

DID YOU KNOW THESE FACTS ABOUT THE GREAT MARAMON CONVENTION?

Grace John Nalloor
www.nalloorlibrary.com

- In 2015, the Maramon Convention will be conducted for the 120th time from 8th -15th February.
- The 1st Maramon Convention was held in 1895. It was for 10 days starting from 9th to 18th March.
- The first convention was held on the Manalpuram (river bank) 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 at the end of the final day of the convention. This practice which started in 1895 still continues!
- In the early days, people from Kuttanadan Parishes would come for the convention in their *Kettuvallams* (large country boats) on the River Pampa along with provisions to stay for a week in Maramon.
- 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 died on 26th August 1912.
- The Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam was established on 25th February 1905 at a special meeting held in the Maramon Convention Pandal.
- 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!
- 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 died on 25th Jan 1973.
- 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*).

- 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.
- Anjilithanam Varkey Upadeshi (T.J. Varkey Ashan) and Angadical Ambalavelil Varughese Upadeshi were the choir leaders. As there were no printed books or mikes they would sing aloud each line and the congregation would repeat after them line by line. Through apt repetitions the songs were taught.
- The Loud Speaker (Mike system) was introduced in the Maramon Convention in 1946.
- Before construction of the Kozhencherry Bridge in 1948, there were ferry services (large *Kurruvallams*) provided near Market *Kadavu* (Kozhencherry *Chanda Kadavu*) and preference was given to women, children and Priests.
- Dedication service of children was started in 1951. At present dedication service for children up to age 12 is held on Fridays and for those above age 12 is held on Saturday in the St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church, Kozhencherry.
- The music instrument Piano Accordion was first introduced at the Maramon Convention by John T. Seamonds in 1956. He was a gifted singer who could even sing in Malayalam and Tamil.
- The Maramon Convention completed 100 years in 1995. To commemorate the Centenary celebrations the Post and Telegraph Department issued a special cover at the Convention Nagar on 17 Feb 1995.
- Special meetings for children are held at the Maramon *Kutti Pandal* and St. Thomas Church Kozhencherry during the Convention (Monday to Saturday: 7.30- 8.30 am).
- Despite the gathering of large number of people at the Convention, the Police are not required to maintain law and order. Discipline is maintained by all the participants throughout the convention.



An undated early photo of the Maramon Convention. (www.marthoma.in)