

TAMILĀRAM

தமிழாரம்

A VOLUME

OF

TRIBUTES AND REMINISCENCES

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

FATHER THANI NAYAGAM

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TAMILĀRAM

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
FATHER THANI NAYAGAM

Edited by Rajan Philipupillai

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Publisher's Note

This volume of tributes and reminiscences dedicated to the memory of the late Father Thani Nayagam was originally intended to be published to coincide with the Fifth International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies which was held in Madurai, in January 1981, a few months after his death.

Despite the enthusiastic and prompt response on the part of most of the contributors, the volume could not be completed in time for the Madurai Conference. Printing was further delayed during the subsequent period which was the most traumatic and lamentable period in the history of Jaffna and her people. Fittingly, perhaps, this publication, whilst being a tribute to the memory of Father Thani Nayagam, will also serve to throw light on many aspects of the growth of Tamilian nationalism.

We have to record with regret the passing away of two contributors to this volume during the intervening period. Rev. Fr Justin Perera, who was a contemporary of Thani Nayagam in Rome and who delivered the panegyric at the Memorial Service held in Colombo, passed away in August 1981. In December 1982 the Tamil world suffered an irreparable loss with the untimely death of Professor K. Kailasapathy, a scholar of international repute and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Jaffna. Prof. Kailasapathy was the main inspirer of this volume and took a keen interest in the plans for the posthumous publication of Thani Nayagam's writings.

To all the contributors to this volume and others who have collaborated in the production of this volume, we are, indeed grateful.

A Biographical Sketch

"A little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on."

Quoting these words of Milton, Father Thani Nayagam climbed, for the last time, the steps to my parental home in Kayts, his birthplace. The guiding hand was that of my wife Amali, herself his niece. It was the twenty fifth of August 1980, twenty three days after his sixty seventh birthday and, as it turned out later, seven days before his death. I was meeting him after four months and for the first time after he had suffered a heart attack in June. In April, Amali and I were fortunate to have been present at his last public appearance and lecture. On 27 and 28 April, he delivered the Chelvanayakam Memorial Lectures, at the Veerasingham Hall, Jaffna, to an audience overflowing with Tamilophiles, first in Tamil on the 'Characteristics of Tamil Culture', and the second in English on "Tamil Studies: Retrospect and Prospect". Little did we know then, that we were witnessing the last leap of a dying flame.

On this visit, that turned out to be his last, we witnessed the final glow of Father. Illness had enfeebled him rather early at sixty seven, and the spread of cataract had impaired his vision. But, yet, the feast of an erudite wit, the cheer of his ever optimistic spirit, the golden voice and the ringing laughter kept us all enthralled. During our conversation he mentioned the proposal of Dr James T. Rutnam and Prof. K. Indrapala to publish a selection of his writings under the auspices of the Evelyn Rutnam Institute of the Jaffna University. He said he had already written to Prof. Indrapala, thanking them both for their gracious offer and suggesting a meeting to discuss the selection for publication. But, alas, before this meeting could take place, he passed away, succumbing to his second heart attack, on 1 September 1980, at the Retreat House in Pandateruppu.

The meeting to discuss the publication of his selected works eventually took place on 26 October 1980 at Prof. Indrapala's house. Besides Prof. Indrapala and Dr James T. Rutnam, Prof. K. Kailasapathy and I were present. And we decided to publish a Volume of Tributes to coincide with the holding of the Fifth International Conference—Seminar of Tamil Studies in Madurai, in January 1981, as this was to be the first major event in the seventeen year old history of the International Association of Tamil Research, that was to take place without the "commanding presence" of Thani Nayagam, who together with Prof. Kamil Zvelebil and Prof. V. I. Subramoniam had constituted the triumvirate of the IATR for several years from its inception.

Prof. Kailasapathy proposed for the volume, the title "Tamilaram" or a garland of flowers, to the memory of a man who was fond of saying and recalling that "The Tamils said it all with flowers".

Thani Nayagam's contributions to scholarship and society, to Tamilology and Tamilians, are likely to stand the test of time and be subjected to critical assessment by future historians of Tamil Studies and Tamilian nationalism. But only a complete and coherent account of Thani Nayagam's life and work can depict in full the versatility of the man, his breadth of outlook and the catholicity of interests, the remarkable blend of his clerical scholarship and secular humanism, his fierce Tamilian nationalism combined with a commitment to linguistic and cultural pluralism, his philological erudition that did not extinguish an enthusiasm for poetry and archaeology, his organisational capabilities and sensitivity to social questions. "Tamilaram" provides neither a critical assessment of Thani Nayagam's work nor a complete biography; it is only a floral tribute by Thani Nayagam's colleagues and friends who were associated with him in his life, in the world of learning, or in the movements that he spearheaded. This biographical sketch serves as an introduction throwing light particularly on Thani Nayagam's early life, the early years of his priesthood and the decade of sojourn in India until the nineteen fifties.



Xavier Nicholas Stanislaus – later known as Xavier Stanislaus Thani Nayagam, was born in Kayts, on 2 August 1913, the first child of his parents, Naganathan Stanislaus and Cecilia Bastiampillai. He chose the name 'Thani Nayagam' – the paternal ancestral name, after being ordained priest. The name, having served so well this catholic ambassador of Tamil culture, now stands immortalized in the history of the Tamil people and Tamil Studies.

Thani Nayaagm received his primary and secondary education at St. Patrick's College, Jaffna, an old missionary institution, founded in 1850 and named after the missionary Saint of Ireland. As a school boy, he has been remembered for his precocity and his outstanding school record. With the untimely loss of his mother, when he was only twelve years old, the school became his home, and in its inspiring missionary atmosphere, this youthful pupil grew up to become a man of general aspirations and ultimately to answer the call within him, to dedicate his life to the service of humanity, in the sphere of education, through the Priesthood of Christ.

The roots of his Tamil scholarship cannot, however, be traced to the classrooms of St. Patrick's College. At school he would have been the not so unwilling victim of a completely colonial system of education designed to make the students – in the celebrated words of Macaulay – "English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect." The teaching of Tamil was neglected while excellent facilities were provided for learning English language and literature. Thani Nayagam exploited these in the most exemplary manner and developed admirable fluency in the alien tongue. The school records show that he was a regular prizeman and a gold medalist in elocution. He was also reputed to be a voracious reader and his inclinations led him not to football and cricket but to writing and speaking. He began writing to the school magazine, *The Bottled Sunshine* and soon became its editor.

It was after completing his secondary education that he decided to join the priesthood. His was a late vocation, and he would often say, "I was not made a priest, but became one." He has recalled that Tolstoy's *Resurrection* which he read at the age of fifteen made a profound impact on him. He was also moved by an anonymous English quotation that he had come across in the school magazine:

"I shall pass through this world but once. If therefore, there be any good thing I can do, or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer it, nor neglect it, for I shall never pass this way again."

Beginning the long trek to priesthood, he entered St. Bernard's Seminary in Colombo, in 1931. Here too he proved his mettle as an outstanding student and excelled in oratorical and literary activities. He was a frequent contributor to the Catholic English newspaper, the "Catholic Messenger", and a sought after speaker at the Seminary's Literary Union sessions. After completing his studies in Colombo, he gained admission to the prestigious Collegio de Propaganda Fide in Rome, to continue his ecclesiastical studies. He was the first Ceylon Tamil to be admitted to this institution founded centuries earlier to impart ecclesiastical training to young seminarians selected from every part of the world.

But about this time, and before he could leave for Rome, he had to face an unexpected setback. Thani Nayagam's Bishop, Dr Guyomar, the then Bishop of Jaffna, chose to decline approval for the young seminarian to continue in his vocation. This was a severe trial to the unsuspecting and inexperienced seminarian who was, however, fortunate to receive the counsel and the practical support of the elder priests in the diocese, particularly Fathers Charles S. Mathew, T.M.F. Long, K. Sebastian and S. Benjamin. As though in answer to the prayers of the anxious seminarian, Mar Ivanios, the colourful Syro Malankara Bishop from South India came to his rescue. On an earlier visit to the island the latter had been so impressed by the exceptionally talented youth preparing for the tonsure, that he readily offered to draw Thani Nayagam into his diocese and send him to Rome under his jurisdiction. Thus at the age of nineteen, Thani Nayagam set out by sea to Europe, Italy and Rome.

He spent five years at the Propaganda College in Rome, receiving his Minor Orders, his Subdiaconate, and Diaconate. He was finally ordained priest on 19 March 1938 and celebrated his first Mass in the catacombs of St Cecilia.

During the five years at the Propaganda College, Thani Nayagam perfected his knowledge of classical and modern European languages and he studied European Art and Archaeology. His doctoral thesis was the "outcome of a love for the catacombs and the history of the heroes and heroines buried in the underground vaults and corridors of Rome". The thesis later published

as a book titled *The Carthaginian Clergy* was a study of the early Church pertaining to the life and times of St Cyprian, his episcopate and his clergy during the period 248-258 AD. This study of the history of the early church, the history of the early missionaries "sowing their evangelical seeds in hitherto unfamiliar fields", enabled Thani Nayagam to realize the importance of "making the Church incarnate" in the culture and civilization of the people who were being introduced to the new Faith. In South India itself, the Italian Jesuits, Robert de Nobili (1577-1656) and Constantinus Beschi (1680-1747) had blazed the missionary trail by their pioneering efforts, centuries ago. But they had not been followed by their successors. Naturally, Thani Nayagam grew desirous of familiarizing himself with the language and literature, the history and culture of the Tamil people in order to make his contribution to the propagation of the Faith in India and Sri Lanka. He took the first step and founded in Rome the Veeramamunivar (Beschi) Society to promote interest in Tamil among the few Tamilian students then living in Rome.

Like Beschi, Thani Nayagam set off from Italy, as a young Catholic Priest, to perform his ministry in South India. Although a Tamilian, Thani Nayagam was no less a stranger than Beschi to the Tamilian literary traditions and to the values of Tamil culture. Like Beschi, he too attained profundity in Tamil letters during his sojourn in South India. But, unlike Beschi, the reputed apostle, Thani Nayagam would be remembered by many not so much as the sower of evangelical seeds in the Tamil world, but as the ambassador of Tamil culture and literature in the secular non-Tamil world. The story of his ministry and the manner of his arrival on the Tamil literary and cultural scene are recalled here briefly.

He began his ministry among the Syro Malankara Catholics under Bishop Mar Ivanios. But as one trained in Latin rites and being one with great enthusiasm for the Latin liturgy, he found it uncongenial to work in a congregation that followed the Syrian rites and liturgical traditions. Besides Malabar was not the seat of Tamilian culture or civilization. To escape from the impasse, as it were, he took the rash step of quitting the diocese without the authority of the Bishop, only to find himself in a worse plight — abandoned and without license in any diocese in India or in Sri Lanka. He then took the only way out before him — the path to Rome, where, fortunately for him, he was able to obtain the assistance of Mgr G. Belvederi of the Archaeological Institute and Professor F. Callaey of the Propaganda College. They arranged for him to move into the diocese of Tuticorin (in South India) under the episcopate of the amiable Bishop Francis Tiburtius Roche. The latter took paternal care of Thani Nayagam and gave him encouragement and support to pursue his Tamil studies. What is more, Bishop Roche, before his retirement, gave Thani Nayagam the indult, which enabled the latter to participate freely in academic and pedagogic pursuits and social movements in the secular world. Without this indult he might very well have been reduced to be an unheard of victim of episcopal banishment. All the same, his vocation was permanent and his mission both successful

and pathbreaking. For, in his life and work as priest, patriot, scholar and ecumenicist, Thani Nayagam had anticipated the many changes in the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council.

Thani Nayagam commenced his career in Tuticorin, as a teacher at St. Theresa's High School in Vadakkankulam. He taught English and History while receiving tuition in Tamil from a Tamil Pundit. He spent five years at St. Theresa's High School. During this period he edited and published a Tamil Magazine, *Siru Malar*, for students besides contributing frequently to the *New Leader*, a Catholic weekly published from Madras.

In 1945, he entered the Annamalai University for a post-graduate course in Tamil language and literature. He was graciously welcomed by that doyen of Tamil scholarship, Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram. The Chancellor, Sir Rajah Muthiah of Chettinad, arranged for the priest alumnus to stay in the University Guest House. Thani Nayagam became a close friend of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy and his family. Prof. Ruthnaswamy, the distinguished scholar, educationist and statesman, was a devout Catholic and used to be a willing acolyte to his student whenever the latter was celebrating Mass.

Clerical seclusion did not prevent Thani Nayagam from studying, understanding and appreciating Hindu philosophy and Hindu religious poetry. His Christian humanism mingled with the highest attributes of Tamil and Hindu culture and he became the classic embodiment of a harmonious confluence of the two different cultural traditions. In 1947, he completed his Master of Arts degree. Two years later he obtained the Master of Literature degree, for his thesis relating to the study of nature in ancient Tamil poetry. This was published as a book, *Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry: Concept and Interpretation*, in 1953. Two more revised and modified editions appeared subsequently, first in 1963, titled *Nature Poetry in Tamil — The Classical Period*, and again in 1966, titled *Landscape and Poetry: a Study of Nature in Classical Tamil Poetry*. Reviewing the last edition, Prof. Kamil Zvelebil wrote in the *Indo-Iranian Journal*, ".....the book surpasses in many respects everything that has been written so far on ancient poetry of the Tamils".

Immediately after leaving Annamalai, Thani Nayagam founded in Tuticorin, the Tamil Literature Society (TLS). The Society, modelled on the Christian Literature Society of Madras, was intended to promote the publication of Tamil Catholic literary works. As the founder director of the Society, he undertook in 1950 his first major lecture tour abroad visiting the United States of America, South American countries and Japan. His sermons and lectures captivated the American congregations and audiences, who hailed him as "an outstanding promoter of the apostolate of thought". As a souvenir to mark his American tour, an American edition of *The Carthaginian Clergy* was published. The American Catholic writers predicted a great future for his movement to make the "Church reincarnate in India", which, they envisaged, would affect methods of evangelization in the Orient, and open new vistas of thought to all those interested in World Christianity.

On the academic and somewhat secular side of the American tour, he made contacts with universities, institutions, scholars and persons of general culture who showed great interest in the study and understanding of Tamil literature and culture. The absence of "some Review in English", through the medium of which the subjects of Tamil literature and Tamil culture could reach the non-Tamil world, was strongly felt. In February 1952, Thani Nayagam began the publication of the *Quarterly Review, Tamil Culture*, through the Tamil Literature Society of Tuticorin. The first number left the press, to quote the words of Thani Nayagam from his inaugural editorial,

"with a mission to perform, and with the conviction that it must meet a long-felt want."

The story of the fulfilment of that mission would also be the history of Tamil Studies during the two decades that followed. What soon became clear was that there was more than a mere academic dimension to Thani Nayagam's involvement in Tamil Studies. Already at Annamalai he had experienced the impact of the Indian independence movement and the parallel revivalist movements in the fields of literature, culture and religion. The effects of this experience now began to manifest themselves in his public life and in his contributions to Tamil Studies, giving them a social and a political dimension as well.



In 1952, Thani Nayagam left the diocese of Tuticorin, returned to the land of his birth and joined the then University of Ceylon as a lecturer in the Department of Education.

For the newly independent island country of Sri Lanka, the fifties dawned behind a facade of prosperity and stability, and the country was hailed as "an island without problems". But the early signs of prosperity and stability soon disappeared; the nation began plummeting through a period of social and political upheavals, economic crises and even communal pogroms; and by the end of the decade the country was described as "Ceylon: a Divided Nation". Of the many problems that have beset the country since then, nothing has been more serious or urgent than the continued deterioration in the relationship between the Sinhala and the Tamil nationality groups. The main issue of controversy during the mid-fifties was the "Sinhala Only" language policy of the government, notwithstanding vehement opposition by the Tamil speaking minorities. This was the phase of the emergence of Tamil nationalism as the inevitable response to the exclusive nationalism of the majority group. There was a parallel growth of Tamil nationalism among the South Indian Tamils, on account of similar causal factors and almost during the same period. Thani Nayagam was "right in the vortex of this Tamil nationalism", according to Prof. A. J. Wilson, a close friend of Thani Nayagam for over twenty five years.

But Thani Nayagam's espousal of the cause of Tamil language and culture was never in conflict with his general world view, his humanism, and his commitment to linguistic and cultural pluralism. He was the pleader for the preservation and fostering of **national** cultures within the larger **Nation**. By no means a chauvinist, Thani Nayagam never argued the case for Tamil nationalism retrogressively on the basis of established myths and revived memories of feudal kingdoms, and always castigated tendentious portrayals of past events as "dangers of history". His wide knowledge of the problems of minorities in several countries enabled him to take a liberal and progressive approach to the solution of nationality problems in his own country.

The famous lecture that he delivered on 2 August 1955 on *Tamil Culture: Its Past, Present and Future with Special Reference to Ceylon* (later published in *Tamil Culture*, and as a pamphlet), the collection of his articles published as *Language and Liberty in Ceylon*, his paper on *Regional Nationalism in Twentieth Century Tamil Literature* and the *Chelvanayakam Memorial Lectures* that he delivered in April 1980, will always be referred to by future writers on Tamil nationalism. These publications do not constitute an exposition or an analysis of all the specificities of the national question involving the Tamil speaking people. But they enshrine the committed views of a dedicated, but enlightened Tamil patriot enriched by scholarship, tempered by reason and inspired by the highest ideals of humanism.

What endeared Thani Nayagam most to Tamil leaders and the Tamil speaking people was his direct participation in their protest movements and the Satyagraha campaigns of 1956 and 1961. He boldly broke out of the seclusion of a cloister, risked his position as a University teacher, risked even episcopal intolerance, and played his role in protesting against the "violation of inviolable rights".

While being a lecturer in Education in the Ceylon University, Thani Nayagam entered the Institute of Education, University of London, as a Research Scholar and obtained the Doctorate in Comparative Education, for his thesis: *Ancient European and Indian Systems of Education Compared, with Special Reference to Ancient Tamil Education*. It was at the London University that Thani Nayagam for the first time, perhaps, came under the influence of secular thought and secular humanism. Although in his forties he was yet receptive to new cultural and intellectual influences, which further enriched his unique blend of Christian humanism and Tamil culture. His exposition, if not extolment of the "Aspects of Tamil Humanism" may be seen as a sequel to his research in comparative education at the London University.

In addition to completing his third major research thesis, he continued to be a prolific contributor of both scholarly and popular articles to various journals. He continued as Chief Editor of "*Tamil Culture*", besides being one of its most regular contributors. In 1955, he undertook a study tour of South East Asia. Writing in the *Tamil Culture* after this tour he pointed out the unexplored fields of study relating not only to Tamil influences in South East Asia, but to the general "flux and reflux of inter-cultural movements in South East Asia". He

foresaw the role that the University of Malaya could play in providing opportunities for comparative studies with regard to cultural influences in South East Asia, and expressed the hope that,

"Tamil Culture in South East Asia will form an important subject in the course given by the Department of Indian Studies that the University of Malaya is to inaugurate in the not distant future."

Six years later, in 1961, Thani Nayagam became the first incumbent of the Foundation Chair of the Department of Indian Studies in the University of Malaya. An year before he assumed duties in Kuala Lumpur, he went on a study tour of Adult Education in the U.S.A., Soviet Union and other European Countries, and delivered the Sornammal Endowment Lectures at the Universities of Madras and Annamalai.



Thani Nayagam was no stranger to the Indian and Ceylon Tamil community in Malaya and Singapore. He had been on lecture and study tours to these countries in 1954 and 1955. He had inaugurated in 1954 the annual "Tamilar Vizha" celebrations organized by the Malayan and Singapore Tamils. On 14 January 1955, he had addressed a vast multitude of Tamils assembled at the Happy World Stadium in Singapore for the Pongal Day Celebrations. His eloquent exposition of the "antiquities and unique characteristics" of Tamil literature and Tamil culture, had endeared him to the Tamils in Malaya and Singapore. He was a close friend of the late Mr G. Sarangapany, founder editor of "Tamil Murasu", and an ardent promoter of Tamil cultural and literary activities in the peninsula. Sarangapany and other leaders were extremely keen about the appointment of Thani Nayagam to the Foundation Chair of the Department of Indian studies.

Of "Father's Malaysian Years", Prof. Arasaratnam and others give an excellent account in this volume, and it would be presumptuous, on my part, to venture to add anything more, except to give a brief account of the various events that led to the formation of the International Association of Tamil Research in 1964 and the holding of its first Conference-Seminar in Kuala Lumpur in 1966.

In as much as the founding of the IATR and its subsequent growth owe a great deal to the sustained and dedicated efforts of Thani Nayagam, the very origins of the movement that culminated in the formation of the IATR ought to be traced to the founding of the Quarterly Review, *Tamil Culture* in 1952. The first number of *Tamil Culture* had left the press "with a mission to perform", and during the subsequent years, as Thani Nayagam was to later record with pride,

"Tamil Culture" functioned as a catalyst for Tamil scholars from all over the world, and created the atmosphere and academic fellowship and friendships, whereby the formation of the IATR and the holding of its International Conference were made possible."

Besides the publication of *Tamil Culture* he was instrumental in inaugurating the Tamil Culture Society in Colombo in June 1952, and the Academy of Tamil Culture in Madras in September 1954. These organizations eventually became the representative associations of the IATR after its inception in 1964. The journal *Tamil Culture* became, from 1955, the Journal of the Academy of Tamil Culture, with Thani Nayagam continuing as the Chief Editor.

When the Madras State Tamil Development and Research Council was constituted on 16 February 1959, Thani Nayagam was included as one of the members of the Council. He was the only non-Indian to be included. Of the significance of the new Council, Thani Nayagam writing editorially in the *Tamil Culture* said,

"The constitution of the Madras State Tamil Development and Research Council is a great step forward in equipping and modernising Tamil for the purposes of functioning in a democracy.....Its activities will not only benefit Madras State, but also other countries like Ceylon, Mauritius and South Africa where Tamil functions as a medium of education and civic life."

Soon after assuming duties at the University of Malaya as Professor of Indian Studies, Thani Nayagam publicly emphasized the "great need to modernize Tamil Studies as any other arts group or modern European Language" and mooted the idea of an annual conference of University Heads of Departments of Tamil from Tamil Nad, Ceylon, Malaya, London, Paris and Prague. He further discussed the matter with Mr C. Subramaniam, then a Minister in the Madras State Government and Chairman of the Tamil Development and Research Council, and along with Prof. T. P. Meenakshisundaram formally wrote, to the Minister on 27 October 1961. Two years later at a meeting of the Council in August 1963, he proposed that an "International meeting of Tamil scholars might be convened under the auspices of the Tamil Research and Development Council, immediately following the XXVI International Congress of Orientalists to be held in New Delhi in January 1964". The Council made attempts to hold a "World Tamil Conference" from 13 to 17 January 1964 (after the New Delhi Conference of Orientalists), in three sessions, in Madras Annamalai and Madurai. The attempts of the Council proved to be unsuccessful and the "World Tamil Conference" did not take place.

Meanwhile, Thani Nayagam formulated his own plans "to make the XXVI Conference of Orientalists in New Delhi the occasion of forming an Association of Tamilologists". He had by then obtained assurance of Malaysian sponsorship for a conference of Tamil Studies. The National Education (Indian Schools) Development Council of Malaya, thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of its then Secretary, the late Mr V. Selvanayagam and the positive response of its then President the late Mr Manickavasagam (who was also a Minister of the Malaysian Government), had decided, at its meeting on 12 August 1962, to "co-sponsor a Conference of Tamil Studies and help with funds should the University of Malaya take the initiative in the matter".

At the New Delhi Conference, Thani Nayagam along with Prof. V. I. Subramoniam convened a "Special Meeting of Scholars in the Field of Tamil Studies". Sixty

scholars from 15 different countries assembled in New Delhi's Vigya Bhawan, on 7 January 1964, and inaugurated the "International Association of Tamil Research." The meeting unanimously elected Prof. Jean Filliozat as President and Prof. Kamil Zvelebil and Prof. Thani Nayagam as Joint Secretaries of the Association. During the discussions, Thani Nayagam explained that "a proposal to hold an International Conference had not materialized, but that such a conference could be an objective of the association".

After returning from New Delhi to Kuala Lumpur Thani Nayagam succeeded in obtaining full Malaysian sponsorship for the first ever International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies, which was eventually and very successfully held in Kuala Lumpur from 16 to 23 April 1966. This was followed by three equally successful and productive Conference-Seminars in Madras (1968), Paris (1970) and Jaffna (1974).

In 1969 the IATR, with Thani Nayagam as the Chief Editor, launched the *Journal of Tamil Studies*. This was to continue the good work performed by his own *Journal of Tamil Culture* which he had founded in 1952 and which had ceased publication since 1966. He was also in the forefront of the moves to establish in Madras an International Institute of Tamil Studies. When he relinquished his duties, in 1969, at the University of Malaya, he yet had hopes of an active future ahead of him. He was Visiting Professor at the College de France in Paris in 1970 and in 1971 he was Visiting Professor at the Naples University in Italy. He fell ill when he was in Naples, returned to Sri Lanka and confined himself to Jaffna, except for a trip to Europe in 1973 and occasional travels to Malaysia.

In 1972 Thani Nayagam delivered the Bunker Memorial Lectures for that year. These lectures are conducted periodically by the premier Christian institution of education in the peninsula, Jaffna College, to honour one of its most eminent former Principals, Rev. Dr Bunker. Thani Nayagam spoke on his favourite theme "Aspects of Tamil Humanism". When Jaffna hosted the Fourth International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies, he had become the patriarch of the IATR and the pride of Jaffna. In April 1980 the City Fathers of Jaffna honoured him by extending to him a civic reception. Speaking on the occasion he paid homage to friends, fellow scholars and benefactors who had given him help and assistance during his long period of service in the cause of Tamil culture and Tamil Studies.

On 2 August 1955, Thani Nayagam had sprung into prominence with a popular lecture on "Tamil Culture—Its Past, Present and Future with Special Reference to Ceylon," delivered at the Colombo Town Hall. The subject of the lecture and the manner of its delivery were a combination of "sweetness and light" that delighted not only the Tamilians but several non-Tamilians as well, in those halcyon days of the emerging united Ceylon of the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Twenty five years later when he delivered the Chelvanayakam Memorial Lectures on the "Characteristics of Tamil Culture," the position of the Tamil minorities in the country had changed for the worse. Worse was to come in the year following Thani Nayagam's death. He did not live to see the lamentable happenings in Jaffna during the year 1981. But a grateful people did not fail to honour him, notwithstanding their own

contemporary trials and tribulations. He was given the highest posthumous honour in the City of Madurai during the Fifth International Conference-Seminar held in January 1981. On the eve of his first death anniversary the University of Jaffna conferred on him, posthumously, the Degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*.

— Rajan Philipupillai

The Grace of Experiencing Nature —

One Way of Looking at Fr Thani Nayagam's Life

As a student of the Gospels, trying to get to know Jesus of Nazareth, I have found that a great part of a person's life remains hidden. Of that which is manifest, there is what we generally describe as one's public life, and one's private life. But even of these knowable forms of life, one just has a few glimpses, since for the most part, the real quality of even public and private life remains pretty hidden. From a few encounters and episodes and sayings, one tries to reconstruct as best as one can the life of even those who have been close to us.

I knew Fr Thani Nayagam for well over thirty years—during the time so to speak of his public ministry. As a friend, I knew something also of his private life. In every area into which he entered, he demonstrated a certain thoroughness and intensity. His teaching, writing and ministering focussed principally on three realities that were close to his heart: **the Catholic Church** or the experience of the saving God in Christ; **Tamil culture** or the experience of nature and human nature; and **General Education** or the communication to posterity of values that cannot be biologically transmitted.

Catholic Priest

Coming from a Catholic family, and having had his theological studies in Rome, he has always been a man of deep Christian faith. Right to the end of his days, he would doubt, question, argue about various aspects of this faith in order to deepen and purify his own experience of it, and to bring that faith ever closer to what Jesus communicated in his ministry, passion, death and resurrection. Every time I met him, he showed an unflagging interest in getting deeper and deeper into the mystery of Christ. He would share his doubts in a way that it often became a prayer experience of a man struggling to fathom the depths of Christian being.

During his years in Rome, he devoted himself specially to Patristic studies, and there particularly to one of the early Church Fathers, St Cyprian. His doctoral dissertation related to the notion of Christian priesthood in St Cyprian's thought. In the context of the recent discussions relating to the nature of the Catholic priesthood, he kept alive this interest, and would constantly come up with various questions, showing that he had not given up his search in understanding what it is really to be a priest of God.

All the demythologization, de-ritualization, de-clericalization, de-romanization and the like of recent times, while disturbing him, also helped him to understand in new ways myth, rite, priesthood and Roman values.

I have met him over the years in various contexts both in Sri Lanka and abroad. Whatever the audience or milieu or occasion, his identity as a Catholic priest and a

follower of Christ came through in discreet but very real ways. It may be a dinner in a grand restaurant in Naples or a humble meal in a simple village in Sri Lanka, it may be a solemn gathering to honor a Hindu swami or an international conference on Tamil culture, there was always the same gentleness, calmness and simplicity of a wise man.

Chequered Life-Story

In spite of the road-blocks that certain short-sighted 'religious' authorities erected along the way—already at St Bernard's Seminary (they found it strange that he wanted to study Greek and Hebrew), and later right through his career as a priest and scholar, he kept on steadily in spite of non-acceptance. Even after he had been acclaimed in other countries as a great scholar of Dravidian culture, the local religious leadership in Jaffna never came to fully appreciate and acknowledge his achievements—if at all they were aware of them.

Sri Lanka has to be grateful to the South Indian Bishops who welcomed him, promoted him and encouraged him along the path he had chosen to witness to Christ. The path he had chosen was to show the reflections of God's presence in the culture of his own people.

In Italy, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka, in various ways, at the highest levels of learning and research, he showed through his lectures, writings and above all his way of life the particular sensitivity of Tamil culture to all that is beautiful and good in nature, human life and religious experience.

Service to the Tamils in the Diaspora

Being out of the Tamil Country* for the last three decades, a decade in Europe, a decade in Kandy and a decade in North America, one way in which I was able to keep in touch with my culture and people was by reading some of the Tamil classics like the *Tirukural* of Tiruvalluvar, *Tirumantiram* of Tirumular, and other literature I could lay hands on. An easier way of entering into the riches of Tamil literature was to read the works of Fr Thani Nayagam, specially his works entitled *Landscape and Poetry* (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1966), and *Tamil Culture and Civilization* (ibid. 1970), where he shows the basic thrust of Tamil literature as the revelation of the human emotions of a people who lived in intimate relationship and communion with nature. The international Review on Tamil Culture that he edited, as also the International Conferences on Tamil language and culture that he organized, helped those of us who for various reasons find ourselves outside our homeland and country to keep in touch with the mind-beat and heart-beat of our people.

In the context of the machine-oriented industrial culture of the West, Fr Thani Nayagam's reflections on Tamil culture always came as a healing element, inviting one to commune more deeply with nature which is always there. Trees and flowers, birds and beasts, mountains and valleys, deserts and seashores and pasture lands, the variety of seasons, sunshine and rain, all these are presented not merely as background to life, but as **sympathetic** background to **human** life. At some point, communion with nature blossoms forth as human communion with one another, based on duty and kindness.

In Tamil literature, nature takes on special beauty and resonance according to the goodness of the people and their rulers. It is not difficult to see how pollution, acid rain, fall-out, depletion of resources, wastage, piling up of garbage, nuclear threat and the like, reflect for us today, nature's resonances to a particular type of rulers! Or closer home, how emergencies, bloodbaths, race riots, terrorism, disrespect of others' basic rights, reflect human nature's resonances to a particular form of political rule.

Love-life in all its manifestations of yearning, meeting, union, separation, misconduct and return are treated by Fr Thani Nayagam in a way that one begins to understand better both nature and human nature. At some points, particularly in later Tamil poetry like the *Paripadal*, he shows how we begin to prepare ourselves for the revelation of the numinous right within the natural and the human.

Corresponding to *Aham*-poetry of love-life, there was the *Puram*-poetry which related to the secular pursuits specially of war and peace. Here too he shows how nature is used as the real milieu of human life—though neither form of poetry, specially *Puram*-poetry, could be limited by the natural landscape. There is the deeper, inner landscape (or inscape) rooted in *arul* (grace) and *bhakti* (fervent devotion).

Heart of Tamil Culture

The point of great significance in all this that Fr Thani has repeatedly underlined is that unlike Vedic literature, Tamil poetry on the whole remains **secular** in the sense that the writers do not go out of the way to look for religious connotations. Rather, they teach us "a simple, spontaneous, unreflecting joy at contact with nature." Well said indeed. The focus on nature and the process of nature is truly remarkable. One might almost say that nature is like the Kingdom of heaven—quite an original and secular way of discovering that the Kingdom of heaven is like to nature!

In a sense the student of Tamil literature has a special preparation to understand the parables that Jesus spoke about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus spoke of the kingdom as very much like the process of nature. The kingdom of heaven, Jesus said, is like the seed that is sown, like the mustard seed, like the seed that grows secretly, like the seed that has to die.....

The fascination that Fr Thani Nayagam had for nature as expressed in Tamil poetry rejoins in some way the attraction he had for the kingdom of heaven as revealed by Jesus of Nazareth. "Look at the birds of the air, the flowers of the field." His life was one of communion with nature, neighbour and God as revealed in Christ. What seemed to be secular studies took him closer to what was most sacred in his religious experience.

The Grace of Nature

Scholars can rightly dwell on the various facets of Dr Thani Nayagam's personality and work, but the lesson I like to retain from his writings and conversations, and above all his life and friendship, is that one cannot be really religious and Christian if one does not strive to be natural and human. Grace builds on nature; or more exactly to our point: nature can be a divine milieu. Thus he underlined a forgotten dimension of true grace as the capacity for communion with nature and humanity.

And this striving to be natural and human, he taught us from the great Tamil classics which really are ecumenical in outlook long before our current, structured ecumenical movements. Fr Thani practised a wider ecumenism of openness to all religions. He was indeed a citizen of the world, quite at home in the East and West, North and South. How St Augustine who spoke of *anima naturaliter christiana* (the soul as being naturally or innately Christian) would have rejoiced to see the way Fr Thani has shown that aphorism to be true with regard to the literature of the Tamil people.

People's Rights

One matter which deeply occupied and pre-occupied him during the last few decades was the relation of politics to culture. He felt that the type of politics which the British left behind while assuring some form of social order and economic progress tended—as it has done even in the British isles—to stifle the soul of minority cultures under the pretext of unity and efficiency. Both in India and Sri Lanka, a centralized political economy often lost sight of the deeper values of a people's language and culture. The legitimate concern of assuring food, clothing and shelter, made some political leaders forget too easily that man does not live by bread alone.

One aspect of the living bread that man needs to survive is a people's particular sensitivity to what is beautiful and true and good in nature and nurture, and which flowers as culture and cult. When these cannot be affirmed and celebrated, then all the paraphernalia of modern civilization turn into dust without a soul. Life becomes lifeless.

That is why he devoted himself to fight for the rights of language and culture—not in any narrow, sectarian way—but in a spirit of international openness and Christian love. He felt that pragmatic uniformity assuring efficiency and success in a modern nation-state generally struck at the very root of human nature as a call to freedom in self-understanding and self-expression.

As an internationalist, he remained open to all cultures not merely in theory, but in real practice. He knew English and Italian literature as much as his own Tamil literature, not to mention his competence not only in the classical languages of India, but also in Latin and Greek. He understood well that true unity can be built only on the uniqueness of diverse cultures. He wanted that Tamil culture—so ancient and so new—be allowed to grow and blossom and radiate in the world its own particular fragrance of communion with self, nature, neighbour and the Unseen.

Sometimes Church authorities, at other times political powers, and occasionally both together misunderstood or felt threatened by Fr Thani Nayagam's initiatives. But with peace in his heart, he was ready to calmly proclaim to angry nationalists, arrogant imperialists, pragmatic politicians and diplomatic Churchmen the rights of man to his own culture, to his own language, literature, art, music and forms of worship.

In the spirit of the Tamil literature he cultivated, he wanted a harmony of cultures, specially when a one-sided worship of one's own culture can result in the horrible spectacles of Nazism and Fascism. He had experienced them first hand in Europe.

A dominant culture in a country or continent, just because it is the culture of the majority, is not necessarily a better or higher culture. It is a different culture. A dominant culture that becomes dominating and domineering loses its credibility; rather it must show its own inner strength by not being threatened by the cultures of the minorities. Thus using political power to propagate, with an eye to economic benefits, one's own language and culture, weakens that culture's innate ability to persuade, edify and enlighten. No culture can grow by putting down another culture. And the putting down can take subtle forms of benign neglect and quiet assimilation.

It is in such a context that Fr Thani Nayagam tried to make his discreet, prudent and non-violent word heard over the clashes of extremists on both sides. When I met him in recent years, he was more and more concerned and crushed by the spiralling violence of extremists. What was happening desecrated the cultures of both the majority and minorities. The values of both the Sinhala-Buddhist culture and the Tamil-Hindu culture—to mention the principal ones—were set aside by the political opportunists and philistine extremists. He suffered deeply from this turn of events (he never quite recovered from the tragic deaths during the Tamil Conference held in Jaffna); and he hoped against hope that unity and justice will prevail.

This may not be the place to go into the details of this national issue. From my conversations with him during my recent visits to Sri Lanka, one thing that came through was certainly not a desire for a separate Eelam (which he did not exclude as a viable alternative), but for justice, with greater autonomy in regional administration, somewhat along the lines that Mr Chelvanayakam had envisioned. This greater autonomy, he felt, should go hand in hand with due recognition of the bi-lingual and multi-cultural nature of the country.

Having spent as much time of his life in the South as in the North, he loved deeply the whole country, all its people, and the total mosaic of cultures that Sri Lanka is blessed with. He did not want to lose any of it. He lived and died a citizen of Sri Lanka, in spite of all his extended sojourns abroad. One need not lose one's identity as a Tamil because of one's citizenship. Rather, one can be enriched by interacting with other cultures with their different contributions to the perception of the good and beautiful within nature and human life.

To a country that is confused with various political, economic, religious and social conflicts, he repeated in contemporary terms, and lived out in such a simple way what the poet Kapilar expressed so succinctly in his *Ahaval* (which my father used to sing so beautifully at home in Jaffna):

குலமுமொன்றே; குடியுமொன்றே;
இறப்புமொன்றே; பிறப்புமொன்றே;
வழிபடு தெய்வமுமொன்றேயாதலால்

முன்னோருரைத்த மொழிதவறாமல்

எந்நாளாயினும் இரப்பவர்க்கட்டுப்

புலையுங் கொலையுங் களவுந் தவிர்ந்து,

நிலைபெற அறத்தில் நிற்பதை யறிந்து

ஆனும் பெண்ணுமல்லதை யுணர்ந்து

பேணியுரைப்பது பிழையெனப் படாது

சிறப்புஞ் சீலமு மல்லது

பிறப்பு நலந்தருமோ? பேதையிரே!

— Fr C. A. Joachim Pillai O. M. I.

A Witness to Christ

I last saw Fr Xavier Thani Nayagam in 1958. When he returned from Europe to Sri Lanka, for a time we corresponded — indeed I planned, unsuccessfully as it turned out, to visit that country in the 1970's mainly with the intention of seeing Fr Thani Nayagam again—and I thought of him quite often, as one does when a close friendship has been formed, and, from time to time, without evident cause one recalls a face, a smile and a warm presence.

Some hours after learning, with sadness, of Fr Thani Nayagam's death, I looked up, on my shelves, a copy of one of his books which he had kindly given me. On the fly leaf of *The Carthaginian Clergy* I found this inscription, which I had quite forgotten was there:

To Vince, In remembrance of our first Greek lesson,
Father Xavier.

London, Jan 14th, 1957.

That must have been near the beginning of our friendship. It was characteristic of Fr Thani Nayagam that, already knowing Latin and several other languages, he should decide, in middle life, to go on to Greek. He was, in the best sense, an adventurer. What I taught him was probably just the rudiments, our time being limited, but I expect he went on to master the language in which the Evangelists wrote, and to read such authors as Plato in the original.

The inscription in the book was also generous. Fr Thani Nayagam chose to thank me for my lessons without mentioning his own lessons about Tamil culture to me. For we had become acquainted when I was researching my biography of Roberto de Nobili the Italian missionary who worked among the Tamil inhabitants of southern India and following Matteo Ricci's methods in China, adapted himself to the habits of thought of the people of Madurai.

In summer 1958 I went to stay in the British School of Rome to search in various archives for documents about de Nobili. It so happened that Fr Thani Nayagam was also then in Rome. He kindly offered to say Mass, at which my wife and I could be present, in one of the catacombs—that of St Cecilia I think—where immediately after his ordination he had celebrated his First Mass. We accepted gratefully.

In the catacomb during World War II a number of Jews had been hidden and cared for by Catholic nuns. In gratitude they afterwards gave the catacomb a beautiful modern mosaic reproducing the subject of one of the catacomb frescoes: the Last Supper. The mosaic was on the wall above the simple altar where Fr Thani Nayagam said

Mass. In the silent underground passage there were only the three of us. I could not help being struck by the unusual intersection of time and space. In a catacomb where early Christians of diverse ethnic origins had sheltered from persecution and where Jews too had sheltered, a priest from Sri Lanka, educated in Tamil values and speaking Tamil as his first language, was saying Mass in Latin in the presence of an Englishman and a Frenchwoman. Never before had I realized so forcefully the universality of the Catholic Church. And that was only one aspect of a memorable occasion. For Fr Thani Nayagam said Mass with such serenity and devotion that the mosaic on the wall seemed wholly appropriate.

After Mass the three of us breakfasted together. Fr Thani Nayagam's courtesy and humorous banter were much in evidence. If only I had noted down what he said, and his manner of saying it! One of our friends, a young lady half-Italian, half-American, who met Fr Thani Nayagam at this time, said to us later, 'He is the sort of priest who should be made Pope.' Certainly he radiated goodness in a way that made her tribute seem reasonable.

That was almost the last occasion on which I saw him. We met once again in London, where he gave me valuable advice for my book on Nobili, published as *A Pearl to India*. He himself was not destined to remain in Rome, nor to continue to radiate among his friends in Europe but rather, like Francis Xavier and Roberto de Nobili, he returned to the East and there by his presence bore witness to Christ among the Gentiles. In one of his letters to me I recall Fr Thani Nayagam expressing sadness that the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka was labouring under political and social discrimination. That must have pained him deeply, since he was sensitive to injustice as to every form of evil. Yet he had been born with a joyful temperament, and his religion had sharpened that joy, so I continued to picture him through the 1960's and 1970's as a man transforming tribulation into something positive for his neighbours in Sri Lanka, as he had done earlier for those who had the privilege of knowing him in England.

— Vincent Cronin

A Pioneer Ecumenicist and A Courteous Humanist

My recollections of Father Thani Nayagam relate mainly to the period when I was working as University Chaplain in Peradeniya. I remember him as a personal friend; and I recall the fact that he was a Catholic priest who anticipated many of the attitudes that became widespread after the Second Vatican Council, while retaining the spirit of Catholic humanism at its best.

He was a genuine ecumenicist blazing a trail wherever he lived and worked. I well remember that he was the first stranger to call on me in the Chaplain's Bungalow after my arrival in Peradeniya. He was both welcoming and friendly. No doubt he had his personal convictions as a Roman Catholic about the unique nature of his own Church but he accepted other Christians as brethren in Christ though separated from his Church. He also recognised the clergy of other Christian Churches as colleagues, in the same spirit. I still have a book of his entitled *Approaches to Christian Unity* by Father C. J. Dumont O.P. which provides the theological basis for the attitude he adopted. We were thus able to work in co-operation, share insights and grow in friendship. In fact when he left Peradeniya, I took over his cook, a courteous Catholic of the old-school named Joseph, who came with me to Kurunegala and looked after me until he retired.

His ecumenicism extended to persons of other religions as well. He was in fact what is now called a 'wider ecumenicist'. His long study of Indian religion and culture made him accept other religionists as fellow-seekers and fellow-wayfarers in the pilgrimage to the Eternal, while keeping his own convictions about the unique status of Christianity. This willingness to appreciate the contribution of other religions to human culture, and to learn from their religious insights and moral values, was once again a pioneering outlook at that time. In terms of the Second Vatican Council he saw the Church as the sign and sacrament of the new humanity. He was thus able to envisage people of other faiths and ideologies making, their contribution to the building up of the new humanity in Christ, each in their own way and each according to their capacity. It was such a perspective that made him a recognised and respected colleague among Hindus engaged in Tamil studies. Likewise, it enabled him to make and keep friends from among the Sinhala Buddhists through a period of trial and stress both in Peradeniya and elsewhere in Sri Lanka. He was neither narrow nor sectarian. He retained a wider outlook and long-term perspective in the face of sectarian, linguistic and religious controversies. He always appealed to the highest ideals in times of crisis whether such an appeal was popular or not. There was both an universal and international dimension to his outlook that gave him a quiet confidence about the future even when the situation looked desperate.

My final comment is that he was a traditionalist in the best sense of the word. As a Catholic steeped in scholarship, he bore witness to the great tradition of Christian humanism. He saw all knowledge and wisdom, all life and activity that belonged to the human spirit, as enfolded in the Divine wisdom and will; he saw all that was human and good as sharing in the goodness of the Divine Spirit. Truth, beauty and goodness belonged to God as Source, Guide and Goal. In an article on 'The Scope of Adult Education', in a journal published in Peradeniya, he gave expression to this humane and humanistic religious ideal. He saw adult education as essential for a real democratic society and polity. It was a means which enabled an individual to perfect himself within the community by a process of life-long and shared learning. He quotes a renowned Catholic humanist, Sir Thomas More who envisaged such a process of life-long education as a 'garnishing of the mind'. Fr Thani Nayagam was a liberal in an age of increasing ideological rigidity and group conflict. He accepted people as persons rather than types representing racial, religious or ideological interests. He believed in the value and power of dialogue and reasonable discourse to overcome the barriers of antagonistic mentalities. These virtues are not highly rated at this time. But they respect the saner aspects of the human spirit and must be preserved until their importance becomes recognised once again.

I would like to add my simple tribute to a pioneer ecumenicist, a courteous humanist and a kindly friend.

— Rt. Rev. C. L. Wickremasinghe.

Humanist, Scholar, Priest

Most people in Ceylon today remember Thani Nayagam as an ardent advocate of the Tamil cause. They may not know the primal sources of this advocacy. For this it would be necessary to make a careful study of his writings on Tamil culture in general and on the National Question in particular. Such a study shows that he became an ardent advocate of the Tamil cause for the basic and over-riding reason that he was an ardent humanist. He was not a sectarian. He was never a chauvinist. His range of vision was not a narrow one. He was dedicated first and last to all that makes human beings human. Intellectually, culturally, even emotionally, Father Thani was an internationalist. He felt he was heir to all the human cultures of this multi-cultural land and he felt deeply when one of its cultures was threatened. It happened to be the one to which he as a Tamil had a special claim. He saw it as a claim not only to love the Tamil culture, but also to protect and promote it.

"Every Ceylonese should admit that because the Sinhala language is spoken only in Ceylon and because excessive bilingualism may prove detrimental to the interests of Sinhala culture, the Sinhala language and culture need special protection and encouragement. But must these protective measures be achieved....by the violation and confiscation of the national and official status of the Tamil language?", he asked in May 1956, the fateful month which preceded the presentation in Parliament of the Sinhala only language bill.

During the same period he wrote: "A last appeal may be made to the MEP (ruling party) leaders not to place the party before the country, and its stability, progress and unity.." And, prophetically, he continued: "To imagine that the Tamil-speaking population will gradually accept the measure is wishful thinking. History does not offer even one such example of a people accepting a language imposed against its own will".

In 1956 Father Thani took his stand with all the Tamils in the country who not only thought that the country was one but who were not even able to think that it could ever in modern times be more than one. By 1976 the situation had deteriorated and the Tamils were asking for a separate state. By then Father Thani had retired through ill-health from the hurly-burly of publications and public life. There is therefore no written record of what he thought about the demand for Eelam.

We can only surmise. His specialization was not politics. One does not know whether he would have subscribed to the view of political scientists that a national

minority has the right to self-determination, extendable even to secession. But as one who knew Father Thani since 1945 I know that a division of the country would have caused him infinite pain.

He once said that he regretted that, owing to the circumstances of his professional career, he did not have numerous friends among the Sinhalese. Yet, there are several evidences in his writings not only of his knowledge but also of his deep admiration and reverence for Sinhala Buddhist culture.

Never at home in the field of political struggle, Father Thani would never have wanted to be considered a radical and would have resented the charge of extremism. Yet, there is enough proof that his fundamental options were for the victims of injustice and oppression. Let us briefly adduce some evidence in two areas.

He was against caste and class discrimination. In *Pedagogica Historica* an international journal of the history of education, he wrote approvingly in 1963, referring to Buddhism: "The monastic systems, on the contrary, discouraged in the entrants pride of birth and station, and were egalitarian....of the early Buddhist monks and nuns, about one-tenth were from the lower classes".

He would have been a supporter of any demand for the equal rights of women. He wrote in 1968 that a great deal of religious literature concerning the nature and character of women reflected the views of ascetic male celibates whose self-repression and lack of "gentile humanism" in his own gentle manner he castigated.

His humanism rested on the twin bedrock of an amiable personality and the highest standards of scholarship. After humanistic and philosophical studies he took his Doctorate in Divinity with the highest distinction in Rome in 1939 at the age of 26, his M.A. and M.Litt. in Tamil language and literature at Annamalai University, then a Doctorate in Education in London. For eight years until 1960 he was a lecturer in the Department of Education at Peradeniya. Between 1961 and 1969 he was Professor of Indian Studies and Head of the Department at the University of Malaya. For two years there he was the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. His lecture tours as well as his research activities took him round the world. He was in the line of great priests and monks of our time and of every time who have immersed themselves in the secular because to them the secular was suffused with the sacred.

Throughout his successful career Father Thani remained a priest. He saw his mission as a priest completely integrated with his deep humanism and his dedication to knowledge and truth. If he will be remembered by most for having revealed to his contemporaries the human face of language and literature, only a few will know, even among his brother priests, that in that human face he had seen another—which he also wanted to reveal—the human face of God.

— Fr Paul Caspersz S. J.

Something Special from India

It is always sad to hear of the untimely death of a dear friend. I always keep thinking of Father Xavier as a very young man. About 30 years ago I was 42 years and he must have been about 36 and, since I have not met him in the intervening years, I picture him now as he was then. We have been corresponding during those years however.

I remember Father Xavier as a scholar and a gentleman. In those past years I was moderator of our diocesan council of Catholic women and attended many meetings in many parishes. He went with me on his "Promotional tour" and I always billed him as "something special from India". I taught him to say the "Philosophy of India" and not "Indian Philosophy"—to these Americans the latter always means "American Indian". He always did his work well and completely.

Being this far from India and not many of our people being world travellers, we always listened intently; he gave a clear picture of the Church in your country. He was famous for his scholarly and gentlemanly presentation. It made one feel proud to be a member of the Church to which such a scholar belonged. His talks were never loaded with humor but enough lighthearted to be delightful as well as informative.

Requiescat in Pace!

— Fr Leo Neudecker

A Citizen of The World

The death of the Rev. X. S. Thani Nayagam is a great loss, not only to his relatives and friends, but to Tamil Culture and the scholarly world in general. I first met him some twenty or twenty five years ago, and I last saw him in March 1980, when he was clearly ailing, although I did not realize—and nor, I think, did he—that the end was so near. I always made a point of seeing him during his visits to England, and several times, I had the pleasure of his presence in my home. I also stayed with him at Kuala Lumpur for a week or ten days in 1968, before he left Malaysia for Sri Lanka. His conversation was always a joy. Stimulating, witty and enlightening, but never malicious or prejudiced. He was in the best sense a "citizen of the world", widely travelled in four continents and on seven seas. He was always alert and receptive to new ideas, people and places; but he was never deflected by them from his vocation as a Roman Catholic priest. His tolerant and irenic outlook was a deeprooted conviction with him, long before it became as fashionable in certain circles as it now is.

Other contributors to this volume can write with authority about his outstanding services to Tamil culture in general and to Tamil literature, in particular. Unfortunately, I do not know Tamil, but even an ignoramus in this respect like myself could not fail to be impressed by his achievements in this field, which can be glimpsed through his translations of Tamil Texts, in whole or in part. In the last letter which I received from him (dated 29th May, 1980) he wrote:

"My physical health is not of the best, but I like to be mentally active and am looking forward to the period after the operation for cataract. At present, I am able to work on Tamil Texts, which are printed in large type, but can hardly work with manuscripts and historical records".

Alas, his wish was not destined to be realized. But although his premature death at the height of his intellectual powers, has deprived Tamil scholarship of one of its outstanding exponents, his extant work will remain his best monument and an inspiration for present and future workers in Tamil studies. As early as 1969, he had traced and catalogued about 120 booklets and books from the *Cartilha* printed at Lisbon in 1554 to the Tamil-English Dictionary of 1779, describing some of them for the first time. And this was only the "top of the iceberg" of his massively documented study

of Tamil printing from the mid 16th century to the late 18th. None of us who knew him well, irrespective of our individual race, class and creed, will ever forget him. We can say in the concluding lines of William Cory's poem *Heracitus*:

**Still are thy pleasant voices,
Thy nightingales awake,
For Death he taketh all away,
But them he cannot take**

— C. R. Boxer

A Man of The World

It was with the deepest sorrow that my wife and I heard on the 3rd of September 1980 of the death a few days earlier of Father X. S. Thani Nayagam. A Christmas card last December had informed us of his failing health, but to learn of his death was still a shock.

I remember him best for his unfailingly calm, efficient, and cheerful administration of the complex affairs of the International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies which I witnessed at Kuala Lumpur and at Paris. The even more difficult meetings at Madras and Jaffna also bore the imprint of his administrative genius. The smooth driving in harness of so many horses, which at times wished to gallop in different directions, was no small matter. But in addition I remember well the elegance of his personal hospitality on these occasions—particularly in Paris at a small dinner at the Tour Eiffel.

Between these occasions at Kuala Lumpur and Paris I remember Father Thani Nayagam's stay at the University of California in Berkeley at the Faculty Club, when he worked in the University Library, said Mass at the Catholic students' chapel, and charmed his fellow residents at the Faculty Club by the erudition and quiet wit of his conversation. He charmed too my wife and myself over dinner at Fishermen's Wharf in San Francisco by his reminiscences of boyhood in similar maritime surroundings in Ceylon, punctuating our view of the sunset over the Golden Gate with apposite quotations from the English poets.

Father Thani Nayagam was indeed an admirable person—urbane and elegant, learned in many cultures, open-minded and intellectually growing, a man of the world in the best sense. Of his spiritual life as a priest of his Church I am ill-equipped to write—but that it formed the central core of his life I have no doubt. His devotion to the Tamil classics too must be spoken of by others—but it was obviously one of his deep interests. We have lost prematurely a most valuable and valued person and friend.

— M. B. Emeneau

A Foremost Sri Lankan Scholar

I like to speak about the life and work of the Rev. Prof. Thani Nayagam, a foremost Sri Lankan scholar of Tamil language and literature. The sad news of his passing in Sri Lanka a week ago, at the age of 67 has just reached us. Some Sri Lankans here may remember him as an old boy of St. Patrick's College or as a member of the Roman Catholic clergy in Colombo, or as a lecturer in Education at the University. I came to know him personally just over 25 years ago, when he joined the staff of the University of Ceylon. Later on he became Professor of Tamil at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, where I was Professor of Mathematics. The years we worked together at these two universities, and particularly the years in Kuala Lumpur, had brought us together a good deal, and our acquaintance grew into close friendship. After returning to Ceylon about 10 years ago, though living partly in retirement, he had continued to work as a Catholic Secular priest and remained active in matters concerning the Tamil language, literature and culture, which had been a main concern through most of his life.

Thani Nayagam had his early education in Ceylon, but went for specialised studies in Tamil at Annamalai University. His training for the Roman Catholic priesthood took him to Rome where he lived many years. His natural flair for languages enabled him while in Rome to study and master several languages. He could read and speak fluently some dozen languages, including French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. He had also spent some years at the Institute of Education in London and obtained Ph. D. for a thesis on Education. His degree from Rome included D.D., or Doctor of Divinity.

With this broad background of training and influence, Fr Thani Nayagam was able to bring a modern outlook to problems of research into Tamil language, literature and culture. He used modern critical techniques of linguistic research into an area of study where long tradition had been the uncritical acceptance of points of view of distinguished predecessors. He inaugurated an International Journal, called *Tamil Culture*. Scholars from different parts of the world reported in this journal their research findings on matters concerning Tamil language, literature, history and culture.

As world-wide interest in Tamil studies grew, he raised with some of the leading scholars the possibility of an International Association of Tamil Research. The idea received warm support, and the association known as I.A.T.R. (International Association of Tamil Research) was inaugurated. Professor Filliozat of Paris was President.

The Vice-Presidents were Professors Burrow of Oxford, Emeneau of the U.S.A., Kuiper of the Hague, Meenakshisundaram of Madurai, and Varatharajan of Madras, all giants in the field of Tamil Studies. Thani Nayagam was appointed Secretary-General. The first in the series of Research Conferences was held in 1966 in Kuala Lumpur. The University and Government of Malaysia gave warm support, as Tamil is one of the four official languages of Malaysia, the others being Malay, Chinese and English. Fr Thani Nayagam did the hard work of organising the Conference. Both my wife and myself were members of a representative Organising Committee, and the Conference, opened by the Prime Minister Tunku Rahman, proved an enormous success, with all well-known scholars attending and with representatives from about 25 countries. The proceedings were later published in two expansive volumes. Subsequent conferences have been held approximately every three years; the second was in Madras, the third in Paris, the fourth in Jaffna, and the fifth in Madurai.

Besides the two particular contributions which Fr Thani Nayagam had made to International Tamil Studies, namely the Journal and the I.A.T.R., I should also refer to the number of scholarly books he has published, and to the number of students who have come under his influence and who may be expected to continue to work for the objectives which Fr Thani Nayagam had set himself. Sri Lanka has lost a distinguished son and the International Community of Tamil Scholars have lost their good friend.

Before I end this short personal tribute, I quote from a comment he made comparing certain languages:

“If Latin is the language of law, French the language of diplomacy, German the language of science, and English the language of Commerce, then Tamil is the language of Bhakthi.”

Bhakthi may be translated as ‘Devotion to the Sacred and the Holy.’ Coming from one who knew so many languages and who himself was a Roman Catholic priest, I regard that comment as very significant.

— C. J. Eliezer

Reminiscences of Fr Thani Nayagam — The Peradeniya Years

Friends in general, leave in you a composite impression which is the result of numerous experiences shared together, whether they be pleasant or unpleasant, of varied reactions, stored up in memory, to the same situation, and a host of other recollections of common interests and pursuits followed together. But of all the friends I have, I do not remember any first impressions, of the day or occasion on which we first met, or what we said to each other. Fr Thani Nayagam is, however, different. Although I knew him over a long period and we often met and talked together and even planned some research together, what is foremost in my mind are the impressions I formed of him when we first met at Peradeniya.

I shall try my best to describe what these impressions are. They are partly intellectual and partly emotional. I will put it this way: if one can imagine a perfect manifestation of a combination of depth of intellect, sincerity of emotion and modesty that would be Fr Thani Nayagam. There are people you can catch unawares, when some hidden dishonesty or duplicity in their natures suddenly reveals itself from behind a mask under which it is carefully concealed, if only for a brief moment. I have the habit of looking at people when they are not looking at me in order to catch a glimpse of their real selves, to see whether these real selves are different from the selves presented to the outside world through overt behaviour. And on many occasions I must say I have had the occasion to suspect that such a difference did exist. Perhaps this may not necessarily have been duplicity. It may have been hesitation or uncertainty in the other's mind, and I may be guilty of being suspicious of people. But whatever that may be, I must say that Fr Thani Nayagam was the one person who passed this test with honours, scoring full marks. He wore no mask of any sort. Whatever he said he said straight from the heart. And what he said was at once sincere and truthful. There were no half-truths in his words. If he had to utter a truth that was unpleasant, he made it as pleasant as he possibly could, but there was no attempt to distort it or to deceive even out of kindness. The greatest kindness would be, after all, not to deceive.

Fr. Thani Nayagam would have rejected the Sanskrit dictum which said,

Speak the truth; speak that which is pleasant.

But speak not even the truth, unpleasant if it be.

Fr Thani Nayagam left the University of Peradeniya and went to Malaysia, but with a heavy heart. He did not say how unhappy he was to go, but we knew it. The skies were darkening that time with the clouds of communal disharmony, and he seemed

to have resigned himself to an inexorable fate that drove him away. No one at Peradeniya wanted him to go. We all knew that a certain richness in the life at the University would be lost by his departure. But in the circumstances, in which we all felt helpless, no one could open his mouth and tell him to stay.

We never discussed communal harmony together. But he and I talked together of the points of contact between the culture of the Tamils and the culture of the Sinhalese. How one had enriched the other and could do so in the future. This was highlighted, in those years, by the revival of the Nadagam form and the music belonging to its tradition. It was also apparent in a number of folk cults of the Sinhalese village, which were being unearthed and described by anthropologists.

But this knowledge had to be spread among the people, said Fr Thani Nayagam. With this end in view he proposed a journal, especially devoted to research in Sinhala-Tamil culture. He was hoping to organise such a thing from Malaysia, but it was not possible. There he had a heavy load of work, organising an entire department. But I doubt if it gave him lasting satisfaction. He would have been happier being here and doing something to right the wrongs that were happening here.

We respect some people but we do not always love them. Some people to whom we are prepared to accord the attribute of greatness, do not possess lovability. Contrariwise, those whom we love do not always earn our respect. They may receive our sympathy, but that is different. Fr Thani Nayagam was one of those people whom we could respect and love at the same time. He was respected by all his pupils and his friends, and they all loved him as well.

— Ediriweera Sarachchandra

Priest, Scholar and Patriot

One by one the lights go out. A senior generation of Tamil patriots have departed from the scene leaving a people almost orphaned but for the new leaders who are striving to come to the fore. From the time I knew Father Thani Nayagam, he was right in the vortex of Tamil nationalism. He did not belong to any party and this left him free to take up independent positions on the issues of the day. I have reason to believe that the concept of federalism was attractive to him. However for the greater part of his "romance" with Tamil nationalism he concentrated on the preservation of Tamil culture and the protection of the Tamil language.

This dedication to the Tamil language and Tamil culture, he married into the second of his vocations—university teaching. He had had a long and distinguished record as an exponent of Tamil history and scholarship during his sojourn in South India. He then came to the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya as a lecturer in education. I do not think the position had an appeal to him. But he liked Peradeniya and he loved his friends there. Then came his distinguished appointment to the Chair of Indian Studies at the University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, shortly after which he also became Dean of the Faculty of Arts. This was the zenith of his second vocation. He had by then published a great deal, written many books and articles and won acclaim and laurels in the world of academe.

But at his back there was the winged chariot of Tamil nationalism always drawing nigh. At Kuala Lumpur, Father (as he was often called) organized the First World Conference on Tamil Studies which proved a tremendous success both for Tamil scholarship and the cause of Tamil nationalism. The proceedings of the Conference was followed by a two-volume publication comprising contributions from the primadonnas of Tamil scholarship the world over, the work being edited by Father. While in Malaysia, Father was also busy raising the consciousness of Tamils of Sri Lankan origin there. What is more, he made frequent visits to Madras to advocate the cause of the Tamils of Sri Lanka to the leaders of the Indian National Congress and of the DMK in Tamil Nad. He had the singular advantage of being a friend of many of the leaders in both political parties. He was also close to C. Rajagopalachari.

Late in the 'sixties, ill-health began to take a toll on Father and he decided to retire back to Sri Lanka. For a year or so, he came and lived with me at my residence in Peradeniya at the time that my children had moved to Colombo to pursue their education, and opportunity had come my wife's way to practise her profession as a librarian at the Industrial Development Board in the capital city. Just before I left for Canada,

Father decided to find his last home in one of the residences of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Jaffna. His health deteriorated but his interest in the Tamil cause remained alive to the end. I visited him on occasion during my recent spells in Sri Lanka and we also corresponded from time to time. The theme was usually the cause of Tamil nationalism.

The fact of the matter was that Father was an unusual blend of priest, scholar, university teacher and a Tamil national leader. This was a heavy load for any person but Father proved a success in each of these vocations (I deliberately have refrained from describing any of these as "professions" because Father never looked at them as such preferring to regard each as a calling in the reverential sense). Father however never gave into the temptation of resorting to didacticism and moralizing repetitiveness—an occupational hazard resulting from the doubly compounded necessity of being priest and university teacher. Nor did he seek to move with the times and be in the trend by identifying himself with radical thought and youth militancy. From first to last he remained a Tamil nationalist. His classic **Language and Liberty in Ceylon** published shortly after the enactment of the Official Language Act in 1956 will forever kindle the hearts of genuine votaries of the Tamil cause.

Father was a cultivated civilized human person. He enjoyed exercise. He loved reading. He often listened to western classical music and he frequented Tamil music festivals in Tamil Nad and Sri Lanka. My wife and I accompanied him in some of his attendances. He would many times wander into discussing the philosophy of life, its meaning and its purpose, bringing into the discussion his lifelong study and immersion in Roman Catholic theology. True to his gifts as a versatile man, he was also dedicated to the study of languages which in a way made him a complete person. He was fluent in more than eight languages. And his world consequently was ever expanding in concentric circles.

The Tamils have lost a selfless leader. Many of us will miss a true and loving friend. He was extremely close to my father-in-law, S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, to the late M. Tiruchelvam and to his wife Punitham and he was very near to the late G. G. Ponnambalam. Father was fearless in his advocacy of the Tamil cause. He realised sooner than others the importance of identifying himself with the central issue of his times. The relating of that story and its details will be a work in itself for a future historian of Tamil nationalism.

— A. Jeyaratnam Wilson.

Xavier S. Thani Nayagam: His Malaysian Years (1961—1970)

Father, as we all loved to call him was appointed to the Foundation Chair in Indian Studies in the University of Malaya in 1961. When he took up this Chair and the direction of the growth and development of Indian Studies in that University, the position relating to the academic study of India, its civilization, language and literature, was far from satisfactory. The Department of Indian Studies had just been moved from Singapore and, though it had produced some very bright and able graduates, it lacked an overall and balanced growth as between the various approaches that have to be integrated in an understanding of that great civilization. This was Father's task and the sum total of his achievement.

The 1960's in the University of Malaya were a decade of growth. The University expanded during these years into exciting areas of academic achievement. The Government supported it with ample funds. Very able and highly motivated students enrolled in the University, the best products of an excellent secondary school system. All the Departments of the University expanded their staff, their course offering and their research contributions. The Department of Indian Studies was in the forefront of this growth, Professor Thani Nayagam was one of the University's outstanding stars, an adornment to its counsels and a respected voice in its deliberations. From being a small, inward-looking Department, it had grown in the 10 years that Fr Thani Nayagam headed it, to an active centre of teaching and research, with a large staff, huge student enrolments, much postgraduate work, greatly respected within the University and with a growing international reputation.

Father's strategy for the growth of the Department was carefully planned and skilfully executed. It grew out of a philosophy of Indian culture and its Dravidian, and specifically Tamil, component that he had held for many years and now had a chance to expound in planning the curriculum and activities of the Department. He perceived that the teaching of Indian civilization in a Malaysian context required specific approaches and ought to perform specific functions. In the first place, it had to reflect the needs and concerns of the immigrant Indian population of Malaysia and Singapore. It had to provide for them an opportunity to study academically the roots of their traditions and culture, their languages and literatures. As the great majority of these Indians were Tamil speakers, and as Tamil was a living language recognized in education and usage in the country, any University studies had to provide high level training in this language and its literatures. He therefore made it the

central concern of the Department. In this he was working on his own field of strength and in his own area of the greatest academic contribution. His love of Tamil literature was easily imprinted on his colleagues and others and soon he collected round him an enthusiastic band of Tamil academics teaching various branches of Tamil literature and equally enthusiastic groups of students studying Tamil at various levels. To this was added Tamil grammar, creative writing, linguistics and other tools necessary for an understanding of the Tamil language. To serve the needs of instruction in Tamil language and literature was to be the first concern of the Department.

The second function of a Department of this sort in Malaysia was to impart instruction on all aspects of Indian civilization in a multi-racial society and to establish Indian Studies as an academic discipline on par with other University subjects. Towards this end, it was necessary to plan courses suitable to a Malaysian criteria and bringing in the main University disciplines in the humanities. In doing this, Father had the advantage of his background and training as an educationist, in the theories and practice of education. He attracted to his Department, Historians, Archaeologists and Sanskritists who developed courses in their specialities, designed to present Indian civilization in its variegated aspects

Within a short time, under his leadership, the Department had built up a structure of courses on Tamil literature and language, Sanskrit literature and language, linguistics, Indian history, art and architecture, philosophy and religion. These courses were integrated into a programme leading to an honours degree in Indian Studies and a general degree in that subject combined with one other subject in the Faculty of Arts. In addition, basic language courses were offered in Tamil and Sanskrit which attracted large numbers of students of widely diverse ethnic backgrounds: Tamils, Telugus, Malayalees, Sikhs, Malays, Chinese, Eurasians. Courses in the history and culture of India, its art, thought and society evoked great interest and students from several other Departments enrolled in them to broaden their studies. Graduates from the University were thus trained at two levels. There were the few who pursued the study of Tamil language and literature through the original sources and became proficient in many aspects of Tamil studies. These graduates secured employment in teaching, mass media organizations and the bureaucracy where their special skills were of great value. Then there were many others who graduated with a knowledge of various aspects of Indian culture and tradition and some knowledge of one of the two languages Tamil and Sanskrit. These graduates also found employment in the civil service, teaching and a wide variety of private sector jobs.

All these developments were pursued with great attention to the maintenance of the highest standards of scholarship. Father Thani Nayagam was a patron of excellence and he was keen that the Department of Indian Studies should be noted for its pursuit of excellence. To maintain standards in parity with other well-known institutions where these subjects were taught, he invited famous scholars of Tamil language and literature as external examiners. They were drawn from Universities such as

Madras, Annamalai and London and included such noted scholars as Professors M. Varadarajan, T. P. Meenakshisundaram and R. E. Asher. What this meant was that the Department received international recognition in respect of the quality of its degrees and its graduates had no difficulty in securing post-graduate enrolment in Universities in other parts of the world.

Father Thani Nayagam was not only keen on fostering under-graduate studies; he also emphasised the importance of post-graduate studies and research undertaken by members of the staff. His attractive personality and generosity brought together a group of able young students to undertake postgraduate research in the Department. Within a few years a number had completed Master's theses under his supervision and that of his senior colleagues and some of them went to work on their Ph. D's. Some of the best scholars were appointed to staff positions. Father promoted research by his example and inspiration. He was constantly researching and writing himself, attending conferences and, of course, continuing to edit the journal **Tamil Culture** from Kuala Lumpur. His work was an example to his colleagues who also started to publish.

To promote and assist the publication of scholarly work by his colleagues he started a Department of Indian Studies Monograph Series. A number of works were published in this series, mainly of the younger scholars whom he had encouraged and supported. These works ranged from studies of Tamil society, literature and culture to linguistics, dialect studies and Malaysian Indian society, as well as bibliographies on Tamil studies. These publications more than anything else, put the Department on the map of international Tamil Studies scholarship. •

By far the greatest achievement and one that decisively broadened the vision of the Malaysian Indian intelligentsia was the organization of the First International Conference of Tamil Studies in the University of Malaya in 1966. Father Thani Nayagam was the sole initiator of the idea and the constant driving force behind its implementation. He successfully brought together disparate groups of interests and individuals consisting of the Malaysian Government, ministers of state, including the Prime Minister, the University of Malaya, prominent Indian groups and individuals, business and funding bodies, U.N.E.S.C.O., apart from similar support in India and Sri Lanka. He welded these people together into a team, working at various aspects of policy and organization. The eventual result was an international gathering that brought together for a week nearly 200 participants from a number of countries spread over all continents. The meetings took place in a number of panels, organized around themes of wide-ranging scope, providing not merely an interchange among scholars but also the vital role of exposing the Malaysian Indian public to lectures and discussions from some of the best Tamil scholars from India and other parts of the world. It was a memorable experience to all participants, but particularly so to those in the Department of Indian Studies and to Malaysian Indians generally. The papers presented were later published under his general editorship in two volumes and remains today a solid tribute to Father's magnificent conception of these years.

He was one of the University's outstanding academics, with a recognized international standing and consequently widely respected by his colleagues. He enjoyed the respect of the University authorities for as long as excellence was valued by the authorities of the University. He was elected to various bodies and served a term of office as a popular Dean of the Faculty of Arts. The then Vice-Chancellor introducing him to the audience before he delivered his Inaugural Lecture in 1962, referred in glowing terms to his scholarship and his rare proficiency in a number of languages. In his lecture he lived up to this expectation by delivering a very learned discourse on *Indian Thought and Roman Stoicism* which would rank among his most penetrating contributions.

It is not solely by his contributions to academic learning that he will be remembered in Malaysia. In fact, Father has always been much more than an academic—he has held that learning must seep down to the people and that the scholar's findings on Tamil culture and Tamil literature must be disseminated to the ordinary man. He had already done much towards this end in India and Sri Lanka. Now he took the opportunity of his residence in Malaysia to perform these functions in that country. Even before he took up residence in Malaysia, he was known in that country as a great expositor of Tamil culture both in English and Tamil. In fact, it was he who had inaugurated the **Tamilar Vizha** (Tamils Festival) in 1952 when a representative group of Tamils invited him to be the chief speaker on this occasion. This then became an annual festival celebrated throughout peninsular Malaya and Singapore and he was invited to speak on many occasions. He captivated Malaysian Tamil audiences with his excellent oratorical abilities. This function he was now able to perform more intensively while living in Malaysia. He gave unlimited support to Tamil teachers' groups, Tamil writers' bodies and other cultural organizations. He brought those bodies within the orbit of the Department of Indian Studies by organizing seminars, lectures and study groups for them and patronizing their activities in every way. His contribution in these fields has left a far greater emotional attachment to him on the part of such groups who today remember him with affection.

Any assessment of Father Thani Nayagam's contribution during his years of residence in Kuala Lumpur should take note of both what he did within the University as well as outside it. Within the University he gave to the Department of Indian Studies a coherent philosophy and shape, an aim and ambition to which his successors could aspire. He stamped on it his personality, his love of scholarship, his pursuit of excellence and, above all, his concern for the aspiring student. The University community found the Department an intellectually and socially attractive place and derived great satisfaction from its curricular and extracurricular activities, its academic and cultural contributions. The Tamil Language Society, to which he extended his patronage and his guiding counsel, provided much enjoyment in the University through its activities.

There is further his impact on the University at large. Here he moved with ease among his fellow-academics of many other disciplines. His social graces and his generous hospitality attracted to him the friendship and respect of the senior academics

of the University. These 1960's were in many respects the greatest years of the University of Malaya. As one by one the intellectual giants of those years left Kuala Lumpur, Father became increasingly lonely and finally he himself decided to leave in 1970. But by that time much of what he came to do had been accomplished.

In the country at large, and among the Indian/Ceylonese community in particular he left behind a love and affection that was more emotional and more overtly displayed. Many who had heard him speak in public platforms or talk informally at social occasions gave their hearts to him. It was such people whom he returned frequently to see after he had left Kuala Lumpur to live in Jaffna.

Thus he leaves behind in Malaysia a twin legacy: of intellectual accomplishment and of emotional attachment. People who came into contact with him drew on one or the other of these legacies and many had the satisfaction of enjoying both.

— S. Arasaratnam

Father Thani Nayagam and his Work: The Creation of the IATR

I met Rev. Fr Thani Nayagam for the first time in 1955 at Colombo. I was already aware of his reputation as a man and as a scholar. I was struck at first by his humanistic or rather universal culture. Differing from both the European and Asian scholars, ordinarily specialized in their regional culture only, he was fully acquainted with the Latin, French, Italian, English languages and their countries, as well as with Tamil and with his motherland.

His proficiency in languages was not merely colloquial but based on a deep and refined knowledge of literatures. So he was a gifted international scholar.

I was not surprised when, some years later, Thani Nayagam proposed together with Professor Kamil Zvelebil, his European fellow in universal culture, the creation of the International Association of Tamil Research (IATR). It was in January 1964 at New Delhi, during the International Congress of Orientalists.

At that time Thani Nayagam was Professor at the University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. So only he organised there the first International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies, in April 1966. I got then the opportunity and honour to work close to him and to enjoy his friendship. The Conference in Kuala Lumpur must be recognised as a landmark on the way of the Tamil studies.

In the past, Tamil and Dravidian studies had been confined to Tamilians and to foreign lovers of Tamil. They were left aside in the development of the general Indology. The Kuala Lumpur Conference gave the occasion to gather also eminent sanskritists and to claim internationally the necessity to integrate Tamil literature, culture and arts among the major sources of the history of India and Southeast Asian countries which have been in close and continuous relations with India during centuries.

The second Tamil Conference, at Madras, in January 1968, has been an enthusiastic mass gathering but also was managed in a scientific way with the help of Thani Nayagam. The third one, at Paris, in July 1970, was under my responsibility, in my office in the Collège de France, but was largely prepared by him. He was at that time associate professor to the Collège de France and I had the honour and fortune to work once more with him.

In the following years he was unfortunately attacked by an insidious disease depriving us of his activity and guidance in the International working.

Now we have lost his dear presence but we are sure his scientific spirit must be kept in the mind of the Tamil scholars.

His spirit, as we have said, was universal. His work remains a permanent testimony of his enlightened love for Tamil poetry so much inspired by Nature. He rightly insisted on this aspect of the literature in *Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry* (1953) and in *Landscape and Poetry: A study of Nature in Classical Tamil Poetry* (1965).

His work is also a model for paying true justice to the Tamil civilization.

In our time, some indologists still keep the prejudice of the insignificance of Tamil literature, considered as purely depending on the Sanskrit one.

Other peoples are systematically against Sanskrit and all foreign influences on the genuine Tamil tradition, but without knowing what may be actually genuine.

Thani Nayagam was an impartial scholar thanks to his wide horizon. He was anxious to respect the opinions of others. That is why he has prepared one book, *Tamil Culture and Civilization* (1970), by selections of readings by various authors. He was fully aware of the duty for science to inquire and discuss the facts and data and to prove rather than to plead. With this attitude he has personally done much in the international scientific circles for our dear Tamil.

— Jean Filliozat

The Spiritual Father of the IATR

The year 1980 has bereft the world of Tamil scholarship, and me personally, of two great savants and dear friends: Mayilai. Sini Venkataswamy and Father X. S. Thani Nayagam.

Mayilai. Sini Venkataswamy died on May 8, 1980, after a long illness. I am still under the obligation of my promise to him to review and eventually translate into English his last book, an outstanding study of the Kalabhras in Tamil Nadu.

Father Thani Nayagam passed away on the first day of September, 1980.

I have not seen him in a long time. He will always remain in my memory as a man of strength, a source of energy, a fire of inspiration. I can never forget the handsome head with the broad forehead, the penetrating eyes, the proud mien, the firm mouth, all characteristic of a sharp intelligence, an enormous will, deep knowledge and broad education, a sense of definite purpose.

I have known him for a number of years before I first met him in person. When *TAMIL CULTURE* was still a young journal, and while I was still a young, beginning Dravidianist and Tamilologue, we exchanged long letters, and not only on matters of scholarship, but also on much more intimate problems of life, faith, philosophy and religion. While I would address him "Carissime et reverendissime Pater", he would respond with the warm and intimate "Carissime Camille". When he published his outstanding book on nature in classical Tamil poetry, I reviewed it eagerly and indeed very positively on the pages of *Archiv Orientalni*, a journal published by the Oriental Institute in Prague where I was then active. And thus, in these years of our first contacts by correspondence, the germ of the idea was born among the three of us—Father Thani Nayagam, Prof. V. I. Subramoniam and myself—to organize an international association of scholars devoted to Tamil studies. The IATR was first conceived of between 1958 and 1962.

Unfortunately, I do not possess any of the pertinent correspondence. It was left behind in Czechoslovakia in 1968, and by now it may be destroyed or scattered beyond recovery.

I first met Prof. Thani Nayagam in Delhi in 1964, when I was a delegate at the International Orientalist Congress. By then it was decided, among Thani Nayagam, V. I. Subramoniam and myself, and I am certain, among a number of other scholars in the field with whom Thani Nayagam must have been in lively contact either by person

or correspondence, that we shall lay the foundation stones to the IATR then and there. I remember well the discussions we had about the orientation and character of the IATR: long before it was actually founded, and from its very beginning, we agreed on three guiding principles for the Association: it must be truly **international**, truly **scholarly**, and truly **critical**. Though there might have been some slight differences among us concerning other matters, these three principles were never questioned. They were accepted by others, too, who participated in the first sessions and activities of the Association: Jean Filliozat, M. Varadarajan, F. B. J. Kuiper, R. E. Asher and others. The one true spiritus movens behind the activities of the IATR, and its spiritual father was, indeed, Thani Nayagam. His sound judgement and his great international vision were coupled with his honest, warm and genuine Tamil nationalism.

For me, though, January 1964 in New Delhi was a very remarkable time for more personal reasons. I learned to know Father Thani Nayagam from a very close, intimate perspective. I remember in detail our first meeting in the Hotel Ashoka; his warm hospitality, his fatherly concern about my health, his sense of humour. I remember well one beautiful clear and cold morning when I first participated in the Mass said by Thani Nayagam at the residence of the Archbishop of Delhi and then had private breakfast with the Father and the Archbishop. These were unforgettable moments, particularly for someone coming from Czechoslovakia!

There is one detail which—though it may sound somewhat irreverent—characterises well Father Thani Nayagam's sense of humour and his hospitable and attentive nature. When I arrived in my room at the Ashoka Hotel in Delhi and opened the cupboard the first thing I saw was a bottle of superb French cognac with two glasses, all ready to drink. And only then the door of the room opened, and Thani Nayagam sailed in majestically in his long white cassock, immaculate, dignified, almost imperial but with a slightly ironic, and yet very warm and friendly smile on his handsome face. We drank to the success of launching the IATR.

To this day I am blissfully unaware who it was that financed my stay in the hotel; perhaps the archdiocese of Delhi, perhaps some incognito Maecenas of Tamil studies, perhaps Father Thani Nayagam himself. I never found out.

Whenever I subsequently met Thani Nayagam—in Madras, in Paris, in Madras again—he always had words of encouragement for my work and of friendship for me personally. I always regarded him as a great man, with mixed feelings of admiration, awe and affection. His love of Tamil was fierce but critical, for he had supreme regard for truth.

— Kamil V. Zvelebil

His Long-lasting Revolution in Tamil Studies

The passing away of Fr X. S. Thani Nayagam in Sri Lanka on 1 September 1980 marked the disappearance from our midst of a savant of great academic acumen, an organiser *par excellence* and one who created a long-lasting revolution in Tamil-studies by earning for it international acceptance by his constant exposition of the great wealth and antiquity of the literature of Tamil. The founding of the International Association of Tamil Research (IATR) at Delhi in 1964 in which I was a co-signatory because others could not appreciate the idea and the first International Conference of Tamil under the auspices of the Department of Indian Studies in Kuala Lumpur, Malaya in 1966 and later the second Conference in Madras in 1968, the third in Paris and the fourth in Sri Lanka were his greatest achievements.

Born in Sri Lanka, he studied Theology in Rome and later Tamil in the Annamalai University in 1944-47 and continued there for the completion of the M.Litt, went for PhD in Education to the London University, established a Tamil Kazhakam in Tuticorin (Tamil Nadu), published a few books under its auspices of which the translation of *Pattupattu* into English by the late J. V. Chelliah was one. He joined the Department of Education, Ceylon University for a brief period, became the first Professor of Indian Studies in the University of Malaya from where he retired to Ceylon to lecture in foreign countries and write what he wanted to do. His wider schooling in philosophy, language and education and extensive travels were of immense use in founding the Tamil Academy around 1954 and the Journal, *Tamil Culture*, which was published for about seven years, later revived through the *Journal of Tamil Studies*, now published from Madras under the auspices of the International Institute of Tamil Studies (I.I.T.S). His ability to speak half a dozen foreign languages placed him in good stead in all his contacts. He had the divine gift of impressing people and to gather them together for a noble cause and put through with marvellous efficiency, programmes from which others will shy away. The interest and admiration the world conferences of Tamil had created in the academic world encouraged Sanskritists/Hindi scholars, Andhras and Keralites to organise such conferences. Thus many languages of India have benefitted by his pioneering efforts. Tamil particularly gained international importance because of his scholarship, devotion and contacts.

His writings on Tamil were mostly interpretative containing brilliant suggestions for further research. The rigour and pleasant presentation and his selfless service to the cause of learning will be gratefully remembered for a long time to come.

It was in the Annamalai University while fellow students younger to him kept a respectable distance from this priest of the Catholic Church, I had intimate contact and had many hours of discussions on Tamil and religious literature. He was well-versed in *Tevaram* and *Tiruvacakam* as he was in the *Bible* and had an English version of *Rigveda* which he had loaned to me for a few days urging me to study that. It was a surprise, at that time, to see a priest of the Catholic order reading and discussing poetry of a purely religious type of the Hindus. This friendship struck in that University lasted throughout our life and only a week before his demise he wrote with his own hand his acceptance of the membership of the Advisory Committee of the Encyclopaedia of Dravidian languages and people, commenting that it is a most laudable venture. His handwriting was steady and I never expected that his end will be so sudden.

Tamils as a lot are very grateful to savants from whichever country they are from. But the Tamils realize their services only after many years of their death and deify them. Contemporary notices about them will be few. Let not the Tamils make this mistake again. It is Fr X. S. THANI NAYAGAM who organised the IATR and spear-headed the Conferences up till the fourth.

Fr Thani Nayagam gratefully remembered and honoured now will create many more THANI NAYAGAMS. Tamil and other Indian languages need such leaders badly for achieving places of honour in a competing and self-centred world.

— V. I. Subramoniam

IATR: The Outcome of his Original Inspiration and Sustained Interest

There are few men of outstanding attainment of whom it can be said that what they achieved could have been achieved by no-one else. One such person was undoubtedly Father Xavier S. Thani Nayagam.

Some three decades ago, Father Thani Nayagam began to feel an increasing concern at the relative lack of interest shown towards the study of Tamil language and culture by the international world of scholarship. It was not that scholars who were not native speakers of Tamil had shown no interest in the language and its literature. That this was not so is made clear by such of his own publications as *Reference Guide to Tamil Studies-Books* (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1966) and *Tamil Studies Abroad-A Symposium* (Kuala Lumpur, International Association of Tamil Research, 1968). The length of this interest in Tamil on the part of European- and later of American—scholars, going back as far as the seventeenth century, did not, however, alter the fact there was in the years after the Second World War little appreciation outside India and Ceylon of the greatness and the antiquity of the Tamil heritage. Father Thani Nayagam set out to change all this and to do it single-handed. Subsequently, he was to receive significant support from others, notably his good friend Mr A. Subbiah, but no-one can doubt that without the original inspiration and the sustained interest provided by Father Thani Nayagam, little progress would have been made towards giving Tamil its proper place in the minds of men of culture the world over.

In retrospect it would appear that Father Thani Nayagam was particularly well prepared for the task he set himself. His studies at school (in St Patrick's College Jaffna) and at college (in St Bernard's Seminary, Colombo) included Tamil as one of the subjects and he later took an M.A. course in Tamil language and literature at the Annamalai University. His thesis for this degree was subsequently prepared for publication as a most important book, *Nature Poetry in Tamil—the Classical Period* (Singapore, Dewan Bahasa dan Kebudayaan Kebangsaan, 1963) which later appeared in a revised edition as *Landscape and Poetry* (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1966). His ability to present Tamil to the outside world was, at the same time, not dependent solely on his formal study of his mother tongue. He was well-educated in other languages too, including English, of course, but also Hebrew, Biblical Greek, Latin and Italian.

His first major venture in the journey towards his goal was the founding of the quarterly journal of Tamil studies, *Tamil Culture*, of which he was to remain Chief Editor for a decade and a half. Setting up this periodical was a great act of faith, for none but he could possibly have envisaged its enormous success and influence.

Much good for the development of Tamil studies came out of his being from 1961 to 1969 Professor and Head of the Department of Indian Studies in the University of Malaya. There he built up courses in Tamil language and literature in a country where Tamil was only a minority language and could for that reason have been entirely unappreciated there. No less valuable was the encouragement he gave to research, not only in the field of classical Tamil literature, but also on the work of twentieth century writers and on the modern spoken language.

It was during his early years in the University of Malaya that Father Thani Naya-gam conceived the idea of an international conference as the next logical step in making Tamil culture more widely known internationally. It was clear to him that this would be difficult without the existence of some at least semi-formal body to be responsible for arranging such a conference. Accordingly, at the XXVI International Congress of Orientalists in New Delhi in January 1964, he convened a special meeting of scholars in the field of Tamil studies. Sixty five scholars from fifteen countries attended and the International Association of Tamil Research was formed as a result. One of the objectives of the Association was to be an International Conference.

Before the end of 1964, Father Thani Nayagam, in his capacity of Secretary of the IATR, was able to announce that it would be possible to hold a Conference at the University of Malaya in April 1966. Quite remarkably, given the shortness of time available, arrangements were completed for this First International Conference-Seminar to take place on schedule. It proved to be a miracle of organisation and a most memorable event, with a permanent record in the form of two volumes of Proceedings.

The pattern was thus set for a series of Conferences—in Madras, Paris, Jaffna, and in Madurai. There was universal sorrow among delegates at the Fifth Conference that the founder and the inspiration for the whole series was no longer with us to take his due and honoured place in the proceedings. All remembered his scholarship, his high standards, his determination in the face of difficulties that would have made a lesser man lose heart, his quiet dynamism. The proper understanding of the greatness of Tamil culture that now exists will be his permanent memorial. Our consciousness of the gap his death leaves in the world of scholarship will nevertheless not hide the fact that what many will miss most is the warmth of his friendship.

— R. E. Asher

The Apostle of TAMILIAN Studies

Tamilian Studies was to Rev. Thani Nayagam a way of life. He believed in the oneness of humanity and was a firm believer in the words of the Twentieth Century poet Bharathi who said that the test of greatness lies in the respect accorded by foreigners. He was instrumental in taking the Tamil language to various parts of the world and was considered a beacon light in the Tamil speaking world.

It is necessary to assess his contribution to Tamilian research. On 7 January 1964 when a conference of Orientalists was held in New Delhi, the International Association of Tamil Research was established thanks to the efforts of Rev. Thani Nayagam. He organised the First International Association of Tamil Research Conference in Malaysia in 1966 on an unprecedented scale and Tamil scholars from Europe, America and Asia participated. The then Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who delivered the welcome address had this to say:

"The Department of Indian Studies is fortunate in having as its Head a person who is not a narrow specialist, but one who commands a knowledge of several languages. I refer to Professor Thani Nayagam, Dean of the Faculty of Arts. No doubt his leadership has been one of the reasons for your choice of the University of Malaya as the venue for your Conference."

The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr M. Bhaktavatsalam, had this to say:

"I am glad that the University of Malaya and the National Education (Indian Schools) Development Council of Malaya have taken the lead in convening this Conference, and I note with pleasure that Rev. Father Thani Nayagam had pursued the proposal vigorously and made it a *fait accompli* today."

The second international Association of Tamil Research Conference took place in 1968 in Madras and the third in Paris in 1970. In these Conferences too Rev. Thani Nayagam had a big role to play. In a sense the International Association of Tamil Research is the child of Rev. Thani Nayagam. This child had a few anxious moments in its tenth year. In 1974 before the Fourth Conference was held in Jaffna, the International Association of Tamil Research was subject to tremendous pressures. It became necessary to have the Conference despite the opposition of certain prominent figures and the government. At that time it was alleged that Rev. Thani Nayagam had abandoned his child. But he was the custodian of a culture that did not know the betrayal of children. He fought for the survival of this child and when he spoke at the Conference he made it known that his ambition was wedded to the growth of this child.

In the inaugural address delivered at the Fourth International Association of Tamil Research Conference Rev. Thani Nayagam stated,

"This Conference would have had much greater impact if there had been a University in Jaffna. If Tamil research is to grow then Universities must be established in the North and East of Sri Lanka. I would also like if the Fifth Conference takes place in Madurai."

His dream has come true. Universities have been established in the North and the East of Sri Lanka. The Fifth Conference took place in Madurai in January 1981.

What has Rev. Thani Nayagam really achieved through these Conferences? First he exploded the myth that research in Tamil language and literature was possible only to those who spoke Tamil as their mother tongue. Tamilian studies has broken through its narrow confines and grown in various ways. Instead of being confined to language and literature, research is being undertaken in the history, sociology, religion, philosophy, archaeology, international relations, culture, fine arts and linguistics of the Tamil speaking people. As a result of this so much of new light has been shed on the greatness of Tamil literature, Tamil culture and the antiquity of the Tamil language.

Further, as a result of his efforts Tamil has become part of the teaching programme of many foreign Universities. The Professors there are engaged in Tamilian research. There was a time when western Universities did research only in Sanskrit and Indo-Aryan languages. Now the situation has altered and research is being done in Tamil language, literature, the history of the Tamils and Tamil Culture. There was a time when foreigners learnt Tamil for political domination, religious propaganda and trade. Today, they study Tamil for its intrinsic qualities and for purposes of research. They believe that it would not be possible to comprehend the fundamentals of Indian culture and Arts without a knowledge of Tamil. Their love and respect for the Tamil Language is evident from the fact that some have given Tamil names to their children. Russian scholars have been enamoured of Tamil to the extent of calling themselves 'Chempiyan' and 'Ainkunran'. A Czechoslovakian scholar has christened his daughter 'Kannamma'. These scholars would like their epitaph to be 'A student of Tamil'.

Rev. Thani Nayagam who was the driving force behind these revolutionary changes was also the ambassador of Tamil culture wherever he went. He gave speeches on the antiquity of Tamil culture and fostered in various countries a love and regard for the Tamil language. The journal committed to the dissemination of the heritage of Tamil language, *Tamil Culture*, was founded by him. He also served as its editor for a number of years. Thus, the very breath of his life was the Tamil Language. Wherever Tamil speaking people live, there Rev. Thani Nayagam will be remembered. Scholars interested in Tamilian studies are found in various parts of the world today. They too will uphold the memory of Rev. Thani Nayagam.

— S. Vithiananthan

His Impact on Dravidian Studies

Professor Rev. X. S. Thani Nayagam has made a tremendous contribution towards internationalising Tamil Studies. He was a Catholic priest who championed Tamil Culture. Catholic Christianity is an international religion and it seems to have helped him a great deal in his life-time task of internationalising Tamil studies.

He was the founder and editor of *Tamil Culture*, a quarterly journal, devoted to Tamil studies, for over a decade. It was this Journal that paved the way for recognition of the importance of Tamil studies at an international level. It was probably a recognition of this work that made it possible for him to become the first Secretary-General of the IATR.

He was the live-wire of this organisation during the first few years of its inception. The work of this organisation and the tireless efforts of Thani Nayagam led to the foundation of the International Institute of Tamil Studies in Madras. There are many scholars who feel that Thani Nayagam should have been made its first Director. He could have given the organisation the necessary push in international circles.

Thani Nayagam's work led to the foundation of many other organisations for research in Dravidian studies. Not entirely satisfied with the work of the IATR on holding occasional International conferences and with the slow progress in building up the International Institute of Tamil studies, Professor V. I. Subramoniam founded the Dravidian Linguistics Association. Professor Subramoniam felt that Thani Nayagam had not gained the recognition he richly deserved and he wanted to honour him by appointing him a Senior Fellow of the DLA.

The interest evoked in Tamil studies by International conference seminars stimulated interest in such International conferences in other South Indian States. Telugu language soon followed Tamil. A number of International conference-Seminars had been held and an International Institute of Telugu studies had been set up in Hyderabad. The second International conference-seminar on Malayalam and Kerala Culture is going to be held soon.

Thus Thani Nayagam's work directly led to raising Dravidian studies to International level and attention.

— A. Veluppillai

A Sage Among Scholars

Among the band of Tamil scholars who have endeavoured to explain and interpret the culture and civilization of the Tamils to the Westerners, Rev. Thani Nayagam occupies a unique place. Since the birth of Oriental studies and especially Indology, a few European savants have done yeoman's service in introducing Tamil Language and Literature to Western scholars. One of the earliest was G. U. Pope (1820-1907) who has endeared himself by his effusive love for Tamil language and literature and by his many translations of Tamil works into English. As has been aptly remarked, Pope contributed much "to the elevation of Tamil studies and Tamil religion as legitimate subjects of study for Oriental scholars". A few other European scholars have likewise by dint of their earnestness of purpose and their life long devotion to the cause of Tamil and Dravidian scholarship have earned for themselves an imperishable place in the annals of Indological research. From Pope to Zvelebil there is a galaxy of distinguished and respectable names that are inseparable from international Tamil studies.

While the European scholars have done their part in unveiling the literary heritage of Tamils, Tamil scholars themselves have lagged behind in this matter. There were no doubt a few isolated attempts by Tamil scholars to translate into English some of the classical works and expatiate on them. P. Arunachalam, T. Isaac Tambyah, J. V. Chelliah, P. Sundaram Pillai, V. V. S. Aiyar, V. R. R. Dikshitar and M. S. Purnalingam Pillai are some of the names that linger in our memory. Pioneering and prodigious as their works are, they were the result of occasional excursions into the world of letters. Broadly speaking, the Europeans were inclined towards philological pursuits and the Tamilians were drawn towards literary matters.

Father Thani Nayagam was perhaps the first Tamil scholar to realize and react to this compartmentalized nature of Tamil studies and strove to evolve an integrated approach towards them. Steeped, as he was, in European humanist studies, he formulated a cultural approach that would not only encompass language and literature but also the arts and other accomplishments of the Tamils. On that basis he made a sustained and systematic endeavour to interpret Tamil culture in its totality to the world at large. To him culture was at once specific and universal. Whereas Tamil scholars before him had largely confined themselves to certain fields like literature, philosophy, history and religion, Father Thani Nayagam worked towards a unified view.

He understood culture in its broadest and best sense as an accomplishment of a particular race or nation. The arts and sciences and other achievements of the Tamils were shown by him to be integral to the Tamil way of life. In his own words,



they were the "result of the *Weltanschauung*, the world outlook of the Tamil speaking people". His was essentially a humanist approach to culture moulded by a harmonious blend of Tamil ethos and English critical sensibility. Time and again he took up the task of defining and elucidating the fundamentals of Tamil culture. In that sense much of his writing were notes towards the definition of his culture.

He would have readily concurred with the statement that culture, "reaches into our capacity to take in thoughts, ideas, beliefs and mannerisms, it is expressed in styles, conversational tones, modes of personal intercourse in the way we eat what, with what, and when and what we call what we have eaten". In his lecture on the "*Characteristics of Tamil Culture*" he echoed similar ideas. To him culture was indeed a conscious achievement of society. In "*Tamil Culture-Its Past, Its Present and Its Future*" a lecture he delivered in 1955 he said:

"While it is true that a culture may not be created artificially, it is equally true that it is in the power of men to contribute to the causes and work at those conditions necessary for a flowering of culture, and it is also in the power of men to combat those intellectual errors and the emotional prejudices which stand in the way of such conditions. The survival and the continued growth of Tamil culture is, therefore, in our hands."

The quotation provides the key to an understanding and appreciation of Father Thani Nayagam. While conceding the fundamental fact that culture operates unconsciously he is quick to add that it is in the power of men to create the necessary condition conducive to the flowering of culture. Here we clearly see his sense of volition. A scholar not merely content with elucidation and exposition but intent on doing his best to a noble cause. To quote him again:

"It is selfless and noble to dedicate one's time and energies under God to one's Culture and one's Country. The Tamil sage implied that Tamil Culture is the dearest possession of the Tamil people for the preservation of which no sacrifice would be great enough, not even life itself."

The gentle scholar who spoke of the "sweetness" of Tamil Language and the greatness of life of altruistic love was at the same time capable of defending a cause and if need be fighting intolerance and injustice. He was not one of those proverbial scholars living in their secluded ivory towers. It is the deep concern for the people who create and perpetuate cultural ideals that inevitably led him to study contemporary Tamil groups in many parts of the world. He pioneered studies in this area and wrote a number of original papers that focussed attention on the geographical distribution and demographic statistics of Tamil speakers or groups of Tamil descent in nearly twenty countries. In fact his idea for an International Association for Tamil Research was itself a logical outcome of his abiding interest in the Tamil 'diaspora'.

However, Father Thani Nayagam's espousal of the Tamil cause should not be confused with the sort of cultural chauvinism that is rampant in the Tamil socio-political scene. He arrived at Tamil cultural studies after a prolonged period of study in Europe, as a result of which he was able to apply the comparative method in his inquiry into classical Tamil Literature and Philosophy: his researches were characterized by comparisons that transcended national boundaries. While writing with eloquence and passion on Tamil culture what he cherished most was the sense of universality that abound in Tamil Literature. The lines of an ancient Tamil bard that Father Thani Nayagam popularised through his innumerable lectures in the countries he visited and which he made central to his thesis was the well known epigram of Kaniyan Poonkunran.

"Every country is my country
Every man is my kinsman"

As a comparativist Thani Nayagam had very few peers. His brilliant lecture "*Indian Thought and Roman Stoicism*" delivered at the University of Malaya (1962) on his assumption of duties as Professor of Indian Studies testifies to his mastery of the comparative method. In a memorable passage he made an observation that has since then become an academic credo.

Today, it should be hardly considered scholarship to compile the history of University education and ignore Taksasila, Nalanda and Kancipuram; to discuss the nature of epic poetry and ignore the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, and the *Silappatikaram*; to write on the history of the scientific study of politics beginning with Machiavelli and yet not to mention the older *Arthasastra*, to analyse mysticism and forget the Tamil bhakti poets; to explain methods of Scholasticism and fail to mention altogether Samkara and Ramanuja, to teach of architecture and by-pass the Moghuls; to teach the history of sculpture and ignore the Nataraja bronze which in spite of its four arms, pace Ruskin, or was it because of them, Auguste Rodin and Ananda Coomaraswamy were convinced, synthesised the highest achievement and total exploitation of sculptural possibilities.

Nor was his interest entirely limited to high culture. Although he was at times prone to view culture as a conscious process of perpetuating, enshrining and valuing certain aspects of it, he never made a fetish of it. As a sober scholar he was sensitive enough to respond to popular or mass culture. In his plea for the systematic study of Tamil groups scattered all over the world he said:

"A comparative study of the retention of folkways and folk literature among the older generation of Tamil migrants in the various countries to which Tamils have migrated would be a most interesting study."

In adopting the comparative method and in pursuing the humanistic cultural ideal and in viewing culture as an aspect of total social coherence, Father Thani

Nayagam was acting not only in the best traditions of humanistic scholarship but also on the basis of modern tenets of scientific inquiry. In that sense he fulfilled the urgent needs of the world of Tamil studies. Max Muller's dictum on pioneers and path-finders seems apposite here.

"Great men, depend upon it, do not come down from the sky like shooting stars. They come in the fulness of time, and if we want to understand their true character, we must try to understand that fulness of time, that is, the time that lay behind them and the time that lay before them".

Father Thani Nayagam's contributions to Tamilology have now become part of our intellectual history and scholars and researchers in time to come will no doubt see them in different perspectives. What their evaluation and conclusions will be is a matter for conjecture. But to those who had the pleasure of knowing him personally both as an individual and as a scholar his memory will always be fresh and fascinating. His attachment and affection towards friends, his abiding and agile enthusiasm for matters intellectual and aesthetic, his instinctive fervour for all social and liberal movements in the cause of humanity and above all his inherent generosity were experienced by all who came in contact with him. His fondness for literary and poetical expression was matched by his fondness for flowers. And both were symbolic of his gentle and humane nature that made him a sage among scholars. As many Tamils were wont to call him, Thani Nayagam Adigal will always be remembered as an extraordinary sage who lived and moved in the world of Tamilian thought.

— K. Kailasapathy

He Responded to the Call of Indian Historiography

History needs men to make it and the great and the resourceful of men accomplish it by responding to that need with full dedication and foresight.

Around the fifties of this century, Indian historiography was at a turning point.

Those very exhaustive and intensive studies made of the culture of the Gangetic Valley, its authors and its diffusion into other parts of the sub-continent and even beyond in the South East Asian region, began to reveal that there was something more in that culture-complex, which until then was considered exclusively 'Aryan' and Sanskritic. The linguistic researches of Burrow and Emeneau, the archaeological excavations of Wheeler, the cultural studies of Filliozat and Sunil Kumar Chatterjee all revealed the urgent need to explore the Dravidian South more closely. And Tamil perhaps the only non-Aryan language in India, which possesses a literature that records the changes that were taking place with the penetration of the Aryan influence began to attract the intellectual attention in a manner that it had not in the earlier days. A thorough scientific examination of its resources needed analysis and elucidation.

But then there was no organizational base for such studies nor even an institutional forum at which those scholars interested in meeting this new demand of Indian historiography could meet.

It can now be said not as mere words of appreciation in an obituary, but as an historical fact that Father Thani Nayagam responded to this call of Indian historiography, and with the active support and able guidance he had from those senior researchers then in the field, was responsible for the formation, inauguration and institutionalization of the International Association of Tamil Research. The dialectics of history is well asserted in the fact that this association was founded on 7 January, 1964 on the occasion of the XXVI International Congress of Orientalists, meeting at Delhi, the *Polis par excellence* of the Indo-Gangetic traditions.

That the IATR had formed the watershed of Tamilological research is now a fact of history. But the significance of the IATR is something more than academic.

At a time when within India the Tamils were striving to establish their political identity as a nationality, at a time when in Sri Lanka the Tamils were demanding their acceptance within the national body politic as a legitimate minority group needing constitutional safeguards and at a time when in Malaysia and Singapore the Tamilians felt the necessity of the continuity of their religio-linguistic traditions as the only safe-

guard for the preservation of their ethnicity, the formation of the IATR, the international status it achieved, and the past histories it recalled provided the struggling Tamils with confidence in themselves and with moral support for their voiced and unvoiced claims. History supported politics. To the thousands of Tamils of India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia caught in the politics of their assertiveness and or of survival, Fr Thani Nayagam, the leading figure in the IATR, became the symbol of their aspirations.

The contribution of the IATR and Fr Thani Nayagam to Tamilian consciousness during these days when the Tamils as an ethnic group faced an identity crisis has been great. And Fr Thani Nayagam, the academician became a house-hold word at every social and literate level of Tamilian existence. This explains his popularity. It provides the clue to the great esteem and reverence in which the Tamils held him.

The uniqueness of Fr Thani Nayagam lay in the fact that he had the personality and the training to perform this historic task. A Roman Catholic priest, with, as Barbara Jencks described, the "polish of a diplomat, the vocabulary of a Pulitzer prize winner and the accent of an Oxford scholar", he could communicate in convincing terms to the Western mind the uniqueness of Tamil culture. Within the Tamilian environment, he moved with the grace of a scholar ascetic, a venerated symbol of the entire tradition and spoke with fluency, charm and clarity that goes with that scholastic tradition.

A Christian priest, no doubt, but he was not the proselytiser from an "alien" culture; he was a Tamil scholar indeed but not one of the conservative pundits who shunned both piercing questions and illuminating comparisons. In him the essential Tamil mixed gracefully with those universals of a world culture.

The Tamil intelligentsia, faced with the problems of political and cultural identity needed the image of a man who could combine the best of both East and West and Fr Thani Nayagam, with his deep inner convictions of the catholicity (universalness) of the cultures each rooted in its tradition and environment provided that much needed image.

Fr Thani Nayagam was not a Tamil scholar alone. He symbolized the universality of Tamil culture and was rightly taken so by the people.

This explains the deep and inconsolable grief the Tamil-speaking communities all over the world were thrown in, on hearing the news of his death.

In symbolizing this unity of the East and West, Fr Thani Nayagam had no need to pretend. This feeling of the catholicity of the Tamil culture in terms of universal humanism was some thing that emanated from his very spiritual foundations. We are able to get a glimpse of this inner tradition in his less known but very significant preface he wrote for the American Edition of *"The Carthaginian Clergy"*:

"Their (the Fathers of Carthage and Alexandria) warnings and counsels guide us in chartering a wise and safe course in the process of making the church "incarnate" in India in its culture and in its civilization. **Their social interest and charitable works teach us that where poverty reigns we cannot constitute a class by ourselves but bring the church into the market place, into the hut and the hovel, the shack and the slum. And is not Dravidian culture, that broad-based foundation on which the temple of Indian thought has been built as ancient, as distinct and as fecund as the Egyptian culture and the Graeco-Roman culture that were the fields where the early sowers cast their evangelical seeds?"** (emphasis added)

This is truly the voice of a Christian Humanist, who had set to view the "classical" achievements in human wisdom and intelligence against the background of Christian Love and Piety.

As an academic, Fr Thani Nayagam's major contribution had been to trace and delineate those strands of Humanism in Tamil culture. All his writings whether on the "Landscape and Poetry of Ancient Tamilnadu" or on the "Aspects of Tamilian Humanism" or on "Indian Thought in ancient Tamil Literature" or on "Indian Thought and Roman Stoicism" reveal this major trend of his research studies. As a Christian Humanist he high-lighted more the ideals the Tamils lived by, though of course, he had also not failed to mention the material bases of their culture. All his efforts at the comparative evaluation of Tamil literature and the culture from which it arose were to discover these perennials of humanism as discovered and experienced by the Tamil man.

His academic strength lay in the "marriage" of the rigorous self-discipline the Catholic Church imposed on its scholars with the liberal egalitarian traditions of British research. This necessitated an inter-disciplined approach and proficient as he was in the classical and modern languages and trained as he was in the humanistic disciplines, he was able to bring to bear on the main theme of his research—Tamil culture—the inter-disciplinary method. Thus in this world of specialisations and intraspecializations he was able to move with felicity and authority from Educational Thought to Literary Criticism and Anthropology to History. He wrote with ease, clarity and sensitivity in both English and Tamil.

It was as a research student that I first met him. He encouraged new lines of research. He had the magnanimity to encourage research even when he knew that the findings could be radical and not much in line with his own thinking on the subject. It is my sincere conviction that it was his encouragement that was able to create a younger group of researchers who like him adopted the interdisciplinary approach to Tamilian studies.

Fr Thani Nayagam, as his name in Tamil means, was a "unique leader" among Tamil researchers. Each of his achievements was a contribution to the elucidation of Tamil culture.

—Karthigesu Sivathamby

A Light of Guidance to Minority Groups

In an article of appreciation of a distinguished scholar and outstanding personality personal reminiscences cannot be withheld. It may thus not be taken as unwarrantable to mention a brief interview in Kuala Lumpur in 1966 after the International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies as my first contact with Professor Rev. X. S. Thani Nayagam. The interview gave an impulse to consider in a wider context the problem of language and cultural identity which I as representing the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church in India had to face in Malaysia and Burma. The well established Tamil speaking congregations in those countries maintained their language and cultural and social traditions, but as small minorities in different cultural surroundings spontaneous growth in their spiritual, hereditary culture needed constant fresh impulses from the "Motherland". Signs of a growing adaptation to the surrounding cultural majority complicated the issue. Professor Thani Nayagam as Head of the Department of Indian Studies at the University of Malaya proved to be a light of guidance in respect to the problems we faced on many practical issues. Meeting him again in Sri Lanka in 1974 underlined the gravity of issues of that kind, and when turning to the literary production of Professor Thani Nayagam the attitude of his becomes a sign of dawn, the approach of a time of new respect for hereditary, cultural traditions of minorities. Even a limited contact with his writings brings home to the reader not only his deep concern for the Tamil language but also for its preservation and importance in common people's communicative ways. He speaks at one time of a need for 10,000 Tamilians in Sri Lanka to devote their sincere interest and attention to the Tamil language, and already in 1952 an editorial in *Tamil Culture* by his hand deals with the problem under the heading "*The Survival of Tamil Culture*".

Admiration and veneration is due to Thani Nayagam for his successful enterprise in starting and editing that quarterly Review dedicated to the study of "Tamiliana". *Tamil Culture*, began in 1952 and appeared regularly with four issues per year till 1966, later followed by *Journal of Tamil Studies*. It is especially noteworthy that Thani Nayagam carried a heavy burden as editor for three years and continued contributing articles all through the years. Of the greatest value for an understanding of the vitality of Tamil is the volume *Tamil Culture and Civilization* printed in 1970.

To meet the problem of Tamil minorities in other countries the author of "*The Survival of Tamil Culture*" emphasizes as an indispensable need for Tamilians to study their past culture with its literary monuments. He is in no doubt about the interest and enthusiasm such study can produce. He adds, however, a remark of importance not in the least for concern about maintaining the connection between congregations

of Tamil Christians as touched upon at our first meeting. A study of past Tamil literature can create lasting result only if nurtured by the cultural elements in the family. Again the broadminded, popular implantation comes to the fore. The spirit of the past must become alive if the culture shall survive. In a way of significant contrast, or better as a proof of the necessity of it, an article followed called "*The Tamils turn Sinhalese*" by Swami G. Prakasar, which illustrates the change into a new culture throughout.

Along the line of his study and concern for Tamil culture abroad among Indian minorities the elaborate report and investigation of "*Tamil Emigration to the Martinique*", published in 1969, occupies an eminent place. It is thorough and very well documented giving exact information about the migration of Indian labourers to the French colony in the Carribean Sea. A majority came from Tamil Nadu, and relevant to our special point of approach are such pieces of information as the reduction of the use of Tamil among people of the second generation but also the fact that from 1858 four days' holiday was granted to enable the immigrants to celebrate Pongal. A Tamil word that became common was the term "Coolie" which the Indians were said to use of themselves "without any shade of semantic stigma" (Op. cit. p.91) In the 20th century full political rights were enjoyed and the young people grew less conscious of their origin. Nevertheless ceremonies like Karumantiram, on the 13th day after death, were observed, and names of several well known gods from Tamil Nadu were registered with their shrines such as Mathurai Veeran, Mariamman and Kaali. As a special feature is mentioned the cult of Nagoor Mira, a Muslim saint whose grave is a well known place of pilgrimage in South India. To what extent preservation not to speak of growth of Tamil culture in the West Indies can be expected remains to be seen but even in those distant areas the revival of language and culture in Tamil Nadu may have its effect.

Very rightly Thani Nayagam stresses the importance of work 'at home' in his survey "*Tamil Studies during two Decades*" printed as opening article in the *Journal of Tamil Studies* 1, 1, 1969. After providing a detailed survey of the many steps taken in other parts of the world to give justice to the importance for the world at large of the Tamil language and its cultural aspects, which he is anxious to emphasize in respect of Anthropology, Literature and Music, he expresses anxiety to see it grow more and more in Tamil Nadu itself. Tamil culture must not be of antiquarian interest only. This is also rightly motivated with the insufficiency in foreigners' approach and study however serious and well motivated they may be. Writing as a foreigner with 26 years of life in Tamil Nadu I feel it is appropriate to end up my personal deep respect and gratitude for the personality and lifework of Professor Rev. Thani Nayagam by wishing for an effective and progressive unity among students of Tamil language and culture from all countries.

— Rt Rev. Carl Gustav Diehl

The Society of Jesus owes a Debt of Gratitude to Him

Prof. X. S. Thani Nayagam, who passed away all too soon, has deserved well of scholars of Tamil language and culture. Through the pages of *Tamil Culture*, a journal founded and directed by him (1952-64), he, together with an international team of collaborators, brought out and made it possible to bring out studies on various aspects of Tamil culture.

In 1954 he undertook an extensive tour of Europe to look for manuscripts connected with Tamil culture in Europe's principal libraries and archives. He put down the result of his research in two separate articles entitled, "*Tamil Manuscripts in European Libraries*" and "*The First Books Printed in Tamil*", which appeared in *Tamil Culture* 3, 1954, 219-28 and 7, 1958, 288-308. In the course of his research in the National Library of Lisbon he discovered the manuscript Tamil grammar of Fr H. Henriques, and in the Vatican Library a printed copy of the *Flos Sanctorum* (Fishery Coast 1586) of the same Fr Henriques as also a copy of the dictionary of Tamil language by Fr A. de Proenca (printed in 1679). He brought out a fac-simile edition of this last in Kuala Lumpur in 1966 (on it see an article of his in *Tamil Culture* 11, 1964, 117-27), whereas Fr Rajamanickam published a new edition of the *Flos Sanctorum* in Tuticorin in 1969. Mrs. J. Hein is currently busy in the USA with the preparation for publication of Fr Henriques' *Arte* or grammar of Tamil language.

In his studies Fr Thani Nayagam also referred to the earliest Tamil prints to appear in India in which the Jesuits had a decisive part to play. Among the closest collaborators of Fr Thani Nayagam there were also a number of Jesuits, like L. Bazou, Francis Morais, P. Ceyrac, V. M. Gnanapragasam and H. Heras.

The figure of Rev. Thani Nayagam, whom I met for the last time in Colombo in 1974 at the end of the Seminar on Tamil Studies held in Jaffna, will remain ever fresh in my memory.

— Fr Joseph Wicki S.J.

Father Thani Nayagam's Contribution to Tamil Bibliography.

I met Father Thani Nayagam for the first time at the IATR Conference in Kuala Lumpur in 1966 when I was very much at the beginning of my career and from the start his work, most of all his approach to Tamil research, has been a great inspiration to me. He was one of the few people who could look at the question of Dravidian Studies in the wider context of International scholarship without ever being narrowed down by emotionalism, over-specialisation or personal idiosyncrasies. His was a truly pre-Newton approach to scholarship. In addition, his bibliographical work and the international conferences he organised, or helped to organise, greatly helped to further the availability of Tamil research material in Western countries. When I first took up my present position at the Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books in the British Library (then the British Museum) in 1965 it was extremely difficult to persuade Indian book-sellers to supply Dravidian language material. Over the years there has been a noticeable change of attitudes, slow at first but with each Conference, gathering in momentum and now most reputable book-sellers in India and in the West will automatically supply special book lists catering exclusively for the subject of Dravidian language, literature, history and culture. Father Thani Nayagam's untimely death has been a great loss to all of us who are seriously interested in a detached and scholarly study of Dravidian culture and we owe it to him to make every effort to continue our work in his spirit.

— Dr Albertine Gaur

He Put Tamil on the World Map

I have been asked to write a short appreciation to this volume of tributes dedicated to Father Thani Nayagam. I do so most readily, because Fr Thani Nayagam was a close friend of mine (and somewhat related to me by a common uncle) and also because he was a person of whom every Tamil could be proud. In his death the Tamil world has lost one who has done it great service and, in the sphere in which he worked a person hard to replace.

I used to see him when he was teaching in Ceylon and also when he was teaching in Malaya, and of course after his retirement quite often. Many times have I told him that for the last 1000 years no one has done more for the Tamil language than he. In doing so I was not uttering words of flattery but words of sober truth.

The essence of Fr Thani Nayagam's scholarship lay in the fact that he was a philologist and not a mere Tamil scholar. There are thousands of people who know more Tamil than he did. The reason that enabled him to make such signal contribution to Tamil was that he brought his vast philological scholarship to the cause of promoting Tamil.

Fr Thani Nayagam knew many languages. So when he spoke about Tamil language and literature, people knew that here was a man who knew many of the world's languages but who still was passionately devoted to Tamil. If a man knew only one language and pleaded its cause, people would have put it down to mere fanaticism or said, "Sour grapes; he doesn't know anything else so pleads for the only language he knows."

Here, on the other hand, was a man who could speak with authority to international gatherings and impress people with his points of view, because they would know that he was a highly cultured man with a wide background, not indulging in wild exaggerations (like saying certain Tamil books were written ten thousand years ago) but one who knew the histories of other languages and their linguistic rules, putting forward the case for a particular language. The word of such a man carried authority with world scholars.

Looking back on Fr Thani Nayagam's life and work what may be considered his special contributions?

1) He discovered and published some rare Tamil books, unknown before, or known only by name, like the two versions of *Thampiran Vanakkam*, *Flos Sanctorum* and the *Portuguese - Tamil Dictionary*.

2) He discovered the remains of Tamil culture in the archaeological remains and cultures of various countries of South East Asia.

3) He founded and, for many years, carried on a Journal of high standard, called *Tamil Culture* to which many scholars from many parts of the world contributed and which dealt with many questions of the relationship of Tamil to the rest of the linguistic world.

4) He also edited a book, called *Tamil Culture and Civilisation*, which brought together in classic form the ideas of many international scholars on the place of Tamil in world culture.

5) By his travels and contacts with Tamil scholars in many parts of the world and of various nationalities, he deepened interest in Tamil.

6) He was also responsible for interesting many great Universities whose concern with Indology had been confined to Sanskrit studies, by making them include the study of Dravidology also in their curriculum.

7) He founded the International Tamil Conference, the first meeting of which was held, oddly enough, in Kuala Lumpur, simply because he happened to be Professor there. This and the subsequent conferences have brought together scholars from many parts of the world in their search for answers to various recondite questions which only philologists can raise.

Altogether, Fr Thani Nayagam's chief contribution to Tamil lies in the fact that he has put Tamil on the world map; otherwise it might have remained a language known as spoken in the extreme South of India and certain areas in the small Island of Ceylon. It is to his credit that he has made known to the world, the antiquity, beauty and copiousness of Tamil. For this every Tamil should be proud of him and remain grateful to him.

— Rt. Rev. S. Kulandran

A Great Loss to Tamil Studies

The death of Rev. Dr X. S. Thani Nayagam is a great loss to Tamil studies. I have known him for over 10 years and he impressed me as one dedicated to the cause of systematic and objective study of Tamil History and Culture. I have delivered a few lectures under his presidentship and I have also had the good fortune of listening to his talks on the development of Tamil in modern times. It is well known that though there is an enthusiasm in Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka and Malaysia and other places, the mode of approach is not modern. Scholars have developed some pet theories regarding the interpretation of ideas and sentiments on chronology of the various works in Tamil literature. It is my conviction that the people of the calibre of Dr Thani Nayagam should organise a scientific approach to these problems.

In respect of early works in Tamil like Tolkappiyam, Tirukural and Silappadikaram, there is wide divergence. Some have advanced the date with a view to exalt the antiquities of Tamil and others, to the reverse. For instance, Tolkappiyam has been dated from 3rd century B.C. down to 10th century A.D. They have not adduced any reason or proof for their views.

Dr Thani Nayagam was responsible for starting a Journal of Tamil Culture; but it has not been continued recently. The International Conference of Tamil Seminars was itself the product of his initiative. He was also actively helped by Thiru A. Subbiah. We will miss Dr Thani Nayagam very badly in the future International Conferences of Tamil. I wish that a suitable commemoration volume be published. That is the least that we can do to commemorate his services to Tamil.

— K. K. Pillay

Father Thani Nayagam—My Impressions

I had heard about Rev. Fr X. S. Thani Nayagam long before I met him. Some had told me that he was an eloquent and fluent speaker both in English and in Tamil; some had told me that he was an extremely erudite scholar; others had spoken of him as being versatile and dexterous in his command and use of languages; and many others merely said that he was a humane and good priest—a man of God. Having had such varied versions of Thani Nayagam given by various people naturally I was diffident about meeting such a formidable personality—nay I was afraid. However, in 1958, I had the good fortune of quite unexpectedly meeting Fr Thani Nayagam at the University of Ceylon at Peradeniya. Immediately, he put me at ease. He was genial, affable, and an interesting conversationalist. Although I was a Junior teacher of History and he a Senior member of the Department of Education, at the University, we found that there were between us more than a few matters of common academic interest. He would speak of History and Historical research with competence and enviable learning. Conversations with him always left me a better informed and wiser person. It was so remarkable that learning sat so lightly on him. Father was not an isolated hermit scholar or an arrogantly opinionated intimidating intellectual. He was modest in spite of profound knowledge and very helpful to younger University colleagues, but in no patronising manner. Warm-hearted, soft spoken, generous and hospitable, Fr. Thani Nayagam drew around him quite a few young teachers of the University; he was a Socratic mentor.

My own association with him grew closer over the years and when his untimely demise occurred I was left a shattered and shocked individual. His passing away created a void and left me much diminished. It is with the death of Thani Nayagam that I realized that I had lost a dear friend, a counsellor and guide; someone dependable and so lovable.

He moved to the University of Malaysia for a few years. I vividly remember the few days I had spent at that time at the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Research. From the beginning, Father figured as the architect of such a stupendous construction which brought together at one venue so many scholars of so many lands and such a spectrum of disciplines. Learning and research in Tamil studies were pooled together for the first time and the monumental volumes published afterwards bear ample testimony to the richness and variety of Tamil Studies. Thani Nayagam had the vision, the intelligence and industry to set in motion the machinery for fostering and stimulating research and investigation into Tamil Studies at an international level.

The International Conference—Seminar last held at Madurai, in January 1981, shows that the work begun by Father in the field of Tamil learning has indeed endured the test of time, and waxed strong. When he was alive, whether Father Thani Nayagam was the primary office holder or only a mere member of the organisation, he was undoubtedly a veritable colossus at the International Conference—Seminars. His singular eminence as a scholar of Tamil was acknowledged by one and all. His range of scholarly friends was wide and many are those who still avidly read the results of his research. His learned contributions were eagerly awaited and enthusiastically accepted for they doubtlessly enlarged the frontiers of knowledge in Tamil and Tamil Studies. To the study of Tamil he gave scientific and analytical content.

After Father had relinquished an active working life in institutions of higher education, he laboured in retirement at Jaffna over what had become his obsession in life—the sedulous pursuit of verities in the area of Tamil Studies. He now engaged himself in study and research in a relaxed and restful atmosphere, and, being versatile at time, he would move away from Tamil Studies into new fields. I remember listening to him delving deep into abstruse academic other worldly concepts at Trimmer Hall in Jaffna speaking in deep metaphysical vein on Religion and Culture, and Religion and Society. These meetings of a dedicated few were rather quiet and pleasant occasions. One returned after hearing him in a pensive and inquiring frame of mind, enlightened and enriched.

To listen to Fr Thani Nayagam speak was always an elevating experience. His diction was clear, his enunciation explicit, his choice of phrase and word was polished and his delivery mellifluously moving whether the language of speech was English or Tamil. Father never spoke anything purely rhetorical. His talk was always esoteric and profound. Even as a conversationalist, although he was convivial in company, his talk would invariably turn to something serious and learned. He had no time for flippancy, although tolerant and modest he could suffer the company of mediocrity too. That was a sign of sure scholarship.

Finally I would like to remember Father Thani Nayagam the host. He was generous in his hospitality, selective in taste and literally considerate towards guests, but his own habits and tastes were rather abstemiously spartan even though he would strain his resources to keep others well supplied so that they never left without being satiated. His conversation, whenever he entertained, was charming and he had an easy manner of conveying what was arcane in an intelligible and didactic way; but differences in views were never frowned upon.

In a brief review it is difficult to sum up all that one could remember about Father. My association with him had been over a number of years and quite close. Father Thani Nayagam had left such an indelible impression on all those who had known him. Like everyone of them, I shall also continue to feel poorer because of his absence for years to come; our loss is indeed great.

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought, I summon up the remembrance of things past the reminiscences of the years with Father Thani Nayagam would certainly loom large among my memories.

— Bertram Bastiampillai

As I Remember Him

"Where there is end there is the beginning"

— Chuang-tzu

Though I never had the opportunity to work with Father Thani Nayagam during his stay in Kuala Lumpur, I felt a sense of closeness of spirit with him. I always pictured him with my own teacher Swami Vipulananda. In any gathering where Father spoke I felt the presence of two great scholars addressing the gathering, one in the saffron robes of a Hindu **sannyasi** and the other wearing the robes of a minister of the Catholic Order. The unity that I saw in these two great scholars was their singular devotion to Tamilian studies and culture. It is difficult for me to say exactly when I first met him, but my last link with him was when I wrote to him to Valalai in Jaffna asking him for details of a carefully preserved copy of *Arichandra Nataham* which he had seen at the home of one Ponnen at Martinique. He replied that he had lost all his notes about his visit to Martinique, and as far as he could remember, it was a larger and a far different Tamil text than that used by Sir Muttu Coomaraswamy for his English translation of *Arichandra* in 1863. He was highly pleased that I printed Sir Muttu's translations into English of *Tayumanavar* and Ananda Coomaraswamy's *A University course in Indian Art*, both published for the first time. Once in a conversation, he cited the case of perishable manuscript material being lost, destroyed or sold and added that there is no law to protect this loss.

I would be like a squirrel attempting to define a mountain if I am to write on matters pertaining to Tamiliana. Except for some meetings of a very casual nature, my contacts with him at the University Campus have been meagre. I have seen him at his best at socials, weddings, lecture meetings and concert recitals. The time of the year was the **Navaratri Pooja** celebrations at the Sangeetha Sabha in our City. The dances and songs were on. But here was Father, telling quietly to some of us who were seated near him, about the music of the ancient Tamils. At the close of the recitals, when asked to speak, he stressed the importance of musical training for our children. To the merriment of the kids seated around, he mentioned the seven notes of the octave in contemporary Western music notation, Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti and that in modern Indian music whether Karnatic or Hindusthani, these seven notes are represented by Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, and Ni.

I remember the date exactly—12, May 1969, the evening before the alarming incidents in the city on the following day. We members of the Gandhi Centennial Celebrations Committee were at the Selangor Club to finalise the programme. A few seconds before we started the meeting, in came Father, jogging—jogging from

the University Campus to the Club **padang**—dressed in shorts, T/shirt and shoes—all white. He held my hand and said "I am not late!" There was that smile on that scholarly face, a smile of beauty which I cannot forget.

Two other cameos remain strongly etched in my mind. A University student comes climbing up the steps in haste, puts in his answer script into the pigeon-hole at the entrance of his office and turns around to face Father. Confused at seeing Father unexpectedly, afraid lest his unwarranted delay should evoke Father's wrath, the student blurts out a hardly coherent apology. Father's reply was an unperturbed smile. That smile was the divine spark in him. Mornings saw him at the University library browsing over books from shelf to shelf. The other picture is that of the conversation with him as the Head of the Department of Indian Studies—sitting in the booklined room of his office. Our centre of conversation was supposed to be Ananda Coomaraswamy and his writings. But his passion for books could not be confined. He kept on saying "Have you read this book? And this one and this one". The answer was obvious. The books were on Tamil poetry and I had to confess, "All the Tamil I knew in my childhood was the Tamil my mother taught me when we were living at Kampung Atap. "Yes Kampung Atap. You are known for place-names. How did this place in the heart of the City get its name?" he asked. I explained and added that very few people are aware that the earlier name for Kuala Lumpur was Kampung Atap—village of **atap** huts. Long before the tin trading settlement came into existence **atap** huts stood side by side on the banks of the Klang river. He was slightly amused when I explained to him further that Brickfields was known to Tamils as Pathinanjang—kaddai, fifteenth mile from Klang. And the conversation went on with my telling him that the government owned brick kilns at this place (the present Y.M.C.A. grounds) for building houses for the employees. He had his lighter side as well. Taking another book from one of the shelves, Norman Douglas, *How about Europe* (A reply to Miss Mayo's *Mother India*) and thumbing through its pages read a passage which was something like the following:

Here is a case for the S.P.S.G. A man complaining to a London Magistrate because a woman persistently blew kisses at him. Soon an association was founded in 1940, named S.P.S.G.—Society for the Protection of Sensitive Gentlemen, and the Society supplied each member with the escort of one of its discreet but efficient policewomen.

We ended our half-hour with hilarious laughter. There are one or more instances when he showed his spirit of sturdy independence. On these matters I need not dwell. Memory brings to mind several other scenes to make them live again.

It is with the deepest of sorrow and the strongest conviction of having known a great human being and scholar that I join the hundreds of graduates, male and female, Hindu and Christian, Muslim and Buddhist in laying my wreath of these flowers at the feet of Father Thani Nayagam.

—S. Durai Raja Singham

With a Deep Sense of Gratitude

I was saddened to learn through Professor Edgar Knowlton of Rev. X. S. Thani Nayagam's death last September. I am sure there are hundreds of others, like me, who feel a deep sense of gratitude to Professor Thani Nayagam for the interest which he took in their endeavors and for the assistance which he so willingly extended. I regret that I did not have an opportunity to become one of his intimate friends; even in my occasional professional relationships with him I was aware of a human being with the type of even-tempered and kindly personality who could sustain a satisfying and rewarding friendship.

My contacts with Professor Thani Nayagam began in 1962 after I had spent two academic years (1955-56 and 1961-62) in South India as a Visiting Fulbright Professor during sabbatical leaves of absence from my post here at the University of Hawaii. Perhaps the fact that I had spent part of my time in India teaching at Annamalai University was in my favour. Soon after I had met him, at the University in Petaling Jaya, he invited me to give a talk to the staff and students in the Department of Indian Studies which he headed. He was extremely helpful whenever I consulted with him concerning a plan I was developing for a sociological research project on leaders of Indian origin in Malaysia.

When I returned to Kuala Lumpur in 1965 to begin the research I was again asked to talk to the staff and students of the department. In addition to whatever other objectives he may have had in mind from the point of view of the staff and students, I suppose these talks at least gave him an opportunity to make some evaluation of me professionally. In any case he not only encouraged me orally in my research but also assisted me immensely by giving me letters of introduction which I could use if needed in asking busy, prominent Indian leaders to give me time for a lengthy personal interview. I quickly found that the respect which he enjoyed among Indian leaders all over Malaysia was profound. And as my research continued my sense of gratitude to him deepened. His active support of my research during my periodic returns to Malaysia continued until his retiring to Ceylon/Sri Lanka in 1969.

Professor Thani Nayagam will certainly be long remembered for the key role he played in the founding of the International Association of Tamil Research (of which I became one of the early members) and in initiating the holding of international conferences,—seminars on Tamil research.

— Clarence E. Glick

Sage and Scholar, Venerable and Profound...

It was a warm afternoon in 1958. From my room at Arunachalam Hall (Peradeniya) I went with a friend of mine to meet Fr Thani Nayagam at his bungalow at Mahakande to invite him to address the Annual Tamil Arts Festival of the University Tamil Society. I was a little nervous, as that was the first occasion on which I was going to meet Father, whose admirer I had become ever since I had read his inspiring article on Tamil manuscripts in European Libraries (a cutting of which I still treasure) and about whom I had heard so much. My friend knocked at the door, and I heard a sonorous voice answer, 'Just a minute, please'. In a few minutes, the immaculate and poised figure of Fr Thani Nayagam appeared, as the large front door opened. He greeted us with his characteristic pose and invited us in. I was instantly attracted by his towering appearance, the sparkle and gaiety of his conversation and his deliberate delivery of precise and well-chosen words. One of the marks of a great man, it is said, is the power of making lasting impressions upon the people he meets. Fr Thani Nayagam made a lasting impression on me on that occasion, as, I am sure, he did on everyone who met him.

I did not meet him again until after I joined the staff of the University at Peradeniya in 1960. Father left our University soon afterwards to adorn the Chair of Indian Studies at the University of Malaya and it was only after he returned to Sri Lanka on his retirement that I had many occasions to meet him.

Father had returned to the Island as a hero, a sage and scholar, venerable and profound, having in the preceding decade lighted a beacon-fire for all Tamilologists—a fire that is still burning bright. This man who gave new dimensions to Tamil Studies was not just another Tamil scholar. In the nineteenth century, the American missionaries Daniel Poor, Hoisington and Samuel Green and their associates gave Tamil a new status, lifting it up from its traditional place to be a subject of study in a modern institution of higher learning and a vehicle for the communication of modern scientific ideas. More than a century later, it was left to Fr Thani Nayagam to elevate Tamil Studies to international levels—as a subject of critical study in leading universities outside South Asia, especially in the West. And he also helped to found an international forum for all scholars interested in Tamil Studies. It was also left to him to create both an international Tamil consciousness and an interest in the study of what may be termed the Tamil Diaspora—the migration and settlement of Tamils in foreign lands. As a strong actuator of the Tamil Studies movement in the fifties and sixties, the impetus he gave to Tamil Studies throughout the world of scholarship is a deep score on the page of the history of the Tamils.

When a university campus was established in his native Jaffna in 1974, those of us who were engaged in building up this institution in its early years, brought him into the Faculty of Humanities as an elected member to enable the infant university to benefit from his immense knowledge and vast experience. It was in these years that I moved close to him and had the privilege of learning many things at his feet.

In his final months, he was sad and in some ways elusive. The Tamil question cut jaggedly across the political scene in Sri Lanka. It seems to have worried him very much. No one knew all his thoughts on this subject.

My closing picture is the night I had dinner with him at the Retreat House at Pandateruppu in March 1980. The guest of honour was his dear friend Prof. C. R. Boxer, and there were besides me Prof. S. Vithiananthan, Prof. T. B. H. Abeysinghe, Dr James T. Rutnam and Mr Silan Kadirgamer. For a brief moment Father was his former self—warm, youthful and ebullient, and made an unforgettable impression.

In his final days, unaware of the impending disaster, Dr. Rutnam and I were planning a volume of articles by him, to be presented to him on his seventieth birthday. He wrote to me on this subject just a few days before his death—possibly his last letter to anyone outside his family. I was planning to meet him and discuss details with him but before I could do that—alas, he was gone.

— K. Indrapala

Appreciation of a many-faceted Man

It is an honour, but one which I wish might never have arisen, to be invited to prepare an appreciation of the late Reverend Dr Xavier S. Thani Nayagam, whom I first met at the University of Malaya just eighteen years ago.

I had been given a grant to serve as Visiting Professor of Linguistics at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, or Petaling Jaya, and Father Thani Nayagam was one of the chief members of the language departments there as Professor of Indian Studies, which included Tamil and Sanskrit; I was attached to the Department of English in order to help implement a recently created program in Linguistics. There was some lack of sympathy for the study of Linguistics at the University of Malaya then, particularly from the Professors of History and of Chinese Studies. But Professor Thani Nayagam not only encouraged me to speak to interested students in Indian Studies on linguistics, but one day early in my stay at the University, mounted the stairs to my non-air-conditioned office, to convey to me his warm greeting. He had an interest in Romance languages, particularly in Italian, and expressed this to me. I was pleased and touched by this special welcome, which I appreciate more in retrospect than I did at the time. It probably would have been more in keeping for me as the younger visitor, of less rank (though I was a visiting Professor, I was merely an Associate Professor at my home university, the University of Hawaii). Other professors like Professor Rauf in Islamic Studies and Professor Rollvink in Malay Studies, were kind and considerate, but Professor Thani Nayagam really went beyond the call of duty to make me feel at home in the University of Malaya.

I recall events of a social and academic nature like the delightful inaugural lecture given by Professor Thani Nayagam, after which there was a delicious sort of banquet which my mother and I attended with great pleasure. Perhaps the shrimp was tastier than it should have been, because subsequently my mother was stricken with indigestion; I recall our jesting about it as if it might have been the lecture rather than the shrimp that caused the indigestion; the jest was possible because, and only because of the confident good nature—there were no complexes or indications of pettiness in Father Thani Nayagam—and keen good humour that such liberties could be taken with someone whose status as priest, and scholar, and professor could.

During my seventeen months at the University of Malaya I became acquainted with a variety of subjects, several of linguistic interest; one of the most rewarding of these was the chance to see before the publication as a reprint the Tamil-Portuguese dictionary of Father Proenca. Father Thani Nayagam encouraged me to look at it from the Portuguese point of view, and this resulted in two articles of great stimula-

tion to my interest in the history of the Portuguese language, in which I found in the Portuguese definitions of Tamil items exoticisms which must have been, in some measure at least, used in Indo-Portuguese or in the Portuguese of Asia. Through him, I was able to meet for the first time the distinguished Professor of Portuguese at the University of London at the time, Charles R. Boxer, beyond the help in having my articles on the Proenca dictionary published in *Tamil Culture* and elsewhere.

Certainly Professor Thani Nayagam was a man who was loyal to the values of Tamil culture, language, and literature; what made this so impressive to a Westerner was that this love and appreciation were accompanied by a scholar's appreciation and knowledge of the European literary, cultural, and linguistic tradition. I am very grateful that he permitted me to help him—he needed no help—in the translation of the linguistic introduction, written in Portuguese, to Father Proenca's dictionary. It was a gracious example of co-authorship in which the senior author did all the work!

In 1966 he was certainly the pillar of the International Conference of Tamil Studies at the University of Malaya; he arranged for me in Lisbon to meet with Father Silva Rego in connection with an early Tamil *cartilha* and for me to participate in the conference, so magnificently hosted. I remember many acts of graciousness; I almost felt that I had been Visiting Professor of Indian Studies in 1962-1964 instead of Visiting Professor of Linguistics attached to the Department of English, such was the warmth with which my mother and I were received by the Department of Indian Studies under Professor Thani Nayagam.

On a subsequent visit to Malaysia, Professor Thani Nayagam permitted me to stay for a time in his home; I remember the cordiality with which he and his servant received me, the sense of ease and graciousness with which he arranged for my meals, my transportation to town, and the like. This was probably in 1968.

Perhaps somewhat before or after this, my mother and I had the privilege of greeting him in Honolulu; he had been permitted to stay at one of the dormitories of the East-West Centre. Once again, the meetings with him here were full of pleasure. We saw him off at the airport, and were expecting the plane to take off, when suddenly Father Thani Nayagam appeared at the door of the plane to signal to us that he had forgotten his coat. It was possible to enlist the help of the airlines (I believe Pan-American) in order to have the coat sent to him at a later stop, I think in Fiji. The most impressive part of this tiny incident was the calm, natural, somewhat wry expression of the problem, and the ability to make something that might have seemed trivial or irritating or a nuisance one more opportunity to express a certain reciprocity of feelings—Father Thani Nayagam made a person want to be his friend, to live up to his expectations, and his example. But there was a feeling, too, that even if a friend didn't live up to expectations that the warm sympathy and friendship and confidence would not be withdrawn.

Another aspect of Father Thani Nayagam's personality which struck me forcibly was his respect and admiration for his former mentor, Professor Meenakshisundaram

who visited the University of Malaya during the period of my teaching there; (I well recall the vivid way in which he got me to reproduce the cerebral r of Tamil), and later was present at the 1966 University of Malaya International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies. I do not recall the details now after these fourteen years; I do think that there were certain tensions or problems, whether these were connected with the non-Tamilian vs. the Tamilian members, those from Sri Lanka vs. those from the Madras area, those from Malaysia vs. those not from Malaysia, and that some of these were at the behind the scenes level, and occasioned some concern on the part of Professor Thani Nayagam. But I know how cheerfully and philosophically he accepted the less pleasant with the pleasant, and recall most positively the Conference not only because of the tangible result in the published volumes that resulted, but also because of its success in human, sociable terms.

Some months ago we heard from Father Thani Nayagam in Sri Lanka; his message was brief and not very specific, but suggested that he did not expect to travel again. I remember writing to him in terms that I hoped would encourage him to look forward to travel and to seeing my mother and me again; until hearing from Rajan Philipupillai, his nephew, of the passing of Father Xavier on 1 September 1980, I still nurtured the hope that we might indeed meet again.

— Edgar C. Knowlton, Jr

An Erudite Scholar

Being myself no Indologist, I became personally acquainted with Professor Thani Nayagam rather late. It was at the International Congress of Orientalists in New Delhi, in January 1964, after the short expose I gave there on the genetic relationship between the Altaic and the Dravidian languages when we met for the first time and Professor Thani Nayagam made a few remarks about my contribution and its significance for Dravidian. His was one of the encouraging comments on this topic, and I was very glad to have it from one of the colleagues who were not only Dravidian but also scholars possessing, as he was, a solid Western erudition, acquired in his native Ceylon and in the West, particularly in Rome, as well as the thorough knowledge of a number of languages, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western. Besides, he held a degree of Ph. D. in Comparative Education of the University of London and was, for some time of his life, quite active both in education and as an educator. In view of this, it was all the more regrettable that because of the great distance of our respective countries the closer acquaintance, nay the friendship with a man of his qualities was to remain, for most of the time, abstract, "academic". Only on three more occasions did I have the great pleasure of seeing him again; this was, two years later, at the First International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Research, convoked by him and held in April 1966 at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, where Thani Nayagam was Dean of the Faculty of Arts and the Head of the Department of Indian Studies so that during the Conference week there was some time for conversation, "shop talk", and discussions.

I must say that I rarely found, even with friends of common educational and philosophical background, so much of mutual interests, of common opinions on the most diversified subjects, be it linguistics, philosophy, or even politics; on the present state of scholarship, the situation in linguistic research, the emancipation of languages and literatures, particularly in Asia, South and North. At this time, Thani Nayagam was occupied with studies on Tamil lexicography, about which he had read a paper at the International Congress in New Delhi, 1964, and it was particularly Proenca's Tamil-Portuguese Dictionary of 1679 of which he was preparing a scholarly edition. With his thorough Western Classical education he was well equipped to do research in the contacts between the Classical West and India, particularly Dravidian India. Of the pertaining work in preparation is to be mentioned the "Relations between Italy and South Asia from earliest times to the present day", and the other on "The Classical Geographers and the Tamil Country", but this is not exhaustive of topics he had selected for further research. He talked to me about these studies when we met in

New York, about a year later, in 1967, I think, when he stayed for a few days in New York before continuing his voyage to the Caribbean where he was to study migrant communities.

Then, in 1968, when I was on a sabbatical leave from Columbia and had a visiting professorship at Upsala University in Sweden, I was invited by Thani Nayagam to come to Kuala Lumpur for a lecture on the Dravido-Altaic relationship. Late in August, on the way from the Far East back to Europe and America, I revisited Kuala Lumpur for this short stop-over. It was the last year before Thani Nayagam's retirement from the University of Malaya—with 56 years. He did not feel sad about the impending retirement—but was looking forward to his native Sri Lanka and, without teaching and administrative obligations to engage freely in his studies and research.

When we parted at Kuala Lumpur airport, in the morning of 31 August 1968 we did not sense that it was to be the last time we saw each other. His amiable, ideal image will always live in my memory.

— **Karl H. Menges**

Like a Seer of Old, Yet Different

The mid-fifties were a time of great anxiety for the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Going back on the promises of the forties, the Tamils of Indian origin had been disfranchised, and it was reported that the Sinhalese members of the Commission on Higher Education in the National Languages were contemplating a weighted quota system of admissions to the University. The gloom was deepened by the dark cloud of a "Sinhala Only" proposal looming large on the political horizon.

When, however, in the Town Hall of Colombo an audience filled to over-flowing heard on 2 August 1955 that the ideal they had inherited was enshrined in a Tamil poet's utterance of 20 centuries ago, "Every country is my country and every man is my kinsman", they seemed to regain confidence in their future. The speaker was the Rev. Father Thani Nayagam of whom they had heard before, but now many saw him for the first time. His personality and the confident manner of his speaking appealed to them. No less, the theme which he so well expounded : "Tamil Culture, its past, its present, its future, with special reference to Ceylon".

Said they, here once again is a Tamil seer as of old. Yet, so different. He could expound his theme in flawless English as well as in his native Tamil. And they learnt that he could expound it in several modern languages and that he was actually striding the continents from time to time carrying the Tamil flag and drawing many savants into its service. They learnt later that his scholarship extended to many other fields; he was able to compare Indian Thought with Roman Stoicism, trace the history and philosophies of education and discuss the solutions to political problems in other countries. They learnt too that this versatile scholar and thinker had brought to the fore several other dimensions relating to Tamil linguistics, art, social history and its cultural spread across the seas.

Meanwhile, on the initiative of Father Thani Nayagam, The International Association of Tamil Research formed in New Delhi in 1964, held its first International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies in Kuala Lumpur in April 1966. It turned out to be a historic event, with national delegations from several countries participating and with the support of many governments and foundations. Madras and Paris were the venue of the second and third gatherings, while the fourth gathering took place in Jaffna in 1974 under the chairmanship of the founder. Some of the World's eminent Oriental Scholars came to study the living culture of our language as it had developed here as well as to greet the one who had set them in this momentous adventure.

Well-read Scholar, possessed of a historical sense, saintly and without any bitterness towards other groups, Father Thani Nayagam was none the less an ardent patriot. We were drawn towards each other when we worked together in the University's Department of Education and in the Tamil Culture Society of which he was the principal founder. But, it was when he returned from his Malayan sojourn and settled down first at Bishop's House, Valalai, and later in Retreat House, Pandateruppu that he called on me regularly and we began to share a common outlook on many public matters. I believe he appreciated any point of view that committed as we are to the self-determination and territorial identity of the Tamils, the manner of historical change cannot be predicted with precision before the moment arrives and that we should for the start consider any settlement which assured us the substance of our demand. It would be in the realm of wisdom to take a leaf from Ghandiji's Resolution adopted at the Nagpur Congress, "the goal of Swaraj within the British Empire if possible and without if necessary". It has turned out that India is a sovereign Republic, but within a Commonwealth, which has replaced the Empire!

Be that as it may, early in December 1979, almost as he arrived on his weekly visit he told me that his health had improved and he must find a door of utterance about the ordeal the Tamil people were passing through under the Emergency. That is how a Jaffna Town Hall audience was able to hear him, after a long pause, on Martyrs' Commemoration Day, the 10th January, 1980. He was again invited to release the 'Homage to the Thanthai' at the opening of the Chelvanayakam Monument on the 26th April, 1980 and delivered the Memorial Lecture on the two following days.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. A. Amirthalingam M.P., proposed the vote of thanks for the first lecture, in Tamil, on "Characteristics of Tamil Culture", while Vice-Chancellor Vithiananthan presided. I took the chair at the second lecture on "Tamil Studies: Retrospect and Prospect", in English for which the President of the TULF, Mr. M. Sivasithamparam M.P., proposed the vote of thanks. While proposing the vote of thanks Mr. Amirthalingam echoed the feeling of the spell-bound gathering that there was hardly any other, here or elsewhere, who could have spoken with greater authority on these subjects and perhaps hardly anyone likely to do so for years. His task accomplished, the Saintly Scholar—patriot passed to the beyond on 1 September 1980.

Surely, it has been our privilege to live in the Chelvanayakam—Thani Nayagam era of the history of the Tamils of Sri Lanka, a great historical epoch. While Thanthai Chelva led his people in their 30-year march to the gates of Liberty, Father Thani; it was who built in them their political and cultural personality. God sends to a people the right leaders at the hour of need.

— K. Nesiah

Soft-spoken Apostle of Humanism

It is over twenty years since Father Thani Nayagam stepped into my house in Colombo one morning in the company of my cousin the late S. Ratnanathar and my dear friends K. C. Thangarajah and the late M. Tiruchelvam.

They were not in any sense young men, but they all had the spirited enthusiasm and the *elan vital* of the young. They found in me, I suppose, a responsive comrade.

They came with an idea. They told me that we must have a Tamil University in our native land. On the face of it, it was not only a good idea, but also a much needed and not so difficult a project, if the people and the Government were to support it. But somehow, it was found, the instant initiative and support from the obvious quarters were not forthcoming. Politics, the bane of a divided nation, was undoubtedly the chief cause then.

Nothing daunted, these determined men, along with many other like-minded colleagues, had pursued the idea, some in course of time increasing their efforts, others falling back, but all united in single purpose. Today a Tamil University at Jaffna is an accomplished reality, thanks also to the sensible and valuable co-operation of many high-souled men among all communities in the land.

But I digress. The good Father Thani Nayagam's visit that day was to commandeer my help to establish a library for our distant University. They had already taken a house in Wellawatte and were for a start busy teaching a few Tamil students for External University Examinations. They wanted now to begin collecting books for a library, the very first desideratum for a university, great or small. I parted with a few books—valuable as all of them are to me—with a heavy heart, but with a satisfaction that I had made a little sacrifice for a great cause.

Since that occasion Father Thani Nayagam, if I be permitted to say so, and I know he himself would have readily admitted, had become a close and dear friend of mine.

We had talked and talked on many occasions. We had day-dreamed together. We discussed so many subjects, ever pitting my comparatively little knowledge against his amazing wisdom. On some occasions we too had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

I was present with him in his hour of achievement in 1966 when in the great hall of the University of Malaysia learned scholars of Tamil, in fellowship with not so learned, but no less devoted, lovers of Tamil, had gathered together from all climes

and counties at a dazzling banquet, spread with the riches of the table to toast the common cause of Tamil scholarship; and at the same time to express our gratitude to the inspirer and founder of this movement.

It was a proud moment for Father Thani Nayagam—a dream fulfilled. I feel good to be able to say that I was present at the Creation.

In the succeeding years I had watched with growing admiration the career of this soft-spoken apostle of humanism, who had restored to us the words and the meaning of the lines in *Purananuru*, which sum up the true philosophy of Tamil—

Yatum Ure

Yavarum Kelir

I had followed him from Malaysia to the Tamil Conferences in Madras and Paris, and have also personally witnessed the ecstasy and the agony of the Conference in Jaffna in 1974. That was the last phase. It would appear that finally Father Thani Nayagam had come home, the eternal sweetheart of the race. May his bones, as did his life, enrich our blessed land.

— James T. Rutnam

He Leaves a Void that Cannot be Filled

Father Xavier Thani Nayagam was born in Jaffna in a conservative family which has done yeoman service not only to Jaffna but to the rest of Sri Lanka. After a brilliant academic career he obtained the degrees Master of Arts, Master of Literature at the Annamalai University, specialising in Tamil, his mother tongue. He also obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of London and Doctor of Divinity at the University of Rome. Thereafter he was lecturer in the Department of Education at the University of Sri Lanka and became Professor of Indian Studies at the University of Malaysia.

He was master of seven languages which he could read, write and speak fluently. His talent for languages, research and eloquence was unique. Having mastered seven languages he was able to delve deeply into the culture and literature of both ancient and modern nations. Although he lisped in his own mother tongue, Tamil, to which he devoted his whole life time, he was fluent in English, Italian, Spanish, German, and also in the ancient languages such as Latin, Greek and Sanskrit.

He made valuable contributions to the Tamil Language and literature. His many articles and books are not only inspiring but have opened new vistas in the field of research of Tamil, the only ancient language which has survived up to modern times. He has travelled throughout the world and has stimulated the study of Tamil in Oriental faculties at the Western as well as the Eastern universities.

His greatest achievement was the founding of the "International Association of Tamil Research" (IATR) which attracted scholars from various parts of the world who have contributed to the study of the language, history, culture, and fine arts of the Tamils. This Association met four times. First in Malaysia, and then in India, and thereafter in Paris and Jaffna. The fifth Session was held in Madurai in January 1981. If not for Father Thani Nayagam and his efforts and enthusiasm this body would never have come into existence.

His fine personality and genius had attracted many scholars who were engaged in Oriental Studies, to come together and exchange their views on the origin, history, literature, and fine arts of the Tamils using modern techniques. IATR received the blessings of the UNESCO. A number of scholars from various parts of the world had come together for these conferences from distant countries at the expense of their universities and the UNESCO.

Father Thani Nayagam had a genial nature which enabled him to attract a number of friends who bemoan his untimely loss. Father Thani Nayagam loved both

Western and Eastern music which he enjoyed and he stimulated the study of Oriental music. Although he was a pious and devout monk he respected all religions including Hinduism. Once he remarked that if not for the Hindu Saints, poets, and poetesses the Tamil Language would have been lost a long time ago.

His death is not only a loss to Tamils all over the world but also to scholars both Western and Eastern, who were greatly benefitted by his efforts. He has left a void that cannot be filled. He had personally been associated with me for many years and his death is a personal loss to me. It was at my house that Father Thani Nayagam and his friends came and laid the foundations of the IATR in Sri Lanka. He asked me to lead the delegation of Sri Lanka to the first Conference in Malaysia and the second Conference in India for which I am very grateful to him.

His memory will never fade in our minds. May his soul rest in peace.

— H.W. Tambiah

Rev. Fr X. S. Thani Nayagam was the first person to give international status to the age-old message that "Every country is my country; Every man is my kinsman" as found in *Purananuru* of the Sangam Age. He wanted to implement the content of this message. He visualised one way to achieve this lofty aim.

The opportunity was provided at New Delhi, India, where Oriental Luminaries met for an Orientalists' Conference. He made use of this opportunity to lay the foundation for the setting up of the International Association of Tamil Research (IATR).

In selecting the venue of the First Conference there was no difficulty as he was the Professor of Indian Studies at the University of Malaysia at that time. The First International Conference of Tamil Research was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1966 with pomp and pageantry. He was able to get the patronage of the Malaysian Government for the Conference and it was inaugurated by Tunku Abdul Rahman, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, uttering the famous phrase: "யாரும் உனதே யாவரும் கேட்கார்". Tamil Scholars from various parts of the world, from the East as well as from the West, attended the Conference. The entire burden of organising the Conference in Malaysia was on his shoulders not only as the Secretary-General of the IATR but also as the Professor working in the University in the hosting country.

He was again the live wire in the organisation of the Second Conference of the IATR in Madras in Tamil Nadu in 1968 where the newly elected popular Government of Anna was only too willing to host the Conference. The international status of Rev. Thani Nayagam enabled him to bear the brunt of collecting funds for the successful conduct of the conferences. His untiring efforts made the holding of the Third Conference possible in Paris, France.

The Fourth Conference held in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, was crowned with success with his unstinted co-operation made available to the organisers headed by Prof. Dr S. Vithiananthan presently the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. But, alas, he was no more with us for the Fifth Conference held in Madurai from 4 to 10 January 1981.

The University of Ceylon in 1952 in recognising his talents appointed him a Lecturer in the Faculty of Education. Later he became the Professor of Indian Studies at the University of Malaysia where he excelled in his academic pursuits.

The first time I came to know him was when he was the Editor of the Quarterly Journal, *Tamil Culture*, issued from Tamil Nadu. At that time I contributed an article, Muslim Tamil Poetry, for this Journal. Not only did he publish it in his Journal but also sent me several off-prints of the article.

In 1956 when the late Mr S.W. R. D. Bandaranaike became the Prime Minister of Ceylon he constituted a separate Ministry for Cultural Affairs. Under the auspices of this Ministry a Literary Academy known as Sahitya Mandalaya was created. Then I had the privilege of becoming one of its members along with the versatile scholars of the calibre of Dr K. Kanapathipillai and Rev. Fr X. S. Thani Nayagam. We were representing the minority communities in Ceylon. Later the three of us were elected to the Executive Committee of the Sahitya Mandalaya.

This practice was repeated later on when the National Book Trust was set up. It was customary in the good old days to make awards for the best literary works produced during the previous year. In this respect Sinhala and Tamil were treated at par.

On one occasion Rev. Thani Nayagam, as a member of the Sahitya Mandalaya did express his disapproval for not selecting a particular book for that year's award. He found this out when he returned to the country after a trip abroad. He maintained that this particular book should have been selected for the award. The book was on the subject of Educational Psychology written in Tamil by the late Mr I. L. M. Mashoor at the time Principal of Attalaichenai Teachers' Training College in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. Rev. Thani Nayagam had to censure the scrutiniser, a former Professor for not recommending this book for the much-coveted national award.

Rev. Fr Thani Nayagam was a great scholar. He knew many languages. His reputation spread far and wide as an author who introduced to the West the sublime themes latent in the masterpieces of Tamil Literature.

He never isolated himself. But moved with one and all. At the IATR Conferences he used to have a word with every one of the delegates and familiarised himself with all.

The passing away of Rev. Fr Thani Nayagam has indeed created a void in the field of the study of Tamilology which is difficult to fill.

— M. M. Uwise

The Dedicated Patriotism of Father Thani Nayagam

Few people know about the dedicated patriotism of Father Thani Nayagam other than those who were quite intimate with him. I was one of those few, having come to know him first when my wife and I met him in Morton Hotel around Russell Square in London. From then on I became his friend from 1955 to the time of his death. In 1955 and early 1956, Father (as we affectionately used to call him) was busy examining the parallels in regard to bilingualism in Belgium. He wanted me to look at examples in Canada, as between French and English, when I was working in the library of the Commonwealth Relations Office in London. In the meanwhile, with his wealth of foreign languages, he was examining situations elsewhere. On the basis of these researches was published his classic for all time, *Language and Liberty in Ceylon*,

Before he left London in early 1956, he told me that he was more than ever convinced that there was a case for bilingualism in Sri Lanka. But he was caught in the aftermath of the 1956 general election right at the peak of the Sinhala Only Movement. He sought and obtained an interview with the newly elected Prime Minister, S.W. R.D. Bandaranaike. He tried to persuade the prime minister that two official languages, Sinhala and Tamil, were a viable proposition, only to receive the stunning reply from Bandaranaike: "Father, I would rather have this decided by the sword." Father realised more than ever the forces of Sinhala nationalism he had to contend with.

His life now in the university at Peradeniya was quite inconsequential. Despite friends, a nice house in Mahakande, an arrangement with the dons living in Mahakande to have "salon discussions" at regular intervals and a certain amount of nationalist activity both in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nad, I think that within him there was growing the conviction that something more tangible had to be done for the Tamil cause. He tried to impress on Professor Chatterjee who was heading a Universities' Commission around this time about the need for a university for the Tamils. He lobbied prominent persons in the Tamil community in Colombo but that was not where the roots of Tamil nationalism were to be found. He made frequent visits to Tamil Nad where he had a good friend and contact in a minister in the government of Tamil Nad. But he was looked on with suspicion by the security agents in Tamil Nad and was being watched by the Inspector-General of Police in Madras, in the same way, as he once was being followed by a detective of the Sri Lanka government in London. His work in Tamil Nad bore fruit the details of which need not be gone into here.

The twin career of teacher and patriot went hand in hand. In Tamil Nad, he had established a tremendous reputation. His *Tamil Culture* was being widely acclaimed. He was offered a prestigious chair in one of the major universities there but he declined it because he loved Sri Lanka and his friends and relatives.

Then he decided, rather reluctantly, to take the plunge and accept the Chair of Indian Studies in the then University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. He built a good department and became sufficiently popular to be elected Dean of the Faculty of Arts. But he was also anxiously working on the promotion of the Tamil cause. He raised funds and I know for a fact that he financed a trip to the International Commission of Jurists in 1961 the result of which was an article in their bulletin exposing the hopelessness of the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka. Soon after, he came to Sri Lanka on a brief sojourn, at the height of the satyagraha campaigns launched by the Tamil Federal Party against Mrs. Bandaranaike's 1960-1965 government. He visited the grounds of the Jaffna Kachcheri where hundreds of satyagrahis were massed and gave them much moral support. He then along with me visited the satyagrahis in Batticaloa and Kalmunai, again trying to minister to them and to indicate to them that they must stand firm behind their leadership.

In his retirement, Father kept up his interests in the Tamil cause and in his reading of Tamil literature. He was a visiting lecturer at Jaffna College for some time. He was appointed to the Council of the University of Jaffna where he contributed the wisdom of his experience.

When the Presidential Commission on Development Councils was appointed (the title is a misnomer, invented by a group of people in it—it should have read "the Presidential Commission for the Decentralisation of the Administration and the Devolution of Subordinate Law-making Powers"—I protested against the "deceptive" first title but found myself in a minority), Father wrote to me that he was so glad that Neelan Tiruchelvam and I were serving on it. When I gave my prize day speech at Jaffna Central College in October 1979, at the height of the State of Emergency, Father said, in a card to me, that the Tamil People "were greatly comforted" by what I had to say. I mention all this because Father was from first to last the single minded Tamil patriot. He was priest, teacher, research scholar, the grand organiser, the loving friend. But above all he was one of the frontline leaders. Had his health not dogged him he could well have developed into the style of an Archbishop Makarios (to whom he was once likened) of the Tamil Movement in Sri Lanka.

— A. J. Wilson

EPILOGUE

Father Xavier Stanislaus Thani Nayagam —

He was First, Second and Last a Priest of God

My Very Dear Friends,

We have met together this evening to pay a tribute to the memory of your, and my, beloved Father Xavier Stanislaus Thani Nayagam, and we have just offered up in thanksgiving for his life and work, this evening, Eucharistic Sacrifice.

Come to think of it, the very word "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving".

It is customary for a priest to preface his sermons with a text or two from the Scriptures. You will pardon me if I depart from this tradition, and base the few words I mean to say, not on two Scripture texts, but on two texts taken from secular poems.

And yet, I am not so sure that I have used the right word when I say 'secular', for nothing is entirely secular. The whole world, the entire Universe, is shot through and through with God, with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. So, there is no sharp demarcating line, no dichotomy, as it were, in that complete sense, between secular and divine, or secular and spiritual.



However, the two texts I am basing this appreciation of Father Stanislaus on are, in the first instance, from the well known "Poems for the Fallen" by the English Poet Lawrence Binyon; the second from William Johnson Cory.

The first of these runs rather like this;

"They shall grow not old
As we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn,
At the going down of the Sun
And in the morning, we will remember them".

That is just what we have done at the going down of the Sun. We have remembered him, and may we continue to do so always.

Text of the panegyric preached by Rev. Fr Justin Perera at the Memorial Service for Father Thani Nayagam at St Lawrence's Church, Colombo on 27 September 1980.

My second text is from those moving lines of William Johnson Cory who describes how a man received the news of the death of his beloved friend Heraclitus, and the lines go like this:

"They told me, Heraclitus,
They told me you were dead.
They brought me bitter news to hear
and bitter tears to shed.
I wept as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the Sun with talking
and sent him down the sky,
And now that thou are lying
My dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long long ago at rest.
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake,
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take".

However, in the case of Father Stanislaus, it is not just his pleasant voices that are awake,

So is Father Stanislaus himself.

Come to think of it, it is this world that is the land of the dying. The next is of the living.

Life, in Goethe's telling phrase, is "**but the childhood of our immortality**".

It was in Caria, in Asia Minor, that Heraclitus lived. There too, and not so far away from Caria, some centuries later, lived Martha and Mary and it was to them that Christ said:

"I am the Resurrection and the life;
He that believeth in me, what though he be dead, shall live.
And he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."

We were all enriched by Father Stanislaus's life. So will we continue to be by his death. Death is only the gateway to life, for God "**has given us this great wages, after death to live**".

If on earth his life was a life of such tremendous self-giving, will it—can it possibly—cease to be so, in the newer, fuller, richer life that is now his?

Father Stanislaus is now, more than ever before, everybody's friend, and he is very much here with us today.



He held aloft the torch of Tamil learning, and culture, and literature, and came to be considered almost a hero, an idol, a god by his compatriots.

And rightly so, for, few other men of his day and time, had studied the Tamil language—its history, literature, scholarship, and culture as deeply as he did, and few other men have written so knowledgeably and learnedly of them. His knowledge of Tamil Literature was profound and his studies and publications in this field are almost countless.

And yet he was no fanatic; no chauvinist.

As Dr A. J. Wilson has pointed out in a tribute, Father Thani Nayagam did not belong to any party, and this left him free to take up independent positions on the issues of the day.

And as the same Dr Wilson remarks, Father Thani Nayagam was an unusual, a unique blend of priest, scholar, university teacher and Tamil national leader.

Dr Wilson goes on to say that Father Thani Nayagam, whilst being a Tamil national leader, was also a cultivated and civilised human person. He loved reading Tamil literature, went to Tamil music festivals, and yet, at the same time, often listened to and enjoyed, Western Classical music.



His concept of culture stands out clearly in this quotation from the Inaugural Lecture he gave at the University of Malaysia:

"To forgive enemies is culture, but to forgive friends is a higher culture. To return good to those who have been bad to you is culture. To be accessible and friendly with the lowly is culture. Culture includes the learning which considers itself inadequate, the service which expects no reward, the greatness which is ever humble, the largeness which forgives, the gentlemanliness which never inflicts pain, the purity of intention and the spotlessness of mind which are born of truth and justice, and the expansiveness which comes of not harbouring petty thoughts resulting in the shrivelling of personality. Culture is fostered by learning, by the critical search for knowledge in books, by association with the learned, by the art of conversation which includes as well the art of listening, by the eloquence which should be able to express lucidly one's subtlest thoughts and by friendships which provide the opportunity to give and to receive. Culture includes the humanism which enjoys humour and laughter. 'To those who are unable to laugh, it is pitch dark even amidst the blaze of noon'. Culture is fed on ideals—the man without ideals is a corpse".



He also possessed an extraordinary versatility, this many—faceted genius of a man.

I have often thought of him as both human and humane, urban and urbane.

Of the many quotable quotes in Tamil Literature, the most favourite one of Father Thani Nayagam was,

**"Every country is my country
Every man is my kinsman"**

He remained, to the end, a citizen of the world.

This puts me in mind of the words of Benjamin Franklin:

"Grant that not only the love of liberty, but a thorough knowledge of the rights of man, may pervade all the nations of the earth so that a philosopher might set foot anywhere on its surface and say—this is my country".



Father Stanislaus was also a gentleman to the fingertips. His was an exquisite courtesy. Both he and I readily subscribed to Belloc's lines,

"Of Courtesy it is much less
than courage of heart or holiness
Yet in my walks it seems to me
That the grace of God is in Courtesy"

He was the Soul of Courtesy. But for all his courtesy, I do not think he suffered fools gladly. And yet I believe he had a real flair, a genius for friendship.

I recall how when he joined the college I was in at Rome, he found me, I think, immersed in a dark, deep sea of melancholic homesickness. He tried hard to draw me out, and up, from this miasma of misery. He even gave me a copy of Cicero's *De Amicitia*—his treatise *On Friendship*. But I am afraid—alas—that I did not respond promptly, and continued to wallow in self-pity.

The flower of friendship took a long time to bloom. I thank God that when I last met him, I apologised and asked his pardon for my shameful resistance to his kind efforts to lift me up. And, true gentleman that he was, and true friend, he promptly forgave me and laughed away my apologies.



I also remember, during his Seminary days in Colombo with me, that he gave a talk to the Literary Union on Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" and the Psalms.

He was then, as later, excellent at what I would call—if I may coin a term—comparative literature. He told us of a priest who read the "Hound of Heaven" before meeting him in the Mass each day. I can well imagine Father Stan doing the same.

As I said earlier, he had a genius for friendship. Yet he would conform to St Jerome's warning that a true friend ought never to conceal what he thinks.

How comforting it is to believe with St Francis de Sales, that friendships begun in this world will be taken up again, never to be broken off.

I also remember his great sense of humour and his ringing laughter. In this respect he was in perfect agreement with Belloc who said—

"From quiet homes and first beginning
Out to the undiscovered ends
There's nothing worth the wear of winning
But laughter and the love of friends".

How well one remembers his pealing, bell-like laughter. He loved his friends and had stimulating discussions with them.

Father Stan was a man not of the intellect alone, but also of the heart. Those of us who have often conversed with him, realised, as he did, that it was a case of *Cor ad cor loquitur*, of heart speaking to heart.



Over and above all this, dominating everything else, was his priesthood. He was first, second, and last a priest of God, and it is this aspect of him that matters to me most.

Cardinal Suhard once said that it is only before the priest that the people kneel.

Anyone who wishes to know what Father Stan's ideals of the priesthood were, should read his sermon, preached on the occasion of Fr T. M. F. Long's Silver Jubilee, which has been printed in booklet form by his kinsmen as a tribute to his memory.



I am grateful for this opportunity to speak of your, and my, beloved Father Xavier Stanislaus Thani Nayagam, which has enabled me to kiss, as it were, during these few brief minutes, the footsteps of his memory.

May I close with these lines from Cardinal Newman, whom Father Stan adored, and at whose springs of both prose and poetry, he drank so freely:

"May he support us all day long, till the shades lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in His mercy, may He give us a safe lodging and a holy rest, and peace at the last".

God rest your gentle soul, dear Father Stan, and if I may bring Shakespeare into the Liturgy and what more beautiful marriage could there be, than that of Shakespeare and the Liturgy—let me close with the loveliest of all lines in "Hamlet":

"Good night, Sweet Prince,
and flights of Angels sing thee to thy rest."

Father Xavier Stanislaus Thani Nayagam, in the Oriental fashion, I salute you.

