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### Tagebuch von Johann Ernst Geister und Johann Zacharias Kiernander.

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Kiernander, Johann Zacharias**

**Cuddalore, 03.01.1742-27.12.1742**

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in Tanjore, pretty large with regular Streets, and a Government.

The Missionaries at Tranquebar had desired one of the chiefest Merchants of their place, to send a Letter of Recommendation to a Substantial Linendrapers and Merchant in Tiarhi, who is his Partners and Correspondent, which was readily complied with. Accordingly I went to the Merchants house, who receives me with a great deal of Compliments, and desired me to Lodge and sup with him. Of my discourses and other Circumstances happening there I shall mention afterwards. It had been likewise recommended to him, that he should speak on my behalf to the head Juncaneer who resides in Tiarhi, that those under him in different other places might not abuse me and extort more, than what was settled. Though the Merchant did his best, the Juncaneer could hardly be contented with three Pagodas.

17. .... Next morning with sunrise I left this place, and though I flattered myself to see Tranquebar at noon, I found the road very bad, and the Palagunboys being much fatigued, I come about noon to a Town called Tirucadaur, where the Juncaneer made me pay another Pagoda. A little after Two we went on, and came about 4. to one of the Missionaries houses without Tranquebar, where I was very friendly received by some of them, who were come there on purposes to meet me. After a short interloaction and refreshment, we went to Town, where I first of all pay'd my Compliments to the Commendant, M<sup>r</sup>. Bonsac, and afterwards saw the others Missionaries and the Doctors, who was my Companion in the Voyages to East India.

The time of my staying at Tranquebar I endeavoured to spend to the best purpose. I had the pleasure of conversing with the Missionaries there, and they used me with all possible Friendship sincerity and Openheartedness, giving me an opportunity to acquaint myself with all the Particulars of their Business and Circumstances relating to the same. I was present at their general and particular Conferences, I heard them Preach in publick, and instruct and exhort in Private the members of their Congregation.

I acquainted my self with the Management of their Schools, Oecconomy, Buildings, Printing press, &c. They freely communicated to me several Manuscripts, Papers and Letters concerning the most Material Occurrences with the Tranquebar Mission from the very beginning.

Upon their desire, I preached twice, to the Portuguese Congregation, on the first part of Hebr. X. and to the Malabarian Congregation on part of Matth. XXVII.

Amongst other necessary and usefull points in our discourses and Conferences, a good deal of time was employed upon our Improvement in the Malabarian Language. Having debated upon several Particular words and expressions, we fixed some general rules, the chiefest of them were the following Three. Viz:

- 1.) To exercise ourselves, to talk and write in such a plain, easy prosaical style, which the unlearned can understand, & which the Learned cannot object against.
- 2.) To acquaint ourselves and to use such a Language, which is used and understood in the several Provinces, in which the Malabarian Language is in vogue. It seems that the Language is in its greatest purity, in the inland parts of Tanjavar and a little further to the West, where as on the Sea-coast, and chiefly to the North of Colaram River, it is much mixed with the Moorish and Gentou Language.
- 3.) That in order to distinguish so much the better, the proper and general Language from dialects. Additions and Mixtures, the Danish and English Missionaries will reciprocally communicate one to another the books wrote in the respective Provinces of their residing, to see wherein they agree and wherein they differ.

It was likewise resolved in one of their Conferences, and minuted in the Books, that we would endeavour to have an Interview every Year, so that one Year an English Missionary should go to Tranquebar, and the next Year a Danish Missionary should come to Cuddalore.

My design was to stay about a fortnight, and this time being near past, I looked for an opportunity to depart, and to go by Sea to save expences. Therefore after having visited all the Gentlemen of note in the place, and having taken my leave from Mr. Bonsac, I agreed with a Boat man for a passage in his boat, which lay ready to go to Cuddalore, But when I had sent my Trunk to the Water side, and was ready to go my self, the boat man came and told, that it

was Impossible to go, because the wind was Northerly, and would probably hold, several days. I resolved therefore to go by Land, but when I enquired how it was in the road, I heard it was not safe, and the Commandant strongly dissuaded it. Because some Days ago, a Portuguese Macao Ship coming from China with a Rich cargo for this coast had the Misfortune at the end of the voyage to run upon a Shoal, which from the mouth of Collaram River goeth out for some Miles into the Sea. According to a Barbarous custom, all what is lost in such an unfortunate way on the Seacoast of Panjaur, is declared to be the Kings, and Immediately Seized upon. Therefore the country people possessed themselves of the Ship, imprisoned the Ships Company, and parties of Horse came to the Seaside to escort the goods and treasure to the Kings residence. Now as I was to go that road I might have come amongst them, and run the risk of being ill used and Plundered, if not seized upon at all, as perhaps for all my professing, they might have taken me for a Merchant, or Agent who came on Account of the lost Ship. Being thus disappointed, I resolved again to go by water. But the season was so extraordinary, that there was yet a strong Northerly wind at a Time of the Year, when the southerly winds commonly blow. So I could not go neither by Land nor by Sea. At last I hired a Boat, and the wind seeming a little fair, I took leave from my friends, and in an Evening about sun set I went out of the River. The People rowed out a good way into the Sea, and we thought that we might gain something by cruising. But when we came to Sail, instead of going Northward, the wind drove us to the shoar again, the country boats being poorly built, and the Black People but very indifferent Sailors. Near midnight the wind turned to blow from the North again, and seemed to increase, therefore after we had been at Anchor for near Two hours I resolved to sail back to Tranquebar. And well it was I did because the Northerly winds held yet for many Days, so that it would have been very miserable to be in an open boat exposed to the Sun in the Day, and cold in the night, losing withall a good deal of Time. I tryed once more therefore to go by Land, and as I had found on enquiry, that it was quiet again on the road, I set out from Tranquebar the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, in the morning designing to go no further that day than Siarni, it being safer to be over night in a Town, than without. I arrived there at three in,

the Afternoon, and went to my former Host, to whom I was again recommended. As I came so soon, I was fully resolved to go about the Town, and see if I could talk with some of the Inhabitants. But my Host told me, it was not practicable, because that Day was an Annual Solemnity for the Soldiers, and great liberties were allowed them, so that none of the Inhabitants did much care to stir abroad, and if a European should go through the streets, he did not know what might happen. His advice made an Impression upon me, because in the Road I fell in with a gang of these merry People, and could just catricate my Self without being affronted. Being therefore confined in a manner I tried to spend the time well within doors. When I was there the first Time, I came a little late, and was pretty much fatigued with the Journey, so my discourses with the Host went about most in general upon the same points as formerly have been mentioned in the Journal on the like Occasions. But now I had more Time to talk as well with him, as his Relations and other people who came to the house. Our discourse run chiefly upon the following Points. He asked me about the differences of Tribes and Casts amongst People, from whence this came &c.

I answered, that even according to the opinion of wise Men amongst them, there was no other Natural division in human kind except Males and Females. And what other difference could we find, because the Bramans, and other pretending People had their Nose, Eyes, and all limbs in the same Shape, place and proportion with other Mortals. As for the difference betwixt white and Black, it was only the outside, and he would be the same Person, though he being <sup>white</sup> White to Day, should put on a coloured Habit Tomorrow. I carried this point a little further, to remove a Prejudice which they have against the Europeans, as being of another Tribe, and with all the uncleanest People upon Earth, I told him you must not take only one part of the white Peoples Behaviour, but the whole. It is true, before we sit we do not always wash our hands and legs, as you do, but you must consider, that we do not put our fingers in the Dish, as you, and this in such a manner, that the bare sight ~~the sight~~ of it is almost enough to turn a European's Stomach, but we use knife, and fork, and spoon, and take care to have them well cleaned and polished. You need washing your Legs and feet, because you go barefoot, and at eating time you squat down, and put your Dish next to your Legs, whereas the Europeans have Legs and feet covered, and put them

under and the meat upon Tables, You drink water out of a brass or copper Pot, which has a large belly with a narrow mouth, and not knowing if the water is clean or not, bend your head backwards, open your mouth, and pour the water in (because these People never touch their drinking vessels with their lips,) whereas we drink out of clean glasses, through which we can discover the smallest dirt, that might happen to be in our drink. To convince him the better of this, I shewed him a glass, which I had with me, because it is a rarity amongst them, as they cannot make them. He objected against the Europeans eating flesh, and killing Animals for that purpose. This is to many of them a very shocking and abominable thing, at least they pretend that it is so, because according to their notion of the Souls Transmigration, by killing an Animal one might drive his Father or other Peoples souls to soon out of their habitation. I told him most of the Inhabitants of this country eat flesh, and even your clean Bramans on a certain Solemn Sacrifice kill a Sheep, Cut the flesh into little pieces, and boil and fry it in butter to a papp, which they eat with a good appetite, and take it to be a meritorious thing very acceptable to God. And yet further, the Bramans cannot have one meal without putting something to it, (which is the *assa foetida*;) though this according to your opinion, is the flesh of a Buffalo, corroded by the juices of a certain Tree, brought from other Countries in Ships (a thing seemingly very offensive to the Bramans;) the best sort of which is said to be packed up in Dogskin. When he found me so well acquainted with these particulars he did not carry the Argument further. I added yet that the Europeans in the Northern parts could not subsist, if they should not eat flesh. (Because in some parts there was no green or fruit for three, or four months in the Year, and how could the people live, if they had nothing else to eat.) Having one of their Authors with me, who treats chiefly of Moral Philosophy, I began to read apart of it, and seeing some Bramans sitting at the further end of the Yard, (that they might not run the risk of being defiled by a European whom they rank in the same class with Dogs,) I called to them, that I wanted to hear from them the meaning of some

words, which the same Author used to express the attributes of God, and which none of their Countrymen could yet explain to me. The Bramans for all their grave airs could not satisfy my desire, and turned themselves several ways, which made me Wonder. and it is surprizing indeed how the notion could prevail amongst the Learned in Europe of the Bramans being such wise and in their way Holy People, whereas they are for the greatest part illiterate and stupid (though if a European converses with them only by an Interpreter, it may be the Bramans Interest as well as the Interpreters, to talk high of their wisdom, and other pretty Things,) and as for their Life they are by the sober part of this Nation reckoned to be the vilest Creatures, chiefly those that are Priests in their Pagodas. This goeth so far, that, as they are much given to Superstition, and pretend to forebode the ill, or good Success of their Affairs by such things or Tokens as they meet at the times of going out of their Houses, they reckon it a very bad omen, if they meet first a Braman, who is a Priest in the Pagoda.

Therefore leaving these People to themselves, I renewed the discourse with my Host. He asked my opinion of the cause of Riches and Poverty, high and Low stations in the world, because his country people took Poverty to be a Punishment for Sins committed in a former birth, and Riches to be the reward of former merits. I answered, that it was wrong to believe that Poor Peoples ~~were the only unhappy, and Rich people the only happy ones~~ ~~took Poverty to be a punishment for Sins committed in a former birth, for it is wrong to believe that poor people were the only unhappy, and Rich People the only happy ones,~~ whereas daily experience might convince one to the contrary, as Human happiness consisted chiefly in the dispossession of Man's mind. Concerning the different degrees and stations in the world Divine wisdom and goodness, had mixed Poor and Rich together that they might be reciprocally Serviceable to one another, and how would it be, if all of us were great Lords and Masters, and could find nobody for Handy craft and Drudgery. In the progress of the discourse their favourite Doctrine of Metempsychosis or Transmigration of Souls happened to come into a debate. My objection against it was, that if we had been in the world before, there must be a Remembrance of things which had happened with us then, but as there was no manner of such a Remembrance, I concluded,

that there had been no former birth of ours. He excepted against <sup>the</sup> validity of my Argument, saying, we had no remembrance of our having been in our mother's womb, and of what had happen'd with us in the first years of our Infancy, yet no body would doubt of the reality of these things; I reply that tho' we could not convince ourselves of this by our own Remembrance, yet there was not only the testimony of our Parents relations and acquaintances, but we might certainly conclude, that what we saw every day happen with these Children born after us, must have been the same with ourselves. As he did not admit the Scriptures, I could not carry the Argument further. Only I make this observation, that the Power of Hell could hardly have found out any stronger Prejudice and Obstacle against practical Religion, than these two Opinions of Destiny and Metempsychosis, as, according to these two Suppositions, a man may commit all manner of Sin without being guilty, and without being under an Obligation or necessity to look out how to be deliver'd from this Evil. Because, if my Life and actions are Absolutely overruled by an irresistible fatality, how can I help committing or Omitting, and how can it be imputed to me. And if the Sins I have committed in the Present birth, cannot be expiated, except in another birth of mine, which likewise depends intirely from destiny, why should I put my self to the trouble of doing things that are impossible. No wonder then that these people entertain such Notions, because as long as this will hold, they <sup>can</sup> stifle the remorses of Conscience in their very birth. Our discourse went further upon the sinfulness of Idolatry, He made the usual evasions and excuses, that in fact they Serv'd the only true God tho' under different names representations &c. These external things were necessary to put the ignorant and careless in mind of the Deity, and might be call'd the Alphabet of the true Service of God for beginners &c. And when they were present at their feasts and Solemnities in their Temples it was with no other design, but to raise their minds by these external means. &c. when I found him going such a length, I told him that according to the notions of their own Moralists, the Subduing of lust, was one part of our Duty to God. now as none of their Solemnities could be perform'd without the company of the common Prostitutes (call'd by the

Europeans, dancing Wenches, and by the natives, the Women servants of the Gods.) I would ask him if he could call this the Alphabet for beginners in God's Service? he told, ~~that~~ <sup>it was</sup> supposed that people did not go to the Feasts, on account of gratifying sinful lusts with the sight of these women, but with a design to serve God, I reply'd, that in the greatest probability, if it were not for pleasing themselves with <sup>the</sup> sight, dancing, and lewd motions of these Wretches creatures, their Feasts would not be much frequented on Religious accounts. To this he spoke nothing. I went on in the following way, It was very strange to pretend, that such and such a Shape, should make people mindful of the Deity, when the Deity had no Shape, and when they had so many different Shapes, and their notions about the same so contradictory to one another, that if one was right and True, the other must certainly be wrong, except a man could believe black could at the same time be white, & sweet could be bitter. If a person was really desirous to know, and to remember God, he needed no Shapes of his own making, but if he would <sup>but</sup> open his eyes and reflect a little, he would find himself surrounded on all sides with Gods works and benefices, abundantly sufficient to make an impression on a dutiful Creature's mind, Suppose a man awakes in the Morning & finds himself in health and strength, is not that enough to make him think of God his benefactor, to whom he owes his very breath, or must he first go to another Street or town, in order to come to a Remembrance of God, by the help of a certain Shape &c. With such and the like discourses time went away till Supper was ready. Before I began to eat, I told the Merchant, that the sight of these Victuals put me in mind of God my benefactor, who had provided Necessaries of life for me though I was a foreigner in this Country, and that I would take them in remembrance of Gods favour, and with hopes, that through his blessing, they would conduce to the health and strength of my body.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of March, at three in the morning I set out from that place, after I had thank'd my host for his civilities, wish'd him well, and offer'd my self to be ready for any Service that I could do him in Suddalore. At sun rise I came to Collaram River, pass'd Sidambaram at Eight, and about Noon I came to Portonovo, where I found all the Dutch Gentlemen return'd to their Factory.

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dined with them, and went further in the Afternoon, having the Pleasure to come home at 8 in the evening, where to my great joy, I found every thing well.

It will not be quite amiss, to add few words about some customs and ways of these people, and how they treat Strangers.

Their Houses are only of one Story, pretty low, and have no windows at all.

At the entrance there is commonly a Yard which has on one Side or other a sort of gallery, called a Varanda, raised from the Ground about two feet. Behind that are the dwellingrooms of the People, and those of the better sort have sometimes Two or Three Inneryards separated from one another for their Women.

A Stranger is admitted only into the first Yard, and so was I at Searhi.

My Host being a Linen-draper, had instead of a Mat a piece of brown linnen, spread in the Varanda, where I was invited to sit down, because there is no such thing as Bench, Chair or Table. At supper time, a piece of a green Plantain leaf, near 1 1/2 foot square was laid next me upon the linnen. The Cook brings a Pot of boiled rice, and with his hand, supposed to be cleanly washed, he puts a heap of Rice on the Leaf. This done he brings in another little Pot, some by meat, all cut in small pieces, and likewise puts a small heap of each sort, as Fowl, Fish, and Greens on the border of the rice. Then in some <sup>little</sup> leaves stitched together almost in the form of a little Cup, he brings melted butter, and poureth it upon the Rice and meat. At ~~last~~ cometh ~~some~~ some fruit, Sugar and the like, which is all put on the same Leaf.

In the Country way I should have mixed and kneaded this together with my Right hands, and with the same convey it to the Mouth, but I could never use myself to that, therefore I took my Spoon and eat in the European way. My Host did not eat with me, because this they never do, except with their next relations, and then every body has his own heap of Rice and meat before him, which he may knead and Manage according to his own liking, only he must not put the left hand in, this being reckoned unclean. They have several curious and nice Customs in their way of Eating. The Wife must never eat with the Husband but wait upon him, after the Meal gives the Husband water to wash, and then they had Liberty to eat. If the places where they have eat, is thought to have been made unclean, they give a thorough cleansing by the sprinkling of Cowdung diluted in Water, the excrements of the Cow being reputed to be the grand Specifick for Innumerable uses. After this Digression it is proper to return again, to our business in Juddalore.