

EDITORIAL

This Special supplement to the *Tamil Civilization* is a humble attempt to give a survey of Tamil language and its literature to an audience, mainly non-Tamils. In other words, a bird's eye view of Tamil on the memorable occasion of the World Classical Tamil Conference held at Coimbatore on the fourth week of June 2010. The task to cover the whole span of two and a half millennium-old ancient Tamil language and literature in an anthology as this, is heavy and stupendous. Massiveness of the task notwithstanding, the desire of ours to give something in essence or provocative was overwhelming. The resultant effect is this souvenir for your scholarly perusal and kind approval.

The classical Tamil language is celebrated by aficionados as a part of popular acclaim. Scholars display their academic appreciation. Intellectuals gather to commit themselves to resume their research. In this three-dimensional approach to the development of Tamil in the World Classical Tamil Conference, this souvenir is submitted to the kind appraisal of academicians and researchers.

The Editors make no tall claim herein. Subject to a few conditions, the essays are collected and thematically arranged. The aim is to give a general idea on Tamil, its antiquity, and its growth for motivating towards its multi-dimensional development and global dissemination. The indulgence of the readers is prayed for, in a few respects.

Research is a growing process. In Tennysonian phrase "it is like a sinking star beyond the utmost bound of human thought". New excavations, inscriptions and even numismatic evidences rule out the findings and researches already made. Hence, readers are requested to submit themselves to these basic conditions in going through these articles. Spellings adopted by one scholar differs from another - for example, Cholas, Cola, Cholas, Solas are the various spellings followed. To reduce the burden of reading with foot-notes, criss-cross references and diacritical marks they have been avoided in most of the articles. Moreover, the articles in this souvenir have to be read with contemporaneity of the contributor in mind.

Acknowledgements are due to a few of the contributors whose materials are added herein.

Honourable **Vice-Chancellor** of Tamil University **Dr.M.Rajendran** was kind enough to provide with this opportunity of submitting this souvenir and to make arrangements for getting it nicely printed. I convey my deep debt of gratitude to him.

The team of Assistant Editors, **Dr. N.Athiyaman**, and **Dr.K.Kandan** helped me in collecting the articles and suggested towards the arrangement of the articles and got them neatly typed in time. They committed themselves wholeheartedly and worked even on unearthly hours to meet the schedule as directed. **Dr.B.Sundaresan**, bibliophile of the University supplied any number of books that were relevant and required and readily extended his timely service every now and then. I thank these friends personally. Any suggestion for further improvement of the volume is quite welcome.

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