

VIC HARTLEY NEWS



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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007

The Annual General Meeting was held on the first Sunday of September 2007, being the 5th. The 2007 committee made a standing order that the annual general meeting every year should take place on the first Sunday of that year, an order which provides the members advanced information to allocate that day for this important event of the past pupils association.

The turn out for the AGM this year was encouraging. It could be noticed that there were a few new faces coming in for the AGM. This event was further made attractive with hopper dinner. The first of the item of the AGM was the election of new office bearers. The committee chose the further end of the hall to assemble to conduct the election as there was high pitch noise created by the kiths and kin of Hartley



The current committee

College. Although the noise created by the children made the speech at the AGM inaudible, the people enjoyed the vibrancy of the children. The AGM created an environment akin to a family get together.

One name of each was proposed for various posi-

tions and elected straight-away into the committee (See the plate above). With about half of the previous committee remaining, the new committee was sworn in. The incumbent president promised to do all what he can to promote the principles of the association.

2007 PERFORMANCE AT HARTLEY

The principal is overjoyed that Hartley College has once again achieved the Academic Excellence at the GCE AL 2007 Exam. V. Rajeevan, Maths stream and S. Nimalan, Bio stream obtained the first place at district level. Congratulations to you guys.

Two of each obtained 3A's in the Maths and Bio Streams, and 3 in Arts stream. The other notable achievements were as follows:

Maths stream, two 3A's, two 2AB's and two A2B's. In the Bio stream, two 3A's,

two 2AB's, three A2B's. In the Arts stream, three 3A's, one 2AC's and four A2B's. The Commerce stream had two 2AB's and two A2B's. Overall, at least 25 students were eligible to enter the university in different field of education.

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Special points of interest:

- AGM is a family get together.
- An airplane was a magical bird to a Hartleyite, can you believe it?
- Hartley once again achieved educational excellence.
- What is the purpose of life?
- Hopper dinner more enticing.

Plane, Plane, Airplane

The epic of Ravana carrying Sita by a plane in the pre-historic times can be set aside by saying, it is a legend, but Cumaravelu's story of the plane cannot be, because it is true. I

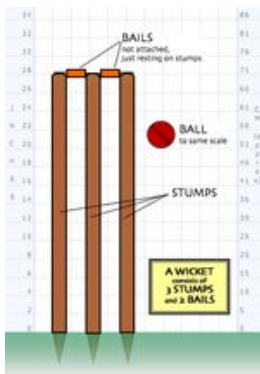
"It was in the year 1929 or 1930 when I was a boy of 12 in Veshti and shawl without a sandal on foot, studying in Form I at Hartley College, Vadamaradchy. One afternoon while in the classroom, we heard an unusual rustling noise coming from the South. As time passed, the noise increased and forced us to run to the plain to find what it was. In no time the open plain was filled with students of various classes.

What a wonder! Four huge birds stretching their wings came over our heads in formation. "They are aeroplanes!" shouted our friends. The four planes flew over our heads towards the sea growling aloud, and we followed them like the children in the Pied Piper of Hamelin until the sea prevented us from going any further."

A View of the TV Screen and Children at the AGM



CRICKET MATCH 2007



The cricket match 2007 was played at the open grounds of the school. The match this time was more regulatory than the previous years, where most of the old ones played.

Seeing among the crowd more of the young boys, the old lot who had been very active in the previous years backed off and some old guys who even went in to play were not given the chance. The old were just humble spectators.

After gaining control of the cricket enthusiasts, the umpire Sivathanan led the boys to the grounds. He laid down the rules of the game, divided them into two teams and started the match straightaway. The gloomy weather provided the best atmosphere to play.

While cricket was going on in the open field, some men organised the women folk to play some badminton. The characteristic shy of the vadamaradchy women prevented them from playing badminton, they opted to go in for the usual gossiping. But, at last came the lunch time. The lunch, the rice and curry, were put on display by the women and men seeing them hurriedly fell in queues to pick up their lunch. The lunch and the refreshments were delicious, thanks to the organisers and the cooks.

BUILDING FOR RETIREMENT

Much to the worry of our people today who doubt that their children will not look after them when they are old, it is important to know how to save for their future. An advise below, but for further details, please contact Sri, the secy.

Building for retirement (also known as transition to retirement)

The latest government rules are good news for the over 55s, opening a new super strategy called building for retirement or transition to retirement.

If you're worried about how much you'll have to live on retirement, a transition to retirement strategy can help accelerate your super savings in the critical last years before you leave the workforce.

How does it work?

In short, you salary sacrifice part of your regular salary into super (paying only 15% tax rather than your marginal rate) and supplement your current income by redrawing funds from your supers savings.

THE HOPPER DINNER



The hopper dinner at the annual general meeting is the most enticing element which attracts the people more than the AGM itself because of its gorgeousness. The cook goes around a minimum fifteen pans one after the other to make hoppers with different menus. The members and their family falling in the queue eat the hoppers to their full stomach. A flat rate was charged.



THIRIUKKURAL— A WAY OF LIFE

Material life or spiritual life, one against the other takes one's life in the way he or she wants to enjoy his or her life. In that, Mr. S V Kasynathan's contribution to this news letter is an eye opening advice to all of us. What is purposeful living? Which is the path? Please read on.

A Path to Purposeful Living by V P Palam, Real Wise Publishing Inc., Georgia USA 2003.

A Path to Purposeful Living by V P Palam (V Perampalam) is based on the verses of the *Kural* or *Thirukkural* a much celebrated medieval Tamil work. It has 133 chapters of ten verses each. The verses are all couplets and hence the name Kural, meaning something short or brief. Little is known with any certainty about the Kural's author or his time. It is widely believed that he was of the lowly weaver caste of *valluvar* and has therefore always been referred to as Valluvar or Thiruvalluvar.* Scholars have assigned to the Kural dates ranging from the 4th to the 10th century AD though there are many who believe that it is of much greater antiquity. The language of the Kural is not entirely archaic and much of it is still accessible with little difficulty to modern readers who have learnt some Tamil and are willing to apply themselves to the task. The main difficulty for the reader arises, as the Rev G U Pope pointed out, from ellipsis inevitably following from the brevity of the Kural form rather than from the opacity of its words as such.

The Kural or at least selected verses from it have been an integral part of the education and upbringing of Tamil children in South Asia for a long time. Those educated there know by heart more than a few of the verses. However, most who have learnt the Kural thus, respect it mainly as a great work that sets out the ideals of domestic and social conduct and of governance. But while the sheer range of the subjects treated with profound wisdom and acuity in the Kural in relation to these matters is astonishingly impressive and makes it a work of indubitable genius, it is also a work of delightful poetry and dazzling wit which aspects unfortunately are not noticed equally widely.

Anyone who attempts it realises soon enough that translation involves much more than the finding of equivalents in dictionaries and that in most areas it is only by chance that a word in one language has a true equivalent in another. One can easily understand therefore the dissatisfaction often felt when looking at attempts at translating creative or poetic works of genius such as the Kural, though no doubt there are exceptionally great achievements. VVS Iyer who did a translation of the whole of the Kural at the beginning of the last century dismissed the Rev Drew's translation as "feeble" and found that the translation by Rev G U Pope (19th C), did "not do justice to the merits of the original but on the contrary deform its grand thoughts by giving them a stilted and unnatural expression"

*The word *thiru* prefixed here, besides being another name for Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, has been used with many meanings including wealth, affluence, distinction, beauty, brilliance, fertility, fortune, holiness, sanctity etc. In its occurrences in the Kural there is little doubt that the word is used to mean wealth, eminence and their cognates and not to mean holiness or sanctity. Given also the incisive contrast Valluvar draws in Kural 374 between the world of affluence or eminence and the world of those seeking clarity of understanding, it would appear, that *thiru* would hardly have been his epithet of choice either for his work or for himself.

There are of course many admirers of Pope's translation and such views as Iyer's have been debated for long. Though one of the merits of the Kural, that attracted so many non Tamil admirers including westerners and impelled them to try to transmit its wisdom to their own societies, is the universal applicability and catholicity of its ideas and sentiments, the thought and spirit of the Kural are nevertheless born of the culture of the Tamils at a specific period of their social, political and religious history. This too no doubt presents a difficulty to translators who, during almost every century at least since the 18th, have attempted the task with varying levels of grasp of the concepts borne of this rich mixture. As Mr Palam also points out more than once, there occur in the Kural many concepts familiar to students of older Tamil literature but defy easy translation. With his vast experience in educational publication where he often had to break new ground by coining new words for technical concepts of disciplines new to Tamil, he is well aware of the challenge and does not hesitate to coin new words in English where he thinks they are needed. To translate the Tamil concept of *Kelvi*, which means to learn by listening and comes from a long period when oral instruction was the main source of learning, Palam coins the term *lisearning* (Ch. 42). Readers will find many other interesting examples.

Palam's chief reason for attempting yet another English rendering of the Kural – probably the first in this century, but one may be sure by no means the last - is his conviction that a "two line translation, however excellent it might be, could (not) do justice to the 'truth, beauty and profundity' of a kural". In any event, the Kural was written at a time when making copies was arduous and obtaining copies was not easy. Most learning was transmitted orally and by *lisearning* and brevity was not only the soul of wit but the only way of ensuring accurate transmission. Our times are different and Palam with the instincts of the teacher and the committed educationist that he was, determined that elaboration is the more important need now.

What we have here then is certainly not another *translation* of the Kural into English but what Palam describes as a *transformation* or reasonable expansion revealing the crucial idea of each kural "setting out its relevance to all times and climes". And hence his decision evidently to call his book *A Path to Purposeful Living* and not a translation of the *Thirukural* as others before him have done.

Palam has clearly succeeded in his chosen purpose and his work, the result of great dedication and loving effort is certain to be of great use and pleasure especially to those who cannot access the original Tamil. The two line verses of the Kural are elaborated into English verses often running to eight or ten lines. Palam evidently delights in the language that he wields without stint and shares the fruits of his facility generously with his readers. Palam's work is particularly to be commended for rendering the Kural in the contemporary idiom that can speak directly to the young and not so young of today. As an example of his contribution, one may quote his rendering of the two compressed lines Kural 784:

The primary purpose of real friendship is not mirth, merriment or revelry

*Though they too have a place, as happy expressions of camaraderie
But the purpose should be to give a friend, hard hitting advice to steady him
Before he stumbles into sin, vice or folly that would otherwise ruin him.*

Palam often uses examples that illustrate the idea accurately but also demonstrate his sharp grasp of the kernel of that Kural. I derived particular pleasure from the last line of his rendering of Kural 805 identifying precisely Valluvar's point when he speaks of the appropriate attitude towards well adopted and long standing friends who may sometimes cause one pain.

Would you blame your finger, if it hurts your eye perchance?

Valluvar's wit is perhaps at its most astringent in Chapter 108 which treats of the nature of Baseness.

Palam renders the much admired Kural 1071 thus:

*Even the very bad guys look so much like the very good guys:
In physical form and physical features, can't find better look alike!
Among human beings only, do we find such similarity in bodily form –
Though with radical diversity in ethical, moral and many other norm!*

In these dark and difficult times when the world seems to be willing once again to acknowledge violence as the only available form of persuasion, Valluvar appears to condemn all of us in Kural 1075 which Palam elaborates:

*Are the lowly ones such hopeless ones
That they are immune to edifying influence?
Only fear can regulate their vicious behaviour:
Fear, that they would physically and materially suffer!
There is also one more thing: the carrot of material gain
Can also make them appear somewhat benign.*

To give a taste of the flavour of the more elaborate of Palam's transformations and the ebullient spirit in which he has approached his labour of evident love, one may cite no better example than his rendering of Kural 273:

*There was a stray cow of Thunnai, who contrived a clever ruse:
She wanted with leisurely ease the farmers' crops to graze
Leaving behind the Kudavattai shrine, she walked with determination
And entered into the Vanni region covered with a leopard skin
Eating up all the greens, she was mowing the garden clean
Soon she started mooing as a call of wooing: she was uncovered and impounded!
Like the holy cow of Thunnai was a holy man of Chennai: in saffron he was clad
In truth he was terrific macho, who could not tame his libido
But draped in saffron garb, he posed as a spiritual Guru
Under false pretence and public ignorance, access, he had to private mansions
When he espied 'home alone' women, he tried to have inappropriate relations
Once within an ace of success, Gurujji was forcibly interrupted
Caught almost red handed, he was publicly disrobed and fully exposed
Do not lead a double life, you will be caught out soon and chastised!*

Mr Palam's work is a big personal achievement for which he deserves our congratulations and also the gratitude of those who cannot read the Kural in Tamil, as well as those who wish to access its message in easily understandable contemporary idiom and often very amusing verse.

S V Kasynathan
Melbourne June '08.

Please send your Written
contributions to the
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