

# SUPPIRAMANIAM.(JORDAN LODGE.)

by Rev D.T.Niles.

Among the first eight students at the day school in Tellipallai was not only the boy who was baptized Nathaniel Niles, but also another lad who was baptized Jordan Lodge. Mrs Winslow speaks of them both baptized on the same day, 21st April 1821, as the "First fruits of the Mission", meaning they were the first Christian converts in Jaffna from Hinduism, after Dutch times.

The name Jordan Lodge before baptism was Suppiramaniam, and he came from the village of Tellipallai. Nathaniel Niles was my father's grandfather and Jordan Lodge was my mother's great-grandfather.

In the history of the American Ceylon Mission, written by Rev C.D. Vellupillai the following account is given of the baptism of Jordan Lodge.

"When the mother of Jordan Lodge heard the news that he was intending to become a Christian, she came one Saturday morning wailing along the road, to the house of the missionary. She said "Should my son be baptized, all our friends and relations will not have anything to do with us after that..I cannot give my consent. The missionary called the boy and said to him "You must decide". Whereupon he took his mother aside and comforted her, and said "I belong to Jesus Christ" The mother went away sorrowing, saying to the son "You will not be able to come to our house again: I have lost you." The father of Jordan Lodge however gave his consent to the baptism .

Jordan Lodge studied for one year at the Batticotta seminary, after which he became a clerk at the Mission.



**Ancestral Home of  
Kumarakulasinghe's in**

One day as Dr Poor the missionary at Tellipallai was on one of his walks he happened to go to the village of North Erlalai. He saw a mother with seven children, all girls, sitting outside a little hut drinking gruel. It was a very poor family. Dr Poor sat down to talk with them, and when he found out about their situation, he asked the mother whether she would be willing to allow the eldest of the girls to go with him to be educated at the Uduvil Girls School, and to be looked after by the Church. The mother consented. The story is told in our family, of how when the missionary called for the girl she went murmuring. "Naaha thambirane intha melaychannudaia kaiililirunthu ennai thapuvee yo"; which was an appeal to her God to deliver her from this stranger. There is an entry in Mrs Winslow's memoirs dated June 29 1822, which reads,

"This morning a little girl was brought to us to be received into our family. This is a wonderful circumstance, and we hardly can understand it."

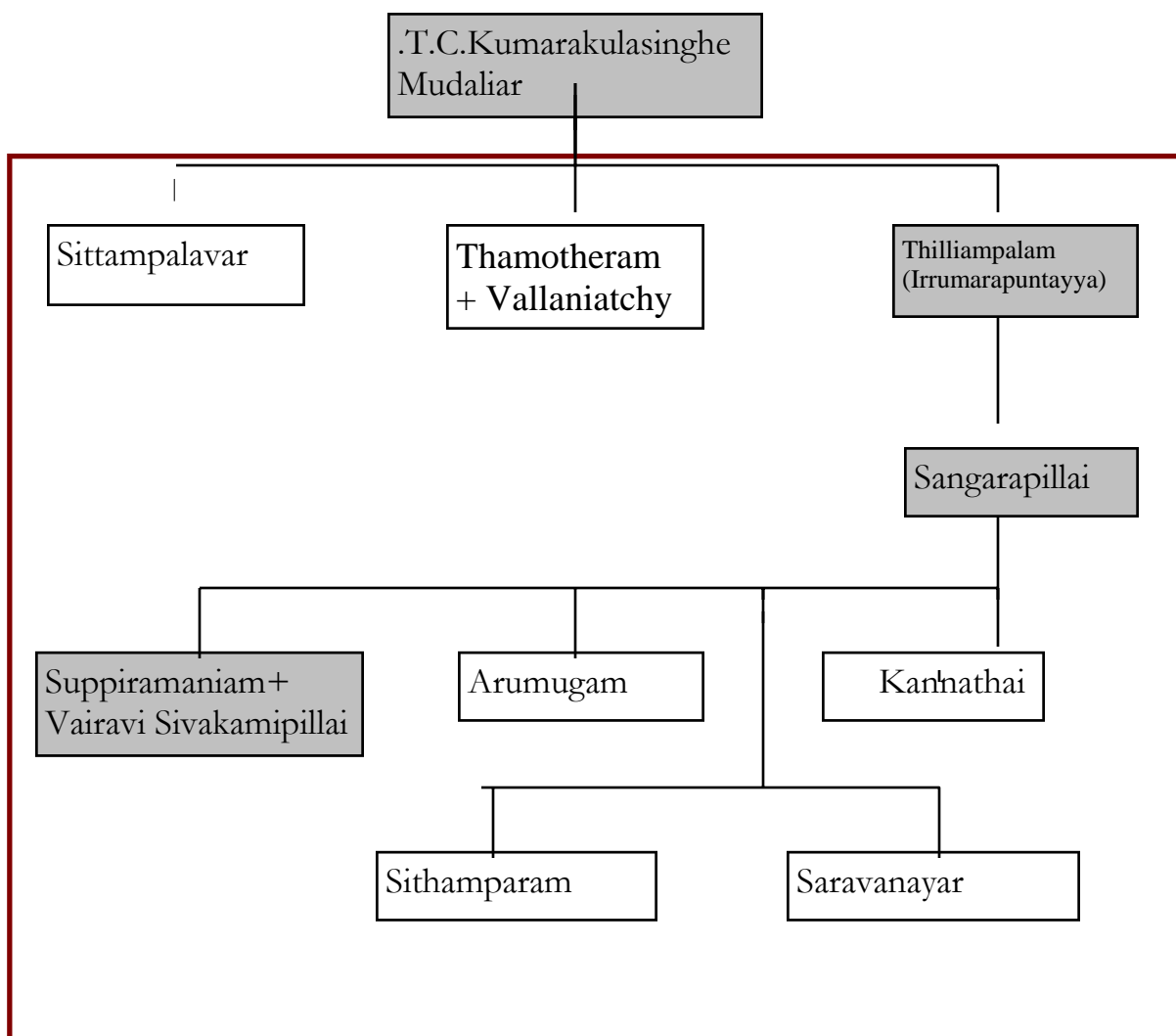
The girl was educated at Uduvil, and proved to be an excellent student, with a beautiful singing voice. She was also very pretty. She was baptized when still at school.

Jordan Lodge in his capacity as clerk to the mission, used to carry letters from Tellipallai and back. He saw this girl in Uduvil, fell in love, and persuaded her to run away with him. These two became the parents of a good Christian home. They had three children, the eldest of whom was Joseph William Appucuddy. Appucuddy was also given the name Barr, which was the name of his benefactor in America, who paid for his education. Barr Appucuddy became Interpreter Mudaliar, and Secretary of the Mallakam Courts. He married Sivakamipillai the daughter of a very orthodox Hindu home in Uduvil. They had nine children of whom the eldest was my mother's mother.

The last of nine children Chelvanayakam went to England on a Government scholarship to study for the Ceylon Civil Service. There he fell seriously ill and died; but before he died, he wrote letters pleading with

**Chelvanayakam**





When in England ,one person with whom Chelvanayakam was in close correspondence was my mother.They were about the same age.She had the same religious commitment as her young uncle.In his letters to her,there constantly runs the strain of his strong desire for greater dedicatin to the gospel among his own people.It was my mother who on the spot,reinforced Chelvanayagam's plea with his mother to be baptised-the old lady listening as much to her eldest grand daughter as much as to her youngest son.

One of Chelvnayagam's last letters to my mother contains the prayer that God would raise someone in the family,whom he would use in the work of the spread of the Gospel.

Dr Isaac Thambyah a brother-in-law and close friend of Chelvanayagam, wrote a “Book of Memories, when Chelvanayagam died. In that book, the following letter dated June 29 1900, from the son to the mother is quoted.

“I trust dear mother, that you and others dear to me understand by now the deep significance of my illness. Its purpose is the Glory of God St John 11.4. God has been very gracious to our house, His mercies have been many. Forgetting all faults He has offered you this opportunity. He calls you through me..... As for me my hope is in my God.

And then referring to the mother’s baptism Dr Thambyah says,

“Crushed in spirit, broken hearted, she openly surrendered her stormy soul to God, at the Tellipallai church, a few weeks before her darling son’s death.

Chelvanayagam died on August 29 1900. In a letter to her eldest son that very day, the mother says,

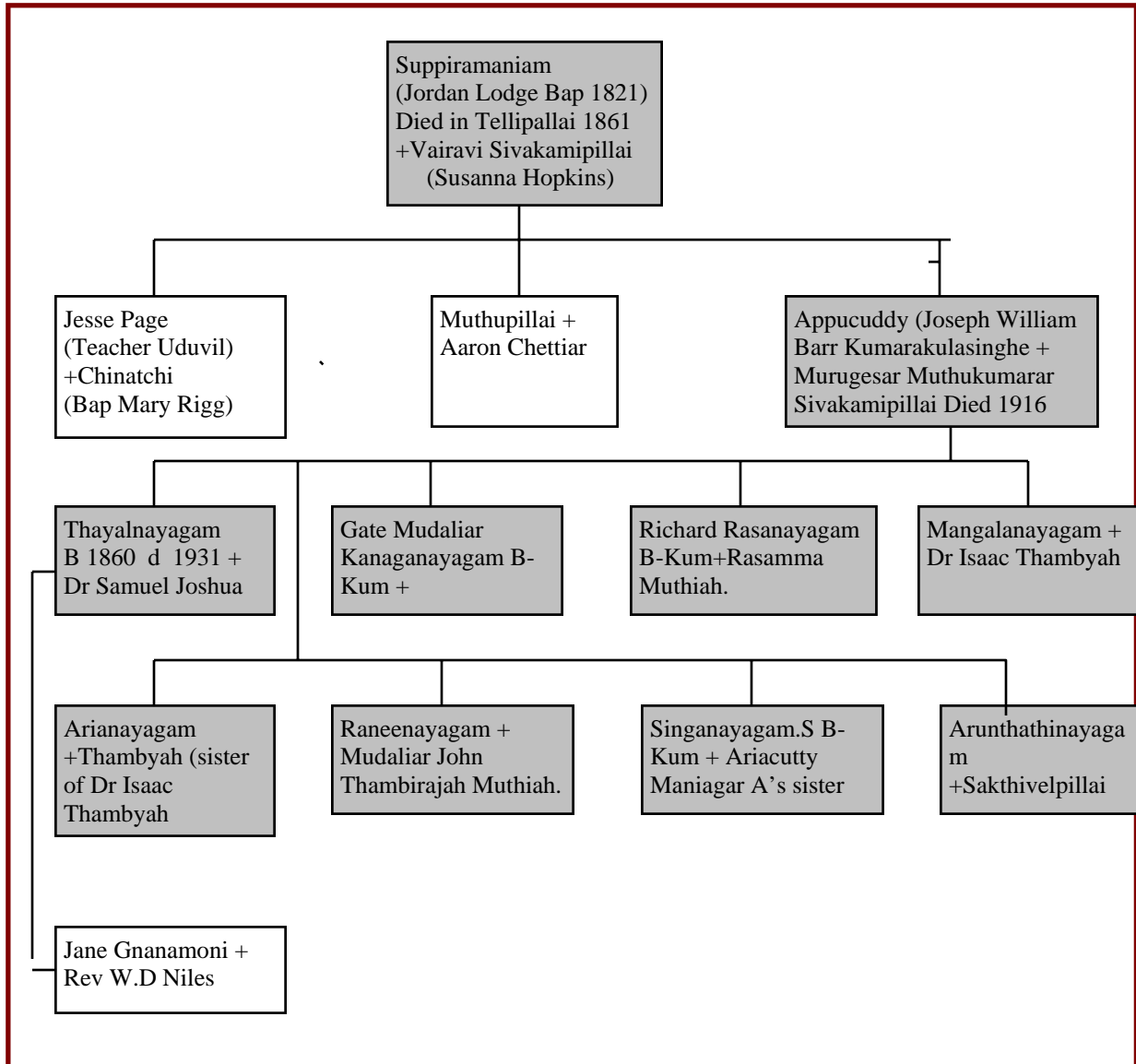
“ I am in no way impatient. I am naturally anxious. I am not unbelieving. On the day that Chellam left home for England, I had cheerfully committed my darling boy to the care of the “All Gracious.” I am only eager to know as a mother well may be, all that is to know about my child.”

Chelvanayagam is buried in Highgate cemetery in North London. Mrs Grace Jecks is also buried in the same grave. It was she who nursed him during his long illness, This cemetery is now of historical interest ; Karl Marx being one famous person laid to rest there.

The mother’s trust in God had another test to bear , for her eldest son Kanaganayagam too died within three years of his younger brother. The ordeal by death



**Chelvanayagam’s grave in Highgate London**



when loved ones go, is an ordeal from which no one is spared; but it was especially hard on one whose decision for the Saviour came so late in life, and under such circumstances. The real Christian influence in Barr Appucuddy's home, his wife having been a Hindu most of her life, was that of his sister, who married one Mr Page. She had no children, so it was she who brought up her brother's children in the Christian faith. Barr Appucuddy's own Christian faith was a living one. Some of the lyrics he sang of that faith are still in use in the church in Jaffna. Given next is one of his lyrics in which find expression of his intense Christian yearning to lead the Christian life, his prayer to be delivered from temptation and his trust in his Lord.

### சரணங்கள்

1: அகில ஆசை செறிந்து செருக்குதே-வீண்  
ஆடம்பரம் மனதைக் கருக்குதே;  
புகலுஞ் சிற்றின்பமுள் அருக்குதே-பொல்லாப்  
புலையன் சாத்தானேவல் நெருக்குதே,  
நிகிலாகுதே, சிந்தை தினம் வேகுதே, விந்தைச்  
செகதல ரட்சணய தீரனைக் காணேனே.

ஆசை

2. சித்தந் திடமில்லாமல் அலையுதே-இந்தச்  
செகவாழ்வை வாழ்வென்று மலையுதே,  
அத்தன் வராமற் காலந் துலையுதே-அவர்  
அருகில் நிலலாமல் நிலைகுலையுதே,  
நித்தமும் அருந்தொல்லை நெஞ்சிற் தாங்குதல் வல்லை,  
உத்தம கர்த்தன் இன்னுமோடி வரக்காணேனே.

ஆசை

3: பாவிபடுந் துயரைப் பார்க்க-சொந்தப்  
பக்தனாகி என்னை ஏற்க,  
ஆவி கலங்காமலே காக்க-என்னை  
ஆட்கொண்டு மோட்சகரை சேர்க்க,  
மூவரொன்றான சோதி முதல்வனான என்னுதி  
தேவனைக் காதலித்துத் தேடியுங் காணேனே.

ஆசை

The fact that Barr Appucuddy married a Hindu is worth noting. It was part of the practice of missionaries to encourage marriages where only one partner was a Christian, and to make sure that the children were all brought up as Christians. This was a very sensible way of building up a Christian community from small beginnings.

Jordan Lodge served the mission for over a period of 25 years. When his wife died in 1855, his bereavement affected his faith so much that, for some years he refused to go to church. His, had not been a very steady life and she had been the mainstay and moderating influence of his life. She left behind, the memory of a sweet and gracious disposition and of a warm Christian faith.

Jordan found his faith again through a long and serious illness. He died ten years after the death of his wife..

At present the Barr family go by the name of Kumarakulasinghe. When Kanaganayagam the eldest son of Barr Appucuddy was honoured with the title of Mudaliar of The Governor's Gate in 1893, he took the name Kumarakulasinghe Mudaliar after Thillampalam Kumarakulasinghe, an ancestor of Jordan Lodge. In a book entitled "Golden Book of India and Ceylon" by Sir Roper Lethbridge, quoted by Dr Thambyah there is the following reference to Kanaganayagam Mudaliar.

"Kanaganayagam Charles Barr Kumarakulasinghe, Mudaliar of the Governor's Gate born Feb 2nd 1862 belongs to the Kumarakulasinghe family of Jaffna. One of his ancestors received the title "Irumarupuntayya Kumarakulasinghe Mudaliar" from the Dutch government in 1756 in recognition of his position as a direct descendent of the ancient kings of Jaffna."

The name Kumarakulasinghe is now the name used by the whole family in all its branches. Even Appucuddy Barr is now known as Joseph William Barr Kumarakulasinghe.

Kanaganayagam Mudaliar inherited his father's ability as a writer of verse. He not only wrote some lyrics but also translated many Western hymns into Tamil. He died in 1903, twenty years after his father's death, and in the prime of his life, being only 42 years when he died.. Dr Thambyah in his book speaks of the evangelical conversion which he had in 1889, a conversion followed by an active life of Christian witness. The following passage is from Dr Thambyah's book.

"The Mudaliars faith so strong in suffering so triumphant under trial, was his always. His reliance upon God was so unworldly as to be deemed unwise. He took no thought for the morrow.



**Kanaganayagam**

His religion was evangelical to the extreme, and his active service in the Master's work begun in 1889 was unremittingly carried on with such ardour as, once, nearly made him forsake all his high official position and the fascinating prospects of it and follow in the path of the "Great Renunciation".

The following hymn of consecration written by him is a fine example of that faith by which he was supported in the trials he bore, the sorrows and disappointments he endured, and the witness to his Lord which he gave.

### பல்லவி

தேவ மைந்தா—பெந்தேக்கோஸ்தின்  
திரு வரந்தா.

### அனுபல்லவி

பாவம், நல் நீதி, நியாயத்தீர்ப் பிவற்றைப்  
பாரித்துணர்த் தாவி பாலிப்பேன் என்றாயே.

தேவ

### சரணங்கள்

1. புன்மை நீங்க, - புனிதா, உன்நன்மை தேங்க,  
உன்னையே எல்லாமென்றுன்னி உளம்பொங்க,  
உலகம் பிசாசம் உடலும் மடங்க.

தேவ

2. துஞ்சுகின்றேன் நின்னருட்குக் கெஞ்சுகின்றேன்,  
அஞ்சவேண்டாம், அந்தரிக்க விடேன் என்று  
ஐய, நீ சொன்னதும், பொய்யாகுமோ? இன்று.

தேவ

3. இன்பத்திலும்-தாங்கவொணாத துன்பத்திலும்,  
அன்பன் நீ, மாறாத நன்பனெனக் கண்டு,  
ஆற்றி யடைந் துன்னைப் போற்றிச் செய்யத் தொண்டு.

தேவ

When Barr Appucuddy died, and that at the early age of fifty, all the family property at Tellipallai was heavily mortgaged. It was due to the self denial of Kanaganayagam that he redeemed all this property for the family and managed to set all his brothers on their feet. He died as he lived an outstanding Christian gentleman. His mother the wife of Barr Appucuddy, lived to a ripe old age, and died

But she kept her faith to the end, a faith she had found under sorrow and leaned on through many sorrows yet

As I have written this story, I have been struck by the circumstances that, on my mother's side, it was the women who were the stronger characters—the wife of Jordan Lodge, the wife of Appucuddy Barr, and if I may add here, also my mother's mother.



L-R Kanaganayagam, Rasanayagam  
Chelvanayagam, Singanayagam



Rasanayagam

Dr Isaac Thambyah and  
Mangalanayagam, sister of  
above.

