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EDITORIAL

“History is a science no less and no more” stated J. B. Bury, the Irish historian, in 1902. Systematic attempts were made since the time of Nicholas de Condorcet and H.T. Buckle to make history as a science. Having understood the scientific nature of the subject and its importance they attempted so. Of course one cannot attain the exact objectivity and absolute veracity in historical researches as in other empirical sciences. Science depends on observation and experimentation to prove the validity of its premises. History pursues it by indirect observation viz. through eye witnesses or through others who have heard of it or by other methods. A scientist verifies his / her conclusions through repeated experimentation. A historian comes somewhat closer to it through corroboration of several sources so that he/ she can check the veracity of one reference with another. Historians Barthold Georg Niebuhr and Leopold Von Ranke developed such historical methods which analyse the source materials with microscopic criticism. Any professional historian is expected to follow such scientific approach in his / her historical pursuits. For the very root word *Istoria* means collection of information obtained as a result of scientific enquiry.

For scientific enquiry in history one needs primary sources without which a historical research cannot take place. Primary sources are of varied categories. Traditionally archival sources do play a vital role. Inscriptions, manuscripts, dispatches, travelogues, memoirs, diaries, records, palm leaves, archaeological artefacts, architecture, coins, sculptures, seals, stamps, paintings, photographs, etc., are considered to be valuable primary source materials. Till recent times scholars mostly relied on the government archival sources as the only authentic sources. Again, the plethora of private original records and documents in private archives and libraries have added value to the research. Researchers now duly acknowledge the value of private (primary) sources. This phenomenon is mainly due to the recent developments in the historiographical fields!

Among the private documents the Jesuit sources serve as a veritable mine of information for the construction of the history of late medieval and modern society in India particularly in Tamil Nadu. Their writings embody copious information about the socio, cultural and political situation of the country. Historians today affirm that the Jesuit sources are one of the reliable sources to write history as they were recorded objectively. “Though the Jesuits’ objective was mainly professed by religions, society as a whole attracted their attention, consequently a flood of light is thrown on political, social and economic condition of South India”, says R. Sathiyanaatha Aiyar, a renowned historian. From the inception of the Order the Jesuits were and are known for their annual letters. One of the secretaries of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Order, Fr. Polanco drew up a set of “rules which are to be observed in the manner of writing by those of the

Society who are scattered outside Rome.” Among them three aspects deserve attention, namely, what to write, how to write and with what diligence to write and dispatch to Rome. One of the Superior Generals of the Jesuits Fr. Mutio Vitelleschi who was in the office from 1615 to 1645, wrote to one of his Jesuits in England, “You must make a selection out of all the news available, and then communicate to us what you have ascertained to be more authentic and of great consequence”.

The missionaries in India sent to Europe accurate data and information regarding the fauna, flora, ethnography, religions, customs, traditions and the history of the land where they had laboured. St. Francis Xavier (1506- 1552), the first Jesuit missionary of the East proved himself as the fore-runner of excellent letter writers from India. He set an eloquent model for his successors in India for writing numerous and compendious letters of high quality and depth to their head quarters in Rome. The letters of Frs. Balthasar da Costa, Em. Martin and Noël de le Bourzes are revealing examples to this. The Jesuits also played the role of historians while recording events. The annual letters of Fr. Balthasar da Costa from Trichinopoly gives evidence to this effect. “..Without claiming to pass judgement on the nature or the cause of these happenings, I confine myself to my role of a historian, and simply relate things which I have seen with my own eyes,” says Da Costa in one of his annual letters in 1643. As asserted by *Documenta Indica* Vol. I, these missionaries were to relate whatever was worthy of being known and speak about such thing as the climate, diet, customs, and character of the native peoples of India. The Jesuit letter writers had naturally to describe the background in which their missionary work was developing and circumstances mission faced. While engaged in briefing mission work they supplied valuable materials which today serve us sources to trace the history of the above period. Thus the Jesuit letters act as ‘contemporary sources’ standing in chronological proximity to the events they deal with. They contain in many instances, the reports of eyewitnesses of the events described, and even some of them being participants in them, and are hence ‘primary sources.’ However one should corroborate these sources with other similar sources for obtaining greater objectivity.

The celebrated historian Vincent A. Smith rightly stated that “the Jesuits, are highly educated men trained in accurate observation and scholarly writings. The Jesuits are noted for their veracity.” John Lockman, the protestant editor of the *Travels of the Jesuits* says, “I believe it will be granted, that no men are better qualified to describe nations and countries than the Jesuits.” The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, himself a historian par excellence, reflects in the same vein in his volume *Glimpses of World History* , “I cannot however resist giving you some more quotations from the accounts of the Portuguese missionaries. Their opinions are of far greater value than those of countries.” These sources are mostly in Portuguese, French, Latin, English and Tamil. One can always refer to such sources in Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu in Rome, French Jesuit Archives, Vanves in Paris, Jesuit Archives of Madurai Province at Shembaganur, Kodaikanal, Xavier Centre of Historical Research, Goa and in other places. A few researches are now being carried out in Tamil Nadu availing these sources. Surely these valuable Jesuit sources will help historians to construct a comprehensive, modern and contemporary socio-political history of South India.

Dr. M. Arockiasamy Xavier, SJ
Chief Editor

CONTENTS

1.	S. John Britto SJ	Ancient Historical Perceptions on Cheras from Sangam Classical Literature ...	1
2.	T. Jayaraman	Tamil Ethno-National Historiography ...	21
3.	C. Thomas	Tiruvalluvar's Concept of State Formation and its Effects on the Politics of the Sangam Age (Tamil Academy) ...	37
4.	A. Maria Arul Raja SJ	Printing Living Orality to Reach Out to the Least: Pioneering Efforts of Henrique Henriques ...	49
5.	Ichhimuddin Sarkar	Bhakti, Humanism and Quest for Social Harmony ...	59
6.	G. Indirajith	Jainism in Kanchipuram ...	67
7.	Keneth O. Ogot SJ	The Pathology of Ethnic Identity and Democratization of the Kenyan Nation-State ...	73
8.	Babu Paul, SJ	Jesuit Contributions to Historiography of Kerala ...	89
9.	T.Selvamuthukumaran	The Labour Movement of the Communist Party of India in the East Tanjore District: An inquiry into the Agitations led by the Tamil Nadu Farmers' Association ...	95
10.	Prabha Ravi Shankar	<i>Indian Opinion</i> (Tamil Edition) and its Contribution to Indian Agitation in South Africa ...	103
11.	A. Akila Mariathangam	Bishop Azariah's Contribution to Dornakal Diocese ...	111
12.	S. Kamini	Indian Forest Administration During the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) with Special Reference to Coimbatore - A Study ...	119
13.	T. S. Lancelet	Demographic Strategies of Managing Solid Waste - A Theoretical Approach ...	131
14.	M. Raziya Parvin	Women Empowerment in India - A Focus on Gender Budgeting and Women Component Plan ...	139
<i>Book Review:</i>			
	T. Sundararaj	'Indian Catholic Christians & Nationalism' by Dr. Mary John ...	150

JAINISM IN KANCHIPURAM

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Kanchipuram - Origin of the Name

Kanchi, was one of the best-known South Indian cities in the past. The antiquity of Kanchi is very difficult to ascertain. However, literature, epigraphy and the archaeological evidences prove its existence. The recent excavations carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India, University of Madras and the State Department of Archaeology, have revealed that Kanchipuram was an ancient habitational site having artifacts dating from the Megalithic period. The earliest phase at Kanchipuram consists of black and red ware, black polished ware and the associated red ware.

The next phase is associated with the historical period from the 3rd century B.C. to the 2nd or 3rd centuries A.D.¹ Early Tamil literature and inscriptions referred to Kanchipuram as Kachi, Kachipedu, Kanchi, Kanchinagara, Kanchimanagar and Kanchipuram. Of these, Kachi seems to be the earliest name. It also had several other names such as Kamakottam, Kamapeetham, Pralaya Sindhu, Shivapuram, Brahmapuram, Indupuram, Tundirapuram, Mummurteeswaram, Dandakapuram, Thapomayam, Sakalasiddhi, Kannikappu, Satyavrata Kshetra and Bhulokakailasam. Here it is useful to know the expression Kanchi. There are several explanations for the word Kanchi. Probably, the most ancient is found in Perumpanatruppadai² and Manimekhalai, Kanchi is name of a tree, which abounded in this area, after which it came to be called Kanchi. Besides, 'ka' means Brahma and anchi means worship. Hence, Kanchi is the place where Brahma was worshipped. In Sanskrit, the word Kanchi meant a girdle, and the city was like a girdle to the earth. Perumpanatruppadai³ states that the Kanchi was a beautiful walled city. There were high brick walls enclosing the army barracks, and a thick, protective forest. The roads were deep with ruts due to the constant plying of heavy and strong chariots. There was a busy market place where businessmen were always engaged in business. It was a city unequalled, in which the people engaged themselves in enjoying the festivals of different religious sects.

Early Jainism in Kanchipuram - The Epigraphical Sources

The existence of the Jain faith in Kanchipuram from 3rd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D. is confirmed by the occurrence of a Tamil-Brahmi cave inscription near the city at Manandur⁴ Historically, the inscription is important as it gives us a hitherto unknown Chiefs name, Kaniman⁵. This name can be compared with that of Tondaiman. It is possible that he belonged to the clan of Tiraiyar

who ruled Tondaimandalam before the advent of the Pallavas *i.e.*, from 3rd century B.C. to 2nd A.D., in that region. Alternatively, Kaniman could be a Sangam Chera chieftain *viz.*, Malaiyaman and Ariyaman who ruled over the adjoining territories. However, in the absence of any literary record, we are in the realm of speculation⁶.

This inscription is the earliest epigraphic record of a battle in the Tamil country. The inscription states that Kaniman took Tenur. We do not know the exact location of this place or other detail of the battle. The endowment of the rock-shelter was probably made as a votive offering after victory. Besides we do not know to whom the rock-shelter was given. Both Buddhist and Jain monks used caverns as shelter in the rainy season. Kanchipuram was a special centre for both these faiths. However, it is more probable that the offering was to a Jain monk as the Tamil-Brahmi cave inscriptions in the Tamil country do not provide any Buddhist association while many of these sites were continued to be occupied by the Jains, as the later *Vatteluttu* and Tamil inscriptions and Jain sculptures testify from this we can surmise that Kanchi became a strong hold of the Jains during days of early Christian era.

The third phase characterized by the occurrence of *Pallavan Koil* copper plate. It is evident from the *Pallavan Koil* copper plate that the Vardhamana temple at Tirupparuttikunram was considered a holy place for the Jains as early as the 6th century A.D. *Ghatika* was the famous university of Kanchi, a unique one of its kind. Kanchi was a seat of higher learning, and it was one of the great centres of learning along with Takshashila, Varanasi, Vallabhi and Nalanda. Patanjali refers to Kanchipuram, or one who is from Kanchi, in the 2nd century B.C. The *Ghatika* is also referred to frequently in inscriptions from the 4th century A.D. The Kadamba king, Mayurasharman, of the West Coast (Goa) entered the *Ghatika* at this time, while Kakutsthavarman Kadamba, in tracing the origin of his line at its *Ghatika*. Tamil poet Appar also refers to Kanchi as a town of great knowledge and learning.

In addition to the seat of learning Kanchi, the ancient city of the south, is also described as one of the seven religious cities of India. The others being Ayodhya, Mathura, Gaya, Kasi, Avanti and Dwaraka. It is significant to note that except Kanchi, the other six cities are situated north of the Vindhya. Amongst these cities, Kanchi was a political, religious and cultural centre. From the dawn of civilization to the present day, this city has witnessed the rise and fall of many dynasties, paving the way for learning's of various ruling families can be observed through their reminiscences.

The Medieval Jinakanchi - Structural Evidences

Kanchi continued to become a stronghold of the Jains in the medieval period and developed to be so for several centuries. A regular colony of the Jains came into existence at the place popularly known as Jinakanchi. It is locally also known as Thirupparuttikunram. The Pallavas of Kanchi were tolerant in their

religious outlook and some of them extended patronage to Jainism. Kanchi developed into an important seat of Jain religion during the period of Simhavarman. He enriched the Jaina temple at Kanchi with a number of land donations. A grant of the village Amanserkkai and some lands in Tamar was made to the Jaina monk Vajranandi of Thirupparuttikunram for conducting worship of Lord Jina⁷. There are two Jaina temples at Thirupparuttikunram, one is dedicated to Vardhamana Mahavira, the twenty fourth Tirthankara and the other is to Chandraprabha, the eighth Tirthankara. The Vardhamana temple was considerably enlarged with additional shrines and a huge pillared hall added in later times. Besides, next to the Pallavas we have a few inscriptions of the Chola kings of this dynasty which describe the various gifts given by them. One of the shrines in the same temple built in the Chola period is dedicated to Dharmadevi. The temple was enclosed by a *prakara* wall by one Alagiyapallavan, who is identified with the Kadava chieftain, Kopperunjinga. In the subsequent period Vijayanagar rulers maintained close contact with Kanchi. Several inscriptions of this rulers are available at various sites in Kanchi. They record the gifts to various temples including Vardhamana temple made by the rulers by their officials.

The *Sangeetha mandapa* of the Vardhamana temple complex was built in 1387-88 A.D. Irugappa, the famous general of the Vijayanagar king, Bukka II⁸. The ceiling of the *mandapa* contained two layers of paintings, one executed during the Vijayanagara rule, the other in the Nayak times. The earlier paintings have disappeared due to the ravages of time. The Nayak paintings depict incidents connected with the life of *Rishabhanatha*, *Neminatha*, *Mahavira* and *Dharmadevi*. The *balalilas* of Krishna, such as the lifting of the *Govardhana* hill, *Kaliyamardhana*, the killing of the elephant *asura*, fighting the wrestlers, killing *Kamsa*, etc., deserve special mention. Short label inscriptions in Tamil narrating these events are found below the paintings.⁹ The entire temple complex came to be called *Trikodabasti*. Besides the Chandraprabha temple is of modest proportions and is said to have been built by Rajasimha Pallava. It has a shrine and a small *mandapa* in front. The first *tala* was converted into a shrine installing an image of Chandranatha. However, the rampant *yalis* at the cardinals of the shrine are reminiscent of the Rajasimha style of architecture.¹⁰

In addition to the above two temples, one more is known to have existed in the vicinity of Kanchipuram known as Mahilampalli. An epigraphic record of Narasimha Pallava II (708-709 A.D.), re-engraved in the 9th century A.D. The epigraph states that Queen Lokamahadevi was affected by a brahmarakshasa and mentions an Acharya of Mahilampalli. He probably had some part in alleviating the Queen's affliction from the evil spirit. It also seems to register a gift of land to the temple of Arhar.¹¹ The Mahilampalli epigraph does not exist now. It is not possible to locate this Jaina temple, as the fragmentary inscription referring to it is engraved on a loose slab lying in the lumber room of the Kamakshi temple.

Grants to the Jain Institutions

Apart from these Jaina temples, here it is highly useful to understand the Landgrants and other endowments to Jaina institutions. The Jaina institutions of Kanchi received the patronage of the members of the various ruling families and the pious devotees. The earliest epigraphic record referring to the Jaina settlement at Thirupparuttikunram is the famous Pallavankoil copper plate issued by the Pallava King, Simhavaraman (556 A.D.). An epigraph of simhavaraman records that the king granted the village Sramanasrama alias Amanserkkai in Perunagar and some lands in Tamar as *Pallichchandam* to the Jaina monk Vajranandi of Nandi sangha for conducting the worship of Lord Jina. The copper plate also states *paruttikunru* as the *Dharma-tirtha* or sacred place of Lord Vardhamana.¹² In due course during the reign of Kulottunga Chola I (1116 A.D.), 3000 *kuli* of land were purchased from the assembly of Kitaduppur by the monks of Thirupparuttikunram for digging a channel for irrigational purposes¹³. Some lands were sold to the temple by the assembly of Vilasar.¹⁴ From the epigraph it is clear that the south Indian form of local government was to have its origins here till it reached its maturity under the Cholas. Not only the *mahasabha* or local assembly promoted the welfare of the society but also the Jaina monks received endowments from the ruling class and enhance the life style of the people.

A similar grant of Pallichchandam was also made to the temple and it was entrusted to one Arambanandi in 1135 A.D.¹⁵ Twenty *Keli* of land in the village Ambai was endowed at the instance of Kulottunga Cholakaduvetti, for the merit of his proctor Chandrakirtidevar and on the bhattars of Thirupparuttikunram.¹⁶ Endowments such as the gift of the village Kanipakkam as Pallichchandam to God Semporkunralvar (mahavira) at Paruttikunram. The assignment of income from the tax *kadamai* for food offerings had been made during the reign of Rajaraja III¹⁷ in addition to the Jaina institutions it is worthwhile to know the Jain *Sanghas* and the propagation of Jaina principle in Kanchipuram. In an instance an epigraph states Perunagar and Tamar (Damal) received by Jain *Sanghas* as donation to preach the principles of Jainism. The reference to the *Nandi Sangha* and the hermitage is of great importance. There was a monastic order at Jinakanchi named *Nandi Sangha*, in which lives a horde of virtuous teachers, one of whom was Vajranandi, who was well-versed in all sacred lore.

The Jaina recluses formed themselves into various *Sanghas* for the propagation of their religious principles. Four types of such orders, viz., *Nandi Sangha*, *Sena Sangha*, *Deva Sangha* and *Simha Sangha*, are mentioned among the Digambara Jains of the south. Among them, the *Nandi Sangha* seems to have been very popular in Tamil Nadu. The presiding monk of the order had his name suffixed with the epithet Nandi. Lithic records from Thirupparuttikunram bear testimony to the fact that the *Nandi Sangha* continued to be there for a long time under the succession of several Jaina *acharyas*.¹⁸

The Vardhamana temple was also patronized by Vijayanagar rulers. The records of Krishnadevaraya register the transfer of the village Kotugai belonging to the Jain temple in lieu of another known as Uvachcheri for the benefit of the residents of the Tirumalai Devi agrahara.¹⁹ Besides, a sale of some land and house sites was made by the *gurukkal* and the *stanattar* of the temple to one Harihara Gurukkal of Kanchipuram.²⁰ Later inscriptions found in the temple register the grant of 2000 *kuli* of land as *saramanya* for conducting regular worship in the Trailokyanatha temples.²¹ The *gopura* of the temple was constructed in the 14th century A.D. by the sage Shri Pushpasena Vamanacharya who was the disciple of Mallisena Vamanasuri.²² Salutations are paid to these two stages of the Jaina order in a lithic record.²³

Here it is worthwhile to understand the Jinakanchi mutt and its *acharyas*. Jinakanchi was considered one among the four sacred *vidayasthanas* of the Digambara Jains. A monastic establishment presided over by a succession of reputed monks existed at this place. But it is not possible to trace the history of the mutt and its learned pontiffs. The origin of the monastery, though shrouded in mystery, may be pushed back to the 4th century A.D., as we find mention of Vajranandi of the Nandisangha in whose favour land grants were made by the Pallava king, Simhavarman.²⁴ The Rishisamudaya (group of monks) of Thirupparuttikunram wielded considerable influence over the administration of the temple and received land endowments during the reign of Kulottunga Chola I. Chandrakirtidevar is said to be the Jaina preceptor in the last quarter of the 12th century A.D. It was for his merit and for the other monks of Jinakanchi, that one Mandiyankilan granted 20 *veli* of land in the village Ambai.²⁵ Pushpasena, the preceptor of the Vijayanagara minister Irugappa, seems to have been in charge of the monastery at Jinakanchi. He instigated the minister to build the *sangeetha mandapa* in the temple and make liberal endowments.²⁶ Theshpasena Vamanacharya and Mallisena Vamanasuri were two important *acharyas* who are glorified in the epigraphical records of the temple.²⁷ They could have headed the mutt in the 15th century A.D.

The Mackenzien Manuscript adds that the Jinakanchi mutt at Thirupparuttikunram was once adorned by pontiffs like Samantabhadra, Shivakotiacharya, Pujiyapada, Akalanka, Nishkalanka, *etc.*, but due to the anarchy and confusion that prevailed in the country after the reign of Krishnadevaraya, the Jinakanchi mutt came to an end.²⁸ The Pontifical seat was then transferred to Chittamur in South Arcot district and the Jinakanchi mutt was re-established by Virasenacharya in the 16th century A.D. Even to the present day, the official pontiff of the Jaina sect in Tamil Nadu functions from the Jinakanchi mutt at Chittamur.²⁹

Thus Kanchipuram was the home of the various religious movements of India. Southern Buddhism and Jainism reached their zenith here, Saivism and Vaishnavism had their beginnings at Kanchi. The various cultural streams met

here - Aryan and Dravidian, Vedic and non - Vedic, Hindu, Buddhist and Jain. It was a seat of education, of religion and philosophy and of art. Thus, the development of Jainism in Kanchi began in the early centuries of the Christian era, reached its zenith in Vijayanagar period. It was the centre of Jaina seat of learning and Jaina faith paving the way for the existence of a common culture.

Endnotes

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3. *Ibid.*
4. Iravatham Mahadevan, *Corpus of the Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions in Seminar on Inscriptions* (1966), Madras. 1968, p. 71.
5. *ARE* of 1939-40, p. 171.
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7. *ARE*, A/10 – 1958-59.
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11. *ARE*, 360 – 1954-55.
12. *TASSI*, 1958-59, p. 41.
13. *ARE*, 382 – 1928-29.
14. *ARE*, 381 – A/1928-29.
15. *ARE*, 381 – B/1928-29.
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17. *Ibid*, No. 367.
18. V. Raman, *Traditional Cultures Jainism in Tondaimandalam*, 1974, pp. 13-23.
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20. *Ibid.*, No. 368.
21. *ARE*, 97 – 1923.
22. *ARE*, 98 – 1923.
23. *ARE*, 100 – 1923.
24. *ARE*, A/10 – 1958-59.
25. *SII*, Vol. IV, No. 366.
26. *ARE*, No. 41-42 – 1890.
27. *ARE*, No. 98 & 100 – 1923.
28. Mackenzie, Mss. No. 68.
29. A. Ekambaranathan, *Chithamoor Varalaru*, pp. 78-79.