

An Ancient Vedic college of Kerala

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One of the most ancient foundation of Vedic College recorded in documents of this country comes from Thiruvananthapuram, in Kerala mentioned in a copper plate grant dated 865(AD) CE. The grant issued by the Yādava king of Karunandan Aḍakkan, who purchased lands, established a town named after his title Pārthiva-śekhara-puram, built a Vishnu temple (Viṣṇu Bhaṭṭāra) and as an adjunct to this temple he established this post graduate Vedic centre called (Pārthiva śāekhara puram) śālai. But what is amazing is that he gives the number of seats provided for each of the three Vedas – Rk Veda, Yajur Veda and Sāma veda, the qualifications prescribed for admission, the mode of study, provision of a hostel and the discipline enforced among the students, Punishment prescribed for misbehavior, and the landed property provided as a perpetual endowment for running the institution. This is the earliest in the whole country that gives such details. And what is it says modeled on another similar college, already functioning at Kandalur śśindicating that it was the norm prevalent in similar institution very much earlier to that date. Another important point is that such Institutions were founded as part of temples. And that it is a Royal Foundation need to be noted. The students were called Sattars. The record is in Tamil and Sanskrit.

Details of Parthivasekharapuram record

Number of Seats provided;

Bahrīch caraṇa	seats	45
Taittirīya caraṇa	seats	36
Talavakāra Caraṇa	seats	14
Total seats	seats	95

Rules of admission

a) One should have studied Mīmāṃsā

Vyākaraṇa and

Paurohitya

Should have no landed property (Poor students Only)

Should have adequate qualification to deal with three functions (traī rājya vyavahāra)

Should produce certificates from five Saṅgats that the statements he has produced were truthful.

Modes of Study: (Vāram)

- a) Should recite nine “Pugavus” as two “krama vāras” alternately in Sutras and Sutra-āranas
- b) Should repeat nine “pugavus “ as two “krama vāras” alternately in Śākha, Kalpa and Ghaṇa.
- c) Repeat nine “Pugavus” in two vārams in “Ahattu ūham”(from memory)

Code of Students’ conduct:

1. If any student speaks ill of another during the course, he will be fined five kānams that should be paid in the hands of elected representatives of the assembly “Sabhai perumakkal”
2. If one Sattar punches on the head of another he should pay a fine of five kānam.
3. The one who received the punch should also pay the same fine
4. If one student wounds another with any weapon, he will be dismissed from the course immediately.
5. Students are not permitted to carry weapons while going to assembly meetings
6. No kind of deceit is allowed within the temple premises.
7. Sattars are not permitted to keep servant maids in their houses (Hostel rooms)

8. No one is permitted to alienate lands of the educational institution (Sabhā bhogam) or the temple lands (Devatāna Lands). Those who attempt such acts shall be fined five Kalanju of gold. Without paying that fine they will not be allowed to dine in the hostel (Śālai).

9. Those who try to coerce or compulsorily collect from the tenants of the Sālā bhoga lands or Devatāna lands will be fined ten times the amount.

10 In case of taxes in arrears from any he should be fined with 50 kanams and the tax should be collected or he should be bound by the decision of three Sattars one from each.

11. Three Saṭṭars from each caraṇas should report to do compulsory service (Kaḍamai) as directed by the assembly failing which they will have to pay 54 kāṇams as fine and in addition to the assigned duty

12 No one should stop the daily routines in the temple under any pretext

13 No one should prevent daily food offering to the deity under any pretext or obstruction. Those who do so will have to pay one kaḷañju of gold per day and until they pay the fine will not be permitted to dine

14. If any temple servant speaks disparagingly about a saṭṭar he will be fined one kācu
