

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE 29TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF SOUTH INDIAN
NUMISMATIC SOCIETY ORGANISED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TAMIL, VELS
UNIVERSITY AND SOUTH INDIAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY, CHENNAI AT VIBA
AUDITORIUM, VELS UNIVERSITY, CHENNAI ON 06.01.2019 AT 11.00 AM**

Anaivarukkum Kaalai Vanakkam

Dr. Isari K. Ganesh,
Chancellor, Vels University

Dr. R. Krishnamurthy,
President, South Indian Numismatic Society

Dr. P. V. Radhakrishnan,
General President of the Conference

Dr. A. V. Narasimhamurthy,
General Secretary,
South Indian Numismatic Society

Dr. T. Sathyamurthy,
Editor,
Studies in South Indian Coins

Dr. R. Raja Reddy,
Chairman, Numismatic Society of India,
Varanasi

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me happiness to be here amongst you at the two-day annual conference of the South Indian Numismatic Society.

Numismatics the collection and study of coins has been of interest to people all through history. The reason for that has been the tale of history that a coin, can narrate. Apart from being admired for its beauty and design a coin by virtue of the metal it is made of is indicative of the prosperity of the people who lived in the times the coin belongs to.

Herein lies a secret. A coin of today is only representative of the value that it signifies. For example if we were to take a 10 rupee coin and estimate its metal value only, it may be far less than

10 rupees. After the advent of paper money the same principle became the underlying concept in the minting of coins. A coin is said to have a value of say, 10 rupees because the State says so and not because of the inherent value of the metal the coin is made of. But in olden times coins were mainly made of precious metals only.

The highest denomination coin was generally named as nishka, pagoda, panam, varaha, etc and was of gold and of a specified weight, usually round in shape. The half pagoda had half the weight of gold or was made of cheaper metals like silver, etc. High value gold coins issued by Roman Emperor Augustus Caesar were found in coastal Tamil Nadu,

providing proof of trade of spices between India and Rome, two thousand years ago.

Another fact to note is regarding the metallurgy and the technology of coins. Gold was often alloyed with silver and copper. Most of the early coins were made by punch-marking. Later with the advent of moulding, accurate moulds were made and molten metal was poured to get uniformity in weight and appearance.

The two sides of the coin are usually used to identify the king, dynasty, royal insignia, date, etc. Many of the kings have used sun, moon or animals such as elephant, fish, pig, horse etc, along with motifs of plants, flowers creepers etc, on the obverse

and king's name, date, etc on the reverse side. Thus these coins help the historian in tracing the dynasty, king, date, etc. In fact many ancient coins have authenticated the king and his date. Many of the coins contain images of Gods, such as Shiva, Vishnu, Venkateshvara, Krishna etc. indicating the religion of the king. Krishnadevaraya, the emperor of Vijayanagar had donated specially minted gold coins with images of Lord Vishnu with his consorts to Tirumala temple which are used for worship even now! Coins issued by Moghuls, Nizam, Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan carry nicely calligraphed Persian scripts with some geometric motifs. A few Hyder coins contained elephants. Gold coins issued by

Wadeyars of Mysore are known for their beautiful images of Hindu Gods.

A few small gold coins helped rediscover the extinct Brahmi script, which helped rewriting the history of India and a group of South Asian nations where a large number of Brahmi edicts were found. This is valued as a great milestone in the history of Indian numismatics. It is well known that a British Mint Master came across a mound of gold coins during the course of his journeys in India it took him several months to decipher that they were gold coins minted by the Greeks in 4th century BC. The script on the obverse of the coin was in Brahmi, and Greek naming the emperor and this discovery led to

deciphering the Brahmi Script in which over 40 stone edicts of Emperor Asoka were carved.

Numismatists can be classified into three categories.

The first group chiefly derive pleasure from the simple ownership of monetary devices and studying these coins as private amateur scholars. In the classical field amateur collector studies have achieved quite remarkable progress in the field. Examples are Walter Breen, a well-known numismatist.

The second group are the coin dealers. Often called professional numismatists, they authenticate or grade coins for commercial purposes. The buying

and selling of coin collections by numismatists who are professional dealers advances the study of money, and expert numismatists are consulted by historians, museum curators, and archaeologists.

The third category are scholar numismatists working in public institutions, universities or as independent scholars acquiring knowledge about monetary devices, their systems, their economy and their historical context. An example would be G.Kenneth Jenkins.

The focus of modern numismatics lies frequently in the research of production and use of money in historical contexts using mint or other records in order to determine the relative rarity of the coins.

About your Society, I learn that there is a Numismatic Society of India, with headquarters at Varanasi. I learnt from your office bearers that the South Indian Numismatic Society was established in 1960 in Chennai to cater to the needs of numismatists and coin-lovers, who were enthused by the discovery of large hoards of rare coins in South India.

I note that this society is holding its annual conference, in all the Southern states in places like Mysore, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Chennai, Udupi, Pondicherry, etc., and bringing out an annual publication of the proceedings containing researched work on new findings of coins, their

origin, dynasty, date and historical information by thorough study and analysis, arranged chronologically, book reviews, news and notes on discovery of coins, besides information of the Society. I found that the volume being released by me today, I have noted articles on a copper seal used to make coins by Satavahanas, Lion symbol in Indian coins, Gold coins minted by Chalukyas of Badami and Kalyana, many interesting coins of Vijayanagar kings, I am informed that in the publication Survey of Research of International Association of Professional Numismatists, 113 out of 133 papers published, are taken from the published

volumes of South Indian Numismatic Society. I congratulate you all on this.

Dr. R. Krishnamurthy's discovery of early coins from Tamil Nadu, particularly that of the coin of "Peruvaluthi" and his publication Sangam Age Coins has won him many laurels and awards. I am happy that Dr.R.Krishnamurthy, President of the Society has been awarded the Life Time Achievement Award by the Numismatic Society of India, Varanasi.

I appreciate the efforts of the organizers for their special efforts in organizing this conference on numismatics and extend my best wishes and greetings to them. May the South Indian

Numismatics Society be visited with success in all its endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam.....

Jai Hind.....