

# TAMIL CULTURE

*JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF TAMIL CULTURE*

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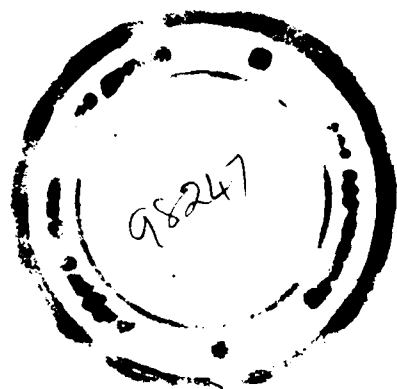
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## TAMIL CULTURE

JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF TAMIL CULTURE

Professor Sethu Pillai Doctorate Commemoration Number

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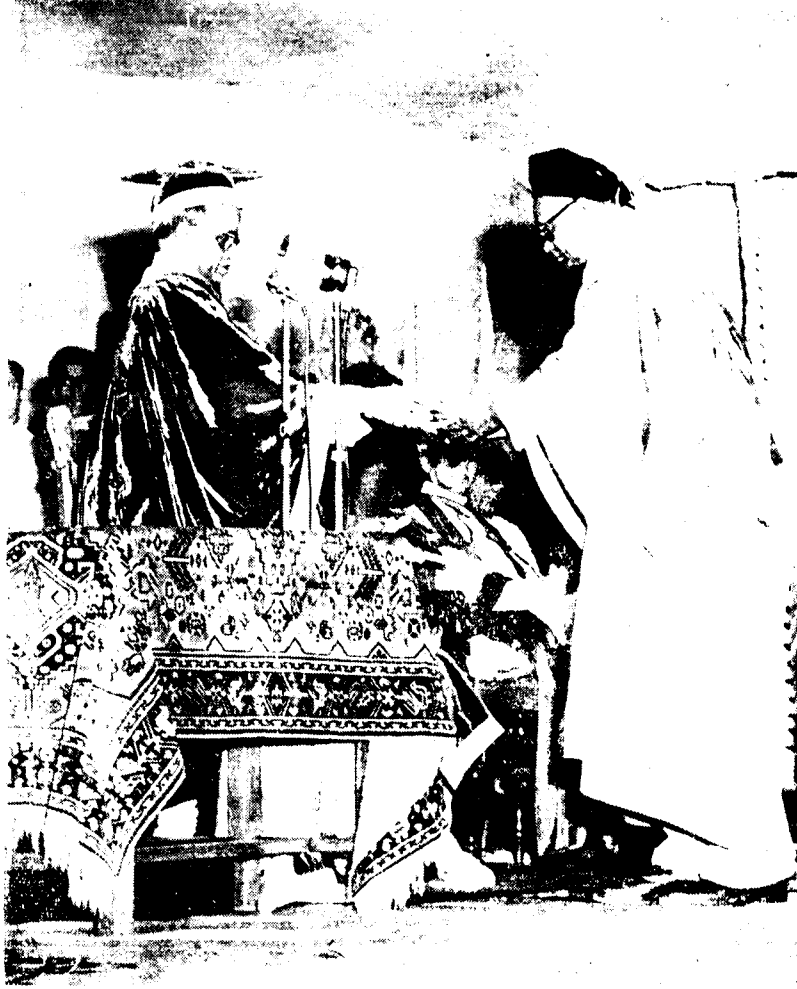
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PROF. R. P. SETHU PILLAI, F.A., B.L.,  
Head of the Tamil Department, Madras University,  
receiving the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature  
awarded to him at the special convocation of the  
University of Madras Centenary Celebrations.

## The sixth year of publication

செந்தமிழ் நாடெனும் போதினிலே இன்பத்  
தேன்வந்து பாயுது காதினிலே.

The sixth year of the publication of *Tamil Culture* synchronises with an historic event of interest to all Tamilophiles. For the first time, the dreams of the poets, sages, and thinkers, who conceived the Tamil triple kingdom as one cultural, linguistic, and political unity, is realised in a manner which those same poets, sages and thinkers of nineteen hundred years ago would never have imagined. Their dreams of “தமிழகம்”, “தமிழ்”, “தொடுத்த தண்டமிழ் வரைப்பகம்”, “பொதுமை சுட்டிய மூவருலகம்” have come to be realised in the establishment of the Tamil State in this mid-twentieth century, with certain losses, it is true, due to the changes that centuries have brought about, but substantially a tribute to the longevity and the vitality of Tamil Culture, ever-ancient and ever new.

May the Tamil State prosper. தமிழ் நாடு வாழ்க!

Recent trends in Ceylon politics, however, have been far from encouraging. The language policies of the parties representing the Sinhalese-speaking group are an affront and an insult to human dignity and to human rights. We hope wiser statesmanship will prevail; cultural and linguistic autonomy with recognition of an official status to Tamil are the conditions indispensable to the existence of Ceylon as a single political unit. We congratulate the Tamil-speaking nation of Ceylon on its stand for Tamil language rights and for fundamental human freedoms.

*Tamil Culture* has reasons to congratulate its readers on its sixth year of publication, and to hope that they will continue to sponsor the movements which it has initiated

or fostered. When *Tamil Culture* went to print five years ago the founder-editor communicated to his first collaborators that, if the quarterly could be maintained for at least five years, he would feel amply rewarded for having undertaken the venture. But now, thanks to the founding of the Academy of Tamil Culture in Madras and similar cultural bodies in Ceylon, Malaya, South Africa, and other countries, *Tamil Culture* may hope to have a longer lease of life and a wider area of service.

During these five years, the members of the Editorial Board have on several occasions received, either in person or through correspondence, the assurance from scholars resident in many countries of the world that this official organ of the Academy of Tamil Culture answers needs long felt in comparative studies of culture and literature. To the foreign scholars who have been associated with *Tamil Culture*, the Editorial Board offers special thanks. To our subscribers at home in the Tamil-speaking countries, and to the Tamil scholars who have contributed articles to *Tamil Culture*, while thanking them we make the request that they introduce the quarterly to their friends. For, though the circulation figure of *Tamil Culture* is about a thousand, that figure needs to be at least five thousand in order to meet without anxiety the financial commitments of maintaining a quarterly review of this standard. The Tamil-speaking public in various countries could help us to increase our circulation. If such promotional work has not been undertaken so far it is because several Tamils have not heard of *Tamil Culture* or have not been made aware of the need for such a review.

We have endeavoured to make *Tamil Culture* a forum for the discussion also of problems of contemporary interest in the field of Tamilians and hence our special appeal to prospective contributors is for studies, surveys, articles and reviews about modern Tamil literature and modern Tamil art and discussions on subjects of topical interest related

to the Tamil speaking nations of which form component groups in different countries like India, Ceylon, Malaya, Fiji, Mauritius and South Africa.

To Professor R. P. Sethu Pillai, the embodiment of Tamil culture, pioneer worker in the Tamil Renaissance, friend, philosopher and guide of the younger generation of Tamil students and scholars and our distinguished colleague, the Academy of Tamil Culture offers its congratulations on the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature conferred on him by the University of Madras, at the Special Convocation held during the University's Centenary celebrations.

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## A seminal period of Indian thought

XAVIER S. THANI NAYAGAM

The sixth century B.C. is a date which may be conveniently used to denote a most seminal and decisive period in the history of Indian thought. The sixth century B.C. together with the century which preceded it and the one which followed it belong to an era which is commonly held to be the Axial Era of the world (800-300 B.C.) because it was during this era that man in India, in Greece and in China, questioned accepted patterns of life and initiated movements of thought which continue to influence mankind to our own day.<sup>1</sup> The educational systems which prevailed in the Tamil country after the bardic and poetic periods had their origin in Northern India. Brahminism, Jainism, Buddhism and Ajivikism were expounded in Northern India and attained in the areas of their origin considerable development in the definition and systematization of their doctrines and institutions before they were ever introduced into the Tamil country. A knowledge of the circumstances of their origin and of the influences which led to their development in Northern India, is indispensable for the understanding of the patterns of education and the didactic methods which they employed in the South.

It is not possible to explain in any satisfactory manner what events contributed to make the sixth century a most seminal period of Indian thought, since we lack the data

<sup>1</sup> Confucius (c. 550-478); Lao-Tsu (c. 600); Thales (640-546 B.C.); Pythagoras (c. 532); Socrates (c. 470-399 B.C.); Plato (427-347 B.C.); Aristotle (384-322 B.C.).

See W. E. SOOTHILL, *Three Religions of China*, p. 77, O.U.P., London, 1952.  
T. W. RHYS-DAVIDS, *Buddhist India*, 6th ed., pp. 131-132, Susil-Gupta, Calcutta, 1955.

necessary for such an explanation. Perhaps it was a movement of peoples within India, perhaps it was the same overseas trade with the maritime peoples of the Mediterranean which is said to have brought the first patterns of the Brahmi script to India, perhaps it was contact with the Achaemenid empire, perhaps political upheavals within India, perhaps it was either one or more of these factors which furnished the sudden stimulus to the advance in religious and ethical speculative thought.<sup>2</sup> Further, the culture impact of the Indo-Aryans by now long settled and mixed with the indigenous population, after a career of war, conquest and consolidation in the Indo-Gangetic plain, may be considered another remote but important explanation for the intellectual ferment which appeared in the sixth century. The efflorescence resulting from the miscegenation and cultural fusion of pre-Aryans and non-Aryans with the invaders has been compared to the fusion in Attica (Athens) of the fair-haired northerner and the dark-haired Pelasgian, and the fusion in Latium (Rome) of the ancient Etruscans with later invaders. The Greek efflorescence did not take place in Sparta which is said to have had the purest blood of the northern people.<sup>3</sup>

It has been assumed all too easily that the changes in the trend of human thought in the sixth century were "simultaneous and independent" in the different countries. As far as India is concerned, it seems difficult to imagine that she could have remained unaffected by the military exploits of the Achaemenids in her north-western provinces. Vardhamana Mahavira (d. 468 B.C.), Gotama Buddha (b.c. 563--d. between 486 and 473 B.C.) and Markhali

<sup>2</sup> T. W. RHYS-DAVIDS, *Buddhist India*, op. cit., p. 61: "These merchants were mostly Dravidians, not Aryans. Such Indian names of the goods imported as were adopted in the West (Solomon's ivory, apes, and peacocks for instance, and the word 'rice', were adaptations, not of Sanskrit or Pali, but of Tamil words."

<sup>3</sup> See L. de la VALLEE-POUSSIN, *Indo-europeens et Indo-iraniens. L'inde jusque vers 300 av. J-C*; 139 ff; Boccard, Paris, 1924.

J. H. HUTTON, *Caste in India*, p. 224 and p. 148 ff; O.U.P., London, 1951. This book is particularly useful for South Indian Cultural Anthropology.

Gosala (fl. 450 B.C.) were young men when Cyrus (558-530 B.C.) was founding his empire. Within the limits of the Achaemenian empire commercial and political interaction between Greeks, Jews, Indians and Persians was frequent, and the new religions of India were yet in their formative stage when the Indian contingents fought in their "cotton garments" in the armies of Xerxes at Thermopylae and when Darius (522-486 B.C.) and Xerxes (486-465 B.C.) built and embellished Persepolis.<sup>4</sup> These synchronistic events are recalled here not to argue a case for a two-way flow of ideas between India at one end and Persia, Assyria and Greece at the other, but merely to point out the probability of a furtherance in the development of thought as a result of culture-contacts and of the social and political changes which are likely to take place in a country consequent upon the awareness of changes in other parts of the world. Ideas travelled faster in the ancient world than we are prone to imagine because of the paucity of historical documents, and the same trade routes which brought Skylax (B.C. 517) to explore the course of the Indus could have brought back Indian merchants with information regarding the various peoples in Babylon and their interests and ideologies.<sup>5</sup>

The sixth century B.C. in India records a questioning of traditional beliefs and of philosophical and religious assumptions. This rationalistic tendency appears not only in the new religions which developed in the century but also within Brahman orthodoxy itself. Many of the philosophic systems which were classified and developed at a later period like the mimamsa, the yoga and the sankhya; the theistic bakthi cults of Siva and Vishnu; popular animistic cults, as well as an influential trend of materialistic and atheistic opinion are found to progress in howso-

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, VII, 65.

<sup>5</sup> LEVI SYLVAIN, *Quid de Graecis veterum Indorum monumenta tradiderunt*, 1890; See L. de la VALLEE-POUSSIN, *Indo-européens*, op. cit., p. 99; S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, passim, 2nd ed., O.U.P., London, 1940.

ever a tenuous and incipient form in the sixth century B.C.<sup>6</sup>

From a mechanistic and world-constraining concept of sacrifice efficacious *opus operans*, maintaining the cosmic order (ṛta), and conferring the wealth and good-living man could hope for, Vedic thought had arrived by this time at a symbolic explanation of ritual and a monistic identification of the individual with the Absolute—*Tat Tvam Asi*. That excessive formalism and ritualistic determination in religion, combined with a mercenary concept of the fees and gifts which accrued for the service rendered at the altar, led to ambivalence and even multivalence in Indian speculative thinking both within and without priestly circles is no surprise.<sup>7</sup> The parody of the priestly procession in the *Chandogya Upanishad* (I, 12) and the comparison of sacrificial rites to unsafe boats relied on by fools in the *Mundaka* (I, 2, 7-10) express the inadequacy of ritualism and would explain the recourse to agnostic and atheistic thinking at one end, as well as to an intense desire for Union with the divine involving a bright and illuminating faith at the other:

From the unreal lead me to the real  
From darkness lead me to light  
From death lead me to immortality.

(*Brahadaranyaka U*, I, 3, 28)<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Indian Philosophy*, op. cit., vol. I; HEINRICH ZIMMER, *Philosophies of India*, pp. 605-613, Kegan Paul, London, 1951; A. M. ESNOUL, *Le courant affectif à l'intérieure du brahminisme ancien*, in BEFEO, vol. VLXIII (1956), pp. 141-207; ALBERT SCHWEITZER, *Indian Thought and Its Development*, pp. 1-67, Adam and Charles Black, London, 1951.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. L. RENOU, *The Religions of India*, University of London, 1953, p. 18: "The Indian mind is constantly seeking hidden correspondences between things which belong to entirely distinct conceptual systems."

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J. N. FARQUHAR, *Religious Thought of India*, p. 57: "There is in the teaching of the Upanishads a basis for pessimism; but their general tone is by no means pessimistic. Emancipation fills many a passage with joyous radiance."

S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *The Principal Upanishads*, pp. 48-145, Allen and Unwin, London, 1953.

Having accepted at some earlier periods, in all likelihood from the animistic thinking of the pre-Aryan and non-Aryan peoples, the doctrines of samsara (transmigration) and karma (causal efficiency of one's deeds in the present life affecting the next), the main preoccupation of the religious and intellectual classes of the entire region, and even of the ordinary people, was how the prospect of an unending tedious chain of existence might be ended. All the various schools which appear in the sixth century offered an answer and a doctrine of Release. The *Anguttara Nikaya* mentions as many as sixty-three different philosophical schools (ganas) of thought which existed at the time of the Buddha, and the Jaina books speak of 363 erroneous views with which the Jains had to contend.<sup>9</sup> The extent and popularity of speculation concerning the problems of the future and the cessation of existence did not originate from one and only source, the Vedas, as is commonly believed.<sup>10</sup> Charles Eliot says:—

"Indian religion is commonly regarded as the offspring of an Aryan religion, brought into India by invaders from the north and modified by contact with Dravidian civilization. The materials at our disposal hardly permit us to take any other point of view, for the literature of the Vedic Aryans is relatively ancient and full and we have no information about the old Dravidians comparable with it. But were our knowledge less one-sided, we might see that it would be more correct to describe Indian religion as Dravidian religion stimulated and modified by the ideas of Aryan invaders. For the greatest deities of Hinduism, Siva, Krishna, Rama, Durga and some of its most essential doctrines such as metempsychosis and divine incarnations are either totally unknown to the Veda or obscurely adumbrated in it. The

<sup>9</sup> CHARLES ELIOT, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, op. cit., vol. I, p. 97; HERMANN JACOBI, *Jaina Sutras*, p. XV, S.B.E., vol. XXII says the spiritual career in India offered a field for the ambition of younger sons.

<sup>10</sup> LASSEN, RHYS-DAVIDS, CHARLES ELIOT, WINTERNITZ postulate a two-fold tradition, one Brahmin and the other non-Brahmin. See M. WINTERNITZ, HIL, vol. I, p. 311 ff. ID., *Problems of Indian Literature*, pp. 21-56; University of Calcutta, Calcutta, 1925.

chief characteristics of mature Indian religion are characteristics of an area, not of a race, and they are not the characteristics of religion in Persia, Greece or other Aryan lands."<sup>11</sup>

Three main streams of educative traditions, which take their rise in a more remote period, progress during the sixth century B.C. One is the informal and technically less specialised process of popular education carried out by the minstrels and bards, the Sutas, Magadhas and Kausilavas, both at court and among the people. It may not have been always a conscious process on the part of the educators; nevertheless, the result was always formative. They kept alive and increased the heroic and epic traditions of the tribe, the clan or the kingdom, and their lays and epics were instrumental in defining and perpetuating the heroic types and the moral, ethical and religious values which were prevalent in the social pattern of their

day. This was the "poetic tradition" of Northern India which was responsible for the *Mahabharatha* and the *Ramayana*, the two great epics which have been the media of popular education, and the source of literary developments, for centuries. The origins of the finalised epics are to be sought in the bardic and poetic traditions of earlier times, which were naturally conserved in a more popular language than the language of religious rites.<sup>12</sup>

The second source of educational thought and institutions was the exclusive hereditary system of the Brahminic priestly class. Its origin may be traced to the dim dawn of Vedic social life when "Brahman" did not denote exclusively a caste and when the power of offering the sacrifice was vested in the *paterfamilias*, and when the distinctions had not originated between the "domestic" sacrifices and "revealed" sacrifices. But functional differentiation in a rapidly changing and developing society had led earlier than the sixth century B.C. to the institution of specialised priestly classes and of special schools in which the language, the liturgy and the ritual could be taught by mnemonic techniques along with phonetics, grammar, lexicography and astronomy. The Vedic sacrifice, exacting as it did the faultless and meticulous recitation of every word and every syllable of the sacred verses charged with mystery and magic, provided for early and mature developments in linguistic and grammatical science. An elaborate ritual and the sacrifices lasting several days called for different types of officiants—the *hotar* (caller) who recites the invitatorium to the gods; the *udgatar* (singer) who sings during the preparation and presentation, especially of the soma libations; the *adhvaryu* (executor) who performs the manual tasks reciting the prose formula and prayers; and the *brahman* or high-priest whose office it was to protect the sacrifice from harm by apposite and timely incantations. The *brahman* or high-

<sup>12</sup> E. W. HOPKINS, *The Great Epic of India*, pp. 363-367; J. N. FARQUHAR, R.T., 44 ff. M. WINTERITZ, HIL, vol. I, 311 ff. ID., *Some Aspects of Indian Literature*, op. cit., loc. cit.

priest needed to be a consummate master of all the Vedas (three at the time of the earliest recorded definition of the function) and the others had to learn at least one Veda each. Hence the need arose for differentiation into separate types of schools for the teaching of the subjects pertinent to every functional sub-class within the priesthood. A later stage of Brahminic scholasticism and speculation demanded the creation of separate types of grammatical, exegetical and theological schools each one characterised by its own traditions.<sup>13</sup>

Thus the principal institutional forms of Brahminic education were well defined by the dawn of the century (600 B.C.) and it was left for the succeeding centuries to augment, classify and codify the content and discipline, having however a hereditary priestly office and priestly functions always as the core and centre of development. The rigid exclusivism of the system was maintained by the social privileges which the priestly class obtained by a legal and political theory formulated by the priests themselves and by the social immobility imposed by caste. The conservative and exclusive character of the system remains unchanged to this day though the Brahmins are found in a great many different walks of life.<sup>14</sup>

The contribution which the Brahmin priesthood, one of the oldest surviving hereditary priesthoods in the world, has made to learning, is considerable. But it has had

tion in the sacrifice.<sup>15</sup> The educational function of a Church should be motivated by these two objectives. The Brahmins provided an educational system which was well suited to producing worthy officiants for the sacrifice, and to safeguarding the economic and social stability of their families, but their system neglected the training and intellectual advancement of the people whom they claimed to represent by divine ordinance.<sup>16</sup>

It might have been a fear complex or religious taboos, or a justification along lines similar to the so-called "disciplina arcani" of primitive religions, which originated an esoterism in Brahminic instruction which originally was non-existent among the Vedic people. But the demands of esoterism increased along with the increase of the social power and prestige of the priesthood. From very slender evidence and from sporadic episodes it is impossible to reconstruct the priestly attitude to the education of Kshatriyas and Vaisyas in the environs of the sixth century B.C. The narratives which refer to Brahmins acting as tutors to royal princes are no indications of any general concern for the education of the "twice-born". But the very age-grouping of Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaisya initiates with implications of earlier maturation of the higher caste or the need for earlier instruction to be imparted to pupils of the higher caste shows the demands of a scale always in favour of the Brahmin child for no ostensible reason other than privilege.<sup>17</sup>

"In the eighth year after conception, one should perform the initiation (upanayana) of a Brahmana, in the eleventh after conception (that) of a Kshatriya, but in the twelfth that of a Vaisya".

<sup>15</sup> Cf. THOMAS ACQUINAS, *Supplementum*, q. 40 a 4 c: "Sacerdos habet duos actus: principalem scilicet, consecrare verum Corpus Christi, et secundarium, scilicet praeeparare populum dei ad susceptionem hujus sacramenti."

<sup>16</sup> J. H. HUTTON, *Caste in India*, op. cit., p. 790.

<sup>17</sup> See plausible but unconvincing justification of sastric age grouping in R. K. MOOKERJI, *Ancient Indian Education*, op. cit., p. 174 ff; F. E. KEAY, *Indian Education in Ancient and later times*, op. cit., pp. 29-30, is more critical.

"The (time for the) Savitri (initiation) of a Brahmana does not pass until the completion of the sixteenth year (after conception), of a Kshatriya until the completion of the twenty-second, and of a Vaisya until the completion of the twenty-fourth".

"Let students, according to the order (of their castes), wear (as upper dresses) the skins of black antelopes, spotted deer, and he-goats, and (lower garments) made of hemp, flax or wool".

"The g

of class prejudice and a fear-complex. Was it the traditional Brahmin attitude which the Dharmasutras of Gautama enunciate ?

“ The ears of a Sudra who listens intentionally when the Veda is being recited are to be filled with molten lead. His tongue is to be cut off if he recites it. His body is to be split in twain if he preserve it in his memory ”.<sup>20</sup>

The Upanisadic discipline of secrecy (*rahasyam*= மறை “secret” is another word for the Upanisads) excluded women from Vedic education. Megasthenes (C. 300 B.C.) should have been amused when he wrote that the Brahmins do not communicate their philosophy to their women because they did not think them fit for philosophy and because they feared the women might divulge the secret knowledge to others should they turn perverse.<sup>21</sup> The examples of Gosha, Lopamudra, Maitreyi and Gargi as philosophers or as disputants are too few to argue any general trend in favour of female education. Though Harita allows an upanayana to women ascetics (Brahmavadinis), Manu is the legislator who codifies a general persistent attitude of the post-Vedic period :

“ For women no (sacramental) rite (is performed) with sacred texts, thus the law is settled ; women (who are) destitute of strength and destitute of the knowledge of the Vedic texts, (are as impure as) falsehood (itself), that is a fixed rule ”.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> GAUTAMA, *Institute of the Sacred Law*, 12-14 (S.B.E., vol. II, Part I, p. 236).

<sup>21</sup> J. W. McCRINDLE, *Megasthenes*.

<sup>22</sup> MANU, *Laws*, II, 66 ; Yagnavalkya, I, 13 ; See position and education of women in H.C., vol. II, p. 558 ff ; S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Religion and Society*, 2nd ed., pp. 139-198, Allen and Unwin, 1948. PADMINI SENGUPTA, *Everyday Life in Ancient India*, pp. 147-162, O.U.P., Bombay, 1955, and pertinent Sanskrit and Pali texts in the books on *Ancient Indian Education* by R. K. MOOKERJI, S. K. DAS, F. E. KEAY and A. S. ALTEKAR. On education of women in antiquity in the Graeco-Roman world ; see THOMAS WOODY, *Life and education in early societies*, op. cit. and CHARLES SELTMAN, *Women in antiquity*, Pan books, London, 1956.

The Brahmin woman had no cause to envy her female contemporaries in Sparta or Athens, for they too were considered hopelessly inferior.

The third and most significant of the century's stream of educational tradition

eastern regions the Kshatriya classes dominated and the Brahmins were subordinate to them, since there appears to have held sway a greater influence of non-Aryan traditions and non-Aryan beliefs. This influence might well explain the popularity of asceticism and the origin of the heterodox sects in the eastern sector.<sup>24</sup> The ethnic composition in these eastern kingdoms involved as it was with differences of worship seems to have laid the foundation for the regional differences in ideologies. Beriedale-Keith says :—

“Much more still beyond the pale were the people of Magadha, which serves with Anga in the Atharvaveda as a symbol of a distant land. The man of Magadha is dedicated, in the account of the symbolic human sacrifice given in the Yajurveda, to ‘loud noise’, suggesting that the Magadha country must have been the seat of minstrelsy, an idea supported by the fact that in later literature a man of Magadha is the designation of a minstrel. If, as has been suggested, the Kikatas of the Rigveda were really located in Magadha, the dislike of the country goes back to the Rigveda itself. The cause must probably have been the imperfect Brahmanisation of the land and the predominance of aboriginal blood, which later in history rendered Magadha the headquarters of Buddhism. It is significant that the Buddhist texts show a subordination of the Brahman to the Kshatriya class which has no parallel in orthodox literature. It is clear however that Brahmans sometimes lived there, but that their doing so was a ground for surprise.”<sup>25</sup>

T. W. Rhys-Davids commenting on the racial and colour composition of the Kshatriyas of these kingdoms in the pre-Buddhist period says :—

<sup>24</sup> EDWARD J. THOMAS, *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History*, p. 13 ff.—Note on the Geography of Early Buddhism; Kegan Paul, London, 1931; B. C. LAW, *The Geography of Early Buddhism*, London, 1932; NALINAKSHA DUTT, *History of Early Buddhist Monasticism*, vol. I, pp. 135 ff, Calcutta, 1941.

<sup>25</sup> C.H., I, p. 123; Cf. MANU, *Laws*, II, 17-20: “From a Brahmana born in that country (Brahmavarthy) let all men on earth learn their several usages.”

“The three upper classes had originally been one; for the nobles and priests were merely those members of the third class, the Vessas, who had raised themselves into a higher social rank. And though more difficult probably than it had been, it was still possible for analogous changes to take place. Poor men could become nobles, and both could become brahmins. We have numerous instances in the books, some of them unconsciously preserved even in the later priestly books which are otherwise under the spell of the caste theory. And though each case is then referred to as if it were exceptional, the fact no less remains that the line between the “Colours” was not yet strictly drawn. The members of the higher Colours were not even all of them white. Some, no doubt, of the Kshatriyas were descended from the chiefs and nobles of the Dravidian and Kolarian tribes who had preserved, by conquest or by treaty, their independence or their social rank. And others of the same

valley; the pre-Aryan nobility of the north-eastern states, therefore, were not all swept off their thrones. Many of the families survived, and when the dynasties of the invading race began to show symptoms of exhaustion, the scions of these earlier native lines were able to assert themselves again.

"Candragupta Maurya, for example, stemmed from a family of this kind. So did the Buddha."<sup>27</sup>

Varying other traditions confirm the existence of a two-fold source of asceticism and scholasticism, one Brahmin and another non-Brahmin. For example, Markhali Gosala is said to be the third of a line of pontiffs. Parcava, the forerunner of Mahavira, is believed to have lived two hundred years earlier than Mahavira himself, and Ravana, the symbol of Dravidian resistance, is credited in Sanskrit literature as possessing super-human powers obtained by ascetic practices. Hence it may not be entirely groundless to suggest that the tradition of 24 tirthankaras preceding Mahavira and 23 buddhas preceding Gautama may point to an ancient unbroken tradition of non-Brahmin scholasticism and asceticism.<sup>28</sup>

(To be continued)

## Religious landmarks in Pudukkottai,\*

### I. HISTORICAL SURVEY

LEOP BAZOU, S.J.

To most people the Pudukkottai region, south of the Cauvery, is but a small barren, an uninteresting and out-of-the-way territory, with no attraction for the casual visitor. But to him who loves the past and has an understanding eye for cultural relics, Pudukkottai soon discloses her rich inheritance. There are, for instance, numerous and extensive megalithic burial sites, although most of them are in secluded spots away in the jungle or the wilderness. There are also many natural caves which were once inhabited by the people who erected the dolmens and later by the Jain monks who were attracted to this region by their very inaccessibility which was ideal for prayer and meditation. But to find out such dwellings requires both patience and exertion.

There are carved Jain caves scooped out of the many rockhills which mark the landscape. One of them enshrines the only ancient fresco painting known in Tamil Nad. At Enadi, a now almost depopulated hamlet between Tiru Kalambur and Ponnamaravati, there is an eleventh century masterpiece, a small shrine all in stone that is an artistic beauty. Who visits now-a-days Kudimiyamalai where former Rajahs were anointed? How many are

<sup>27</sup> HEINRICH ZIMMER, *Philosophies of India*, op. cit.  
<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

\* This study is the result of several tours made by the contributor in Pudukkottai in June, July and August 1953. He wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the learned *Manual of the Pudukkottai State* by K. R. Venkatarama Aiyar (3 vols., 1938, 1940 & 1944) and to W. C. M. Claassen of Dindigul, without whose kind help, deep understanding and pleasant companionship the study would not have been possible.

aware that at the zenith of the Pallava period Kudumiya-malai had attained such a cultural importance as to be considered the right place to place on permanent record a complete treatise on the 'Fundamental Principles of Music' for both the seven — and eight-stringed veena? The inscription, thirteen centuries old, still looks fresh in its archaic characters engraved upon the rock, just below the almost inaccessible cave where Jain monks prayed and sang.

#### THE PRIMITIVE TRIBES

The many unassuming shrines to the Village *Amman* and her faithful companion, the *Aiyanar*, which are found in every village and hamlet, are worth a study by themselves. Decaying or renovated temples may be of interest to the student of the past, but why it may be asked bring into the picture these small and shockingly unartistic pagodas erected to the 'Mother', and the unseemly mounds of broken or crumbling earthenware which seem to be part and parcel of every shrine to the *Aiyanar*? Why indeed, except for the simple reason that they are very much in the picture. While many beautiful structures of Brahmanic Hinduism were allowed to fall into disuse and ruins, rustic shrines to the Village Mother and the *Aiyanar* are still being erected, for these deities are even now worshipped by the bulk of the village population; here lies their interest for the student of religion. They belong to an archaic but living faith, that has withstood the impact of successive faiths, many of them inspired by the Aryanized North Buddhism, Jainism, Adi-Saivism and, last of all, Brahmanical Hinduism. However deep may be the imprint such religious forms left upon the country, however rich in works of art their religious edifices, they could not, as we shall see, obliterate the primeval tribal faith that survives them all.

In a comparatively small area, which is about half of the size of the neighbouring Madurai district, Pudukkottai provides the richest ground in south Tamil Nad, for the

study of primitive Dravidian culture and religion; it possesses more historical remnants than any other comparable area south of the Cauvery.

Even a bird's eye view will show how the cults of the Village Mother and of the *Aiyanar*, both inextricably connected, are unmistakable survivals of the ancestral fertility rites, typical of archaic agriculturist communities, of which the abundant dolmens and neolithic burial sites stand as so many pre-historic memorials. The present-day villagers still honour their ancestors, real or mythical, as Village *Ammans* and *Pattavars*, even as the megalithic and neolithic man did. It is not, therefore, fortuitous that the *Amman* and *Aiyanar* shrines are closely connected with these ancient burial sites, and that even the later religious forms, which could not supplant them in spite of centuries of State patronage, established themselves near these very spots of primeval worship. Religious forms may come and go but the 'sacred spot' survives.<sup>1</sup>

Exploring this area patiently, the student of religion will soon realize that he is treading upon hallowed ground, the very places in which the ancestors of the most primitive groups

## MEGALITHIC AND NEOLITHIC CULTURE

The late P. T. Srinivasa Aiyangar, remarked that 'the miles and miles of... burial sites, generally near water-courses', make of the Pudukkottai country 'the best district for the study of the burial customs of the Neolithic Man'.<sup>2</sup> No less than eighty different burial places have been discovered, and some localities contain several sites. Considering that not a few sites may have disappeared in the course of some two thousand to two thousand and five hundred years and that some of the surviving burial sites cover several acres of land in tank areas, water-spreads and porambokes or grazing-grounds, we can have an idea how deeply engrained in the mind of the pre-historic man was his respect towards the dead. It may not be without significance that the ancient Kurumbar people are still inhabiting villages connected with pre-historic burial sites; these are often situated at the foot of the very hills in which natural caves show traces of ancient inhabitation, such as Sittannāvasal, Narthamalai, Tenimalai, Sevalimalai, Kudumiyamalai, Sembudi, Ammanchattram, Malaiyadipatti, etc.

The burial sites of Pudukkottai offer the usual variety, burials in tombs or graves, chamber-burials and urn-burials, each mound covering a grave surrounded by a circle of stones or barrows. Dolmens found within these stone circles are stone-cells, the *kallarai*, 'stone-chamber' which word has survived in the Tamil language as the name for a tomb. A complete skeleton found in a tomb of the Pulvayal forest showed the body in a seated position, holding a sword in the right hand, while the left hand rested on the thigh. This characteristic posture survives in the sitting position even now given to the dead in their graves. The half seated images of the Karuppan form of the Aiyandar (one finds them everywhere in stone or baked clay) show him holding a curved sword in his right hand while the left rests upon the outer curved part of the

<sup>2</sup> P. T. SRINIVASA AIYENGAR, *The Stone Age in India*, Madras, 1926, pp. 41-61.

*valadi* or *valaittadi*, a South Indian boomerang still used by the Valaiyars, the Kallars and the Maravars in hunting small game. Valadis and other weapons, including iron spears and swords, are also found in tombs with their points downwards.

The iron-spear or spike, the *Vel*, emblem of Murugan and the Aiyandar, was a symbol of authority as well as the weapon of the ancient chieftains in Tamilagam, from which they took the title of *Vel* or *Velir*, Village Elder, Chief of armed troupes, and Priest. Owing to the very fact that it was a weapon made of iron, the *Vel* was bound to become not only the symbol of authority, religious as well as secular, but also of fertility and perenniality. It is not mere chance, therefore, that the stone circles that surround burial mounds are laterite boulders, often brought from some other part of the country. The tradition has survived; smaller shrines to the Mother, the Aiyandar, the 'Seven Virgins' and the Nagas found in Brahmanical temples are built in laterite stones, even where such shrines stand within

natural elements which bespeak durability—water, alive with fish, that periodically brings back life to the fallow fields and provides a new harvest—tanks and rivers upon whose embankment the burial sites are usually to be found—Mother-Earth to whose womb all her children return to sleep, the sleep of nightly repose and of death—all these partook of the sacred as so many manifestations of fertility, of life and survival. Just as life perpetuates itself in nature through the cycle of recurring seasons, so it renovates itself, generation after generation, in the family and in the clan.

The concept of time among primitive people was somewhat different from ours. Their cycles, much shorter than our modern eras, were based upon quite different phenomena: the annual seasonal return of the rains after long dry months, the span of human life from one generation to the next, and that of some of the known and domesticated animals, such as the bull and the elephant, which renewed themselves periodically at shorter or longer intervals. There were also material objects that seemed to be endowed with this element of durability, if not perennality, the ever-growing trees in the forest, Mother-Earth, rocks and stones and then iron. They all lasted beyond the longest known cycle, beyond the seasonal alternation of Spring, harvest and barren land, and much beyond the span of man's life.

There were things that appeared to endure almost for ever while others, after undergoing a process of apparent decay and death, came back to life. These experiences led man to conclude that death was not the end of everything but was just a suspense to be followed by a new lease of life. Fields in the dry plains might periodically lie barren, but there were also in the neighbouring hills perennial forests with giant-trees that seemed to endure for ever; no one had known them when they were saplings. Life went on in spite of all appearances, hence the logical assumption that the dead too had not gone for ever. At

most they had retired to rest for a while, as man does every night; hence the Tamil name of பள்ளி Pal:l:i, 'chamber, sleeping couch, temple as well as for funeral rites'.

This means much more, indeed, than would appear at first sight, for the memory of primitive peoples is the collective memory that survives in the family and the clan. The respect and honour paid to the dead and their tombs kept both living and dead in close relationship, the departed members of the clan remaining part and parcel of it. Before the departed ancestors could be forgotten, they became supra-terrestrial beings—protective guardians of their surviving kith and kin. It was believed that they were reborn in due course in the new clan's offsprings.

This belief perhaps accounts for the Tamilian custom of giving to a child the name of its grandparent பேரன் pe:ran, the Tamil equivalent of grandson, means one who bears the same name. It is this ancestral custom of honouring the dead that must have gradually led the primitive Dravidian clans to give the rank of *ishta devata*, favoured deity, to their ancestors and protective spirits, as personified in the Village Mother, the Aiyandar, the Seven Virgins or Mothers, and the Pattavars or ancestors of either sex. The custom is still prevalent in villages.

Among the ploughed fields one may find the *Samādhi* or tomb of a local headman. Outwardly it looks as insignificant as the hut used by the watchman who guards the crop. Inside its narrow single chamber, no name, no memorial, no inscription is to be found to

This belief in the survival of the dead explains why all the familiar implements that belonged to the departed were placed in his grave, along with eatables, and seeds, such as grains of rice, the staple food that nourishes and the seeds that sprout into new life, the very symbol of a future harvest. Much has been written about the deep-rooted dread, among Hindus of all classes, as regards death and whatever connected with it, cemeteries being held as the supreme place of ill-omen. And yet, *Sivā* and *Kāli* in Hinduism and *Sudalai Madan* in village worship are all three supposed to haunt cemeteries. No one who has witnessed a family gathering around a tomb on the occasion of the annual ceremony for the dead can have any doubt however as to which is the dominant sentiment—dread or confidence. It looks more like an intimate family feast, in which special dainties are distributed and shared among the living in honour of the departed. And yet the orthodox will go on telling us that whatever is connected with the dead spells pollution; but we are dealing here not with orthodox Hinduism but with ancestral Dravidian rites and in this lies the difference.

#### THE JAINS

Next in importance are the lithic records in the Asoka-Brahmi script of the ancient Tamil language,<sup>4</sup> found in the natural caves of The Sittannavasal Hills. If these may be taken as genuine, we can trace back the settlement of Jain monks in the Pudukkottai region to the 3rd or at least the 2nd century B.C. Similar inscriptions found in caves of the Madurai and Tinnevely districts would support their genuineness. More recent inscriptions (7th-9th centuries A.D.) in archaic Tamil, at Sittannavasal, testify to a long occupation of this cave by Jain monks. Natural caves in which the Jains have left such traces of their occupation are not rare in Pudukkottai. We find them at Sembudi in

<sup>4</sup> Dr. K. K. Pillai has pointed out that these inscriptions are in a hybrid language containing Tamil as well as Prakrit words, *vide* Tamil Culture. vol. V, No. 2, April 1956, p. 178—(Ed.)

the Tirumayam taluk, at Kadugumalai or the Hill of the caves in Narthamalai, at Tenimalai north of Ponnamaravati, at Sevalimalai in the same range and at Kudumiyamalai.

To these natural caves the Jains added, in course of time, rock-cut cells or shrines. Some of these caves, which are better-known under the collective name of 'Pallava Caves' and have been attributed to Hindu craftsmen, were actually the work of the Jains themselves. Such is, for instance, that of Melamalai above the village of Narthamalai. In the 13th century when Jainism was showing signs of decline, it was taken over by Hinduism and the present twelve Vaishnava figures were then added. The new masters had very little alterations to make, for Vaishnavism took most of its symbols straightaway from the Jain or the Buddhist concept and forms. One wonders, indeed, how many Pallava Caves now credited to Brahmanical Hinduism had been thus inherited from the Jains. When Hindu temples were enlarged, pillars and other ready-made materials would be taken from former Jain edifices. Thus the Amman and Siva shr

everywhere by Jain remnants, in the form of rock-cut beds, prayer-seats, or drip-lines in natural caves, shrines carved out of rock, statuary and fresco-paintings, which are clearly not secular. The carvings or sculptures of holy men, seated or standing, fully naked ('airclad' as the expression goes), show them in an attitude of prayer, deep concentration, or at least of peaceful repose.

Such Jain works are not rare in the rest of Tamil Nād but Pudukkottai has preserved for us, at Sittannavasal, an important relic of a lost art, the fresco paintings which are unique in the Tamil districts. Their artistic value and their deeply religious implications of genuine Dravidian culture are such as to arrest the attention of any student of the religious history of the country. The only remnants of fresco paintings, which must have once covered most of the walls of this shrine but are now irreparably damaged, are the carpet-like paintings on the ceiling and the four figures on the pillars of the verandah.

At first sight, the carpet-like fresco represents a common though most artistic aquatic scene, a pool of lotus-flowers but it is in fact a highly inspired study in the purest Indian tradition. The lotus flower was and has remained the accepted symbol of fertility and of Saktic Energy. Even in modern Tantrism of the Bengal School, the Lotus represents the 'Mother'. The fact that the pool contains but living beings connected with the same symbolic element goes to emphasize still more the emblematic value of the lotus: water, a traditional element of fertility, teeming with life, fishes that display themselves here and there among the lotuses, aquatic birds that feed in the water, the three young men, the elephants, the bull and the lion. All these belong to the same concept. The birds are mostly seen in pairs, male and female cackling together, as merry as in the Spring and the mating-season. The three youths have a serene countenance and their candid open faces, without yet the dawn of puberty, express in their quiet joy the peace and contentment of the morning of life, when

everything is fresh and pure—and temptations are yet to come—in a world which is characteristically otherworldly and conducive to contemplation. The presence of the elephants and bulls, examples of strength and energy—the strongest and largest types of vital energy familiar to men—and that of a lion, the king of animals (which is moreover a typical Jain symbol) give the scene its full significance. This Franciscan-like candidness and peace of the Jain was not built upon sentimentalism but upon self-detachment which calls for great tenacity of purpose.

The master artist knew how to avail himself of the soft tints his rich palette provided; he also had a keen eye for contours and graceful poise. Finely displayed, the colours of the fresco are fresh and vivid, though the whole piece is now fast deteriorating. Even though they are, as was to be expected of a Jain artist, characteristically discreet in their varied soft hues, they combine to enhance the quiet joy of this Spring-scene,—the peaceful and refreshing waters, the abundant flowers, the graceful ease of the moving animals, and the serenity of the three youths who evince no self-consciousness of their complete nudity.

Paintings which adorned the inner sanctuary have almost completely faded away. There are two dancing girls and a royal couple on both the pillars of the outer verandah. The prince shows the typical features of Mahendravarman I, the magnificent royal patron of the Arts in this classical Pallava age. He and his consort stand here in the attitude of repose, not unlike the 'donor' and his wife in a religious painting of the later Medieval Flemish school. The 'exquisite Apsaras, celestial dancers', also radiate peace and repose with their arms curved in graceful movements and with their commanding poise, full though it be of rhythm and motion. With its

fresco appears to Jouveau-Dubreuil, the French scholar who discovered them in 1920, as 'a scene from the religious history of the Jains'.<sup>6</sup> 'A scene from the Jain heaven', remarks Karl Khandalavala.<sup>7</sup>

The Sittannavasal fresco recalls to mind those of the famous Ajanta. 'The line has all the rhythm, fluency and definitiveness of that of Ajanta', and they 'undoubtedly belong to that age when the art of fresco painting in India was at its zenith',<sup>8</sup> to quote again Khandalavala. But the Sittannavasal artist has happily followed his own creative imagination; thus he has avoided the exaggerated forms of his better known contemporaries, such as the wasplike feminine waistline and the typically sensuous rather than religious attitudes of Ajanta as well as of Sigiriya (Ceylon).

It has been said that the Jains had 'an eye for the picturesque'.<sup>9</sup> The natural caves they first occupied and those they later carved out of the rock are usually to be found in the upper slopes of rockhills, as eagle-nests would be. They command a large landscape; from there the eye rests on nothing that is not peace-inspiring in the vast panorama of nature with its rocks and forests, its combs and dales, its water tanks and fields. As seen from such an altitude and distance, everything looks, in the subdued light and colours, like a dreamland, as it might well appear through the half-closed eyes of a contemplative Jain recluse who lived there and prayed.

(To be continued)

<sup>6</sup> NANALAL CHAMANLAL MEHTA, *Studies in Indian Paintings*, Bombay, 1926, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> KHANDALAVAL, p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> KHANDALAVAL, p. 55.

<sup>9</sup> *Madura Gazetteer*, p. 256.

## The Problem of the Life and Age of Kamban

A. C. PAUL NADAR

Kamban is the greatest poet in Tamil language. His supreme mastery of language and metre, his simplicity of style and profundity of thought, his wonderful portrait of men and women, his powers of dramatisation and his sense of humour, his knowledge of the deep past, and prophetic vision of the future and his grasp of the fundamental problems of life make his *Ramayana* unique in Tamil literature. It is a creative work of art, comparable to the very best epic poem produced in any age or under any clime. Its study from the point of view of the age is calculated to elucidate several problems connected with the historical development of the culture of the Tamils. For it is obvious that it reflects the hopes and fears, the aspirations and ideals of a particular epoch in the history of the Tamils. But the problem of his age and life remains unsettled among historians, literary scholars and research workers. There is such a vast difference in the periods assigned by the various schools of thought among them that the question of the development of age, language and literature, art and science, religion and philosophy, politics and economics, caste and society and a host of questions of similar nature await determination. Some think that Kamban belonged to the 9th century of the Christian era; others take him to the last quarter of the 12th century. There are a few others who

1917). This view was shared by such various schools as 1. Sunnakam Kumarasamy Pillai (vide his *Balakandam* 1918). 2. Illakkana Paramparai Somasundaradesikar (Karanthai Silver Jubilee Essays, 1938). 3. T. K. Chidambaranatha Mudaliar (vide *Kamban Tharum Ramayanam* 1953). 4. V. P. Subramania Mudaliar (*Kamba Ramayana Saram*).

The late Dr. S. Krishnasami Iyengar placed him in the middle of the 12th century. The editors of the Annamalai University Silver Jubilee Publication of six padalams of *Sundara Kandam* (1955) suggest 978 A.D., as the date of composition of *Kamba Ramayana* and emphatically reject the 9th as well as the 12th century. The theory of the 12th century was first suggested by the late Maha Vidwan R. Raghava Iyengar about 50 years ago (vide *Sentamil*—Vol. 3). In recent years it was championed by Professor S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, whose two books—*Tamil Chudar Manigal*—1952, 2nd edition, and *Kamban Kavyam*, 1955 fairly summarise the arguments advanced by the late R. Raghava Iyengar in addition to his own.

The task of fixing the correct date is not an easy one. It is full of difficulties. No direct or contemporary evidence is available. There is a paucity of historical works. We do not know with certainty the time and place of origin of many books of literature. There is a mass of traditional accounts, which have gathered around Kamban and his patron Sadayan down the centuries. They contradict one another; though some of the stanzas connected with traditional accounts profess to be Kamban's own or those of his contemporaries, they are of doubtful historical value. The circumstantial evidence is neither full nor adequate to warrant any definite and certain conclusion. Our forefathers had neither an historic sense nor an excessive anxiety to preserve things as they were in their pristine form. As a result of these defects, we have not the original text of Kamban's poem with us, but only copies made less than 400 years ago. Even these copies are admittedly full

of interpolations, additions and omissions. The earliest copy available is alleged to have been prepared in about 1578 A.D., that is to say, about 400 years after the latest and 700 years after the earliest date assigned to the poet. And no one knows from which source that copy was made. We have now about 30 to 40 manuscripts written on palmyra leaves. The readings vary from one manuscript to another, though the general frame work is substantially kept intact. So we have to take the 16th century text with all its faults and infirmities as a basis for our investigation. As interpolations and additions have been made from time to time to suit the ideas and tastes of later ages, the question of fixing the age becomes extremely complicated. Indeed the whole thing works in a vicious circle. We want a correct text to fix the age, and the text can be corrected and restored to its pristine purity only in the light of the knowledge of the times which necessitated the interpolations, additions and omissions.

In recent years, several attempts have been made to get at the original text. T. K. C.'s monumental work makes an attempt to restore the original from the point of view of poetics and aesthetics alone. This leaves a large gap in the narration of the story of the poem. S. Murugappa in his short-study of *Kambar Kaviyam* (1953) deals with the question

Pillai rejects as an interpolation the story of Viswamitra (83-138 in Mithilai Katchi) on the strength of omission in one manuscript which he considers very old (vide: *Kamban Kaviyam*, pp. 43 & 44). T. K. C. rejects the same on poetical grounds (vide: T. K. C.'s *Ramayanam*, Introductory P. XIV). The purification of the text is a task beyond the capacity and competency of any single individual. It calls for the exercise of different qualities and talents not commonly found in any single individual. Discriminating poetic perception, a sound and intimate knowledge of the literature of the relevant period in all its aspects and patient industry must be brought to bear upon the study of the knotty problem before anything like a satisfactory solution can be found.

We have, therefore, to grope in the dark in our investigation with a debased text, and with the mass of contradictory traditional accounts. Far more than these is our imperfect knowledge of the historic background. In spite of the vast historical materials now available after a patient research for nearly a century, no historian of genius has arisen to use these materials with the insight of a seer, the vision of an artist and the accuracy of a scientist. Till now specialisation has gone so far that research scholars, who know epigraphy well, are deficient in their knowledge of literature and *vice versa*. We have before us the curious phenomenon of a learned historian of the Cholas who was so sure some years ago that Kamban was patronised by Vikrama Chola (1118-1135) and was even lavishly rewarded by him with the title Kavichakravarthi (Emperor of Poets) and a fief called Kumba nadu, holding now the view that he belonged to the age of Kulottungan III (1178-1216). One is left wondering whether he has any adequate reason for the change over and whether the period of more than half a century in the history of Cholas does not make any difference whatsoever in what he calls "the colour of the time." (vide page 672 in *The Cholas* by K. A. N. Sastry 2nd edition, 1953). The learned professor admittedly

follows the conclusion of the late Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai.

The late Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai has expounded his theory of the 12th century in his two books (*Tamil Chudar Manigal* 2nd edition, 1952 and *Kamban Kavyam*, 1955). He asserts that the world of scholars accepted the last quarter of the 12th century as settled—vide page 145, *Kamban Kavyam*. The reasons assigned by him for his conclusion are:—

- (a) Tyaga Vinodam is referred to in the stanza No. 58 of Maruthumalai padalam and is the exclusive title of Kulothunga Chola III. Hence Kamban must have lived in his reign. (*Kamban Kavyam*—page 149).
- (b) The stray stanza (Thanian) beginning with "ஆவின் கொடை சகரர்" supports the view that Kamban finished his poem in Saka year 1100 corresponding to 1178 A.D. (*Kamban Kavyam*—page 150).
- (c) The stray stanza (Thanian) beginning with "எண்ணிய சகாப்தம் எண்ணாற்று ஏழில்" shows that arangetram (publication) of *Kamban Ramayanam* was in Saka year 1107 corresponding to 1185 A.D. (*Tamil Chudar Manigal*—page 131).
- (d) Another stray stanza attributed to Kamban according to *Tamil navalar Sarithai* is said to be addressed to the king Prat

of Ottakoothan. So Kamban was the junior contemporary of Ottakoothan who sang ulas about the three Cholas who ruled for fifty-four years (1178 to 1171) (vide pages 124-125 *Tamil Chudar Manigal*).

- (f) According to tradition Ottakoothan, the Kavi-chakravarthi of the Chola Court, jealously guarded his position and influence and kept down young aspirants including Kamban (vide page 151 *Kamban Kavyam*).
- (g) Kamban did not find favour with the Chola King (Kulothunga III) for he was a Vaishnavite and Saivism was the state religion. And those were not the days of toleration (page 151, *Kamban Kavyam*).
- (h) Kamban was neglected by the literary circles, as he did not follow the poetic tradition of his days. The poets of his age looked down upon this as heresy and taunted him with his low birth (page 151, *Kamban Kavyam*).
- (i) In spite of the opposition of the royal court and literary circles, his genius was recognised by the common people who immediately awarded the title of Kavichakravarthi. His fame was an established fact as soon as his great Kavyam was published (page 152, *Kamban Kavyam*).
- (j) Kamban lived at the time when Tamilnad attained the zenith of its prosperity (pages 131 & 132 *Chudarmanigal*).

We will now examine his reasons in the order set forth above :

(a) The sheet anchor of his thesis is the reference to Thyaga Vinodhan in Maruthumalai Padalam in stanza No. 58. He says that a certain town named " thiraimoor "

during Vikrama Chola's reign was some decades later renamed *Tygavinodha Arrur* and that this change took place during the reign of Kulothunga III. Therefore he thinks that this shows clearly that Thyaga Vinodhan was none other than the Kulothunga III himself and that following the king some of his officers added this title to their names. He quotes for instance " Thyga Vinodha Muvendavelan " (MER No. 28 of 1927) and " Thyga Vinodha Bhattan " (MER No. 169 of 1927) vide *Kamban Kavyam*, page 149.

(1) The identification of Thyaga Vinodhan with Kulothunga III is based on an inference from the changes of names as Thyaga Vinodhan Arrur, referred to in two mutilated inscriptions reported in *Senthamil*, Vol. I half a century ago, but not yet copied by the Government Epigraphists. As a matter of fact historians took no notice of that until Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai explained it in recent years. There is however no evidence that Kulothunga III even used this title of Thyga Vinodhan in any one of his innumerable inscriptions. He used as many as nine titles and this is not one of them (vide Pandarathar's *History of Later Cholas*, Part II, page 168, and Krishna Sastri's comment in G.O. No. 665 dated 28—7—1910).

ruler Vikrama (1004-1041 A.D.). As a matter of fact it is the year 1007, that is to say, about 200 years before Kulothunga III. There are two officers of Vikrama Chola bearing the name of Thyaga Vinodhan Thalaikoli (பதியிலார் தியாக விநோதத்தலைக்கோலி) and Thirumandiravolai Thyaga Vinodha Bramma Rayan (திருமந்திர வோலை தியாக விநோத பிரம்மராயன்) [For other references to Thyaga Vinodhan vide MER No. 260 of 1920 for the time of Kongu Chola ruler Kulothunga III (1145-1183) and S.I.I. Vol. VIII No. 487 in 15th century during Vijayanagar times.]

(3) The reference to the Thyaga Vinodha Muvenda-velan in MER 28 of 1927 related to a chieftain who belonged to the region of Thiruvarur where Siva was and is worshipped as Thyagaraja Perumal. It is legitimate to infer that the name is one in imitation of the deity just as திருச்சிறும்பல மூவேந்த வேளான் and தில்லையம்பல மூவேந்த வேளான் used in those days. It is hardly necessary to add that the name Thyaga Vinodha Muvenda Velan cannot be called in aid to prove the king's title.

(4) The stanza No. 58 of *Maruthumalai Padalam* describes the ruler of the land of sacred Cauvery as Veeran Thyaga Vinodhan (வீரன் தியாக விநோதன்). The literary and epigraphic evidence of those times shows that the successive rulers of the land of Cauvery were all fond of the titles veeran and thyagi. The *Nandi Kalambakam* refers to its hero the Pallava King Nandhi Varman III as 'தியாகி என்னும் நந்தி' 'வீர நந்தி' 'காவிலிகுழ் திருநாடுடைய நந்தி'. *Vikrama Chola Ula* refers to Vikrama Chola (1135-1150 A.D.) as தியாக சமுத்திரம். Various inscriptions describe the first Rajadhiraja Chola (1042-1054 A.D.) as தியாகமே அணியாகக் கொண்டவன்; Veera Rajendran (1063-1070 A.D.) as வீரத்தனிக்கொடி தியாகக்கொடியோடு ஆண்டவன்; Adi Rajendra Cholan (1070 A.D.) as தியாகக்கொடியுடை யோன் and Kulothunga I (1078-1118) வீரமும் தியாகமும் விளங்க பார் மிசை ஆண்டவன் (vide Annamalai University Silver Jubilee Publication—*Sundara Kandam—Part I—Introduction* pages XI to XII). Hence

there is no point in asserting that because Kulothunga uses 'வீரக்கொடியுடன் தியாகக் கொடி எடுத்து' in his inscriptions Thyaga Vinodhan is the exclusive title of the ruler.

For the foregoing reasons the identification of Thyaga Vinodhan in stanza 58 of *Maruthumalai Padalam* with Kulothunga III is not tenable.

(b) The stray stanza referred to for the second argument reads as follows:—

position of *Kamban Ramayanam*. But it is difficult to see how these learned men get over the expression ஆயிரத்து நூறெழுத்து which would mean only a thousand years deducting a hundred years answering to 900 of Saka Era, corresponding to 978 A.D. This is exactly the interpretation put upon it by the learned editors of the 'Annamalai Silver Jubilee Publication—*Sundara Kanda*—1955.'

(4) It may be noted that in their stanza the name of Kamban is not at all mentioned but is simply described as the son of the great Gunadithan of Muvalur (முவலூர்ச் சீரார் குணதித்தன்). According to tradition there are as many as six different stories all pointing to the bastardy of the poet. It is difficult to see how these stories could have been invented if he was known to be the son of a great man.

(5) Further there is another 'Thanian' which makes the poet as the native of 'Therazhandur' describing him as "சீரணி சோழநாட்டுத் திருவமுந்தாருவச்சன், காரணி கோடையான் கம்பன்மமிழினுற் கவிதை செய்தான். The proximity of Muvalur to Therazhandur does not solve the problem.

(6) There is the statement that the composition of Ramayana must have taken place in 1178 A.D. and that the alleged change of name of "Thiraimoor" as Thyaga Vinodha Arrur derives support from an inscription of the sixth year of Kulothunga. It is difficult to see how a poem finished in 1178 A.D. would refer to a title assumed by the ruler six years later, even if the assumption be true.

(c) Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai cites the 'Thanian' reading as follows :—

எண்ணிய சகாப்தம் எண்ணாற்றேழின் மேல் சடையன் வாழ்வு  
நண்ணிய வெண்ணெய் நல்லூர் தன்னிலே கம்பநாடன்  
பண்ணிய இராமகாதை பங்குனி அத்தநாளில்  
கண்ணிய அரங்கர் முன்னே கவியரங்கேற்றினுனே.

and interprets the Saka year as 107 reading "எண் நூற்று ஏழு" what others read as "எண்ணாற்றேழு" or eight hundred and seven Saka year. He accepts the ingenious explanation of R. Raghava Iyengar that in practice 1107 is mentioned as 107 leaving out the thousand. But the question is when such practice as that came into existence.

Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai is not consistent with reference to this stanza. On page 149 of his *Kamban Kavyam* he treats it as a fabrication of the 16th century. We will deal with many problems arising out of this stanza at a later stage.

(d) Reliance is placed on the evidence afforded by a

(page 76 of *Tamil Navalar Charithai* published by Saiva Siddhantha Nool Padippu Kazhagam) shows that the Chola ruler mentioned above must have been a petty ruler. If it is so it must represent an earlier period than the 10th century when the Cholas built up an empire.

(2) The learned Professor seems to realise the absurdity of a Tamil poem being appreciated by a Telugu ruler in a far-off country and seeks to support his position by an allegation that Kamban himself shows a familiarity with the Telugu language by the use of such words as “மசரதம், நம்மி, இச்ச, அக்கட and “அந்து” in his *Ramayanam*. But several commentators consider most of these words as “திசைச் சொல்.” It is clear one need not go to Telugu land to learn these words. When the Pallavas ruled over the land between the Krishna and Cauvery, there must have been an intermingling of Telugu and Tamil populations as we see today.

(3) The legend connected with this stanza is of a tell-tale character. It may be remembered that from the 16th century Telugu rule was established at Madurai, Tanjore and Gingee. It looks as though a Tamil poet invented the story as a sort of compensation for their degradation. The legend says that Kamban quarrelled with the Chola ruler and went in exile to Warangal and afterwards returned triumphantly to the Chola Court with the ruler of Warangal acting as his betel box carrier !

(4) Professor K. A. N. Sastry has dealt with this aspect of the matter and states as follows :—

“The story goes that Kamban commanded the rule of all the sovereigns of his time, including the Pandya and the Kakatyia Rudra and that the Chola Ruler jealous of his fame and anxious to get rid of his over-mighty subject plotted his murder and executed it in person. There is no means yet of deciding if this *puerile* account of the poet's end has any foundation—Italics is mine. (Colas. 1955 edition, page 672).

(e) Next is an attempt made to fix the age of Sadayan, the acknowledged patron of Kamban. Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai strikes a note of caution that legends have gathered round the name of Sadayan as much as in the case of Kamban. These legends are embodied in *Tamil Navalar Charithai* and *Cholamandala Sathakam*. It is also natural that the proverbial poverty of the poets and panegyrics exaggerate the importance and the greatness of the man who patronized them. It is possible that in subsequent times when patrons were scarce the poets would look back with glamour for the past patrons. Hence apart from *Chola Mandala Chathakam* and *Tamil Navalar Charithai* there are other stanzas handed down the centuries. Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai rejects some of them and utilises a few in support of his theory of the end of 12th century as the age of Kamban. We propose to examine the value of such materials as he relies on.

(1) *Kamba Ramayanam* gives the names of Kamban's patron as Sadayan and Sararaman. Another name Kannan is also found in some manuscripts. His place said to be Thiruvannainallur is identified now with a small hamlet on the banks of Cauvery as Kadirkamam, not far from Mayavaram.

Muvalur. From that he asserts that the authenticity of the stanza cannot be questioned. Unfortunately the Muvalur inscription is not dated. Apparently he thinks that the stone record is more reliable than the cadjan record.

(2) As a matter of fact, the very same stanza occurs in *Tamil Navalar Charithai* also. The learned editor of *Tamil Navalar Charithai* points out that the Muvalur inscription was copied out in AR No. 29 of 1925 and Pudukkottai becomes Pudukkottai in an inscription of Thirukodikkaval copied out in AR No. 58 of 1930-31. Professor K. A. N. Sastry in his *Cholas* talks of Sadayan alias Sararaman whom he identifies with "Trigarta", mentioned in *Vikrama Chola Ula* and in the undated inscriptions from Muvalur and Thirukodikkaval in which he is also described as the "Cedirya" of the Ganga race. Professor Sastry identifies "Cedi" country with the hilly country round about Thirukkottai and Killiyur in South Arcot District. Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai relies on *Chola Mandala Sathakam* for describing Sadayan as "Vennai Trigartan". Now "Trigartan" means one who has fed the entire entourage of all the three crowned heads of Tamil Nad. viz., Chera, Chola and Pandya Rulers. One wonders when all these three rulers were the guests at Thiruvannamalai !

(3) *Vikrama Chola Ula* does not refer to the place of "Trigarta" of his times but only describes him as a conqueror of Kongu and Coorg. (vide *Vikrama Chola Ula* stanza No. 88). Now stanza No. 84 of the same *Ula* refers to the chieftain of Chedi as a conqueror of the land of Kannadas. It is clear that they are different personages altogether. Further from the days of *Purananooru* down to the days of the later Cholas, Chedirayas were Malayans (மலையமான்) (vide *Purananooru* No. 125 and Pandarathar's *History of Later Cholas*, pages 65, 106 and 174). The trigarta referred to in *Vikrama Cholan Ula* is not identifiable with any of the known heroes of the times of Vikrama Chola (vide Pandarathar's *History of Later Cholas*, II, page 88).

(4) Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai relies on another stray stanza quoted on page 156 of *Tamil Chudar Manigal* for the position that Sadayan's father was Sankaran of Pudukkottai in whose domestic service Ottakkoothan was alleged to have been employed in early life. That stanza refers to

“புதுவையம் பதிதங்கு புண்ணிய சேகரன் சங்கரன் தருசடையன்”.

The learned professor does not say from which source he got this stanza though he boldly asserts that it is a contemporary poem in praise of Sadayan. He relies also on *Chola Mandala Sathak*

Kamban was a contemporary of Ottakkoothan (vide page 12 of the introduction to *Moovar Ula* and page 11 of Kavi Rakshasan). Pandarathar says that Ottakkoothan died in the time of Rajadhi Raja II (1150-1163)—(vide page 118, Part II of Pandarathar's *History of the Later Cholas*).

(6) It is somewhat inexplicable why Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai does not at all refer to the inscriptions at Ukkal where it is recorded that Sadayan helped the Mahasabha there with a loan of one thousand kadis of paddy at one time and four hundred kadis of paddy at another time directing them to feed two brahmins a day and to repair an irrigation tank with interest thereof. They belonged to 10th and 15th years of the reign of Kambavarman who flourished at the end of the 9th century. The omission seems to be that he was only searching for support in favour of his 12th century theory.

(7) If tradition be given any credit at all, it may be there were a number of Sadayans from the 9th century onwards. But the question is, who patronised Kamban?

(f) The question whether Ottakkoothan jealously guarded his position and influence at the Chola Court and kept down young poets including Kamban does not arise. There is absolutely no shred of evidence that they were either contemporaries or were together at any king's court. The chief poet of Kulothunga III's court was Veerantha Pallavarayar (vide page 164, Part II Pandarathar's *History of Later Cholas*).

(g) The statement that Kamban the Vaishnavite did not find favour with Kulothunga III, whose state religion was Saivism, and that those were not days of toleration, is not tenable. There is no evidence whatsoever that Kulothunga III was intolerant or anti-Vaishnavite. On the other hand, there is ample evidence afforded by inscriptions that though he was an ardent Saivite himself, endowed

liberally Vaishnava temples and Jain institutions. He built a Vishnu temple at Velur in South Arcot District and lent his own name to it as குலோத்துங்கசோழ விண்ணகரம் and endowed for it the entire village of "Kulothunga Chola Nallur" (vide pages 162 & 163, Part II, Pandarathar's *History of Later Cholas*). It is difficult to see whence Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai got his information about the intolerance of Kulothunga III.

(h) That Kamban was neglected by literary circles as he did not follow the poetic tradition of his days is not supported by any evidence given by Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai and it seems to be a mere speculation. No doubt *Tamil Navalar Charithai* has a stanza attributed to 'Vanian Thathan' attacking Kamban, and reading as follows:—

கைம்மணிச் சீரன்றி சீரறியா கம்பநாடன் சொன்ன  
ம

what he calls a contemporary poem which reads as follows :—

கம்பநாடுடைய வள்ளல கவிச்சக்கரவர்த்தி பார்மேல்  
நம்பு பாமாகையாலே நரருக்கின்றமுத மீந்தான்.

(vide pages 126 & 127 of his *Kamban Kavyam*). Unfortunately he contradicts the same on page 149 of the same book that the expressions “Kamba Nadan” and “Kavi-chakravarthi” are inventions of the 16th century. Further, what he reads as இன்றமுதம் in the above stanza is given as இன்னமுதம் in other editions (vide Sunnakam Kumaraswamy Pillai’s *Balakandam*).

(j) Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai does not adduce any evidence for the statement that Kamban lived at the most prosperous period of Tamil History. He seems to point out that the achievement of empire under the later Cholas in the 10th century was itself the best evidence (vide *Tamil Chudar Manigal*, pages 121 & 122). It is difficult to see how the achievement of imperial power in the 10th century will help to fix the age of Kamban. On the contrary he says (page 153 of *Kamban Kavyam*) that at the beginning of the 12th century the Chola power was at its height and that it looked as though Kamban appeared just then to give artistic expression to the sovereign power. But according to his own conclusion, Kamban did not live at the beginning of it but at the end of it. Historians such as Messrs. Sathiyathier, K. A. N. Sastry and Pandarathar are all agreed that the height of the imperial power was reached during the 11th century but had declined from the beginning of the 12th century. Mr. Sathiyathier says, “Early in the reign of Kulothunga I (1070-1118), Ceylon became independent (1075) and towards the close of it, Ganga Desa (1117) Mysore and Vengi (1118). The Tamil country, as far as Rameswaram was raided by Vishnu Vardhana Hoysala (1104-1141). Troubles in the Pandya country engrossed the attention of the Cholas from 1169 to 1177 and from 1182 to 1189. The Telugu Cholas seized

Kanchi which was however recovered by Kulothunga III about 1196. The growth of feudatory puissance during the 12th century weakened the central authority (causing so much internal troubles by the rebellion of local chieftains and the invasion by the Ceylonese in the days of their King Parakrama Bahu the Great, (1153-1186).” [Vide *Studies in the Ancient History of Tondamandalam*, Madras University, Sankara Parvathi lectures 1943-44, pages 41 & 42. (vide Pandarathar’s *History of Later Cholas*, Part II, pages 128 to 136 and 147 to 158.)]

As a matter of fact all through the reign of Kulothunga III during which Kamban is

# Tentative periodization of the development of Tamil

KAMIL ZVELEBIL.

## OLD TAMIL

(?—cca 6th, 7th century A.D.)

We must not be afraid to put the question mark at the very beginning; the beginnings of Tamil as a separate independent language of the Dravidian family are not yet elucidated and the exact limits are most difficult to ascertain. It seems to be clear that we may presume a hypothetical stage which might be called \*Proto-Tamil (several centuries B.C.?) and which, in its turn, has developed out of a hypothetical unity of Tamil and Kannada (and possibly some other territorial dialects) which might be termed \*Proto-South Dravidian. Malayalam at this stage, if differentiated at all, was probably only a territorial dialect of Western Tamil country, of the Cera land.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Early Old Tamil

?—cca 3rd, 4th century A.D.)

The language of most of the Et:t:utthokai and Patthuppa:t:t:u texts, especially of the early poems of

<sup>1</sup> The exact limits of the beginnings of Malayalam are still difficult to ascertain. According to L. V. Ramaswami Aiyar and A. C. Sekhar, the 9th and 10th Centuries mark the end of this epoch. Thus we can assume that characteristically Malayalam forms existed in the speech of the West Coast for at least one or two centuries before they became acceptable in writing.

It is difficult yet to say if the language of the short inscriptions found in natural caverns in the Mathurai and Tirunhelve: li districts was Tamil at all. It may be the most ancient Tamil so far known to epigraphy; it may, on the other hand, be a hybridized form of Prakrit or Pali, strongly Tamilized. At any rate, it contains very many Prakrit words and forms. The inscriptions are unfortunately too short and brief and they have been too inadequately treated to offer a solid base for any far-reaching conclusions.

Putam, Akam, Nhattin:ai and Kutunthokai collections.

## Characteristics:

1. *Morphology*: (a) Nominal: Total or nearly total absence of some later typical suffixes of casual relations (e.g. acc. suff. -ai, abl. suff. -ilirunthu, -inintu, inst. suff. -a:l, soc. suff. -o:t:u) and pluralizations (suff. -kal:). Typical ancient pronominal forms like *ya:m*, *ya:n*, dem. pron. *uthu* (side by side with *ithu*, *athu*) etc. (b) Verbal: total absence of present-tense morpheme. The verb has two tenses (aorist-future and preterite) which seem to be rather aspects (momentaneous-durative, perfective-imperfective) than tenses. Some characteristic ancient verbal

3. *Lexicon*: Very few borrowed Indo-Aryan elements are found; they are rather Prakritic than Sanskrit. The borrowing gradually increases.

### 2. Middle Old Tamil

(cca 3rd, 4th—5th, 6th century A.D.)

The language of the later poems of Et:t:utthokai and Patthuppa:t:t:u (e.g. Kalitthokai, Paripa:t:al) and of the earlier poems of Pathinen:ki:l-kkan:akku (Kutal:, Kala-val-i etc.).

To the characteristics already described must be added especially: causative verb-bases in -uv- and -vi, -kk-, -pikk-, -ppikk-; preference for the 2nd pl. suff. -i:r; occurrence of final participles in -va:n, -pa:n, -pa:kku; honorific pl. -va:rum etc. Increasing use of Indo-Aryan loan-words of mixed Prakritic and Sanskrit origin.

### 3. Late Old Tamil

(cca 4th, 5th—6th, 7th century A.D.)

The language of the later and latest poems of Pathinen:ki:l-kkan:akku (Na:lat:iyar:r, Inna:nha:tpathu, Palamol-i, etc.) and of the Cilappathika:ram.

To the characteristic features of Old Tamil must be added especially some important trends and forms which appear for the first time: use of special morpheme of the present tense (-kint-, -kkint-); use of a special morpheme of objective case (-ai) with rationals and sometimes even with non-rationals; use of the pl. suffix -kal:; new developments in verbal endings (e.g. -o:m). Also, the typical clusters of roots become dissolved, word-order becomes more significant and bound. The number of Indo-Aryan loan-words still increases.

### MIDDLE TAMIL

(cca 6th, 7th cent. A.D.—17th, 18th cent.)

It is the language of the Shaiva na:yana:rs and Vaishnava a:l-va:rs which shows distinctly new features and

new developments when compared with the language of the so-called Sangam poetry. Perhaps we are not far from truth when suspecting this new type of language to be, contrary to the artificial, literary language of the Sangam texts, the idiom spoken by the masses, by the people.<sup>3</sup>

All those features of grammar which have been described as sporadic and new in the Old Tamil period,

2. *Middle Middle Tamil*

(850 A.D.—1200 A.D.)

E.g. Ci:vakacintha:man:i, Kampara:ma:yan:am, Periya Pura:n:am, early man:iprava:la style, early commentaries.

3. *Late Middle Tamil*\*

(1200—cca. 1750—1800)

This stage begins with the language of Civajnja:napo:tham, typical is the language of the famous commentators and rahasyas, as well as of the Pa:ratham of Villipputthu:rar. Extreme development of Late Middle Tamil may be seen in the rich man:iprava:la style showing immense number of Sanskrit loans and only partly retaining the Tamil morphologic and syntactic structures.

For the Middle Middle and Late Middle stages are typical some morphologic developments like e.g. nat:ava:-nhinte:n, pres. tense for nat:akkinte:n, imperative in -e:l, frequent use of the passive formed with paz:u- and un:-.

## NEW TAMIL

(cca 1750-1800 to the present day)

The New Tamil period may be said to begin with the origins of Tamil prose,<sup>4</sup> i.e., with the works of F. Beschi, Civajnja:na Cuva:mikal: (1785) T.Ra:ya Mut:aliya:r (1850).

The origins and development of modern Tamil prose has caused the use of commonplace sayings, idioms of the colloquial form of the language, territorial dialectic forms in literature which, in its turn (today together with radio and film), has influenced immensely the development of the language. Also, a still increasing averseness to introducing too many Sanskrit words may be observed, on the

<sup>4</sup> By modern prose I mean the artistic prose, the prose of fiction, not the scientific prose of the commentaries which was, naturally, in existence already for several centuries.

## The Song of Madurai

மதுரைக்காஞ்சி

V. KANDASWAMI MUDALIAR

(Continued from previous issue)

Charioteers deeply versed in trainer's art  
Urged their horses to mad-wind speed, when chariots  
With the added grace of white maned horses 495  
Harnessed to them sped fast, raising a cloud  
Of sanguine dust which screened the blazing sun;  
And horses speeding to the bewitching toss of manes  
Promoted and well dressed left behind  
A trail of deep hoof-marks; and this was like 500  
A flight of red-legged

other hand, words of other languages (Urdu, Portuguese, French and, above all, English) have been freely adopted.

It is necessary to stress that this tentative scheme of the periods of Tamil language development is only tentative and that it is strictly schematical. It does not, e.g. take into account some special features of development as shown in the Tamil of Ceylon. It is based only on literary remnants. I should like to point out a few desiderata in this connection.

The following tasks must be fulfilled to enable the scholars to determine an exact and detailed periodization of the evolution of Tamil :

1. Every (or at least every typical, characteristic and important) literary work and every linguistic text (i.e. every linguistic datum, be it an epigraph engraved in stone, an inscription on pottery or a literary work preserved in palm-leaf manuscripts or orally) must be analysed and described from the philological point of view and, if its absolute dating is impossible, the relative date of its origin must be at least tentatively stated.

2. Special territorial developments must be taken into account. This means the foundation of Tamil dialectology and linguistic geography.

3. This is connected closely with the next demand, viz. to pay attention to the colloquial form of speech ; this means extensive field-work : to try to capture the Tamil speech in all its forms and manifestations (by the means of modern apparatus like magnetophone and experimental phonetic apparatus).

4. Attention must be paid also to the Tamil folklore which very often preserves obsolete and very important forms.

The task is enormous, and it must be mostly (especially the last three points) carried out by the Tamils themselves.

Inebriate and of elephant port  
Shambled about the crowd-surging street.  
When hush fell, as at the end of battle 520  
Of four-fold<sup>4</sup> armies contending, people caught  
In the shouldering crowd heaved a sigh of relief.  
When eve fell, when the crowd thinned and when  
Silence reigned, the streets echoed with foot-falls  
Soft, with muffled clops, with silvern voices 525  
Of courtesans of seductive peacock grace,  
Of blond complexion fair as rays of eve,  
Reflected from golden statues of shoulders round  
And sleek like hollow bamboo,<sup>5</sup> encircled 530  
With bright anklets, of looks as mortal  
As arrow-darts, of ensnaring pearl-rows  
Of teeth, of languid ink-black tresses,  
Of voluptuous breasts mantled with pink-fair  
Chloiasma<sup>6</sup> and painted<sup>7</sup> with creeper design, 535  
Who, eagerly bent on their way for embraces  
Lascivious of lustful youths, promenaded.  
Against the loud ensnaring allurements  
Of these, moved in modest matronly grace,  
Old dames of silver-white hair made up 540  
Into the shape of right-whorled conch of the deeps  
Hawking from door to door their viands diverse  
And delicious and fragrant, and colourful  
Flowers bewitchingly arranged in their trays.  
Thus passed the evening hour of ablution  
On the seventh day of the festivity 545  
Unparalleled in grace, colour and sound  
In the bazaar streets of four-borough

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## TAMIL CULTURE

Decrease through thirsty clouds nor increase  
By the winter freshes of rivers of land.

The broad streets echo with the rattle of chariot wheels  
And tramp of prancing horses ; and handsome youths  
Of rank, and generous as blue rain-clouds, 555

Arrayed with gold-brocaded *kachams*, as pink  
As gorgeous clouds of the colourful west,  
And with gold-hafted swords depending bright  
From flaming girdles, and with hero-anklets  
Gleaming round their ankles firm and close knit 560

And indurated, urge to racing-wind speed  
Their chariots wrought in grace ; their whips rattle loud  
In their sockets, their neem-garlands, a mark

Of the wane of fame and strength of enemies,  
Sway in company with their blue garlands 565  
Of sengalineir<sup>8</sup> flowers, their pink scarves

Flutter in the wind, and footmen steer clear  
The way full with the last-lingering crowd

The Nayanar<sup>9</sup> festival is loud  
With colour and sound ; and colourful banners 570  
On adamantive staffs of storied mansions

Stream in the wind like spume flags of green waves  
Towering, of the sapphire seas ; and screened  
Behind them vanish as they appear,  
Like the full moon behind dark-blue clouds, 575  
The radiant faces of stately damsels.

The festive streets overflow with the fragrance  
Of civet, with the soft silver chime  
Of pearl-hearted beaming anklets,  
With the golden radiance of jewelry 580  
Flashing, and flower-graved bracelets wrought

Out of divine gold purified in fire,  
And with the winsome charm of damsels  
Bright of face as the golden sheen  
Of ear-pendants fashioned like shark-fish. 585

<sup>8</sup> Deep crimson or purple water-lily.

<sup>9</sup> The chief of the tutelary gods.

The music of evening worship softly rings,  
When men pure in body and mind offer  
Delicious food and flowers radiant, unfading  
To the lofty Siva<sup>10</sup> girdled with the sword  
Flaming, wrought with the elements five 590  
Of ether, fire, air, earth and water,  
And to other awe

With the chorus of gold-banded bees ;  
 Wherein live those sages, who by penance, 620  
 Without bodily mortifications,  
 Have gained the peace that comes through subduing  
 Their senses five, and those wise seers who read  
 The past and the future, and who have  
 A knowledge of heaven and earth ; from whose mutt roofs  
 Hang in nets bowls as narrow of mouths  
 As the clefts in rocks of towering hills.  
 As holy priests, who raise sacrificial fire  
 Leading to heaven, subdue the king and so  
 The assembly of wise ministers far-famed 630  
 And of flaming-white turbans decorated  
 With golden lace<sup>14</sup> of regal honour, guard the King  
 From all ill-fame, and lead in path lofty  
 Of righteousness that comes through elevating  
 His people by planting in them the love 635  
 Of kith, kin and all things living, after  
 Weighing impartially, like the beam  
 Unswerving of the scales, his good and evil.  
 Man and wife walking in the righteous path  
 Of householders live in mansions fair, huddled close 640  
 Like their neighbouring hills ; and on the heights  
 Towering, of mansions full with viands  
 Varied, eagles rest and jubilantly cry.  
 And beside them live merchants who trade  
 In products of hills, land, sea, as gold 645  
 Precious, peerless pearls and colourful gems,  
 And also priests, captains, ambassadors  
 And spies of four-fold jargon, like knightly kosas  
 Affecting four different tongues, who live  
 In Mogoor of the chieftain king, Pazhaiyan<sup>15</sup> 650  
 Ever fertile through unfailing rains.  
 Your four-square streets beam with the colour  
 And ring with the hum of crowded traders

<sup>14</sup> A strip of gold-leaf decoration given by the king and worn on the face of a turban.

<sup>15</sup> The chieftain King of Magoor.

And artisans standing shoulder to shoulder  
 And hip to hip ; weavers great and small spread 655  
 Their sarees in ripple-folds and hawk them ; sellers  
 Of bangles cut and fashion slender conch wristlets ;  
 Jewellers drill gems to beads and string them  
 Into necklaces of blue sapphires, corals  
 And pearls ; goldsmiths exhibit their ornaments 660  
 Fashioned out of purest gold, and those who  
 Determine the purity of gold stand  
 By them ; braziers weigh and barter their wares  
 Old and new ; drapers do the kachams<sup>16</sup> 665  
 To the latest fashion ; flower girls,  
 Akil<sup>17</sup> and sandal sellers, and artists  
 Keen-eyed, who paint in cunning colours and true,  
 Finish up the motley crowd of Bazaar-streets.  
 In the evening-bazaar, the cry of hawkers  
 Of juicy jacks, sweet and rare mangoes, 670  
 And other fruits mingles with the jubilation

It is also like the noisy twitter  
 Of crop-full birds, as they fly down to feed, 690  
 In the fast-falling eve, their eager nestlings.  
 In the evening hour when the sun, abating  
 Its fiery rays, sets behind western hills,  
 When the moon, grown full after sixteen days  
 Of waxing, rises in east making noon of night. 695  
 Fawn-eyed women beloved of their kind  
 For their chastity, eager for the embraces  
 Of their husbands, deck themselves with garlands  
 Of fragrant water-lilies and radiant jewelry,  
 Smear their bodies with sandal and musk, 700  
 Anoint their long tresses with scented oil,  
 Smoke their diaphanous, flower-worked sarees  
 With the perfume of akil and sandal.  
 Smitten with amour at the approach of night  
 Convivial, after the hush of noisy day, 705  
 They light their hundred lamps of golden tongues,  
 Illumining the town to its very borders  
 Round, to welcome home their dear absent lords.  
 They then raise, by turns, enrapturing music  
 In their seven-tuned small harps; and after 710  
 Amour, with the return of modesty  
 Dearer than life, quiescently repose.  
 And courtesans of affected modesty  
 And seductive, eager for the lascivious  
 Embraces of bucks deck their raven black hairs 715  
 With flowers of heaven-reaching perfume.  
 The broad festive streets, littered with fallen  
 Opening buds, overflow with fragrance  
 Luxurious, and with the jingle of courtesans  
 Wandering for the sweet seductions of night, 720  
 Who set their straying jewelry; and decked  
 Abright with almost a bower of buds,  
 Varied in hue and sweet perfumed, which open  
 To the chorus of circling bees, hasten  
 For further captivations of enrapturing night. 725

At dawn pearl-winged bees hum their flatteries  
 Round the fallen flowers at their portals,  
 And desert after draining their honey cups;  
 And so the courtesans spend the balmy night!  
 Locked in the arms of lustful youths, 730  
 To the print of their jewelled garlands,  
 On their supple full breasts, and rob them  
 Of their wealth with honeyed words of loving  
 Affectations, and leave them in the lurch.  
 In their mansions overflowing with perfume 735  
 And illuminated with golden flames,  
 Courtesans, ravishingly fair as nymphs  
 Of heaven, decked with beaming jewelry  
 Of purest gold, spend the night with youths,  
 Who, like birds that go in quest of trees 740  
 Fruit-laden, gather round them. And the courtesans  
 With these gay gallants gambol in water  
 Cool, of Vaigai river, rest on sand dunes  
 Playing on harps and drums, till far  
 Into the night and then desert in haste. 745  
 And girdled round their swaying waists with wreaths  
 Of water-lilies, and cresses hanging  
 Over their languid zones for other captivations  
 Seductive, hurry to their stately mansions  
 Full with perfume of enrapturing flowers. 750  
 On the bright Onam-day<sup>20</sup> of the birthday  
 Festivity of Nannan,<sup>21</</sup>

Are indurated with training tuskers  
 Of war, death dealing, whose heads are covered  
 With scars of battle, and their thumbai garlands,  
 To the hum of bees, sway round their shoulders,  
 And love of war ever burns in their hearts. 765

With milk surging in full round breasts, women  
 Of matronly grace, newly delivered  
 Of children, to the great joy of their husbands,  
 Wash, with their kith, kin and others  
 Of their households, the pollution of child birth, 770  
 In the holy waters of the temple tank ;

And join in worship to the sweet melody  
 Of harps set in tune with drums large and small,  
 By food offerings before the golden flames  
 Of camphor, when enceinte women of pea-cock gait 775  
 Pray for a similar deliverance

And safe of their first and anxious conception,  
 As augured by the presiding, god-possessed  
 Priestess of broad, full and rounded shoulders.

With these mingles the surge of devil dame-square,  
 Where the awe-inspiring priest, decked abright  
 With a garland of kurinchi<sup>23</sup> flowers  
 Of winter, dances to the music silvern  
 Of pellet-anklets<sup>24</sup> and hand-silambu ;  
 And apprises the crowd of the cause 785  
 Of their several misfortunes, and offers

Propitiatory worship to Muruga  
 Decked with kadamba<sup>25</sup> flowers. The festive  
 Birth-day of far-famed Nannan finished up  
 With the surge of kuravai dance and song, 790  
 Of man and wife, in the villages

Several and cherries of Madura-town ;  
 Thus passed the first watch of the night.

When conch trolls the end of first watch, women  
 Stately and modest of mien, decked with jewels, 795

<sup>23</sup> Now applied to blue flowers of Nilgiri Hills, *Strobilanthes Gunthianes*.

<sup>24</sup> Pearl or jewel hearted anklet, and the same is used as a hand musical instrument by priests when they dance in ecstatic-square.

<sup>25</sup> *Wendlandia Notoniama* (bot.).

Shut their booths of sliding plank-doors, to rest  
 For the night, and confectioners of cakes  
 Spongy as beehive, of sweet puffs with dhol  
 And

Bazaar-keepers sweep their booths and spray  
 Them with cow-dung water ;<sup>27</sup> toddy vendors  
 Loudly tell the prices and hawk the beverage. 835  
 When the morning rays of sun dispel darkness  
 Of night, chaste damsels sleeping in embraces  
 Loving of their lords, eager for duties  
 Domestic of day rise betimes, open  
 The lofty doors guarding their high-walled mansions, 840  
 To the jingle of their anklets and bracelets  
 Flashing like lightning, when the morning echoes  
 With the confused lisp of men still under  
 The spell of their night's carouse, with praises  
 Of minstrels, some standing and some sitting, 845  
 And with the bell-toll of time-keepers.  
 Peal of drums apprises the birth of dawn,  
 And mingles with the bellowing of bulls in stalls ;  
 The song of pie-bald cock ushers in the dawn ;  
 The hoopoe, the swan and the peacock tune 850  
 Their amorous notes calling to their mates ;  
 Tuskers in company of their dames peel loud  
 Jubilantly ; and the roar of tigers,  
 Bears, and lions immured in cages echoes  
 In the distant chaste blue heavens of dawn. 855  
 When the morning rays of sun put to rout  
 The darkness of night, ushering in the dawn  
 With the promise of security, maids  
 Sweep the mansions littered with arecanuts,  
 Pearls and gems flaming as flower torn from 860  
 Necklaces in the night's amours, and sweep  
 The sanded gateway buzzing with bees circling round  
 Fallen flowers of the night's amour.  
 Tuskers deserted by brazen-shouldered  
 Warriors in their retreat, horses fleet of foot 865  
 Captured from the enemy's country, and herds  
 Of cattle deserted by fleeing herdsmen through

<sup>27</sup> This custom still obtains in Hindu homes of South India ; cow-dung and other products of cow are sacred to Hindus, for example the wine ; it is supposed to remove pollution.

Slaughterous flames raised by fierce Vetuwas,<sup>28</sup>  
 Massive doors of fortresses girdling round  
 The hill-country, and subsidies of gold 870  
 And jewelry offered as homages  
 By vassel kings flow in volume  
 Measureless into Madura like waters  
 Many of the Ganges that empty themselves  
 Into the sea. Thus in riches greater 875  
 Than of the domains of gods shines in glory  
 Far-famed Madura-town of Pandian king.  
 Damsels roseate fair as the rays of sun  
 Setting behind western hills, filtering  
 Through a grove of asoka<sup>29</sup> trees aflame . 880  
 With burning-red leaves on a network  
 Of boughs circled round by humming flatteries of bees—  
 Damsels decked with jewelry wrought of gold  
 Purest, set with sparkling colourful gems,  
 Walking in bewitching peacock-gait casting 885  
 Radiant haloes—  
 Damsels tender of newly-budded  
 Mango-leaf complexion mantled fair  
 With golden chloasma in leaf-vein patterns— 890  
 Damsels with a fine array of pearl teeth,  
 With ears beaming with pendants shark

In cunning colours lively and true to life  
 By cunning artists, and smeared with fragrant paste 905  
 Of sandal of adamantine core and decked  
 Abright with pearl necklace and fair garlands  
 Of colourful flowers, round which hummed bees,  
 Gold-banded, their amorous songs, set in state—  
 The jewel-set rings on his fingers gleamed, 910  
 In tune with the golden hero-anklets;  
 And his starched diaphanous tunic on shoulders  
 Broad, hung in straight faultless folds in tune  
 With pearl-garlands hanging down from his neck.  
 Sovereign liege, lord of hosts and princes! 915  
 Sitting in state, you welcome those warriors,  
 Who, like the anicut that stops the fast-rushing  
 Waters, advancing between two warring hosts,  
 Have put to flight the surging forces of foes,  
 To the praise of your fame through victories of sword: 920  
 Those warriors who with mighty bend of bows  
 Have their arrows against their broad chests borne,  
 And of shoulders brawny enough to master  
 Wild horses of mettle and fleet of foot:  
 Those warriors rich in heroic deeds who had 925  
 Guarded the fortresses girdled by as deep moats  
 As yawning hill-caverns into which surge  
 And rush the waters of winter rains:  
 Those warriors still covered with raw wounds  
 Through battling tuskens of war, and who, 930  
 To the peal of kettle-drums of mouths stopped with the  
 robe  
 Of death-dealing bulls, had boldly marched  
 Into the very thick of battle like forest-fire  
 To the devastation of enemies:  
 Those allies decked with garlands of gold-wrought 935  
 Thumbai-flowers, who had flung their arrows  
 And steel-capped lance-sticks at the enemies.  
 To their confusion, and who are armoured  
 In sectional coats-of-mail dull with age,  
 Over their bodies obvious with ribs, 940

Like the spokes of wheels, through flesh-lorn wounds of  
 war:

Those who have patched up friendships  
 Between those, whose prosperous domains broad  
 Are comparable to the regions of the gods:  
 Those vassals of smaller domains, who are 945  
 Decked with colourful garlands, whose chests deep  
 Are dry with sandal paste, and who had  
 Devastated the arrayed forces stately  
 Of tuskens of war:  
 Thus welcome princes 950  
 And warriors famed through war to enter,  
 Without hesitation, your lofty palace gates.  
 Accessible thus, you will be to all,  
 And welcome the troops of minstrels, singers,  
 Dancers and trumpeters; and not curious 955  
 To know who and whence they are, you with them  
 Consider as your own kith and kin,  
 And without their solicitations,  
 And to the measure of their dear wishes,  
 Give gifts of lofty chariots decked with lotuses 960  
 Wrought in ivory, and tuskens.  
 In fields far and wide people carouse wild  
 On sweet toddy; under every tree fat sheep  
 Are slaughtered, and the fat melts under fire raised  
 To approach them;

- In ancient lore. And you like lofty Vishnu<sup>31</sup>  
 The lord of all the wealth of the wide world,  
 Will share all your good things with your peoples.  
 Filled with greatness matchless, wisdom,  
 And all other praiseworthy virtues, you will 980  
 Bestow precious gifts on the many  
 Families that live in your large domain,  
 And elevate them. And filled with deep learning  
 You will shine amidst your kith and kin  
 Prosperous like the flaming sun that rises 985  
 From the depths of sapphire seas, and like  
 The full moon amidst her starry host.  
 And you will, to the deep desire of your heart,  
 Lead in the straight path of righteousness,  
 Chieftain kings famed for war ; the five-fold men<sup>32</sup> 990  
 Great in virtue and wisdom, decked with jewels  
 Of far-famed gold, of your great assembly ;  
 The Kongan<sup>33</sup> kings famed for smiting with sword  
 Unfailing, their foes, beginning from Maran,<sup>34</sup>  
 A chieftain king, famous and decked with flowers 995  
 Of gold, who on earth established renown  
 Fair ; and to the blessings of the wise,  
 Beaming with renown, of the assembly.  
 When night comes, sleep against the shoulders  
 Of consorts, decked with beaming jewelry, 1000  
 After carousing on the well-flavoured mead,  
 Offered by them in cups of gold.  
 May thou, lofty king, great in wisdom  
 Live for the rest of your god-ordained days  
 Walking in the goodly path of righteousness ! 1005

<sup>31</sup> Vishnu, one of the Hindu triad, the preserver ; in one of his incarnations he rose to sky-reaching height and hence lofty.

<sup>32</sup> Ministers of the king's assembly (cabinet) ; ministers, commanders, priests, ambassadors, spies.

<sup>33</sup> Kongan, a country of a chieftain king.

<sup>34</sup> A chieftain king of the line of Pandians.

## Tamil Nayanars in Telugu Literature

ATHILAKSHMI

The Nayanars of the Tamil country played an important role in the evolution of Saivism in South India. The word 'Nayanar' denotes a devotee of Saiva. They were sixty-three in number and were drawn from all strata of Hindu Society ; the twice-born and the low-born, the kings, warriors and the commoners. They lived approximately between the 5th and the 10th centuries of the Christian Era.

In Telugu they are styled as 'Aruvattumuvvuru Nayanarlu' and are included in the 'Sahasraganamalika' which forms one of the devotional litanies of the Saivites of the Telugu country. Curiously enough the number 63 corresponds to the Tri-shasti-sataka purushas of Jain tradition embodied in the encyclopaedic work of Hemachandra Suri, the well-known Jaina Samayacharya in his Tri-Shasti-S

Saivism. Thus we see the Pallava King MAHENDRA-VARMAN I, who was at first a Jain, becoming an ardent Saivite under the influence of Appar (Tirunavukkarasu or Vāgīsar Nayanar). With the zeal characteristic of a new convert, Mahendravarman caricatured Buddhists and Jains in his Sanskrit burlesque *Mattavilasa-Prahasana*.

These Nayanars, besides being the living embodiment of devotion and sacrifice, were also great poets. Quite a volume of devotional hymns flowed from their hearts providing emotional sustenance for Saivite devotees of later ages. *Tevaram* which consists of the hymns of Appar, Sambandhar, and Sundarar and Manikkavachakar's *Tiruvāsakam* form the basis of Saivite devotional literature. All the four were inspired Saints who electrified the country with their songs of devotion and set in motion a wave of Bhakti, which spread throughout the land kindling the light of spiritual aspiration.

Besides these four main Nayanars, Tirumular (the author of *Tirumandiram*), Chirutondar, Amaraniti and others also played an important role in giving a new stimulus to Saivism.

The stories of the Tamil Nayanars were obviously very popular in South India and had spread into the neighbouring Telugu and Kannada countries. In Telugu Literature we find for the first time references to some of these Nayanars in the *Sivatatwasaramu* of Mallikarjunapandita who lived between 1100-1180 A.D. In Nannechoda's *Kumara Sambhavam*, the earliest Saivite classic in Telugu, we find a reference to Tirunilakanta Nayanar in Canto 5 verse 143<sup>1</sup>. But complete biographies of the Saints are given only by Palkuriki Somanatha, the famous Telugu poet and apostle of Virasaivism (1190-1260 A.D.). In his earlier work, *Basavapurānamu*, Somanatha links some of the stories of the Nayanars with the main story of Basava to prove that 'Devotion tinged with pride is futile' and that 'Bliss is conferred on the truly devoted, without any

consideration of birth or intelligence'. The stories of the Nayanars form the most interesting chapter of the work. Somanatha introduces the story of Sundaramurti Nayanar and in the course of that story narrates briefly the accounts of some other Nayanars. It is in his later great work *Panditaradhyacharitra* (the biography of Mallikarjuna Pandita) that Somanatha enumerates the names of all the sixty-three Nayanars, and deals with the stories of some of them in the *Puratana Prakarana* of that work. The story of Udaya Nambi is again narrated at length in the *Mahimaprakarana*.

In this connection it should be noted that the names of some of the Nayanars, as given by Somanatha, differ from those found in the *Periapuranam*, though the themes are the same. Later Telugu poets generally followed Somanatha who first recorded, in Telugu, these stories as current in popular tradition. For instance Nandanar is referred

*kamu* which is not however now available. The following verse occurs in an anthology :

“అరయగ పిన్నవాడు సిరియాళుడనై యెల్లభాయమందును  
దరుడను నంబియై పదనుదప్పిన గుండయగారి చందమై  
ధరచరియింప గలిగిన తథాస్తు వృథాపరిపాక రూపదు  
మృత జననం బిదేమిటిమి? కాలుపనే శివదేవధీమణి!

‘My life would have been fruitful if I had been a Sirivala in boy-hood, Sundara in youth and Gundaya (Tirunilakanta) in old age. If a man has no faith in Siva then this birth is a burden and life is futile.’

In Sarabhankalinga's *Sataka* written about 1300 A.D. we find references to the Nayanars ; this work is available. Ravipati Tirpurantaka, a poet of the post-Kakatiya period, refers to incidents in the lives of the Nayanars in his work *Tripurantakadahanamu*.

Srinadha, one of the famous Telugu poets, in his poetical work *Haravilasamu* deals with the story of Chiruttonda in two aswasas. The story given here is very similar to that found in the *Periapuranam* excluding the military career of the saint as Paranjothi. He links the story of the Dravidian saint with Aryan mythology and says that Tumbura was born on earth as Chiruttonda as the result of a curse by Durvasa reputed for his irritable temper.

Srinadha gives the caste of Chiruttonda as vaisya, whereas in the Tamil work he is referred to as belonging to Mahamatyakula. Palkuriki Somanatha already referred to also styles Chiruttonda as a Vysya and calls him as Siriyala and the son as Sirala. But Srinadha never refers to the father as Siriyala, but invariably as Chiruttonda. Srinadha follows Somanadha in giving the name of Sangalavva to the saint's wife, who is also referred to a Tiruvenganachi. Her name in *Periapuranam* is Tiruvengattu-

nangai. In Telugu Literature, the Nayanar is stated to be from Kanchi and not Sengattangudi, as stated in the Tamil work. In the Kannada works, Siriyala Settina Ragale and Siriyala Settine Vardige, we also find the names Siriyala Setti, Sangalavva and Sirala.

The stories of the Nayanars, however interesting they might be, were viewed only from a religious point of view, till Srinadha gave the story of Chiruttonda Nambi a literary stamp and a classical touch so that his successors, Saivites as well as non

of the famous prabandhas of the golden age of Telugu Literature.

Pillanayanar Charitra, the story of Sambandhar, was the first of its kind written as a separate dwipada kavya by Piduparti Basavana, but the work is not available.

About Tirunilakanta we have an excellent Champu Kavya by name 'Kummar Gundayya Charitra'. It is written by Amalapurapu Sanyasi Kavi of the last century. Curiously, the author belongs to the same caste as that of the saint.

All these poets belong to the Telugu country proper extending up to Ganjam district, now a part of Orissa.

Coming to the 18th century we have two outstanding works relating to Nayanars. One is the prose work known as Sivabhaktavilasamu by Kaluve Nanjaraja of Mysore, the well-known poet and patron of letters. He is a Saivite and a poet in Sanskrit and Kannada also. He is the author of many Telugu classical prose works; Halasyamahatmyamu (the greatness of Halasya Kshetra—Madurai), Kasimahimardhadarpanamu, and Garalapuri Mahatmyam (the importance of Nanjangudu) are some of his prose works that have come down to us. Sivabhaktavilasamu is a voluminous work in 75 adhyayas divided into five cantos. The stories of all the Nayanars are dealt with in this work. The life of Haradatta, the famous Saivacharya, is also included.

The other work is Harabhaktavilasamu by Attaluri Papa Kavi, containing nearly 5000 verses in five cantos. This work stands on a par with the *Periapuranam* in Tamil. Papa Kavi, the author, is known to the literary world as the author of Chenna Basavapuramamu. These two rare works are both complete and are written on cadjan leaves.

It is explicitly stated in the Telugu works that the Nayanars belonged to Dravida desa. For instance, Gundayya is said to belong to the famous place of Kanakasabhai, which is known in the Tamil Nad as Chidambaram.

Nanjaraja's work gives an account of some of the religious customs peculiar to the Tamils, which are interwoven with the stories of the Nayanars, such as the worship of Kumaraswamy. In Andhra, Subrahmanya is mostly represented as a serpent and the concept of a god with two wives is not in vogue. Further we find no temple dedicated to Subrahmanya at present though there is a reference to one such at Chebrolu in the Yuddhamalla's inscription dated 980 A.D. Even Visakhapattinam, which was constructed by Kulottunga Chola I, is stated to have taken its name after the deity of the place—Visakha or Kumara whose temple is now submerged under the sea.

Thus, it will be seen that the lives of the Nayanars attracted the attention of Telugu writers from the 12th century till the present day. They reveal the influence of Tamil tradition on the neighbouring Telugu and Kannada peoples. The culture of

## Reviews

### THE CEYLON HISTORICAL JOURNAL, Vol. V, 1956

(The D. S. Senanayake Memorial Number)

It is not always easy to form impartial estimates of men and events in living memory. Nevertheless the D. S. Senanayake memorial number of the Ceylon Historical Journal can be deemed to have performed this difficult task admirably, for, the contributors of the various articles are mature and discerning persons who were intimately connected with Mr. D. S. Senanayake. Sir Ivor Jennings, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon writes on the services rendered by D. S. Senanayake in the struggle for independence as well as in the consolidation of Free Ceylon as her first Prime Minister. Mr. R. L. Brohier describes Mr. Senanayake's contribution as the Minister of Agriculture to the development of irrigation and other facilities intended to promote the lot of the peasant. His foreign policy which aimed at peace and co-operation with the Democracies of the world and with the Commonwealth countries are described by the Hon. Jāyavardena, while his interest in University education and his contribution to the development of a residential University in the Kandi district are stressed in a brief article by Sir Charles Attygale, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon. An insight into the circumstances which led to the appointment of the Soulbury Commission, the complexity of the problems which it had to face and the admirable role played by Mr. Senanayake in their solution are furnished by Sir Frederick Rees, member of the Ceylon Commission on Constitutional Reform, 1944, while the qualities of Mr. Senanayake, the man, are vividly portrayed by Viscount Soulbury, the Governor-General of Ceylon,

who pays a glorious tribute to him when he writes that but for Senanayake the history of Ceylon would have been unfortunately different. A far-sighted statesman, Mr. Senanayake rose above petty differences and narrow prejudices. The welfare of his country was his sole concern. He recognized the legitimate place to which the Tamils of Ceylon were entitled and was not guilty of wilful persecution. This is clearly shown by Sir F. Rees in his article.

The Journal reproduces several photographs of Mr. Senanayake and the public speeches made by him. The tributes paid to him by the outstanding public men of the world are also incorporated.

K. K. PILLAY

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### ARCHITECTURAL AND SCULPTURAL MONUMENTS OF INDIA

This map, illustrating the cultural heritage of India in the shape of the Architectural and Sculptural Monuments of old, has been prepared with care. Though not the first of its kind, it belongs to a novel series designed to interest the lay public as well as the discerning specialist. It is perhaps easy to point out that certain prominent monuments like those of Tiruvannamalai, Tanjore or Suchindram should also have figured in the map, but it is well to remember the limitations of space. The map does not by any means profess to be exhaustive; rather it is representative of the different parts of the huge country. The design, the colour scheme, the indication of the approximate dates of the different periods in Indian Art as well as the brief descriptions of the monuments are good. However, some dates given are rather vague and misleading, as for example, those pertaining to the temples of Chidambaram (A.D. 500 to 1700) and Rameswaram—18th century A.D.

K. K. PILLAY

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## News and Notes

### MADRAS STATE BECOMES UNILINGUAL STATE

Under the State Re-organization Act, 1956, Madras State has become a Unilingual (Tamil) State.

### TAMIL BECOMES THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE MADRAS STATE

Following the State Re-organization the Madras Legislature passed an important piece of legislation—a bill to provide for the adoption of Tamil as a language to be used for the official purpose of the State of Madras.

The Madras Assembly to-day (27-12-56) adopted unanimously the Official Language Bill, making Tamil the language of administration in the State.

Mr. C. Subramaniam, who was lustily cheered on rising to move the Bill for being taken into consideration at once, said that this was a significant step forward in their march towards progress. However a mere declaration of Tamil as official language would not bring about all that they wanted immediately. It had been the desire of the general public, legislators and State Government that all official business should be transacted in Tamil in this State as early as possible.

“I am immensely pleased” concluded the Minister amidst applause, “that in this joyous task I have the undivided and unanimous approbation of all the members and let this be our last act of crowning glory to our mother-tongue.”

The entire discussion on the Bill was in Tamil and even members who had never before attempted to speak in Tamil took to it to-day befitting the pleasant and happy atmosphere.

The Deputy Speaker made history by using Tamil to put the motions to the vote of the House at every stage of adoption of the Bill.

Later moving for the adoption of the Bill, the Minister said: “May I on behalf of the Assembly, Government and the people of Tamil Nad dedicate this piece of legislation to Tamil Mother? To-day I breathe the free air of Tamil and I deem it a special honour that I am privileged to pilot this Bill. The special honour has come in my way not because of my worth but because of the penance of my forefathers. Many are there who are eminently fitted to have this honour—those who had dedicated their lives to the Tamil language and Tamil cause.

“IF ONLY THE LONG LINE OF TAMIL SCHOLARS WERE TO COME BACK TO LIFE AND BE HERE THEY WOULD REJOICE AND SHOWER THEIR CHOICEST BLESSINGS ON US. I CANNOT DO BETTER THAN END MY SPEECH AND CLOSE THE BUSINESS OF THE PRESENT ASSEMBLY WITH THE FOLLOWING VERSES OF POET BHARATHI:

“VAZHGA SENTHAMIZH VAZHGA NATRAMI-ZHAR VAZHGA BHARATHA MANI THIRUNADU”

He then gave the call for Three Cheers to Tamil.

## CZECHOSLAVAK DELEGATION'S VISIT TO MADRAS CITY

A fifteen member Czechoslovakian Delegation of eminent people in the field of science, art and humanities headed by Dr. Karol Bedrna, First Deputy Minister for Education and Culture, Government of Czechoslovakia paid a five-day visit to Madras in the last week of December. The delegation met at the residence of the Vice-President, Mr. A. Subbiah and had an interesting discussion.

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DOCTOR OF LITERATURE FOR PROFESSOR

R. P. SETHU PILLAI

The Honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature was conferred on Professor R. P. Sethu Pillai, B.A., B.L., Head of the Tamil Department of the University of Madras during its centenary celebrations. In presenting Professor Sethu Pillai to the Chancellor for the conferment of the Degree the Vice-Chancellor Dr. A. L. Mudaliar made the following citation :—

“Here we have a great scholar in Tamil, one whose erudition has been acknowledged by eminent authorities. Professor R. P. Sethu Pillai is the first Professor of Tamil in the University of Madras and is the author of many valuable publications. His great literary gifts received appropriate recognition by the Presidential award bestowed on him. In South India, his scholarship has been greatly appreciated. We, in the University, regard him as a great savant in Tamil literature.

Mr. Chancellor, I present to you Professor R. P. Sethu Pillai who has been unanimously recommended by the Syndicate and the Senate of the University as a fit and proper person, by reason of his eminent position and attainments to receive the Degree of Doctor of Literature (*Honoris Causa*) to which I pray that he may be admitted.”

## Transliteration of Tamil Phonemes\* into English

## VOWELS

|   |   |    |               |
|---|---|----|---------------|
| அ | — | a  | (as in among) |
| ஆ | — | a: | ( „ calm)     |
| இ | — | i  | ( „ sit)      |
| ஈ | — | i: | ( „ machine)  |
| உ | — | u  | ( „ full)     |
| ஊ | — | u: | ( „ rule)     |
| எ | — | e  | ( „ fed)      |
| ஏ | — | e: | ( „ able)     |
| ஐ | — | ai | ( „ aisle)    |
| ஓ | — | o  | ( „ opinion)  |
| ஔ | — | o: | ( „ opium)    |
| ஔ | — | au | ( „ now)      |

## CONSONANTS

1. The Phonemes, classified as *hard*, have normally an *unaspirated* - *unvoiced* value but acquire the following modified values if preceded by a consonant:—

(a) a *slightly aspirated* unvoiced value, if preceded by a *plosive or hard consonant*.

e.g., பக்கம் - is pronounced pakkham, not pakkam

(b) an *unaspirated but voiced* value, if preceded by a *nasal or soft consonant*:—

e.g., பங்கம் - is pronounced pangam, not pankam  
பஞ்சம் - " panjam, not pancam,

(c) a *fricative* value if preceded by a *non-nasal continuant or medium consonant or by the auxiliary consonant*.

e.g., பங்கலை becomes palhalai not palkalai  
எஃகு " ehhu not exku

NOTE.—In most present day dialects, the plosive assumes a fricative —sometimes a voiced—value after a vowel also, except in the case of t: which retains its normal unaspirated, unvoiced value even after a vowel.

2. The value of this *auxiliary* phoneme, which must *always* be followed by a hard consonant, was variable during the time of Tholkappiam; it acquired a phonetic value identical with that of the following hard consonant, vide 1 (c) above,

e.g., எஃகு became ehhu

Later its value became fixed as h, irrespective of the following consonant.

Note. (i) With a view to keep down transliteration to the minimum it is suggested that, in the case of Tamil words which are already in free use in English (e.g., Tamil=Thamil), or where it is unnecessary to indicate the exact pronunciation, accurate transliteration need not be resorted to. In the case of proper names etc., which occur more than once in the same article, the transliteration need be shown only once in brackets side by side with a free English adaptation, the latter alone being used subsequently, except of course in cases where such a procedure will lead to ambiguity,

e.g., வேங்கடம் = Vengadam (Ve:ngkat:am).

- (ii) Reference may be made to *Tamil Culture*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (January 1955 issue) pp. 58-73 for fuller details.

## THE TAMIL SCRIPT

## Commemoration Numbers

This year is important being the centenary year of two outstanding events in India, which have a special significance for Tamilians, viz., the publication of the first Indian Comparative Grammar and the establishment of the Universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

The credit for making a comprehensive study of any Indian group of languages and publishing a scholarly work on it for the first time goes to Dr. Robert Caldwell. To him also goes the credit for establishing beyond doubt that the Dravidian languages form a distinct family; at his time, to quote his own words, "it was supposed by the Sanskrit Pandits (by whom everything with which they were acquainted was referred to a Brahmanical origin), and too hastily taken for granted by the earlier European Scholars, that the Dravidian languages, though differing in many particulars from the North Indian idioms, were equally with them derived from the Sanskrit". Though the Science of linguistics, which was in its infancy a century ago, has made great advances during this period and though many facts unknown to Dr. Caldwell have since come to light invalidating some of his findings, his broad conclusions remain unchallenged and his work *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* is still the only one of its kind. The world of linguists in general, and Tamilians in particular owe a deep debt to him and, in commemoration of the centenary of the publication of his classic work, the Academy of Tamil Culture has decided to publish the ensuing October issue of *Tamil Culture* as Dr. Caldwell's Centenary Commemoration issue.

Although Bombay and Calcutta share with Madras the centenary celebration of the establishment of the first modern universities in India, Tamilians have special cause

to rejoice in that a Tamil linguistic scholar has, for the first time, been bracketed with men of international repute who have distinguished themselves in various walks of life, both Indian and Foreign. This is undoubtedly a great personal tribute to Dr. R. P. Sethu Pillai, who was the recipient of the honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature at the Centenary Celebrations of the University of Madras but it is also a recognition by the University of the important position which Tamil is entitled to occupy in the sphere of University education, which position was only grudgingly, if at all, conceded in the past. The Academy has decided to publish the July issue of *Tamil Culture* as Professor Sethu Pillai Doctorate Commemoration number.

Scholars are invited to contribute articles for both these Commemoration numbers. Contributions for the July issue should reach us before 31st July and those for the October issue before 31st October.

—EDITOR.

## Verbal Noun in Early Old Tamil

KAMIL ZVELEBIL

Says J. Bloch in his *Grammatical Structure of Dravidian Languages*, p. 59: "It therefore seems in the end that the flexional system of the pronominal type had developed secondarily. It follows the usage of the verbal nouns capable of pronominal subjects in the nominative."<sup>1</sup>

Prof. Bloch himself quotes some examples of this use, found in the old Tamil poetry, e.g. யான் பிறக்கு "I shall be born", or வரற்கே "I will come", காண்கு வந்து "I shall see having come"—*ibid.* The possible way of development of pronominal verbal flexion from the use of verbal nouns has been shown in a short study in *Archiv Orientalni*, XXIII, pp. 479-81. The object of this article is to show the importance and the different syntactic functions of verbal nouns as found in an Early Old Tamil text, the anthology நற்றிணை 'abbreviated NT'. I shall proceed from the clear cases to those which are more complicated and questionable.

Verbal nouns தொழிற் பெயர் of both tenses<sup>2</sup> are used as subjects of action or state, cf. இல்லிடத்து இற்செறிந்திருத்தல்

<sup>1</sup> Quoted according to the English translation (of the French original) by R. G. Harshé, Poona, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> Are the future and past tenses of Early Old Tamil true tenses? I am rather inclined to think that, in Old Tamil, the primary and important and maybe original division was not that of true tenses (aorist-future and past) but that of aspects: the verb had, originally, two themes: one for complete action, the other for incomplete action. The instances in Early Old Tamil texts shown clearly that the so called 'future tense' is used for every form of aoristic, incomplete, imperfective or non-temporal action taking place in every temporal sphere (in present, past or future), whereas the so called 'past tense' is used for every form of complete, perfective, momentaneous action (even if taking part, let us say, in the future). Due attention will be paid to this problem in a study dealing with Early Old Tamil syntax as a system.

அறனும் அன்றே lit. "after having lived closed inside in the house—the stay is verily not a virtue" (NT 68, 2-3).

Very often, the verbal nouns are found in attributive position, as determinants, cf. அமுங்கல ஊர் "the uproaring village" (NT 63, 5); செய்யம்மேவல் சிறுகட்பன்றி "the hog with small eyes, feeding on a cornfield" (ib. 48,2); புறந் தாழ்பு இருளிய... குரல் "the dark hair, hanging on the back" (ib. 96, 5, lit. the back—the hanging—darkened . . . hair). In these instances, only the position (determinans preceding determinatum), or, if we want, the taxeme of order, determines the syntactic function; in other cases, the attributive suffix—இன் is employed, cf. பறவை . . மொய்த தலின் கண் "the eye/determined by/the swarming . . of bees" (NT 55, 5-6).

Still more often, we find the verbal nouns in the function of object, cf. செய்பறியலரே (செய்பு+...) "he does not know the deed" (NT 1, 10); there are some very interesting cases to be noted in this connection—the so-called inner object, where the noun (or, in our special case, the verbal noun) as object is actually in the role of a close determinant of the verb; the noun may be either of the same base, or of the same or very near meaning<sup>3</sup>, cf. இயங்கல் செல்லாது... குழவி "the child (sc. of the elephant) not going the walking", i.e. "not knowing how to walk" (NT 47, 2, figura synonymica).

In two spheres of Old Tamil syntax, the verbal nouns had been used most extensively and they had formed very important means to express syntactic relationship.

1. The verbal nouns of the base<sup>4</sup> ஆ —"to become" were used with the morpheme -இன் (originally maybe the

<sup>3</sup> There are some remarkable cases of this inner subject in the form of the "figure etymologica" found in NT, cf. நூழை நுழையும் பொழுதில் "when it enters the small hole" (NT 98, 4)—there is one common etymon used; or வாவல்...தூங்கு துயில் பொழுதின் "at the time when the bat . . . sleeps (its) sleep".

<sup>4</sup> As far as the terms base, root and stem are concerned; I am inclined to use the term base (or, more in detail, "base conveying the

morpheme of adnominal relation, also the attributive suffix) to express adverbial locution of conclusion: நின்...தோள் எய்தினம் ஆகலின்...வருந்தாதேகு மதி "We have reached thy shoulders, therefore without grief, go thou." (NT 9. and ib. 56, 7): அருளான் ஆ

regular New Tamil negative construction like நான் கண்டதில்லை.

Now, these cases are, at first sight, clear enough. But they may still be interpreted in two different ways: 1. as nominal sentences: the verbal noun (கண்ணியது, உட்காருவது etc.) is not, in this case, to be analysed as predicate, but as subject; the predicate, viz. verbum existentiae, is not actually expressed; the 'subject' (அன்னை, நான், நாம்) is not true subject at all, but it is in attributive relation to the verbal noun -result: a nominal sentence, rendered literally (NT 53, 3) "What, a friend, the mother's thought—thing" or "What—scil. was—the things—thought by—the mother?"

This interpretation, however, does not much agree with the fact that this 'attribute' is, often, in the active 'nominative' case, cf. நினக்கு யான் மறைத்தல் யாவது? 'to thee—I—the having been concealed—what?' (NT 72, 4), i.e. "What have I hidden from thee?" This instructive example supports rather the second explanation which also seems to me to be the right one, that the quoted instances are not nominal sentences but, that the predicate is, truly, expressed by the verbal noun (e.g. (மறைத்தல்), capable of pronominal (and substantival) subject in the nominative (active) case, without any question of attributive relation. The symbolic structure of the last quoted example (NT 72, 4) would be

O<sup>2</sup> S P O<sup>1</sup>

(Indirect Object in dative—Subject in Nominative—Predicate, verbal noun—Direct Object).

(b) There is a much disputed verbal form in Old Tamil, namely the form with the suffix — al, appearing in the 1st p. sg. aorist-future, cf. சென்று நின் மனையோட்கு உறைப்பல் (100, 6-7) " (I) shall go (and) say (it) to thy wife. "But—is there actually any real difference between the verbal noun மறைத்தல் (72, 4) and this 'finite' verbal form? I venture to suggest that the suffix — al even in these aorist-

future formations of 1st p. sg. is nothing else than the suffix of verbal nouns, that actually, the 'finite' forms ending in —al are no 'finite' forms but verbal nouns capable of subjects in nominative, verbal noun in the predicative function.

And, similarly, the disputed suffix — ku in such forms as நோகோ யானே (NT 26, 1) "I have pain", எவன் செய்கோ (ib. 30, 1) "What shall I do?" These cases are either verbal stems used predicatively, or, which is perhaps more probable, verbal nouns, capable of pronominal subjects in nominative. The suffix — கு is given by ancient grammarians as one of the suffixes constituting the தொழிற் பெயர் and it can be actually found as the morpheme of verbal nouns—cf. போக்கு 'going, departure' from போ- and, to return to Bloch's instance, பிறக்கு 'birth', etc. from பிற.

## The Problem of the Age of Kamban (Continued)

### The Theory of the 9th Century

A. C. PAUL NADAR

(A) The sheet anchor of the champions of the 9th century is a stray stanza referred to in III above beginning with எண்ணிய சகாத்தம் எண்ணாற்றேழின் மேல் found in all manuscripts except the one which was in the possession of Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai. It is certainly found in all the printed editions of *Kamba Ramayanam* in the prefatory portion. V.V.S. Iyer, T.K.C. and others interpret the Saka year referred to in the stanza as 807 corresponding to 895 A.D. This is objected to by Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai for the following among other grounds :—

(a) This date of 885 A.D. would chronologically make Kamban earlier than Alvars such as Thirumangai Alvar and Nammalvar to whom Kambar is alleged to be indebted for idioms, expressions and incidents. (Vide *Kamban Kaviyam*, pp. 143).

(b) The Saka era referred to in the stanza was not in vogue in the Tamilnad until about the end of the 10th century. Hence the stanza in question must have been only a later fabrication. (Vide *Kamban Kaviyam*, pp. 146-147)

(c) The word 'Arangetral' mentioned in this stanza was originally a technical term and applied to the first performance of a danseuse in the august presence of the king and his assembly. It was never applied in those days to any literary exposition. Hence the stanza must be a fabrication of a later age. (Vide *Kamban Kaviyam*, p. 148)

(d) The reference to 'Kamba Nadan' in the stanza shows that the stanza must have been fabricated sometime after the first use of that word by Arasakesari, the author of *Raghuvamsam* in Tamil, sometime in the 16th century. (Vide pp. 148 & 149 of *Kamban Kaviyam*)

(e) This stanza is not found in the manuscript in the possession of Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai alleged to have been dated "Kollam Andu" 753 corresponding to 1578. Hence that stanza must have come into existence after that manuscript. (Vide *Kamban Kaviyam*, p. 143)

(f) It is a well established fact that Kamban has adopted expressions, ideas and metrical forms of vritham from *Jeevaka Chintamani* of Thiruthakka Thevar belonging to the early part of the 10th century. The acceptance of the stanza will antedate Kamban to Thiruthakka Thevar. Hence it cannot be genuine. (*Tamil Sudarmanigal*, pp. 119—120)

(g) *Kamba Ramayanam* is the product of the Bakthi movement initiated and inspired by the Alvars and Vaishnava Acharyas. The movement was canal

mangai Alwar and Nammalwar. According to M. Srinivasa Iyengar claimed by Vaiyapuri Pillai to be his authority, Thirumangai Alwar lived in the 8th century. To be exact he must have flourished between 680 and 760 A.D. (vide his *Tamil Studies-First Series*, p. 320). No doubt M. Srinivasa Iyengar came to the conclusion in his studies that Nammalwar must have lived about the beginning of the 10th century. He published his *Tamil Studies* in 1914. Later on, in 1919 T. A. Gopinatha Rao reviewed all the authorities available upto that time including M. Srinivasa Iyengar's work and came to the conclusion that Nammalwar must have lived in the first half of the 9th century. This has received additional support from L. D. Swamikannu Pillai who placed the birth of Nammalwar at 798 A.D. from the astronomical data furnished by Guruparamparai (vide Gopinatha Rao's *The Age of Alvars* Madras University Publication p. 21). Hence no question of making Kamban chronologically earlier than Thirumangai Alwar and Nammalwar arises at all.

(b) As for the use of 'Saka era' in Tamilnad, there is irrefutable evidence to show that it was in vogue at the earliest in the 5th century A.D.

(1) The Jain work *Loka Vibhaga* was copied by one Sivanandi at Patalika (Tirupappuliyoor) and the year of making the copy is given as the Saka year 380 corresponding to 458 A.D. (vide Pandarathar's *History of Tamil Literature* 250—600 A.D.) 1955 Publication of Annamalai University.

(2) Reference may next be made to Gadval Plates (M.A.R. Copper Plate No. 3 of 1903-1910—The Western Chalukya—Vikramaditya I (655-688) mentions his conquest of Kanchi and encampment at Urugapura Tiruchirapalli). They are dated the Saka year 595 corresponding to 674 A.D. (*Epi. Indica*, Vol. X—page 101)

(3) The Aihole inscription of Western Chalukya, King Pulikesin II (609-642) regarding his conquest of

Kanchi makes reference to the Saka year 556 corresponding to 634 A.D. (*Epi.—Indica*, Vol. IV—p. 6)

(4) The Aivarmalai inscription belonging to the 8th regnal year of the Pandyan Varaguna (862-880) A.D. refers to the Saka year 792 corresponding to 870 A.D. (vide *Epi.—Indica*, Vol. XVIII—p. 295)

It may be noted that (1) is a case of literature and is found in South Arcot District, that (2) and (3) are cases of foreign rulers making reference in

எனவே சகாப்த வழக்கு கி. பி. this system of chronology in C. 600 A.D. About 800 A.D. 885ல் (9வது நூற்றாண்டு இறுதி the Aivarmalai inscription யில்) தமிழ் நூல்களில் காணப்படு was recorded. A century தல் அசம்பாவிதமாம்.” must have elapsed before it found favour with the Tamil Kings, and was introduced by them in their inscriptions. Most probably it came into general vogue about the end of the 10th century A.D.”

It may be noted that the first comment assumes that the inscription is a royal act, while the other assumes that it is a transaction of the people. It is sheer speculation that, whether it is a people's transaction or royal act, it would take a century or two for the adoption of the Saka by the other. But, as a matter of fact, Aivarmalai inscription records the renewal of the images of Parsva Bhatarar and Yakshies at Aivarmalai near Palani. It is really a private transaction by the Jain community. The Jains were not only predominant in Kannada country but also in Tamilnad at least from the middle of the 3rd century. (Vide Pandarathar's *History of Tamil Literature* 250-600 A.D., pages 15—28 and *Samanamum—Kongu Nadum* by C. M. Ramachandran Chettiar). Even after their discomfiture at the hands of Sambandar in the middle of the 7th century at Madurai, they seem to have been so influential as to induce subsequent Pandya rulers to lavishly endow their pallis. (Vide K. A. N. Sastry's *Pandyan Kingdom*, p. 95). Hence the objection regarding the Saka era fails.

(c) As for the use of the word “Arangetral” Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai contends that originally it was applied only to the first performance of the “Danseuse” and that it continued to be so restricted until the 14th century. He admits, however, the fact and practice of the presentation of literary works before learned bodies from the days

of Tholkappiyam. The reference to the presentation of the various works relied on by him are the following :—

“நிலந்தரு திருவிற் பாண்டிய னவையத்து  
அறங்கரை நாவின் நான்மறை முற்றிய  
அதங்கோட்டாசாற்கு அறித்தபத் தெரிந்து  
மயங்கா மரபின் எழுத்துமுறை காட்டி”  
—தொல்காப்பியம் (பாசிரம்)

“உரைசா லடிகள் அருள மதுரைக்  
கூல வாணிகள் சாத்தன் கேட்டனன்”  
—சிலப்பதிகாரம்

“இளங்கோ வேந்தன் அருளிக் கேட்ப  
வளங்கெழு கூல வாணிகள் சாத்தன்.....  
அறிய வைத்தனன்.”  
—மணிமேகலை

He belongs to the middle of the 7th Century A.D. The commentary on *Irainar Ahaporul* which cannot be later than the 8th century speaks of “தலைச் சங்கத்தில் கவியரங்கேறினார் எழுவர் பாண்டிய ரென்ப.....இடைச் சங்கத்தில் கவியரங்கேறினார் மூவர் பாண்டிய ரென்ப” vide *Irainar Ahaporul*—Bhavanandar Kazhagam Edition, pp. 6 & 7). These facts are mentioned in the famous commentary of Adiarku Nallar on *Chilappathikaram* (p. 197 of Swaminatha Iyer's Edition in *Venil Kathai*—First Edition). The words used in the stanza in question are “கண்ணிய அரங்கர் முன்னே கவியரங்கேற்றினானே” instead of the simple word “Arangetral” அரங்கேற்றல் we have got கவி அரங்கேற்றல். It is therefore idle to contend that the expression “Arangetral” was never applied to the presentation of literary works in the relevant period.

(d) As for the use of the word ‘Kamba Nadan’ in the stanza in question Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai says that there was never a district known as Kamba Nadu at all, that when the unrivalled genius of the poet became a recognised fact, the secular followers styled him ‘Kamba Nadan’ creating for him an imaginary Nadu, which he could rule over, that, as a matter of fact, Kamba Nadu was first used in a stanza of Arasakesari (1478-1519), the author of *Raghuvamsa* in Tamil and that therefore the stanza must be a fabrication of the 16th century (vide *Kamban Kaviyam*, p. 149). As stated before under VIII, he himself relies on what he considers as a stanza made on the occasion of the presentation of *Kamba Ramayanam* to the public, it describes the poet not only as Kamba Nadan but also as Kavi Chakravarthi (*Kamban Kaviyam*, p. 127). If there be any truth in it, that at least takes us to the 12th century according to his own showing. Another stanza attributed to Vanian Thatan in *Tamil Navalar Sarithai* refers to ‘Kamba Nadan’. “கைம்மணிச் சீரன்றிச் சீரநியாக் கம்ப நாடன்.” According to tradition, Vanian Thatan was a contemporary of Kamban and was reputed to be the author of *Uthara Kanda*.

It is interesting to note that Prof. K. A. N. Sastri accepts

the reality of the ‘Kamba Nadu’ as a fief granted to the poet by the contemporary Chola King even after he adopts the views of Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai in the matter of the date of Kamban. (Vide p. 671 his *Colas* 1955 Edition).

According to the traditional accounts, even the very name of Kamban was at one time considered novel and enquiry was directed about its origin and meaning. Fanciful stories were invented to account for the etymological meaning of Kamban such as “the boy with the stick” (Kambu) or the foundling deserted near the flag-staff of a temple (Kamban). Now, epigraphy discloses such names as கம்பன்

not be taken very seriously unless we have got other substantial evidence.

(f) The question of fixing the date of Thiruthakka Thevar, the author of *Chintamani*, is not an easy one. It is as difficult to determine as, if not more than, the date of Kamban. There is absolutely nothing in the text of *Chintamani* to enable us to fix his time. The Jain tradition is persistent that he was connected with the scholars of Mathurai Tamil Sangam, who were alleged to have been the instrument of making him sing sweetly of the pleasures of the life of senses. Hence, *Chintamani* was a new venture in Jain literary productions, contrary to their ascetic ideal. (Vide the life of Thiruthakka Thevar in Swaminatha Iyer's *Chintamani*). If there be any truth in it, he must be connected with the 3rd Tamil Sangam which cannot be later than the middle of the 3rd century as stated before. No scholar is however inclined to accept this date for *Chintamani*. A fourth Sangam seems to have functioned sometime in the 7th and 8th century, though not so influential as the 3rd Sangam (vide M. Srinivasa Iyengar's *Tamil Studies* 1st series p. 254). According to Pandarathar, a Tamil Sangam functioned earlier in the 5th century under the auspices of the Jains. (Vide Pandarathar's *History of Tamil Literature* 250—600, p. 46.)

*Narivirutham* is said to be a minor work of Thiruthakka Thevar. The learned editor of the poem, Sri M. Raghavaiyengar, has no doubt that it is the genuine production of Thevar, as it has the ring of *Chintamani*. The Jain tradition supports it. Appar Swamigal refers to *Narivirutham* in one of his pasurams. (*Adipurana Tirukuruthokai*) Sri M. Raghavaiyengar is of opinion that the reference by Appar Swamigal is to Thevar's *Narivirutham* and none other. If so, Thevar must belong to the period earlier than the middle of the 7th century to which Appar belongs. In that case Thevar may belong to the 4th Sangam of M. Srinivasaiyengar or the Jain Sangam of Pandarathar.

The astronomical data given for the time of marriage of Jeevakan with Gandarva Dathayar yield 813 A.D. as the date of the wedding. If this date and the event be accepted, the composition of *Chintamani* cannot be earlier than 813 A.D. But the infirmity about this data is that it is of a cyclic nature and is likely to answer to a later or an earlier date. Whether, Thevar composed his *Chintamani* in the 5th, in the 7th or in the early part of the 9th century, he was earlier than Kamban envisaged in the stanza in question. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar, M. Srinivasa Iyengar and T. A. Gopinatha Rao fixed the age of Thiruthakka Thevar at about 900 A.D. In that case, Thiruthakka Thevar must have been a contemporary of Kamban in the light of the same stanza in question.

Thir

the absence of a thorough investigation, it is not conclusive to adopt a date later than 898 A.D. as a definite land mark to fix the age of Thiruthakka Thevar. The author of *Chintamani* seems to have been held in the highest esteem in the world of Jainism (vide the famous inscription at Sravana Belgola—*Ep. Indica* Vol. III, p. 190-1.) It is significant that Thevar does not refer to the great author Gunabhadra so well known for his sanctity and political influence at the court of the one of the greatest South Indian rulers. It may be that Gunabhadra was inspired by Thevar ; such a possibility need not be excluded in the circumstances of the traditional accounts. The acceptance of the 10th century as the age of Thiruthakka Thevar raises another difficulty. There is no trace of any Tamil Sangam in that century (vide Srinivasa Pillai's *Tamil Varalaru*, pp. 204 to 207 and K. A. N. Sastri's *Colas*, p. 666, Revised Edition 1955).

We have now to deal with another tradition connecting Kambar with *Chintamani*. In his introduction to *Jeevaka Chintamani*, 3rd edition Dr. Swaminatha Iyer refers to an old document of which he does not give the age and in which it is suggested that Kambar himself acknowledged that he took a spoonful from *Chintamani*. This is said to be in reply to a suggestion at the time of his aranjatral that the phrase வெள்ளி வெண்கடலின் in stanza No. 133 of விபீடணன் அடைக்கலப் படலம் seemed to be an echo from *Chintamani*. If this traditional story be correct, Kambar must have composed his poem long after the composition of *Chintamani*. Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai adds that Kambar was indebted to Thiruthakka Thevar for words, phrases, sentiments, ideas and metrical forms. He cited 3 parallel stanzas to show that the former borrowed from the latter.

*Jeevaka Chintamani*.

1. வாளினால் பேசு லல்லால்  
வாயினால் பேசல் தேற்றேன்.

*Kamba Ramayanam*.

வில்லி னாற்சொலி னல்லது வெந்  
திறல் வெள்கச்  
(257) சொல்லி னாற்சொலக் கற்றிலம்  
யாமெனச் சொன்னான்.  
(குமபகர்ணன் வதை 255)

2. துன்ப முற்றவர்க்கலால் துன்புள தெனினன்றே சுகமுளது  
இன்பமில்லை யாதலின் (579) (கங்கைப் படலம் 69)
3. விருந்தாயினை யெறிநீயென இணையாருமி லவனேர்தர எய்தா  
விரைமார்பகங் கொடுத்தாற் வலி செய்தாய்  
கரும்பூணற வெறிந்தாங்கவ

As for the alleged metrical indebtedness of Kambar to Thevar, it is an established fact that Kambar was an unrivalled master of Vritham metre. An old saying of a poet is விருத்தம் என்னும் ஒன்பாவில் உயர் கம்பன். Indeed, Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai himself in another place waxes eloquent in describing the metrical talent of Kambar. He says Kambar was not a blind follower of poetical tradition, he was a daring genius and iconoclast . . . . He made ever new experiments in metre and words and produced a harmony never achieved before. He set up in fact a new tradition which began to find followers. Thus he exercised an adverse influence against the current notions of poetry. The poets of his age looked down upon this as heresy and taunted him with his humble birth" (p. 151, *Kambar Kaviyam*). If he was really an imitator or even in the line of the tradition of metrical evolution started by others, it is difficult to see how he could have been found guilty of heresy. Neither the learned Professor nor the editors of Annamalai University Silver Jubilee Publication, who also believe that Kambar was indebted to Thevar for metrical perfection of Vritham, explain how this was so. It is worth the study of scholars to find out the part played by Thevar and Kambar in the evolution of the metre called Vritham. In the same manner, it is worthwhile to find out whether Kambar owed anything to *Choolamani* for his rhythm.

So far as the matter in hand is concerned, the objection of Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai to the stanza beginning with எண்ணிய சகாத்தம் எண்ணாற்றேழு on the basis of the chronological priority of *Chintamani* to *Kamba Ramayanam* lacks substantial evidence and requires further investigation from various angles.

(g) Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai relies on stanza No. 37 of இராமானுஜ நூற்றந்தாதி reading as படிக்கொண்ட கீர்த்தி இராமாயணமென்னும் பக்தி வெள்ளம், குடிக்கொண்ட கோயிலிராமானுஜன் . . . . . for his conclusion that the bakthi movement

was canalised in the story of Rama in the time of Ramanuja. (1017 to 1137 A.D., vide *Tamil Chudamanigal*, p. 114). He seemed to have thought that *Ramayanam* was not so popular in Tamilnad until then. He realised the untenability of this view in his later book, *Kambar Kaviyam*, p. 153 wherein he has stated— "we see that the story of Rama had been exercising a potent influence in the Tamil land from the earliest times", namely early centuries of the Christian Era. But he added that the pietistic school in the 11th century and later, embellished the story and expounded it in a vivid conversational style. Evidently by the pietistic school he means the later Vaishnava Acharyas including Ramanuja. In this connection it is relevant to consider what Prof. K. A. N. Sastri has to say about this period. "It is curious that few works of religious literature seem to have been composed in Tamil by the Vaishnavas of the Tamil country in the period . . . . . There is ample evidence to show that a succession of great Vaishnava Acharyas composed numerous devotional poems and philosophical works in the Sanskrit language in this period; Yamunacharya, Yadavaprakasa and Ramanuja himself are only the leading examples of a large group of authors justly celebrated for their learning and devotion and for their literary achievements.

We have examined the various objections of Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai. We find none of them is sufficient to discredit the stanza relied on by V.V.S. Aiyer, T.K.C. & others for placing Kampan in the 9th century. But there is no evidence to prove who composed the stanza and when it was composed. If it was a contemporary stanza on the occasion of the arangetral of *Kamba Ramayanam*, it is well and good. If not, the question is how long after arangetral it was composed. What was the source of the knowledge of the date? If it was forged at a later time, what was the motive for it? These are legitimate questions to be considered.

If it be a forgery of the 16th century as contended by Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai, it seems to be strange that the date of 885 A.D. (Saka year 807) is pitched upon without reference to any ruler either Chola or Pallava. The author of the stanza in question has shown a rare knowledge of the history of the period, which we now begin to understand after a laborious research of nearly a century by an army of scholars and research workers. For, that period marks the fall of the Pallavas, and the rise of the Cholas of the dynasty of Vijayala. The stanza does full justice to Kampan's patron Sadayan, who is directly mentioned in the text of the poem as many as ten times.

(B) The second ground of the champions of the 9th century relates to the evidence of the age of Sadayan, the patron of Kampan. The poet refers to Sadayan directly in the following stanzas.

நடையி னின்றயர் நாயகன் றேற்றத்தி  
னிடையி கழந்த விராமாவ தாரப்பேர்த்  
தொடையி ரம்பிய தோமறு மாக்கைத்  
சடையன் வெண்ணெய் நல்லூர்வயிற் றந்ததே.

—பாயிரம்

விண்ணவர் போய பின்றை விரிந்தபூ மழையி னாலே  
தண்ணெய்ங் கான நீங்கித் தாங்கருந் தவத்தின் மிக்கோள்

மண்ணவர் வறுமை நோய்க்கு மருந்தன் சடையன் வெண்ணெய்  
யண்ணறன் சொல்லே யன்ன படைக்கல மருளி னானே. 2  
—(பாலகாண்டம்-வேள்விப்படலம்)

வண்ண மாலை கைபரப்பி யுலகை வளைந்த விருளெல்லா  
முண்ண வெண்ணித் தண்மதியத் துதயத் தெழுந்த நிலாக்கற்றை  
விண்ணு மண்ணுந் திசையனைத்தும் விழுங்கிக் கொண்ட விரிநன்னீர்ப்

V. V. S. Iyer points out two inscriptions of the Vishnu Temple of Ukkal somewhere between Kancheepuram and Wandiwash in Chingleput District (vide Inscriptions Nos. 5 & 8 of Vol. III of S.I.I.) to indicate his age.

The English translation of No. 5 reads as follows.

Hail prosperity ! In the fifteenth year of the reign of Kambavarman : The writing of us, the assembly of Ukkal, we have received one thousand kadi of paddy from Sadayan.

We the assembly shall close (sluices of) the tank to collect water for irrigation and shall cause five hundred kadi of paddy to be supplied every year as interest on those one thousand kadi of paddy. We declare that those who disobey this shall incur all the sins committed between the Ganga & Kumari. The great men elected for the year shall cause (the paddy) to be supplied.

No. 8 reads as follows :

Hail prosperity ! in the tenth year of the reign of Kambavarman, Sadayan gave four hundred kadi of paddy to the assembly. From the interest on this paddy which amounts to one hundred kadi of paddy per year, we the assembly of Ukkal shall feed two Brahmins daily as long as the earth and sun exist. If we fail in the feeding of guests, we the assembly shall incur all the sins committed within seven hundred kadams between the Ganga and Kumari.

These two inscriptions evidence an agreement between one Sadayan and the Mahasabha at Ukkal for keeping the village tank in repair and for feeding two Brahmins. They do not however indicate either the place of Sadayan's residence or his status. He was perhaps so great or so well known that his address was not thought necessary. The generosity of the donor in the inscription bears out the tribute paid by Kamban in the above said stanzas. Still the difficulty arises whether this Sadayan was the patron

of Kamban for want of specific evidence. From the traditional account mentioned in *Chola Mandala Sathakam* and *Tamil Navalar Sarithai* on the one hand and inscriptions at Muvaloor (M.A.R. No. 29 of 1925) and of Thirukkodika (M.A.R. No. 58 of 1930) on the other, we hear of other Sadayans. Sadayan of Ukkal inscription is certainly the earliest ; for, the other inscriptions through undated, are said to be later than or about the twelfth century. Ukkal inscriptions belong to the tenth and fifteenth year of Kambavarman who is said to be the younger son of Nandivarman III of *Nandikalambakam* fame and brother of Aparajithan (882-890 A.D.) and seems to have ruled over a small portion of Northern Thondai Mandalam after the conquest of Pallava Kingdom by the Chola King Aditya I. As many as twenty inscriptions are found in the Chingleput and North Arcot Districts referring to Kambavarman's rule. Sadayan of Ukkal inscriptions is therefore a man of the last quarter of the 9th century and hence a contemporary of Kamban

நீங்கு படலம்-35 is too general to identify it with any Chola ruler. சென்னி is a family name of all Chola rulers. Amalan (அமலன்) occurs in *Kulothunga Cholanula* line 157 along with அனகன் and அதுலன் and does not seem to apply to any one Chola king in particular (vide *Tamil Chudarmankal*, pp. 126—7). As for the identification of அமலன் with Uttama Chola by the Editors of Annamalai University Silver Jubilee Publication *Sundarakandam*, we will deal with it later. The only other reference is to வீரன் தியாக வினோதன் of which we have already dealt with. From these the champions of the 9th century argue that there was no eminent ruler in the time of Kamban and hence he did not mention any. The opposite school of thought however contend that this circumstance shows that Kamban was treated in a hostile manner by the contemporary Chola king and several stories were invented to show the nature of the quarrel between them. Our suggestion is that if in the light of the stray stanza in question, Kamban belongs to the period of interregnum between the fall of the Pallavas and the rise of the later Cholas, the absence of any reference to any one particular ruler is quite natural.

(d) V. V. S. Iyer relied on another circumstance namely the absence of any reference to Tanjore, Gangaikonda-Cholapuram, Madurai, Puhar, Uranthai and Palayarai in *Kamba Ramayanam*. It is full of the colour and atmosphere of the land of the Cauvery, the poet's home country and it is significant that he did not mention or even echo any thing about the mighty towns and palaces raised by the later Cholas. The poet is not conscious of their great achievements in building an empire and extending it overseas. V. V. S. Iyer therefore thought that Kamban must have lived earlier than the empire of the later Cholas. This also, would confirm the genuineness of the stanza in question. (Vide his edition of *Balakandam*—introduction).

We now take up the case of the champions of the 10th century. Their reasons are 1. The identification of 'Amalan' அமலன் with Uttama Cholan (970-85). 2. The

stanza beginning with ஆவின் கொடைச்சகரர் ஆயிரத்து நூறுழித்து relied on by the champions of the 12th century with a different interpretation.

The first reason is untenable. The stanza reads :

புவிபுகழ் சென்னி பேரமலன் தோள்புகழ்  
கவிகள் தம்மனையென கனக ராசியும்  
சவியுடைத் தூசுமென் சாந்து மாலையும்  
அவிரிழைக் குப்பையும் அளவில் லாதது. -- பிலநீங்கு படலம் 35

If Kamban really wanted to do honour to the ruling Cholas, it is difficult to see that he would have chosen to do it in such an obscure place such as பிலநீங்கு படலம் and that too in the form of a

glorious epoch of Tamil history falls within this period. Under Rajaraja I (985-1013) the Chola kingdom grew to be an empire, and under his son and grandsons (1025-1069) it reached its height, and under them it spread overseas over the Indian ocean in South East Asia including a great portion of Indonesia. The earliest date assigned by V. V. S. Iyer and others places Kamban in the period of the rise of Cholas before the foundation of the empire, while the latest date assigned by Vaiyapuri Pillai and others places him at its decline and the date assigned by the Annamalai University Silver Jubilee Publication places him at an advanced stage of its growth before it became an Empire. Now, the question arises whether Kamban lived before or after the rise of the later Chola Empire or when that empire was at its zenith.

(To be continued)

## Historical Writing on the Peoples of Asia South Asia Seminar

### Historical Ideas in Early Tamil Literature

K. K. PILLAY

#### INTRODUCTION :

It is indisputable that professedly historical works are conspicuous by their absence in early India. Several writers, commencing with Alberuni, the discerning scholar who visited the country in the 11th century A.D., have observed that Indians of the past, despite their high intellectual attainments, lacked the historic spirit. This feature is as much true of the Tamils as of the rest of the Indians.

However, the Sangam classics, comprising the extant literary works of the early Tamils, contain extraordinarily abundant data of historical value. They throw a flood of light on the political, and still more on the social and religious conditions of the early Tamils. But the determination of the chronology of the Sangam age on the one hand, and the sifting of the historical data from the vast mass of miscellaneous material on the other, is by no means easy. The origin of the Sangam, the celebrated literary Academy, is itself enshrouded in mystery.

#### THE S'ANGAM

The earliest account of the S'angam appears in the Commentary on the *Iṟaiyanār Ahapporūl* (Grammar of Tamil Poetry)<sup>1</sup> which is not assignable to a date earlier

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. S. K. Aiyangar: *Beginnings of South Indian History* (1918) pp. 249-56 for an account of the legend and P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar: *History of the Tamils* (1929), pp. 226-30 for a critical examination of the legend.

than 8th century A.D. Moreover, it is coloured by the belief in the supernatural agency. It speaks of three successive S'āṅgams which lasted altogether for 9,990 years and had in the aggregate 8,598 poets, who included certain gods as well! On the face of it this account is incredible.

Nevertheless, the entire tradition concerning the Academy does not seem to have been a fiction, for in the first place, traditions do not arise normally without any basis. Secondly, certain kings and poets figure in more than one classic of the S'āṅgam age. Apparently, fact and fiction seem to have become mixed up in the account recorded in the Commentary on the *Ṛṇaiyanār Ahapporuḷ*. While it is quite probable that an academy of poets flourished under the patronage of the Pāṇḍyan kings, as mentioned in the *Vēlvikkudi grant*,<sup>2</sup> many of the details concerning the S'āṅgam are clearly figments of the myth-maker's imagination.

It is not possible to determine whether there existed three S'āṅgams or only one. The legend that the Pāṇḍyan kings changed their capitals twice before they settled in the present Madurai, is supported partly by the reference in the *Mahābhārata* and by the evidence of Pliny.<sup>3</sup> The fact of the three capitals was perhaps responsible for the legend of the three S'āṅgams. Tradition is, however, persistent that the two earlier S'āṅgams had produced numerous literary works, most of which have perished and that the extant classics are mainly the products of the third S'āṅgam. It must be admitted that it is impossible to arrive at a finality in respect of this question.

CHRONOLOGICAL BASIS: Nor do the extant S'āṅgam works provide a firm chronological foothold for the history

<sup>2</sup> Madras Epigraphist's Report for 1908, pp. 50 ff. That there flourished a S'āṅgam is evident from the statement alleged to have been made by Nedunjelian, the victor of the battle of Talayāḷanganam, that if he were to be defeated, the extent of his kingdom should not be sung by poets of world-wide renown, the chief of whom was Māṅgudi Marudan of great eminence (*Puram*, 72).

<sup>3</sup> *Mahabharata*, Par IX, 36. See also E. H. Warmington: *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India*, (1928) p. 167.

of the early Tamils. The determination of the age of the S'āṅgam has proved a vexed problem, for speculation on it has ranged from 500 B.C. to A.D. 500 not to speak of the extreme views on its upper and lower limits.<sup>4</sup> Doubtless, the Academy flourished prior to the 7th century A.D. because of the S'aiva hymnists, Sambandar and Appar, who were the contemporaries of Pallava Narasimhavarman I of 7th century A.D. refer to the S'āṅgam.<sup>5</sup> Besides it is obvious that several centuries must have intervened before the rather archaic style of the

A.D. 500.<sup>7</sup> But this challenge is based on a doubtful hypothesis. The language of these inscriptions represents a hybrid of Prākṛit and Tamil and not the real Tamil of the age.<sup>8</sup>

The extant S'aṅgam literature comprises the eight anthologies called *Eṭṭuttogai* of short lyrics and the Ten Idylls known as *Pattuppāṭṭu*.<sup>9</sup> These poems are broadly classifiable into two groups, viz., those called 'Puram' works which deal with external matters like war and patronage of king and 'Aham' works which concern themselves with love.<sup>10</sup> The anthologies and Idylls were no doubt compiled several centuries after the S'aṅgam age. Further, all the works in each of these categories were not composed at the same time either. Even verses in the *Puṇānūru* belong to different periods of time within the S'aṅgam age. *Kalittogai* and *Paripāḍal* seem to be later than *Ahanānūru*, while *Tirumurugārruppadai* among the Ten Idylls was unquestionably a late composition, posterior to the 3rd century A.D.

According to tradition the *Eighteen Minor works* called *Patinenkīlkanakku*, as well as the two great epics, *Maṇimekhalai* and *S'ilappadikāram*, are classed among the S'aṅgam classics. But the language as well as the ideas contained in most of them indicate a later date for them. However, all the '18 didactic poems', as they are described, do not belong to the same time, though they were grouped together because of the 'venbā' metre in which all these

<sup>7</sup> Dr. N. P. Chakravarti: Presidential address to the 17th session of the Indian History Congress, December, 1954.

<sup>8</sup> K. K. Pillay: 'The South Indian Brahmi Inscriptions and the Sangam Age', *Tamil Culture*, April, 1956.

<sup>9</sup> See V. R. R. Dikshitar: op. cit. pp. 24-45 for a brief account of the extant works of the Sangam literature.

<sup>10</sup> Among the *Eṭṭuttogai* anthologies, *Puṇānūru*, and *Padirruppattu* deal with Puram, and *Narrinai*, *Kurundogai*, *Aingurunuru*, *Kalittogai* and *Ahananuru* with Aham, while *Paripāḍal* partakes of the characteristics of both. Among the Ten Idylls, *Porunararruppadai*, *Sirupanarruppadai*, *Perumpanarruppadai*, *Tirumurugarruppadai*, and *Malaipadukadam* are laudatory poems on patrons, and *Mullaippattu*, *Nedunālvadai*, *Kurinjipattu* and *Pattinappalai* are love poems, while *Maduraikkanchi*

S'āṅgam works.<sup>12</sup> It is interesting to find that a recent writer proceeding on astronomical data furnished by *S'ilappadikāram* and its famous commentator, *Aḍiyārku-nallār*, suggests A.D. 465 as the date for the composition of the epic.<sup>13</sup>

tempt of those rulers who failed to treat them in the befitting manner.<sup>17</sup> Thus the poets maintained their self-respect, despite their poverty. Their poems were generally true to their convictions, though extravagant praises of generous patrons have occasionally found their way into the poems

























































































































































