

"It is quite clear (from the above arguments) that Mr. Vaiyapuripillai had written the above mentioned books with the express aim of degrading Tamil. Therefore it is quite in order that the word 'Vaiyapuri' has come to mean triator to tamil"²²

It is true that other scholars were not so abusive. Yet there was almost a conspiracy of silence at that time at the level of the establishment scholars (by this term, I refer to those Tamil Scholars who attained positions of official distinction as a result of the political gains made by Tamilian nationalism as expressed by the D. M. K. This would include those scholars who are taken as symbols of Tamil learning but were not politically partisan.) Mu. Varadarāsan the ideologue of secular Tamilian nationalism, once Professor of Tamil, University of Madras, later Vice-Chancellor, University of Madurai in his thesis on the treatment of nature in Cankam literature for Ph.D. to the University of Madras in 1947, avoids any reference to Vaiyapuripillai. In fact there is no discussion in that thesis to the date of the Cankam texts.²³ Nor is there any reference to Vaiyapuripillai in the thesis submitted in 1956 on 'Love in Sangam Poetry' by V.Sp. Manickam, who later became Professor of Tamil at Annamalai University and Vice-Chancellor, Madurai Kamaraj University.²⁴ In both these works, Vaiyapuripillai's name does not occur even in the bibliographies.

N. Subramanian's thesis on Sangam Polity presented to Annamalai University (1954), and later published in 1966, refers to Vaiyapuripillai on the question of the dates of some of the texts. Here again one is able to note the hostile terms in which Vaiyapuripillai is referred; quite often the suffix 'Pillai' (indicating the Vellala Caste) is dropped and is referred to as just S. Vaiyapuri.²⁵ To any one who is accustomed with South Indian Social proprieties this is something very hostile, if not derogatory.

By the sixties, at level of the establishment scholars, there was a slight thaw. Vaiyapuripillai's name was not being discussed at length, but his views were being referred to and objected to without much discussion. Such a renowned scholar as T. P. Meenakshisundaram in his *A History of Tamil Literature* (Annamalainagar, 1965) mentions Vaiyapuripillai's name only in matters of not so great importance. There is no reference to Vaiyapuripillai's name and his views on the dates of the

Vaiyapurillai's History of Tamil Language and Literature

(From the Beginning to 1000 A.D.)

An Introductory Note by
Dr. KARTHIGESU SIVATHAMBY

*M.A., [Sri Lanka]; Ph. D., [Birmingham]; Head of Department of
Tamil Fine Arts Jaffna University, Sri Lanka.*



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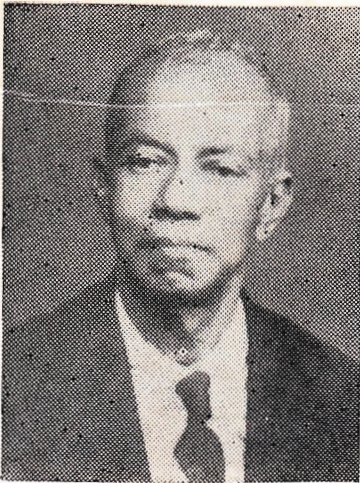
VAIYAPURI PILLAI'S

**History Of
Tamil Language
And Literature**



INTRODUCTION BY
Karthigesu Sivathamby

Professor S. Vaiyapuripillai



Professor S. Vaiyapuripillai needs no introduction to students of Tamil literature. His was a life dedicated to studies and research in Tamil literature. All alone he struggled through the mazes and helped to establish the chronology of Tamil literature. The glorious literature of the period covered in this book is a sure guide to gain an insight into the aims and aspirations, thoughts and feelings, actions

and achievements of the ancient Tamil people. But, chronological difficulties which confronted the students of ancient Tamil literature were sought to be solved by our learned professor whose signal service was to establish a time sequence for our ancient literature.

Professor Vaiyapuripillai was an eruditescholar. He brought to bear on his studies, an unusually keen intellect and analytical mind. He presented his views in an unambiguous manner. He always strove for truth. His patience, devotion and hard work have been crowned with success. The monumental "Tamil Lexicon" edited by him in the shortest possible time is a veritable treasure house of Tamil language. Having gained experience as the Editor of Tamil Lexicon, he devoted his time and energy to examine and scrutinise, compare, study and evaluate a number of available manuscripts of Tamil classics and published, with critical introductions, authoritative editions which are today acclaimed as authentic by the Tamil scholastic world. His numerous studies in Tamil literature, help not only to throw light on the dark corridors of history but also to assess properly our heritage. Further, they outline path of future progress of Tamil literature.