



By Grace John Nalloor

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Did you know these facts about the great Maramon Convention?

- In 2024, the Maramon Convention will be conducted for the 129th time from 11th -18th February 2024, at Maramon, Pathanamthitta District.
- The 1st Maramon Convention was held in 1895. It went on for 10 days starting from 9th to 18th March.
- The first convention was held on the Manalpuram of River Pamba (riverbank) opposite to the Aranmula Temple. It then shifted to Parapuzha Kadavu near Maramon Church and then finally to its present location.
- The hymn "*Sthuthippin sthuthippin Yesudevane, Halleluiyah paadi sthuthippeen sthuthipeen Yesudevane*" written by Vidhuwankutty Achen (Rev. Yustus Joseph) is sung as a closing Hymn at the end of the final day of every convention. The practice that started in 1895 continues till date!
- The Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam was established on 25th



February 1905 at a special meeting held in the Maramon Convention Pandal.

- Rt. Rev. Dr. Abraham Mar Thoma was the first Mar Thoma Bishop to become a speaker of the convention.
- Thomas Walker was the main speaker of the Maramon Convention from 1899 to 1912. He was born on 9th August 1859 and called to eternal rest on 26th August 1912.



Abraham Mar Thoma XVII
Metropolitan

- Mrs. Nicholson and Miss. McKibbin used to conduct special meetings and Bible classes for women during the convention. They were also responsible for the establishment of Nicholson School in Kattode, Tiruvalla in 1910.
- Sadhu Sunder Singh was one of the main speakers of the Maramon Convention held in 1918. He was born in 1889 and it is believed that when he was on his way to Tibet (in 1929) he disappeared, never to be seen again!
- In 1925, there was a *Chottu Kada* (hotel serving rice and curry) at Maramon Manalpuram. The charges were One rupee for 14 full meals and One rupee for 228 full glasses of coffee (*chakkara kappi*).
- Anjilithanam Varkey Upadeshi (T.J. Varkey Ashan) and Angadical Ambalavelil Varughese Upadeshi were the choir leaders. As there were no printed books or microphones, they would sing aloud each line and the congregation would repeat after them line by line. Through several repetitions the songs were taught.
- Before construction of the Kozhencherry Bridge in 1948, there were ferry services (large *Kettuvallams*) provided near Market Kadavu (Kozhencherry Chanda Kadavu) and preference was given to women, children, and Priests.
- In the early days, people from Kuttanadan Parishes would come for the convention in their *Kettuvallams* (large country boats) on the River Pamba along with provisions to stay for a week in Maramon.
- Dr. Stanley Jones was one of the main speakers of the Maramon Convention from 1921 to 1970. He was born on 3rd Jan 1884 in Baltimore, Maryland, USA. He was called to eternal glory on 25th Jan 1973.
- The loudspeaker (mike system) was introduced in the Maramon Convention in 1936. It was brought to Maramon from USA by the Rev. Dr. E. Stanley Jones. It was donated by one of the Christian Churches in USA.
- The dedication service of children was started in 1951. At present, special meetings for children are held at the Maramon *Kutti-Pandal* during the Convention (Monday to Saturday 7.30-8.30 am).

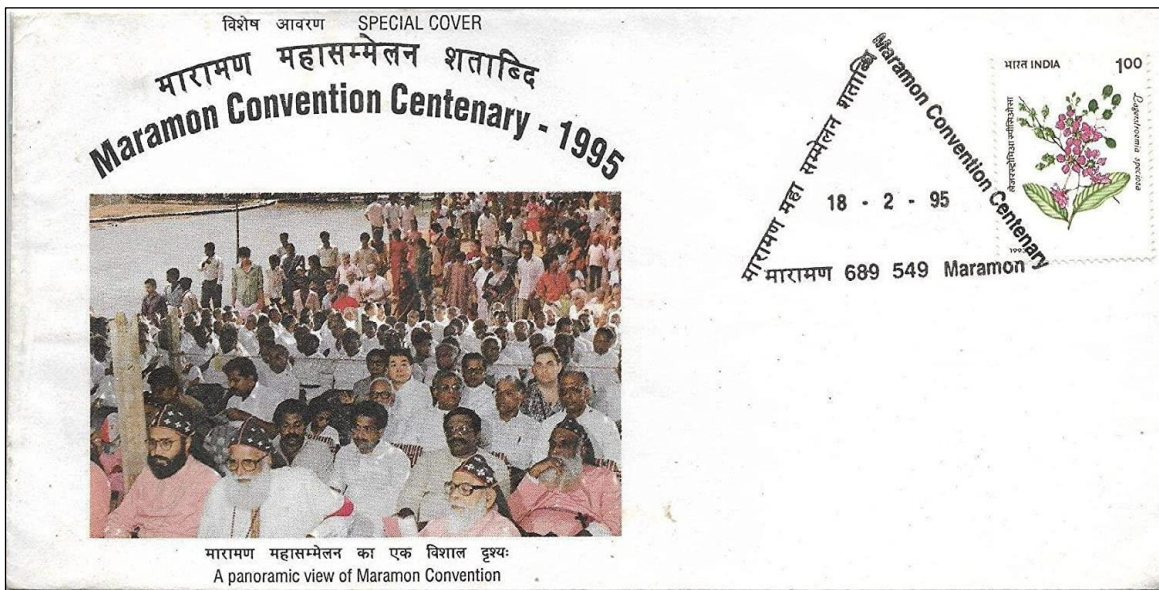


Kettuvallams in a canal in Travancore circa 1905.
 "Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries."

- The musical instrument accordion was first introduced at the Maramon Convention by John T. Seamonds in 1956. He was a gifted singer who could sing in Malayalam and Tamil.
- Normally, the convention speakers are Christian leaders, but in 1936, Mr. C.V. Kunjiraman, a prominent Ezhava (SNDP) leader was given the privilege to speak at the convention.
- Despite the gathering of hundreds of thousands of people at the Convention, the police force never had

to enforce law and order till date. Discipline is maintained by all the participants throughout the convention.

- The Maramon Convention completed 100 years in 1995. To commemorate the Centenary celebrations the Post and Telegraph Department of India issued a special cover at the Convention Nagar on 17th February 1995. ■



1995 – special postal cover by India Post to celebrate Maramon Convention Centenary

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