A LIFE-SKETCH

OF

MR. S. TAMBIMUTTU-PILLAI
PHILANTHROPIST, EDITOR, POET, AUTHOR, PLAYWRIGHT, PHYSICIAN

BY

MR. S. JOHN RAJAH, ATCHUVELLY.
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WRITTEN FROM THE NOTES KEPT BY REGISTRAR
S. JOHN RAJA, ATCHUVELY

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PREFACE

The impression that one gathers by reading this biography is that my grand-father, S. Thambimuttupillai, was a devout Roman Catholic, whereas the opposite was the case. He frequently did not attend Sunday Mass. This was considered a mortal sin. One Sunday the European priest strode up in high dudgeon and saw my grand-father sculpting the figure of a man without going to church. He was expected to refrain from such work on Sundays. "What are you doing on a Sunday?" asked the priest. "I am creating a man, father" replied my grand-father.

In the genealogical table appearing in Appendix I, the Atchuvally line is clear right up to King Pararajasekeram VI, but in the Manipay line there is a gap between King Pararajasekeram VI and Kulasekere Mudaliyar. The Yalpana Vaipa Malai written at the request of the Dutch Governor, Jan Maccara, based on earlier records like the Kailasa Malai and other ancient works refers to Atchuvelly as one of the royal villages, but not to Manipay. Manipay came into prominence only after the arrival of the American missionaries, who built the Green Memorial Hospital, and found the people willing to adopt American names.

The biography only mentions the arrival of Catholicism to Atchuvelly for the second time, but suppresses the first arrival when Prince Paranirupasingham fled to the Portuguese and became a Roman Catholic, after Sankily seized the throne, ungrateful though he was after being rescued from the Chola prison by Paranirupasingham. Prince Paranirupasingham’s son was Prince Pararajasingham, who had six sons and one daughter. The Yalpana Vaipa Malai states that Prince Pararajasingham distributed his lands as follows: He gave Nallur and Kallivanankadu to Allahkanmai Vallal Mudali, and placed him in his palace at Nallur. He gave Mallakam to Thanabasinka Mudali, Sandiruppai to Vettivelayutha Mudali, Arali to Vissaya Theiventhira Mudali, Atchuvelly to Thidaveerasinka Mudali, Udipidi, to Santhiresekara Mappana Mudali, Kachchhai to Irayaredna Mudali and Mathagal to his daughter Vetavalli.

King Pararajasekeram VI had two wives, and several concubines. His principal wife was Irasanukkumi, daughter of the Chola king. His second wife was Valliammai, daughter of Arasakesari of the line of that famous Malavan of Ponpatpur in Pandi, who bore the distinguished title of "the crown-giver". Prince Paranirupasingham of our story was the son of this second wife. By his concubine Mangathammal he had a son, Sankily. The King once went on a pilgrimage to Kumbakonam in South India taking Sankily with him. There Sankily behaved in an improper manner,
and was thrown into prison by the Chola king. His father, the king, went to his rescue. He too was thrown into prison. Prince Paranirupasingham went to war, defeated the Cholas, and brought back his father the King and his step-brother Sankily. To show his gratitude, the king bestowed the seven districts referred to above on Paranirupasingham. He also perpetuated the gift by recording it on a plate of copper.

Prince Paranirupasingham was a skilled physician. Ancient medical works on ola leaves were inherited by my ancestors, and were kept secret in the family, but my grand-father got his grand-aunt to remove one ola leaf at a time from the bundle belonging to her husband, copied it and later published the medical work. This was a sensation at the time. My grand-father was a rebel against society. The Yalpuna Vaippa Malai, states that the king of Kandy once requested Prince Paranirupasingham to come down and cure his Queen, who was suffering from a painful colic, and was not responding to traditional treatment. Paranirupasingham cured her. While he was away in Kandy, the ungrateful Sankily seized the throne. Paranirupasingham later went to South India and was baptized.

The science of genetics lends support to the royal lineage of the Tambimuttus. After several generations, sometimes a child is born which takes after a remote ancestor. In genetics this is called a “throw-back.” A European couple had a black child. As the husband was contemplating divorce, research revealed that a century earlier there was a negro ancestor. My brother Augustine Tambimuttu had a child, Arul, born without a hand. His wife and he were bewildered, as none of their ancestors had this defect, but my father who was a genealogist said that there was an ancestor without a hand. He was Vijaya Kulankai Arya Chackravarti, King of Jaffna. In Tamil ‘kulankai’ means ‘without a hand’. My uncle Rev. Fr. S. Ganapprasakar and Mudaliyar C. Rasanyagam argued that the name is Vijaya Kalinga Arya Chackravarti and not Vijiya Kulankai stating that Malivakana Pulavar, author of the Yalpuna Vaippa Malai or one of the copyists had made a mistake. Dr. S. Pathmanathan in his doctoral thesis, and his book “The Kingdom of Jaffna” has effectively demolished this theory by stating that long before Malivagana Pulavar, the “Vaiya Padal” and its prose version “Vaiya” refer to the name as “Kulankai Arya Chackravarti”.

Rev. Fr. S. Ganapprasakar owes his scholarship to S. Tambimuttupillai, who groomed him for his future role of “the foremost Dravidian philologist” as Rev. Fr. H. Heras calls him because he helped him to decipher the Mohenjo Daro script. Single-handed, Gnanaprasakar produced six volumes of his monumental “An etymological and comparative Lexicon of the Tamil Language” whereas a whole team of scholars was working on the Sinhalese Lexicon. The remaining volumes of the Lexicon which Gnanaprasakar left in manuscript have all disappeared. The Rev. Fr. Dr. H. S. David told me that he enquired from the Bishop and others about this, but that they did not give him any information as to their whereabouts. Will the Catholic Church or anybody who has the manuscripts produce them so that the work of a lifetime will not be lost to posterity. If nobody is willing to publish them, I undertake to do so bearing the cost. Gnanaprasakar will soon come into his own, because the West was distorting history. Until now the West was saying that civilisation started with Greece, but now the West has changed its tune and says Greece got her civilisation from the East. Even now the West excludes India from the “East” because of politics, merely because India has good relations with the USSR. The West will change its tune soon because India is probably the cradle of these ancient civilisations. Excavations were stopped at Mohenjo Daro when the water level was reached. There are more ancient cities below the water level. Pakistan should eschew politics and join India in excavating below the water level.

Gnanaprasakar’s manuscripts probably disappeared because of the original attitude of the West. The Catholic Church should also change. There is incontrovertible evidence that schools in Negombo district etc. adopted the Tamil medium because the people were Tamil, but a Catholic Bishop, Edmund Pieris, changed the medium to Sinhalese saying that the people were Sinhalese. Will the Church admit the truth?

I shall relate an incident to illustrate the attitude of the West. At the first meeting of the Royal Asiatic Society I attended in London the woman who opened the door said: “Oh! you have come to eat!” Fifteen years ago every meeting of the Society was preceded by one of the grandest teas in London (not now).

On another occasion the British Council arranged for me and another Asian to spend a week-end with an English widow to show us something about English life. The lady wanted to show us an English fair. She went alone to the fair in a big car, and asked us to follow on foot, probably because she felt it was infra dig to travel with us in the same car!

Two more anecdotes should be mentioned. A Sinhalese officer in Govt. Service was charged with some misdemeanour. Although there were hundreds of Sinhalese in London he came to me to defend him. At the enquiry there were three men seated as if it were a Supreme Court. In the Colonial Service at the time in Ceylon only one man held the enquiry. I have myself held dozens of enquiries, I only asked two questions. Where is the charge
sheet? and Under what regulation are the charges framed? The three men went in to a huddle and adjourned the enquiry. There was no charge sheet. The enquiry was never held thereafter, and the officer was grateful to me. As soon as the Management heard that I, the terror of robbers, was the defending officer attempts were made to prevent me from coming. The officer applied for two hours' leave to come and pick me up. Leave was refused. I volunteered to come by tube. The officer had a feeling that I would be prevented from coming at the tube station. He rushed to a public telephone and asked me to get down, at another tube station. We were 15 minutes late for the enquiry. This is the way Asians are brow-beaten into submission. Sri Lankans in London, bow and salaam and do not maintain their dignity. There was a Sinhalese belonging the old Sri Lanka Administrative Service who went so far a to join the whites to bait me. It is no wonder he was promoted and I was not.

An Englishman who was not a racist, and I attended a dinnerance organised by the Civil Servants. Although we had our own drinks, an Asst. Secretary forced two glasses of wine on us. As we did not wish to be rude we accepted the offer. The following morning we received a bill for £4 for two glasses of wine. Such things are not done unless it was a hint to the English man for hob-nobbing with me!

This attitude is being copied here. An American Professor Carswell told us at a lecture at the British Museum that during excavations at Thiruketheesvaram in the Mannar District he had found human habitations dated 10,000 B.C., but that the Govt. did not permit him to proceed, but pack up and leave. I wrote to the Archaeological Commissioner from London he did not reply. The silence proved that carswell was truthful I interviewed the Asst. Archaeological Commissioner, Colombo when I returned. I was told that it was only a temporary suspension, and that Carswell would soon recommence excavations. If the fear was for the Tigers surely an agreement could have been reached with them as they would not prevent work beneficial to the Tamils. They would even have provided escorts to the staff to and from the site.

This attitude should change. It is the fashion for academicians in the South to date history from the 5th century B.C. merely to ingratiate themselves with politicians, ignoring millennia that preceded. The international community should fund academicians in the North and East to go abroad for training in Archaeology. Archaeologists from the North and South should work as a team ignoring the past, at both Sinhalese and Tamils come from a common stock, and were kept apart by the policy of divide et impera, and politicians who did not care for the good of the country but were pursuing their selfish ends, some lining their pockets in the process, to get votes by rousing communal passions.

The Indus Civilisation extended right up to Sri Lanka and the Maldives. After geological upheavals and swallowing up of lands by the sea Sri Lanka split away from India, evidence of this has been found in the Maldives. Even the duodecimal system of Mesopotamia was found in the Maldives. There were articles in the "Daily News" recently stating that it was the Sinhalese who first came to the Maldives. I wrote an article refuting this as Thor Heyerdahl came to the Maldives on invitation by the President of the Maldives and found lingams and evidence of earlier Indus Valley and Mesopotamian artefacts in the "Daily News" of 2.5.88.

Adam's Peak is one of the oldest centers of worship in the world. There was a place called Elam in the area that is now Iran. The West now admits that the language of Elam spoke, Elamite is Dravidian. Was Sri Lanka part of Elam which broke away during geological upheavals, and was Adam's Peak originally near the Persian Gulf? Myths spread by the West should be examined afresh. Rama is stated to be an Aryan god whereas Rama appears in the Bible as a Hebrew name. The legend of Rama and Ravana existed millennia before the Aryan-speaking people ever entered India. The father of Dutugemunu was originally called Kakavanna Tissa because he was black as a crow. Can a black king be Aryan? It is time we shed our shibboleths. In my opinion the word letter comes from the Tami 'ellutu' meaning 'letter', number comes from the Tamil 'ennu to count, 'add' comes from the Tamil 'koodu' to 'add'.

I wrote a book entitled "Europe and the Dravidians". This book too used to disappear. I sent a copy to the University of Madras from London by registered post. I was told that it was not received, but the Post Office said they had the signature of the person who received it. Copies given for sale to Dillon's University Bookshop, London, Vijayalukshmi Book Depot, Wellawatte, Colombo, disappeared. There were no records of sales. The German Embassy in London reported that the book was received, but that it had disappeared. A copy given to the Commonwealth Institute, London, was not catalogued. I was told that it was in the Travelling Section which displayed books all over UK. If it is with a travelling circus nobody will have a chance of reading it. I gave a copy to the Library, Town Council, Manipay in the Jaffna district. I went one year later. It was not to be seen. Ultimately it was found in the Children's Section. The Public
Library, Colombo, purchased a copy. It was sent to the binders. It had not been returned by the binders even after four years. I then gave the Library a bound copy of a reprint. After nine months I enquired where it was. I was told it would have to be sent to the binders before it could be put on the shelves. I said it was already bound. Ultimately it was sent to the Specialist Collection. A copy given to the American Centre, Colombo, was not catalogued. I was told it was in "Vertical Filing", i.e. made available only when asked for. I went a year later and asked for my book in "vertical filing". It had disappeared! In spite of these capers, Universities in USA and UK have ordered copies of my book as soon as they heard of it.

My grandfather spent all his wealth in the cause of literature and music. He got down musicians from India to teach my father music both North and South Indian.

The photographs which illustrated the biography are not reproduced here as the printing blocks which were entrusted to me by my father in the hope that I would reprint the book some day have mysteriously disappeared along with priceless books including my grandfather’s publications and my notes kept for forty years for my magnum opus, while I was away in UK. My brother, Meary James’ poems published when he was a youth and dedicated to Miss Miriam Pieris etc. were with me in UK for fourteen years without getting lost. They have also disappeared after my return here.

I am very grateful to Vidwan F. X. C. Nadarajah of 53 Central Road, Batticaloa, for giving me a list of my grandfather’s works and publications which is reproduced in Appendix 2. My grandfather’s poems which appeared in the biography have also not been translated as their scintillating brilliance will be lost in translation. I am indebted to Mr. A. L. V. Victoria for undertaking the translation in spite of his onerous duties, and to Mr. K. Kern for his prompt and excellent typing.

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A Life-Sketch of Mr. S. Tambimuttu Pillay, Philanthropist, Editor, Poet, Author, Playwright, Physician

Chapter I

Lineage and Youth

Thambimuttu Pillay, a son of Santiagu Pillay Udayar, a grandson of Thillaiaampala Vidane is a descendant of the Jaffna Royal family which is hailed by the ancient chronicles as “unconquerable Vetti Vidaikodiyar” (Flag) and noble Aryan tribe.” In 1619, the Portuguese captured the Jaffna kingdom and took the king Sankili Kumaran and the queen as hostages and brought them to Goa. Similarly, the 7-year-old Crown Prince who was the son of the last king of Jaffna, Pararasasegaran VIII, two Princesses and the Prince’s brother-in-law were also taken to Goa. There Sankili Kumaran was killed, other members of the royalty were entrusted to the care and protection of the converts. All the other Princes and Princesses, who were connected to the Royal Family, were first sent to Colombo and were converted to Roman Catholicism. After the conversion, they returned to Jaffna and went and lived in their respective villages which were given to them as grants. Their descendants were known as Madapali Vellalars and their villages known as Rasa Madapali or Kumara Madapali. Madapali is a Royal village in Kalinga, North India. The royal family which ruled Jaffna was descended from this place in the early period. These royal descendants were known as East Kankayar, their emblem was ‘Vidaikodi’ (Bull Flag). Therefore, the members of royal family were called Madapaliyar. When they got mixed with the Karaikal Vellalar royal families, they were also known as Madapali Vellalar. As they belonged to the Kankaya Clan, they were also known as Kangai Vellalar. Just like Rasa Madapali families, there emerged Sangai Madapali families and then Saruva Madapali families in later years. Although Sangai Madapali families did not belong to the ancient royal family circle, it seems they had inherited this title, as the commonly talked about slogan “untempered curry and the caste not mixed with Madapali” indicates. Saruva Madapali was an undignified name indicating a mixture of several castes.

The forbears of Thambimuttu were residing at Manipay. Don Louis Poothathambi, after the Portuguese had been driven
out in 1658 had tried to drive out the Dutch who were in occupation of Jaffna, was also a resident of Manipay. This fact has been mentioned in early times in the History of the Dutch written by Rev. Baldaeus. Manipay was one of the few towns which could boast of distinguished people in earlier times. There is no doubt whatsoever that Manipay was the cultured town when compared to other places in the nineteenth century thanks to English education and official grants. It seems Manipay was advanced in English education because in the neighbourhood Vaddukoddai College had been established by the American Missionaries. It is an undeniable fact that the family which brought forth Thambimuttu was responsible for the highest civilisation obtained by Manipay at that time. It is this family which produced men such as Varithambi Aratciyiar, Kathiri Chattambiyar, Vairamuttu Vidane, Shroff Saravanamuttu and Sir Muttu Kumarsamy, all of earlier times and persons such as Arnold Sathasivampillai, Sir P. Arunachalam, Sir P. Ramanathan, Dr. Isaac Thambiah, Mudaliyar Karalapillai, Mudaliyar Rasanyagam, Mudaliyar Rasasuriyar and Mudaliyar Kanagasabai, all of later years. This sketch will become bulky if I venture to write about all those belonging to this family who were noted for their brains and brains. Among them, I would like to mention here an important episode pertaining to Varithambi Aratciyiar. In those days, there were two bandits by the name of Aatkolli Nagan and Ammaiyar Kariyan, who had been threatening the wayfarers in the Vallai area and robbing them of their valuables. The latter had been escaping from the vigilance of the King’s troops and indulging in criminal acts for a long time. However, it was Varithambi Aratciyiar who had cunningly shot him dead. Even today, people talk about how Ammaiyar Kariyan became a victim of the gunshot fired by Var Aratciyiar. It is said that the Government, in recognition of Var Aratciyiar’s heroic act, appointed him as the leader of a group of soldiers to apprehend the robbers who had been going about all over the Peninsula.

Now let me tell you the history of marriage relationship which the Manipay residents of Thambimuttu Pillay’s forefathers had in Atchuveley. When I speak about this, I cannot but write on the glorious history of the reappearance of the Catholic religion here. Nearly two hundred years ago, Vallavan Mudali alias Mutlu Marian Chettiar, came from Vaddukoddai and stayed at Avarangal and was doing business in the Atchuveley market. During this time, he got married to a woman of Vellala caste at Paththaimani. He was a Roman Catholic whereas his wife was Saiwite. Therefore, as this marriage was considered improper, Marian Chettiar was despaired by the clergy. After some years, he fathered many children. Along with them and his wife, he approached the Parish Priest at Vasivilan and requested him to baptise all of them and to regularise his marriage. The parish priest chased Marian Chettiar out of his sight but the latter humbly told him that he wanted to relate a story to the former. After obtaining the permission from the priest, Marian Chettiar told him the story thus: A sheep got out of its farm, lost its way and strayed all over the place. After a long time, the sheep returned to the farm along with its kids. Will the shepherd chase the sheep and its kind out? I had come to you, Rev. Father, with my wife and children to get them admitted in the Catholic Church after making all preparations for it. The priest was extremely happy to hear this. He blessed the marriage and admitted the entire family to the Catholic church. Once upon a time the Catholic religion had been flourishing in Atchuveley and later it declined. But once again this religion started flourishing there due to this family.

Marian Chettiyar’s son was Visuva Udayar; his son was Seema Udayar. Seema Udayar had a fair and beautiful daughter. Thillaiampalam, a son of Murugar fell in love with this beauty and married her. Thillaiampalam came from Manipay to Atchuveley due to some work in connection with research. During this time, he got married to this girl. Murugar’s father was Varithambi, his grand-father was Kathirkamar and his great-grandfather was Varithambi Aratciyiar. Thillaiampalam’s friend and maternal uncle Chinnathamby, got married at Paththaimani. He became the grandfather of Saravanamuthu, whose father was Vidane Ponnampalam. This is the history of how the Manipay families came to settle down in Atchuveley. The son-in-law of Seema Udayar was appointed a Vidane in his time. Thillaiampalam Vidane was blessed with four sons and two daughters. Among them the eldest son was Santiagupillai Udayar. He was born in March, 1815. He married in 1838 the daughter of Ramu. Ramu’s father was Arumugam, who was the son of Kandar. Kandar’s father was Samba Udayar of Manipay. Santiagupillai Udayar was blessed with a daughter by the first bed. In 1846, he married for the second time the daughter of Anthiraspillai Santiagupillai, who was the descendant of Karunagarapillai from Ilavali. By the second wife, Santiagupillai Udayar was blessed with three daughters and four sons. The first two children were girls. The next child, who was a male, died at a young age. The next in line was a male, who was the eldest son among the living children. This life-sketch deals with this male child, who was named Thambimuttu Pillay. He was born on the 6th of August, 1857.

Santiagupillai Udayar was a Vidane from 1851, and an area ‘parapathiakaran’ from 1858. In 1861, he was appointed as Udayar. He was a chiefman commanding reverence and dignity throughout Valikamam East. He was the owner of vast acres of land and several heads of cattle in Atchuveley. As Thambimuttu Pillay
was his darling eldest male child. Udayar had shown a special affection for him. Therefore, Thambimuttu Pillay was brought up as a very affectionate child on a wealthy family. Those days it was customary for the sons of nobles belonging to the Vellalar families to tie up their hair in a knot. Likewise, Thambimuttu Pillay as a small boy used to tie up his hair in a knot, wear a gold chain around his neck, bangles in his arms and ring on his finger and wear slippers and walked about elegantly like adults. His father was happy to see his son in such a fashion. The son was initiated in learning the first letters with a great celebration. Thambimuttu was taken to a school at a distance of half a mile from his house and was taught the first lesson for the first time. This school was situated in a small hut. How can a son of a great landlord go to a school like a cattle-shed and sit on the floor and learn his lessons? As an alternative there was another school which was not very far off. It was a spacious and well ventilated building. There were benches and a parapet wall was built around it. This school was run by Missionaries. Therefore, Udayar sent his affectionate son to this school for studies.

American Missionaries were running this school. In those days, Mess Cooley—he was the father of the late Mess Cooley, Inspector of Schools—used to visit the school for inspection off and on. Lessons consisted of only arithmetic and language. These two subjects were considered as two precious eyes, according to the great poetess Avvaiyar. Students did not have printed books. Teachers used to teach from memory or by reading from the books. The students had to take them down on ola leaves. Thambimuttupillay gradually studied Athisoodi, Neethi Venba, Uricehel Nigandu, Mandala purudar Nigandu, Thani Viruthangal and Thanyavankovai in this school. It is to be mentioned here that he showed signs of his potential talents to be achieved even at this young age in the fields of art, painting, composition of poems and miscellaneous arts. Once Rev. Smith, who was the pastor at Uduppiddy, visited the Atchuvely American Mission School and was astonished to see a map of Jaffna drawn by Thambimuttu Pillay and wanted to take him along with him and to educate him under his charge. But Thambimuttu Pillay, would never agree to go against his Catholic religion even at the risk of his life. As he feared that his studying under the American Mission pastor would be harmful to his faith, he did not comply with the request of the pastor. If a young man is born to achieve greatness, we can see the signs of it at his tender age. Thambimuttu Pillay was born to achieve a great name in composing devotional songs in the future. Such a great poet to be, even as a school boy composed certain hymns. Some verses of such a hymn are still sung. There is a saying that familiarity breeds contempt. To prove this, there used to be disputes off and on between the Catholics of Atchuvely and the Saivites of the same caste who were living in close proximity at Pathaimeni. Once there arose a great dispute between the two parties regarding the cutting of grass on the land known a Varalipulam at Chambattuveli. This dispute ultimately ended in a court case. The court gave judgment that the land did not belong to the claimants of Pathaimeni but to Chittampalam Mudaliar and his descendants, who were Catholics. When Thambimuttu Pillay as a boy heard about the decision of the court, he composed a song at once to the effect that the fertile Varalipulam land belonging to Chittampalam Mudaliar was purposely disputed with a sinister motive by the Saivites of Pathaimeni.

After his elementary education at the Atchuvely Mission School, Thambimuttu Pillay was sent to Puthur Mission school to study English. Here too he studied for one or two years. Then, he was attending a small Catholic English school at Vasavilan for sometime. However, he did not make much progress in studies, perhaps because he was pampered too much by his father. He was spending his time in flying paper kites and was going up to Myladdy to buy ropes to fly the kites. As a matter of fact, the depth of knowledge, in Tamil possessed by Thambimuttu Pillay was not acquired in schools. It was due to his innate intelligence and his later day efforts that he possessed such a knowledge. Besides, his extensive knowledge in Tamil and mature judgement were also due to his close association with Tamil scholars of that time. Some of his colleagues in his early days were Avaranegal Vaithilinga master, S. Pillay master, his brother S. Namivayam, and Vasavilan Thambimuttu, a physician. In later years those who had befriend him were Nallur magistrate, K. U. Wyman Kathiravelpillai, Manipay journalist Arnold Sathanayampillai, Vannarpponnai Pandit Robert Newton, Vaddukotai M. Sithamparapillai alias William Nevins Pandithar, Jaffna journalist (presently Chevalier) Francis Thambu, Tellippallai Preacher Hon'ble Daniel Velupillai, Pulaver Eramias, Kopay Justice of Peace Mylvagananadurai and Udipiddy Pulaver A. Sivasambu.

After his collegiate education, Thambimuttu Pillay was assisting his father's clerk and later he took up the same clerical post. Since 1866, the Udayar was holding the post of Divisional Head and the post of Registrar as well. Because of this, Thambimuttu Pillay was well trained in fulfilling the duties of Govt. officers such as Divisional Head (Pahuthiparaputhiya Karan) and Registrar of Marriages, Births and Deaths.
CHAPTER II

HIS EXEMPLARY FAMILY LIFE

Santiagupillai Udayar wanted to arrange a marriage for his son in a proper place. For this purpose he thought of his father's town Manipay. In that town, he negotiated a marriage for his son with a young girl among his relations, who had good characteristics, and a sound education. Besides, the young girl was his paternal Uncle's daughter's child too. This girl was the eldest daughter by the first bed of Gardiner Chittampalam, who was the son of Vidane Vairamuttu. This Vairamuttu's father and grandfather were respectively Mudaliyathomb and Kathiragamar. Kathiragamar was the son of Anaicottai Velauther. Gardiner Chittampalam first studied English at Vaddukodi and then attended the newly built English schools at Manipay and Anaikottai. He handed over the Manipay school first to his brother-in-law, Page Vaidyanathar and then to his future son-in-law Swaminathapilla. After sometimes he held the post of overseer. In later years, the Manipay English School was given in charge of American Missionaries. Now it is called "Memorial School" situated closer to its place of origin. On the eastern side of the road where the two teachers, namely Page and Swaminathapilla had taught in the original school, there are several shops at present. Swaminathapilla teacher had earlier married Gardiner's eldest daughter Thanamutu. Swaminathapilla was a son of Rasalingam, whose father and grandfather were respectively Ponnampalam and Puvirasasingam Kulasekera Mudaliar of Tellipallai. Gardiner Chittampalam's house was one of the few houses built with stone and mortar in Manipay in those days. This was the one and only storeyed house. Swaminathapilla's house too was one of the big stone houses in the neighbourhood. These two families had plenty of agricultural produce and other riches. They were influential too. Swaminathapilla, who was addressed affectionately by all as Pillai Master died of cholera in 1876. Therefore, Santiagapillai Udayar wanted his son to get married to Thangamuthu, who was a young widow of Swaminathapilla and the daughter's daughter of his paternal uncle and the eldest daughter of Gardiner Chittampalam by his first wife.

Before the marriage, Thangamuthu was prepared to be baptised and was taken to the parish priest of Atnhvelu, Rev. Charles Lyton. By the time all preparations were made for Thangamuthu's baptism, she revealed a secret to Fr. Lyton. The secret was this:

She told the priest that she had a 3-year old child by her first marriage who was known as Vaihilingam or Kanagaratnam, and that this child had been given to his father's relations, and she expressed a wish that this child also should be baptised and become a member of the Church. This was against the agreement made with regard to this particular marriage. According to the agreement, it was obligatory on the part of the mother to leave the child with its father's relations. On hearing this, Fr. Lyton called for the bridegroom's people and told them that if they did not bring Thangamuthu's child by her first bed, he would neither baptise her nor solemnize her marriage. Since the Udayar's family never went against the wishes of the Church authorities, when the mother was baptised, her child also was admitted to the Church. When both of them were baptised, Fr. Lyton was overjoyed. He said, "All buy the land first and then cultivate it, whereas I have succeeded in buying the land with plenty of harvest."

Santiagupillai Udayar Joseph Thambimuttu Pillai and Anna-muthu were married in the Church on 9th December 1878. The wedding was celebrated according to their status. The couple started their married life in an ancient house belonging to the Udayar. After a lapse of two years, they moved to a storeyed stone house built newly for them in 1880, in a land known as Thambakonai. This was the second stone-house built at Atnhvelu. The first stone-house was occupied by the eldest daughter of Santiagu Udayar by his second bed and her husband. The man who married the eldest daughter was a man of importance in the village with wealth and properties. He was Susaippil Ividane who was a descendant of the leader of Pathaimani Vannia clan, who was Uyarapulam Thiruv-Chittampalam Mudaliar. Susaippil Vidane's father and grandfather were respectively Karalar and Thiruchelvar. Thiruchelvar's father was Pathaimani Chittampalam Mudaliar.

The couple led an exemplary family life for the entire village. In those days, educated women were very rarely to be found in Atnhvelu. Due to this, people were following ancient customs. Modern civilization had not taken root up to this time. The bride from Manipay was the daughter of an educated woman who had studied at the Uduvil Girl's School and was refined. The bride herself had studied at the Naval College. Though a Saivite, she had read the Catholic Bible to some extent. Besides, she was the daughter of an English educated father and a wife of an English School teacher. Because of this, she had learnt the art of conducting family matters in a proper way. Atnhvelu women used to drape their clothes and wear ear studs according to customs which were in vogue in the country-side. After the arrival of Thambimuttu Pillai's wife, the women started wearing blouses to cover their upper body and bangles in their arms and also wearing necklaces round their necks. Even their way of talking became a little
refined after the arrival of Pillay's wife. At Uduvil High caste women used to consult each other in the matter of cooking their food and improved their cooking methods to prepare food according to the Tamil customs, and became adept in the art of cooking. Since Thambimuthu Pillay's wife had experience of cooking such foods, she exhibited her skills in the culinary art to her husband's people and others in the village. She taught them the refined methods of cooking a variety of foods with taste and aroma. She could cook ten to fifteen types of curries with a plaintain tree flower, raw and ripe fruits and its peel, etc. She was extremely clever in preparing a variety of dishes from ordinary vegetables. It goes without saying that she was the cause of refinement among the educated and civilised girls in several respects in the matter of dress, food and other matters.

Thambimuthu Pillay too was far above others in the village in education and intelligence. As he had acquaintance with scholars from foreign countries, he was advanced in running his family and mixing with his neighbours. As he was getting enough income from his agricultural produce, he was maintaining a high standard of family life as obtained among the rich in Manipai. Visitors and guests coming from various places were received well and properly treated by him. As he was blessed with a suitable wife, all the visitors without fail went away fully satisfied after receiving hospitality more than they expected. In those days, Thambakonai Street was a resting place for those who came from outside the village and wanted to rest after dusk. If anyone came that way, whoever he may be a rich man or a poor man he never failed to get his meals and lodging at the residence of Thambimuthu Pillay. For such generosity, there were times when certain rascals had shown their base ingratitude. Once a middle-aged woman made a request to stay at night at Thambimuthu Pillay's house. She was given a good meal and allowed to stay there for the night. As she was a woman, Pillay's wife asked her to sleep inside the house. While the woman was sleeping inside the house, she had noticed at dead of night the places where the children were sleeping. She left the house when the doors were opened in the morning. But she returned to the house one day without being noticed by anybody and stole a chain, some pieces of gold ornaments and a saree and ran away without making a noise. The people in the house came to know about this only in the morning. Later the woman was also caught. However, Thambimuthu Pillay and his wife did not give up their inborn qualities of helping others.

Thambimuthu Pillay had four sons and three daughters. Among the sons, one died as a child. The youngest of the sons was Vedanayagam. He worked earlier as a teacher at St. Patrick's College where he was respected by priests and pupils. Then he studied to become a lawyer. But he died at the prime of his youth on 3rd February 1920. Among the other two married sons, Dominic Selladurai was the elder who married the only daughter of Pedru Pillay and had two daughters and one son. Pedru Pillay's father and grandfather were respectively Vaithi Pillay and Mariam Pillay. Mariam Pillay's father was Vaddukotai Visva Udayar. Dominic Selladurai studied at St. Patrick's College and worked as an official at Nawalapitiya, Cocoskollai and Dickoya. Later he worked as an Assistant Manager of Aloysius Printing Press, Receiving Postmaster and many times as acting Registrar of Births, Deaths and marriages. He died on 21st September 1916. The younger son married the eldest daughter of Santiagu Pillay, the Catechist and had six sons and one daughter. Santiagu Pillay's father and grandfather were respectively Vaithiampillay Udayar and Murugesar Master. Murugesar's father was Kathirkumar, who was related to Canagaseker Mudaliyar of Sandiruppui. This younger son worked in Colombo at Walker & Sons for sometime. Later he was an Assistant Editor of "Satthiya Vetha Pathukavalan" for its English edition, the "Catholic Guardian". After this, he was an official in the Thuduvai area. Now he is holding a government post in Colombo. Thambimuthu Pillay's eldest daughter was married to Gnanapragasam Bastiam Pillai and was blessed with three sons and five daughters. Gnanapragasam Bastiam Pillai's father and grandfather were respectively Bastiam Pillai and Vinyagar Savarimuthu. Savarimuthu was the descendant of Thida Weerasinghe Mudaliar of Alaveddi. Thambimuthu Pillay's younger daughter was married to Vincent Soosaipillai and was blessed with three daughters and one son. Soosaipillai's father and grandfather were respectively Bastiampillai Udayar and Phillip Udayar. Phillip Udayar's father was Anthony Udayar who was a descendant of Illavalai Karunakera Mudaliyar and Bagadeva Mudaliar. These two were related on the father's side and mother's side to Thambimuthu Pillay's younger daughter. The other daughter was Gnanamma who studied at the Convent school, Illavalai and remained a virgin to serve God and to be of help to her family members. She was assisting her mother and brothers and sisters, besides helping her father in the Printing business. She was a beacon of light to the family. She was attending on the sick at home and caring for them devotedly. While doing this she fell ill and succumbed to it on 4th October 1919 at the age of 27.

The way Thambimuthu Pillay brought up his children in the proper way is evidenced by the fact that his children were well behaved and were acceptable to both the Catholic Church and the society at large. He would not allow unwanted drinking and eating including even smoking of cigars by his children at home. He stressed that obedience and good behaviour were the important duties of the children. His married sons and daughters, who have children will not dare to disobey him even now. He taught
them by precept and practice several good manners such as not to go from house to house gossiping, not to waste precious time, and to take interest in studies, etc. Good habits like giving respect to the elders, not to sit in a higher place in their presence, and to stand up on seeing them, etc. were often taught at home. Improper language was not allowed to be uttered at home. Thambimuttu Pillai would not permit his children to associate themselves with such people who were used to bad language. He would never tolerate telling lies. The only weakness in him was if he came across people of base character, who were notorious liars, thieves and cut throats he would become furious and shout at them. If one gets angry with his subordinates with a view to mend their ways, it cannot be said that it is a weakness in him but a justifiable anger, learned people will say that when one gets extraordinary zeal to suppress evil, anger is justifiable. This anger naturally comes to a man who occupies an important place in a village like Thambimuttu Pillay.

The lady of the house was also a well-mannered woman like her husband. So the children had got all facilities to grow up in a disciplined manner. Even if there were any undesirable habits on the part of the husband, the wife was a moderating influence on the husband like a dutiful minister. In fact both husband and wife lived a happy married life with understanding and unity like flower and fragrance. Though Thambimuttu Pillai got angry at times, he used to subdue his anger immediately on seeing the patience of his wife and the amicable replies tendered by her. Thambimuttu Pillay too like other gentlemen, though hot-tempered to begin with used to show mercy at the next moment. This was a symbol of a golden heart. If he got angry he would persist in this, but become quiet quickly and would exhibit more tolerance than before. His attitude was compared to a golden pot. If the golden pot broke even the golden pieces could be collected. But if it was a clay pot, which broke, no one would ever care to collect the clay pieces. Those who were subject to Thambimuttu Pillay's anger, many a time, would come to realise his goodness when he was calm. It was not surprising that his patience and tolerance were really appreciated by each and everyone because he was respected by all in the village as a man of importance and as one who had the right to admonish the young ones when they went wrong.

Thambimuttu Pillay's wife was an ideal wife in the family. She ran the home the proper way, cooked tasty food and brought up the children in the proper manner. She was a better half in her family life in all respects. She was not only his life's partner at home but also was very co-operative in her dealings with the villagers. She used to tender advice and suggestions to the husband whenever required in the matter of his official, duties and scholarly activities. Once he was struggling to solve a riddle, 'She noticed it and suggested a way to the husband to solve it. Thambimuttu Pillay was encouraged by the timely help rendered by his wife at the proper time and was leading a happy family life with peace and harmony.

A word should be mentioned here about the sufferings that both husband and wife had undergone in later years. Both of them suffered in silence and with patience and accepted the will of God with humility like true Christians. This was a great example to the villagers and others as well. While Thambimuttu Pillay and his wife went mourning for Pillay's father who died on the 9th of February 1916 at the age of 96. Pillay's eldest son Dominic Selvadorai expired suddenly on the 12th of September of the same year due to diarrhoea and fever. When Pillay endured unbearable suffering due to the sudden death of his eldest son who was very near and a right-hand to him, Pillay's wife was afflicted with remorse for the same reason and became paralysed. She was bedridden due to this. Because of all this, Pillay's had to face unbearable sufferings which could not be described in black and white.

Thambimuttu Pillay's faithful wife suffered for five long years in bed. She was unable to get up from bed or turn her body to either side of the bed on her own and wanted others' help. She bore the suffering always with a smile and without a murmur with Christian patience. Those who came to assist her from far and near admired her patience and thanked God for this. When the Very Rev. Fr. Lytton who baptised her and her son came to Jaffna from Colombo, he visited the patient and blessed her. The Manipur relations who had a special affection for her demonstrated such feelings of love and affection when she was afflicted with paralysis. An example can be cited here. Her cousin brothers, the late Shri Saravanamuttu Shroff Subramaniam and his brother Somasundaram used to visit her off and on even after she was married and settled down at Atchuvelly. The reason for this was Pillay's wife had the face cut of their late sister Thangamuthu and a school colleague. Shri Somasundaram, after the death of his wife, had an idea of marrying her sister. He conveyed this message to Pillay's wife to which she replied that she was sorry she could not meet the proposed girl in person. Somasundaram assured her that he would bring and show the girl to Pillay's wife and then only get married. Accordingly, he came in a car while the girl with her mother travelled in another car and showed the proposed girl to Pillay's wife who was bed-ridden and then had his marriage celebrated.

1919 became an year of sorrow and remorse for the grief stricken Thambimuttu Pillay and his wife who had been carrying the painful cross of sufferings. The eldest daughter was admitted to the Inuvil hospital for treatment. Now it became the responsibility
of the spinster Gnanamah to look after the nine children of her sick sister along with her mother. In the meantime Shri Bastiampillay came to see his wife from Colombo. During the visit, he wanted to give charity secretly to a very poor family and so he took the short cut to visit this family when a thorn pricked him. Due to this, he was afflicted with a severe disease. When he was admitted to the hospital, he was told that it could not be cured and so he was brought back home. On seeing this, Gnanamah got high fever. She used to attend on her people whenever they were sick and helped them beyond her strength. Because of this fever, she expired on the 22nd of September. Following this, Shri Bastiampillay died on the 6th of October. Then his nine year old son Thambiratnam also passed away on the 11th of October. Thambimuttu Pillay received several letters from his relations from distant places expressing their condolences and sympathies on hearing the deaths of a number of family members one after the other. Some of these letters were published by him in his “Sanmarga Pothini”. As a foreword to this issue he wrote. “In the last issue of this paper, I had announced the sad news of the demise of my younger daughter. In addition to this, God in His wisdom had thought it fit to increase my sorrow more and more. As deaths had occurred one after the other in my family, my heart had become hardened. Though others feel sorry in the bereavement of my family, God Almighty has been consoling me to bear up the situation. God is great and I realise all these sufferings He sends for my own good. Therefore, I do not want to explain further and want to just mention the later happenings only.”

These words point to his strong faith and unassailable resolve in the midst of obstacles. His wife’s strong faith was not second to that of her husband. Another very sad event took place in the family within four months. Vedanayagam was a man of exemplary character who was much loved and respected by many persons in the Jaffna Peninsula and in the capital of Ceylon. When he died, Fr. Gnanapragasgar came to attend his funeral service with a heavy heart. When the Rev. Fr. approached the mother’s bed, he cried openly out of grief. This mother had been offering all her sufferings to the Sacred Heart of Jesus throughout her life. This heroic mother looked at her priest-son with a smile and said, “Son, don’t cry; it is not proper. Our Lord had called Vedanayagam to eternal rest because our Lord would have thought that had Vedanayagam become an Advocate or an Attorney, he would perhaps have become a traitor to Him. We shouldn’t cry. We should thank our Lord for this.” This great woman had learnt devotional songs and hymns in the school from her early childhood. Whenever she had to undergo sufferings, she used to sing these hymns. The entire village was plunged in grief when she was called to rest to enjoy everlasting happiness on 17th March 1921.

CHAPTER III

TESTIMONY OF THE FOSTER CHILD

In the previous chapter, we mentioned only the name of the child who was brought by Thambimuttu Pillay’s wife and we did not mention anything about the life history of the child. This child had been born to the first husband of Thambimuttu Pillay’s wife. The reason for it is this: This child was Fr. Gnanapragasgar, who was a great missionary and an educationist. He had won a great reputation not only in Sri Lanka and India but also in Europe and America. As we requested he had sent a detailed letter to us describing how he was brought up by Thambimuttu Pillay. This letter has been given in this chapter—an important document. One of his forefather’s name was given to Fr. Gnanapragasgar when he was baptized. We can gather much information from his letter about his upbringing by Thambimuttu Pillay. Pillay accepted Fr. Gnanapragasgar as his own child and bestowed his love more on him than on his own children and paved the way for the present heights reached by Fr. Gnanapragasgar. The method of upbringing clearly indicates his high quality of selflessness and determined effort. The letter sent by Fr. Gnanapragasgar is given below:

“My dear Cousin, I invoke the blessing of God on you.

“It is my good fortune that you have asked me to write how I was brought up in an exemplary manner by my step father. I got an opportunity on the 25th anniversary day of my ordination as a priest to demonstrate my unfailling gratitude publicly to my step father. Thousands of people from Jaffna assembled to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of my Ordination where I extolled briefly the great help rendered and the support given to me by my step father. However, I am happy that I am given the opportunity to describe in detail everything of such help so as to be understood by the entire Tamil world.

“When I was 7 or 8 years old, I was surprised to hear from my mother that the step father was not my father. I have been addressing him as Appu then and now. Even after my ordination as a priest, he used to write letters addressing me as “My dear Son”. When I was 7, 8 years of age, he had a son and a daughter. In spite of this, it did not seem to me that he had loved them more than he loved me. Because of this special love bestowed on me, in the later years, he did not consent immediately when Rev. Fr.
Collin brought pressure on him to permit me to join the Seminary after leaving my employment. I will explain this later.

"The good habits taught to me in my early age by my mother and step father made me keep up the reputation enjoyed by them both within the village and outside. My mother taught me especially to read the Holy Scriptures and to bestow real love in our Redeemer. She was well versed in the Bible and the Gospel. She told me that she was bed-ridden afflicted with a great disease when I was only an year old. In the sick bed she used to read Job’s history daily and believed once the reading of history was completed she would get cured. This happened as she believed. She used to teach me Bible history and Gospel reading along with the recitation of children’s songs and animal stories. She used to teach me little hymns and kindle my love towards our Lord. I think it is because of this that I was keenly interested in historical studies, Scripture reading and in church music. It is very seldom that we can see a mother so much attached like my mother to her sons who have attained adulthood.

"My foster father trained me in something out of the ordinary. I think he was a class by himself in training children in manliness, bravery, determination, honesty, respect and charity. He would see to it that what was told was carried out. He would ask me to assist the compositor in the press and workers in the garden. He did not tolerate any lies or stealing. I still remember how I was punished for speaking certain words once or twice, which were not actually lies but seemed apparently lies. He would not allow me to talk with people who spoke unrefined language. He would not allow me to join the company of mischievous children. He made the neighbours call me “Manipay Thambi” and made them treat me with dignity. We should get up and give respect to elders whenever and wherever we saw them. We should not talk in front of them. He would not tolerate a talkative child. Once a middle-aged man asked me to take and give some printing paper to an elderly worker who was busy with his printing work. I took the paper in hand and called the man to take it from me. Suddenly I felt a blow on my back. My step father reprimanded me and advised me that I should go and hand over the paper to the man who was elder to me instead of asking him to take the same from me. He impressed on me how I should show respect to the elders. When I was fourteen or fifteen years old and was attending an English school, I would not sit on the same level as my step father. Once he has sitting on a chair and asked me to sit on another chair to write something. But was embarrassed to sit in his presence and so I wrote and gave him while kneeling on the ground. The habit of giving learnt from him still makes me not to accumulate anything on my hand. I feel such habits persist from womb to tomb.

"I was studying Tamil in our Christian school in the fourth standard up to the age of eight. He wanted to give me an English education too. I was sent to a Protestant Tamil school in Atchuvely where I was asked to learn English in the morning from Sinnathamby Master who had a scant knowledge of English. In those days, there were no children learning English at Atchuvely. As I was interested in music, he arranged with some musicians to teach me music. Within a year, Sinnathamby master left the school on transfer and went to some other village. At a farewell to the master I was asked to sing some farewell songs and gave him a send-off. Later, for some days I was learning English from Joseph, the Catechist at his house. Then, I remember having learnt English from Santosh, the preacher who succeeded Joseph. They say that the heart of Kamban too will sing poems. Likewise, on often seeing the poetical talents of my step father, I too started singing poems. When somebody was sick in his family or when some happy ceremonies were held at home, he used to sit on a side and compose songs then and there. One day I opened his drawer and took out a poem composed by him. Then I wrote a similar poem and showed it to my mother with great pleasure. My mother reprimanded me saying that if my father saw it he would beat me and advised me not to think of composing poems at this age. She then tore up the piece of paper containing my poem. However when I was extremely happy or extremely sad, I used to compose poems and get consolation and relief. I think if I was not engaged in other fields of work, I would perhaps have acquired the ability to compose devotional songs like my step father.

"My step father was not only a composer of songs but also a writer of good prose. Thanks to my acquaintance with him, I too got a taste in this field without my knowledge. While I was still at school in Atchuvely the newspaper ‘Sanmarka Pothini’ began to be published. My step father taught me composing work for the paper and after the news had been composed I was asked to proof read the news and correct the mistakes. I gained experience in this field. Sometimes I had the occasion to contribute some news to the paper. When I was fourteen years, he went to South India on some business. During his absence I ran the paper. They say when one sees something with his eyes, his hands would start working on it. As I was used to see the art work done by my step father off and on, I too became interested in such art works. All these were very useful to me in my later years. When I think of all this, I feel really grateful to the one who had sown the good seed in my mind.

When I was eleven, I went to my native place i.e., Manipay and stayed in the house where I was born, with my father’s sisters. While living under their care and support, I was sent to my father’s
school to study English. When I was attending this school, I used to wear a very valuable silk dress given by my step father. He put his brilliant ring too on my finger. At this ring was shining very brightly, he made another small ring with art work for me. Such acts of affection and kindness on the part of my step father left an impression on my mind and I still cherish them. The Manipay school was somewhat connected to the American Protestant Mission in those days. According to the rules of the school, students should memorise the New Testament and attend school on Sabbath days. My foster father did not allow me to memorise the text from the Protestant Bible. Instead, he bought a Catholic Bible edited at Pondicherry and asked the school authorities to give lessons from this Gospel for me to learn by heart. I think Pastor Warren used to take class on Sabbath days. Pastor Pitch too used to recite prayers on these days. But I did not participate in their prayers. It became necessary for me to argue with them when they criticised the books of the Catholic church. My step father gave me a small book entitled “A hammer to smash false teachings” and asked me to study this and then refute the arguments of the Protestants. This book contained the clippings which appeared in the ‘Sathiya Vetha Pathukavalan’ paper, edited by Arulappa Mudaliyar. I learnt the art of gathering clippings from papers and compile them in a book form from my step father. Even today I collect all my contributions to the papers and compile them in a small book and ask other people also to do likewise. I have told them several times through my paper to cut out useful items from the papers and paste such clippings on white sheets of paper. I have refuted the fallacies of the Protestant church with the help of the hammer given to me by my step father. The preacher was a nice man; he did not wantonly criticise Catholicism. He would shake his head on hearing my replies and would start explaining some other thing. Even though I was found to be incorrigible in the class, I did not fail to get the first prize. As this prize was given by the Protestant church, I did not carry the prize to my house but gave it to a daughter of my aunt who was a Protestant.

The religious attachment which I learnt from my step father had gone too far at times. I had been reprimanded for this. One Sunday when I was in the house of my grandfather Gardiner Chittampalam, I was assisting him in some hand work. The children of my aunt who were the neighbours had seen this and remarked that ‘Catholics do work on Sundays.’ They were laughing at me for doing the work on a Sunday. These people were hard-core Protestants, they behaved like Pharisees. These people held their assemblies on Sundays, ate well and did just nothing. I could not bear the sarcastic remarks passed against the Catholics. At this time, the youngest girl of the lot had a slate and a pencil. I got this from her and wrote a verse in four lines vehemently condemning them for their remarks and sent it to the other elder sisters. The verse conveyed the following ideas: ‘You belong to the Protestant religion propagated by Pastors who have no means for their livelihood. Followers of such religion are like Pharisees who condemn the Catholics and as a result enter hell and suffer for eternity.’ When my aunt came to know about this and scolded me, I kept quiet. My teacher in the school made me aware of the harmful effect of composing verses all of a sudden. I was caned one day for this habit by my teacher. The present vice-principal of the Vaddukkodai College had been a class-mate of mine at Manipay. Both of us were friends for sometime. They say that familiarity breeds contempt. We fell out and he scolded me one day. While remaining in the class, I wrote a poem condemning his action and gave it to him. He got angry and passed it on to Marimuthu teacher. On the receipt of it, the teacher got angry and said, ‘Is this the work to do in the class?’ He asked me to stretch my hand out and caned me once. Due to this caning, my ring engraved with artwork fell off my finger. Thus I learnt the bitter lesson through my hand and mind for the habit of composing verses on provocation.

As Fr. Votarian, the Parish Priest of Atehuvely during this time insisted that I should not be sent to a Protestant school for studies, my step father sent me to St. Patrick’s College, Jaffna. He spent lavishly for my food, clothing and books at this College. As I did at Manipay earlier, I could not but remain without seeing my mother for a number of days, and so now I started walking home every Friday to see my mother. To begin with, he used to send a cart on Mondays. When I was fourteen or so, I befriended Curusumuttu who became a very respected priest of the Catholic church in later years and was known as Very Rev. Fr. Benedict. He used to come and put me up early morning and then both of us went walking together to Jaffna. On Saturdays and holidays, when I was at home, my step father made me work in the press as usual and help him in reading and writing. As he wanted me and other youths to learn music, he produced the ‘Esthakiar drama’ and employed Periya Saravanai Annayar, the great dramatist to train us. I got the opportunity to learn the music very well from this Annayar. Sinna Saravanai was an expert in playing ‘tabla’. I learnt to play Carnatic tabla also from him. He was very friendly with us and came to know much about the history of the Catholic church. One Sunday, my step father called me and said, “Tomorrow, the birth certificate should be sent to the office. Refer to the counterfoil and make a duplicate copy of the same.” He went on an urgent business after telling this. Since I had studied in a Protestant school, a certain undesirable thought
came to my mind. The Catholic Church does not consider reading, writing and learning as manual labour and does not prohibit doing such things on a Sabbath day. But, due to my acquaintance with the Protestant religion, it seemed to me that writing was prohibited on a Sunday. My attitude was perhaps different from what it was when I wrote the verses against the daughter of my aunt. I thought it was a sin to do things as my step father asked me to do. I did not listen to my mother however much she advised. I stuck to the doctrine which I studied in the Catechism that ‘I should not obey my parents in sinful matters.’ My step father was strong in his faith. He was an enemy to any fraudulent activities. He returned home after sometime and asked my mother whether I had written the copy as was told. She replied in the negative and explained to him that my conscience did not permit me to do such a thing on a Sabbath day. My step father did not listen to any reason and after giving me one or two slaps dragged me from the bed and taught me immediately as to how I should write. At this time I was not firm in my convictions as a martyr. I did the work with tears in my eyes. After having written one or two lines he asked me to go to bed. I think my mother must have chided him the following day for having treated me in that fashion. When I came home next week from the college he presented me a valuable Veena. My joy knew no bounds. He knew it was the greatest gift which I would treasure. I realised that my step father though quick tempered was very sympathetic towards me.

Gardiner Chittampalam, my grandfather, wrote from Colombo that a job was awaiting me there. My step father took me there. Then I was seventeen and a half years old. I still remember how I was crying without a stop on leaving my mother behind till I got into the steamer. I am ashamed to tell even at that age I used to get up at night whenever I was thinking of my mother and cry at dead of night. My grandfather took me to the house of Arunasalam Dorai (later Sir) P. Arunachalam, who was one of our relations and who studied English at the beginning under my grandfather. I was told that this gentleman would secure me a job in the government service. Sir P. Arunachalam did not give due respect due to his former teacher. My step father told some of our relations such as William Mather to find a job for me but could not succeed. So he had asked me to prepare for the Railway Clerical Service examination. In the meantime, he sent me to Nawalapitiya with my maternal uncle for training in the Estate sector. As I came first in the Railway Clerical Service examination by the grace of God, I got a government job, even though I was underaged. I was appointed as an assistant to a Station Master at Kadigamuwaa, who was a Sinhalese. But my step father was very particular about my food and so when I was in Nawalapitiya he used to send me tasty foodstuffs by post from home. My foster father was concerned about my food at Kadigamuwaa thinking that as I was in a Sinhalese area I might start eating beef which was a disgrace to our caste. Therefore, he had sent a cook from Atchuve to prepare my meals separately.

I had to leave my government post within three years. Rev. Fr. Anthony, a cousin of my step father wanted me to join the priesthood. I was not aware of any reason for his wish. At his request, Very Rev. Fr. Jules Collin sent me letter after letter and urged me to join a Seminary. It did not seem to me that I had the qualities to become a priest. Besides, I felt that it was my bounden duty to assist my foster father for all that he did for me. But, when Fr. Collin came down to Pussellawa and spoke to me personally, there was a slight change of heart in me. Even then, it was a great pain of mind as to how I could forget the help rendered to me by my foster father. He too had been showing great attachment more than before. He had given my name to his printing press and was hoping that I would run it after him. The struggle in my mind was going on for about six months. Finally, when Fr Jules Collin sent a message through his brother Fr. Charles Collin, I cleared my doubts left the job and started for Jaffna to join the Seminary. I got down from the steamer at Kankesanturai Port and wanted to go straight to the Jaffna Seminary. However, as I changed my mind at the Atchouve Junction, I turned back the cart to my home where I got the chance of witnessing the abundance of affection shown towards me by my step father. He had come to know through one of my cousins, namely Mudaliyar Kadasagabai (at present) that I had decided to join the Seminary. But he thought that I might change my mind once I came home. However, when he came to know through my mother that I was determined to follow my vocation, he suffered pain of mind and started fighting with my mother. She recommended my case to my step father and explained to him that she had resolved to dedicate her son when he was young to the service of God. But no one could console my step father. It was feared that he might die without food and sleep. Therefore, I thought of reconsidering the matter and wanted to postpone my decision for at least another five years under the circumstances. I had to make a promise to my foster father to this effect. But Rev. Fr. Collin got me down to the town and took me to the Bishop, who ordered me to stay in the Seminary and said he would speak to my step father about the promise I made to the latter. So, I had to stay in the Seminary. After a few days, my step father came to see me with gladness in the Seminary.
When I started writing this story, I did not anticipate that I would tell many things about me also. Contrary to my wish, I had told many things here. Please accept whatever that is relevant and leave out the rest.

Yours
Fr. S. Gnanapragasar
Mahiyapitiya, 19.1.31.

CHAPTER IV

HIS SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

Thambimuttu Pillay did not live for himself and his family only. Because of his love of God, he loved his neighbours and lived specially for them. This is clearly evident from the fact that he had been doing certain things without a break for the good of his village folk and others of the neighbouring villages, in spite of financial loss and difficulties. When he got married, Atchuvely had not seen any progress. It was a village where all undesirable things such as fighting, enmity, jealousy, street brawls, etc., were common. In those days though Thambimuttu Pillay was young in age, he shone like the sword of justice settling fights among his villagers and restoring peace. Even if there was a big fight he would rush to the place boldly and try to stop it. No one would try to disrespect him. If the neighbours had any family problem and dispute, they would come to him for advice. Young men on hearing his voice would stop playing cards for money. Children would stop giving trouble if somebody said, “Thambimuttu Annar comes”. It goes without saying that Thambimuttu Pillay received all this because of his good qualities and learning, though he did not hold any office.

Thambimuttu Pillay was influential not only in areas where Catholics lived but also in areas where people of other religions lived in Atchuvely. With his special efforts, a common association of all faiths known as “Sanmarka Development Society” was established in 1884 in the village with a view to eliminate all evil and to promote good habits. In this society, Vidane V. Sinnappu, S. Sinnathambi, Catechist N. Joseph, Vidanayar S. Ponnampalam, Vidane S. Thambiah, Mattuvel K. Mylvaganam, M. Ehamaram, Va. Arumaiyar, Teacher K. Felix, Udayar M. Bastiampillai, M. Sellamuttu, K. Vaiythilingam, M. Rasapillay, Vaihyiar S. Thamo-therampillay, Vaihyiar S. Velayuthar and others were members. The live wire of the society was Thambimuttu Pillay. To publish a paper in the name of the society rested on his shoulders. He spent lavishly for the common good and immediately started a paper in manuscript in book form. This was circulated among the members of the society to be read one after the other. This paper contained matters of common interest. Along with this paper, he started sending a book entitled “Sanmarka Sāthagam”, which contained many a suggestion and good advice for people to lead
good lives. As an introduction to this book, “Homage to God” was written in verse, the substance of which is given below:

I have started this ‘Sanmarka Sathagam’ in the name of the said society with the noble idea of helping the people of this great village to lead good lives. Oh! My Omnipotent and Omnipresent God Almighty, Thou should bless this venture and make it successful so that all people should benefit by it.

“Sanmarka Pothini” has been released containing the handwritten manuscripts of Thambimuttu Pillay with an attractive cover bearing art work. This paper was highly praised by Arnold Sasivaswamy Pillay of Manipay who was the editor of “Udaya Tharakai” (Morning Star), a Tamil pundit and a relation of Thambimuttu Pillay. He suggested that this book be printed so that it could be useful to all the people. Thambimuttu Pillay bought immediately a small printing press on his own account and printed the “Sanmarka Pothini” and released the first printed copy on 31st January 1885. He had never known earlier the art of composing and printing process. He had no training in this field. In spite of this, he practised this art with his intelligence and trained others too in this art and in course of time he had established a reputed printing press through which several good books were printed and published. When the first issue of ‘Sanmarka Pothini’ called ‘Tribune’ in English came out, it was highly praised by many important personalities in Jaffna. Poets composed verses in appreciation of the paper. These verses were published in later issues. Among them, the four-line verse composed by the Jaffna Pandit Robert Newton deserves mention here. It says:

‘Sanmarka Pothini’ has come out to lead the people in the correct path. Though it is small in size, it contains the greatness of Kural, the great epic of Valluvar.

This paper was published monthly to start with, and then came out bimonthly. Two pages of it were in English but later one page only was in English. It had been published for the last forty five years without a break and now it has entered its forty sixth year of publication. No other paper published by an individual had been in existence for such a long time in Jaffna. Perhaps, such a record has not been established in the whole of Sri Lanka.

‘Udaya Thara’ and ‘Sathia Vetha Pathukavalan’ were the two papers which were started before this paper, were not published by individuals but by different missions. They were religious. This was the oldest secular newspaper in North Ceylon. When one considered all this, one should hail this publication as a great achievement of Thambimuttu Pillay. Besides, other papers had separate editors, separate Managers and separate heads of printing press, whereas Thambimuttu Pillay was himself the editor, manager and head of printing press for this paper. He had worked like this for forty-five years. In addition to this, he had undertaken to do many a work in the interests of the public, attended to government work and was Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages and also undertook many duties concerning the Catholic church. All this bears ample testimony to the fact that he had been a man of great intellectual ability and capacity.

It is not easy to extol the services rendered by the paper ‘Sanmarka Pothini’ or ‘Tribune’ to Jaffna for the last forty years. This paper has instilled many good qualities in the hearts and minds of the people such as honesty, integrity, respect for elders, proper etiquette in eating and drinking, etc. It had worked for setting up of a Post Office, Hospital, roads etc. for Atchuve help and removal of taverns and unwanted taxes. It had brought to the notice of the Government many grievances of the public and requested the Government to punish the bribe takers or to eliminate the habit of officials receiving bribes. Though the editor was a devout Catholic, he never sought to establish Catholicism through his paper which was run as a service to help the public. The paper carried always matters which were acceptable to all religious sects. It never allowed space for people to denounce other religions. It did not give room for religious dialogues and counter attacks between groups. It always condemned evil ways and propagated good ways to lead better lives as its name implied. Several useful matters were published in the ‘Sanmarka Pothini’ or ‘Tribune’ according to the needs of times and to the satisfaction of lovers of art. Many a Chitra Kavi had appeared in the paper. Among them two four-line verses composed by Thambimuttu Pillay himself in Chitrakavi form deserve to be mentioned here:

By worshipping at the feet of the Creator
One would acquire all the wealth of this world by His Grace
God in Heaven will bestow His blessings
On all those who lead their lives in a righteous way.

Thambimuttu Pillay once exhibited his skill in carving out pictures for Chitra Kavis, in the presence of a King. Sivasambu Pulavari of Udupiddy composed many a Chitra Kavi on Baskara Setupathy Maharaj, who ruled Ramanathapuram. For these kavis, it was Thambimuttu Pillay who carved out beautiful prints out of wood. When these kavis were presented to the Setupathy by the Pulavari, the Maharaj highly commended the artist who carved out the prints for these kavis. Similarly, when Hon’ble Daniel Velupillai translated the Geometry book and printed it, it was Thambimuttu Pillay who carved out the geometrical diagrams and published them. For this art work, Thambimuttu Pillay
got a commendation in verse from Wyman Kathiravelpillay, Magistrate of Urathurai (Kayts). According to him, it was a wonderful hand work made with precision. When ‘Sanmarka Pothini’ took new forms off and on, Thambimuttu Pillay used to bring out beautifully the paper’s name with decorative letters carved out by his own hand.

Thambimuttu Pillay had been doing a public service by running ‘Sanmarka Pothini’. He was determined to continue publishing it even now in his old age. The paper did not have the same circulation as before, and so he had to incur losses by publishing it without interruption. He wanted his paper to continue for all time by helping the people to lead better lives. With this in view, he tried his best to retain Fr. Gnanapragasar, his step son in the printing business. He helped Fr. Gnanapragasar to learn not only Tamil and English but also languages like Sanskrit, French, etc. It was because of that he changed the name of his printing press from ‘Vachchira Press’ to ‘Gnanapragasar Press’. It was due to this that when Fr. Gnanapragasar was trying to join the Seminary, he stood in his way. The shining example of Thambimuttu Pillay’s sense of public service is clearly evident from the fact that he has been running the paper ‘Sanmarka Pothini’ with so much enthusiasm and determination.

The efforts made by Thambimuttu Pillay for the development of education both in his village and the neighbouring villages deserve mentioning here. When he was young, there was not a single Tamil school for the Catholic children in Athchuvelly. It seems that Thambimuttu Pillay and his cousin Karalapillay Susaipillai Vadiane were responsible for establishing a small school at Athchuvelly. The old boys of that school still remember that out of the four cups belonging to the school, two cups were donated by Thambimuttu Pillay and the other two cups by the Vadiane. The present new school existing in another place at Athchuvelly was built only recently.

It was Thambimuttu Pillay who caused the founding of the Athchuvelly American Mission English school. His step son studied English in the village for the first time and later went to Manipay school. After him, Vaddukottai Muthumurari’s son (presently Very Rev. Fr. Asirvatham), Viswaadayar’s son, Mariappillai’s son, Croosmuttu (whose father and grandfather were respectively Susaipillai and Bastiapillai) and others were learning English from Hon’ble J. M. Sandosh, the Pastor, little by little. Because of this, Thambimuttu Pillay felt that an English school was necessary for the whole village. He went to Chavakachcheri along with Pastor Sandosh and brought Mas L. V. Clarence and arranged to start English classes in the American Mission school itself. He thought that English education would not be related to any religion and would be useful to members of all religious persuasions. However, this education came to be involved with religious matters, in a short time. His Saivite friends wanted to start a common school in another place and tried to entrust it to the care of the Catholic Church. For this purpose, they approached Thambimuttu Pillay to help them. He made repeated requests to the Catholic Church regarding this matter but could not succeed. The Protestant Missions were propagating their religion through their schools, whereas the Catholic Church was never in the habit of doing such a thing. The Saivites knew this very well and so they wanted to entrust the management of their common school, which they intended starting. The Catholic Church would not run their schools as an instrument of converting other religions but would run the schools for the benefit of children belonging to the Catholic faith. Therefore, the Catholic Church did not want to run an English school at Athchuvelly because there were not enough school-going Catholic children in that village. On account of this, the American Mission started running its school which has gained from strength to strength today and is flourishing at present by rendering useful service to the entire village.

It was Thambimuttu Pillay who worked for the establishment of a Post Office and Government Hospital at Athchuvelly. He was interested in getting a Post Office to the village many years ago. First of all, he arranged to open a Receiving Post office because he was interested in receiving the letters and papers which came to his Printing Press in large numbers without delay and at the same time he was keen on dispatching his letters and papers without much difficulty. Besides, the Post Office at Puthur was far away from his village. Therefore, he had built a new building in his own land for the Receiving Post office. His eldest son Selvadurai was the receiving Postmaster in this Post office. It was very convenient for all the people of the village to post and receive letters. Though the Receiving Post office expanded in course of time, Thambimuttu Pillay did not charge any rent from the Government for his building for some time.

Like the Post Office at Athchuvelly, the Government Hospital too came into existence due to the special efforts of Thambimuttu Pillay. The idea of providing medical help to his villagers was not born in him in one or two years, but it was embedded in his mind for nearly fifty years. As a youth, he befriended Thambimuttu Vaithiyan, son of Thambaippah Vaithiyar of Vasavilan, “Malait Pariyario” of Ilavalai and Velaayuthar Vaithiyar of Athchuvelly and had already had some practice of Tamil medical treatment. He had also learnt something about English medical treatment by reading some book published by Dr. Green in Manipay. Thanks to this, Thambimuttu Pillay was providing free medical service...
to his villagers as far as possible till the age of eighty. He made ceaseless efforts in searching and finding out ola leaves and old manuscripts throughout the village with a view to improve his medical knowledge and especially to print and publish Ayurvedic books for the common good of all people. We could say that no ola leaf was unknown to him. We will be mentioning in Chapter V, some of the ola leaves which he had printed and published on his own account. He had made complaints several times against small time physicians who had locked up the ola leaves to be eaten away by white ants and never wanted to bring them out for the benefit of the community. At the same time, he had commended very highly those who had lent their ola books to be published. Thambimuttu Pillay had expressed his deep sorrow and sympathy at the demise of his old friend Physician Thambimuttu of Vasavilan. While eulogizing the dead physician, Thambimuttu said inter alia in verse the following:

“Physician Thambimuttu was a jewel of a man at Vasavilan. He possessed many good qualities such as consideration for others, patience, sense of service, firmness, etc.

Even a father will not prefer to lend his ola leaves to his son. But this physician had given us his treasured ola leaves with genuine love.

Holders of ola leaves would not easily part with them just like a dog hovers over a haystack. But this physician had parted with his treasure out of love for others.

When are we going to see such a man again.”

Thambimuttu Pillay was always engaged in doing service to the public. He stressed the need for a Government hospital at Aitchuvely and encouraged other gentlemen in the village to join hands with him and petitioned the Government over this matter. It was not a surprise that Aitchuvely got this benefit through his initiative.

In addition to this, Thambimuttu Pillay had played a leading role in all public activities of the village. We could say without doubt that he was the main cause for the removal of the tavern from Aitchuvely, which was decided at a public option poll. He had been always condemning the habit of taking intoxicating drinks through his books and papers. Besides, he was setting an example to others by not consuming liquor. He was wielding much influence in the village too. Therefore, he was the one who induced them not to allow the tavern to exist in the village. It might appear he was one-sided when he spoke and wrote that toddy was harmful or injurious to health. But he did this in the interests of the youths who were the future generation. He knew that intoxicating drinks only were harmful and ordinary stimulative drinks were not injurious to health. However, young people started with ordinary stimulative drinks and in course of time had become drunkards or alcoholics. That was why Thambimuttu Pillay was determined to remove the tavern completely from the village.

Similarly, Thambimuttu Pillay was in the lead to initiate several schemes for the well-being of his villagers. He was the President of the Cooperative Credit Society at Aitchuvely. All people sought his advice in matters relating to the Rural Court. He was respected as the leading figure in the village. His example in the fields of agriculture, industry, and commerce has reformed the village and the country and has produced substantial gains. If we have ventured to explain every matter in detail, this handy life sketch will grow into a big volume. That is why we think it is enough to say only this much.

It is nothing but proper to describe here at least some of the good that Thambimuttu Pillay had done for the advancement and uplist of his relations and neighbours. He provided employment for the poor in his vast acres of land; he deployed many a young man in his Printing Press and trained them in the art of printing and helped them. He disseminated knowledge through his books and papers to his relatives and neighbours. In the matter of general education, these people achieved great progress through his efforts. As an inducement to enjoy life and to acquire satisfaction of mind, he made his people interested in music. He composed several songs himself both in the Carnatic style and dramatic style as well and arranged with Annaivas to train these people at his own expenses and held “arrangetam”. It seems when he was young only, any Catholic drama was put on the stage at Aitchuvely. Behind the rural setting, Devasegayam Pillai drama and Three Kings dialogue were staged. When Thambimuttu Pillay played a role in each of them. Later in the Carnatic style, Esthakiar drama was put on the stage. This was very popular throughout Jaffna. Because of its popularity, the drama group went from Aitchuvely to Mannay and staged the play there. When the Jaffna Railway Committee came from Colombo, a part of this drama was staged in the Jaffna town free of charge at the request of Sir P. Ramanathan. When Carnatic style lost its importance and instead new trends such as Indira Saba, drama etc. emerged in the village. Thambimuttu Pillay produced Gnaa Soundari Navarasas Saba, Joseph drama etc. and trained his villagers to act in these plays.

Apart from this, Thambimuttu Pillay wanted to provide entertainment for these people from time to time and thereby to improve their knowledge in a different sphere. He made all the people happy by arranging groups of magicians and hypnotists.
to perform their magic and art in the evenings. People enjoyed themselves thoroughly by watching black magic and acts of hypnosis. In the magical arts, which involved brawn and body strength, it should be mentioned here that Caspar Pillay had been assisting Thambimuttu Pillay. Caspar Pillay had no equal in maintaining body strength as well as cracking jokes. When he performed magic, the audience would go into peals of laughter without a stop. The families who lived in the neighbourhood of Thambimuttu Pillay had a pleasant entertainment and enjoyment because of these magical performances.

CHAPTER V

A TALENTED POET AND EDITOR

Now we will describe briefly how Thambimuttu Pillay wrote several books and how he edited and published many other books. We mentioned earlier that Thambimuttu Pillay started composing poems at a very early age. In those days there were many instruments to accompany the music in certain villages. It is sad to find now these instruments have gone out of use at present. In ancient times, lessons taught in schools were in verse. In houses and workplaces too, people used to sing poems and verses. Even farmers engaged in sowing and in other agricultural operations used to sing and did their work happily. At times children and women would be going about singing on special occasions the songs composed by talented poets. Some people still remember one or two such songs which Thambimuttu Pillay had learnt by heart in his early years. Here is the history of one of these songs: A woman of ill-fame used to stand at the northern gate of the old Kovil and disturb the people who were trying to enter the Kovil. Someone had composed a song in order to enlighten this immoral woman. This song caught the imagination of all the people during those days. It had come down from generation to generation with the result even now the village boys are singing it. The substance of some of the verses of the song is as follows:

Where do you go; don't go, wait,
Why do you go to the kovil, tell us.
You are a shameless woman and a prostitute
What interest do you have in a religious surrounding.
Your mouth is filled to the brim with betel
Why do you pretend by wearing attractive cloth and jewellery
You are standing as a palmyrah tree at the northern gate
If asked to stand behind, you will jump at us like a tiger.

Some people say that this event took place in the newly built Kovil. But it cannot be so because in the Dutch period public worship would not have taken place in a newly built kovil and it would not have been built with many entrances. Besides, in the old Kovil the northern entrance was blocked from the southern entrance. For these reasons, this event should have taken place in the old Portuguese Kovil/Church.

Now we will briefly describe an event which took place during the Dutch period.
When the Dutch came to Atchuvelly they converted the Catholic church into a Protestant church, closed the side entrances, made alterations to the altar and constructed a house by closing the neighbouring block of land. But some people did not want to become converts and so, having come to know the presence of the Dutch, took away the statues to a house situated in the north-east (which is known as Rajasingam Mudaliar's house) and kept them there and were worshipping secretly. Later, the statues were brought to the spot known as 'old Curusadi' situated close to the eastern side of the present Kovil. After this, a church was built at the present site.

During the British period when the present Church was being built, a Sannyasi was requested to donate a margosa tree from his compound for the church construction. When he refused, poet Innasithambi sang a song. The following day the Sannyasi said that he had a dream in the night and accordingly he gave permission for the tree to be cut down. As these logs had been used for construction work at the time of Thambimuttu Pillay, he used to sing the following verse whenever he saw these logs:-

He was a mendicant who used to beg a lot
When he was asked to donate a margosa tree
He refused to give and said he would go along with his wife
To the ruler the King and lodge a complaint.
Merciful Lord! Thou art the Protector of this beautiful isle
Make him realise his folly and let him grant this favour.

In addition to this, Thambimuttu Pillay used to sing many verses of olden days. One of them is given here. A newly-married woman came to her mother-in-law's house where the latter was spinning yarn in her spinning wheel for a living. The daughter-in-law got annoyed when she saw the mother-in-law at the spinning wheel and in an angry mood threw it away. Badly affected by this, the mother-in-law, complained to Pulavar Innacithambi who immediately composed a few verses about it. The substances of this 'kavi' is as follows:

The dark complexioned and grey-haired old woman was working hard at the spinning wheel so that she could earn her living. When other women in the village expressed appreciation of her work, she began to feel there was no equal to her in that field. After sometime, when the daughter-in-law came to her house, she thought of teaching a good lesson to her mother-in-law and one day took the spinning wheel and threw it away. With that, the old woman gave up her egoism.

Thambimuttu Pillay used to sing this song as well as another song. However, the second song was a criticism of somebody so he stopped singing it.

Besides, the Arumugam Chettiar drama written by Pulavar Innacithambi was very familiar to Thambimuttu Pillai and he was able to recite it from memory. In this drama, Muthuvelu Chettiar met the Diwan of Malayalam and presented him with a pearl chain. In return for this, Diwan recommended Muthuvelu Chettiar to the King of Malayalam to have free access to certain trade. The substance of Diwan's recommendation is as follows:

Oh, King of Kings! Great ruler of Malayalam. Lend your ear to me. There is a leading trader from South of Ceylon who is known as Arumugam Chettiar. He is extremely rich whose loving son is Muthu Velan. He should be given preference in the tobacco trade. No other trader should be allowed to come and do business here.

Thambimuttu Pillay learnt several kavis similar to the above and at the same time had trained himself to compose many verses of his own. Besides, Pulavar Seema Udayar from Mathagal wrote some film songs for him. Also Thambimuttu Pillay was deeply interested in mastering the great Christian epic 'Thembavani.' He wrote many 'Viruththams' and hymns. In addition to this, he corrected and edited the ola leaves relating to 'Gnansoundari Ammanai'. Thus we can see Thambimuttu Pillay a young religious Pulavar and editor coming gradually into prominence.

The verses already written by Thambimuttu Pillay conveyed clear ideas which were easy to understand. They were like hymns and could be set to tunes. He used to hold two tender pieces of wood in his hands and strike one against the other when he sang his hymns. We had seen him singing like this many times. An example for one of his earlier hymns is given here. Its substance is as follows:

Like a lightning in the sky and like bubbles in the water, the life of a man on this earth will disappear. Without thinking of this, he is trying to do harm to others in this world. His mind is always restless. He violates the commandments of God. Day and night he is waiting to do evil to others. Such a man goes after women of beauty with bad motives. He also keeps company with undesirables to indulge in crimes. He gets drunk and goes on fighting from street to street. He also goes about with an idea of stealing valuables from other people's house.

Thambimuttu Pillay composed many kavis and published them. The list of such kavis is given below:

'Sugunneri Potham', 'Naththal Keeiththanam' (Christmas hymns), St. Joseph's Pathigam', 'Keerththanam', 'Thiruvasaga Pathigam', 'Keeiththanam on Mary of Madhu', 'Sangeetha Pakkal',

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Thoththira Keerthanam on Mary, 'Panchapatchi Thoothum, Kappatpatham on Mother of God', 'Pulambalam Keerthanamum on St. Anthony', 'Anthony's Pathigam', 'Thoththirappa on St. Anne, Talawila', 'Pulambal on Mother of God', 'Viyagula Mathavin Oppari', 'Viyagulammary Visan sayasam', 'Viyagula oppariryum Pulambalum', 'Piralaba Kavithai on Bishop Bonjean, etc. On occasions such as festivals, feasts, welcoming dignitaries, days of sorrows and rejoicings, he had composed songs without number. If he wanted to produce a song, he went into a corner and scribbled some words in the form of a verse then and there. He would get up suddenly from the bed and write songs in the ola leaves in the dark night itself.

Even in his old age, Thambimuttu Pillay used to write festival kavis in double quick time. Some kavis were written for his grandchildren to be sung in the church. He wrote a kavi for his grandson Victor to be sung in honour of St. Joseph.

It can be said that one could come across very seldom poets like Thambimuttu Pillay who could compose songs in dramatic Tamil style with all its niceties. It was wonderful to see how he trained the actors when he produced 'Esthakiar drama' in 1890. Annanar was there to teach the role of actors participating in the drama whereas Thambimuttu Pillay was composing the song and the dialogue for each and every actor then and there. In his efforts, Saverimuttu Pillay was assisting him. Saverimuttu Pillay was the son of Anthony Pillay, whose father was Thillaialampa Vidane, a cousin of Thambimuttu Pillay. This Esthakiar drama together with its author was highly commended by Pulavar Eramias, Headmaster of Tellipalai Vidyanalai and other distinguished persons such as Pulavar A. Sivasampu of Udupiddy and Pulavar A. Kumaramsam of Chunnagam.

The songs of the Esthakiar drama were full of significant phrases and had Tamil dramatic linguistic traditions. Besides, they were full of rhymes and alliterations. Even though the Esthakiar drama was forty years in existence, its songs are still lingering in our memories. ‘What the boatman said to Esthakiar’ and ‘How Esthakiar’s wife narrated her life story to the widows’ are some of the events to prove the popularity of these songs.

Thambimuttu Pillay produced many other dramas like the Esthakiar drama. The songs and dialogues of these dramas too were printed and published by him. ‘Esthakiar Saba’, Gnanasoundari ‘Navarasaba’, ‘Santiagumariyah Sayaha Saba’, ‘Aleesuravitra Saba’, ‘Sangiliuras Dana’, ‘Yosappu Dana’, Thoovananthadam Nadagam etc. are some of his dramas. In addition to them, he produced and published ‘Samson Kathai’, based on the tune of ‘Thesingurajan Kathai’.

The above dramas were mostly in verse form. Apart from these, some of the important books written in prose form were “Alagavalli” and “Sundaran Saitha Thanthiram”. These were like novels or fiction stories. They were very pleasing and instructive to the readers. They were written in attractive and simple language so as to benefit the women-folk. A book entitled “Vinotha Kathamalai” was written by him with plenty of pictures for the use of school children.

Besides, “Thevamathavin Charitram” and “St. Soosaisipper Charitram” for the use of Catholics and “Pathantha Saviam” for the use of physicians were written by him in prose form.

Thambimuttu Pillay had written and published more than forty books which had helped the progress of education and development of good behaviour in Tamil Nadu. Tamils throughout the world are indebted to him so much thanks to his untiring efforts and interest in bringing out several books. The weakness of our people who have kept ola leaves with them is that they will rather allow these ola leaves to rot or be eaten by white ants than permit somebody to make use of them in the interests of the general public. Therefore, Thambimuttu Pillay had undergone immense difficulties in searching for these old ola leaves and editing them. He felt very sad when he found that its Catholic religious books and medical books in the form of ola leaves were rotting and so with the greatest difficulty and labouring hard for a number of days he edited them and printed the same at his own expense. We mentioned earlier that he evinced great interest in his young days in searching and editing old ola leaves. If Thambimuttu Pillay had not evinced such interest, several valuable Catholic books like “Thiruchelvar Kaviyum” would not have been the light of the day. This excellent Tamil book was written by the famous epic poet known as Navalar Poologasingh during the Portuguese period. The ola leaves pertaining to this book were lying unattended in the boxes of the people of the olden days. Thambimuttu Pillay searched and found these ola leaves with the greatest effort and edited and published the same in a book form. Similarly, the “Thiruchelvar Ammanai” which he edited at a later stage was one of the ancient books. In another book which he edited namely “Yagapper Ammanai” there were certain details about the author of the book and some description about the situation in Jaffna in the year 1647. Thambimuttu Pillay made the Catholics interested in certain “Ammanais” which were once popular amongst them but in later years had lost their importance. The list of old and new “Ammanais” edited by him is given below:
Thiruchelvar Ammanai
Yagapper Ammanai
Thewamatha Ammanai
Gnanasoundari Ammanai
St. Alesammanai
St. Anthonier Ammanai
Aginesakanni Ammanai
Devasagayampillai Ammanai
St. Sebastiar Ammanai
Theethus Ammanai
St. Saveriar Ammanai
Thiruchsabai Ammanai
Marigaruthal Ammanai
Christinakanni Ammanai
Sammananasuswamy Ammanai

Thambimuttu Pillay edited and published many dramas and other rhythmical verses. Here is a list of what are available among them:

Devasagayampillai Nadagan
Devasagayampillai Drama
Saveenakanni Saba
Philomenakanni Drama
Varapregasan Nadagan
Goliath Nadagan
Aattu Vanigan Nadagan
Gnanathachchan Nadagan
Dharmaputra Nadagan
Christu Samaya Keerthanam
Devasayagashimani Malai
Thirupathiruttu (Pillai thamal)
St. Soosaipper Charitra Vasagappa
Thoththra Geetham (Michael Malai)
Sabamalaimatha Anthathi
Perinpakathal
Viyagulakathal
Thiruchabai Thathuva Theebikai Kummi
Sinthagula Thirathu
Kalingarayar Pulambal
Viyagulu Mamari Pulambal
Thiruppadiyakal Oppari
Thevamathavin Oppari
Thirumariannai Pirabam
Nunmarana Malai

Besides, he published Catholic devotional prayer books such as “Saththivetha Anusaram” and “Sebananthavanam” and other books such as “Viyagula Pirasangam” and “Siluvaipathai.”

As Thambimuttu Pillay was always interested in the research of ancient history, he published at his expense the great work “Manimpathiar Santhathi Murai.” This was published with the notes provided by T. Vinayathamy of Manipay along with his research on this subject. Later, for the sake of lovers of story books, he published “Osonone Panalthai Kathai” with the help of Fr. Gnana pragarasar. Besides, he published novels such as “Magavaran”, “Thamotheram” and “Ratnasingam”. In order to encourage story writers. In addition to this, he published in his papers many novels and stories written by young writers after editing them and then brought them out in book form too.

Moreover, the service rendered to the scholars of Ayurvedic system of medicine by Thambimuttu Pillay made his name known to the entire Tamil world. It is a sad commentary that physicians of this medical system will never let out the secrets of their professional methods to others. Thambimuttu Pillay spent many days and much money in publishing ancient medical books such as “Segera Sekara Vaiththyam” and “Pararasa Sekara Vaiththyam”.

What was left after white-ants had eaten of the ancient ola leaves were available for publication. Besides, he published old and new medical books such as “Suthes Vaiththyai Ondatha Thirathi”, “Piravara Vaiththyai”, “Bala Vaiththyai” and “Nayana Vaitththiam”.

Apart from this, Thambimuttu Pillay edited many grammar and literary works and Catholic religious books written by others and published them charging 50 to 25 percent of their printing cost due to his innate sense of public service. There is a long list of such books. “Tamil Viyagaraham” written by Pundit Neerateswaran, “Yapparungala Karigai” edited by Pulavar Sivasambu and “Uracho Ngandum” are some of the noteworthy grammars published by Thambimuttu Pillay. Among the literature books can be mentioned “Protestant Religious Divisions and Bible”, “The greatness of Holy Mass”, “Yalpana Vyavha Vimalan” and “Vigai” all written by Fr. Gnana Prakasayar and published by Thambimuttu Pillay. “An argument between a teacher and a farmer” is a leaflet edited by Fr. Gnanapragasar and published by Thambimuttu Pillay. Besides, he had printed many books after editing them with great effort, written by not-so-popular authors and pulavars and charged only the cost of printing paper from them. Sometimes people used to compose verses full of mistakes which were corrected and put into proper form and then were printed by Thambimuttu Pillay. For a few years, a monthly issue entitled “Maienokkam” brought out by Chunnakam Trading Company was under his supervision. Thambimuttu Pillay had been publishing this issue for a meagre payment.

At the request of C. Mylupillai Mudaliyar, Shroff at Mercantile Bank, his uncle Arunasa Mudaliar’s son Swaminatha Mudaliyar had produced “Dharmaputra Nadagan” interwoven with beautiful proverbs. One of the actors who took part in this drama in those days was K. Murugesu, teacher from Sandiruppai, who was married to the sister of Thambimuttu Pillay’s father at Acheruvel. With
the help of Murugesu, teacher and S. Veerasinga Udayar of Neervely this drama was put into shape with melodies and songs and was published by Thambimuttu Pillay. After publication, the Shroff honoured Thambimuttu Pillay by holding a banquet in Colombo and invited relations and friends for the banquet. Afterwards, at the request of the Shroff, Thambimuttu Pillay put into proper form and published “Prama Nadagam” produced by the aforesaid Swaminatha Mudaliar.

In addition to this, “Indira Kumaran, Nadagam” was produced by Kumaraswamy Mudaliyar. He was the father of Kathiravel Pillai durai, the Police Magistrate, Ooraturai. This drama had been staged by people of Atchuveley but its manuscript had been destroyed. Therefore at the request of Durai, Thambimuttu Pillay as far as possible collected several portions of the drama from those who had known them by memory and the balance portion he himself composed and then published the drama in full.

It can be said that it was more than enough for single individuals to have written edited and printed so many books during the his life-time. Thambimuttu Pillay not only wrote books, edited books, did composing for the printing of books and published them, but also attended to many duties in the interests of the public and pointed out in the previous chapter. In addition to this, he had also undertaken to perform several functions for Government and the Church as well.

CHAPTER VI

HIS SERVICES TO THE STATE AND THE CHURCH

Santiagupillay Udayar passed away at the age of 84 years on 11th May, 1898, the two government posts which he held in later years namely Registrar and Divisional Officer had been taken over by his son Tambimuttu Pillay. He handled both jobs with distinction to the satisfaction of the Government and the citizens. At the age of 67 years, he retired from Government service in May 1924. Throughout his public service, he was respected highly among his colleagues in the Kachcheri due to his educational attainments. Once the then Registrar-General Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam came to inspect the books of Thambimuttu Pillay, he noticed how methodically his records had been kept and how beautifully his records had been written and that too without any mistakes. He commented that Thambimuttu Pillay was the best of all Registrars he had known. After the inspection, Thambimuttu Pillay had a long conversation with Sir Ponnampalam Arunachalam regarding the origin of the Sinhala names of the places. Similarly, on different occasions higher officials had sought his suggestions on various government matters. In the matter of inquiries and cases regarding village affairs, his opinions were always highly respected. He used to be called for Tamil Jury service in the Supreme Court cases.

Although Thambimuttu Pillay worked hard in respect of educational matters and official matters, he had never forgotten his duties towards the Church. He was more engaged undoubtedly in matters pertaining to the Church. His attachment to the religion was not a blind one but it was genuine. He used to show keen interest in religious matters and Church affairs even in his early age. The old parish church at Atchuveley during the Portuguese period had been badly neglected during the Dutch period. Thambimuttu Pillay felt sorry that this old church had been seized by the Protestant Christians and had lost its serenity. Whenever he saw it he used to hum the infamous verse which we mentioned earlier namely “Where do you go—Don’t go, wait.” Until 1830, this Church was like a shed having mud walls. Later it was built with stones. However, it had no Gopuram and so he put up a pinnacle made of bamboo sticks adorned it with paper bunting with decorative art pictures. The artistic talent shown by him in later years had its beginning in this Church work.
It was Thambimuttu Pillay who first started singing kavi and songs of prayer with tabla in the church. When he was a young man, as there was nobody to sing hymns properly in the church at Atchuvely, the Catholic laity of the village after reciting the rosary during the festival days used to wait till the Catholics from other churches came there to sing the litany. Thambimuttu Pillay was very particular that his villagers should be able to sing at least the Church hymns and so he, with the help of his cousin and others, started to stage "Devasagayampillai Nadagam".

As Thambimuttu Pillay was a talented and convincing artist, he began to show interest in conducting 'Passion Play'. For the first time, the elders of the village brought down Soosaipillai Master from Pulol to conduct the Passion Plays. Thambimuttu Pillay as a young man started conducting this Play better than Soosaipillai Master. After gaining experience, he took a leading part in conducting this Play in an excellent manner in later years. He himself composed verses for this Play and printed them too. When historical plays of the Church such as grand festival play, Soosai-appar drama, etc. were staged under the guidance of Thambimuttu Pillay, people from the entire Jaffna Peninsula thronged to Atchuvely to witness them.

Thambimuttu Pillay's father held the post of Church Chieftain (Mooppu) for a long time. After his death, the son was appointed as Chieftain of the Church by the Church authorities. Immediately, he started dismantling the church and building it anew in 1898. Though the old church had been built of stones, it was very badly built and had no shape. The front wall was not above the level of the door-post. Thambimuttu Pillay wanted to dismantle the Altar and the room adjacent to the Altar first and foremost and then thought of building up an attractive Altar on the same foundation. With this idea, he consulted the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Baron. The priest replied how could he put up a building without money and there were no more than ten sovereigns in the church accounts. Thambimuttu Pillay said that money would come once the work started. Fr. Baron said that the dismantled portion of the church would never be completed and when the time came for him to pay a visit to the Church at Atchuvely, he may not be able to go there. His Lordship Bishop Julian after having come to know about the building construction, asked the Church Chieftain, "Where is the Plan for the building? Where is the Chief Mason?" Thambimuttu Pillay replied that he was the chief mason and the entire plan had been well devised in his mind. In fact, the plan for the attractive Altar which was something new to Atchuvely had been devised by him. Intricate workmanship for the building had been carried out under his supervision. When he found that the masons had not done their work properly, he would get on to the bamboo structure and show them how to do the job like an experienced mason, even though he had never handled a mason's trowel in his life. When the church chieftain was taking so much efforts in the construction work, could the Catholics remain quiet? No paid labourers were employed for the construction work. Both men and women came forward voluntarily, prepared the mortar and carried stones to the building site. During those days there were very few who went abroad for employment from Atchuvely. The income of the lay Catholics of the church was very meagre. A small revenue was collected in the name of the church from tobacco cultivation and harvesting of crops. Therefore, the construction work was nearing completion entirely due to the manual labour provided by the Catholics of the parish. The Parish Priest was astonished to see that the major part of the Altar was completed in time for him to pay a visit to the church at Atchuvely.

Fr. Gnanapragasas was ordained as a priest on the 1st of December 1901. When he visited St. Joseph's church at Atchuvely on the 3rd of December for his first Holy Mass, the work on the Altar had been completed. After this, work started by dismantling the main body of the Church and building it on a high level. Planks and trunks for the beams, doors and windows were donated by Bishop Julian from his Chilawatte jungle, Mullaitivu. With unceasing efforts, Thambimuttu Pillay made the Catholics of the parish to defray other expenses little by little. We should mention two persons who were very helpful to Thambimuttu Pillay in this respect. One was the Sacristan, namely Bastiampillai's son Soosaipillai; the other was the Village Chieftain, namely Casparpillai, whose father and grandfather were respectively Mariampillai and Amarasingam. It is needless to say that it was Thambimuttu Pillay, who was the main cause for putting up St. Joseph's Church building except the two towers which were to come as the front piece. This Church stands today as the symbol of the Christian faith of the villagers.

As in the case of Church construction, Thambimuttu Pillay was the live wire in arranging the celebration of the festivals. He was the one who started putting up pandals, decorations and arches for the feast of Blessed Sacrament, offering of flowers by the youngsters and singing of sacred hymns. Such ceremonies were not in vogue at Atchuvely. Again, it was he, who initiated the singing of hymns accompanied by musical instruments for the first time during the holy sacrifice of the Mass. He made his daughters play the instruments and the children of his relations to sing. During the village celebrations which were linked with the Church festivals, he would take a leading part and train the children to play 'Kolattam' etc. When his nephews such as Rev. S. Aservatham, Rev. V. William Jesuthasan, Rev. A. Charles Navaratnam and
Rev. C. Vedanayagam were ordained priests and came to offer their first Holy Mass in their Church, Thambimuttu Pillay, in spite of his advancing age and deteriorating physical condition, welcomed them to the Church and sang songs in praise of them. Everyone in the village was surprised to witness these events.

Thambimuttu Pillay was working hard in all matters pertaining to the progress of the religion and the advancement of the Church. We have already mentioned about his efforts with regard to the establishment of a school. He had been fighting with the Church authorities to found a Catholic English school for the Atchuvely parish, but all his efforts had borne no fruit because there were not enough children in that parish. He had been arguing for a long time that persons intended to become priests should be sent to Rome for higher studies. In this he had succeeded. Today, two Jaffna brothers, belonging to the Jaffna Catholic diocese have gone to Rome and are prosecuting their studies. When Thambimuttu Pillay speaks to higher authorities he will come out with lapses on their part without hiding anything. If other persons talk like this, it would be construed as insubordination and disrespect on their part. When he tells something, high officials would listen to him with respect and correct themselves. It was so because we think that people on seeing him easily recognised his fine sense of duty and his sincerity of purpose.

Thambimuttu Pillay spent his own money by publishing many rare books for the good of the Church thanks to his real and unbiased attachment to the religion. He felt that Catholics should not go astray by reading immoral stories and so he himself wrote good and useful stories. He produced religious plays so that people should not get demoralised by seeing worthless plays which instigated their base instincts. In his plays mostly the village youth took part under his direction. Though his “Sanmarga Pothini” was meant for the general public, he would never allow anything to appear in the paper disparaging the true religion. Even if the paper circulation were to come down, he would never permit anything favourable to the pagan religions.

If the history of Thambimuttu Pillay is to be told in one or two words, it can be said that “true affection” pervaded his entire life. In whatever sphere affection had to be shown, he had conducted himself with affection in such matters as a real gentleman. His affection consisted in telling lies even in error. His affection wanted his country to prosper and his villagers to progress. His affection wished for the promotion of the true religion and for the glorification of religious worship. He faithfully followed this affection throughout his life. Today he is seventy four years old. He is sick and is deterioration in health. Despite this, he appears to be a man possessed of untiring energy. He will never remain idle. While lying down in a lounge chair, either he will be going through a book or jotting down some notes for his paper. Even today, he will be eagerly waiting to help those who seek his help as far as possible. He will never grudge nor complain to anybody about his physical discomfort. He is living in peace, singing the praise of God for having protected him up to this day and for having given him an opportunity to do at least some service to his neighbours and the country.

Thambimuttu Pillay is a Tamil scholar, a benefactor commendable by the State, a pillar of the Church and a bright light which leads to the path of good behaviour. May God grant him long life and keep him in good health.
Their ancestor is Vijaya Kulankai Arya Chakravarti (13th century) the first King of Jaffna who came from the royal town of Madapaly, Central India who belonged to Ganga Kula, and who was related to the Royal Houses of the Cholas and Ramnad.

The last king of Jaffna was Don Constantine (1615–1619). From his uncles living at Manipay and elsewhere were descended Don Louis Poothamby (1608–1658) and others. From these were descended Varithamby Arachiyar etc. mentioned in “Maniampathiya Santhathimurai”. The nos, refer to sections in that book. The “Yalpana Vaipava Malai” states that Prince Thidaweerasingham, brother of Princes Vetavalli was given the village of Atchuvely, which was inherited by Tambimuthus and their kinsmen.

King Pararajasekeram VI (1478–1519)

- Thiruchittampala, Mudaliyar of Uyarrapulam

Princie Paranirupasingham

- Sittamparanatha Mudaliyar

Princie Pararajasingham

- Narasinka Mappana Mudaliyar

Princess Vetavalli

Daughter married— Sittamparanatha Mudaliyar II

Sittampala Mudaliyar Heads Section 64 Heads Section 26 of the book

Thiruchelvarayar Kathirgamar

Karalapillai Murugar Kathirathamby

Nathalipillai Thilliampala Vidane Ponnambalam Arumugam

Anasipillai-married— Santiapillai Udayar Rasalingam Nagamuttu

Bastiampillai Udayar

Bastiampillai Santiapillai S. Tambimuttupillai married Anne Gardiner

Mary Ponnammah— H. T. Tambimuthu Rev. S. Gnanaparakasar

E. Thambirajah—

Spaulding

Augustine, Joseph Josephine Chrysanthus

Rev. Fr. Francis, Meary James, Paulinus Tambimuthu married Loretta Sellam

Freud Yogarajah Hedy Vasanthi, Neelakandan, Arunthathy
LIST OF BOOKS WRITTEN BY OR PUBLISHED BY
S. TAMBI MUTTUPILLAI BY VIDVAN
F. X. C. NADARAJAH

1. குலவித்யா சுற்றுக்கை (சுருக்கிய)
2. பூமிக் கலாச்சாரம் (சுருக்கிய)
3. சிங்களாராசிய காலப்பகுதிகள்
4. பிரமாண்டம் (பழம்ப.
5. பால்குருவாக்கம்
6. கொண்டாலாங்கடார் பள்ளியர் (1830)
7. கயிறுகையனூற்று
8. வேண்டணையுடைய
9. அரசுவராபித்ய தமிழ் தகன்
10. குலவித்யா சுற்றுக்கை தமிழ் தகன்
11. முகல் விழா பகுதி
12. காலம் திருச்சந்தம்
13. செம்பகம் சுத்தார்
14. கொண்டாலாங்கடார்
15. கொண்டாலாங்கடார் கையல்
16. சுவரணி (தமிழ்)
17. கொண்டாலாங்கடார் குலவித்யா (தமிழ்)
18. சிங்களாராசிய காலப்பகுதி
19. செம்பகம் திருச்சந்தம் தமிழ் தகன்
20. வேண்டணையுடைய
21. கொண்டாலாங்கடார்
22. காலம் திருச்சந்தம்
23. குலவித்யா சுற்றுக்கை
24. செம்பகம் சுத்தார் (மாருமாரியான)
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EXTRACT FROM “YALPANA VAIPA VA KAWMUTHI”
by S. K. Velupillai

Thiruchittampala Mudaliar: Thiruchittampala Mudaliar’s forefathers came from Karaikkal. He was residing at Uyarapulam. He was born on 1630 or thereabouts. He got married to the daughter of Innacikanakar, who was the son of Seemankanakar and took up residence at Atchuvelly. This Seemankanakar was born in 1570 at Atchuvelly and was holding a Government post under the Portuguese. Thiruchittampala Mudaliar’s son was Chidambaranatha Mudaliar, whose son was Narasingamapana Mudaliar. This Mapana Mudaliar’s son was Chidambaranatha Mudaliar II. He was married into the ancestral line of Princess Vethavalli, who was the daughter of Prince Paranirubasingam, Mathagali. The descendants of Chidambaranatha Mudaliar were holding Government posts under British rule too. In this ancestral family, the 4th generation of the above said Mudaliar were Thiruchittampala Mudaliar, Thiruchelvarayar and Karalapillay Soosaipillay Vidane. The latter died in the year 1911 at the age of 77. He was in a way cousin of Muruga Udayar Rasa, an influential man in those days.

The above is an extract from “Yalpana Vaipa Vaumuthi” by S. K. Velupillai. This is the 3rd family mentioned in the book the first being Varatha Pandither, a Brahmin, who married at Atchuvelly and the second is Poologasinga Mudaliar of Tellipalai.

THAMBIMUTTUS ENRICHED OUR CULTURE
(Article by K. S. Sivakumaran in “The Island” of 10-1-88)

(Chris, James (the poet), nephew and Paulinus—Picture taken at a reception to the poet by the Arts Council of Great Britain)

The Thambimuttu brothers from Atchuvelly in Jaffna have contributed in their own way to aspects of culture in this country. Although they shone through the English language, their grandfather S. Thambimuttupillai was the oldest secular Tamil newspaper editor and founder in Jaffna. Sanmarkapotheni. He also edited an English paper called “Tribune” and published works like “Sekerajasakera Vaithiam”.

S. Thambimuttupillai’s son Henry, after editing the papers mentioned above went to Malaysia and functioned as an assistant editor of the ‘Malayan Tribune’. On his return to Sri Lanka, Henry set up a press in Trincomalee first and later in Colombo.

This press set up at Maradana was bought by the late A. E. Goonesinghe for Rs. 1000. Henry later joined the Government Press and was in charge of the confidential room where stamps were printed.

Henry had five sons, and a daughter: Francis, James, Paulinus Augustine, Joseph, Chrysanthus, Josephine.
The eldest Francis became a priest and edited a paper called the ‘Beacon’. He was the Director of Catholic Action, and General Manager of Roman Catholic Schools, in eastern province. He later went to New York and died there.

James the poet first studied in St. Joseph’s College Trincomalee and later at Darley Road, where all the brothers studied. He had read a number of books already in Trinco and continued to do so in Colombo. He won a scholarship in botany to the University College in Colombo, but he couldn’t collect his degree. He is reported to have fallen in love with Audrey de Silva first and later with Miriam Pieris. James before emigrating to England worked in the Ratnapura Kachcheri and the Public Works Department Colombo. James Thambimutu is credited with coining the word ‘Fitzrovia’. The supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary mentions this.

Paulinus was a brilliant student at St. Joseph’s Colombo and won several gold medals for elocution. He passed his Junior Cambridge with honours and distinctions in Latin, Greek, French, and Religious Knowledge. He used to participate in the French lessons programme conducted by Fr. Y. M. Le Jeune over the then Radio Ceylon. He also presented “Paris-Ce Soir” with Madame Fumet. Paulinus entered the University of Colombo paying his gold medal to pay the fees and buy books. But later had to drop out of the University for lack of funds. He joined the Auditor General’s Department and began to be enganged in trade union activities. He was transferred to Batticoloa and Amparai on punishment and later to Colombo. On his retirement Paulinus emigrated to the United Kingdom as the Life Member of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. He did research there and produced a book entitled “Europe and the Dravidians”. He is now drawing two pensions from the government in U.K. and Sri Lanka. He has two sons, Freud (Superintendent, British Telecommunications) and Neelakandan (a doctor to the Sultan in Oman). His two daughters are also married.

Paulinus wrote the article, “Ceylon—the Garden Island of Asia” included in the seven volume work “Lands and People” The world in colour published by the Grolier Society, New York. This article was reproduced in another work of several volumes.

Augustine graduated with English majors and taught at St. Joseph’s College, Colombo first and then became a lecturer in English at the Government Training College, Maharagama. He produced more than 20 Shakespearean plays while serving there. He went to U.K. on scholarship and on his return is reported to have felt that the standards here are higher. He had four boys, all doing well abroad, except one. This son handicapped is a pastor in the Assemblies of God in Sri Lanka.

Joseph, a graduate of the London University was in the then Ceylon Administrative Service. He was a musician who produced several musicals and concerts. In those days he was considered as the second best piano-accordionist in the country. The first was Dr. Gulgasekeram who emigrated to Australia. Joseph married a Burgher, Rachel and has a son who works for a Jazz band in Switzerland and three daughters one of the daughters is Christine actress now married to Fernando.

Josephine, the sister married Frank Pinto and emigrated to Canada.

The youngest of the Thambimutts brothers, Chrysanthus worked as a journalist and later as an English announcer on Radio Ceylon. He was also a singer over the radio. Chris then emigrated to U.K. and qualified as an accountant and works there.

The younger readers amongst us may not have heard of the Thambimutts, but their varied interests need to be recorded for posterity.
EXTRACT FROM COLUMN FROM THE “SUNDAY ISLAND”
OF 31.08.86
by Kaultiya (Mervyn de Silva)

PRINCELY POET

No prince of poets perhaps but a prince nonetheless. That
more or less is the gist of the message that brother Paulinus wants
to send back to his native land. Fair enough. The family es-
cutcheon is indeed a matter of honour.

Unfortunately our ‘quotes’ from James Maclaren-Ross and
Dom Moraes on the poet Tambimuttu has thrown his brother
Paulinus into such an uncontrollable rage that the apoplectic
fit has produced such a maddeningly wordy outburst which leaves
us no choice but to publish in its pristine form. Except for a
single sentence.

To illustrate the lampooner Velupillai’s gift for obscenity,
Paulinus cites one particular ditty that celebrates his uncle, the
Reverend Father, in action, all too vividly. “It is more impressiv
in Tamil alliteration” notes Paulinus with a pleasing literary-critical
detachment. I dare say it is all that but seeing this column is
advertised as Sunday reading ‘for the whole family’, I am afraid
that sentence for all its nice galloping rhythm, has to go. The letter
by Paulinus Tambimuttu of 43, Eatonville Road, London S.W. 17,
follows:

The Editor,
The Island,
Sir,

Your columnist has referred to an article by Dom Moraes in
an Indian journal, and appears to doubt that Tambimuttu was a
prince. The fact that Tambimuttu was a descendant of a prince
was proved in the controversy which lasted three months between
James T. Runham and “Heraldry” in Walrus column “Of Cabbages
and Kings” in the Ceylon Daily News” of 20.7.55, 4.8.55,
9.8.55 etc. The “Yalpana Vaipava Malai” which is the Tamil
Mahavansa based on earlier records like “Rasamurai”, “Pararas-
sekaner Ula” etc. (an English translation by C. Britto is available
at the Colombo Museum Library) states that Tambimuttu’s village
Atchuvella was given by the King to Prince Thidaveerasingham.
One of the estates inherited by the lineal descendants of the Prince
was the Tambimuttu’s estate “Sitampala Mudaliyar Valavu”.

* "HERALDY” was Paulinus Tambimuttu.

The Sinhalese changed “valavu” to “walauwwa”. “There are no
Walauwwas” in North India, hence it is obvious that Tamil Kings
brought their kinsmen and settled them in walauwwas just like
William the Conqueror. In last week’s issue of the “Economist”
I note that Mr. J. R. Jayewardene admits that his ancestor was
an Indian.*

S. K. Velupillai in his book “Yalpana Vaipava Kawmuthi”
gives the genealogical tables of the leading families in Jaffna. The
Tambimuttu family is the third family mentioned in the book, and
admits Royal descent. Velupillai was a fanatical Anti-Christian
and used to lampoon my uncle, Rev. Fr. S. Gnanaprakasar, a descen-
dant of Kulasekera Mudaliyar of Tellipalai, in obscene songs
which were sung at street corners in Jaffna. I can well believe
this of Gnanaprakasar as it is a family weakness probably because
their ancestors had Senior Queens, Junior Queens (Ran Doliya,
Yakada Doliya) and dozens of concubines. It is time the Minister
of Justice abandoned Judaeo-Christian morality and reintroduced
our ancient laws. Then there will be less rape, madness, etc.

Your columnist admits that Maclaren Ross’ piece in “Memoirs
of the Forties” was mischievous. Tambimuttu exposes Ross’
lies in an article in “Harpers and Queen” (February 1975) e.g.
Ross stating that Tambimuttu came to UK in a sailing boat whereas
he used one of the leading shipping lines. Ross may be harbouring
a grievance as when whites tried to show they were superior, Tambi-
muttu always cut them down to size. I had the same experience.
When I was in the Civil Service here some whites tried to be super-
cilious. I always deflated them because I had a better grasp of
administration, Accounts, even English! Another reason was
English males becoming jealous, because females preferred Asians
very often to whites (this was the origin of the colour bar). Queen
Victoria was a bosom pal of Sir P. Muttucumarasamy, and the
courtiers were hopping mad. While I was in the Civil Service,
we went on a picnic. The girls asked me to sing. I sang in French,
German, Italian etc. As I was after a few drinks I went full throttle.
The President of the Club which arranged the picnic became jealous,
as 98% of whites cannot sing. He started making remarks like
Indian accent etc. to the embarrassment of the females. At the
next meeting of the club, I stepped out, all guns blazing. I told
him that although I had an Indian accent, he had a cockney accent
that he could not pronounce English because he pronounced
‘behind’ as ‘beehind’ instead of ‘Berhind’, wicked as ‘wickerd’ in-
stead of ‘wickid’ etc. He was so ashamed he did not utter a word.

Will Dr. James T. Runham please speak up?

* The “Economist” used the word, “Tamil", Kaultiya has changed “Tamil”
to “Indian".
Can that indefatigable finder of skeletons in aristocratic family cupboards tell us whether there are any records in the British Museum or elsewhere to confirm the wild allegation that English courtiers—Lord Almighty So-and-So or Sir Jeremy Pinchbottomley or any others—were actually hopping about madly in the courtyard while the good Queen was hopping into the royal bed with Sir P. Muttu-cumaraswamy, introduced to us by brother Paulinus rather suggestively as the Victoria’s “bosom pal?” Did Sir P. Live up to the family reputation? Or did he prove yet another Victorian disappointment, promoting the dowager Queen to utter that famous line “we are not amused?”

For myself, I am now much more inclined, given the family’s track record in sexual athletics, to treat a little more seriously another Maclaren Ross yarn.

To catch the eye of every impressionable female commuter, some unknown admirer had scrawled in big, bold red letters the following testimonial on the wall of a London tube station:

“TAMBI IS THE FINEST...IN FOLKSTONE”

The line, not so daring as ‘the square ball rolled on the ground’, may not have caught Eliot’s eye but the alliterative touch, though in English rather than Tamil, was worthy of the Velupillai School of versification.

Long before Madison Avenue, many a peninsular prince, poet and civil servant seems to have appreciated that it pays to advertise Tambi himself preempting in life Norman Mailer’s title “Advertisements for Myself”.

Obituary—Henry T. Tambimuttu “Sun” 28 October 1971
by Dr. James T. Ratnam

APPRECIATIONS

HENRY THAMBIMUTTU

Another link with the past was broken when Henry Thambithurai Tambimuttu died recently in his home town at Atchuvely in his 84th year. Atchuvely in the Jaffna Peninsula had produced many men of note and the name Tambimuttu had been a household word there for over a hundred years.

Henry Tambimuttu’s father Santhiapillai Tambimuttupillai was a poet and scholar and was also a philanthropist in Atchuvely. He owned and edited a Tamil journal entitled Sanmarkapothini, which in English was called The Tribune. This journal was one of the oldest newspapers published in north Ceylon. Some of its earliest issues published nearly a hundred years ago are available at the Ceylon National Archives.

Tambimuttupillai is also responsible for publishing the first Tamil novel in Ceylon entitled Usan Palantai Katoi by Innasitamby of Trincomalee. An invaluable source book of genealogy of the landed gentry of Manipay in the Jaffna district entitled Munipumpathyar Santhathi Murai by T. Vinasithamby an uncle of the late Dr. Isaac Tambiah was published by Thambimuttupillai in 1901.

Henry, the son, inherited the qualities of his father especially his literary tastes and cultural interests which, we note, have been passed on to his talented sons, especially the late Father Francis Tambimuttu the theologian, James the poet, Paulinus the historian, and Augustine the producer of several Shakespearean plays.

Henry was a half-brother of Father S. Gnanapragasam, the well-known lexicographer, and hailed on his mothers’ side from the Uloganathar family of Manipay to which also belonged the illustrious Ponnambalam brothers.

Some years ago Henry’s poet-son James laid claims to having been descended from the last king of Jaffna. This not unjustifiable claim to what would probably be a handicap in this Age of the Common Man has been left unchallenged.

Henry was privately educated at his early age by his father who trained him in music and writing. His father produced plays in the village in which the son was a principal actor. Henry’s first assignment was as an assistant Editor in his father’s paper.
He however broke away from journalism to serve for a time as a tea-maker in Central Ceylon and as a clerk at Walkers in Colombo.

Soon he was called back to his first love. He became an assistant Editor of the “Jaffna Catholic Guardian”. Not long afterwards, like so many of his countrymen, he left these shores for the Federated Malay States where he served in the same capacity with the Malayan Tribune of Kuala Lampur. Later the native returned to become the Editor of his father’s paper at Atchuvely.

He established a printing press in Colombo called the “Commercial Press”. He crashed during the depression and sold his press to the Labour Leader, A. E. Goonasinghe, who renamed it as the “Labour Press”.

He was finally in charge of the Confidential Branch at the Government Press, Colombo, from which he retired with a pension. Such is the story of a man who had printer’s ink in his veins.

Besides those already mentioned Henry has two other sons Joseph who is a popular musician, and Chrysanthus, the elocutionist who is now in London and an only daughter Josephine Pinto, the singer, who is in Canada.

Dr. James T. Rutnam

Appendix 7

Picture in “Ceylon Daily News” of 8 December 1949

POET GREET HIS FATHER

TAMBIMUTTU, (right) the Ceylon poet and publisher and former Editor of the periodical “Poetry London”, returned to the Island yesterday on the S. S. Canton. He is seen greeting his father at the jetty after a separation of eleven years.
Mr. Paulinus Tambimuttu's older brother was the poet-famous in the UK-Meary James or 'Tambi'. One of Tambi's songs, 'I'll still be feeling blue', was a popular selling record at Woolworth's for sixpence in the 1930's!

Above are pictured Mr. Paulinus Tambimuttu (centre), his brother Chrysanthus (right) and Chrysanthus' daughter Tamara (left) singing one of Tambi's songs at the memorial concert held in the poet's honour at The Bharatiya Vidy Bhavan in March this year.

Photo by Indrajit Sugumasinghe

Appendix 8

Extract from "A Profile of Ceylon's Catholic Heritage" by Rev. Fr. Francis O. Thambimuttu published by Maryknoll Publications, New York. (World Horizon Report No. 28)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Father Francis O. Thambimuttu was born in Ceylon in 1914, and was ordained a diocesan priest at the Papal Seminary at Kandy in 1941. Father Thambimuttu comes from a very literary-minded family: his grandfather was a Catholic editor, poet, novelist and playwright, his father was a newspaper editor in Singapore and in Ceylon; all of his five brothers are writers—one of them edited Poetry-London for 10 years in England, and is presently writing poems and articles for major publications in the United States.

Father Thambimuttu himself is no stranger to editorial circles. For two years he edited The Beacon, a Catholic Action newspaper in Ceylon. He is also the author of three textbooks on religion that were commissioned by the Ceylonese hierarchy. I Believe, The Commandments, and Christ's Seven Sacraments are used presently by senior classes in Ceylonese Catholic high schools. He also established the first group of Young Christian Workers in Ceylon. As a seminarian, he wrote a series of articles on the Y.C.W. or Jocist Movement, and these were later published in book form.

Father Thambimuttu has spent some time studying in the United States, and it was during one of these visits, that he wrote A Profile of Ceylon's Catholic Heritage. He is presently in Ceylon, where he is performing his diocesan duties in Trincomalee.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was Father John J. Considine of Maryknoll who suggested that I write A Profile of Ceylon's Catholic Heritage, and it was he who acquainted me with the excellent facilities available at the New York Public Library. He also introduced me to Father Thomas J. Bauer, M.M., of Maryknoll Publications. Father Bauer has been most patient in postponing my deadlines so that I could stay abreast of the developing school crisis. To both of these Maryknollers I am most grateful. Ceylon, after all, is not an area where Maryknoll, in its role as a mission sending society has any immediate concern. Maryknoll's outlook is indeed Catholic, however, and extends to all places where Christ has an interest. It was by reason of this universal approach that I was invited to prepare this World Horizon Report.
Since I wrote this book in the United States I had to depend on many friends in my own country to send me the necessary books and statistics. The energetic Secretary of the Colombo Diocesan Union’s Literature Committee, Ignatius Ferdinandz, and my brother, Paulinus Tambimuttu, have been most helpful. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Michael Perera, Vicar-General of Chilaw; Very Rev. Dunstan Barseenac, O.S.B. Vicar-General of Kandy, Very Rev. Nereus Fernando, Chancellor of Colombo; Rev. Nives Rodrigo, Superintendent of Schools in the Diocese of Galle; Rev. Claude Lawrence, O.M.I.; Rev. William Jesu Thasan O.M.I., of Jaffna; Rev. Jacob Alexander of Batticaloa; Rev. John Ancot, S.J.; and Rev. Robert Criem, S.J.; of the Papal Seminary, Poona, India; Thomas A. Kreitzheim and Chitra Fernando of the Ceylon Mission to the United Nations and Mrs. Nita Villiers of New York. A special thanks also to Anthony Cuseo and Eileen Brand for sacrificing their holidays to type the manuscript.

Finally, an ever-grateful salute to Father John Cass, pastor of Saint Ignatius Church, Long Beach, New York, who has been a father to me during my stay in the United States.

Francis O. Tambimuttu

Appendix 9

Obituary in London “Times” 29 June 1983 on Meary James Thurairajah Tambimuttu

TAMBIMUTTU

Kathleen Raine writes:

Tambi will be remembered with deep affection by poets of my generation who recall the lion-waisted young man from Sri Lanka who appeared in London just before the last war like that prototypical Bohemian from the East, the god Dionysus, and established his cult in London’s Fitzrovia. “I love ecstasy” I remember his saying, and with Tambi ecstasy, with or without the help of the Soma, never seemed to flag.

Poetry London with its Ceri Richards, Graham Sutherland, Marvyn Peake, Gerald Wilde and many besides, made poetry history. There were many excellent literary reviews including Cyril Connolly’s Horizon and Geoffrey Grigson’s New Verse but PL had a different character, Tambi was not an “intellectual” what he looked for in poetry was imagination and this intangible quality he discerned with sure intuition. It was as if the could feel it through the paper, and he was never wrong. It was the same with people—he either loved people, or recoiled and wasted no time in explanations or excuses.

His values cut right across those of “the literary world” in whose intrigues he took no interest, though he knew all the poets and painters of note, and all from T. S. Eliot downwards had a special kind of affection for Tambi. “He is really a wild man, like me!” Tambi said of the remote Mr Eliot who on his side claimed to be the only one among us able correctly to pronounce his name.

Tambi was the wild member of a distinguished family the aestheteician A. K. Coomaraswamy was his uncle and though usually penniless, his fine features bruised in fights, his behaviour was always that of a prince.

When he had money—and over the years large sums were repeatedly given him by patrons proud to support him—he spent it on superb production of books or gave it away; when he had not it made very little difference to his way of life, for princes are perfectly at ease n beggar’s rags.

On balance he gave infinitely more than he received from American millionaires, Indian royalty, The Beatles, and at the end from Mrs. Gandhi herself for his last great project, the founding
of an Indian Arts Council in Great Britain (in 1983); I was in Delhi early this year just after Tambi’s triumphant progress and found that in the Subcontinent too Tambi stories were told with affectionate amazement.

He brought to England the warmth of the genius and poetry of Indian civilization. There will never again be anyone like Tambi.

OBITUARY IN “ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA” YEAR BOOK 1984

Tambimuttu Meary James Thurairajah Ceylonese born editor (b. 1915 Ceylon (Sri Lanka)—d June 22, 1983. London England) edited poetry London published from 1939 to 1947. during which time he published work by virtually every British poet of any note and left an indelible mark on the British cultural scene. He immigrated to Britain in 1937 and founded Poetry London less than two years later as a showcase for new talent, including such gifted individuals as Dylan Thomas, Kathleen Raine, Stephen Spender, and George Barker. “Tambi,” who preferred energy and enthusiasm to intellectualism, held court in the pubs of London’s Fitzrovia rather than in university common rooms. In spite of the paper shortages during World War II and his own eccentricities, he kept the magazine going. Tambimuttu displayed a genius for spotting genuine poetry and encouraging then-unknown writers. In 1947 he went to the U.S., founded Poetry London, New York and immersed himself in such other projects as Dr. Timothy Leary’s League for Spiritual Discovery. He planned a new poetry review with the Beatles, but it was not until 1979, more than ten years after his return to Europe that Poetry London/Apple Magazine appeared. His final project was the founding of an Indian Arts Council in London, which opened in 1983. He is remembered as a man of great charm and generosity and as a unique figure on the English literary scene.

Article in Ceylon “Sunday Observer” 9.7.72 on Paulinus Tambimuttu

A SCHOLAR RETIRES

When you mention the name Tambimuttu, no handles are needed, and people think automatically of the poet—the legendary figure from obscure Archuvelly who has carved for himself a niche in the halls of literary fame. It is not generally known that he hails from an exceptionally gifted family of five boys and a girl.

The third Paulinus has sent in his papers for retirement from the public service, as Office Assistant in the dept of Health after 35 years of unquestioned integrity. But his distinction has been outside the working hours and certainly he has been honoured more by others than his employer—State.

Every single Tambimuttu has the gift of speech and for seven consecutive years the gold and silver medal in eloquence were won by one or other of the Tambimuttu brothers, Paulinus started with silver and later won a gold as well.

They also swept the board at prize givings—starting again with Paulinus, and when Joseph (now Assistant Food Controller) did the same, a newspaper acclaimed him a prize winning genius and compared the Tambimuttus to the Arndts of St. Thomas.’ Paulinus is also highly proficient in French. He has been associated with the teaching of French over the radio.

From 1947 to 1960 all letters received in French by successive Prime Ministers were translated by Paulinus—an honorary service. He also similarly translated French documents for the Treasury, the Government Tourist Bureau and other government agencies. But when vacancies occurred in the Ceylonese Embassy in Paris, ironically he was over-looked.

 Shortly after leaving school, he joined the Rationalist Press Association of London and was one of only five members including a lady from Ceylon. That was twenty years before the Ceylon Rationalist Association and Dr. Kovooy’s interest in Rationalism, he says.

He couldn’t follow an University education for financial reasons, and was too proud to accept any outside help. But he did go to University College, just to see what the inside of a University was like, having pawned the Gold Medal to have some cash in hand.
In the public service, he was a leading trade unionist, having been President of the Audit Branch of the GCSU at the time of the public servants strike over the special living allowance. He paid for the honour, but recalls with pride that throughout his entire career, his integrity has remained unscathed.

Paulinus is recognised as a historian and a scholar. He is a Life Member of the R.A.S. (C.B.) and his comments have been published journal.

He has one of the best private libraries in Ceylon. Like his cousin James, T. Rutnam, he is a bibliophile, a collector and a connoisseur. His library is used by other scholars.

He is a genealogist who first published the royal descent of the poet Meary James Tambimuttu. He has drawn up a family tree which goes back all the way to the kings of Jaffna.

Paulinus too has written poetry which have been published locally and even written lyrics in French for songs written by the poet.

He has four children Freud (U.K.) Mrs. Hedy Charles, Neelankandan (Medical College) and Arunthathy (Holy Family Convent). In the two volume Bibliography of Ceylon by H. A. I. Goonetilleke, Librarian, University of Ceylon published by the Inter-Documentation Co. in Switzerland the only Ceylon Family that has three of its members included in the book is the Tambimuttu Family as entries have been made of books etc. by Rev.Fr. Francis, Meary and Paulinus.

E. C. T. CANDAPPA

Appendix 11

Article in “Weekend” of 17.10.71 on Augustine Tambimuttu
TRAINING COLLEGE PRESENTS SHAKESPEARE

TAMBI GROWS HIS LOCKS FOR SHYLOCK

His pepper-and-salt thatch flicked up modishly over his rumpled collar, Augustine Tambimuttu, materialised cheerfully before us to inform about his forthcoming play, Shakespeare’s “The Merchant of Venice” produced by the English Dramatic Society of the Government Training College, Maharagama.

“I grew my hair for the part of Shylock” explained Tambimuttu who has been in charge of the Society for the last twenty years and has faithfully presented an annual play, to appreciative Shakespeare fans. This makes him Ceylon’s most dedicated and veteran play producer.

His Dramatic Society is a society with a difference. The productions by this society are meant to be a part of the training of teachers of English. Unlike professional societies Tambimuttu’s is more concerned with the educational value of the production. Hence his concentration on Shakespeare.

Tambimuttu whose stage career began when he made his debut as a beggar at the age of six is a senior lecturer in English at the Teacher’s Training College and picks his cast chiefly from his students and the rest from the staff.

This year two British lecturers at the College, Paul Pham and Beverly Alcock are acting in the play. Beverly who plays the part of Portia, is assisting Tambimuttu with the production.

Beverly, one of the 20-odd Britishers spending a year in Ceylon on Voluntary Service Overseas Project is “taking a break from academic studies.”

“Before these VSOs came” remarked Tambimuttu, “I had to do everything myself, including the transporting of props. Now I have an easy time.”

Also acting in the Merchant of Venice is Desiree Chapman who plays the part of Merissa.

In Tambimuttu’s production Shylock is portrayed not merely as a hated Jew but with much sympathy and understanding, because it was society that ill-treated and hurt him deeply and turned Shylock into a callous money lender.
It took Tambimuttu three months to grow his hair to a satisfactory length for his part. A wig would not do he explained, because "in one scene I come in with my hair dishevelled. With a wig it would be difficult."

"The Merchant of Venice" will be staged at the Lionel Wendt Theatre on October 21 and 22 at 5.30 p.m.

Appendix 12

Extract from the Programme of the "Happy Wanderer" On Joe Tambimuttu who founded the Ceylon Association of Accordionists

Message from our Patron

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Queen's House,
Colombo,
Ceylon.
8th June, 1961.

As Patron of The Ceylon Association of Accordionists, I am very pleased to hear that this Association will be staging their First Accordion Concert at the Lionel Wendt Theatre on the 18th June, 1961.

This Association was formed last October with two objects in view, namely, to foster Accordion Music and to conduct examinations in Ceylon on the same pattern as the examinations of the Trinity College of Music, London. I am also informed that the Association is in the process of being affiliated with the British Association of Accordionists and the Arts Council of Ceylon.

I wish the Association every success in their endeavour to interest all accordion fans in this country through this, their First Concert.

(Sgd) O. E. Goonetilleke,
Governor-General

"HAPPY WANDERER"

The inaugural meeting of the Ceylon Association of Accordionists was held on 30th October, 1960, at this Theatre. Amongst the objects of the Association are the fostering of interest in the accordion as a medium of serious musical expression, the encouraging of home talent and raising standards. It is towards achieving this purpose that this Concert is presented as a first step.

Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, published as recently as 1944, has described the accordion as an instrument with extremely limited capabilities, as it can be played only in one key, and even in that one imperfectly, and that this instrument is little more than a toy. To many of us, perhaps, the accordion conjures up visions of an aunt or other aged relative squeezing out a tune out of a small diatonic instrument and Grove's des-
cription would be apt if the little instruments as played by our progenitors is the one referred to. What is, perhaps, not realised is the fact that tremendous improvements have been effected, and are still being effected, converting the toy to a portable organ, with immense potentialities. The ancient Chinese Cheng, a kind of mouth organ with pipes supplied with free reeds is popularly regarded as the ancestor of the accordion. The invention of the accordion has been claimed for Damian of Vienna in 1829 or Buchmann of Berlin in 1822. There is also the interesting story of the pilgrim (said to be Damian) who, on his return from a pilgrimage to the “Black Madonna” of Loreto, left behind a rudimentary instrument in the house of Soprani, who was fascinated with it, Soprani and his descendants are credited with developing this instrument. The addition of the piano keyboard is attributed to Bouton of Paris in 1852. A very recent experiment is being conducted by producing accordions with “free” bases, i.e. one button for each single note so that a piano transcription could be straightaway rendered on the accordion.

Musical notation for accordions and scoring for accordion orchestras is also a recent development. While accordions cannot replace an orchestra, yet an orchestra cannot be an accordion orchestra. What we ask for is that the accordion be judged on its own merits as a serious instrument not solely confined to popular entertainment. Our group composed of various age groups will attempt to convince you tonight.

My thanks go to Drs. Valentine and Mrs. Basnayake, who readily loaned us their Music Room for rehearsals, Mr. Augustine Tambimuttu and Miss Trudy Dickson for having, at very short notice, created the characters of the “Happy Wanderer” and the heroine, with the kind assistance of Miss Sheila Mack and Messrs. Globe Musical Trades for the loan of the “Farfisa” Micromat.

Joe Tambimuttu

Appendix 13

Extract from the Daily News–1987 and the Canadian Chemical News May 1938 on Josephine Tambimuttu’s husband Frank Pinto and son Mario Pinto

FRANK C. PINTO

Frank Pinto is no more. He passed away peacefully a few days ago.

A staunch old Josephian, Frank had a distinguished career in College, excelling both in the academic field and in extra-curricular activities. Having joined the University, he graduated in 1944 with an honours degree in Chemistry. His incisive mind and scientific intellect saw for himself no department better than the Government Analyst’s Department. So, to further his scientific interests, he duly joined this department as an Assistant Government Analyst in 1945.

Whilst in the Department he chose for specialisation the very fertile field of Forensic Serology. With a heavy departmental load of cases, Frank still somehow found the time and energy for his own personal research.

His specific area of interest, in which he made several internationally noteworthy scientific contributions, was an attempt to find a scientific basis for time determinations in rape cases on examination of productions sent to the department by judicial Medical Officers all over the Island.

His first paper on the subject entitled “Rape for the Defence” which appeared in an issue of the Journal of Forensic Medicine is still sought after by forensic serologists the world over.

His contribution to forensic serology in Sri Lanka and in the international sphere were indeed significant.

His departmental scientific work did not prevent him from participating actively in the department’s sports and welfare activities. He represented the Department in Govt. Service tournaments in Cricket, Soccer, Tennis, Table Tennis and Bridge. Besides, he held office in the department’s club and was a live wire in the organisation of the department’s annual tournaments in all its indoor games.

Unfortunately for the Department, after twenty-one years of dedicated service, Frank, a family man as he was, sacrificed his future in his chosen field to emigrate to Canada to join the Centre of Forensic Sciences, only for the sake of his children.
His departure was the Department’s and Sri Lanka’s severe loss and very much Canada’s gain.

Now, placed in a laboratory equipped with sophisticated and scientific equipment, his research blossomed to the full, resulting in many noteworthy publications authored by him.

Frank as we knew him, was a gentle, kind-hearted individual whose humility and simplicity were extraordinary. He was always the poor man’s champion – defending the minor employee instead of the staff officer.

His life was dedicated to his family and those less fortunate than him.

Frank is no more. But the contribution he made to Forensic Medicine both in Sri Lanka and in the international sphere will be eternal monuments to this tremendously talented and dedicated scientist.

Frank could be saying in the poet’s words.

“I have gone out of the universe I made and have grown nameless and immeasurable."

May he rest in peace!

A. R. L. WIJESEKERE

B. Mario Pinto

May 1988 Canadian Chemical News 37

Mario Pinto, MCIC, was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka and received his BSc degree in Honors Chemistry from Queen’s University (1975) and his PhD degree at the same University (1980) under the supervision of Walter A. Szarek. He subsequently went to France as a NATO Science Fellow for post-doctoral research at the Institut de Chimie des Substances Naturelles, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique under the direction of Sir Derek H. R. Barton (1980-82). He returned to Canada as a Research Associate with David R. Bundle in the Division of Biological Sciences of the National Research Council (1982-83) and then joined the Department of Chemistry at Simon Fraser University where he is an Assistant Professor and NSERC University Research Fellow.