

Tamil Studies Abroad: A Symposium. EDITED BY XAVIER S. THANI NAYAGAM. Kuala Lumpur: The International Association of Tamil Research, 1968. 269 pp. Appendix, Bibliography. n.p.

Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, Vol. I. Kuala Lumpur: International Association of Tamil Research, 1968. 764 pp. n.p.

Tamil Studies Abroad contains informative articles on the historical development of Tamil Studies in France, Holland, Germany, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Russia, U.S.A., Ceylon, Malaysia, Australia, and New Zealand, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Burma, Union of South Africa, and Trinidad.

Professor R. E. Asher's article on "The Contribution of Scholars of British Origin to Tamil Scholarship and the Study of Tamil in Britain" (pp. 43-80) is complete in its contents and reveals the fact that, Britain has made significant contribution towards the study of Tamil.

Dr. Kamil Zvelebil in his "Tamil Studies in Czechoslovakia" (pp. 81-89) has laid out the plans for the future development of Tamil Studies in his country (pp. 87-89). The appendix (p. 90) shows that the emphasis in the first year Tamil course is on the literary Tamil, rather than on the colloquial variety of the language. It appears that in Czechoslovakia, the colloquial variety is taught during the third year of the Tamil course.

Professor V. I. Subramoniam's "Tamil Studies beyond Tamil Nadu" (pp. 119-128) is very informative in that it deals with the

translations of several of the Tamil works in other Dravidian languages, such as Kannada, and in the north Indian languages too.

Next to Britain comes Ceylon (S. Vithianathan, "Tamil Studies in Ceylon II," pp. 143-201) in her contribution towards the development of Tamil Studies.

One is disappointed to note that in Australia and New Zealand, and in Hungary nothing has been done to encourage Tamil Studies.

The *Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies* is divided into two parts viz., "Southeast Asia" and "Social History." Among the articles of a factual nature are those of Professor Jean Felliozat ("Research in Southeast Asia and in the Far East" pp. 7-20) and Professor T. P. Meenakshisundaran's "Tiruppavai Tiruvempavai in Southeast Asia" (pp. 13-20).

Mr. R. K. Jains "Ramnathapuram Experiment Paradigm of an Estate-Farm-Factory Community in Malaya" (pp. 164-196) throws light on the ethnographic features of the Immigrants and the Emigrants.

Mr. M. Palaniappan's article on "The Young Men's Indian Association and the Indians of Kuala Lumpur, Malaya 1945-55" (pp. 219-226) deals with the events that led to the formation of the association and which narrowed down its ideologies to the catastrophic and contagious parochial regionalism.

Professor Lo Hsiang-Lin's "On the Voyage of Soli Samudra Chola's Envoy to China in A.D. 1015" (pp. 509-520) is an interesting paper which tells us about the commercial and cultural intercourse that existed between Tamilnadu and China.

There are several other interesting and informative papers, such as, Professor Robert Eric Frykenburg's "Elite Formation in Nineteenth Century South India, An interpretive Analysis," Miss Brenda E. F. Beck's "A Sociological Sketch of the major castes in the Coimbatore District" (pp. 635-650) and Bertam Bastimappillai's "Social Conditions of the Indian Immigrant Labourer in Ceylon in the 19th Century, with Special Reference to the Seventies and Some Comparisons with Conditions in other Colonies" (pp. 678-725).

Several of the articles may be criticized for their impressionistic approach. Professor Harry M. Buck's "An Introduction to the Study of

the Ramayana in South and Southeast Asia" (pp. 72-89) contains nothing new in its contents except his impressions on the Tamilians' faith in the Ramayana. His statement, "In contrast to the enforcement of caste distinctions, much of Tamil literature disapproves of the system. Ancient Tamil kings professed Vaidya Marga (the way of life in the Vedas)" (p. 76 para. 4) needs literary evidence for support. In the early 50's "The Ramayana in the Southeast Asia" was an attractive subject discussed in almost every Annual Meeting of the All-India Oriental Conference. One of Professor Buck's irrelevant quotations is the Tamil proverb: "What difference does it make whether Rama or Ravana is in charge"—which caused suspicion in his mind as to the popularity of the concept of Ramarajya. His suspicion is baseless. This proverb came into vogue, during the second world war, when the Indians were divided over the issue of supporting the British in the war. A group of politicians in Tamilnad introduced this proverb and ascertained that all that the people needed was nothing but food, clothing and shelter, regardless of the fact who ruled them.

Professor K. K. Pillay's "Aryan Influence in Tamilaham during the Sangam Epoch" (pp. 272-279) needs literary evidence or reference to support his vague statements such as "The various incarnations of Vishnu are mentioned in the Sangam Classics" (p. 276 para. 1) "there were for instance, 'Indra Vila,' Kartikai Vila, Ona Vila and numerous other festivities. . . ." (p. 277 para. 2).

Vidwan F. X. C. Nadarajah's paper on "A Survey of Nautical (Navigational) Terms in Tamil" (pp. 547-557) needs a correction. Tamil *tōṇi* is a borrowing from Prakrit and Pali. *dōṇi* (Sanskrit, *drōṇi*—(M. B. Emeneau and T. Burrow. *Dravidian Borrowings From Indo-Aryan* item 220 p. 42). The fact that a word occurs in the Old Tamil text, does not mean that it is indigenous to Tamil. (footnote 4 p. 548).

A careful screening of the papers before including them in the Volume, would have reduced the size of this volume and made it more interesting and readable to the scholars. It is high time that we try to leave Tiruvalluvar alone for some time!

These two books will be of great help to

scholars and students who are interested in the study of Tamil language, literature, and the Tamilians. The wealth of material presented in these volumes make it an asset to any individual or library.

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