

Mr. Chandhu Menon (1778-1837)

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Mr. **Chandhu Menon** (1778-1837) is the man credited for helping with the translation of the Bible from English to Malayalam. Menon was born in Chunagad (a known Hindu family) in the Ottapalam village of British Malabar. He lost his mother when he was very young and was brought up by his Uncle who taught him Martial arts. After that he moved to Madras and continued his education and became an employee of the Madras Revenue Department. Later, he became a tutor of the Travancore Divan Mannadiyar Raman Menon, after which he became the Tahasildar of Chengannur. Chandhu Menon married Parvathiamma of Pulivelil House in Aala, a village near Chengannur Town.

Chandhu Menon was an expert in Malayalam, English and Sanskrit. While he was working as the Kottayam Tahasildar he became a friend of the Church Mission Society (CMS) missionary, Rev. Benjamin Baily. Rev. Baily was in need of a person like Chandhu Menon to help him translate the Bible from English to Malayalam. Moved by Baily's request, Chandhu took leave from the Travancore Government Service and joined back after two years, completing the translation work in 1819.

The Bible translation transformed his life and he accepted Jesus as his personal Saviour. On 2 November, 1831, he was baptized in the Anglican Church in Calicut and was given the name Joseph Fenn. Later members of his family were also baptized. Chandhu Menon had to resign from his government job as Travancore Rules dictated "non Hindus were not allowed to hold the post of Tahasildar." However he joined the British Government Service and worked as a 'Salt Peshkar in Ponnani', Record Keeper in Calicut; and District Munsif in Cochin. He passed away in 1837, at the age of 57, and was buried in St. Francis Anglican Church, Cochin. The Church in Kerala is indebted to this great man who aided in the translation of the Bible to Malayalam.

(Ref. Malayalam Bible Acts 19:35 "Town Clerk "translated as "Pattana Menavan")

