

THE NAKARAM OF THE NĀNĀDESIN IN SRI LANKA

The Tanmacākarap-paṭṭinam at Vihārēhinna

The existence of a mercantile town called Tanmacākarap-paṭṭinam at a locality in the vicinity of Galevela in Dambulla, during the Polonnaruva period, is known exclusively from an inscription found at Vihārēhinna. The text of this inscription was deciphered on the basis of an estampage prepared by the Archaeological Department and published by A. Velupillai in 1971.¹ This text, based on a reading of an estampage, which has not been carefully prepared, was very defective and the studies based on this text have led to serious misunderstandings.

In August 1997 a team of Sri Lankan, Indian and Japanese scholars led by Noboru Karashima prepared fresh estampages of the inscription, and this effort has facilitated a successful decipherment of almost the entire text which consists of 37 lines.² The inscribed slab, which is of unusual length, is found within the premises of a medieval monastic establishment the architectural remains of which are found scattered over a large area. The principal building had as its main components the sanctum housing a colossal image of the Buddha and a hall the roof of which was supported by stone columns of considerable height. The superstructure had

¹ *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, Part I ed. A. Velupillai, Peradeniya, 1971, pp. 46-57.

² The team consisted of Japanese, Indian and Sri Lankan specialists in History, Archaeology and Epigraphy: Professor Noboru Karashima (Taisho University), Professor Sato (Taisho University) Dr. Yasushi Ogura (Tokai University), Professor Y. Subbarayalu (University of Tanjavur), Professor P. Shanmugam (University of Madras), Dr. Siran Deraniyagala (Commissioner General, Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka), Dr. Malini Dias, (Director, Department of Archaeology), and Professor S. Pathmanathan (University of Peradeniya).

The estampage of the inscription was prepared by Professors Subbarayalu and Shanmugam. The text was deciphered by Prof. Subbarayalu. Professor Velupillai made the pioneering effort to decipher the inscription. He could not read the Sanskrit portion and his decipherment of the Tamil portion is found to be unsatisfactory. As the letters engraved on the stone are small and crowded they cannot be easily identified. Professor Subbarayalu had the advantage of wide experience and a clear understanding of concepts and terminology usually found in the inscriptions of merchant guilds. The text as reconstructed by him is found to be a complete and intelligible one. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions* ed. A. Velupillai, Peradeniya, 1971, p. 54; e. Supparayalu, pa. Canmukam, "Ilarkaiyil aiññurruvar kelvettukal". āvaṇam 9 patippācīriyar ka Irācakōpāl, tamiḷakat tolḷiyal kalakam, tañcavur, 1998, pp. 33-34.

collapsed long ago on account of centuries of neglect, and presently there are no traces of its remains. The temple was constructed within a rectangular courtyard surrounded by walls of brick construction. The existence of a monastery at a distance of about 75 yards from the site of the temple is suggested by the scattered remains of a brick-building and its ground plan.

The fact that the inscription was set up within the premises of the temple is significant as suggesting the possibility of close interaction between the Buddhist institution and those who were responsible for setting up the inscription. The physical dimensions of the temple and the existence of a medium-sized tank in close proximity to it suggest that the area in which they were located was the centre of a flourishing agricultural settlement. The penetration of itinerant merchant communities had the effect of transforming a local centre of commodity exchanges into a major marketing centre linked to the arteries of internal and external trade.

The inscription from Viharehinna is indited in an admixture of Tamil and Grantha characters of the 12th century. On the top and the bottom portions of the inscribed slab are found representations of objects which had a symbolic value. At the extremity on either side of the top portion are found the representations of metallic lamps of the traditional type (*kuttuvilaku*). By the side of each of these objects the figure of a conch is to be found. An unfolded umbrella is depicted at the centre, and it is flanked on the left by the figure of a crescent. In the Indian cultural tradition, these symbols are associated with prosperity, authority, royal power and benevolence. They probably formed part of the insignia of authority of the mercantile towns administered by some of the merchant guilds.³

At the bottom of the slab there are representations of three objects; namely, a sword, a drum (*maṭṭu*) and a weapon which resembles a scimitar. Figures which resemble these objects are also found engraved on the slab inscription of the *Vīrakkoti* from Budumuttāva. The representation of weapons on the inscriptions of the mercantile communities is generally indicative of their association with military groups. In fact most of the inscriptions of the merchant guilds found in Sri Lanka are said to have been set up by groups of warriors.⁴ In this particular instance, the

³ It may be noted here that the *pacumpai*, "the money-bag", which is peculiar to the merchant communities as a symbol is not depicted on this slab. The symbols depicted on this slab seem to have had some association with notions of authority rather than with the mercantile profession. The figures of the umbrella, conch and traditional lamp are usually found on royal seals.

⁴ The *Vīrakkoti*, a group of warriors, associated with the *Nānātēci* merchants, are said to have established the inscriptions pertaining to the mercantile towns of *Nānātēciya-vīrapattinam* (*Vahalkada*) and *Vikkiramacalāmēkapuram* (*Māgala*). S. Pathmanathan, "The Tamil Slab Inscription of the *Vīrakkoti* at

military community that had set up the inscription were the Erivīrar. It may be assumed on the basis of the engravings on the inscribed slab that the Erivīrar had the sword as their principal weapon.

The inscription from Vihārehinna is of unusual significance as a source of historical information. It refers to a market town called Tanmacākarap-pattinam, which is otherwise unknown. The preamble of the inscription provides a clear indication of the close association between two merchant guilds, the Aññūruvar and the Viravañciyar in the establishment of the town concerned. It is perhaps the only inscription from any locality which specifically refers to the establishment of a virattānam. Another interesting detail found in the text pertains to an incident of conflict between a local chieftain and the merchants.

The town referred to in the inscription had two alternate names, Mācenakāmam and Tanmacākarap-pattinam, of which the first was doubtless the earlier one. The name Mācenakāmam appears to be a Tamil form of the Sinhalese or Pali name Mahāsenagāma which is formed by combining the expressions *mahāsena* and *gāma*. The locality was originally a village as indicated by the expression *gāma* and was probably named after Mahāsena, who is known to have constructed a large number of irrigation works.⁵ The tank at Galevela to which reference has been made earlier, in all probability, had its origins under the ruler Mahāsena (274-302).

The second name of the locality, Tanmacākarap-pattinam, suggests that the locality which was originally a village (*gāma*) had grown into a town (*pattinam*) on account of some social changes that took place during the Polonnaruva period. The development of trade through the agencies of the itinerant merchants seems to have provided the stimulus for this development. The development of the Tanmacākarap-pattinam suggests that it had become a centre of market oriented exchanges involving the collection and distribution of local products and the staples of long distance trade, and also as a focal point where routes traversed by caravans of merchants converged. The importance of the locality was further highlighted by the fact that it provided access to the regions of Malayadesa where some of the staples of itinerant trade such as pepper, ginger, cinnamon, saffron and arcanuts were to be found.⁶

Budumuttāva, Nikaweratiya: Urbanization At Magala." (pp. 15-30), The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities, Vol. XX, Nos. 1 & 2, 1994, pp. 24-25.

⁵. mahāvamsa trans. into English by Wilhelm Geiger, London 1964, 44.

⁶. These commodities were among the staples of international trade. They are referred to in many of the inscriptions set up by the mercantile communities in South India. They were also exported from the island in substantial

The name Tanmacākarap-pattinam, which is formed by combining the expressions Tanmacākara and pattinam, is significant as suggesting a close connection between the merchant communities, which had established this particular pattinam and the Buddhist temple of the locality. The expression Tanmacākara, which means the 'the ocean of dharma', is reminiscent of the names Amirtacākarar and Kuṇacākarar, which belonged to two reputed Tamil grammarians both of whom were Jainas.⁷ The word Tanmacākarar may be considered as an epithet of the Buddha, and as there are several instances where towns dominated by merchants were named after the epithets of deities it may be assumed that the pattinam at Vihārāhinna was named after an epithet of the Buddha. Such an explanation is supported by the consideration that the inscription pertaining to the town was set up within the premises of the Buddhist temple.

The Nānādesis and other merchant communities at Tanmacākarap-pattinam had probably established a reciprocal relationship with the monastic establishment and the temple which occupied a dominant position in the religious, social and cultural life of the community of the locality. Rare commodities of distant origin such as camphor, sandal-wood, incense, oils, silks, cloth and porcelain required for these institutions were probably supplied by itinerant merchants by special arrangements and it may be supposed that the merchants occasionally made substantial donations to them. Such an interaction seems to have given the merchants free access to a wider community beyond the limits of the town.

The close interaction between the merchant guilds and Buddhist institutions is recorded in inscriptions from Anurādhapura, Polonnaruva and Budumuttāva. The Tooth Relic Temple at Polonnaruva was once placed under the custody of a military unit serving the nakaram of the Valāñceyar in that city.⁸ When that military unit assumed control over the temple that institution was named after that military unit. At Vikkiramacalā-mekapuram there was a Buddhist temple called Aññurruvan-pāḷli,

quantities to the South Indian ports for resale and distribution.

⁷ Amirtacākarar was the author of the grammatical treatise called *yāpparuṅkalam*. The commentary on it was written by Kuṇacākarar.

⁸ The expression *nakarattār* found in the text of The slab Inscription of the Vēḷaikkaras from Polonnaruva may be construed as one which denotes the members of the governing body of a *nakaram* or "market-town". *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. IV ed. Krishna Sastri, No. 1412; S. Pathmanathan, "The Nagaram of the Nanadesis In Sri Lanka Circa A.D. 100 - 1300", *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* Vol. X, Nos. 1 & 2, 1984, pp. 136 - 139.

which was obviously named after a merchant community.⁹ At Tanmacākarapattinam the relationship was in the reverse order. Here, we have an instance where the town established by merchant communities is named after Tanmacākarar, which, in the contemporary Sri Lankan context, could be none other than an epithet of the Buddha. Such a situation presupposes that the merchant communities of the locality had enjoyed the support and patronage of the Buddhist establishment.

It would appear from a careful scrutiny of the preamble of the inscription concerned that two merchant communities, the Nānādesis and the Viravaḷaṅceyar, were jointly responsible for constituting the pattinam. The portion of the inscriptional preamble which describes these two communities translates:

Hail Prosperity. The refuge of the entire world. The Viravaḷaṅceyar possessing the long, luminous and fiery spear, endowed with the edict of the Five Hundred Heroes, famous throughout the world on account of their valour, whose breasts are adorned by the goddess of wealth, are the descendants of Sri Vāsudeva, Kaṇḍhali and Mūlabhadra. They observe steadfastly the noble law of the association (samayam) in the eighteen pattinam (towns), the thirty-two velāpuram and the sixty-four katikait-tavaḷam. They are the children of Paramesvari of Aiya(p)polil who resides in all towns.

The *prasasti* of the mercantile communities is generally a poetic and conventional description, which records myths, traditions and historical information pertaining to their origins, social status and activities. The adoption of the *prasasti* of the Aññāruvar by other communities has resulted in a great deal of confusion. All of them claim descent from a trinity of divinities: Vāsudeva, Kaṇḍhali and Mūlabhadra. All of them acknowledged Aiya(p)polil Paramesvari as their tutelary deity. Yet, it should be noted that such claims do not provide any indication of the history of their social origins or their religious affiliations. The merchants were of high social status and the membership of the guilds was of a composite character. They were mostly adherents of cults included within the fold of Hinduism. It is probable that some of them were devout Śāktas. Yet their attitude in matters of religion was one of eclecticism. They are generally known to have extended support and patronage to Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Jaina and Buddhist institutions.¹⁰

⁹ "The Slab Inscription of the Virakkoti at Budumuttava," *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* Vol. XX (1994), Nos. 1 & 2, p. 21.

¹⁰ The inscriptions of the Ayyavolc and other merchant guilds are mostly found at the premises of Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Jaina and Buddhist Shrines in Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh. There are instances where the main shrines affiliated to one or the other of these four traditions have been named after

The three categories of localities called *pattinam*, *velāpuram* and *kaṭikaitāvalam* represented different levels at which market oriented exchanges were conducted by merchant guilds. The ones called *pattinam* were market towns with rows of shops, warehouses and bazaars where business was transacted continuously by local residents and itinerants.¹¹ There were hundreds of such towns in South India and a great deal of historical information pertaining to them is found in inscriptions. The *velāpuram* and *Kaṭikaitāvalam* cannot be easily defined and epigraphic notices on them are only a few in number. The only available reference to a locality where an institution called *velāpuram* existed is to be found in the inscription from Barus in Sumatra, which has been fully deciphered, edited and published recently by Noboru Karashima and Y. Subbarāyalu.¹² The *Kaṭikaitāvalam* has been defined as a fair held periodically, on designated days of the week,

mercantile communities. Meera Abraham. *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1988.

¹¹ Kenneth Hall, *Trade and State Craft In the Age of the Cōlas*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1980, p. 105.

¹² The inscription from Barus, Sumatara, refers to the *Vēlāpuram* in *Varōcu* otherwise called *Māntakari - Vallava-tēci-Uyyakonṭa-pattinam*. The English translation of the text as rendered by Karashima reads:

"In the Saka year 1010 current (1088 AD), month Masi. We the Five Hundred (*aiññūrruvarōm*) of the Thousand Directions, known in all countries and directions, having met at *Vēlāpuram* in *Varōsu* *alias* *Mātangari - Vallava desi - uyyakonda - pattinam*, decided to grant as follows to our son(s). [e] *nagara-senāpati nāṭṭu ceṭṭiyār. padinen-būmi-dēsi-appar* and the *māvettugal*.

"[Each of] the ships...ships' Captain and the *kēvigal* (boat-rowers) shall pay the fee *añju - tuṇḍāyam* in gold according to the price of the *Kastūri* and [then only] may step on the cloth-spread."

"Thus we the five Hundred of the Thousand Directions known in every direction in all the Eighteen Lands got this stone written and planted. Do not forget charity. Charity alone is the good companion." - Quoted from the abbreviated text of a lecture delivered at the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya, 10 August 1998.

where groups of merchants halted their caravans and conducted business transactions with local inhabitants and traders.¹³ The words *velā* and *kaṭikai* which are prefixed respectively to *puram* and *tāvakam* seem to suggest that they denoted localities where trading operations were conducted during certain designated periods of time. It may be suggested that the *velāpuram* designated marketing centres where the peak period of activity was seasonal. The numbers 18, 32 and 64 which are associated respectively with *pattinam*, *velāpuram* and *kaṭikait-tāvālam* are conventional and do not have any significance.

The consideration that the *prasasti* of the inscription concerned consists of two parts each of which is devoted to a description of one of the two merchant communities, the *Viravaḷaṅceyar* and the *Nānādesin* is significant as providing an indication of the fact that the *Tanmacākarappattinam* was composite in character. It may be suggested that both these communities were represented in the *pattinam* as it was the case at *Vahalkada*. The *Viravaḷaṅceyar* perhaps, functioned in that town as auxiliaries of the *Nānādesin* in a subordinate capacity.

The epigraph under consideration records some information relating to an incident of conflict between a local chieftain called *Veṅātu-utaiyār* and the merchant community. A certain (*Mukudavalan*) *Muttan*, otherwise called *nānāteciyāntān*, who belonged to the military community of *erivīrar* was seized, his hands were fettered with chains (*piṭṭuc ciraḷ ceytu onpātukait talai-yiluppin pōtu*) and was taken captive by the chieftain. The *perumakkal* of the *pattinam* are said to have secured his release by paying a sum of money (*āṭakacu kuṭuttu vīṇu koṅṭamaiyil*). The *perumakkal* of the *pattinam* are said to have conferred some honours and privileges on the *erivīrar*. They were presented with silver amulet(s) and the *pattinam* was named after them and called *erivīrantānam*. The military community reciprocated by surrendering the right to collect oil for burning lamps. They also promised that the *nānū-cettis* who collect some dues in the *pattinam* will no longer be allowed that privilege. Instead they were to receive maintenance during day-time (*pakar-cōru*) and the customary payment of four *kācu* and enjoy the freedom of access into the *pattinam*.

The circumstances leading to the arrest of *Nānāteci-yāntān* by *veṅātu-utaiyār* are not mentioned in the text of the inscription. The identity of the chieftain also cannot be ascertained. The expression *veṅātu-utaiyār* is a compound of two separate words *veṅātu* and *utaiyār*. The first of these words denotes a territorial division while the second one is the designation of a chieftain of such a division. *Veṅātu* mentioned here is not to be confused with *Veṅātu* in Kerala. The merchant communities seem to have had their own lists of names to designate territorial divisions in Sri Lanka and *Veṅātu* seems to have been one of them. Or else it could be the Tamilised form of a Sinhalese name. Nevertheless, he may be recognised as

¹³ Kenneth Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Colas*, p. 145.

a chieftain who exercised authority over the region in which the Tanmacākarappaṭṭinam was included. It is also possible that he was a military chief serving under a ruler. The conflict he had with the merchants may be explained in two ways. He could have abused his position of authority to demand a ransom from the merchants and arrested one of their agents when his demands were not met. Another plausible explanation is that the *paṭṭinam* was in default in respect of some payment which had to be made to the higher authorities. The affair was settled by the intervention of the *perumakkal*, the governing body of the *paṭṭinam*.

The *erivīran-tānam* referred to in this inscription seems to be synonymous with *vīrataḷam*, an expression which is recorded in the concluding portion of the inscriptions from Budumuttāva and Galtenpitiya. These expressions are also found in some Indian inscriptions recording the activities of merchant communities. For instance, Ārrur of Ārrur-nāṭu is described as *erivīrataḷam* in an inscription from Cittaiyan-kōṭṭai in Tiṅṅukkal.¹⁴ On the basis of information found in this inscription it may be assumed that the *paṭṭinam* established by the Aññūruvar and the Vīravalāñceyar at Vihārēhinna was renamed as *Erivīrantānam* after the name of the military community called *Erivīrar* who were under their service. Such a step presupposes that the merchant communities of the *paṭṭinam* had conceded to the warriors certain privileges to which they were not entitled to earlier.

The inscription from Vihārēhinna records the names of ten persons who belonged to the group of warriors called *Erivīrar*. They are:- (1) Tira(Jana ... varakālarakattiluk) nāṭuccetti, (2) Cīraḷan Kampan otherwise called Piḷlaic-Cakalan *nānātecic-ceṭṭi*, (3) Munai vallapa *nānātecikkon*, (4) Nātan otherwise called *nam-vāṭu-muriyān*, (5) Kūttan Kālan otherwise called *nūrāyiran tacamaṭi mummata-vāraṇap-piḷlai*, (6) Virakan Murperaraiyan Kūttan otherwise called *aññūruva maṇḷila ayiraṣṭāḷam*, (7) Pirān Cāttan otherwise called *Virakan ceṇāpati-yāṇṣān*, (8) Kampan Villan otherwise called (*ceṇāpati*) *virakan*, (9) Nāṭṭarayan Kaṇṇan otherwise called *aruvan ampalapillai-yāṇṣān* and (10) Tiruvarankan Teci-yāparaṇap-piḷlai. They refer to themselves as *patinenpumi vīrarōm*, which expression is the first person plural form of *patinenpumivīrar*. The assertive character of this group, which is suggested by the tone and contents of the inscription, provides an indication of the fact that they had considerable influence and authority in matters pertaining to the activities

¹⁴ The expressions *arrūr-nāṭu ārrūrāna erivīra-taḷattu* which translate: Ārrūr otherwise called *erivīrataḷam* of *ārrūr-nāṭu* clearly suggest that the word *vīrataḷam* denoted an institution and an area over which it exercised authority and the limits of which corresponded with those of a village. In this particular instance the village of Ārrūr had been transformed into a *vīrataḷam*. *Vīrataḷam* may therefore be construed as an alternate designation of *Vīrapaṭṭinam*. Pa cankaralinkam, "cittaiyan kōṭṭaik kalveṣṭukkal", *āvaṇam* 4, 1994 patippācīriyar e. cupparāyalu, tamilt tolliyal kaḷakam, putukkōṭṭai, 1994, p. 35.

of the merchant communities. In addition to providing security they seem to have exercised some administrative functions.

A group of warriors called *Erivārar* are sometimes mentioned in the list of communities associated with the mercantile communities in inscriptional preambles. But the reference to them as a group of people engaged in specific activities at a locality in the island is exclusively from the epigraph from *Vihārēhinna*. The expression *erivāran tānam* clearly suggests that the *paṭṭinam* was named after the military community called *Erivārar*. The position held by them at *Tanmacākara-paṭṭinam* was similar to that held by the *Virakkoṭi* at *Vikkiramacalāmekapuram*, *Vahalkada* and *Galtenpitiya*.

In conclusion it may be stated that the formation of *Tanmacākara-paṭṭinam* coincided with the peak period of commercial activities in pre-colonial Sri Lanka, which provided a fresh impetus for the process of urbanization and inter-cultural communication. The *paṭṭinam* was probably organized by two merchants guilds, the *Nānādesis* and the *Viravaḷaṅceyar* and named after an epithet of the Buddha on account of the close connections it had with the Buddhist establishment of the locality.

It would appear from the tone and contents of the text of the inscription that at a particular stage of its development the *paṭṭinam* was named after the military community of *Erivārar* as *Erivārantānam* on a decision made by the governing body of the *paṭṭinam*, which was dominated by merchants. Such a decision on the part of the merchants presupposes that the power and influence of the military community within the *paṭṭinam* was growing on account of some circumstances the precise nature of which cannot presently be ascertained.

Text

1. *svasti sri* samasta bhuvanasraya pancasata virasasana laks.
2. mi-lankrta vakshasthala sri vasudeva kandhali mulabhadrot
3. bhava sri astadasa-pattana dvatrimsat velapura ca
4. tusasti katikaisthana disaiyasraya divyasarasamaya
5. dharmma sampurnna sakalapura nivasaniya kiya sri
6. ayapolirpura paramesvarikku makkalakiya veyyacutar netu
7. vel viravalanceyar patinettu pattinamum muppattirantu vela puramu
8. marupattu-nanku katikaitavalamum tavalattuc cetti
9. yun cetti putiranun kavaraï katripanun kamuntasva
10. miym ottanum [ulpacumpaikkaranum ankararanu]
11. mavanakkaranum [eri] viranum pavatai viranum ariyab[to
12. tajrun tamil valla ca...lanum palutilat tolil va
13. va kalutai meva...vanumullittu aram valarak kali
14. meliyap pukal [perukat] ticaiyanaittun cevitu patamar cenkole
15. munnaka samaya dharmam initu natattukinra patinenpumi nanku
16. ticai nanatecit ticai vilanku ticaiyayirat-tannurruvar kantiyamu
17. [ttar] ulltta patinenpumi [vi] virarom macenakamamana tanmacakarap pattana
18. [ttup] perumakkal [cnkalai] nokkie ceyta cirappavatu nam utappiranta
19. mu...valan muttanana nanateciyantanaï venatutaiyar pitittuc ci
20. rai ceytu onpatukait talai yiluppin potu atankacu kututtu vitu kon
21. tamaiyalum vellittali ceyvittup patinenpumi criviran taname
22. nru naman cattik kulatin perittup perun cirappuc ceytamaiyil nan
23. kalum nam perumakkalukkuc cirappuc ceyya ventumenru [ni.lattuki]
24. vitum vilakkennaiyum panamunnu nattuc cettikalum nam utap
25. pirantarum ippattinattil panamunnati-takavum virun cirumattuttavum
[pa]rrai
26. katti eraticakavum ivarukku pakarcoru peruvatacum pavatai menatai
27. nalu kacu peruvatacum ippatic ceyya viramuraimai aliyac ceyta
28. lpaniyum cetiyum otukki muttum purakum atikkapperuvatacum ip
29. pati ceyyum[i]tattu uttirattilalintu patuvanakil avan pinam nayelavu
30. mavatacum ipparicu camaintu kallum palakaiyum mattinom tiralan...
31. [varakalalara kattiyulla] nattuc cettiyum tiralan kampanana pillaccakalan
nanateci itta
32. munaivallapa nanatecikkonu - natan namvittu muriyanum kuttan kalanana
33. nurayiran tecamati mummata varanap pillaiyum virakal murper arayan
kuttanana virakal
34. ainnurruva mantila ayirastanamum piran cattanana virakal cenapati-
yantatum
35. kampan villanana cenapati virakalayum natarayan kannanana aruvanampala
pil
36. laiyantanum tiruvarankan eranana teciyaparanap pillaiyum [vatateca]pa
37. tinenpumi virarom aramararka

Translation

Hail Prosperity. The refuge of the entire world. The Vīravajñeayar possessing the long luminous and fiery spear, endowed with the edict of the Five Hundred Heroes, famous throughout the world on account of their valour and whose faces are adorned by Lakṣmi are the offspring of the lineages of Sri Vāsudeva, Khaṇḍhali and Mūlabhadra. They observe steadfastly the noble law of the association (*samayam*) in the eighteen paṭṭinam (towns), the thirty-two *velāpuram* (coastal towns) and the sixty-four kaṭikait-tāvalam. They are the children of Parameśvarī of Aiya(p)polil who resides in all towns.

The eighteen *paṭṭinam*, the thirty-two *velāpuram*, the sixty-four *kaṭikaittāvalam*, the cettiṭṭirar, the kavaraī, the katripan, the kāmuntasvāmi, the oṭṭan, the *pacum-paik-kāran*, the *ankakkāran*, the *anakkāram*, the... *vīran*, the *pāvatai-vīran*, those who are proficient in Sanskrit and Tamil and those who ride donkeys which never falter, those who conduct their business in conformity with laws so as to enable the sceptre to be held forward prominently so that righteousness shall prevail and evil will disappear, with their fame spreading in all directions. All these are the Five Hundred of the thousand directions in the eighteen countries and the four quarters (of the earth).

We, 'the heroes of the eighteen lands (patinenpūmi-vīrar) including Kaṇṭiya-muttar, attached to them (make this resolution): We have been greatly honoured by the *perumakkaḷ* (governing body) of the Macenākāmam otherwise called Tanmacākarap-paṭṭinam. They secured the release of our 'companion' Mudavaḷan Muttan otherwise called nānāteciyāntān, who was arrested by Venāṭuṭaiyār and put in chains, after paying a ransom in money (*āṭankācu*). Besides, they have made (a) silver amulet(s) and presented them to us, and have named [attested by us] the *patinenpumivīrar*. Tiralan. . . Varakalatarā-kattilulla nattuccetti, Tiralan Kampan otherwise called Pillaicakala nanateci itta Munivallapa-nanatecik-kon, Natan namvittumuriyan, kuttan kalan otherwise called Nurayīran tacamati-mummata-varanappillai, virakol Murperarayan Kuttan otherwise called Ainnurruva-mantila-ayirastanam, Piran Catan otherwise called Cenapatiyantān, Kampan Villan otherwise called Cenapati virakalai, nattarayan Kannan Aruvanampala-pillai-yantān, Tiruvarankan Eran otherwise called Teciyaparanap-pillai. Forget not justice.

S. PATHMANATHAN