

THE  
HISTORICAL STUDY OF  
THE THEVARAM HYMNS

By

**Prof. A. M. Paramasivanandam**

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**THE  
HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE  
THEVARAM HYMNS**

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**Prof. A. M. Paramasivanandan**

A Thesis submitted to the University of Madras  
for M. Litt Degree in 1947

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## Preface

In this thesis an attempt has been made to trace out the historical references in the Thevaram hymns of the three Tamil saints namely Thirunanasambandar, Tirunavukkarasar (otherwise known as Appar) and Sundaramurthi. To study the history of Tamilnadu we have no ancient historical works to help us. We have got only the ancient and mediaeval literature to guide us to trace out the history of the country. For the later half of the mediaeval period there are the inscriptions discovered in the stones and pillars of the temples. We have also some of the notes of the foreign travellers who visited South India at times.

Ancient Tamil literature comprises of the works called Sangam literature. They are classified as Ettuttokai (the eight collections) and Pattuppattu (the ten idylls). They belong to the period earlier than 200 A. D. beginning from 1000 B. C. or still earlier. Apart from these works ancient literature also includes Patinenkilkanakku, Cilappatikaram and Manimekalai. It is from this portion of Tamil literature, the historians are able to trace the ancient history of the country.

The primary works of the mediaeval Tamil period (300 A. D. to 1300 A. D.) are the Thevaram hymns of the three Saiva Nayanars, the hymns of Alvars known as Nalayirappapantam, Perunkatai, Civacacintamani, Jeryapuranam and Kambaramayanam. These works

**furnish evidences relating to the history of the mediaeval period.**

**Most of the historians of India and abroad who have written the history of the Tamil country have gathered their facts from the ancient works and paid little or no attention to the mediaeval literature. Though the mediaeval works express the religious and sectarian views of the people of that period, yet they are not devoid of valuable historical references pertaining to that period. Tevaram forms a prominent religious work of the middle ages and provides us with many useful informations about the life of the people of those days.**

**What is history? History is not merely a chronicle of kings and wars. It is also a record of the life of the common man. Hence it is proper that history includes all aspects of social life. The evidences furnished by Tevaram are, therefore, historical evidences, inasmuch as the saints who sang the hymns depicted therein the social and religious life of the people and also to some extent the economic and political conditions of the period.**

**Generally the Tevaram hymns are studied by the Saivaites as their scripture and their value as historical records has not yet been properly recognised. In South India even from the early days we see that religion played an important part and so there is no wonder many of the literary works being based on religions. Though the religious literature of Tamilnadu propagate the views of the particular religions of the country, yet they have a wide scope and contribute to the development of the society as a whole. The Tevaram hymns also give prominence and much importance to the expression of**



their religious views, but at the same time they explain the history of the society in a broad outlook. Therefore it has been possible to find out in those hymns evidences which contribute to the studies relating to the history of the country. This thesis is an attempt in this direction. The Tevaram hymns belonging to the period of three centuries from the seventh to the ninth, and the facts gathered from them will throw some light on the history of that period. Many references from other literary works and from the inscriptions of that age have been given to corroborate the facts mentioned by the three Tamil saints in their Tevaram hymns.

In the first chapter Saivism has been traced up to the Sangam age. It has also been pointed out how in the beginning of the seventh century the two saints Appar and Sambandar propagated their faith and put down the rival religions, Buddhism and Jainism. The life sketches of the three saints who are responsible for the renaissances of Saiva religion are also given.

The second chapter deals with the rulers of the different dynasties of the country during the time of the saints. Mention has also been made of the heroes and the legendary kings found in Tevaram. Certain facts regarding the system of administration have been explained.

In the third chapter, the references to the towns and the villages in those days have been collected. Informations about some small villages and sea ports have also been gathered. It has also been explained how the people respected the heroes of those days by naming certain places after them,

In the next chapter, the society of those days has been portrayed. It has been shown that caste system existed in the age of the saints, but played an insignificant role in the field of religion. It has been proved that the women of that age had been well advanced and that their environments had an elevating influence over them.

The fifth chapter refers to the development of agriculture and commerce. The progress of industry has been illustrated. The evidences regarding arts and education have been given in the sixth chapter.

In the seventh chapter the religious and philosophical ideas of those days have been taken into consideration. Some of the religious customs and habits have also been explained.

The next chapter brings to light some of the scientific ideas that were known in the age of the saints. The last chapter traces out the ideals and principles of life prevalent in those days.

The facts which thus explain the history of the Tamil land during the time of the saints i.e., seventh, eighth and ninth centuries have been gathered from the Tevaram hymns, and the references have been given in the foot-note in the Tamil script. Whenever necessary the concerned portions of the hymns have been translated and cited as evidences.

Madras  
30-1-1947 }

**A. M. Paramasivanandam**

# System of Transliteration

(Tamil Lexicon of the University of Madras,  
Vol. VI, p. IXVIII)

## Tamil alphabets and their English symbols

### Vowels

அ	a	எ	e
ஆ	ā	ஏ	ē
இ	i	ஐ	ai
ஈ	ī	ஓ	o
உ	u	ஔ	ō
ஊ	ū	ஔ	au

### Consonants

க	k	ம்	m
ங்	ñ	ய்	y
ச	c	ர்	r
ஞ்	ñ	ல்	l
ட்	t	வ்	v
ண்	ṇ	ழ்	ḷ
த்	t	ள்	ḷ
ந்	n	ற்	r
ப்	p	ன்	ṇ

There are exceptions to this method. The names of the saints, the rulers and certain places have already found places in many historical works in which they have been transliterated in a different method. To avoid confusion they have also been given in those familiar forms. For example:-

<b>Correct forms</b>	<b>Familiar forms</b>
Campantar	Sambandar
Cuntarar	Sundarar
Caṅkam	Sangam
Civa	Siva
Cāttanār	Sattanar
Citampa.am	Chidambaram
Maturai	Madura
Murukan	Murugan
Pāṇṭiya	Pandiya
Poṅkal	Pongal
Tēvāram	Tevaram

Sanskrit words like Ganapati, Vinayaga etc., are used in their familiar forms.

## List of Authorities Cited

### (a) TAMIL

Tolkāppiyam

Kalittokai

Puranānūru

Paṭṭinappālai — Uruttiraṅkaṅṅaṅār

Porunarāruppaṭai — ..

Tirukkuraḷ — Tiruvaḷḷuvar

Naladiyar — Jains

Cilappatikāram — Ilāṅkōvaṭikal

Manimēkalai — Sattanar

Tevaram — Saint Sambandar (Saiva Sidhanta  
Samajam Edn.)

.. — Saint Appar ..

.. — Saint Sundarar ..

Tiruvācakam — Saint Mānikkavācakar

Nālayiram — Vaishnavaitē Saints (Aḷvārs)

Cintāmaṇi — Tirūttakkatēvar

Piṅkalam — Piṅkalamunivar

Periyapurāṇam — Cēkkiḷār

Rāmāyanam — Kambar

Nalvāli — Oṻvālyār

Sivañña Sittiyār — Aṛulnantisivam

Pāratam — Villiputūrār

Tanjaivāṇaṅ kōvai — Poyyāmoli

Tāyumānavar pātal — Tāyumānavar

Kāñcipurāṇam — Sivaññaṇamunivar

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of Tamil Literature (1895)

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Thomas Walters — On Yuan Chwang (1905)

Thrudson — Castes and Tribes of South India

Vaithiya, C. V. — The History of the Medaeval  
India

Venkataramanaiya — The Origin of South Indian  
Temples (1930)

Venkateswara S. V. — Indian Culture through the  
Ages (1928)

Madras Census Report (1891)

### Method of Citing Authorities

In refering to the Tevaram hymns three numbers are given. The first number refers to Thirumaṟai, the second refer to the Patikam and the third, the number of the particular hymn in that Patikam. (7.14.3. denotes the third hymn of the fourteenth patikam in the seventh Tirumuṟai)

Numbers in other poetical works refer to the verse, and when two numbers are givan the first denotes the Kātai or Chapter and the second the particular line in it. (Cii. 26. 57, means the fifty-seventh line in the twenty-sixth kātai of Cilappati-kāram).

Numbers in other prose works refer to the page and indicated by letter 'p'

### Abbreviations

Periya-Cēramān	—	Periyapurāṇam-Cēramān- perumāl nāyaṇār purāṇam
Periya-Ceruttuṇai	—	Periyapurāṇam-Ceruttuṇai nāyaṇār purāṇam
Periya Eayar	—	Periyapurāṇam Eayārkoṇ kalikkāma nāyaṇār purāṇam
Periya Elayān	—	Elayāṅkuṭi māra nāyaṇār purāṇam
Periya Kaḷar	—	Kaḷarcinṅkanāyaṇār purāṇam
Periya Muṇai	—	Muṇaiyaṭuvār- nāyaṇār purāṇam
Periya Pusa	—	Pūsalānāyaṇār purāṇam
Periya Sam	—	Sampantamūrti - nāyaṇār purāṇam
Periya Tatu	—	Taṭuttāṭkoṇṭa - purāṇam
Periya Tiru	—	Tirunāvukkaracu - nāyaṇār purāṇam -

Ep. Ind.-Ephigraphic. Indica

S. I. I.-South Indian Inscriptions

Tol. Porul.-Tolkāppiyam Poruḷatikāram.

## The Renaissance Of Saivism

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Lord Tennyson, the popular English poet, has pointed out that "more things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of". This concept about prayer has been upheld by the great Tamil Saints as well. Tamil nadu is famous for its hymns and devotional songs, which could be traced back to the pre-historic days. The hymns and devotional songs in Tamil literature deal with different shades of thought. Even the Christian missionaries who came to South India to propagate their religion composed a variety of hymns and songs in consonance with the thought and ideal of the Tamil people.

### **Pre-Tevaram Period**

In the Sangam age there were no hymns and that age had a characteristic special literature most of which is devoid of any mention to differences of colour, creed and religion. In fact, there existed poets belonging to varied creeds and religions, but

they were primarily interested in the development of their mother-tongue and paid little care in spreading their sectarian creeds and religions. Many of the songs depict truly the important characteristics of the civilization of that age.

During the Sangam age there were different people belonging to different castes and religions. But this did not in any way hamper the social harmony as they all loved one another and worked in co-operation. They never indulged in sectarian creeds and petty differences. The important and popular literary compositions of the Sangam age, Pattuppāṭṭu and Eṭṭuttokai are completely free from such sectarian, caste and other narrow outlook.

In the literary compositions of the Sangam age reference has been made to Hindu Gods like Siva, Muruga and Tirumāl and this necessarily leads us to the conclusion that most of the poets belonged to Hinduism. But it is also evident that there were people of other religions also and they were very few. In those early works there are ample evidences to show that Saivism was given a prominent place. In Cilapatikāram, Cēraṅ Cēṅkuttvaṅ prayed to Siva first before he started on his expedition towards the north.<sup>1</sup> The author stated

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1. Cilapatikaram, 26, 27.

that the king was born by the grace of Siva.<sup>1</sup> In the same epic Lord Siva alone is mentioned as the Lord who has no birth.<sup>2</sup> The author of Manimēkalai, a Buddhist, gave the first place only to God Siva.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Kandiah Pillai has established that the worship of Siva was the good old religious function of Tamilians.<sup>4</sup> Mr. T.R. Sesa Iyengar also well explained that the early pre-historic religion of Dravidians was only Saivism which is also the view upheld by the great western scholars such as Pope, Whetler, Ragozin and Fergusson.<sup>5</sup>

Tirumurukāruppaṭai testifies to the predominance of Saivism and of Muruga worship during the Sangam age. In the story about the Sangam, Siva has been depicted as the chairman of the academy. In Tolkappiyam, Tirumāl, Murugan and such other Gods have been mentioned as regional deities.<sup>6</sup> So it has to be concluded that Saivism was an established religion during the Sangam age.

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1. i) Chilappatikaram 26. 97. 98

ii) Ibid, 30, 141, 142,

2. Ibid, 5. 169 - 178

3. Manimekalai, 1. 54 & 55

4. Tamilar Carittirm, p. 14

5. Dravidian India, p.98

6. Tol. porul. 88

### **The Rise of Buddhism and Jainism**

In course of time many people immigrated to our country both by land and by sea. Even during the Sangam age the missionaries sent by King Asoka travelled in South India and Ceylon and propagated the doctrines of Buddhism. It was only because of this, Buddhism and Jainism found a place in the Tamil land. Mr. T. R. Seshayengar explained the introduction of Buddhism as follows:- "In the next century, i.e., the third century B. C., Buddhism was introduced into South India by Asoka. The early history of Buddhism in the Tamil country is obscure, though there are frequent references to the Buddhism in early Tamil literature."<sup>1</sup> He further explained how Jainism was brought into South India. He said that the work of propagating the Jain faith into peninsular India was undertaken by the disciple of Bhadrabahu, a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya. One of these disciples known as Visakhani came to the Pandiya and Cola kingdoms, and preached the Jain Moral Code to the Tamils of those kingdoms.<sup>2</sup> Prior to the seventh century A.D. Many of the rulers in South India supported Buddhism and Jainism and this royal support accounts for their pre-eminence in that period.

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1: Dravidian India, p: 113

2: Ibid, p. 114

in the beginning of that century Jainism was fast spreading among the masses and was gaining strength, but Buddhism had begun to show signs of decay even as early as fifth century A.D. About the middle of the seventh century Saiva Saints and Vaishnava Aļvārs preached their religions respectively and by dint of their hard labour and missionary zeal brought about the revival of their religions to their original greatness. Sambandar and Tirunāvukkaracu - the two Saiva Saints, whose zeal for the revival of their religion knew no bounds, suffered persecution at the hands of the Jains. These saints in their literary compositions, called Tevaram, condemned the Jains and the Buddhists. But in the works of the other Tamil Saint, Sundarar, the condemnations of the Jains and the Buddhists are not so severe. It implies that during the time of Sundarar, Jainism and Buddhism might have lost their influence over the people. The Saiva Saints and the Vaishnava Aļvārs collaborated in bringing about the fall of Buddhism and Jainism and thereby gave an impetus to the revival of Saivism and Vaishnavism in South India.

### **The fall of Buddhism and Jainism**

In the beginning of the seventh century, the ruling dynasties of Tamilnadu, the Pandiyas in the

South and the Pallavas in the North, were antagonistic to the spread of Saivism. Both of them being Jains, supported their own religion. Saint Appar who stood against the tyranny of the Pallava emperor and came out successful in all his sufferings, did really succeed in converting the king to Saivism. Similarly Saint Sambandar converted the Pandiya king to Saivism. Thus the whole of Tamilnadu became converted to their religion. 'If Sambandar (a Saiva Saint) brought about the down-fall of Jainism in the Pandiya kingdom, Appar drove the Jains from the Pallava country' said Mr. Ramaswamy Iyengar in his *Studies in South Indian Jainism*.<sup>1</sup> This view is well explained by V. Smith also.<sup>2</sup>

### The Saiva Literatures

The Saivaite literature was increasing in volume day by day. A few of such literary works have been regarded as sacred and they have been worshiped by many of the Saivaitees. They are called twelve Tirumurai covering a period of six centuries from the 7th to the 12th century A.D. The first seven of these are known as *Aṭaṅkaṁmurai* containing 384 patikams of Sambandar as one to three, 312 of Appar as four to six and 100 of

1. *Studies in South Indian Jainism*, p. 66

2. *Early History of India*, p. 327



Sundarar as the seventh.<sup>1</sup> The Tamilians are quite familiar with these literary works of the great Saivaite Saints-Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar of whom the first two are contemporaries and lived in the middle of the seventh century. Sundarar lived probably in the ninth century. Even to this day such religious compositions command great respect and are the rich treasure of the Saiva religion. The Saivaites during the puja hours recite them in many of the temples. The religious minded Cōḷa kings of the later period had great admiration for these songs and they patronised the reciters of these songs by granting them villages and other gifts. The Cōḷa kings really patronised the recital of hymnal literature.

### The three Saints of the Tevaram hymns

The three Tamil Saints were always prompted by the desire of serving humanity. Through service they wanted to attain salvation. They never deviated from their high ideals. Their hymns were voluminous, but we have got only a portion of them. It is a tragedy that a larger part of these great devotional works has been lost to the Tamilians, since it has been eaten away by white ants.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Tirumurai Kantapurānam, 25

2. Ibid, 22.

The Tamil country was ruled by the Pallavas, Pandiyas and Cēras and these three saints had connections with these ruling dynasties-Appar with the Pallavas, Sambandar with the Pandiyas and Sundarar with the Cēras. At that time there were no prominent Cōḷa kings and naturally these saints had no connection with the Cōḷa kings and their administration. These saints portrayed in their hymns the life of the people during their time. A critical study of these hymns will enable us to have sufficient historical knowledge about the customs and manners of the people. That is real history as history is not simply a record of dates and events, of battles and victories. In short, these Tevaram hymns depict the social, economic and religious conditions of the people of Tamilnadu. These saints led ideal lives which serve as a source of inspiration for the people.

Saint Sambandar played a leading role in the Renaissance of Saivism. He was born in Cīkāḷi in Tanjore district in a Brahmin community. His father was Civapātavirutayar. When he was a child of three years, his father took him to the tank to have a bath. Leaving the child on the bank of the tank, the father dived deep into the waters. The child frightened by its loneliness began to cry. Lord Siva and Parvatī made their appearance and offered milk to the child in a gold

cup. The moment the child drank the milk, Lord Siva and Parvathi disappeared. In the mean while the father came out of the waters and was surprised to see some milk in his child's mouth. He, belonging to the Brahmin community, did not tolerate this, scolded the child and asked for the cause.<sup>1</sup> The child unmindful of these frightful threats, turned towards the direction of the tower of the temple nearby and began singing the first song of Tevaram.<sup>2</sup> The purport of the song is the child's pointing out to his father, God Siva and Parvathi who graced the child with their divine appearance. Subsequently the father visualised the entire situation and he was very much elated. Along with the boy he entered the temple where the child saint sang in praise of God. This young poetic genius travelled to different places reciting songs in praise of God Siva and since he was young, his father used to carry him on his shoulders during travels.

As Sambandar progressed in life, God was very much pleased with his songs and devotion and presented him with many things. Among the numerous valuable divine presents, the pearl palanquin and 'gold tālam' were most important.

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1. Periya. Sam. 72 & 73

2. தோடுடைய செவியன் 1-1-1

His religious activities and great spiritual deeds are very interesting. At one time he was invited to Madurai by Queen Mankayarkkarsi and Minister Kulaccirai. Many of the people of Madurai along with the king supported Jainism. By his persuasive methods and religious hymns he established Saivism in Pandiya country. His literary works became a proof of all tests held by the Jain king. Greatly influenced by the teachings and impressed by the miraculous deeds of Sambandar, the King gave up Jainism and became a sincere devotee of Saivaite philosophy and ordered all his subjects to glorify saint Sambandar and to follow his ideals. At Mailāpōre the Saint gave life to the dead bones. He and Saint Appar were contemporaries and they visited many sacred places together. Tirunēlakāṇṭayāḷppāṇar was of low birth and was an untouchable. Yet Sambandar moved very closely with him. He gave him a dinner at Cīkāḷi after their return from the temple. This episode is well depicted by poet Cēkkaḷār in Periyapurāṇam.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently Sambandar visited the village of Pāṇar in the west of Chidambaram. Both of them together visited numerous temples and whenever Sambandar

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1. Periya. Sam. 1.137

recited the holy hymns, Pāṇar used to play the yāḷ accordingly. During the last days of Sambandar's life a miraculous event happened. On the day of his marriage, all of a sudden a Jothi appeared and all the people assembled together with Sambandar, became one with the Jothi and attained salvation.

Tirunāvukkarasu also known as Saint Appar was born at Tiruvāmūr a village near Villupuram in the South Arcot district. He was a Vēḷāḷa and lost his parents when he was very young. His elder sister Tilakavati became his guardian. She was about to commit 'Sati' on hearing the death of her betrothed husband in a battlefield against the Chalukyas. But due to the timely intervention of her brother, she abstained from it in the interest of the welfare of her brother. Appar was a born saivaite, but he became converted to Jainism and was a great exponent of Jain philosophy. As such he was appointed as the minister in charge of religion by the Pallava ruler. He was honoured as 'Dharmasena'. Appar was having his place of residence at Pāṭaliputra. His elder sister who lived at Tiruvatikai, a few miles away from Pāṭaliputra, was very sorry when she heard about the conversion of her brother to Jainism. From that day onwards she began

praying to Siva for the reconversion of her brother to Saivism. In response to her prayers Lord Siva appeared in her dreams and promised to effect the conversion of her brother to Saivism.

At the time of his stay at Pātaliputra, Appar suffered from an acute stomach pain called 'cūlai'. Many of the Jain priests resorted to all kinds of medical aids and mantras too. But all were in vain. On one night he left the place at Pātaliputra to Tiruvatikai to meet his sister. He was taken to the temple by her, where he was purified by sacred ashes called 'tiruniru'. At that very moment he was cured of his virulent stomach pain. He, in his first hymn explained how the stomach pain gave him much trouble.<sup>1</sup> Feeling at ease, he began singing in praise of God Siva which songs form the Tevaram hymns. Thus he became reconverted to Saivism.

The Jains believed that the conversion of Appar to Saivism would retard the progress of Jainism and were even afraid that the king might lose faith in their religion. They pleaded before the king and went to the extent of characterising

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1. தோற்றுதென் வயிற்றினகம் படியே  
குடரோடு துடக்கி முடக்கி யிட  
ஆற்றேன் 4-1-1

Appar as deceitful. The king immediately issued orders to Appar to appear in his court. Saint Appar in the beginning disobeyed the orders. He had expressed nothing but aversion to the tyrannical and autocratic rule of the king.<sup>1</sup> But Later on relying on God Siva he appeared before the Pallava king. He faced numerous ordeals at the hands of the Jains but on all those occasions he was miraculously saved by divine intervention. Finally he was tied to a huge stone and thrown into the waters of the sea. Even then, fearless as he was, he offered prayers to Siva<sup>2</sup> and by the grace of Siva he reached the shores near Tiruppātirippuliyur. The particular place where the great Saint was washed ashore came to be known as 'Karaiyēravittakuppam'. This event in the life of Appar had its own effect on the Jain king. He became a convert to Saivism and immediately ordered the destruction of all the Jain temples at Pāṭaliputra. He built a Siva temple called 'Gunaparaviccaram'. Gunapara was a surname of the king. This was the beginning of the decay of Jainism resulting in the revival of Saivism.

Appar went on pilgrimage to different holy places and performed many miracles thereby

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1. மறுமாற்றதி திருத்தாண்டகம் 6 - 98
  2. கற்றுணைப் பூட்டியோர் கடலில் பாய்ச்சினும்  
நற்றுணை யாவது நமச்சி வாயவே 4-11-1

strengthening the faith of the people in Saivism. He started on the pilgrimage to Himalayas and wanted to reach Mount Kailas. He brought to life a Brahmin boy who was bitten by a snake at Tinkalūr. The boy's father Appūti regarded Appār as his Guru ever since he heard the greatness and the divinity of the latter. His respect and reverence for his Guru was so great that he was ready to serve meals to his Guru even at the time when his eldest son was lying dead bitten by a snake. Saint Appar has made mention of Appūti in Tevaram which he sang at Tiruppaḷanam.

Appar was a contemporary of Sambandar and both together visited places of religious importance. During the last days of his life Saint Appar lived at Tiruppuḷalūr, where he attained salvation. He led a very simple life of devotional service. Appar insisted that every part of the body should do its best for the achievement of spiritual glory.<sup>1</sup> He believed in service to God and to humanity.<sup>2</sup> He led such a great saintly life that even the wild animals in the forest refrained from doing him any harm.<sup>3</sup>

1. திரு அங்கமாலை 4.9

2. என் கடன் பணிசெய்து கிடப்பதே 8-19-9

3. ஆயவா நிருளின்க ணேகும்வ் வன்பர் தம்மை அணைந்துமுன்  
கீயவாய விலங்கு வன்தொழில் செய்ய அஞ்சின



Sundarar was born in Adisaiva community, the members of which perform pujas in temples. He was a native of Tirunāvalur, a village near Tiruvāmur, the birth place of Saint Appar. He was brought up by a chieftain named Narasiṅka-muṇaiyar who admired his charming qualities. At the time of his marriage God Siva appeared in the guise of a Brahmin and prevented Sundarar from being married. It was decided by the local panchayat that the Brahmin (Lord Siva) was the master of Sundarar. This was based and proved on the evidence of a document produced by the old Brahmin. At Tiruveṅṅainallūr, Sundarar realised that his Brahmin Master was no other person than Lord Siva Himself. Then he began singing hymns in praise of Siva.<sup>1</sup> Siva treated Sundarar as his friend. Sundarar taking advantage of this relationship, obtained what all he wanted, i.e., gold, paddy etc. He did miraculous deeds by his divine power. On one occasion at Avināci he brought to life a boy who was devoured by a crocodile. He brought to light the fame and greatness of Saiva Nayanars in his hymn 'Tirutton-tattokai'. Cēkkaḷar's Periyapurāṇma is entirely based on this.

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1. பித்தா பிறை சூடி 7-1-1

Sundarar had a friend from the west-coast by name Cēramāṇ, the learned scholar and ruler of the Cēra dynasty. Cēramāṇ lived with Sundarar for some time and accompanied him to Kailas, from Tiru-vañcaikkalam, the capital of the Cēras. He married Paravai and Cankili, two girls not belonging to the Brahmin community to indicate perhaps his disapproval of the rigorous caste distinctions which regulated the marriages of those times. Some of the Saiva Nayanaras of Periyapurāṇam were his contemporaries.

A historical study of the lives of these Tamil Saiva Saints is possible through the hymns sang by them called Tevaram. Tevaram is really of great historical value and its study will really throw much light on the history of South India during their period.

## II

# THE RULERS

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### **The Ruling Dynasties**

In Tevaram reference has been made to the three royal dynasties of Cēras, Cōlas and Pandiyas who governed in the seventh century A. D. But the Pallavas rose to great prominence in the north. The Cōlas have not been referred to in detail in Tevaram. Saint Sambandar had influence over the Pandiyas, Saint Appar had influence over the Pallavas and Saint Sundarar over the Cēras.

### **The Pallavas**

Saint Appar, the re-convert to Saivism suffered a great deal at the hands of the Pallava Jain king, who later on embraced Saivism. Modern research has revealed the fact that this Pallava king was Mahendravarma I. In Tevaram this Saint expressed his aversion to the acts of intolerance of the Pallava king and criticised his misdeeds. The kings were regarded as occupying the highest position in the social ladder. On one occasion

Saint Appar disobeyed the command of the Pallava king and thereby exhibited his hatred towards the ruling kings. The Jain king Mahendra I with a view to punish Saint Appar, commanded his ministers to bring him to his royal court. Appar, stubborn as he was, refused to obey the command of the king even though the latter might occupy an elevated and a dignified seat on an elephant.<sup>1</sup>

Mahendra ruled the north part of the Tamil country in the early years of the seventh century, during the years 600 - 630 A.D. with his capital at Kāñci. The Pandiya king Neṭumāran was his contemporary. The re-conversion of Saint Appar to Saivism might have taken place about the year 615 A.D. Mr. V. Ramachandra Dikhshitar in his 'Studies in Tamil Literature' has endorsed the view of Mr. K. R. Srinivasa Pillai that Appar's conversion should have taken place before 613 or 614 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after Appar became a convert to Saivism the Pallava king Mahendra changed his religion and became a disciple of Saint Appar.<sup>3</sup> All the Jain temples and mutts at Pātaliputra were

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1. பாராண்டு பகடேறி வருவாரி சொல்லும்  
பணிகேட்கக் கடவோமோ பற்றற்றேமே. 6-98-3.
  2. Studies in Tamil Literature, p. 1
  3. Introduction to the S. I. I.. Voi. XII, p. 2

completely demolished and the king ordered the building of a Siva temple at Tiruvatikai. The temple was designated after his surname 'Gunabaran' as Gunabara Isvaram.<sup>1</sup> Even though the Jain temples were demolished by the Pallava king at Pataliputra, yet the Jains and Buddhist viharas at Kāñci continued to exist. The Chinese traveller Hieun Tsang who visited Kāñci about the years 642 referred to the prevalence of hundred Buddhist monasteries with more than ten thousand brethren all of the Sthavira School.<sup>2</sup> The successors of Mahendra I were all Hindu kings and naturally neither Jainism nor Buddhism could have hoped to make any progress.

Saint Sambandar and Appar were always actuated by certain high ideals and never interested themselves very much in the worldly affairs. In addition, the kings of their time stood against the progress of Saivism. The Pallava king Mahendra issued orders to throw Saint Appar in the sea. Similarly the Jains under the Pandiya king Neṭumāran set fire to the house of Saint Sambandar. However both these Saints escaped miraculously. This intolerance of the kings towards Saivism was perhaps the main reason

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1. Periya. Tiru. p. 146

2. Oy Yuau Chwng, V61. II, p. 226

for the Saints not mentioning the names of these kings in Tevaram. But, Kulaccirai, the minister and Maṅkayarkkaraci, the Pandiya queen were referred to by the Saints in so far as they happened to be the pillars of Saivism in Pandiya country.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sambandar went even to the extent of tracing out the parentage of queen Maṅkayarkkaraci and to pay a tribute to her father, a Cōḷa king.<sup>2</sup>

No reference has been made to the Pallavas by Saints Sambandar and Appar. This has induced some to contend that the Pallavas were not the admirers and supporters of Tamil literature. Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar observed that the two Saints never mentioned about the Pallava king as the latter was not a patron of Tamil literature.<sup>3</sup> Mattavilasaparakasanam written by Mahendra I in Sanskrit indicates that he was a patron of Sanskrit literature. Many of the inscriptions are either in Sanskrit or Prakrit. Further Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar remarked that the

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1. பன்னலம் புணரும் பாண்டிமாதேவி குலச்சிறை  
எனும் இவர் பணியும், அந்நலம் பெறுசீர் ஆலவாய்  
3.120.11
  2. மண்ணெலாம் நிகழ மன்னனாய் மன்னும்  
மணிமுடிச் சோழனறந் மகளாம் 3.120.9
  3. Some contribution of South India to Indian  
Culture, p. 145

Saiva Saints did not care to mention the name of the rulers of the land as the poets of the Sangam age did. But it can be said that Mahendra had respect for Tamil literature. The Saints Appar and Sambandar never cared for the patronage of the ruling kings as some of the poets of the Sangam age did. Further these rulers were intolerant and tyrannical. As such these Saints never referred to them in Tevaram but expressed their respect and reverence for all the followers of Saivism. The Saints desired to serve humanity as a whole and thereby attain salvation.

During the time of the first two saints, the Pallava kingdom was at its highest glory. Their kingdom consisted of all the territories from the south of Andhradesa upto Tirichirappally. There was no powerful Cōla king at that time. Saint Sambandar in the hymns which he sang at Mūkkiccam referred to the names of the three royal dynasties (Cēras, Cōlas Pāndiyas) who offered worship at that particular shrine. But he has not referred to the names of the ruling kings. It is probable that the Cōla king might have been then a feudatory under the Pallavas. The sovereignty of the Pallavas in those days seemed to have been absolute and paramount in South India.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Pallavas of Kanci, P. 24.

The Cōlas might have been in power before the reign of the Pallava king Mahendra I. Sainj Sambandar in his hymns which he sang at Madurat referred to queen Maṅkayarkkaraci the wife of Neṭumāraṅ who was a contemporary of the Pallava king Mahendra I. He said that she was the daughter of a Cōla king who was ruling over a vast territory.<sup>1</sup> This Cōla domination might have declined and the Cōlas after that able ruler might have been brought under the subjection of the Pallavas during the reign of Mahendra I. Some historians regard queen Maṅkayarkkaraci as the daughter of Karikālaṅ. This view is open to objection because Cōla Karikālaṅ ruled at least four hundred years before the reign of Neṭumaran, the contemporary of the Pallava king Mahendra I (600-630 A.D.). Therefore, it has to be concluded that during the time of the first two Saiva Saints, no Cōla king rose to prominence. As such, Tamilnad was entirely under the rule and domination of the Pallavas and the Pandiyas.

Saint Sundarar lived in the ninth century A.D. In his hymns which he sang at Chidambaram, he referred to the decay and the decline of the Pallava power and prestige. It is probable that

1. மண்ணெலாம் நிகழ மன்னராய் மன்னும்  
மணிமுடிச் சோழன் 3-120-9



this might have been affected by the later Cōlas. Chidambaram was one of the cities in the Pallava dominion. Sundarar referred to the punishment given by Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram to those who opposed and failed to recognise the authority of the Pallavas.<sup>1</sup> There is every reason to believe that those who opposed the power of the Pallavas from the south might be the Cōlas. That Cōlas regaining power in the latter part of the ninth century A.D. (During the time of Saint Sundarar) is based on historical evidence.<sup>2</sup>

Saint Sundarar referred to a Pallava king by name Kāṭavarkōṇ kaḷarcinkaṇ.<sup>3</sup> Kāṭavar is a name given to the Pallavas since they destroyed the forests and constructed villages and cities. Dr. Minakshi in her 'Pallavas' emphasised the aptness of the term 'Kāṭuveṭṭi' to the Pallavas.<sup>4</sup> Kalarcinkāṇ belonged to that Kāṭava family. This king was a saint and he was included in this list of

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1. உரிமையால் பல்லவர்க்குத் திறைகொடா மன்னவரை  
மறுக்கஞ் செய்யும்

பெருமையால் புலியூர்சிறிறம்பலத்தெம் பெருமானைப்  
பெற்றோ மன்றே. 7-90-4

2. History of the Cola Dynasty in Tamil, p. 6

3. கடல்கூழ்ந்த நிலவுலகங் காக்கின்ற பெருமானை  
காடவர்கோன் கழற்சிங்கள். 7-39-9

4. Administration and the social life under the  
Pallavas, pp. 17&18.

sixty three Nāyanārs as enumerated by Sundarar. Sundarar referred to Kaḷar̥cinkaṇ as the ruling king of the Pallavas during his time.

Sundarar mentioned another Pallava king named 'Aiyatikāḷ kātavarkōṇ'. This Pallava king has been depicted as a pious and religious person by Cēkkiḷār in his Periyapurānam. But the Pallava king Kaḷar̥cinkaṇ has been depicted by the same author as a warrior winning laurels in the north.<sup>1</sup>

### The Pandiyas

Though not as powerful as the pallavas, the Pandiyas were considerably strong and held sway in the south. Saint Sambandar visited Madurai with the idea of converting the ruler and the ruled to Saivism in response to an invitation sent by queen Mankayarkkaraci and minister Kulaccirai. The Pandiya king Neṭumāraṇ in the beginning was known as Kūṇpāṇṭiyaṇ since he was hunch-backed. But immediately after his conversion to Saivism and by the sacred touch of Saint Sambandar he became Niṇracir neṭumāraṇ. Saint Sambandar in a hymn blessed the king to shake off the physical deformity and to stand erect

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1. Periya. Kalar, 2

and dignified.<sup>1</sup> The king had been in the list of Nāyaṅārs by Saint Sundarar. Professor Sundaram Pillai was of opinion that the two names Kūṅpāṅṅiyan and Niṅracīr neṅmāraṅ might have been the titles given to the Pandiya king and the proper name of the same is yet to be known.<sup>2</sup> The Talapurāṅam of Madurai refers to the name of Sundra Pandiya as the Pandiya king during the time of Sambandar and that the original name of Neṅmāraṅ might have been Sundara Pandiya. This also is not accepted by Professor Sundaram Pillai who contended that the term Sundara Pandiya might have been the Sanskrit translation of Niṅracīr neṅmāraṅ. Even Sambandar did not refer to the proper name of the Pandiya king but designated him as Tennavaṅ and Maturaimaṅ. But we see in the list of the Pandiya kings of the name Sundara Pandiya more than once. Marcopolo who visited the country later, probably in the thirteenth century, mentioned a Pandiya king also as one among the nine who were ruling then, named Sundara Panti<sup>3</sup> and so it can be concluded that Sundara Pandiyan might be the original name of the king.

1. வேந்தனும் ஒங்குக 3-54-1.

2. Some mile stones in the History of Tamil Literature, pp. 16 & 17.

3. Foreign Notices of South India, p. 162

Cēkkiḷār in his Periyapurāṇam, portrayed the Pandiya king, a follower of Jainism as an unrighteous king since he consented to set fire to the dwelling place of Saint Sambandar.<sup>1</sup> But he at a later stage, after the conversion of the Pandiya king into Saivism when he realised his folly and began to repent for his misdeeds, appreciated and admired this act of the Pandiya king.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sundarar referred to the greatness of the Pandiya king as a warrior and glorified his victory at Nelvēli.<sup>3</sup> Saint Appar also visited the Pandiya king at Madurai. He was cordially welcomed by the king who became a convert to Saivism earlier.<sup>4</sup> The very fact that Cēkkiḷār wrote many poems about Sambandar's visit to Madura and only a few about that of Appar clearly indicates that<sup>5</sup>during the visit of the later to Madurai, there was no conflict between Jainism and Saivism, and in fact Jainism then paled into insignificance.

Saint Sundarar on his pilgrimage to Pandiya country met a Pandiya king at Tiruppaṅkuraṁ.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Periya. Sam. 688.689
  2. Ibid 864-867
  3. நிறைகொண்ட சிந்தையால் நெல்வேலி வென்ற  
நின்றசீர் நெடுமாறன் 7-89-8
  4. Periya. Tiru. 405.
  5. முடியாலுலகாண்ட மூவேந்தர் முன்னே 7-2-11

He said that he met all the three renowned kings of Tamilnad at Tiruparankunram. During his time the Cōlas and Cēras were rising to greatness and the Pallavas were declining. Even though the Cōlas were regaining their supremacy, yet no great Cōla king lived in his time. Similarly no Pandiya king of great reputation existed. But the Cōlas and the Pandiyas at the time of Saint Sundarar might have been the subordinates of either the Pallavas or the Cēras. The Cēra king who was with Saint Sundarar at Tirupparankunram, as probably Cēramāṅperumāl of the Cēra kingdom.

### The Colas

In Tevaram no mention has been made of the outstanding Cōla kings and their rule. But reference has been made to certain minor rulers who were pious devotees. Vincent Smith, referring to the Chinese Traveller Yuan Chwang's report, said that there was no powerful Cōla monarch when the traveller visited the Cōla country, since he did not mention any of the Cōla rulers.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sambandar has said that Maṅkaiyarkkaraci, the queen of the Pandiya king, was the daughter of a Cōla king. The name of the Cōla

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2. The early History of India, p. 344

king has not been mentioned. Cēkkiḷār, who used to narrate the parentage of the saints, was silent regarding the parentage of Mankaiyarkkacci except mentioning that she was the daughter of a Cōḷa king. Saint Sambandar in his hymns at Kañci made use of the word Karikalan. Some were of opinion that the term Karikālan refers to Cōḷa king. But Karikālan in the context denotes Yama the God of death and not a king. If Saint Sambandar really wanted to mention the name of the Cōḷa king he could have done it when he sang various hymns in the Cōḷa country itself.

The Cōḷa king Kōccankaṇāṇ has been referred to in the hymns. The birth of this Cōḷa king is a mystery. All the three saints made mention about him. It is stated that the Cōḷa king in his previous<sup>t</sup> life was a spider worshipping a Lingam under venṇāval tree (white jamboo tree) at Tiruvāṇaikkā near Trichirappally. The devoted service as a spider is said to have enabled him to be born in a royal dynasty of the Cōḷas in his next birth by the grace of Lord Siva.<sup>1</sup> Tirumaṅkai Aḷvār, a

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1. சிலந்தியும் ஆணைக்காவில் திருநிழற் பந்தர் செய்து  
உலந்தவன்ஃஇறந்தபோது கோச்செங்கணனுமாகக்  
கலந்தநீர் காவிரிகுழ் சோண்டடுச் சோழர்தங்கள்  
குலந்தனில் பிறப்பித்திட்டார் குறுக்கை

வீரட்டாரே 4-49-4

Vaishnava devotee referred to the construction of seventy Saivaite temples by this Cōḷa king Kōccenkaṇāṇ<sup>1</sup>. In his hymns, there are references to state that the king did not hate Vaishnavism and at the same time supported it. The Alṽar well explained about his superiority and greatness ruling over the whole of the Tamil country and the north.<sup>2</sup> He was depicted also as a great warrior.<sup>3</sup> Tevaram bears clear evidences to these particular facts. Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar pointed out that there was a Cōḷa king called Koccenkaṇāṇ who fought a battle against a Cēra king and the latter was taken a prisoner.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Iyengar said that Kaḷavaḷināṛpatu is a description of the battle that took place between the Cōḷa king Kōccenkaṇāṇ and the Cēras. Mr. C. V. Narayana Iyer contended that Kōccenkaṇāṇ ruled after the death of Cēraṇ Cenkuṭṭuvan (Cēra king) who gained a victory at Nelvēli against the nine Cōḷa kings.<sup>5</sup> So it has to be concluded that Cōḷan Kōccenkaṇāṇ

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1. எண் தோளீசர்க்கு எழில்மாடம் எழுபது செய்தோண்  
Nalayiram 1505
  2. தென்தமிழ் வடபுலக்கோன் சோழன் " 1502
  3. சிலைத்தடக்கைக் குலச்சோழன் " 1504
  4. Some contributions of South India to Indian Culture, p. 219
  5. Origin and early History of Saivism in south India, pp. 197-201.

ruled after the Sangam age and before the time of the two saints Sambandar and Appar i.e., after the second century and before the seventh century A. D. Cēkkiḷār in his Periyapurāṇam said that Koccenkaṇāṇ, built temples and houses for Brahmins at Chidambaram.<sup>1</sup> So it has to be concluded that Kōccenkaṇāṇ, who was highly mentioned by all the three saints might have lived before the seventh century and contributed to the progress of Hinduism by building many temples, the most significant of which is the temple at Chidambaram.

In the hymns reference has been made to some more Cōḷa kings by Saint Sundarar, especially to Pukaḷccōḷan who died at Karūr<sup>2</sup> and Ceruttuṇai of Tancai.<sup>3</sup> Karūr was the capital of Cēras. Pukaḷccōḷan as the very name indicates, was a man of great name and fame and he might have organised a campaign against the Cēras. In the course of the campaign he might have taken as a captive and should have met his end at Karūr as a captive. Hence he came to be called Karūr tuñciya pukaḷccōḷan. Ceruttunai is depicted as the ruler of a part of Cōḷanadu with Tancai as his

1. Periya. Koccenkatcolar. 16

2. பொழிற்கருவூர் தஞ்சிய புகழச்சோழர் 7-39-7

3. தஞ்சை, மண்ணவனும் செருத்துணை 7-39-9.



capital. His very name indicates that he was a victor of great battles and he might have helped the Cōḷa monarchs towards such victories in the battle. It is presumed that he might have been a tribal chieftain of the Cōḷa king of his time.

In the hymns Tiruttontattkai, Saint Sundarar depicted some more Cōḷa chieftains as saints and these chieftains might have been under the Cōḷa power. Saint Sambandar mentioned one Killi who worshipped the deity at Mūkkīccaram<sup>1</sup> and this Killi might have been the ruler of the Cōḷa country during the time of the Pallava king Mahendra I.

Saint Sundarar mentioned one king in the name of Narasiṅkamunaiyar.<sup>2</sup> This king might have been the parton of Sundarar who took the Saint while he was young, admiring his charming face and good qualities.<sup>3</sup> This king Narasiṅkaṁmunaiyar might be the chieftain under the Cōḷas.

### The Ceras

These Tamil Saints did not mention full details about the Cēras except the reference made

1. ஒன்புலால் வேல்மிக வல்லவன் ஒங்கெழிற்கிள்ளி  
2-120-10

2. மெய்யடியான நரசிங்க முனையர் 7-39-7

3. Periya. Tatut. 5

be Cēramāṇperumaḷ by Saint Sundarar. Cēramāṇ was a pious and God-fearing ruler and a sincere devotee. Cēkkiḷār regarded Cēramāṇ as a great administrator and a warrior but no reference has been made to his war-like qualities in Tevaram. As referred to by Cēkkiḷār, Cēramāṇ, was in friendship with the other two crowned kings of Tamilnadu. He said that Cēramāṇ had with him the powers of the other two kings Cōḷa and Pandiya and ruled the land with law and order.<sup>1</sup> The hymns of Saint Sundarar sang at Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam<sup>2</sup> in which he explained the worship of the three Tamil kings form an evidence to this fact.

In the hymns at Uṟaiyur mōkkīccoram and Tiruppūvaṇam by Saint Sambandar and in the hymns at Tirupparaṅkuṇṇam by Saint Sundarar references have been made that the three crowned kings worshipped Lord Siva at those places gathered together.<sup>3</sup> These references show that though the Pallava power was predominant, the three crowned kings also were ruling with no hatred among them, probably under sovereignty of the Pallavas.

1. Periya. Ceraman. 2

2. முடியால் உலகாண்ட முவேந்தர் முன்னே 7-2-11

3. i மல்லையார் மும்முடி மன்னர் 2-120-11

ii தென்னர் சேரர் சோழர்கள் தாம் வணங்கும் 1-64-1

iii முடியால் உலகாண்ட முவேந்தர் முன்னே 7-2-11

These Saiva Tamil Saints apart from describing the royal dynasties also made references to certain petty cheiftains and warriors, e.g., Meypporuṅnāyaṅār of Cētinātu,<sup>1</sup> Māñakkāṅcārar a great warrior,<sup>2</sup> Mūrtynāyaṅār, great ruler and a Siddhantha philosopher,<sup>3</sup> Kalikkampan, a great warrior<sup>4</sup>, Ciṟappuli, a great benefactor,<sup>5</sup> Ciṟuttonṭar, a commander-in-chief of the Pallavas,<sup>6</sup> Eyarkōṅ Kalikkāman,<sup>7</sup> Muṅalyatuvār,<sup>8</sup> and Kōṭpuli<sup>9</sup>.

Muṅaiatuvār was a great hero. As seen from his life as depicted by Cēkkiḷār there were some warriors who used to go to the battle field as mercenary soldiers to help the falling troops.<sup>10</sup> Even in Cintāmani such reference of mercenary soldiers has been made<sup>11</sup> in addition to the fact that the people of the land were called upon to

1. வெல்லு மா மிக வல்ல மெய்ப் பொருள் 7. 39. 1
2. மலை மலிந்த தோள்வள்ளல் மானக்கஞ்சாறன் 7. 39. 2
3. மும்மையால் உலகாண்ட மூர்த்தி 7. 39. 3
4. கை தடிந்த வரிச்சிலையான் கலிக்கம்பன் 7. 39. 7
5. சீர் கொண்ட புகழ் வள்ளல் சிறப்பிலி 7. 39. 6
6. செங்காட்டங்குழு மேய சிறுத் தொண்டர் 7; 39. 6
7. ஏயர் கோன் கலிக் காமன் 7; 39; 5
8. அறை கொண்ட வேல் நம்பி முனையடுவார் 7. 39. 8
9. அடல் சூழ்ந்த வேல் நம்பி கோட்புலி 7. 39. 9
10. Periya. Muni. 3
11. பொன்னினாகும் பொருபடை, Cintamani 8. 35

do war services by their respective kings at the time of emergency irrespective of payment.

### Legendary Heroes

References have also been made to certain legendary heroes like Cipi<sup>1</sup>, Pakiratan<sup>2</sup>, Pururavan<sup>3</sup>. The heroes of the two great epics Ramayana and Mahabarata have also been referred to in Tevaram.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sambandar referred to Nantanu, the ruler of Cīkālī, the birth place of the saint himself.<sup>5</sup> He is said to have successfully ruled his country facing the opposition of many enemies. Saint Sundarar in his hymns at Vatatirumullai-vāyil explained that one Tonṭaimān king worship-

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1. புறவனெதிர் நிறைநிலவு பொறையனுடல் பெற  
அருளும் புறவம் 3. 67. 8
  2. பாரகம் விளங்கிய பகீரதன் 3. 69. 5
  3. போது சேர் சென்னிப் புறூர வாப் பணிசெய் 3. 119. 6
  4. i நீரிடை துயின்றவன் தம்பி நீள் சாம்புவான்  
போருடைச் சுகர்வன் அனுமன் 3. 33. 1
  - ii பத்திலங்கு வாயாலும் பாடல் கேட்டுப்  
பரிந்தவனுக் கிராவணனென் நீந்த நாம  
தத்துவனை 6. 79. 10
  - iii பஞ்சவரில் பாரித்தனுக்குப் பாசுபதம் ஈந்துகந்தான்  
1. 62. 5
  - iv அர்ச்சுனற்குப் பாசுபதம் கொடுத்தானை 4. 7. 10
  5. நட்டாரி நடுவே நந்தன் ஆள 1. 63. 11

ped Lord Siva and did a miraculous deed by which Lord Siva appeared before him.<sup>1</sup>

We see in Tevaram instances of certain places having become prominent because they were made centres of worship by such legendary kings. A place Naḷḷāru in Tanjore district was made a religious centre because of the worship of Naḷan<sup>2</sup>. Even today the tradition of Naḷan story prevails there and the people from many places used to go there for worship and by that means to go rid of the evils caused by Saturn (Caṇi). So also Pullirukkuvēḷur otherwise known as Vaitēsvaraṅkōil near Mayavaram was named because of the worship of Jatayu and his brother Sambati.<sup>3</sup> The heroism played by Jatayu against Ravana was well explained by Saint Sambandar in his hymns.<sup>4</sup> He said that the birds stayed there

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1. சொல்லரும் புகழான் தொண்டைமான் களிற்றைச்  
குழுகொடி முல்லையால் கட்டிட்டு  
எல்லையில் இன்பம் அவன்பெற வெளிப்பட்  
டருளிய இறைவனே 7. 69. 16
  2. நளன் கெழுவி நாளும் வழிபாடு செய் நள்ளாரே  
2. 33. 3
  3. தள்ளாய சம்பாதி சடாயென்பார் தாமிருவர்  
புள்ளானூர்க் கரையனிடம் புள்ளிருக்கு வேளுரே  
2. 43. 1
  4. விடைத்துவரு மிலங்கைக் கோன் மலங்கச் சென்  
றிராமற் காய்ப்  
புடைத்தவனைப் பொருதழித்தான் 2. 43. 10

and worshiped Lord Siva and only from that place Jatayu fought Ravana. There are more references to confirm this fact of battle between Ravana and Jatayu. Two villages near Pullirukkuvēlūr where the battle took place, are called Pōntanallur and Cirāntanallur. They are the corrupt forms of Pūviluntanallūr and Cīrakilāntanallūr. Pūviluntanallūr is the place where Sita while she was flying along the air route with Ravana, let her flowers down and Cīrakilāntanallār is the place where the wings of Jatayu had fallen down in the battle with Ravana. Thus the legendary kings and heroes found their places in Tamilnadu in connection with the names of the place where they had their worship to Lord Siva.

### Some Principles and Customs of the Rulers

Many of the kings whom we have referred to ruled the country peacefully. They really understood the true ideal of kingship. A certain amount of divinity had been attached to the kings and they were regarded as the incarnation of God.<sup>1</sup>

The Saints glorified and praised the just and fair deeds of the kings; but at the same time were not blind to their defects and misrule. Saint Sambandar in his hymns at Tiruppullamānkai

1. தென்னவன் என ஆளும் சிவனவன் 5. 21. 5

compared the benevolence of the king to that of the timely showers<sup>1</sup> which is in accordance with what Tiruvalluvar explained in Kural.<sup>2</sup> Saint Appar said that a king should be a straight forward and impartial administrator of justice.<sup>3</sup> In another connection the same saint pointed out that the king should be an embodiment of all perfection and God alone is superior to the king.<sup>4</sup> He further said that the king could win respect and veneration of the people only when he rules the kingdom justly and wisely.

Saint Sambandar and Appar condemned the kings who were not just and kind in their administration. In the hymns at Kōlīli, Appar said that the king should not be a figure head and a nominal ruler.<sup>5</sup> Saint Appar refused to respond to the call of the Pallava king Mahendra and he was not at all enamoured of all the paraphernalia of royalty. He seemed to have said that he would pay no respect to king even though the latter might ride on an elephant or he might be the king of the whole of India known in those days as

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1. மண்ணாவன் உலகிற் கொரு மழையானவன் 1. 16. 6
  2. Kural 542
  3. கோவினுக் கருங்கலம் கோட்ட மில்லது 4. 11. 2
  4. தனிமுடி, கவித்தாரும் அரசினும் இனியன் 5. 14. 10
  5. பாடி காவலில் பட்டுக் கழிதிரே 5. 78. 9

Nāvalantīvu.<sup>1</sup> He said that if the kings ruled unjustly nemesis would overtake the land.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sundarar also had the same contempt for the unworthy kings. He said that the absolute and tyrannical power of the king would dwindle into nothingness in the same manner as the tail of a frog disappears in the course of its growth.<sup>3</sup> Saint Appar emphatically concluded that none should be a prey to Akankāram - the pride rule of a monarch.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sundarar has emphasised the need for the establishment of a democratic form of government.

These kings in their social position and dignity can be compared to the modern Maharajas. The kings during the period of Sangam literature

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1. நாவலந் தீவகத் தினுக்கு நாதரான  
காவலரே ஏவி விடுத்தாரேனும்  
கடவமல்லோம் 6. 98. 6
  2. காத்தாள்பவர் காவலிகழ்ந்தமையால்  
கரைநின்றவர் கண்டுகொளென்று சொல்லி  
நீத்தால கயம்புக நூக்கியிட  
நிகைகொள்ளும் வழித்துறை ஒன்றறியேன் 4. 1. 5
  3. படையெலாம் பகடு ஏற ஆளினும்  
பவ்வஞ் சூழ்ந் தர சாளினும்  
கடையெலாம் பிணைத் தேரைவால்  
கவலாதெழு மட நெஞ்சமே 7. 35. 6
  4. அனைத்துலகும் ஆளலாம் என்றுபேசும்  
ஆங்காரம் தவிர் நெஞ்சே 6. 42. 5



had *Aimperuñkuḷu* and *Enpērāyam*, the bodies of the ministers and such other administrators. In *Tevaram* it is said that the kings had elephants, palanquins and royal coach etc. They had weapons of different kinds and shapes. They used to wear garlands. In the *Talavānūr* cave inscription we see king *Mahendra* is said to have worn *tonṭai* garlands.<sup>1</sup> The kings of *Tamilnadu* were wearing the crowns<sup>2</sup> and ruled the country with love and affection.<sup>3</sup> All the kings had flags of their own.<sup>4</sup> *Maturai*, *Uraiyūr* and *Vañci* were the capitals of the crowned kings.<sup>5</sup> Good omens were observed when the kings entered into the capital and then pipes were blown and drums were beaten to celebrate their entrance each time.<sup>6</sup> They won laurels in the various victorious battles. The kings had faithful ministers, able commanders and brave warriors.<sup>7</sup> They were philanthropic in

1. Ep. Ind. Vol. XII. P. 225

2. முடிசேர் தென்னர் சேரர் சோழர் 1. 64. 1

3. கழல் மன்னர் காத்தளித்த திருவாய்மலர்ந்த 1. 64. 2

4. செருவிலாரும் புலிசெங்கய லாணையினுண் 2. 120. 3

5. தென்னவன் கோழி எழில் வஞ்சியும் ஒங்கு  
செங்கோலினுண் 2. 120. 4

6. மணியொடு சங்கொலி மற்றை மாமுரசின் ஒலி  
என்றும் ஓவாது  
அணிகிளர் வேந்தர் புகுதுங் கூடல் 1. 7. 9

7. Foreign notices of South India, p. 127

their outlook but at the same time very strict in the administration of law.<sup>1</sup>

These kings though they were great warriors and fighters, never neglected the development of architecture and literature. In time of peace, the kings interested themselves in the improvements of the towns and villages. Such improvements contributed much towards the social and economical advancement of Tamilnadu.

### III

## Towns and Villages

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The three Saiva saints in their hymns referred to the great towns and beautiful villages in Tamilnadu. The most important of such towns are Kāñchi and Madurai which have been praised and glorified in the Sangam literature. Arūr also well flourished during the time of our saints. Such cities bear ample testimony to the development of art and architecture during the time of those three Saiva saints. These saints not only referred to such beautiful and great towns but also mentioned about certain small towns and villages.

### **Kanchi**

In the seventh century A. D. Kāñci which was ruled by the Pallavas rose to prominence as the most beautiful city in Tamilnadu. But its fame and prosperity could be traced back to the second century A. D. Even as early as the second century Kāñci was a beautiful city and a great commercial centre. This fact has been referred to in Perum-

pāṇārruppatai<sup>1</sup> which is one of the collections called Pattuppāṭṭu or Ten Idylls. This pays a tribute to Cōlan ḷantiraiyan the ruler of Kāñci in that period. The poet Sattanar in Maṇimekalai mentioned the beautiful city of Kāñci.<sup>2</sup> Maṇimekalai, the heroine of his epic, after many a ordeal at Pukār went to Vañci to offer worship to her mother Kaṇṇaki and finally to Kāñci where she spent the last days of her life. This city of Kāñci has been well praised by the Saiva saints.

Saint Sundarar in his Tevaram, characterised Kāñci as the oldest city of his time.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Kāñci is the oldest city in Tonṭaimaṅṭalam. Kāñci was one of the three great cities of the early Cōlas. Kārikālan of the early Cōla dynasty paid special attention to this city and even though Pukār was his head-quarters he contributed a great deal towards the construction and the progress of the town. There is a tradition regarding this Karikāla Cōlan. A saint by name Cattaṇār gave a Senṭu, a kind of weapon to Karikāla Cōlan at the temple of Goddess Kāmākshi.<sup>4</sup> This weapon he made use of in his campaign to the north.<sup>5</sup> Kāñchi rose to

1. Perumpanarruppatai. 402-420

2. Manimekalai, 28. 156.

3. கச்சி மூதூர் காம கோட்டம் 7. 5. 6.

4. Cilap 5. 95 to 98 commentary

5. கவிங்கத்துப்பரணி 178

be a prominent city of South India during the time of Iṅantiraiyaṅ who is said to be the son of Karikālaṅ.

Saint Appar depicted Kāñci as a great and beautiful city.<sup>1</sup> It was the centre of Tamil learning in those days. Saint Appar mentioned that men of literary repute lived at Kāñci.<sup>2</sup> Kāñci was a centre of great educational activity and was a place of meeting of scholars from all over India. Appar laid stress on the influence of fine arts. In Kāñci there were numerous buildings which bore testimony to the development of Tamil architecture. The buildings of Kāñci were remarkable for their size and height. The great saints referred to the huge and magnificent buildings of Kāñci.<sup>3</sup> Kāñci was the finest as well as the largest city in Tamilnadu during the period of the saints. It had a vast area and people belonging to the various parts of India and foreign countries congregated in connection with education and trade. In the city of Kāñci of those days people lived fearlessly

1. i காஞ்சிமாநகர் 4. 43. 1

அணி பொழிற் கச்சி 4. 43. 9

2. கல்வியே கரையிலாத காஞ்சி மாநகர் 4. 43. 8

3. i கருமுகில் தவமும் மாடக் கச்சி 4. 44. 2

ii சேட்டார் மாளிகை சூழ் திருமேற்றளி 7. 21. 2

iii இடமுடைக் கச்சி 4. 44. 8

and with peace of mind.<sup>1</sup> At Kāñci In its huge and palatial buildings, flags of various kinds were seen and the beautiful kuyil birds perched on them.<sup>2</sup> Such flags, it is said, signified the different trades and professions. This has been referred to in Kāñcipuranam.<sup>3</sup> In the city of Kāñci, peacock and other beautiful birds, large in number lived in the groves. The music of these birds was very pleasant to hear. But at the same time the streets were noisy on account of the busy activities of the business men. Thus, being the centre of trade and culture, the city of Kāñci has been praised by all the people from all the sides of the earth.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sambandar said that the bazaar streets of Kāñci were broad and long,<sup>5</sup> and even modern travellers from the west as well as from the north were astonished at the breadth and length of the streets. The city of Kāñci was well guarded and protected by strong and huge walls. The fields outside were well cultivated and there were deep moats and fortifications to defend the city against

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1. தீதில் கச்சித் திரு ஏகம்பம் 2. 1. 2. 8

2. கொடிகளினடைக் குயில் கூவுமிடம் மயிலாடுமிடம்,  
கச்சி 7. 10. 3

3. Kancipuram, Nakarappatalam, 44

4. எண் திசையோரும் ஏத்த நின்ற ஏகம்பம் 4. 44. 7

5. நீள் மறுகின் கலிக் கச்சி 3. 65. 8

the extranal attack. Saint Sambandar referred to the fortifications of the town.<sup>1</sup>

In the seventh century Kāñci was visited by foreign travellers from China and the most prominent of such travellers was Yuan-chwang. In the beginning of his travels he stayed in the north and subsequently he travelled towards south and reached Kāñci. He stayed at Kāñci for a considerable time enjoying the beauties of the town and researching the fundamentals of various religions. He has vividly described the city of Kāñci. He has praised the people for their learning and the streets for their breadth and beauty. He also said that there lived great religious personalities propagating their own individual faiths.<sup>2</sup> This report of the Chinese traveller agrees with the descriptions by the Tamil saints. But the life of the Chinese traveller

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1. ஆழ்கிடங்கும் சூழ்வயலும் மதில்புல்கி அழகமநும்  
3. 65. 8,

2. The region had a rich and fertile soil, it abounded in fruits and flowers and yielded precious substances. The people were very courageous, thoroughly trustworthy, and public spirited and they esteemed great learning; in the written and spoken language, they differed from 'Mid-India':—On Yuan-chuang, Vol. II, page 226.

written by Mr. S. Beal depicts Kāñci as a sea port.<sup>1</sup> Tirumankaiālvār, a Vaishnava saint has said that the eastern boundary of Kāñci was Kadalmalai (Mahabalipuram) very near the sea shore.<sup>2</sup>

We know now that Kāñci is more than forty miles away from the sea-shore. However it may be pointed out that the Pallava kings might have resided for some time at Katalmalai to further the progress of Pallava architecture. The Chinese traveller might have visited the Pallava king both at Kāñci and Katalmalai and both the places might have flourished as the capital since the latter is considered as the sea port of the Pallava country. The Pallava capital should have extended as far as Katalmalai (Mahabalipuram) and hence the statement of the Chinese traveller that Kāñci was a sea-port. The greatness of Kāñci could be envisaged from a study of the facts mentioned about it. During the time of the Saints Kāñci was the capital of the Pallavas and so it was called as it is well explained in the Talagunta inscrip-

1. The city of Kancipura is situated on the mouth (bay) of the southern sea of India, looking towards the kingdom of Simhala, distant from it three days voyage. The life of Hwen-Tsiang. p.139.

2. கச்சிக் கிடந்தவன் ஊர் கடன் மல்லை (Nalayiram, 1102)



tions, Pallaventrappuri.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sundarar also asserted the same name and he has further gone to the extent of characterising Kāñci as the best city on earth.<sup>2</sup>

### Madurai

Madurai was the capital of the Pandiyas and it was a famous town like Kāñci, but the three Saiva saints have not referred to it in detail. Saint Sambandar when he visited Madurai was more interested in religious controversies and devoted all his time to propagate Saivism. The other two saints Appar and Sundarar paid short visits to Madurai and as such had no sufficient opportunities to describe in detail the beautiful Pandiya capital.

### Arur

Next in importance to Madurai was Arūr, the modern Tiruvarūr in Tanjore district. Many of the contemporaries of Saint Sundarar lived in Arūr. Saint Appar in his hymns sang at Tiruvarūr which depict high ideals regarding Arūr as the oldest city of Tamilnadu with an untraceable origin.<sup>3</sup>

1. Ep. Ind. Vol. VIII, p. 32

2. பாறூர் பல்லவனூர் மதிற் காஞ்சி 7. 21. 10

3. புகையெட்டும் போக்கெட்டும் புலங்க ளெட்டும்  
பூதங்க ளவை எட்டும் பொழில்க ளெட்டும்  
கலையெட்டும் காப்பெட்டும் காட்சி எட்டும்  
கழற் சேவடி ஆடைந்தார் களைக ளெட்டும்

Saint Sambandar in describing Tiruvārūr in his Tiruvirākam patikam made mentions of the melodious music of the birds and bees<sup>1</sup> and of the sweet voice of the women folk of the town. He also referred to the beautiful flags flying high on the huge house tops.<sup>2</sup> Saint Appar also referred to them.<sup>3</sup> The Ladies of Arūr used to sing and their sweet melodious musical sounds reached as far as heaven.<sup>4</sup> The ladies used to go to the halls known as 'arangam' where they used to dance to the accompaniment of music.<sup>5</sup> The sweet smell of senpaka flowers used by the ladies is also

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நகையெட்டும் நாளெட்டும் நன்மை யெட்டும்  
 நலஞ் சிறந்தார் மணத் தகத்து மலர்களெட்டும்  
 திகையெட்டும் தெரிப்பதற்கு முன்னே பின்னே  
 திருவாரூர் கோயிலாக் கொண்ட நாளே 6. 34. 9

1. சோலையிற் வண்டினங்கள் அரும்போடு இசைமுரல  
 1. 105. 2
2. கருக்கொள் சோலை நீடு மாட மாளிகைக் கொடி  
 அருக்க மண்டலத் தணவு மந்தனாரூர் 2. 101. 1
3. ஈண்டு மாடங்கள் நீண்ட மாளிகை மேலெழு கொடி  
 வானி னம்மதி  
 திண்டி வந்துலவும் திருவாரூர். 4. 20. 1
4. கெண்டை கொண்டலர்ந்த கண்ணினூர்கள் தீத  
 ஓசை போய்  
 அண்டரண்டம் ஊடறுக்கும் அந்தனாரூர் 2. 101. 2
5. பஞ்சியாரு மெல்லடிப் பனைத்த கொங்கை நுண்ணிடை  
 அஞ்சொலார் அரங்கெடுக்கும் அந்தனாரூர் 2. 101. 4

mentioned by Saint Sambandar.<sup>1</sup> The ladies used to play on the top floor of the houses.

Tiruvārūr was famous for its Tiruvātirai festival and Saint Appar clearly described the festival. On that day the Lord of the temple used to be taken in an excellent palanquin made of pearls and diamonds.<sup>2</sup> The streets were decorated with white flags. High buildings with beautiful tops decorated with gold and precious stones were of marked importance in those Tiruvātirai festival days.<sup>3</sup> In the whole of the Tiruvātirai hymns Saint Appar mentioned the various kinds of activities and merriments by men and women during that festival.<sup>4</sup> Even today

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1. தேங் குலாவு நீடுசோலை தேனுலாவு செண்பகம்  
2. 101. 5
2. முத்து விதானம் மணிப் பொற் கவரி முறையாலே  
பத்தர்களோடு பாவையர் சூழப் பலி பின்னே  
வித்தகக் கோல வெண்டலைமாலை விரதிகள்  
ஆத்தண் ஆருர் ஆதிரை நாளால் அதுவண்ணம்  
4. 21. 1
3. வீதிகள் தோறும் வெண்கொடி யோடு விதானங்கள்  
சோதிகள் விட்டுச் சுடர்மா மணிகள் ஒளிதோன்ற  
சாதிக ளாய பவளமும் முத்துத் தாமங்கள்  
ஆதி ஆருர் ஆதிரை நாளால் அதுவண்ணம் 4. 21. 3
4. செந்துவர் வாயார் செல்வன சேவடி சிந்திப்பார்  
மைந்தர்க ளோடு மங்கையர் கூடி மயங்குவார்  
4. 21. 7

the Tiruvātirai festival is very famous in Arūr, Chidambaram and in all the Saiva temples of South India. In Kerala even today the Tiruvātirai is celebrated in the manner as described by Saint Appar. The method of Tiruvātirai festival which takes place in the month of Mārkaḷi is well explained by another Saint Mānikkavācakar.<sup>1</sup>

Saint Appar has said that at Tiruvārūr, sub-sects (Agasamyikal) of Saiva religion were wandering in the streets.<sup>2</sup> He appreciated the natural surroundings of Tiruvārūr and compared the city with Kāñci. He said that many buildings were decorated with shining metals and diamonds.<sup>3</sup> This reveals the luxurious lives led by the people in those days. Professor K. A. Nilakanta sastrī found difficult to believe that the practice of actually decorating with 'Pon' was in vogue.<sup>4</sup> In this connection it must be noted that the term

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1. Tiruvacakam. Tiruvempavai

2. விரிசடை விரதிகள் அந்தணர் சைவர் பாசுபதர்  
கயாலிகள்  
தெருவினிற் பொலியும் திருவாரூர் 4. 20. 3

3. முத்து விதானம், வீதிகள் தோறும்.  
Ref. foot note Nos. 2&3 of the previous page.

4. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, The Historical Methods in Relation to the problems of South Indian History, p. 17.

'pon' is used in the early Tamil literature in the sense of metal, and it does not signify only gold—karumpon, cempon and venpon meaning iron, brass and silver.<sup>1</sup> So we can be sure of confirming that the buildings in those days were built and decorated with some metals like iron, silver, brass and gold.

Though Saint Sundarar spent much of his time at Tiruvārūr he has not described the natural beauties of the place as the other saints did. No doubt Saint Sundarar has not mentioned Arūr in detail. From the hymns of the other two saints it could be regarded as one of the oldest towns of Tamilnadu and had reached the highest development in various fields of activities during the period of the saints.

### Tancai

One Tañcai is mentioned in Tevaram hymns of the three saints and there is every reason to think that this Tañcai has no connection with the modern Tanjore. Some are of opinion that this Tañcai is the capital town of Saint Ceruttunai as mentioned by Sundarar.<sup>2</sup> A careful research will indicate to us that in Tevaram no reference has

1. தூண்டிற் பொன் மீன் விழுங்கி யற்று. Kural 931.  
Parimelalakar's commentary.

2. தஞ்சை மன்னவனும் செருத்தூணை 7. 39. 9

been made to modern Tanjore as the seat of Siva except a reference of Tañcai as one among the Vaiputtalam by Saint Appar.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sambandar explained that his village Cikāli was annexed with one Tañcai.<sup>2</sup> Later days we had a reference also about a chieftain of Tañcai near Madurai.<sup>3</sup> So there are possibilities to think that there were more than one place which were known as Tañcai. The modern Tanjore, also known as Tañcai in Tamil, was improved by Rajaraja Cōla who lived after Saint Sundarar. In the Saivaite works called Patinōrāntirumuṟai, we find patikam describing the temple and its shrine at Tanjore. If Tanjore had been in prominence during the period of the three Saiva Saints it is quite possible that some hymns in Tevaram should have been devoted to its description. Mr. Gobinatha Rao explained that Sundarar lived during the time of the Cōla king Vijayalaya who had his capital at Tanjore and who built a temple for Durkai (a goddess) there. He further said that the Cōlas became powerful, putting down the Pallavas whereas Saint Sundarar mentioned only the power of the Pallavas in his

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1. தஞ்சை வழுவூர்

6. 70. 8

2. தஞ்சை சார் சண்பை

1. 126. "

3. Tanjaivanan, the hero of Tancaivanankovai of Poyyamoliyar.

hymns at Chidambaram.<sup>1</sup> Though there are reliable information to show that modern Tanjore was in existence during the time of the Saints, it can be asserted that this Tanjore was not Tañcai the capital of Ceruttunai and was not prominent in those days, since no reference has been made by the Saints and no hymns have been addressed to that place. Professor Sundaram Pillai was of opinion that Tañcai does not refer to modern Tanjore. This Tañcai is a small village now known as Pottitancai near Nākaipattiūam.<sup>2</sup> Cēkkiḷār asserted that Tañcai was in Marukal nadu a sub-division in the Cōḷa country.<sup>3</sup> King Ceruttunai visited only the temple at Tiruvārūr which was very near Pottitañcai. Marukal is now known as Tirumarukal which is near Tiruvārūr. Hence Tañcai the capital of Ceruttunai had no connection with modern Tanjore.

### Villages

The natural beauty of the places which they visited specially attracted the Saiva Saints and

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1. The History of the Cola dynasty in Tamil, pp. 7 & 8.
  2. Some mile stones in the History of Tamil Literature, p. 22
  3. Periya. Ceruttunai, 1.

they classified these places on the basis of the natural surroundings. In Tamilnadu the land was divided into five divisions and each region has got its own peculiarities. The villages on or adjoining the mountains came to be called as Kuricci or malai or kuṇṇam, those adjoining the forests as kātu or mullai, those in the sea coast as pakkam or paṭṭiṇam, those in the fertile lands as Uṛ or Nadu and the villages in unfertile dry lands as Pālai. Paraṅkuṇṇu and Tiruvaṇṇāmalai; Tirumullaivāyil and Tiruvalaṅkāṭu; Kāviriṅpūmpaṭṭiṇam and Acciṛupākkam; Tiruvārūr and Tiruppukalūr; Tirukkaḷippālai etc. Many of the villages and towns in Tanjore district were termed Uṛ by the Tamil saints because most of them are situated on the fertile lands on the banks of the Kāviri. From a study of these names it would be possible to understand the regions comprising them. But there are certain exceptions to this. The names Tiruvorriyūr and Mailāpūr are not very apt because they are not situated in fertile regions, but they are in the sea-coast and now form a part of the city of Madras (Ceṇūaippaṭṭiṇam). Similarly the name Tirumaṛaikkāṭu should be given to a place in the forest region whereas it is situated on the coastal region. Such classification of the regions already existed in the Sangam age as expounded by Tolkāppiyaṇār.



In the hymns of Sambandar in which he catalogues the holy places of Lord Siva explained in one that there existed many places with the names ending in Palli.<sup>1</sup> Palli generally mentioned the places where the Jain priests used to Live. The places mentioned by Saint Sambandar ending in Palli lead us to think that they were the citadel of the Jain priests and of their Jainism prior to the Renaissance of Saivism.<sup>2</sup> Makētrapalli also finds a place in that list. That place is located between the two important religious centres Chidambaram and Cīkāḷi. That might be the place where the Jain priests were intimate to king Mahendra lived and since he had a love towards them and to that place they might have called the place by his own name. That centre of the Jains might have been destroyed after the conversion of the Pallava kings and after the influence of Sambandar there might have been

1. அறப்பள்ளி அகத்தியாணபள்ளி வெள்கைப்

பொடிபூசி ஆறணிவாணமர் காட்டுப்பள்ளி

சிறப்பள்ளி சிராப்பள்ளி செம்பொண்பள்ளி

திருநனி பள்ளி சீர் மகேந்திரத்துப்

பிறப்பில்லவண பள்ளி வெள்கைச் சடையாண

விரும்பும் இடைப்பள்ளி வணசக்கரமால்

உறைப்பால் அடிபோற்றக் கொடுத்தபள்ளி

உணராய் மட நெஞ்சமே உணனி நினறே

2. 39. 2

2. Even now there is a village known as Cevarak kottai situated between Madura and Virutunagar,

constructed a Siva temple where the saint recited his hymns.<sup>1</sup>

In Tevaram mention is made of a place Civapuram. It is the name of a holy place where the first two Saints Sambandar and Appar recited their hymns. Some are of opinion that this is synonymous with Cīvaram the name generally given to the place where the Jains lived. Cīvarattar is a term applied to Jains.<sup>2</sup> Cīvaram now known as Walajabad adjoining Kāñci is called so because of the presence of many remains of the Jain temples in villages around it. But Civapuram mentioned in Tevaram has no connection with the Cīvaram of the Jains. Cīyapuram is the name given to a place ruled by Cīyakaṅkaṅ, a Pallava king and there is every possibility of Cīyapuram being changed into Civapuram.

### Location of some places

Certain places of the ancient days have been washed away by the sea, e.g., Tirukkaḷippāai was one on the sea shore. But it was washed away

1. உடை துறந்தவர்களும் உடை துவருடையரும்

படுபழி யுடையவர் பகர்வன விடுமினீர்

மடைவளர் வனலணி மகேந்திரப்பள்ளியுள்

இடமுடை ஈசனை இணையடி, பணிமினே

3. 31. 10

2. சீவர மூடிப் பிடக்கே உரைசெய்வார்

1. 13. 10

by the sea. Yet to remember the place, the people constructed a temple in a place very near Chidambaram and called that place Tirukkaḷippālai. Similarly, it is told, that in Kaṭalmalli now known as Mahabalipuram (Seven Pagodas) one or two temples on the shore have been washed away by the sea. It is said that the temple worshiped by the Saiva Saints at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai was not situated in the present place but on the western side of the mountain now known as Ati or Aṭiṇṇa-malai. Also, Cīkāḷi, as mentioned by the hymns, was a sea-port in the ancient days where as it is far away from the sea shore now. Saint Appar narrated how the low caste people used to collect pearls and fish on the shore of Cikali.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sambandar referred to the presence of numerous ships on the sea shore of Cīkāḷi.<sup>2</sup> Cīkāḷi is also known as Tōnipuram and the latter term literally means a boat-city. But in modern days we find Cīkāḷi being ten miles away from the sea-shore.

### Change of Names

The names of certain towns and villages as mentioned in Tevaram have been changed now.

1. திரை வாய்ப் பெருங்கடல் முத்தங்குவிப்ப முகந்துகொண்டு  
நுரைவாய் நுளைச்சியர் ஓடிக்கழு மலத்துள்  
அழுந்தும் 4. 82..3
2. கலங்கள் தம் சரக்கொடு நிரக்கவந் தேறும்.கழுமலம்  
1, 79. 9

Tiruventurai in the Tanjore district is now known as Van̄tuturai and it is said that a saint Brunki worshiped Lord Siva in the form of a vantu (bee). Parutiniyaman of Tevaram period is now known as Paruttiyappar kōyil and it is associated with a cotton tree (parutticeṭi). Such changes are many and some names were sanskritised and now the new names are more popular than the old names of the seventh century. These facts have been well explained by Mr. R. P. Sethu Pillai in his book on Urum Pērum (places and names).<sup>1</sup>

### Geographical facts

Many of the geographical features mentioned by the saints are true, even today, e.g., Saint Sundārar said that Veṅṅainallūr was situated on the southern side of the river Pennai; that Turaiyūr was on the northern side of the same river; that Verattam was on the northern side of the river Keṭilam and this fact has been corroborated by Saint Appar. But in certain instances the geographical features as described by the saints have been changed. In Tevaram Tirumālpēru is described as being situated on the banks of the river Pālār. But now it is far away from the river Pālār.

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1. Urum Perum, P.11

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Thus, it is evident that how the three Tamil Saiva Saints have beautifully portrayed the towns and villages, and some times even their origin, history and importance in detail. The hymns contribute a good deal to the knowledge of the historical conditions of these towns and villages during the time of the saints.

## IV

### Social Conditions

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There are certain similarities between the social conditions of those days and of the modern days. But the people of the seventh century A.D. were more spiritual in their outlook as contrasted with the people of the modern days who generally attach more importance to worldly matters. But, this does not mean that the people of that century were not materially advanced. The three Saiva saints have clearly depicted the various aspects of the social life of those days. As pictured by these saints, the land was divided into four natural regions and the people led a life characteristic of their region. The Saiva Tamil saints travelled over the different parts of Tamilnadu and Saint Appar went as far as Mount Himalayas. The three seers have portrayed the life and habits of the people in the various regions.

### Caste System

The caste system was in existence in that period. "As long as caste in India does exist, Hindus will hardly intermarry or have any social intercourse with outsiders and if Hindus migrated to other regions on earth, Indian caste would become a world problem" said Mr. V. Ketker.<sup>1</sup> Thus the caste system is a great hindrance to the social development. But in the early period, i. e., in the Sangam age society was classified on the basis of profession. Even though the caste system existed at the time of the Saiva Saints, yet it was not of great significance. Saint Sambandar and Sundarar belonged to the Brahmin community and Appar to the Vēlāḷa community. Saint Sambandar has said that the Brahmins recited the vedas and exhibited a great deal of piety and devotion.<sup>2</sup> According to Saint Sambandar certain villages were solely inhabited by certain communities. Some villages were mostly inhabited by the Brahmins. In certain inscriptions references have been made to the villages granted to the Brahmins by the later Cōlas. Such villages came to be known as 'Bramadeyams'. Economically, these Brahmin

1. History of Casts in India, p.4

2. i உள்ளங் கலந் திசையா லெழுந்த வேதமும்

வேள்வியும் ஓவா வேட்களம் 1. 39. 3

ii ஒன்றும் இருமுன்றும் நான்கும் உணர்வார்கள் 2. 34. 6

villages were very well off as they were generally free from all contributions to the state which other ordinary villages were obliged to make. It has therefore to be said that the Bramadeyams would have been in existence even during the time of Saint Sambandar. In one of his hymns the saint has said how Chidambaram came to be inhabited mostly by the Brahmins.<sup>1</sup> Similarly a place called Akkūr was inhabited by the charitable and philanthropic Vēlālas.<sup>2</sup> The Vēlālas are the great agricultural caste of the Tamil country and they are strongly represented in every Tamil district. The word Vēlālan is derived from Vēlānmai meaning cultivation, tillage.<sup>3</sup> Sundarar in Tirumurukanpūnti<sup>4</sup> has said that there were many hunters who were high-way robbers. His money and belongings were stolen away by them. In his patikam there, he mentioned the atrocities of the hunters.<sup>5</sup> There he called the hunters as

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1. அந்தணர் பிரியாத சிற்றம் பலம் 3. 1. 1  
 2. வேளாள ரென்றிவர்கள் வள்ளன்மையால் மிக்கிருக்கும்  
 தாளாளர் ஆக்கூர் 2. 43. 3  
 3. Madras Census Report, 1891.  
 4. It is a village in Coimbatore district  
 5. i வில்லைக்காட்டி வெருட்டி வேடுவர் விரவலாமை சொல்வி  
 கல்லினுலெறிந் திட்டு மோதியும் கூறை கொள்ளுமிடம்  
 7. 49. 2  
 ii பசுக்களே கொன்றுதின்று பாவிகள் பாவமொன்றறியார்  
 உசிர்க்கொலை பல நேர்ந்து நாடொறுங் கூறை  
 கொள்ளுமிடம் 7. 49. 3



Vaṭuka vēṭuvar.<sup>1</sup> Vaṭukar is a tribe of people who came from the north and during the time of Sundarar they were uncivilised and indulged in high-way robbery. It is recorded in the Gazetteer of Malabar that in Palghat and the adjoining part of Valuvanadu such foreigners, probably from the north, known as Vadugans had settled and lived in groups.<sup>2</sup> In the forest regions there used to live the hunters whose only means of livelihood was robbery. Such robbers or hunters had a monopoly of the forest regions and the villages therein. The ladies of the hunters' family used to safeguard the grains such as tinai, in the fields before they were ready for harvest, by being seated on an elevated platform built for that purpose and by making a peculiar kind of notice.<sup>3</sup>

Saint Sambandar well explained how the shepherd in the mullai region used to return homes in the evenings with his cows and calves.<sup>4</sup>

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1. கொடுரு வெஞ்சிலை வடுக வேடுவர் 7. 49. 1
  2. Caste and Tribes of South India, p. 266
  3. வேட மடவாரிகள் இதணமது ஏறி  
அஞ்சொற்கிளிகள் ஆயோ வென்னும், அண்ணாமலை 1. 69. 2
  4. களைத்த மேதி காணு தாயன் கைமேற் குழலாத  
அனைத்துஞ் சென்று திரளுஞ் சாரல் 1. 69. 6

He further referred in two of his hymns sang at Pāluvūr a village in the Tanjore district that the Malayali Brahmins used to worship the Lord Siva there.<sup>1</sup> But it is nōt clear whether any such kind of Nambudiri Brahmins had settled there during the time of the saints. Saint Appar has narrated how every individual belonged to a particular 'Kulam' and the people born of a high caste were greatly revered and respected. He was of opinion that an individual of a lower caste might attain the merits and privileges of higher caste by chanting the Pancakshara Mantra.<sup>2</sup> Kannappar and Yāḷppāṇar, though of low birth, were respected and held in high esteem because of the devotional and sacrificing life.

However, the caste system did not hamper the progress of religion. Saint Appar has emphatically asserted that there should be no distinction of caste, creed or nationality in the worship of Lord Siva. He has also advised the high class people not to gloat over their superiority in the society but to worship God along with the

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1. i அந்தணர்களான மலையாள ரவ ரேத்தும்  
பந்தமலிகின்ற பழுலூர் 2. 34. 11  
ii மண்ணின் மிசையாடி, மலையாளர் தொழுதேத்திப்  
பண்ணின் ஒலிகொண்டு பயில்கின்ற பழுலூர் 2. 34. 4
2. குல மில ராகிலும் குலத்துக் கேற்பதோர்  
நல மிகக் கொடுப்பது நமச்சிவாயவே 4. 11. 6

common people to attain salvation<sup>1</sup>. Mr. C. V. Narayana Iyer has translated the few lines in the hymns of Saint Appar referring to this idea.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sambandar also contended that every individual who worshipped Lord Siva would attain salvation irrespective of the caste he belonged to.<sup>3</sup>

Periyapuram makes references to the Adiyārs and Nāyanārs who had no belief in the caste system. Saint Sambandar, though a high caste saint travelled with Yaļpāṇar - a low born saint and worshipped God along with him. In the temples when Saint Sambandar used to sing, Yaļpāṇar used to play on his instrument Yāļ. On one occasion at Tarmapuram when Yāļpanar was about to break his instrument as he was unable to play the tune to the song of Saint Sambandar, the latter intervened and prevented the Yāļ from

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1. சாத்திரம் பல பேசுஞ் சமூக்கர்காள்  
கோத்திர முங்குலமுங் கொண்டுஎன் செய்வீர்  
பாத்திரஞ் சிவமென்று பணிதிரேல்  
மாத்திரைக்குள் அருளுமாறி பேறரே 5. 60. 3
  2. 'Oh fools, who speak of various sastras, of what await in your ancestry and family? If you worship Siva saying that he alone is great you will gain his grace in a trice. (Saivism in South India, p. 385)
  3. குலவாரகக் குலமிருமாகக் குணம் புகழுங்கால்  
உலகில் நல்ல கதி பெறுவர் 2. 115. 9

being broken. Saint Sambandar closely lived with a Vēlāḷa Saint Appar and both dined and lodged together.

Saint Appar was a Vēlāḷa. He had many followers and one among them was Appūti, a high souled Brahmin Saint. Appūti had so much reverence and respect for Saint Appar that he named every thing in his possession and every one of his sons Tirunāvukkaracu. He regarded Saint Appar as a superhuman being. On one occasion he had the fortune of receiving the saint in his house and paying him homage. He served him even after seeing his son dead and requested Saint Appar to excuse him for the delay in his attendance and service. Because of this noble and worthy deed Appūti came to be raised to the position of a saint and his name found a place in the list of saints enumerated by Saint Sundarar.<sup>1</sup> Saint Appar also mentioned about Appūti in his hymns at Tiruppaḷaṇam.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is evident that Saint Appūti was above all caste distinctions and though a Brahmin by birth regarded Saint Appar, a Vēlāḷa as his divine master.

1. ஒரு நம்பி அப்பூதி அடியார்க்கு மடியேன் 7. 39. 4

2. அஞ்சிப் போய்க் கலிகெலிய அழலோம்பும் அப்பூதி  
குஞ்சிப் பூவாய் நின்ற சேவடியாய் கொடியையே  
4. 12. 11

Saint Appar himself was a staunch advocate of the abolition of caste system. He said that God will find a place only in the hearts of such men who are above caste distinction.<sup>1</sup> He has further said that he would respect those who worship Lord Siva though they might belong to the low caste. Those who were not the devotees of Siva never received his respect although they might happen to be high, rich and influential.<sup>2</sup> An Amāttiyar Saint by name Ciruttontar dined with a Birava and offered a feast by sacrificing the life of his own son in order to satisfy him with a dish of human flesh. Saint Sundarar married two wives both of whom belonged not to his own community. Thus it is evident that the existence of the caste system did not stand in the way of the progress of the religious minded.

1. இவர் தேவர் அவர் தேவர் என்று சொல்லி  
இரண்டாட்டா தொழிந் தீசண் திறமே பேணிக்  
கவராதே தொழுமடியார் நெஞ்சி னுள்ளே  
கன்றப்பூர் நடுதறியைக் காணலாமே 6. 61. 3
2. சங்கநிதி பதுமநிதி இரண்டுந் தந்து  
தரணியொடு வாளைத் தருவரேனும்  
மங்குவா ரவர்செல்வம் மதிப்போ மல்லோம்  
மாதேவர்க்கே காந்த ரல்ல ராகில்  
அங்க மெலாங் குறைந்தமுகு தொழு நோயராய்  
ஆவுரித்துத் தின்றுழலும் புலையரேனும்  
கங்கைகவார் சடைக் கரந்தார்க் கன்பராகில்  
அவர்கண்டர் யாம் வணங்கும் கடவுளாரே  
6. 95. 10

## Hospitality

The three Saiva Saints advocated that hospitality and alms-giving should be the duty of every human being. Tiruvalluvar in his *Kuraḷ* explained the significance and sanctity of helping the poor.<sup>1</sup> A Sangam Tamil Poet Cittalaiiccāttaṇār in his Buddhist work *Manimēkalai* emphasised this virtue.<sup>2</sup> Of the three Tevaram Saints Sambandar extolled the giving of alms at Akkūr, a village in Tanjore district. He explained the philanthropy and hospitality of many of the *Vēḷāḷas*.<sup>3</sup> The *Vēḷāḷas* were prompt in such helpful deeds.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sambandar has pointed out how the benefactors never used harsh words towards the needy even though the adverse circumstances reached their climax.<sup>5</sup> Saint Appar in his Tevaram has said how God blessed all those who gave alms, creating

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1. ஈத்துவக்கும் இன்பம் அறியார் கொல தாமுடைமை  
வைத்திழக்கும் வன்கண்ணவர் knral 228
  2. ஆற்ற மாக்கள் அரும்பசி கனைவோர்  
மேற்றே உலகின் மெய்ந்நெறி வாழ்க்கை  
Manimekailai 11. 93. 94
  2. இன்மைகள் சென்றிரந்தார்க் கில்லை என்னு தீத்துவக்கும்  
தன்மையார் 2. 49. 9
  4. இரந் தோர்க் கெந் நாளும் காலம் பகராதார் 1. 81. 9
  5. வையம் விலை மாறிடினும் ஏறுபுகழ் மிக்கிழிவிலாத  
வகையார்  
வெய்யமொழி தண்புலவருக்கு உரை செயாதவர் 3. 78. 6

hell for the misers.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sundarar condemned himself for not being very generous and hospitable.<sup>2</sup> He has further advised the people to be charitable and to help the poor as the life is short.<sup>3</sup> According to Periyapurānam Saint Sundarar on one occasion brought paddy to his home and instructed his wife to distribute the same to the poor people without storing it.<sup>4</sup> Thus the above illustrations clearly indicated the charitable and self sacrificing nature of the ancient Tamilians.

### The rich and the poor

Alms giving was developed to such an extent because the poverty in the country was so acute. The poor people were suppressed by the rich, who

1. இரப்பவர்க் கீய வைத்தார் ஈபவர்க் கருளும் வைத்தார்  
கரப்பவர் தங்கட்கெல்லாம் கடு நரகங்கள் வைத்தார் 4. 38. 10

2. சிறுச் சிறிதே இரப்பார்க் கொண் றீயேன் 7. 60. 4

3. தாழா தறஞ் செய்மின் 7. 81. 1

4. i Periya, Eyarkon. 28

ii A parallel may be found in Sangam literature. In purananuru the Post Peruncittiranar pointed out how he brought a large sum of gold from a king and instructed his wife to give away the same in the shape of alms to all deserving people irrespective of caste, colour and creed and even without his consent. 63

occupied a higher status in the social ladder. The Tamil Saint Appar might have suffered under the clutches of the rich and thence-forward he expressed his contempt for the rich people and remarked that the merciless rich people had no place in the kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup> He has emphatically asserted that he would rather face starvation and sufferings than to approach the rich for their help.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sambandar expressed his wish to attain salvation before he was dragged to the position of approaching the rich for some help who would postpone the time for the alms.<sup>3</sup> Saint Appar also asserted that an individual would be insignificant on the face of earth if he had no wealth for his own and none would hear his words and respect him.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sundarar has explained how some people are having the wealth without using it for their own happiness and for that of

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1. i துறந்தானை அறம் புரியாத் துரிசர் தம்மை 6. 66. 6  
 ii கரப்பவர் தங்கட்கெல்லாம் கடுநரகங்கள் வைத்தார் 4. 38. 10
2. இடுக்கட் பட்டிருக்கினும் இரந்து யாரையும்  
 விடுக்கிற் பிரானென்று வினவுவோ மலோம் 4. 11. 3
3. நச்சி நீர் பிறன்கடை நடந்து செல்ல நானையும்  
 உச்சிவ மெனும் உரை உணர்ந்து கேட்பதன் முனம் 2. 97. 4
4. மாடு தானது இல்லெனில் மானுடர்  
 பாடுதான் செல்வாரிடை 5. 70. 3



others.<sup>1</sup> He said that they would be losers in the true sense of the word for they gain nothing from that either for themselves or for others. Thus it is seen that the rich and the poor lived side by side. But the world, in the words of a Sangam poet exists because of the presence of generous and benevolent people even though there might be certain hard hearted and miserly men.<sup>2</sup>

Saint Sundarar in his Tevaram explained how the bare necessities of life like food and clothing could be obtained by constant prayer to God and as such there was no necessity for man to be avaricious and greedy.<sup>3</sup> Tiruvalluvar in great anguish said that if it was the will of God that certain people should remain in abject poverty and had to beg for their livelihood such a God should perish.<sup>4</sup> Tiruvalluvār made it clear that

1. உழக்கே யுண்டு படைத்து ஈட்டிவைத் திழ்ப்பார்களும்  
சிலர்கள்  
வழக்கே எனிற பிழைக்கே மென்பர் மதிமாந்திய மாந்தர்  
7. 78. 4
2. உண்டாலம்ம இவ்வுலகம்  
தமக்கென முயலா நோன்றாள்  
பிறர்க்கென முயலுகர் உண்மையானே Puram 182
3. இம்மையே தரும் சோறும் கூறையும் ஏத்தலாம்  
இடர்க்கெலுமாம் 7. 34. 1
4. இரந்தும் உயிர்வாழ்தல் வேண்டிள் பரந்து  
கெடுத உலகியற்றியான் Kuraj 1062

the existing social inequalities are man made and not God made. Kamban has developed this idea in describing the kingdom of Kosala where he said that every individual possessed sufficient wealth and as such there existed neither a class of beggars nor a class of benefactors.<sup>1</sup>

### The place of women in society

In the society of those days women played an important part. Many of them were educated and well-versed in the art and literature. Women generally went to the temples with their husbands to offer prayers to God. They were living in families and were real house wives. They were of hospitable and were of disposition. They were kind towards their guests who visited their houses. They used to play various games with the balls.<sup>2</sup> They enjoyed bathing in springs and tanks making huge noise (Kampalai)<sup>3</sup>. The women while playing

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1. எல்லாரும் எல்லாச் செல்வமும் எய்தலாலே  
இல்லார்களும் இல்லை உடையார்களும் இல்லைமாதோ  
—நகரப்படலம் 74
  2. i கழல் மல்கு பந்தொடம்மாணை முன்றில்  
கற்றவர் சிற்றிடைக் கன்னி மார்கள் 1. 4. 2  
ii மையார் ஒண்கண்ணார் மாட நெடுவீதிக்  
கையாற் பந்தோச்சம் கழி சூழ்தில்லை 1. 80. 5  
iii பந்தாடும் விரல்கள் 7. 27. 3
  3. i ஏலமலி குழலா ரிசைபாடி எழுந்தருளாற் சென்று  
சோலைமலி சுணையிற் குடைந் தாடி 1. 104. 2  
ii காலே மடவார்கள் புனலாடுவது கௌவை. 73. 3

games used to sing melodious songs on Lord Siva.<sup>1</sup> They used to lay their children in decorated cradles and sing melodious songs which pleased the Gods of heaven.<sup>2</sup> In the history of those early days we have numerous instances to show how women who were separated from their husbands used to send messengers to them. Saint Sambandar had utilised this method to send messages to Lord Siva himself.<sup>3</sup> The ladies adorned themselves with beautiful dresses, jewels, and flowers. They wore ankles, pāṭakams, mēkalai, paṭṭam, and kinnari. Saint Appar when describing Lord Siva has mentioned the jewels used by the Lord himself.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sundarar in a hymn at Nākaippaṭṭinam prayed to Lord Siva to provide him with jewels like pearl garlands, garlands made of precious

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1. மனைகள் தொறும் இறைவனது தன்மைபாடிக்  
கருந்தடங் கண்ணூர் கழல் பந்தம் மாணை பாட்டயருங்  
கழுமலமே 1. 129. 2
  2. வாரிசைமென் முலைமடவார் மாளிகையின் சூளிகைமேல்  
மகப் பாராட்டக்  
காரிசையும் விசும் பியங்குங் கணங்கேட்டு மகிழ்  
வெய்துங் கழுமலமே 1. 129. 4
  3. 1. 60. Patikam
  4. சிலம்பும் செறிபாடகமும் செழுங்கிண் கிணித்தி ரளும்  
அலம்பும் திருவடி 4. 92. 12

stones, Kastūri. sāntu and fine silks.<sup>1</sup> He further referred to Kāmbu and nētiram<sup>2</sup> and these words according to pinkalam, the ancient Tamil dictionary, refer to some kind of silk cloth.<sup>3</sup> But Mr. Somasundaram Chettiar in his notes on these lines of Saint Sundarar misinterpreted these words as referring to spectacles. But this view cannot be accepted because spectacles were not in vogue in those days.

The ladies had their freedom to select their husbands. Paravaiyār selected her husband Sundarar of her own accord. The ladies suffering from the unbearable separation of their husbands used to derive satisfaction by drawing a circle, with eyes closed.<sup>4</sup>

The women were well educated. They believed firmly in religion as evidenced by Tevaram hymns. Queen Maṅkayarkkaraci championed the

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1. முத்தாரம் இலங்கிமினிர் மணீவயிரக் கோவை  
அவை பூணத் தந்தருளி மெய்க் கினிதா நாளும்  
கத்தூரி கமழ்சாந்து பணித் தருளல் வேண்டும்  
கடல் நாகைக் காரோணம் மேவி இருந்தீரே 7. 46. 2
  2. காம்பினொடு நேத்திரங்கள் பணித்தருளல் வேண்டும்  
7. 46. 1
  3. Pinkalam, 3739
  4. மாட நீடு மருகற் பெருமாண் வரீற்  
கூடுநீ யென்று கூடல் இழைக்குமே 5, 88. 8

cause of Saivism as against Jainism sponsored by the king, her husband. Saint Sambandar has admired her in his hymns at Alavāy (Madurai) and his epithets such as pattiārkinra Pāṇṭimādevi.<sup>1</sup> 'Civan tirunīrṇinai vaḷarkkum pantaṇai viralāḷ Paṇṭimātēvi'<sup>2</sup> explain the elevated and respectable position occupied by her. It was Tilakavati who influenced her brother Tirunāvukkarasu to embrace Saivism by completely separating himself from Jainism. Folk songs were common among the women in those early days. Their themes were not of ordinary type but they formed devotional descriptions of God. The singing of such songs elevated women in their religious life. Women were accustomed with vocal and instrumental music. Dancing and music went together on certain occasions.<sup>3</sup>

### Customs and Manners

There are many evidences about the customs and manners of the people in those early days. In that society there existed ascetics as well as

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| 1. பத்தியார் கின்ற பாண்டி மா தேவி  | 3. 120. 7 |
| 2. சிவன் திரு நீற்றினை வளர்க்கும்<br>பந்தனை விரலாள் பாண்டிமாதேவி   | 3. 120. 3 |
| 3. காந்தார மிசையமைத்துக் காரிகையார் பண்பாடக்<br>கவிஞர்வீதித்<br>தேந்தா மென்றறங்கேறிச் சேயிழையார் நடம்பயிலும்<br>திருவையாறே | 1. 130. 6 |

family men and these ascetics were supported by the latter. The family men also were well regarded and respected if they were pure in heart and sincere devotees to Lord Siva. Saint Sundarar though he lived with two wives he had received much respect and honour from the people. Hospitality was their household virtue.<sup>1</sup> Meat eating was not condemned. The Stories of Ciruttontar and Kannappar could be cited to illustrate the presence of this custom. Thus meat eating as pointed out by Mr. C. V. Narayana Iyer was prevalent among some of the leaders of the South and the North. Even today some Gonda brahmins of the north are taking meat.<sup>2</sup> According to the hymns of Saint Sambandar there were some meat eaters among the devotees.<sup>3</sup>

Offering boiled rice to the crows was one of the religious customs. Pali is the word mentioned in the hymns which means crow.<sup>4</sup> Here it is used

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1. விரையாலும் மலராலும் விழுமை குன்ற  
உரையாலும் எதிர் கொள்ள 1. 119. 5
  2. Origin and early History of Saivism in South India, p. 142
  3. ஊடுகுண்டல் நன்றென ஊடுகுண்டல் தீடுதன  
ஆனதொண்டர் அன்பினால் பேச நின்ற தன்மையன் 3. 53, 9
  4. Pinkalam 3795

as the food given to Lord Siva.<sup>1</sup> In *Taiñcaivāṇaṅkōvai* the author explained the word *pali* as the food given to crows.<sup>2</sup> Even to this day this custom exists among some of the Hindu families. Mention of a particular custom is found in *Sundarar's Tevaram*, that the people at *Tiruppuṅkūr* offered land to God Siva for blessing them with rain and also for protecting them from having floods and rain.<sup>3</sup> Mortgage of property or person was known to them.<sup>4</sup> There was a custom of swearing before God as a proof of one's firm determination to fulfill a purpose. Saint *Sundarar* at *Nākaipattiṅam* emphatically asserted that he would not allow God to move unless God granted him what all he wanted.<sup>5</sup> In *Tiruvotriyūr* for the sake of his wife *Caṅkili* Saint *Sundarar* swore before God that he would not separate himself from her.<sup>6</sup>

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1. மனைகள் தோறிடு பலியது கொள்வர்— 3. 88. 6
  2. குருதிப் பலி தூய்— தஞ்சைவாணன் கோவை. 298
  3. பெய்யுமாமழை பெருவெள்ளம் தவிர்த்துப்  
பெயர்த்தும் பன்னிரு வேலிகொண்டருளும்,  
செய்கை 7. 55. 2
  4. i ஐவர்க்கு ஒற்றி வைத்தாய் 4. 99. 9  
ii ஒற்றிவைத் திங் குண்ணலாமோ 7. 5. 3
  5. தாரீரேல் ஒரு போதும் அடிஎடுக்கலி ஒட்டேன் 7. 46. 8
  6. தாவாத பெருந் தவத்துச் சங்கிலியா ருடனீ காண  
மூவாத திருமகிழை முக்காலும் வலம் வந்து. *Periya*  
*Eyar* 260

Though the people observed certain customs they were prepared to sacrifice them for the sake of their high ideals. People believed that certain women remain barren due to the influence of some evil spirits. Saint Sambandar has emphatically said that by going on a pilgrimage to Tiruvenkāṭu and taking a bath in the three tanks there, women might be relieved from the influence of such evil spirits and they will be blessed with children.<sup>1</sup> Maikaṅṭār the author of Sivañāṅpōtam was born under similar circumstances. Cremation prevailed in those days along with burial and Saint Appar narrated the actual scene of how a dead body used to be carried and finally cremated. Appar narrated that the people who gathered around the dead body would cry aloud and would decorate the corpse with collyrium and flowers and would carry the body to the burning ghat where the final cremation would take place with the help of firewood.<sup>2</sup>

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1. பேயடையா பிரிவெய்தும் பிள்ளையினோடுள்ளநினை  
வாயினவே வரம்பெறுவர் ஐயுறவேண்டா 2. 48. 2
2. i ஐயினால் மீடறடைப்புண்டு ஆக்கைவிட்டு  
ஆவியார் போவதுமே அகத்தார் கூடி  
மையினால் கண்எழுதி மாலை சூட்டி  
மயானத்தில் இடுவதன்முன் 6. 6. 7
- ii செத்தால் வந்துதவு வார் ஒருவரில்லை  
சிறுவிரகால் தீ மூட்டிச் செல்லா நிற்பர் 6. 62.1



## V

# Agriculture, Industry and Commerce

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### **Agriculture**

Most of the people in Tamilnad in the seventh century were agriculturists and this is true even of the modern days. The people of the Marutam region, where there were an adequate sources of irrigation, were well trained in the art of agriculture. This development of agriculture has been praised by many of the Tamil poets and saints and in these days the wealth of the world is mostly derived from agriculture. India is an agricultural country from time immemorial. Sir John Hewitt in his treatise on the pre-historic Ruling Races has expressed the view that of all the ancient races the Dravidians took the great interest in the systematisation and the development of agriculture.

During the time of the Tevaram saints, the people were well acquainted with the methods to be adopted to increase the yielding capacity of the land.<sup>1</sup> Agriculture was mostly developed by the Vēlālās or Vēlirs.<sup>2</sup> Many of the Tamil poets compared the life of an ideal devotee to that of an agriculturist. Of the three Saiva saints it was Saint Appar who spoke elaborately about this aspect. Born of an agriculturist family, i.e., Vēlāla he had a thorough knowledge of the different stages in the development of agriculture, like ploughing, sowing, watering, hedging etc. These various stages in the progress of agriculture have been compared to the different aspects of the progress of humanity; ploughing to the truthfulness, sowing to desire the high ideals, wedding to the removal of untruthfulness, watering to patience and hedging to culture and character.<sup>3</sup> Prof. T. R. Seshayengar rightly emphasised that

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1. பெரிய செந்நெற் பிரம்புரி கெந்தசாலி திப்பிய மென்றிவை அரியுந் தண் கழனி 4. 20. 7
  2. Caste and Tribes of South India, Vol. VII pp. 361, 368
  3. மெய்மையாம் உழவைச் செய்து விருப்பெனும் வித்தை வித்திப் பொய்மையாங் களையை வாங்கிப் பொறை யெனும் நீரைப் பாய்ச்சித் தம்மையே நோக்கிக் கண்டு தகவெனும் வேலியிட்டுச் செம்மையுள் நிற்ப ராகில் சிவகதி விளையு மன்றே 4. 76. 2

“To the ancient Tamilians there was indeed nothing nobler than the yoke and the plough which were to him the true emblem of freedom, honour and virtue.”<sup>1</sup>

Saint Sambandar has also spoken about the development of agriculture at the hands of the Vēlālas. He said that men and women together worked in the fields.<sup>2</sup> He has also described elaborately the transplantation of the tender paddy seedlings.<sup>3</sup> He had great pleasure in describing the cultivation of the land and the beauty of the green fields were much attractive to him. He explained how at Tiruvēlimiḷalai the paddy grew to the size of a fan and it seemed to be fanning the swan seated on the lotus flower.<sup>4</sup> The plantains grown there resembled the trunk of an elephant.<sup>5</sup> Kamuku was grown in some places

1. Ancient Dravidians, p. 227
2. தனையவிழ் தண்ணிற நீல நெய்தல் தாமரை செங்கழு  
நீருமெல்லாம்  
கனையவிழும் குழலார் கடிய 1. 5. 9
3. i முடிக்கையினுற் றொடும் மோட்டுழவர் 1. 5. 7  
ii நடவந்த உழவர் 1. 129. 8
4. செறியிதழ்த் தாமரைத் தவிசில் திகழ்ந்தோங்கும்  
இலைக்குண்டக்கீழ்ச் செய்யார் செஞ்நெல்  
வெறிகதிர்ச் சாமரை இரட்ட இள அன்னம் வீற்றிருக்கும்  
மீழலையாமே 1. 192. 2
5. மொய்சேர் வண்டு மும்மத நால்வாய் முரண் வேழக்  
கைபோல் வாழைக் காய் குலை ஈனும் 1. 102. 2

and the flowers, nuts and fruits of the same have been compared by Saint Sambandar to white pearls, green precious stones and red pavalams.<sup>1</sup> He has further explained how the noise made by the agriculturists during their work was so great that it reached the heavens.<sup>2</sup> This explains the enthusiasm in and the enjoyment of their work in the fields. This also explains the custom by which the cultivators cut and brought the harvested paddy from the field to the elevated place to make it pure and store it. The people made use of ēṟṟam to draw the water from the wells for the purpose of cultivation as explained by Saint Appar in his hymns at Tiruvārūr.<sup>3</sup> The people in those days erected a pillar by the side of a well and tied a long pole across it and attached a vessel to it to draw the water from the well. This process has been explained by Saint Appar in a metaphor

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1. எண்ணூர் முத்தமீன்று மரகதம்போல் காய்காய்த்துக்  
கண்ணூர் கழுகுபவளம் பழுக்கும் 1. 102. 4
  2. அசும்பு பாய் கழனி யலர் கயல் முதலோ டடுத்தரிந்து  
எடுத்தவான் சும்மை  
விசும்பு பாய் வனபோல் விம்மிய வீழி மிழலை 3.119.2  
(சும்மை—சுமை; ஒலி)
  3. உயிர்நிலை உடம்பே காலா உள்ளமே தாழியாகத்  
துயரமே ஏற்றமாகத் துன்பக் கோலனைப் பற்றிப்  
பயிர் தனைச் சுழியவாங்கிப் பாழ்க்கு நீர் இறைத்துமிக்க  
ஆயர்வினாள் ஐவர்க் காற்றேன் 4. 52; 7

illustrating a philosophical truth. Dr. Minakshi explained a method of irrigation during the time of the Pallavas with the help of kurrēttam which was mentioned in the inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> Water for the purpose of cultivation has to be supplied not only by the wells but also by the canals. Saint Appar narrated how the cultivation should be begun at a particular time and in a particular method.<sup>2</sup>

Cattle being very necessary for cultivation; it has been regarded as a great source of wealth. As such the Tamilian had nothing but respect and reverence for the cows and this characterising is true of the modern days also. In the work of cultivation the Sun and the cattle, in the order of preference are of great importance. So during the Pongal festival on the first day the Sun is worshipped and on the second day the cattle is worshipped for their services in connection with the work of agriculture, and these festival days known as Pongal and Māṭṭuppongal respectively. The word māṭu signifying cattle also means wealth.<sup>3</sup> Saint Māṇikkavācakar in his Tiruvācakam

1. S. I. I., Vol. II, Part III, p. 352

2. உழுதசால் வழியே உழுவான் 5. 90. 8

3. i மாடு தேடி மயக்கினில் வீழ்ந்து 5. 77. 4

ii மாடு தானது இல்லெனின் மாணுடர்  
பாடு தான் செல்வாரிசை 5. 70. 3

used the word in the same sense.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sambandar prayed to God to protect the Antanars, Tevas and cows, which he considered to be essential to the progress of humanity.<sup>2</sup>

Whenever the seasonal rains failed, the people used to offer prayers to God Siva and subsequently there used to be heavy showers of rain. Saint Sundarar narrated an episode which happened at Tiruppuṅkār. Once there was a famine and the people prayed to God Siva to bless them with rain for which act of kindness they offered him a certain plot of land. There were heavy rains and the limits were exceeded. The people once again prayed to Lord Siva to stop the rain and offered him twelve more vēlies of land.<sup>3</sup> Even today in many of the villages people offer prayers to God for seasonal rains.

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1. மாடும் சுற்றமும் மற்றுள போகமும் Tiruvacakam  
Arputappattu 5
  2. வாழ்க அந்தணர் வானவர் ஆனிணம் 3. 54. 1
  3. வையக முற்றும் மாமழை மறந்து  
வயலில் நீரிலை மாநிலந் தருகோம்  
உய்யக் கொள்க மற் றெங்கையென்ன  
ஒளிகொள் வெண்முகிலாய்ப் பரந்தெங்கும்  
பெய்யு மாமழைப் பெரு வெள்ளந் தவிர்த்துப்  
பெயர் த்தும் பன்னிரு வேலி கொண்டருளும்  
செய்கை கண்டு நின் திருவடி அடைந்தேன்  
செயும் பொழில் திருப்புன் கூருளானே 7. 55. 2

In this connection it is also interesting to study in detail about the famines in Tamilnadu of the seventh century. Saint Appar in his hymns explained the devastating consequences of the famine and narrated how under the circumstances he was protected by Lord Siva. He has given a detailed description of the famines. There was absence of rain for a long period and consequently the stones became hot and sea shranked.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sambandar, when he spoke high of Vēlāḷars who were great benefactors expressed that they did not hesitate to do charity even though the rain failed.<sup>2</sup> It is stated that on one occasion at Tiruvēlmiḷalai Saint Sambandar and Appar were given gold coins each every day by Lord Siva to be made use of during the period of the famine. This indicates the coins were used as the medium of exchange during those days. Saint Appar had no difficulty in getting his gold coin exchanged. But Saint Sambandar was faced with difficulty and subsequently he prayed to Lord Siva<sup>3</sup> who later gave him a gold coin similar to that given to

1. கண்ணெடுங்காலம் வெதும்பிக் கருங்கடல் நீர் சுருங்கிப்  
பண்ணெடுங்காலம் மழைதான் மறுக்கினும்; பஞ்சமண்டு  
4. 113. 10
2. விலங்கலமர் புயன்மறந்து மீன் சனிபுக் கூண்  
சலிக்கும் காலந் தானும்  
கலங்கலிலாப் பெரு வண்கை மனத்தர் 1. 129. 8
3. வாசி தீரவே காசு கல்குவீர் 3. 54. 1

Saint Appar. It was said that vāci was deducted in exchange of the coins. Saints Sambandar and Appar did such relief works by means of gold coins obtained from Lord Siva at Tiruvēḷimīlalai.

Famine was also caused by war. The famine from which Saint Appar and Sambandar suffered took place after the battle of Vātāpi in 642 A. D. between the Pallavas and Chalukyas. Dr. Minakshi in her book on (Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas) has stated that this famine should have been taken place during the beginning of the reign of Narasimhavarman II alias Rajasimhan who ruled during the years 680-722 A. D.<sup>1</sup> Her views are based on the report of a Chinese traveller who seemed to have fixed the years 686-689 as the date of the famine. But it should be stated that Saint Sambandar who experienced the after effects of this famine never lived during the years 680-722, the period of Raja Simha's reign. He lived during the reign of Narasimhavarman I, who ruled the Pallava country during the years 630-655 A. D. Hence the famine should have taken place only after the battle of Vātāpi (642 A. D.)

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1. Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas, p. 113



In the Tamil literary work Manimēkalai reference has been made of a terrible famine an Kāñci and how Saint Manimēkalai was sent there to give relief to the sufferers.<sup>1</sup> Various relief measures have been undertaken in the course of the famines. A committee called Pañchavārium used to be appointed to relieve the distress of the people during the famine.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the occasional famines agriculture prospered very well in Tamilnadu. Apart from paddy, kamuku,<sup>3</sup> mancal,<sup>4</sup> cēmpu<sup>5</sup> and such other things were produced. Plantains were produced in abundance<sup>6</sup> and places came to be named on the basis of the plantains grown, for example a village came to be known by its name as Tirupāññēli simply by the fact that there used to grow plantains in abundance.<sup>7</sup>

### Industry

There is some evidence of the Industrial development of those days in the Tevaram hymns

1. Manimekalai, 28. 154-158
2. Studies in Cola History, pp. 142-143
3. கண்ணூர் கழுகு பவளம் பழுக்கும் கவிக் காழி 1. 102. 4
4. விங்குவிளை கழனி (விங்கு—மஞ்சள்) 3. 72.1
5. சேம்பிடுண்டு செங்கமுநீர் தண்கிடங்கில் திகழும் 7. 46. 2
6. i தாறுடைய வாழை 1. 8. 7
- ii வேழக்கை போல் வாழைக்காய் குலைநீரும் 1. 102. 2
7. Urum Perum by R. P. Sethu Pillai, p. 11

Silk industry was very common in Tamilnadu and we find references about this in the works of the three Tamil Saints. Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar in his book 'Contributions of South India towards Indian Culture' has mentioned that there were thirty varieties of silk in those days.<sup>1</sup> Saint Appar in his Tiruvalampuram hymns explained that the women praised Lord Siva who used to wear silk.<sup>2</sup> In the Tevaram of Saint Sundarar at Nākaippttīnam, term kāmpu and nētiram have been used to denote special varieties of silk.<sup>3</sup> However it should be noted that silk industry of Tamilnadu was indigenous in character.

Sugar and jaggery industries were in existence and Saint Appar characterised Lord Siva as Karumpinil katti which means jaggery.<sup>4</sup> He further explained how sugar juice used to be obtained from the sugarcane, the latter being crushed in between the two iron rods.<sup>5</sup> The same

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1. Contributions of South India towards Indian Culture, p. 359
  2. பட்டுத்துப் பவளம் போல் மேனிஎல்லாம்  
பசுஞ் சாந்தம் கொண்டணிந்து 6. 58. 7
  3. காம்பினொடு நேரத்திரங்கள் பணித்தருளல் வேண்டும்  
7. 46. 2
  4. கரும்பினில் கட்டிபோல்வார் கடலூர் விரட்டாரே. 4. 31. 4
  5. ஆலைப்படு கரும்பின் சாறு போல. 6. 52. 2

has been explained by Saint Sundarar in his Arūr Tevaram.<sup>1</sup> Jewels were in common use and the making of jewels formed a separate art by itself in those days. In Tevaram references have been made to the variety of jewels worn by men as well as women by the saints.<sup>2</sup>

During the time of the Saints wax lights were in use and Saint Appar expatiated upon the pleasure of the light produced by the burning of the wax.<sup>3</sup> From this it may be supposed that the industries in connection with wax and such other articles also were developed in those days. Apart from these candle lights there were lights with oil as mentioned by Saint Appar.<sup>4</sup>

Saint Sambandar has referred to smoke in a factory and we do not have sufficient information regarding the nature of the factory. He has said that the smoke of the chimney rose in the sky upto the clouds.<sup>5</sup> All that we can say is that factories with chimneys were in vogue in those days.

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1. கொழுங் கரும்புகள் நெரித்த சாறு 7. 37. 1
  2. i சிலம்பும் செறிபாடகமும் செழுங்கிண்கிணித்  
திரளும் 4. 92. 12
  - ii முத்தாரம் இலங்கி மிளர் மணி வயிரக் கோவை 7. 46. 1
  3. விளக்கிறைப் பெற்ற இன்பம் மெழுக்கிறை  
பதிற்றியாகும் 4. 77. 3
  4. நெய்ஞ் ஞின் நெரியும் விளக்கு 4. 80. 5
  5. ஆலையில் வெம்புகைபோய் முகில் தோயும் ஆரூர் 1. 105. 2

At Naṛaiyūrc cīttisuram Saint Sambandar said how there was a huge industrial section.<sup>1</sup> In many of the sea coast towns fishing was in flourishing condition. The practice of diving for pearls was in vogue. These facts have been well explained by Saint Sambandar in his hymns sang at Tiruvēṭṭakkuti and Tirumaṛaikkāṭu both of which are on the sea coast.<sup>2</sup> Ships were of varied sizes and kinds. Sambandar in his hymns at Tiruvēṭṭakkuti has explained how a ship at a distance resembled a crescent moon.<sup>3</sup>

### Commerce

In those days in addition to industry and agriculture, commerce also gained much importance. Trade flourished in Tamilnadu even before the beginning of the Christian Era. Tolkāppiyaṇār also made reference to sea voyage.<sup>4</sup> In that he has explained that the women were prohibited from crossing the sea. The trade in South India

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1. துனிதரு சோலை ஆலைத்தொழில் மேவ 2. 87. 7
2. i பாய்திமிலர் வலையோடு மீன் வாரிப் பயின்றெங்கும்  
காசினியில் கொணர்ந்தட்டும் கைதல் சூழ் கழி 3. 66. 2  
ii காசு மணி வார் கனக நீடுகடலோடு திரைவார்  
திவலைமேல்  
வீசுவலை வாணரவை வாரிவிலைபேசும் எழில் வேதவனமே 3. 76. 11
3. நாவாய பிறைச் சென்னி 3. 66. 6
4. முண்ணீர் வழக்கம் மகடுவோ டிலலை Tol Poruḷ 34

was more prosperous than in North India as pointed out by V. A. Smith.<sup>1</sup> The Tamilians had trade relations with Egypt as early as the 15th century B. C.<sup>2</sup> Tamilians travelled to far distant countries and their trade extended upto Egypt, Greece and Rome in the west and China in the east. Sugar was brought from China and it is still called Cēni which indicates that it was originally brought from China. The sea trade and land trade of the early days have been referred to in Cilappatikāram and Pattinappālai.

A study of Tevaram will give us ample evidences regarding the development of trade in Tamilnadu. The saints referred to many sea-ports and ships which were like mountains in height and size.<sup>3</sup> Cēkāḷi, Nākaippaṭṭinam, Tirumaṛaikkāṭu, Makēntirappāḷi, Tiruvoṛṇiyur, Māntōṭṭam in Ceylon are the important sea ports mentioned in Tevaram. Though, Kōkarnam on the west coast is mentioned in the hymns as surrounded by the sea it was not depicted as a seaport.<sup>4</sup> We find a

1. Oxford History of India, pp. 68 & 69

2. Tamilakam, p. 185

3. மலையின் மிக்ஞயர்ந்த மரக்கலம் சரக்கு  
மற்றுமற் றிடை யிடையெங்கும்  
கலைகளித் தேறிக் காணவில் வாழும் கழுமலம் 3. 118. 7

4. மாகடல் சூழ் கோகரணம் 6, 49. 1

vast difference in the construction of the ships of those early days and of the modern days. In those days mats were spread over the surface of the boats and they moved by the help of the wind.<sup>1</sup> Such boats in the ancient days were made use of not only for catching fishes but also for getting pearls, precious stones and shells of high value. Saint Sambandar in his hymns at Cāikkātu mentioned how a ship brought shells, precious stones etc., from the deep seas.<sup>2</sup> In Tirumaraikātu also such instances have been narrated.<sup>3</sup> Saint Sundarar prayed to Lord Siva to give him pearl garlands and other luxurious things.<sup>4</sup> He also prayed for pavaḷam, garlands of precious stones, kastūri and cāntu.<sup>5</sup> Saint Sambandar also narrated that great ships anchored at the shore of Nākaippaṭṭinam<sup>6</sup>

Saint Sambandar explained how the port authorities used to give intimation to the business

1. பாயோங்கு மரக்கலங்கள் படுதிரையால் மொத்துண்டு  
சேயோங்கு வேணுபுரம் 2. 81. 9
2. வங்கமங் கொளி ரிப்பியும் முத்து மணியும்  
சங்கும் வாரித் தடங்கடல் உந்து சாய்க்காடே 2. 38. 6
3. வீசுவலை வாண ரவைவாரிவிலேபேசும் எழிவேதவனமே  
3. 76. 11
4. 7. 46. 2
5. Ibid
5. வரையார் வனபோல் வளரும் வங்கங்கள்  
கரையார் கடல் நாகைக் கரோணம் 1. 84, 7

men, from which place the ships were coming and the cargo which they were bringing from the different sounds produced by the respective ships. Such sounds were experienced by the saint at Makēntirappalli near Cēkālī.<sup>1</sup> Saint Appar in explaining a philosophical truth made mention about the nature and consequences of a ship wreck. He compared the travel of a ship to the life of an individual, mind to the ship, wisdom to the rowing stick, anger to the cargo and mata or kama to the rock against which a ship dashes.<sup>2</sup>

It is very probable that Saint Appar was at least once on the sea on some expedition when he was a Jain and then underwent the difficulties incidental to the voyage viz., narrow escape from whirlpools, want of food and the consequent starvation or dependence upon the product of the sea for sustenance<sup>3</sup>. "The marine view of the horizon, the ships steering their course towards it, the motion of the wet sands of the tiny mollusca

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1. வங்கமார் சேணுயர் வருகுறிபான் மிகு சங்கம் 3. 31. 4
  2. மனமெனுந் தோணிபற்றி மதியெனும் கோலையுன்றிச்  
சினமெனும் சரக்கை யேற்றிச் செறிகடலோடும் போது  
மதமெனும் பாறை தாக்கி மறயும் போதறிய வொண்ணு  
உனையுனும் உணர்வை நல்காய் 4. 46. 2
  3. Saint Appar, p. 61

carried by the billows are picturesquely drawn by Saint Appar in his hymns at Tiruvorriyūr.<sup>1</sup>

After the age of the saints there had been in unrecognisable dislocation of some of the sea ports mentioned by them during their time. Tirukkaḷaippālai and Cikāḷi were two important seaports as mentioned by Saint Sambandar and ships carrying many commercial articles used to anchor there.<sup>2</sup> But these two villages are at present five and nine miles away from the sea-shore respectively. There is a story explaining the fact that Tirukkaḷippalai was washed away by the sea and the people in memory of that place built a temple five miles away from the shore. But we have no such references regarding Cikāḷi. In the Tamil literary work Manimēkalai also Cikalai otherwise known as Canpai has been described as a sea port.<sup>3</sup> It has also been known as Tōṇipuram which means either a floating town or a town with boats.

Except Tirukkaḷippalai and Cikāḷi, the other villages mentioned as sea-ports in Tevaram

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|------|---|------------------------------------|----------|
| 1. i | விடுகலங்கள் நெடுங் கடலுள் நின்று தோன்றும் | 6. 45. 4                           |          |
|      | ii  | ஒல்லைதான் திரை ஏறி ஓதம் மீளும்     | 6. 45. 7 |
| 2. i | கலங்கள் வந்துவவும் கழிப்பாலை              | 3. 44. 8                           |          |
|      | ii  | கலங்களிற் கொண்டு கரைசேர் கலிக்காழி | 2. 59. 2 |
| 3.   | Manimekalai;                              | 3. 29                              |          |



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continue to be on the sea coast even now. In the twin epics Kāvīripūmpattinam (Pukār) has been explained as a great sea-port, But Saint Sambandar has described Pukār as a sea- port. After the deluge mentioned in Maṇimēkalai the importance to Pukār might have declined and even though there is now a small village by that name on the sea shore it has no commercial importance. After the sea-trade, inland trade also prevailed. The sea-trade, coupled with land trade did really contribute towards the commercial prosperity and economic advancement of the Tamilians in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries A. D.

## VI

# Art and Education

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### Art

Art and architecture developed to a great extent in Tamilnadu even before the seventh century A. D. The religious revival of the period and the great progress in the field of art and architecture are interrelated. Mr. J. P. L. Shenoy in his book entitled "Madura, the Temple City" has pointed out that the Hindu art is a mirror of the Hindu religion and therefore both are complex and symbolical. There are ancient temples in Tamilnadu which bear evidences to the perfection of architecture in those early days. Generally God is characterised as an embodiment of art and beauty.<sup>1</sup> The term Murugu generally means beauty. Of all the fine arts, music was considered to be one of the most important and music flourished in those days.

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1. Madura, the Temple City, p. 25
2. Murugan or Alagu, p. 9

Even today music plays an important part in the every day life of the Tamilians. Saint Sundarar attached a certain amount of divinity to music and identified the seven ragas and the effects of such ragas with the form of God.<sup>1</sup> Almost all the temples in Tamilnadu owe their importance to the pilgrimage and preachings of the three Tamil saints. These temples of great architectural beauty did really contribute to the growth of the life and culture of the villages as pointed out by Prof. C. S. Srinivasachariar in his 'History and Institution of the Pallavas'.<sup>2</sup>

#### (A) Fine Arts

The three saints whenever they prayed to God in villages or in towns always associated art with God. The beautiful buildings, characteristic of ancient art and painting, as well as the beautiful walls attracted the attention of these Tamil saints. In some places they were so much engrossed in the appreciation of the art that they began to offer prayers to art rather than to God. Saint Sambandar has explained how the temples at Cīkāḷi and Chidambaram were decorated with gold and silver plates in an artistic way.<sup>3</sup> In describing the temple

1. ஏழிசையாய் இசைப் பயனாய் 7.51.10

2. The History and the Institution of the Pallavas, p. 2,

3. குன்ற மன்ன பொன்னுமாடக் கொச்சைவயம் 2.89.8

at Tiruvārūr Saint Appar has narrated how the buildings were beautifully decorated with high flags and those flags were so high that they seemed to reach the sky.<sup>1</sup> Saint Appar in Omāmpuliūr has explained the great buildings of architectural beauty.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sundarar has described the beautiful buildings at Panaiyūr. Peacocks used to dance on the trees and the monkeys used to occupy the tops of the huge halls.<sup>3</sup> He was greatly moved by the art and architecture prevalent at Tirumutukunram now known as Virutacalam.<sup>4</sup> There he portrayed the huge buildings with golden peaks, numerous halls of great architectural beauty and beautiful gardens with the clouds moving over the sky. In addition to the huge buildings and temples strong walls were constructed, around the town and villages.<sup>5</sup> From this we infer that

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| 1. ஈண்டு மாடங்கள் நீண்ட மாளிகை மேலெழுகொடி,<br>வானினம்மதி               |        |
| தீண்டிவந்துலவும் திருவாரூர்  | 4.20.1 |
| 2. i உருமிக்க மணிமாடம்   | 6.88.3 |
| ii ஓங்கு மதில் புடைதவமும் எழில்ஓமாம்புலியூர்                           | 6.88.5 |
| 3. மரங்கள் மேல் மயிலால மண்டபம் மாடமாளிகை கோபு<br>ரத்தின்மேல்           |        |
| திரங்கப் வன்முகவன்புகப்பாய் திருப்பனையூர்                              | 7.87.7 |
| 4. மாட மதிலணி கோபுரமணி மண்டபம்<br>முடி முகில் தவழ் சோலைசூழ் முதுகுன்று | 7.43.5 |
| 5. படையார் புரிசைப் பட்டினம்   | 1,65.1 |

these buildings and walls really exhibit the development of art and architecture in Tamilnadu.

### (B) Dance

Dancing was an important art that was developed by the Tamilians in the seventh century. God Nataraja is the embodiment of art of dancing and the three Saiva saints have lucidly and vividly explained his dancing poses. The painting of the two women dancers on the Sittannavāsai cave during the period of the hymns amply indicate the development of dancing in those days.<sup>1</sup> Women used to dance in groups and such dances have been elaborately explained by the Tamil saints. Saint Sambandar has described the various aspects of dancing by natural imagines. At Tiruvelimilalai he compared thunder to the drum used for dancing, the humming of the bees to the song, the peacock to the dancing girl and finally the golden flowers of surapunnai tree to the presents given to the dancer.<sup>2</sup> Thus he expounded how the art of dancing was developed and perfected in those days. At Tiruvaiyāru he pointed out how

1. Plate 7, Fig. 13, Plate 8, Fig. 15

2. வரைசேரு முகில் முழுவ மயில்கள் பல நடமாட வண்டு  
பாட  
விரைசேர் பொன் இதழிதர மென்காந்தள் கையேற்கும்  
மெகையாமே 1.132.4

some ladies were singing Kāntāram and some dancing according to that tune on platforms in huge halls.<sup>1</sup> He has further pointed out that at Tirumutukunram and Tiruvaiyāru special dancing halls were constructed.<sup>2</sup> Sundarar in his hymns at Tiruppaiñāli has given a list of instruments used as accompaniments to dancing.<sup>3</sup> Thus dancing was cultivated as an art and it was appreciated by the people at large. It is said in puranas and epics that dancing was made use of to convert certain pious and religious men.<sup>4</sup> Dancing came to be introduced in the temples and even to this day this custom of dedicating the dancing girls to the temple exists. According to the Tiruvaiyāru hymns of Saint Sambandar, the women danced while they came round the inner shrine of the temple.<sup>5</sup>

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1. கந்தார மிசையமைத்துக் காரிகையார் பண்பாடக் கவிஞர்  
விதித்  
தேந்தாமென் றரங்கேறிச் சேயிழையார் நடம்பயிலும்  
திருவையாறே 1.130.6
  2. i விழவோ டொலி மிகுமங்கையர் தகு மாடகசாலை  
முழவோடிசை நடமுன்செயு முதுகுன்று 1.12.7  
ii தேரோடும் அரங்கேறிச் சேயிழையார் நடம்பயிலும்  
திருவையாறே 1.130.5
  3. தக்கை தண்ணுமை தாளம்வீணை த்துணிச்சங்கிணைசல்லரி  
கொக்கரை குடமுழவினோடு இசைகூடிப்பாடி, நின்றூடுவீர்  
7.36.9
  4. Periya. Tiruna. 420
  5. வலம்வந்த மடவாரிகள் நடமாட 1.130.1

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## Music

Those spontaneous outpouring of devotional hearts, the songs of Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar who flourished in this age are filled with music' said Dr. Minakshi in her Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas.<sup>1</sup> Music played an important part in Tamilnadu during the period of the saints. But we find a lot of difference between the music of those days and the music in the modern days. Many of the puns and ragas mentioned in Tevaram are not understood by many of the Tamil musicians in the present day. Some of the technical works on music and various instruments mentioned in Cilappatikāram are not known today. Reference has been made to the instrument Yāḷ in the Tevaram hymns by all the three saints. Dr. Minakshi clarified the different kinds of musical arts and the technique of the music.<sup>2</sup> Sundaram Pillal has explained the Yāḷ cannot be compared to Vēnai of today.<sup>3</sup> The melody of some of the Tevaram hymns may not be fully

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1. Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas, pp. 239 and 240.

2. Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas, Chap. XVI and XVII.

3. Some mile stone in the History of Tamil literature, p.5

realised since the tunes to which they were set are now lost.

The three saints have elaborately expatiated upon the beauty of the music of those days. The important musical instruments that were made use of in those days were Vēnai,<sup>1</sup> Yāl,<sup>2</sup> Kinnari,<sup>3</sup> Kuḷal,<sup>4</sup> Kokkarai,<sup>5</sup> Caccari,<sup>6</sup> Takkai,<sup>7</sup> Muḷavam,<sup>8</sup> Montai,<sup>9</sup> Kuṭamuḷā,<sup>10</sup> Taṇṇumai,<sup>11</sup> Tamarugam,<sup>12</sup> Tuntupi,<sup>13</sup> Pitavam,<sup>14</sup> Tāttalakam,<sup>15</sup> Muracu,<sup>16</sup> Utukkai,<sup>17</sup>

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| 1. தமிழொடு நீர்மைபேசித் தாளம் வீணைபண்ணி முழுவம்<br>மொந்தை மல்குபாடல் | 1.73.8  |
| 2. பண்ணி யாழ்பயில் கின்றமங்கையர்                                     | 2.51.9  |
| 3. கின்னரம் கேட்டுகந்தார்  | 4.28.10 |
| 4. கொக்கரை குழல் வீணை கொடுகொட்டி.                                    | 5.7.1   |
| 5. ibid  |         |
| 6. சச்சரி வீணை பாணியானை  | 6.74.7  |
| 7. தக்கை தண்ணுமை தாளம் வீணை தருணிச்சங்கிணைசல்லரி                     | 7.36.9  |
| 8. 1.73.8  |         |
| 9. ibid  |         |
| 10. குடமுழ நந்திசனை வாசகனாய்க் கொண்டாய்                              | 6.96.11 |
| 11. 7.36.9   |         |
| 12. கடுத்தாடும் கரதலத்தில் தம்ருகம்                                  | 7.90.1  |
| 13. கொட்டிப்பாடு மித் துந்துமி                                       | 7.49.6  |
| 14. பிடவம் மொந்தை குடமுழுவம்   | 6.10.2  |
| 15. கொட்டித் தத்தளகம்  | 7.49.6  |
| 16. மணியொலி சங்கொலி மா முரசினி ஒலி                                   | 1.7.9   |
| 17. தண்டுடுக்கை தாளம் தக்கை சார நடம்பயில்வார்                        | 1.65.10 |



Tālam,<sup>1</sup> Tudi,<sup>2</sup> and Koṭukottī<sup>3</sup> These were mentioned by the saints. Koṭukottī has been included in the list of musical instruments in a hymn by Saint Sundarar. But it is not clear whether Koṭukottī was a musical instrument. In Cilappatikāram a reference has been made to a type of dance Koṭukottiyādal, which prevailed from the early days.<sup>4</sup> It is probable that the instrument made use of during the dance hence given that name.

In those days music used to be played when the kings entered the city and this was considered as a good omen.<sup>5</sup> Saint Sambandar in Nallāru hymns has said that the Pandiya king entered the capital in the midst of such music. Music was a pastime for the women of those days. In palatial buildings drums were beaten in the ground floor. Yāḷ was played at the top floor and the ladies used to enjoy the musical sounds from there. At

1. 1.73.8

2. துடிகளோடு முழுவம் விம்மவே 1.28.6

3. i கொக்கரை குழல்விணை கொடுகொட்டி. 5.7.1

ii விட்டிசைப்பன கொக்கரை கொடுகொட்டித் தத்தளகம்  
7.49.6

4. Cilap. 3. 12—15, 6. 42 & 43.

5. மணியொலி சங்கொலியொடு மற்றை மாமுரசின் ஒலி  
என்றும் ஓவாது  
அணிகிளர் வேந்தர் புகுதுங்கூடல் 1.7.9

Tirukkalar Saint Sambandar has explained how women were accustomed to singing and dancing and used to play on the yāḷ.<sup>1</sup> Saint Appar at Tiruvārūr has said that Lord Siva himself was singing Kāmarām a kind of pun.<sup>2</sup> Lord Siva is said to be a lover of music. It is stated that Saint Narata advised Rāvaṇā to sing a song to receive the blessings of God Siva and thereby to be relieved of his distress. Saint Appar has further emphasised how God will bless mostly those who sing.<sup>3</sup> In his hymns at Tiruvēḷimīlāḷ he explained how the seven strings in an instrument used to produce different ragas.<sup>4</sup> This particular fact has been further elucidated by Saint Sundarar.<sup>5</sup> Music used to be sung to make the children sleep.<sup>6</sup> Saint Sambandar has explained how the music was used by the Ayaṅ the shepherd who used to

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| 1. பண்ணியாழ் பயிண்கின்ற மங்கையர்<br>பாடலாலோ டாரவாழ் பதி   | 2.51.9  |
| 2. காமரங்கள் பாடித்திரியார் போலும்  | 6:28.4  |
| 3. i கீதத்தை மிகப்பாடும் அடியார்கள் குடியாகப்<br>பாதத்தை தொழ நின்று பரஞ்சோதி பறுலுமிடம்                               | 2.43.5  |
| ii பண்ணொடு பாடல் தண்ணைப் பாடுவார் பாங்கராகி   | 4.48.3  |
| 4. ஏழ் நரம்பின் இசைகேட்டானை   | 6.50.10 |
| 5. ஏழிசையை ஏழ் நரம்பின் ஓசையை   | 7.83.6  |
| 6: வாரிசைமென் முலைமடவார் மாளிகையின் குளிகைமேல்<br>மகப்பாராட்டக்<br>காரிசையும் விசம்பியங்குங் கணங்கேட்டு மகிழ்வெய்தும் | 1.129.4 |

live in forests and mountains, to secure their lost cattle by playing the tunes on Kuḷal.<sup>1</sup> Songs used to be sung at time when God Nataraja used to dance and many kinds of musical instruments were used in the course of dancing. Saint Appar elucidated that sounds proceeded by certain things probably like the waves had a musical tinge.<sup>2</sup> This he has explained in his hymns at Tiruppattiripuliyūr which is on the sea shore. In the modern Tranqubar also known as Taraṅkampāti in Tamil, we are told the sounds produced by the movement of the waves have a musical tinge. It is because of this the place came to be named as such (Taraṅkam means waves). Such sounds at Patiripuliyūr might have given Appar a certain amount of relief especially at the time when he was saved from the persecution of the Jains. During the festivals in the temples music used to be played and musical instruments of varied types were used. The Saint has explained not only about the music but also about the musicians, most of whom were women.<sup>3</sup> Invariably women were mentioned in

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| 1. | கலைத்தமேதி காணாதாயன் கைமேற்குழலாத<br>அலைத்துஞ் சென்றுதிரளுஞ் சாரல் | 1.696. |
| 2. | பண்ணார்ந்தமைந்த பொருள்கள்பயில் பாதிரிப்புலியூர்                    | 4.94.7 |
| 3. | i பண்ணியாழ் பயில்கின்ற மங்கையர்                                    | 2.51.9 |
|    | ii பாடல்முழவும் குழலும் இயம்பப்<br>புணைத் தோளியர் பாடலொடு ஆடலு     | 7.42.8 |

connection with the music which leads us to conclude that they took a prominent part in this field and they had a greater aptitude for music than men. Saint Sambandar in his hymns at Tēvūr has beautifully described the sweet musical voice of the ladies accompanied by vēnai and other instruments.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sundarar in his hymns at Veñiamākūtal, a town on the Malabar coast has explained about the different kinds of instrumental music and also about the dancing of the women to the accompaniment of such music.<sup>2</sup>

The king Mahendra of Kañci who became a convert to Saivism by the efforts of Saint Appar was a great musician. His court was filled with musicians. Rudrachariya, who was an adept in the composition of swarams, was the music master of the king. In the inscriptions at Kuṭumiyāmalai in Putukkottai State reference has been made to Rudrachariya, a royal music lover, and to the musical instruments. Dr. Gopalan in his Pallavas of Kañci expressed the view that this royal music

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1. வாசமலர் கோதுகுயில் வாசகமும் மாதரவர் பூவை  
மொழியும்  
தேசஒலி வீணையொடு கீதமது வீதிநிறை தேவூர் 3.74.4
2. மண்ணார் முழவும் குழலும் இயம்ப  
மடவார் நடமாடு மணியரங்கு 7.42.4

lover should have been Mahendra.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Minakshi in discussing about this inscriptions has remarked thus:—“These references clearly indicate that Rudra was an early authority on music and flourished probably in the seventh century and may be identified with Rudrachariya, a great music master of Mahendravarma”.<sup>2</sup> In the ancient Tamilnadu there was a group of professional musicians known as pāṇars. One of them by name Tirunīlakaṇṭayālpāṇar played on the instrument Yāḷ to the vocal music of Saint Sambandar. Both travelled together over different parts of Tamilnadu and their music was loved and appreciated by the people. At Tarmapuram, Saint Sambandar made an attempt to test pāṇar’s talent and skill in playing the musical instrument Yāḷ. Pāṇar was not in a position to set the tune and was about to break the instrument. However Saint Sambandar interceded and prevented Pāṇar from breaking the Yāḷ. Thus it is evident from the Tevaram hymns and Periyapurāṇam (from the life of the saints) that in the seventh century A. D. music had reached a state of perfection and prominence in Tamilnadu.

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1. Pallavas of Kanci, p. 93

2. Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas, pp. 252-253.

## Education

In the seventh century great attention was paid to the progress and development of education. The progress of education synchronised with the religious ideals of those days. Tiruvalluvar in his Kural has said that the object of education is to inculcate the spirit of devotion to God.<sup>1</sup> Saint Appar has stressed this point when he said that God lived in the hearts of the learned men, and would never be found in the hearts of the uneducated people.<sup>2</sup> The religious preachers of those days not only expounded certain religious ideals, but also took steps for the progress of general education. Thus in many of the Tamil religious works references have been made to the educational ideals.

The three Saiva saints gave an Impetus to the development of the Tamil language. Saint Sundarar has characterised Tamil as an ever truthful language<sup>3</sup> and he has said that God would bless those who prayed in Tamil.<sup>4</sup> But Saint

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| 1. சுற்றதனலாய பயன் என் கொல்வாலறிவன்<br>நற்றூள் தொழாஅ ரெனின்              | குறள்   |
| 2. கல்லாதார் மனத் தணுகாக் கடவுள் தண்ணைக்<br>கற்றூர்கள் உற்றேரும் காதலானை | 6.84.8  |
| 3. பொய்யாத் தமிழ்  | 7.13.11 |
| 4. பண்ணலந் தமிழாற் பாடுவோற் கருளாய்                                      | 7.69.4  |

Sambandar has explained that God is above the languages and so he could hear all the languages of the devotees.<sup>1</sup> In Tamilnadu there existed various literary works in Tamil and Saint Sambandar has made reference to two of them, e.g. Oḷiyintolirpāṭṭu and Kīḷiyinviruttam which are not in existence today.<sup>2</sup> Both of them might be the works of the Jains. Tamil prosody was greatly enlarged by the introduction of many new meters. For example viruttam, Kuruntokai and Tāṇṭakam were new compositions.

These Tamil saints were in touch with Sanskrit as well as Tamil language. Some methods of worship in those days were based on the Akamas and Vetas of Sanskrit. Mahendra, the king of Kāñci and a patron of Saivism was a great Sanskrit scholar, his important Sanskrit work being Mattavilāsaprakacanam. Saint Appar regarded both Tamil and Sanskrit as languages of great merit and mentioned both of them in many of his

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1. எல்லா மொழியிலும் இமையோர் தொழுதேத்த

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நல்லான் நம்மை யாள்வான் நல்ல நகரானே 1.85.1

2. கூட்டினார் கிளியின் விருத்தம் உரைத்ததோ ரொலியின்  
பாட்டுமெய் சொலிப் பக்கமே செலும் எக்கர் 3.39.5  
தொழிற்

hymns.<sup>1</sup> That Appar has some knowledge of Sanskrit works cannot be gainsaid. Besides the use of Sanskrit words in his poems he has given summaries of many puranas, reproduced some Sanskrit mantras and followed the rules of Sanskrit prosody in many of his poems. This proved the influence of Sanskrit learning in that age. In his hymns at Kāñci Saint Appar described it as a great centre of learning<sup>2</sup> and this shows that education was in a progressive state at that period.

In Tamilnadu of the seventh century, no reference has been made by the Tamil saints to the presence of technical education. But in a country where due importance was given to all aspects of education this technical education also must have been developed. Since reference has been made to Alai (factories) with smoking chimneys<sup>3</sup> in the Tevaram hymns it must be presumed that some sort of technical education with trained experts existed in those days.

Saint Appar has emphasised that education did not consist in mere reading of books without under-standing the meaning. He wanted the

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| 1. i ஆரியந் தமிழோ டிசையானவன்               | 5.18.3  |
| ii செந்தமிழோ டாரியனை                       | 6.46.10 |
| 2. கல்வியே கரையிலாத காஞ்சி மாநகர்          | 4.43.8  |
| 3. ஆகையில் வெம்புகைபோய் முகில்தோயும் ஆரூர் | 1.105.2 |



people of Tamilnadu to understand and assimilate ideas in the book which they read.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the highest ideal of education according to these three Tevaram saints was the realisation of God and Truth. They wanted that the people of the land should develop the habit of self sacrifice and other human qualities. Saint Kaṇṇappār was noted for his spirit of sacrifice. Even though his method of worship was very crude, yet he had great devotion to God. Thus he exhibited his single heartedness. That is the real spirit of education. This has been explained by Dr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar who remarked 'In the last resort, the moment when one attains to the single-minded and unalloyed devotion, he attains the condition of Siva and the affection for his is not separate from Siva himself.'<sup>2</sup> Saint Sundarar has characterised Kaṇṇappār as an enlightened person because of his singlemindedness and self sacrifice though he was uneducated.<sup>3</sup>

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1. சொற்பாஷும் பொருள் தெரிந்து தூய்மை நோக்கித்  
தூங்காதார் மனத்திருளை வாங்காதானே 6.67.2
  2. Some Contributions of South India towards  
Indian Culture, p. 225.
  3. கலை மலிந்த சீர் நம்பி கண்ணப்பர் 7.39.2

## VII

# Religion and Philosophy

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Religion means faith in a Supreme spiritual power, directing the universe and holding moral relations with human life. South Indian languages abound in religious literature. In the Sangam age there were no purely religious literature, but the names of Gods were mentioned occasionally. A portion of Paripāṭal and Tirumurukāṟruppatai are however exceptions to this. A study of Cilappatikāram and Manimēkalai will enable us to have a clear conception of the historical development of religious ideas in the early period. The author of Cilappatikaram though a Jain explained the doctrines and conceptions of other religions as well. But Manimēkalai is a Buddhistic work and its author has glorified Buddhism by comparing it with other religions. From the time of the twin epics down to the sixth century A. D. Buddhism and Jainism were prominent. Some of the eighteen minor poems called patinenkīkaṇakku, which belong to this period refer to the moral

codes enunciated by the Jains. In such works we come across the prayer song in the beginning.

### **Buddhism and Jainism**

Many of the kings in the beginning of the seventh century were followers of Jainism. The Pallava king Mahendran and the Pandiya king Neṭumāraṇ in the beginning never hesitated to persecute and illtreat the followers of Saivism. Mattavilasaparakasanam, the work of king Mahendra bears testimony to the support given to Jainism by the king. He has explained there in the immoral and indescend life led by the people of other religions. He expressed his contempt for the Buddha Bitchu, Kapalika and Pasupata, but no such reference has been made to the Jain priests whom he respected as his own religious leaders. The opening scene presents the disgusting spectacle of a Kapalika ascetic dallying with his sweet heart and disgracing himself in different ways though now and then he utters the praises of Siva. He (Kapalika) compares the liquor shop to a yagasala or a place of divine sacrifice. The Sakkiya Bitchu, when he says that those who laid down rules of conduct for a Buddhist monk were servile and envious folk because they did not allow sexual pleasure and drinks. The Pasupata acts like a fool. The goodly company is completed

when a madman and a dog are made to appear. Thus in a small book, King Mahendra tried to portray the defects of the different religions except Jainism. Hence, it is true that this book might have been written before his conversion from Jainism to Saivism. Mr. Gopalan in his *Pallavas of Kāñci* has explained the importance of *Mattavi lasaprakasanam* and has emphasised the fact that this work synchronised with the religious movements of those days.<sup>1</sup> The facts mentioned in this have been corroborated by the evidence of Hieun Tsang, the Chinese Traveller, who explained about the numerous Buddhist mutts and saints in the city of Kañci.<sup>2</sup>

In the begining of the seventh century the Jain monarchs were converted to Saivism and thus Saivism replaced Jainism in Tamilnadu. Cēkkaḷār has pointed out that Jain monasteries at Pātālīputra were destroyed by the Pallava king Mahendra and a Siva temple was built at Tiruvaikāi with the help of the stones and other building materials brought from Pātālīputra.<sup>3</sup> A Jain work *Lokavibaha* refers to a monastery in South Arcot district existing from the early days

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1. *Pallavas of Kanchi*, pp. 94 & 95.
  2. *On Yuan Chuang*, Vol. II, p. 226.
  3. *Periya. Tiruna*. 146.

of the Pallava rule.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that this was the monastery destroyed by King Mahendra.

Saints Sambandar and Appar were born at the beginning of the seventh century A. D. and they were the prominent protagonists of the Saiva religion. Saint Sambandar expounded the Vedic religion and the people became well versed in Saivism because of him. From this age Vedic religion spread to far off lands like China and Japan where Buddhism was prevalent. A Chinese priest by name Kien-Tchen pointed out during his journey from China to Japan in 749 A. D. that in Canton there were three Brahmin temples where Indian Brahmins lived.<sup>2</sup> A Tamil inscription of Takuapa, in Japan also bears evidence to this. This inscription mentions the presence of a Hindu temple, a tank called Naranam and a village called Manigramam.<sup>3</sup> The three Tevaram saints explained and expounded the principles of Vedic religion and V. G. Suriyanarayana Sastri has pointed out this fact in his *Tamilmoli varalaru*.<sup>4</sup> The Jains were antagonistic to the Vedic religion and the

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1. Mysore Archaeological Report 1909-10, p.45
  2. Foreign Notices of South India, p.19
  3. Ibid, p.19
  4. *Tamilmoli varalaru*, p. 84

fact is mentioned by Saint Sambandar in many of his hymns.<sup>1</sup>

The great exponents of Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy like Sambandar and Appar suffered a great deal in the beginning at the hands of the Jains. Therefore these saints had nothing but contempt for the Jains and expatiated upon their inhuman behaviour. Saint Sundarar who lived two centuries later has not said much about the Jains. Saint Sambandar suffered at the hands of the Jains at Madurai and on account of bitter personal experiences condemned them in his hymns. He openly expressed his fearless opposition to the Jain leaders at Anaimalai and other places.<sup>2</sup> He depicted the Jains to be backbiters.<sup>3</sup> They had no cleanliness and never took bath regularly.<sup>4</sup> They lacked in courtesy.<sup>5</sup> They used

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| 1. வேத வேள்வியை நிந்தனை செய்துழல்<br>ஆதமில்லி அமனோடு தேரர்               | 3.108.1 |
| 2. ஆனைமாமலை ஆதியாய விடங்களிற்பல அல்லர்சேர்<br>ஈனர்கேட்கெளி யேனலேன்       | 3.39.1  |
| 3. பொங்கு நூல்வழியே அன்றி புலவோர்களைப் பழிக்கும்<br>பொல்லா அங்கதர்       | 3.39.10 |
| 4. i மாசடைந்த மேனியர்  | 1.48.10 |
| ii பேணார் தூய்மை மாசு கழியார்  | 1.72.10 |
| 5. ஆசியாரமொழியா ரமண் சாக்கியாரல்லாதார்கூடி<br>ஏசி ஈரமிலராய் மொழ்செய்தவர் | 1.3.10  |

to beg with open hands.<sup>1</sup> The dress of ascetics was made of bark.<sup>2</sup> They never used to allow the hair to grow on the head.<sup>3</sup> They were people of low mentality.<sup>4</sup> They were ignorant of the merits of the Tamil and Sanskrit languages.<sup>5</sup> They were naked.<sup>6</sup> They were voracious eaters.<sup>7</sup> They used to stand in the hot sun in the noon to get their food.<sup>8</sup> They were accustomed to fishing.<sup>9</sup> These are some of the charges framed against the Jains by Saint Sambandar. The misdeeds of the Jains have been explained by Saint Appar in a detailed manner and elaborately because he had the experience of being a learned leader of the Jains in the beginning. Saint Appar while elaborating all the misdeeds of the Jains lamented for being a Jain in the early part of his life. He has said that

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| 1: | அணமிசு செல்குசோறு கொணர்கென்று<br>கையிலிட வுண்டு பட்ட அமணும் | 2.84.10 |
| 2. | தடுக்கால் உடல் மறைப்பார்                                    | 1.13.10 |
| 3. | தட்டை இடுக்கித் தலையில் பறித்துச் சமணே                      | 1.69.10 |
| 4. | மதியல்லவர் சமணர்  | 1.15.10 |
| 5. | ஆரியத் தொடு செந்தமிழ்ப் பயனறிகிலா<br>அந்தகர்                | 3.39.4  |
| 6. | சீறுமுடை கோவண மிலாமையி லோவிய·தவத்தர்                        | 3.83.10 |
| 7. | அணமிசு செல்குசோறு கொணர்கென்று...உண்டு                       | 2.84.10 |
| 8. | வழியருகு சார வெயில் நின்று அடிசில்<br>உள்கிவரு வாரும்       | 3.82.10 |
| 9. | கழிக்கரைப் படுமீன் கவர்வா ரமண்                              | 3.47.10 |

the Jains prohibited speaking while eating,<sup>1</sup> and that women also neglected taking bath regularly and never paid much attention to their dress.<sup>2</sup>

Saint Sundarar has described the way in which the Jains recited their mantrams.<sup>3</sup> He has also stated that the Jains were exclusive and evil minded.<sup>4</sup>

Though the Tamil saints pointed out the defects of the Jains and presented a bad picture of their life, the Jains possessed indeed certain qualities appreciable from the ascetic point of view, e.g., not talking while taking food and sacrificing all their wants except taking meals once a day and that too during the hot part of it. The Tamil Saints who wanted to propagate and popularise the Saiva religion have thus effectively pictured the defective side of the Jains to the complete neglect of their virtues. In fact people

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| 1. i | அருந்தும் போதுரை யாடா அமணர்   | 4.101.        |
|      | ii மூங்கைகள் போறுண்ணுமூடர்  | 4.101.        |
| 2.   | முலைமறைக்கப்பட்டு நீராடாப் பெண்கள்<br>முறைமுறையால் நந்தெய்வமென்று தீண்டி. | 6.3.10        |
| 3.   | ஞமண ஞாஞன ஞாண ஞோணமென்றோர் யாரையும்<br>அமணர்                                | நாணிவா 7.39.9 |
| 4.   | கரியமனச் சமணர்  | 7,449         |



of every religion have their own defects. Jainism is not antagonistic to Salva religion and in truth there is not as much difference between these two religions as there is between Hinduism and Islam or Hinduism and Christianity. Indeed, the Jains as well as the Saivaites have contributed towards the progress of Tamil literature. It may be pointed out that the slight difference between Jainism and Hinduism is analogous to that of the lives of an ascetic and a house-holder. The Jains praised their own literature but never condemned the Vedas.

Saint Sambandar has referred to the Jain ascetics wandering in the streets begging in the mid-day. According to the Jainism the ascetics should approach for alms after the house holder had taken his food and that too by merely standing in the streets. This method of the Jains is really appreciable because the Jain saints never entertained the idea of troubling the house holder prior to his taking food. But according to the Hindu custom the saints are fed first and then alone the householder takes his food. This generosity of the Hindu house holder is praised by Cēkkaḷār in his Periyapurānam.<sup>1</sup> Even though the Jain system

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1. Periya. Elayan. 4, Sam. 1087

of begging in noon was condemned by Saint Sambandar, yet the Jain saints even today have great belief in such kind of begging as they are prepared to sacrifice to any extent and never wanted to cause inconvenience to the householder before the latter takes his food. In the Jain philosophy caste system finds no place and this cardinal doctrine in the Jain society has been mentioned by Saint Sambandar.<sup>1</sup> Though he condemned the Jains for their ignorance of the merits of Sanskrit and Tamil, we find on the contrary that the Jain scholars have contributed many literary and grammatical works in Tamil.

Appar and Sambandar have pointed out that Lord Siva is the supreme Being and he is worshipped by all the religionists with different names and in different ways.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sambandar has further stated that Siva would help even the Buddhists and Jains.<sup>3</sup> In their opinion Siva is the only God and

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| 1. சாதியில் நீங்கிய அத்தவந்தர்  | 1.7.10  |
| 2. i விரிவினா அறிவினார்கள் வேறொரு சமயஞ்செய்தே<br>எரிவினாற் சொன்னாரேனும் எம்பிராற் கேற்றதாகும் | 4.60.9  |
| ii எங்கேனும் யாதாகிப் பிறந்தினும் தன்னடியார்க்கு<br>கிங்கே என்றருள் செய்யும் எம்பெருமான்      | 2.40.6  |
| 3. போதியாரும் பிண்டியாரும் புகழல சொன்னாலும்<br>நீதியாகக் கொண்டாங்கருளும் நிமலன்               | 1.66.10 |

it is He that the Jains also worshipped. As such the Saiva saints had nothing against the Jain religion by itself. But they condemned the Jain ascetics who were influential with the kings and were the cause for the sufferings of the Saivaites.

The Saints have not mentioned about the life of the Buddhists in such detail. There were very few references to them which are the same as the remarks of about the Jains. But as we see in the Jain philosophy some good qualities and ideals, the Buddhist religion also has got its own ideals. R. G. Majumdar in his book on "Corporated Life in Ancient India" has described the high ideals of Buddha Biktchu<sup>1</sup>. In conclusoin it can be said that every religion has its own high ideals though defects may be found in the average life of the people following it.

### Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism was in vogue and was in close alliance with Saivism especially during the time of the Tamil saints. In South India according to Tevaram hymns we find no great antagonism between Saivism and Vaishnavism as we find between Saivism and Jainism. Many Saivaites of

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1. Corporated Life in Ancient India, pp. 296, 297.

today visit Vishnu temples and offer worship. In Tevaram hymns we find no such caustic remarks made by the Saints. Pēyālvār a Vaishnava saint saw no difference between these two religions and he portrayed the Lord of Tirupati as appearing in both the forms Siva and Vishnu<sup>1</sup>. Saint Appar has identified Vishnu with Sakti.<sup>2</sup> In another hymn he has mentioned that Siva is worshipped as Vishnu and Brahma.<sup>3</sup> But on certain occasions the Saiva saints did not hesitate to degrade and abuse Vaishnavism<sup>4</sup> and they were repaid in their own coin by the Aļvārs of Vaishnavism.<sup>5</sup> The Aļvārs of Vaishnavism condemned Buddhists and Jains also.<sup>6</sup> Narasimhavarma, the son and the successor of Mahendra, the converted Saiva king was a Vaishnavite. It was during his time that the three first Vaishnava Aļvārs, Poikaiyār, Pūtattār and Pēyār lived and propagated Vaishnavism.

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1. தாழ்சடையும் நீள்முடியும் ஒண்மழுவும் சக்கரமும்  
சூழரவும் பொன்னாணும் தோன்றுமால்—சூழும்  
திரண்டருவி பாயும் திருமலைமேல் எந்தைக்கு  
இரண்டுருவும் ஒன்றா யிசைந்து Nalayiram 2344
  2. அரியலாற் றேவியில்கு ஐபன் ஐபாற னூர்க்கே 4.40.5
  3. ஒருருவே மூவுருவமான நாளோ 6.34.9
  4. பிரமனோடு மாலுந் தொழுதேத்த 1.2.1
  5. சிறியார் சிவப்பட்டார் செப்பில் Nalayiram 288
  6. அறியார் சமணர் ஆயர்த்தார் பவுத்தர் Nalayiram 238

They were the contemporaries of Saiva saints Sambandar and Appar. It was said during the time of Narasimha Pallava that Tirumalīcaiālvār and his disciple Kanikannan the two great Vaishnava saints lived. The Pallava king Narasimhavarma built Vaishnava temples both at Kadalmallai and Kāñchi. Thus with the rapid and spontaneous growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism, Buddhism and Jainism began to decay.

### Oneness of God

Saivism became prominent in the seventh century A. D. and there is no gainsaying the fact that Saivaite philosophy is so comprehensive as to include any religion. Saint Appar in his Peruvēlūr Tevaram has rightly remarked that Lord Siva would be tolerant towards non-saivaites however much the latter might be intolerant.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sambandar has explained how Lord Siva blessed all those who prayed to him, irrespective of caste or religion.<sup>2</sup> Saint Maṅikkavācakar further illustrated this view by stating that God who is called Siva in South

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1. விரிவிலா அறிவினர்கள் வேறொரு சமயஞ் செய்தே  
எரிவினாற் சொன்னா ரேனும் எம்பிராற் கேற்றதாகும்  
4.60.9
  2. எத்தவத் தோர்க்கும் இலக்காய் நின்ற எம்பெருமான்  
1.4.10

India is the Lord of all<sup>1</sup> the world. This view has been corroborated by a later work in Saiva Sidhanta Philosophy (Civaññacittiyār)<sup>2</sup> and also by the world famous Bagavat Gita.<sup>3</sup> Saint Sundarar has included a Buddhist saint Cākkiyanāyaṅār in the list of sixty three Nāyaṅārs.

The Saiva saints Appar and Sambandar advocated the worship of one God alone i.e. Lord Siva, and discouraged the adoration of minor gods. Saint Appar has characterised the people who worship the mortal demi gods as hard hearted.<sup>4</sup> The worship of such demi gods especially today is prompted by the fear that such gods would do harm to those who fail to please them with offerings. Saint Appar has emphatically asserted that he would be a subject to none except the Supreme Rular Siva<sup>5</sup> and that he would be never thrown into hell as he had the fortune of serving

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1. தென்னாடுடைய சிவனே போற்றி  
எந்நாட்டவர்க்கும் இறைவா போற்றி  
Tiruvacakam Porri Thiruagaval 164. 165
  2. யாதொரு தெய்வங்கொண்டீர் அத்தெய்வமாகி ஆங்கே  
மாதொரு பாகனார் தாம் வருவர் Cittiyaar 115
  3. Githa iv. 2.
  4. செத்துசெத்துப் பிறப்பதைத் தேவென்று  
பத்தி செய்மனப்பாறை 5.100.2
  5. நாமார்க்குங் குடியல்லோம் 6.99.1

Siva.<sup>1</sup> Thus he evinced a strong faith in the devotional life. Saint Sambandar when starting his tour to establish Saivism in Madurai did not wait for an auspicious day. He started on an inauspicious day with the firm conviction that the Navakirakas or the nine planets would not do any harm to the devotees of Siva and that all the days are auspicious to them.<sup>2</sup>

The worship of the Sun (among the Navakirakas) was not in vogue during the time of the saints. Saint Appar in his hymns at Cōṟṟutturai has objected to divinity being attached to the Sun; but he has stated that after death the soul of every human being should reach the kingdom of God Siva only after passing through the kingdom of the Sun.<sup>1</sup> The South Indians in those days treated the Sun not as a God but as a planet which helps the world by its heat and light. The Poṅkal Day is celebrated in his honour not because to worship

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1. நரகத்தில் இடர்ப்படோம் 6.99.1
2. ஞாயிறுதிங்கள் செவ்வாய் புதன் வியாழன் வெள்ளி  
சனிபாம் பிரண்டுமுடனே  
ஆசறுநல்ல நல்ல அவை நல்ல நல்ல  
அடியார் அவர்க்கு மிகவே 2.81.5
3. அங்கதிரோனவனை அண்ணலாக் கருதவேண்டா  
வெங்கதிரோன் வழியே போவதற்கமைந்து கொண்டின்  
4. 41. 6

him as God but simply to show their gratefulness to him as he is the main cause for the rain and grains.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Kandiah Pillai in his book on Tamilakam has pointed out that Siva and the Sun are identical because both are red in colour.<sup>2</sup> He based his theory on the lines of Saint Appar Arukkaṇpātam Vaṇaṅkuvar antiyil, Arukkaṇāvāṇ Araṇuruallaṅṅ<sup>3</sup> which Mr. Pillai mistook to refer to the worship of the sun. These lines of Appar do not refer to the worship of the Sun, but to the fact that the worshippers of the Sun do not realise the greatness of Siva and that the Sun is one of the many forms of Lord Siva. In this particular patikam Saint Appar has merely condemned the worship of minor gods. In the very next stanza Appar has criticised the worship of Krishna.<sup>4</sup> Thus in the seventh century the Saivaites worshipped Lord Siva and not the minor Gods as planets and others.

1. South Indian Images of Gods and Goddess, p.336

2. Tamilakam, p.150

3. அருக்கன்பாதம் வணங்குவர் அந்தில்  
அருக்கனாவான அரனுரு அல்லனே  
இருக்கு நான்மறை ஈசனையே தொழும்  
கருத்தினை நினையாக் கல்மனத்தரே 5. 100. 8

4. பேயர் பேய்முலை உண்டுகிர் போக்கிய  
மாயன் மாயத்துள் பட்டமனத்தரே 5. 100. 9



### The Sub-Sects

In the Saiva religion there are six divisions but the followers of every division worship Lord Siva. This fact has been referred by Saint Appar in his hymns at Inṅampar.<sup>1</sup> He has stated that in Arūr there were these agasamayikal.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sambandar stated the same fact in his Pirama-purām hymns.<sup>3</sup> In another hymn he has said that it is only Siva who is worshipped as Tirumūrtikal namely Brahma, Vishnu and Siva who do the functions of creation, protection and destruction.<sup>4</sup> Hindu religion believes in the existence of these three Gods. Brahma has no temples, but Vishnu and Siva have temples big and small. Saint Appar has explained the fact that Lord Siva is worshipped by the followers of the six subsects. Thus the saints have recognised all the subsects as one and explained the three Gods are the manifestations of Siva.<sup>5</sup>

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| 1. ஆரென்றிய சமயங்கள் அவ்வலர்க் கப்பொருள்<br>வேரென் நிலாதன  | 4. 100. 4 |
| 2. விரிகடை விரதிகள் அந்தணர் சைவர் பாசுபதர் கபாலிகள்<br>தெருவினிற் பொலியும் திருவாரூர்                                | 4. 20. 3  |
| 3. முன்னம் இருமுன்று சமயங்களவையாகி   | 2. 29. 5  |
| 4. படைத்தளித் தழிப்ப மும்மூர்த்திக ளாயினை  | 1. 128. 4 |
| 5. காலமும் நாள்கள் ஊழிபடையாமுன் ளுக<br>உருவாகி மூவர் உருவில்<br>சாலவுமாகி மிக்க சமயங்களாறின்<br>உருவாகி நின்ற தழலோன் | 4. 14. 3  |

### Equality as a Religious Principle

The Saiva saints advocated the equality of man as the fundamental principle of religious life. Saint appar has emphasised the fact that God would protect those who worshipped him whole heartedly, without any distinction of caste, colour or creed.<sup>1</sup> He has further said that the God would be in the hearts of the true devotees in the form they worshipped and would help them.<sup>2</sup> He has said that even a man of low birth could attain salvation if he has got the knowledge of perfection.<sup>3</sup> Saint Sambandar has expatiated upon the protection given by God to all human beings irrespective of caste.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sambandar has also stressed the same point that God has no difference in this world and he would be ready to help all the people who worship him with no distinction.<sup>5</sup> Thus the three Saiva saints laid much emphasis upon the oneness of humanity.

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1. ஆரேனும் அடியார்கட் கணியான் தன்னை 6. 1. 8
  2. ஆரொருவர் உள்குவார் உள்ளத்துள்ளே  
அவ்வுருவாய் நிற்கின்ற அருளும் தோன்றும் 6. 18. 11
  3. கற்றூர்கள் உற்றோரும் காதலானை 6. 84. 8
  4. எங்கேனும் யாதாகிப் பிறந்திடினும் தன்னடியார்க்  
கிங்கே என்றருள் செய்யும் எம் பெருமான் 2. 40. 6
  5. எல்லார்க்கும் இல்லை என்னாது அருள் செய்வார் 7. 53. 4

### Method of worship

In the Saiva worship we note image worship (uruvam), non-image worship (aruvam) and symbolical worship (aruvuruvam). But in other religions we find either of the first two forms being adopted. But the symbolical worship (aruvuruvam) is present only in Saiva religion. This refers to the worship of Sivalinkam. Saint Appar in his hymns at Tiruppūvaṇam has referred to the image worship and has explained the charming image of Siva.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sambandar and Sundarar also have referred to the image worship.<sup>2</sup>

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1. வடியேறு திரிகுலம் தோன்றும் தோன்றும்  
 வளர்சடைமேல் இளமதியம் தோன்றும் தோன்றும்  
 கடியேறு கமழ்கொன்றை கண்ணி தோன்றும்  
 காதில்வெண் குழைத்தோடு கலந்து தோன்றும்  
 இடியேறு களிற்றுரிவை போர்வை தோன்றும்  
 எழில்திகழும் திருமுடியும் இலங்கித் தோன்றும்  
 பொடியேறு திருமேனி பொலிந்து தோன்றும்  
 பொழில் திகழும் பூவணத்தெம் புனிதனார்க்கே 6. 18. 1
2. i காதிலங்கிய குழையன் இழைசேர் திருமார்பன்  
 ஓர்பாகம்  
 மாதிலங்கிய மேனியினர் 1. 2. 2
- ii தம்மாணை அறியாத சாதியா ருளரே  
 சடைமேற்கொள் பிறையாணை விடைமேற்கொள் விகிர்  
 தன்  
 கைமாவின் உரியாணை கரிகாட்டில் ஆடல் உடையாணை  
 விடையாணைக் கறைகொள் கண்டத்து  
 எம்மான் 7. 28.1

Idol worship was in existence and that too in every house in the middle ages.<sup>1</sup> Most of the Tevaram hymns are dealing with the image worship. But Saint appar in his hymns at Kaccimayāam (Kāñci) has mentioned Aruva worship and declared that Lord Siva transcends all and is above all and has no shape, form or colour.<sup>2</sup> In his patikam called Linkapurāṇam he has referred to the symbolic worship.<sup>3</sup> Thus the saints advocated all the three forms of worship and all methods lay emphasis on one important factor namely sincere devotion to the supreme being.

### Worship of Ganapati and Muruga

In Tamilnadu the worship of Muruga was prevailing from the very early days. But the worship of Vinayaka began only from the time

1. History of Mediaeval India, p. 434.

2. மைப்படிந்த கண்ணாரும் தானும் கச்சி  
மயானத்தான் வார்சடையான் என்ன னல்லான்  
ஒப்புடைய னல்லன் ஒருவனல்லன்  
ஒரு னல்லன் ஒருவம வில்லி  
அப்படியும் அந்நிறமும் அவ்வண்ணமும்  
அவனருளே கண்ணாகக் காணினல்லால்  
இப்படியன் இந்நிறத்தன் இவ்வண்ணத்தன்  
இவன் இறைவன் என்றெழுதிக் காட்டொணாதே 6. 97. 10

3. இங்குற்றேனேன் நிலிங்கத்தே தோன்றினான்  
பொங்கு செஞ்சடைப் புண்ணிய மூர்த்தியே 5. 99. 11

of the Tamil saints. The worship of Siva and Skanda (Muruga) among the Tamilians was in vogue even before the advent of Aryans in South India and this has been well explained by many of the leading historians of South India.<sup>1</sup> Tirumuru-kāṛruppatai and some songs in Paripāṭal of the Sangam Age exclusively deal with the description of the worship of Muruga. But the earliest Literary reference to Vinayaka is to be found only in Tevaram hymn of Saint Sambandar as the first son of Lord Siva and Parvati. Gaṇapati is worshipped as the son of Lord. Siva with elephant face by the Saivaities and his parentage has been described by Saint Sambandar.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sundarar has said that Gaṇapati has got a large stomach.<sup>3</sup> Worship of Gaṇapati was not familiar to South India in the pre-Tevaram age. In the Karnool plate of Vikramatitya, references have been made to the destruction of numerous temples by the commander Ciruttontar<sup>4</sup> and the Pallava king Narasimha, and the image of God

1. Ancient Dravidians, p. 53

2. பிடியதனுரு உமைகொள மிகுகரியது  
வடிகொடு தனதடி வமிபடு மவரிடர்  
கடிகண்பதி வர அருளினை

1. 124. 5

3. கணபதியேல் வயிறுதாரி

7. 5. 2

4. Studies in Pallavas (Father Heras) p. 37.

Ganapati might have been brought from one of the destroyed temples by the Saiva devotee Ciṛuttontar. In Tamilnadu there is a song even today the first line of which being 'Vatapi Ganapatim Baje' which is popular among the musicians, which refers to Ganapati from Vātāpi. These evidences clearly prove that Vinayaka or Ganapati worship was popularised in the seventh century after the battle of Vātāpi.

In the seventh century when Buddhism began to decline, huge images of Buddha were removed from the shade of the Boti trees and in their places the image of Ganapati might have been placed. This was welcome by the common people who found new images for worship in the place of the old ones under the same old Boti trees. The Boti trees is called Arasamaram in Tamil and there are popular tales refering to Arasamarattuppillaiyār or Vinayaka under the Boti tree. This also explained the fact under discussion.

In Tevaram numerous references have been made to God Muruga. Muruku means beauty and therefore it is quite appropriate that Muruga is recognised by the Tamilians as the God of Kuruñci or the mountain regions which is the place of best natural scenarios. In Tamilnadu of

today the famous temples of God Muruka are generally situated in hilly places e.g. Tiruttani, Palani etc. The worship of Muruka was extended upto the Vintiya mountains as pointed out by Mr. K. P. Jayaswal.<sup>1</sup> So Muruka or Kartikeya is well known God among the Tamilians and even the three saints have referred to his worship.

In the hymns. the saints made more references to Muruka than Gaṇapati. When they mentioned Gaṇapati they simply stated that he is the son of God Siva with his elephant face. Muruka also is designated as the son of Lord Siva.<sup>2</sup> But some more particulars are given about Him. Saint Appar has explained Muruka's marriage with Valli, the hunter girl.<sup>3</sup> They have mentioned about his peacock and 'cock flag'<sup>4</sup> about his twelve eyes.<sup>5</sup> six faces<sup>6</sup> and about his kaṭampa garlands.<sup>7</sup> and narrated that Muruka has suppressed Cūrapāma.<sup>8</sup>

1. Imperial History of India, p. 30

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|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2. சேந்தனை மகனாகக் கொண்டார்         | 4. 43. 8  |
| 3. குறவிதோள் மணந்த செல்வக் குமரவேள் | 4. 60. 3  |
| 4. i கோழிக் கொடியோன்                | 6. 89 2   |
| ii மயிலூர்தி முருகவேள்              | 5. 16 7   |
| 5. பன்னிரண்டு கண்ணுடைய பிள்ளை       | 5. 18. 4  |
| 6. ஆறு கொலாம் அவர்தம் மகனார்முகம்   | 4. 18 6   |
| 7. கடம்பமர் காளை                    | 4. 75. 4  |
| 8. சூரபன்மாவைத் தடிந்தவேற்குமரன்    | 5. 64. 10 |

Saint Sambandar has explained that the ladies in the hilly regions used to gather and sing songs in praise of Muruka.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sundarar has said that Muruka is young.<sup>2</sup> Thus the worship of Muruka is described in great detail than the worship of Vinayaka.

### Tree Worship

Tree worship is common in all the religions.<sup>3</sup> and more so in Saivism. This can be traced upto the early Sangam age when banian and other trees were worshipped by the people.<sup>4</sup> In many of the European countries also such tree worship prevailed.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the construction of the temples Gods used to be worshipped under the trees and in the fields. The images of Gods being under the trees and in the fields made it possible for all classes of people to worship God. The worship of Kēārēsvarar, the God of fields, is very common to Tamilians. Kētāraṇi in Sanskrit means the paddy fields and the worship of the

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1. கருகு குழல் மடவர்கூடி குறிஞ்சியதுபாடி  
முருகனது பெருமைபகர் முதுகுன்று 1. 12. 10
  2. அங்கை வேலான் குமரன் பிள்ளை 7. 5. 2
  3. The origin of Religion ch. VI
  4. Mullaikkali, 1
  5. Introduction to the History of Religion, p. 210



God in such paddy fields came to be designated as Kētāresvaraviratam. This is observed by the people in the month of Aippaci. Such worship of nature was predominant among the Tamilians in the seventh century. In most of the Saiva temples even today there is Talavirutcham -a sacred tree. Some of the places of much religious importance like Chidambaram, Madurai are called after the names of Talavirutcham such as Tillaivaṇam and Kaṭampavaṇam. The name Pātirippuliyūr is given after the pātiri tree. Saint Sundarar took his oath before wedding Caṅkili, only under the sacred tree Makiḷ at Tiruvorriyūr. He himself explained how he had to take his oath at that particular tree.<sup>1</sup> Cekkilar explained that the particular tree Makiḷ is ever green.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sambandar when he has mentioned the place Kurṛālam in Tirunelvēli district, not by any other name but by the name of the sacred Talavirutcham Kurumpala itself.<sup>3</sup> These facts clearly point out how the Tamilians respected the

1. பொண்ணவிலும் கொன்றையினாய் போய் மகிழ்க் கீழ் இரு  
என்று

சொன்ன எனைக் காணாமே சூறாவு மகிழ்க்கீழே  
என்னவல்ல பெருமானே

7. 89. 9

2. மூவாத திரு மகிழ் Periya. Eyar

260

3. Pathikam-71

sacred tree and how the tree worship prevailed in the seventh century.

### Devotional Duties or Some Religious Custom

During the time of the Tevaram saints priest hood was not in vogue. The people generally used to congregate in the temples, pour water on the linkam and decorate the same with flowers. Even today this kind of worship prevails in Benares (Kāci) and in some of the north Indian temples, and the devotees are not precluded from going near and touching the image of God. Saint Appar in his hymns at Tiruinnampar has referred that the devotees used to go near the shrine and worship Him with flowers and love in heart.<sup>1</sup> He has said that a devotee should take a bath early in the morning, go to the temple with flowers, adorn the lingam with the same, light the lamp and worship God with all affection and sincerity and that God would show His choicest blessings on such devotees.<sup>2</sup> In his hymns at Tiruvārūr, Saint

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1. தொழுது தூமலர் தூவித் துதித்து நின்று  
அழுது காழற் றரற்றுகின்றார் 5. 21, 8
  2. பெரும்புனல் காலமூழ்கிப் பித்தர்க்குப் பத்தராகி  
அரும்பொடு மலர்கள் கொண்டாங் கார்வத்தை உள்ளே  
வைத்து வைத்து  
விரும்புநல் விளக்குத் தூபம் விதியினால் இடவல்லார்க்குக்  
கரும்பினில் கட்டி போல்வார் 4. 31, 4

Appar has centred his mind upon the Kirya Marka and he wanted the mind to follow that path. He has enumerated the various kinds of services to be performed in the temple such as sweeping the temple, collecting the flowers etc.,<sup>1</sup> He himself used to remove the grass in the inner pathways of the temple by making use of his pick axe. Saint Sambandar in his hymns at Tiruvēlimilalai has pointed out that the archanas in the temples were performed by the learned people pure in heart.<sup>2</sup> According to Cēkkiḷār the term archana refers to the songs of the devotees. Lord Siva once explained in detail to Saint Sundarar the story of his previous birth and advised him to sing songs in Tamil, such songs being the archanas<sup>3</sup> The method of worship as advocated by Saint Appar was very simple. The worship of God with

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1. நிலைபேறுமா நெண்ணுயேல் நெஞ்சே நீவா  
நித்தலும் என் பிரானுடைய கோயில் புக்குப்  
புலர்வதன்முன் அலகிட்டு மெழுக்குமிட்டுப்  
பூமாதை புனைந்தேத்திப் புகழ்ந்து பாடி. 6. 31. 3
  2. செந்தமிழர் தெய்வமறை நாவர் செழுநற் கலைதெரிந்த  
அவரோடு  
அந்தமில் குணத்தவர்கள் அர்ச்சனைகள் செய்ய அமர்கின்ற  
அரனூர் 3: 80. 4
  3. அர்ச்சனை பாட்டே யாகும் ஆதலால் மண்மேல் நம்மைச்  
சொற்றமிழ் பாடுகென்றார் தூமறை பாடும் வாயார்  
Periya-Tatu . 70

ordinary green leaves bestowed with affection and devotion would be accepted by God and the devotee would receive God's blessings.<sup>1</sup> However apart from this simple method of worship there were great festivals like Atiraiviḷā, Oṇaviḷā, Kartikaiviḷā and Uttaraviḷā.<sup>2</sup> Burning of the camphor was unknown to the Tamilians in the seventh century and the Tamil saints have not made any reference to it. Appar in one of his hymns has referred to all the requirements for offering worship to God, i.e. water, flowers, tupam and sweet Tamil songs,<sup>3</sup> but has not made reference to the use of camphor.

The Tamil saints have advocated purity and simplicity of mind. One of the sixty three Nayanars by name Pūcalār attained salvation by pure meditation and not by any outward form of worship.<sup>4</sup> Saint Appar has emphasised on Mana-

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| 1. எம் போலிகள் பறித்திட்ட இலையும் முகையுமெல்லாம்<br>அம்போதெனக் கொள்ளும் ஐயன் | 4. 92. 10             |
| 2. i அத்தன் ஆநர் ஆதிரைநாள்<br>ஆதிரைநாள்                                      | 4. 21. 1.<br>2. 47. 4 |
| ii ஐப்பசி ஒண விழாவும்  | 2. 47. 2              |
| iii கார்த்திகை நாள் விளக்கீடு  | 2. 47. 3              |
| iv பங்குனி உத்தரநாள்   | 2. 47. 7              |
| 3. ஜலம் பூவொடு தூபமறந் தறியேன்<br>தமிழாடிசை பாடல்மறந் தறியேன்                | 4. 1. 6               |
| 4. Periya Pusa. 3 to 8   |                       |

sapuja i.e., silently praying to God with in the heart itself. He has compared the human body to the temple, conscience to the devotee, purity of heart to truth, good thought to the lingam, love to milk and curd, patience to water.<sup>5</sup> Similarly in many of the Tevaram hymns the worship of God within the heart has been advocated. This according to Saint Appar would qualify every individual for attaining salvation and not the outward semblance of worship.

### The Emblem of Saivism

In Tevaram hymns Namasivāya mantram has found a prominent place. All the three saints have expounded the greatness of the mantram each in a patikam. Saint Sambandar has laid stress on the utterance of this mantram always while asleep or awake.<sup>1</sup> Saint Appar never feared any amount of sufferings and ordeals because of his strong

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1. காயமே கோயிலாகக் கடிமனம் அடிமையாக  
வாய்மையே தூய்மையாக மனமணி இலிங்கமாக  
நேயமே நெய்யும் பாலா நிறையநீர் அமைய ஆட்டிப்  
பூசனை ஈசனார்க்குப் போற்றிவிக் காட்டி னேமே. 4. 74. 4
  2. துஞ்சலும் துஞ்சலிலாத போழ்தினும்  
நெஞ்சகம் நினைந்து நினைமின் நாடொறும்  
வஞ்சகமற்று அடிவாழ்த்த வந்தகூற்  
றஞ்ச வுதைத்தன அஞ்செழுத்துமே 3. 22.

faith in this mantram. When he was tied to a stone and thrown into the sea he was saved by the divine power of this mantram.<sup>1</sup> In the same hymn he had said that this Mantram would elevate an individual of a low caste to a higher position.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sundarar has pointed out how his tongue would never fail to utter the Mantram of Namasivayam.<sup>3</sup>

The three saints not only chanted the sacred Mantram, but also used the sacred ashes called Tirunīru. Saint Appar who was suffering from Cūlai was cured by the sacred ashes given by his sister Tilakavati at Tiruvatikai.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sambandar cured the disease of the Pandiya king Neṭumāraṅṅa by using the sacred ashes and advocated the use

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1. கற்றுணைப் பூட்டியோர் கடலில் பாய்ச்சினும்  
நற்றுணை யாவது நமச்சிவாயவே 4. 11. 1
  2. குலமிலராகிலும் குலத்துக் கேற்பதோர்  
நலமிக்க கொடுப்பது நமச்சிவாயவே 4. 11. 6
  3. நற்றவா உனை நான் மறக்கினும்  
சொல்லுநா நமச்சிவாயவே 7. 48. 1
  4. திருவாளன் திருநீறு திலகவதியா ரளிப்பப்  
பெருவாழ்வு வந்ததெனப் பெருந்தகையார் பணிந்தேற்றங்  
குருவார வணிந்து தமக்குற்றவிடத் துய்யுநெறி  
தருவாராய்த் தம்முன்பு வந்தார்பின் தாம்வந்தார்

of the same in times of difficulties and calamities.<sup>1</sup>  
The significance of the sacred ashes has been explained by Saint Sundarar also.<sup>2</sup>

### The Siddhantha Philosophy

The three Saiva Tamil saints have spoken of the Trinity of the Saivasiddhanta philosophy - God, soul and the world being eternal. The soul while leaving the world would by the grace of God attain ever lasting bliss. This philosophical idea has been clearly explained and expounded by Saint Appar in his hymns and in one of them he has differentiated between God and soul, and

1. i மந்திரமாவது நீறு வாணவர் மேலது நீறு  
சுந்தரமாவது நீறு துதிக்கப்படுவது நீறு  
தந்திரமாவது நீறு சமயதிலுள்ளது நீறு  
செந்துவர் வாயுமை பங்கன் திருஆலவாயான் திருநீறே  
2. 66. 1

காண இனியதுநீறு கவினைத் தருவது நீறு  
பேணி அணிபவர்க் கெல்லாம் பெருமை தருவது நீறு  
மாணந் தகைவதுநீறு மதியைத் தருவது நீறு  
சேணந் தருவது நீறு திரு ஆலவாயன் திருநீறே 2. 66. 4

iii ஆற்றலடல் விடையேறும் ஆலவாயின் திருநீற்றைப்  
போற்றிப்புகலி நிலாவும் பூசுரன் ஞானசம்பந்தன்  
தேற்றத் தென்னன் உடலுற்ற தீப்பினியாயின தீரச்  
சாற்றிய பாடல்கள் பத்தும் வல்லவர் நல்லவர்தாமே  
2. 66. 11

2. நீறு தாங்கிய திரு நுதலானே

7. 64. 1

expressed his eagerness to attain godhood.<sup>1</sup> All the saints desired that the soul (pasu) by means of devotion and attachment to God (pati) to leave the world (pāsam) and to attain salvation.<sup>2</sup>

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1. நற்பதத்தார் நற்பதமே ஞானமூர்த்தி  
 நலஞ்சுடரே நால் வேதத்தப்பால் நின்ற  
 சொற்பதத்தார் சொற்பதமும் கடந்து நின்ற  
 சொலற்கரிய சூழலாய் இதுவுன் தன்மை  
 நிற்பதொத்து நிலையினே நெஞ்சந் தன்னுள்  
 நிலாவாத புலாலுடம்பே புகுந்துநின்ற  
 கற்பகமே யான் உன்னை விடுவேனல்லேன்  
 கனகமாமணி நிறத்தெங் கடவுளானே 6. 95. 4
2. பழக நான் அடிமை செய்வேன்  
 பசுபதி பாவநாசா 4. 51. 10



## VIII

### Scientific ideas

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The modern age can be regarded and aptly characterised as a scientific age in view of the varied and vast scientific developments that have taken place. But even in the seventh century there prevailed numerous scientific ideas. Some of the ideas have been referred to in Tevaram by the Tamil saints. One such idea refers to the composition of the elements namely earth, water, fire, air and ether. Saint Appar has explained that the earth, contains all the five elements.<sup>1</sup> Today the science has well explained about this fact. According to Nebular theory, the earth is included in the solar system which forms a single unit. The innermost part of the earth called the Barysphere or the internal core contains hard

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1. மின்னுருவை விண்ணத்தில் ஒன்றாய் மிக்கு  
வீசங்கால் தன்னகத்தில் இரண்டாய்ச் செந்தீத்  
தன்னுருவின் மூன்றாய்த் தாழ்புனலின் நான்காய்த்  
தரணிதலத் தஞ்சாகி

substance such as rocks and other materials with high temperature. The earth itself is said to have been a ball of fire in the first stage, later the surface cooled down to liquid and then to solid which is the final stage. Next to the internal core is the lithosphere which is also very hot. The next part or the surface is called hydrosphere in which water exists. The next sphere around the surface is called atmosphere and in that the air spreads. Either prevails in the atmosphere. It can be assumed that either to be an all pervading element. Thus the modern scientist affirm the theory of Saint Appar that the earth contains five elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether.<sup>1</sup>

Saint Appar has stated in his hymns that the world is round.<sup>2</sup> Another Saiva saint Mānikka-vācakar stated this in his Tiruvācakam<sup>3</sup> and he has further stated that there are numerous worlds. These have been known to the modern scientists only from the seventeenth century.

1. Principles of General Geography by H.L. Kaji, pp. 2 - 4.

2. பாராழி வட்டத்தார் 6. 18. 6

3. அண்டப் பகுதியின் உண்டைப் பிறக்கம்  
அளப்பருந் தன்மை வளப்பருங் காட்சி Tiruvacakam.  
Tiru antappakuti

The people of the seventh century were aware of the fact that vapour has its shadow. Saint Appar in his hymns on Kayilāyam has explained this fact and said that vapour is one of the manifestations of God.<sup>1</sup> Generally it is well known that lightning precedes thunder and Saint Appar well explained this in his hymns at Tirvē-kampam (Kāñci).<sup>2</sup> A Tamil poet Villiputtūrār of later date has also emphasised the fact that no thunder could be heard without lightning.<sup>3</sup>

The various stages and growth of a child in the mother's womb namely fertilization, the formation of the zygote, the segmentation and the development of the sygote, the formation of the brain and the spinal cord with the originating nerves<sup>4</sup> and finally the formation of the bones have been clearly referred to by Saint Appar in one

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1. நீராவியான நிழலே போற்றி 6. 55. 5
  2. மின்னி இடித்தவன் காண் 6. 64. 8
  3. மின்னாமல் இடித்ததென Paaratam 13-ம் நாள் போர் 143.
  - 4: The term karunarampu mentioned in this hymn by Saint Appar does not refer to any black nerves as mentioned by some, but it stands for the originating nerves attached to the spinal chord. (கரு - mould, foundation - Lex. Vol. ii)

of his hymns,<sup>1</sup> which is quite in accordance with the facts revealed by the modern, scientific study<sup>2</sup> This illustrates the extent to which physiology had been developed as a science in the seventh century.

In modern days there are conductors to protect buildings from lightning. Saint Sambandar has discribed about a Cūlam in the top of the palace of Ravana, in the city of Lanka.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Chengalvaraya Pillai in his Tevara Olinerikkatturaikal considers this cūlam as a conductor to protect the palace of Ravana against thunder and lightning.<sup>4</sup> This may be true because in Kambaramayanam there are references about the palace of Ravana being immune from all thunder and lightning.

Saint Appar characterised wood as candecent<sup>5</sup> and this has been proved by the scientist only in the last century. He in his hymns at Tiruvitai-marutūr has explained some aspects of physical

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1. கருவாகிக் குழம்பிருந்து கலித்து மூளை  
கருநரம்பும் வெள்ளெலும்பும் சேர்ந்து ஒன்றாகி  
உருவாகிப் புறப்பட்டு 6. 25. 2
  2. The human body, Chapt. VII
  3. பரந்திலங்கையிற் சூலம தென்பதே 3. 114. 2
  4. Tevara olinerikkatturai, p. 18
  5. விறகில் தீயினன் 5. 90. 10

science.<sup>1</sup> Astronomy, astrology and medical science were also developed upto a certian extent. A Chinese traveller by name Ma-Twan-hin who travelled India in the beginning of the seventh century has testified to the advanced study of astronomy and astrology in Tamilnadu.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sundarar and Sambandar have referred to the evil efforts of Saturn. The Saturn generally moves from one place to another and would do more harm if he should join the star called Makam.<sup>3</sup> Saint Sambandar in his hymns at Baramapuram explained how saturn was the cause of all evils in the world, e.g., famine etc.<sup>4</sup> Even in modern days the astrologers do really stress on this particular aspect of the character and influence of Saturn.

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1. பிரியாத குணம் உயிர்கட் கஞ்சோ டஞ்சாய்ப்  
பிரிவுடைய குணம் பேசிற்பத் தோடொன்றாய்  
விரியாத குணமொருகால் நான்கே என்பர்  
விரிவிலா குண நாட்டத் தாறே என்பர்  
தெரிவாய குணமஞ்சும் சமிதை அஞ்சும்  
பதமஞ்சும் கதியஞ்சும் செப்பினரும்  
எரியாய் தாமரைமேல் இயங்கினரும்  
இடைமருது மேவிய ஈசனாரே! 6. 16. 7
  2. Foreign Notices of South India, p. 93
  3. Saint Sundarar criticised Lord Siva for not helping him to get back his eye-sight and compared him with Saturn in Makam. 7. 54. 9
  4. விலங்கலமர் புயன்மறந்து மின்சனிபுக்கு  
உன் சலிக்கும் காலம் தானும் 1. 129. 3

Saint Appar has described in detail about the medical science in the seventh century. He has said that there were ninety eight diseases and many human beings became victims to such diseases.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sambandar in his hymns at Kōvalūrvīraṭṭam has enumerated some of the diseases prevalent in his time.<sup>2</sup> Such diseases were cured more by sacred ashes and by the chanting of Mantrams than by using medicine. Saint Appar in his hymns at Pullirukkuvēḷūr has described God as the only power who can cure many incurable diseases.<sup>3</sup> He himself had his personal experience in curing of his stomach pain by his sister by applying only the sacred ashes. Saint Sundarar has prayed for a medicine to cure his blindness.<sup>4</sup>

Thus some of the achievements of Science in the modern age could be traced back to the

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1. நாளும் நம்முடைநாட்களறிந்திலோம்  
ஆளும் நோய்களோ ரைம்பதோ றெட்டும்  
ஏழைமைப் பட்டிருந்து நீர்நையாதே 5. 57. 3
  2. கண்கொள் இருமல் சூலைநோய் கம்பதாளி குன்மமும்  
இனைய பலவும் மூப்பிடுநோடு எய்திவந்து நலியாமுன் 2. 100. 4
  3. மந்திரமும் தந்திரமும் மருந்துமாகித்  
தீரநோய் தீர்த்தருள வல்லான் தன்னை 6. 54. 8
  4. ஒழுக்க எண்கணுக்கு ஒரு மருந்துரையாய்  
ஒற்றியூரெனும் ஊருறைவானே 7. 54. 1

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seventh century. But in the seventh century the people were more religious minded, rather than scientific. Hence they believed in the intervention of God to cure all diseases and promote every aspect of human welfare.

## IX

### High ideals and Principles of Life

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The highest ideal of life in Tamilnadu was perfect happiness to all. Love and toleration were the basis of social life. Saint Tāyūmanavar of a later age has said that the highest service was to work for the achievement of happiness for all in the world.<sup>1</sup> Tiruvalḷuvar in his Kuṛaḷ has pointed out that the learned scholars want to see that what is enjoyed by them is enjoyed by all.<sup>2</sup> The three Tevaram saints expounded such a high philosophical outlook in life and desired the happiness of all. They put into practice all their philosophic ideals.

Although these saints outwardly participated in the worldly life, they were inwardly devoted to

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1. எல்லோரும் இன்புற்றிருக்க நினைப்பதுவே  
ஆல்லாமல் வேறென்றறியேன் பராபரமே.

Tayumanavar பராபாக்கண்ணி 221

2. தாயின் புறுவ துலகின் புறக்கண்டு  
காமுறுவர் கற்றறிந் தார்

Kural 399



the service of God. Saint Sambandar has said that in the midst of many a distress he would continue to be a devotee of God Siva.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sundarar also has stated that he had no other help except that from Siva in all his distress and thus prayed to Him for the restoration of his eye sight.<sup>2</sup>

The Tamil saints led a fearless life without expecting favour from any body. This fact has been well explained by Saint Sundarar in his Vaṭatirumullaivāyil hymns. Therein he has stated that God Siva was all his fortune, treasure and wealth and therefore there was no need for him to respect anybody or to expect favour from others and that he would lead a bold and proud life.<sup>3</sup> Saint Appar never cared for the might of the monarch, who never felt proud to call himself the unredeemable slave of God

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1. இடரினும் தளரினும் எனதுறுநோய்  
தொடரினும் உன்கழல் தொழுதெழுவேன் 3. 4. 1
  2. வழக்கி வீழினும் திருப்பெயரல்லால்  
மற்றுநான் அறியேன் மறுமாற்றம் 7. 54. 1
  3. திருவும் மெய்ப்பொருளும் செல்வமும் எனக்குள்  
சீருடைக் கழல்களென் றெண்ணி  
ஒருவரை மதியா துறமைகள் செய்தும்  
ஊடியும் உறைப்பனாய்த் திரிவேன் 7, 69, 1

Siva.<sup>1</sup> He had no fear even when the huge elephant was let against him. In the face of such a danger he remained bold and calm and began to sing in praise of Lord Siva, and of his relationship with him.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sambandar has asserted that he was not afraid of the mean minded Jains, because he was in the hands of the Lord.<sup>3</sup> The saints pleaded to the people of Tamilnadu not to commit sin if they wanted to attain salvation.

The saints have explained many of the virtues and vices. They advised the people to be contented with what they get.<sup>4</sup> Wars and conflicts are mainly the results of the desire or avarice on the part of a country or of an individual. The

1. நாமார்க்குங் குடியல் லோம் நமனை அஞ்சோம்

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தாமார்க்குங் குடியல்லாத் தன்மையான

சங்கரன் நற்சங்க வெண் குழையோர் காதில்

கோமாற்கே நாமென்றும் மீளா ஆளா

சொய்மலர்ச் சேவடியிணையே குறுகினோமே 6. 98. 1

2. திண்ணன் கெடிலப்புனலும் உடையார் ஒருவர்தமர்நாம்

அஞ்சுவதியா தொன்றும் இல்லை அஞ்சவருவதும் இல்லை

4. 2. 1

3. ஈனர்கேட் கெளியேனலேன் திரு ஆலவாயரன் நிற்கவே

3. 39. 1

4. i வைத்தபொருள் நமக்கு ஆம் என்று சொல்லி மனத்

தடைத்துச்

சித்தம் ஒருக்கிச் சிவாய நம வென்றிருக்கின் 4. 94. 5

ii உள்ளதே அமையுமென்றிருந்தேன்

7. 14. 3

desire for acquiring more and more prompts people to praise others unduly and seek their favour. The real necessities of life are only two, i.e., food and clothing.<sup>1</sup> People should pray only to God to bless them with the bare necessities of life and should never flatter human beings and cringe for their favour.<sup>2</sup> Saint Appar in his Namasivayattirup-patikam had clearly shown that he approached none even in times difficulties but always prayed to God and uttered Namasivaya.<sup>3</sup>

In Tamilnadu there is a distinction between family life (illaram) and ascetic life (turavaram). The former refers to the life led in the midst of family and friends, and the latter to the life of solitude and penance. Even though there is a

உண்பது நாழி உடுப்பன இரண்டே Puram 189

உண்பது நாழி உடுப்பது நான்கு முழம் Nalvali 28

1. A Sangam poet Nakkirar as well as the famous poetess Avvaiyar have emphasised only upon food and clothing as the necessities of life.
2. தம்மையே புகழ்ந் திச்சை பேசினும் சார்வினும் தொண்டர் தருகிலாப்  
பொய்மையாளரைப் பாடாதே எந்தை புகலூர் பாடுமின் புலவீர்காள்  
இம்மையே தரும் சோறும் கூறையும் ஏத்தலாம் இடர்க்  
கெடலுமாம்  
அம்மையே சிவலோகமாள்வதற் கியாதும் ஐயுறவில்லையே  
7. 34

certain amount of sanctity in the latter kind of life, in the earlier ages, house hold life was the usual life led by the people and it was much respected. Tiruvalluvar has explained the true traits of family life as compared with the other.<sup>1</sup> The Tamil saints upheld the life of the house holder as against the ascetic life. Saint Sundarar lead a family life. Saint Sambandar attained salvation at the time of his marriage. Saint Sambandar has said that an individual could attain salvation even by leading a family life. He blamed his own mind for directing him always to lead an ascetic life, and consoled himself by realising that there would be happiness in both kinds of life.<sup>2</sup> Saint Sundarar in his hymns at Tirukkālumalam pointed out that some ascetics who were not true to their life wandered from place to place, calling it pilgrimage and blamed

1. அறன் எனப்பட்டதே இல்வாழ்க்கை அஃதும்

பிறன் பழிப்பதில்லாயின் நன்று

Kural 49

2. i துறவியார்க் கல்லது துன்பம் நீங்காதெனத் தூங்கினாயே

2. 79. 5

ii தந்தைதாய் தன்னுடன் தோன்றினாற்புத்திரர்

தாரமென்னும்

பந்தம் நீங்காதவர்க் குய்ந்துபோக் கில்லெனப் பற்றினாயே.

2. 79. 9

them for cleaning their bodies while nourishing all the wickdness within.<sup>1</sup> He advocated the inner purity and discouraged those who had only the outward forms and symbols of asceticism.<sup>2</sup> In short the saints wanted the people to get themselves free from all vices and at the same time to make every effort to serve humanity.

These saints have regarded the birth of man as a glorious exhorted stage in the evolution of a soul and every human being to make the best use of it.<sup>3</sup> Saint Appar commanded every part of the body to serve God the only saviour of the soul.<sup>4</sup> In explaining the ideals of life the saints have advocated quality of all human beings and complete extinction of all distinction including untouchablilty and declared that god is in the

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1. மறையிடைத் துணிந்தவர் மனையிடை இருப்ப  
வஞ்சனை செய்தவர் பொய்கையு மாயத்  
துறையுறக் குளித்துளதாக வைத்துய்த்த  
உண்மையெனுந் தகவின்மையை ஒரேன் 7. 58. 9
  2. தன்னில் ஆசறு சித்தமும் இன்றித்தவமுயன்று அவமாயின  
பேச  
பின்னலார் சடைக்கட்டி என்பணிந்தால் பெரிதுநீத்துவ  
தரிது 7. 64.7
  3. வாய்த்தது நந்தமக்கு ஈதோர்பிறவி மதித்திடுமின் 4. 81. 5
  4. திரு அங்கமாலை 4. 9

hearts of those who do not observe any distinction of caste.<sup>1</sup> Saint Ramalinkar of the last century has explained the same ideal when he said that the soul is the innershrine of God, the body being the temple.<sup>2</sup>

In the seventh century Saivaites believed in the existence of one God only, that God being Lord Siva. Saint Appar also has expressed that the worship of Siva in the temples expanded itself into the sublime vision of seeing God in every thing in the universe, without which the religious rites such as bathing in the waters of Ganges and Kumari are no use.<sup>3</sup> Besides expressing this he also stands as a monumental example for such a noble life as evidenced by this hymns a Tiruvaiyāru; in this hymn he has said that he had

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1. இவர் தேவர் அவர் தேவர் என்று சொல்லி  
இரண்டாட்டா தொழிந்தீசன் திறமே பேணிக்  
கவராதே தொழுமடியார் நெஞ்சினுள்ளே  
கண்ணப்பூர் நடுதறியைக் காணலாமே 6. 61. 3
  2. எவ்வுயிரும் பராபரன் சன்னிதியதாகும்  
இலங்கும் உடல் அனைத்தும் ஈசனகோயின் Arutpa
  3. கங்கையாடி,லென் காவிரியாடி,லென்  
கொங்குநீர்க் குமரித்துறை யாடி,லென்  
ஓங்கு மா கடல் ஓதநீ ராடி,லென்  
எங்கும் ஈசன் எனாதவர்க் கில்லையே 5. 99. 2

the opportunity of seeing God Siva in the form of various animals and birds.<sup>1</sup>

The three Tamil saints condemned the system of worship by mere outward forms without real love in heart. They wanted people not to resort to untruthful and dubious methods to achieve material success. Though ordinary people are unaware of the wickedness of such pretending individuals, God will detect and punish them suitably. Saint Appar advised the people to worship Lord Siva with a pure heart<sup>2</sup> and not to be wicked and untruthful.<sup>3</sup> He further said that God would not help those who are insincere though they chant the Pañchakshara - the sacred mantram of Siva.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sundarar in his hymns at Tirukalī-

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1. i யாதுஞ் சவடு படாமல் ஐயாறடைகின்றபோது  
காதன் மடப்பிடியோடுங் களிறுவருவன் கண்டேன்  
கண்டேன் அவர் திருப்பாதங் கண்டறியாதனகண்டேன்  
4. 3. 1
  - ii. கோழி பெடையொடுங் கூடிக் குளிர்ந்துவருவன்  
கண்டேன். 4. 3. 2
  - iii வரிக்குயில் பேடையொடாடி வைகுவருவன் கண்டேன்.  
4. 3. 3
  - iv இளமண நாகுதழுவி ஏறுவருவன் கண்டேன் 4. 3. 11
  2. வஞ்சமின்றி வணங்குமின் வைகலும் 5. 31. 5
  3. பொய்யனைத்தையும் விட்டவர் புந்தியுள், மெய்யனை 5. 48. 9
  4. வஞ்சனையால் அஞ்செழுத்தும் வழுத்துவார்க்குச் சேயானை  
6. 50. 4

ppālai praised God as the divine light ever shining in the heart of the virtuous people.<sup>1</sup> Saint Appar has explained the futility of the recital of vedas by people who are devoid of a good and pure heart.<sup>2</sup> Thus the Siva saints advocated faith in God and goodness of heart as the essentials for the attainment of salvation.

The use of harsh and virulent language in abusing others, was condemned by Tiruvalluvar and others from ethical point of view and by these Saivaite saints from religious point of view. Saint Appar in his hymns at Ramēsvarm wanted the people to avoid speaking harsh words.<sup>3</sup> He has further said that any individual disirous of reaching the kingdom of God should not resort to the use of harsh words.<sup>4</sup> Saint Sambandar went to the extent of saying that the Yemadhuthas

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|---|----------|
| 1. பொய்யா நாவதனார் புகழ்வார்கள் மனத்துள்ளே<br>மெய்யே நின்றெரியும் விளக்கொத்த தேவர் பிரான்   | 7. 23. 9 |
| 2. குறிகளும் அடையாளமும் கோயிலும்<br>நெறிகளும் அவர் நின்ற தோர் நீர்மையும்<br>அறியா ஆயிரம் ஆரணம் ஒதிலும்<br>பொறியிலீர் மனம் என்கொல் புகாததே | 5. 90. 6 |
| 3. வாக்கினால் இன்புரைத் துவாழ்கிவார்  | 4. 61. 7 |
| 4. வெஞ்சொலின்றி விவகுமின் வீடுற   | 5. 31. 5 |



would be afraid of approaching those who use kind words.<sup>1</sup>

The Saints condemned the habit of speaking ill of others in their absence. When one does not agree with an individual one should always frankly criticise him in person and be done with it. Saint Appar has laid down this principle in a song which is autobiographic in substance.<sup>2</sup> In various hymns he also criticised idleness.<sup>3</sup>

The Saivaites believe in Karma theory according to which virtue breeds happiness and vice distress in the succeeding birth. Saint Sundarar went a step further and declared that evil doers are punished even in the same birth.<sup>4</sup> Saint Appar advised the people not to do harm and sow seeds for the sufferings of the next birth.

Most important of all, the saints have expatiated upon the importance of benevolence in life.

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1. இயமன் தூதரும் அஞ்சுவர் இன்சொலார்  
நயம் வந்தோத வல்லார் தமை நண்ணினால் 3. 49. 4
  2. பேச்சொடுபேச்சுக்கெல்லாம் பிறர்தமைபுறமே பேசிக்  
கூச்சிலேன் ஆதலாலே கொடுமைகள் விடுமாறேரேன் 4. 78. 6
  3. i பொய்யர் காலங்கள் போக்கிடுவார்களே! 5. 35. 2  
ii பொழுது போக்கிப் புறக்கணிப்பாரையும்  
எழுதும் கீழ்க் கணக்கு இன்னம்பர் ஈசனே 5. 21. 8
  4. செற்றொருவரைச் செய்த தீமைகள் இம்மையேவரும்  
திண்ணமே 7. 35. 4

Life is short and one should do as many charitable deeds as possible during the short span of existence. This advice has been repeatedly given by Saint Appar.<sup>1</sup> Saint Sambandar has also explained the importance of such a life to attain salvation.<sup>2</sup> Saint Appar emphatically asserted that God would dispise those who spend their life in vain without doing a single charitable deed. Thus one's religious life is closely associated with one's benevolent acts and religion serves not only in the happiness of individuals but also in that of the society.

The principles of life explained above are very essential for the achievement of hapiness in general. The Tamil saints have advocated these as the basis of a true religious life. These in life will to a great extent contribute towards the happiness and contentment of mankind. The simple and devotional lives of the Tamil saints as well as their religious teachings contained in their hymns illustrate the value of these high ideals and principles.

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1. நிலலா வாழ்வு நிலைபெறுமென் றெண்ணிப்  
பொல்லாவாறு செயப்புரியாது நீர் 5. 69. 7
  2. இன்று நன்று நானைநன்றென்று நின்ற இச்சையால்  
பொன்றுகின்ற வாழ்க்கையைப் போகவிட்டுப் போதுமின்  
2: 99. 1
  3. 6. 66. 6

## X

### Conclusion

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Thanks to these Tevaram hymns which have survived a long period of more than a thousand years, many important evidences are available to construct the history of the land during the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries. Though the historical references in these religious works are very few, they are interesting and also valuable to the student of South Indian History. To study the social history of those days there are no definite historical records or inscriptions. Though mainly religious in their theme, the Tevaram hymns, indeed, contain references which to an appreciable extent form the skeleton of the history of those centuries.

The hymnal references reveal the fact that the Pallava, Pandiya, Cōḷa and Cēra kings encouraged the renaissance of Saivism by building temples and also by becoming Saivaite devotees themselves. Generally the three great Tamil kings

maintained unity and cordial relationship among themselves and there was peace and prosperity in the country. Though there were no internal conflicts in the country the kings had armed forces which were utilised for waging wars against the North Indian kings and the petty rebellious chieftains in the boundaries. The capitals and other cities were well known for architecture, fortifications and other developments essential for the civilized life of the citizens. Sea-ports had their importance as the centres of commerce and trade. Even small villages acquired some fame through the temples which attracted the Saiva devotees from various parts of the country. The names of some towns and villages indicate the nature of the places in which they were situated, the history of their own growth and development and also other details such as the special local produce and the sacred trees under which the image of God was originally enshrined.

There are references in Tevaram to the prevalence of the caste system in those days, but at the same time they point out that it did not count in the practical religious life of the devotees. There were also people belonging to the depressed community, even among them those who devoted their lives to the service of God and humanity.

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were treated on a par with the devotees of other communities. The society was so organised that the rich were made to feel it their duty to help the poor. Socially and educationally women were well advanced and it is interesting to note the various kinds of arts and games they learnt and enjoyed. They also contributed to the renaissance of Saivism in those centuries. Many of the customs and manners of the people of the modern days are traceable to the age of Tevaram saints.

The hymnal literature also furnishes valuable information regarding the development of industry and commerce thousand years ago. Beyond doubt, agriculture was the main occupation of the majority of the people and honoured by one and all as the noblest profession. Foreign trade was also carried on as evidenced by the number of important sea-ports mentioned by the saints.

As seen from some of the hymns, Tamilnadu of those early days was famous for its cultural advancement. Art, especially music and dance, were well developed and the temples of those days were like the great academic institutions of modern days for promoting these arts. The development of architecture deserves all praise and the monumental examples of it in the form of South Indian great temples had their origin in these centuries.

Education had its own importance though it was in those days religious and sectarian. There were many centres of learning in several big cities like Kāñci.

The rise of Saivism and consequently the fall of the rival religions Buddhism and Jainism are proved by the references made in the hymns. Realisation of oneness of God was advocated and religious fanaticism had no place atleast in the lives of the learned devotees of Saivism. Carping criticisms of other religions are occasionally found, but they were based upon the personal experience of the saints. Subsects of Saivism which were prevalent in some of the towns like Tiruvārūr had no prominence. Minor gods were worshipped by the people. but the hymnal references show that they were discouraged by the religious leaders. Though there were different kinds of worship, it was clearly realised that the purity of heart was the important requisite of all.

Elementary principles of physics and astronomy were well known in those ages. It is interesting to note the extent to which the science of physiology was developed as regards the growth of the child in the mother's womb.

Of the two kinds of life, the Jains encouraged the ascetic life and to counteract them the Saivai.

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tes advocated the usefulness and aptitude of the household life for religious devotion. Simple living and high thinking were the ideals, and serving humanity was the supreme goal of life.

Thus the history of Tamilnadu in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries in political, economical, social and religious spheres has been found to be worthy of considerations. Though it may not be said that it was the golden age of the country, yet after the Sangam age and after the disturbance caused by the Kalebras it was only in this period that Tamilnadu had again risen to prominence and developed its own culture. The people were again able to lead an independent and peaceful life as in the Sangam age and thereby achieved a broad outlook and noble vision in religion. These facts of history are furnished by the Tevaram hymns which, therefore, are a source of valuable information to the student of history.

This book (Thesis) written and submitted for the M. Litt. Degree of the Madras University in 1947, is published only now, in 1982. I thank the Tirumalai Tirupati Devasthanam authorities who were kind enough to help me by their financial assistance. Though this is published after 35 years, the matters and points discussed and explained in this are current and are to be further discussed by learned scholars. I thank one and all who helped me in writing the thesis and to publish it.

Tirupati  
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Author.