

University of Ceylon Review

Vol. VI No. 4

October, 1948

*Ceylon's Contribution to Tamil Language and Literature*¹

THERE is a tradition in Tamil literature that the island of Ceylon was once a portion of the Tamil country situated in its southern-most corner. During the period referred to, the sea which divides it now from the mainland of India had not come into existence. Somewhere near the place where stands at present the Cape Comorin, otherwise known as Kumari Muṇai, there ran a river called Kumari.² South of this river existed a vast stretch of land of which Ceylon also was a portion. This land was a part of the then Pāṇḍya Kingdom. The capital of this kingdom was the city Kapāṭapuram which was somewhere in this stretch of land. Suddenly a deluge occurred; 49 districts which probably lay west of Ceylon, the Pāṇḍya capital Kapāṭapuram and the river Kumari all sank into the sea.³ That there existed a river between Ceylon and India in ancient times is attested to by Megasthenes, the Grecian ambassador of Seleucus Nikator (the Conqueror) at the Court of Candra Gupta at Pāṭaliputra in his account about the India of his time.⁴ He says that Taprobane was separated by a river from the mainland.

It may be that it was this deluge which was recorded in the Pali Chronicle *Mahāvamsa*⁵ and the Sinhalese work *Rājāvaliya*⁶ as having occurred during the reign of Tissa who ruled in Kelaniya. Calculating from the account given in these works this deluge may be taken to have happened about the 3rd century B.C.

1. An inaugural address delivered on 15th July, 1948 at King George's Hall, University of Ceylon, Colombo.

2. *Mahā Bhārata : Bhīṣma Parva*, Section IX, Śl. 35.

3. *Kalittokai* : Stz. 104, l. 1.

Cilappatikāram VIII, ll. 1-2.

Nakkīrar : Commentary on *Iṭaiyaṅār Akapporu*.

Atiyārkkū Nallār : Commentary on *Cilappatikāram*, VIII, ll. 1-2.

Pēraciriyar : Commentary on *Tol. Poru IX*, cūt. 94.

Tennent : *Ceylon*.

4. *Foreign Notices of South India*, p. 41.

5. *Mahāvamsa*, Chap. XXII.

6. *Rājāvaliya*, pp. 190-191.

If any value is attached to this tradition it might be assumed that Ceylon was part of the Tamil country under the rule of the Tamil monarchs and that Tamils had been living there from ancient times. It is for the historian to verify the truth of this tradition. But it can be said with a fair amount of certainty that by about the early centuries of the Christian era Tamils not only lived there but also asserted their power from time to time by becoming its rulers.

This being so, let us see what part they played in the cultivation and development of their language and literature.

It is a well-known fact that during the early centuries of the Christian era the Pāṇḍya country was the chief centre of Tamil learning. Literary men from all over the Tamil country went to Madura, the capital of the Pāṇḍya Kingdom, to show their talents and get their works approved by the Tamil Sangam which sat there. Literary men from Ceylon also seem to have gone there and got their works approved. Among the celebrities of this Sangam we hear of a poet called Īlattup Pūtaṅ Tēvaṅār.⁷ This proper name translated into English will mean "Tēvaṅār, son of Pūtaṅ of Īlam." Īlam was the name by which Ceylon was referred to in the Tamil works of this period. He is also spoken of sometimes as Maturai Īlattup Pūtaṅ Tēvaṅār. This will mean "Tēvaṅār, son of Pūtaṅ of Īlam who lived in Madura". It is not known from what part of Ceylon he went there. All that we know is that for some reason or other he went from Ceylon to Madura and settled there. Through his deep scholarship in Tamil he came to be recognised as a Sangam poet—an honour which was the envy of all the poets of the time.

As he was a recognised poet of the Sangam it is but natural to suppose that he would have produced a good number of works. But unfortunately most of them are lost with the exception of a few poems which are found in the anthologies of the Sangam poetry. These poems are modelled, like the poems of the other poets of his age, on the old poetical conventions.

The period between the second and the thirteenth centuries is practically blank as regards the production of Tamil literary works in Ceylon. The presence of the Saiva temples Tirukkētisvaram in Mannar and Kōṅēcar temple at Trincomalee are proof enough that the belt of land between Mannar and Trincomalee was populated by Tamils from ancient times. It is to be noted that St. Tiruñānacampantar who lived in the 7th century A.D. sang sacred hymns in praise of the Lord presiding at these two temples.⁸ The northern-

7. Author of Stz. 300 of *Narriṅai*, Stz. 360 of *Kuruntokai*, Stzs. 88, 231 and 307 of *Akanāṅūru*.

8. *Tivārap patikāṅkaḷ* (ed. Caiva Cittānta Makā Camājam). *Tirumuṅai* II, No. 107. *Tevārap patikāṅkaḷ* (ed. Caiva Cittānta Makā Camājam). *Tirumuṅai* III, No. 123.

CEYLON'S CONTRIBUTION TO TAMIL LANGUAGE

most part of Ceylon, the present Jaffna, originally a Nāga settlement, had already from early times become, like the settlements of the Nāgas in South India, a Tamil-speaking district by the absorption of the Nāga population by the Tamils. Though these parts were Tamil-speaking from the early period, still no literary work seems to have been produced due to the unsettled state of affairs that was prevailing there on account of the frequent invasions from South India. Only by about the 13th Century A.D., we hear of any literary activities in this part of Ceylon, when the independent State called the Jaffna Kingdom came into existence, under the dynasty of kings called the Āryacakravartis.

This kingdom rose to the zenith of its power and fame in the reign of Varōtaya Cekarāca Cēkaraṇ. The King was a patron of learning and poets and pandits flocked to his court. He established a college of *literati* called the Tamil Sangam.⁹ Works on astrology and medicine were composed and translations from Sanskrit Purāṇās were made under his patronage. The works composed by the poets of this Sangam, it is told, were all preserved in a library called Sarasvatī Mahālayam. This library was later on destroyed by fire when a Sinhalese King sacked the capital of Jaffna. Varōtaya Cekarāca Cēkaraṇ himself was a great scholar. *Cekarāca Cēkaram*, a work on medicine in all its branches, *Takṣiṇa Kailāca Purāṇam* and several others works received the *imprimatur* of his court.¹⁰

During the reign of his successor Mārttāṅṭa Pararāca Cēkaraṇ, which was equally illustrious, the royal bard Aracakēcari, who later on became the son-in-law of the King, composed the poetical work called *Iraku Vamicam*.¹¹ This was an adaptation of the Sanskrit work *Raghu Vaṃsa* of Kālidāsa. Another colossal work on medicine called *Pararāca Cēkaram*¹² was composed in his reign.

In this period the kings of the Sinhalese court also appear to have patronised Tamil poets and encouraged the production of Tamil works. In the reign of Parakrama Bahu III of Dambadeniya a Tamil astrological poem named *Caracōti Mālai*¹³ received the *imprimatur* of his court. This was composed by a Brahmin poet called Pōca Rāca Paṇṭitar.

Apart from this, many other Sinhalese Kings also seem to have encouraged Tamil-learning as much as they did Sinhalese-learning. In the reign of the last King of Kandy a poet from Jaffna named Ciṛṇampalap Pulavar composed a poem called *Killai-viṭu-tūtu* in honour of the King and took it to him.¹⁴ But

9. *Kailāya Mālai*, ll. 209-210.

10. Mudaliyār C. Rāsanāyagam: *Ancient Jaffna*, p. 355.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 359.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Caracōti Mālai*: *Ciraṇṇupṇāyiram*.

14. *Pāvalar Carittira Tīpakam*, p. 145.

on his way to Kandy he heard the news of his capture by the British. Hearing this he returned to his native village in Jaffna, a disappointed man.

Portuguese Period

When the Portuguese came into occupation of Ceylon, Tamil learning underwent slight changes. All this time Saiva religion was the main theme of the works produced. But, as the Catholic faith, the religion of the new rulers, became the State Religion, works produced in this era dealt mainly with the tenets of this religion. Many works seem to have been written in this period; but most of them appear to have been lost. *Nānaṣ Paḷḷu* is one of the few works which has come down to us. It is not known who the author of this work was. It deals extensively with the doctrines of the Catholic Church in the form of a story.¹⁵ *Cantiyōku Maiyūr Ammānai* is another work produced during this period. This deals with the life of Saint James Major. This was composed in the Ammānai form of composition by one Pēturup Pulavaṅ of Tellippalai, Jaffna, in the year 1647. This is one of the earliest Catholic works extant in Tamil.¹⁶

Yet, a few works on the Saiva cult also have come down to us. One of them is *Katiraimalaiṣ Paḷḷu*. The name of the author is not known. From the references found in the work one can gather that an ascetic named Kalyāṇa Giri, otherwise called Muttuliṅgasvāmi, who supervised the erection of the present building of the temple of Kataragama, was the patron of this work. It appears that this ascetic commenced the rebuilding of the temple under the direction of King Rāja Sinha III who ascended the throne of Sitawaka in 1554 A.D. It may not be out of place to mention here that according to *Cūlavamsa*¹⁷ Rāja Sinha embraced the Saiva creed in the latter part of his life with the view of expiating the sin he heaped on himself in his young days by murdering his aged father Māyādunne.

Though there existed many paḷḷu poems at that time, *Katiraimalaiṣ Paḷḷu* became so popular with the cultivators that it was later on converted into a Nāṭakam (Drama) with few additions and alterations. In one additional stanza in the Nāṭakam reference is made to one Tyāga Sūriya. The late Mr. V. Cumaraswamy, the editor of *Katiraimalaiṣ Paḷḷu* mentions that Tyāga Sūriya is another name for King Vimala Dharma Sūriya I who ascended the throne of Kandy in 1590 A.D.

Dutch Period

The Dutch who occupied Ceylon after the Portuguese also encouraged the cultivation of the Tamil language. As in the Portuguese times small

15. Rev. S. Gnāna Prakāsar : *XXV. years' Catholic Progress*, p. 230.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

17. *Cūlavamsa*, Chap. XCIII, Stz. 7-10.

CEYLON'S CONTRIBUTION TO TAMIL LANGUAGE

schools attached to churches were built throughout the country for imparting elementary education. Also, Tamil formed a subject of study in the Seminaries which were established by them for the purpose of higher education. Most of the works produced in this period were connected with the Protestant religion.

Perhaps the most noteworthy among the scholars who contributed much to Tamil literature in this period was one Phillip De Melho.¹⁸ He belonged to a respectable Tamil family in Colombo and was born in 1723. After a brilliant career in the Colombo Seminary, which the Dutch Government founded in 1705, he became a minister of religion.

In the midst of his duties as a minister he brought out a Tamil version of the New Testament. He also wrote an elaborate work in Dutch under the title of "The Triumph of Truth or a Refutation of the Principal Dogmas of the Church of Rome", with a view of putting a stop to the rapid progress which Catholicism was making in Ceylon about that time through the labours of the Goanese Fathers. This work was rendered into Tamil under the title of *Cattiyacamayam* and published at the expense of the Government in 1753. In the meanwhile he was busy rendering into Tamil the whole of the New Testament which was published in 1759. It was the first time that the whole of the New Testament was translated and published in Tamil.

When De Melho was residing in Jaffna as a minister he came into contact with many renowned Tamil scholars. Among them was the scholar Kūlaṅkaiṭ Tampirāṇ. With the help of this scholar he enlarged *Cūṭamaṇi Nikāṇṭu*, a poetical Tamil lexicon, by adding 20 stanzas to the second part and 100 to the twelfth. He also composed a panegyric called *Marutappak Kuravañci* on one Marutappā Piḷḷai who was Mutaliyār of the Gate in Jaffna, at that time.

Kūlaṅkaiṭ Tampirāṇ was a celebrated poet and philosopher, well-versed in Sanskrit and Tamil. His place of origin was Kāncīpuram in South India. Owing to certain troubles he had in the land of his birth, he came to Jaffna and settled there. He spent his time in teaching Tamil to students. He helped many who sought his aid. Through him the standard of Tamil-learning in Jaffna became very high and famous all over. Along with that his fame spread all over Ceylon and he was invited several times to Colombo. There he helped Rev. Father Gabriel Pacheco to produce in Tamil several works connected with the Catholic faith. He also wrote a commentary on the grammatical work *Nannūl*. He was also the author of some Purāṇās and several minor poems. Amongst the Purāṇās may be mentioned *Yosep Purāṇam* which treats of the History of the Patriarch Joseph in 1023 stanzas arranged in 21 cantos.

18. *Pāvalar Carittira Tīpakam*, p. 243; *Tamil Plutarch*, p. 82.

UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON REVIEW

When the study of the Tamil language dwindled in Jaffna as a result of the troublous and unsettled state of affairs caused by its conquest by foreign powers, it was Kūḷaṅkai Tampirāṅ who gave a new impetus towards its study. In fact the present state of Tamil education in Jaffna is due in no small measure to the labours of this savant from India.

Along with the literary men of this period must be placed the famous poet of Jaffna, Ciṅṅattampip Pulavar of Nallūr. He was the son of Villavarāya Mutaliyār, who revised the *Tēcavaḷamai* or *Codex Jaffanensis* which was compiled at the order of Governor Simons in 1706. He was the author of the poetical works called *Maraicai Antāti* and *Kalvaḷai Antāti*. The first one was sung in praise of the presiding deity at Tirumaraik Kāṭu in South India, and the latter in praise of the one at the temple of Kalvaḷai situated in Caṅṅiruppāy, Jaffna. Both poems are remarkable for their poetic beauty and style. He also composed another work employing the literary conventions of the Sangam literature. It is called *Karavai Vēlaṅ Kōvai*.

British Period

When Ceylon passed into the hands of the British, Tamil literature underwent many changes caused by the new conditions created. A great many of the changes are due in a large measure to the arrival of the European Missionaries.

One of the earliest bands of Christian Missionaries to arrive in Ceylon was the American. They made Jaffna the centre of their activities. When they arrived there they saw that there existed only a few Tamil schools here and there. Only a few could read and write. Fewer still could read the printed character with ease. Finding this state of affairs they strove to increase the reading population by establishing Tamil schools all over the country.

Later on, in the year 1823, they started a central school at Vaṅṅukkōṅṅai for imparting education of the university standard.¹⁹ It was re-named as the Seminary in 1827. The only institution of a university grade that had been established before it in India and Ceylon was the Serampore College founded in 1818. The Universities of India were not started till the middle of the 19th century. The oldest college in Ceylon next to the Seminary at Vaṅṅukkōṅṅai was the Seminary at Cotta which was established in 1827.

The main object of the Missionaries in founding this institution was to give the youth of the country a thorough knowledge of the English language. When they became fully equipped with the advanced knowledge of the West through this medium, they thought they would be able to translate into Tamil the most important works in English, make epitomes out of them or write new

19. Mudaliyār C. Rāsanāyagam : *The British Period of the History of Jaffna*, p. 128.

CEYLON'S CONTRIBUTION TO TAMIL LANGUAGE

works. They were of opinion that this way of enriching the Tamil language could not be done by foreigners comparatively ignorant of the language and the customs of the country.

Another object of this Séminary was to encourage the cultivation of Tamil literature. They found that the high or poetic Tamil was very difficult to acquire, and as such they decided to furnish all the aids required for its acquisition. But a more important benefit they wished to give the country was the cultivation of Tamil prose composition, which they found was entirely neglected at that time. The people who could read correctly understood to some extent the poetic language ; they were also able sometimes to form a kind of artificial verse. But, in spite of all this they could not write a single page of correct prose. To form a reading population they thought, the people must be taught to write intelligibly and forcibly in Tamil. In view of these they concluded that authors should be produced among the Tamils whose minds were enriched by science and European ideas. They must be taught to put these ideas into Tamil prose and thus enable their kinsmen to come in contact with this advanced knowledge.

With these ideas in view the American Missionaries began their labours in Jaffna. Though they started in the Vaṭṭukkōṭṭai Seminary to give instruction in English on advanced subjects like science, philosophy and others, their ultimate aim was to enrich the Tamil language and make it a vehicle of all the advanced ideas that lay embedded in the languages of the West.

One of the most useful and important contributions they made in this direction to the Tamil language was the translation of modern sciences. The person who was mainly responsible for this work was Dr. Samuel Fish Green.²⁰ He was the chief of the Mission Hospital at Manipay. He possessed a good knowledge of the Tamil language. Along with his duties as a doctor he gathered a number of pupils around him and taught them the Science of Medicine. It is to be noted that the Medical College in Ceylon had not come into existence at his time. As such many of the doctors who were taken in those days in the service of the Government of Ceylon were men trained under his able guidance.

To start with Dr. Green taught his students through the medium of English. But, later on, thinking that they would be able to grasp the subject much more easily if they were taught through their own language, he began lecturing to them in Tamil. It was only then he discovered the disadvantage of having no text-books on the subject in Tamil. In order to rectify this he began to translate some of the leading text-books on the subject into Tamil.

20. Mudaliyār C. Rāsanāyagam : *The British Period of the History of Jaffna*, pp. 131-132. Kula Capānātaṅ : *Cen Tamil cCelvi*, Vol. 15, p. 524.

UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON REVIEW

The work of translation was not done by Green alone. He induced the students who studied under him to take up the work. Notable among his students who did this work were Chapman, Danforth and Evarts. Before the translations of his students were published he himself went through the works and made the necessary corrections and alterations.

The book which Dr. Green translated at first was Cutter's *Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene*. This was printed at the A.M.C. Press in Madras. Besides this, he and his students translated Maunsell's *Obstetrics*, Druit's *Surgery*, Gray's *Anatomy* and other works.

Apart from this, several other modern subjects also claimed the attention of the Seminary. Great emphasis was laid on the study of Mathematics, Astronomy, Philosophy, Chemistry and Natural History. Owing to these facts this institution was able to produce great scholars who were proficient in Tamil, English and other branches of knowledge. Like their professors who taught them, the students also played an important part in enriching the Tamil language in several branches of modern knowledge. One of them was William Nevins who was otherwise called Nevins Citamparap Pillai. He was a clever mathematician. Along with his knowledge of Mathematics, he was very good in logic. He knew thoroughly the old Hindu System as well as the modern European System. He produced in Tamil a work on logic called *Niyāya Ilakkaṇam*. This work expostulated the Indian and European principles of logic. The scholars produced by this institution also wrote in Tamil works on Algebra, Geometry, Arithmetic, Trigonometry, etc. Unfortunately these works are not easily available now.

Another branch of knowledge to which the Missionaries devoted their attention was Tamil lexicography. In the year 1833 the American Mission in Jaffna decided to compile a Tamil-English Dictionary on the model of the dictionaries of the European languages. Along with this they wanted to bring out an English-Tamil Dictionary and a Tamil-Tamil Dictionary. On the request of the Missionaries Rev. J. Knight assisted by Mr. Gabriel Tissera and Reverend Peter Percival collected the material for these works. Unfortunately Rev. J. Knight died in the year 1833 and the work was suspended for some time. But, in the meanwhile Paṇḍit Candraśekara, a Tamil scholar of Jaffna, brought out the *Manual Dictionary of the Tamil Language* from the materials already collected. This was popularly called *The Jaffna Dictionary* or the *Mūṇipōy Akarāti*.²¹

But the work for the originally planned dictionaries went on. Scholars like the Rev. P. Percival, the Rev. L. Spaulding, and the Rev. S. Hutchings

21. Tamil Lexicon: Introduction by the Tamil Lexicon Committee, p. 38.

CEYLON'S CONTRIBUTION TO TAMIL LANGUAGE

kept on collecting the material. In the end they entrusted the edition of the Tamil-English Dictionary to the Rev. M. Winslow. He published it at Madras in the year 1862.

Mr. C. W. Kathiravēl Piḷḷai who happened to be one of the earliest students of the Vaṭṭukkōṭṭai Seminary also produced a Tamil Dictionary. He included in this work several words gathered from works on Hindu Philosophy and Metaphysics including Vedānta and Saiva Siddhānta, words from Tamil medical books, and technical words relating to the science of Logic, Rhetoric, Astrology, Astronomy, Chemistry and Mathematics. With regard to the words of Sanskrit origin occurring in the work he gave their Sanskrit equivalents in the Grantha characters. The vocabulary of the work was substantially increased and it contained more words than all the dictionaries produced in India and Ceylon.

Besides these works, several other dictionaries were also produced in Jaffna. Notable among them were the works produced by N. Kathiravēl Piḷḷai, A. Kumāracāmi Pulavar and Muttuttampip Piḷḷai.

Revival of Religion and Literature

When the Christian Missionaries were thus working in full swing for the propagation of their religion and European culture, a section of people revolted against their activities. They could not bear to see the ancient heritage of their fore-fathers belittled and their countrymen converted from the old faith which their ancestors professed. They also saw that the Tamil culture was being replaced by the Western, the English language was gradually gaining in importance and Tamil was being neglected. If this state of affairs continued long, they thought, everything that their ancestors held dear would be lost and the Tamils would lose their individuality.

The chief man who led this opposition against the activities of the Missionaries was the famous Ārumuka Nāvalar. He was born at Nallūr, Jaffna in 1822. He was a great scholar in Tamil and along with it he possessed a good knowledge of Sanskrit and English. He helped the Rev. Peter Percival in translating the Bible into Tamil. Later on he devoted 32 years of his life to revive and diffuse the Saiva Religion and its literature by expounding its tenets to the Tamil people by establishing schools in various parts of the country and by delivering lectures on the principles of the Saiva cult. In the course of his lectures he attacked Saivites and Christians alike for their hypocrisy and superstition.

He established a printing press in Madras and brought out from it about 70 works carefully edited on good paper in clear print. He wrote some school

books in prose which are unrivalled even today for their style and clear diction. Also he rendered some Purāṇas into Tamil prose. After working tirelessly for Saivism and the Tamil language he passed away in the 54th year of his life.²²

The services which Nāvalar rendered to the Tamil language are manifold. He was the originator of platform-speaking in Tamil. He cultivated this in imitation of the Missionaries for the purpose of inculcating the Saiva religion to the common man. He also induced other scholars to take up this system of religious instruction. In the end he became an excellent platform-speaker owing to which he was given the title of *Nāvalar* by the chief of the Religious Monastery called Tiru-Āvaṭuṭurai in South India. This title translated into English would mean " Orator ".

Another of his contributions was the creation of a lucid and easy style of prose-writing. Up to his time it was not customary among Tamil scholars to write in prose. Whatever they wrote they wrote only in verse. Even letters of correspondence were written in verse. Later on when the Missionaries arrived they began to cultivate the art of prose-writing. Yet, it did not gain a hold on the orthodox Tamil scholars. In counteracting the efforts of the Missionaries to convert the people to Christianity, Nāvalar began to issue his message in the form of pamphlets. Thinking that the high Tamil was useless to explain to the masses his purpose and the Doctrines of the Saiva Creed, he began to use simple clear language which was not very different from the everyday language of the people ; but while writing this he adhered to the rules of grammar. In this way he laid the foundation for modern Tamil prose.

The other great service he did to Tamil was the publication of ancient Tamil works. Till this time printed books in Tamil were very rare. People who wanted to study a work had to make a copy of it on the palm leaves with the style. This process was laborious and at the same time expensive. This was one of the factors which prevented the spread of education among all the sections of the people. Nāvalar rectified this defect by establishing a printing press in Madras and publishing Tamil works. All the Tamil works on Saiva Religion and also some of the best known classical literary works saw the light of publication for the first time by the labours of this great scholar.

In connection with this revival movement we cannot forget to mention the labours of another great Tamil scholar Rao Bahadur C.W. Tāmōtaram Piḷḷai. He was born at Ćiruppiṭṭi, Jaffna, in the year 1832. He had his higher education at the Vaṭṭukkōṭṭai Seminary, where he studied under great scholars like Nevins, Mills and Carrol Viśvanāta Piḷḷai. Later on he joined the Presidency College, Madras, as a lecturer in Tamil, from where he sat for the B.A. Examination conducted for the first time by the University

22. Mudaliyār C. Rāsanāyagam : *The British Period of the History of Jaffna*, p. 150.

CEYLON'S CONTRIBUTION TO TAMIL LANGUAGE

of Madras after its inception in 1857. There were only two candidates who sat for the examination; one was C. W. Tāmōtaram Piḷḷai and the other was Carrol Viśvanāta Piḷḷai who was his teacher at the Seminary at Vaṭṭukkōṭṭai. Both of them passed the Examination; but Tāmōtaram Piḷḷai came first and his teacher Viśvanāta Piḷḷai came second in the pass list. Thus it happened that the first graduates of the University of Madras were students from Jaffna.

Tāmōtaram Piḷḷai collected some of the oldest works in Tamil which were in the form of manuscripts, edited them carefully and got them printed and published. Some of the oldest works on Tamil grammar like *Tolkāppiyam*, and Sangam works like *Kalittokai* would have perished and been forgotten by this time if not for the indefatigable labours of this scholar.

In short it may not be too much to say that the revival of Tamil language and literature is due in a large measure to the untiring efforts of two persons. One was the great Ārumuka Nāvalar and the other was C. W. Tāmōtaram Piḷḷai. The former gave a new life to the language by the publication of all the most important religious works in the language. The latter brought out to the public the oldest classical works including some of the works of the Sangam Period.

In this connection the contribution made by the Tamil Scholars of Ceylon towards the study of Tamil culture should also be mentioned. The earliest of these scholars is Simon Casie Chitty. His literary activities extended over a wide field displaying a keen insight and study of Oriental languages and Historical researches. He was an ardent antiquarian and was well versed in the flora and fauna of the island. His work *The Tamil Plutarch* which gives in English a summary account of the lives of the poets and poetesses of Southern India and Ceylon was the first attempt to write a book on the history of Tamil literature on the European model. This work was published for the first time in 1859. The other work to be published on the model of the work of Casie Chitty was the one called *Pāvalar Carittira Tīpakam*. This was written in Tamil by one A. Catācivam Piḷḷai and was published in 1886.

On the historical side the work of Kanagasabhai Piḷḷai entitled "*The Tamils 1800 Years' Ago*" is perhaps unrivalled. This book serves as the foundation even today of all the historical studies connected with South India and Ceylon that are being carried on both in India and Ceylon. The labours of Mutaliyār C. Rāsanāyagam also should not be omitted in this connection. Besides his numerous articles on the history of Ceylon that appeared from time to time in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch), his work on the history of Jaffna called *Ancient Jaffna* is a great attempt to give an account of the history of the Ancient Kingdom of Jaffna and the Tamil people.

UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON REVIEW

On the religious side also a good deal of work has been done by scholars from Ceylon. The earliest scholar to pursue this branch of study was Nānapirakāca Tēcīkar who, during the Portuguese times, went away from Jaffna and lived at Citamparam. He was well-versed in the Āgama Literature and possessed a critical insight into the philosophy of the Saiva Siddhānta. He wrote a commentary on the Tamil Saiva Siddhānta work *Civañāna Cittiyār* which still remains unsurpassed in its interpretation of the principles of Saiva Siddhānta. Another scholar who worked on similar lines was M. Tiruviḷāṅkam of Colombo. He wrote commentaries on some of the leading works on Saiva Siddhānta philosophy. Kāci Vāci Centinātaiyar, a disciple of Ārumuka Nāvalar, rendered into Tamil the *Nīlakanṭha Bhāṣya* of the *Brahma Sūtras* and gave this commentary his own interpretation. He also wrote a commentary on *Civañāna Pōtam* of Meykaṅṭa Tēvar.

The late-lamented Srimat Swami Vipulānanda was the first scholar who made a bold attempt to rebuild the lost musical system of the Ancient Tamils from information available from literary, inscriptional and sculptural records. His work *Yāl-nūl* is epoch-making in the field of Tamil musical research. *Mataṅka Cūḷāmaṇi* another of his works explains in detail the principles of the Tamil Drama.

K. KANAPATHI PILLAI