

EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCES FOR TAMIL STUDIES

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Epigraphical Evidences For Tamil Studies

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இந்தூல் 1981 சனவரியில் மதுரையில் நடைபெறவிருக்கும் ஐந்தாவது உலகத் தமிழ் மாநாட்டையொட்டி வெளியிடப் பெடுகிறது.

FOREWORD

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Dr. A. Velupillai, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Tamil, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka came here as our Visiting Professor in the International Institute of Tamil Studies for a period of three months in July, August and September 1980. He has delivered six lectures on the "Epigraphical Evidences for Tamil Studies".

Dr. Velupillai, a well known Scholar in Tamil, in his pioneering work 'Epigraphical Evidences' deals with the origin and development of Tamil Palaeography, the influence of Tamil Nadu script in South East Asia, the common features of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, the impact of Buddhism and Jainism on the Tamils and the history of Tamil Language in a detailed and critical manner and has based his analysis on epigraphical sources. Though this work appears to be a survey of the hitherto published materials, it has a peculiar and distinct tone. He analyses the problem in hand from different profiles. He does not hesitate to present the views of various scholars and he does it without any prejudice.

His analytical bent of mind is discernible when he deals with the origin and development of Tamil script in the first chapter. He is of the view that the Tamil script is an adoption or a modified form of the ancient Tamil Brahmi script. His bold attempt in defying the stand of various scholars regarding the origin of Tamil script—that the Tamil Brahmi script is derived from Indus Valley Script—deserves to be recognised. Eventhough he recognises the theory of the indigenous origin of the Tamil Script, he unfalteringly establishes that the Tamil

script has undergone a change, if not a sea-change as against the view that the Tamil script has never undergone any change. He shares the common view regarding the Grantha Tamil, Vattam scripts and the influence of Sanskrit on Tamil Language. Dr. Pillai, convincingly disproves Mr. Kannian's theory of Koleluttu as a separate script. He explains the three stages of development in the Tamil Palaeography too.

In the second chapter, he speaks of the influence of Tamil script, in ancient times, in South East Asian countries like Burma, Thailand, Sumatra, China and New Zealand. His assertion, after reviewing in detail the works of various scholars in this field, that the influence of the Pallava script is invariably found in the scripts of the South East Asian Countries is really commendable. His citizenship and his rich academic experience in Sri Lanka must have helped him a lot, when he comes to analyse the Palaeographical similarity between the Tamil and Sri Lanka epigraphical records. He strongly emphasises, that the Sri Lanka Tamil script must have been influenced by the Tamil Brahmi scripts and not by the Northern Brahmi script. This, he feels, is due to the constant cultural contact of the Tamils with the Sinhalese.

In the next chapter, the author makes an attempt to evaluate the epigraphical source relating to the contact between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. He says that the objective 'Ēl' found in 'Ēltenku Nāṭu' etc., bears some connection with the term 'Īlam'. His views on the derivation of the word 'Īlam' is highly interesting and thought-provoking. Also he feels that 'Yāḷppāṇam' must have originated from the word 'Ēlpaṇai Nāṭu'. Then he delves into the various aspects of the contact that the Tamils had with the Sinhalese. He takes into consideration, the Pali chronicles such as *Dīpavamsā*, *Mahāvamsā* and *Cuḷavamsā* to conform the epigraphical evidence of their contact.

In the fourth chapter, Dr. Pillai deals with Buddhism and its impact on the Tamil script. His critical temper is found expressed in his analysis of the impact of Buddhism on the

Tamil script through various stages. Here also he brings into picture the various works in this field. He does not fail to assert the influence of their Polemic skill on their philosophy, logic etc. Their influence on Tamil literature and grammar is also graphically touched upon. A sense of humour is also found in his discussion on the vegetarian and non-killing attitudes of the Buddhists. It is befitting to conclude the chapter with the causes of the disappearance of Buddhism in the 15th Century.

After elaborately talking about Buddhism he deals with Jainism in the next chapter. Here he traces the development of Jainism from the minority status it enjoyed in the third and fourth centuries to a get near acceptance in the 9th Century. In his wonted manner he has first reviewed all the available works in this connection. While, surveying its development, like a historian, he doesnot fail to point out its impact on the Tamil script. With all pride he expresses that many famous ancient Tamil writers belonged to this religion. He has not forgotten to talk about the Jaina's interest in commerce, their encounter with the Saivites and the Vaishnavites, the Digambara tradition, their Karma theory, peculiar place labels personal names etc. His analysis of its impact on the four Mandalas brings to light the rich cultural heritage of the Jains.

In the last chapter Dr. Pillai deals with the history of Tamil Language through epigraphical evidences. His scholarship finds itself expressed in his discussion on the phonemic, morpho-phonemic and morphological changes in the inscriptional language. He points out that the language in Pandian inscriptions alone comes very close to the standard Tamil. About the language in Sri Lanka inscriptions, he opines that they consist of two dialects of Sri Lanka—the Hindu and the Buddhist.

Dr. Velupillai's attempt will be, I hope, warmly received by Tamil Scholars. His scholarship, critical temper, common sense have gone in to the texture of this work. His language is flawless and unhalting. His simplicity of narration will definitely help even a beginner to grasp the subject well.

Adaiyaru
Madras-20.

S. V. Subramanian

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Epigraphical Evidences For Tamil Studies

TAMIL PALAEOGRAPHY : HISTORY OF DIFFERENT SCRIPTS

It is a popular misconception that language and script are the same or are very closely related. There are many languages in the world without scripts. In the course of the history of certain languages, some scripts are entirely abandoned and some other new scripts are adopted. Modifications of scripts also take place in the course of the history of certain languages. Quite recently, the Tamilnadu government has introduced some modifications of the existing Tamil script. The distinctiveness of language and script can also be realised from the fact that Robert Caldwell who was the first to establish scientifically that the Dravidian was an independent family of languages, had also pleaded in the same book that Tamil had adapted the Sanskrit alphabet to its needs.

The history of Tamil script does not go up to the history of Tamil language, not even up to the history of the literary dialect of Tamil language. The present Tamil script is closely related to the Grantha script. In Medieval times, the concept of one Grantha Tamil script, which encompassed both Grantha and Tamil, seems to have existed. For instance, in copper plate inscriptions of the Pandyas, where Grantha was used to write Sanskrit and Vaṭṭeḷuttu to write Tamil, Tamil words occurring in Sanskrit portions were written in Tamil script and not in Vattam script¹. Vattam seems to be the Tamil script par excellence in early Medieval times.

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1. Subramaniam, T.N., *South Indian Temple Inscriptions*, Vol.III, Part II, Madras Government Oriental Series, Madras, 1957, p.1536.

The most ancient written records in Tamil, so far discovered, are in Tamil Brahmi. The evolution of Vaṭṭam from Tamil Brahmi is now fairly clear. Tamil Brahmi should have contributed to the evolution of Grantha-Tamil also.

The Tamil Brahmi script is sometimes sought to be derived from the Indus Valley script. Dr. R. Nagaswamy (1968) has put forward this idea². He develops his idea from Kamil Zvelebil's article based on B.B. Lal's finding that ninety percent of South Indian pottery marks were seen in the writings of Harappa and Mohenjadarō. But as Iravatham Mahadevan (1970) has categorically stated, this cannot be proved³. Now, Subramaniam Malayandi claims that he had deciphered the Indus script and that he had found the language to be Centamil (Classical Tamil). According to him, the Cōḷas and the Pāndyas were ruling in the Indus Valley at that time. My opinion is that his attempt also will find a place among the unsuccessful attempts made to decipher the Indus Valley script. As in the previous attempts, he also does not have any 'Key' for decipherment. His findings are rather amusing⁴.

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2. R. Nagaswamy., Tamil Eḷuttukkaḷ, *Ulakat Tamil Māṇṇu Viḷa Malar*, Madras, 1968.

He has rightly stressed in that article the need to study the ancient script to understand well the phonology of Tolkappiyam. But in his argument, he has wrongly used the word Kuṟṟiyal for Kuṟil in two places.

3. Mahadevan, Iravatham., *Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions*, State Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnadu, 1970.
4. Malayandi Sabramaniam., The Language and Cultural Heritage of the Indus Script, *Heritage of the Tamils: Language and Grammar*, Ed., S.V. Subramaniam and K.M. Irulappan, International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras, 1980, pp.466-471.

Some of his statements are as follows :-

'In the IV Congress of the Epigraphical Society of India, while offering my remarks on the findings of Thiru Iravatham Mahadevan on 11.1.1978 in the Museum Theatre, Madras, I declared the Indus Script has been deciphered by me'.

There is a hypothesis that a well developed Tamil script existed to write Tamil manuscripts, quite distinct from Tamil Brahmi. S. Ilakkuvanar (1968) has put forward this view⁵. According to him, the Tamil script in its present form existed from remote antiquity. That script used to write books has not undergone modification. Probably he is not aware that till recently these were no printed books and that script has undergone certain modification even when compared to the printed books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A.D. Further, if, as he says, the changes in script reflected in inscriptions is due to the ignorance of the scribes or the engravers, it will not be possible to trace the evolution of scripts, from the recorded inscriptions. It is useless wasting time on such outmoded theories.

Once Tamil-Brahmi is accepted as the most ancient script in Tamilnadu, the question arises whether it was developed for the Dravidian or Tamil. T.N. Subramanian (1957) has put forward the hypothesis that it was originally Tamil script and that it was taken over by Prakrit, which according to him was a synthesis of Dravidian and Aryan.⁶ As Professor T.V. Mahalingam says, it is difficult to accept this hypothesis in the present stage of our knowledge⁷. V. Kannaiyan puts forward the idea of the Tamil origin of Brahmi still more strongly⁸ but he has

‘The gender, tiṇai, number and other grammatical aspects indicate the language to be centamil’.

‘I have found out by a reading of majority of the seals, Mohenjaddaro and Harappa were found to have been ruled by Cōla and Pāṇḍiya dynasties’.

5. Ilakkuvanar, Dr. S.,—Tamil Varivaṭṭaṅkaḷ, *Ulakat Tamil māṇāṭu viḷā malar*, Madras, 1968.
6. Subramaniam, T.N. Op. Cit., pp. 1587-1609.
7. Mahalingam, T.V., *Early South Indian Palaeography*, University of Madras, Madras, 1967, p.83.
8. Kannaiyan, V., *Scripts in and around India*, Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, Madras, 1960, Introduction, p.5.

According to him, the cave inscriptions of Tamilnadu preserve the earliest writing so far discovered in India; Asoka borrowed this script from the extreme South; Tamilnadu was so civilized in Asoka's reign that he who conquered nearly the whole of the Indian sub-continent, did not dare to conquer Tamilnadu,

not made any attempts to argue his case. We are inclined to agree with Iravatham Mahadevan (1970) who gives a number of reasons why Brahmi must have been originally meant for Sanskrit⁹. Dr. Nagaswamy (1980) is a strong protagonist of the theory of Tamil adopting Northern Brahmi to its needs.¹⁰

The origin of Brahmi is still a subject for heated arguments. Even the actual name of the script in Ancient India was unknown. Lalitavistara, a Buddhist work assigned to the sixth century A.D. enumerates sixty four scripts of which Brahmi heads the list. Samavayanga Sutta of the first century A.D., a Jaina Prakrit work enumerates eighteen scripts of which Brahmi heads the list. The Brahmins have a habit of ascribing the origin of everything to the creator-god Brahma. So the ancient Indian script has been termed Brahmi by modern palaeographers. Those who have contributed to the question of the origin of Brahmi fall into two broad divisions:- those who advocate a foreign origin and those who advocate an indigenous origin. Most Western scholars have advocated the foreign origin of Indian Brahmi. The Greek origin, the Chinese origin, the Assyrian origin and the Semitic origin are the different points of view advocated by different Western Scholars.¹¹ There is no support for the first three views among modern scholars. The theory of Semitic origin branches into three sections in advocating the origin of Brahmi from (a) Phoenecian (b) South Semitic and (c) North Semitic. Here too, the first two sections are not being seriously advocated by any modern scholar. The theory of North Semitic origin for Brahmi is seriously advocated even now. Diringier subscribes to this theory. Dani (1963) has again advocated the theory in strong terms.¹² Iravatham Mahadevan (1970) feels that this theory has not yet been satisfactorily rebutted.

9. Mahadevan, Iravatham., Op.Cit.

10. R. Nagaswamy., Origin of Brahmi Script, Ed. S P. Gupta and K.S. Ramachandran, Delhi, 1980, pp. 72-82.

11. Mahalingam, T.V., Op.Cit. pp.43-86.

12. Dani, A.H., *Indian Palaeography*, Oxford University Press, 1963, pp.23-30.

A new publication on the origin of Brahmi has just come out.¹³ Two Indian scholars - Dr. S.R. Goyal and Dr. K.V. Soundara Rajan have contributed two Keynote papers and a number of eminent Indian archaeologists and palaeographers have contributed their comments. All indigenous scholars have argued for an indigenous origin. After the discovery of the Indus Valley script, the theory of the indigenous origin for Brahmi has gained respectability. Even Dani (1963) has conceded that the Indian Pandits have devised the Brahmi script to suit their language, basing themselves on North Semitic. The indigenous scholars who have participated in the project to explore the origin of Brahmi have not accepted the portion 'basing themselves on North Semitic'. According to K.V. Soundara Rajan, Brahmi was not an instant miracle. He makes use of the recent findings of Professor Gift Siromoney of Madras Christian College that the Brahmi letters are made up of geometrical figures like the square, circle, cross, etc. to arrive at the conclusion that it could not have been derived from any pre-existing script. He relies on grammatical evidence to say that there was some knowledge of writing in Panini's time. There is controversy about Panini's age but he takes the conservative line and ascribes him to ninth and tenth centuries B.C.

Dr. S.R. Goyal has argued that the Maurya rulers invented Brahmi somewhere in the third century B.C. The absence of regional or local variations has been ascribed to such origin. According to him, the knowledge of foreign scripts was there but no foreign script was the basis for Brahmi. K.G. Krishnan the Chief Epigraphist of the Office of the Government Epigraphist for India, pleads that Tamil Brahmi too should be taken to consideration when the origin of Brahmi is determined. R. Nagaswamy agrees with Dr. Goyal and shows how this script became universally accepted for the whole country including South India. He asserts that the religious zeal of

13. Same as note (10).

Asoka was responsible for its wide acceptance but it was the Jainas and the traders who brought this script to Tamilnadu where in the extreme South, inscriptions are ascribable to the first century B.C.

The designation for the most ancient script of Tamilnadu also remains controversial. It was Bubber who first postulated a distinct South Brahmi which he termed Dravidi, which idea he seems to have derived when he edited Bhattiprolu inscriptions. The term Dravidi occurs first in *Lalitavistara*, a Sanskrit Buddhist work. The term Damili occurs in *Samavayanga Sutta*, a Prakrit Jaina Work. R. Nagaswamy is mainly responsible for popularising this name, as to be seen in Kalvetiyai (1972)¹⁴. Iravatham Mahadevan coined the new term Tamil Brahmi as that script was essentially Brahmi, adapted to the needs of the Tamil language. Going through Nagaswamy's arguments on the most ancient script of Tamil nadu, we are not sure whether he still subscribes to the designation Damili script. He demolishes all the points, generally advanced to establish the distinctive character of that script.¹⁵ But Nagaswamy's (1980) reference in another publication to the discovery of four bilingual coins of the successive rulers of the Satavahana dynasty of the first and second centuries A.D. seems to be of great significance¹⁶. Panneerselvam discussed some years ago the significance of the bilingual coin from the point of view of Tamil palaeography¹⁷. K.V. Soundara Rajan belittled its importance that the writing of Tamil language in Tamil Brahmi might have been prompted by the need to use such coins in trade with Tamilnadu.¹⁸ Now, the discovery of

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14. Nagaswamy, R., *Tamil E[uttuka]*—Kalvetiyai, Ed. Four persons, State Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnadu, 1972.
 15. Ref: Note 10.
 16. Nagaswamy, R., *Fresh Light on Dravidian People—Art and Culture of Tamilnadu*, Delhi, 1980, pp.30-34.
 17. Panneerselvan, R., Further light on the Bilingual coin of the Satavahanas, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol XI, No.4 (1969) Mouton, The Hague, pp.281-288.
 18. Soundara Rajan, K.V., *Glimpses of Indian Culture, History and Archaeology*, Delhi, 1980, p.272.

many coins of successive rulers at places far beyond Tamilnadu has many implications. Does the so-called Tamil of these coins denote the ancient Dravidian which has not yet separated into Tamil and Telugu? Does the so-called Tamil Brahmi denote a script which is well-known in Andhradesa also? Does the bilingual nature of the coins reflect dichotomy in Andhradesa between the ruling classes of Indo-Aryan origin and the ruled common people of Dravidian origin?

The dating of Tamil Brahmi records remain controversial. Comparing them to Asokan Brahmi records, K.V. Subramania Ayyar considered them contemporaneous as he felt that some of the forms could be even older than Asokan letter forms.¹⁹ Basing himself on Sittannavasal cave inscription and Arikamedu potsherd inscriptions which had been dated on C/14 dating techniques, Dani felt that the entire cave inscriptions have to be dated to the First century A.D. Professor T.V. Mahalingam was the first to introduce a system of staggered dates. According to him, the date of the cave inscriptions range from the third century B.C. to the third or the fourth Century A.D. Iravatham Mahadevan followed him in the system of staggered dates but he modified the chronological table from the second century B.C. to the sixth century A.D.²⁰ Both Mahalingam and Mahadevan divide the Brahmi inscriptions of Tamilnadu into earlier (Pre-Arikamedan) and later (Post-Arikamedan) inscriptions. It is strange that the earlier inscriptions exhibit many characteristics, distinctive to Tamil Brahmi while the later inscriptions tend to conform to the characteristics of Brahmi.

Some other scholars also have contributed to this question of dating of the Tamil Brahmi records. D.C. Sircar brings the date of these inscriptions forward to the second century A.D.

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19. Subramaniya Ayyar, K.V., *The Earliest Movements of the Pandya Country and their inscriptions—Proceeding and Transactions of the Third Oriental Conference, Madras, 1924*, pp.275-300.
 20. Mahadevan, Iravatham., *Corpus of the Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions—Seminar on Inscriptions, Madras, 1968*.

but he does not give reasons.²¹ K.V. Soundara Rajan (1980) chides Iravatham Mahadevan and others for giving definite staggered dates without taking into consideration other relevant fields like archaeology, numismatics and other fields. According to him, inscriptions at the behest of Kings or coin issues of such kings would imply a governmental scrutiny of the grammatical or scribal norms then prevailing in society, they should be deemed as standard or sanctioned uniform usages in the tract of their provenance. The Pugaliyur record and the bilingual coins of Vasisthiputra Sri Satakarni are cases in point. In a comparative study of palaeography, the manner of occurrence and provenance of such early records should be taken into consideration. In a cave shelter setting, the script has its relationship conditioned by the raw material, viz., granite rock, and the religious or social setting involving the patronage of Jaina ascetics by craftsmen and traders of various guilds and its historical perspective being highlighted by a seeming absence of any monarchical type of control over the transactions. The situation is somewhat different in the case of pottery engraved with such records as they would be reflective of wider social contacts. Reasoning this way, he dates the cave inscriptions from the first or second century A.D. to the fourth and fifth century A.D. Nagaswamy (1980) has given the first century B.C. at least as the date for the early cave inscriptions.

It is disappointing to note that the few available cave inscriptions of Tamilnadu lead to so much controversy in dating. So far, the only available scientific dating like C/14 dating is available for Arikamedu potsherd inscriptions only. According to Kodumudi S. Shanmugam, the State Department of Archaeology of Tamilnadu, in its Korkai excavations, have collected potsherds with Tamil letters and figures of the Indus Valley civilization and C/14 dating at this excavation has revealed the

21. Sircar, D.C., *Indian Epigraphy*, Delhi, 1965,

period to be eighth century B.C.²² But, Nagaswamy, (1980) the head of the Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology, has denied the existence of any evidence for use of a script in the South prior to the cave inscriptions.

The dating of the Tamil Brahmi records has aroused such interest, only because it is related to the dating of the Sangam literature. As the language of the cave records seem unsystematised, it is surmised that the cave inscriptions belong to an earlier age and the literary polished dialect of Sangam literature belongs to a later age. In fixing the date of the Sangam period, Professor K.A. Nilakanda Sastri (1955) used this argument.²³ Professor T.P. Meenakshisundaram (1965) subscribes to this thought in his *History of Tamil Language*. K.V. Soundara Rajan (1980) reiterates this point strongly as follows :

“Earliest Cankam hero stones do not go, at present earlier than the early sixth century A.D. With the linking of their still earlier proto-vaṭṭeṭuttu stages in older records like Pugaliyur, etc., this would yield a date such as fourth-fifth century A.D. for these Sangam classics, a date which was suggested by Vaiyapuri Pillai already for most of the Sangam classics”.

We are strong admirers of Professor Vaiyapuri Pillai not because we agree with all his datings but because he made Tamil scholars think on scientific and constructive lines by putting forward provocative ideas. As students of the history of Tamil language and literature, we are very well aware that what goes by the name of Sangam and Post-Sangam (Or Kalabra) periods of Tamil literature cannot be squeezed in to fit into the chronological period of fourth to the sixth centuries A.D.

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22. Shanmugam, Kodumudi, S., *Palaeography—Heritage of the Tamils: Language and Grammar*, Ed. S.V. Subramaniam and K.M. Irulappan, International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras, 1980, pp.455-465.
 23. Nilakanda Sastri, K.A., *A History of South India*, Madras, 1955,

One way out of this difficulty is to assume that Sangam poetry were oral compositions and that anthologies of them were made later when a Tamil script had been adapted for Tamil language. Professor K. Kailasapathy (1968) has put forward such a view.²⁴ But George L. Hart III has ably refuted this view and has asserted that the Sangam poetry were written compositions.²⁵ So, there is no point in pursuing the theory of oral composition further.

Another way out of this difficulty is to assure that writing came to Tamilnadu in Asoka's reign, if not soon afterwards and that writing had evolved to a higher level when compared to contemporary Tamil Brahmi inscriptions. Both Sangam literary compositions and early grammatical works (if not Tolkappiyam, at least the works referred to in Tolkappiyam) should be assumed to have been written in manuscripts earlier than the age of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions. The possibility of manuscripts, reflecting a later stage and of inscriptions reflecting an earlier stage in the development of script, even though they are contemporaneous has been brought out by Dani in the following episodes.²⁶

‘Max Muller notes the following tradition regarding the ownership of the manuscript: ‘We have good evidence showing that the leaves were brought to Japan in A.D. 609 and that they came from China. It is further probable that in China, they belonged to the monk Yashi who died in A.D. 577 and before him to Bodhidharma, who emigrated from India, to China in A.D. 520’. Relying on this tradition, Buhler adds ‘Leaving all

24. Kailasapathy, K., *Tamil Heroic Poetry*, Oxford University Press, 1968.

25. Hart III, George L. *The Poems of Ancient Tamils: Their Milieu and their Sanskrit Counterparts*, California, 1975.

26. Dani, A.H., *Op.Cit.*, pp.151-152.
He quotes from Maxmuller and B. Nanjo *The Ancient Palm Leaves* (Horiuzi Palm-leaf Ms.); *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, Vol.1, part III, Oxford, 1884, pp.90,93.

probabilities aside, it is certain that this manuscript, which evidently has been written by an Indian scribe, cannot date later than the first half of the sixth century A.D.' Later he remarks: 'If we had no historical information regarding the age of the Horiuzi palm leaves, every palaeographer, I believe, would draw from the above facts the inference that they belonged to the beginning of the eighth century A.D.' Finally he draws the conclusion: 'They clearly illustrate the truth of the maxim that the inscriptions are not safe guides for the investigation of the Indian alphabet, but that in the development of letters, they lag behind the literary documents'.

Dani quoted the above to illustrate another point but as a palaeographer, he did not like this to be quoted for the purpose for which we are quoting. So, Dani's interesting comment follows:-

"This maxim is probably true when two allied scripts are used one for the inscriptions and the other for literary purposes or business documents. Examples can be cited for the simultaneous use of Hieratic and Demotic in ancient Egypt.....But when the same script is employed for inscriptions and literary documents, the difference will be merely stylistic unless a particular archaic form is deliberately preserved..... In the case of Indian inscriptions, there is no reason to believe that the archaic form was deliberately preserved. On the other hand, the epigraphic writing shows changes that are traceable to the literary style because the new forms seen in the form of letters are the natural result of the technique of the pen rather than that of the engraver". Dani seems to have forgotten what he is talking about. When the maxim itself has been formulated on the basis of Indian palaeographical evidence, Dani here tries to argue that this maxim will not apply to Indian palaeography.

In the Tamilnadu context, the history of Tamilnadu scripts can be worked out on the basis of epigraphical evidence only.²⁷ Both Tamil inscriptions as well as Tamil literature can be said to have roughly two thousand years of history. The available Tamil manuscripts are not more than two or three centuries old. Printing stabilised the Tamil script not very long ago. Inscriptions preserve the letter forms of the period in which they were written. This study will continue under three broad heads:-(a) Publications on Tamil Palaeography, (b) Influence of Cultural Developments on Tamilnadu scripts and (c) Changes in letter forms of the Tamil script.

(a) Publications on Tamil Palaeography

Till recently, the names of Buhler and Ojha dominated the Indian palaeographical scene. But Dani (1963) has brought a new dimension to the study of Indian palaeography. He says in his preface:-

"It is only in the background of the cultural evolution that the writing styles can be properly followed and changes in them adequately explained. In the absence of this understanding, the letters become mere shapes produced whimsically at random, but that is hardly true of any system of writing. The letter forms are a part of culture, and palaeography defines them within that culture".

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27. Veluppillai, A., has been working on Tamil Palaeography for more than ten years. In fact, he published a review of Indian Palaeography (A.H. Dani) in *oriental Art*, Vol X, Oxford in 1964. He read a paper reviewing publications on Tamil Palaeography at the Second International Conference Seminar of Asian Archaeology in Colombo in 1969. This is published in *Ancient Ceylon* 3, Archaeological Department, Colombo, 1980. He has published a paper on 'Tamil Palaeography as an aspect of Culture' in *Senerat Paranavitana Commemoration Volume*, E.J. Brill, Leyden, 1978. What follows in this lecture has been drawn freely from those publications and from 'Cācānamum Tamiḷum' (1971), a Tamil publication of his.

In this light, books on Tamil palaeography will be reviewed.

A.C. Burnell (1874) was the pioneer in the field with his *Elements of South Indian Palaeography*. Caldwell had reviewed some of his views next year.²⁸

For our purpose, it is enough to concentrate on publications of the present century. T.A. Gopinatha Rao, the first person to make a substantial contribution to Tamil palaeography in the present century, complains that South India had not attracted the due attention from palaeographers. He has contributed two chapters, one 'A Chapter on the Evolution of Grantha Tamil Alphabet' and the other 'Specimens of Vatteluttu inscriptions' to Travancore Archaeological Series, Volume I. He treats Grantha and Tamil separately. He begins by giving a numeral or a letter from Brahmi and goes on to show how it developed into the later Grantha and Tamil letter forms. At the end of the chapter, he gives diagrams illustrating Tamil and Grantha scripts of different periods. In the other chapter, he gives an introductory history of Vatteluttu and then gives specimens. T.N. Subramanian followed him with essays on Tamil palaeography to *Kalaimagal*. Later this appeared in the form of a book in Tamil. Sivaramamurthi was the next to make a substantial contribution in his publication 'Indian Epigraphy and South Indian Scripts' (1957).²⁹ Devoting one page to one letter, he illustrates the development of that letter in all parts of India. The page opposite will carry a discussion of the changing shapes of the letter. Dani criticises this work as suitable only for exhibition in a museum setting as this does not account for the changing of shapes.

28. Caldwell, Robert, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages*, Second Edition, Madras, 1975.

29. Sivaramamurthi, C., *Indian Epigraphy and South Indian scripts*, Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, 1957.

T.N. Subramanian (1957) developed his ideas and published a section on Tamil palaeography in the last issue of South Indian Temple inscriptions series¹⁰. Unlike the earlier palaeographers, he has taken script by script in the total context. The development of each script is dealt with in stages roughly corresponding to historical periods. When Dani's work appeared in 1963, we had the opportunity to write a review to it.

Other notable contributions in this field are T.V. Mahalingam's Early South Indian Palaeography (1967) and Kalvettiyal (1972). The earlier work deals with Tamil Brahmi inscriptions only but it adopts an academic approach and gives lot of information on related fields. He has reviewed previous attempts at decipherment of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions and he found two defects in the study of K.V. Subramania Ayyar, that he had not utilised classical Tamil literature to interpret these records and that he had not noticed the existence of two stages of script. He has also given a chronological table for these cave inscriptions. Now, Iravatham Mahadevan's masterly readings are generally accepted. Kalvettiyal, a publication of the Tamilnadu State Archaeological Department, has come out with contributions from four authors. The early part deals with chapters on the history of Tamilnadu scripts. Nagaswamy asserts that the early script should be called Damili or Tamili. The history of Tamil and Vaṭṭam scripts are claimed to go to the third century A.D.

Dani seems to subscribe to the theory that culture always moved from the North to the South. Therefore, he uses strong language when he refers to the Far South and Sri Lanka. He refers to writing 'trickling down to barbarous hill caves of the South'. Most of the peculiarities in the scripts of Bhattiprolu, Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka, he dismisses as 'mistakes' and 'scribal errors'. If he were familiar with Sangam literature, he would not have gone so far to run down Tamilakam.

30. Subramanian, T.N., Op. Cit.

By seventh century A.D., Grantha, Tamil and Vattam scripts have come into existence and frequent use. Telugu-Kannada script is closely related to the three scripts. Of all these, the relationship between Tamil and Grantha is the closest. Letters like, u, ū, k, ā, t, n, y and v are written in the same manner. Letters like a, ā, i, ō, an, ṭ, r, l and ḷ are written slightly differently. Grantha and Tamil also evolved in the same manner. When the Tamil and Grantha sections of Kuram copper plates of Parameswaravarman are compared, letters like u, ṭ, ṇ, t, n, y and v and medial vowel signs of ā, i, ī, ē and ō resemble each other. There is only slight difference in letters like k and r and in the medial vowel sign for u. This close relationship led to various theories. Ellis thought that the Aryans took over the Tamil script, added new letters needed for Sanskrit and named it Grantha. T.N. Subramanian thought that the Pallavas had introduced both Grantha and Tamil scripts into Tamilnadu.

The relationship of these two scripts with Vaṭṭam also raised speculations. Burnell (1874) thought that Vaṭṭam was derived from Phoenician or Aramic. He believed that Vattam had an origin, independent of Asokan Brahmi. According to him, Tamil had replaced vaṭṭam which was very old. Caldwell criticised this view. Gopinatha Rao agrees with Caldwell and asserts that Vaṭṭam developed from Brahmi. Sivaramamurthi thought that Vaṭṭeḷuttu was a cursive form of Tamil script. He believed that Vaṭṭam had replaced Tamil in the southern districts. Nothing that Vaṭṭam had been prevalent not only in Pandya and Kerala territories but also in Kongu and some other northern districts of Tamilnadu. T.N. Subramanian has rightly pointed out that Vaṭṭam was once prevalent throughout Tamilnadu and later Tamil script began to supersede it.

T.N. Subramanian (1957) traces three stages in the development of Tamil script: ancient (before 900 A.D.), medieval (900-1250 A.D.) and modern (from 1250 A.D.—). But two stages only are clearly marked. Gopinatha Rao points to the

presence of dot to distinguish the short e and o from long ē and ō until the eleventh century in inscriptions. This dot is not seen in later inscriptions. According to Sivaramamurthi, writing curves for angles was the prevalent tendency in Tamil inscriptions up to the eleventh century and then from the latter part of the eleventh century, this tendency has been reversed. Unfortunately, he had not developed these ideas and related them to the cultural background.

When Gopinatha Rao was discussing about Vaṭṭeḷuttu, he referred to its decline from the eighth century, its disappearance from Pandyanadu from the eleventh century and its inability to withstand Malayalam script in Kerala. Sivaramamurthi has given Vaṭṭeḷuttu examples up to the eleventh century A.D. only. It is not clear why he stopped there. Up to fourteenth century A.D., it remained the popular script in Kerala.

The adoption of Dani's concept of the study of palaeography as an aspect of culture to the study of Tamil palaeography will be more fruitful.

(b) Influence of Cultural Developments on Tamilnadu Scripts

From the seventh century A.D., there is copious evidence to trace the continuous development of the Grantha, the Vaṭṭam and the Tamil scripts. Kannaiyan (1960) takes the Kōḷeḷuttu as the script of the Pandya Kingdom. According to him, Vaṭṭam was the script of the Pandya Kingdom and the script of the Cōḷa region was probably a mixture of the other two scripts. He mentions the existence of inscriptional evidence to illustrate the varieties of those scripts. However, we have not come across any evidence for the Kōḷeḷuttu in the Pandya inscriptions. The Pandya Vaṭṭeḷuttu records date from the sixth or the seventh century while the Kerala inscriptions date from the end of the ninth century. Therefore the earliest Kerala inscriptions, in consonance with the general trend in South India of those times had more rounded characters than the earliest

Pandya inscriptions. Thus the slight difference in shape might be due to the difference in time only. Furthermore, Gopinatha Rao has observed that among the early Vaṭṭam inscriptions, some have more angular and less curved lines and several palaeographers thought that these inscriptions were earlier than inscriptions with letters of a more curved appearance.³¹ Perhaps Kannaiyan thought that these inscriptions were in Kōleḷuttu and that that script was a special feature of the Pandya Kingdom. Palaeographers like Gopinatha Rao, Sivaramamurti, T.N. Subramanian, Mahalingam and Iravatham Mahadevan did not feel that the scripts of the Kerala and Pandya Kingdoms were different. The scripts of these two countries were included under Vaṭṭam by all these palaeographers and we do not find any ground for questioning this treatment. In addition there is evidence from the Kurralam inscription in the Tinnevely District, once part of the Pandya Kingdom, that the script prevalent in that territory was called Vaṭṭam.³² There is no controversy about the script prevalent in Kerala being Vaṭṭam.

Both the Tamil script and the Vaṭṭam script were meant for writing the Tamil language. It is not possible to explain why a single language develops two scripts at the same time, in the same locality, for writing in the same material. Therefore it is difficult to accept the claim of some recent palaeographical writings that the beginnings of both Vaṭṭam and Tamil scripts can be seen in the same inscriptions of the third century A.D. Burnell gave an independent status to the Vaṭṭam script and felt that it might have evolved independent of Brahmi. He must have been influenced in his view by the great antiquity claimed for the earliest phase of Tamil literature. As the Grantha-Tamil script was closely associated with the Pallavas, who claimed origin from North Indian Brahmins, he must have thought that Vaṭṭam prevalent in the Pandya country which

31. Gopinatha Rao., Op. Cit, p. 286.

32. Ibid.

was traditionally associated with the earliest phase of Tamil literature, must have been in existence from very ancient times. Burnell formulated his opinion when the study of Indian palaeography, was in its infancy. But Burnell's view continues to hold ground even now among some Tamil scholars who are unfamiliar with recent research on Indian palaeography.³³ Buhler challenged Burnell's view and put forward his own theory that Vaṭṭam was only a cursive form of the Tamil Script.³⁴ This led to fresh thinking on the subject. Gopinatha Rao rejected the theory of the independent origin of Vaṭṭam. According to him, both Vaṭṭam and Tamil, as other modern Indian scripts, developed out of Brahmi but subsequently underwent independent evolution. Sivaramamurti treated Vaṭṭam separately when he gave charts illustrating the development of South Indian scripts but his comments clearly show that he felt Vaṭṭam to be only a cursive form of the Tamil script. T.N. Subramaniam argued that Vaṭṭam was an ancient script prevalent throughout Tamilnadu and that the Tamil script, introduced by the Pallavas gradually superseded it.³⁵ Iravatham Mahadevan's view that Vaṭṭam evolved directly from Tamil Brahmi, seems sound. Some letters of Vaṭṭam are similar to certain letters of the Sinhala script of the medieval period. This is understandable not only because Tamil Brahmi and Sri Lanka Brahmi were quite similar and because of the geographical proximity of both areas but also because close political ties existed between them in medieval times. The indigenous character of Vaṭṭam must have been the reason for the adoption of this script by the Kerala and Pandya Kings.

Clear references to a script are found in Tolkappiyam, the earliest extant Tamil grammar. Though there is controversy

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33. See Kovindarajanar, S., Kaḷukumalai Tarum Vāralāru — *Āyvuḷkkōvai*, I.P.T.M. Tenth Seminar, Coimbatore, 1978.
 34. Buhler, G., Indian Palaeography, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXIII, 1904, Appendix, p.75.
 35. Subramaniam, T.N., Op. Cit, p. 1562.

about the date of this work and also about whether this work precedes or follows the Sangam poetry, this should be attributed to the early centuries of the Christian era, if not earlier. The available references establish the existence of one script only for the Tamil language and they can apply to later Tamil Brahmi or early proto-Vaṭṭam.

The Grantha script was closely associated with the South Indian Brahmins. Though there are references to Brahmins of South India, even in the earliest available Tamil literature, there is definite evidence that large number of brahmins with Sanskrit names were settled in various parts of Tamilnadu from about the seventh century A.D. When the Vedic religious revival commenced in South India, Sanskrit was the language of the Vedic religion and the study of Sanskrit was encouraged by the Pallavas and the Pandyas. The former had used the proto-Nagari of the North in some of their early records. But they also issued some Vaṭṭeluttu records.³⁶ It is quite possible that the Grantha-Tamil script evolved in the Pallava Kingdom as a sort of compromise between proto-Vaṭṭam and Proto-Nagari. At the beginning, local proto-Vaṭṭam might have been adapted with the addition of letters for additional sounds in sanskrit. The angular shape of letters in Proto-Nagari might have modified the curved shape of letters in proto-Vaṭṭam and the new Grantha script was probably born in the Pallava Kingdom. Same people were using the Grantha script to write Sanskrit and the proto-Vaṭṭam to write Tamil. In the Pallava territory, the letters of proto-Vaṭṭam, probably began to be written like the letters of the Grantha script. This could have been the origin of the Grantha-Tamil script. In this view, the proto-Vaṭṭam was also the proto-Tamil and the Grantha script was mainly an adaptation of the proto-Vaṭṭam. Dani says that the Grantha script was developed in South India but that its origin is obscure. However, its origin could be surmised.

36. Ibid, p.1561.

The origin of the term 'Tamil script' to denote the script of the Pallava territory can be guessed. This term might have been coined to distinguish the script for writing the Tamil language from the Grantha script used for writing Sanskrit. With the patronage of the Pallava rulers, the Grantha-Tamil script became dominant in the Pallava Kingdom which embraced the major portion of Tamilnadu. The Vedic religious revival originated in the Pallava region and spread to the Pandya and Kerala Kingdoms. The Grantha-Tamil script might have gone to these areas with the Vedic revival. Therefore, the Pandyas and the Keralas were using Grantha-Tamil and Vaṭṭam for the Sanskrit and the Tamil portions respectively of their inscriptions. These developments in South Indian palaeography reflect great cultural changes. Sanskritisation was taking place in South India. However, South India was not completely Sanskritised, as is proved by the fact the Nagari script was not adapted. It retained considerable individuality in the Pallava region and even more so in the Pandya and Kerala Kingdoms.

Till about the eleventh century A.D., Grantha, Tamil and Vaṭṭam were in close contact with one another. The Vaṭṭam was becoming more and more rounded, probably because the writing materials of stylus and palmyra leaf, used in South India, favoured this tendency. The Grantha-Tamil script was also evolving in that direction, partly due to the same reason and partly due to the influence of Vaṭṭam. In the Pallava period, two scripts were used for writing one language in regions which were geographically contiguous. The Pallava and the Pandya Kingdom could not be said to have well marked boundaries at that time. There were incessant wars between these neighbours and boundaries fluctuated with each campaign. Further, both Kingdoms began to use the Grantha-Tamil script. Therefore mutual influences made themselves felt and so the Grantha-Tamil script was also evolving towards a curved variety.

The latter half of the eleventh century saw a change in this trend. By the beginning of that century, the Cōḷa empire had been

well established and the whole of Tamilnadu had been brought under the effective rule of the Cōlas. For some centuries, the Cōlas had been the feudatories of the Pallavas and hence, they had adopted the Grantha-Tamil script of that period. Thus Grantha-Tamil became the Imperial script of the South and replaced Vaṭṭam in the Pandya territories. Here, it should be noted that Sri Lanka formed part of the Cola empire for the greater part of the eleventh century and all the Tamil inscriptions, so far discovered in the island, were written in Grantha-Tamil. Because of the insularity of the Kerala Kingdom, separated by hilly barriers from the rest of Tamilnadu, Vaṭṭam continued its existence in Kerala. For the next few centuries, this script held the field in the inscriptions of Kerala. The parting of the ways between Kerala and the rest of Tamilnadu was not confined to the script. Here too, the differences in script marked the differences in Culture. Up to the time when Kerala shared the same script with other parts of Tamilnadu, that region used Tamil as its court language and the language for literary purposes. But when this link was cut off, the Tamil dialect spoken along the West coast replaced the standard classical Tamil for all purposes. This was the origin of the Malayalam language. Its evolution can be seen in the Vaṭṭeluttu inscriptions, as A.C. Sekhar has shown in his book, *Evolution of Malayalam*.

Further developments in palaeography in Kerala were also due to cultural factors. One of the characteristics of the Malayalam language was the large scale borrowing from Sanskrit which gradually increased. Vaṭṭam was not suitable for writing Sanskrit. Hence, by the thirteenth century, the Grantha script was adapted for the Malayalam language. As the followers of the Vedic religious sects were using more Sanskrit words, they adopted the Grantha-Tamil script with enthusiasm. The Muslims of Kerala, who formed a considerable minority of the population and who were also shown to adopt Sanskrit words and usages, and who preferred to keep their own distinctiveness, continued to use Vaṭṭam up to the

eighteenth century A.D. As the use of Vaṭṭam gradually became restricted, the script deteriorated. Muslims began to use it as some sort of secret script for commercial purposes and it developed almost into a code script. Different letters began to be written alike in the inscriptions of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries and their deciphering presents great problems.

The hypothesis that Vaṭṭam must have modified the shape of Grantha-Tamil upto the eleventh century A.D. is supported by another fact. From the late eleventh century, Grantha-Tamil began to develop angular features again.³⁷ Kulottunga I established a Cōḷa-Cāḷukya dynasty on the Cōḷa throne. Though the Telugu script of the Eastern cāḷukya territory was curved in character, the Telugus were using Nagari script also to write Sanskrit. By the time, Sanskrit had developed into an all Indian language. With the accession of Kulottunga I to the Cōḷa throne, Sanskritisation advanced still further as, Sanskrit the common language of the Cōḷas and the Cāḷukyas—received emphasis under the changed conditions in preference to the local languages of Tamil and Telugu. Consequently the influence of Nagari must have been increasing in the Cōḷa empire. But there was no question of dispossessing Grantha-Tamil which had been the well established Imperial script. Hence, Nagari could only influence Grantha-Tamil. The tendency to write angles instead of curves is said to have been started in the inscriptions of this emperor's region. When the Pandya empire replaced the Cola empire in Tamilnadu, it was only a change of dynasty and of capital city. By that time, the Grantha-Tamil script was well established in the Pandya territory. Culturally speaking, there was complete continuity and palaeography was no exception. When the Vijayanagar empire and later the rule of Nayaks came into being in Tamilnadu, there was a further change. Inscriptions, especially copper plates, were written mostly in Nandi-Nagari, the southern variety of Nagari. Grantha letters and words written in Grantha found their way into Tamil

37. Sivaramamurti, Op. Cit, p.233.

records only. Hence, the importance of Grantha declined in Tamilnadu while that of Nandi-Nagari increased. The Maharrattas who ruled in Tanjore in the eighteenth century A D. also used Nagari to write Sanskrit. These changes in palaeography were not isolated developments but only reflected cultural change. Sanskritisation reached its peak in South India during this period. North Indian scholars who fled from Muslim conquest migrated to the South. They were patronised by the Hindu rulers of the South and Sanskrit learning received a new fillip. Tamil literature and grammar of this period show the enormous influence of Sanskrit. For some time, Grantha was confined to the Tamil Brahmins. But as Hindi, the present official language of India is written in Devanagari and modern Sanskrit text books designed for all India usage also use this script, Grantha is almost dying out.

The Tamil language used *puḷḷis* or dots to denote pure consonants. As Sanskrit does not have short *e* and short *o*, Tamil have dots for those vowel sounds also. The anomaly of having the sign of the pure consonant to denote two short vowels was not noted as long as Sanskrit influence was predominant in Tamilnadu. But when Tamil came into contact with the Western languages, this awkward aspect seems to have been realised. The two pairs of vowel sounds were then distinguished in shape by retaining the earlier long vowel letters as short vowels and by slightly changing the earlier forms for usage as long vowels. Constantius Beschi, the Italian Catholic missionary turned Tamil scholar-poet, is said to have been responsible for this reform. However, Gopinatha Rao informs us that this change was introduced in Tamil inscriptions datable to a period before Beschi but he gives no reference.³⁸

Kannaiyan thought that it was Tamil genius to have used four different scripts in Tamilnadu. But a study of palaeography in relation to Tamil history and culture shows that there was nothing to boast about. For the Tamils used different scripts

38. Gopinatha Rao., *Op. Cit.*, p. 202, note 3. He rejects the view of Burnell, *Op. Cit.* pp. 4. & 5, note 4.

to write Tamil because they were not politically united. When political unity was achieved under the Cōlas, one script only was used to write Tamil. During the medieval period, Tamil culture was heavily indebted to North India and the medium for that culture was Sanskrit. As a result of this, Grantha was developed in order to write Sanskrit in Tamilnadu. Today, it is being discarded because culturally speaking, it no longer serves a purpose.

(c) Changes in letter forms of the Tamil Script

Changes in letter forms during the evolution of the script are generally assigned to three factors. The quickness of the hand and the aesthetic instinct of the scribe as also the materials on which the records were written are the three factors mentioned. T.N Subramaniam has given few illustrations for each factor. But there does not seem to have been any attempt so far to take the script as a whole, stage by stage, and to account for the changes according to each factor. An attempt is made here to study the Tamil script, mainly vowels and consonants, of the seventh, the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries and to account for the main changes.

First, Tamil letters of the seventh and the eleventh centuries A D. can be compared. Looking at consonants first, some of them have a vertical line above and a horizontal line on the left. Letters like k, ṅ, c, t, n and r undergo this change in shape in the eleventh century when compared to the seventh century. In the eleventh century, the downward stroke of some letters gets elongated to appear as a tail. Letters like ñ, ṇ, l and ḷ have loops in the eleventh century. Curves, where necessary, are well developed in ḷ and ṇ. These changes should be assigned to the aesthetic instinct of the scribe. It cannot be said that writing materials caused big changes in Tamil script as there is no change in writing materials in Tamilnadu up to the introduction of printing. The technique of writing could have caused some variation. The changes in shapes of a and ā could have taken place when they were written clockwise instead of anti-clockwise as earlier. The changes of shapes in consonants like v, ṇ and y also could be attributed to the same change in the technique of writing.

The quickness of the hand could have caused a number of changes. The elimination of curves in vowels *a*, *ā* and *i* and in consonants, *ṭ*, *p* and *m* could be attributed to quickness of the hand. This also may be the reason for writing pure consonants without dots in the eleventh century when they were written with dots in the seventh century. Letters which had two form, in the seventh century like *tu*, *ṇu*, *lu* and *ṭai* have only a single form each in the eleventh century. This also could be an attempt at simplification.

Now, Tamil script of the eleventh century can be compared to Tamil script of the fifteenth century. Letters, which start with a horizontal line on the left — *k*, *ā*, *c*, *t*, *n*, and *r* — and which had slightly curved horizontal line in the eleventh century, have elongated straight horizontal line in the fifteenth century. These consonants and the vowel *ē*, which have vertical lines above the horizontal lines and which had curved horizontal lines not going beyond vertical lines at the ends in the eleventh century have straight vertical lines, going a little beyond vertical lines at the ends in the fifteenth century. These must be due to the aesthetic instinct of the scribe. One more change can be assigned to the same factor. Letters with curves below have their curves well developed in the eleventh century. The curves of *k*, *c* and *t* and the right curves of *ā*, *u*, *m* and *ḷ* have been well formed in the fifteenth century, compared to the eleventh century.

Another change which can be assigned to the aesthetic instinct or to the quickness of hand or to both is also seen. Letters like *a*, *ā*, *e*, *ā*, *ṇā*, *l* and *j* which begin with loops have the loops well developed, compared to the eleventh century. All the loops in *ṇ* have been well formed in the fifteenth century.

The quickness of the hand also leads to a kind of change. Curves seen in some letters like *a*, *ā*, *u*, *y*, *ḷ* and *ṭ* gets eliminated in the fifteenth century. The medial sign for *i* was written like a semicircle in the eleventh century while it has assumed the present shape in the fifteenth century.

Relatively speaking, the evolution of the Tamil script has been rather slow just like the evolution of the Tamil language.

INFLUENCE OF TAMILNADU SCRIPTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA AND COMMONNESS IN EARLY PALAEOGRAPHY BETWEEN TAMILNADU AND SRI LANKA

Indian colonial and cultural activities once embraced the greater part of the Continent of Asia. The concept of 'Greater-India' covers most of Asia, especially Central Asia and South-East Asia. The Far East was also profoundly influenced by one aspect of Indian Culture, i.e., Buddhism. The term 'Further-India', which itself is very suggestive, sometimes denotes Indo-Chinese peninsula. Recent interpretations for all colonial and cultural activities boils down to the economic motive. Trade has been assigned as the main factor that inspires and promotes such activities. Ancient Jatakas have many references to traders going to and coming back from Swarnadeepa and Swarnabhumi, which terms again imply the economic factor¹. These places are now identified with Indonesia and Indo-Chinese peninsula which terms stress again the Indian connection.

There is copious evidence for foreign maritime trade during the Sangam period. References in Sangam literature to Greeks and Romans were confirmed by Greek and Roman writings about flourishing trade with various ports throughout the coasts of ancient Tamilnadu. In fact a complaint, was made that the huge wealth of the Roman empire was frittered away by its

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1. Singhal, D.P., *India and World Civilization*, Volume II, Rupa & Co, 1972, p. 80.

He also says, "Arab writers such as Al Biruni testify, that Indians called the whole South East region Suwarnadib. Hellenistic geographers knew the area as Golden Cheronese. The Chinese called it K'in-Lins; K'in means Gold",

trade with South India². In archaeological explorations at Arikamedu and other places, evidence for Roman settlements has been found. Plenty of Roman coins have been discovered in various parts of Tamilnadu³. A separate mint is now assumed to have existed in South India to produce Roman coins. Cilappatikāram can be said to mark the highest point of the flourishing economy through trade with ancient Rome and other places. Both Cilappatikāram and Maṇimēkalai refer to contacts with Sri Lanka. Maṇimēkalai refer to contacts with Java also. Paṭṭiṇappālai, a still earlier work refers to contacts with Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

But one doubt lingers about the exact nature of the participation of Tamilnadu in that trade, Whether Tamilnadu was an active participant or a passive participant. Sri Lanka Brahmi inscriptions preserve the names of some Tamil traders and navigators. According to the Sri Lanka chronicles, the first Tamils to rule the Island were two horse traders in the second century B.C. But much cannot be made from this evidence as

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2. Schoff, Wilfred, H., *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, Second edition, Delhi, 1974, p. 219.

He quotes Pliny's comment which refers to foreign trade with India, draining a huge amount of wealth from the Roman Empire. A generation before the Periplus, in 22 A.D., this was made the subject of a letter from the Emperor Tiberius to the Roman Senate. He also complained that imports of luxuries on a massive scale leads to drain of wealth from Rome.

3. Thurston, E., *Catalogue No. 2*, Madras Government Museum, pp. 1-47. Schoff, W.H., *Opp. Cit.* makes the following observation on p. 220.

'In the Madras Government Museum, there is nearly a complete series of the coins of the Roman Emperors during the period of active trade with India, all of them excavated in Southern India. ——— The coins of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero are numerous. There are very few of Vespasian and Titus anywhere in India. Those of Domitian, Nerva, Trojan and Hadrian are frequent; then there comes another break lasting until the time of Commodus'.

Sri Lanka lies so close to Tamilnadu. Besides this, no positive evidence is forthcoming for the Tamils taking an active part in that foreign trade, i.e., Tamils going on long voyages, settling down in foreign countries and returning after a considerable stay. There is no concrete evidence in Sangam literature to show that the Tamils had been well acquainted with foreign lands.

This lecture will be in two parts, the first part dealing with the influence of Tamilnadu scripts in South East Asia⁴ and the second part dealing with commonness in early palaeography between Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka⁵.

Influence of Tamilnadu scripts in South-East Asia

A look at the map of Asia will show how easy it is to travel from the eastern coast of Tamilnadu to Indonesia and Indo-China. This is also indicated by the fact that the Tamil Coja Empire was the only Indian Empire to expand towards South East Asia in the eleventh century by fighting against the powerful Sailendra Empire of that region. But during the Pallava rule of Tamilnadu, the contacts with South East Asia were mainly commercial, colonial and cultural. About forty-five years ago, an article was published with the title 'Expansion of Indo-Aryan Culture during Pallava rule, as evidenced by inscription'⁶.

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4. The first draft of this part of the paper had been published in *Purva Kala*, Volume I (1973), a publication of the Jaffna Archaeological Society, Sri Lanka. The fifth issue of *Kalvettu*, a journal published by the Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology, has commended this article when it reviewed this journal.
 5. The first draft of this part of this paper has been submitted to the Vth International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies, expected to be held in Madurai in January, 1980.
 6. Chaabra, B.Ch., *Expansion of Indo-Aryan Culture during Pallava rule, as evidenced by inscriptions- Proceedings of the Royal Historic Society of Bengal*. Volume I. Calcutta, 1935. pp. 1-64.

It was a Ph D. Thesis submitted to the University of Leyden, Holland.

As the above title indicates, B.Ch. Chhabra tries to prove from epigraphical evidence from all parts of South-East Asia that the expansion of Indo-Aryan culture through out this region occurred during the Pallava rule in South India. The expansion of Indian culture throughout this region is a fact sufficiently established and this aspect of his study cannot be challenged. But his attempts to connect this expansion with the Pallava rule and to give exclusive importance to the Eastern coast of South India are based on insufficient and circumstantial evidence. Chhabra himself was aware of one difficulty. When writing his conclusion, he noted.

“In the very numerous inscriptions, on copper and stone, left by the rulers of the Pallava dynasty, no reference is made to relations, friendly or hostile, with the countries overseas..... The epigraphical documents of Further India and Indonesia are almost equally reticent about any connection with India proper”.

But he came to the conclusion about the Pallava connection because “of the very remarkable fact that the earliest known inscriptions found in those countries are all composed in Sanskrit, all belong approximately to the same period, viz., the fifth century and are written in a script which in every respect is identical with the Grantha character used at that time in the coast of Coromandal”.

He further says,

“Even more significant is the phenomenon that for several centuries, the Pallava Grantha has remained the only script in that region and that during this period, it exhibits a development running parallel with that which we notice in the contemporaneous records of Coromandal”.

The observation of Chhabra regarding the language and the age of the inscriptions remain substantially the same even now. But his reference to the Pallava Grantha exclusively is not acceptable to later epigraphists and palaeographers.

Along with Grantha, Tamil and Vaṭṭam were also prevalent in Tamilnadu along the east-coast, especially during early medieval period. There is no evidence for Vaṭṭam script in any foreign country. Even Sri Lanka does not have any Vaṭṭam inscription. Two inscriptions in Tamil script have been reported, one from Burma⁷ and one from Thailand⁸. The Tamil inscription from Takua-pa refers to the digging of a tank called Avani Naranam by the Chiefs of Nangur; its upkeep was entrusted to the Mani-gramattar. Another Tamil inscription refers to endowment of a Visnu temple by merchants in Burma. This inscription uses Grantha letters also. One Tamil inscription was discovered in Sumatra; China and New Zealand have also yielded Tamil epigraphs.⁹

7. Sircar, D.C., *Indian Epigraphy*, Delhi, 1955.

8. Sastri, K.A.N., *Journal of Oriental Research*, Vol. VI pp. 299-314.

9. Soundara Rajan, K.V., *Art of South India, Tamilnadu and Kerala*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 17-18.

He records details of four records:-

- (1) The Takua-pa record of A.D. 9th—10th Century referring to one Nangurudaiyan, Avanimaranam tank, Manigramam trade guild and senamukha and Munrukai Mahasenai (elsewhere seen in the Tiruvalisvaram inscription, Tirunelveli District.)
- (2) The Pagan Tamil record of 13th - 14th century, referring to Pagan alias Arimardanapuram and Nanadesi Vinnakar Alvar Vishnu temple to which donations were made by traders of Malaimandalam and the reference to the sixth verse of Kulasekara's Mukuntamala at the beginning of the record.
- (3) The Lobal Tolwa (Baros region, Sumatra) Tamil record of Saka 1010 (A.D. 1088) of trade guild of Ticaiyāyirattu aṇṇūruvar.
- (4) The bi-lingual record in Fu Cien province of China, opposite to Taiwan discovered in 1956. Five lines in Tamil dated in Saka 1203 (A.D. 1281) on the Chitrapaurnami day when Tava Chakravartikal Sambandapperumal established a Siva temple in the name of Tirukkodaliswaramudaya nayanar. during the reign of the Chinese King Kublai Khan for the merit of his crown prince Segazar Khan.

The last one is outside South East Asia but it implies Tamil contacts through that region. A bell with a small Tamil inscription, discovered in a ship-

An attempt will be made in this lecture to study, the comments on the influence of South Indian palaeography from three recent publications of the last decade. The three authors come from widely different backgrounds. Sivaramamurti is a South Indian who worked in Madras Museum¹⁰. Dani hails from the north-west of the sub-continent which is now Pakistan¹¹. He did his research in the University of London under the guidance of Professor A.L. Basham. Sircar comes from Bengal, the north-east of the sub-continent.¹² He was the retired Government Epigraphist for India. It is quite possible that none of these authors referred to each other's publication in their bibliographies because they worked thoroughly independent of each other. None of these authors accept Chhabra's claim about exclusive Pallava Grantha connection. As a palaeographer, Dani brings in advanced knowledge. He gives more importance to North India and West Coast, especially Gujarat and Malwa. It was Sircar who ably refuted Chhabra's arguments which were in favour of exclusive Pallava connection. All three scholars seem to agree that the whole eastern and western coast of India participated in Indian colonial and cultural activities. But Sivaramamurti seems to be interested in pointing out the influence of South Indian epigraphy only in South-East Asia.

Unlike Sircar and Sivaramamurti who deal with this subject, country by country of region, Dani deals with the earliest South East Asian contacts with India mentioning the general trend and then only, deals with country by country. Of

wreck near New Zealand is reported to be available in a museum there. The ship concerned might have gone to South East Asia for trade.

10. Sivaramamurti, C., *Indian Epigraphy and South Indian Scripts*, Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, Second Edition, 1966.
11. Dani, A.H., *Indian Palaeography*, Oxford University Press, 1963.
12. Sircar, D.C., *Op. Cit.*

such earliest contacts, the oldest evidence come from Oc-éo in Southern Cambodia, where a number of inscribed stone seals have been found. One such seal is also known from Malaysia. Dani surmises that these seals must have been imported from India. He has divided the seals into four groups, (a), (b), (c) and (d). Group (a), he assigns to North India, Gujarat and Malwa and dates in the third to fourth century A.D. Group (b), where he finds North Indian and South Indian forms together, he again assigns to Gujarat and dates in the fifth century A.D. Group (c), he assigns to Vakataka forms and dates in the fifth Century A.D. Group (d), he assigns to Malwa and dates in the fifth century. So he supposes that the first contacts were established with Western Indian seaports and the earliest writing style of South East Asia was derived from that region. He also relates the two styles of writing found in Indo-China to the two styles found in Malwa between the fourth and fifth centuries A.D.

According to Dani, from the close of the fifth or the beginning of the sixth century, writing spread to most of the regions of South East Asia. The style which become current at this time bears the closest resemblance to the writings known from the records of the Madharas, Visnukundins and Pallavas. The earliest examples known are from the Yüpa inscriptions of Mülavarman from Botnes, which are related to Indo-Chinese inscriptions mentioned in the previous paragraph. This inscriptions is also linked with the ornamental style of writing seen in almost all the inscriptions of the sixth century. The best known examples in this style are the inscriptions of Pūrṇavarman from Java, the records of the Kings of Fou-nan, the Srideb inscription from Siam and the inscription of the Mahanavika Buddhagupta from Malaya. These inscriptions borrow not only the Pallava medial vowels but also some of the forms of their letters. It seems that contact with the south-eastern coast of India was greatest at this time. The influence from the western coast is traceable in a few letters of this time and much more so in those of the seventh century A.D. In fact the dated inscrip-

tions of this last century from Founan and Sumatra exemplify a happy mixture of the sixth century writing of the east coast of India and the new features of the seventh century from the Western coast. It is strange to note that the Pallava Grantha writing of the seventh century is not traceable in these inscriptions at all.

It is quite interesting to see how these three authors deal with each country of South East Asia. Burma had contacts with India through overland route with Eastern India and though the sea route with the eastern coast. According to Dani, the Eastern Indian influence was felt in inscriptions in Arakan, as far down as Hmawza near Proma. These inscriptions are datable from the seventh century A.D. The South Indian influence is traceable in the Maunggon gold plates and the Kawgun cave inscription, both of which belong to the sixth century A.D. In the Pyu inscriptions, he finds a mixture of the northern and southern types. But he admits that in the Pali or Prakrit inscriptions, the characters are derived from the Pallava records and they resemble the sixth century writing from South-East Asia. According to Sivaramamurti, Maunggon plates of the fifth century A.D. resemble closely the Salankayana script. It is this script that had been developed in Pyu inscription two centuries later. He also says that the modern Burmese script developed from this script while Dani contradicts him when he says that the later Burmese script is not derived from these characters. Sivaramamurti refers to affinities between Grantha Tamil and modern Burmese script and points out that the medial 'e' from Grantha Tamil is substituted for the full vowel in modern Burmese script. According to Sircar, Anandachandra of eighth century A.D. used Siddhamātrikā alphabet of Eastern India. This term Siddhamātrikā is rarely used in Indian palaeographical works. Dani quotes Alberuni's observation that this script was current in Kashmir, Madhyadesa and Varanasi. Sircar refers to evidence to prove the contact of Tamil speaking merchants with Burma during the late medieval period. He mentions a pagan inscription of about the thirteenth century A.D. which is written partly in the Sanskrit language and Grantha characters and partly in the Tamil language and script.

Unlike Burma, Thailand does not seem to occupy an important position in the matter of South Indian palaeographical influence. Though a Tamil inscription of the ninth century A.D. had been found there, Sivaramamurti had not mentioned this country at all. Sircar refers to a Sanskrit inscription of the ninth century but there is not much discussion about it. He says that from the thirteenth century, epigraphs began to appear in Siamese language and in early Siamese characters. Dani refers to three inscriptions. According to him, Srideb inscription of sixth century A.D. shows the Pallava forms of the letters and the medial vowels with the only difference that it does not favour ornamental extensions. The other two inscriptions of the seventh century prefer the ornamental style. But characters in all three inscriptions are similar.

Malaysia also does not figure very much in this discussion. Sivaramamurti refers to a fifth century A.D. inscription mentioning Buddhagupta, a Mahanavika, i.e., captain of a ship. This person was said to be from Rangmrttika which is now identified with Rangmati in Bengal. While Sivaramamurti refers to close similarity of letters of this inscription with those of the southern variety in the Krishna area, Dani feels that it is the same script that was prevalent in most parts of South East Asia from the close of the fifth century. Sircar states that the script of the early records including the one mentioning Mahanavika is the late Brahmi of West and South India assignable to the fifth or sixth century. Dani refers to Western Indian forms of early seventh century A.D. in Kedah site Number Two tablet inscription.

In the territory which was formerly French Indo-China, influence of South Indian palaeography can be seen in Cambodia and Vietnam. The difference in dating of early epigraphs too can be noticed among these epigraphists. Sivaramamurti dates the earliest inscriptions in the second and third centuries A.D. and says that their script is very similar to that in contemporary

India. According to him, there is further development of the script in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D., but the earlier script was also preserved. In the eighth century, the script changes and approximates to the script in Vengi or in the Andhra area and thereafter the further developments shows the influence of the Pallava script and even the later Tamil script. Here the letter Ka tends to shape itself like the letter ka in Tamil. Ca is shaped after the Kanarese and Telugu type. Ya tends more towards the Kanarese-Telugu variety. In all these cases, a peculiar box-head shaped or semi-circular head added to each letter distinguishes it, like the serif in contemporary South Indian letters.

According to Dani, apart from Oc-ec seals, there are two geographical zones where early Sanskrit inscriptions were found: Lin-i and Fou-nan. Dani dismisses the arguments in favour of early dating of these epigraphs. He divided the inscriptions of Lin-i and claimed that three of these groups of the fifth century A.D., were influenced by the script from Gujarat and Malwa. The influence of the Satavahana script was also seen in the second group of inscriptions. The Royal title of Dharmamaharaja, seen in one of the records of the same group was a borrowal from the Vakatakas. The style of the last group of inscriptions was connected with the early inscriptions of Fou-nan. Dani identifies three main groups in the early inscriptions of this area. In the first group is seen marked difference in the style of writing from the previous one. The medial vowels are entirely southern. It is further possible to localize the origin of these medial vowels to one of the proto-regional scripts of South India. The circle type of the medial i and ī and the broad curved type of the medial u are seen in Pallava records from the sixth century A.D; a and ṣa are definitely derived from the Pallava records. The highly ornamental forms reflect the Pallava style of the sixth century. In the second group of inscriptions, the influence of Malwa script is seen. Northern features are traceable from the records of the Gurjaras of Broach. In the last group of inscriptions of the middle of the seventh century, northern forms of the letters continue.

Sircar refers to the voluminous Sanskrit inscriptions of ornate Kavya style ranging from the fifth to the fourteenth centuries A.D. Saka era and decimal system in numbers were seen from the sixth and seventh century records. These must have been introduced from Western India. The script is Late Brahmi of west and South India which gradually underwent modification as in different parts of India. Majority of the inscriptions exhibit the author's thorough acquaintance with the metres and the rules and conventions of Sanskrit rhetorics and prosody. The Indo-Chinese inscriptions are mostly of Saivite character although there are some Vaisnavite and a few Buddhist records. Sircar also says that some of the inscriptions of Yasovarman of ninth and tenth centuries A.D. are written in the Siddhamātrkā script.

Indonesia is the largest country in South East Asia and it comprises thousands of islands. Till recently, it was known as East Indies, which again signifies close Indian connections. Java Sumatra and Borneo are the most important islands in the Indonesian Archipelago and the influence of South Indian palaeography is seen in all these islands. Sivaramamurti refers to Java and Borneo only. According to him, the Yūpa inscriptions of Mūlavarman in Kutei in Borneo shows clear similarity between South Indian Pallava script of the fourth or fifth century A.D. and the script of these inscriptions. In the records of Pūrṇavarman of Java can be seen the palaeography of Pallava script of the fifth and the sixth century.

According to Dani, Yūpa inscriptions bear some connections with some inscriptions of Lin-i. Head marks were apparently derived from the South rather than Malwa. Head marks were not added to the top of the verticals but they were centrally placed over them, as seen in the inscriptions of the Madharas and the Gangas of the eastern coast of India. The link with the South is further established by the medials a, e, ai, o and au. These medial vowels agree with those given in the Pallava records of the fifth to the sixth centuries A.D. Pallava

forms are adopted for some other letters also. One of the two groups of Pūrṇavarman's inscriptions of the first half of the sixth century A.D. establishes a link with the inscriptions of Mūlavarman. The letter forms as well as the medial vowels, derived from the Pallava records are identical with the first group of inscriptions of Fou-nan. The Sanskrit inscriptions from Sumatra dated in Saka era of the seventh century shows Western Indian influence, as for example, ka, la, etc., are derived from Gurjara inscriptions of Western India.

According to Sircar, the script of Mūlavarman's inscriptions is similar to Buddhagupta's inscription from Malaysia. But the stanzas in those epigraphs resemble those of the early Kadambas of Banarasi. Epigraphical records in Indonesia continue in broken series from the fifth or sixth centuries to the sixteenth century. The earlier inscriptions are in Sanskrit in the Late Brahmi alphabet of West and South India or its local modification. The Sailendra Kings of Sri Vijaya used the Siddhamātrkā script of East India.

It is clear from the comments of the three scholars above that each of them stress influence from his region. But all three have conceded some South Indian or rather Pallava script influence also. The fact that all the early inscriptions of South East Asia are in Sanskrit has also its own story to tell. The movement of script indicates movement of culture. If Pallava kingdom were exclusively responsible for activities in South East Asia, we could have found more inscriptions of Tamil script and Tamil language also. The total domination of Sanskrit at least in the initial stage shows that traders from all parts of India from the Western and eastern coasts were coming. So they needed a common language for use among themselves and for use with the indigenous inhabitants. Sanskrit was becoming a pan-Indian language at that time and so, it was the obvious choice. So, Tamilnadu can claim a reasonable share in these activities in that region.

The comments of the scholars are so conflicting that anybody with a reasonable knowledge of palaeography will like to check at least the published material on inscriptions of all parts of India and South East Asia. Records from South East Asia are not easily available for ready reference. We understand that a doctoral dissertation on the palaeographical development of Brahmi script in South East Asia had been done in Banaras Hindu University.¹³ This should have cleared many misconceptions. The important findings of this thesis, at least, should be published.

Commonness in Early Palaeography of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka

Along with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, Sri Lanka is also now included in the regional designation 'South Asia'. The history of Sri Lanka is so closely interwoven with the history of the mainland that it is in fact difficult to understand the history of the island without a knowledge of main trends of the contemporary history of the mainland. Till recently, the main text book of Sri Lanka history divided the entire ancient history of Ceylon up to the beginning of the sixteenth century into two periods of North Indian periods of Ceylon history and two periods of South Indian periods of Ceylon history.¹⁴ Very close cultural ties existed between Sri Lanka and various parts of India. Dani who deals with Indian palaeography up to the eighth century A. D. has a chapter on 'Ceylon' and deals with palaeographical influence from various parts of India during that period. Sivaramamurti who has a small section on Indian Epigraphy abroad gives more importance to South Indian palaeographical influence in Ceylon than to its influence in different parts of South East Asia. Sivaramamurti rates the influence of all the three important scripts of medieval

13. Gunaratna, A.P., *The Palaeographical Development of Brahmi Script in South East Asia*, Ph. D. Thesis, Banaras Hindu University, 1976.

14. Mendis, G.C., *Early History of Ceylon*, Colombo.

Tamilnadu upon the Sinhala script. What has happened is not mere influence; Tamil and Grantha scripts moved into Sri Lanka and inscriptions in these scripts are found from the ninth century A.D. onwards.

As mentioned previously, the appellation 'South Asia', has been coined recently. But it is strange that this concept appears to be more of a reality two thousand years ago than now. The whole of South Asia was linked by one script, if not variants of the same script. Though the Indus script existed in what are now Pakistan and North West India, sufficient evidence is not available to show that this script penetrated to other parts of South Asia.¹⁵ More than a millennium after the abrupt disappearance of the Indus sculpture, Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts make their appearance. Kharosthi was prevalent in roughly the modern Pakistan while Brahmi was the prevalent Pan-South Asian Script. So, even from the point of view of regional study, it was not Brahmi but Kharosthi that was prevalent in most parts of the Indus valley. Enthusiasm which was generated about a dozen years ago when the Scandinavian Institute of

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15. Nagaswamy, R., *Handbook*, Second International Conference Seminar on Tamil Studies, Madras, 1968, quotes Kamil Zvelebil that the pictorial signs on pottery from ancient burial sites in Tamilnadu could be either the degenerate survivors of the signs introduced by the Harappan people or original ones of a script that was later developed and improved by the people of the Harappan civilization.

Kamil Zvelebil reasoned out thus from Lal, B.B., *From the Megalithic to the Harappan: Tracing back the Graffiti in the pottery*, *Ancient India*, No.6, 1960, New Delhi, 1962, pp 1-24. According to him, ninety percent of the graffiti on the red and black faze of the megalithic people in South India are identical to various signs used in the Harappan writing.

Senerat Paranavitana, in a paper on *The Decipherment of the Indus script*, connects some of the non-Brahmi symbols in ancient Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka with the pictorial script of the Indus Valley. According to him, Gujarati ancestors of the Sinhalese must have brought the Indus Valley writing to Sri Lanka.

Asian studies began to issue announcements that its team had deciphered the Indus Valley language to be proto-Dravidian has almost evaporated and the present situation is back to the point where it has to be admitted that no satisfactory decipherment—satisfactory to the scholarly world—is possible at the present stage.¹⁶ The lack of any long record among the Indus Valley inscriptions as well as the lack of any evidence in inscriptional material to bridge the big gap in time, and the lack any record of connecting link, between the Indus script and the known later script serve as hindrances to the development of an acceptable key to open up the secrets of the Indus Valley script.

The claim of Sri Lanka chronicles that Buddhism came to Sri Lanka during Asoka's reign in the third century B C. is now generally accepted. It is generally believed that the Buddhist monks, who brought the religion, also brought the art of writing. The origin and/or the introduction of writing, as we have noticed in the previous lecture, remains controversial. But, we can concentrate on the earliest available writing in these two states. The earliest extant writings in both these states can be termed Brahmi. But there are minor variations from Asokan Brahmi and Brahmi of other regions of subsequent periods. So, Brahmi in Tamilnadu has been variously termed Tamil-Brahmi,

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16. The Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies in Copenhagen issued a series of announcements in 1969 and 1970 that the Indus Script had been deciphered by Computer analysis to be proto-Dravidian. Some Soviet Indologists had also used computer and came to a similar conclusion. This was the important subject for discussion in IIIrd International Conference Seminar for Tamil Studies in Paris in 1970. In 1971, the Journal of Tamil Studies, of the International Institute of Tamil Studies, issued a special number on this subject. But Iravatham Mahadevan who has brought out a voluminous publication on the Indus Valley records has to admit that attempted decipherments so far are unsatisfactory and leave the matter wide open again.

Dravidi and Damili (or Tamili)¹⁷. Likewise, Brahmi is Sri Lanka has been named old Sinhalese.¹⁸

Some South-Asian scholars have referred to the close similarity in palaeography between the ancient records of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka. According to P.E.E. Fernando (retired Professor of Sinhalese of the University of Peradeniya),

"In general appearance, these records (of Tamilnadu) are so like the ancient records of Ceylon that one can almost mistake them to be those carved in Mihintale, Vessagiriya and such other ancient sites in Ceylon".¹⁹

The similarity in cave records between these two regions was due to many reasons, such as records being carved on drip ledges of caves and palaeographical grounds. He also identified two letters which did not occur in any of the records of Asoka, viz., 'i' and 'ma'. A.H. Dani has stated that the letter 'ma' (of Sri Lanka Brahmi) copied the form of the Southern (Tamilnadu) caves²⁰. According to him, the writing in the ancient Sri Lanka inscriptions was closely related to the Naneghat records of Western India and that seen in the caves of the

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17. Mahadevan Iravatham., *Corpus of the Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions, Seminar on Inscriptions, Madras, 1968.*
Mahalingam, T.V., *Early South Indian Palaeography*, Madras, 1967, pp.110-112.
Nagaswamy, R., *Tamili E[uttuka], Kalvettiyal*, Madras, 1972.
 18. As this script evolved into the later Sinhalese script proper, it is loosely referred to as Old Sinhalese script in palaeographical discussions in Sri Lanka.
See for example, Paranavitana., *Vallipuram Gold Plate Inscription of the Reign of Vasabha, Epigraphic Zeylanica*, Vol. IV, Colombo, 1941.
 19. Fernando, P.E.E., *Palaeographical Development of the Brahmi Script in Ceylon from 3rd Century B.C. to 7th Century A.D*, *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. VII, Colombo, 1949, pp. 282-301.
 20. Dani, Ahamad Hasan., *Indian Palaeography*, Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 218.

extreme South of India, though local tendencies were also obvious. T.V. Mahalingam has referred to various similarities between the cave inscriptions of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka and he has mentioned the short 'i' as common to the scripts of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka.²¹

Some Sri Lanka scholars are not willing to acknowledge and account for this close similarity, in the early palaeography of these two regions. Dani himself has given two references. Senerat Paranavitana (distinguished former Archaeological Commissioner and former Professor of Archaeology in the University of Ceylon), had drawn up a chart entitled, 'Evolution of the Sinhalese script between the fourth century B.C. and the ninth century A. D.'²² Tennakoon Vimalananda (retired Professor of History of Vidyalandara, University of Sri Lanka), used the same material for his Doctoral thesis.²³ In that thesis, four broad chronological divisions are made and changes in the letter forms described under each of them. Dani has criticised them both for treating the development of Sri Lanka script as if it was wholly indigenous and as if it had no extraneous influence.²⁴ Dani had not referred to the contributions of C.W. Nicholas and P.E.E. Fernando probably because he had not seen the relevant volume of the University of Ceylon Review. C.W. Nicholas, a co-worker of Paranavitana, had drawn up a chart showing the palaeographical development of the Brahmi script from the third century B.C. to the seventh century A.D.²⁵ His chart, of course, was based mainly on the

21. Mahalingam, T.V., Op. Cit, pp. 158-160, p. 135.

22. Paranavitana, Senerat, *Epigraphia Zeylanica* Vol. IV, plate 15, facing p. 150.

23. Vimalananda, Tennakoon., *Epigraphy and Palaeography of Ceylon* down to tenth century A. D. Unpublished Thesis, University of London, 1951.

24. Dani, A.H., Op. Cit, p. 216.

25. Nicholas, C.W., *Palaeographical Development of the Brahmi Script in Ceylon from the 3rd Century B.C. to the 7th Century A.D.*, University of Ceylon Review, Vol. VII, No. 1, Colombo, 1949.

Fernando, P.E.E., Op. Cit,

dating of the Brahmi records by Paranavitana and there was no improvement in his treatment of the development of the script from that of Paranavitana. Fernando made use of this chart to prepare a fine paper which he published in the same volume of the same journal. It is unfortunate that Vimalananda could not make use of this paper and build on this foundation for his thesis which he submitted two years later.

^The recent theory of Professor K.V. Raman that the Brahmi writings of Sri Lanka could have been the inspiration for the Brahmi writings of Tamilnadu takes another extreme stand.²⁶ Both Krishna Sastri and K.V. Subramaniya Ayyar have, in their studies of the Tamilnadu Brahmi inscriptions, made pointed reference to the Sri Lanka Brahmi inscriptions and tried to compare the two. Subramaniya Ayyar believed that the Tamilnadu cave records belonged to the Buddhists as in the case of the Sri Lanka records. The earliest extant Brahmi records in the Far South of India belonged to the Pandya country and Subramaniya Ayyar entitled his paper, 'The Earliest Monuments of the Pandya country and their Inscriptions'.²⁷ Ayyar seems to have believed that Mahinda and Ariṣṭha, the earliest Buddhist missionaries to the Island, went to South India also to propagate the teachings of the Buddha. But according to Fernando, the original Pali of the Mahavamsa did not warrant such a conclusion.²⁸ Raman, of course, differs from subramaniya Ayyar and subscribes to the theory that most of the Tamilnadu Brahmi records belonged to the Jains. But considering the similarity between the records of these states, the fact that almost three thousand Brahmi records had been discovered in Sri Lanka to almost less than a hundred in Tamilnadu and the fact that

26. Raman, K.V., Brahmi Inscriptions of Tamilnadu, An Historical Assessment, *The Sri Lanka Journal of South Asian Studies*, Vol. I, No. 1, Jaffna, 1976, pp. 64-76.

27. Subramaniya Ayyar, K.V., The Earliest Monuments of the Pandya Country and their Inscriptions, *Proceedings and Transactions of the Third Oriental Conference*, Madras, 1924; pp 275-300.

28. Fernando, P.E.E., *Op. Cit*, p. 284. f. n.

the Brahmi records in other parts of Tamilnadu are later records compared to the records of the Pandya kingdom with which Sri Lanka had intimate connections, even according to the earliest chronicles of Sri Lanka, he had propounded his theory. In this connection, it should be pointed out that Mahalingam had already referred to mention in traditional chronicles of matrimonial and other connections of the early Indo-Aryan settlers with the Pandyas.²⁹ So, it is quite possible that the evolution of the earliest extant script in the region owed to close collaboration between the Pandya kingdom and Sri Lanka.

Recently, communal relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in Sri Lanka took a worse turn due to long years of neglect of the unsolved minority problem concerning the status of the Tamil community in the country and the political leaders of the Tamil community, out of frustration, putting forward the demand for separation. Articles and books have appeared, denying the historical rights of the Tamils to Sri Lanka on the one hand and over-emphasizing the contribution of the Tamils to the same on the other hand. Two illustrations will be cited from the latter category as they suit the needs of this lecture. J.T. Xavier has taken up the stand that the Indus Valley people settled in Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka and that they were the common ancestors of the Sinhalese and the Tamils.³⁰ According to him, the ancient settlers were Dravidians and the oldest Sinhalese and Tamil cave inscriptions, dated in the third and second centuries A.D. were in the Damili script. The inflow of Magadhan Buddhist missionaries to Sri Lanka introduced the Asokan Brahmi or Old Pali script used in the inscriptions dated in the first century onwards for over four centuries in the Post-Christian era. D.J. Kanagaratnam puts forward the following

29. Mahalingam, T.V., Op. Cit, p. 160.

30. Xavier, J.T., *The Land of Letters*, Trincomalee, 1977, pp. 155-174.

argument.³¹ Buhler called the Mauryan script 'Brahmi' and the Southern script 'Dravidi'. According to this classification, Sri Lanka inscriptions should be called Dravidi inscriptions. Buhler also stated that the Dravidi script was a century or two earlier to Asoka and might have been introduced by Indian colonists to Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka and South India, similar symbols were found for some vowels and consonants which were not found in the Brahmi records of Asoka. Kanagaratnam also mentions 'i' and 'ma'. He quotes Dr. Saddhamangala Karunaratna (present Sri Lanka Archaeological Commissioner) from a news-paper article to show how the early Dravidian alphabet became modified due to Mauryan influence.

To assess realistically the commonness between the Tamilnadu script and the Sri Lanka script in a manner that will be

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31. Kanagaratnam, D.J., *Tamils and Cultural Pluralism in Ancient Sri Lanka*, Pilimalalawe (Sri Lanka), 1978, p. 26. He ascribes the modification of the Dravidi script of Sri Lanka due to Mauryan influence as a theory of Dr. Saddhamangala Karunaratna presented in a paper entitled 'Palaeographical Development of the Brahmi Script of Ceylon to the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Kuala Lumpur, 1966.

We have no access to this source.

Kanagaratnam goes on to quote from Karunaratna from a newspaper article entitled 'Did Mahinda give writing to Ceylon?' from Ceylon Daily News, 1966.

The contribution of Mahinda to the evolution of the script can be assessed by the changes that the Dravidi alphabet underwent in Ceylon. The Mauryan forms completely ousted the earlier forms and gave an impetus to the development of the script. For example, the earlier form of the 'i' went out of vogue. The tabular form of the 'ma' was replaced by the Mauryan form. The dental 'sa' was introduced by the missionaries and the palatal 'sa' completely disappeared at the commencement of the Christian era. The cerebral 'ja' found in the Sanchi alphabet was introduced and the 'ja' of the Southern alphabet disappeared.

This is a good scientific analysis but again, we could not check the original source.

acceptable to the generality of scholars, a rigorous comparison should be made first among the ancient Sri Lanka Brahmi, the Asokan Brahmi and the North Indian Brahmi contemporaneous with Sri Lanka Brahmi. The Sri Lanka tradition that the art of writing was brought here by Asokan Buddhist missionaries is held strongly and weighs quits strongly with Sinhalese scholars in Sri Lanka. Paranavitana, who, a decade ago, edited the early Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka in one volume, seems to be still unreconciled to the idea of any close relation between the scripts of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka. Discussing the palaeography of the early inscriptions of Sri Lanka, he could go only so far as to say that it was substantially the same as Asokan Brahmi. Even about the peculiar symbols of *i* and *ma*, he was arguing that those symbols appeared in North India as well, implying that they could have come to Sri Lanka direct from North India.³²

It is unfortunate that he had not made use of scientific analyses of Dani, Fernando and Karunaratna. Dani, of course, did not accept the existence of a Dravidi or a Damili script or even an old Sinhalese script. He considered these as minor variants of Brahmi. He could assert that the Sri Lanka script betrayed influences from Naneghat in the North as well as from the caves of Tamilnadu. According to Dani, the equavalisation of verticles, as in the cave inscriptions of Vessagiri, was a practice which started in North India after the Mathura Kehatrappa inscriptions and *ta* having a hook attached to the vertical belonged to the Deccani style.³³ His comment about the Dravidian *ma* had already been noted.

Likewise, Tamil Brahmi also has to be compared to Asokan Brahmi and contemporary North Indian Brahmi. After that, Sri Lanka Brahmi has to be compared to Tamilnadu Brahmi. Mahalingam has brought out the symbols for the following

32. Paranavitana, S., *Inscriptions of Ceylon, Vol.I, Early Brahmi Inscriptions*, Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Colombo, 1970, pp.XVII-XXV.

33. Dani., *Op. Cit*, p.218.

letters as the peculiar symbols of Tamil Brahmi when compared to Asokan Brahmi and contemporary North Indian Brahmi:- 'i' 'na', 'la', 'ja' and 'ra'.³⁴ He dealt with 'ma' in a different context. As voluminous material is available for Sri Lanka Brahmi, scholars well versed in this are in an excellent position to compare this with Tamil Brahmi. Fernando had done good work thirty years ago, when he made the following comment:-

"The letters well represented in the South Indian records that is, 'u', 'e', 'ka', 'ca', 'ta', 'pa' 'ya', and 'ra' resemble those found in the inscriptions at Vessagiriya and Ritigala. But the more remarkable affinities to the Brahmi alphabet are noticeable in the letters, 'a', 'i' and 'ma'. Equally remarkable affinities to the Brahmi alphabet of the early cave records of Ceylon are found in the inscriptions carved on pottery discovered at Arikamedu and South India..... The letters occurring in these inscriptions,..... contain the 'i' and the 'ma' peculiar to the records of Ceylon and of South India mentioned earlier".³⁵

But we have to note that Fernando has also referred to the influence of Asokan characters of the Western and the Southern parts of India and also to the influence of later Brahmi of Central and Eastern parts of India on the characters of the earliest extant records of Sri Lanka. Therefore the statement that the old script of Sri Lanka was exclusively Dravidi or Damili might not be acceptable even to liberal Sinhalese scholars. What we can do is to assert the commonness in the script of these two states, pinpointing the almost unanimous view of the resemblance in the symbols like 'i' and 'ma'.

A point to be noticed when one compares the Sri Lanka Brahmi with Tamil Brahmi is that in Sri Lanka, the script was used to write Old Sinhalese or more precisely Sinhalese Prakrit, while in Tamilnadu, the script was used to write Tamil or more

34. Mahalingam., Op.Cit, pp.135, 139.

35. Fernando., Op.Cit, pp.284-285.

precisely Tamil with Prakrit intermixture. The Tamil Brahmi script depicts the Tamil Brahmi alphabet and few other symbols to write Prakrit words. The Sri Lanka Brahmi was used to write Prakrit which does not exactly correspond to any known Indian Prakrit. It was already a composite Prakrit with certain new features not recorded in other Indian Prakrits. That is why, the earliest recorded language in Sri Lanka was sometimes referred to as Sinhalese Prakrit.³⁶ But there is one more letter 'ja' which is found both in Sri Lanka and Tamilnadu and Karunaratna only, according to the newspaper article already quoted, seems to have mentioned this.

The inscriptions found at Bhattiprolu in the heart of the Telugu country had an additional sound ja which was needed to write some Telugu proper names occurring in the inscriptions.³⁷ The Tamil Brahmi also had this letter but its formation differed from that of Bhattiprolu. It is remarkable that Sri Lanka Brahmi also had this letter and the symbol for that letter was that of Tamil Brahmi. Therefore it is quite possible that this symbol was needed in Sri Lankan Brahmi also to write Dravidian words.

Most of the other scholars had failed to mention this letter as one of the distinct symbols common to Brahmi of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka because there is controversy in Sri Lanka whether this symbol should be read as 'lu' or 'ja'. Paranavitana has given a list of reasons for his identification of the symbol as 'lu' and they need careful consideration.³⁸ On this reading, Paranavitana himself had followed Goldschmidt, Muller and Bell. Firstly, Paranavitana's argument is that this symbol had not been satisfactorily read in Tamilnadu Brahmi. He was aware of Subramaniya Ayyar's reading and Sir Mortimer Wheeler's criticism that the exact nature of the language was open to

36. Geiger, Wilhelm., A Grammar of the Sinhalese Language, Colombo, 1938, p.3.

37. Dani., Op.Cit, p.70-71.

38. Paranavitana., Early Brahmi inscriptions, pp. XXIV-XXV.

doubt.³⁹ But unfortunately he was not aware of Iravatham Mahadevan's widely accepted readings and interpretations.⁴⁰ Secondly, Paranavitana argued that the attempt to trace the evolution of the modern Tamil letter *ja* to the Brahmi symbol in question does not carry conviction because of the yearning gulf of nearly a millennium between the earliest occurrence of the character *ja* and the Brahmi symbol from which it is sought to be derived. Here too, Paranavitana seems to be out of date and not aware of the new chronological tables prepared by T.V. Mahalingam and Iravatham Mahadevan and the discovery and datings of ancient epigraphical records by R. Nagaswamy,⁴¹ of the Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology. Thirdly, he pointed out that it occurred for instance, in the name read as 'Velu-Sumana' in one of the inscriptions. Because Pali and Sinhalese historical works have preserved the name of a hero as Velu Sumana, Paranavitana felt that the names must be identical. The present writer finds nothing in the inscriptions to suggest that the person mentioned must be the same as the one mentioned in the historical works. When read as in Tamil Brahmi records, it will be 'Vēl Sumana' meaning Sumana, the chieftain. Paranavitana has read an inscription mentioning Tamils from Anuradhapura, *ilubarata*, an epithet of a Tamil, and commented that it is a word of uncertain origin. The word *barata*, he has explained in other contexts as 'lord'. Read as in Tamil Brahmi, this epithet will read as *iḷa barata* meaning 'lord of *iḷa(m)*'. This might have stood as a place name like *ḷam* of Tamil Brahmi inscriptions and *Paṭṭiṇṇippālai*, a Sangam classic. There was also a Sangam poet, *ḷattup Pūtantavaṇār* meaning 'Pūtantavaṇār from *ḷam*'.

39. Wheeler, Sir Mortimer., *Ancient India*, Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India, No.2, p.109.

40. Iravatham Mahadevan presented a paper in Second International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies (1968). He has also published the *Corpus of the Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions* (1963).

41. Mahalingam, T.V., *Op.Cit.* p.203 dates these inscriptions from the third century B.C. to the fourth Century A.D.

The other arguments brought forward by Paranavitana also do not carry conviction. Fourthly, the feminine form of parumake had been read as Parumakalu in one of the records. According to him, the feminine form of Parumaka occurred also as Parumakala and Parumakali in two other records. According to him, Indo-Aryan feminine suffixes 'ā' and 'ī' have been shortened as 'a' and 'i' in Old Sinhalese. In the two latter records cited by him, the dental 'l' was clear. So, he reasoned out that Parumakalu was the form resulting from the addition of the feminine '-u' suffix to Parumaka, augmented by the '-la' suffix. Paranavitana knew some Tamil and he had edited a few Tamil inscriptions. But as he did not want to concede that it could be Dravidian, he had to give an ingenious explanation. If this letter were read as 'ja/j' as in Tamil Brahmi, the feminine form could be read as Parumakal. The termination '-j' is the recognised feminine termination in Tamil. As for the other two forms of the same word mentioned by Paranavitana, the two terminations 'la' and 'li' could be explained away as scribal errors without bringing in new grammatical rules. The letter 'la' might have been there for 'ja' because the scribe failed to convert the symbol for la into the symbol for ja by inserting the additional hook. The letter 'li' might have been written for 'ja' because the scribe wrote the hook upwards instead of downwards.

The fifth argument of Paranavitana was that words which contained a 'ja' were written in the early Brahmi inscriptions with a 'ḍi' in place of the letter 'ja' and that when the cerebral

Mahadevan I, Op.Cit. dates the Brahmi inscriptions from the second century B.C. to the third century A.D. For the discoveries of Tamil and Vatteluttu records of the fifth and sixth centuries A.D.
See,

Nagaswamy, R., *Archaeology and Epigraphy of Tamilnadu: A Survey of Recent Developments, Proceedings of the Third International Conference, Seminar (I.A.T.R. Paris, pp- 56-71.*

'ja' occurred in later Brahmi records in places where there had been a 'ḍa' in earliest records, the symbol for 'ja' was formed by the addition of an extra stroke to the bottom of the letter ḍa. He correctly pointed out that the letter ja of modern Sinhalese alphabet directly evolved through various stages from the latter ja. As Dani points out, these two 'ja', though very much related, are distinct sounds, the former one evolving to represent a Dravidian sound and the latter one evolving to represent what came to be known later as West Indian 'ja'.⁴² So, Paranavitana seems to be right in the latter part of his argument. What he is unwilling to concede was that there was no evidence for the systematisation, at that early period, of Old Sinhalese language or Old Sinhalese script. The earliest extant Sinhalese literary work is dated after the tenth century A.D. and the earliest extant Sinhalese grammatical work is dated in the thirteenth century A.D. As Karunaratne is quoted to have mentioned in the news-paper article, an earlier 'ja' of the Dravidi script must have given way to a later 'ja' of the Dravidi script must have given way to a later 'ja' when North Indian influence in Sri Lanka became predominant in the period of later Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka. The writing of 'ḍa' in an earlier stage in place of the later 'ja' in Indo-Aryan words seems to have been a feature of the North Indian languages. When this latter 'ja', along with many other changes were introduced in Sri Lanka Brahmi, the earlier ja, along with many other peculiarities of the then existing script went out of usage. This great change in palaeography should be taken to reflect great cultural change. Further, it has also to be noted that Tamilnadu Brahmi is also undergoing similar change. The tabulation prepared by Iravatham Mahadevan shows that by first century B.C., Tamilnadu Brahmi is also approximating to North Indian Brahmi in the allocation of values to letters, etc.⁴³

42. Dani., *Op.Cit.*, p.70.

43. Mahadevan, I., *Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions*, state Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnadu, Madras, 1970.

So, besides this 'ja' which should have signified Dravidian influence, the symbol for 'i' should have been introduced to fulfil the needs of Dravidian/Tamil phonology. The addition of a dot to the three dots of 'i' signified the long 'i' in Asokan Brahmi. According to Tamil phonology, as in the case of consonants and short 'e' and short 'o', addition of a dot signified the shortening of the value. Therefore, the four dots had been converted to a vertical line with a dot on each side. So, this symbol should have been originally long i.⁴⁴ But in ancient or rather early Tamil Brahmi, this symbol denoted both short 'i' and the long 'i'.⁴⁵ As Sri Lanka Brahmi had a characteristic of avoiding long vowels, it could be said that that symbol denoted the short 'i'. But after sometimes, Asokan short 'i' of three dots makes its appearance both in Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka and the peculiar symbol denotes long 'i' in both States. It was as long 'i' that this symbol makes a brief appearance in North India. Though Dani was inclined to accept that this symbol might have travelled from the extreme South to the North of India, Paranavitana could have gone so far only as to say that this symbol was found in Sanchi in North India⁴⁶ without indicating that that symbol denoted long 'i' there. As in later Tamil Brahmi, this symbol denotes the long 'i' in later Sri Lanka Brahmi. The modern Tamil and Sinhalese scripts retain this letter in easily identifiable but slightly different shapes.

The other common symbol, which is definitely peculiar to the two states is what is generally referred to as the Dravidian 'ma'. A variety of forms of 'ma' had been found in Asokan Brahmi. Some varieties are found in Sri Lanka Brahmi also. But this peculiar symbol known as the Dravidian 'ma' was very common in Sri Lanka Brahmi.⁴⁷ As far as the present writer is aware, nobody has explained why this particular symbol had

44. Mahalingam., Op.Cit, pp.135-136.

45. Mahadevan., Op.Cit. p.1.

46. Paranavitana., *Early Brahmi Inscriptions*, p.XVIII.

47. Ibid. See Paranavitana's Chart on Brahmi Script in Ceylon,

been evolved to denote 'ma'. The symbol representing 'Asokan 'ma' was occurring as a Non-Brahmi symbol in a few inscriptions in Sri Lanka.⁴⁸ This symbol occurs in some ancient Brahmi cave inscriptions discovered in Periya Puliyankulam (Vavuniya District: Northern Province); Nattukanda (Anuradhapura District: North Central Province); Tonigala and Paramakanda (both in Puttalam District: North Western Province).⁴⁹ The northern and western portions of Sri Lanka were strong holds of Naga inhabitants during that early period and Nagadipa mentioned in various chronicles, historical records and Puranas had been identified with different parts of the region.⁵⁰ This symbol also occurs on a recently discovered Brahmi potsherd inscription from Kanterodai (Jaffna peninsula: Jaffna District: Northern Province).⁵¹ We surmise that this non-Brahmi symbol of Sri Lanka, the equivalent of Asokan Brahmi symbol 'ma' could have served as a Naga emblem. Therefore, there was a need to create a new symbol for 'ma' in Sri Lanka.

The full significance of the fact that the symbols created to fulfil the needs of Dravidian and particularly Tamil and those of the Nagas found universal acceptance in the two states and in the two states only in the entire South Asia in the earliest extant available records should be realised and the early history of Sri Lanka should be reconstructed in this new light. Paranavitana had read and interpreted the Sri Lanka Brahmi

48. Ibid. See Paranavitana's Chart on Non-Brahmi Symbols.

49. Ibid. See the Photographic plates of the records.

50. Paranavitana deals with this problem in his paper on Vallipuram Gold Plate inscription in *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Volume IV, pp 229—237. Wilhelm Geiger identifies Nagadipa with Mannar in North East of Sri Lanka. Mudaliyar A.M. Gunasekara identifies it with the maritime parts of Puttalam and Chilaw Districts in North—West Sri Lanka. Paul E. Piris, with whom Paranavitana agrees, identifies it with Jaffna Peninsula, northernmost part of Sri Lanka.

51. Indrapala, K., A Brahmi Potsherd Inscription from Kanterodai, *Purva Kala*, Jaffna Archaeological Society, 1973, pp.18-19.

records, always looking for derivations from Pali, Prakrit and Sanskrit. Changes in letter forms do not occur in a haphazard manner. The modern trend in the study of palaeography is to study it as an aspect of culture.⁵² The ancient history of Sri Lanka has to be modernised, giving due weightage to Dravidian, particularly Tamil influence.⁵³

What Indrapala says here can be quoted as it is very interesting:-

"The first character may be read as 'ma', but Dr. W. Saddhamangala Kurunaratne, the Assistant Archaeological Commissioner (Epigraphy) of Sri Lanka is inclined to take it as a symbol. The present writer understands that the late Prof. S. Paranavitana also read it as a symbol. As the present writer has a high regard for the knowledge of these two scholars in the field of Brahmi Inscriptions and as such symbols do occur in the Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka, this interpretation is adopted by him in this article, although personally he would prefer to read it as the letter, 'ma'".

52. Dani., Op.Cit. Preface.

53. The following article, published in two parts, is a contribution to this field.

Veluppillai, A., Tamil Influence in Ancient Sri Lanka with special reference to Brahmi Inscriptions, *Journal of Tamil Studies*, 16, December, Madras, 1979 and *Journal of Tamil Studies*, 17, July, 1980

TAMIL CONNECTIONS WITH SRI LANKA

Dr. K.K. Pillai, former Professor of Indian History of the University of Madras, has already published a book on South India and Ceylon seventeen years ago. He has also brought out a revised second edition five years ago.¹ This is a good book as far as it goes but the relationship between the two regions is wider than that indicated in that book. Further, the present lecture aims to study and evaluate the epigraphical sources of the contact and so, the focus is different.

Our country now goes by the name of Sri Lanka. This name also has variants, such as Lankawa, Lankadipa and Lanka. The form Lanka-w-a, shows that Lanka could have been a loan-word, borrowed from some other language. Etymologically, this word is not considered Indo-Aryan. Professor Romila Thaper of the Jawaharlal Nehru State University of New Delhi, suggested that it was derived from a Dravidian language. The Dravidian Etymological Dictionary of Professor Burrow and Professor Emeneau claimed that this word was an Indo-Aryan loan-word, derived from ranka, 'small island like formation in a river.' This ranka becomes lanka in Telugu and Gond.² According to H.D. Sankalia, who devotes a small chapter on the study of different names of the country of Sri Lanka, Lanka, is a Mundari word-meaning an island or a solitary place in a hill.³ Mundari

1. Pillai, K K, *South India and Sri Lanka*, Sir William Meyer Lectures (1958-59), University of Madras, 1975. First edition in 1963.
2. Emeneau, M.B., *Dravidian Borrowings from Indo-Aryan* (C.U.P.L 26) Berkeley, 1962.
3. Sankalia, H.D., *Aspects of Indian History and Archaeology*: Ed. S.P. Gupta & K.S. Ramachandran, Delhi, 1977.

Sankalia has not cared to find out whether Sri Lanka could have an ancient Dravidian or Tamil name.

is one of the Austro-Asiatic languages spoken in Central India. It is very doubtful whether they have a word for an island, Because Mundari speakers have no access to the sea. Being in uncultivated tribal language, Mundari word with the meaning island may not exist. Therefore it is quite possible that the word Lanka was a Dravidianised Indo-Aryan loan and the people who gave the name to the Island were Aryanised Dravidians. The narrowness of the sea between India and Sri Lanka might have given the early wave of migrants the impression that the latter is a Lanka only.

This lecture will be in four parts. The first part will deal with Tamil names for Sri Lanka. The second part will deal with epigraphical evidence of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka. The third part will deal with evidence of Pali chronicles. The fourth part will deal with conclusion.

1. Tamil Names for Sri Lanka: Ilaṅkai and Iḷam

When Sri Lanka emerges into History, it was known by various names. All the early names seem to have been derived from Indian languages. People from different parts of India must have migrated to the small island situated at the South east corner of the mainland. Different groups of people might have been using different names. Sri Lanka with abundance of pearls and precious stones, situated in the middle part of the Ocean, on the trade routes between the East and the West, attracted people from many parts. Ilaṅkai and Iḷam are the Tamil names for our country.

The name, Ilaṅkai (Lanka) is connected with Ramayana which mentions this as the capital of Ravana. When the story of Ramayana of Sanskrit origin became popular in Tamilnadu, Lanka must have been Tamilicised as Ilaṅkai. some references to Ramayana episodes appear even in Sangam literature. But the reference to Ilaṅkai first occurs in Cilappatikāram where it

is stated that when Senguttuvan, the Cera ruler inaugurated Kannagi worship, 'King Kayavaku (Gujabahu) of Ilaṅkai surrounded by sea' was present there and that the latter ruler brought that worship to Sri Lanka.

The question arises why Ilaṅkai should have been qualified by the epithet 'Kaṭal Cūl' (surrounded by sea). There should have been Ilaṅkai, not surrounded by sea. Ancient Tamil lexicon gives the meaning āṟṟiṭaikkūrai to the word Ilaṅkai. It is not clear how the ancient Tamil nikaṇṭu derived this meaning 'island like formation in the river' to the word Ilaṅkai. Such formations in the Cauvery river are called arankam or rankam. Therefore the meaning given in the Tamil nikaṇṭu for the word Ilaṅkai corresponds to the meaning of Telugu for Lanka. Further, Ciṟupāṇāṟruppaṭai, a Sangam literary work refers to the existence of Mā-v-ilaṅkai, just north of the Cōḷamaṇṭalam. Therefore the phrase 'Kaṭal Cūl Ilaṅkai' might have been coined to distinguish our country from various Lankas in Telugu and Ilaṅkai in Tamil.

When the two forms lanka and ranka are compared, the phonemic change of r into l is noticed. This change is a peculiar feature of East India; it was prevalent in former Magadha and Kalinga. It is generally believed that the ancestors of the Sinhalese people arrived from Kalinga and that Buddhism came to Sri Lanka from Magadha. These contacts might have been responsible for the retention of the name Lanka as the name of our country. But, the name Ravana of the Ramayana times does not seem to have undergone transformation as Lavana in general usage. But it is strange that when Aracakecari wrote Irakuvamsam in Tamil (an adaptation of Kalidasa's Raghuvamśa), in the kingdom of Jaffna in the fifteenth century, he refers to Irāvaṇaṇ (Ravana) as Ilāvaṇaṇ. According to a tradition preserved in Yāḷppāṇa Vaipava Mālai, it was Ukkiracinkan, a Kalinga Prince who inaugurated the ruling dynasty of the Jaffna Kingdom.

It is unfortunate that there is controversy about the date of Cilappatikāram which first refers to Sri Lanka as Ilaṅkai. Though various dates are suggested on various grounds, two dates only are being held by serious scholars. The first date of second century A.D. has been based mainly on Gajabahu synchronism. The author of the work claims to be a contemporary of the personages mentioned in the epic and as Gajabahu I is assigned to the second century A.D., this work is also dated in that century. Professor V. Chelvanayagam, formerly of the University of Ceylon, has discussed the matter well from many points of view and arrived at the conclusion that the date of Cilappatikāram should have been fourth Century A.D.* Therefore, we can take it that if not in the second century A.D., at least in the fourth century A.D., our country seems to have been referred to as Ilaṅkai.

There are copious references to Ilaṅkai in Tamil literature of the Pallava period. When Ravana is mentioned, Ilaṅkai also is mentioned in association with him. The clear references as 'Kaṭal Cūlnta Ilaṅkai' (Lanka, surrounded by the sea) should apply to our country. Saint Thirugnanasampanthar of the seventh century A.D. who composed devotional songs on Tirukketiswaram and Tirukonamalai of our country, has also used expressions like 'atir kaṭal ilaṅkai', 'aṟaiyar kaṭal ilaṅkai', 'eṟiyar kaṭal cūl ilaṅkai', 'kaṭal vāli ilaṅkai' and 'tiraīy-ārnta ma kaṭal cūl tēṇṇ-ilaṅkai'. Saint Thirunavukarasar of the same period has expressions like 'kaṭal ilaṅkai' and 'poru kaṭal ilaṅkai'. For an illustration to references not directly connected to Ravana. Tontaratippoti Alvar's reference to Lord Vishnu 'reclining in Sri Rangam in the Cauvery, showing his back to the north and looking towards Ilaṅkai in the south' can be cited.

4. Chelvanayagam, V., Dates of Cilappatikāram and Manimekalai, *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. VI, Colombo, 1949.

Unlike Ilaṅkai, Iḷam seems to be a pure Tamil word. The second letter 'ḷa' is peculiar to Dravidian, especially to Tamil-Malayalam sub-group. So, this word could not have come from Indo-Aryan or other language families. How this word began to denote our country is not clear. The word Iḷam has meanings like 'gold' and 'toddy'. It is quite possible that our country was named after gold as Indians who went abroad to trade with South-East Asia designated those parts as Swarnabhumi and Suwarnadeepa. Following similar tradition, our country might have been designated as Iḷam.

Tolkāppiyam and Cilappatikāram are the earliest works to mention the boundaries of Tamilnadu. Both of them refer to Venkatam as northern boundary and Kumari as southern boundari. At the southern extremity of present Tamilnadu, we find Kumari muḡai (Cape Comerin). But all the medieval commentators of the above works say that Kumari refers to Kumari river and not Kumari muḡai. According to them, Kumari river and adjoining lands disappeared in a deluge. They bring in the story of the Three Sangams or Academies mentioned in Iṟaiyaṅār Akapporuḷ Urai and say that forty nine nāṭus were devoured by the sea. The forty-nine are enumerated as follows:- Ēḷ tenkanāṭu, Ēḷ Maturaināṭu, Ēḷ muṇṇāḷaināṭu, Ēḷ piṇṇāḷaināṭu, Ēḷ Kuṇṇanāṭu, Ēḷ Kuṇṇakaraināṭu and Ēḷ Kuṇṇumpāṇaināṭu. So, actually, seven names only are mentioned. All the seven names have an adjective ēḷ. The numeral adjective ēḷ in Tamil means seven. So, forty-nine are being derived by having seven into seven. But it is difficult to accept here that the adjective could have denoted seven in a symmetrical way in all the cases. This Ēḷ could have some connection with Iḷam. Vowel 'i' and 'e' are closely related front vowels. As Tamilnadu had a name Tamilakam in ancient times, our country also could have had a name like Ēḷakam which became Iḷakam and then changed to Iḷam. But it has to be accepted that it is not possible to come to any definite conclusion about the word Iḷam.

There is evidence even in Sangam literature for the usage of the name *Iḷam* for our country. It is generally accepted by modern scholars that Sangam period preceded third century A.D. Paṭṭinappalai which sings of the glories of Cola Karikalan mentions 'food from *Iḷam* and produce from *Kedha*' as imports arriving at *Kavirippampattinam*. The fertile Cola country with usually surplus food, has imported food from *Iḷam*. Unfortunately, it is not mentioned which food item was imported. The *la* sound, peculiar to the Dravidian and occurring in the word *Iḷam* occurs in the name *Cōlanāṭu* also, *Cōlanāṭu* might have acquired its name as the *Cōlas* were the ruling dynasty. There is no such evidence to explain *Iḷarāṭu*.

There is evidence for the usage of the word *Iḷam* in the Pandyanadu also. Pandyanadu is closely associated with development of Tamil in the Sangam age. The first and the third Sangams are said to have been located in Madurai. Pandyanadu alone is sometimes referred to as Tamilnadu. Pūtantēvaṇār from *Iḷam* was one of the poets of the Sangam Age. In fact, two names, *Iḷattup Pūtantēvaṇār* and *Maturai Iḷattup Pūtantēvaṇār*, occur. The latter name can be explained as Pūtantēvaṇār from *Iḷam*, settled in Madura. He has seven poems to his credit in Sangam literature.* As all of them are love poems, composed according to the traditions of the age, it is not possible to obtain any historical evidence. A few poets of the Sangam Age have Indo-Aryan names. The name of our poet has also Indo-Aryan elements as *Bhūta* and *Deva*. These names occur in early Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka.

Historians don't give much importance to literary evidence alone. They give more importance to archaeological and epigraphical evidence especially for Ancient Period of History. There seems to have been very close connections from remote

5. *Akṇanuru*:— 88, 231, 307, *Kuruntokai*:— 189, 343, 360; *Narrinai*:— 366.

times between Sri Lanka and Pandyanadu which are so close to each other geographically. That might have been the reason for Mahavamsa to refer to matrimonial connections which Vijaya and his friends established with the Pandya Kingdom as well as to the settlement in Sri Lanka of Pandya artisans and craftsmen.⁶ One Brahmi inscription of Tamilnadu, contemporaneous with the early Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka mentions Iḷam.

That inscription has been found at Tirupparankunram, a hill near Madura. A householder from Iḷam is said to have donated a cave to some ascetic. Unfortunately there is controversy about the date of this epigraph. K.V. Subramaniya Ayyar dated all the Tamilnadu cave inscriptions to the third century B.C. T.V. Mahalingam dated this particular inscription to the first century A.D. Iravatham Mahadevan dated this particular inscription to the first or second Century A.D. Irrespective of whose view we accept, we can boldly say that this inscription appeared during the Sangam period, if not earlier.

Prof. T.V. Mahalingam (1967) has referred again to the theory of Wilhelm Geiger about the derivation of the word

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6. Geiger, Wilhelm., *The Mahavamsa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, Colombo, 1960.

See VIIIth Chapter 'The Consecrating of Vijaya'.

'Vijaya refused to consecration unless a maiden of a noble house were consecrated as queen. The ministers sent people, entrusted with many precious gifts, jewels, pearls, and so forth, to the city of Mathura in Southern (India) to woo the daughter of the Pandu King for their lord.....and they also (sent to woo) the daughters of others for the ministers and retainers..... When (the Pandu King) had thus obtained many maidens.....he sent his daughter, bedecked with all her ornaments, and all that was needful for the journey and all the maidens whom he had fitted out, according to their rank, elephants, withal and horses and wag-gons worthy of a king and craftsmen and a thousand families of the eighteen guilds, entrusted with a letter to the conqueror Vijaya'.

Iḷam According to Geiger, **Sīhaḷa**, the Pali form of **Sinhaḷa**, became **Sīḷa**, then **īḷa** and consequently **īḷa**. Geiger must have got this idea because in medieval **Cōḷa** inscriptions, the terms **Iḷam** and **Sinhalese** go together in many places. If Geiger's derivation were correct, it might have taken a thousand years for **Sīhaḷa** to develop into **Iḷam**. But there is literary and epigraphical evidence for the usage of the name of **Iḷam** in the **Sangam** period. The earliest reference to **Sīhaḷa** in an **Ikshvaku** inscription is dated in the third century A.D. Therefore, it is quite possible that the name **Iḷam** preceded the name **Sīhaḷa** or **Sinhaḷa**. A more probable derivation for the word **Iḷam** is from **Elu** or **Helu** which is claimed as the ancient name for the **Sinhalese** language before it was **Sanskritised** from the fifth century A.D. As no literary records have survived from that period, it is not possible to make definite assertions about the characteristics of that language.

The name **Iḷam** has been in continuous use. The copper plate of **Parantakan Viranarayana Pandya** when referring to **Sri Mara Sri Vallabh's** invasion of **Sri Lanka**, mentions '**Karai kaṭal Iḷaṅ Koṇṭu**' (having captured **Iḷam**, surrounded by roaring sea). The **prasasti** of **Rajaraja the Great** refers to '**Cinkaḷar Iḷa-maṇṭalam**'. **Rajendra I** claims to have captured '**Iḷamaṇṭalam muḷuvatum**' (entire **Iḷam**).

It is not possible to decide whether the names **Iḷam** and **Yāḷppāṇam** (**Jaffna**) in the north of **Sri Lanka** are related. According to **Yāḷppāṇa Vaipava Mālai**, the northern region of **Sri Lanka** known as **Maṇṇārī** was presented to a musician (**Pāṇar** with the musical instrument **Yāḷ**) and he got South Indians to settle there. There is no evidence for the usage of the name **Yāḷppāṇam** in Ancient and early medieval periods. Phonetically, **Yāḷ** and **īḷ** are quite related. According to **Tol-kāppiyam**, the classical **Tamil** grammar, the sound '**i**' and '**y**' can come one in place of another, at the end of words. It is quite possible that such usage occurred in the initials of words also at a later age. It has already been shown that **īḷ** and **ēḷ** may be related to each other. So, phonetically, **īḷ**, **āḷ** and **yāḷ** may be related. Further, **Yāḷppāṇam** is especially noted for

its abundance of palmyra trees. In the list of lands devoured by the sea during the deluge was mentioned *Ēl Kuṟum paṇai-nāṭu*. It is tempting to derive *Yālpṇāṇam* from *Ēl paṇai (nāṭu)*. What *Yālpṇāṇavaipavamalai* gives might be folk etymology of a later period, after the original explanation was lost. This derivation will also explain *Yapana*, the Sinhalese name for Jaffna.

2. EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE OF TAMILNADU AND SRI LANKA

The history of Tamilnadu has to depend mainly on epigraphical evidence and secondarily on archaeological and literary evidence. The history of Sri Lanka depends mainly on Pali chronicles and secondarily on archaeological literary and epigraphical evidences. This is true especially for the Ancient and early Medieval periods. For the late Medieval and modern periods, there are many other sources also. Light is thrown on Ancient history of Sri Lanka by about three thousand Brahmi inscriptions - an exceptionally large number for a small country like ours, only about half the size of Tamilnadu. Sri Lanka is justly proud that nowhere else in South Asia historical sense seems to have been as developed as in it, as portrayed in its chronicles *Mahavamsa* and its continuation *Culavamsa*. These chronicles are very important for studying Tamil connections with Sri Lanka and they will be taken up later.

The archaeological evidence for Tamil connections with Sri Lanka has been studied by many scholars especially in reference to Pallava⁷ *Cōla*, Later *Pandya* and *Vijayanagar* styles on architecture and sculpture of Sri Lanka⁷. Professor K. Indrapala has published a book in Tamil on Dravidian influence on the architecture of Sri Lanka⁷. Besides Tamilnadu, especially in Pre-Pallava period, Andhra Pradesh had also considerable influence on the architecture and sculpture of Sri Lanka through

7. Indrapala, K., *Ilankaiyil Tiravittak Kattitakkalai—Oru varalaru arimukam*, Colombo, 1970.

Buddhist contacts. Another aspect, less well known, is the discovery of about ten megalithic sites spread throughout Sri Lanka:- Vallipuram in the extreme North; Matottam and Ponparappi in the North-West; Kuchaveli and Katiraveli in the East; Tissamaharagama and Walawa basin in the South; Kondadeniya in the West; Padyagampola in the Centre and Anuradhapura, the ancient capital of Sri Lanka.⁸ These show extensive Dravidian contacts with many parts of the country by about the beginning of the Christian era, if not earlier. Parana-vitana, of course, could concede only an overflow from South India.

Tamil inscriptions from Tamilnadu from about the ninth century to the thirteenth century A.D. provide evidence for Tamil connections with Sri Lanka. The general pattern of the evidence is one way contact of invasions from Earlier Pandya, Cola and Later Pandya Empires. In the ninth century, Sri Mara Sri Vallabha invaded Sri Lanka and took much booty. Pandya copper plates refer to this as 'Karai Kaṭal Iḷaṅkoṭṭu, and 'Ciṅkaḷattum... Vāṭāta vākai Cūṭi' (larger Sinnamanur Copper Plates). Parantaka I calls himself 'Maitariyum Iḷamum koṭṭa kōp Parakācari' (King Parakesari who conquered Madura and Iḷam). There was another invasion of Sri Lanka during the reign of Sundaracola Parantaka II. Cīriya Vēḷār, the Coḷa commander fell down fighting in 965 A.D. There is epigraphical evidence for this in Tamilnadu.⁹ One Sinhalese inscription from Sri Lanka confirms this by referring to the successful campaign of Senapati Sena against the Damilas.¹⁰

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8. These places are marked so in a map of Sri Lanka at the Museum in Colombo.
 9. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol.V (27th Year of Rajaraja I), Annual Report on Epigraphy, 1914, II 15 gives the date correctly as year 9.
 10. The Vessagiri Slab Inscription of Mihindu (Epigraphia Zeylanica I, pp. 29 ff).

It was Rajaraja the Great who seems to have established Cōla rule firmly in northern Sri Lanka. His meykkīrttis refer to 'Cīnkaḷar Iḷamaṇṭalamum... tiṇṇīraḷ veṇṇi ttaṇṭar Koṇṭa' and 'eṇṇīcai pukaḷ tara Iḷamaṇṭalamum'. His inscriptions with the usual meykkīrttis have been discovered at Padavya and Trincomalee in Sri Lanka. He made the conquered portion of Sri Lanka, a province of the Cōla Empire under the title 'Mummuṭi Cōlamaṇṭalam. In his twenty ninth year, he made a grant of various villages in Sri Lanka for various purposes to the Great Temple at Tanjore.¹¹ He made Polonnaruwa the capital in Sri Lanka and named it Jananathamangalam, after one of his titles.¹² Matottam was named Rajarajapura and a Cōla officer built a temple there called Rajarajeswara. This information is found in a Sri Lanka Tamil inscription.¹³

Rajendra I explicitly says that he conquered the entire Iḷam. The Pandyas left their crown and jewels with the Sri Lanka ruler when they had to flee from their land. Even when Rajaraja the Great conquered the northern part of Sri Lanka, the Sri Lanka ruler fled to Ruhuna in the south-east carrying with him these valuables. Rajendra I claims to have captured both Pandya and Sri Lanka crowns and valuables. His usual meykkīrttis give this information. But his Karandai (Tanjore) plates (V.V. 58-59) say that Rajendra conquered the King of Sri Lanka with a fierce army and seized his territory, his crown, his queen and her crown, his daughter, all his wealth, his transports and the spotless garland of Indra and crown of the Pandyas left in his charge; after having lost the battle and being shorn of his queen, son and other belongings the king of Sri Lanka, out of fear, came and sought the two feet of Rajendra

11. S.I.I. 2.92. Paragraphs 12-15 made a grant of various villages.

12. Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, 1905, p.27.

13. Veluppillai, A.,—*Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, Part II, Peradeniya, 1972.

as shelter. A number of inscriptions of Rajendra I with the usual meykkiṟtti 'tirumanggi vaḷara' have been found in Sri Lanka. A recently discovered fragmentary Cōḷa inscription from Fort Hammenheil, Kayts in Sri Lanka confirms that a Cōḷa commander took away the Sri Lanka royal family and treasures. It was also the only record which gives the name of the Cōḷa commander as Jayañkoṭṭa Cōḷa Mūventa Vēḷar.¹⁴

Rajendra I adopted a novel system of administration in the government of outlying provinces of the Cōḷa Empire. The earlier system of appointing the former conquered rulers to rule again as subordinates of the Cōḷa Empire by paying tribute did not work well in some parts of the Empire. These subordinates raised revolt at the earliest possible opportunity. The new system is appointing Cōḷa princes to rule from enemy capitals with designations as Cōḷa-Pandya and Cōḷa Kerala. The system prevalent in regard to Sri Lanka was unknown till recently and it was generally felt that an officer of lesser rank like a governor might have been in Sri Lanka to administer the country. Recently, two inscriptions have come to light from Trincomalee (Tirukonamalai) District of Sri Lanka with evidence that Sri Lanka was administered by a Cōḷa Lankeswara of comparable status with Cola Kerala and Cola-Pandya.¹⁵

The meykkiṟtti of Rajadhiraja I mentions battles with various personalities in Sri Lanka. When the Sinhalese King died in Captivity in Tamilnadu, the Sinhalese set up Vikramabahu as King in Ruhuna. Though the Cōḷas claimed to have captured the whole island, they had firm control in the North only. Ruhunu, the South-east of Sri Lanka was almost in continuous revolt. Though the Cōḷas put down all revolts

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14. Indrapala, K., *Epigraphia Tamilica*, Volume I, Jaffna Archaeological Society, 1971.
 15. Gunasingam, S., *Two Inscriptions of Cola Ilankesvara Deva*, Trincomalee Inscriptions Series, Peradeniya, 1974.

now and then with severe destructive actions, they could not stabilise themselves in Ruhunu. Besides Sinhalese princes, Indian adventurers too ventured to stake their claims to Sri Lanka throne, by making use of popular revolts against Cōla rule. Almost throughout the period of the Cōla Age, the Pandyas and the Sinhalese were in close alliance against the Cōlas their common enemy. Vikramapandya, an adventurer also fought the Colas in the region of Rajadhiraja I. Vira Salamegha, another adventurer from Kannoj in North India is also given prominence but it is not clear how he obtained support in Sri Lanka. Sri Vallabhan Madanarajan, another adventurer of Karnataka descent is also mentioned. As the Western Chalukyas, ruling in Karnataka, were also enemies of the Cōlas, an adventurer from there was able to obtain Sinhalese support to fight against the Cōlas.

Till the disappearance of Cōla rule from the Island in about 1070 A.D., the Cōlas were busy putting down occasional revolts in Ruhunu. The meykkirtti of Rajendra II mentions defeat of Vira Salamegha an adventurer from Kalinga. Kalinga is sometimes claimed to be the home of Vijaya and his comrades, the earliest Aryan settlers of Sri Lanka. In Medieval Sri Lanka History, close relationship existed between Sri Lanka and Kalinga. The Kalingas were also against the Cōla-Eastern Chalukya alliance and that might have been a factor in a Kalinga adventurer leading a Sinhalese-revolt. This meykkirtti also mentions another Sinhalese rebel ruler Manabharana. The meykkirtti of Vira Rajendra, his successor also refers to defeat inflicted on the Sinhalese but it gives no details. An inscription of Adhirajendra with his usual meykkirtti is also found at Polonnaruwa. The meykkirttis of Kulottunga Cola I and Vikramacola have also vague references of over-running and scaring the Sinhalese.

In the second half of the twelfth century, there is a change in the pattern of Tamil connections with Sri Lanka. The main battle-field was Pandyanadu in South India. There was a civil

war in Pandyanadu. At the request of one party, Parakramabahu the Great of Sri Lanka sends help. The help was so effective that the other party has no alternative but to appeal to the Cōlas for help. The Pandya civil war was fought during the reigns of Rajadhiraja II and Kulottunga III (1163-1216). The Arppakkam (Chingleput District) inscriptions of Rajadhiraja II in his fifth year records the beginning of this civil war. The Pallavarayanpettai (Tanjore District) inscription of the same ruler in his eighth year records how seriously that war developed due to Sri Lanka intervention. In fact, according to the record, the Cōlas had to intervene to prevent Pandyanadu becoming a part of Sri Lanka. The Cōlas defeated the Sri Lanka army, killed Lankapura, its commander and nailed his head to the gates of Madurai. The North Arcot inscriptions of the same ruler, in his twelfth year, states that an expedition was sent against Sri Lanka by Annan Pallavarayan who heard that the Sinhalese king was preparing for another attack on the Cōla King and his protege Kulasekara and that with this intent, he was concentrating his forces and building ships in northern ports. The expedition, sent with Sri Vallabha, nephew of Parakramabahu at its head, destroyed various places in Sri Lanka, seized many elephants and set fire to many places.

Parakramabahu I of Sri Lanka then tried to accomplish by diplomatic means what he could not accomplish by military means. Irrespective of from whom they got help, the Pandyas nurtured a grievance against their Cōla overlords and wanted to assert their independence. So, Parakramabahu now lured Kulasekhara to his side, promising support against the Cōlas. Then the Cōlas had to fight again, punished Kulasekhara and enthroned Vira Pandya whom Parakramabahu I supported earlier. Within a short time, Parakramabahu I was busy again and Vira Pandya defected to his side. Then the Cōlas had to fight again, put him down and instal Vikrama Pandya on the throne. An inscription of Kulottunga III in his tenth year mentions Sri Lanka as one of the countries seized by him. During that period, there was confusion in Sri Lanka after the

death of Parakramabahu I. This King died childless and for a few years after his death, a number of people including his queens and some adventurers ruled Sri Lanka. Kulottunga III might have inflicted a defeat on Sri Lanka at that time. Sri Lanka regained political stability when Nissanka Malla, a Kalinga prince, became ruler. He was generally boastful in his records and he claimed three successful expeditions to the Pandyanadu. He also claimed to have renovated a temple in Rameswaram which, of course, has been confirmed by the existence of a Sinhalese inscription at Rameswaram of the same ruler.

The Pandya Civil war was a turning point in the history of South India. The Pandyas became more and more powerful and the Cōlas declined rapidly after Kulottunga III. Maravarman Sundara Pandya (1216-1238 A.D.) defeated the Cōlas; he also claimed that the Sinhalese rulers and others sent him tribute. But during the reign of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I (1251), probably the greatest Pandya ruler, the Cōlas were subjugated and forced to pay tribute. The Pandya Empire replaced the Cōla Empire in South India. He had invaded Sri Lanka and levied elephants and precious stones as tributes from the ruler. This is mentioned in his usual meykīrtti. The Pandya Empire reached the zenith of its glory under Maravarman Kulasekhara I, his successor. The Cōla dynasty disappeared for ever. Sri Lanka was invaded again. Many valuables including the most important sacred Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha fell into the hands of the Pandya invaders. The Sinhalese ruler had to come to Madurai to plead for the restoration of the Relic and other valuables and then returned to Sri Lanka, agreeing to rule the country as a subordinate of the Pandyas.

The Pandya power collapsed dramatically by 1310 A.D. when there was a disputed war of succession and Muslim invasion of South India. Though the Pandya dynasty continued to rule some parts of Pandyanadu, they had to be on their defensive in South India itself. Tamil rulers in South India were no longer threats to Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions are available from the ninth to the nineteenth centuries A.D. Some of them give corroborative evidence for claims made in Tamilnadu inscriptions. Some Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions mention activities of Vēḷaikkārars. Vēḷaikkārars are mentioned in Cōḷa country as soldiers who have undertaken an oath to die or to take revenge if they could not prevent danger and death from enemies occurring to the Cōḷa Kings. In the Pandyanadu, a similar institution called Āpattutavikal seems to have existed. Because they were under such oath, they enjoyed many privileges with the King. The Vēḷaikkārars must have come to Sri Lanka along with Cōḷa expansion. But they continued to be influential and powerful even after the disappearance of the Cōḷa rule. The Pali chronicles complained that when the Sinhalese Kings planned reprisals against Tamilnadu Kingdoms, the Vēḷaikkārars in Sri Lanka remained a hindrance. Dr. S. Pathmanathan has recently published a paper on the activities of the Vēḷaikkārars both in South India and Sri Lanka.¹⁶

Quite a number of inscriptions of merchant guilds and mercantile corporations have been discovered from various parts of Sri Lanka. All the three inscriptions of the ninth century refer to activities of merchant guilds in the former capital city of Anurathapura. A number of records of 'Ticaiyāyirattuaṅṅūrguvar' with their usual meykkīrttis have been found in various places like Padavya, Vāhalkada, Vihārechinna, Polonnaruwa, Galtēpitya and Detiyamulla.¹⁷ Vīrapaṭṭapams were constituted in those localities by royal charters. On palaeographical evidence, they could be dated only after the Cola rule in the country. Therefore this mercantile corporation most probably

16. Pathmanathan, S., *The Vēḷaikkārars in Medieval South India and Lanka*, *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, Vol. II, No. 2, Peradeniya, 1976.

17. Veluppillai, A., *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, Part I, Peradeniya, 1971, Part II, 1972.

obtained their royal charters from Sinhalese rulers. They seem to have had an impressive net work of autonomous trading centres.

Most of the Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions deal with Hindu activities. But there is a considerable number—nearly a quarter—which deal with Buddhist activities. They will be taken up in the next lecture. Out of the nine provinces of Sri Lanka, Tamil inscriptions have been located in eight—the only exception being Uva.¹⁸ Out of the twenty four districts of Sri Lanka, Tamil inscriptions are available in nineteen—the exceptions being Gampaha, Ratnapura, Badulla, Moneragala and Hambantota.

3. Evidence of Pali Chronicles

These are three important Pali chronicles in Sri Lanka: The Dipavamsa, the Mahavamsa and the Culavamsa. The first two chronicles cover the same period. Chronologically, the Dipavamsa is considered the earlier one, dated in about the fourth century A.D. The Mahavamsa which gives more details and which shows the influence of Kavya style in its composition is dated in fifth-sixth century A.D. The Culavamsa starts where the Mahavamsa ends. Some-times both Culavamsa and Mahavamsa are together called by the one name of Mahavamsa. There are Sinhalese chronicles also, but they are quite late. These Pali chronicles supply a mine of information about Tamil connections with Sri Lanka. The information is of two kinds:- (A) Corroborative evidence with copious details, otherwise unavailable and (B) Additional information for which no inscriptions are available.

(A) Corroborative Evidence

We have already referred to epigraphical evidence from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries A.D. for Tamil connections with Sri Lanka. Most of these references are confirmed by

18. Veluppillai, A., *Cacanamum Tamilum*, Peradeniya, 1971.

these pali chronicles. Further, these chronicles refer to acts of retaliation and counter attacks by Sri Lanka rulers. Many details are given in the chronicles than in other places for the war of liberation against the Cojas. Parakramabahu the Great was the only ruler of Sri Lanka who have undertaken overseas expeditions in South India and Burma. He was epic hero for a section of Culavamsa. His early victorious expedition in Tamilnadu is painted in glowing terms and so many place names and personal names of Tamilnadu, especially Pandyanadu, occur in the Culavamsa that it may not be possible to collect that material from any other source for that early period. Place names will be listed at the end of this section.

The Pandya copper plates express in a phrase Srimara Sri Vallabhas invasion of Sri Lanka. The Culavamsa gives a lot of information not only about that invasion but also about a counter-invasion of the Sinhalese ruler against the Pandyas. For illustration, we will quote from Chapters L and LI of the Culavamsa.

“Once later came the Pandu King with a great force from Jambudipa and began to take possession of the Island.....Owing to the discord among the high dignitaries, the prince, the Pandu King, found opportunity to get a firm footing; he laid waste the whole of Uttaradesa and occupied on armed camp in Mahatalitagama. The many Damilas who dwelt here and there, went over to his side. Thereby he gained great power—. When the King (of Sri Lanka) heard of the dispersion of his army, he took all his valuable property, left the town and turned towards Malaya (Central highlands of Sri Lanka)——. The Pandu King took away all valuables in the treasure house of the King and plundered what there was to plunder in Vihara and town. In the Ratnapasada, the golden image of the Master (Buddha), the two jewels which had been set as eyes in the stone (image of the) Prince of Sages.

likewise the gold plates of the Cetiya in the Thuparama, and the golden images here and there in the viharas—all these he took and made the Island of Lanka, deprived of her valuables, leaving the splendid town in a state as if it had been plundered by the Yakkhas."¹⁹

For the counter attack on the Pandya Kingdom, there is no other source but this Pali chronicles. When Sena II heard about the Pandyan plunder in Sena I's reign,

"he gave order to his councillors to collect troops. Now at that time there arrived a son of the Pandu King, who ill-treated by the King, had made the resolve to gain the Kingship for himself. Sena II took him to the sea port Mahatitta, collected a great force as well as all the appliances of war. The Senapati took the army and set sail on the spot. He came then to the opposite coast with his whole army and train and laying waste the neighbouring country, surrounded the town of Mathura. He blockaded the gates and cut off all traffic and set fire to towers, bastions and gates. When thus the Sihala army had penetrated his own pillaging the whole (town) and slaughtering the garrison, then the Pandu King at the news, collected his army, came on in haste and opened fight. The King, wounded, took flight and later died. Thereupon, the Sihala army which had fearlessly entered to town, plundered it completely, as the gods the town of asuras. The Senapati thereupon inspected the treasures in the royal palace; and all the valuables which had been carried away from our island, as well as that found in the town and in the country, he took for himself and carried on

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19. The Pali chronicles generally do not acknowledge that Sri Lanka was defeated because the Tamil Empires were strong. They always look for some excuse like famine, disputed succession, weakness of the ruler, etc., whenever Sri Lanka lost.

the administration which he had seized. Hereupon he consecrated the Pandu King— —The King (of Sri Lanka) held a victory banquet and celebrated a festival of victory".²⁰

The Cōja conquests of Sri Lanka by Rajaraja the Great and Rajendra I have been clubbed together as one Cola conquest by the Pali chronicle. Culavamsa refers to weak government and utter confusion in northern Sri Lanka during that period. Sena V was the Sinhalese King (972-981 A.D.). During his reign, the Senapati, supported by queenmother, collected Damilas, gave over the country to them and took his abode in Polathinagara. To fight him, the King sent troops from Ruhunu but the Senapati annihilated the whole army of the King. The Damilas now plundered the whole country like devils and pillaging, seized the property of its inhabitants. Mahinda V's reign (981-1029), in which the two Cōja conquests of Sri Lanka took place, has been described in a chapter entitled, 'The Pillage of Lanka'. Culavamsa's description is as follows:-

"Anuradhapura was full of strangers brought hither by the Senapati Sena. As he (the King) wandered from the path of statecraft and was of very weak character, the peasants did not deliver him his share of the produce. As the prince, in his tenth year, had entirely lost his fortune, he was unable to satisfy his troops by giving them their pay. All the Keralas who got no pay planted themselves one with another at the door of the royal palace, determined on force, bow in hand, armed

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20. It is difficult to say whether all the details are correct. There was a powerful confederacy of South Indian states fighting against Sri Mara Sri Vallabha and Sri Lanka might have joined them to take revenge. In South Indian History, versions of the opposing sides have to be correlated to arrive at the truth. Various dynasties boast about their victories but remain silent about their defeats. Their opponents do the same. So, there should be some truth in the Sri Lanka claim.

with swords and (other) weapons, (with the cry) "So long as there is no pay he shall not eat". But the King duped them. Taking with him all his movable goods, he escaped by an underground passage and betook himself in haste to Ruhunu. Outside Ruhunu, Keralas, Sīhaḷas and Kaṇṇāṭas carried on the government as they pleased. The Cōḷa with the purpose of taking possession of Lanka, sent off a strong body of troops. They landed speedily in Lanka, From the spot where they disembarked, oppressing the mass of the inhabitants, the Cola army advanced on Ruhunu. In the 36th year of the King, the Cōḷas seized the Mahesi, the jewels, the diadem, that he had inherited, the whole of the (royal) ornaments, the priceless diamond bracelet, a gift of the gods, the unbreakable sword and the relic of the torn strip of cloth. But the ruler himself who had fled in fear to the jungle, they captured alive, with the pretence of making a treaty. Thereupon, they sent the monarch and all the treasures which had fallen into their hands at once to the Cōḷa monarcha. In the three fraternities and in all Lanka (breaking open) the relic Chambers, (they carried away) many costly images of gold etc., and while they violently destroyed here and there all the monasteries, like blood sucking Yakkhas, they took all the treasures of Lanka for themselves".²¹

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21. The Cola records refer to the capture of the king but not to 'the preference of making a treaty'. The overall picture of the Cola monarchs, especially till Kulottunga I, is that they were tolerant to all religions. They even patronised and respected other religions. But communities which differed from the Colas in language and religion seem to harbour bitter dealings and memories of Cola conquest and occupation. Not only the Sinhalese Buddhists but also the Karnataka Jains seem to have had similar strong feelings. The Cola Tamil Hindus did not seem to have treated the Pandya Tamil Hindus much better than the Sri Lanka Sinhalese Buddhists of the Gangavadi Karnataka Jains.

The story of Parakramabahu the Great is told like a Kavya in Culavamsa. Parakramabahu was a grandson of a pandya prince and Mitta, the sister of Vijayabahu I who liberated Sri Lanka from the Cōja rule by about 1070 A.D. So, Parakramabahu's first successful expedition to Tamilnadu, till its defeat by the Cōjas is told in epic detail. The message sent by the Pandya ruler Parakrama to Parakramabahu is given as follows:— "O Thou with whom I may take refuge, thy two feet shall be for me who am a moth in the fire of the majesty of my foe, a cage of diamond".

The description of the campaign of Lankapura, Parakramabahu's general in Tamilnadu is interesting and a sample follows:—

Lankapura——fought also with these, slew many Damilas, took away their horses, put to flight the great army and captured Ramissara—— He bore away the victory, seized many horses, slew the Damilas and penetrated from Ramissara—— The many Damilas who had fled through fear, took refuge in the forest; he captured several of them and had them impaled there. Some of these, at the command of the ruler of Lanka who thought to have all the Cetiya formerly destroyed by the Damilas rebuilt by them, he had brought to Lanka and the work of restoration begun on the Ratanavaluka-Cetiya—— He slew in combat numbers of Damilas, took away their horses and pressed forward in pursuit.———When thus the great battle was fought, the Sihalas endowed with great courage, stilled the twitching in their arms—— shattered them and slew many Damilas—— He robbed Tondriya of his life, took his horses away from him, slew many Damilas and occupied Kangakondana.———a great battle, shattered them all and slew numbers of Damilas, seized from them many horses.—— Damilas thousands in number they deprived of life.....

the Sinhalas shattered with a lion's courage the army of the Damilas.———Semponmari which the Colas could not capture in spite of four day's fight, the Sihalas with their lion like courage, captured within half a day.———at Rājinā——they celebrated the festival of victory.²²

The references to Tamil invasion in the meykṛtti of Maravarman Kulasekhara have their elaboration in the Cula-vamsa as follows:— Bhuvanekabahu I (1273-1284).

“drove back all the Damila foes, like Kalingarayara, Colagangadeva and the rest who had landed from the opposite coast. Once when (here in Lanka) a famine arose, there landed, sent with an army by the five brothers, the Kings who held sway in the Pandu Kingdom, a Damila general known by the name of Āriyacakkaravarttin who, though he was no Āriya, was yet a great dignitary of that power. He laid waste the Kingdom in every direction and entered the proud stronghold of Subhagiri. The sacred Tooth Relic and all the costly treasures there, he seized and returned with them to the Pandu Kingdom. There, he made over to the Tooth Relic to King Kulasekhara”.

Parakramabahu III (1284-1291), by friendly negotiation, obtained the Tooth Relic, placed it in the Temple at Pulatthinagara where he ruled.

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22. There is a strong possibility that Parakrama Pandya and Parakramabahu took serious interest in the matter. Further, Parakramabahu was taking a side in a civil war between two Tamil factions. But the chronicler is bent on describing the campaign as a Sinhalese—Tamil war.

The reference to capture of horses again and again arrests our attention. Probably they formed an important element in Tamil forces or more specifically Pandya forces. The Arab traders might have exchanged horses for pearls.

(B) Additional Information

If we have to rely entirely on inscriptions for studying Tamil connections with Sri Lanka, our knowledge on the subject would have been very much poorer than it is today. With information supplied by the Pali chronicles of Sri Lanka, we have been able to study Tamil contacts with Sri Lanka for almost a millennium years before the ninth century A.D. Modern historians are not taking seriously much of what these chronicles say up to the coming of Buddhism to Sri Lanka in the third Century B.C. In the second century itself, the chronicles refer to Tamil rule twice for twelve and fortyfour years respectively. According to both Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa, Sena and Gutthaka, two Tamil horse traders seized Anuradhapura and ruled from there. They were overthrown by the Sinhalese but soon, Elara's rule follows. Dipavamsa, the earlier chronicles, did not refer to him as having come from India but Mahavamsa referred to him as a nobleman from Co^la country. The first two syllables of the name of this ruler remind the word *Ilam*, the ancient Tamil name for Sri Lanka. It is also difficult to imagine whether an adventurer, from another country, speaking another language and following another religion can rule a country for the long period of forty-four years.

Leaving this speculation aside, Elara seems to have given a model of just rule for Sri Lanka.²³ Many Tamils look upon the Sangam period as the most glorious period of Tamil history. Many Kings and chieftains of the Sangam period are praised for their just rule by the Tamil poets of that period. Tiruvalluvar has composed *Tirukkural*, depicting an ideal Kingdom. Here in Sri Lanka, Mahavamsa, the Pali chronicle has preserved an account of the just rule of Elara:—

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23. One of the election promises of President J.R. Jayawardana is to establish a Dharmista society in Sri Lanka. According to newspaper report, he wanted to establish a nighteous society as in the time of Elara.

"forty four years, with even justice toward friend and foe, on occasions of disputes at law. At the head of his bed, he had a bell hung up with a long rope so that those who desired a judgement at law might ring it. The king had only one son and one daughter. When once the son of the ruler was going in a car to the Tissa tank, he killed unintentionally a young calf lying on the road with the mother cow, by driving the wheel over its neck. The cow came and dragged at the bell in bitterness of heart; and the king caused his son's head to be severed (from his body) with that same wheel.

"A snake had devoured the young of a bird upon a palm tree. The hen-bird, mother of the young one, came and rang the bell. The King caused the snake to be brought to him, and when its body had been cut open and the young bird taken out of it, he caused it to be hung upon the tree".

"When the King, who was a protector of tradition, albeit he knew not the peerless virtues of the most precious of the three gems (of Buddhism), was going once to the Cetiya mountain, to invite the brotherhood of Bhikkhus, he caused, as he arrived upon a car, with the point of the yoke on the waggon, an injury to the thupa of the conqueror (Buddha) at a certain spot. The ministers said to him, 'King, the thupa has been injured by thee'. Though this had come to pass without his intending it, yet the king leaped from his car and flung himself down upon the road with the words; 'Sever my head also (from the trunk) with the wheel'. They answered him; 'Injury to another does our master in no wise allow; make thy peace (with the bhikkhus) by restoring the thupa'; and in order to place (anew) the fifteen stones that had been broken off, he spent the fifteen stones that had been broken off, he spent just fifteen thousand Kahapanas".

"An old woman had spread out some rice to dry it in sun. The heavens, pouring down rain at an unwonted season, made her rice damp. She took the rice and went and dragged the bell. When he heard about the rain at an unwonted season, he dismissed the woman, and in order to decide her cause, he underwent a fast, thinking: 'A king who observes Justice surely obtains rain in due season'. The guardian genius who received offerings from him, overpowered by the fiery heat of (the penance of) the king, went and told the four great kings (i.e., guardian deities of the four directions) of this matter. They took him with them and went and told Sakka (i.e. Indra). Sakka summoned Pajjunna (Skt. Parjanya, the god of rain) and charged him (to send) rain in due season.— From thenceforth, the the heavens rained no more during the day throughout his realm; only by night did the heavens give rain once every week, in the middle watch of the night; and even the little cisterns everywhere were full (of water)".

This testimony from a foreign source will carry more weight than indigenous source of poetry when the glory of just rule of the Tamils has to be painted. Invasions of Sri Lanka by adventurers of Tamilnadu have taken place occasionally during the following centuries also. During the reign of Vattagamani, seven Tamils invaded Sri Lanka and ruled for some time. Chandamukha Siva's (101-111 A.D.) queen was Damiladevi. The Damila named Pandu had slain Mittasena in battle and 'now having come over from the opposite coast, held sway in Lanka'. He and his Tamil successors ruled between 433-460 A.D. Potthakuttha, a Tamil, put the crown prince into prison nominated two persons, one after the other as Kings and administered the Kingdom. But these later rulers are not praised in the chronicles.

It is still not established who the ancient Nagas were. They were mentioned with references to various parts of South Asia. But Jaffna Peninsula had now been identified by Paul. B. Pieris

and Paranavitana as the ancient Nagadipa.²⁴ The Nagas and the Yakkhas were said to be the inhabitants of Sri Lanka when the first Aryan colonists arrived. There are references to a number of Naga poets in Sangam literature. All the musicians mentioned in Paripatal are Nagas. There is a theory that the Nagas might have been Tamils or at least Tamil speaking.²⁵ The chronicles do not mention anything directly about contacts between the Sinhalese and the Nagas. But between the eighteenth and fifty-fifth rulers mentioned in the Mahavamsa, ten rulers call themselves Nagas. The details are as follows:- Khallatanaga (50 B.C. - 44 B.C.); Coranaga (3 B.C. - 9 A.D.); Mahadathikamahanaga (66 A.D. - 78 A.D.); Ilznaga (95-101 A.D.); Mahallanaga (193 - 199 A.D.); Khyjanaga (241-243); Kuncanaga (243-244 A.D.); Sirinaga I (244-263 A.D.); Abhayanaga (285-293 A.D.); and Sirinaga II (293-295 A.D.). It is difficult to explain this without postulating intermarriages between the Sinhalese and the Nagas.

Tamil armies seem to have been brought from South India to settle disputed successions in Sri Lanka. When Kasyappa Killed Dhatusena, his father and became king in 478 A.D. Moggallana, his brother whose intention it was to fight him, betook himself, as he could raise no forces, to Jambudipa to find troops there. When Silameghavanna began to rule in 617 A.D., Sirinaga, a general 'had betaken himself to the opposite shore. He returned with many Damilas and began to take possession of Uttaradesa. At the tidings of this, the king advanced, offered battle, beat the Damilas who had accompanied him, captured those who remained over from the slaughter, subjected them to all kinds of humiliation and distributed them here and there as slaves to the Viharas'. There was a fight between Aggabodhi III and Jetthatissa III in the seventh century A.D.

24. Paranavitana, S., Vallipuram Gold Plate Inscription of the Reign of Vasabha, *Epigraphic Zeylanica*, Vol.IV, Colombo, 1941.

25. Pillay, K.K., *Op.Cit.*, p.22.

'At defeat, Aggabodhi hastily took ship and betook himself to Jambudipa, deserting wealth, country and kinsfolk. Aggabodhi hired Damila troops, came to Kalavapi and began the combat'. He was victorious. When Dathasiva heard of the death of Mana, 'he came in haste with Damila troops to the village called Tintini'. Aggabodhi fled to Jambudipa. Dathasiva who took the name Dathopatisa I plundered Buddhist institutions for their wealth. The canoes in the Mahapali Hall, he left to the Damilas'. Narasimhavarman I, a Pallava ruler sent his forces to instal Manavamma on the throne of Sri Lanka.

When the Portuguese and the Dutch ruled the coastal areas of Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese Kingdom of Kandy maintained its independence. It continued to be independent till 1815 when the British finally conquered it. This Kingdom maintained close matrimonial relations with the Nayaks of Madura. When the Sinhalese king of Kandy died in 1739 A.D. with no proper heir to succeed him, a brother of his queen from Madura became king as Vijayarajasinha (1739-1747 A.D.) His successors up to the British conquest of Kandy were all from Madura, Kirttisirirajasinha (1747-1782). Rajadhirajasinha (1780-1798 A.D.) and Wikramarajasinha (1798-1815). The last ruler had the name Kannusamy before he ascended the throne. These rulers were Tamil speaking but might have been of Telugu extraction.

Place Names Occuring In The Description Of Lankapura's Campaign In Tamilnadu

Tirivekambama; Semponmari; Tajaiyāruanāḍu; Kalahayināḍu; Athalayunnāḍu; Kākannāḍu; Cellaru (Village); Jayankondana (Village); Rājasihamaḥaḥa (Village); Vaḷuḡama (Village); Perumpalaya; Tenkongu; Vaḍakongu; Mundrannaddhāna; Oruttiyrutombama; Tirikanappēra; Pattanalluru/Pattanalluru; Soranḍakoṭṭa; Vayiga (River); Tirippāluru; Pannattānkoṭṭa; Parittikuṇḍi; Aḷagvānagiri; Tiruppattūru; Pona amaravati; Mangalama/Mangalamkoṭṭa; Sivaliputtūru; Sāntaneri (Fortrees); Tirimalakke (Village); Kattala (Village); Coḷakulantaka (Village); Palaṅkoṭṭa; Paṇḍunāḍukoṭṭana; Uriyeri; Adharatṭeri;

Uccaikuṭṭha; Kīlenilaya; Ancukoṭṭa; Toṇḍi; Velankuṇḍi; Talaḍilla; Rāmissara; Kundukāla; Carukaṭṭa (Village); Koḷuvura (Village); Maruthūpa (Village) Kaṇcakuṇḍiya; Koḷūru; Kuṇappunallura (town); Vadali (Village); Kuṇḍiyūru; Aḷattūru; Tiriṇaveli; Erukaṭṭa; Iḍakaḷissara; Erukkāvāra; Deviyapattana; Siriyavala; Koḷuvukoṭṭa; Dantika (district); Kundayamkoṭṭa; Vikkamacoḷappera (fortress); Kāmānākkkoṭṭa; Maruthukoṭṭa; Kangakoṭṭāna (fortrees); Paṇiva; Paṇivakoṭṭa; Vāla-koṭṭa; Neṭṭūru (fortress); Muṇḍikkāra; Kīlamangala (district); Melamangala (district); Anivalakoṭṭa/Anivalakkikoṭṭa; Muṇḍannamkoṭṭa; Patapata; Mānaviramadhura/Madhurammānavira; Madhura.

4. Conclusion

Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka are so close to each other that occasional movement of people should have taken place both ways. But major movements of population seem to be of one way, i.e., from India and especially Tamilnadu in our context to Sri Lanka. The establishment of Tamil Kingdom in the North of Sri Lanka might have been facilitated by large scale settlement of Tamil people during the expansion of Cōḷa and Pandya empires. During the Vijayanagar-Nayak rule in Tamilnadu, Telegus and Kannadas settled in large numbers in Tamilnadu. This also might have led to more Tamil people moving to Sri Lanka. It is quite possible that considerable section of Tamils settled in predominantly Sinhalese areas were absorbed into the Sinhalese population.

During the British occupation of Sri Lanka, the British needed cheap labour to work on their plantations in Sri Lanka. As they could not get such indigenous labour, they recruited plantation labour from poorer classes in India, mainly from Tamilnadu. Those labourers were settled in estates in Central highlands of Sri Lanka and they now constitute, the Up-country Tamil community. At the time of Sri Lanka independence in 1948, they constituted almost ten percent of the total population of the island. The first independent government of Sri Lanka

disenfranchised them. The governments of India and Sri Lanka have come to some agreements. For every seven persons coming back to India, four are being given citizenship in Sri Lanka. About two lakhs of Tamils have come back to India during the last few years. The Up-country Tamil community remains a backward community with many disabilities. Many of their problems are yet to be solved.

The Sri Lanka Tamil community proper have the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka as their traditional homelands at least for many hundreds of years. There is definite evidence for the existence of a Tamil kingdom of Jaffna in the north of Sri Lanka from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth century²⁶. The Portuguese, the Dutch and the British sources speak of the Sinhalese and the Tamils as two races inhabiting different parts of the Island. Since independence the status of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka has become a problem. Politicians tend to play with it because of its emotional appeal to the electorate. Recently, Tamil has been recognised as a national language of Sri Lanka in the constitution, along with Sinhalese. There is a long way to go.

It is very unfortunate that knowledge about Sri Lanka is still very minimal even among educated Indians. We glanced through the section on Sri Lanka in a new publication 'Tamilaka Varalāṅṅil cila putiya ēṭukaḷ' by A. Rajendran.²⁷ In his preface, the author is very critical of modern readership that it prefers trash to research works. While we agree with him in

26. Pathmanathan, S., *The Kingdom of Jaffna*, Colombo, 1978.

27. Rajendran, A., *Tamilaka Varalarriḷ Cila Putiya etukaḷ*, Tamil Ayyuk Kalaka Veliyitu—5, Nagercoil, 1978.

We came across another publication also. This deals with various aspects in comprehensive way but a number of inaccuracies, as in the above publication, are found here also.

Thirunavukkarasu, K.D., *Ilankaiyil Tamilar Panpatu*, Madras, 1978.

his criticism, we have to point out that one has to be very careful of what is dished out as research. His work is a translation of Ibn Batuta's Travels, as they pertain to South India and Sri Lanka. His contribution is in the notes to various references. His note one explains that Serandip is derived from Sinhala. The word Seran means 'lustre' in Arabic. Sri Lanka is said to have acquired this name from the Arabs because of the lustre of its precious stones. We agree with his identification of Sabal isarandip with Trincomalee but his equation of Sabal isarandip—Serandip—Sinhalaadipa is wrong. His note three identified Ariccakravartti of Ibn Batuta with Vijaya and relates the story of early Aryan settlement in Sri Lanka. But this Ariccakravartti has to be identified with Ariyacakaravartti, Tamil king of Jaffna. All the early Tamil Kings of Jaffna called themselves by the title Ariyacakravartti. According to Culavamsa, the Pali chronicle of Sri Lanka, Ariyacakravartti (not an Ārya, according to that chronicle) was the Pandya general who invaded Sri Lanka during the reign of Maravarman Kulasekhara. He seems to have established a dynasty in North Sri Lanka.

Some more notes of this scholar are also not accurate. His note four does not relate province and district. He does not make it clear whether they mean the same thing or different things. His note seven is confused. About Adam's peak, travellers like Ibn Batuta and Marco Polo do not refer to Buddha's foot print there. In the next sentence, he says that so, it is called Sivanadi patham and Sivapatham. This does not follow. His note nine was about Sillava. He could have referred to the Tamil name Cilāpam. This is not a separate district, as he mentions. Together with Pullalam, this constitutes one district. Regarding note eleven, the place mentioned is not Kurnagala but Kurunagala. It is in north west Sri Lanka; it does not lie to the northwest of Sri Lanka. His note thirteen was about Alagukkonar as a Sinhalese King. This is true but the king preserved his family name - he is said to be of Kerala descent. We have pointed out those only to show that knowledge about Sri Lanka is still not much even among research scholars and they have to pay more attention to this aspect, to make Tamilology more perfect.

IV

IMPACT OF BUDDHISM ON THE TAMILS

Exactly forty years ago, in 1940, the pioneer work in this field, entitled 'Pauttamum Tamilum' was published by the late Mayilai Seeni Venkataswamy.¹ This book is clearly an attempt of a Tamil scholar trying to press in all relevant fields to study the impact of Buddhism on the Tamils. It is unfortunate that no similar assessment has been attempted by any other scholar till now.

Almost at the same time, the late Dr. C. Minakshi (1940) wrote an account of Buddhism in South India, which remained unpublished till last year.² This account takes South India in a broader sense and includes the entire South from Krishna Valley. She adopts a historian's approach and emphasises the importance of Buddhism in the history of South India. She says, "That the contribution of Jain scholars towards the enrichment of Tamil literature has been great is well known; and equally great in value is the contribution of Buddhist scholars qualitatively, though not quantitatively". She also emphasises the need for a deep and critical study of Pali sources as follows:—"For an understanding of Buddhism in South India in the very early centuries, we have to depend upon Pali literature for our source and unless an absolute command of this language is acquired, it is not possible to do full justice to the subject". She brings a larger vision to the subject, unlike Venkadaswamy,

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1. Venkadaswamy, Mayilai Seeni., *Pauttamum Tamilum*, *Kalaka Veliyitu*, 1940.
 2. Minakshi, Dr. C., *Buddhism in South India*, *South Indian Studies-II*, (Ed.) R. Nagaswamy, Society for Archaeological, Historical and Epigraphical Research, Madras, 1978, pp. 83-131.

that the study of Buddhism in Tamilnadu has to be related to developments in Andhra Pradesh.

At this point, the recent views of historians and archaeologists have to be noted. Dr. K.V. Raman (1972) makes the following comment³:—

“While Jainism showed remarkable adjustability in facing the storm of Hindu revivalism, Buddhism practically succumbed to it. Particularly in Pandyanadu, not a trace was to be found. But in the Cōla country, places like Nāgapattinam, Bhutamangalam, Kaveripumpattinam etc., there were atleast stray Buddhist colonies”.

Dr. K.V. Soundara Rajan (1980) comments as follows :—

“But the context of the early Tamil traditions was positively oriented towards Vedic Brahmanism. This very situation presupposes a dominant role that was played by non-Hindu creed or creeds before this era. In the Tamil country, this was certainly not Buddhism, since even in the Asokan and Post-Asokan period, Buddhism could not enter Tamilnadu effectively, and it was mainly around the sixth-seventh centuries A.D. and that too in north Tamil country that metropolises like Kanchi particularly received and respected Buddhist scholars and allowed their institutions to thrive. Tamilnadu certainly had its patrimony in the Lower Krishna Valley which was a great bee-hive of Buddhist activity and the Catabolism of Tondainadu, even in a nascent Hindu era, towards Buddhism, should therefore occasion no surprise”.

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3. Raman, Dr. K.V., *Some Aspects of Pandyan History in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, University of Madras, Madras, 1972, pp. 71-72.
 4. Soundara Rajan, Dr. K.V., *Glimpses of Indian Culture, History and Archaeology*, Delhi, 1980, p. 270.

Dr. K. Nagaswamy seems to have changed his views from 1968 to 1980. In his contribution (1968) to Handbook of the Second International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies, he subscribes to the traditional view of tracing the influence of Buddhism in Tamilnadu from the third century B.C. He brings forward the history of Buddhism in Tamilnadu to the fourteenth century A.D. saying that an inscription of that century from Pegu in Burma refers to Buddhist monks like Katyayana. He also refers to the discovery of a seal, with Buddhist slokas beginning with 'He Dharma Hetu Pirabava' at Arikamedu excavations near Pondicherry.

Among these three scholars, K.V. Raman and R. Nagaswamy have given some reasons why they consider Tamilnadu cave inscriptions exclusively Jain. K.V. Raman pointed out to Jaina interpretations of some words in some inscriptions.⁵ Even if his reasoning is accepted, it is difficult to conclude why all the early inscriptions have to be exclusively Jaina. Further, we shall be a little careful in trying to read too much from the small inscriptions. If Jaina interpretations were to be accepted, there is a problem of chronology. K.V. Soundara Rajan says that the date of the cave inscriptions have to be brought forward a few centuries after the beginning of the Christian era to accommodate that interpretation. R. Nagaswamy has advanced a few arguments about their Jaina character in another context (1980)⁶. It is good to deal with them one by one. First, he says that the Tamil country remained independent of Asoka's rule and the royal officers of Asoka, spreading the King's religion—Buddhism—were not present in Tamil country with as

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5. Raman, K.V., The Brahmi Inscriptions of Tamilnadu, An Historical Assesment, *The Sri Lanka Journal of South Asian Studies*, Volume I, Jaffna, 1976.
 6. Nagaswamy, R., The Origin of Brahmi Script, (Ed.) S.P. Gupta & K.S. Ramachandran, Delhi, 1980, p.p. 80-81.

much authority and power as in other places where his officers were stationed, as in Andhradesa. But he seems to have not noticed that the case of Sri Lanka was similar to the Tamil country. Yet, Buddhism spread there like wild fire. Even if we don't rely on the Sri Lanka chronicles, we have to rely on the thousands of cave inscriptions of Sri Lanka. Secondly, he says that excavations even at such places as Kaveripumpattinam, Kanchi, Uraiyur, Karur, etc. in Tamilnadu, has not yielded any large scale Buddhist activity that could be assigned to the Sangam Age. Here too, we should remember that this is negative evidence and that there is also no such evidence for any large scale Jaina activity.

He has some other arguments also. Thirdly, his reasoning is that in not a single cave, we find Buddhist vestiges, even of a later date while on the contrary, in most of the caves, there are Jain *tirtankara* images, found carved on the rock itself in eighth century A.D., as at Anaimalai, Alagarmalai, Kongarpuliyangulam, etc.. Again taking here the case of Sri Lanka, it should be pointed out that Buddhist vestiges were not available in all the caves there. Further, as Nagaswami himself admits, Jaina vestiges in Tamilnadu caves were definitely of a later period. Therefore it is possible to postulate an earlier period when some of these caves were occupied by Buddhist monks and a later period when Buddhism declined and the caves were taken over by the Jainas. As for example, Anaimalai was later taken over by the Hindus with the building of Narasimhapperumal Kovil, the Jainas might have taken over these hills from the Buddhists. Fourthly, Nagaswamy points out that in none of the cave inscriptions, the words intimate with Buddhist religion like *Bhikkus* and *Sangha* appear. This is again negative evidence. The available material in Tamilnadu Brahmi inscriptions compared to Sri Lanka Brahmi inscriptions, is very little. More than thousand Brahmi inscriptions of Sri Lanka have been published and majority of them don't mention words like *bhikku* and *sangha*.

The fifth argument of R. Nagaswamy is related to royal patronage extended to Jainism (and not Buddhism, by implication) as reflected in inscriptions. He elucidates his argument in the following words:—

“The Meenakshipuram epigraph shows the Pandya’s grant while the Pugalur inscription shows the Cera’s gift. In the lives of the Saivite saints and Vaisnavite Alvars who lived in seventh century A.D., the rulers of the time are said to have followed only Jainism before their conversion. Even at that period, there is no pointed reference to King’s involvement in Buddhism.---- There is only one reference of royal patronage to Buddhism. It refers to the erection of a stupa at Kanchipuram by one Cōla prince, Iḷaṅkiḷi. But this is referred to in a later works, viz , Manimekalai. Similarly the reference to a stupa erected by Asoka at Kanchipuram mentioned by Yuwan Chwang is also a later tradition”.

We feel that he mentions ‘as reflected in inscription’s purposefully because he wants to exclude Acuta Vikkantan’s patronage to Buddhism in the Kālabra Age, for which there is only literary evidence. The two epigraphs that he mention in his elucidation refer to Tamil Brahmi inscriptions. We are not convinced that the Meenakshipuram epigraphs refer definitely to the Jainas. We have to mention here about the possible patronage of the Cēras to Buddhism also. There is epigraphical evidence that Asoka had a title ‘Devanampiya’ (beloved of the gods). When the King of Sri Lanka accepted Buddhism from Asokan missionaries, he seems to have assumed that title. He was known as Devanampiya Tissa. Sri Lanka Brahmi inscriptions show that the title was assumed by some other rulers also. The Sangam literature preserve two titles of the Cēras, ‘Imaiya varampaṇ’ (traditionally interpreted as having sky as the boundary line). Such hyperpoles, as signified by these interpretations, cannot fit into the characteristics of Sangam literature.

M.G.S. Narayanan feels that a slight mistake has occurred in these forms: the nasal 'm' has been substituted for the nasal 'n' in those expression. If this correction were accepted, the Cēra titles can be considered as Tamil translations of 'Devanampiya'.⁷ So, Buddhism might have had royal patronage in Kerala. As Nagaswamy points out, Manimekalai and the Chinese account are late works. But he has to accept that if epigraphical evidence of a contemporary age were to be the sole criterion, there is no such evidence for the existence of Jainism in South India (except the dubious Tamil Brahmi inscriptions). Though Jainism is claimed to have come to Karnataka with Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya in the third century B.C., this is mentioned for the first time in inscriptions after some centuries.

Thus the recent views generally belittle the importance of Buddhism in Tamilnadu and totally exclude it from early Tamil Brahmi inscriptions. This is a complete change of attitude as at one time, all these inscriptions were thought to be Buddhist. K.V. Subramaniya Ayyar, partly inspired by the similarities in the cave inscriptions of Sri Lanka and Tamilnadu⁸, puts forward the view that they were exclusively Buddhist with a number of other arguments also. Mayilai Seen Venkadaswamy must have been encouraged to work on Buddhism earlier than on Jainism because he believed in Subramaniya Ayyar's arguments as he faithfully reproduced them in his book. Dani also seems to have taken all these Tamilnadu cave inscriptions as Buddhist.⁹ It was Professor K A. Nilakanda Sastri (1968) who says that Subramaniya Ayyar's arguments were not very convincing and that it was not possible to assign them exclusively to the

7. Narayanan, M.G.S., *Reinterpretations of South Indian History*.

8. Subramaniya Ayyar, K.V., *The Earliest Monuments of the Pandya Country and their Inscriptions, Proceedings and Transactions of the third Oriental Conference, Madras, 1924.*

9. Dani, A.H., *Indian Palaeography*, Oxford, 1963, p. 69.,

Buddhists.¹⁰ According to him some of them could have belonged to the Jains also. Iravatham Mahadevan (1970) shares this view.¹¹ T.V. Mahalingam has put forward the view that these cave inscriptions should have belonged to non-Vedic religions such as Buddhism, Jainism and Ajivikism.¹² We take the view that the exclusive claim for a single religion cannot be proved. One of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions refer to *Ilam*, the ancient name for Sri Lanka. According Tamil Brahmi inscription refers to 'Dhammam' one of the Triple Gems of the Buddhists. Protaganists of the exclusively Jainism theory rely on circumstantial evidence. On the same ground of circumstantial evidence, the claim of Buddhism can also be advocated. A knowledge of the missionary zeal of the Ancient Buddhists, a look at the map Tamilnadu lying between Andhra Pradesh and Sri Lanka and the commonness in early palaeography between Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka should convince anybody that Tamilnadu could not have remained outside the sphere of Buddhist influence.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to me to find that Dr. S.N. Kandaswamy, Reader in Tamil of Annamalai University, is making varied contributions to Buddhism.¹³ He is probably

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10. Nilakanda Sastri, K. A., *Tamīṇāṭṭil Pauttam, Cintanai*, Peradeniya, 1968.
 11. Mahadevan, Iravatham., *Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions*, Government of Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology, Madras, 1970.
 12. Mahalingam, T.V., *Early South Indian Palaeography*, University of Madras, 1967, p. 161.
 13. Kandaswamy, S.N., *Buddhism as expounded in Manimekalai*, Annamalai University Publication, 1978; *Pauttam*, Centre of Advanced Study in Radhakrishnan Institute of Philosophy' University of Madras, 1979; *Buddhist Logic, Āyukkōvai*, Intiyap palkalaikkalakat Tamil ācriyar Maṅṅam, mūṅṛāvatu Karuttaraṅku, 1971, pp. 177-183; *The Non-soul Theory (an-anma vada)*, Āyukkōvai, I.P.T.A.M., aintāvatu Karuttaraṅku, 1973, pp. 91-96; *Jaina and Buddhist literature in Tamil-Seminar Paper-Heritage of the Tamils, Literature, held by the International Institute of Tamil Studies*, 1979.

the first trained Tamil scholar to take up the study of Buddhism. He had worked on Buddhism as expounded in *Manimekalai* for his doctoral dissertation. Annamalai University has done well to bring this out as one of its publications. We feel that he should have consulted Buddhist scholars in Sri Lanka which lies so close to Tamilnadu. He should have discussed his interpretations with them; in that case his views will carry more weight and authority. He has also contributed a number of articles and delivered lectures on Buddhist philosophy. But we have been disappointed to read his contribution on 'Pautta Camaya Nūlkaḷ' to *Teyvat Tamil*.¹⁴ Under the short title meaning, 'Manimekalai, the incomparable epic of the Buddhist world', he says, "There are no epics in Pali. Tripitakas contain Buddha's teachings. Even in Sinhalese, there are only chronicles like *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa* and commentaries to the *Tripitaka*". When reading about Buddhism, this scholar must have come to know something of Pali and may be a little of Sinhalese. We have no reason to suspect that this scholar has read even histories of literature of Sinhalese and Pali. If he has, he won't make the mistake of calling *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa* as Sinhalese history works. These have been translated from Pali to Sinhalese in the present century. Kandaswamy has taken this idea from another scholar.¹⁵ That scholar also makes a bold claim: We find it difficult to believe that he can be right.

14. Kandaswamy, S.N., *Pautta Camaya nūlkaḷ, Teyvat Tamil*, (Ed.) Sanjivi, N., University of Madras, Madras, 1975.

15. Thirunavukkaracu, K.D., *Intiya nakarikattil Tamil paṇṇāttin kūrukaḷ*, Souvenir, International Conference Seminar for Tamil Studies, Madras, 1968.

According to him, in about one hundred and fifty languages connected with Buddhism, none of them except Tamil has a *Kāvya* explaining Buddhist views and principles.

Kandaswamy has some more statements in that article. Manimekalai says, in the book of the same name, that dharma is the provision of food, clothing and shelter to living beings. According to Kandaswamy, saying all these three together is unique, not seen in Pali, Sanskrit and Sinhalese Buddhist works. We are unable to confirm or deny this statement but we feel that he has not made this statement after a study of Buddhist works in those languages. According to Kandaswamy, Dhammapala and Dignaga from Kanchi were heads of Nalanda University. Dhammapala has been mentioned as head in various places; this is the first time we hear that Dignaga was also head. He gives no reference to this important piece of information. Therefore this information is suspect. It is very disappointing to note a trained scholar floating loose ideas like these.

About a dozen years ago, Prof. K.A. Nilakanda Sastri (1968) published an article under the title 'Buddhism in Tamilnadu'. It was translated and published in *Cintanai*, a journal, published by some University teachers of Peradeniya. This article does not deal with the whole range of the subject, taken up for lecture here. But still, it forms a considerable section of the subject of lecture here; further, Dr.K. Indrapala, the editor of the Journal, found that the article has not covered the entire range of its own title and made his own comments. Nilakanda Sastri was undoubtedly an eminent historian-probably the most eminent historian, produced by South India. So, we shall give here the main points of that balanced historian and then the comments on that article.

Buddhism In Tamilnadu

(i) Tamilnadu was not an important centre for Buddhist religion, Culture and Philosophy as Andhra, Gandhara or Udhyaana. Still, there is evidence for impact of Buddhism on the lives and literatures of the Tamils. Tamilnadu and especially Kanchi have contributed to the development of Buddhist philosophy and to the spread of Buddhism in the East.

(ii) Hiven Tsang referred to Buddha's visit to Kanchi and converting people. This is a late folk tradition.

(iii) Earliest evidence for the coming of Buddhism to the Tamil country:— Asoka's rock edicts number two and thirteen, missionary activity. Early cave inscriptions of Tamilnadu belonged to both Buddhists and Jains. Importance of such records should not be exaggerated, as to be seen in Sangam literature.

(iv) There is evidence for Buddhist worship in Sangam literature as seen in Maduraikkanchi. Such worship might have existed in other parts also.

(v) There is evidence that Buddhists were there in Uraiyur and Kaverippumpattinam when Accuta Vikranta, the Kalabra ruler was ruling Cōlanāṭu. Buddhadatta who went from Sri Lanka stayed in Uragapura (Uraiyur) and composed *Abhidham-mavatara* and *Vinayaviniccaya*. At the end of both works, he has given beautiful descriptions of Kaverippumpattinam. He has also mentioned the unblemished Accuta Vikkanta of Kalabra Kula's rule.

(vi) By fifth century A.D., Buddhism had substantial following in Tamilnadu; enjoyed the support of Kings and nobles; notable contributions were made to Buddhist literature and philosophy. Accute Vikranta, a non-Tamil, might have been interested in spreading Buddhism. There is a much later story that Accuta Vikranta was an enemy of the three crowned indigenous kings of Tamilnadu and that he put them all in prison. Can't use this as serious evidence.

(vii) As a reaction against growing importance of Buddhism and Jainism, devotional movement of the Saivite and Vaisnavite saints. This movement tried to check the spread of Jainism and Buddhism and gradually eliminate them. By ninth and tenth centuries A.D., these religions lost their importance. Buddhism continued to hold on for some time. Saiva-Vaisnava works composed in Tamilnadu have preserved accounts of pole

mics between these religions on the one hand and Buddhism on the other. Considerable Buddhist antiquities discovered in Tamilnadu but they have not yet been satisfactorily studied.

(viii) Kanchi, an important centre of Buddhism and Buddhist activities. Name of many Bhuddhist philosophers and logicians connected with Kanchi. They went from Kanchi to occupy important positions in Nalanda, Burma, China, Indo-China and Indonesia. Dignaga, the famous logician, Dharmapala, his disciple who became famous as head of Nalanda University and Bodhidharma were born and bred in Kanchi. Dharmaruci who translated three Buddhist works into Chinese at the beginning of the sixth century, Bodhiruci II who was a favourite of the Chinese Emperor and who translated fifty three works into Chinese with the help of Indian scholars living there in the late seventh-early eighth centuries A.D. and Vajrabodhi, educated in Kanchi, teacher to the Pallava ruler, translated eleven works into Chinese and preached a Mantraic form the Buddhism-----all three were form South India.

(ix) Manimekalai refers to Kanchi as a centre of Buddhist philosophy and culture. She is said to have gone to a Buddhist Caitya, built by Kiḷḷi, a Cola ruler. Difficult to accept the identification of Aṇaṇa Aṭikaḷ, her teacher as Dharmapala referred to above.

(x) Mahendravarman's Mattavilasaprahasanam gives information about Buddhist monks of Kanchi, some Viharas appear to be very rich. Devasoma in that satire refers to accumulated wealth at Rajavihara, derived from other viharas. The Vihara at Kanchi must have been a Rajavihara. A trader is mentioned as one of the patrons of this Vihara.

(xi) Hiuen Tsang's testimony. About ten thousand Buddhist monks in the Pallava territory. There was a big Sangarama, South of Kanchi. But his other references to Buddha, Asoka and previous Buddhas, Nilakanda Sastri rightly dismisses as beliefs of the time.

(xii) Various schools of Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist logics in Kanchi. Hiven Tsang had discussions with three hundred Sri Lanka Buddhist monks there. The most popular school was 'Stavira' of Mahayana Buddhism. Dyana school was also there. Bodhidharma took this from Kanchi to China in 520 A.D.

(xiii) Buddhism most affected than Jainism in religious polemics with Hindu revivalists between the seventh and the ninth centuries. Very little information about Buddhism in the Cōla period. Cūḷamaṇi viharam. Rajaraja I and Rajendra I gave an entire village. Kulottunga I also made an endowment. Tirumaṅkai Āḷvār stealing a golden statue from this Vihara for building activities in Sri Rangam. May be a later story. Sri Mulavasa in Kerala, also famous Buddhist centre, known well even in Gandhara. Many small Viharas around this place.

(xiv) Buddhāmitra's *Vīracōḷiyam* important historical information like Vīra Rajendra, a Tamil scholar. Combines both Tamil and Sanskrit grammatical traditions, important for study of history of grammatical theories in Tamil.

(xv) Buddhism existed in Kanchi, even after the fall of the Cōla Empire. According to a book in Javanese, Buddhāditya of Kanchi composed some slokas on a king of Java of the fourteenth century.

(xvi) Very meagre evidence about Buddhism during the Vijayanagar period. Mention of a Buddhist temple at Tiruvilanturai in an incidental reference in an inscription from Kumbakonam. Buddhist Vihara exchanged some land. An inscription from Belur in Karnataka mentions that Lord Kesava of the place was worshipped as Siva by the Saivites, as Brahman by the Vedantins and as Buddha by the Buddhists. This is probably evidence for amalgamation of these religions. Buddhist sculptures found in interior walls of the Hazara-rama temple in the Vijayanagar period.

To this article, the editor of the Journal has made his comment. As it is very important, it will be reproduced in translation:—

“Sri Lanka inscriptions and Pali works serve as notable sources for the history of Tamilnadu Buddhism. Inscriptions which give information about Mahayana connections between Sri Lanka and Tamilnadu during the Pallava times, give indirectly information about Tamilnadu Buddhism also. As an example, Tirikayastava inscription of Mihintale (*Epigraphia Zeylanica*, IV, pp. 151-160, 312-317) inscribed in Pallava Grantha, not only shows the spread of Mahayanism from the Pallava Empire, but also proves the existence of such views in the contemporary Pallava Empire. Like this, the Polonnaruwa inscription of Vikramabahu I (*Epigraphia Zeylanica*, IV, pp.71-72) gives evidence for the existence of a Buddhist sangha in the Cōla kingdom.

“Pali works, even more than inscriptions give more information about this matter. They help very much to know the status of Buddhism in Tamilnadu during the Cōla period. *Sīhaḷavattupaharana*, *Sahassavattupaharana*, *Mahāvamsa*, *Dīpavamsa*, *Mahārūpasittasāntaya*, *Vimativinotana*, *Vinayasaratatipani*, *Mohaviccetani*, *Jinalankara*, *Paramattavinicceya*; *Nettipaharana*, *Madurattavilasani* are the most important of these works. From these, it is possible to know about Viharas and famous Buddhist monks of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Cōlanāṭu. The Buddhist monks from the Cōlanāṭu were very much respected by Sri Lanka Buddhist monks (*Jinalankara*, p.31- 1955 edition). To purify the Buddhist sangha of Sri Lanka in the thirteenth century, Parakramabahu II invited monks from Cōlanāṭu (*Culavamsa*, 84.9-16). Pali works give information of this type”.

We think that the situation has not improved substantially from that of 1963. Historians and archaeologists who formulate their views on Buddhism in Tamilnadu should take the above sources also into consideration.

It is gratifying to note that K.V. Soundara Rajan (1978) has tried to relate Tamilnadu Buddhism and Sri Lanka Buddhism.¹⁶ The hymns of Tirunavukkaracar, Tirunanacampantar and Cuntaramurti, the Tevaram trio, and Tirumankai Alvar among the Alvars have references to Buddhists and their practices and doctrines. They lived in the seventh-eighth centuries A.D. Cuntaramurti's references to Buddhists are more valuable and specific, such as *tārar*, *sakkiyar*, etc., Campantar gives more references in that every tenth stanza of all his *patikams* condemn Buddhists and Jains together. The references of these saints are clearly to the Theravada school of Sri Lanka and if so 'it could be seen that unlike Jainism that had come from the north in its Digambara traditions and had directly settled down sufficiently early in different parts of Tamilnadu, Buddhism apparently did not move in from the north and at least did not penetrate south of Kanchi in Tondaimandalam but had recocheted from Sri Lanka into lower Tamilnadu after the fifth century A.D.' But, we have to comment here that he had to posit the coming of Buddhism from Sri Lanka to India because of his theory that Buddhist came to Tamilnadu in fifth century A.D. According to him, there is a dichotomy between northern and Southern Tamilnadu in the patronage of Buddhism and show that Mahayana Buddhism had never struck root in the lower Tamil country. He doesn't mention Manimekalai but he refers to Sambapati Amman temple in Kaverippumpattinam, datable, at its earliest stage, perhaps to the tenth-eleventh century A.D. with additions up to the twelfth century A.D. K.A.N. Sastri has dated Manimekalai in the sixth century A.D.¹⁷ V. Selva-

16. Soundara Rajan, K.V., *Art of South India: Tamilnadu and Kerala*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 33-37.

17. Nilakanda Sastri, K.A., *A History of South India* Madras, 1954.

nayagam has also dated it in sixth century.¹⁸ S.N. Kandaswamy also dates it about the same time. It will not be possible to push forward the date of Manimekalai to the eleventh or twelfth centuries A.D. just because it mentions Sambapati temple.

Sundara Rajan (1978) makes some other important observations also. "We seem to have apart from the Theravada school of Sri Lanka which constituted the major concentration in most parts of Cōla and Pāndya countries, some Mahayana trends also". "Buddhism thus had its entrenched activity mostly in Thanjavur District and was responsible for some choice productions in bronze also, as seen from the Nagapattinam bronze hoard of early to late cōla range". These statements are acceptable but what he says about Buddhism in early Tamilnadu before the fifth century A.D. is not acceptable. Excluding Maduraikkanchi lines which Nilakanda Sastri misquoted, there are some more pieces of evidence from Sangam literature. Professor S. Vithiananthan has mentioned a few references.¹⁹ Recently, S. Sathiamoorthy has referred to the influence of some Buddhist

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18. Chelvanayagam, V., Dates of Cilappatikaram and Manimekalai, *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol, VI, 1949.

It is very unfortunate that South Indian scholars remain ignorant about Sri Lanka Studies. The best history of Tamil literature, so far written in Tamil has been written by the late Professor V. Chelvanayakam. The book went through five editions in Sri Lanka. But many Tamil scholars in Tamilnadu have not heard about it.

19. Vithianathan, S., *Tamilar Cālpu*, Second edition, Pariputtakappannai, Madras, 1971.

He shows that Nilakanda Sastri's quotation of Maduraikkanchi belongs to the Jainas and not to the Buddhists. He quotes Paḷli from Pattinappalai, as common to both Buddhists and Jainas. He also mentions Sangam poets like Cīttalaic Cāttanār (not the author of Manimekalai) and Iḷampōtiyār.

thoughts in Sangam literature.²⁰ He has also mentioned Iṭam-pōtiyār, Cīruvēṇṭēriyār and Tērataraṇ as Buddhist poets of the Sangam period.

From the very beginning, the Buddhists cultivated polemic skill as an art. That is how Buddhist philosophy and Buddhist logic took shape very early. Buddhism allowed free thinking within reasonable limits and so schools of Buddhist philosophy proliferated. In that way, freedom of thinking and reasoning was an advantage as well as a disadvantage for Buddhism. This characteristic of Buddhism was a serious challenge to the rival religions of India at one time. One Jaina scholar has recently commented that after eighth century A D, development of Jaina and Hindu philosophy was hampered because of the decline of Buddhism in India.²¹ Manimekalai is the only Buddhist Tamil literary work that has been preserved in complete form in Tamil and its approach is very clear. It does not mince words where it gets an opportunity to criticise other religionists. Further, it has one chapter entirely devoted to various religionists explaining their tenets of faith. For example, the Saivite puts forward his philosophy in a few lines. This Buddhist work preserves the first extant Saivite philosophical view-point. Manimekalai, of course, did not degenerate into a book on religious controversy. Manimekalai finds the teachings of other religions unconvincing and so she accepts Buddhism and to shed birth, she

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20. Sa thiamoorthy, S., Impact of some philosophic thoughts in Sangam literature, Āyvuḱkōvai, I.P.T.A M., mūṇṇāvatu karuttaraṅku. 1971.

He quotes 131st poem of Kalittokai: in the words of lady maid consoling the heroine that hero will come and marry her soon. To reveal out his kindness, she uses an implied simile. Even the beautiful attracting flock of birds living in his littoral region are so kind that they do not kill anything for their prey. They only prey upon their fishes killed by the clash of the waves.

21. Padmarajiah, Dr. Y.J., *Jaina Theories of Reality and Knowledge*, p.1.

becomes a Buddhist nun. Tiruvññacampantar, also from the Tanjore District, must have felt that the Buddhist challenge was serious. Otherwise, he could not have cared to give so much information about the dress, mode of life, doctrines, their denial of the Vedas and the efficacy of sacrifice and their allegiance to the bodhi tree and the Tripitaka. Cekkilar's *Periyapurāṇam* in the section on Tirunanacampantar purāṇam gives a detailed account of Buddhist settlement of Bodhimangai between Telicery and Tirukkadayur in Tanjore District in about thirty verses.²²

Cekkilar's description of the confrontation between the Saivites and the Buddhists also tends to show that the Saivites at that time were not well prepared to meet the Buddhists in debate. The Saiva processionists referring to Campantar shut 'The Lion-like destroyer of other religionists have come'. So there was the expected reaction of Buddhists there bringing in their monks led by Buddhanandi for debate. Campanta Caranalayar, a disciple of Campantar sang a stanza beginning with 'Puttar camāṇ Kaḷukkaiyar' of his master and angrily shouted 'Let the head of the Buddhist roll on the ground by thunder strike'. This is said to have happened and the Buddhists under Saridatta appealed to have a fair debate according to logic. The Buddhists are said to have lost the debate. But anyway, the angry reaction of Campanta Caranalayar is not understandable and Buddhanandi has not been allowed to defend his religion.

The *Tiruvilaiyatal Purāṇam* and the *Tiruvataṇṇavurar Purāṇam* which deal with the biography of Manikkavācakar show this religious debate at an advanced stage. Probably because Buddhism has already declined in Tamilnadu, the Buddhist monk who debated with Manikkavācagar is said to have come from Sri Lanka. The Buddhists have come in a group along with the royal family to Chidambaram, the temple par excellence

of the Saivaites of South India. When the Buddhist monk challenged, 'I came here to establish that there is no god but Lord Buddha and to instal Lord Buddha in this Saiva temple', the priests of Chidambaram temple are said to have been taken aback and to be worrying that they were not aware of anybody who could take up this challenge and defeat the Buddhist. This shows that the all-conquering Saiva devotional movement was still not equipped to face Buddhism in religious disputations according to logic.

This conclusion is confirmed by the Saiva report of the progress of the debate. First, the Buddhist monk puts forward the views of his religion and Manikkavacagar argued that his concept of god and nirvana were incorrect. After that, the Saiva saint puts forwards the views of his religion to which the Buddhist monk levelled his criticisms. The Saiva saint defended his case but the Buddhist continued his criticisms. Finding that the Buddhist monk cannot be stopped from talking, the Saiva saint has to get the help of Saraswathy, the goddess of learning to make the Buddhist monk dumb to clinch the debate. Incidents like this must have convinced the Saivites, the need to formulate Saiva Siddhanta.**

That Buddhism continued to be quite influential even in the thirteenth century in Tamilnadu becomes quite evident from its influence in *Sivañāna Sitthiyār*. Though *Sivañānabōdham* is counted as the foremost of the fourteen Saiva Siddhantha works, *Sivañāna Sitthiyār* is probably the most advanced of the fourteen works as it is a scholar's elaborate logical exposition of the former. Arunanthi Sivacharyar, its author was known as 'Sakala-Agama Pandit'. He is also said to have visited Banares and Nepal. This broad knowledge should have helped him to write parapakkam of *Sivañāna Sitthiyār*. In this section, the philosophical view points of other Indian

23. Veluppillai, A., *Tamil Ilakkiyattil Kālamum Karuttum*, second edition, Pari Puttakap Pannai, Madras, 1978.

religions are mentioned and then they are refuted from the point of view of Saiva Siddhantha. As *Saṅkṛpa Nijākarcam* of Umapathi Sivachariyar confines itself to criticism of some other forms of Hinduism only, this is the only Saiva Siddhantha work that attempts criticism and refutation of other religions. Fourteen religious thoughts are refuted in parapakkam. Of these, the first is not a religion proper- it is Lokayata view point. The next four are Buddhist philosophical schools: Sautrāntika Vaipādika, Mādhyamika and Yōgāchāra. Jainism is treated as one school. Buddhism could not have been treated in such detail if it was on the verge of disappearance from Tamilnadu.

Arunanthi Sivacharyar was also indebted to Buddhist logic. In this, he seems to have followed Prabāhara of Mīmāṃsa school and Sankara of Vedanta school. The two latter scholars studied Buddhism well and followed the same techniques of argument. It was because Sankara's arguments closely followed that of Yōgāchāra Buddhism that Ramanuja and Madhva called Sankara 'pracanna pauttha' (hidden Buddhist). To defeat Buddhism in intellectual controversies, Sankara had to adopt this method. Fourteen verses explain the logic at the beginning of *Sivāṇa Sītthiyār*. All the extant commentaries of this work belong to sixteenth century or even later than that. Some Buddhist works available to the author appear to have been unavailable to the commentators. So, the commentaries to logic are unsatisfactory. For example, the definition and classification of perception (Kāṭci) of Arunanthi follows the Buddhist logicians. When Pauskara āgama of Vedic religion classified perception into three sections, Arunanthi, like the Buddhists, classify it into four known as intiriyak Kāṭci, māntak kāṭci, taṇ vētaṇaik kāṭci, and yōkak kāṭci. Arunanthi goes the same way in the classification of inference (aṇumāṇavakaika) and hētu (ētuvakaika). He has given up Kāraṇa aṇumāṇam mentioned in Vedic works and he has followed Kāriya aṇumāṇam like the Buddhists. According to ancient Buddhism, all things will belong to one of the four categories;— form, formless, form

and formless, no form and no formless. Arunanthi will allocate Lord Siva to the fourth category. As belonging to one category will affect Lord Siva's transcendent nature, Arunanthi justifies that the god assumes form of grace. But what is necessary here is to note that like Sankara, Arunanthi had also utilised Buddhism. As Arunanthi accepts *Salva Āgamas* as authority for his work, his conclusions have become different from the Buddhists.²⁴

Buddhism had to contend not only against Hinduism but also against Jinism. *Manimekalai* sets the tone by criticising Jaina monks and also by rejecting the view-point of the Jains. Later the Buddhists composed *Kundalakeci* which is regarded as one of the great *Kāvyas* in Tamil. Unfortunately this had not survived. This is regarded as polemic literature, *Kundalakeci* meeting in debate other religionists in debate and winning them over to Buddhism. Probably because of this characteristic, it has disappeared when Buddhism disappeared from Tamilnadu. This work probably did not share the literary excellence of *Manimekalai*. As Buddhism seems to have thus posed a challenge, the Jains felt the need for reply and *Nilakeci* appeared. Like *kundalakeci* who was a Buddhist nun, *Nilakeci* was a Jaina nun. *Nilakeci* defeats the Buddhists in debate and wins them over to Jainism. This work is included as one of the five minor *Kavyas*, in Tamil. This is polemic literature to which the outline of a story has been added. This work which is very critical of Buddhism, has survived probably because the Jains continue to live in Tamilnadu. What should be noted here is that the Jains felt that the Buddhist challenge was serious and that it needed a reply.

Viracōḷiyam, the Tamil grammar, written by a Buddhist, has been assigned with definiteness to the latter part of the eleventh century. This is the second earliest extant grammatical

24. Kulathungam, L.C.D., *Buddhist Elements in the Logic of Saiva Siddhanta*, *Saiva Siddhanta*, Vol. IV, No. 3 & 4, Madras, 1970.

cal work in Tamil and it clearly sets a new trend in Tamil grammatical theory. Though the sacred language of early Buddhism was Pali, later, the northern school, sometimes referred to as Mahayana Buddhism adopted Sanskrit while the southern school, referred to as Hinayana Buddhism continued to use Pali. Even the southern school gave importance to Sanskrit studies. The Tamilnadu Buddhists have made important contributions to Buddhist philosophy and logic in Sanskrit or Pali. The Paliyam copper plates of Karunanthadakkan, most probably Vikramaditya Varaguna, the Ayking, had given an endowment to the Buddhist vibara at Sri Mulavasa in the ninth-tenth centuries A.D. The Sanskrit portion of this record, unlike in other parts of Tamilnadu, has been engraved in Nagari script of the North. In Viracōliyam also, Puttamittirangar gives unnecessary importance to Sanskrit. In fact, It can be said that he was basing Tamil grammar on Sanskrit model. Even grammatical terms, he borrows wholesale from Sanskrit even when Tamil equivalents of Tolkappiyam are available. The extreme stand of Viracōliyam was such that it could not find adherents among Tamil grammarians till the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries A.D. when Sanskritists brought up in the Āṭṭam (Mutt) environment like Swaminatha Desikar and Subramania Desikar brought out grammatical works like *Ilakkanakkottu* and *Pirayogavivekam*.²⁵ In supporting Sanskrit and Northern influences, the Buddhists appear to be more advanced than the Hindus. Probably because the Buddhists had only a small minority following in Tamilnadu, they wanted to keep up their international image. It is interesting to note here that in contemporary Sri Lanka also, the Buddhist monks were writing in Pali and Sanskrit. The earliest extant definitely datable Sinhalese literary work makes its appearance in the twelfth century.

Viracōliyam is a definite land-mark in another way and in that way, it has no follows till the Christian missionaries and

25. Veluppillai, A., *Tamil Varalārrilakkanam*, second edition, Pari Puttakap Pannai, Madras, 1979.

modern philologists and linguists. *Tolkāppiyam* set the pattern by writing a grammar of Centamil but modern linguists reinterpret *vaḷakku* of *Payiram* to mean spoken Tamil. The literary dialect of Tamil changed very gradually in course of time. Tamil inscriptions have preserved large number of spoken Tamil forms from the times of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions. Tamil grammarians and commentators have been very reluctant to admit spoken Tamil forms into their prescriptive grammars. *Viracōḷiyam* boldly goes forward in adopting a new standard Tamil for its grammar. In *Viracōḷiyam* alone, we get grammatical recognition for some changes taking place in contemporary spoken language forms, recorded in Tamil inscriptions.²⁶ The boldness of *Viracōḷiyam* must have influenced the author of *Naṅṅūl* to be more progressive by including some innovations also in his grammar.

K.A.N. Sastri has referred to *Mattavilasa prahasana* of Mahendravarman I. This *prahasana* was a reaction of the Pallava ruler who is described as a versatile genius. This ruler became a convert to Saivism from Jainism. It is difficult to say whether he wrote this *prahasana* before or after his conversion. The objects of his satire were Buddhism and some extreme and repellant forms of Saivism. Another *prahasana*, *Baghavadajjukam* was also assigned to him.²⁷ It is a satire on Buddhism. The Buddhist monk *Parivrajaka* and his disciple *Sandilya* who was interested only in food were the main characters; a courtesan died untimely and to console his disciple and others, the soul of the Buddhist monk enters her body; the newly arisen courtesan adopting the attitude of the Buddhist monk; the soul of the courtesan enters the body of the monk and adopts the attitude

26. Veluppillai, A., *Viracōzhiyam*, as a grammar of Inscriptional Tamil, *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. XXV, No. 1 & 2. 1957, pp. 89-95.

27. For an English translation of this work, see Meenakshi, Dr. C., *Bhagavadajjukam South Indian Studies*, (Ed.) R Nagaswamy, Society, for Archaeological and Epigraphical Research, Madras, 1978, pp. 59-78.

of the courtesan; there is confusion all round this was the main trend of the prahasana. The strong impact of Buddhism in the seventh century in Kanchi might have impelled Mahendravarman I to react this way.

A number of other Buddhist works in Tamil, namely *Cittāntattokai*, *Vimpaśārakkatai* and *Tiruppatliyam* are called from commentaries and such other contexts but there is no point in wasting time as their importance and significance cannot be assessed. No Buddhist work in Tamil is available from Sri Lanka. But there is considerable epigraphical material connected with Buddhist activities. About a quarter of the Tamil Inscriptions of Sri Lanka are Buddhistic in content. Among the so-called 'Hindu Ruins' of Anuradhapura, the capital of Sri Lanka till the end of the tenth century, three Tamil inscriptions have been discovered. One of them deals with the erection of a Buddhist temple known as *Makōtaipaḷḷi*. *Makōtai* was the name of contemporary Cera capital also and it is not known whether the Tamil merchants who built this temple had Kerala connections. There is a verse at the end of the Tamil inscription beginning with 'pōti niḷal amarnta puṇṇiyaṇ—'²² After *Iḷattup Pātantēvaṇār* of Sangam Age, this is the next earliest extant verse from Sri Lanka Tamil.

The largest concentration of Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions in one site has again been discovered in a Buddhist temple, known as *Rājarājapperumpaḷḷi* in north-east Sri Lanka, very close to Trincomalee.²³ Sixteen Tamil inscriptions of the eleventh and twelfth centuries have been found there. Quite unfortunately, most of them are fragmentary. The *meykkīrttis* of Rajendra I have been found in seven records. One is dated

28. South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. IV, No. 1405.

29. Veluppillai, A. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, Part I and Part II Peradeniya (Sri Lanka) 1971, 1972.

Indrapala, K., *Epigraphic Tamilica*, Vol. I, Jaffna Archaeological Society, 1971.

in the reign of Rajendra II. These are donative records and register the grant of money and cattle for the maintenance of lamps at the Buddhist shrine. These records clearly show that the Buddhist establishment enjoyed the patronage of Tamils, evidently Buddhists, some of whom were possibly Cōḷa officials. But there is no evidence for the patronage of Cōḷa royalty to this institution. This vihara, known earlier as Vilagama Vihara among the Sinhalese, seems to have been rebuilt on the style of Cōḷa architecture - a new feature, unknown in other Buddhist temples of the Island.

The references to Rājarājapperumpaḷḷi and Rājendracōḷapperumpaḷḷi in the two Leyden Plates should be viewed in this light.³⁰ The Larger Leyden Plates is one of the longest epigraphs from Tamilnadu. It has III slokas in Sanskrit and 332 lines in Tamil. Much geneological and historical information are available in the Sanskrit section. Mara Vijayottungavarman, the Sailendra ruler of Sri Vijaya built a huge vihara which is even higher than mount Meru and named it after his father as Chūḷāmaṇi Vihāram. The Sailendra rulers built Borabudur shrine in Java. They had trading contacts with both China and India. As China was a Buddhist country, they were probably not interested in building a Buddhist temple there. So, in the interests of their traders and as a demonstration of their power and wealth, they wanted to build a huge temple at Nagappattinam. The fact that Rajaraja gave an entire village to support this vihara also shows the big establishment at the vihara. But the record has been inscribed in the reign of Rajendra I, probably because Rajaraja I died before the formalities could be concluded.

Next time, epigraphical evidence for the Buddhist temple occurs under the name of Rājarājapperumpaḷḷi during the reign of Kulottunga I in the Smaller Leyden Plates. The intermediate history has to be reconstructed. During the reign of Rajendra I

30. Epigraphia Indica., Vol. XXII, pp. 213-266; 267-281.

hostilities break out between the Cōlas and the Sailandras. The Cōlas invaded the Sailendra Empire, burnt and destroyed many places and returned with much booty. This is probably the reason why K.V. Raman mention Rajendra I as hostile to Cūlāmaṇi Vihāram.³¹ Most probably, the Buddhist monk from the hostile Empire left the Chūlāmaṇi Vihāram and in their place, the Buddhist monks from Rājarājpperumpaḷḷi of Sri Lanka walked in. Rajendra I gladly accepted the change of designation of the Vihara from that of a line of enemy kings to that of his father. The Smaller Leyden Plates also mention Rājendra cōḷapperumpalli, built by the Sailendra ruler. Probably, this was another vihara built by Mara Vijayotunga-varman and not named. This might have been named after Rajendra I himself during the period of the hostilities. But relations between the two Empires seem to have become normal during the reign of Kulottunga I when the Sailendra ruler again requests the Cōla to make endowments to these viharas.

The Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions refer to two other Prumpaḷḷis. One of them, a slab inscriptions of the Veḷaikkāras from Polonnaruva, published long ago in *Epigraphia Zeylanica* refers to Sri Daḷadāyapperumpaḷḷi.³² Because of the unsettled conditions in the country, the Sinhalese Buddhist monks hand over their most sacred relic temple, the Temple of the Tooth (of Buddha) for the protection of the Tamil Veḷaikkāras and the Veḷaikkāras undertake the responsibility solemnly. The second Sri Lanka inscription has recently been discovered and reported in the news-papers. This refers to Vikramasalāmēgapperumpaḷḷi at in Tiriyai, again a few miles north of Rājarājapperumpaḷḷi, in Trincomalee District. Ganapati, a Veḷaikkāar general, built this and named after the monarch who must have been Vikramabahu I. The Culavamsa paints this ruler as hostile to Buddhism. In that case, it is difficult to believe

31. Raman, K.V., (1972), p. 72.

32. Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Annual Report 2 of 1921.

whether he would have allowed his name to be so associated; even if he was supposed to have been not consulted, his general would not name a temple after a ruler known to be hostile to that faith.

The significance of the expression 'perumpalli' is not clear. The designation *palli* of course, refers to Buddhist or Jaina temple in Tamil from classical times. The adjective *perum* usually means 'great'. There is the expression '*peruṅkōvil*' also. Tirunāvukkaracar refers to seventy eight *perum kōvils* in his time. Some temples are expressly referred to as *peruṅ kōvils* in Tiruppatikams. They are not the most important Saiva temples. Sathasiva Pantarattar explains that they were either hill temples or upper storey temples.³³ Whatever that may be regarding Saiva temples, they don't seem to be appropriate for the Buddhist temples. Mattavilasaprahasanam mentions Rajavihara under which other viharas appear to have functioned. In Sri Lanka, they have Rajamahaviharas. Most probably, Perumpalli was a translation used for this type of temple.

The biggest Sri Lanka Tamil inscription, so far discovered, also deals with Buddhist monument. The inscription at Lankatilaka vihara in Gampola, near Kandy, begins in Sinhalese and consists of two records of two consecutive Sinhalese rulers. Then the Tamil section mentioning endowment by Sena Lankadhikarikal follows.³⁴ The Tamil section runs to forty six lines in the smoothened surface of an adjoining rock. The Tamil record is written in Grantha and Tamil. Besides a fair admixture of Sanskrit words, translation and adaptation of many Sinhalese words also can be noticed there. The imprecation against violators of the grant given at the end of the record is quite new to Tamil epigraphy; this reflects Buddhist faith and beliefs.

33. Sathasiva Pandarattar- *Ilakkīyamum Kalvettukalum*.

34. Veluppillai A. (1952).

Paranavitana, S., Lankatilleke Inscriptions, University of Ceylon Review, Vol. XVIII, 1950.

The Pallankovil copper plates which are well known to refer to endowments to Jaina temple also refer to a Buddhist paḷḷi accidentally.³⁵ The term Cākkiyap paḷḷi clearly refer to the Buddhist temple as Buddha was said to belong to Sakyagula. When the boundaries of the Jaina endowment are mentioned, the Cākkiyappaḷḷi of Kuḷalūr is mentioned so many times that it must have been quite a big establishment.

The late Mayilai Seeni Venkataswamy's painstaking effort to collect all references to Buddhist sites for inclusion in his chapter 'Pautta Tiruppatikaḷ' should at be duly acknowledged. He has utilised epigraphical evidence also. For the moment, the sites of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions can be omitted as there is controversy and as it is quite difficult to assign any single site with definite assurance. We will take up here some of the most important Buddhist places. One inscription mentions *Pūtaman-galam*, adjoining Nittavinōta vaḷanāṭṭu veṇṇikkūrṟattu nakaram veṇṇi³⁶. An inscription from Tiruvirameccuram of Mannarkudi Taluq of Tanjore District refers to Pakavatavar temple of Ūrkkāṭu and mēr pūtamangalam nadu.³⁷ The village adjoining Pūtamangalam is Paḷḷivirutti. In the Jaina temple at Mannarkudi, there is a statue of the Buddha.³⁸ An inscription from Adityesvarar temple of Paravur of Tiruvarurkkurram of Keyamanikavvalanadu mentions a village called *Puttamangalam*³⁹. An inscription mentions a village called *Sangamankalam* to the

35. Subramaniam, T.N., Pallankovil Jaina Copper Plate Grant of Early Pallava Period, *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India*, Madras, 1958-59.

Cākkiyappaḷḷi of Kuḷalūr mentioned four times in this grant.

36. South Indian Inscriptions, Vol. II, Part I, No. 5.

37. Topographical List of Inscription in Madras Presidency' Vol. II, p. 276. 143 of 1931.

38. Minakshi, C., Bhutamangalam of Buddhadatta, *Current Science*, Vol, VI, 1937-38, p. 491.

39. 69 of 1925. Epigraphy Report, 1907.

West of Kandiur of Colasikhamanipuram of Tāṇavanadu of Jayasimmakulakālavaṇātu.⁴⁰ This may be identical with *Tiruccangamankai*, the birth place of Sakkiyanayanar of Periyapuram. An inscription from Subramanya temple at Tiruvidaikali mentions Pōtimangalam, which has to be identified with Cekkilar's *Pōtimāṅkai*. Nagappattinam has long been a centre of Buddhism. A Buddhist temple built there during the Pallava period was known as Chinese Temple as it catered mainly for the needs of the Chinese traders. Marco Polo referred to this temple as having a Chinese inscription also. All these places are located in the present Tanjore District.

Most of the other sites are located in Chingleput District. There was a Buddhist temple in Kanchipuram, known as Kacciku nāyakar Kōvil (Temple of the Lord of Kanchi). The village of Nāvalūr of Ponneri Taluq in Chingleput District was a Paḷḷicantam endowment to this temple. At the back side of the inscription, there was a Dharmacakra. There was a Paḷḷicantam village called Māṅkādu near Poonamalee of Saidapet Taluq of Chingleput District. An inscription from Āvūr of Tiruvannamalai Taluq in North Arcot District, by referring to names like Sa(k)kiyar and Srimaṅ Sena Mahabodhi, implies a Buddhist settlement there.⁴¹

Mayilai Seeni Venkadaswamy, as a pioneer, was over-enthusiastic in putting forward some views about Buddhism. The views which need modification or correction will be taken up here. According to him, Saivism converted Buddha into Sāsda/Aiyaṇār. The Buddhists of Sri Lanka worship Aiyanayake/Aiyaṇār as a guardian deity. So, it is quite possible that Aiyaṇār worship existed independently in South India and Sri Lanka. According to him, the Kamakshi temple at Kanchi was a Buddhist Tara temple and the Annapurani temple there

40. 124 of 1935-36. Ep. Rep. 1935-36.

41. References to all these sites in Mayilai Seeni Venkadaswamy (1940).

was Manimekalai temple. The temple architecture of the Kanchi Kamakshi temple is peculiar and not found in any other Hindu temple.⁴² So, there is some basis for his view. But he says in another place in a later work (1954) that some Jaina sculptures were available in a Prakara of the same temple.⁴³ So, it is quite possible that materials from Buddhist and Jaina temples were utilised in the construction of this temple. His view about Annapurani temple must have been based on the story of Manimekalai feeding people from 'Aṭṣayapātra'. We cannot be certain that the epic Manimekalai has a real story as its theme. He also says that Tara temples in Tamilnadu were converted into Draupadi temples. In the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, many Draupadi temples exist but there is no tradition connecting them up with Tara temples. There is a Kaṭalāṭci amman temple near the Batticaloa harbour in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka but it is not certain whether it could have been dedicated to the sea deity of Manimekalai.

As Buddhism and Jainism give prime importance to Ahimsa or non-killing, Venkadaswamy rushed to the conclusion that the Buddhists, like the Jainas whom he knew in Tamilnadu, were vegetarians. He had said that the Brahmins in Tamilnadu had to become vegetarians, following the examples of Buddhists and the Jainas. But unlike the Jains, the Buddhists do not advocate vegetarian diet. In Sri Lanka which boasts that it preserves pure Buddhism, the number of pure vegetarians among the Buddhists will be almost negligible. Vegetarianism is not much in evidence in other Buddhist countries also. That Buddhism could become an international religion counting crores of adherents while Jainism had only a few lakhs of adherents in India might be partly due to the food habit they advocated. The

42. Mayandi Subramaniam gave this information at the discussion following the Lecture.

43. Venkadaswamy, Mayilai Seeni - Camaṇamum Tamiḷum, Kalaka Velīyīṭu, Madras, 1954.

Jaina example, and not the Buddhist one, might have influenced the Brahmins to take up to Vegetarianism.

According to Venkadaswamy, the Buddhists and the Jains preached and wrote in the language of the people. We think that he was trying to differentiate them from the Brahmins, the patronisers of the scholarly Sanskrit. It is true that they preached in the language of the people. But the Buddhists seem to have made Pali, a sacred language like that of Sanskrit. Most of the contributions from Tamilnadu were made either in Pali or in Sanskrit. In Sri Lanka too, the Buddhist monks have made substantial contributions in Pali and in Sanskrit. As in our countries today, we write in English to keep up international contacts, it was a necessity of that time to write in Sanskrit to keep up international contacts. Pali also served the same purpose to a lesser extent than Sanskrit.

Venkadaswamy also says that Buddhism and Jainism which had rejected caste system of society appealed to the Tamils instructively as the Tamils also didn't have a caste system. For one thing, Buddhism and Jainism appear to have taken considerable time to appeal to the Tamil people. Further, the Buddhists seem to have constituted only a small minority in the Tamil population even in their best days. The Buddhists of Sri Lanka who claim to preserve this religion in its pristine form, have a caste system but they don't seem to have untouchability. Probably this belief of Buddhism against untouchability led to the conversion of a section of Hindu Harijans of India to Buddhism a few decades ago, under the inspiration of Ambedkar. Among Hindu Tamils of Sri Lanka also, a small section of the Harijans went over to Buddhism.

Some more views of Venkadaswamy also need comment. According to him, it is undeniable that the Buddhists originated the bo-tree worship. The bo-tree seems to have occupied an important position prior to Lord Buddha, even in the Indus Valley civilization. Indus valley seals preserve single bo-leaf as well as twigs of the bo-tree. Venkadaswamy also quotes a

Buddhist text to show that Lord Buddha originated the Brahmi script. This was in a late work and even Buddhist scholars have not taken the reference seriously. His view, that the Buddhists and Jainas originated Grantha, also has no basis. About the origin of Manipravala style, a blending of Sanskrit and Tamil, for which the early evidence was entirely Jaina, Venkadaswamy wants to give some credit to the Buddhists also because *Vīracōliyam*, the Tamil grammar composed by a Buddhist, refers to it. We think that this is going too far. He also says that the Hindus established mutts under the influence of the Buddhist Sangha. This may be true regarding mutts, established by Sankara and regarding later *Ātīṇams*. But some type of mutt is mentioned to have been in existence even in the time of *Tirunāṇacampantar* and *Tirunāvukkaracar*. This needs further investigation.

The disappearance of the Buddhist community in Tamilnadu, in other words, the absorption of the Buddhist population into the Tamil Hindu population, should be viewed in the wider context of what was happening in South Asia and South-East Asia.⁴⁴ By about fifteenth century, great change was taking place in the religious composition of these regions. Long ago in Tamilnadu, a Pallava inscription proclaimed that Lord Buddha was one of the Avatars of Lord Visnu. This is generally interpreted as an attempt to assimilate Buddhists into the Vaisnava population. Buddhism continued to hold on in Tamilnadu in spite of this tactic as well as the other tactics of the Hindu devotional movement. In Malaysia and Indonesia (Except for Bali) both Buddhism and Hinduism succumbed to Islam. In Bali, a peculiar religion, a happy blending of Hinduism and Buddhism still remains. In Nepal also, a happy blending of Hinduism and Buddhism remains. In countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma, Hindu minorities were absorbed into their Buddhist populations. How this change came about throughout these regions needs further study.

44. Veluppillai, A., *Caivamum Pauttamum, Tirukkātiswaram Tirukkuṭamukku viḷā malar*; Colombo, 1976.

IMPACT OF JAINISM ON THE TAMILS

One can say that the late Mayilai Seeni Venkadaswamy's book, 'Camaṇamum Tamilum' (1954) was the pioneer work in this field also.¹ Though this book appeared fourteen years after his book on Buddhism and Tamil, the author claimed that he started writing this book immediately after the other book and completed writing it in four years. In his introduction, he refers to the general ignorance and apathy of Tamil scholars on this matter and to his inability to find a publisher to his work. There, he also makes the significant observation that taken religious community wise, no other religious community has made a greater contribution to Tamil language and literature than the Jaina community. He also makes the point that Jainism was an important religion in Tamilnadu till very recently and that he felt that he should unravel the history of that religion in Tamilnadu. Venkadaswamy's book was incomplete. He himself mentioned that he was publishing part one, dealing with religious history and part two, dealing with the Jaina contribution to Tamil would be forthcoming. This work served some purpose and kindled interest in Jaina Tamil studies. The late Professor S. Vaiyapurippillai's contributions emphasising Jaina character of many Tamil literary and grammatical works, along with this book of Mayilai Seeni Venkadaswamy inspired us to take to Jaina Tamil studies.²

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1. Venkadaswamy, Mayilai Seeni Comaṇamum Tamilum, Kaḷaka Veljiyitu, 1954.
 2. Veluppillai, A., A Study of the Jaina Tamil Inscriptions at Kalugumalai, *Proceeding of the Second International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies*, Madras, 1968.

We have also published a number of short articles in magazines published from Peradeniya during the last twenty years,

Venkadaswamy's promised part two of the work had never been published. T.P. Meenakshisundaram has published a 'Camaṇat Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāru'.³ This work can be said to fulfil Venkadaswamy's promise to some extent. This book is comprehensive in a way as it mentions all Jaina literary works as well as other works claimed by the Jainas but whose authorship is not so certain. But this is not analytical and so it has not brought into focus the significant Jaina contribution. Some thing more significant than known facts were brought out in publications on literary theories of the International Institute of Tamil Studies. Dr. D.V. Veerasamy has made his contributions to literary theories of three Jain epics:— *Cīvakacintamaṇi*, *Cūḷamaṇi* and *Nilakēci*.⁴ Working on literary theory of each literary work in Tamil is a new experiment of the Institute. Further development of studies in literary has lot of promise for better literary Criticism and better history of Tamil literature

Tamiḷaṇṭṭiṇ Camaṇar, Camaṇapattippāṭalkaḷ, Tirunāṇṭāṭi, Appar, Camaṇa-Saivappāḷam, etc., in *Iḷaṅkatir*.

Puraṇāṇūṟṟil Nilaiyāmaḷ, Paurāṇikamatamum, Camaṇamum, Tirukkuraḷ, oru Kaṇṭaṇa nūl, etc., in *Cintanaḷ*. When we were in England between 1962 and 1964, we got photostat copies of a number of small Jaina books from India Office Library as we found them unavailable in Sri Lanka.

Students following Special Course in Tamil have written critical essays in Jaina Tamil works under our supervision:-

Umachandra, M., *Udayannkumāṛakāviyamum Yasōtara-kāviyamum*, 1978.

Vadivelu, K., *Jīvasambōdharai*, 1979.

Thillainathar, A., *A Comparative Study of Tirunāṇṭāṭi and Tiruppāmālai*, 1980.

3. Meenakshisundaram, T.P., *Camaṇat Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāru*, Kalaikkatir Veḷiyiṭṭu, Coimbatore, 1961.
4. Veerasamy, D.V., *Cīvakacintāmaṇi*, *Tamil Ilakkiyak Kolkai*, 2, International Institute of Tamil Studies, Madras, 1977, pp 1-32; *Cūḷamaṇi* T.I.K., 4, I.I.T.S. 1979, pp 3-40; *Nilakēci*, T.I.K.S, 1980, pp. 27-54.

than now available. Dr. R. Vijayalakshmi follows another line of study regarding Jaina Tamil literature.⁵ In her doctoral thesis, she compared Tamil *Civakacintāmaṇi* with Prakrit and Sanskrit versions of the same story and came to the conclusion that the Tamil version should have been the original. By similar comparative studies, she has attempted to reconstruct the missing portions of *Peruṅkatai*. She is now busy trying to show that *Bṛhadkathā* originated in South India.

A more significant contribution in this field has been made by K. Subramaniam in his publication, '*Peruṅkatai and its Jaina background*'.⁶ He has tried to go deep into Jaina philosophy and then to relate those philosophical concepts to episodes and descriptions in Jaina epic literature. In this study, he hit upon a brilliant finding that *Cilappatikāram* reflects Ājivaka ideals and not Jaina ideals. He has shown that predetermination was the sole factor guiding the entire epic of *Cilappatikāram*. The theory of all powerful predetermination, the distinguishing character of Ājivaka religion as well as the other essential characteristics of that religion fit in very well with *Cilappatikāram* story. He has also shown how many peculiarities of Jaina epics, especially *Peruṅkatai* could be explained only with reference to Jaina philosophical concepts. He has also shown that *Kaṇṇiyan Pūṇkuraṇṇār* and *Uṇṇaiyūr Mutukuraṇṇan Cāttaṇṇār*,

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5. Vijayalakshmi, R., *A Story of the missing portion at the beginning of the Perunkatai with special reference to its relationship to the Brhadkathā*, *South Indian Studies* II, Society for Archaeological, Historical and Epigraphical Research, Madras, 1979.

Her doctoral thesis on *Civakacintāmaṇi*, under her former name of Annamuttu Muthukumar, remains unpublished in the University of Oxford.

6. Subramaniam, K., *Perumkatai and its Jaina Background*, Department of Tamil, Kerala University, Trivandrum, 1975.

two poets from *Puṛaṇāṅṁṟu* of Sangam Age really reflect Ājivaka ideals and not Jaina ideals as some-times supposed.⁷

The Jains have made such a rich and varied contribution to Tamil language and literature that they cannot simply be ignored. The Jains specialised in Tamil grammar. There is, of course, a controversy whether *Tolkāppiyar*, the author of the earliest extant and the most authoritative Tamil grammar was a Jain. Nobody now doubts that he has referred to some Jaina concepts. The matter remains controversial because he has referred to Hindu concepts also. We have to remember that *Tolkāppiyar* was writing a book on Tamil grammar and not on Jainism. Because Jainism had a substantial following and big influence in Tamilnadu, we should not rush to the conclusion that Jainism was at any time predominant in Tamilnadu. At one time, about the seventh century A.D., the Hindus seems to have feared that Jainism might become predominant in Tamilnadu. Jainism seems to have remained an influential minority religion throughout, till about the last three or four centuries. So, when the Jains composed books on general topics, they were broad-minded enough to have references to other faiths. This also becomes evident from a reference to history of Kannada literature. Pampa, Ponna and Ranna, the three famous poets of Ancient Karnataka were Jains and all three wrote on Jaina themes. Each of them has contributed on Hindu themes also in the interests of Hindu public or

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7. Jeevabandhu T.S. Sripal exaggerates the position of Jainism in Sangam Age in Tamilnadu when he says that majority of the poets were Jaina scholars. In his work '*Tamilakattil Jainam*', he mentions specifically the names of *Ulōccaṇār*, *Pūṅkuṇṇār*, *Nikaṇṇār*, *Aṟivuṭai Nampi*, *Akampāṇ*, *Āimanti*, *Patumaṇār*, *Cēralātaṇ*, *Kāppiyāṇ Cētaṇār*, *Kaṇakkāyaṇār*, etc.

But *gathiamoorthy. S.*, *Wlōccaṇārpaṇṇiya Cintanaika*, *Ayvukkavai*, I.P.T.M., Seventh Seminar, Nagercoil, 1975, mentions *Nikaṇṇ Kalaikkōṭṭuttaṇṇār* and *Mātrirttaṇ* only besides *Ulōccaṇār* as Jaina poets of the Sangam Age.

Opinions vary,

Karnataka.* We feel that Tolkāppiyar was adopting a similar attitude.

Comparing the Jaina contribution to Tamil and Kannada, their contribution to Kannada is more significant as they were the pioneer contributors who dominated the Kannada literary scene for three or four centuries continuously. In Tamilnadu, the Sangam literature cannot be ascribed to Jaina influence. But the codification of Tamil grammar in Tolkāppiyam at such an early period has done much to preserve the individuality of Tamil. Alone among ancient grammarians of the world, Tolkāppiyar has been given credit for so minutely describing the phonemic pattern of a language, i.e., in this case, Tamil. It is difficult to how this brilliant concept could have occurred to Tolkāppiyar if he was not a linguist, with a good knowledge of one or more developed languages. Even making allowances for his quotations from other authors, it is difficult to imagine now how much industrious he must have been in those difficult times to write a book like Tolkāppiyam.

What Nannūl, another Tamil grammar of medieval period again by a Jaina author, says about Tamilicisation of Indo-Aryan words is complementary to what Tolkāppiyar has already stated on the phonemic pattern of Tamil. From the beginning of the Pallava period, Sanskritisation was going on at a quick place in Tamilnadu and how to adopt Sanskrit words in Tamil became a big problem. Inscriptional Tamil shows that Sanskrit words were taken into Tamil in a variety of ways. To preserve the individuality of Tamil, the Tamil phonemic pattern has to be followed. So, loan words from Sanskrit and other Indo-Aryan languages have to be Tamilicised to suit the phonemic pattern of Tamil. If not for the steps taken by the two Jaina grammarians, Tamil would have taken a course similar to that of other cultivated Dravidian languages.

8. Mativanan, R., — *Arukaṇ neṇṇiyai pperuka vaḷarṭta Kannaṭa ppulavarkaḷ*, *Mukkudai*, Jaina Youth Forum, Madras, December 1976.

That Thiruvalluvar has been a Jaina author, is not very much doubted now among serious academic circles even though controversy exists and each religion including Christianity and Islam also putting forward some claim to it.⁹ Tirukkuraḷ has been translated into a large number of languages. In a few languages, it has been translated many times. It has been hailed as a breakthrough in Indian thought by Albert Schweitzer. This work treats of *aram* (Dharma), *poruḷ* (artta) and *inṇam* (Kāma). This is an ethical work and it tries to guide one's life on ethical principles. The work has literary qualities of a high order. The Tamilnadu Universities have instituted special chairs to do research on this work. This book could be summed up as picturing 'an ideal cultured man'. Tirukkuraḷ seems to have served as the guiding light for Tamil culture. The Hindus accepted it with reverence, though claiming it to be their own. All the modern reform movements in Tamilnadu have accepted it with equal enthusiasm. Tirukkuraḷ and other didactic poems of the early period concentrate more on Dharma than on preaching Jaina religion probably because early Jains were more bent on an idealistic reform of the society. At that time, organised Hindu religion was not a serious rival in Tamilnadu.

Jaina contribution is equally noteworthy in the compilation of Tamil epics. *Civaka Cintāmaṇi* has been acclaimed by many as a great epic from the time of its appearance.¹⁰ Instead of akaval metre which was earlier used for the first three epics of Tamilnadu, Tiruttakkatēvar was using viruttam metre. It was a bold innovation, extending the use of viruttam from devotional poetry to epics, which paved the way for wonderful

9. Kandaswamy, S.N. in a recent publication *Tirukkuraḷ* puts forward the Buddhist claim in a scholarly way. See his *Tirukkural Kūrum Uṟutipporuḷ*, Manivacakar Nulakam, Madras, 1977.

10. Gnanamurthy, T.E., *A Critical Study of Civaka Cintāmaṇi*, Kalaikkattir Veḷiyiṭṭu, Coimbatore, 1966.

Aravintan, M.V., *Ilakkiya Vāṇil Cintāmaṇi*, Tamilnadu Jaina Sanga Veḷiyiṭṭu.

exploits of Kambar. S. Vaiyapurippillai evaluated this work in his *Kāvya-kālam*, mainly using the yardstick of epics in Sanskrit and Western languages. He has referred to a few shortcomings but he has also pointed out the merits of the work. Professor S.V. Subramaniam has recently brought out a book on 'Kāppiyappuṇaitiraṇ' in which he takes the stand that Tamil epics should be having their own yardsticks.¹¹ After the appearance of *Civakacintāmaṇi*, Tamil epics appeared only in Viruttam up to the modern period. In 1954, various scholars of Tamilnadu have contributed to the publication of *Civakacintāmaṇi nīṇaiṇu malar**, a moderate size volume.¹²

The Jainas dominated the field of Tamil lexicography also. *Piṅkalantai*, *Cēntaṇ Tivākaram* and *Cūṭāmaṇi nikaṇṭu* were all written by the Jainas. These works served the purpose of dictionaries of modern days. If not for these nikandus, it would have been almost impossible to understand so much of classical and medieval Tamil. All the commentators were freely using these nikandus. The nikandus include so much of information about Hindu topics that it shows their broadminded quest for knowledge. This also shows that it was the Jainas who took seriously to Tamil scholarship.

But we have to admit that the Jainas first introduced the *manipravala* style, equal admixture of Tamil and Sanskrit. This would not have helped the Tamil cause. The Jains gave this up after sometime. But the Vaisnavites took it up and used it to write commentaries to *Divyappirapantam*. In the previous lecture, we have noticed the pro-Sanskrit posture adopted by *Puttamittiranar* and the Buddhists and near-contempt of some of the later Hindu grammarians towards the individuality of

11. Subramaniam, S.V., *Kāppiyappuṇai tīraṇ*, Tamil Pathip-pakam, Madras, 1979.

12. Sripal, T.S. (Ed.), *Civaka Cintamanic corpolivu ninaivu malar*, Kanchi Jaina Tamil Ilakkiya manram, 1954.

Tamil¹³. The worth of the Jaina contribution can be adjudged in this background only.

Unlike in the case of Buddhism, the modern trend in Tamil nadu is to emphasise still further the Jaina contributions, especially the Jaina influence in ancient Tamilakam. We have already noted in the previous lecture, the views of K.V. Raman, K.V. Soundra Rajan and R. Nagaswamy who ascribe all ancient Tamil Brahmi inscriptions to the Jains. The 2500th year of the parinirāvana of Lord Mahāvira has been celebrated about five years ago and from that time, there seems to be a revival of interest in Jainism and in Jaina Tamil studies. Some scholars are rather balanced in their views but this cannot be said of all. In the light of K. Subramaniam's point that two poets of Puranānuru and Ilango reflected Ājivaka ideals, it is quite possible that T.V. Mahalingam (1967) was right in ascribing the Tamil cave inscriptions to the Jains, the Buddhists and the Ājivakas.

A further question remained unanswered till recently as there was no definite evidence that the Jains had come to South India in the Age of the Tamilnadu cave inscriptions. A few knowledgeable scholars pointed to Mahāvamsa reference to Jain settlement in Anuradhapura in the fourth Century B.C. as evidence that the Jainas must have been in Tamilnadu also at the same time. But some critics have pointed out that this could not be relied on as Mahāvamsa was formally composed in the fifth century A.D., almost a millennium later. But most of the Tamilnadu scholars are not aware of development in Sri Lanka and so they repeated only the story of Badrabahu and Chandragupta Maurya coming to the South during the Maurya period and staying permanently in Sravana Belgola in Karnataka in the third century B.C. In this context, they refer to literary and inscriptional evidence but these are all very late records. Professor H D. Sankalia has given evidences to show that the

13. Veluppillai, A., Tamil Varalāṅgilakkaṇam, Second edition, Tamil Puthakalayam, Madras, 1979.

Jains were present in southern Maharashtra and Andhra in that early period.¹⁴ So, we are on firmer ground now.

As a small Jaina community of about thirty thousand people live in Tamilnadu and a rich Jaina mercantile community of Northern origin does business in the cities of Tamilnadu, the voice of Jainism has never been completely silenced. A. Chakravartti Nainar and T.S. Sripal, both of them no more, kept the cause of Jainism in the lime-light by various publications in Tamil. T.S. Sripal (1968) argued that all the cave shelters and cave inscriptions of Tamilnadu should belong to the Jains and not to the Buddhists as Buddhism has allowed the Buddhist monks to wear the robes, to carry umbrellas and to live in-

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14. Sankalia, H.D., *Aspects of Indian History and Archaeology*. (Ed.) S.p. Gupta and K.S. Ramachandran, Delhi, 1977.

See his article 'Early Epigraphical Evidence of the prevalence of Jainism in Gujarat (Saurashtra, Western Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh)', pp. 134-140.

'Now during the last seven-eight years definite evidence has been found in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh which lends support to the earlier discovery of an inscription in the cave known as Bawa Pyara at Junagadh (Gujarat State). Both these discoveries as well as the earlier one at Junagadh not only give the hope that if a regular, planned search is made in these and other parts of India, then we will definitely find archaeological evidence for the earlier existence or prevalence of Jainism'.

"Of all the three epigraphical evidences, the one in Maharashtra is extremely important, because it opens up a new vista in time and space. For the inscription was discovered in the hitherto unknown and unexplored range of hills around the famous Bhaja and Kerala caves, not far from Pune. Secondly, Palaeographically, the inscription definitely belongs to the early part of the first or the end of the second century B.C."

comfortable abodes among the people.¹⁵ Sripal could not have argued like this if he had known that in Ancient Sri Lanka, thousands of cave inscriptions attest to Buddhist monks living in caves. Sripal has written a book arguing that Ilango was a Jain and refuting that he was a Saivite. The second part of his argument was alright. He has recently brought out a book on Jainism in Tamilnadu which has several thought provoking ideas.¹⁶ He is giving a Jaina version of Tamilnadu religious history and it is valuable on that account, But too many speculations are being floated for this work to be considered a serious historical work. In 1974, a Jaina Youth Forum has been formed in Madras. It is issuing a monthly journal 'Mukkudai' Triple umbrella. It is engaged in various activities including publication of books.

Some Hindu contributors to these publications seem to take an 'emotional line'. K.P. Aravaanan, Suresh B. Pillai and A. Ekambaranathan who are serious scholars themselves have plugged this line. *Cainarin Tamililakkana nan kotai* of K P. Aravaanan, is painstaking research. The long historical introduction is very valuable but at the end of that introduction, his reference to Hinduism which made the Jainas suffers the same at the hands of Christianity and Islam, etc., seems to be emotional.¹⁷ Suresh B. Pillai seems to be emotionally worked up when he says "Let me recall to the staunch Hindus and to the lovers of Tamil that the Jains were mainly responsible for stemming the over-whelming flow of Sanskrit influence by devotion to and propagation of Tamil language and literature.—— It is the religious fanaticism of the Hindus towards this 'heterodox' faith that was responsible for their decay and elimination.

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15. Sripal, T.S., *Jaigam, Handbook*, Second International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Madras, 1968.
 16. Sripal, T.S., *Tamilakattil Jainam*, Tamilnadu Jaina Sangam, Madras, 1975.
 17. Aravaanan, K.P., *Cainarin Tamil Ilakkana nan kotai*, Jain Youth Forum, Madras, 1974.

The contribution of the Jains to the culture and language of the Tamils has never been properly expounded mainly out of prejudice"¹⁸ A. Ekambaranathan has tried to make out that Tiruñāncampantar was asking permission from Lord Siva to rape Jaina women.¹⁹ We feel that this is going too far. The saint has used the word 'Karpajikka' which in modern Tamil means 'to rape'. There is no other evidence to indicate that this word had that significance in the seventh century A.D. Cekkilar was never hesitant to hide anything in the religious conflict and surely he would have come out with this if this was what the Saiva saint intended. We have noticed that T.S. Sripal quotes supporting evidence from a modern festival in Cirkali, the birth place of that Saiva saint. This festival seems to mark religious fanaticism but the usage of the name of the Saiva saint

18. Pillai, Suresh, B., Chittannavasal: The Abode of the Jains, *Mukkudai*, January 1980.

19. This interpretation with an episode in a ritual at Sirkali, the birth place of the Saiva saint, in whose honour a second festival of Tirumulaippal Tiruvila was going on where reference was made to rape was first put forward by T.S. Sripal. According to K.D. Thirunavukkarasu, an Associate Professor at the International Institute of Tamil Studies, T.S. Sripal wrote an article and Thiru. Vi. Ka. immediately published a rebuttal that no such reference was made in that festival. K.D. Thirunavukkarasu himself had been to this festival where he found no such episode. Further, the verse has been misinterpreted for mischievous purposes. Karpu has many meanings in Tamil. Just because the word *peṇ* 'female' also occurs there, one should not rush to the conclusion 'raping women'. That section actually means asking permission from Lord Siva to destroy the determination of weak female hearted Buddhists and ignorant Jains.

See Ekambaranathan, A., *Kalvettil Cananam*, Jain Youth Forum, Madras, 1979.

in this connection is unfortunate. Some years ago, T.P. Meenakshisundaram came out with a book 'Campantarum Camanarum' in which he argued that the Saiva saint could not have been responsible for impaling eight thousand Jain monks. The same arguments can apply here.

Mayilai Seeni Venkadaswamy's book serves as a general reference book for Jainism and Tamils. Some points he mentioned in his book don't seem to be accurate. According to him, the words 'dharma' and 'adharma' have special meanings in Jainism as principle of motion and principle of rest. These words don't have the meanings assigned to them in other languages. We find that these words have the usual meanings in Jainism also in addition to special meanings. He says that Jainism encouraged agriculture. We have read in many places that Jainism discouraged agriculture as it could involve destruction of lives and that was one reason why Jains took to trade. We are quoting A.L. Basham in support of this position. "No lay Jaina could take up the profession of agriculture, since this involved not only the destruction of plant life, but also of many living beings in the Soil".²⁰

According to Venkadaswamy, the success of Hinduism in the religious controversy was not only due to the Bhakti movement but due to the united front formed by the bhakti movement with extremist and repellant Saiva sects like the Kalamukhas and the Kapalikas who seem to have carried on terrorist activities. There is evidence for the existence of these sects in Tamilnadu. We have not come across any evidence for the united front of terrorist activities against the Jainas. T.S. Sripal also alludes to this factor in his publications but no evidence has been produced. Mahendravarman I criticised the Buddhists and these extremist sects together in his Mattavilasaprahasanam but it is not known whether he criticised when he was a Jaina or when he was a Saivite. If the Saivites had these extremist groups as

20. Basham, A.L., *The Wonder that was India*, Grove Press, Inc. New York, First Evergreen Edition, 1959, p. 292.

allies, it is quite possible that such alliance could have proved counterproductive, due to popular revulsion.

Venkadaswamy also says that the Jainas should not cross the sea except narrow stretch of water. It is not clear whether it was intended for the Jaina laymen or for the Jaina monks. Jaina traders were crossing the sea at least from the Middle Ages. Mukkudai, the Jaina monthly refers to the foundation of a Jaina temple in Nairobi in Kenya. Some Jaina monks had power to fly through air. Except for the reason that crossing the sea and going to a far off land might involve difficulties in living a strict disciplined line, we cannot understand why Jainism imposed a ban here. We are also not aware of the source of Venkadaswamy.

Venkadaswamy accounts for the quick spreading of Jainism in Tamilnadu because the casteless society of Ancient Tamils was attracted to the preaching against caste of the Jains and the Buddhists and not to Brahminism. For one thing, neither Jainism nor Buddhism had such instant success in Tamilnadu like the spectacular success of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Further a deeper study of *Puṇanāṇūru* shows that the Ancient Tamils were mostly non-vegetarians, who freely took alcohol. Such people would have found it very difficult to accept Jainism and it would have taken considerable time for them to accept Jaina life of vegetarianism and to become a teetotaler. So, there is also no point in claiming the Ancient Tamils or the Dravidians as Jains, as advocated by T. S. Sripal.

Venkadaswamy who started discussing Jaina influences in Hinduism came up with an amazing hypothesis—could Jainism and Saivism have a common origin? We accept that the common beliefs which he brings out between these two religions are rather startling. Both religions consider Mount Kailas as sacred. Both consider Sivaratri a sacred day and celebrate. Both consider Dipavali sacred and celebrate. Considerable number of attributes to Siva and Jina are common. Though in each case,

the Saivites and the Jainas give different interpretations, the commonness cannot be just ignored. But no other scholar seems to have taken up this idea for discussion. But a recent article in Mukkudai shows that these beliefs and practices are developments in Tamilnadu Jainism through Hindi influences.²¹

S.R. Sharma (1938) has raised some pertinent points on Tamilnadu Jainism.²² He has mentioned that caste had entered into the Jaina community. Probably except for Muslims, influence of caste is traceable in all religious communities in India. In Mukkudai, K.P. Aravanan points out that to a small extent, caste system has entered into the Jaina community but Jaina scriptures are totally opposed to caste system. Caste system has entered into Sri Lanka Buddhist society too though they have no untouchability.

S.R. Sharma has also mentioned the creation of a sisterhood of female ascetics against the Digambara traditions, the accepted form of Jainism in Tamilnadu. The Digambara Jainism

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21. He also makes the following observation: "It has been suggested that Jginism survived in India, whereas Buddhism perished, because the former sect took better care of its layfolk. The Jaina monks, perhaps paid greater attention to the laymen than did the Buddhists, and in Jainism, the laymen was a definite member of the Order, encouraged to undertake periodical retreats and to live as far as possible the life of the monks for specific periods".

We are unable to comment on this point but we wonder whether he is referring to a weakness of Buddhism in India only as Buddhism survived well in many other countries.

Lakshmi Narayan - Jains of South India, Mukkudai, February, 1977, Courtesy of the Times of India, January 16, 1977.

She says, "Their festivals are a peculiar mixture of Hinduism and Jainism".

22. Sharma, S.R. - Some Aspects of the History of Jainism in South India, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1938, p. 114.

denied moksa to females. The females have to be born as males, then become monks and then attain moksa.²³ Venkadaswamy has an appendix explaining this position but in the body of the work, he has praised Jainism for giving equality to women and for giving education to them. Probably, he has not noticed this contradiction. In fact, Mukkudai even now carried articles advocating both positions.²⁴ It is difficult to explain why this change occurred. Cilappatikāram portrays Kavuntiyāṭikāḷ, a female Jaina ascetic as an important character very well versed in Jaina principles. Cilappatikāram also refers to Yakshi worship by Mātavi in Madurai. P.B. Desai points out that Yakshi worship, giving Yakshi an importance similar to Mother Goddess, is a peculiarity of South Indian Jainism.²⁵ The sociological condition of Tamilnadu must have influenced the Digambara Jains to accommodate females and female principle very early in their activities in Tamilnadu.

V. Vedasalam seems to have for the first time spotted a point in the history of Tamilnadu Jainism. Earlier, many scholars have made a vague reference that the Cola Emperors were very tolerant and they patronised all religions including Jainism and thus were responsible for flowering of Jaina literary activity during the Cōḷa period. Basing himself on epigraphical and other archaeological evidences, he maintains that there was a revival of Jainism from late eighth century.²⁶ Epigraphical evidences are available to show that the Pallavas and the

23. Appandai Jain, Eramalur, A —Peṇkaḷ Mukti piṇa Muṭiyuma?, *Mukkudai*, June, 1978.

24. Thavamany Thanyakumar—Caṅgam pōṟṟiya peṇ kalvi, *Mukkudai*, July, 1975.

25. Desai, P.B. —Jainism in South India and some Jaina Epigraphs.

26. Vedasalam, V. — Kaḷukumalai Camappaḷḷi, Kalvetṭu, Government of Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology.

It is very unfortunate that these issues of Kalvetṭu don't carry the years according to the International Calender. The years of issue of the Journal have been

Pandyas have started patronising Jainism and the Cōla Emperors followed them in that patronage. So, it is too simplistic a notion of history to accuse the Pallavas or the Colas in their entirety as being responsible for the destruction of Jaina religion in Tamilnadu. It is true that the Cōlas identified themselves with Saivism throughout their history and that a number of cruelties against Jainism by the Cōlas had been recorded by Cēkkiār. But they seem to have made amends in the Cōla period as a number of epigraphs testify. It is again an emotional reaction to say that one cannot trust the Cōla spigraphs.²⁷ Small Jaina communities cannot have survived in Tanjore, Kumbakonam, and Tiruchi if the Cōlas were such Saiva fanatics.²⁸

S. Thanyakumar has published an article on 'Jaina influence on Tamils' in 1978.²⁹ On the first three matters which he mentions—vegetarianism, stopping of animal sacrifices in the name of religion and some social customs like avoiding hot discussions and hilarious rivalry at the time of eating and avoiding taking food after sunset among some Tinnevely Saivites—we believe that there won't be much controversy now. Though vegetarian food is now popularly referred to as Saiva food, there is no evidence that early Saivism gave such importance to vegetarianism; being a vegetarian is not a requisite for a Saivite at any

given in the traditional Tamilicised Sanskrit loans. Probably they expect scholars who want to quote this Journal in publications to do some research in converting them to international calendar years.

27. Pillai, Suresh B., made this observation at discussion time of the above lecture.
28. Lakshmi Narayan (1977).
Jains in Thanjavur call themselves Mudaliyars and in Kumbakonam call themselves Chettiyar. She also gives further information that Jains in North and South Arcots call themselves Nainar and in Kanchipuram call themselves Iyer.
29. Thanyakumar, S.—Jaina Influence on Tamils, Mukkudai, March, 1978, pp. 25-27.

time. A Jaina cannot give up vegetarianism; if he does, he gives up Jainism too. It was against animal sacrifice that religions like Jainism and Buddhism first raised their protest and then continued to fight they came into severe conflict with the Vedic religion on this point. Long after the Brahmins gave up animal sacrifice, the custom of propitiating village deities by animal sacrifice continued and this custom ceased among Hindus in Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka very recently. Among social customs, the first one is widely prevalent even among Sri Lanka Tamil Hindus.

Among the three other points mentioned by Thanyakumar, the Karma theory mentioned by Uṛaiyūr Mutukappan Cattanār has been shown to be more appropriate to the Ājivikas. The belief in Karma is deeply imbedded in the Hindu society but it is difficult to assert boldly that it was due to Jain influence as all Indian religions stress Karma more or less. It is an interesting observation that the broad and tolerant outlook of the Tamils to other religions was due to syadvada or anekantavada of the Jains. The only ancient Indian religion which advocated the possibility of many facets in truth was Jainism. Curiously enough, this attitude to other religions was first proclaimed in Tamil literature by Appar who was a convert from Jainism to Saivism. Like vegetarianism, this approach also came to be identified with Saivism later. Probably it is this influence that was mainly responsible for the foundation of the Church of South India, by many protestant Christian Missions who maintain unity in diversity. Jainism preached that a layman should set a limit to his earnings. If he earns more, he should spend it in four kinds of gifts like food, asylum, medicine and education. The society must have gained considerably by the efforts of pious Jaina laymen. But it is difficult to say how this could have worked in practice. We understand that even Muslims are enjoined to make such gifts, especially during Ramzan. From our knowledge of the conditions in Sri Lanka, this does not seem to bring in levelling up in society. Some of the richest

people in Sri Lanka are Muslims while the vast majority of Muslims there seem to be very poor.

Thanyakumar goes on to say that the Jains provided education without distinctions of caste or sex. According to him, equality of women to education was first established by Jains and that there are many inscriptional evidences that support this. The Jaina women were well versed in scripture and other fields. Jaina nuns conducted schools and colleges exclusively for women.³⁰ They are the first to introduce the system of addressing a literary work to women. Aravaanan (1974) shows that this practice started first in Jaina Kannada literature and followed up later in Jaina Tamil literature.³¹ Why the Jaina ascetics should address women had been raised as a criticism to which Thanyakumar answers that this shows the concern of Jains towards education of Tamil women. He also refers to initiation to religious life by upadesha as equally performed for both men and women. On this matter, we have to accept these

30. South Indian Inscriptions, Volume III, No. 92 is usually quoted for this purpose. This inscription of the reign of Aditya I refers to a quarrel between four hundred nuns of Mātēvi Ārantimangalam paḷḷi at Vedāl of North Arcot and five hundred female disciples of Kanagavirakkuratti. As Kanagavirakkuratti was the daughter and the disciple of Guṇakīrttibhaṭṭarar, the followers of the latter are said to have looked after the female disciples of the former.

31. Aravaanan (1974), p. 226.

He refers to Nagavarma's Kannada Grammatical work 'Santōmputi' of 990 A.D. Nagavarma claimed to be teaching his wife. Aravaanan also refers to Guṇakāḍḍi-kiyam in Kannada as a metrical work addressing women as preceding Yaṭṭaruṅkalakkārikai in Tamil. Aravaanan also quotes from M. Arunachalam his satirical comment that Jaina ascetics who always preach giving up this worldly life and who always detide women have probably the licence to address women like that.

Arunasalam, M.—*Tamil Ilakkiya Varalaru*, 11th century 1971, pp. 121-122.

assertions within a certain limit. Here, we have to look into not only what happened in Tamilnadu but also into the attitude of the Jaina scriptures to women and also into the attitude of North Indian Jainism towards women. We have to admit that the general attitude was unfavourable. Probably to encourage asceticism among men and to encourage segregation of sexes, Jainism has portrayed women in unfavourable light especially in the didactic literature of the Post-Sangam Age.

Thanyakumar also alludes to patronage of fine arts and architecture by Jains and concludes that this influenced and encouraged Tamils to develop these arts. According to him, there are many Jaina Tamil works that speak in length about these. T.S. Sripal also mentions this and at the end of his book (1975), he gives a list of such books, besides other Jaina books. For one thing, it is not clear on what evidence, T.S. Sripal is talking all the works of music and dance as Jaina creations. Secondly, *Ēlāti*, one of the didactic works composed by a Jaina in the Post-Sangam Age condemns *nāṭakam* (dance/drama) wholesale. Many writers have commented that Jainism was opposed to music and drama because they kindle emotions. It is true that music occupies an important place in Jaina epics but sex too occupies an important an important place there. A.L. Basham also wonders how Jaina ascetics, without losing their piety, have composed so much secular literature.³² This ques-

32. Basham, A.L. (1959), p. 289.

"Some monks turned their attention to secular literature and other branches of learning, apparently without losing their piety. One of the last great poets in Sanskrit, Nayachandra, of the fourteenth century, was a Jaina monk, as was Mallinatha, the author of the standard commentary of Kalidasa. We owe much to the Jaina monks' love of literature. To copy a manuscript, even a secular one, was considered a work of great religious merit, and thus the old Jaina monasteries of Western India have preserved many rare and otherwise unknown texts, some of which have still to be published, and many of which are of non-Jaina origin". Considering this point, it is quite possible

tion seems to have been raised even in the time of Tiruttakkatēvar, the author of *Civakacintāmaṇi*.³³

T.S. Sripal (1975) gives a list of Hindu temples which had been formerly Jaina temples. Venkadaswamy (1954) also refers to this but he says that Kanchi Kamakshi temple was formerly a Buddhist Tara temple. We believe that T.S. Sripal assigns all temples with unusual architectural features as converted structures from Jainism. We are not in a position to agree to disagree with Sripal on each individual case. But we agree that such conversions must have taken place in quite a number of cases. This is in conformity with international religions history. When there is wholesale conversions of population to another religion, it is very rarely that places of significance to the former religion were completely abandoned or destroyed. Some of the shrines also undergo conversion. The people newly converted also like to worship the former shrine in the new way. K.V. Raman illustrates this point as follows:—³⁴ 'Nedunjadayan Parantaka was a great devotee of Visnu and his minister Madhurakavi excavated a stone cave temple for Narasimha at Anaimalai in the same hill in which the Jains had their resorts. This was symbolic of the triumph of Hinduism over the heterodox religions. An inscription of the seventh century recently dis-

that Tamil has been able to preserve so much of classical and medieval texts because of the strong hold that Jainism had in Tamilnadu. Probably because Buddhism and Hinduism had not been so favourable, Sinhalese and Tamil in Sri Lanka have not preserved very much of their old literature.

33. There is a tradition that when Tiruttakkatēvar presented his *Civakacintāmaṇi* or Book of Marriages before other scholars for acceptance, a doubt was raised whether an author of such a work could be a real Jaina monk. He had to compose *Nariviruttam*, a work on impermanence, to show the scholars that he was very much attached to Jaina beliefs.
34. Raman, K.V.— *Some Aspects of Pandyan History in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, University of Madras, 1972, p. 70,

covered at Malayadikurichi by Sri K.R. Srinivasan makes a pointed reference to the conversion of a Jaina cave temple into a Saiva one. According to him, temple movement of Hinduism took two forms either converting the existing Jain caves into Saiva ones or excavating new cave temples. The words used for conversion were *tiruttuvitta*, *Putukki*, etc., Similarly the inscription of 773 A.D. Tirupparankunram cave also seems to make a veiled reference to conversion of the existing Jain temple for the Saivite one. It states that Sattan Ganapati re-appropriated the cave '*tiruttuvittatu tirukkōyilum Sri taṣākamum*'. The term "*tiruttuvitta*" has rightly been taken as "remodelled", "corrected", "reformed" or "converted".

M. Arunasalam seems to have made very provocative statements about Tamilnadu Jains as follows. —³⁵ "The Jains were complete strangers to Tamilnadu; strangers not only in religion but complete strangers by race, culture and language. If the Jains could formulate such fine, accurate and long existing Tamil grammar, it should be investigated whether they were strangers to Tamil". We concur with Aravaanan's (1974) complete refutation of this point. Arunaalam is quoted by Sripal as saying, "In course of time, Jainism spread towards the South and in about five hundred years reached Tamilnadu. During the next five hundred years, it spread to Pandya and Pallava territories and began to obstruct other theistic religions. Saints like Appar and Campantar appeared, put down the crooked activities of the Jainas and established Saivism". Sripal questions this statement with special reference to 'obstruct' and 'crooked activities'. We agree with Sripal that this statement is completely unacceptable but we cannot accept all the implications of Sripal.

Ekambaranathan (1979) has brought out fifteen essays under the title '*Kalvēṭṭil Camaṇam*'. This book adopts an

35. Arunasalam M., *Tamil Ilakkiya Varalāru, 13th Century*, Madras, 1970, p. 362.

archaeologist's approach to the study of Jainism in Tamilnadu. The second essay on poems in inscriptions is very interesting. He has collected a number of poems from Jaina Tamil inscriptions from different places and published seven good poems with his comments. This itself is evidence for Jaines, cultivating Tamil literary talents. His essay on endowments to Jaina shrines is very revealing in that the Jaines who suffered at the hands of Hindu revival tried to remodel their worship on the pattern of worship offered in the Hindu temples. His essay on Yakshi worship in Jainism affirms that Korravai of ancient times might have been the basis for one Yakshi. Especially because Yakshi worship on a prominent scale was peculiar to the South, we have to postulate Korravai developing into Yakshi on much stronger terms.

Some of the observations made by K.V. Soundara Rajan (1978) seem to sum up in excellent language, the influence of Jainism in Tamilnadu. They are as follows³⁶: "——— but the earlier period of the propagation of Jain way of life into Tamilnadu had been significant for the shading of the social philosophy of the indigenous Tamil speaking communities, resulting in a very honoured and crucial place for Jainism in the Tamil language and culture. ———by the early medieval times, it was not possible to separate Hindu secular literature from the Jain owing to the fundamental and harmonious nature of the contributions made by Jains in the region.———Undoubtedly the Pandyan country saw the most widespread activity and cultural evidence for their religious creations in the form of cave temples, paintings, bas-reliefs, loose sculpture, etc.———Jainism had fully merged itself with the life-stream of the Tamils and became a vital part of it. In the realms of art, it left very majestic and extensive evidence of the intricacies of its iconographic trends, as the monuments at Sittannavasal, Jina Kanchi, Tirumalai, Kalugumalai, etc., testify. On the architectural side, however, there was a practically common grammar and usage,

36. Soundara Rajan, K.V., *Art of South India, Tamilnadu and Kerala*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 28-30.

falling within what could be adequately called as the southern Virmana order.—— The early centres are equally noted for the mural paintings of themes like the Samavasarana lake, etc., and displayed excellent examples of the true fresco process, which seems to have developed mainly in the South——”.

Going through peculiar forms in language, place names and personal names recorded in Jaina Tamil epigraphs, a Jaina Tamil dialect of Tamil could be postulated. The Pallankovil Copper Plates have peculiar forms like māṇakkiccikaḷ (instead of māṇavi or māṇakki ‘female disciple’), nālattonṇu (instead of nālil onṇu ‘one-fourth’), sīmai (instead of Tamil ellai ‘boundary’ and forms like an aṭikaḷmār ‘male ascetics’ and peṇṇ-aṭikaḷmārs ‘female ascetics’. Some of the personal names met with in Jaina Tamil inscriptions are Tavattāḷaṇ, Tēvaṇ, Aṇattūḷaṇ Tēvaṇ and Paṭṭiṇikkuratti. Some of the place names are Kuṇṭikaittuṇai, Pīḷimaṭu, Aṇṇakattār Tiruttu and Avaiyam Pukkār Maṇai. There are exhortations like aṇam maṇavaṇka ‘don’t forget dharma’ and aṇam allatu illai ‘there is nothing but dharma’. These are reproduced in the inscriptions of the mercantile corporations of the ‘Five Hundred of the Thousand Directions’, even in Sri Lanka.³⁷ The Jains might have formed an important element within that mercantile corporation.

Along with Venkadaswamy’s book (1954) two other important works appeared in the fifties throwing much welcome light on Tamilnadu Jainism. P.B. Desai brought out his Jainism in South India and some Jaina Epigraphs. This takes South India in a broad sense and includes Maharashtra in addition on the four Southern States. Kovai Kilar published his Kongunadum Camanamum, dealing with Jainism in Kongu country. R Champakalakshmi was encouraged by those works to work on Jainism in South India, confining her work to Tamilnadu,

37. Veluppillai A., (Ed.)—Ceylon Tamil inscriptions, Part I and Part II, Kandy, 1971 and 1972.

for her M. Litt. Degree of the University of Madras.³⁸ For the purpose of our study, Tamilnadu can be taken to constitute four Mandalam:— Kongumandalam, Tondaimandalam, Colamandalam and Pandimandalam. We can go into epigraphical evidences, mandalam by mandalam.

Before proceeding to inscriptions of Kongumandalam, it is necessary to note that the Tamilnadu Jains were looking for a shrine outside as the principal seat of their religion and that Jaina Tamil inscriptions give a variety of information about Tamilnadu Jainism. The Jains of Tamil country continued to look upon Sravana Belgola as the principal seat of their religion. The hills of Sravana Belgola are full of epitaphs of a later date, recording the visits of monks and also lay worshippers from Tamilnadu. The fortunes of Jainism in Tamilnadu were closely linked with the history of the faith in Karnataka. The activities of some of the celebrated Jaina teachers and their achievements in the field of religion and philosophy not to speak of literature brought the Tamil land into close contact with Karnataka.³⁹ The most celebrated names of Jaina gurus in the Tamil country were Samantabhadra, Pujiyapada and Akalanka. The necessary resource for the spread of Jainism thus seems to have come from Karnataka. A Kannada record of the twelfth century from Samanar Hill, near Madurai, mentions the Jaina teachers, one of whom was Balachandradeva of Sravana Belgola. The connection of a Jain teacher from Karnataka with the Jain centre near Madurai should be noted. From Jaina Tamil epigraphs, we learn of the existence of Jaina monasteries, preceptors and their activities, places of Jaina worship and other important centres. They also record the construction of Jaina temples and endowments made to them bear evidence to the extension of royal patronage and popular support to the Jains in Tamilnadu.

38. Champakalakshmi, R.,—*Jainism in South India*, Unpublished M.₂Litt. Thesis, University of Madras, 1958.

39. Saletore, B.A.,—*Medieval Jainism*, pp. 223-224.

Among these four mandalams, Kongumandalam was the first to receive detailed coverage in book form from Kōvai Kīṭṭar. Compared to other parts of Tamilnadu, Venkadaswamy (1954) has written relatively little on Jaina sites in that mandalam. R. Champalakshmi (1973) has given good coverage in a recent paper.⁴⁰ There is epigraphical evidence to show that Jaina temples and mutts continued to function till 16th—17th centuries A.D. According to her, Jainism must have come to Tamilnadu through Kongunadu. Pugalur (now also called Pugaliyur) and Araccalur (now also called Araccalaiyur), two sites of ancient Tamil Brahmi inscriptions, which are assigned to Jaines by modern research are located in Kongu. According to her, the Jaina ascetics proceeded to Pandimandalam in the South and Tondaimandalam in the East. There are Jaina Tamil Brahmi inscriptions in Pandiamandalam from the third century B.C. and in Tondaimandalam from the third Century A.D.

After the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions, Vaṭṭeḷuttu Jaina inscriptions of ninth-tenth centuries are found in Aivarmalai in South West Kongu. Almost contemporaneous with them, Kannada and Sanskrit Jaina inscriptions of the Nolamba rulers were found in Dharmapuri District. About 10-12th centuries A.D., many Jaina inscriptions of the Kongu Colas were found in a site called Tingalur. Contemporaneous with them were inscriptions of the Gangas found at Vijayamangalam. Sites like Vijayamangalam had Jaina inscriptions of the Colas and Vijayanagar rulers also. Vijayamangalam seems to be the leading Jaina shrine in Kongu. Some portions of Kongu were under continuous Jaina rule from the third to the eleventh centuries A.D. Simmanandi, a Jaina monk, seems to have inspired two Ganga princes to found a kingdom to foster Jainism and thus was born Gangavadi. Jainism prospered most under their rule but it continued to receive patronage from later rulers also.

40. Champalakshmi, R., — *Camaṇam, Āyvuṭṭēn*, (Ed. Kodumudi Sanmugapprakatham, Kongu Publication, Madras, 1973.

Among the Jaina sites in Kongu, Vijayamangalam near Erode, now in Periyar District, was also known as Bastipuram. An inscription recording the *niṣḍikai* of Puḷiyappai, sister of Cāmundarāya, a general of Ganga ruler of the tenth century had been found there. It was he who was responsible for the huge Gōmaṭēswara statue of 57 feet in height at Sravana Belgola. From an inscription of Kulottunga II in 1163, we come to know that this shrine was called Vīrasangātapperumpalli. Many damaged Cōla inscriptions are discovered there. In 1412 A.D. during Harihara's reign, land grant was made to this temple according to an inscription. The Jaina temple at Tingalur, known as Chandrabasti, was dedicated to Puspananda the ninth tirttankara. An eleventh century Kongu Cōla inscription refers to the building of a Mukamandapa to this temple. This ruler Vikramacola had also the title Sinhalāntaka. Inscriptions of 892-93 A.D. of Mahendra, a Nolamba ruler, recording the building of a Jaina temple and making endowments at Dharmapuri (ancient Tagadur) had been found. On behalf of this temple, Mūlappalli, a village was handed over to Kanagasena Siddhanta bhatara, a disciple of Vijayasena Siddhanta bhatara. The Mariyamman Temple of Dharmapuri also bears an inscription of Mahendra of 898 A.D. recording an endowment to a Jaina temple. Ponggaḷakōṭṭavar, a Jaina monk, had been named in this record. An inscription of 12th century A.D. mentions a Jaina temple called Nagara Jinālayam at Mudikondan. At the slopes of Anaimalai Hills was a shrine Tirumūrttimalai with Jaina sculptures. An inscription of 1793 by Etulappa Nāyakkan shows that it was converted into a Hindu shrine. A marriage tax was imposed on Amaṇacamuttiram village for the maintenance of Amaṇēswara. These names themselves betray Jaina connection. Ayyampālayam (Aivarmalai) has been referred to in inscriptions as Tiru Ayiraimalai. An inscription of 870 A.D. of Pandya Varaguna refers to the renovation of Parsuanatha and Iyakki sculptures by Shantivīrakuravar, a disciple of Guṇavīrakuravadigal.

Jainism in Kongumandalam seems to have been associated with great monks and great Tamil scholars. Some of the Jaina

monks mentioned in these inscriptions are as follows:— Ajjanandi, Indrasena, Mallisenapperiyār, Parsva Bhatāra, Paṭṭinikuratti and Puvvaṇanti kuratti. Perunkatai, the first Jaina epic, was written by Konguvēḷir, assigned to Vijayamangalam. Aṭiyarkkunallār, the commentator of Cilappatikāram, has also been assigned to the same place. Gunavīra, the Jaina monk, mentioned in an inscription at Aivarmalai has been identified with the author of Neminatham by Pulavar Iracu. Pavaṇanti, the author of Nannūl is also claimed by Kongu.

Most of the Tamil Jains now live in Tondaimandalam. Within Tondaimandalam, most of them live in North Arcot district in Wandiwash, Arni and the surrounding areas. There are others in Kanchipuram of Chingleput District and Tindivanam in North Arcot District. K.V. Raman and V. Radhakrishnan have contributed papers on Jainism in Tondaimandalam.⁴¹ According to Raman, Jainism must have come to Tondaimandalam direct from Karnataka as Gangavadi of Southern Karnataka was bordering North Arcot of Tondaimandalam. He quotes inscriptions from Sravana Belgola to show that Smanthabhadra visited Kanchipuram frequently. According to him, Jaina paḷḷis in Tamilnadu were most attested in Tondaimandalam, especially in North Arcot. He reasons out that Jainism might have been very influential for a long time in that area probably because it was adjacent to Gangavadi where Jainism was predominant.

V. Radhakrishnan mentions many details. Simhanandi has composed Logavibhaga during the reign of Simhavarman, a

41. Raman, K.V., Jainism in Tondaimandalam, *Journal of the Institute of Traditional Cultures*, Madras.

This paper has been published again in Tamil as Tondaimandalattil Camaṇam in Tollyal Āyvuḱaḷ (K.V.Raman) Sekar Pathippakam, Madras (date not given).

Radhakrishnan, V. — Tondainaddil Camaṇam, Cenḱai Māvaiṭṭa Varalāṅṅukkaruttaraṅku, (Ed.) R. Nagaswamy, Varalāṅṅu ppāravai, Madras, 1978.

Pallava ruler. According to Pallankovil Copper plates, Simhavarman had granted sixteen and a half paṭṭis of land to Vajranandi as paṭṭicantam. Tirupparuttikkunṇam, adjacent to Kanchi and known as Jaina Kanchi was a centre of Jainism from the beginning of the Pallava period. Jinakanchi was one of the four leading educational centres of the Jinas. This was the abode of Jaina scholars like Chandrakīrtti, Mallisēna, Puspasēna and Anandavīravāmana. Mallisēna had written many books both in Sanskrit and Tamil. The Jain temple of Chandraprabha Tīrttankara which was founded by Nandivarman II at the beginning of the eighth century is still there with modifications. At the top of Ananthamangalam Hill, in Chingleput District, names like 'Reṭṭañemi aṭikaḷ' and 'Araṭṭar āṇa Nēmikaḷ' were inscribed. Adjoining these was an inscription of Parantaka cōḷa, so all these letters might belong to tenth century A.D. Place names like Ammaṇampākkam, Arukattuṇṇai and Attamaṇaṇcēmi betray Jaina connections.

The sculpture of 'Golden Yakshi', carved out during the 50th year of Nandivarman II at Pancapandava Hill of North Arcot District, is still available. This, identified by P.B. Desai, as 'Siddhayika', is the earliest extant Yaskhi sculpture in Tamilnadu. Mamandur preserves Jaina beds and a Tamil Brahmi inscription. The cave had been excavated by Rajagula, a Ganga ruler. At Tirumalai in the same district was sculptured a Yakshi along Bahubali, Varddamana and Parsvanatha. According to an inscription, these sculptures were made by Ariṣṭanemi bhatāra. During the reign of Parantaka cōla I, this same bhatāra has engraved the sculpture of a tīrttankara at Vilāppākkam. The temple of Kundavai Jinālayam was located in Tirumalai. Kundavai was responsible for a Neminatha sculpture, sixteen feet in height. During the reign of Rajendra I, Tirumalai was a paṭṭicantam. Place names like Jina Cintāmaṇi Nallur, Vīrasāgaraperumpaḷḷi and Paṭṭicantal betray Jaina connections.

There was a famous Jaina mutt at Patalipura in South Arcot. This name seems to be an adoption of Pataliputra of Bihar where Mahavira was preaching Jainism. Thirunatharkunru, near Chenji, was a Jaina shrine. There are inscriptions recording the *nisidikai* of Chandranandi and Ilayabhatara. An inscription of Parantakacōla I found in Sembai Village, near Paḷḷiccantal records land endowment for the maintenance of a tank belonging to Pālaiyūrnaddupperumpaḷḷi. An inscription of Kulottunga Cōla I from Tirunarunkondai records that Virasegara Kadavarayar has endowed some taxes for Nārpatteṇṇāyiram perumpaḷḷi. At Paḷḷiccantal of Tirukkoyilur taluq, there was a Jaina temple called Gandaradityapperumpaḷḷi. A number of other perumpaḷḷis like Vīrarājendrappapperumpaḷḷi, Gangasūrappapperumpaḷḷi and Vīrakeralapperumpaḷḷi are also mentioned in inscriptions.

Jainism remained influential in Mylapore till about the fifteenth century A.D. Both Vijayanagar rulers and a few Muslim rulers patronised this religion in Tondaimandalam. According to Mackenzie Manuscripts, Tamil Jains lived mostly in this mandalam where there were about one hundred and fifty Jaina shrines.

Jaina relics are relatively much less in Cōlamandalam than in the other three mandalams. Tanjore District, the heart of the Cōla mandalam, has no hills, the familiar abode of the Jainas. But Jaina Tamil inscriptions and other Tamil inscriptions referring to Jainas had been found. Venkadaswamy (1954) and Champalakshmi (1958) have mentioned various references. Inscriptions from the Tanjore District contain references to Jain temples, none of which, however, seems to have left traces of their former existence. References to Cātikulamāṇikkapperumpaḷḷi and Gangakulasuntharapperumpaḷḷi at Jananathapuram were found in an inscription of Kulottungacola III dated in about 1194 A.D. in the Airavatesvara temple at Maruttuvakkudi. An inscription of Aditya I from Thirunagesvaram in the Tanjore District registers a gift by the perunakarattār of Kumaramat-

tandapuram for the renovation of the gopura and tiruccuṟṟālai in the Milatudaiyarpalli of the village. In Kūtūr, there seems to have existed a Jain temple known as Kulottungacōḷapperumpalli to which a gift of land was made in the time of Kulottungacōḷa I. In Kumbakonam taluq, there was Gangasurapperumpalli and in Nagappattinam taluq, there was Sitralekaipperumpalli.

Some Jaina shrines from Tiruchi District also find mention. The name Tiruchi itself, derived from Tiruchirāppalli signifies that the hill in the city was an abode of Chira, a Jaina monk. The name of the monk had been inscribed on the rock. An inscription from Anpil village in Tiruchi taluq mentions Tiruvidaikkudi Amutamōḷipperumpalli. An inscription from Thiruccenthurai of the same taluq mentions Amaṅkudi. 'Kavirājapperumpalli' is mentioned in an inscription from Jambukesvarar temple in the city. At Cundakkappārai in Kuḷittalai taluq is a Jaina sculpture and two names Viramallaṅ and Sīyamitraṅ.

Pandimandalam can be considered the richest depository of Jaina relics. Pudukkoddai state will be included here even though it included portions of both Pandimandalam and Cōḷa-mandalam. A Manual of the Pudukkoddai State, Volume II, Part I gives information about Jaina vestiges. There are clear indications that the Jainas occupied natural caverns at Sittannavasal, Thenimalai, Nārttamalai and Āluruṭṭimalai. Two inscriptions of this State, dated between 7th-9th centuries A.D. from Thenimalai mention that Malayatuvaja lived there and the Chief Irukkuvel gave him a rent free avippuṅam and that Ceruvoṭṭi Utana made a sculpture of Mahavira tīrttankara. Two inscriptions from this state give the name Ālvār to the Jaina deity:- nāyaṅār Tirumāṅamalai Ālvār and Kallāṟruppalli perunaṅkiḷiccōḷapperumpalli-ālvārku.⁴² Jaina monks were

42. 202 of 1902 of Cīṟṟāmūr in South Arcot District refers to Cīṟṟāmūrt Tiruvārāmpalli-ālvār. There was a Jaina poet Avirōti Ālvār, the author of Tirunūṟṟantāti. The word ālvār is well known as the name of Vaisnava poet-saints. So, scholars who were not aware that this word belonged to Jainas also, postulated that Avirōti Ālvār was a convert from Vaisnavism to Jainism,

also given this name:- Tiruppaḷimalai Ālvār māṇākkar..... Ālvār. An inscription at Pommaimalaippārai mentions the endowment of Koṭṭamangalam village to Tiruppaḷimalaippaḷi. Centers of Jainism retained their importance till about 14th century A.D. The excavations at Tiruveṇṇāyil (modern cheṭṭi-paṭṭi) brought to light three Jain temples, one of which with a prasasti of Rajaraja I. Attached to the temples was a monastery called Ainnūṟuvapperumpaḷi built or endowed by Jayavira-pēriḷaiyan. A ninth century inscription in a cave at Sittannavasal refers to a Jain teacher of Madurai by name Īam Gautaman who made some renovations there, during the reign of Srimara Sri Vallabha. Jain temple there was known as 'Aṟivar kōyil'.

V. Vedaśalam gives lot of details about Jaina records in this mandalam.⁴³ Epigraphical evidences are available for Jaina shrines in Pandimandalam from Kurandi, Erukkankudi, Kovilangulam, and Anumantakkudi. Kurandi in Aruppukoddaḷ was associated with many Jaina monks and with many Jaina endowments. This shrine was referred to as Veṇṇunāṭṭuk Kuṟaṇṭi Tirukkāṭṭāmpaḷi or as Parāntakapparatam āyina Teṇvaṭṭaipperumpaḷi. Three inscriptions from the reign of Maranjadaḷayan had been found endowing fifty sheep each for each lamp to this temple. An inscription of Sri Mara Sr Vallabha refers to the Jaina shrine at Erukkankudi as 'Irappaikkudi Vaḷanakarū eṭuppitta Perumpaḷi'. An inscription of the 48th year of Kulottunga-cōḷa I records carving of Jaina images and sculptures and endowment of land to Kovilangulam, near Aruppukoddaḷ. An inscription of 1535 A.D. mentions Anumantakkudi as Jinendramangalam. Vikramadityavaragunai the Ay king had a rock cut Jaina temple made at Tiruccāraṭṭumalai (Citaral) in Kanyakumari District. Jainism seems to have been quite well of in Pandimandalam from the 8th to the 10th centuries A.D.

43. Vedaśalam, V., pandiyanaddil Camaṇa Camayam, *Kalvettu*.

There are epigraphical evidences that worship and endowments in Jaina temples approximated more and more to those of Hindu temples⁴⁴:— Ananthav[ra Adika] gifted 11 kacus for one lamp to Lord of Gunagiri of Uttamapalayam Jain temple; two kalams of paddy were gifted for a lamp to Lord of Ayiraimalai of Ayyampalayam; Santivirakkuravadiga[of Kaḷakam gifted 500 kanam pon for sacred food offerings to Parsvabhatara and Iyakki of Tiruvayirai. Paḷlicantams or land endowments to Jaina shrines are also frequently mentioned.

From Pandimandalam, Kaḷukumalai, near Kovilpatti, in Tinnevely District seems to have attracted the most attention. No other Jaina site in Tamilnadu has as many sculptures and as many inscriptions as Kaḷukumalai. Kaḷuku or the vulture, was a bird sacred to Jainism. We read a paper on Tamil inscriptions of this site at the Second International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies in Madras in 1968. A paper on history as gleaned from Kaḷukumalai has been published in Āyvukkōvai (1978).⁴⁵ V. Vedaśalam has published a paper on the Jain shrine at Kaḷukumalai in a recent issue of Kalvēṭṭu. Suresh B. Pillai has written on Kaḷukumalai, in Jaina_Hill series in Mukkudai in 1979.

Suresh B. Pillai has some provocative ideas on the history of Jainism in Tamilnadu.⁴⁶ He says that till the middle of the seventh century A.D., Jainism in Pandyan Kingdom was potent

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44. It is also customary in Tamilnadu Jain temples to have the puja conducted only by the Pujari in the sanctum, and not by the devotee himself as and when he desires so. Burning camphor and ringing of bells are also concomittant practices usual in this area—Soundara Rajan (1978).
 45. Govindarajanar, S., Kaḷukumalai tarum varalāṟu, Āyvukkōvai, I.P.T.A.M., Tenth Seminar, Coimbatore, 1978 also Virasikāmaṇic Camaṇarmalai, Mukkudai, November, 1978.
 46. Pillai, Suresh B., Kalukumalai, Jaina Hills-1, Mukkudai, July, 1979.

enought to present theology to the elite and the art to the laity, later overshadowed and destroyed by Saivism. We find no evidence for this. Jaina Siddhanta was taught at Kaḷukumalai about ninth century A.D. according to an inscription there. According to him, the Jainas might have come to Tamiṇadu first in the second century A.D. This will have many implications bringing forward the date of the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions and the Sangam Age. According to him, the watch sommit is an obligatory need in the important Jain hills, as the monks and Jains were political victims with the emergence of the Coḷas and the Saivite religion. We have overwhelming epigraphical evidences for Cola patronage of Jainism at least from the ninth century A.D.

The paper of S. Govindarajanar in *Āyvukkōvai* is full of errors and inaccuracies which we will not take up here. But he has made one point. People among the elite with titles like eṭṭi, ēṇāti and Kāviti became Jaina monks as seen in inscriptional phrases like 'Sri Kuṇṇṇi Kāviti Kāviti', 'Sṭaṇ kāviti ēṇāti kuntanan' and 'Kāviti Tavaṇ'. Even females had the title ēṇāti as seen in 'Ēṇāti Mākāṇakkuratti'.

Among the other papers, V. Vedasalam gives some additional information. Kaḷukumalai maintained contacts with Thirunarunkondai of Tondaimandalam and Thiruccaranattumalai of Kanyakumari District. Seventeen sculptures were made in memory of the deed. To look after this temple and its endowments, Pandya soldiers known as Tirumalaivirar and Parāntakavirar were assigned. Later Pandyas of the first Pandyan kingdom patronised Jainism. Larger Sinnamanur plates refer to numerous paḷḷiccantams endowed by the Pandya ruler, Maravarman Rajasimha. A. Veluppillai (1968) made a few points in his paper. A glance at these inscriptions is enough to show that the Jaina Votaries were not confined to one particular locality or district. The number of localities mentioned show that Jainism was widely prevalent in South

India and the mention of a number of donors from particular localities may indicate that Jainism had strongholds in those localities. Twenty place names and the number of gift from each place has been listed there. As usual, women showed keen interest in religious affairs and even though Digambara Jainism did not theoretically accept the eligibility of women for salvation, twenty women were expressly referred to as donors of sculptures. List was again given there. While Vedaśālam has translated 'Cārtti' as in memory of the dead, Veluppillai has translated them as 'on behalf of', a wider term.

VI

HISTORY OF TAMIL LANGUAGE

Tamil language has roughly about two thousand years of History. Though the first Tamil book was printed by the Christian missionaries before the end of the sixteenth century, it took some time for the printing press to be firmly established in Tamilnadu and till about the nineteenth century, books printed were almost exclusively of the Christian missionaries. The writing material in Tamilnadu consisted of dried palmyra leaves called *Olas* and *Stylus*. Palmyra *olas* could be preserved for many centuries in cold climate like that of Tibet or Europe. In Tamilnadu, these *Ola* manuscripts could at the maximum, last two or three centuries.

It is well known that Tamil has preserved literary documents of about two thousand years. But this statement should be modified to read that literary documents in Tamil exist for the past two thousand years. These documents exist because they were copied and recopied again and again periodically. This type of preservation will lead to errors and modifications, as can be easily guessed. But this was the only type of preservations of literary documents available in Tamilnadu.

We are all grateful to the pioneers who underwent so many difficulties to collect manuscripts, compare them, correct them and print what they considered to be the correct text. C.W. Damadarampillai, U.V. Swaminathaiyar and others have done yeoman service to classical and medieval Tamil. Textual criticism, the methods of arriving at the correct text, have developed in the West recently. Our pioneers had the enthusiasm and they had put hard work. But, textual criticism had not been well developed in their time and there is no reason to believe that they even kept in touch with what might have been available in this field in contemporary West. But in the conditions then existing, it is expecting too much from them.

Further, even when going through the introductions of these pioneers to their editions of classics, we come across references to the negligence of Tamil scholarship in the country, to the availability of very few manuscripts for certain texts and to the very poor state of preservation of some of the manuscripts. So, many Tamil classics of the Ancient and Medieval times have been edited and published in this background.

So, inscriptional Tamil is a more dependable source than literary Tamil as a source for the History of Ancient and Medieval times. It is true that inscriptions have sometimes been wrongly read. But the originals of inscriptions (as they were written, at the time they were written) and their estampages and sometimes their photographic plates are available even now for verification. But we don't have this facility in regard to literary documents.

Another point which we should note is that literature mainly preserved the literary dialect. It is true that the literary dialect of Tamil has undergone changes in course of time. But the rate of change was slow. Folk literature and language have exercised some influence in the Bakty poetry of the Pallava period. But up to sixteenth century at least, Tamil literary dialect has not undergone marked and significant changes. This state of affairs should not be interpreted to mean that Tamil language had not undergone marked changes in the period for it is an accepted fact now that every living language changes. The absence of marked changes in literary language could only mean that the literary language had become fossilised and spoken language could only penetrate it little by little. This fact also becomes evident from a reference to inscriptional Tamil. It should be noted that even inscriptions are not written entirely in spoken Tamil. A few inscriptions are written entirely in literary dialect. But most of the inscriptions have preserved spoken Tamil forms to a greater or lesser degree. So, inscriptional Tamil serves as a better source than literary Tamil for the History of Tamil Language.

For all neighbouring languages of Tamil—Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu and Sinhalese—inscriptional language is the only source for the early portion of their 'history of language'. Sri Lanka has inscriptions in a dialect of Prakrit, sometimes referred to as Sinhalese Prakrit or Old Sinhalese in Brahmi script, roughly contemporaneous with the Tamil Brahmi inscriptions. Except for Sigiri Graffiti (i.e., graffiti by visitors to the hill to view the famous frescoes) which had been dated on Palaeographical grounds, the earliest extant Sinhalese literature could be dated only in the twelfth century. There are inscriptions of Asoka both in Andhra Pradesh and in Karnataka. Some Telugu proper names started appearing in inscriptions from the second century B.C. Telugu inscriptions make their appearance from the fifth century A.D. The earliest extant Telugu literature is available from the eleventh century A.D. Kannada inscriptions make their appearance in the sixth century A.D. while the earliest extant Kannada literature is dated in the ninth century A.D.

There is a problem regarding Malayalam. Kerala, the land of Malayalam, was a part of Tamilnadu and actively participated in the production of Tamil literature from the Sangam Age. But Malayalam literature proper makes its appearance from the sixteenth century A.D. While inscriptions with characteristically Malayalam forms (these inscriptions almost look like Tamil inscriptions; these inscriptions also used the same Vaṭṭeḷuttu script of the Pandya inscriptions) begin to appear from the tenth century. For all the four languages surrounding Tamil, the early portion of their history of language has to be based on the language of inscriptions. But in Tamil, it is not very clear which source is earliest. The Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions, the Sangam literature and Tolkappiyam—there are still many protagonists advocating the theory that each of them is anterior to the other two. In Tamilnadu, many scholars still hold on to the theory that Tolkappiyam was the earliest. In Sri Lanka, many scholars hold on to the theory that Tolkappiyam was later than Sangam literature. The case of the

Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions is usually put forward by Historians and Archaeologists. Even if Tamil Brahmi inscriptions were accepted as the earliest source, there is very little material to work on. Unlike the standardised elegant language of Sangam literature, the language of the Brahmi inscriptions reflects a non-standardised stage. If Sangam literature and Tamil Brahmi inscriptions were to be taken as almost contemporary, Tamil Brahmi inscriptions should be taken to represent a dialect distinct from the dialect or the dialects of Sangam literary language.

Dr. Suresh B. Pillai, in the discussion on the previous lecture, raised an important point on the shortcomings in the survey and publication of epigraphical records. From his experience in exploration work throughout Tamilnadu for ten years, he claimed that outside Cōḷanatu, archaeological surveys to collect epigraphical records have not been properly conducted and many thousands may still await collection. We are not able to comment on this point. But we have to agree with him that of about twenty five thousand inscriptions, collected from Tamilnadu, only about five thousand have been published. The pace of progress is very slow and it is not known why they republish the published ones when there is such a big backlog. In the mean-time, thousands of inscriptions collected in the form of estampages get crumbled and unusable in course of time. Some of these records will be lost forever as building in which they are found may collapse and temples may get renovated without action being taken to preserve these records. We are aware of the working of the Office of the Government Epigraphist for India. It is a very small office. The number of staff officers is very small. Epigraphical assistants who were recruited on a small salary have no incentive to put on maximum work. The Government of India may have to spend many times of the present amount to expand the office and to revamp the administration if the pace of work were to quicken substantially.

The Government of Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology seemed to be on the right track when it started intensive surveys and publications of the inscriptions of Madras

City and Kanyakumari District. It does not seem to be pursuing the work on this line now. If the Central Government is unable to take action for some reason or other, the State Government should take urgent action. It should be explored whether a computer could be made to decipher the collected inscriptions. Otherwise, there is a real danger that many of them might be lost forever.

Inscriptional Studies in Tamil in the background of Dravidian

To have a better perspective of the study of inscriptional Tamil language, it is better to view it with a knowledge of such other studies in the other Dravidian languages also. Besides Sanskrit and Prakrit and, of course, Arabic, Persian and Urdu, exclusively used by later Muslim rulers of India, the only languages to have been used for inscriptions in India are Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam of the Dravidian family.

Two languages with vast amount of epigraphical material seem to be Tamil and Kannada. It has been reported that twenty five thousand inscriptions have been collected from Tamilnadu and that twenty thousand records have been collected from Karnataka. It is very doubtful whether other languages have such vast store house of epigraphical material. And curiously enough, the first serious systematic studies of inscriptional studies of the South began at the same time. A. N. Narasimhia worked on Kannada language inscriptions and K. Kanapathippillai worked on Tamil language inscriptions. The school of Oriental Studies of the University of London was the venue in which the two studies were carried on. Narasimhia worked on the language of the sixth and seventh century Kanarese inscriptions and submitted his thesis for the Doctorate in 1934.¹ Kanapathippillai worked on the language

1. Narasimhia, A.N., *A Grammar of the Oldest Kanarese Inscriptions (6th and 7th Centuries A.D.)*, Mysore, 1941.

of the Tamil Inscriptions of the seventh and eighth centuries and submitted his thesis for the same degree one year later.² Both of them had Turnour, an Indo-Aryan expert as supervisor. Some years ago, the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute in Poona brought out a Felicitation Volume in honour of Turnour. Narasimhia returned to Karnataka and worked as Principal of Maharaja's College. Kanapathippillai returned to Sri Lanka and joined the University College there as Lecturer in Tamil. This University College became University of Ceylon in 1943.

The foundation of the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute in Poona in 1939 is an event of great significance in advanced studies in India. It was there that importance of studies like epigraphical studies was first realised. Though Poona is in Maharashtra, the boundary of Karnataka comes very close to it. So, it is Kannada inscriptions again that become a subject for systematic study. G. S. Gai works on Historical Grammar of Old Kannada, based on Kannada inscriptions of eighth, ninth and tenth centuries A.D. He received 'advice and valuable help' from Narasimhia. Gai acknowledges Narasimhia's work as the model for his work. Though there is considerable difference in approach between Narasimhia and Gai, the latter, in a cultured manner, acknowledges his indebtedness to the former. Through Narasimhia, Gai was able to get a copy of Kanapathippillai's thesis. So, Gai acknowledges his gratitude to Kanapathippillai for permission to make full use of his thesis. Abbreviated as K.P., this thesis has been profusely quoted in comparative studies of G.S. Gai.³

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2. Kanapathippillai, K., A Study of the Language of the Tamil inscriptions of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., unpublished thesis, University of London, London, 1935.
 3. Gai, G.S., Historical Grammar of Old Kannada inscriptions of 8th, 9th and 10th centuries A.D., Poona, 1946.

The Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute has also produced another Doctorate thesis—this time on early Malayalam inscriptions. A. Chandra Sekhar has worked on evolution of Malayalam language, based upon inscriptions from tenth to thirteenth centuries A.D. His approach was not exactly that of G.S. Gai but he has also generous enough to acknowledge Gai's work as his model. So, Narasimhia's thesis had served as the model or basis for two other doctoral thesis in Dravidian languages. Sekhar's work was published in 1953.⁴

There is no sign that Tamilnadu scholars were awake to realise the importance of these studies even after the publication of three theses:—two on Kannada and one on Malayalam. In 1954, Kamil Zvelebil, the Dravidologist from Czecho-slovakia published an article on the importance of Tamil epigraphy in the journal of Tamil culture, edited by Rev. Fr.X.S. Thani Nayakam, a Sri Lankan and published from Madras.⁵

Slowly, the importance of Tamil epigraphical studies in relation to language seems to have dawned on Professor T. P. Meenakshisundaram. He should be given credit for having taken up the entire field of Tamil epigraphy and assigning, to various research scholars, portions of it, for language studies. The University of Madras produced the first M. Litt. thesis on a study of the language of the Tamil inscriptions from the Seventh century, up to the middle of the eleventh century.⁶ Mrs. V. Jayakumari submitted this thesis in 1959, almost a quarter century after Kanapathippillai submitted his thesis in London in 1935.

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4. Sekhar, A.C., *Evolution of Malayalam (inscriptions of 10th to 13th centuries A D.)* Poona, 1953,
 5. Zvelebil, Kamil., *The Importance of Tamil Epigraphy, Tamil Culture*, III, 3-4, Madras, 1954.
 6. Jayakumari, Mrs. V., *A Study of the Language of Tamil Inscriptions from 7th century A.D., upto the middle of the eleventh century A.D.*, Unpublished M. Litt., thesis, University of Madras, 1959.

T.P. Meenakshisundaram went to Annamalai University as Professor of Linguistics and carried on much useful work there. In fact, his hard and enthusiastic work in Annamalai University earned for that University the Centre of Advanced Study in Linguistics. Coming to his contributions for epigraphical studies, research scholars continued to work under his supervision and produced two M. Litt. thesis. Kumari S. Baghirathi worked on the language of the Tamil inscriptions of the following two centuries and submitted her thesis in 1961.⁷ Kumari S. Kausalya worked on the language of Tamil inscriptions and submitted her thesis in 1962.⁸ Though this last thesis claimed to be working on the language, the word index alone has become a bulky volume. The candidate has got this word index typed, submitted it under the title 'language of inscriptions', and obtained her Degree of M. Litt. Noting the unsuitability of the title, Professor S.V. Shanmugam has referred to this thesis as 'The word index of the inscriptions of 1250-1350' in some of his later publications. S. V. Shanmugam himself has selected Tamil inscriptions from the middle of the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century, the last portion of Tamil epigraphy, according to the scheme of T. P. Meenakshisundaram. But the later left Annamalai University to become the first Vice-Chancellor of Madurai University, S.V. Shanmugam had some years of teaching experience as lecturer in C.A.S. in Linguistics and able guidance from Prof. S. Agesthalingom and other scholars. So, his Doctoral thesis has come up with many good features.⁹

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7. Baghirathi, Kumari, S., *The Language of the Tamil Inscriptions: 1050 to 1250 A.D.*, unpublished M. Litt. thesis, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, 1961.
 8. Kausalya, Kumari, S., *The Language of the Tamil Inscriptions: 1250-1350 A.D.*, unpublished M. Litt. thesis, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, 1962.
 9. Shanmugam, S.V., *The Language of the Tamil inscriptions from the middle of 14th century upto 17th century*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar, 1968.

Before S. V. Shanmugam submitted his thesis, he had a fine opportunity to present his ideas on epigraphy and Tamil linguistics in the Seminar on Inscriptions, 1966, organised by the Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology.¹⁰ We were gratified to note that he had mentioned K. Kanapathippillai as the pioneer in the study of the language of Tamil inscriptions. Though this is only his due recognition, it did not come to him easily.

We made the next significant contributions in this field. We worked on the language of Tamil inscriptions of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya and Maravarman Kulasegara under the Supervision of Professor K. Kanapathippillai and submitted our Doctoral thesis to the University of Ceylon in 1962.¹¹ It was, of course, modelled on Kanapathippillai's thesis. This was later published.¹² We had been working on the language of Tamil inscriptions of the period 800 to 920 A.D. under the supervision of Professor T. Burrow and submitted the second Doctoral thesis to the University of Oxford in 1964.¹³ Kanapathippillai's approach was commended by T. Burrow who suggested to me to base my thesis on the same model. We also edited Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions in two parts, Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions, Part I, and Part II in 1971 and 1972 and in those parts, we have commented on the language of those inscriptions. We have also published a book in Tamil, *Cācānamum Tamilum* in which and chapter deals with the language of Tamil inscriptions.

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10. R. Nagaswamy (Ed.), - *Seminar on Tamil Inscriptions, 1966*, Madras, 1968.
 11. Veluppillai, A., *A Study of the Language of Tamil inscriptions of the reigns of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya and Maravarman Kulasekara*, thesis, University of Ceylon, Paradeniya, 1962.
 12. Veluppillai, A., *The Pandya Inscriptions - A Language Study*, Jaffna Archaeological Society, 1972.
 13. Veluppillai, A., *A Study of the Language of Tamil inscriptions of the period 800-920 A.D.*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford, 1964.

The Dravidian Linguistics Association of India have given us a good opportunity to make a significant contribution in this field. We were invited as Senior Fellow of the Dravidian Linguistic Association for the year 1973-74 and the title of the study of the dialects in inscriptional Tamil was suggested to us. We worked on regional, social and stylistic dialects in inscriptional Tamil for the period 500 A.D. to 1200 A.D. The last four hundred years of this period, we covered century by century also. This has been published.¹⁴ We are grateful to Professor V.I. Subramaniam and the Dravidian Linguistics Association for giving us this opportunity.

In 1969, another doctoral thesis on the Tamil inscriptions of the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries A.D. appeared.¹⁵ R. Panneerselvam was the author of this thesis and he worked under professor V.I. Subramaniam. This is a good thesis and we made full use of it when we were working on the D.L.A. project. Panneerselvam has also worked with the Scandinavian Institute of Asian studies when they were attempting decipherment of Indus Valley inscriptions. A question can be raised why Panneerselvam has to work again on early period of Tamil inscriptions when Kanapathippillai (1935) and Jayakumari (1959) had already worked on the same period. As none of the earlier works had been published and as Professor V.I. Subramaniam was very interested at that time in working out the History of Tamil language, he might have suggested this have title to Panneerselvam.

The Dravidian Linguistics Association has decided to publish the thesis of Panneerselvam. We welcome the decision as this book will serve as one of the success for those working on history of Tamil language and also as a model for language

14. Veluppillai, A., *A Study of the Dialects of Inscriptional Tamil*, Dravidian Linguistics Association, Trivandrum, 1976.

15. Panneerselvam, R., *Tamil Inscriptions of the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries, A.D.*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1969.

description of records like inscriptions. Kanapathippillai's thesis was unpublished. Professor Kanapathippillai is no more and the work cannot be published without revision. It is already forty five years since he submitted his thesis and presentation will have to be modified in a few places. When he presented his thesis, the published inscriptions are a few. After that time, a number of new inscriptions of the same period have been published. It is not good to bring out a publication now, leaving out all the newly published inscriptions.

No one, of course, will recommend Jayakumari's thesis for publication. The thesis is in two volumes.¹⁶ For the second part of the thesis, there is no transliteration proper, i.e., diacritical marks are missing. Not that she is following a system of transliteration without diacritical marks. She seems to follow the Madras Lexicon System, but the typist has not cared to type the diacritical marks and she has not cared to correct them at least in the copy kept at the library of Madras University. About a quarter century before Jayakumari, Kanapathippillai was able to collect thirty seven inscriptions for study in London. For the period covered by Kanapathippillai's thesis, Jayakumari could collect much less from Madras. So, Jayakumari's thesis also suffers from the defect of having worked on less material for study of the early period. It should be admitted that it is quite difficult to select inscriptions in a chronological order from the present available publications of Tamil inscriptions. A very good sense of South Indian History of basically necessary

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16. We must make a comment here about *some* of the Ph.D. and M. Litt thesis which we have consulted in Tamilnadu. We should emphasise the word 'some' as otherwise there can be misunderstanding. The requirements of a thesis are not necessarily two volumes of typed material going over six hundred pages and hard work done during two or three years on certain aspects of a very wide field. The thesis has to be a through study. If the study is not thorough, the thesis should be rejected. So, it is always advisable to limit the subject. Then only, a thorough study will be possible,

to select and arrange inscriptions. Mrs. Jayakumari seems to have had a very poor sense of history. Long after Prof. K.A. Nilakanda Sastri published two editions of the *Cōlas* and the *History of South India*, Jayakumari makes blunders in collecting inscriptions centurywise. Besides leaving out many published epigraphs, she assigns eleventh century inscriptions to tenth century, as for examples, see her numbers 88, 90, 92 and 93. Her number 89 actually belongs to the twelfth century but she has included that also as a tenth century inscription.

Mrs. Jayakumari also made misuse of the thesis of Kana-pathippillai. T.P. Meenakshisundaran is one of the few Indian scholars who has mentioned contacts with Sri Lanka for a long time; he is also the first South Indian to be awarded an Honorary D. Litt. Degree by the University of Sri Lanka in 1979. So, he was able to obtain a copy of Kanapathippillai's thesis and handed it over to Mrs. Jayakumari. She was probably not aware that she should recognise Kanapathippillai's work as a pioneer study. Instead, she has contributed a chapter no criticism of Kanapathippillai's work and most of the criticisms appear quite silly as she could comprehend his work.¹⁷

Kumari S. Bhagirathi's thesis, we have to admit, was an improvement in all respects. She Says at one place, 'This study is not concerned..... with criticism of Kanapathippillai by Jayakumari'. Kumari S. Kausalya's thesis, as we have seen earlier, is no thesis at all on the language of the inscriptions. In this context, the decision of the D.L.A. to publish Panneerselvam's thesis has to be welcomed.

Some other notable contributions in Dravidian language epigraphical studies have to be mentioned. Kamil Zvelebil has published a booklet as *Tamil in 550 A.D.* in 1964, basing his analysis on Pallankovil copper plate inscription which has been

17. Professor Kanapathippillai told me that even his thesis copy was not returned. It was reported lost.

edited by T.N. Subramaniam. He has also published a paper on the Brahmi Hybrid Tamil Inscriptions in 1966 but he based his analysis on the readings of Tamilnadu cave inscription by K.V. Subramaniya Ayyar. K. Mahadeva Sastri has worked on Historical Grammar of Telugu for his D. Litt. degree and published his work in 1968.¹⁸ Professor S. Agesthialingom and S.V. Shanmugam have utilised the word index of Kumari S. Kausalya to bring out a publication on the language of Tamil inscriptions of the period covered by her.¹⁹ There is also another publication in Linguistics from Annamalai University, Howda Kannada of K. Kushalappa Gowda. This thesis studies the Kannada language of certain districts of Karnataka, of the period, subsequent to that covered by G.S. Gai.

Professor T.P. Meenakshisundaram is a pioneer in writing a History of Tamil language on modern lines and in properly intergating inscriptional Tamil language studies in a comprehensive history of that language.²⁰ His visiting Professorship at the University of Chicago gave him a fine opportunity to bring out in lecture from both a History of Tamil Language and a History of Tamil literature. A number of publications on history of Tamil literature are available. But nobody has ventured on a proper history of Tamil language. When discussing sources for his work, he had given proper weightage to inscriptions. He has a chapter on the language of the cave inscriptions but unfortunately, it was based on the readings of K.V. Subramaniya Ayyar. For the study of the language of the Pallava and the Cola periods, he has relied on Tamil epigraphical material only.

18. Mahadeva Sastri, K., *Historical Grammar of Telugu*, (200 B C., 1000 A.D.), Sri Venkateswara University, 1969.

19. Agesthialingom, S. and Shanmugam, S.V., *Language of Tamil inscriptions 1250-1350 A.D.*, Annamalai University Publications in Linguistics, Annamalaiagar, 1971.

20. Meenakshisundaram, T.P., *History of Tamil Language*, Poona, 1965.

Some problems on Working on Language of Inscriptions, Especially that of Tamil

There are a number of difficulties in working on inscriptional Tamil language. A few of them have been pointed out in publications referred to above, in connection with working on inscriptions of other languages also. Dr. K. Nachimuthu who had reviewed our publication on dialects in inscriptional Tamil, have referred to some other difficulties.²¹

A.C. Sekhar (1953) makes the following comment:-

"The selection of the inscriptions has been made chiefly on the strength of the opinions expressed by scholars regarding their dates, I have not however taken such opinions on trust but have examined them carefully, particularly from the linguistic point of view before selecting the inscriptions. As a result of such examination, I have found it necessary to reject several inscriptions as probably belonging to a much later date than their editors have supposed". This problem in there regarding Tamil inscriptions also as a large number of them cannot be dated with certainty. There are sometimes two or three rulers having the same name and living within a hundred years or so. Sometimes, palaeographical considerations are stretched to date them but they cannot be expected to be accurate.

G.S. Gai (1946) makes the following observation:

"As the texts and transliterations sometime differ from each other and as both of them are sometimes faulty, it becomes difficult for the student of a language to rely upon these speech forms and arrive at conclusion". Mistakes could occur at various stages. The epigraphist who read the inscription might have made mistakes. Mistakes could also occur at the stage of

21. Nachimuthu, K., (Review), Study of the Dialects in Inscriptional Tamil, *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics*, Vol. VII, No. 1, Trivandrum, 1978, pp. 164-179.

transliteration. Most of the epigraphists don't have a good linguistic background and they are not aware of the need for exact transliteration for linguistic analysis. Mistakes also could occur at proof stage during printing. The publication of photographic plates will be of some help. But recent editions of Tamil inscriptions have only the Tamil text no transliteration and no plate. This is done for reasons of economy but this is very unsatisfactory. The printed version of the publication has to be accepted on its face value. Scholars who are proficient in Tamil and especially inscriptional Tamil only can use these publications. The government should be persuaded to release ample funds to bring out these publications in a proper form.

S.V. Shanmugam's view (1966) is as follows:- "The publication of inscriptions in Roman script (for instance in *Epigraphia Indica* and in other journals) need revision from the linguistic point of view. The transliteration system is sometimes inconsistent and also misleading and it gives a wrong picture to linguists looking into these records. The Tamil script is transliterated as in the initial position and in the intervocal position.—— The stop sounds are transcribed as voiced ones in the intervocal position and after nasals, and as voiceless ones in the initial position and in gemination. But in the case of the script ஃஃ, transliteration used is such. The transcription is misleading since it indicates the phonetic value of a geminated aspirate palatal sound.—— That the transliteration is not consistent is seen in the following example: the inscription edited in *Epigraphia Indica*, XXI, 17 which is also published in Tamil in South Indian inscriptions XVII". This situation is very much true. For our first doctoral thesis, we selected only those which are available in Tamil texts. For our second thesis as well as for my work on the study of dialects in inscriptional Tamil, we selected inscriptions from *Epigraphia Indica* and such journals, but we were very careful in making use of them for phonological studies.

Some comments from K. Nachimuthu's review (1978) will be taken up here. He says, "Kanyakumari district and Kerala could have been studied as separate areas, for clearly tracing the linguistic changes that have taken place in these areas.— It seems that from Kerala, inscriptions which are declared as Tamil, only have been included. An explicit explanation on the criterion of selection is wanting in this regard. Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions have not been included because they fall beyond the time frame of this study". When we were working on the inscriptions of the eleventh and twelfth centuries A D. we also felt that those two regions of Kerala and Kanyakumari District could have been treated separately. But we formulated the regions when we worked on the records of the ninth century. The material for the entire west coast for that century was so limited that we felt that one region would do. It is true that we selected inscriptions from Kerala, only when they were declared to be Tamil. There is a difficult problem in deciding whether inscriptions from Kerala in the tenth and the eleventh centuries are in Malayalam or Tamil. Both of them were using Vatteluttu. The inscription can be read as Tamil except for a few peculiar forms. As A.C. Sekhar has taken them to be Malayalam and worked on them, I thought that working on them again would be unnecessary. But I could have drawn some notes from his publication (1953). As for Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions, they were published in various place by various persons and some of them were not available anywhere in India. I have worked on language variations of Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions subsequently and published it as a paper in the *Journal of Tamil Studies* (1979).²²

Nachimuthu also makes the following observation:—"Because of the insufficient information on the date and place of the inscriptions in the earlier epigraphical publications, the

22. Veluppillai, A., Language Variations in Sri Lanka Tamil Inscriptions, *Journal of Tamil Studies*, Vol. XIV, 1979.

author had to spend a considerable time to fill in the details and doubts still remained. One can understand the difficulties in such basic matters of data collection, in the absence of any topographical list of inscriptions both published and unpublished, and precisely because of this handicap, the author was not in a position to include some published inscriptions from Coimbatore District in Kongu region.— The time span has been broken into centuries to observe the linguistic variations. Except the inscriptions from 500-800 A.D., all the other inscriptions were studied century by century from 9th century to the 12th century. The rationale behind the centurywise breaking up is not clearly stated by the author. Will it be possible to break the time span into generation of 25 years or mere ten years—?” The lack of a topographical list of inscriptions is a very big handicap to all those working on Tamil inscriptions. When we were in India six years ago working on the project reviewed here, we were told that T.V. Mahalingam, retired Professor of Ancient History and Archaeology of the University of Madras had been working on a project of preparing a topographical list of Tamil inscriptions and that B. Sitaraman, an Epigraphical Assistant working at the Office of the Government Epigraphist for India in Mysore was assisting him. We are now being told that T.V. Mahalingam has now been working in Benares Hindu University. Most Probably, the work on the topographical list has ceased. This is very unfortunate.

Why the time span was taken as a century and not as a generation of 25 years or more ten years, also has been connected with the lack of a topographical list of inscriptions. For one thing, preparing a topographical list is not easy. It is very difficult to place many inscriptions in a chronological frame-work. Even in our centurywise study, we had to omit a considerable number of inscriptions as epigraphists when they edited the inscriptions have given dates as ‘ninth or tenth centuries,’ ‘tenth or eleventh centuries’ and ‘eleventh or twelfth centuries’. Sometimes, the same name has been borne by two

or three rulers who lived within a century. When the date is not mentioned as in some of the publications of South Indian Inscriptions series and when no photographic plate is also published, one cannot make use of such inscriptions if the time span were to be reduced to twenty-five or ten years. Excluding a considerable number of inscriptions this way, we cannot still be sure that we can find epigraphical material for all the regions for that small time span. Even to work out these matters from the existing available publications on inscriptions would have taken a long time.

Some Changes In Language of Tamil Inscriptions: Before and After the Cola Empire²³

There are inscriptional Tamil forms which show development from traditional alphabet, spelling and pronunciation. It is not possible to consider dental *n* and alveolar *ṇ* as separate phonemes in inscriptional Tamil. One occurs instead of the other in a number of places without any reference to the context. This shows that the difference between the two lost, Kanapathippillai has shown that the confusion of these two consonants occurred in the northern districts of Tamilnadu during the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. This feature continued in the earlier inscriptions. But in the later inscriptions, this confusion occurred in all the parts of Tamilnadu. It seems that this confusion had something to do with the introduction of Grantha-Tamil script. It was this script which was prevalent in the northern districts of Tamilnadu. Grantha script which was designed to write Sanskrit in South India had no alveolar *ṇ*. Tamil language had both *n* and *ṇ*. Vaṭṭeḷuttu, the script for Tamil language in the southern districts of Tamilnadu retained the distinction between these two letters. When Grantha-Tamil

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23. Material for this section has been drawn from our two theses (1962) and (1964). This aspect has been treated in *Cācanamum Tamilum* (1971). We also read a paper on 'Inscriptional Tamil as a source for the History of Tamil Language' in the IV International Conference-Seminar on Tamil Studies, Jaffna, 1974.

script replaced Vaṭṭeḷuttu in the southern districts in the eleventh century A.D., the confusion spread to all parts of Tamilnadu.

Phonological features which were apparently confined to the earlier period or to the later period only will be mentioned here for consideration of time. The change of *e* to *i* occurs only in the earlier inscriptions:- *piyar* (*peyar*), *clavu* (*celavu*) and *piṛātōm* (*peṛātōm*). The change of *ai* to *a* occurs in a number of examples in the earlier inscription:- *ūṭṭāmā* (*ūṭṭāmai*), *vaḷuvāmē* (*vaḷuvāmai*) and *keṭāmē* (*keṭāmai*). In the later inscriptions, this change was seen in only one example:- *iṛṛē*. *varai* (*iṛṛaivarai*). In consonants, changes take place initially and medially. For example, the initial palatal *ñ* becomes dental *n* in earlier inscriptions. There are examples for this feature in earlier inscriptions: *nāṇṇu* (*ñāṇṇu*) and *nekiṭṭu* (*ñekiṭṭu*). In the same group of inscriptions, these *nesals* are found to fluctuate in a few forms. In the later inscriptions, the initial palatal *ñ* disappears completely. Therefore in the later period, this consonant ceased to be a phoneme. The change of *l* to *ḷ* occurred only in the later inscriptions in a number of examples:- *vēḷvi* (*vēḷvi*), *tiruvāykkēḷvi* (*tiruvāykkēḷvi*) and *Viṛappulināṭṭāḷvārkkū* (*Viṛappulināṭṭāḷvārkkū*). The change of *ey* to *ē* occurred only in earlier inscriptions like *puncē* (*puncey*), *cetu* (*ceytu*) and *cēil* (*ceyyil*).

Considering morphophonemics, it should be stated that the traditional Tamil grammatical classification of sandhi into case relation sandhi and non-case relation sandhi could not explain sandhi forms in inscriptional Tamil. The plosive following 'L' doubles only once in *pāl kkarukāvūr* in earlier inscriptions. But in the later inscriptions, this doubling occurs in a number of places as in *mālppaṭi*, *Palkkuḷattu colkkurram* and *Kōyil ttirunaṭaimāḷikaiyil*. The disappearance of 'r' ending before plosives occurs in a number of places in the later inscriptions only: *Caṇṭāḷapperu*, *taṇṭācuvavarapperuvilai* and *Makēcura kkaṇkāṇi*. The *ṇ* ending becomes *ṭ* before plosives in case relation sandhi in many places in the earlier inscriptions only.

The change of *l* to *ṭ* before plosives was seen only in the later inscriptions:- *pukaṭpaṭara* and *kaluṭperum piṇakkupṇam*. The change of *ṇ* ending into homorganic nasal of the following plosive occurred when the names of father and son were written together:- *Nakkan kāṭaṇ* (*Nakkaṇ Kāṭaṇ*) and *Cāttam paṭiyili* (*Cattaṇ Paṭiyil*). This change did not occur in the later inscriptions.

There were comparable developments in Morphology and Syntax. A number of nouns in modern Tamil are formed by the addition of *kāraṇ*/*kārar*/*kāri* to other nouns. There are two examples for this addition, only in the later inscriptions:- *nivantakkārar* and *vāṭṭaikkārar*. Ancient postpositions *aṇ* and *iṇ* began to be replaced by *al* and *il* in Medieval Tamil. There were two examples for *aṇ* in the earlier inscriptions while there were no examples for it in the later inscriptions. There were five examples for it in the earlier inscriptions while there were only four examples in the later inscriptions. There were nine examples for *al* in the earlier inscriptions and twelve examples for it in the later inscriptions. The form *il* occurs in seven examples in the earlier inscriptions and in twelve examples in the later inscriptions. As first person singular pronoun, only *yāṇ* occurs in the earlier inscriptions while only *nāṇ* occurs in the later inscriptions. Honorific particles developed in Medieval Tamil. Two stages of their development can be seen in the inscriptions. These occurred both before and after nouns. In the earlier inscriptions, *ṣri* and its variations of *ciri* and *tiru* and *aṭikaḷ* occurred before nouns. In the later inscriptions, *ṣri* and its variations together with *uṭaiyār*, *tēvar*, *nāyaṇār* and *nācciyār* occurred before nouns. In the earlier inscriptions, *aṭikaḷ*, *amutu* and *aruḷ* occurred after nouns verbs while in the later inscriptions *amutu*, *aruḷ*, *tēvar* and *nācciyār* occurred after nouns/verbs. Later inscriptions mark an increase in the use of honorific particles.

Developments in verb can be treated separately because of their importance in grammar. Present tense suffixes developed

in Medieval Tamil. There were five present tense forms in earlier inscriptions and all of them had *kiṅṇu* suffix. There were eleven present tense forms in later inscriptions and all of them had *-kiṅṇu* suffix. This is evidence both for the deviation of *kiṅṇu* from *kiṅṇu* and for the increasing use of present tense suffixes in course of time. In the earlier inscriptions, the infinitive *Ka -kka* had almost completely replaced the earlier infinitive terminations, *-pa* and *-ppa*. But in the later inscriptions, both types of terminations co-exist in almost equal number of examples. In the earlier inscriptions, there were two optative formations *kaṭavām*, first person, plural and *kaṭavar*, third person plural. These were not added to infinitive forms of the verb, as is the usual pattern in Tamil. Addition to infinitive forms seem to reflect a relatively later development to give clarity to the purpose of the record. Addition of negative suffix 'a' to verbal base gives negative sense. There are examples for the usage of this simple form for negative adjective participle, negative adverbial participle and negative finite verb. This must reflect the earliest stage of the development of negative in Tamil. The development of distinctive forms for each grammatical class for which also there were examples in the earlier inscriptions must have been a later development. Negative forms with tense suffixes appeared only in the later inscriptions. This must have been a subsequent development.

Some Findings From the Study of Dialects In Inscriptional Tamil²⁴

Tenth century inscriptions have a peculiarity, Inscriptions of that period have very few classical forms and they have a lot of colloquial forms. The tenth century marks a period

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24. This section draws material from Veluppillai (1976) and (1979) Prof. S. Agasthalingom is busy preparing a historical grammar of Tamil. He has made use of both of our theses for the work. We hope that this will be a breakthrough in recent studies in Dravidian Linguistics.

when the Pallava Kingdom had fallen to the Cōlas and the Colas themselves were unable to recover till the end of the eleventh century from the devastating blow they suffered at the hands of the Rastrakutes. The eleventh century inscriptions were a big contrast. Most of them contained elaborate *meykkīrttis* of the Cōla emperors and some sort of Imperial language was supplanting regional variations throughout the Tamil speaking area. The twelfth century inscriptions are more modest in size and there are indications that regional variations are reasserting themselves.

Geographical Variation

Dialect difference depend to some extent on the political situation. There is a clear distinction in isoglosses between the Pallava Kingdom and the Pandya Kingdom till about the tenth century. In fact, till the Pandya Kingdom was absorbed into the Cōla empire, it along with Kerala, maintained a separate script known as *Vaṭṭeḷuttu*. The parallel development of Grantha Tamil in the Pallava Kingdom and the *Vaṭṭeḷuttu* in the Pandya Kingdom was probably an attempt to maintain dialect differences. The language used in most of the Pandya inscriptions was rather close to the standard Tamil. It preserved classical form in a large measure. On the other hand, as a whole, language was not standardised in the Pallava Kingdom.

Kerala regional language had some affinities with language of the Pandya Kingdom. Kanyakumari District especially, shared many features of language change with Madurai and Tinnavelly regions. The Tamil inscriptions of Kerala proper exhibit the influence of Malayalam from the ninth century in having a number of nasalised forms. From the tenth century, characteristically Malayalam forms begin to appear in the Tamil inscriptions of Kerala proper. Till the beginning of the twelfth century, there is no evidence for the existence of such forms in the present Kanyakumari District. In the twelfth century inscriptions of Kanyakumari District, a few Malayalam forms are seen.

North Arcot was not the seat of any government but it was a vast area and it seems to have maintained some individuality. Though a separate region called Andhra Pradesh has been recognised, there does not seem to be any special Telugu influence in the Tamil inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh. But the Telugu or may be Telugu-Kannada influence is easily recognised in Cankam hero-stone inscriptions of North Arcot and the adjoining Dhar-mapuri region in the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. Though the Telugu influence fades away, North Arcot seems to have maintained some individuality even in the latter centuries. This area seems to have had a martial tradition, as seen in the large number of herostones. A considerable number of Pure-Tamil inscriptions were also found in North Arcot probably because Sanskritisation penetrated this area quite late.

The language of Tinnevely had some expressions relating to the Jainas of 8th to 10th centuries A.D. Probably the Hindu revival of the Pallava period penetrated this part of Tinnevely slowly. There is inscriptional evidence for intense Hindu religious activity in Tinnevely in the eleventh century under the Cōla-Pandya viceroys.

Frequent occurrence of hiatus in internal sandhi between noun bases and honorific plural markers and between nouns and case markers and in external sandhi between words and the clitic—um was a noticeable feature of the Pandya inscriptions, especially of Madurai, even in verses, up to the end of the first Pandya Kingdom. A few such examples are available for Chingleput and North Arcot also for the same period. From the eleventh century, some sort of standardisation, probably based on the dialect of Tanjore region had takes place.

Under geographical variations, it is possible to follow hypothetic linguistic movements through regions. The form *vaḷuvāmē* occurs in Chingleput only in the ninth century. The form *muṭṭāmē* occurs first in Chingleput, North Arcot and Tanjore in the ninth century and in the next century, it was

found in North Arcot, Tanjore, Trichi and Madurai. So, it is quite possible that this type of forms originated in the northern districts of Tamilnadu and then spread to other places. The appearance of prothetic *i* before *y* has been noticed in Madurai region up to 900 A.D. but it becomes Universal later. The change 'a' to 'u' was first noticed in Chingleput, then appeared in Tanjore and Trichi and in the tenth century, it was seen in Tanjore, Trichi and South Arcot. It became universal from the eleventh century when the Cōla empire was established. The change of *ṇṭ* to *ṇṇ* was first noticed in Tinnevely in the twelfth century. The classical Dravidian form *nāḷku* 'four' makes its appearance first in North Arcot and then in Chingleput in the ninth century. This could be a Kannada form also as written classical Tamil has not preserved this form. Addition of *-kārag-kārar* to other nouns to form personal nouns might have originated in South Arcot and Tanjore in the twelfth century as examples are recorded from those regions only.

The following hypothetic language movements are also interesting. Those who perform charitable acts want those acts to continue for ever. To encourage protection of charitable endowments, they make various interesting imprecations, etc., Those who maintain this charity will have the merit of performing *asvamedha* sacrifice was one such statement. This has been noticed only in inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh and North Arcot in the ninth century. This has not spread to other parts of Tamilnadu and even from those two regions; it disappears forever. Those who violate the charity are sometimes threatened that they will go to the hell below the seventh hell. This was first noticed in North Arcot and South Arcot in the ninth century. It was found in North Arcot in the tenth century and in South Arcot in the twelfth century. So, this was confined to the two Arcot regions. Those who violate this charity will suffer for the sins committed in the banks of the Ganges and in the coast of Cape Comorin. Up to the end of the tenth century; it was noticed in the northern districts and Tanjore. Probably because of Cōla expansion, this appears in Kanyakumari in the

eleventh century. From the twelfth century, it was again confined to the northern districts of Tamilnadu.

Was there a Buddhist Dialect of Tamil in Sri Lanka?

Dealing with social dialects, many Dravidian linguists postulate the existence of dialects based on caste differences. The fundamental dichotomy is said to be between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. One of the reason for the sharp distinction between the two communities was patronage of Sanskrit by the Brahmin community. A separate script called Grandha was in vogue in the Medieval period in South India to write Sanskrit. Unlike in Tamilnadu, there is no separate Brahmin dialect in Sri Lanka Tamil. The Brahmins in Sri Lanka continued to maintain matrimonial and other ties with their counterparts in Tamilnadu and Kerala and so some influence of the Brahmin dialect of Tamilnadu is discernible in the language, spoken by the Brahmins of Sri Lanka. As Brahmins were never the dominant caste in Sri Lanka Tamil Hindu Community, the distinction between the Brahmin and the non-Brahmin dialects is not very prominent.

But it should be conceded that the Brahmins were also there in Sri Lanka and Tamil epigraphical evidence bears testimony for their existence. The Tamil inscriptions of the Island mention Brahmin villages called caturvedimangalam situated in Anuradhapura and Kantalai areas. There is also evidence for land grants from Sinhalese rulers to Brahmins in Chilaw, Davinuwara and Sammanturai. In inscriptions with reference to Caturvedimangalam, Sanskrit influence is quite strong. For example, the word *Cāṇi* which was occasionally added to the personal names of Brahmin ladies in South India, occurs in the same context in a Tamil inscription at Kantalai. The Sanskrit influence is evident also from expressions like *partta* for 'husband' and *meritta pigpu* 'after (he) expired'. In the Tamil epigraphs at Chilaw and Devinuwara, entire Sanskrit slokas occur besides Sanskrit words and phrases. But Sanskritisation cannot be ascribed entirely to the influence of the Brahmins. Most of the Sri Lanka Sanskrit inscriptions were Buddhist records, issued by Buddhist rulers. Along with Pali, the sacred language of Southern Buddhism, the Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka patronised

Sanskrit also. In the lecture on Buddhism, we have noticed that Tamilnadu Buddhists took to Sanskrit in a big way. There were Sanskrit or rather Indo-Aryan words in the Tamil inscriptions. The Grantha script was in use both to write Sanskrit words and Sanskrit passages in Tamil inscriptions and to write some Sanskrit epigraphs.

When the language of Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions is analysed in relation to the past and the present, it becomes clear that religious difference was more important than caste difference. Sri Lanka inscriptional Tamil can be classified into a Hindu dialect and a Buddhist dialect. The earliest epigraphs in Tamil from Sri Lanka, of the ninth century, which refers to the establishment of a Buddhist shrine in Anuradhapura has the word 'Kammi'. This word occurs as 'Karmi' in inscriptions, connected with Hinduism. The word 'Karmi' is a derivative from Sanskrit 'Karma'. The form karma changes into Kamma in Pali. It is clear that 'Kammi' was derived from 'Kamma'. 'Dhamma' is the Pali form for the Sanskrit word 'Dharma'. This inscription has the form 'tanma' which is in the intermediate stage between tarma and tamma. While Hindu Tamil uses Sanskrit forms, Buddhist, Tamil uses Pali forms. It is also interesting to note that most place names in Jaffna Peninsula in the northern tip of Sri Lanka appear to be derivatives from Pali names. The Sanskrit word grāma becomes gama in Pali and gama in Sinhalese. In Jaffna, we get place names like Valikā-mam, Kodikāmam, etc.,

Quite unfortunately, most of the Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions are either short ones or fragmentary ones. In the few complete ones of considerable size, exhortations or admonitions for the maintenance of the Charitable deed can be found. Exhortation and admonitions found in Buddhist Tamil inscriptions seem to be mainly translation of such, found in Buddhist Sinhalese inscriptions. The inscription mentioning the founding of Makotaippaḷi says that those who had done wrong to the shrine would be born as crow and dog. This admonition was not found in any ancient or medieval Tamil inscription from Tamilnadu. But this occurs in Sinhalese Inscriptions. There is a long passage of admonition and exhortation in the Tamil inscription at Lankatilleke Vihara, near Kandy. Such type of

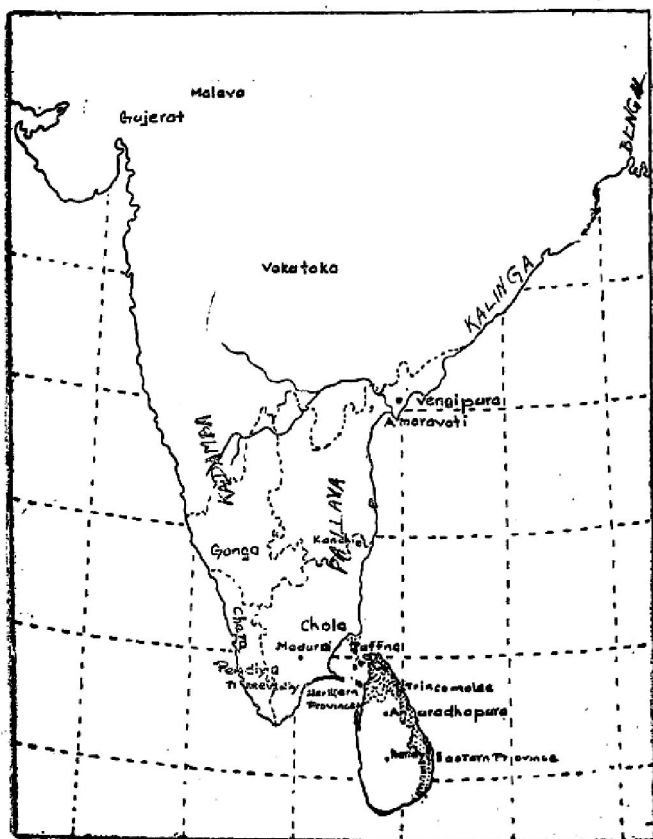
exhortation and admonition is never found either in South Indian Tamil inscriptions or in other Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions.

Sinhala words and phrases occur in a few Sri Lanka Tamil inscriptions. The occurrence of personal names, like those of Sinhalese Kings and place names in some Tamil inscriptions, is of course understandable. Names of places, even in traditional Tamil areas of the North and the East of Sri Lanka, sometimes occur in their Sinhalese forms in inscriptions, issued by the Sinhalese Kings. But this is not peculiar to inscriptions with Buddhist connections. In the Buddhist Tamil inscription at Mankanai, near Trincomalee, many words of Sinhala origin, besides personal names and place-names, occur. The following are some of the examples:— telvicār, kiratu, naratuvecār, veyaka and verattānam. In the Lenkatilleka Vihara Tamil inscription, the cultivable land is called yaḷattaṟai. Of this, yāla is a Sinhalese word. Pita madigs of Sinhalese has been translated as puṟa maṭikai and atula madige had been translated as uḷ maṭikai in Tamil. This inscription contains a large admixture of Sanskrit words and quite a number of Sanskrit-Tamil hybrids. Buddhism probably served as a bridge between the Sinhalese Buddhists and the Tamil Buddhists of Sri Lanka. Deeper study of sinhalese through archaeological and linguistic angles may shed considerable light on Dravidology, especially Tamilology.²⁵

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25. One such study unfortunately remains unpublished. Silva, M.P.H., *Influence of Dravida on Sinhalese*. Thesis submitted for the D. Phil. Degree of the University of Oxford, 1961.

Study of Sri Lanka Tamils from various angles also will be useful. Professor A. Sathasivam started compiling a dictionary of Sri Lanka Tamil but nothing has yet been published. Dr. P. Poologasingham has made some serious contributions to the history of Sri Lanka Tamil literature. His publications are not sufficiently known in Tamilnadu as India does not allow import of Tamil book from other countries.

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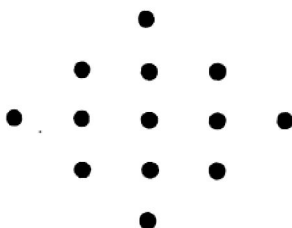
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