

Leader 4 February 1994
SATF JUBILEE FEATURE

FLASHBACK

From whence it all began

TAMIL COMMUNITY'S RICH HERITAGE

The First Annual Conference of the South African Tamil Federation was held during the Easter Weekend.

Mr RG Pillay, an Inspector of Indian education, opened the conference on Friday April 4, 1968, at the Tamil Institute hall in Clairwood. In his address to an audience of about 450 people, Mr Pillay traced the growth of Tamil literature from ancient times. Mr Pillay said: "The Tamils are an ancient race, and their civilisations begins from pre-historic antiquity. Their language is well structured, and their literature, vast and varied, is mostly poetry.

"They reflect the ancient culture, refined emotions and noble aspirations of the Tamils. Nature in all her glory formed their background and humanity their subject matter. "Their early history depicts a vast panorama of life of the people, picturing their society, their kingship, their marital exploits in times of war, and in peace their civic life and affairs of love in a human setting.

The language employed is rich, dignified and plainly direct, clothed in appropriate metre and apt versification, suitable to the themes depicted.

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"With such a rich literature, reckoned to be, at a moderate computation of nearly then thousand years or more, it makes one melancholy at the thought that many of these great works have perished and passed beyond one's grasp."

Mr Pillay drew an outline of the existing literary works of the Tamils.

In declaring the conference open, Mr Pillay said: "I pray that we, the Tamil people, the inheritors of a glorious civilisation, view the world with the eye of Subrahmanya Bharati, our late poet, and rising above narrow sectarianism and the petty social conventions, march on the path that will lead us to the Divine Spirit, which is the source of all goodness, all beauty and all truth.

After the address by the President of the Federation, Mr VS Iyer, a member of the council, Mr JR Devar read some of the messages that were received from various organisations and individuals.

On the second day of the conference held at the Pelican restaurant in Chatsworth, officials and delegates were entertained to a civic lunch given by the Durban City Council. After the lunch there was a discussion on "Marriages: Present Patterns and Possible Reforms."

The third session of the conference was held on Sunday, ^ April 1968 at both Clairwood and Chatsworth.

At the pelican a symposium on the "Religion and religious Practices" was held. Yogiraj CV Naidu presided. In the afternoon a well-known businessman Mr LM Naidu read a paper on "Economics for a Community's progress."

The conference ended with a farewell banquet for delegates at the Clairwood Tamil Institute.