

Sri Chandramouliswaraya Namah

*Sri-Sankara- Bhagawatpadacharya- Paramparagata
Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Pithadhipati*

Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal

Srimatam Samsthanam
Kanchipuram

Tamil and English copies of *Thirupporur and Vadakkuppattu: Eighteenth Century Locality Accounts* have been received. The volumes give a detailed description of the cultural, educational, economic and social conditions that obtained during the eighteenth century.

Kanchipuram, an ancient city and now headquarters of the District, has been justly famous for its cultural, religious and educational advancements from very ancient times. In accordance with the saying, “Kanchi is an ancient city of boundless learning”, there have been *Ghatikas* during the period of Pallava rulers with a very large number of students pursuing advanced learning in various *Sastras*. Kanchipuram is a city of many temples with architectural beauty and sculptural splendour. The most important temple of Kanchi is the Temple of Devi Sri Kamakshi. According to the preface of the Commentary on *Silappathikaram*, written by the famous Adiyarkunallar, this Temple was in existence before the time of Emperor Karikala Chola I.

By and large, the people of Chengalpattu region seem to have been very righteous and truthful. One of the Sangam literary masterpieces speaks of the greatness of the people of Thondaimandalam (the region of Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram and surroundings) who would never tell a lie even if the whole world were offered. Devi Kamakshi, the presiding Deity of Kanchi, is said to have performed 32 *Dharmas*.

The present work has taken a small area out of the vast Thondaimandalam region and the authors have presented a graphic picture of the economic, social, cultural and educational aspects of the region during the eighteenth century based on the very detailed records that they have obtained. They bring out the

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great affluence of this region and the grandeur of this society and polity that has been founded in *Sanatana Dharma*.

In the introduction to the book, the authors have brought to notice the *Merai* contribution received by the Chikkodeyar Swami (Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swami of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Pitham) from more than 300 localities. They have also brought to light similar *Merai* contributions received by the other great religious institutions of the region.

His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal bestows his blessings on the authors and the Centre for Policy Studies for bringing out this work and for unhindered continuation of their efforts in this direction.

Kanchipuram
September 4, 2001

Narayanasmritih

Sivamayam

Sri-La-Sri Jnanaprakasa Desika
Paramacharya Swamigal

Adheena Kartar
Thondaimandala Adheenam

This research monograph on *Thirupporur and Vadakkupattu: Eighteenth Century Locality Accounts*, prepared jointly by the Centre for Policy Studies, Chennai and Tamil University, Thanjavur, presents a graphic picture of the society and polity of eighteenth century Tamil Nadu. This monograph is mainly based on the Tamil palm-leaf accounts of the Chengalpattu Survey which have been obtained from the office of the District Collector at Kanchipuram and also utilises the English summary accounts presented in about fifty Registers available at the Tamil Nadu State Archives at Chennai. The Chengalpattu Survey was undertaken by the British in the eighteenth century after this region was obtained as a *Jaghire* from the Nawab of Arcot; and it was conducted by a British engineer, Thomas Barnard, and his *dubash*, Rajasri Chengalvaraya Mudaliyar.

In preparing this book the authors have pooled together expertise from diverse fields – manuscriptology, archaeology and computer technology for information processing and development of new fonts for printing. They have compiled the traditional verses that describe the special symbols used in ancient manuscripts and have aptly classified these symbols as those pertaining to numbers, measures, abbreviations and conjunct letters. In their introduction they have given an overview of the Chengalpattu society and polity, during the eighteenth century, as brought out by the records of the Chengalpattu Survey of 1767-1774. They have discussed the land-use pattern under the heads of *purampokku*, *maniyam* and *varappattu* and explain how the *purampokku* was composed of a large number of *kovil*, *kulam*, *kuttai*, *turavu*, *tangal*, *madu*, *eri*, *puntottam*, *toppu*, *kalamedu*, *nattam*, *malai* and so on. They have brought out the details of the large number of communities that lived in these localities, such as Siva Brahmanas, Vaishanava Brahmanas, Pandaram, Kondaikati Vellalar, Payirkottai Vellalar, Sir-Kanakkar, Palli, Talaiyari, Kaikkolar, Idaiyar, Chetty, Kammalar, Devadasi, Vaniyar, Sanar, Vannar, Navitar, Kuyavar,

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Tacchar, Panisevar, Muhammadiyar, Vettaikkarar and so on and how these localities were often divided into several habitations. They have brought to light the high level of agricultural production and productivity and the large number of grains that were grown such as Nel (paddy), Varagu, Kelvaragu, Kambu, Tinai, Samai, Kollu, Ellu, Tuvurai, Ulundu and so on. They have also highlighted the fact that a number of cultural institutions, such as the great temples, received a share in the produce from a large number of localities.

There are many other notable features of the eighteenth century Tamil society, which are brought out in this book, such as the fact that as a consequence of the region coming under a new rule, the Governments started raising the level of taxation to 40% of the produce; the fact that these locality records do not associate the name of any individual with any of the lands except in the case of maniyams; the fact that cultivated lands often constituted less than a third of the total area of a locality which allocated a large part of its lands for other purposes such as for habitations, forests, water bodies, and so on. This monograph can serve as an eye opener to those engaged in village and revenue administration today.

We bestow our blessings on the Centre for Policy Studies and the Tamil University that have jointly taken up this effort. We also bestow our blessings on the authors and all those who have helped in bringing out this valuable book.

Kanchipuram
October 23, 2001

Tiruvambala Desika
Jnanaprakasa
Paramachariya Swamigal
232nd Adheena Kartar
Thondaimandala Adheenam

FOREWORD

This book on *Thirupporur and Vadakkuppattu: Eighteenth Century Locality Accounts*, is based on the eighteenth century palm-leaf records of the Chengalpattu District. Chengalpattu District is part of the culturally rich Thondaimandalam region, which is renowned as the home of men of great wisdom. This region is also important for historical studies, as it was the first to come under British rule in South India.

While the stone and copper inscriptions give us only glimpses of the history till the modern period, these palm-leaf locality accounts of eighteenth century are an invaluable source of the history of recent times. They record, in a systematic manner, a great deal of information about most of the localities of Chengalpattu District. They present the most detailed picture available anywhere of the nature and functioning of Indian society, economy and polity at its basic level prior to the establishment of British rule and in fact lead us to an entirely new perspective on the traditional Indian society and polity.

It is our good fortune that such extensive records, which do not seem to be available for any other region of India, are available with us. This book presents, for the first time, detailed locality accounts of two localities in both Tamil and English. It is indeed a signal contribution to historical studies.

This admirable effort has been jointly undertaken by the Centre for Policy Studies, Chennai and the Department of Palm-leaf Manuscripts of the Tamil University, Thanjavur. The dedicated and incisive work of the scholars of these institutions, Prof. T. G. Paramasivam, Prof. M. D. Srinivas and Dr. T. Pushkala deserves all appreciation.

A notable feature of this book is the fact that the eighteenth century locality accounts are presented in the original script of the palm-leaf manuscripts, for which special fonts have been developed. There is a general impression that most investigators hesitate to take up manuscripts and other original records for study because of the difficulties involved in deciphering the special characters and symbols that occur in these records. In this context,

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the editorial note in the Tamil version of this book would be a valuable introduction to the researchers who wish to embark on such a study.

This book will be of great significance to scholars both in the fields of History and Manuscriptology. We wish the authors all success in their endeavour to edit and publish the locality accounts of several more localities for the benefit of the scholarly world.

Thanjavur
September 1, 2001

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