

A Tamil Inscription from Panduvasnuvara¹

THIS inscription was discovered by the then Archaeological Commissioner, Dr. S. Paranavithana, in the year 1951 at Paṇḍuvasnuvara, which was otherwise called Parākramapura, the capital of the Principality of Dakkhīṇa-deśa for a time during the medieval period. It is situated in the Girātālana Korale of the Devamādi Hatpattu in the Kurunāgala District. The place is 22 miles from Chilaw on the Wariyapola road. This inscription was discovered on an ancient site south of the Citadel. Its discovery is mentioned in the Archaeological survey of Ceylon Report for the year 1951².

The inscription is written on a stone slab. It consists of 22 lines, clearly incised between ruled lines. It is in the Tamil script of about the 12th century A.D., with Grantha characters mixed up here and there. In the following words Grantha and Tamil Characters are mixed up :

பாநாக்,மஹாஹ - Parākrama bāhu—in this word ப (pa) and ம (ma) are engraved in Tamil and the rest in Grantha (1.2) ; (2) in lines 15 and 16 the same word appears, and here too only ரா (rā) and க்ர (kra) are in Grantha. (3) In line 15, in the word அலக்ரதபயந் (alakra-tapuyan) க்ர (kra) is written in Grantha. (4) In line 21, in the word ஸ்ரீபுரநகர் (Śrīpura nakar), ஸ்ரீ (Śrī) is written in Grantha.

There is a confusion between the dental na and the alveolar ṇa in two places. In the word அலக்ரதபயந் (alakratapuyan-1.15) the dental na comes at the end. Since it is a rational masculine noun, the standard dialect of Tamil would use only the alveolar ṇa. But in the proper noun Kuḷantey (1.22) the alveolar ṇa comes where the dental na should occur. The word tai is written as taiy (11.5-6) with y (ய) after ai. Also, the name Kuḷantai is written Kuḷantey (1.22). In this, the final ai is reduced to e and an 'y' is also added to this e. This form of adding 'y' after e and ai is found frequently in the language of inscriptions of South India, not only in this

1. I am very much obliged to the Archaeological Commissioner for giving me permission to publish this inscription.

2. Archaeological Survey of Ceylon Report 1951 p. 6.

period, but even earlier. According to grammatical Tamil the final short 'u' followed by a 'y' is changed into the short 'i'. This rule is observed in the combination *niccaṅka mallar̥ki -yāṅṅaiṅciṅ* (ll.3-4). But in the combination *yāṅṅaiṅciṅ tiṅakaraṅ*, the 't' (த) occurring after 'r̥' (ர) should have also become 'i' according to the grammar of the standard dialect. Generally, the language of this inscription tallies with the standard grammatical dialect of the period.

The king, in whose regnal year this inscription is dated, is the Kalinga ruler Niśśaṅka Malla (1187-1196 A.D.).³ He is referred to as the king of South Ceylon *தென்னிலங்கைக் கோன்* (*Tenniṅkaikai kōṅ*) and is given the *biruda* *Parākramabāhu*. In his Sinhalese inscriptions he is given several *birudas*, namely, Śiri Sanghabodhi, Kalinga Parākramabāhu, Apratimalla, and Cakravartin.

This inscription is dated in the fifth year of Niśśaṅka Malla's reign. Since this ruler ascended the throne in 1187 A.D., the date of this inscription is to be placed in the year 1191 A.D. or 1192 A.D. The astronomical data given in this inscription has also helped to confirm this. On the basis of this data the nearest equivalent date of the record would be either (1) Thursday, the 7th January, 1188 A.D., or (2) Thursday, the 3rd January, 1191 A.D. The latter equivalent agrees with the fifth year of Niśśaṅka Malla. Incidentally it also helps the identification of the king with king Niśśaṅka Malla of the Kalinga line.⁴

The Military general, whose benevolent deeds are recorded in this inscription, is to be identified with Lak Vijayasinha mentioned in the slab inscriptions of Niśśaṅka Malla at Polonnaruva. His name in this inscription is *Matimāṅapaṅacara* alias *Kulaṅṅey*.

The place-name *Tenniṅkaikai* (*தென்னிலங்கை* l.1) in this inscription is translated here as *Laṅkā* of the South. The adjective *teṅ* (*தென்*) lends itself to various interpretations. The meanings of *teṅ* as given in the Madras Tamil Lexicon are (1) south, and (2) beauty. *Tenniṅkaikai* here might mean "South Ceylon", "the beautiful Ceylon," or "Ceylon of the South"; but the first interpretation does not seem to suit the context. Whether Ceylon was divided into North and South at this time of its history is a disputed question, especially after the reign of Parākramabāhu I, under whom Ceylon

3. *Epigraphia Zeylanica* Vol. 3 pp. 23.

4. I am greatly indebted to Dr. G. S. Gai, Superintendent for Epigraphy, Ootacamund, South India, for having kindly got me the services of the expert in Tamil inscriptions in calculating this date on the basis of the astronomical data, given in this inscription.

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was practically united. Paṇḍuvas Nuvara was for some time the capital of Dakkhiṇadeśa.⁵ The Teṇṇilaṅkai of this inscription from Paṇḍuvas Nuvara might have been a Tamil rendering of the name Dakkhiṇadeśa. That there was political disunity in the island during the reign of Niśśanka Malla is seen from his inscription at Katugaha-Galgē.⁶ But it would seem strange that while in his Sinhalese inscriptions he is referred to as having subjugated the whole of Ceylon (muḷu lak diva),⁷ in this inscription he is called the king of South Ceylon. Therefore, only the last interpretation is suitable.

The word cayittam occurs in this inscription, and is derived from Sanskrit Caitya (Pali, Cetiya). This word, meaning a Buddhist temple is found in Tamil. There is also an alternate form of this word, namely cattiyaṃ. In Maṇimēkalai, the form Cayittam occurs.⁸

A number of titles are given to the General Matimāṇapaṅcara. The exact significance of some of these titles is difficult to explain. One of them is Mēṇai. This is perhaps a shortening of the form mēṇavara found in Sinhalese inscriptions, as, for example, in the Gaḍalādeṇiya slab inscription.⁹ Codrington suggests that the Mcheṇavara clan was that branch of the royal family descended from the ex-nun (mcheṇi) Sunandā by her marriage with Bodhigupta, one of the seven Maurya princes who brought the Bo-tree to Ceylon. The Commander-in-Chief Kulaṅtey referred to in this inscription might have been one belonging to this clan. Another title is Ceṇevi nātaṅ and means Commander-in-Chief. Ceṇevi is a Sinhalese word frequently occurring in inscriptions and means an army. The title Ceṇevi Nāvan is found in inscriptions and Ceṇevi Nātaṅ might have been an equivalent of this Sinhalese title.¹⁰ A third title Tiruppiyāṅ (திருப்பியான்) is probably a compound of Tiru (திரு) meaning "eminent," and piyāṅ (பியான்). The word piyāṅ may be the equivalent of the Sinhalese Sunandā an honorific term for father. This word might have been abbreviated into the Tamil form piyāṅ. A similar form piyāṅan-vahanse occurs in the Pritidānaka maṇḍapa Rock Inscription, (Polonnaruva) of the reign of Niśśanka Malla.¹¹ If Vahanse means Tiru and if Piyāṅan is equated with piyāṅ, then Tiruppiyāṅ may be a Tamil form of Piyāṅan vahanse, meaning Majesty. Here, Tiru is taken to be Lakṣmi, and piyāṅ as "beloved" and

5. Sasanavamsa -(Bude's Edition) p. 136.

6. E. Z. III. p. 330.

7. E. Z. 3. p. 126.

8. Manimekalai 28 : 131.

9. E. Z. iv. p. 19.

10. E. Z. II. p. 191.

11. E. Z. Vol. II, No. 29. p. 165 ll.5-6.

is translated as 'Beloved of Lakṣmi.' The title Ilaṅkai-atikāri is the Tamil form of the title Lankādhikāra found in Sinhalese inscriptions.¹² The title Aivarkaṇṭaṇ (ஐவர்கண்டன்) means the Destroyer of the Five (meaning Pāṇḍyas). This practice of conferring this title on the Commander-in-Chief, was followed after Laṅkāpura, who defeated a section of the Pāṇḍyas once. Even in his inscriptions Niśśaṅka-Malla claims that his army 'twice proceeded to the Pāṇḍya country.'¹³ Matimāṇapaṅcara must have been the Commander who led this army to South India. The title Vaṇuveri may be a Tamilicised form of Manamperi.

The Sinhalese words that have been used in this inscription are vaṇuveri (l.14), mēṇai (l.16) Seṇevi (l.16), pirivuṇa (ll.19 and 20), and ṇama (l.22).

A number of astronomical terms have also been used here. Cuṛavu is the Tamil equivalent of Makara, and stands for the Zodiac Capricorn. Uttiraṭṭāti is one of the twenty-seven Nakṣatras of the Lunar month. It is derived from Sanskrit uttarabhādra padā, the 26th nakṣatra. Yōkam means "union," especially of the stars and planets, and is translated here as the "lucky conjunction" of the planets. Tai is the Tamil month corresponding to January-February of the Christian calendar.

The following is the text of the inscription :—

1. தென்னிலங்கைக்கொ
2. ன்பராகுமரொஹு நிசு
3. சங்கமல்லற்கியான்
4. டஞ்சிற் தினகரன் சுற
5. விலணைந்தவித்தை-
6. தய்யிலுத்திரட்டாதி
7. யழ்பக்கம் பொன்னவன்
8. தினநற்சாதயொகத்தில்
9. உயர்தரும் பொதிமாதவ
10. ற்குப் பொற்பமர் கொயில் மு
11. னிவராலையந்தெனறந்
12. திகழ்சாலையுஞ்சயித்தம்

12. E. Z. II. p. 101.

13. E. Z. II. p. 155.

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13. அன்னவை திகழ் ஐயர் கண்
 14. டன் வனு வெரி இலங்கை அதி
 15. காரிஅலகர்தபுயந் தென்பரா
 16. கரமன்மெணைசசெனவிநா
 17. தன் திருப்பியான் மன்னி
 18. ய சிறப்பிலமலதருமழகா
 19. ற் பராஈரம அதிகாரி ப்பி
 20. ரிவுன வளர்தர அமைத்தான்
 21. ஸ்ரீ புரநகருள் மதிமானபஞ்
 22. சரனம குழந்தெய்.

The following is the translation:—

1. Tenṇilaṅkaik-ko
2. n- Parākramabāhu Nic-
3. Caṅka Mallar kiyāṇ-
4. ṭaṅciṭ ṭiṅkaraṇ cūra-
5. viḷaṇainta vit-
6. taiyyil uttirattāti
7. Yē ḷpakkam poṇṇavaṇ
8. ṭiṅa naṭ cātayōkattil
9. uyar tarum Pōtimātava-
10. ṛkup poṇṇamar kōyil mu-
11. ṇivar ālaiyan-tēṅaṅaṅ-
12. ṭikal cālaiyuṅ cayittam
13. aṇṇavai ṭikal Aivarakaṅ-
14. ṭaṅ Vaṅuveri Ilaṅkai Ati-
15. kāri Alakratapuyan Ten Parā-
16. kramaṅ Menaic Cenevi nā-
17. ṭaṅ Tiruppiyāṇ maṇṇi-
18. ya ciṇṇappilamala tarumalakā-
19. ṛ Parākrama Atikārip pi-
20. rivuṅa vaḷartara amaṭṭāṅ
21. Śrī pura Nakaruḷ Matimāṅa paṅ-
22. cara ṅama Kulaṅtey.

Translation :—

In the fifth year of Parākramabāhu Niccaṅka Mallar, the king of South Ceylon on the occasion of the lucky conjunction of the planets, on Thursday, which is the seventh day of the *pakṣa* and on which the *Nakṣatra*

was *Uttiraṭṭāti* in the month of Tai, when the sun had gone into the Zodiac Capricorn, Matimāṇapañcara¹⁴ named Kulaṅtey, who is the Destroyer of the Pandyas, Vanuveri, the Atikāri of Laṅka, he whose shoulders are replete with decorations, the Teṇ, Parākramaṇ, Mēṇai the Commander of the forces, he who is the beloved of Tiru (Lakṣmī), built to flourish in Śrīpura nakara,¹⁵ a beautiful temple to the great Pōtimātavar (Bodhi Mātava), a monastery for monks, an alms hall for distribution of delicious food, a cayittam (cetiya), all this, and a college named Parākrama Atikāri Pirivuna.”

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14. “Who was an embodiment of wisdom and pride.”

15. This place, now known as Malasnē, is situated near Hiripitiya in the Kurunāgala District. *J.R.A.S. (C.B.) New Series Vol. VI (Sp. No.) p. 104.*