

## 11<sup>th</sup> Classical Tamil Summer Seminar in 2013

Organised by Eva Wilden at the centre of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient  
in Pondicherry, 19<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2013

The year 2013 will bring the 11<sup>th</sup> CTSS, directly following the second workshop on the Archaeology of Bhakti, but from this summer onward our concept will have to be changed fundamentally. The last pandit has left the EFEO, at the proud age of 90 years, and with him the traditional way of teaching, with its traditional claims of authority, is gone. We shall probably have to go through a phase of experimentation before we can settle on a new, satisfactory formula. For the time being the idea is to split the day into three reading sessions of equal length that will be devoted to selected texts from three different genres of Tamil literature. Classes will be presided over by experts (young and old, Indian and Western) who provide the material and present their work and view of the chosen text, but emphasis will be laid on the discussion in the forum. The goal will not be to arrive at a single “correct” translation, but rather to explore the different possibilities of understanding, based on commentary or argument. In accordance with the general philological outlook of the EFEO, work will not only proceed from the current editions but will include manuscript material photographed by our lab, or in the case of inscriptions photographs and estampages.

The literary text will be from the oldest part of surviving Tamil poetry, from the Caṅkam corpus, that is, this time, from the ten long songs of the *Pattuppāṭṭu*. We shall begin with the shortest among them, the *Mullaippāṭṭu* of only a hundred-and-three lines, to be followed by the second shortest, the *Neṭunalvāṭai* with hundred-eighty-eight lines. This session shall be conceived as a round-table meeting of the Caṅkam project[insert link to page], an occasion for its members to read together and discuss various issues of method and editorial procedure. Of course colleagues and students will be welcome to add their insight and voice their questions. For the theoretical domain we shall have a section from a grammatical treatise as yet to be selected, under the guidance of Professor K. Nachimuthu, who, to our good fortune, is about to join the EFEO this spring, after his prolonged stay at the JNU in Delhi. This session can be regarded as an introduction into reading Tamil commentaries, with their specific idiom and agenda(s), an indispensable requirement for anybody interested in any genre of literature. Last but not least Professor G. Vijayavenugopal will preside over a session on Tamil epigraphy, devoted to the thorny question of how inscriptions take up literary forms or even quote from literature. Here we shall proceed from several examples that have been quoted in recent research, such as a 12<sup>th</sup>-century Cōla inscription that refers to the *Malaikaṭām Pāṭṭu*, which might be the *Malaipaṭukaṭām*, the last of the *Pattuppāṭṭu*.