

# Some Eminent Tamils

Writers and other leading figures  
(19th to 20th Centuries)

V. Muttucumaraswamy

Department of  
Hindu Religious & Cultural Affairs

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## FOREWORD

The Publication, 'Some Eminent Tamils - Writers and other leading figures (19th to 20th Centuries)' authored by Mr.V.Muttukumaraswamy, is a significant contribution to the understanding of the History of Tamils and Tamil Culture in Sri Lanka during the 19th and 20th Centuries. The Publication is a compilation of the life sketches of 24 Tamil Scholars, Statesmen and intellectuals of the period between 1820 and 1950.

I am informed by relevant scholars that this is the first time a publication that contains a comprehensive and exhaustive description of the life and works of so many Tamil personalities is appearing in English.

The Author, the late Mr. V.Muttucumaraswamy, was a Trained Teacher. He had been a distinguished career at St. Joseph's College, Colombo, for over 20 years. Later he had joined the Staff of Forest Hill School Decres Road, London, U.K. He had also been a free lance journalist, and has written both in Tamil and English.

This publication contains a lot of valuable information and will be found useful by those who want to have an understanding of the History of Tamil Culture in Shri Lanka in the 19th and early 20th Centuries.

The State Ministry of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs is happy to assist in the publication.

P.P.Devaraj,  
State Minister for Hindu Religious &  
Cultural Affairs.

## PREFACE

It would be correct to say that my late Husband Varalatu Varnar Mr. V. Muttucumaraswamy devoted his whole life to writing and publishing his Books. Brought up in the tradition of writing and publishing of his illustrious grand-uncle Mr. A. Mootootampipillai, the first Tamil Encyclopaedist and writer, my husband was determined to follow in his footsteps. He first published his Historical Readers through their Navalar Press which had been established by his grand-uncle in Jaffna and continued to contribute research articles in all the well known newspapers in the island. His first major work was "Arumuga Navalar" in English which brought the life of that great Tamil patriot to the attention of all the people in the island who read English. He went on to publish more books, all at his own expense.

Having retired from teaching at St. Joseph's College, he went to London to join our son Ajit Arabinthan in 1968. My husband taught at Forest Hill School in London. I followed him in 1969 and taught for some time. My husband continued to visit the British Museum Library, India House Library, Bible Society Library and other libraries to do research and collect material for his books. He was engaged in research and writing till his last breath, one might say. Most of the essays in this Volume were written by him during the late Seventies. I helped him by looking after him. Our daughter Shambavy who was still in Sri Lanka, helped in the printing of his books till she came to London.

All the Tamil Associations in London joined together in 1978 to organise a function to honour him for his great contribution towards the history of the Tamil people. He was conferred the title of "Varalatu Varnar" and a gold shawl and purse were presented to him, as the tradition is among us.

Ten years have passed since he breathed his last. Only now I have succeeded in getting a collection of biographies published in book form with the help of the State Ministry for Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs. The articles in these pages were separated from all my husband's papers and books by our daughter Bhanumathy who has now come to London.

All the other books which had been published by my husband have yet to be reprinted. Tamil people from Sri Lanka now live in the U.K., Europe, U.S.A., Canada, Malaysia and Australia. People tell me that these books which can be made available to the Tamils living in these countries will help them and their growing children to know about their roots in Sri Lanka. I hope some benevolent members of the public will help in re-printing and distributing the books and thus help in perpetuating the knowledge about the great people who lived in Sri Lanka and helped in building the nation.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the Hon.Minister for Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs P.P.Devaraj for his understanding of my problems and taking a personal interest in the publication of this book. I thank Mr.K.Thayaparan, Secretary, Mr.K.Shanmugalingam, Director, Mr.A.M.Nahiya the Assistant Director and all the others at the Ministry for their help. I would also thank Mr.Bertram Chinnaiyah for going through the Proof and making the necessary correction. I thank Mr. V.Sadagopan who has risen to the occasion and produced the book within such a short period of time. Every one of them has helped Tamils all over the world to know and appreciate their great heritage.

May everybody be blessed.

MRS. THANGARATNAM MUTTUCUMARASWAMY.

## CONTENTS

1. Simon Casie Chitty	01
2. Arunasalam Sathasivampillai	06
3. Daniel Carroll Vyramuttu Visuvanathapillai	11
4. William Nevins	14
5. Srila Sri Siva Sankarapandithar	20
6. Arunuga Navalar	22
7. Sivasambu Pulavar	29
8. C.W. Katiravetpillai	34
9. Murugesu Pandithar	51
10. Sabapathy Navalar	58
11. Kasi Vasi Senthil Natha Aiyar	61
12. A.Kumaraswamy Pulavar	66
13. A. Mootootambipillai	75
14. Mudaliyar S.Sabarettnam	87
15. T.Kanagasundarampillai	92
16. Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy	100
17. Swamik Gnanapragasar	108
18. K.Somasundara Pulavar	114
19. S. Shivapadasundaram	134
20. Navaneetha Krishna Bharathi	142
21. Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva	147
22. Swami Vipulananda	153
23. Dr. S. Natesan	161
24. Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan	167

*SOME EMINENT TAMILS - 1*

**SIMON CASIE CHITTY  
(1807 - 1852)**

Simon Casie Chitty, was one of the pioneer writers of what we call "Tamiliana" in Ceylon. He was the first to write the "Early History of Jaffna", and was a scholar who had a good knowledge of Tamil and English.

He was born at Kalpitiya which is a small coastal town in North West Ceylon. He belonged to a "Chitty" family. The "Chitties" were originally Tamils from the Pandyan Country in South India who lived in the Madura and Thirunelvely districts who had come to our Island and married the Sinhalese; they owned extensive property in several towns, such as Colombo, Galle and Kalpitiya in Ceylon.

He was born on the 21st March 1807. His first appointment was Interpreter Mudaliyar of the Magistrate's Court at Puttalam, which formed part of the Tamil Kingdom, during the days of the Arya Chakravarthy kings from the 13th century to the 16th century.

He was an efficient translator and secured a higher position as District Mudaliyar and Maniagar or Chief Head Man of Puttalam in 1833. It was the year in which the Legislative Council was established in Ceylon, as a result of the recommendations of Coldbrook and Cameron. The first Tamil Legislative Councillor who was appointed to this Council was Coomaraswamy Mudaliyar in 1833. But he died on the 7th November 1836.

Mudaliyar Simon Casie Chitty was nominated Tamil Representative of the Legislative Council in 1838 by the Governor of Ceylon. He continued to serve there until 1845.

Later he was appointed to the Civil Service, and served as District Judge of Chilaw until 1852, when he died prematurely at the age of 45.

Simon Casie Chitty was a scholar in his own right. He delved deep into Oriental literature, and made a thorough study of what we may now describe as the "sociology" of the Tamils. He was a pioneer orientalist or one who studied certain aspects of "Dravidology". He was one interested in paleography and folklore. He was a linguist, for he had mastered Tamil, Sanskrit, Sinhalese, Arabic and Hebrew - besides English. He had no correspondence courses or lecturers or professors to guide him in his earnest quest for knowledge.

In 1824, when Casie Chitty was in his teens, a youth of 17, he had conceived the idea of compiling the origins of various races that inhabited Ceylon - only an Arunachalam would have compiled a Census Report. He wanted to trace the origins of the place names of our Shri Lanka.

The publication known as "Ceylon Gazetteer" was published in 1834, with the generous help of a hundred guineas of Sir Robert Wilmot Horton, who recognized the talents of Mudaliyar Simon Casie Chitty. There were only 500 copies printed. One copy of this, is available at the Royal Asiatic Society, Colombo.

The Observer of March 17th 1833, the oldest newspaper of Ceylon, contained the following editorial:-

"The author of the Gazetteer, Simon Casie Chitty Mudaliyar, a native of the Island, has rendered himself deserving of lasting praise for the manner in which he has combated with and overcome the difficulties that must have

presented themselves, while collecting materials for the accomplishment of this arduous undertaking and the complete success that has attended his efforts proves him to be a man possessed of a degree of energy for which his countrymen generally, seldom have credit, but which ought in him to be liberally awarded, so that others may be induced to exert themselves and pursue the same useful course equally advantageous to the island and benefiting the community at large."

Besides the Gazetteer of Ceylon, Casie Chitty wrote a number of learned articles on literary, historical, antiquarian, religious and philological subjects.

His "Tamil Plutarch" which was published after the author's death in 1859, was the first collection of the lives of Tamil authors and also Ceylon Tamil authors. The Ceylon Printers reprinted this with a Foreword from Swami Vipulananda about a few years ago. This has about 200 biographical sketches in English.

The "Castes, Customs, Manners and Literature of the Tamils," was published over eight decades after Simon Casie Chitty's death, in 1834, by his grand-daughter, the late Mrs. Gardener.

The contributions to periodicals are:-

1. The Madras Government Gazette -  
"On the identity of Koodremala (Horse Mountain) September 1830.
2. The Ceylon Government Gazette -
  - (a) On the Affinity between the Maldivian and Sinhalese Languages - December 11, 1830.
  - (b) On the Affinity between the Javanese and Sanskrit Languages - February 16, 1831.
  - (c) Translation of Kavi Raja Varathayan's Poem, giving an account of the origin and history



- of the Hindu Temple at Trincomalee - November 26, 1831.
3. The Colombo Journal -  
History of the Queen Alliarasany - March 23, 1833.
  4. The Colombo Friend  
On the Affinity between the Ancient Egyptians and the Brahmins, 1838.
  5. The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain -
    - (a) Remarks on the origin and history of the Parawas - 1837
    - (b) Remarks on the site and ruins of Tanmana Nuwara, with a survey - 1841.
  6. The Colombo Observer -
    - (a) Aphorisms of the Tamils - April 1840.
    - (b) Extract from Kasi Kandam - April 13, 1840.
  7. The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society - Ceylon Branch
    - (a) An account of some ancient coins found at Colpentyn - 1839.
    - (b) Translation of the sixth chapter of the Tiruvathavurar puranam.
    - (c) History of Jaffna from the earliest period to the Dutch conquest.
    - (d) Catalogue of Tamil Books with the names of their authors.
    - (e) An analysis of the great poem of the Moors entitled "Seerah"
  8. The Ceylon Magazine -  
On the Rodiyas with a specimen of their language.
  9. The Ceylon Magazine -
    - (a) Brief notices of the Tamil Philosophers and Poets in the South of India and Ceylon.

- (b) Remarks on the Language and Literature of the Tamils.
- (c) An account of Ceylon Mass.
- (d) Creation and Fall of Adam according to Mohammedan Legends.

The published works of Simon Casie Chitty were (a) A Correct outline of the Classification of the Tamil castes; (b) An essay on the ceremonies observed by the Tamil Castes; (c) Essay on the Manners and Customs of the Moors of Ceylon; (d) Tamil Translation of the Epitome of the History of Ceylon; (e) Malai Agaradi; (f) Udaya Aditya or the Rising Sun - A Tamil Newspaper - 1841; (g) Life of Father Joseph Vaz - 1848; (h) Sketch of the rise and progress of the Catholic Church in Ceylon - 1848.

Simon Casie Chitty's unpublished works are:-

- (a) The Sanskrit and Tamil Dictionary.
- (b) Thesaurus of foreign words and phrases in use amongst the Tamils.
- (b) An English and Tamil Lexicon.

The late Mrs. Gardner, wife of Rotary Governor Gardiner, who was Managing Director of the Ceylon Proctors Ltd. largest holding company in Ceylon in 1949, reprinted "The Tamil Plutarch" some years ago. Dr. Caldwell in his "Comparative Grammar of Dravidian languages", acknowledged the authority of Chitty's intellectual history of the Tamils in his Tamil Plutarch.

**SOME EMINENT TAMILS - 2.**

**ARUNASALAM  
SATHASIVAMPILLAI  
alias  
J. R. ARNOLD  
(1820 - 1896)**

Author, Editor, Poet and Tamil scholar, Sathasivampillai, alias Arnold, was an intellectual genius of the 19th century. He was a close kinsman of P.S. Page, the first pioneer of English education in the North, who had established an English School at Manipay, and which later became the Manipay Memorial School.

His father was Arunasalam, a noble of Tellipallai. His grandfather was Kathirithamby Chattambiyar. His mother was a daughter of Kathirithambi Chattambiyar. He was born on October 11, 1820 at Navaly, Manipay, Jaffna. He began to study English in the English School conducted by the American Mission at Manipay, in 1831. He studied Tamil from 1825 to 1830 at the same school.

He joined the Batticotta Seminary in 1832. This was established by the American Missionaries in 1824. Dr. Poor was the head of this American institution. He was a Saivite from his birth until 1835, when he became a Protestant at the age of 15.

He studied for eight years at the Seminary from 1832 to 1840. He graduated in 1840. At that time the Seminary was presided by Rev. H.R. Horsington. Arnold's classmates were William Nevins, alias Muttucumarar Cidambarapillai, Daniel Carroll Vyramuttu Viswanathapillai, Evarts, Roger and Stickney all intellectuals.

After Arnold graduated, he became a teacher of the Manipay English School in 1840.

In 1844 he proceeded to Madura with Rev. J.C. Smith. After he returned shortly from Madura, Arnold was appointed as a teacher in the English Mission School at Chavakachcheri.

In 1846 he was transferred to the Uduvil English School. He taught Tamil to Miss Campbell, the lady missionary who was stationed at Uduvil.

He married Margaret E. Nitchie, alias Muttupillai, on July 9, 1846.

In 1847 Arnold was transferred as a teacher of the Uduvil Girls' School. This was the first girls' English school of the Protestants which was started in 1824.

In 1848 he proceeded to Madras with Dr. Spaulding and Pandit Santhiresegaram, to be of help in the revision of the Tamil translation of the Bible done by Percival with the help of Arumuga Navalar.

He published his Thiruchatakam (100 stanzas on Jesus Christ) - his first publication of poems in 1850.

He published Meyvethasaram or a poetical compendium of the Bible in 1852. In the same year, he became Headmaster of the Female Boarding School in Uduvil.

He succeeded Carroll Visuvanathapillai, his classmate as Tamil Editor, Morning Star on June 1st 1857. He continued to be its Editor till his death in 1896.

He was Vice-President, Jaffna Native Evangelical Society from 1853 to 1856, and its Secretary from 1856 to 1860.

He published the "Universal History" in Tamil - the "Ithihasam" in 1858. This was the first of its kind, which touched upon a wide compass of World history. Ceylon was a pioneer of this branch of knowledge.

In 1859 he published the Nanneri Kottu - which is a poem which comprises "what is ethical behaviour?"

He published a book on Astronomy "Vana Sastram" in 1861.

He became Editor of the "Morning Star" (English) in 1864.

He published "Moral tales" or "Nanneri Katha Sangirakam" in 1869.

He became Tamil Instructor to Rev. Dr. Howland in 1873.

He published the second edition of Thiruchathakam in 1874.

He became Tamil Instructor to Rev. R.C. Hastings in 1879.

He wrote a number of short stories.

It was during this year that Arnold Sathasivampillai supported the candidature of Ponnambalam Ramathan to the Legislative Assembly in 1879, for the seat of Tamil Representative which fell vacant on the death of Sir Muttu Cumaraswamy (1861-1879). Ramanathan's opponent was C. Brito. He addressed a public meeting at Valigamam.

That Great Scholar Arumuga Navalar and his friend Caroll Visuvanathapillai had addressed a public meeting at Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarpannai in support of Ponnambalam Ramanathan.

Jaffna College was established in 1872. It rose like a phoenix from the ashes of the "Batticotta Seminary" which functioned from 1823 to 1855. Arnold Sathasivampillai was appointed as Professor of Tamil Literature in Jaffna College in 1881. He taught Tamil to Miss K.E. Hastings, Mrs. R.C. Hastings and Professor F.K. Sanders Ph.D. (now of Yale University, U.S.A.) all American educationists.

He published the "Pavalar Charithra Theepakam" or the Galaxy of Tamil Poets" in 1886. It was an excellent

compilation of Tamil poets, both from Tamil Nadu and Eeela Nadu.

He translated the accounts of the Tamil poets as presented in English in the Tamil "Plutarch" by Casie Chitty and published it in 1859. Moreover he collected various biographical sketches of Ceylon poets, and arranged all of these accounts in the Tamil alphabetical order.

His appraisal of Sila Sri Arumuga Navalalar's literary achievements and presentation of his life and of his parents are realistic.

There are more details of the life of Koolangai Tambiran in this Galaxy than in any other Jaffna History or History of Tamil Literature. This book was revised by Dr. Poologasingham of the University of Peradeniya and published by the Colombo Tamil Sangam. . . . There are two parts. This is a remarkable piece of scholarship.

In 1887 Arnold published "Illara-Nondi". This was a poem in the popular "Nondi Sinthu" on the virtues of family life. In 1889 he published "Urichol Nigandu". In 1890, "Keerthana Sangraham" and "Velai Anthathi" - the first being a collection of hymns and the other a collection of religious poems were published.

Although he retired as a teacher of Jaffna College in 1891, he retained the Editorship of the Morning Star.

In 1893 he brought out the second edition of Moral Tales or "Nanneri Kottu".

He published Family Mirror or "Kudumba Tharpanam".

He was an active man until the last. He was very punctual in life. As a teacher, when he did not know some intricate matter, he openly said so. This shows his intellectual honesty. He saw to it that he published his paper in time. He was a vivid writer.

He published "Arulappa Navalalar" in 1896.

He died on February 20, 1896 at the age of 76 at Manipay leaving a host of relations.

[One of his grand-nephews was A. Mootootambipillai, of whom we have written a biographical sketch in this series.]

**DANIEL CAROLL VYRAMUTTU  
VISUVANATHAPILLAI  
(1820 - 1880)**

He hailed from Suthumalai, a village in Jaffna. His father was Vyramuttu, also known as Vyravanathapillai, an Ayurvedic Doctor. He studied from a relative, Vyravanather, a teacher, and Sanskrit from Ganga Pattar. He joined the Batticotta Seminary in 1832, Vaddukoddai, and graduated from there. This Seminary was started by the American Missionaries in 1824. It was an "Academy" on the lines of the "Athens University" in Greece. It gave a good foundation, not only in Western literature and sciences, but also Eastern literature and sciences. Besides English, Tamil, Sanskrit, Mathematics, Logic, Astronomy and the philosophy of Saiva - Siddhanta were taught. He became a convert to Christianity.

He joined as an instructor of mathematics in the "Batticotta Seminary". He was a teacher of C.W. Thamo-tharampillai. He was a contemporary of William Nevins Muttu Cumarar Sithambarapillai. He was the first to produce an Algebra in Tamil - "Visa Kanitham" - in 1855. He was an adept in astronomy and edited the Astronomical Journal.

The Morning Star was started by the American Missionaries in 1841. It was published in English and Tamil. This paper did yeoman service to the people. It helped to diffuse knowledge and enlighten the readers with its views. Carroll Visuvanathapillai was Editor of this paper, a few years after its inception, until 1856.

Soon after Visuvanathapillai went to Madras and he sat for the Bachelor of Arts Examination of the Madras University in 1857. This was the year in which both the Madras and Bombay Universities were established. There were only two candidates who sat for this examination, Visuvanathapillai and Thamotheampillai. Both passed successfully; Thamotheampillai secured the first place and a better grade than Visuvanathapillai.

#### A Controversy

Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar published the "Saiva Thooshana Parikaram" - A Defence of Saivism in 1854. This evoked even the admiration of Christian contemporaries, such as Rev. Walton, the Superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission, Jaffna. A review of this was found in the "Hindu Pastors". There were letters exchanged between C. Arumukam (later Arumuga Navalar) and the Christian Missionary relating to it.

Caroll Visuvanathapillai, entered into the fray and wrote the "Supra Theepam" in 1866. It attacked the God Subramania, whom he alleged had two wives. Regarding the style of the prose of "Supra Theepam", Selvanayakam (now Professor of Tamil, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya), author of History of Tamil prose, comments that this was loaded with a great admixture of Sanskrit terms. Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar wrote a reply to Supra Theepam - the "Supra-Potham".

#### A Conversion

It has been recorded in the life of Arumuga Navalar by T.Kailasapillai, that there was a confrontation between Navalar and Visuvanathapillai. There was a heated argument between the two. But in the end Visuvanathapillai was repentant for having attacked Saivism. He went to Chidambaram - the holy city of the Saivites, cauterized his tongue for having uttered vituperation

against Saivism and returned to Jaffna as a Saivite and as an admirer of Navalar. He was an able speaker, an excellent translator into Tamil.

It is said that Visuvanathapillai wrote a rejoinder to his own book "Supra Theepam", but this was not published and was burnt by his Christian relatives.

He wrote a Calendar (Kala Theepikai) which was not published, a Tamil Calendar and an English - Tamil Dictionary. He helped Rev. Myron Winslow in editing his Tamil - English Dictionary.

The missionaries thought that he had been seized by a fit of paganism.

When there was a public meeting at the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Vannaipannai, in 1879, in order to canvass for Ramanathan (against C. Brito, the Advocate) for the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the premature death of Sir C. Muttu Coomaraswamy, Visuvanathapillai was requested to preside over the public meeting, which was to have been presided by Arumuga Navalar, but who was not able to do so owing to his ill health.

Visuvanathapillai died on the 21st of the month of Kaarthigai (November 15 - December 15) in 1880; just a year after the passing away of Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar.

Mr. H.W. Thambyah, the eminent Author of Law Books the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Ottawa, Canada, is a lineal descendant of this author.

**WILLIAM NEVINS  
Alias  
MUTTUCUMARAR  
SIDAMBARAPILLAI  
(1820 - 1889)**

A luminary of the Batticotta Seminary, William Nevins, alias Muttucumarar Sidambarapillai, was an outstanding personality of the 19th Century. He was an Educationalist, a Grammarian, a Lexicographer, a Logician, a Mathematician, and a Poet - a versatile genius.

Birth and Parentage

Sidambarapillai was born at Sanguveli, the village lying between Manipay and Uduvil. Sanguveli is a corrupt form of Sangaveli. Sangaveli owes its name to the fact that it was gifted to the Tamil Academy at Nallur by the Tamil Kings of Nallur in the 13th Century.

His father was Muttucumarar or Muttucumaraswamy-pillai. He was his father's fifth son.

Education

He was educated first at the Vaddukoddai High School until 12. When he was 12 years old in 1832 he joined the Batticotta Seminary. This seminary was conducted on the lines of a Greek Academy and the course lasted eight years. In this Academy among other subjects taught were logic, astronomy, grammar, mathematics, Tamil Literature, Sanskrit and Religion. The lecturers had both Western and Eastern concepts of education.

Education in Colonial Ceylon

According to the observations of the American Mission, by emphasising the teaching of English they aimed at providing "young natives .... with a literary and scientific education".\* In the opinion of the Mission it was only through an English education that "the treasures of European sciences and literature" could be laid before the rising generations". Furthermore, it was thought that by having "a large number of English scholars" in the country, the more important works of English could be translated and a great mass of people "could be enlightened" through such knowledge. Thus the American Mission as a matter of policy emphasized the teaching of English in their schools.

Teacher

He left the Seminary in 1840 and secured a place as an Assistant Teacher at the English School at Manipay. It was possibly the school started by Mr. P.S. Page, the first educationist in English at Manipay; it formed the nucleus of the Manipay Memorial School. He was there from 1840-1846. After 1846 he joined as an Instructor in the Batticotta Seminary and he was there till 1856.

At Madras

After 1856 William Nevins went over to Madras. There he assisted Dr. Winslow, in editing his Tamil Dictionary. We find a reference to this in the Preface to the Dictionary. It was during his stay at Madras (1856-1860) that he supervised the studies of his son, Samuel Nevins Pillai. His son passed the B.A. in Arts, obtaining second place in the examination in 1862. He also got through his B.L. and practised as a Vakil in Madras. But whom the Gods love die young. He died prematurely.

\* Pages 168 & 169, Letter of the Secretary of State to American Board of Commissioners, 20th May 1826.

William Nevins was a teacher of Mathematics, to many pupils including Europeans who had a high regard for him. Kumaraswamy Pulavar describes him as one who possessed an intellect as sharp as a file.

Sidambarapillai showed a special aptitude for Logic, Mathematics, and Grammar besides English and Tamil. He had a tenacious memory and he was noted for his solid knowledge.

#### Head Master

On the resignation of Samuel Grenier, William Nevins, alias Muttucumarar Sidambarapillai, was appointed Head Master of Wesleyan Central School, Jaffna. He filled this post with distinction for twenty-six years from 1860-1886. But by the end of 1886 he wanted to be independent and resigned from this position.

#### Founder of Schools

He started a school of his own in 2nd Cross Street, Jaffna and carried on this school for some time 1887-1888. Later, he left this and founded the Native Town High School in 1889.

Before his death in the later part of 1889, Sidambarapillai handed this school to Advocate Nagalingam who was a leading figure on the Saiva Paripalana Sabai which was founded in 1889 and which had undertaken to give the Saiva Youth a higher education in English; he in turn handed this to the Saiva Paripalana Sabai.

It has been mentioned that some time before his death Muttucumarar Sidambarapillai had studied Saiva Siddhanta and Vedanta. Perhaps his mind dwelt on the services that he could do to the 90 percent of the land who were Saivites, when he decided to hand over the institution that he had founded to a pillar of the Saivite faith, Advocate Nagalingam, who was a staunch patron of his own school.

#### His Legacy

William Nevins, alias Muttucumarar Sidambarapillai was a man of many aided talents. Once before we have mentioned his prodigious memory. He was a good mathematician, who had original ideas; of solving problems by short methods; he was a purist; he wanted to substitute certain other words for 9, 90 - other than the words now in use; "thondu" for "nine" (Onpathu) etc.

#### Author

He wrote the Elements of Logic in Tamil - "Niyaya Ilakkanum" - in two parts in 1850. The first part of which deals with Principles of Logic as enunciated by western scholars, especially Mill; and the second part, with those as enunciated by "Sivagnana Siddhiyar" - (Thamil Alavai) - a Saivite theological work of the 13th century. Thus he combined the Eastern and Western forms a quintessence of the best from each.

His selections from Tamil Literature was a compilation of selected passages from Maha-Bharata and Ramayana made for those who do not have the time and mind to read these in their original texts.

His "Essentials of Tamil Grammar" (Tamil Viyakarana) was published in three parts in 1886, out of the rules of the extant Grammar in Tamil. The last part dealing with syntax shows how clear his definition of terms were, and how his selections of illustrations have been drawn from a vast range of Tamil literature.

His English-Tamil Dictionary is valuable in view of his clear and original definitions of modern scientific terms. A copy of this is found in the Jaffna College Library. This was not published.

He was also a poet, of no mean order. His eulogy on the death of his son, Samuel Nevins Pillai, is lost. He is said to have composed a poem on a dead bird in his teens.

### Golden Jubilee

Sidambarapillai's service to education for a period of fifty years had been noted and acclaimed by the general public. When his Golden Jubilee Celebrations was celebrated in 1889 at Oddumadam, Vannarpannai, he was taken in procession with music and fireworks and he was presented with an address, and special songs composed for the occasion were sung.

He died on March 18th 1889 in Jaffna.

He was a man of sterling qualities and simple habits. He used to walk from Vaddukoddai, his house, to the Wesleyan Central School - a distance of seven miles, five days in the week. On the way many students followed him, and he discussed many a difficult question with them.

[If by posterity one would like to judge Muttucumar Sidambarapillai, he left a host of intellectuals as his successors. His son Nevins Selvadurai was Principal of Jaffna Hindu College from 1892 to 1925, with a break when he served as Vice Principal, Trinity College, Kandy in the early part of the century. From 1920-1925 when the writer was a student, Nevins Selvadurai was Principal. He firmly believed in getting his pupils to write a simple elegant style. He was a great disciplinarian. It was the days of the rod; he did not spare anybody who refused to toe the line in maintaining the order of the school.

The Jaffna Hindu College prepared students for the F.A. and B.A. for the Calcutta University and later during the writer's days, it prepared students for the Cambridge Junior and Senior Examinations.

Nevins Selvadurai was Representative of the Legislative Council that met after the Donoughmore Recommendations were introduced. He was a gifted speaker. He was awarded a J.P. ship.

One of William Nevins' nephews, Raju Watson, an old pupil of Central College, Jaffna and later St. Thomas' College, Colombo, was Inspector of Schools and later Assistant Inspector of Schools. One of his sons-in-law was R.R. Breckenridge - Inspector of Schools - who married his daughter.

William Nevins was a Guru of Thamotharampillai and Mootootambipillai who will form the subject matter of biographies in this series.]



**SRILA SRI SIVA  
SANKARAPANDITHAR  
Alias  
SANKARA NAMASIVAYA  
PULAVAR  
(1821 - 1870)**

He was from Neervely, a village six miles from Jaffna town. His father's name was Sivagurunathar. He was one year younger than Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar and died nine years earlier.

Navalar and Siva Sankara Pandithar were like two stalwart champions who buckled on their armour to fight against the mighty invasion of Christian Missionaries in the North of Ceylon.

Siva Sankara Pandithar was a great scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit and knew English, too. He was well versed in the Saiva Agamas, having studied Tamil under Appa-pillai of Kanterodai, and Sanskrit under Swamynathar of Vetharanujam - a great Sanskrit scholar.

Navalar invited Sankara Pandithar to deliver a series of lectures on the philosophy of Saiva Siddhanta, at the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarpannai.

"On March 1863 on a Friday Arumuga Navalar delivered a discourse. Sankara Namasivaya Pulavar or Siva Sankara Pandithar stressed the same view by quoting Sanskrit quotations. The theme under discussion was whether the Vytheeka Brahmins or the Thesikar, namely the Saiva Kurukkal were superior. Navalar maintained that the Saiva Kurukkal were superior."

Jaffna Freeman, 10th March 1863.

Sankara Pandithar wrote an attack on Christianity "Kristhu Matha Kandanum". He wrote a compendium of Periyapuranam - the Periyapurana Soosanam. He gave a Foreword to Srila Sri Arumuga Navalalar's magnum opus "Periyarpurana Vacanam".

Sankara Pandithar wrote Saiva Prahasanam, Sattha Sankraham, Ahanirnayuth Thamilurai, Sivapoosai Anthathi Urai, Sivathoodana Kandanam and Anuddana Vithi. These were Saivite Treatises, and also criticism against attack on Saivism and the rules of Saiva Practice.

He wrote a Sanskrit Grammar and a Reader in Sanskrit.

He died at Puducheri, in 1870 at the age of 59. He was "Guru to Murugesu Pandithar who studied under him from 1841 to 1849.

## **ARUMUGA NAVALAR (1822 - 1879)**

Arumuga Navalar was the most dynamic national leader of the Tamils in the 19th century. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, a national leader of the 20th century, hailed Navalar as the Champion Reformer of the Hindus. Great writers in Tamil acclaimed him as the father of modern Tamil prose.

### Parents

He came of a family which was noted for its education, wealth, and official position. His father was Kanthapillai; his mother was Sivakamy. Arumugam was born at Nallur, the capital of the ancient Tamil Kingdom one mile from Jaffna on the 18th December 1822.

When Arumugam was nine years old, his father who was writing a Tamil Drama - Retnavilasam - with his stylus, had died. The unfinished drama was completed by Arumugam. This was a surprise to his brothers - for Arumugam seemed to be a genius.

His brothers decided to send Arumugam to the best Tamil Scholars. They were Senathirayar and Saravanamuttu. Arumugam took infinite pains in acquiring a thorough study of Tamil literature and Tamil grammar.

### Education

Arumugam was sent to the Wesleyan Central School, Jaffna, at the age of 12. Rev. Peter Percival, who was

the Principal of that School, perceived Arumugam's ability in Tamil and his avidity to study English. He asked Arumugam to teach English for the lower classes and Tamil for the Upper classes. He was in that school till 18.

### Vocation

At the age of 20 in 1841, Arumugam was appointed Percival's Tamil Tutor. Percival, a scholar in English and Tamil, was entrusted with the task of translation of the Bible into Tamil by the Wesleyan Missionary Society at Madras. Arumugam was his assistant. This work of translation, a comparison with the original and so forth, went on for six years from 1841 to 1846. Percival and Arumugam worked at this for six hours a day in 1846. The work was finished. Percival took Arumugam to Madras, in order to see this work completed and sent to the Press. This work was referred to a Joint Committee of the Jaffna Bible Auxiliary Society and the Madras Bible Society. At last in 1850, this work - known as the Union Tentative Edition - was published by the American Mission at Madras.

He had learnt Sanskrit by himself in order to master the tenets of Saiva Siddhanta.

He made his first oration at the age of 25, at the Sivan Temple, Vannarpannai.

### A Saiva School at Jaffna

Arumugam decided to give up teaching under Percival and started the Sivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarpannai, Jaffna, Ceylon in 1848.

It was a formidable task to run a School. One day he was so overwhelmed with deep feelings, that he shed tears before the "Shiva lingam" and requested for help; if help was not forthcoming, he was prepared to die for his cause. As if in answer to this prayer, Nannithamby Mudaliyar, the father-in-law of Sir Ponnambalam Rama-

nathan, had sent a contribution of Rs.400/= to Arumugam. That gave him the necessary money, to buy some shops - the income from which he could utilise to pay the staff.

Arumugam was keen on the exposition of the Pariya Puranam - which consisted of the biographies of 64 Saiva Saints.

He never accepted any fees for his work as a teacher; he taught them day and night.

There were no suitable text books for Saiva students at that time. Arumugam felt that he should establish a Printing works. He went to Madras to fetch a printing machine and equipment in 1849; he brought one and established it adjacent to his school at Vannarpannai in the same year.

#### Title of "Navalar"

It was on his way to Madras that Arumugam was honoured by Subramania Thesikar - the Head of the Thiruvadurthurai Mutt - with the title of "Navalar" which means the Orator - as he was much impressed by Arumugam's oration on the Saiva religion.

#### Author

Soon after Arumuga Navalar (as we shall now call him) wrote a series of Readers for the children and published them in 1850. He published the Periyapurana Vacanam in 1852 - dictating to the compositors his sentences. He published "Suppira Potham" in 1853 and the "Saiva Thooshana Pariharam" in 1854. Arumuga Navalar found that he had to reply to the numerous attacks upon Hinduism and he published those attacking Christianity.

#### Press at Madras

Navalar realized that he should have a bigger press, possibly at Madras. So he went to Madras in 1858, bought one in 1860; that is housed at 300 Mint Street, Madras; the Press is known as "Navalar Vidyanu-

palana Press". His beloved disciple, N.K. Sathasivampillai, a bachelor like Navalar was his assistant and supervisor in charge of the publications of Navalar. Two important classical works in Tamil, which were formerly Ola Books, were published by Sathasivampillai. One was Thirukkural by Thiruvalluvar, with notes by Parimelahar in 1860; the other was Thirukkovaiyar by St.Manickavasagar with notes by Navalar in 1861.

#### Founder of a School at Chidambaram

Arumuga Navalar had a deep yearning to establish a Saiva School at Chidambaram - which is the "Mecca" of the Hindus. It is a very sacred city. So Navalar went to Jaffna in 1862, convened a public meeting at his Vidyalayain Vannaipannai, appealed for funds and collected a good sum. Similarly he held a public meeting at the Siddhi Vinayagar Temple, Pt.Pedro and collected necessary funds.

On his way from Jaffna to Chidambaram he was feted at Ramnad, Madura, Thiruvannamalai and Kumbakonam. Navalar's orations thrilled his hearers; here was a man of unflinching will and an erudite scholar. He established the Saiva Tamil School at Chidambaram in October 1864. This became known as Arumuga Navalar High School. There is also a Primary School. Mr.K.Rajeswaran, is the Trustee of this School and Navalar's Press at present.

Navalar went to Madras, established a Thiruthondar Punnuja Sabhai and delivered stirring speeches.

While at Chidambaram, Navalar had noted that some of the priests of the temple officiated as priests without having obtained "Siva Deeksha". He heard that goats were to be sacrificed at this temple. He was wounded and not only did he convene a meeting and condemn this practice, but also issued a tract against this.

The priests of Chidambaram were angry with Navalar. They set up one Ramalingapillai of Karunguli to abuse

Navalar. When Navalar heard about this he filed a case at Manchuruppan Court. As a result Ramalingapillai denied abusing Navalar; he gave up his links with the priests. The chief priest of Saba Nadesar temple was fined Rs.50/=. Navalar had gained a moral victory.

#### Navalar at Jaffna (1870-1879)

Navalar returned to Jaffna in 1870 and was welcomed very warmly by the people.

Navalar published the "Yalpana Samaya Nilai" in 1872 in which he lashed out at the social vices of his age.

Another tract he published on the Nallur Kandaswamy Temple in 1875, is a scathing exposure of the non-agamic practices in that temple.

Arumuga Navalar was a "Hampden" fighting for the rights of his people. In 1878 a great famine stalked the land. The Government had established dispensaries to give free medicine and distribute food. But there were no proper officials to attend to this work. It was when Twynam was Government Agent of Jaffna. He was Government Agent from 1867.

Twynam, the Government Agent, turned a deaf ear to the people's appeals. The people appealed to Arumuga Navalar, who convened a public meeting at the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarpannai, Jaffna and deplored the attitude of the Government. Navalar drew up a petition in English and sent it to James Longden the Governor. Soon after, a Commission was set up to investigate the corruption of the administration.

But the lesser officials of the time saved Twynam. The "Morning Star" (English) attacked Arumuga Navalar; but articles published in "Ilankai Nesan" and "Udaya Bhanu" two Tamil publications in 1877 supported the cause of the people. Navalar continued his agitation.

Eminent leaders such as Chellapapillai (Chief Justice of Thiruvananthapuram, Tranquellar), Coomaraswamy Mudaliyar and Ponnambalam Ramanathan, sent a joint petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the United Kingdom. But the Colonial Office heeded not.

Twynam was not able to curb the independent spirit of Navalar who fought for the vindication of justice. In the end, he perceived Navalar's mind. He ordered his Government servants in the Kachcheri, to attend Navalar's funeral in 1879.

Navalar was a seer. He had the foresight to know that Ponnambalam Ramanathan was going to be the leader of the nation. Navalar presented a memorandum to James Longden the Governor stating among other things that Ramanathan was a fit man in every respect; a patriot and scholar and one who would be of service to his country and people. Navalar went from village to village in support of Ramanathan. On the 22nd of May 1879, Navalar organized the public meeting at Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarpannai and supported Ramanathan's candidature to the Legislative Assembly, which was vacant owing to the death of Sri C. Muttoo Coomaraswamy. C. Brito, Senior Advocate contested Ramanathan, Ramanathan won in the contest.

Navalar died in 1879.

Navalar was the first Saivite to establish a Printing Press in Jaffna, and counter Christian propaganda. He was one of the earliest to publish classics which were in Ola form, preserved zealously by Heads of Muttu, which only a few privileged people were able to see.

Navalar was one who expected each religionist to follow his religion in the proper manner. He expected the Saivites to be good practising Saivites.

His influence remained. The Saiva Paripalana Sabai was established in 1889. The Jaffna Hindu College

1899. This held examinations in Tamil and awarded certificates in Tamil. The Victoria College, Chulipuram was founded at the beginning of this century and the Hindu Board of Education was started in 1924. It was he who pointed out the greatness of Thiruketheeswaram to the Hindus. It was due to his efforts that the Sivan temple at Keerimalai was rebuilt. He was indeed a peerless man, whose fame has grown with the passage of time.

## SOME EMINENT TAMILS - 7

### **SIVASAMBU PULAVAR (1829 - 1910)**

Sivasambu Pulavar was an outstanding Tamil poet of Ceylon, a younger contemporary of Arumuga Navalar. He was one whose poems gladdened the hearts of princes as well as of common people.

His father was Arulambala Mudaliyar and his mother Kathirasi Ammaiyar. He was born at Udupidy in 1829. He had a very good memory and an acute intellect. He was a student of Saravanamuttu Pulavar of Nallur (1802-1845) who was a teacher of Arumuga Navalar. He also studied from Sambanda Pulavar who was a pupil of the former for ten years. He studied Maha Bhatsysm, Ramayanam, Kanda Puranam, Raghuvamsam - Tamil books on literature, grammar books such as Tholhappiam, Saiva Siddhanta texts and Logic, thoroughly. As a student Sivasambu had the spark of poetic genius in him. His teachers held him in high esteem as he composed Tamil verses readily.

Navalar and Sivasambu Pulavar were good friends. Whenever Navalar lectured, Sivasambu Pulavar was taken along with him. At the end Sivasambu Pulavar made a precis of Navalar's lecture in verse and read it to the audience. One day Navalar was lecturing at the Saiva-prakasa Vidyalaya at Puloly. It was raining pell mell outside. Sivasambu Pulavar composed verses which also touched on the heavy downpour and compared it to Navalar's eloquence.

Navalar's heart was touched. He stood up on the platform in the hall and greeted Sivasambu with the words

"You are the greatest poet after Kamban" and bestowed on him the title of "Pulavar" (poet). Everybody recognized his greatness from that time.

Sivasambu Pulavar's verse after the death of Navalar which he sent to C.W. Thamotharampillai was as follows:-

Gone are the Saints Gnanasambandar, Sundarar and  
Appar  
Gone is Saint Manichavasagar and gone is the  
one who was at Nallai.

Arumuga Navalar, alas, now who is left

Truly worthy to preach the religion of Lord Siva?

Thamotharampillai deeply appreciated this poem and sent the following verse in appreciation of Sivasambu Pulavar's verse:-

From your verse in praise of Arumuga Navalar  
We discern the power of your eloquent words.

Sivasambu Pulavar had the gift of writing poetry from his boyhood. He had the special grace of Lord Subramania. There was no body - in composing several types of Tamil verses - during his time. He sang "Yamahavanthathy", "Pathiham", "Malai" and "Oonjal".

#### Special Awards From the King of Ramnad

The verses that Sivasambu Pulavar sang on Bhaskara Sethupathy won special awards from Ramnad potentate. His verses on Bhaskara Sethupathy were, "Bhas kara Sethupathy Nanmani Malai", "Bhaskara Sethupathy Kalladasarak Kali-turai", "Pandi-thurai Thevar Nanmani Malai", "Kanda Vananathar Pathiham", "Kanda Vana Nathar Keerthanai" "Kanda Vananathar Nanmani Malai", "Vallipura-nathar Pathiham", "Senthil Yamahavanthathy", "Thiruvvara yamahavanthathy", "Puloly Nanmani Malai", "Mailvagana Vamsa Vaipavam", "Eddukkudi Pirapandam", etc.

Fifteen verses of Sivasambu Pulavar, including the following Kathirgama Venba, Kandy Kathiresan Pathiham, Marasai Nanmani Malai, Thiri Konamalai Villoomri Nanmani Malai, have now been lost.

Sivasambu Pulavar wrote commentaries for fifteen texts. Of these, Maraisai Anthathi Urai, Yapparank - Kalak - Karikai Urai and Valliyammai Thirumanap - padalaurai were printed.

It is crystal clear that Sivasambu Pulavar was deeply versed in Sangam classics as well as later writers. His verses are rich in their choice of diction; depth of meaning, and the excellent figures of speech he employs. Most of his verses are related to the Hindu religion. His great love of Lord Subramania is seen throughout.

Sivasambu Pulavar's prose works show us his deep knowledge of Tamil literature and Saiva Siddhanta.

In these days when there are very few who look into old classics, it is not surprising that Sivasambu Pulavar's works are lost.

Amongst those who studied under Sivasambu Pulavar were Valvai S.Va. thialingam-pillai the poet and teacher, V. Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Puloly, M.Thillainatha Navalar of Puloly, V. K.napathypillai of Puloly, Vel Mailvaganam

He died on 29 September 1910. He was the unique poet - of his age and was praised by Arumuga Navalar as the poet next to Kamban.

Chettyar of Atchuveley, M. Muttucumaraswamy Kurukkal of Pt. Pedro, P. Murugesu Pandithar of Chunnakam, K. Nama-sivayampillai of Averangal, and Notary Arumugam of Alway. He had a special liking for Muruhesa Pandithar of Chunnakam. This can be seen from a letter which Sivasambu Pulavar wrote to Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam, in which he addresses him as his "grand-son" for Kumaraswamy Pulavar was a pupil of Muruhesa Pandithar, his pupil (pupil's pupil).

When Sivasambu Pulavar lost his eye-sight, he went to Kandavanak Kadavai and appealed to Lord Skanta by singing a "Nanmani Malai" and a few "Keuthanams". Lord Skanta blessed him with the restoration of his sight. One day a pseudo-poet came and requested him to correct a verse which he had written in praise of a noble. Seeing those verses Sivasambu Pulavar expressed his displeasure in the shape of a verse and the pseudo-poet was taken aback and went away.

Sivasambu Pulavar was over six feet tall. He was neither dark nor fair. He wore a veshti and a shawl in the waist and had a turban on his head; he had a shawl over his shoulder; he had an ear-ring; he wore the sandal paste "Poddu" on his forehead; and holy ashes as well. He was popularly known as "Anai Kutty Pulavar" for he had an imperious walk and appearance.

He loved to eat many kinds of delicious foods. His wife, Sree Deviyar, attended to this. He used to be angry when pupils asked him questions while in the process of teaching. He was poor, as he spent more than his income.

**C. W. KATIRAVETPILLAI  
(1829 - 1904)**

Katiravetpillai, better known as Wyman Katiravetpillai, was a scholar, school master, journalist, lawyer, a judge, and an eminent lexicographer.

Ancestry

Tracing his genealogy for three generations, we find his great grand-father was Chanthira Segara Mappana Mudaliyar who was responsible for the quelling of the rebellion of the Vanniyars under the Dutch rule. An Indian poet had written an eulogy about this Mudaliyar. His son was Kathirgama Poopa Mudaliyar; and his son was Coomaraswamy Pulavar who was the author of Purantara Natakam - a Tamil dramatic work. His son in turn was Coomaraswamy Mudaliyar (1793-1896) of Valvettiturai, who was a great Tamil savant. He wrote "Indra Kumara Natakam", a drama, "Arulambala Kovai" - a book of Tamil poems, "Thiruvil Subramaniar Pathiham", "Moolai Sitti Vinayakar Oonjal", "Nallai Kalithogai" and "Kanthavana-nathar Oonjal" - religious poems on various Hindu deities.

It was Coomaraswamy Mudaliyar who made a grant to the American missionaries of a piece of land called "Urk-kadu" when they set foot in North Ceylon in 1816, although he was a Hindu.

His Parents

Katiravetpillai's father was Coomaraswamy Mudaliyar; his mother was Sivakampillai. Katiravetpillai was born in 1829 at Valvettiturai.

In his infancy Katiravetpillai was noted for his gentle and winning ways. He was given more to study than to play. His father taught him Tamil and laid the foundation for his later scholarship.

Education

The Batticotta Seminary was regarded as a university, the Athens of North Ceylon. A Governor of Ceylon remarked that it could hold its own with any university in Europe. Sir Emerson Tennent had left a glowing report after a visit to this Seminary. Dr. Hoisington who had joined the American Mission in 1834 was appointed the Principal of this institution.

Katiravetpillai at the age of twelve, in 1841, was sent to the Batticotta Seminary (at Vaddukoddai). The term of study was six years. Wide scope was afforded to the students; they studied Greek and Latin, (western classics), Sanskrit and Hebrew (Eastern Classics), besides the English language and composition, sciences (natural philosophy), European and Hindu astronomy, Tamil literature and Tamil grammar (Nigandu and Nanool). In the select classes the special subjects taught were English literature and higher mathematics (Conics and Trigonometry), logic, mental and moral philosophy, and theology.

Dr. Hoisington gave permission for Katiravetpillai to have a servant to prepare his meals as he was a vegetarian and allowed him a special room, as he was grateful to Katiravetpillai's father and wished to satisfy his moral scruples.



The scholars who assisted Dr. Hoisington in the Seminary were Henry Martyn, George Dashiell, Parker Haseltine, Wiseborn Volk, James Gregory and Elisha Rockwood.

In 1844, at the age of 15, Katiravetpillai had written a "Virithi Urai" - a commentary in extenso for the Ramayana.

Katiravetpillai was admitted to the select class in 1847, and while a student here, at the age of 18, he became a Christian, having taken the name of "Wyman" the name of a professor of his.

Dr. Hoisington wanted to translate some important works on Saivism into English. They were Siva Gnana Potham, Siva Pirahasam and Thattuva Kaddalai.

Dr. Hoisington got the help of the seminary scholar Katiravetpillai in the translation of these important classics of Saiva Siddhanta from 1846-1849.

We quote an excerpt of a letter of Dr. Hoisington's views and intentions (Morning Star, April 14, 1853), Col.3:

"The work complete should fill a volume. In preparing it, I have had special reference to the Seminary, but trust it will be found useful to other schools and for private use. I shall aim to make it a work to be studied, rather than to be snatched up to amuse, or for a half hour's light reading. Still, I think, there may be some thing gained by first publishing it in numbers. It may call out criticism and develop other materials, which will enable me or some better hand to make it more what it should be, when brought in to a more permanent form in a volume.

"I have just completed for the press the translation of Siva Gnana Potham, with an

introductory essay on Hindu Logic. I propose next to prepare also for the public here Siva Pirakasam. The Tattuva Kattalai is already in the hands of the Editor . . . .

Pillai graduated from the Seminary in July, 1848. These translations were made use of by M. Nallaswamypillai when he undertook to translate Sivagnana Potham, etc.

#### The Teacher

Dr. Hoisington appointed Katiravetpillai to the tutorial staff of the Batticotta Seminary. He served there from 1848-1851.

On the 31st July 1851 Pillai was appointed as a teacher of the Wesleyan Central School, Jaffna, at the request of Rev. John Walton of the Wesleyan Mission. He served here from 1851-1855.

Katiravetpillai was helpful to Rev. Percival in the translation of the Bible.

Among his colleagues was Henry Francis Mutu Kistna. He was the son by a Burgher lady of Muttukistna Mudaliyar of the Jaffna Kachcheri and the Editor of the Thesawalamai. He subsequently married an English lady who was a relative of Dyke, the Government Agent of Jaffna. Having thrown up his Deputy Queen's Advocateship, he practised latterly with remarkable success in the Madras Presidency. Others were Nicholas Saverimuttu and Jonathan Crowther.

Some of Katiravetpillai's pupils who shone in life were C.W. Thamothersampillai, who became a judge, William Gabriel Rockwood, who became a doctor, and was a legislative counsellor, Thamothersam Chellappahpillai, who later became chief justice of Travancore and was one of the founders of Jaffna Hindu College and Samuel Grenier, a Burgher born in Jaffna, who rose to be Attorney General was knighted and would have become Chief Justice had he not been cut off early in life.

### The Budding Journalist

While still serving as a teacher at the Wesleyan School, Katiravetpillai blazed a new trail. He started a literary journal "The Literary Mirror" (Ilakkiyak Kannadi") on May 6, 1853 and this was kept alive for some years. While tracing the history of journalism in Ceylon, we note that the Colombo Journal made its debut on the 1st January 1851.

Ten years before this the "Morning Star" had been started in 1841 as a fortnightly in English and Tamil with Mr. Henry Martin, one of the lecturers of the Batticotta Seminary as its editor.

The opening article in the Literary Mirror was as follows:-

"There are not a few of the community of this province who have regretted that there does not exist any periodical that is specially intended for the publication of articles on purely literary subjects. At no period has this want been more felt than at present. The literary necessities of a people are always in proportion to their mental culture, so that every progressive stage in their education develops fresh demands for literary and scientific resources. We state only what has been reasonably anticipated and legitimately accomplished when we assert that at no period of the history of this province were the people so extensively educated as they are at present. Were it otherwise, agencies multiplied with no parsimonious expenditure and worked with no fruitful energy, would have signally failed in yielding their contemplated results. It cannot but be deplored that no suitable facilities are available for enriching the information and directing the augmented

4th To state and recommend such improvements in agriculture, commerce, navigation, etc., as the present advanced state of the arts and sciences may suggest.

5th To support popular dissertations on logic, lexicography, grammar, history, ethics, theology and kindred subjects.

The Literary Mirror was published for about two years, partly in English and partly in Tamil. Mr. Katiravetpillai worked hard for the success of his venture; and he found a steady coadjutor in his friend and fellow teacher Mr. Crowther, and a valued contributor in his own father Coomaraswamy Mudaliyar who enlivened the Tamil pages with some of the finest specimens of his poems. Various subjects, literary and scientific, instructing and interesting, appeared in the Mirror, bringing it into prominence as a vehicle of useful information. It secured for it a large and respectable clientele, Tamils and European including Civil Servants.

#### The Lawyer

Katiravetpillai severed his connections with the Wesleyan Mission on 24th April 1855 and became a lawyer. He joined the Ceylon Law College in Colombo in 1856 and studied there for two years. Thomas Rust, a Dutch legal luminary was Head of this institution at that time. Two legal luminaries, Sir Richard Morgan and C.A. Lorenz, were on the Board of Examiners - Katiravetpillai passed out with flying colours as an Advocate. He took his oaths on May 5th 1858 and was the first amongst the Jaffna Tamils to have done so. He practised as an Advocate in Jaffna and Point Pedro.

Katiravetpillai had a keen intellect. He was a master of the principles of law and he familiarised himself with its forms and precedents. To that species of forensic eloquence sonorous, copious, commanding, ..... Katiravetpillai made no pretensions.

Till his 35th year Pillai had a defect of the teeth. In 1864 he removed his defective teeth and replaced them by a set of false ones.

As a lawyer, conscientiousness, earnestness and thoroughness were the leading characteristics of Katiravetpillai. He did not support a bad cause. He seldom missed a good argument or used a bad one. He always aimed to secure justice for his clients. He was a thorough master of the local laws and usages. He knew minutely the sub-divisions in the Jaffna Peninsula. He served as a lawyer from 1858-1872.

#### The First Magistrate Amongst the Tamils of Ceylon

Sir William Gregory paid a visit to Jaffna in 1872. On the 21st May 1872 he addressed a letter to Katiravetpillai and sent it through his Government Agent at Jaffna, Sir William Twynam.

He wrote:-

"His Excellency considers he cannot pay a higher compliment to the Tamil population of Jaffna than by conferring on one of them an appointment requiring high educational attainments and trustworthiness. He is pleased to offer the provisional appointment of Magistrate of Kayts to Mr. Wyman Katiravetpillai, a Tamil gentleman who bears the character of education, capacity and integrity.

Should Mr. Wyman accept the appointment, His Excellency has every confidence that the business will be conducted in such a manner as will encourage him hereafter to confide other offices of trust to persons of Mr. Wyman's race."

Katiravetpillai's first appointment was as Magistrate of Kayts in 1872. He was a wise and just judge.

He was a very popular judge. He was Police Magistrate of Jaffna and Mallakam. He was District Judge, Jaffna.

Katiravetpillai was confirmed in the Ceylon Civil Service on the recommendation of Sir Arthur Gordon in 1884.

In 1892 when Conally was District Judge, Jaffna, Katiravetpillai was entrusted the responsibility of drafting the Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance.

When in 1898 he retired from the Civil Service, Sir West Ridgeway sent an appreciative letter.

That was the age when the Supreme Court Judges and other luminaries reached Jaffna with the aid of palanquins and torch light bearers.

When Katiravetpillai was a Magistrate, the judges of the Supreme Court were Sir Carpenter Rowe, Sir Edward Barnes, Justices Temple, Lawson, Thompson and Stewart.

Ambalavanar Kanagasabai, later (Sir) was leader of the Jaffna bar and addressed a speech of farewell when Katiravetpillai retired from the bar as a judge in 1898.

#### The Examiner

The Wesleyan Mission Report of 1859-1860 published in England contains a reference to Wyman [Katiravetpillai] who examined their Training Institution. That institution undertook the task of reading and translating a portion of Dr. Payner's Mental Science aided by a vocabulary of meta-physical terms in Tamil and English. They had edited a similar vocabulary of technical terms in Logic, possibly based on Katiravetpillai's book on Logic in Tamil.

#### The Editor

"Jaffna Freeman" edited by N.G. Gould was the first secular English newspaper in 1863. Katiravetpillai started a weekly newspaper, the "Ceylon Patriot" on February 6th 1863, as a rival to "Jaffna Freeman" which sometimes overstepped the proper limits of a paper. Three pages were in English and the fourth was in Tamil.

We note from the biography of Arumuga Navalar by T. Kailasapillai, that Arumuga Navalar was constrained to expose the social evils of his times, and incidentally Dyke, the Government Agent, was also the butt of criticism. The Ceylon Patriot took the side of the Government Agent. But other journals, such as Udaya Bhanu, took the opposite view, and echoed Navalar's sentiments.

#### Excerpt from "Ceylon Patriot"

The prospectus of the Ceylon Patriot:-

"On Friday the 6th February 1863, will be issued the first number of a new weekly periodical to be called the Ceylon Patriot. It will be of moderate size, the last page being devoted to Tamil; and its cost will be four shillings per quarter, exclusive of postage.

"The necessity is felt by many in Jaffna for a local exponent of public sentiment which shall command the respect and confidence of all classes. For a public journal, moderation is as desirable as truth. Fidelity to obligations does not require a journalist to be slanderous, nor does integrity of purpose necessitate a disregard for the character and feelings of others.

"It is intended to comprehend within the range of this periodical the ordinary topics of newspaper interest. In dealing with public questions, we shall avoid ourselves and discountenance in others, the practice of dragging

into the discussion either personal feelings or private interests. With persons, we shall deal only so far as the public interest absolutely demands.

"In politics we shall neither kiss the rod of tyranny nor court the hazards of revolution. We shall contend for reforms when conservatism becomes an evil.

"In religion, whilst cordially yielding to others the liberty we claim for ourselves, we shall ally ourselves with those who contend for the inviolability of conscience, and whilst practically endeavouring to carry out the principle that every man has a right to his own religion, we shall not disavow our preference to Protestant Christianity.

"Subjects of local interest will receive our best attention. The development of the resources of our Province will enlist our interest and our efforts, whilst we shall endeavour to cultivate a large-hearted sympathy with the well being of the Island generally.

"Several friends have kindly promised to aid us by contributing articles of literary and general interest.

"Our Tamil page will not be a mere translation of English articles, but will contain original contributions calculated to benefit that section of the community which is not acquainted with the English language. There are very clear heads and warm hearts amongst them and we shall studiously endeavour to reach them.

"We hold ourselves responsible for the forthcoming periodical and will gratefully accept

the help of those who have an interest in our undertaking."

The Ceylon Examiner said "The get up of the paper is excellent and some of the articles are such as will grace any paper with higher pretensions."

It made its debut on the 6th February 1863. Some of the articles were on the Jaffna Schedule Law, Hindu Chemistry and Medicine, Education and Tamil Music.

The Ceylon Patriot was continued for two years as an Anglo-Tamil newspaper. The Freeman was amalgamated to it in 1867 (Jaffna Freeman started by Gould in September 1862.)

C.W. Katiravetpillai was the Editor of the Ceylon Patriot. On January 1, 1864 the Ceylon Patriot wished its readers a happy New Year and thanked its Colombo contemporaries, the "Observer", the "Times" and "Examiner" for cheering and unsolicited commendation of its efforts to serve and please the reading public.

Jaffna young men were invited at that time to apply for employment as Overseers in the Kandyan Provinces. The pay was 2 shillings a day to begin with, and there were encouraging prospects of promotion. This is a fitting opportunity for the young men of Jaffna to push their way up in the world.

Under the heading "A Prospect of Jaffna" the Patriot had the following comment:- (Excerpt from Ceylon Patriot 1864). This appeared under an article entitled A Century Ago in Jaffna in the Ceylon Daily News, of September 1, 1964.

"Now we can date a commencement of commerce in Jaffna. Excepting a handful of owners of brigs, schooners and dhows and others in the ports of our peninsula, other intelligent men have shrunk from applying themselves to trade for want of that "root of all evil" and some of all worldly comfort and conveniences. We

can very well sympathise in their hopes and fears of dealing in financial matters with that of the class of men - Nattukottai Chettiars - a synonym for exorbitant interest and discount.

"But now a treasury has been opened in Jaffna, inviting all the honest energetic sons of the soil to help themselves to any amount of money on paying a lawful interest. The Oriental Bank Corporation had opened an agency in Jaffna in February that year. Money was thus made available for carrying on extensive trade."

"Now is the hour and now is the day to shake off idleness and to give some of the talents and the means at their disposal. Clerkships and other subordinate Government situations bring yet other attractions and are in the ascendancy. The large band of young men coming out yearly from the various schools look to the government service as the appropriate theatre where they could shine, fancying as they do, that attention to merchandise would derogate from their scholastic merits and reputation."

The Editor added that

"the earlier those young men got rid of that false notion, the better it would be for Jaffna's prosperity."

\* \* \*

"Commenting on the capture of the bandit Sardiel (the Robinhood of Ceylon) the Ceylon Patriot wrote: "We advise the Jailor at Kandy to be careful of Sardiel and his terrible accomplice ..... They appear to be endowed with some super human power ...

Hanging is too good for Sardiel. Had he lived in the days of the Dutch Supremacy, his fate would have been an effectual warning to the bandits of Kandy and the districts adjoining."

#### The Lexicographer

Katiravetpillai's "magnum opus" was his Tamil Solaharathy which was completed up to 12 parts.

This was printed by the Madurai Tamil Sangam. The rest of his dictionary, it is stated, was burnt accidentally. The Senthamil; the Magazine of the Madurai Tamil Sangam, commented that the Dictionary stands foremost of all Tamil works. It is a land mark in the history of Tamil Literature publication.

We cite herewith the Preface to C.W. Katiravetpillai's Dictionary, pages 7 and 8:-

"Many years ago I attempted in the course of my reading, a collection of such words as are not found or defined fully in the dictionaries extant, with a view to the compilation of a new and comprehensive dictionary of the Tamil language, but the duties in which I had been successively engaged, as Instructor, Journalist, Advocate and Magistrate, interfered with the prosecution of my design. Since my retirement five years ago from Government Service [1899] I have devoted what intervals of health and leisure I have had, to the completion of a work undertaken many years ago as a labour of love, for the benefit as well of my countrymen who must ever regard a fair knowledge of Tamil as an intellectual necessity, as of foreign students who will find it to be "one of the most copious and polished languages spoken by man."

"I have included in the present work the words derived and gradually adopted from Sanskrit to meet modern requirements and now

appropriated by various writers as part and parcel of the Tamil language. Although I had to correct a few words found in the other dictionaries, I have not rejected the foreign words included in that of Dr. Winslow. My chief aim has, however, been to rescue from obscurity and present to the public as large a collection as possible of words not found in any previous dictionary, occurring in shastras, whether existing in print or manuscript.

"To those wishing to study Hindu Philosophy and Meta-physics, including Vedantism and Siva - Sithantham, this dictionary will, it is hoped, be a great help. Medical men will be glad to find in this compilation, botanical and medical words collected from the medical books published by the celebrated Pandit Suppiramania. Technical words relating to the science of logic, rhetoric, astrology, astronomy, chemistry and mathematics have received special attention. A noticeable feature of the work is the citations from standard authors and approved sources which are intended to illustrate the meanings and uses of words.

"Words of Sanskrit origin are traced to their source and the originals from which they are derived are also given in Sanskrit characters.

"To the sum total of the words given in previous dictionaries, the present work claims the addition of thousands."

January 1st 1904 C.W.Katiravel Pillai

A preface in Tamil was given by his son, K. Balasingham, an Advocate. He explained that the Dictionary was to have been published in six parts, but that it was published now by Pandithurai Thevar, the Founder of the Madurai Tamil Sangam.

K. Balasingham published posthumously a Revised Tamil translation of a Sanskrit treatise on Logic by Siakasavamisira, made by his father in 1862; a copy of which the writer came across in the Commonwealth Society Library, London.

Balasingham looked after his father very carefully during his old age when he was completing the dictionary.

Katiravetpillai was appointed to the Text Book Committee of the Board of Examination to judge about the quality of the books that were published at that time.

#### His Fine Qualities

Kathiravetpillai was a model of patience. He always did things quite coolly, patiently and in an orderly way. Of twenty hours, he was master of sixteen hours. He was a vegetarian. Once his mother had jumped into a well. Pillai thought deeply what he had to do and saved her.

It was not at all easy to deceive him. Whenever anybody came to see him, he was able to judge why that person had visited him.

Even Katiravetpillai was once cheated by a goldsmith of Sankani who had borrowed some money from him.

Katiravetpillai was attacked in the Ilankai Nesan by Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar. But Pillai's calmness was not to be shaken.

Katiravetpillai died on the 8th April at the ripe age of 75, in 1904. He left behind his son, Balasingham, by his second wife, who became an Advocate and also a member of the Legislative Council and Executive Council, and a leader of the people. He was first married to Miss Murugesar of Udupiddy in 1862. He had one son and three daughters. He married Miss Katiresu of Colpetty in 1874.

## SOME EMINENT TAMILS - 9

### **MURUGESA PANDITHAR (1829 - 1900)**

Chunnagam, in the Northern province (in Jaffna, Ceylon) now a market town, six miles from Jaffna, has been the home of many renowned Tamil poets. It was the home of Varatha Pandithar who sang "Sivarathri Puranam", "Ehathasi Puranam", "Pillayar Kathai", "Killai Vidu Thoothu", and "Amuthaharam" (a medical work). It was here that Muttukumara Kavirasar, was born in 1780. Naganatha Pandithar who wrote "Ithopathesam" was born in 1824 at Chunnagam. Sangara Pandithar who was well versed in Sanskrit and Tamil and who wrote "Saivapirakasanam" and "Saptha Sangraham" was born here in 1829. Murugesa Pandithar who was a great Tamil poet and who linked Ceylon with Tamil Nad was born at Chunnagam in 1829. He was seven years younger than Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar.

Murugesar's father was Pootha-pillai and his mother was Umai Nachchiammayar. Poothapillai was a Tamil scholar, his father one Sittambalam and his grandfather Sayambu Udaiyar was the Village Head-man. Umai Nachchiammayar was the grand daughter of Vetharaniya Pulavar. Thus Murugesar inherited his intellectual heritage both from his father's side and his mother's side.

Murugesar had two brothers, and one sister. The eldest brother had become a Christian and was given the name of Fitch and became a Christian preacher in Ceylon and India. The other brother was a farmer.



### Early Education

Murugesar studied Siddhanta Shastras and Logic from Srila Sri Siva Sankara Pandithar (1850-1853). He also received further education from Sivasambu Pulavar of Udupidy (1850-1853) in the Tamil classics of Maha Bharata and Ramayana as well as the five kinds of Tamil Grammar (Pancha Ilakkanam). Murugesar was a strict adherent of the rules of grammar both in his speech and his writings. He was a great critic; his "criticisms" were sent to different newspapers and magazines where he analysed clearly the transgressions in grammar.

The fame of Murugesar Pandithar spread as he was a poet, essayist and lecturer. He established a Tamil school at Mylany, Chunnagam, and imparted Tamil learning to those who sought to study under him. A. Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam, A. Mootootambipillai of Manipay (later of Navalar Kottam, Jaffna) and Saravanamuttu Pulavar of Urelu - all scholars of Jaffna were some of his well-known pupils.

Murugesar Pandithar taught at Chunnakam, Punnainagar, Kovai, Sirupiddi, Alaveddi, Mallakam, Kalvalai - all places in Jaffna from 1854 to 1866. Also Elalai and Kopay were two places where Murugesar Pandithar's services were rendered to a high degree. He was Head Master of the Kopay Tamil School started by Arulambala Mudaliyar's son Ambalavanar who was a Judge from 1867 to 1871. He was Head Master of the Elalai Tamil School started by C.W.Thamotharampillai in 1877.

Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar published the Kanda-Puranam and other rare Tamil works. Murugesar Pandithar wanted to challenge Navalar about a grammatical blunder of his and said so to a friend of his. Navalar came to know of this. At this time there was a meeting in Kopay where Navalar was invited to speak. It was decided that Murugesar Pandithar should make the speech of welcome. The Pandithar spoke in praise of

Navalar's services to Tamil and Hinduism. Navalar was very glad to invite Murugesar Pandithar to his home at Vannarpannai. A golden bond of friendship was forged, Murugesar Pandithar's songs on the death of Navalar reveal the depth of feelings of regard he had for Navalar.

### Murugesar Pandithar and Arulappa Mudaliyar

In 1878 Arulappa Mudaliyar came from South India to Ceylon to do propaganda for Catholicism. He printed many scurrilous pamphlets - one of which was "Alankara, Panchakam". Murugesar Pandithar collected all the faults of this book and published an attack on it entitled "Alankara Panchaka Sunda Marutham" in the Ilankai Nesan. His grammatical legerdemain may well be seen in this book. The Mudaliyar did not reply to this but wrote some general criticism in the Catholic Guardian (Sathya Vetha Pathu Kavalan) in Tamil. Although each of the verses of Arulappa Mudaliyar was criticized and although Murugesar Pandithar challenged him to have a public discussion with him, yet the Mudaliyar dared not meet him in public for fear of defeat.

### Murugesar Pandithar in Tamil Nadu

Soon after in 1878 Murugesar Pandithar and his wife paid a visit to the Hindu shrine at Kataragama, in South Ceylon - and he lost his wife on return.

Murugesar Pandithar had no children nor dependent relatives. So he left for Tamil Nadu.

He was employed by the Kumbakonam Government High School as a Tamil Pundit between 1878 - 1885. During this period, Murugesar Pandithar composed the Kudanthai Venba and "Neethi Nooru" and this was published in 1882. It had an excellent reception from the leading scholars of Kumbakonam and Jaffna. "Neethi Nooru" consisted of a hundred poems, rich in thought and couched in elegant words. Of the Mayilani Sledai Venba, which this poet

composed only twenty-one verses are available.

Murugesha Pandithar served as a teacher at Kumbakonam, Madras, Chidambaram, Kanchipuram, and Thirupattoor for twenty-two years. Not only was he a Tamil poet, but he was also a Tamil lecturer, a critic and a free lance journalist.

It is interesting to recall a true anecdote of the Pandithar at Kumbakonam. He went to the Kumbakonam High School after having heard that there was a vacancy for the post of a Tamil Pandit. The Principal decided to select the candidate after a test by Thiyagaraja Chettyar as a lot of people had applied for this. Murugesha Pandithar did not like the idea; but he went along with others. The question paper which was set by Thiyagaraja Chettyar was given to him. Murugesha Pandithar underlined the mistakes in the question paper, and composed a verse which conveyed that the paper was not composed correctly, stating various reasons. He gave this earlier than others and left the hall. The Examiner Thiyagaraja Chettyar on perusing this unusual answer paper was astonished at the deep knowledge of the examinee. The Principal of the Kumbakonam College was also amazed. And the result was that Murugesha Pandithar was appointed Head Pandit of the kumbakonam High School, where he served for eight years (1878-1885)

At the same time as Murugesha Pandithar who was serving at Kumbakonam High School, the Tamil Pandit of Kumbakonam College was Dr.V. Samynatha Aiyar (later Maha Maho Upadhyayar). When Dr.Saminatha Aiyar published the "Ceevaka Cinthamani" in 1887, Murugesha Pandithar discerned many flaws in that work and published the "Ceevaka Cinthamani Valup-Piraharanam".

Dr.Saminatha Aiyar's pupil Kudavayil Shanmugampillai wrote a counter criticism of "Ceevaka Cinthamani" Murugesha Pandithar challenged both Dr. Saminatha Aiyar and his pupil to meet him on a common platform for an

open discussion. None of them came forward.

In Dr.Saminatha Aiyar's second edition, all the faults pointed out by Murugesha Pandithar were corrected. Naturally bitter feelings reigned between the Aiyar and the Pandithar.

#### Life at Kanchipuram

Murugesha Pandithar, after spending eight years of his life at Kumbakonam or Kudanthai - went to Kanchipuram and continued to be a private teacher of Tamil literature and Tamil grammar to some pupils.

#### Final Life at Madras

After spending five years at Kanchipuram and Chidambaram, Murugesha Pandithar came to Madras where Perumal Nadar and Vellaiya Nadar - two rich Tamil business magnates befriended him. He was appointed Editor of the publications of their Press. This was removed soon after from Madras and established at Thirupattur in the Salem District. To the end, Murugesha Pandithar plied his pen, and contributed articles to the "Amiruthaguna Bodhini" and also published his books. The Nadars befriended him to the last.

#### The Works of Murugesha Pandithar

Murugesha Pandithar wrote many works both while in Ceylon and in India. They are Sandirasegarap Pillaiyar Oonjal, Pootharayar Oonjal, Mayilani Subramaniam Oonjal, Mayilani Maha Vishnu Oonjal, Wattakkai Amman Oonjal, Mayilani Visaladchi Pathikam (1887), Kudanthai Venba (1882), Mayilani Siledai Venba, Patharththa Deepikai, Neethi Nooru (1886), etc.

#### Characteristics of his works

Of all the poets in Jaffna, Murugesha Pandithar was able to write poems quite spontaneously on any given theme, be it ever so thorny. Interspersed in his works,

one comes across Puranic stories and scientific truths. The rich imagination in his verses, the depth of thought, the fecund poetic ideas and other excellences make the reader enjoy and revere his works. The "Oonjal" poems go with a swing - full of vigour and depth of feeling. The Kudanthai Venba, Neethi Nooru and Mavilani Siledai Venba were written in Venba metre and are extremely melodious. Patharththa Deepikal (1896-1900) reveals his great knowledge of logic and science. There are seventy "Kalippas" - a kind of metre - in this book.

#### Epilogue -

##### Personality and Character

Murugesha Pandithar was rather dark in colour and was neither slender nor fat. He liked to eat chillies; consequently his pupils called him "Milakay Sadaambayar" (Chilly teacher). When he became indignant, he blurted out acid remarks. His wrath knew no bounds when he saw any work which contained errors. The "Ilankai Nesan" and the "Udaya Bhahu" were two of the newspapers which published his criticisms. He was in the habit of challenging authors to debate with him in public. The opponents were too scared to confront him face to face.

He did not bow to others for the sake of personal benefit or for obtaining any favours. He was always grateful in word and deed to those who showed kindness to him. He never forgot his gurus and in every work of his he has remembered to write a salutation to them.

The last days of Murugesha Pandithar were spent at Thirupatur, Salem District, South India. Although his body had become emaciated, he was deeply interested in teaching and writing new Tamil works. Vellaiya Nadar was a real benefactor and had given every facility for this Tamil poet of Eelam. Murugesha Pandithar was a devotee of Lord Subramania - and he was gathered to

the feet of the Lord on the 15th August 1900. His body was laid to rest in "Samadhi" - the state of bliss where soul communes with God eternally.

## **SABAPATHY NAVALAR (1845 - 1903)**

Sabapathy Navalar was the first Tamil scholar from North Ceylon (Eeelamandalam) to hold the post of Adeena Vidvan, in the Thiruvavadu "Math". The first savant who was honoured by the head of this Math Sri Subramania Thesikar, - (the sixteenth to hold this position) - was Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar (1822-1879). He was the first to be given the title of "Navalar". The second to be honoured with this title was Sabapathy, - the son of Suyambunathapillai and Theyvayanai of Kopay (Vada - Kovai) Jaffna - a scholar who trod in the footsteps of Arumuga Navalar. He was nearly twenty-one years younger than Arumuga Navalar.

Sabapathy had received his early education in Tamil and Sanskrit under one Jaganatha Iyer in his early days and later under Neervely Siva Sankara Pandithar - a lieutenant of Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar. Young Sabapathy received his early English education from two judges - Kumarasuryar and Wyman Kathiravetpillai.

When Sabapathy was young he had an attack of leprosy, and he hastened to the Nallur Subramania temple, where he stayed and prayed. He sang a number of verses praising Lord Murukan. Soon-after Sabapathy was relieved of this disease.

Then Sabapathy left for Chidambaram where he was appointed the Head-teacher of the Saiva-prakasa Vidyalalai - the Tamil school started by Srila Sri Arumuga

Navalar. Immediately afterwards Sabapathy became a pupil under Srila Sri Subramania Thesikar - the Head of the Thiruvavadu Math. Here Sabapathy stayed for twelve years and mastered Sanskrit religious literature. Sabapathy was an erudite scholar, and it pleased the Head of this Math to appoint him as "Atheena Vidvan" - an honour first bestowed on a Jaffna (Ceylon) Tamil.

Sabapathy Navalar, considered Sivagnana Munivar as his "Guru", and when he wrote prose it was as majestic as his master's. Laurels were bestowed by other Heads of Maths, such as were at Madurai and Suruganar Kovil, on his scholarship.

Sabapathy Navalar had the penetrative intelligence to arrive at the fundamental truths expounded in Sanskrit and he expressed these in Tamil. In 1885 he wrote the Sidambara Sabanatha Puranam - a translation from Eme-Sabanatha Manmiyam. Soon after followed another translation into Tamil of Sivakarma-Mirtham - the original having been written by Appiah Dishitar. In 1887 Sabapathy Navalar published the Sathur Veda Thatpariya Sangraha; Sabapathy Navalar wrote the Bharata Thatpariya Sangiraha and the Ramayana Thatpariya Sangiraha - essences of Bharata and the Ramayana in Tamil.

Sabapathy Navalar's Dravida Prakasikai was originally published in 1899 by the Siddhanta Vidyanupalana Yanthirasalai. It was a magnum opus, and was described as the "Thilotthaman" of the Tamil land by no less a person than Mr. Shivapadasundaram. Nobody had conceived the idea of assembling all the facts of Tamil literature, Tamil grammar, Tamil psychology, that vast expanse of knowledge in one book; it was arranged in chapters, and each para contained the essence of the best known Tamil works. It was a literary mirror, a kind of encyclopaedic history of Tamil literature. It is a milestone in the history of Ceylon Tamil literature. The man who wrote histories of Tamil literature

followed Sabapathy Navalar. They were A. Mootootambipillai who wrote the *Thenmoli Vatalaru* which was published posthumously in 1921; and another work called "*Thamil Moli Vatalaru*" by Pandit Poopalapillai of Batticaloa.

A second edition of this history of Tamil learning came out in 1927 from the Sadhu Press at Madras, having been published by a nephew of Sabapathy Navalar.

Dravida Prakasikai has been prescribed as a textbook for the London B.A., Ceylon B.A., and the Tamil Pandit classes. It is really an invaluable book.

Sabapathy Navalar was a profound scholar of Saiva Siddhantism. He conducted the "*Siddhamirtham*", a monthly magazine, with the help of funds given to him by Bhaskara Sethupathy who admired him and lent his patronage as he did to Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar. It is said that Sabapathy Navalar lived in Madura and Madras for thirty five years translating learned works from Sanskrit into Tamil, and expatiating on Saiva Siddhanta truths through his mellifluous speeches in Tamil.

"*Siddhantam*" was published by the Kuala Lumpur Saiva Siddhanta Sangam in which Sabapathy Navalar's several learned articles on Saiva Siddhanta appeared regularly.

Sabapathy Navalar passed away on 15th June 1903 at Chidambaram. He was lionised by the Pandits of his time in India and Ceylon. His writings were eulogised by men such as C.W. Thamocharampillai and Maha Upadiyayar Swamynathapillai. He was a hero to many during his time, such as Thirumayilai Balasundara Mudaliyar.

At Kopay Vada-Kovai steps have been taken to build a monumental hall in honour of this poet and son of Eelam. A flower garden (*Poonkavanam*), attached to the Veerakathipillayar Temple, bears the name of Sabapathy Navalar even today!

## **KASI VASI SENTHIL NATHA AIYAR (1848 - 1924)**

One of the best followers of Arumuga Navalar was Kasi Vasi Senthil Natha Aiyar.

Elalai is a village near Mallakam in the Jaffna district in Ceylon, near Puttur, ten miles north of Jaffna. Senthilnatha Aiyar was the eldest son of Ratnesvara Aiyar's son Sinnaya Aiyar and Gauri Ammal of Elalai. He was born in 1848 on October 17th at Elalai.

He first studied Tamil and Sanskrit with his uncle Kathirgama Aiyar of Punnalaikadduvan; he commenced his studies at 5. He was invested with the sacred thread at 7.

He was sent to the Jaffna Central College in the year 1858 at the age of 10. He studied there for ten years.

He studied Tamil grammar and literature from Sambandapa Pulavar. He completed studying the *Periya Puranam* in 1870 at the age of 22.

He set out with his father to Thiruchchundur in 1870 and observed *Kanthar Sashti Viratha*. Then he went on a pilgrimage to Rameshvaram, Thiruvuddara Kosa Mankai, Thiruvallavay (Madura), Thiruchirappalli, Thiruvanaikka and Thirumaraik-kadu (Vetharaniyam) and went back to Jaffna.

At Jaffna he was appointed a teacher of the Navalar Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Vannarpannai from 1872-1878 and then he was appointed as an assistant of the English-Tamil School of Navalar. It was during these days that Senthilnatha Aiyar had the opportunity of listening to Navalar's lectures and realising the superiority of the Saiva Siddhantic way of life. During this period Navalar wrote the "Viviliya Kutsitham" and got Senthilnatha Aiyar to publish it.

Senthilnatha Aiyar married Sivakami Ammal, the daughter of Sabapathy Aiyar of Nachchimar Kovil, Vannarpannai. He had a daughter called Meenadchi-ammai.

Senthilnatha Aiyar was desirous of going over to South India and proceeded there in 1879. He had been given a good testimonial by Arumuga Navalar.

He went over to Thiruvananthapuram where he was befriended by T. Chellappahpillai, the High Court Judge of the Malayalam High Court. Senthilnatha Aiyar then studied Logic, Grammar, and Classics under Suppa Shastri and Anantha Krishna Aiyar. During this time in 1879 Arumuga Navalar died. The verses he sent at the death of Navalar were touching. Navalar had been delighted in hearing Senthilnatha Aiyar's singing Devarams to the musical instrument called "Karangi".

From Thiruvananthapuram Senthilnatha Aiyar came over to Colombo in 1880 where he delivered lectures at Thambyah Chathiram (inn) at the request of Thambyah Mudaliyar. In 1880 he was at Kataragama, and though he fasted he completed reading the Kanda Puranam in twelve days.

In 1882 he went to South India where he was appointed as an Assistant Teacher of a Saiva Tamil School at Thirunelvely. In 1883 he was appointed Editor of the journal "Sujana Manoranjani" which was conducted at Thirunelvely by Munisof Subramaniappillai.

Senthilnatha Aiyar wrote the book "Shan Shatryap Pirasanda Marutham" in answer to the book entitled "Shanarellam Shatriyar", by Samuel Satainar B.A., the sub-registrar of Sattoor in 1883.

In 1884 Senthilnatha Aiyar received further ordination at Thiruppuhaloor and was called "Akhora Siva-sariyar" by Soma Sundara Siva Achariyar.

Then he visited many shrines of Lord Subramania and came to Mallakam where he wrote "Kanthapurana Nava Neetham".

As he wanted to publish this he took his younger brother Sivasambu Aiyar and went to several shrines in Ceylon, such as Trincomalie, Verugal and Ukantha Malai. He visited Kataragama for the second time and having received special grace he went to Madras and printed the Kanthapurana Navaneetham.

He then resided at Thirupattoor in the Salem district, started the "Amirtha Bodhini" a monthly journal in 1888, and conducted it for some years.

It was in 1888 that Senthilnatha Aiyar wrote the tracts "Sivanum Thevana ennum Theeya Navukku Aappu" and Vajradankam as replies to two of the tracts published by the Christians.

He travelled on November 4th 1888 to Benares and worshipped Lord Visvesvara. He founded Vaitheeka Sutthathuvitha Siddhanta School at Thiruparankunram in 1902 where he taught Tamil, Sanskrit and English.

Senthilnatha Aiyar was awarded the title of "Siddhanta Sikamani" by the head of Suriyanar Kovil Mutt "; Srila Sri Muttucumaru Thesikar sent a letter of praise to the Aiyar. He established the Senthilnathaiyaswamy Press at Devakotah in 1906 with the donations given to him by Somasundaram Chettyar and Ramanathan Chettyar.

The Manager of the Saiv prakasa Vidyalaya, T. Kailasapillai, published Senthilnatha Aiyar's article "Vydeeka Suddathuvicha Saiva Siddhanta Samayam" in the Inthusathnam, being its Editor, under the name of "Senthilnatha Yogi".

While Senthilnatha Aiyar was at Kasi or Benares from 1888-1898, he was known as "Kasi Vasi Senthilnatha Aiyar." He was one of the witnesses in the case between N. Kathiravetpillai of Puloly and a few people from Madras regarding and Ramalingepillai's poems.

While Aiyar was at Thirupperunkunram, one of his uncles Brama Sri Sithamparanatha Sastrikal, went to see him. When they met Pandithurai Thevar - the founder of the Madura Tamil Sangam, in answer to a question "Who are you", the Sastrikal gave a fine answer in verse. Pandithurai Thevar was so very pleased with this that he sent him to Thirupperunkunram.

Senthilnatha Aiyar was the spiritual Guru of Mahopadayayar Ganesha Aiyar who wrote a Commentary on the Tholhappiyam - the most ancient grammar of the Tamil language.

Senthilnatha Aiyar was gathered to the feet of the Lord Parameshwara on 5 May 1924.

He wrote 45 texts for publication; of these 20 were printed; mostly at Devakota at his press.

He published:

- 1.Kanthapurana Navaneetham
- 2.Gnana Ratna vali (1888)
- 3.Saiva Vedantam
- 4.Devaram Vethasaram
- 5.Thathuva Vilakkam (with notes) (1918)
- 6.Sivagnana Potha Vasanalankara Deepam
- 7.Vajradankam
- 8.Vachchra Dandam

- 9.Gnana Potha Vilakka Chooravali
- 10.Sivanum Devana ....
- 11.Veerapathirasthiram
- 12.Vivilya Kutsitham Kandana Thikkaram
- 13.Vivilya Kutsitha Kurippu
- 14.Dandrika Thunda Kandana Kandanam
- 15.Maha Ukkira Virapathira Ashiram (1915)
- 16.Vaitheeka Suddhaduvitha Saova Siddhanta Padam
- 17.Vaitheeka Suddhaduvitha Saiva Siddhanta Thathuva Pada Vinavidai
- 18.Sri Sikali Peruvalin Jeeva Karunya Madchi (1907)
- 19.Neelakanda Pashya Tamil Translation.

The rest have been lost.

## A. KUMARASWAMY PULAVAR (1854 - 1922)

If we consider 'Teaching Tamil' as the pivot of our theme and trace the history of the past hundred years from 1870-1970 roughly the first fifty years may be described as the era of the 'Pulavar' who was a scholar and poet.

Tracing his genealogy backwards we find his father was Ambalavanapillai (1808-1886), and his grandfather Muttu Kumara Kavirayer - a great poet who was also an ardent champion of Hinduism. (1780-1850).

### Education

Kumaraswamypillai was born in 1854 at Mylany, Chunnakam, Jaffna. At first he attended the Tamil School in his village; when he was a student in the 4th standard at the Mallakma English School, his father stopped him from English studies and sent him to Murugesu Pandithar of Chunnakam, who was a profound Tamil scholar.

Kumaraswamy Pulavar studied also from Pandit Naganathar of Chunnakam (1834-1884). He was a good scholar of Sanskrit and Tamil. Naganatha Pandithar had rendered Hitopadesa, Bhagavat Gita and Santhokya Upanishad from Sanskrit into Tamil. He also studied Grammar and Logic from Kanagasabi Pulavar of Alaveddi.

Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar's Saivaprakara Tamil School was established in Chittirai 1848. But he used to be away on his mission in Tamil Nad. But from 1870

till his death he had settled down at Jaffna. He lived at Vannarpannai at Navalar Street, in the house which is now known as "Navalar Kottam" at Vannarpannai, Jaffna, close to the Navalar Saivaprakasa Vidyasalai. At the age of 16, Kumaraswamy Pulavar contacted Navalar and got his difficulties in grammar, and literature, cleared up by him. Navalar perceived the talents in young Kumaraswamy and encouraged him by his praise.

It was the year 1877, when there was a dreadful outbreak of cholera in Jaffna. People were terrified of this scourge, as this fell disease took toll of thirty lives a day. Once late in the night, Kumaraswamy was missing from his home. His parents were worried and looked for him everywhere. At last he came home. He explained to his parents that he was busy poring over some books at Navalar's house.

Kumaraswamypillai's first appointment was as a teacher of the Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya at Elalai in 1878. This was established in 1876 by Rao Bahadur C.W. Thamo-tharampillai who was a Judge at Pudukottah, and a famous Tamil scholar.

During the period when Kumaraswamypillai was a teacher at this school, Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar had paid a visit to the school, and been much impressed by the scholarly attainments of the pupils of the Elalai Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya and had left on record his appreciation. Navalar's nephew Vidva Sironmani Ponnambalampillai also had visited this school, tested the students and remarked about their excellent standard. Those officers of the Education Department who visited this school, after inspecting the Pulavar's pupils had always commended the Pulavar. When Navalar died in 1879, Kumaraswamy Pulavar wrote a few verses as an eulogy which touches the inner chords of our heart.

Kumaraswamy Pulavar was Head Master of the Elalai Saiva prakasa Vidyalaya from 1884-1902. Amongst his distinguished pupils who learnt from him were, Vidvan Sivadanda Aiyar and E. Balasubramania Aiyer of Telli-



palai, S. Visuvanatha Mudaliyar of Maviddapuram, Pandit K. Manicka Thiagaraja of Chunnakam (Saiva lecturer) V. Thambaiya (teacher) and I. Ponniah both of Elalai, and K. Mailvaaganam, Notary of Kadduvan. One of his illustrious pupils was Vidvan Sivananda Aiyar of Pannalai (1873-1914) who was a good scholar of Tamil and Sanskrit, but he died prematurely. He was the author of Puliyoor Puranam, Puliyoor Anthathy and Sani Thuthi, etc.

The Manager of Navalar Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, Manager, T. Kailasapillai, requested Kumaraswamy Pulavar to accept the Head Mastership of his school. He was Head Master of the Navalar School Vannarpannai from 1902 to 1922 - roughly during the first quarter of this century.

Amongst those who served on the Tutorial staff under the Pulavar were Pandit Sivaprakasapillai (1864-1916), a son of Sankara Pandithar of Neerveli and who wrote Pala-amirtham Palapadam, Thiruchen-thoor Purana Urai and Sivananatha lahari Thamilarai and Pandit Arunasala Sastrikal of Vadali Adaippu, Jaffna - who were both pupils of Sankara Pandithar.

Of the students of Kumaraswamy Pulavar, the late Pandit V.M. Ratneswara Aiyar was a preceptor of the Saiva Paripalana Sabai and was a poet of a very high order. The author was acquainted with him and has heard this Pulavar extolling his master's scholarship. He was also a student of the Navalar School in the Primary classes. M. Vetharaniya Thesikar of Irupalai, Velupillai and Panchadsara Aiyar of Karainagar, S. Muruges Aiyar of Kokuvil, M. Ponniahpillai of Thavadi, Mailvaganampillai of Neervely, S.Kathiripillai of Tellipallai, T. Arunasala Thesikar of Vetharaniyam, S. Ganesha Aiyar of Vannarpannai Pandithamani, S. Kanapathipillai of Madduvil and Pulavarmani Periyathambipillai of Batticaloa were some of his distinguished students .

T. Kailasapillai (the Manager of the Navalar School) Kumaraswamy Pulavar, and A. Mootootambipillai formed the "intellectual trio" and were held in high esteem by the authorities as well as by the Tamil public.

The Tamil Sangam was founded in 1898 by T.Kailasapillai at the Navalar Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya, mainly with the support of the above and others. The Sangam was not given the prefix "Jaffna" or "Ceylon" because of the fact that it had very broad ideals - of getting students from "Senthamil Nad". It formed the model and precursor of the Madurai Tamil Sangam, which was inaugurated in 1901.

One of the chief ideals of Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar was to establish an Institution to hold examinations and award degrees such as Pandit, Vidvan etc. through the medium of Tamil. The Tamil Sangam had as its first President, T. Kailasapillai, Kumaraswamy Pulavar, Mootootambipillai and Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Puloly, Sabaretna Mudaliyar were members. The first examination of the Tamil Sangam was held in 1899. The Secretary of the Tamil Sangam at this time was M. Vaitthialingam, the second Head Master of the Navalar Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya. In the same tradition the pulavar was also Secretary from 1902. Certificates were all issued in Tamil and degrees awarded in consonance with the ideals of Navalar, who had the central idea of starting one.

When the plan for the Madurai Tamil Sangam was considered by Pandithurai Thevar, the Zemindar of Ramnad, he kept in touch with the Tamil Sangam, which was already established in Jaffna and sounded scholars such as Kumaraswamy Pulavar, as to how the examinations should be conducted and the contents of the syllabus for the various Tamil Examinations.

When the Madurai Tamil Sangam was constituted, Kumaraswamy Pulavar was appointed an examiner of Tamil language and grammar for the Pandit Examination of the

Madurai Tamil Sangam. His name appears first in the list of Tamil Examiners. He was also requested to contribute his research to the Senthamil - monthly magazine of high standard - the organ of the Madurai Tamil Sangam.

Kumaraswamy Pulavar contributed articles of research from 1902 till his death to that magazine. Some of the articles that he contributed were "Akarathi", "Thanigai Puranam", "Thatthi Thantha Patham", "Athiyatthuma Ramayana", "Idamavathu Yathu?" "Niruttham", "Parimelalakar Urai", "Madak-Kalankaram" "Arasakesari and his Raghu Vamsa", etc., etc. He wrote a moving appreciation in verse at the death of the Founder of Senthamil and the Madurai Tamil Sangam, Pandithurai Thevar in 1911.

Kumaraswamy Pulavar wrote a number of prose works such as "Sisupala Charitham", "Ramothantham", and "Thamil Pulavar Charithiram". His translations from Sanskrit are "Meka Thutha Karikai", "Sanakya Neethi Venba", "Hitopadesa", etc. One of his best works is "Vinai Pahupatha Vilakkam" which was written at the request of and published by A. Mootootambipillai in 1913 at the Navalar Press, Jaffna. It is a masterly study of Philology of Verbs. Its second edition was printed by the Thanaluksmy Press Chunnakam a few years ago. They had omitted the fact that the first edition was published at the request of Mootootambipillai.

He was an able commentator and published "Soodamani Nigandu" Chapters I and II, "Thandiyalankaram" with new notes, "Yapparunk-kalak-karikai" with new notes, "Akapporul Vilakkam" with new notes, the "Ilakkana Sandirikai", and also published "Marasai Anthathi" with notes, "Thiruvathavoorar Puranam" with notes and the "Thirukkarasai Puranam" with notes. He published the "Kalasai Siledai Venba" an invaluable aid for aspiring poets. He sang many other poems on several shrines and temples. His Tamil Pulavar Charithram

(2nd Edition) is a mine of information of Tamil Poets of Thamir Nadu & Eelam.

His Tamil literary Dictionary "Ilakkiya Sollaharathy" contained several hundred words more than the other Dictionaries of that time and was published in 1924. It had many words found in the Tamil classics.

He was one of those who were consulted when the Madras Tamil Lexicon was to be compiled. Rev. Chandler came to Jaffna and contacted Kumaraswamy Pulavar and Mootootambipillai, and some others. He offered his own Tamil Tamil Dictionary which formed the basis of the Tamil Lexicon. He also collected words and sent to the Editorial Board. This was in 1912.

In 1917 E.B. Denham, the Director of Education came over to Jaffna and contacted Kumaraswamy Pulavar and A. Mootootambipillai at the Uduvil School, and requested their opinion regarding Tamil text books - some of which the Director had reported were teeming with errors.

He helped Wyman Kathiravetpillai in editing his Dictionary, which was published by the Madurai Tamil Sangam in 1910, due to the zeal of Pandithurai Thevar, its President.

#### An Incident

C.W. Thamotharampillai had published the "Ilakkana Vilakkam" in 1889 after much research. In a Preface to that book Thamotharampillai maintained that the supposed faults in the above book as published in the "ilakkana Vilakka Chooravali" by Sabapathy Navalar were not at all faults. Sabapathy Navalar, was also from Kopay, Jaffna. He had been the Vidvan of the Thiruvavathurai Atheenam. Kumaraswamy Pulavar attacked Sabapathy Navalar in several articles.

\*Once Sabapathy Navalar had come to Jaffna and had gone for a bath at Keerimalai. On his return from Keerimalai he stopped his buggy cart at Mallakam station and asked a by-stander whether he would like to come along with him in his carriage if he was bound for Chunnakam. The traveller agreed readily and the following dialogue ensued. (It must have been the year before 1902).

Sabapathy Navalar :- Where is Elalai?  
 Traveller :- It is close to this village.  
 Sabapathy Navalar:- Is the school established by Thamothersampillai there?  
 Traveller :- Yes, it is.  
 Sabapathy Navalar :- Is Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam, the Head Master there?  
 Traveller :- Yes, he is.  
 Sabapathy Navalar :- Do you know him well?  
 Traveller :- O! Yes. I do.

The 'Traveller' did not like to continue the conversation, politely thanked him, and got down from the cart and went his way. Who do you think was the traveller? It was Kumaraswamy Pulavar, who perceived from his holy appearance that it must be Sabapathy Navalar.

Once Kumaraswamy Pulavar was asked why he allowed his sons to follow English. The poet said that the times had changed and one who learnt Tamil alone would have to lead an impoverished life, as he had to do. He cited the examples of Wyman Kathiravetpillai, T.Kanaga-

\*An account of Kumaraswamy Pulavar by his son K.Muthukumaraswamypillai B.A. of Mylani, Chunnakam.

sundarampillai and Mudaliyar Naganathar."

From the life of Sabaratna Mudaliyar we learn that he used to take his horse carriage to take Kumaraswamy Pulavar from the Navalar School to Kokuvil and get his doubts cleared from Kumaraswamy Pulavar. Many other students awaited the Pulavar from Kokuvil to Mylani.

He was seized with rheumatism in 1922. Even from his sick bed he helped Kanapathipillai (Pandithamani) and Paiyathampillai (Pulavarmani). They were there at his death bed.

#### His Qualities

In one of his essays in the Senthamil he says that a man should be free from jealousy, have high courage, independence, lofty thoughts and an unsullied reputation. All these qualities Kumaraswamy Pulavar possessed in abundant measure.

He was unostentatious in his ways. On the few occasions he was compelled by his friends to put on the long coat and the "Uttariyam" and the turban, he did so, but they were never worn again. Apart from Mootootambipillai with whom he was intimate, he counted Rao Bahadur Thamothersampillai, Judge K. Kathiravetpillai, T. Kanagasundarampillai, William Nevins, Muttucumarar Sidambarapillai and Maho Upaddiyayar Saminatha Aiyar as his friends. Maho Maho Upaddiyayar Ganesha Aiyar who published the Tolhappiyam with new notes was one of his illustrious pupils. His translations from Sanskrit into Tamil were (1) Meha Thootha Karikai; (2) Ramothantham (3) Sanakya Neethi Venba; (4) Hitopadesa.

His writings were:-

1. Tamil Pulavar Charithram
2. Vinai Pahupatha Vilakkam
3. Sisupala Charitham
4. Raghuvamsa Charitha Amirtham
5. Siva Thothra Kavi Thiraddu

6. Eka Viruththa Parathathi
7. Mavai Pathikam
8. Ilakkana Chandrikai

He published the followign with notes and commentary:-

Kalasai Sled dai Venba  
 Kambaremayanam - Bala Kamdam  
 Neethi Neri Vilakkam  
 Thandiyalankaram  
 Yapparunkalakkarakai  
 Choodamani Nikantu  
 Thirukkarasai Puranam

He left behind two sons, Ambalavanapillai and Muttukumaraswamypillai, two Tamil and English scholars, and a daughter Visalatchiammah. They trod on the footprints of their illustrious father - the scholar and poet. The Tamil world should read the works of Kumaraswamy Pulavar which are fortunately kept alive by his sons. Muthukumaraswamipillai has broughtout an excellent biography of his father Kumaraswamy Pulavar in Tamil.

A Public Hall and a Public Library should be erected at Chunnakam to commemorate his name as well as A STATUE!

## SOME EMINENT TAMILS - 13

### A. MOOTOOTAMBIPILLAI (1858 - 1917)

Mootootambipillai was the author of Abhidanakodam - The Tamil classical Dictionary which is a precursor to Kalai Kalanjiyam - to the Encyclopaedia in Tamil. He was a Historian, Grammarian, a wielder of fine Tamil prose, a printer and publisher, and a Western Medical Practitioner.

#### Fore-Fathers

Tracing his family backwards, we find his mother's father was Anumakkoddi Mudaliyar who owned lands around the Manipay Maruthadi Pillaiyar Temple. One of his grand-uncles was P.S.Page, the pioneer of English education in the north. Another was J.R.Arnold, or Arnold Sathasivampillai, who was Journalist, Poet and Professor of Tamil Literature, Jaffna College Vaddukkoddai. From the "Manipay Santhathy Murai" we learn that many of the leading men, such as S.K. Lawton and Gate Mudaliyar Thiagaraja and Father Gnanapirakasar formed a close family circle.

His father Arumugampillai was a farmer; his mother was Seethevipillai. He was the eldest son. Mootootambipillai was born on the 18th April 1858, at Manipay, Jaffna. The home of his birth is at Memorial Lane, Manipay.

### Education

He had his early education under P.S. Page in Page's School at Manipay. Later his parents sent him to Wesleyan Central School, Jaffna, when William Nevins Chidambarapillai was Head of that Institution. Chidambarapillai was a great Educationist, a Lexicographer, a Mathematician, a Logician and a bilingual scholar. Mootootambipillai had an aptitude for learning English, Tamil and Sanskrit. He was also a pupil of Murugesa Pandithar of Chunnakam. Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam and Saravanamuttu Pulavar of Urelu were his colleagues, who studied under - Murugesa Pandithar - a veritable genius.

### First Vocation

At the age of 18, Mootootambipillai moved to Nawalapitiya, where he worked as a Tamil Tutor under the Manager of the Ceylon Company Estates.

### In Tamil Nadu

In 1880 Pillai crossed over to 'Tamil Nadu', and he found his first vocation was that of a Tamil Tutor to Alaganathan Chettiar of Thiruturai poondy. Shortly afterwards Pillai moved to Nagapattinam - known as Negapatam - a commercial shipping centre. He was appointed Head Clerk and Accountant of Messrs. Anderson and Co., and he toiled for two and half years there.

In 1883, Pillai wrote the "Epitome of Ceylon History". It was a brilliant analysis of Tennent's Ceylon in a nutshell. It was acclaimed by scholars at that time. It was the first History of Ceylon in Tamil.

J.R. Arnold, who was Editor of the Morning Star and the author of the Galaxy of Tamil Poets in his opinion dated the 15th September 1883, said:-

"The author it seems has spared no pains to execute the work in such a way as to please

the students as well as the general readers. The style is neat, simple, commanding and animating; expressions are rich, forcible and enlivening. The plan of the work is what it should be - abundance of materials compressed into a small compass. The size of the work is such that the vast majority of the Tamil students can easily afford to purchase it. I believe that the work is in every respect worthy of the patronage of the public."

Rev. Spaulding, a Professor in Tamil, an American Missionary, of Batticottu High School, Manipay, said on the 8th September 1883:

"the work contains in a small compass much valuable and useful information and is characterised throughout by the highest graces - brevity, purity and simplicity of style. The author has certainly conferred a lasting benefit upon the youth of the country by supplying a long-felt desideratum and such as desire to gain a knowledge of the history of the island will do well to possess the compendium."

William Nevins Muttucumarar Sidambarapillai, the Educationist, B. Francis Thamboo, Editor Catholic Guardian, and James H. Martyn - First Editor Morning Star have all paid tributes to this publication. Murugesu Pandithar his Guru has written a Foreword to this in verse.

### Editor "Sathiabimani"

Pillai went to Karikal about this period, on the invitation of Tavasi Muttu Nadar, a millionaire who started a Tamil weekly "Sathiabimani" in 1884. The Nadar really wanted to repel and crush the vagaries of another paper which had the policy of ridiculing his family. Pillai was the right man in the right

place . He thrilled his readers with his chaste, homely and trenchant leaders. His opponent lost his nerve and became abusive, which landed him in jail.

The Nadar was gratified and expressed his gratitude by a donation to Mootootambipillai that it be utilised for the propagation of Tamil Literature. It was in the Sathiabimani, that Pillai published his Life of Kalidasa - part by part - in sweet Tamil.

#### In Madras

Soon after, Mootootambipillai went to Madras in 1885. He set up a Printing Press in Anderson Street, and named it Jubilee Press, in memory of Queen Victoria whose Jubilee was to be shortly celebrated. He also established Thamby & Co. His brother Veerasin - ghampillai, and his brother-in-Law Vythialingam were with him at that time.

It was while at Madras that Pillai wrote a drama in Tamil - "Prabodha Chandrodaya) or the Rise of the Intellect, and got this published in 1889. This was originally a drama in Sanskrit written by Kisna Misra about 1500 years ago. About 300 years back Vythianatha Navalar had translated it into Tamil verses. Pillai wrote this drama in Tamil prose. The author was able to trace a copy of this at the British Museum Library, Oriental Section. The style is simple, the irony or the implied sarcasm is very deep. It is like the pilgrim's progress, an allegory. But here you find the highest watermark of intellectual penmanship; the copyright of this work was sold to the Rippon Press, Madras, and so no copies are available in Ceylon;

It was while at Madras, Mootootambipillai started writing the Abidhana Kosam and in 1886 as he makes it clear in the Preface. Materials too were gathered, such as "Visuvanatha Kurukkal Sambava Kurippu" for writing a "Jaffna History" whilst at Madras.

He was a Medical Practitioner whilst at Madras and was successful at that.

He took part in some of the discussions regarding certain aspects of Tamil grammar. On a certain day while passing the Presidency College, his attention was drawn to a debate about "Ahupeyar" and "Anmoli Thohai". He was garlanded and taken to his residence. Sathasivampillai, the pupil of Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar, a close friend of his took a leading part in honouring him.

Pillai published the "Kalidasa Charithram" - a biography of Kalidasa, the poet, which was appreciated by scholars of his day. Murugesu Pandithar and Poovai Kalyanasundara Mudaliyar have given appreciative forewords to this.

He was honoured with the title of "Senthamil Vacana Singam" - the lion of Sentamil Prose, while in Madras (1885 - 1892) by the literati in Tamil Nadu.

#### At Jaffna

Mootootambipillai returned to Jaffna in 1893. It was a time when the leading lights of Eelam had faded out one by one. Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar and Sir Muttu Cumaraswamy had died in 1879, and Carroll Visuvanathapillai in 1880.

Navalar's house at Vannarpannai was put up for sale. Mootootambipillai who was at Manipay heard of this and wisely purchased Navalar's house. It is the present "Navalar Kottam" at Navalar Road. The land adjacent to that was also Navalar's land; Mootootambipillai looked upon Navalar as his Guru and with reverence walked in his footprints. He named the house "Navalar Kottam", established a Press the "Navalar Press" in 1893.

He started a Medical and general store and named it "Ward & Davy" - which would attract business with the west. This name "Ward & Davy" represented the two

brothers Mootootambipillai and Veerasingampillai, and became very popular not only in Ceylon but also other countries in the east and the west.

Mootootambipillai carried on practice as a medical practitioner; he was a Registered Medical practitioner; so was his brother. Pillai carried on business with Japan, Germany and Great Britain and owned a Pharmacy and General Stores.

Pillai had edited a "Tamil Medical Review" in 1897. Here we find a glossary of scientific words in Tamil. Here we find an exposition of Theriar's work on Colour of Urine and Oil test. He has published the Western treatment of diseases and compared it with the Eastern treatment. He vindicated the value of vaccination. He preferred cremation to the burial of the dead. He spoke of "Karma" and accidents. The author fortunately came across some copies of this review, which reveal trends of his thoughts.

Swami Vivekananda's first public lecture in the East was in January 15, 1897 at Colombo. He also paid a subsequent visit to Jaffna and delivered two lectures. These are gems of eloquence. These were translated by Mootootambipillai and published in the Hindu organ and separately as booklets. It earned the highest praise from the Editor and the public. The writer found a copy of this work at the British Museum Gallery (Orient 1 Section). No copies were available at ordinary Libraries in Ceylon. But there are copies at the Archives at Nuwara Eliya in Ceylon.

In 1898, there was a Tamil Sangam, founded by T.Kailasapillai, a nephew of Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar, the Trustee of the Navalar school and his publications, A. Kumaraswamy Pulavar, a distinguished scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit and a Post the Head Master of the Navalar Saivaprakasa School at Vannarpannai, Mootootambipillai, Mudaliyar Sabaretam, Eramba Aiyar and other leading Tamil Scholars of the day collaborated

with T.Kailasapillai. This 'Sangam' had as its objective the conducting of certain examinations "Bala Pundit" and 'Pundit' in Tamil and to award more titles. This was very dear to the heart of Navalar. Mootootambipillai was a pillar of this Sangam which became a model and a precursor to the Madurai Tamil Sangam - the Fourth Tamil Sangam.

Just before starting his Tamil Sangam, at Madurai, the Palavanantham Zemindar, Pandithurai Thevar - communicated with the "Tamil Sangam" Examiners, one of whom was Mootootambipillai - and obtained all the particulars as regards syllabus, content, and other rules of this Sangam. The Madurai Tamil Sangam was established on May 24th 1901. Some of the leading Pandits of the Tamil Sangam at Jaffna were appointed Examiners of the Madurai Tamil Sangam. They were A.Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam, A. Mootootambipillai of Navalar Kottam, Jaffna, N. Kathiravetpillai and V.Kanagasabaipillai - were in Madras then.

The "Vaidya Visarani" was published by A.Mootootambipillai in 1898 and also the following years. This was called the Tamil Medical news; Pillai published Western scientific truths in Tamil, and also published a glossary of common medicines and medical terms in Tamil. We have seen a few Magazines of this year and the subsequent years. They were absorbingly interesting.

The Fourth Tamil Academy was established at Madurai on May 24th 1901 by Pandithurai Thevar who was the Zemindar of Palavanantham. He also started a monthly Senthamil in 1902, for Tamil research. Mootootambipillai's weighty contributions to this journal may be found from 1902 till his death.

His articles reveal a profound originality of research. One of his earliest articles was on the toad in a rock. Others were on: The Boundaries and Extent

of the Tamil country, "Tamil letters", "Tamil Number", "The Tamil in a Sugar plantation", "Poets of Eelam" which was a lecture at the Madurai Tamil Sangam in 1914.

His article on "Belamum Thamilum (Ceylon and Tamil)" was a bold research and was reproduced in the Tamilian Antiquity edited by Dr.G.U.Pope.

Mootootambipillai was appointed an Examiner in Tamil for the Madurai Tamil Sangam in Tamil Literature from 1902. The other was Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam - who was thus honoured.

#### The First Tamil Encyclopaedist

An encyclopaedia is a work in which the various branches of arts or science or all topics of a particular branch, are discussed in alphabetical order. It is a comprehensive summary of knowledge.

Aristotle, a Greek Scholar was the first to contemplate writing such a book. The Chinese had made a sort of Cyclopaedia in the tenth century. Someswara, the king of Kalyani (in India) wrote "Abileshi" - thaithe - Sinthamani" in 1131, a Cyclopaedia in the Sanskrit language.

The first encyclopaedia in English was published in 1768, A.D. It comprised 5020 volumes and can be seen at the British Museum at Great Russell Street, London. Tharanatha Tharka of Calcutta started writing a kind of Cyclopaedia called "Vaaspathiam" in Sanskrit in 1859 and completed it in 1899. In the same year (1899) Philo Paul compiled a "Purana Katha Nigandu" in Malayalam, which was a kind of Encyclopaedia.

But no such work appeared in Senthamil until A.Mootootambipillai of Navalar Kottam published his "Abhidhana Kosam" in 1902. This work, says the author in the Preface, was started in 1886 when he was in Madras.

Pillai had laboured sixteen years on this unique work.

Mootootambipillai's "Abhidhana Kosam" was published at the Navalar Press, Jaffna, in 1902. It was called The Classical Tamil Dictionary. It was a pioneer work and the precursor to the Kalai Kalanjiyam. The author in his preface stated that he worked at this for sixteen years. A similar work was the Abidhana Cinthamani as the first of the Kalai Kalanjiyam; this is a misleading statement. Under Mootootambipillai volume 8, it is stated that Abhidhana Kosam is an earlier but smaller work than Abhidhana Chinthamani. But the previous statement should be corrected where this is revised and reprinted.

Abidhana Kosam is a significant contribution of Mootootambipillai, in the field of learning. The style of Tamil prose is so clear, brief and elegant that modern Scholars have wondered whether Navalar had written this.

This work was dedicated to P.Coomaraswamy Mudaliyar, who was a member of the Legislative Council of Ceylon from 1893-1898. He was the first son of Ponnambalam Mudaliyar and the eldest of the two distinguished leaders of Ceylon, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam. He was a great patron of Tamil and Saiva religion.

If this is revised and published, this would be very useful to the public.

#### Bharata Churukkam

Mootootambipillai's Bharata Churukkam Essence of Maha Bharata is a most useful contribution to the students. This was dedicated to Pandithurai Thevar, the Founder of the Madurai Tamil Sangam in 1901.

This was a text book for the G.C.E. Ordinary Level from 1965-1967. It was a textbook in Tamil for the London Intermediate in Arts, some decades ago. It was



also used as a textbook at Theological College at Bangalore. This is a book that has a perennial charm. The first edition was published in 1903. The latest edition was in 1978 by the Sri Lanka Book Depot, Jaffna.

#### Nannool Made Easy

Nannool Made Easy or Nannool Ilahupotham Elutthathikaram am (Part I) was published in 1904 and Sollathikaram in 1905. The intricate rules of Grammar were made very easy. Questions and answers and many examples were given in this book, an advance on previous editions. A. Kumaraswamy Pulavar in his Foreword to this work has acclaimed him as a scholar in Tamil and English. Reviewers in Senthamil applauded this work. The first part is we believe still available and the second part is very rare. If the latter is reprinted, both would be useful for University students and for those pursuing higher education in Grammar through the Swabhasha (Tamil). Another Nannool Uthara Vilakkam - a second edition with notes by Pundit Veerakathi was printed on the eve of the Tamil Conference in January 1974, by S.Cumaraswamy at his Sanmuganatha Press, Vannarpannai.

Jaffna has been the home of Dictionaries. The American missionaries published the Manipay Tamil - Tamil Dictionary in 1842 in Jaffna. A Tamil English Dictionary was published by Dr. Winslow who was for a long time a missionary at Jaffna and produced his Dictionary in 1862 with the help of several Jaffna Tamil Scholars - William Nevins Muttukumarar Sidamparapillai and Daniel Caroll Vyramuttu Visvanathapillai one of the first to graduate from the Madras University in 1858. This has been reprinted recently in the U.S.A. Percival who was a Missionary in Jaffna had published an English - Tamil Dictionary in 1900. But it was Mootootambipillai who brought out the first edition of the English Tamil Dictionary. Although the preface is dated 7th November 1907, yet this was published in 1908.

It saved the trouble of referring to two Dictionaries. It contains more words, phrases and synonyms than all the similar dictionaries at that time. It was dedicated to Dr. Ananda Commaraswamy, the greatest ambassador of Indian culture to the West.

The Dictionary was revised and printed six times; The last edition was in 1953. This Dictionary, if revised and printed, will meet the needs of the modern times. This is one of the source lexicons cited by the Madras Tamil Lexicon and Sollaharathi by Kathiravetpillai.

Mootootambipillai had completed a Tamil-Tamil Dictionary, on the lines of the Oxford English Dictionary - but had not been published. This will be an invaluable aid to Tamil Scholars.

#### Civilians' Tamil Grammar

His "Civilians' Tamil Grammar" in English is a very useful book for those non-Tamils who wish to study the Tamil language. This was published in 1912. It is a lucid and model exposition of Tamil grammar.

#### Jaffna History (Tamil)

Mootootambipillai was the first national historian of Jaffna in 1912. He has based this book in Vaipavamalai and an unpublished "Ola Manuscript" Visuvanatha Kurukkal Sambava Kurippu" and other traditions. Other Historians built on the foundations laid by him and built superstructures.

Kalladi Velupillai of Vayavilan, who published the "Yalpana Vaipava Kaumuthi", quotes Mootootambipillai in extenso. Although Casie Chitty has written a Jaffna history earlier, that was a brief outline and in English which is found in the Royal Asiatic Society Journal

Ceylon. It would be very useful, if this work is revised and updated by a competent scholar and published.

His Last Work  
"Thenmoli Vatalaru"

His last work was "Thenmoli Vatalaru" (The History of Tamil Literature) completed in the early term of 1917, and was published by Mootootambipillai's brother, Veerasinghampillai, in 1920. This was dedicated to Sri E.B.Denham, the then Director of Education. This was the second history of Tamil Literature, the first being Sabapathy Navalar's Dravida Prakasikai which was published in 1899. If Thenmoli Vatalaru is revised and published this would be indeed most helpful to students of Tamil.

Several generations of students have studied Mootootambipillai's Lagu Bodham Series Tamil Readers. His "Pillai Padam" - or first steps to Tamil (Infant Reader) has been published over seventy five times and is a popular first alphabet book.

Mootootambipillai passed away on November 3rd 1917. His photograph was unveiled at the Jaffna University of Sri Lanka, Jaffna on 6.1.78 by Dr. Vidyananthan. Portraits should be unveiled at the Jaffna Central College Library, and it will be a fitting gesture to rename the 'Road' where he was born, the "Memorial Lane" as "Mootootambipillai Avenue". A sketch of A.M. was issued by the Tamil Manram Mahajana College, Tellipalai, and his portrait was unveiled on 6.1.78.

It would be useful if selections of Mootootambipillai's weighty essays are published by some research workers.

**SOME EMINENT TAMILS - 14**

**MUDALIYAR S. SABARETNAM**  
**(1858 - 1922)**

Mudaliyar Sabaretam was an outstanding Saiva Siddhanta Scholar - who wrote some good Tamil and English works. He knew Sanskrit as well. He was also a poet of no mean order.

His father was Sabapathy pillai of Kokkuvil - who was Chief Secretary of the Mullaitivu Kachcheri. Sabapathypillai was a descendent of Kulasegara Mudaliyar. His mother Aachchimuttu was the daughter of Murugesar - who was an affluent man. Sabaretam was born on April 17, 1858 (Chittirai 3rd) at Kokkuvil in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

Education

He studied Tamil from Pundit Suyambu Nather; He also studied under Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar at his Saivaprakasa Vidyasalai, Vannarpannai. Among his classmates was Navalar's brother's son T.Kailasapillai who was appointed the first Editor of the Inthusathanam in 1889.

He studied English at the Wesleyan English School, Jaffna (now known as Central College, Jaffna) the alma mater of both Arumuga Navalar and Mootootambipillai the Guru and friend of the Mudaliyar.

The "Udaya Bhanau" was started in 1880 by Urelu Saravanamuttupillai inspired by Arumuga Navalar. At the end of the 19th Century there were writers - such as

Charley Bradlaugh who spread atheism with materialism through his writings. Sabaretnam as a youth wrote a series of articles - as he felt that the spread of Atheism should be arrested. These essays were collected and published later under the name of "Echchuvaram Nichchayam" in 1889.

Sabaretnam passed out at the General Clerical Service - a public examination 1878 at the age of 20. He served at Mullaitivu, Colombo and Kandy. He was transferred to the Jaffna Kachcheri in 1902. He was made a J.P. in 1905. He was appointed as Kachcheri Mudaliyar in 1908 - he was promoted as Deputy Fiscal Jaffna in 1912. He was appointed as Mudaliyar to the Government in 1917 and Gate Mudaliyar in 1919. He served for several years at Jaffna and retired from Government Service in 1921.

Even after he retired, he was appointed as a member of the Commission to effect reforms in the service of the Head Men - Sabaretna Mudaliyar was a powerful critic of the deviations of Saivism. His contributions are to be found in the "Hindu Organ" "Inthusathanam", of Jaffna the Siddhanta Deepika and Siddhantam and Kala Sarithra Mani periodicals from Tamil Nadu. He wrote also under the pen name of "Kuhathasar".

Here is a list of his published works their date and a brief comment on each of these.

- 1) Seevana Potham (Tamil) 1890  
This was an attack on "Maya Veda"; and seeks to clarify the relationship between Soul and God.
- 2) Echchura Nichchayam (Tamil) 1896  
This is written to establish the positive nature of God's existence and is an attack on Atheism.

Its logical presentation is admirable.

A second edition was published in 1956 by C.V. Jambulingampillai of Mylapore, Madras, a friend of his; the writer was presented a copy of this by Proctor Manickavasagar J.P. of Kokkurvil in 1966.

- 3) Essentials of Hinduism 1913  
(English - Madras)  
This is a detailed account from the Saiva Siddhanta view point.
- 4) Pirapancha Vicharam (Tamil 1918 - Madras)  
This elaborates the existence of God - as propounded in Echchura Nichchayam.
- 5) Life of Thirugnana Sambandar (English)  
This was published in Madras on the 29th April 1921 by C.V. Jambulingampillai. It discusses the exact date of Thirugnanasambandar. He had the ambition of writing and publishing the lives of all the other Saiva Saints in English.
- 6) Thirukkural (Arattupal - Illaraviyal) last 10 Chapters  
It was included by Pundit V.T. Sambandan when he edited the S.S.C. Tamil text of 1921.

#### The Poet

Mudaliyar Sabaretnam's contributions as a Tamil poet are as follows:-

- 1) Munneswaram Nunnathaswamy and Vadivalagi Ammai Asvikiya Vituttam - 1887 (Published by his friend Chelliah)
- 2) Kanthar Kalippa - He composed 300 verses but this was not completed.
- 3) Saravanapava Malai

- 4) Nallai Nanmani Malai
- 5) Kokkuvil Sith Vinayakar
- 6) Kokkuvil Kirupaharar  
Sivasubra Maniar Mummani Kovai (Venba etc.)  
Published by S. Kanapathipillai a Teacher.

It was at the last mentioned temple that Mudaliyar Sabaretnam spent all his leisure hours in communication with Lord Muruga. His books are now out of print.

He wanted to collect all his contributions to the various journals and publish them in one volume - but he was not able to do so. Would some Tamil Saiva Society ever fulfil his wish and earn the gratitude of the world.

Mudaliyar Sabaretnam was a dear friend of Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam and used to take his horse carriage to the Saivaprakasa School - Vannarpannai - While on the journey from Vannarpannai to Mylani - till the home of the poet, the pulavar cleared the knotty passages and doubts that arose in the Mudaliyar's mind.

Mudaliyar Sabaretnam was called upon to preside at the deliberations of the Saiva Siddhanta Sabai at Tuticorin, the Saiva Siddhanta Samajam at Mylapore, Madras in 1916 and the Saiva Siddhanta Samajam at Jaffna of which he was the Secretary. He was a very active member of the Tamil Sangam, Jaffna which was founded in 1898 by T.Kailasapillai. He was Trustee of the Kokkuvil Kirupahara Sivasubramania Swamy temple.

He was held in high esteem amongst his Saiva colleagues.

#### A Note On His Family

He had an elder sister Annapurani, a younger brother Kulandaivelu and a younger sister Sinna Thankachchi. He married Kanagambal, a daughter of Ponnambala-

pillai in 1889; she died in 1906. Afterwards Sabaretna Mudaliyar married his wife's sister - a second time.

He set out on a pilgrimage to Benares with his second wife in 1922. The Mudaliyar's health broke down as a result of both his daughter's death and his wife's death - following in rather close succession. Mudaliyar Sabaretnam died on November 15, 1922.

May his fame live long !

(The writer saw a four times the Cabinet size photo of Mudaliyar Sabaretnam at Mr.C.V. Jambulingam's house at Mylapore, Madras.)

(His daughter Parangna Anmai married Manicka Vasagar, a Proctor and J.P. now of Kokkuvil - who was a son of M.K. Vetpillai, a poet, and commentator, a disciple of Navalar and Ponnambalapillai. They have six children three daughters, Mrs. Amirthambikai Sathasivam B.A., Miss Suntherambikai, B.A., Chavakachchi Hindu College, Mrs. Kanagambikai Ranganathan B.A. and three sons Mr. Mahadeva, Principal, Kokkuvil, Hindu College, B.A. Honours (London) Mr. Vamadevan, Science Master, Royal College, Colombo, and Dr. Subramania Sivam, Surgeon, Badulla Hospital.)

## **T. KANAGASUNDARAMPILLAI (1863 - 1922)**

Kanagasundarampillai was an eminent Tamil Scholar of the last quarter of the 19th century and first quarter of this century, who has linked Eelam with Tamil Nadu.

He was born at Thiru Konamalai, the seat of the ancient Sivan Temple, sung by two Nayanmar which was a part of the ancient Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna. He was born in the month of Avani (August 15-September 14), 24th 1862. His father was Thambimuttupillai. After being educated at Thiru-Konamalai, he left for Madras; his teachers were Kathiravetpillai and Pundit Ganeshan two great Tamil Scholars. He was a profound Tamil scholar at the age of 14 able to expound Thiruvathavoorar Puranam and Anthathi, and got the title of Ilan-Tamil Pulavar.

He went to Madras in 1880 and first entered Senkalvaraya Nayakkar College, and from there he joined Pachchaiyappan College where he passed the F.A. Class; later he joined Presidency College, Madras at the age of 17 from where he graduated offering Tamil and Philosophy obtaining Honours in Tamil. He won several awards after this. One of those notable scholars who studied under him there was V.U. Sithambarapillai (1872-1936) of Thirunelveli who was not only a scholar, but a patriot of Tamil Nadu, who built the first native boat and defied the British administration.

Sithambarapillai published "Adame Puranam", "Innilai Viruthi Urai", "Patattirattu", "Manampola Valvu", "Meyyarum", "Meyyarivu", Thirukkural with commentary of Manakkudavar and Tholhappiyam with a commentary of Ilampooranar. He has left a poem in praise of his "Guru" Kanagasundarampillai.

N. Kathiravetpillai was one of his students who studied "Tholhappiyam" from him. Kanagasundarampillai's first appointment was as Head teacher of the Chittoor High School of Tamil Nadu. He urged Navalal's nephew Kailasapillai to write a "Life of Navalal". His second appointment was as a Lecturer of English at Saidapet Training College, Madras. Later he taught at Christian College and Pachchaiappan College, both at Madras. He taught Tamil privately for some students.

Kanagasundarampillai was so responsible a scholar manager as to enable the Navalal Vidyanu Palana Yanthirasalai at 300 Mint Street, Madras, to maintain the highest level of literacy accuracy.

### Examiner

He was appointed as Examiner of the Madras University. C.W. Thamothersampillai was the first Ceylon Tamil Graduate of the Madras University to be appointed as an Examiner. Kanagasundarampillai followed his salutary example and was Chief Examiner of the Board for four years. He was also Examiner in Tamil Literature, and grammar at the Madura Tamil Sangam, which was established in 1902 by Pandithurai Thevar.

### The Publisher

Kanagasundarampillai edited Ramayanam Balakandam with the help of Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam and published it in Madras in 1918. It took ten years to publish this as the two scholars lived apart and the work of co-ordinating their joint work was very slow. Working all alone Pillai published the Ramayanam Sundara

Kandam. "The Tamil Navalar Charithram" edited by Kanagasunderampillai was published by Coomaraswamy Naidu & Sons, Madras. In that book of biographical sketches of Tamil poets, he has included some verses of Pughalendhi, a poet who had visited Kataragama and other places in Ceylon. He published "Eelamandala Thevaram" and "Thiruppuhal" in 1910. He published "Sivagnana Ma Padiyam" and Thirumoolar's Thirumanthiram - two important Saiva Siddhanta texts. He collaborated with Natesa Aiyar a Scholar in Sanskrit and translated Valmiki's Ramanayagam Kishkita Kandam into Tamil which was published in 1911.

In publishing Yappilakanam or the grammar of Prosody and Ani Ilakanan or the grammar of figures of Speech, Kailasapillai acknowledged his indebtedness to Kanagasunderampillai; Kanagasunderampillai published "Ahapporul Vilakka Urai" with Kumaraswamy Pulavar's help in 1912. Thus the two important aspects of Tamil Poetry, prosody and figures of speech (ani) were made easy to the Tamil students.

Kanagasunderampillai helped C.W. Thamothersampillai by giving him a palm leaf manuscript of Ilakkana Vilakkam; he helped Pinnathoor Narayana Aiyar by giving him a palm leaf manuscript of Nattinai. He helped Saminatha Aiyar, Anavaratha Vinayakampillai, Professor Suntharampillai, Namasiva Mudaliyar, Vidvan Rajagopalapillai and Ponnambalappillai the Trustees of Vidyanupalana Press in each of their publications - in many ways.

His brother Saravanamuttu was a gifted poet (1848-1948). He also wrote Mohananki - an excellent novel.

Kanagasunderampillai was appointed as an Editor of the Madras Tamil Lexicon 1919-1920.

Pulavar Muttukumaraswamy pillai has given us word pictures between Thirukonamalai T. Kanagasunderampillai who came from Madras and visited Kumaraswamy Pulavar in 1911, 1913 and 1919 and his father Kumaraswamy Pulavar in "Pulavar Ninaivukkal". Pages 16-20 (The author's translation).

When he came to Jaffna in 1911, he discussed Ramayana. here is the dialogue :-

Pulavar : We should complete Ramayanam Balakandam soon and get on to Ayodya Kandam. First I have to correct the original text. Then write the notes. If more palm leaf manuscripts are available, this would be very helpful.

Kanagasunderampillai: I have asked for the manuscript of the Ramayana from the Madurai Tamil Sangam. They say they do not lend that. But that is not the truth. Rippon Press got the Thirumanthiram palm leaf manuscript and handed it over to Visuvanathapillai. I saw this personally when it was with him. Please inform Pandithurai Thevar about this.

Pulavar : I shall do so.

Kanagasunderampillai: Raghava Aiyangar the Sethu Samasthana Vidvan came to see me to show the Pari Venba he wrote. The verses are good. He is a learned man and is good at research and knows English besides.

Pulavar : I have read his weighty essays. They have a depth of knowledge.

Ask Not Less Than Hundred Rupees

Pulavar : How is the Madras Tamil Lexicon work getting on?

Kanagasunderam: They have appointed Rev.Chandler to be the Chairman of the Tamil Lexicon Board. Rev.A.C.Clayton of Ceylon is also a member of the Board. He may request you to join the Board. If he does make a request, stipulate not less than a hundred rupees.

Pulavar : I have compiled a little dictionary. I like to get it printed.

Kanagasunderam: It is good to get this printed without delay.

#### Nattinai Commentary

Kanagasunderam: Did you see my Nattinai commentary?

Pulavar : I have seen it. In certain places, the commentary is not suitable.

Kanagasunderam: I too felt the same. But for the time being I have to be satisfied.

Pulavar : Is the commentator Pinnathur Narayanasamy Aiyar known to you for a long time?

Kanagasunderam: Some time ago when he came to request a palm leaf manuscript of Nattinai, I became acquainted with him. He is from Kumbakonam. He has the talent to compose poems. He has a good knowledge of Sangam works.

#### Incomplete Critiscism (1913)

Pulavar : What is Ambalavana Navalar doing now?

Kanagasunderam: Ambalavana Navalar wrote an incomplete critiscism on Tholhappiam Payira Virutthi which was written by Arasan Shanmugampillai. Shanmugampillai in

a reply to that, attacked Ambalavana Navalar in various ways. Ambalavana Navalar did not come out with a rebuttal.

Pulavar : It is a mistake that Ambalavana Navalar wrote an incomplete criticism.

#### Use of Sanskrit Words

Pulavar : Anavarathavinayakampillai wrote to me and asked me whether I agree with the use of Sanskrit words by Sir Pon. Ramanathan in his Bhagavat Gita commentary, I wrote in reply that I do not agree, with the use of Sanskrit words by Sir Ponnambalam in his Bhagvat Gita Commentary. I wrote in reply that I do not concur with him.

Kanagasundaram : If many Sanskrit words are included, the Tamil style will be spoilt. It is good that you wrote to him your point of view. He liked to secure your friendship. He is a dear friend of mine.

#### Rheumatism 1919

Kanagasunderam : It is a wonder that you, a person who walks six miles daily - should have got rheumatism.

Pulavar : I had rheumatism in 1902 but now it is serious.

Kanagasunderm : Please take suitable medicine to cure this.

### Hitopadesa

- Kanagasunderam : Have you completed writing the Hitopadesa (in Tamil?) If possible, you can get this printed at Madras.
- Pulavar : Let the prose style be entirely Tamil. You should not mix Sanskrit words as formerly. Just like Navalar's style of prose it should be clear and vigorous.

### Life of Navalar

- Kanagasunderam : It will be good if Kailasapillai writes the Life of Arumuga Navalar. Please convey this thought to him.
- Pulavar : I shall certainly do so.

Kanagasunderampillai in his leisure hours, concentrated his attention on the examination of ancient Tamil and Sanskrit words. He used to compare the Tholhappiam and other Samgan palm-leaf manuscripts with other palm leaf manuscripts of the same title and had a sixth sense to lay his finger on the correct verse and reject the spurious ones.

Kanagasunderampillai was a poet from his boyhood. These verses were rhythmic and had given his invaluable palm leaf manuscripts to scholars but also collaborated with them in publishing their works - personally as well as by communication with them. Kanagasunderam was a Scholar of Tamil, English and Sanskrit and was of paramount help in editing the Madras Tamil Lexicon. He had commenced annotating the Kamba Ramayanam Ayodya Kandam but death intervened between - Kumaraswamy Pulavar his collaborator and he also died in the same year.

- Sources : (1) Kalai Kalanjiyam, Pages 399 and 400.
- (2) Life sketch of Thiran Ayvanar - T. Kanagasunderampillai by Pulavar Sivapathasundaram issued by the Tamil Manram, Mahajana College, Tellippalai April, 1976.
- (3) Pulavar Ninaivugal, K. Muttukumaraswampillai, Mylany.
- (4) Eeelanaddu Chudar Manikalm-Kanapathipillai.



**SIR WAITHIALINGAM  
DURAI SWAMY  
(1875 - 1968)**

Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy was a member of the Northern Province Western Division in the legislative Council from 1924-1930. He was an apostle of Sinhalese - Tamil co-operation. He took a considerable interest in promoting the interests of the teachers, an improvement in their salary scale, pensions, etc. He advocated the reopening of the Northern Ports of Kayts and Kanesanturai. His political philosophy was that national independence and self-government for Ceylon were necessary for the collective welfare of the nation. According to him there were two communities.

Political Manouvering

At the beginning of 1936, a general election of the four constituencies left vacant in North was held. W. Duraiswamy was returned unopposed for Kayts constituency on January 15, 1936. At that time there was a lot of political manoeuvring. There was talk that Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy was to be appointed Speaker. If Sir Duraiswamy came forward Dr. Perera said he was willing to support him. It was felt that the responsible post of a Speaker should be vested in a non-communal member - a Senior member of the Parliament who could think on national lines. But Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy declined to join any

party - either the party of Dr. N.M. Perera or G.G. Ponnambalam or A. Mahadeva.

On the 16th March 1936, Dr. N.M. Perera's party met at 'Mahendra' near the Clock Tower, Jaffna - the house of Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy. Mr. Francis de Soysa also was present. It was thought that Mr. Francis de Soysa would be proposed as Speaker. The Sinhalese members all thought that Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy was the fittest candidate to be the Speaker. So did the Tamil members. Mr. G.G. Ponnambalam suggested the representative put forward by the Tamil members should be proposed by Dr. N.M. Perera. But Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy said that he could not agree to this without consulting the other members.

On the evening of 16th March 1936, there was a meeting in a Committee room of the State Council. Mr. Francis de Soysa was silent. At 8 p.m. Dr. N.M. Perera's party decided that Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy should be elected Speaker. On 17 March 1936, the European Member, Mr. Carey, proposed the name of Sri Waithialingam Duraiswamy as Speaker which was seconded by Dr. N.M. Perera. Fifteen members supported this motion and it was carried - this being a definite majority. He was elected Speaker of the State Council in 1936 and continued to be the Speaker of the State Council till 1947.

He said "matters like manhood suffrage and the abolition of communal representation are domestic matters and we can adjust them when we are so minded. They cannot be abolished by a stroke of the pen." (Hansard Page 1799, 1928). He said this bogey of communal representation and the fear of Sinhalese domination should not be trotted out. He was one of those who voted for the introduction of the Donoughmore Constitution which he believed would bring autonomy for Ceylon.

On October 15, 1928, he brought forward the motion:

" . . . in the opinion of this House this country is fit for Self Government of the Dominion

type; but that in order to meet the wishes of others also, we are prepared to accept the recommendations of the Commissioners concerning executive functions subject to modification.

He supported Hon.K. Balasingham in the motion brought forward by him that there should be a commission to revise Thesawalamai and spoke on January 29, 1925 in the Legislative Assembly. He said that there should be changes re "Thediatheddam" acquisition and the law of pre-emption.

He was highly respected by the Sinhalese members of Parliament. Dr. N.M. Perera and Phillip Gunawardhana belonged to the opposition as leaders of the Communist parties. They wanted the party of Sir Baron Jayatileke and D.S. Senanayake not to get Cabinet portfolios. G.G. Ponnambalam and A. Mahadeva- the Tamil leaders became friends with this party. They thought of persuading Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy to join them.

"It cannot be denied that it is a universally accepted principle that the lower classes in Schools for non-English speaking children should be conducted in the vernacular - in the mother tongue of the children."

\* \* \*

The following is a key sentence in his speech -

"Provision must be made so that equal opportunity will be given for the study of the vernaculars and the study of English."

Speaker of the State Council from  
1936 - 1947

The Donoughmore Commissioners had pointed out in 1928 that before self-government could be granted, there should be a consensus of opinion. It should

suit all communities. The majority community should be just and have good will towards the minorities.

Sir D.B. Jayatileke, the leader of the State Council, had opportunities of selecting members on a national basis, but did not do so; he selected a Cabinet full of Sinhalese members. Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy was elected as Speaker mainly by the Sinhalese on a national basis, despite the fact that he led the boycott of the Tamil leaders in 1931, having been the representative of the Tamils from 1921. He was a true nationalist, and had a winsome personality. He stuck to his main principles and respected those who deserved respect. He was no narrow communalist and was elected uncontested to the Kayts seat.

He was President of the Vivekananda Society, Colombo, and the Tamil University Movement, Ceylon. He was one of the founders of the Tamil Union and was its President for some time. He was one of the founders of the Ceylon Liberal League. It is not in existence now, but it played an important part during the years 1927 - 1930 before which the Donoughmore Constitution came into operation.

His closest political friend was C.E. Corea, President and Founder of the Chilaw Association, and the President of the Ceylon National Congress. At one time there was what was known as the "Mahendra Pact" entered into by the Tamil and Sinhalese leaders whereby, inter-alia, Ceylon Tamils were to have one half of the representation of the seats in the Legislature which the Sinhalese had. 'Mahendra' was the name of Sir Wythialingam's house. No greater concord between the Sinhalese and the Tamil leaders was arrived at during all the years of controversy.

### His Opinions on Education

Duraiswamy said on February 25, 1926 -

"English education was originally introduced with a desire to impart Western culture and civilisation."

\* \* \*

"A great injustice is being done to the children of non-English speaking families who are admitted into the Kindergarten classes of English Schools."

\* \* \*

He believed that the future of a country rested on the co-operation of all communities and creeds in the Island. He attached special significance to Buddhist-Hindu goodwill. He realised the importance of the Buddhist priesthood. The visit of the Maha Nayaka Thero of Malwatte to Jaffna (a few years before he passed away) was looked forward eagerly by this octogenarian (He died at 91).

### Birth and Career

He was born in 1875 at Jaffna. He became an eminent advocate and took to public life before he was 30. He was one of the founders of the Jaffna Association. The others were Hensman of Nallur and Sir Ambalavanar Kanagasabai. This Association was founded long before the Tamil Mahajana Sabha founded by Ramanathan and Arunachalam in 1921, and the Ceylon National Congress, founded in 1918. It was the sole accredited organisation for the Tamil people to express their views of affairs relating to the country and to the Tamil Community. Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy was one of the founders of the Hindu Board of Education on 9th December 1923. He took a great deal

of trouble in drafting its ordinance which was passed by its Board. The Hindu Board of Education wanted to establish in every Hindu village or group of villages a desirable Tamil vernacular school. He introduced the ordinance of its incorporation March 4, 1926. He was its President and later its Patron. He was also the Manager of the Board of Directors of the Jaffna Hindu College and its linked educational institutions.

### Aspects of Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy

Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy was one of the leaders of the Prohibition movement in Ceylon and introduced a motion for local prohibition in the old Legislative Council on February 24, 1928. He was against Government affording facilities for liquor of any sort. He said -

"I am the person who wants prohibition enforced as early as possible .....  
I will not be wounded if you call me a temperance fanatic ....."

He concluded his speech about prohibition, saying -

"Let me tell this house and the people of Ceylon that toddy drinking is not the national habit of Ceylon or of the people of the peninsula."

He was for franchise to women, but they had to be educated upto a certain standard.

He was also a leader of the boycott movement of 1931, when the Northern Constituency boycotted the Donoughmore Constitution. They had a few cogent reasons for doing so: He was of opinion that the constitution offered by the Commissioners was retrograde.

Waithialingam Duraiswamy was knighted on June 2, 1953, in recognition of his services by Queen Elizabeth II when he attended his coronation as Speaker of Ceylon. He presided at the Diamond Festival of the Hindu Organ and Inthusathanam, the weekly issued by the Saiva Paripalana Sabai in 1949 and sent a message to it, as he was the eldest Hindu Statesman of that time. Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy took an abiding and deep interest in the affairs of his country.

In May 1958 when there was an out-break of violence and riots in Ceylon, Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy did his best by contacting the Governor General, the Prime Minister, Parliamentarians and the Maha Sangha - to ease the estranged feelings between the Sinhalese and the Tamils.

#### Duraiswamy the Devotee

Sir Waithialingam Duraiswamy led the life of a recluse during the period of retirement. He shunned publicity and did not want to reveal the details of his life when the writer interviewed him a year or so before his death. In a recent work on the writings of Yogar Swamy, we have a few letters to Yogendra - who is a son of Duraiswamy. He had poise and equanimity of mind acquired by mental and spiritual training.

The Secret of his poise was his link with Yogar Swami of Yogar's work 'Gems of Thoughts' helped

Sir Duraiswamy a good deal to shape his attitude to life. A few days before Sir Duraiswamy was gathered to the feet of the Lord, on the 15th April 1966, Yogar Swami had paid him a visit and had an inspired talk with him.

## **SWAMI GNANAPRAGASAR (1875 - 1947)**

Multi-linguist extraordinary, Historian, Lexicographer, Missionary and Journalist, Swami Gnanapragasar's name is a byword for Scholarship in the Tamil world. Three and a half decades have rolled by since he died on 22 January 1947.

He belonged to an ancient family of Manipay. His ancestor (as rewarded in the Yalpana Vaipava Kaumuty) was Kulasegara Mudaliyar. Swaminathar was his father. In the days of his prime he was known as Vythialingam Swaminathar was the proprietor of Velakkaip-Pillaiyar temple in South Manipay. His mother was Thangamuttupillai, the first daughter of the late Chittampalam Gardener, the business magnate who was the owner of the Regal Theatre.

Vythialingam was a Hindu at Birth, but he became a convert soon after his father's death. His uncle Thambimuttu - a Journalist, a dramatist and a scholar established the Sanmarka Bodhini press at Atchchuvely and published several books. Rev. Fr. G.H. Litton, former Manager of St. Joseph's Catholic Press, Jaffna, who was then at Atchchuvely, baptised Vythialingam as a Catholic. As he passed the Railway Clerical examination, he was appointed to the Government Railway service, where he worked for two years (1893-1895), but gave that up for the 'cloth'. He was

ordained into the Catholic priest-hood within the Order of Mary Immaculate in 1901. Thereafter he was known as Rev. Father Gnanapirakaser.

As a Catholic priest he was a very active worker and built churches at Nallur, Vannarpannai, Uduvil, Manipay etc. It was at Nallur that his work as a priest and as a writer was very successfully accomplished. He lived there for several years; Hence he was known as Nallur Swami Gnanapiragasar.

Swami Gnanapiragasar (as he was popularly known) was a multi-linguist. Besides Tamil he knew, Sinhalese, Sanskrit, English, Portuguese, Dutch, French, Pali, German, Greek, Gothic, Hebrew - in all, about seventy languages. He studied the history of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity.

He wrote many pamphlets and essays and contributed many valuable essays on the Catholic faith and Catholic history in English and Tamil.

But his research into the roots of the Tamil language was bold and far-reaching. He established that the roots of many words of other languages which are current in European circles were derived from roots in Tamil - one of the oldest languages of the world. He was the first to do so, and his conclusions were unassailable. In the Foreword to his studies in Tamil Etymology 1932 he sums up the above conclusions.

\*His COMPARATIVE LEXICON OF THE TAMIL LANGUAGE was an original conception and reveals his deep knowledge of various languages.

\* Ceylon was at one time linked with India, and it is agreed by all that here the language spoken was a corrupted form of Tamil; in my opinion, this gradually became "Elu" ... Another name for Sinhala. EELADESARI, 15.8.37. In this foreword to his studies in Tamil Etymology 1932 he sums up the above conclusions.

He had a knowledge of the Tibetan, Burmese, Egyptian, Babylonian, Syrian and Sumerian languages. He was learning the Chinese, Japanese and Mongolian languages through his research. He would spread out the books of various languages and find out similarities and differences and trace any common link; he notes them in a special notebook. He knew in all eighty languages.

Before his time and during his time there were few scholars in the East who had the depth of knowledge of foreign languages as Swami Gnanapiragasar had. He was constantly in touch with scholars of many languages in Germany and other Western countries.

He had linked himself in correspondence with some of the best. The German Government had requested Swami Gnanapiragasar to be a Professor in Asiatic language knowing as they did his erudition. That Government honoured him by issuing a postage stamp showing his profile. A similar honour was done to Mahatma Gandhi by the United Kingdom on his centenary celebrations in August 1969. In 1971 Arumuga Navalar and Ananda Coomaraswamy's stamps were issued in Ceylon.

The writer had the opportunity to look over the books in his Library and they were of many languages. All the books he examined were filled with underlinings - footnotes were written - and marginal comments made - the way adopted by scholars. Every day many books, magazines and newspapers came pouring in from diverse corners of the world. Anybody who was a scholar of an ancient classical language could learn similar languages, Swami Gnanapiragasar contended.

He was able to learn new languages in two months. After careful research he found the roots of Tamil words in the roots of the other languages.

He established that many basic letters were related to a,i,u,e. HOW TAMIL WAS FORMED, RESEARCH INTO THE ROOTS OF TAMIL WORDS WERE IMPORTANT CONCLUSIONS THAT he arrived at after elaborate research.

Swami Gnanapiragasar wanted to bring out a COMPARATIVE TAMIL LEXICON in twenty parts, each consisting of 100 pages. He was able to publish only six of these. The others are in manuscript form. The Head of the Thirupananthal Mutt (A Hindu Institution) knew Swami Gnanapiragasar's ability as a research scholar and granted him a considerable sum, to complete the printing of this book\*. The Ceylon Government also voted an annual grant of Rs.2000/= towards the publishing of this remarkable Lexicon. This was printed at the Thanaledchumi Press, Chunnakam, Ceylon. There were few who could appreciate the magnitude and usefulness of this work. This was a higher step, in the field of Lexicography.

#### Swami Gnanapiragasar - The Historian

Swami Gnanapiragasar delved deep into the history of Jaffna - an important part of the history of Ceylon. His "Yalpana Vaipava Vimarsanam" (Criticism of Jaffna History) which he published in 1928 was a model of what should be a critical history. He also wrote a history of the royal dynasty of North Ceylon - "Kings of Jaffna" during the Portuguese period of Ceylon History in 1920. His contributions to various historical journals in Ceylon, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch) and "Tamil Culture", the Ceylon Antiquary and literary Register, and other magazines, reveal his deep knowledge of Dravidian history, in particular the history of Jaffna. Some of the titles of his other articles in English are: "Caste System of the Tamils", "A History of Madhu", "Tamil Rule in Ceylon", etc. His historical articles are in a class of their own. The "Yalpana Vaibava Maumuthi" (1917) is a joint work of Swami Gnanapiragasar and Kalladi Vetpillai, and is a comprehensive history of Jaffna.

He published the Vaiya (in prose) 1921 and also Chekarasekaran. He wrote a monograph entitled India's Ancient Chronology and Civilisation".

Rev. Fr. S. Gnanapiragasar had his complement in Rev. S.G. Perera in historical research in Ceylon. Rev. Fr. Herras, a Catholic Priest of Spain, an eminent research student of Dravidology came to Jaffna and consulted Rev. Fr. Gnanapiragasar when he wanted to decipher the inscriptions found at Mohenjodaro - the ancient city in Punjab in the valley of the Indus.

Some of the publications of Swami Gnanapiragasar are:-

- (1) The Life of the Lord
- (2) The Catholic Church and its teachings
- (3) A historical account of Jesus Christ
- (4) The history of the development of Tamil
- (5) A synopsis of Logic
- (6) The origin and ancient history of the Tamils
- (7) The history of the Church
- (8) Jaffna History - the Portuguese and the Dutch Period
- (9) The wisdom of the Sage
- (10) The method of worship
- (11) The research into Jaffna History (English)
- (12) The origin of Caste of the Tamils
- (13) Ancient Indian history and their dates
- (14) Philosophical Saivism (English)
- (15) Research on Lord Subramania (Tamil)
- (16) Research on Pillaiyar (Tamil)
- (17) Historical aspect of Christianity and Buddhism
- (18) Studies in Tamil Etymology -
- (19) Twenty five years of Catholic Progress -  
The History of Jaffna under the bishopric  
of Dr. Henry Joulain O.M.I.-1925 (274 pages)  
Industrial School Press, Jaffna. -

- (20) The Dravidian element in Sinhalese (21)  
St. Gabriel Modling anthropos 1937.

Swami Gnanapiragasar had a commanding personality. He was six feet tall, had a broad forehead, penetrating eyes, a benign smile and a deep calm enfolded over his form. He espoused the cause of the so-called untouchables (Harijans), and looked after their interests. This he did long before Mahatma Gandhi - who dedicated his life for their upliftment. One of his first acts as a Priest, was to erect a Catholic Church at Manipay for the Harijans.

It is fortunate that the vast library of books which Swami Gnanapiragasar built was really used by Rev. Fr. Hyachinth Singarayar of Karampan. The late Fr. Hyachinth Singarayar David had followed the footprints of Fr. Gnanapiragasar and edited a comparative Tamil Lexicon of which Part I (Volume 7) was published in 1970 and two more parts subsequently in a few years later. Rev. Fr. Hyachinth of St. Patrick's Jaffna continued the research in comparative philology and published some parts. These books of Swami Gnanapiragasar were donated to the Library of the University of Sri Lanka, Tirunelvely, Jaffna on 20th December 1975. His portrait should be unveiled at the Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka. A Malar to Swami Gnanapiragasar was issued in December 1976. The Government of Sri Lanka issued a stamp in his memory on May 22, 1981 - on national heroes day - and honoured the Tamils of the World.

## **K. SOMASUNDARA PULAVAR (1878 - 1953)**

Somasundara Pulavar, affectionately known as "Thanga Thatha" (Golden Grand-dad) was one of the most popular Tamil poets of Ceylon in the first half of the Twentieth Century.

His father was Kathirgamar who was descended from Vanniyasekera Mudaliyar who had settled at Navaly, Jaffna. Several generations ago his mother, Illakumipillai, was descended from Singanayaka Mudaliyar of Kondavil.

Kathirgamar was a Clerk in the Courts of Point Pedro. His wife Ilakkumipillai was blessed with a son - Somasundaram - by the grace of Lord Murugar on 12th June 1878. \*

### His Early Education

He received his first education at the age of five from Arunachalam, the teacher who took a keen interest in young Somasundaram. Arunachalam taught him not only Tamil ethical works, but also Saiva hymns. Those were days when the pupils had to learn from the "ola" manuscripts. The children were taught to memorise poems from Kumaresar Sathakam and Thandalaiyar Sathakam.

\* As was given to the author by the Pulavar's son Pundit Illamuruganar 1880 is the date found in Kalai Kalanjiyam which we do not hold as correct.

Somasundaram was sent after having learnt five years under Guru Arunachalam to the School run by Guru Kantha Nayinar Thambyah. Here he learnt not only the three R's, but also History, Geography and English. He passed the 8th Standard in Tamil and the 4th standard in English.

### Under Guru Ramalingam

At the age of thirteen Somasundaram entered the English School run by Guru Marimuttu at Manipay. Ramalingam was Somasundaram's English teacher at the above school. Somasundaram passed the eighth standard in English.

During that time, Somasundaram and Vythialingam, a son of his teacher Ramalingam, were both companions in studies. Somasundaram with the help of Vythialingam gathered a number of his friends at Navaly, Manipay and Anaikottai and organised a Young Men's Hindu Association (Saiva Valipar Saagam) and conducted such activities as Reading of Puranas, Saiva classes, and Saiva religious discussions. This was the forum in which the future poet trained himself as a speaker, and debated with his friend Vythialingam. The debate would be conducted with great heat, but afterwards both would be friends.

### Attaining Proficiency in Saiva Education

Somasundaram now wanted to acquire a good knowledge of Saivism. To begin with, he studied Thiruvatha Vora-dikal Puranam from Ramalinga Upadiyayar and then he studied Sivaprakasam. Afterwards he studied Sivagnana Siddhiyar from Velupillai Upadhyayar of Kopay and also Thamothersampillai of Point Pedro. Later he was able to study Sivagnana Eodham. His father Kathirgamar taught Somasundaram the poems of Thayumana-var, Thiruvagasam, and Kandapuramam. He studied Thirukural and Thiruvilaiyadat Puranam by himself. He got his difficulties cleared by Ramalingam, his Guru.



### A Poet in the Making

Somasundaram already began writing Tamil Poetry at the age of 15. His father used to sing for him verses from Kanthapuram and Bharatam and rendered them with melody. The young poet's mind readily imbibed the melody of these classics. Once Somasundaram showed his verses to Vidvan N. Subramania Aiyar of Vaddukodai, who encouraged him considerably. It is said that young Somasundaram sent wood-apples to his friend Vythialingam along with a Venba. The young poet was very much loved by Vythialingam's mother who gave him some grams "Kondai Kadalai" and plantains to eat and requested Somasundaram to sing a verse. Pat came the verse. This verse was appreciated by Vythialingam who showed it to his Guru Ramalingam. Guru Ramalingam now blessed Somasundaram and asked him to write poems, after he studied Tamil prosody (Karikai).

Later Somasundaram, the budding poet, went to see his Guru Ramalingam and asked him to state on what theme he should compose his verses. Guru Ramalingam asked him to sing verses on Lord Muruga. He sang a Viruttam before the Guru bathed and performed Pooja within a short time.

### How the Poet Learnt Tamil Prosody

Books were very rare in those days. In the course of time he was able to get "Yappilakkana Surukkam". Later he got "Yapparun Kalak Karikai" which Somasundara Pulavar studied devotedly. He first sang Attakiri Muruka Vel Pathiham. His Guru admired his erstwhile pupil's clarity of diction and melody of his verses.

### Links with Sinnadurai, the Teacher

Sinnadurai after passing his F.A. entered teaching service as a teacher at the school of Marumuttu. Somasundaram came in contact with Sinnadurai, the teacher,

in order to prepare for the London Preceptors Examination and learnt English Literature under him. The poet offered, besides English Language, History, Arithmetic and Geography as subjects for the examination.

As the attendance at Marimuttu's school fell gradually it had to be closed. Sinnadurai then organised a new English school at Sittankerni, Vaddukodai to which he invited the poet Somasundaram to join him.

### Somasundaram Poet Becomes Teacher

Somasundaram joined Sinnadurai's school in March 1899. This school now flourishes as a Secondary School under the name of Vaddukodai Hindu English School. It had started with only fifteen pupils. Poet Somasundaram taught Tamil and English. While yet a member of the staff the poet appeared for the Teacher's Certificate Examination twice, but did not succeed. The inspectors who visited this school praised Somasundaram's skill as a teacher.

### The Acclaim of the Saivite Parents

Somasundara Pulavar's good conduct and his Saiva way of life were deeply appreciated by the parents of the pupils at Vaddukodai. The Pulavar initiated Saivite Religious initiation ceremony "Theedchai" to the children; and trained them to sing Devarams; read Puranams and interpreted them. Hence Vaddukodai became his second home village.

### His Yearning for a Religious Guru

At the age of ten, Somasundaram had received his Saiva "Theedchai" - initiation ceremony. From the age of ten, Somasundaram was a deep lover of Lord Murugan and observed fasts in honour of the Lord. He used to chant Thirmuru-gatopadai and Kanderalkaram - two poems on Lord Murugan. It was his father who had initiated him into this habit. From the age of twenty,

Somasundaram was yearning to meet a Guru for his religious needs.

#### Meeting a Religious Guru

Subramania Swamiyar came to Navaly from Bangalore in South India. He was a Siddhar. He wore a veshti of four yards and a shawl and was well-versed in yoga practice. Poet Somasundaram was really happy to meet his Guru Subramania Swami, and the Swami too was equally happy to accept him as his pupil.

#### Blessings from his Guru

The next day was a Saturday. The poet informed his mother of the arrival of the Swami and his being at Ramalingam, his ex-teacher's house. When Somasundara Pulavar went to see his Guru, his Guru was delighted to see the poet and went with him to his place at Navaly, to live there for some time.

In that house, devotees and friends of Somasundaram - Arumugampillai, Velupillai and Saravanamuttu waited on Subramania Swami. One day the Swami asked Poet Somasundaram, "What gift or boon do you want?" To that the poet remarked, "You know best what I like or what I do not like". The Swami smiled and bestowed on him a blessed object and told him that would bequeath to him everything he wanted. The Swami did many "Siddhis" in Navaly. He blessed also others, of Navaly, namely Ramalinga Upadhyayar, Vaithialingam and Thambyah the teacher who was a commentator of the Puranams.

#### Links with Thambyah, the Teacher and Commentator

The trio, Thambyah, the Commentator and teacher, Vythialingam and Somasundaram the poet, appeared in the temples, the first reciting the Puranams mellifluously, and the others giving a paraphrase in prose.

The trio conducted Devaram classes and Puranam classes at Navaly. At the time Somasundaram the poet was only 25 years old, - in the prime of his youth.

#### Many-Sided Intellectual Activities

Somasundaram, the poet, had a profound sense of the awakening of his talents from the time that the Swami blessed him. He was able to understand the sublime truths in Saiva Siddhanta works, without a master. He liked to study Eastern medicine and mastered the tenets of Ayurveda and Siddha systems. He also had access to the old manuscripts of magic, which his father had possessed. He delved deep into ancient Tamil classics such as Iraiyanar Ahapporul and Kalithogai, which he was fortunate enough to get at. He studied Palmistry from English books.

#### The Poet's Marriage

Somasundaram at first did not wish to get married, as he thought that marriage would deter him from carrying out his ambitions. He was 28. His parents pressed him to get married. His mother thought of Subramania Swami of Bangalore and mutely prayed to him, as her son was inclined against marriage. One day a letter from Somasundaram's spiritual Guru came to him which said, "Fulfil your parents' wish by getting married. My wish to you is the same." Hence Somasundara Pulavar agreed to carry out his parents' wishes. His maternal uncle, Velupillai lived at Sankuveli, who gave his daughter Sinammaiyar to Somasundaram in marriage.

#### His First Publications

Somasundara Pulavar's first poem Addakiri Pathiham, and the story of Savitri were published by his brother Velupillai when the pulavar was 30 years old.

Eramba Aiyar of Mathahal, Velupillai of Maddurvil, and Sankara Suppiar of Uduvil, were among the galaxy of eminent poets who appreciated the early works of this Pulavar. Several individual songs written by this poet were published in several local newspapers and magazines. Among those great Tamil poets and Scholars of South India who admired Somasundara Pulavar's verses were Arunachala Kavirayar, Kandasamy Kavirayar and Marai Malai Adikal (Swami Vedachalam) - the father of "Thani Thamil".

#### Impecuniousness

When the poet-teacher Somasundaram was teaching at Vadukoddai Saiva English School, he had to face the rising cost of living with only very limited means. During the days of the Tamil kings, Tamil poets were patronised by them. But those days were no more and the poet had to face impecuniousness. This can be seen in the poem "Namakal Puhai Malai" Praise to the Goddess of learning.

#### Illness

The poet had piles and later asthma. In spite of these, he never took his meals without observing daily pooja.

#### Brother Velupillai

His brother Velupillai was also a student of Somasundara Pulavar. Velupillai was one of the persons who was blessed by Subramania Swami. He knew how to appreciate good Tamil verses. Whenever the poet wrote letters to his brother, he was in the habit of writing a verse in praise of Lord Murugan and another in praise of Goddess Saraswathy. (Namakal). The brother had preserved all these for publication later. He published Uyirilank Kumaran

(a Saiva - Siddhanta philosophical drama), Thal Vilasam (Poems in praise of the Palmyrah palm), Addakiri Kalambaham, Namahal Thaladdu, Savittri Kathai, the truths in the stories of the Kanda Puranam and so forth.

#### Subramania-pillai - the poet's friend

Subramaniapillai of Moolai entered service as a teacher of the Vaddukoddai Saiva English School. He was known as "Tamil Saddambiyar". He was an authority on Nannool. Very soon Somasundara Pulavar and Subramaniapillai became good friends. Both being vegetarians, they took meals from a "Saivite" during lunch. Sometimes the meals had an excess of tamarind, sometimes the meals lacked salt and at times there was an excess of salt. Both the friends would compose verses redolent of wit and humour. It is significant to note that Somasundara Pulavar served for 38 years as a teacher at the Vaddukoddai Hindu English School, which is a record hard to beat.

#### The Poet's Characteristics

Somasundara Pulavar observed Kanthar Sashti and Navarathri (Nine Nights) meticulously as religious feasts. He considered the last three days, dedicated to Saraswathi, the Goddess, as very auspicious to the Tamils. He never swerved from the Saiva way of life.

At the age of 48, the poet was seriously laid down by pneumonia and he thought fervently of the Lord of Kandavana Kadavai and got his friend Thikkam Chelliah to perform special "pooja", and made a vow. He was cured of his illness and performed his vow.

### Links with Inland Shrines

#### (i) Narasingha Vyravar:

There were three thefts at the poet's house. Not that these thieves robbed, not because they had much riches, but because of a spirit of bravado and mischief' they did not remain quiet, but went on whispering to others about this and scoffed at the poet. The poet could not brook this. He wrote a Pathikam in honour of the Lord Kalundai Vyravar at Navaly South and sang this before the Lord and performed a Pooja and a "Pongal". After a few days those wicked men approached the poet and begged forgiveness from him for deriding him.

#### (ii) Kathiramalai Velavar

By 1920 the poet's brother Saravanamuttu was afflicted by an eye-illness. Despite both western and eastern medical treatment he continued to suffer. One day he dreamt that he and his brother were at the shrine of Kataragama and after worshipping the Lord of Kataragama, his eye-affliction had disappeared.

Saravanamuttu was a most pious devotee of the Lord of Kataragama and wrote to his brother, the poet, a letter about his dream. The poet took it as a sign of his rapid recovery and wrote "Kathirgama Velavar Pathigam" and sent to this brother. Saravanamuttu read this daily. In a few days his eye-illness left him, although this affliction persisted for seven or eight years. The poet wrote a "Sledai Venba" on the Lord of Kataragama in 1929.

#### (iii) Maruthadi Vinayakar, Manipay

The poet's eldest daughter, Mankayarkarasi, was a devout worshipper of Lord Vinayakar, of Maruthadi, Manipay. The Lord appeared to her in a dream until

1930. When Somasundaram Pulavar heard this, he composed a garland of verses to the Lord Vinayakar, which the daughter recites daily. She wrote a history of the Lord Vinayakar at Manipay in prose and published it along with her father's poems.

#### (iv) Lord Muruka of Addakiri, Navaly

We have mentioned earlier that the poet had sung a few poems on Addakiri Muruka of Navaly at the request of his teacher, Ramalingam. After a few years the poet sang another set of verses (Pathiham) on the same Lord. Both were published together. The poet sang at Kalampaha - Prapantham on the Lord Muruga of Addakiri in 1927.

#### (v) Lord Muruga of Nallur

The Poet has sung two sets of verses (Pathiham) on two different occasions. Later he sang an antnathy and Thirupuhai on to the Lord at the request of his brother and pupil Velupillai.

#### (vi) Lord Muruga of Maviddapuram

The poet sang a Pathiham also on Lord Muruga of Maviddapuram.

#### (vii) Other Hymns

The poet has sung a Pathiham on 'Kannaki' the female deity of the Amman Temple at Kaliyodai, Navaly, and also on Lord Vinayaka at Sankuvely, and on Oonchal Pathiham, Alankara Pattu and other poems on Lord Muruga of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

#### Somasundaram - the Dramatist

The poet, while serving on the staff of Vaddukoddai Hindu English School used to write one act plays for the benefit of his students. These were all

plays which pointed a moral.

In 1925 the poet wrote a drama with a few scenes based on Saiva Sidhanta. The Poet's brother Velupillai requested him to enlarge this drama. Hence in 1926 he revised and enlarged this drama and gave it the name of "Uyir Ilank Kumaran". This was put on the stage by the Poet and his pupils. We see a parallel to this in the dramas written by Rabindranath Tagore who staged certain plays with his pupils, himself taking an important part.

This received acclamation amongst the eminent Tamils of Colombo. Amongst those who appreciated the poet's plays should be mentioned Saravanamuttu Coomaraswamy Shroff of Hongkong Bank and Mudaliyar Rasanayakam. Some of the great men of the times, such as K. Subramaniapillai M.A.M.L., a distinguished Tamil scholar and lawyer, and Ramanathan-pillai purist, Tamil scholar of Kulasegaran Pattinam acclaimed this play.

#### Honours to the Poet

Those who had read the play "Uyirilankumaran", namely, Mudaliyar Rasanayakam, Mr. Somasundaram, the President of the Village Committee, Manipay, Mr.V. Mailvaganam of Navaly, the then Udaiyar of Navaly, Mr.Veerasingam, all got up a stage and arranged a special function at the big Walawe in the north street of the Addakiri Kandaswamy Temple, Navaly. This drama of the poet was staged. Maha Vidvan Arumugampillai of Vaddukoddai spoke on the Saiva-Siddhantic principles in this drama and extolled the finer parts. Mudaliyar Rasanayagam, Village President Somasundaram and V.Veerasingam Principal of the Manipay Hindu College, praised the poet's service to Tamil culture and the Saiva religion. The poet-dramatist Somasundaram was given the title of Pulavar in 1927. The play "Uyir ilank Kumaran" by Somasundara Pulavar has a foreword by Mudaliyar C. Rasanayakam.

#### Ability as a Teacher

The fact that Somasundara Pulavar taught continuously for nearly 40 years in one school is something worthy of emulation by any teacher. The Pulavar was not a trained teacher, but he taught better than any of that category. He took Dictation in both the Primary classes and the Post Primary classes as he had a good fist. He was specially efficient in teaching Arithmetic. The Inspecting officers of the Education Department had always the highest praise for his ability as a teacher.

The poet took great delight in teaching Tamil Literature and History and imparted these to his pupils in his own unparalleled way. He would read the poems twice or thrice in his inimitable voice. Later he did the appreciations. It was a great literary treat to hear the poet expound the Thirukkural, Kandapuram and the Thiru Murugatupadai and so forth. Especially his rendering of the Thirukkural was superb. It was no wonder that all his pupils became literary critics, and appreciated good Tamil literature. No Inspector dared to or did inspect his pupils in Tamil Literature.

In all public examinations his upper form pupils secured credit in the Tamil Language and Literature, never did anybody fail in these subjects.

#### Higher Education in Tamil

The poet prepared students in Tamil for the Bala Pundit and Pundit Examination of the Jaffna Oriental Studies Society, at his home every Saturday and Sunday, and accepted no fees for the same. He considered this as a service done for the Tamil Language. He taught Tamil for the B.A. Examination of the London University.

Some of the pupils who studied Tamil under him were Mr.K. Mathiaparanam, M.A., Lecturer in Tamil, Jaffna College, Vaddukoddai, Senator Kanaganayagam, S. Eliathamby, B.A., Lecturer in Tamil, St.John's College, Jaffna and Mr. Subramaniapillai of the same institution.

Many were those students who studied for the examinations conducted by the Jaffna Oriental Studies Society. Mr. M.Seevaratnam, Inspector of Schools and Mr. Wijayaratnam, Inspector of Schools were some of those who studied under Somasundara Pulavar of Navaly.

#### How he Taught Composition of Tamil Poems

It was a hobby of the poet to teach the composition of poems. He taught the science of prosody (Yapparunkalak-Karikai) in ten lines. He taught the science of figures of speech, Thandi-alankarum, by citing examples from Kantha Puranam and Ramayanam. This was a 'bonanza' to the students.

He taught the Ahaval metre, as found in the Silappadikaram of which he was very fond. He praised the 'ahaval' of Manicka Vasagar and said that he dare not imitate the Saint. K.Sidambaranathan the lawyer and Tamil Pundit, the late Nagalingam, Advocate of Vaddukoddai, Pandit Muttuvetpillai, Pandit Murugesapillai, Pandit Saravanamuttu, Pandit Ilamuruganar, Pandithai Parameshivari and many others learnt the art of composing poems from Somasundara Pulavar. He used to comment very often that a poem should blossom of its self; it cannot be evolved or built by putting together similes and metaphors. The ears and heart must attune to the verse. This reminds us of the aphorism in English "Poets are born, not made." He said that students should study Kamban the poet and Sekkilar the poet, if they wanted to compose poems in

the Viruttam metre. Day-in and day-out he stressed that pupils should read the Thirumurugattupadai and Sakala Kalavalli Malai over and over again and memorise it, if they aspired to attain scholarship in Tamil.

#### Classes in Saiva Siddhanta

The poet conducted classes in Saiva - Siddhanta during Saturdays and Sundays as well as during the holidays at the Vaddukoddai Hindu English School. He taught Thilliapalam, Subramaniam, Rajakarier and Mailvaganam his co-teachers Sivaprakasam and Siddhiyar - two admirable texts on Saiva Siddhanta. Proctor Nagalingam and Pandit Chidambara Nathan and some others studied Sivagnana Bodham from Somasundara Pulavar.

The Pulavar also held classes at his house for about three years. In these classes K. Mathiaparanam, M.A., Pandit Ilam Muruganar, Teacher Murugesu and S. Eliathamby, B.A. studied Siddhiyar.

#### Classes in the Puranas

The people of Jaffna are keen on studying the Puranas. In every temple Kandapuranam, Thiruvathavooradikal Puranam and Periya Puranam used to be read. Thanks to the initiation of Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar in the 19th century, some of the Tamils and the Brahmins had acquired the knowledge of expounding some of the Saiva Puranas. Somasundara Pulavar, his brothers Velupillai and Saravanamuttu and S.Kumarswamy had become adept at reading of the Puranas and duly interpreting the meaning of this to the multitude.

#### Children's Literature

The lack of literature for Tamil children was felt deeply by Mr.K.S.Arulnandhy who was an Inspector

of schools during the thirties. He wanted poems for Tamil children. So he contacted Tamil poets of Jaffna, Colombo and Batticaloa and requested them to write songs especially for the children. Somasundara Pulavar,

as a result of this filling given by Mr. Arulnandhy, sang songs such as: - "Adi Pirappu", "Kethari Veruli", "Thadi Aruntha Vedan", etc. The Education Department awarded a prize for this poet's children's poems.

There were many poems popular still, such as  
"Pavala Koli", "Kolukaddai Ponnai",  
"Anopudaiya Thai", "Nirahu Vediaia",  
"Ilavu Katta Kili", "Manam Niraintha Selvan"

which were sung primarily for his grand children Varadaraja Perumal, Kumara Bharati and Somasundara Bharati.

These songs for the children were highly appreciated by Illakiya Kalanithi Pandithamani then Pandit S. Kanapathipillai and J.T. Sadasiva Aiyar who was an Inspector of Schools and also a Tamil poet.

#### A "Kummi" for Health

The late Mr. M. Sabaretnasingham B.A. (father of Mr. Thananjayarajasingham, Lecturer of the University of Ceylon) requested the poet to compose a "Suhathara Kummi" or Nal Vali Nool and dedicated this to Sir Andrew Caldecott, who was then Governor of Ceylon. This was then used in many schools.

He also contributed a few poems to the Tamil Vasagam edited by his son Pandit Ilamuruganar for the American Missionary Society in 1938.

The story of Savitri, written in prose by the poet, had been published in 1912.

#### Poet Somasundaram's Links with Journalism

In 1910 the poet and his friend Pandit Subramaniam planned to publish a monthly magazine, as several minds were then enveloped by Maya Vata (Vedanta) and Christianity. The poet was grieved to find the attacks on Saiva Siddhanta. Both of them contacted A. Comaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam, who stimulated them and suggested the name of "Saiva Palya Sampothani" to this paper. Pandit Subramaniam conducted this for nearly five years. The poet contributed a series of articles to this magazine on the theme of "Saiva Siddhanta and attacked Maya Vata. Many distinguished writers from South India contributed to this journal for the Saivites.

#### Links with Yogar Swami

In 1928 the poet met Yogar Swamy who blessed him and said:-  
"You have already been blessed by a Great Soul. There is nothing for you to ask. Everything that you think will fructify."

Somasundara Pulavar sang a garland of verses on Yogar Swami. Now and then the poet used to meet Yogar Swami and get his blessing. The poet's brother Velupillai was an officer working at Kandy. Yogar Swami visited Velupillai there. Whenever the Swami met Velupillai he asked him:  
"What is the poem that your brother has sent to you?"  
Among those great men of letters who sent poems in appreciation about Somasundara Pulavar were Pandit Navaneetha Krishna Bharati, Vidvan (later Maha Maho Upadhyay) Ganesha Aiyar, Vidvan Subbiahpillai, Pandithamani Kanapathipillai, Pandit Thillainathar, Swami Gnanapiragasar, and Vara Kavi Amirthanathapillai who took a very keen interest in awarding the poet a substantial purse.

Many of his pupils held high positions in Malaysia and had retired. There was one common characteristic to be noted about these officers, they all had imbibed the love of Saivism and Tamil culture, characteristic of the poet.

#### Award of a Purse (Pot Kizhi)

For about forty years from 1898-1938, Somasundara Pulavar had done yeoman service to the Saivites of Vaddukoddai. The citizens, mainly the Saivite teachers and students, collected a substantial contribution of Rs.3000/= and awarded this to Somasundara Pulavar.

The Poet had taught over a thousand pupils during the course of 40 years of his service as a teacher. Of these pupils many had joined the public service, some of them had joined the higher professions such as Law, Medicine and Engineering. Mr.K. Kanagaratnam who was at one time the member for Vaddukoddai in the State Council, Ceylon, was one of his pupils. Samy Saravanamattu of Vaddukoddai and M.Sabaretna Singham B.A., who was Head Master of the Vaddukoddai English School and for some time acting editor of the Hindu Organ were Somasundara Pulavar's students. All of them awarded the Pulavar with a 'Pot Kizhi' a liberal. This was a noble example to be copied by others.

#### Poems of Reception

Whenever eminent Tamil poets from South India came to Jaffna on a lecture tour, it was customary for them to receive praise in the form of poems embodied in an address. Somasundara Pulavar was approached by whoever it was who arranged the receptions to write poems in reception to them in the majority of cases. Marai Malai Adikal (Swami Vedachalam), Mahatma Gandhi,

V. Kalyanasundarar, K. Subramaniapillai M.A.M.L. (Pleader) Scholar and Poet Sethupillai, Navalayar Somasundara Bharatiyar, Swami Vipulananda, Balasubramania Mudaliyar (President, Saiva Siddhanta Samajam) and Siva Kalamani Subramania Mudaliyar were among those on whom poems of reception were written by Somasundara Pulavar.

It has to be noted that many of the poems from "Namakal Pukal Malai" and the work known as Kili Kummi (which is an exposition of Pathy (Lord) Pasu (Soul), Pasam (Attachment) and the Thirupuhai on the Lord of Muruga at Nallur were sung by the poet at the bidding of Yogar Swami.

These poems were not made in the same pattern. Each one of them had its special merit. There were new similes, metaphors and concepts of thoughts in each of these. It is a tribute to the poet to say that modern poets have followed his poems as a model in composing poems of reception.

Among those who were honoured in verses by the poet were:- Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam. The former greatly appreciated the poet's poems.

#### The Poet's Friends

"Every city is mine; every man is my kinsman" is found in Pura Nanooru. This was the maxim found in the note heads of World Tamil Conferences in Malaysia (1966), and India (1968), and in France (1970) (Paris), in Jaffna (1974) and in Madurai (1981).

One of the most striking qualities of the poet was that he loved, respected, and spoke kindly with those great men who came in contact with him. Amongst his inner circle of friends were Mudaliyar C.Rasanayakam, Mudaliyar Sekarajasingam, Poet Thikkam Chilliappillai, the Tamil scholar Mootootambipillai, Swami Gnanapraka-



sar, Varakair Amirthanathapillai, Advocate S. Kumara-swamipillai of Tellipalai, Pandit Thillainathan, Vidvan Arumugampillai (Vaddukoddai) Arunasala Sastriyar of Sankanai, Vaidyar Ratnam of Kaddudai, Sabapathipillai B.A.B.L., Vidvan Ganesha Aiyar, Pandithamani Navaneetha Krishna Bharatiyar, Pandithamani S. Kanapathipillai, J.T. Sadasiva Iyar and Pandit V. Mahalinga Swami,

### The Works of the Poet

He sang innumerable individual poems. Many of them were on local deities. Some of the poems, such as "Valiyum Pulavanum", "Sini Viral", have literary value. Some of the individual songs were sung at the request of his brothers and friends, Velupillai, Arumugampillai and Saravanamuttu which were cherished by them and kept for future publication.

Among those published works of Somasundara Pulavar are:-

- (1) Uyirilank Kumaran Nadagam (a drama)
- (2) Thanthaiyar Pathittu Pattu (a poem)
- (3) Maruthadi Vinayakar Pamalai (a poem)
- (4) Savithri (a story in prose)
- (5) Kanthavana Kadavai Nanmani Malai (a poem)
- (6) Nallur Muruhan Thirupuhai (a poem)
- (7) Kanthapurana Kathaikalum Avaikal Unarthum Unmai Noot Karuttum (Stories of Kanthapuram and the Truths hidden in them - prose)
- (8) Suhathara Kummi (a poem)
- (9) Namahal Puhai Malai (A Garland of Poems in praise of the Goddess Namahal) with a Foreword from K.S.Arulanandhi in English.
- (10) Ilankai Valam (Verses in praise of the beauties of Sri Lanka)

- (11) Thala Vilasam (a poem in praise of the Palmyrah poem)
- (12) Atta Kiri Kalambakam (a poem)
- (13) Kathirai Sledai Venba (a poem)
- (14) Siruwar Senthamil (a children's anthology of poems)
- (15) Thottira Pathihankal (Hymns in praise of the Durni)
- (16) Marutham Anchaloddam (a poem)

### Evening of His Life

The evening of the poet's life was affected by asthma. Yet he did not for sake his religious duties, his singing Devaram, Thirumanthiram and Periyapuramam, nor writing poems which he did till the very end. He passed away at the ripe old age of seventy-five, beloved by the Tamil world of letters on the 10th July 1953.

### His Descendants

His eldest son Pandit Ilan Muruganar, was Lecturer in Tamil at Uduvil Girl's School. He has written "Eelathu Chidamparam Puranam". He has been awarded the title of Kavi Chinthamani by the Head of the Kanchipuram Muttu Srila Sri Gnana-pirakasa Paramacharya Swamikal in March 1972. His second son Vidyaratnam Nadarasa (B.A.) Hons (Sanskrit) is also an eminent Tamil poet and eminent Tamil Translator. He served as Chief Translator of the Official Languages Department. His last son Vala-uthapillai was a Tamil Translator in one of the Government Departments in Ceylon.

**S. SHIVAPADASUNDARAM  
(1878 - 1953)**

Learned Author, Religious Reformer and  
Educator

Learned, author, religious reformer and educator par excellence was Saiva Tamil Savant Shivapadasundaram, whose centenary was celebrated in July 1978. He was a successor to such stalwarts as Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar, Saakara Pandithar Senthilnatha Aiyar, M. Laliyar Sabaretnam and Sathavathanam Kathiravetpillai.

He hailed from a family noted for its intellectual tradition. He was born at Puloly - a village on the outskirts of the North of Sri Lanka. His father was Subramaniapillai and his mother Valliammai. He was born on the 17th July 1878 and was tutored by his father and uncle early in his life. One of his father's brothers (uncle) was Kumaraswamy Pulavar, of Puloly who was a favourite pupil of Sivasambu Pulavar; he was a contemporary and friend of the Tamil Sangam Scholars of Jaffna, Kumaraswamy Pulavar of Chunnakam, Mootootambipillai of Vannarpannai and T.Kailasapillai, the Tamil and Sanskrit Scholar; who was a Professor for Sanskrit in Mahajana College, Tiruvendram. His aunt was Pundit Parwathi Ammaiyar, who taught Pandithai Pathmasiri Ammal for the Madurai Tamil Sangam Pandit examination. He is a brother - in - Law of the late M.K. Vetpillai who

was the Head Master of Navalar Saivaprakasa Vidyalaya at Chidambaram (he married his sister), his sons were Sivam and Pandit Thirugnanasambanthar; Editor Inthusathanam, Jaffna the late Mahalingasivam. etc.

Shivapadasundaram had his early education at Puloly Saiva School; afterwards he went to Madras to complete his studies and graduated at Presidency College, Madras. He had an aptitude for Mathematics and Logic.

He was appointed as the Principal of Victoria College, Chulipuram in 1924. This was one of the national institutions founded as a result of the Saiva revival fostered by Srila Sri Arumula Navalar, and its founder was Chellappapillai. During the period that Shivapadasundaram was Principal of Victoria College, Chulipuram (1924-1933), he had inspired his pupils with the fire of Saiva Siddhantic doctrines and urged them to lead a Saiva way of Life. He was a Mathematician, Logician, Psychologist, philosopher, an eminent educationist and savant of Saiva Siddhanta. His success was phenomenal as he was a great teacher who may be compared with Arnold of Rugby. Shivapadasundaram believed in producing Tamil Saiva Sanror like Rugby who wanted to produce Christian gentlemen.

He joined the staff of Parameshvara College, Jaffna, from 1934 and served this institution as a Lecturer in Mathematics for a number of years gratis (without receiving any compensation) and later was appointed as its Principal. H.S. Perera who was the first Ceylonese Director of Education, held him in high regard for Shivapadasundaram's knowledge of psychology, and entrusted his book on the Essentials of Teaching to be translated by Sivapadasundaram into Tamil. He was a member of the special Education Commission in 1939. The Head of this Committee was Dr. Kannagara, the Minister of Education. Shivapadasundaram was called

out of his retirement by the late H.S.Perera, the first Ceylonese Director of Education who regarded Shivapadasundaram as his guide, philosopher and friend in educational research.

Shivapadasundaram's riders in the Report of the Committee that finally recommended Free Education clearly show that he was a pioneer nationalist who advocated the national system of Schools, through the state take over of schools. He had the prophetic vision to foresee this some twenty years ago. This is what he said: "The grant in aid system should be abolished; and schools should be state schools. Those bodies and individuals who own schools would oppose the abolition, as their business might come to a stand-still. He pertinently stated that the freedom of the child is of infinitely greater value than the Freedom of the parent born with religious indifference. Of all freedoms religious freedom is most precious.

But his "Alavai Nool" was an attempt to postulate the entire principles of modern Logic in Tamil. This was prescribed as a textbook for the Intermediate classes by the Annamalai University, Chidambaram;

The "Glory of Saivism" is in English and focusses the readers' attention to the scientific truths of the Saiva Siddhanta faith. This was published in 1954 by his brother, Dr. Shivaprakasam who was a teacher at Jaffna Hindu College.

His brief life of Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar and his wish that somebody should undertake to write his comprehensive life inspired the writer of this biography to complete a comprehensive life of Navalar and to prepare such an edition of his life in 1965.

Shivapadasundaram rendered invaluable service to the Saiva world by writing a series of textbooks on Saivism - and named them Siva Potham (I-IV). He was the first to do so, in a continual systematic way,

after Navalar's "Saiva Vinavidai" I & II.

His "Thiru Peru Vadivam" reveals the depth of his perception of God according to the Saiva Siddhanta Scriptures.

There is a small pamphlet entitled "Saiva Samaya Saram" (The Essence of the Saiva Faith" written by S.Shivapadasundarampillai and published at the Navalar Vidyanupalana Press, Madras in 1947 on the request of Rao Bahadur Rajagopalapillai - a great patron of the Saiva faith by the late C.V. Jambulingampillai of Mylapore, Madras.)

Shivapadasundaram wrote the "Kanthapurana Vilakkam" in Tamil which serves to explain the allegories in the "Skantha Puranam". He had dived in and brought the pearls that lie in its bed-rock of the Saiva Siddhantic Philosophy.

His "Saiva Kriyai Villakkam" in Tamil helps the ordinary layman to understand the truths that lie behind the symbolic ceremonies of the Saivaites.

Shivapadasundaram's "Thiruvardupayan Vilakkavurai" contains a very simple exposition of the profound philosophy embedded in one of the fourteen Saiva Siddhanta Scriptures.

His "Thiruvaseka Manikal" is a selection of poems from Thiruvasaqam by Saint Manickavasagar - a garland of gems of his inimitable poems. His magnum opus is the "Saiva School of Hinduism", a book in English which was published by Allan and London and dedicated to Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, and helped the western world to understand this religion. It is a rare accomplishment for which he was acclaimed by scholars of India, England, and American. He says in that great work of his:- Religion is a power and not a bundle of doctrines and practices to be accepted or rejected according to the tastes of the follower."

"Saivaism regards the Love of God as religion itself, "Because it alone has the power, to take a soul to God. The belief of the bigot that his religion alone can take a soul to God is untenable since it is the capacity of the Soul that counts and not the guidance given by books."

"The Saiva School of the Hinduism is an eminently clear exposition of the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and a study of which will be highly rewarding to Western readers."

An "Outline of Savagna Bodham" with a rejoinder to a Christian critic, a pamphlet, was written by Shivapadasundaram at the request of one of the Heads of the Dharmapuram Mutt and was published by the Saivaprakasa Press, Jaffna, in 1951. He was invited by the Dharmapura Atheenam and at their request a significant service he rendered was to re-edit Nallasampillai's Sivagnana Bodham.

He gave the rights of all his publications to the Saivaparipalana Sabha, Jaffna and some to the Vivekananda Society, Colombo. It is an example of self abnegation and selfless service to the Saivaites.

He preferred to lead a life far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife. He wanted to lead the life of a spiritual devotee. He found the atmosphere of the temple of Kandervanak-kadavai to suit his way of life. Here was a lovely statue of Lord Murugan. This statue had a history of its own. As its arm was mutilated it was placed outside in the holy of holies. This statue was placed in the inner vault of the temple of Kumarapuram - the site of a Murugan temple in the Vanni, during the times of the Tamil Kings. It is widely believed that the same sculptor who made the Murugan statues at Ettikuti and Palani - two favourite shrines of Lord Muruga in South India, had fashioned this as well. The statue of Murugan, Valli,

Theyvanai and peacock were all carved out of a single stone - and was identical with the one at the Maviddapuram Murugan Temple.

Shivapadasundaram was the first President of the Thiruketheesivaram Restoration Society, when it was founded in 1948 in Colombo. He was responsible for erecting the statues of Lord Nadaraja and Sivakamy Ammai at Thiruketheeswaram. It was he who was responsible for the erection of the "Thirugnanasambanthar Mutt" at Thiruketheeswaram. The preliminary conference was held on October 19, 1948 at the place of business in Colombo of Raja Sir Muthiah Chettiar, one of the Trustees of the New Kathiresan Temple, Colombo - the Bank of Chettinad, 256, Sea Street, Colombo. The Nattukottai Chettiyars gave their ungrudging help in the founding of this Society and its objectives. It was there that the first school for training Brahmin priests to officiate in Saiva Temple was started by the above Society, an ambition of Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar. But this school has now been transferred to Nallur and is managed by the Thirugnanasambandar Atheenam. One of these students at Victoria College was T. Mailvaganam of Moolai, who married Maheswari (the daughter of Chellappapillai, the Manager of Victoria College, Chulipuram). He held a high position under Government in Malaya. He founded a branch of the Thiruketheeswaram Restoration Society at Malaya and collected funds for the parent Society in Ceylon to complete the "Gowri Amman Temple". The Saivaites of Jaffna have collected funds and completed the "Ketheeswarar" shrine in April 1977.

Shivapadasundaram felt that Hindu tracts should be published and distributed, as effective answers to the pamphlets by the Christians and he did this.

In a letter (see preface to Saiva Samaya Saram, page IX) written by him, he says:- (translated into English by the author):-

"It is my desire to prevent Saivites from being deceived by other religionists and forsake their religion. I read sometime back from a newspaper that there were three villages in the Salam district that they were to be converted to the Roman Catholic faith. In the Siddyar, the first chapter is assigned to Criticism of foreign religion. I dedicated my life for the same. When I started writing a criticism of the Christian religion, it struck me that I should first write about the Saivite religion. Hence I started writing the Saiva Bodham, First book, the second book and the other books. Unless the weeds are destroyed, no crops will grow. Unless the Christian influence is destroyed the Saiva Faith will not thrive."

Shivapadasundaram was President of the Hindu Board of Education for a number of years and has done significant services to the Saiva public. He was persistent in his campaign for the abolition of animal sacrifice in Hindu temples. This was one of the principles for which Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar fought in Chidambaram and he had to run the gauntlet with the "Theedchithars" of Chidambaram. He was instrumental in opening many a Saiva School in the island.

Shivapadasundaram was not merely a preacher and writer of Saivism. He led an exemplary Saiva Way of life- he was also a great thinker - the

Bertrand Russell of Sri Lanka. He died on the 14th August 1953. There are two ways that the Saivaites could remember him. One is to see that they carefully read his works in Tamil and English. Another is to start a magazine in Ceylon such as "kumara kurupara Swamikal" in India and dedicate that to Saiva Siddhanta. Who is the "Punya Purushar" to come forward to do this? The Saiva Paripalana Sabai celebrates "Shivapadasundaram's Anniversary by means of a public lecture and recitation of Devarams on that date.

We are grateful that the cultural world of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) celebrated Shivapadasundaram's centenary in a fitting manner during July 1978. There was a special malar of the Hindu organ and Inthusathanam issued on July 1978. There were prizes offered to students who were efficient in Thirumurai and the Saiva Religion.

**NAVANEETHA KRISHNA  
BHARATHI**  
Known also as  
**VENNEY KANNANAR**  
(1884 - 1951)

It is a matter of convention to speak of Ceylon (Tamil Ceylon) as the daughter country and South India (Tamilakam) as the mother country. A small stretch of sea, Palk's Strait about thirty miles, separates Tamilakam's southern most tip, Cape Comorin, from Pt. Pedro, the northern-most trip of Ceylon.

On either side of Palk's Strait there has been a cultural exchange from the Pre-Christian era. Men such as Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar, C.W.Thamotharampillai, Senthinatha Aiyar, Sabapathy Navalar, Sathavathanam Kathiravetpillai, Swami Vipulananda and others have gone from Ceylon to Tamilakam and contributed to Tamil learning and culture. Enlightened poets such as Anthhakavi Raghavar, Koolangai Tambiran, S. Natesan and recently Karunalaya Pandiyannar have come to our Eelam and contributed significantly to Tamil knowledge. Navaneetha Krishna Bharati belongs to the group of literati who came to adorn Eelath-thamilakam in the 20th century - along with the last two mentioned above.

He wrote "Ulahiyal Vilakkam" which is a significant contribution to modern Tamil poetry, and was first published in Jaffna in 1922.

K.G.Shesha Aiyar, a Judge of the High Court of Trivandrum observed:-

"Students of Tamil literature do not require to be told that the tide of Tamil Poetry has long ceased to be really flowing ..... The language"of natural feeling has long been absent and in its place gaudy affectations and meaningless ornamentations have for long passed for poetic diction and there has been a consequent decadence of poetic thought and absence of new and original poetry. It is therefore with a feeling of relief we return to the poems us (Ulahiyal Vilakkam) which are refreshingly new. In these poems from the depressing shackles of the later day poetic models, they are pregnant with instincts of nature .....  
..... In "Ulahiyal Vilakkam" there is an outburst of new poetry which is full of human interest; there is the glow and colour of the personality combined with an artistic form and freedom of movement."

This book is divided into three parts:- "Aram", (Duty), "Porul" (Wealth) and "Inbam" (pleasure). In one of its passages, the poet here asks where is the difference between the students in their teens who meet and play under the banyan tree without going to school and the elderly people who are in pursuit of material ends without seeing, "the worthy goals such as Aram, Porul and Inbam".

Vidvan S.Poopalappillai of Batticaloa wrote a luminous commentary to "Ulahiyal Vilakkam" and Swami Vipulananda published this. This was prescribed as a text for the Pundit Examination by the Jaffna Oriental studies Society for several years.

Navaneetha Krishna (Venney Kannanar) was born at Karavankudi which was a part of Krishnapuram

in the Chola country in South India. His father Subramania Bharati was also a great Tamil poet. He began to compose verses very early in his life. He learnt Tamil (including Tamil prosody) from Sarikarai Ramaswamy Pulavar. His great knowledge of the classics and Tholhappiyam was imbibed from Narayanasamy Aiyar, of Pinthoor, who wrote the commentary on grammar and literature "Nattinnai". He studied Tamil from Pandit Gopala Aiyar and also Cholanathantham Arasan Sanmuganar.

He was a teacher for some time at Victoria College, Palamcottah, Madras. His mind soared higher. He came in contact with Sri Ambalavana Thesika Swamy, who was a Vidvan of the Thiruvavaduthurai Mutt, who engaged Navaneetha Krishna Bharati as one of his Research Assistants in the research on Thirumurai (Devarams).

In 1917 Navaneetha Krishna Bharati was advised to come to Ceylon by his Guru "Maha Maha Udadyayar Dr. U.V. Samynatha Aiyar. Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan needed a Tamil Vidvan for his Ramanathan College, Chunnakam, and communicated his desire to a friend of his in South India, as a result of which, Navaneetha Krishna Bharati came to Ceylon and contacted Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan in October-November (Alpassi 1917). Ramanathan was impressed with Navaneetha Krishna Bharati's scholarship and appointed him Tamil Vidvan in charge at Ramanathan College, Chunnakam.

Apart from his major work "Ulahiyal Vilakkam" which we have mentioned earlier, Navaneetha Krishna Bharati has written "Api Navajothior Putthilan Chenkathir" in 1929, which he wrote within five years of his stay in Jaffna. This is a book of poems consisting of 522 "Nerisai Venbas", and describes the fundamental traits of character of Mahatma Gandhi. It

was during this period that Gandhism as a movement had spread to Sri Lanka. He wrote a drama entitled "Parampu Malai Pari" in 1934 which describes the Chola, Chera and Pandyan Kings, Auvaiyar, and the Tamil chief "Pari". He wrote poems for this drama. He also participated as an actor of this drama. He wrote "Chelunkathir Chelvam" in 1934.

His grammatical work "Baaratheeyam", is a simplification of much grammatical knowledge found in grammar books which were hard to understand, and was published in 1946. He contributed to many learned journals such as "Senthamil", of Tamil Nadu, "Eelakesari" and other journals in Ceylon and newspapers such as "Thesa-Nesan" (of which he was an Assistant Editor) Veerakesari, and other journals.

Navaneetha Bharati wrote an article in the Senthamil, opposing S. Vaipayuripillai's view who wrote an article saying that "Tholhappiar was a Jain". The same view was held by the Mahavidvan of Thiruvavaduthurai Attheenam, Chidambara Ramalingampillai in 'Senthamil', 1919-1920 as well as by the Editor of Senthamil. By caste a Brahmin, yet he denounced caste and was in the forefront of the movement for the removal of untouchability. He wanted the Tamils to take up to agriculture, arts and crafts and home industry, for it is then that they would raise their standard of living.

He chastised those who disdained to speak their native tongue, Tamil although they were Tamils and advocated inter-communal unity - between the Tamils and Sinhalese sons of Sri Lanka.

He was as many Tamil poets who were not gifted with the riches of this world.

His appeal to Ramanathan in ten verses, published on 15 April 1951 can be compared to the appeal

of Perunthalai Sattanar to Kumanan in Pura Nancōru the Sangam epic.

Navaneetha Krishna Bharati served also as Head Tamil Pundit of Parameshvara College, Jaffna, and was responsible for shaping the minds of hundreds of Tamil boys and girls who studied at Parameshvara College, Thirunelvely (boys) and Ramanathan College, Chunnakam. (girls) Namasivayam Sivaprakasam, Editor of Inthusathanam and Pundit K.K.Nataraja were two of his brilliant pupils who shed lustre to the Saiva religion. Navaneetha Krishna Bharati, or Venney Kannanar as he was called, was gathered to the feet of the Lord of Chidambaram on the 22nd December 1954 at the age of 67 in Jaffna.

A good number of verses of his, all masterpieces, remain yet unpublished. One of his poems was on Kalayogi Ananda Coomaraswamy, sent to Duraisingham his biographer on the Kala Yogi's 70th Centenary in 1947.

His son-in-law, Mr. Pooranananda Aiyar, a B.A. (First Class Honours in Tamil) and an Advocate (He was an Assistant Legal Draughtsman, Legal Draughtsman's Department, Colombo.) He is now in America. He has published Navaneetha Krishna Bharati's last research, named a Thiruvassagam, with a new commentary many years after his death. His commentary eclipses previous commentaries of that work, in point of scholarship and clarity of exposition.

Contemporary poets of his age, such as Mahalingasivanar and Somasundara Pulavar, held Navaneetha Krishna Bharati in great esteem.

It will be a philanthropic and patriotic gesture for some Tamil Association classical to publish the published works of Navaneetha Krishna Bharati, who was a brilliant Tamil poet of the 20th Century.

## SOME EMINENT TAMILS - 21

### **SIR ARUNACHALAM MAHADEVA (1885 - 1969)**

"He was the distinguished son of a more distinguished father" was the summing up of a learned wit on a great man. This may with equal truth be applied to Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva. His father, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, was one of the Founders of the Freedom of Ceylon.

Mahadeva was born at Matara on October 4, 1885. He was the second son of Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam. He was educated at the Royal College, Colombo, where he carried off almost every prize, including the Turnoor prize given to the most distinguished scholar of the year. This prize was won by his father Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, and previously by the latter's maternal uncle, Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy, and was subsequently awarded to Balakumar Mahadeva (Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva's son). After leaving school Mahadeva went to Christ's College, Cambridge where he graduated with Honours in Mathematics. Thereafter he was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn and returned to Ceylon after qualifying as a Barrister-at-Law.

In Ceylon he joined the Attorney General's Department as Crown Counsel. He also practised as an advocate on the unofficial side of the profession.

At this time most of the Ceylonese politicians came from the ranks of the Law. Mahadeva followed the



family tradition and entered politics. When Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam founded the Ceylon National Congress in 1917, Arunachalam Mahadeva became one of the early Secretaries from 1917-1924. He was also Political Secretary to his uncle, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan - who was at the height of his influence. The other Co-Secretaries of the Ceylon National Congress were E.T.de Silva and M.A. Arulanandan.

Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva continued to play a prominent part in the Ceylon National Congress - even after his father left that Association in 1921.

#### In the Legislature

Arunachalam Mahadeva entered the Legislative Council in 1924 when he defeated his cousin the late Mr.R. Sri Pathmanathan to represent the Tamils of the Western Province (1924-1931). During the boycott of the Donoughmore Constitution by the Tamils (from 1931 for a brief period he was Manager of the State Mortgage Bank. He re-entered the Legislative Council as Member for Jaffna in the State Council from 1934-1947. On the retirement of Sir Baron Jayatilleke, the Minister for Home Affairs in 1942, Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva was elected Minister of Home Affairs - a very prominent ministry since the police came within its purview.

Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva wielded considerable influence and it was he who first suggested the appointment of a Royal Commission (later the Donoughmore Commission) to consider Ceylon's future constitutional advance. He was one of the founder-members of the United National Party, which was to contain members of all the communities in Ceylon.

#### Minister of Home Affairs

Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva was Minister of Home Affairs from 1942-1947. In 1947 he was defeated by

Mr. G.G. Ponnambalam, who advocated the "fifty-fifty" policy - equality of representation between the majority and the minority.

Mahadeva, however, preferred to fight a losing battle in Jaffna, as a candidate of the United National Party (of which he was a founder-member) rather than compromise with the fundamental principle of a united Ceylon in which he believed firmly.

From 1948-1949 he served as High Commissioner for Ceylon in India. He was knighted in 1949, and made a Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George in 1955. He was a member of the Public Service Commission (1950-1957). His clarity of mind and firm adherence to rules and precedence were characteristic qualities of his.

After he retired from public life, he devoted considerable time and energy to Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs. He was Chairman of Hindu Religious Affairs Advisory Committee at the time of his death in 1969. He was a Senior Trustee of the Sri Ponnambala Vaneswarar Temple at Kochchikadde, originally built by his grandfather, Arunachalam Ponnambala Mudaliyar and rebuilt in granite by his uncle, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. He was fortunate to complete the many storeyed Gate Tower (Gopuram) at the entrance of this temple. He was also Chief Trustee of the Sri Arunachaleswarar (Swair) Temple at Mutwal, built by his father Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and his mother Lady Swarnam Arunachalam, over the samadhi (tomb) of the Saint Anai-kutti Swamy.

Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva was Patron of the Vivekananda Society, Colombo (the oldest Hindu Society in Colombo), the Saiva Paripalana Sabai, Jaffna (the oldest Hindu Society in Ceylon), the Colombo North Hindu Paripalana Sabai (of which the present writer was a Founder and Past President) from 1953-1969, and which

continues to be vigorous, having its meetings and partaking in the festivals of the Arunasalesvar Temple, Mutwal.

"He was a man of great personal charm and wide intellectual sympathies. He had none of the exhibitionism which is often associated today with politics and politicians. Indeed his retiring disposition and contempt for publicity have combined unfairly to blur the image of an otherwise notable figure. The maturity of his advice often sought even by Prime Ministers, the simplicity of his manner and his total absence of rancour and bitterness, even in the darkest hours of personal defeat were abiding characteristics of the man, and his death will certainly leave a void."

M.S. in Ceylon Daily News of 10.6.69

Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva was Vice-President of the United National Party of which he was a Founder.

Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva was always aware of the lofty traditions of his family. He was a great statesman and a true gentleman.

Once Arunachalam Mahadeva and Dr.E.V.Ratnam contested the St.Pauls Ward of the Colombo Municipal Council. A very influential land-lord wanted Mr.Mahadeva to approach his father Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam, who was then Registrar General for a favour, Mr.Mahadeva turned round and brusquely said, "I will be the last person to get it done". These words cost him the election. The affronted land-lord became his opponent's supporter. But Mahadeva's reputation for integrity was enhanced in the eyes of the discerning public.

Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva was devoted to the cause of national unity and a sovereign Ceylon. He was associated with the Legislature for twenty-five years. His speeches were characterised by their non-communal approach - irrespective of race or creed. For a few years prior to his death on 8 June 1969, he did not play an active role in politics.

Mr. Dudley Senanayake, the present Prime Minister of Ceylon, moving a vote of condolence in the Parliament of Ceylon on the passing away of Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva, said that the country lost an outstanding personality who had played a prominent part in the public life of the country. After a brilliant academic career, both in Ceylon and later in England, he returned to the island and entered the Attorney General's Department. In 1924 he entered the then Legislative Council and from that time, for many years, he had played a very prominent part in the public and political life of the country. Coming from a family that had for generations contributed and still continued to contribute with distinction, many services to the country even in the present generation, the late Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva himself was gifted with many outstanding qualities.

The Prime Minister added that he had had the pleasure and privilege of knowing the late Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva personally since 1936 when they both entered the State Council and subsequently in the same State Council the late Sir Arunachalam had ended his career in the legislature as Minister of Home Affairs. All those who had come to know him, friend as well as foe in political and public life had always held him in the highest esteem because of the outstanding qualities of character, which he manifested in his dealings with everyone.

Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva was a man of high integrity and high ideals; he eschewed communal politics

and sought to bring into being his cherished ideal of a unified Ceylonese nation and it was not surprising that when they looked back upon those qualities he won the acclaim of all those who had the good fortune to know him.

The Prime Minister added that he had known the late Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva very closely over many years and he therefore looked upon his passing away as a personal loss. He hoped that the exemplary manner in which the late Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva had lived his public life would be one such as those who had the good fortune to lead public lives would endeavour to emulate.

In 1918 Sir Arunachalam Mahadeva married Sivakami, daughter of Mr.M. Mootatamby, a leading business magnate. He had two children, the eldest Mr. Balakumar Mahadeva and Mrs. Swarnam Nadarajah, wife of the Professor of Law, Mr. T. Nadaraja, University of Ceylon, Colombo.

### **SWAMI VIPULANANDA (1892 - 1947)**

Swami Vipulananda was the first Professor of Tamil of the Annamalai University - founded by Sir Annamalai Chettyar in 1928 at Annamalai Nagar, close to Childambaram in South India. He was the first to be Professor of Tamil of the University of Ceylon, Peradeniya from 21st June 1937. He was called "Mutthamil Vitthakar" - a great master of Tamil prose, verse and drama.

He was named Mailvaganam by his parents. He was born at Katerumootthoor at Batticaloa, the capital of the Eastern province of Ceylon on Sunday the 27th March 1892. His father was Samithamby; his mother was Kannamai - a devotee of 'Kannaki' - the Goddess Pattini. Samithamby was from Batticaloa. Kannamai's father Rajagopalapillai was the grandson of Ramana- than of Uduvil and the son of Vairamuttu. Kannamai's grandmother was the daughter of Sethunathan of Vaddukkoddai. Hence, both the Batticalonians and the Jaffnese could claim a just pride in him.

Mailvaganam's first teacher was Kunchithamby. He learnt Tamil and Sanskrit from Vythialinga-Thesikar of Puloly, Jaffna who was Head Teacher at Karaitivu Saiva Tamil School at Batticaloa. The teacher who gave him a taste for Mathematics was Mr.Thillainayakam B.A. Nallaratnam also was one of his teachers. He was able

to compose Tamil verses at the age of 12. He had studied Kural, Nanool, Nikandu, Bharatham, and Kandapuranam at a very early age from able teachers.

Mailvaganam joined the Methodist Mission School at Batticaloa in 1903 and after he passed the Cambridge Senior Examination in 1908, he became a teacher there. Soon after he passed the Entrance Examination of the Government Training College at Colombo in 1911, and completed training in 1912.

When Mailvaganam attended the Government Training College, Colombo, as he was keen to advance his Tamil knowledge, he learnt from Vidvan Kandiahpillai of Kovai. He also studied under Mudaliyar Sit-Kailasapillai (a Tamil Scholar and poet who was a Government servant) who held religious classes at the Vivehananda Society, Colombo. It was after this that he got through the London Matriculation Examination and the London Intermediate in Science Examinations. He taught at St. Michael's, Batticaloa (1913-1914). He joined the Technical College in 1915; from there he secured a "Diploma in Science" in the First Division in 1916. During this period Mailvaganam also got through the Pundit Examination of the Madurai Tamil Sangam, being the first to do so from Ceylon.

He was appointed as a Science Master at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna, in 1917. While teaching there, he passed the London B.Sc. Examination. Pundit S. Mailvaganam was appointed Principal of the Manipay Hindu College - a national institution in 1920. It was during this period (1920-1922) that he came in contact with Yogar Swamy of Columbuturai and also with Swami Shanananda. It was about this period that he resuscitated the Jaffna Oriental Studies Society, and gave new life to the Kala Nilaiyam at Vannarpannai.

Pundit Mailvaganam had the idea of leading an ascetic life, so he joined as a votary of the Ramakrishna Mission, Madras, in 1922 and was given the name of "Prabotha Chitanya". Then he was initiated as a "Sannyasi" by Swami Sivananda in April 1924 and was given the name of Swami Vipulananda. While at Madras in the Mission he edited the "Ramakrishna Vijayam" a Tamil monthly and "Vedanta Kesari" an English monthly.

Swami Vipulananda was Editor of the Prabuddha Bharata from the city of Mayavati, close to the Himalayan Valley in 1930. Although he belonged to the Ramakrishna Mission, yet he cherished Saiva - Siddhantic ideals. He delved deep into the treasures of Tamil literature and Tamil history. He read contemporary research into Dravidology. His contributions on Tamil language, Tamil literature and Tamil civilisation in English and Tamil were published in Senthamil and Thamil Polil.

He reorganised the schools of the Ramakrishna Mission from 1925-1931. He was Principal of Hindu College, Trincomalee for some time. He enlightened many people who were ignorant of its beauties. He was selected to preside at the Saiva Siddhanta Congress held at Thiruvannamalai in 1935.

A University Commission was established at Madurai in 1926. Swami Vipulananda was very keen to get a Tamil University in South India and gave evidence to this Commission. He fancied Thiruchinapally as the site, as it was a centre of Saiva philosophy. He advised Sir Annamalai Chettyar to build the Annamalai University near Chidambaram. It was established in 1928 and has become the fountain-head of Tamil and Hindu culture. It was here that he became the first Professor of Tamil in 1931 and did yeoman service to Tamil from 1931-1933. He was Head of the Lexicon Committee that worked on collating scientific terms

in Tamil in 1936. His collaborators in the compilation of a Glossary of Scientific terms in Tamil were Sri K.S. Ramasamy Aiyar for Mathematics, Sri Rajagopala Achchary, the Prime Minister, for Physics, Sri Sabesha Aiyar for Botany, Sri S.G. Manavala Ramanujam for Zoology and Physiology and Hygiene, Sri N.Subramania Aiyar for Geography, Sri T.S. Natesapillai for History and Economics, and Sri Subramania Mudaliyar for Agriculture. Swami Vipulananda (the Chairman) was responsible for the technical terms in Chemistry. He was appointed as an Examiner in Tamil at the Madras University in 1937 soon after his visit to the Himalayas where he saw Mt. Kailas.

He was entrusted with the task of translating Swami Vivekananda's works into Tamil by his mission.\* When he started translating the "Gnana Yoga" Swami Vipulananda read notes of Thirukkural and Sivagnana-Ma-Padiam to find philosophical words of pure Tamil origin. He did not want to flood his translation with Sanskrit terms.

A work of great merit of Swami Vipulananda is "Mathanka Choolamany" - a dramatic criticism - a Tamil rendering of some of the plays of William Shakespeare - the world's greatest dramatist - whom he has called "Sakappiriyar". This was published in 1927..

Swami Vipulananda was one of the Founders or Organisers of the Jaffna Arya Dravida Virutti Sangam in 1921 which was housed at Vannarpannai Jaffna. The Swami had meant that this idea should serve as a centre for advanced studies of Tamil and Sanskrit. He thought this would be a "nucleus" for a future Tamil University in Jaffna.

\* He translated "Karma Yoga", "Ghana Yoga" into Tamil and wrote Vivekananda Gnana Deepam Vivekananda's dialogues, and "The Spiritual life of our people".

Swami Vipulananda's contributions in English appeared in Vedanta Kesari, Modern Review, Calcutta Review, and several University Magazines. It was through these contributions that the West came to know to a great extent the greatness of Tamil civilisation and culture.

Swami Vipulananda was not only a master of Tamil and English, he knew Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, Bengali, Sinhalese and Arabic. He was, in short, a multi-linguist. Swami Vipulananda wanted to complete the translation of "Yal Nool" into English, and complete an Exposition of Thirukkural, write a History of the Tamils and complete the Vivekananda Gnana Deepam in the form of Tamil verses which he had already begun, but it was not the Lord's will that he should do so.

#### A University in Nallur, Jaffna

Swami Vipulananda stressed the cultural importance of Nallur - the last capital of the Tamil kings. He wanted Tamil learning, Sanskrit lore and scientific scholarship to find a lasting place among the youth of Jaffna. He condemned the decision of the Ministry of Education for having established the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya. The present second University of Ceylon at Colombo would have been truly welcome to him. He contributed articles to the "Vivekanandan" emphasising his view.

Swami Vipulananda was sent by the Head quarters of the Ramakrishna Mission at Calcutta to take charge of Education and Hindu Missionary work at Batticaloa. Batticaloa had long been a centre of Christian missionary activity and there were many Christians and there was little encouragement for the spread of Hindu ideas. Swami Vipulananda founded the Shivananda Vidyalaya- and imparted a deep knowledge of Tamil

and Saivism and gave the children an education on national lines.

Swami Vipulananda established an Orphanage for the poor and destitute at Kalladai - Uppodai, close to the city of Batticaloa. The students who lived there did not want the Swami to name that as the Orphanage: so long as they regarded the Swami as their "parent" and guardian, they wanted it to be called the "student home" with which wish the Swami complied.

Swami Vipulananda took an abiding interest in the "Vaidyeshvara Vidyalayam" Vannarpannai, Jaffna, which had developed to be an 'A' Grade Secondary School, under the able supervision of Mr.S.Ampihaipakan, who was Head-Master there for nearly thirty years.

Swami Vipulananda was one of those who gave evidence to the National Languages Commission in 1945. He stressed the retention of Swabhasha and English - a trilingual system of education. The writer of this biography also gave evidence to the above commission in a similar manner much earlier. To the Tamils the Swami advocated a study of Tamil from the Kindergarten to the University. Today his ideas have borne fruit, and we have education in the "Swabhasha" at the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya, not only in Arts but also in Science and Medicine and Economic Faculties. The University of Ceylon at Colombo will follow suit as from September 1970.

The author had the opportunity of hearing Swami Vipulananda's talks at the Refresher Course held by the Colombo Teacher's Association where it was such a pleasure to hear his sonorous voice, and listen to his expatiation on the beauties of Tamil literature. Several years ago, Swami Vipulananda presided at the

Saiva Maha Nadu, in 1933, which drew great crowds to hear him and also at Youth Conferences.

Swami Vipulananda's "Yal Nool" was his greatest original work, he worked at this for 14 years. The Tamils had many musical instruments before the Christian era, according to Silappadikaram - a Tamil classical poem written by Ilanko Adikal, a prince and poet of the Chera land. But the Tamils of the modern period did not have any conception of the ancient "yal" - a musical instrument. Swami Vipulananda got a "yal" reconstructed and wrote a paper on it during the days when he was Professor of Tamil at the Annamalai University. This book was released by the Karanthai Tamil Sangam for the first time at Thirukollam Poothoor Temple (South India) before a large concourse of musicians on 6 June 1947. The "Yal" was also exhibited to the public.

Swami Vipulananda returned to Colombo on the 30th June 1947. He was weak and his health failed. He was treated at a Hospital.

Swami Vipulananda was gathered to the feet of Lord Shiva on 19th July 1947 at the Ramakrishna Mission Headquarters at Wellawatte, Colombo. Everyone connected with Tamil education in this country, and in South India was engulfed in sorrow. His fame will endure, so long as Tamils and their music and literature last. A fitting tribute would be to follow in his footsteps. He belongs not only to Ceylon, but to the whole world of Tamil letters.

It would be a fitting gesture to Swami Vipulananda if the Government establishes a University at Trincomalee or Batticaloa to serve both the Tamil interests and the interests of the Saivites of East Ceylon. A Library in Vipulananda's name in Jaffna and Batticaloa will certainly meet the needs of the students of Tamil & Saiva Siddhanta. Swami Vipulananda had drawn

three Syllabuses - one for (a) Saiva Siddhanta Teachers in Tamil (b) Saiva Thirmurai Teacher (c) Saiva Agama Sidhanta Tamil Teacher which was published in the Vivekanandan in 1926. This was one of his aims. How closely did Swami Vipulananda and Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar agree on their ideals!

**DR. S. NATESAN  
(1895 - 1965)**

Edward Carpenter in his book "A Visit to A Gnani" describes vividly the personality and teachings of a sage of Tanjore. That Sage was the guru of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan and Sir Ponnambalam Arunasalam.

Subbiah Natesan was the grandson of this Sage of Tanjore. He was born at Tanjore in May 1895 and was educated at Tanjore High School and later at St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly. He joined Madras University and obtained the degrees of B.A. and B.L. He practised as a Lawyer at Tanjore. He acquired other titles, such as Member of the Royal Asiatic Society (M.R.A.S.) and Fellow of the Royal Economic Society (F.R.E.S.) later.

Soon after Parameshvara College, Jaffna, was established in 1921 by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Natesan was appointed its Principal in 1924 by the founder. He was Principal from 1924 to 1952. Natesan was eminently fitted to guard the Saiva Tamil traditions, while head of this Institution.

Soon afterwards Natesan was Private Secretary to Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, when he went over to England in 1930 to register his dissent from some of the recommendations of the Donoughmore Commissioners (1927-1928).

Natesan married Sundari, the daughter of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan. She became Principal of the Ramanathan College - the College founded for Hindu girls by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan at Chunnakam, Ceylon in 1913. Natesan continued to carry on the work and ideals of Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, for the Tamils in general and particularly to the Hindus.

Natesan represented the Kankasanturai Constituency in the State Council from 1934 to 1947. According to the new constitution, as recommended by the Donoughmore Commissioners, there were three officials and fifty elected and nominated members in the State Council. Of the seven executive committees, Natesan served in the Executive Committee of Education - in which the late Mr.C.W.W. Kannangara, "the father of free education", was the Minister. The remarkable change from learning in the English language to the mother tongues - Sinhalese and Tamil - was effected by this Committee. Free education was introduced in Ceylon from October 1, 1945.

The Donoughmore Constitution had produced far-reaching effects. The Adult Suffrage after 1924 undoubtedly stimulated the politically conscious minority to provide greater educational facilities for the majority of the people. The country's development had hitherto been subordinated to imperial needs and the educational system in particular had grown up haphazard without much relation either to the economic progress or the cultural advancement of the people.

The Special Committee on Education appointed in April 1940 made a comprehensive survey in the field of education. The report revealed in unmistakable terms the sins of omission perpetrated during the period before the Donoughmore Constitution. The report focussed attention on the fact that Swabhasa-Sinhalese or Tamil - the mother tongue, was relegated

to a subordinate status and that those who studied through the English medium were given a badge of superiority.

Natesan's dissents in this report from the other members of the committee reveals his personality. He pointed out that Ceylon writers had evolved a Tamil prose in which they had great pride. He stressed that there should be an educational system suitable for democracy with a special emphasis on training for character. Natesan urged a reasonable place for Tamil in the Committee of Education which inquired into the state of the national languages of education - Sinhalese and Tamil. The writer had the privilege of being a translator in Tamil under this Special Committee on Education under Natesan in the State Council in 1945.

The Soulbury Commission presented its report to the Secretary of State on the 7th April 1945. Soon after, the Government in Britain, published a White Paper which offered a constitution on the lines recommended by the Soulbury Commission.

On the 18th June 1947, D.S.Senanayake founded the United National Party on a non-communal basis. Clearly the fundamental desire was not to secure tactical advantages, but to leave the racial and religious minorities (Burghers, Tamils, Muslims, Hindus etc.) as purely cultural bodies outside the political orbit. During August-September 1947 elections were held to the new House of Representatives based on the Soulbury Constitution. D.S. Senanayake was elected the President of the U.N.P. with S. Natesan as one of its Vice-Presidents in 1947.

Sir Nicholas Attygalle, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, has summed up Natesan's contributions to the sphere of education in a speech which he made when the University of Ceylon conferred



on S. Natesan the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature, in December 1964:-

"Mr. Natesan's chief contributions throughout his career have been in the sphere of education. He was Principal of Parameshvara College for nearly thirty years and Manager of Parameshvara and Ramanathan Colleges till those schools were taken over by Government in 1960. He was a member of various bodies connected with education such as the Central Advisory Council of Education, the Educational Research Council and the Examination Council. From 1943 to 1947 he was a member of the Executive Committee of Education in the State Council, which selected the Peradeniya site for the University of Ceylon and prepared the Ceylon University Ordinance. Later he was a member of the Special Committee on Education which was associated with the introduction of the Scheme of Free Education in 1947; and in 1961 and 1962 he was a member of the National Education Commission, the recommendations of which form the basis of the White Paper on Education that was recently submitted to Parliament. Moreover, no one could claim a longer connection with University bodies than Mr. Natesan. He was a member of the University College Council from 1938 to 1942, of the University Court from 1942 to 1965, of the Senate since 1946 and of the Faculty of Oriental Studies from 1952."

#### Natesan's Avocations

If Natesan's vocation was education, his avocations lay in the fields of literature, philosophy and history. He was recognized in Ceylon and in India as a scholar of outstanding renown in Tamil and Hinduism. He had the rare distinction of presiding over the Golden Jubilee Celebrations both of the Madurai Tamil Sangam, the premier Tamil Academy in India, and of the Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam, the premier Saiva religious organisation in India. He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Association which published the Tamil Encyclopaedia, "Kalai Kalanjiam", to which he contributed several articles. On the invitation of the University of Madras he inaugurated the Sornamma lectures on Tamil literature and he was invited by several learned institutions to deliver lectures on the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy on which he was acknowledged to be one of the greatest authorities. His "Sakuntalai Venba" (a narrative poem in Tamil) has been hailed by an enthusiastic reviewer as "Poesy 'of aesthetic delight'" and at the special function at the Annamalai University at which the work was related to the public, Sri C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar described it as combining some of the best aspects of Tamil poetry with the sonorousness and suggestiveness of Sanskrit poetry. He was also a member of the Editorial Board of the "University History of Ceylon", to which he contributed some chapters dealing with Tamil history and literature.

He had long connections with the Jaffna Oriental Studies Society and the North Ceylon Oriental Music Society and with the Jaffna Kala Nilayam, the Society for the Promotion of Tamil Culture, of which he was President for nearly a quarter of a century. About 1935 he established a College for the training of Tamil Pundits. He organized advanced courses in Carnatic Music at Ramanathan College. He was a dignified and graceful speaker in both English

and Tamil. The wide variety of his activities shows that he embodied in his person that rare combination of worldly and other worldly wisdom of which King Janake of Mithila was the best exemplar.

Natesan was an intellectual luminary in Tamil. His introductory contribution to the "Ilankai Tamil Malar" the magazine issued on the occasion of the International Tamil Conference held at Parameshvara College, Thirunelvely, Jaffna, in 1951, was a scholarly summing up of the Tamil contribution to the culture of Ceylon.

Natesan was a Vice-President of the Arya-Dravida Bhasha abivirutti Sangam - the Oriental Studies Society - which encouraged the study of both Tamil and Sanskrit and which was established in 1921. Lord Soulbury, the Governor of Ceylon, was the Patron and the Director of Education, the President of this Sangam.

Natesan presided at the Saiva Siddhanta Samaja Annual Conferences held at Chidambaram in 1955 and again at Pennakadam in 1956.

The writer had the opportunity of meeting Dr. Natesan and talking to him about the history of Jaffna several times. Dr. Natesan contributed much to Jaffna history and the development of Tamil in Ceylon.

## SOME EMINENT TAMILS - 24

### **SIR KANTHIAH VAITHIANATHAN (1896 - 1965)**

He was a man of many parts. He was an administrator who later on became a Minister. During his last days he devoted his life to the restoration of Thirukketheeshwaram - national shrine of the Ceylon Hindus.

Vaithianathan was born of an aristocratic Hindu family at Kopay on 23 July 1896. His father was Kanthiahpillai.

He was sent to St. Patrick's College, Jaffna, one of the best colleges in North Ceylon, where he received his secondary education; later he joined St. Joseph's College, Colombo, one of the best colleges in Ceylon, where he passed his Intermediate in Science. In 1918 he joined the Ceylon Medical College, Colombo. He became the first in order of merit to pass the Medical Examination. He got prizes for Chemistry and Physics and the Gold Medal for Biology. Then he proceeded to the United Kingdom in 1921 and joined King's College, London. In 1923 while yet a student in London, he passed his Ceylon Civil Service at the age of 27.

#### Administrator

Kanthiah Vaithianathan had varied duties in the thirty years of public service from 1923 to 1955. From 1930 to 1932, Vaithianathan was an Assistant Secretary

in the Emigration Department. From 1932 to 1935 Vaithianathan was an Assistant Secretary to Mr. D.S. Senanayake, the Minister of Agriculture.

From 1935 to 1937, Vaithianathan was Secretary to the State Council and Secretary to the Cabinet of the State Council. Vaithianathan was appointed to be the one man Commission of the Ceylon Radio Services in 1937. An illuminating report was issued - which resulted in many of the modern services of Radio Ceylon today. Vaithianathan was Secretary to the Committee in 1937 for reducing the number of Government officials.

#### Information Officer

Kanthiah Vaithianathan was appointed Information Officer, Colombo, in 1939 - a most important post, only second in importance to the post of Civil Defence Commissioner, held by Sir Oliver Goonetilleke. Sir Oliver Goonetilleke became later the Governor of Ceylon on July 17, 1954, after Lord Soulbury. Kanthiah Vaithianathan had to keep up the morale of the Ceylon people when Ceylon was threatened by an attack by the Japanese. I.M.R.A. Iriyagolla, the present Minister of Education (then on the editorial staff of a Sinhalese paper in the Lake House) was drafted as the Editor of the 'Yuddha Pera Munai', the "War Front" - the Sinhalese weekly. Iriyagolla was Chief Propaganda Officer in Sinhalese. S. Nadaraja, one of the Senior Translators, of the Official Languages Department, was then appointed Editor of the 'Yuddha Munai' in Tamil. The writer of this biography, served as a Tamil translator and Press Officer under Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan from 1942 for a few years. Ananda Tissa de Alwis was a Press Publicity Officer who worked under Vaithianathan in the Information Office.

In 1947 the Parliament in Great Britain passed the Act of Independence for Ceylon. D.S. Senanayake was the force which enabled Ceylon to get its independence without shedding a drop of blood. K. Vaithianathan was Permanent Secretary to D.S. Senanayake, the Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs, during this time. The United National Party was formed in 1947 which comprised all the communities of Ceylon.

February 4, 1948, was a remarkable date for Ceylon for it gained its place as an equal member of the Commonwealth of Nations.

Since 1947, Vaithianathan was adviser at all the Prime Minister's Conferences. At the Foreign Ministers Conference in Colombo in 1950, which incidentally gave birth to the Colombo Plan for which Ceylon was a founder member, Kanthiah Vaithianathan (who was created a knight on the 4th February 1950 in recognition of his great service to his land and the government) was Joint Secretary with Sir Normal Brooke.

In 1950 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was Prime Minister of India, Attlee was Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ernest Bevin was Foreign Minister and a Labour Government was in power. Nehru and Bevin attended the Foreign Ministers Conference which was held in Colombo in 1950. This conferred enormous prestige on the Ceylon Prime Minister, D.S. Senanayake.

There was undernourishment, overdependence on one crop (or the price of one crop) little industrialisation and knowledge of up-to-date techniques. It was clear, therefore, that a lot had to be accomplished and the terms of reference of the first Consultative Committee were to "to assess the resources available and required, to focus world attention on the development problems of the area, and to provide a framework within which an international cooperative effort can be promoted to assist the countries of the area to

raise their living standard."

"Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic Development in South and S.W.Asia. This began in 1950, when the effects of the war in S. and S.E. Asia were still very much in evidence. The population was 10% higher than in 1939, but the output of food lower; this in an area where one quarter of the world's population lives on one-sixteenth of the land surface."

Phillip A.S.Taylor  
"A New Dictionary of Economic  
Terms", p.37

The Colombo Plan has done a world of good to Ceylon. Foreign Governments continue to help the people of Ceylon to solve some of her problems; many with loans or grants. Other countries have given gifts in kind, such as tractors and diesel engines. Through the economic aid programme, foreign experts come to Ceylon to teach new methods. Foreign doctors have shown the Ceylonese how malaria could be wiped out which they have done successfully. Foreign engineers are helping to repair old tanks. Many young men go to the United Kingdom and America to study in the universities. The founding fathers of this plan were Ceylon, Canada, Australia, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and the United Kingdom. A Planning Secretariat was set up by the government in Colombo in 1951.

In 1947 Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan was appointed Government Agent of the Central Province - a very important administrative position. From 1948 till 1953 Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan was Permanent Secretary to three Prime Ministers of Ceylon. Don Stephen Senanayake was Prime Minister of Ceylon from September 1947 till March 22, 1952. Subsequently his son Dudley

Senanayake was Prime Minister from March 1952 till October 12, 1953. Thereafter Sir John Kotelawala succeeded him as Prime Minister from October 1953. Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan was appointed Minister of Housing and Social Services. He was the first to be a Minister, direct from Government service. He was appointed a Senator from 1953 to 1956.

Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan contested the Mannar seat in 1956, but lost it.

#### Vaithianathan - the Devotee of Thirukketheeswaram

In a short time thereafter, Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan gave up politics and dedicated himself to the cause of Hindu religion. His chief love was the resuscitation of Thirukketheeswaram - an ancient shrine of the Hindus which had been in ruins for over three centuries. Sundaramurthy Nayanar and Thirugnana-sambantha Murthy Nayanar have sung hymns (Devanams) on this shrine.

Thirukketheeswaram is near Mannar. It formed part and parcel of the kingdom of Jaffna. After 1617, it became part of the Portuguese territory. Srila Sri Arumuga Navalar in a pamphlet entitled 'Yalpana Samaya Nilai' (The State of Religion in Jaffna - published in 1872) stressed the importance of this shrine to the Hindus. Subsequently, Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan had also showed its importance in a speech in Parliament. A Thirukketheeswaram Society was formed in the beginning of this century. In 1903 there was a small temple erected, thanks to the efforts of the Nattukottai Chettiar. The second 'Kumbabhisekam' was performed in 1921.

The 'Thirukketheeswaram Restoration Society' was inaugurated at Colombo on October 19, 1948, Mr. Shivapathasunderam was elected first President. Proctor S.Sivasubramaniam was its Secretary. A third Kumba-

bhishekam was celebrated on August 1952. Plans for extension were made and the foundations for the present structure were made on 27th February 1953. Subsequently, Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan was elected President of the Restoration Society.

Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan had a cot at Thirukketheeswaram which he named 'Kottil' (the cottage). He supervised the 'Vimanana' (front super structure) and the building of the other structures in this ancient temple of Shiva; once a month he would go to his own mansion 'Senthil' at Kollupitiya to see Lady Vaithianathan and children. He donned the 'Veshti' and 'shawl' gave up western mode of dress. He regarded it as a mission to collect funds for putting up the structure at Thirukketheeswaram, which he did successfully.

He organised a Cooperative Store, a weaving Centre, a school, a rice mill - for Thirukketheeswaram, for he visualized a time in which this city would expand in population.

Great was his patience regarding the action of the Catholics in Mannar.

He had to fight against the serious way in which the men in the Catholic Action movement tried to encircle Thirukketheeswaram and prevent Hindus going ahead in this work. This can be seen from the paper entitled 'Catholics and Thirukketheeswaram'. His 'Thirukketheeswaram Papers' compiled from various writings of Mudaliyar C. Rasanayakam and others contain the bed-rock of the history of this shrine. He wanted the author of this biography to write a history of this shrine to be embodied as a part of his papers. The author had done research on this theme which had appeared in the 'Hindu Organ'. But this wish could not be fulfilled as he passed away meanwhile.

On 5 July 1953 the Colombo North Hindu Paripalana Sangham was convened at Prince College, Kotahena, Colombo 13. Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan presided. Vaithianathan expressed his desire that there should be Hindu Associations in every important city in Ceylon. Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan was its Patron, and presided at many of its important functions.

Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan presided at the Saiva Siddhanta Samajam held at Viruthu Nagar (in South India) in 1954.

He was the first President of the 'Akila Ilankai Hindu Ma Manram' (Confederation of Hindu Associations in Ceylon) which drew its membership from the representatives of various religious associations in every part of Ceylon. Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan was able to unite under the banner of Hinduism, the North, the East, the West and Central parts of the Island.

This Conference had Prohibition, Abolition of Caste, and the spread of Hinduism among the items on its programme.

The writer was President of the Colombo Hindu Paripalana Sangam of which he was a Founder, President and later Patron; and has had the opportunity of knowing the sterling qualities of Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan.

Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan was gathered to the feet of the Lord of Thirukketheeswaram, in the temple itself, on 27th August 1966. His funeral was attended by unprecedented crowds.

Professor Gnanasambandar who was a translator of the Official Languages to the Madras Government at Madras, and who spoke at a public meeting held at the Saraswathy Hall (the next week after his funeral) paid very high tributes to the late Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan.

Associated with all her husband's activities was Lady Vythianathan, who is also a fervent devotee and on his dying bed he requested her to build a Gopuram. Lady Bhuvaneshwari Vythianathan has already accomplished his last wish. The present President of the Thirukketheeswaram Restoration Society is Proctor S. Somasundaram. A Kumbabhishekam was celebrated in 1968.

By associating himself with the meritorious task of resuscitation of Thirukketheeswaram, Sir Kanthiah Vaithianathan had done signal service to the Hindus, not only of Ceylon but of South India and other parts of the world where Hindus flourish. The present pyramidal granite structure at the shrine of Thirukketheeswaram which was completed in 1970, will be a reminder for generations about Sir Kanthiah Vythianathan's dedicated services.



