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SIVA SIVA

The Story of Saiiva Saints



K. M. V.

1979

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**The Story of
SAIVA SAINTS**

by

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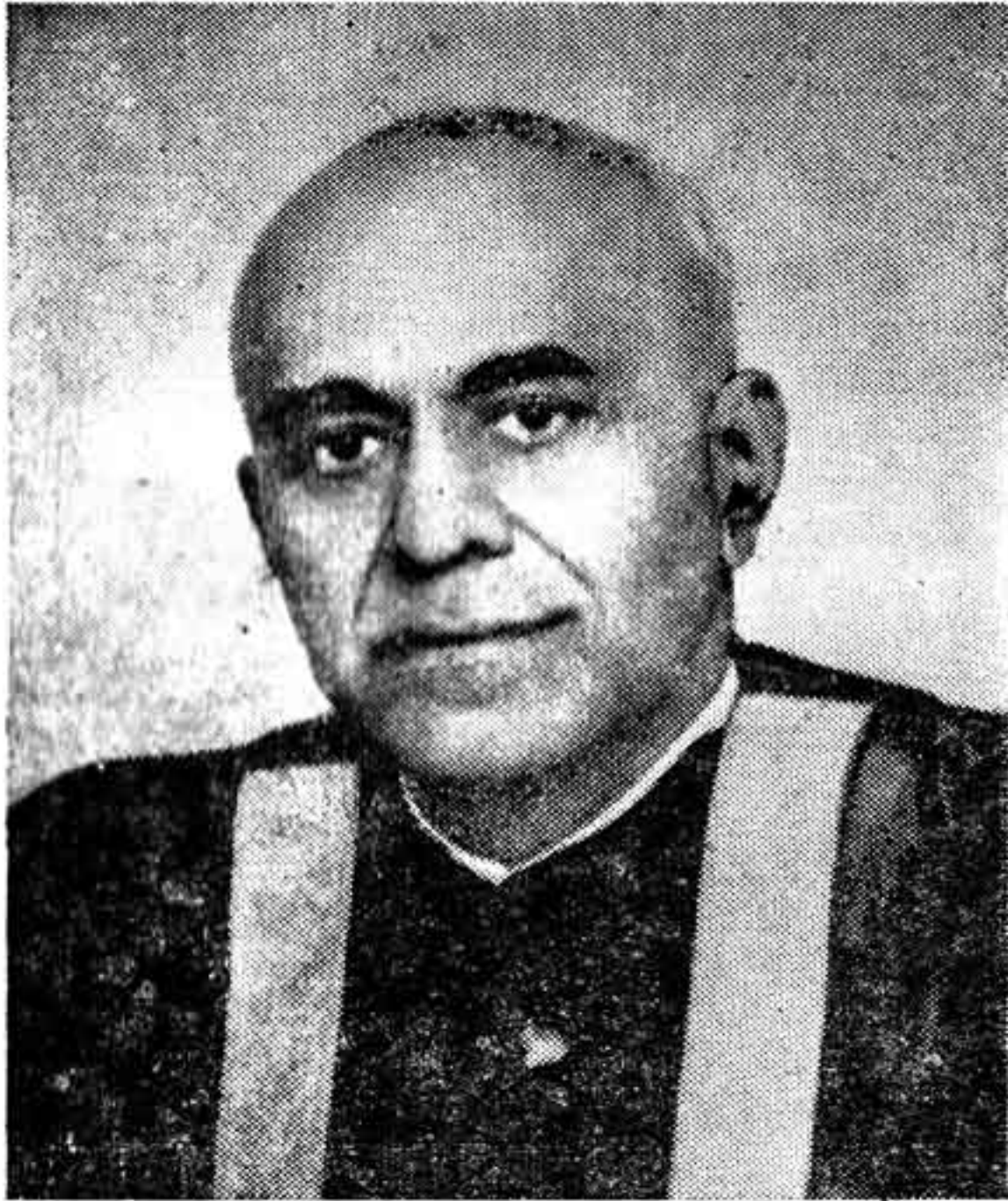
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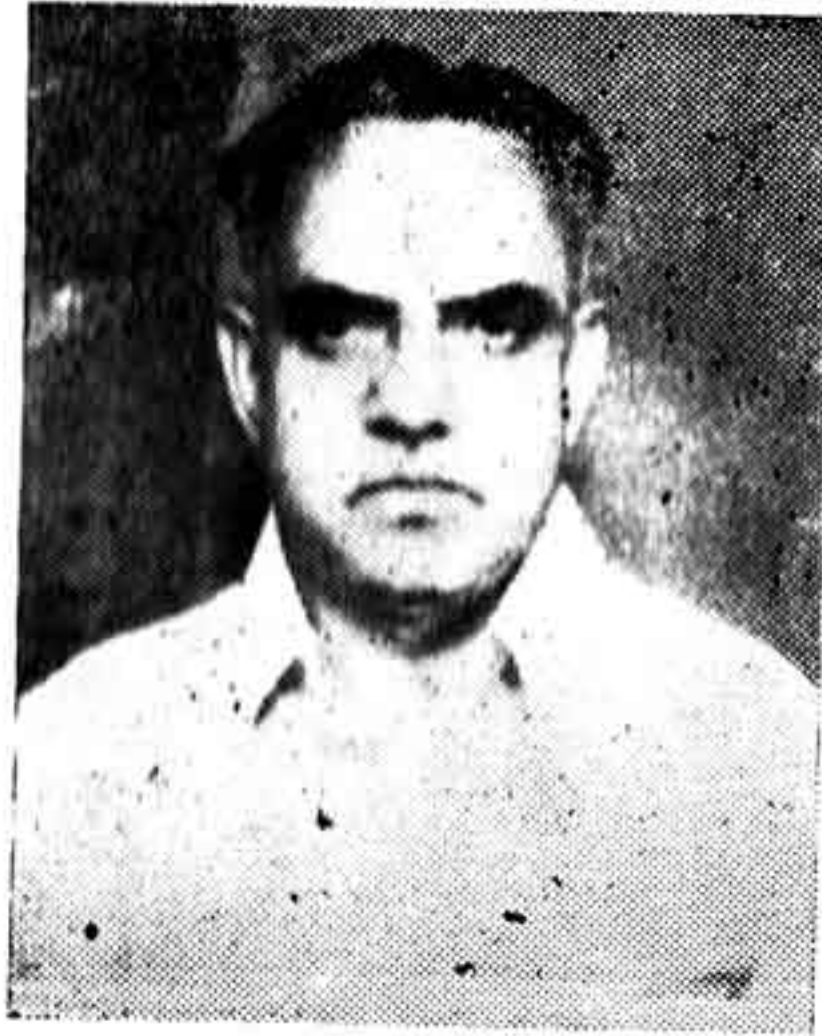
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THE STORY of SAIVA SAINTS

PROEM

Suntharamurthy Swamigal is one of the four great Saiva Saints. He was also known by the name Vanthondar. By the grace of the Lord he improvised a pathigam called Thiruththondaththogai (containing 11 stanzas). This contains the names of all Saiva Saints contemporary and prior to Suntharar. One Nambi Andar Nambi who lived during the reign of Rajaraja I was a native of Thirunaraiyur near Chidambaram and he wrote a minor poem called Tiruththondar Thiruvanthathi containing 89 stanzas. It relates the story of all Saints mentioned by Suntharar in his Thiruththondaththogai, allotting one stanza for each saint in the order related by Suntharar. Following the above mentioned poem, Sekkizhar, the renowned minister and litterateur during the time of Kulothunga II sang the well known Thiruththondar Puranam popularly known as Periya Puranam describing vividly the history of all Saivite Saints in 4253 stanzas. Umapathi Sivacharya the fourth of the Santhana Kuravars (Saiva Acharyas who propagated the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy) summarised the above said elaborate Periyapuranam in 76 stanzas. (We also find the history of those Saivite Saints related in precision in a minor poem called Tiruththondar Satakam which contains about 100 stanzas.)

Following the work of Umapathi Sivacharya, the stories of the Saints are narrated in the following few pages as briefly as possible.

1. SUNTHARAMURTHI SWAMIGAL

Suntharar's father was Sadayanar and mother Isai Gnaniyar. While he was playing with a toy cart at Thirunavalur, a

chieftain of the place called Narasinga munaiyaraiyar took him home and brought him up in his palace. When the marriage of Suntharar was about to take place, Lord Siva appeared in the form of an aged brahmin and said that Suntharar, according to a former agreement with his grandfather, was his slave and that he should serve him for ever. Though Suntharar remonstrated, the case was proved, but to the amazement of all, it was found, that the aged man was no other than Lord Siva of Thiruvannainallur. Suntharar thereupon sang the hymn beginning with "Piththa Pirai soodi".

Then Suntharar began his pilgrimage and after being blessed by God at Thiruvathigai, he proceeded to Thiru Arur and married Paravaiyar. He composed at Thiruvarur, the Thiruththondaththogai in which he adored and worshipped all Saiva Saints known upto that day. He was once given mounts of paddy by one Kundaiyur Kizhar and as Suntharar sang a Pathigam (decad) Lord Siva bade his demons to carry the paddy to Thiru Arur.

At Thiru Nattiaththankudi, Suntharar was the guest of Kotpuli Nayanar who with reverence and piety, gave his daughters to Suntharar and Suntharar accepted them as his own children. At Thiruppugalur, by the grace of Siva, bricks were transformed into gold for the sake of Suntharar. While he had been to Thirukkachchoor (near Madras) Lord Siva himself gathered food by begging at each door and served him.

At Thiruvotriyur he once again got into wedlock with Sangiliyar. The mediator for the marriage was Siva himself. The marriage took place only after he swore that he would not leave Thiruvotriyur. Suntharar cannot keep up to his word and longing to have a darsan of Lord of Thiruvarur, he left Thiruvotriyur. No sooner did he leave than he lost his

sight. At Thiruvempakkam he was given a walking stick and at Kanchcepuram he got back the sight in the left eye, Proceeding to Thiru Arur, he recovered the sight in the right eye. To pacify the wrath of Paravaiyar, Lord Siva himself acted as a mediator. Suntharar once got gold bars at Vriththachalam, threw them in the river and caused them to appear in the Kamalalaya tank at Thiru Arur.

His contemporay Chera King was Cheraman Perumal much noted for charity and he once came to Thiru Arur to meet Suntharar. Both became friends and Suntharar reciprocated his friendship by visiting Thiruvanjaikkalam. While he was returning with the presents got from the Cheraman, he was robbed of all his valuables at Thirumurganpoondi and as he improvised a decad he got back everything.

While he was going to Thiruvanjaikkalam for the second time, he wrought at Avinashi the miracle of bringing back to life a brahmin boy devoured by a crocodile. Then from Thiruvanjaikkalam he departed for Mt. Kailas on a white elephant accompanied by the Cheraman on Swathi day in the month of Adi and continued to perform his duties as before in Kailas.

2. THILLAI VAZH ANTHANAR

The Thillaivazh Anthanar or the Brahmins of Thillai (Chidambaram) are three thousand in number. They are blessed to be very near Sri Nataraja and conduct daily prayers. They perform daily puja with proper ceremonies and they consider it as their gift. They conduct themselves in the path of Bhakti and they do not even like final beatitude. Lord Nataraja himself blessed Suntharar with the clue 'Thillaivazh Anthanartham Adiyarkkam Adiyen' to extemporise the Thiruththondaththogai and from this, one can conclude that they were selected by the Lord as the first in the list of

Saints. They perform (Vedic) Sacrifices with the three fires - Karukapattiyam, ahavaniyam and takshinakkini. They were so very fortunate that Lord Nataraja counted himself as one among them. They were equal to themselves and their greatness we are at a loss to describe.

3. THIRUNILAKANTA NAYANAR

Thirunilakantar was born of Potter's caste in Chidambaram. Owing to excessive devotion he used to worship Siva by chanting the name Thirunilakantam. Hence he came to be known by the name Thirunilakantar. He used to offer free of cost Thiruvodu (begging bowl) to anyone devoted to Siva. One day he went to the house of a harlot and his wife knowing his infidelity sulkily said, "On the name of Thirunilakantam, please keep away from us". On hearing this, he took a vow to keep away not only from her but also from all women and left off carnal pleasure. Many years passed by and he became old. Yet the couple did not desist from their devotion and service to the Saints. Lord Siva, in order to make every one informed of the pious conduct of the Saint came in the form of a Siva yogin and kept his begging bowl in the safe custody of the Saint and went away. The Saint kept it in his locker. After some days the Siva yogin came and asked the Saint to return his bowl. Alas! the Saint was astonished to see that the begging bowl was missing. He requested the Siva yogin to receive another new begging bowl. Siva yogin got wild and asked the Saint to take hold of the hand of his wife and dip themselves in the tank to prove that they had not deceived the Siva yogin. Both of them plunged into the tank and when they rose up, they rose up young regaining the lost youth. After living piously for some more time, they reached the feet of the Lord.

4. IYARPAGAI NAYANAR

In Kaverippoompattinam there lived a Saint called Iyarpagaiyar who was born in Merchant Caste. He would offer to any one anything without saying "NO" to them. One day Lord Siva came in the form of a venerable and handsome person and requested the Saint to offer him his lady. The Saint prostrated before the incumbent, offered him his lady and bade him go. The relatives of the Saint attacked the new comer with fury and ferocity but the Saint fought with his relatives, killed them and asked him to go. While the Saint was returning, he heard once again the cry of lamentation: "O Saint Iyarpagaiyar! Please do come". The Saint rushed to the spot. The new comer vanished and appeared in the form of Rishabaruda (as mounted on the Sacred Bull) and blessed him, his wife and the dead relatives with beatitude.

5. ILAIYANKUDI MARA NAYANAR

There was a Saint called Marar at Ilaiyangudi. He was an agriculturist born in the Vellala Caste. As a devotee of Siva, he used to feed the Lord's devotees with dishes of six flavours, but he became poor day by day. But yet he did not abstain from his devoted service of feeding the devotees of the Lord. One night it was raining incessantly; they had nothing to eat and were extremely hungry. Owing to ravenous appetite they could not sleep. At dead of night Lord Siva came in the form of a devotee to the house of the Saint and wanted food. The Saint requested him to be seated, ran up to his field which he ploughed and sowed that day, collected the seeds, gave them to his wife and supplied firewood by dismantling the roof laths. His wife prepared food and made curry of greens. The Saint then went to the devotee to invite him for dinner and to his astonishment, the devotee appeared in a mass of fire and bestowed beatitude.

6. MEYPPORUL NAYANAR

There was a feudatory of the Pallavas at Kovalur, by name Meypporul Nayanar. He believed that "It is true wealth ¹ to be in the guise of Siva²." Hence he came to be known as Meypporul. He had a foe called Muththanathan who tried several times to defeat him, in vain. So he planned to win him by deceit. He hid his sword in a manuscript of palmyra leaves and came in the robes of a devotee of Siva to the palace of the Nayanar. He was given free entry. He met the Nayanar in his private chamber, bade his queen to leave the apartment and told the Saint that he came to him to teach the spiritual truths embedded in a rare Sivagama. The Saint bowed down and the deceiver drew his sword and struck him down. The body guard of the Saint, Datta by name, was alert and rushed in to strike him. But he could not, for, the dying Saint bade Datta to lead the new comer out of the palace unhindered. After explaining to those that assembled there the importance of the path of Saivism, he left the mortal body and attained Siva Bliss.

7. VIRANMINDA NAYANAR

In the Chera country at Sengunrur there lived a Saint called Viranminda Nayanar. He belonged to the Vellala Caste. Once he visited Tiru Arur and remained in a Hall called Devasiriyam worshipping the Lord. One day Suntharar (one of the four great Saiva Saints) passed by the side of the Hall to worship the Lord without paying divine honour to the Saints. Viranmindar mistaking that he was so haughty as not to pay respects to the Saiva Saints, declared that he was an out cast or outsider to the Saivafold. On hearing this Suntharar

1. *Meypporul — True wealth*

2. *Thiruvadam — Guise of Siva.*

prayed to the Lord and improvised a decad under the caption "Thiruththondaththogai" and worshipped the devotees of Siva. Viramindar was immensely pleased and by the grace of god Viramindar became one of Siva's celestial hosts.

8. AMARNEETHI NAYANAR

In Pazhaiyaru there lived in the Merchant Caste a Saint called Amarneethiyar. He was very rich and by guessing one's intension or need he used to feed him and offer blanket waist cord or loin cloth whichever he wanted. Once the Lord in order to test his devotee came to the Saint in the guise of a celibate (Brrhmachari), gave a loin cloth from the staff in his hand and went away for bath informing him that his loin cloth had nothing to equal it. The Saint placed it in a safe place but alas! it disappeared without the knowledge of the Saint. Then the celibate came and demanded his loin cloth but what would the Saint do. He became perplexed. The celibate got wild and asked the Saint to give a loin cloth equal in weight to another loin cloth of the same texture in his possession. The Saint agreed. The loin cloth was placed in the scale of a balance and in the other scale all loin cloths were placed one by one to match the loin cloth of the celibate but in vain. At last the Saint mounted the scale pan with his wife and children to equalize the same and attained beatitude by the grace of the Lord.

9. ERIPATHTHA NAYANAR

In Karur there is a Siva Temple called Thiru Anilai and there lived a Saint called Eripaththar daily worshipping the Lord in that Temple. In order to remove the distress of the devotees of Siva if any, he used to keep a sword in his hand. There was a devotee in the temple by name Sivakami Andar who used to make garland of flowers and offer them to adorn the Lord. One day when Sivakami Andar was proceeding to

the temple with flower garlands, the royal elephant of Pugazh Chola, a chola king, becoming mad or frenzy seized the basket containing flower garlands, threw it off and went on its way. Sivakami Andar cried out in anguish "Sivatha Sivatha" (O Siva O Siva!) entreating succour. Eripaththar hearing the call for aid, got wild and killed the elephant and the mahout with his sword. This incident was communicated to the king who rushing to the spot came to know the reality and requested to kill him also for expiation of the sin committed by his elephant. This act of the king moved the Saint and he rushed to cut off his own neck and die. The king held the hands of the Saint, obstructed him and saved him from self immolation. At this moment a voice from heaven was heard to the effect that it was only to proclaim the devotion of the Saint, the elephant's action happened and by the grace of the Lord the dead elephant and the mahout came back to life. By this unflinching devotion the Saint became the head of Siva's celestial hosts.

10. ENATHINATHA NAYANAR

There was a Saint called Enathinathar at Eyinanur. He belonged to Sanar's Caste. He had an enemy called Athisooran. Both of them were well at imparting instruction in Sword-fight. Athisooran entertained jealousy over the Saint and one day he was defeated in a combat. The next day he approached the Saint once again for a combat besmearing his forehead with sacred Ash. At the sight of the sacred Ash on the forehead of his foe, the Saint became bewildered. He thought for a while that Athisoora should not be censured for killing an unarmed one. So he held a sword in his hand and pretended to fight. Athisoora struck the Saint and by the grace of god he attained salvation.

II. KANNAPPA NAYANAR

At Uduppur (near Kalahasti) there was a chieftain called **Nagan**. He was the chief of the Hunter's Caste. He had a son who was named **Thinnan**. He attained the age to practice hunting. He took to the first hunt and proceeded to a forest followed by his mates **Nanan** and **Kadan**. In the chase **Thinnan** killed a pig and then went with his mates to a river called **Ponmukhari**. On a hill there, he was informed that there was the temple of Lord **Kudumith thevar**. **Thinnan** went there and wanted to worship and feed the Lord. He filled his mouth with water; placed flowers over his head; cooked the flesh of the pig and offered them to the Lord. This was repeated for a few days. The Priest performing daily service to the Lord was at a loss to know who was doing such an improper act. So at the instance of the Lord, the Priest **Sivagochariyar** watched the devoted service of the Hunter unnoticed on the sixth day. The hunter came and performed his services as usual. Suddenly the hunter saw blood gushing forth from one of the eyes of the Lord. He tried in vain to stop the blood. Then he plucked one of his eyes, and placed it at the bleeding place. The blood stopped. But alas! another eye also began to bleed, He began to bore out another of his eyes. The Lord intervening said, "Stop **Kannappa!** stop **Kannappa!**" and blessed him to remain always by his right side. Then **Thinnan** the hunter came to be known by the name **Kannappar**.

12. KUNGULIYAKKALAYAR

There was a Brahmin Saint called **Kunguliyakkalayar** at **Thirukkadavur**. He used to burn incense of 'Kunguliyam' daily before the Lord and he became poor day by day. One day while he was going to the market with the **Thali*** of his wife to purchase paddy, he saw a cart load of **Kunguliyam**. He brought it in

* Neck ornament tied by the bride groom around the neck of the bride at the time of marriage

exchange for the Thali and burnt it with extreme devotion to the Lord. The Lord was pleased and blessed the Saint with riches. Once when he visited the Siva shrine at Tirupanandal, he found the Chola king trying to set aright the Siva Linga which was in bending posture. By his sincere devotion he set it right by pulling it. Later on Thirugnana Sambandar and Thiru Navukkarasar were his guests for sometime.

13. MANAKKANJARA NAYANAR

Kanjaru is now known by the name Anaithandavapuram. At Kanjaru there lived a Saint called Manakkanjarar. He was blessed with a female child. On her wedding day, the Lord came in the guise of Maviratha (an ascetic belonging to a sect in Saivism) and asked the Saint to give off her tresses to make panchavati (sacred thread of hair.) At once the Saint cut off the locks and offered it to the Mahavratha. By the grace of the Lord the locks grew as before. Then she was given in marriage to another Saint called Eyarkon Kalikkamar.

14. ARIVATTAYA NAYANAR

In a place called Kanamangalam there lived a Saint called Thayanar. He was a Vellala by Caste. He used to offer rice (of superior Paddy of Yellowish hue), cooked comb greens and tender mango to the Lord daily. Day by day he became poor. He continued to offer them by the wages he got. As the wages he got was always "Sennel" he offered all paddy to the Lord and remained starving. One day while he was proceeding to the temple with rice etc., owing to fatigue, he fell down. Everything that he carried fell in the cracks of the ground. The Saint thought that he should die for expiation of sin and while he was cutting his throat with a sickle, he heard the champing sound coming from the cracks along with the Lord's Hand obstructing his action. Then the Lord blessed the Saint.

15. ANAYA NAYANAR

There lived in a village called Thirumangalam a Saint by name Anayar. He used to tend and graze a herd of Cows. He was well at flute. One day he saw a blossomed KONRAI tree. It reminded of the Lord with matted locks. So he went near the tree and began to set in music the Mystic five Letters. On hearing the music all movables and immovables in the universe began to melt. The music of the flute was also heard by Lord Siva who bestowed grace saying that he might be permanently seated in Sivaloka and play on the flute and accordingly he attained salvation.

16. MOORTHY NAYANAR

There lived in Madurai a Saint called Murthiyar. He belonged to the Merchant's Caste. He used to supply sandal wood paste to Lord Siva. Once there was scarceness of sandal wood owing to the orders of an alien ruler at Madurai. Hence he used his hand as sandal wood and rubbed his hand on the stone as if to make sandal paste. By the grace of the Lord his wounds became healed. The alien ruler of Madurai died and he had none to succeed. By the grace of the Lord Moorthy Nayanar was selected as the king by being garlanded by the royal elephant. The matted locks was his crown; the rudraksha beads were his ornaments; and the sacred Ash was the water for the anointment. With this triad he ruled his kingdom and attained the Feet of the Lord.

17. MURUGA NAYANAR

In Thiruppugalur there lived a Brahmmin Saint called Muruganar. He used to supply various kinds of flower garlands to adorn Siva enshrined in Varthamaneshvaram at Thiruppugalur. He witnessed the wedding of Thirugnana Sambandar at Thiru Nallurpperumanam, entered the Effulgent Light and reached the Feet of Siva.

18. RUDRAPASUPATHI NAYANAR

In Thiruththalaliyur there lived a Brahmin Saint Rudra Pasupathiyar by name. He used to stand in the water to the level of his neck, adore the Feet of Siva, chant the mystic Five Lettered mantra and recite Sri Rudram incessantly throughout day and night and at last reached SivaLoka.

19. THIRU NALAIPOVAR NAYANAR

In Athanur, there lived a pious man called Nanthanar. He was a Harijan or Adi Dravida. He had a craving for the Darsan of Lord Nataraja and hence he used to say "I will go to Chidambaram tomorrow." So he was popularly known by the name Thirunalaipovar (one who would go on the other day). He dug a tank at Thiruppungur. He wanted to have a darsan of Siva in the temple of Thiruppungur. Rishabha Devar or the Bull also gave way and he had the sight of Siva. Then after several severe tests by his land lord, he proceeded to Chidambaram, entered into a bonfire, came out as a Saint with sacred thread and matted locks to the astonishment of the Brahmins at Thillai. He then proceeded to the Golden Hall, worshipped Lord Nataraja and attained Siva Bliss.

20. THIRUK KURIPPUTH THONDA NAYANAR

In Kanchipuram there lived a Siva devotee who was a Dhobi. He used to serve the devotees of Siva by guessing their intentions. Hence he was called Thirukkuripputh thondar. He used to render free service to Siva mendicants by washing their clothes. One day Lord Siva came in the form of a poor mendicant and requested him to wash his cloths and return them before the setting of the sun. If he could not do so, he said, his body would get affected. The Saint accepted. Alas! it began to rain unceasingly. The sun set; everything was wet. The devotee was shivering. The Saint being perplexed dashed his head against the stone. Lord Siva intervened, desisted him from his deadly act and blessed him with beatitude.

21. CHANDESWARA NAYANAR

In Thiruchcheynalur, there was a Brahmin called Echchadaththan. He had a son named Vichara Sarman who became well versed in Vedas. The cow herd of the village while tending the cattle beat a cow severely. On seeing this Vichara Sarman took to himself the service of grazing the cattle. He tended them very carefully and the cows began to spill in plenty. Looking at this Vichara Sarman made a Siva Linga out of the sand of R. Manni and used the milk for abhishekam (bathing of the idol). This was reported to the owners of the cows and Echchadaththan went to the common pasturage to find out the truth. To his astonishment he found his son performing abhishekam and also pots full of milk. Loosing his temper, he struck against the pots. Vichara Sarman took a stick which became transformed into an axe and cut the legs of the father. The Lord appeared and saying that "all flowers that used to adorn Him and all clothes and garments and oblation should become his", awarded the rank of Chandeswara.

22. THIRUNAVUKKARASU SWAMIGAL

In the South Arcot District at Thiru Amur there lived a Saivite couple Pugazhanar and Mathiniyar. They were blessed with a daughter named Thilakavathiyar and a boy named Marulneekkiyar. After a few years when Thilakavathiyar's marriage was settled, the parents died. Kalippagaiyar to whom she was to be married also died. In order to bring up her brother, she resolved to live. The brother joined the Jain College at Patali (modern Thiruppathirippuliyur) where he won the respect of all and came to be known as Dharmasena. Thilakavathiyar silently prayed to Lord Siva at Thiruvathigai to redeem her dear brother from the Jaina religion. Her prayers were heard by Lord Siva. Dharmasena was afflicted with pain in the stomach, which no medicine could cure. He

therefore left the Jaina Mutt, came to his sister, besmeared his body with holy Ashes, uttered Panchakshara, went into the temple of Thiru Athikai and sang a Pathigam. By the grace of Siva, pain ceased and Lord Siva bestowed on him the name of Thirunavukkarasu.

Dharmasena's desertion made the Jains tremble. The Pallava king Mahendravarman summoned him and subjected him to a series of trials. He was shut in a burning kiln and he came out of it alive. The royal elephant was incited against him but it would not injure him. He was given poisoned food and it did him no harm. He was bound to a stone boulder and thrown into the sea and using it as a float he reached the shore. Mahendra Pallava became a Saivite.

Thirunavukkarasar then went to Thiruvathigai and from there he commenced his piigrimage. He met Thirugnana sambanthar at Sirkali who christened him with the name Appar. Appar in one of his tours went to Thingalur where a Brahmin Saint Appoothi founded many charitable institutions in Appar's name and Appar himself saw a Watershed founded in his name. Appar went to Appoothi's house and consented to be his guest. The eldest son of Appoothi while cutting a fresh plantain leaf was stung by a cobra and was dead. Keeping this as a secret, Appoothi invited Appar for the feast. Appar found out what had happened and by singing a pathigam he brought back life to the dead body.

In one of his tours he and Thirugnanasambanthar stayed at Thiruvizhimizhalai for a pretty long time and there was a drought. Each of them was supplied with a gold coin by Lord Siva and the devotees were daily fed. Both of them proceeded to Vedaranyam. As the gates of the inner temple were closed, the devotees went in by a side gate. They were informed that the gates were shut by the Vedas. On hearing

His Sambanthar requested Appar to have the doors opened by singing a pathigam and Appar did so and the doors opened of their own accord. After worshipping the Lord, Sambanthar closed the door by singing a stanza.

Leaving Vedaranyam, Appar travelled throughout the Tamil Nad and went upto Kalahasti. From there he proceeded northward to have a darsan of Siva at Kailas. He became disabled, but he would not give up the idea. He was bid to plunge in a tank nearby and by doing so he got up at Thiruvaiyaru in the Tanjore District, and had the darsan of Kailas there. Then he went to Thiruppoonthuruththi, built a shrine and while he was there he met once again Sambanthar. He then went on pilgrimage to the Pandyan country, then returned to the Chola country, stayed at Thiruppugalur and then attained the Feet of Lord Siva on Sathayam day in the month of Chiththirai.

23. KULACHCHIRAI NAYANAR

Kulachchiraiyar was a native of Manamerkudi in the Pandya country. He was the minister of the then ruling Pandya king. He used to pay respect to the devotees of Siva. The queen of the Pandya king was Mangaiyarkkarasiyar, and she was 'a fence to the Saiva crop'. He impaled the Jains who were defeated in the disputation with Sambanthar. He performed many acts of grace to the humanity, worshipped the Feet of Lord Siva and attained Siva Bliss.

24. PERUMIZHALAIKKURUMBA NAYANAR

There lived in a village called Mizhalai a devotee Kurumbar by name. He was the devotee of a devout votary of Siva. He always meditated upon Suntharar and he was blessed with Ashtamasiddhi—the eight supernatural powers viz, satva, mahima, lahima, garima, praththi, prakamiyam, isathvam and vasithvam). By yogic power he came to know that

Suntharar was leaving for Kailas and he reached Kailas even on the preceding day through Bramharandra (aperture in the crown of the head).

25, KARAIKKAL AMMAIYAR

In Karaikkal there lived a merchant called Danadaththan. He was blessed with a female child and he named her Punithavathi. From childhood she was devoted to religious thoughts and exercises. When she came of age she was married to one Paramadaththan, son of Nidhipathi of Nagappattinam. The couple lived at Karaikkal. One day Paramadaththan sent two mango fruits to his house. A Siva mendicant came and Punithavathi served a fruit to him. And when her husband came for dinner, the other mango was served to him. The husband tasting the fruit with exquisite flavour, wanted her to serve him with the other fruit also. Lo! she went into the apartment as if to fetch a fruit but what would she do. By the grace of god, she got one and served it to her husband. Finding it to be sweeter than the previous one, the husband was amazed at the superabundant taste and inquired about the fruit. As he was informed that it was obtained by the grace of the Lord, he wanted another fruit. She entreated the Lord and getting a fresh fruit, she served it but it disappeared. The husband was perplexed. Soon he left the Chola country, went to the Pandya country, established trade, married another wife, begot a female child, named her after Punithavathi and remained there with mental peace. The kith and kin of Punithavathiyar came hear about her husband and took her to him. The husband prostrated before his wife and craved for her blessings. Punithavathiyar shelving her flesh, with the skeliton body topsy-turvy, reached Mt. Kailas. Lord Siva with eagerness called her "O! Mother" and with reciprocal motion she exclaimed "O! Father." Then Lord Siva bade her go to Thiru Alangadu, witness His dance there and remain there perennially under His Feet.

26. APPOOTHI ADIGAL

Appoothi Adigal was a Brahmin Saint who lived in Thingalur. He called every one of his belongings by the name Thirunavukkarasar. He conducted a water pandal which also he named after Thirunavukkarasar. One day while Thirunavukkarasar, during his pilgrimage, passed by Thingalur, he saw the waterpandal and came to know about the fidelity of Appoothi Adigal. He went to Appoothi Adigal's house. Appoothi was much pleased to welcome Thirunavukkarasar and requested him to dine in his house. All dishes were prepared. The eldest son of Appoothi, mooththa Thirunavkkarasu by name, went to the back yard to fetch a plantain leaf and while cutting it, he was stung by a cobra and dead. Without informing Thirunavukkarasar of the death of the boy, Appoothi invited him for dinner. Thirunavukkarasar came to know of the sorrowful incident, got the corpse, sang impromptu a decad beginning with 'ONRUKOLAM' and made the dead come back to life. The dinner was over. Thirunavukkarasar then visited the Siva shirne at Thiruppazhanam and while improvising a decad sang in praise of Appoothi in one of the stanzas. Appoothi Adigal obtained eternal bliss by chanting the name of Thirunavukkarasar.

27. THIRUNEELANAKKA NAYANAR

In Saththa mangai there lived a Brahmin Saint Thiru Neelanakkar by name. In the temple called Ayavanthi, a spider fell on Siva Linga and the wife of Thiruneelanakkar blew air by her mouth and spit on the spot. Without understanding the purport of her action, the Saint considered it to be an offence and transgression and excommunicated her. Lord Siva came in his dream and showed him pimples in the places where she had not spit. The Saint changed his mind and took her back. Once Thirugnana Sambanthar was his guest. ThiruNeelakanta yazhppanar and his wife

too came with Sambanthar. Though they were considered to belong to the depressed class, ThiruNeelanakkar made them remain in the heart of his house by the side of the pial intended for performing daily sacrifice. Finally the Saint took part in the wedding ceremonies of Thirugnana Sambanthar and attained the Feet of Siva.

28. NAMINANTHI ADIGAL

Naminanthi was a Brahmin Saint of Emapperur. One day when he had been to Thiru Arur, he desired to light lamps in the temple called Araneri. So he stepped into a house nearby and requested to give him some ghee for this purpose. As it happened to be the house of a Jain he was refused ghee. Now the voice from heaven bade him to burn the lamp with water. Accordingly he got water from the tank and lit the lamps. From that day onwards he continued this service with devotion. One day he witnessed the annual festival at Thiru Arur and went late to his abode. As he thought he was polluted, he wanted to take bath. While his wife was making arrangements for his bath, he had a nap when the Lord appeared in his dream and told him that all those born in Thiru Arur were Sivaganas. Then he shifted his residence to Thiru Arur. He was glorified by the appellation "Thondarkku Ani" (Linch-pin of devotees) by ThiruNavukkarasar.

29. THIRU GNANA SAMBANTHA SWAMIGAL

Sambanthar was born of Sivapathahruthayar and Bhagavathiyar at Sirkazhi. While he was three years old, he went with his father to the tank in the temple. As the father was busy with ablutions, the boy began to weep and called out "Mother & Father". Uma (Siva's consort) heard the cry, came and fed him with a cup of holy milk. The boy at once became Thirugnanasambanthar (one connected with wisdom). The father came up from the tank

and asked him who gave him the milk. Sambanthar atonce sang the Pathigam "Thodudaiya Seviyan" (and this is the first Hymn in the Thevara collections). The father was astonished at this and this news spread throughout the land. Crowds of Bhaktas visited Sambanthar.

He went to Thirunanipalli and as he sang a hymn, the barren land there became fertile; At Thirukkolakka he was supplied with Talams by the Diving grace. One Thiruneelakanta Yazhppanar (a violinist) accompanied him. At Thirunelvayil a palanquin, umbrella and horn were presented to him. He wore the sacred card, when he told the priests about the greatness of the Panchakshara, the mystic five letters by a Pathigam. At Pachil achchiramam, he cured the daughter of Kollimazhavan of a chronic paralysis called "Muyulagan". At Thiruppatteeswaram he was awarded a canopy of pearls, At Thiruvavaduthurai, he was bestowed with a purse consisting of 1000 gold coins for his father to perform sacrifice or yaga according to Vedic rites. At Thirumarugal he brought back life to a merchant stung by a cobra. He in his tours met his contemporary Saiva Devotees viz. Thiruneela Nakkar, Siruth thondar, Murga Nayanar and Kunguliyakkalayar. At Thiruvizhi Mizhalai and Vedaranyam he worshipped Lord Siva along with Appar.

From Vedaranyam he proceeded to Madurai at the invitation of Mangaiyarkkarasiyar, the consort of Pandya king, Maravarman who was a Jain. The matt where Sambanthar was camping was set fire to by the Jains and Sambanthar bade the fire to go to the Pandya. At once the Pandya king was afflicted with high fever. The Jain Monks tried their best to cure the king of the disease in vain. Sambanthar was invited and he besmeared the body with sacred Ash, singing the pathigam "Manthiramavathu Neeru" and the fever faded away. The Jain Monks were prepared for a second test. They wrote out their doctrine on a palm leaf and placed it

on the fire; no doubt it was burnt to ashes. Sambanthar took out a leaf containing a pathigam which was sung at Thiru Nallar and laid it on the fire and to the dismay of all it remained unburnt. The Jain ascetics demanded a third test. They said that the tenets of each faith should be written in a palm leaf and thrown into the running stream and that the doctrine of the leaf which ran up the current should be considered as a true one. Sambanthar readily agreed. The palm leaf of the monks went away with the current, while that of Sambanthar containing the hymn "Vazhga Anthanar Vanavar Aninam" dashed against the current. As per the agreement all the Jain monks were persecuted by the king. The king himself then became a Saivite.

While returning to his native land, he caused a boat to sail across the flooded river by improvising a pathigam at Thiruk Kollampoothur. At Pothimangai he was crossed by a Buddhist who was killed by a thunderbolt while Sambandar's uncle chanted one of his hymns. At Thiruvoththoor he changed the male palmyra trees into female ones. At Mylapore he brought out the preserved bones of a dead girl into the form of a virgin by singing a hymn. From Kalahasthi he sang Mt. Kalias, Ketharnath and other north Indian shrines and returned to Sirkazhi. On the day of his marriage at Achchalpuram (Thirupperumana nallur) he sang a hymn and by the grace of Siva there appeared a miraculous fire. All those present entered the celestial fire and lastly Sambanthar entered it with his bride and attained the Feet of Siva on Moolam day in the month of Vatkasi.

30. EYARKON KALIKKAMA NAYANAR

In Thirupperumangalam there lived a Saint called Kalikkamar. He was a Vellala by Caste and he belonged to a clan called Eyar. He heard that Suntharar sent Lord Siva as a negotiator to pacify the sulkiness of his consort

Paravaiyar and hence he began to cherish hatred towards him. Lord Siva in order to make the Saint reconciled, made him suffer from a colic disease and informed him that the disease could be cured only by Suntharar. Accordingly he was informed that Suntharar had proposed to visit him. At once the Saint cut his belly with the scimitar and died. Suntharar came, heard that the Saint was dead and aimed the scimitar to die. By the grace of Lord Siva, Kalikkamar was restored to life. Then he prostrated at the feet of Suntharar and got his blessings.

31. THIRUMOOLA NAYANAR

There was a Siddha (one endowed with super natural powers) in Mt. Kailas. He wanted to proceed to Mt. Podigai. On his way he came to Thiruvavaduthurai watered by R. Kavery. There was a cow herd called Moolan. He used to tend cattle and while doing so he suddenly died. The cattle were grieved. In order to remove the distress of the cattle, the new comer kept his body in a safe place and entered the body of the dead Moolan. Moolan rose up and the cattle were very glad. In the evening the cattle returned to their homes of their own accord and Thirumoolar followed them. He did not go to the house of the dead Moolan. But on the next day when he came to the place where he kept his original body, it was not found. Hence he remained in the body of (the cowherd) Moolan, came to be known by the name Thiru Moolan and performed Siva yoga beneath a pipal tree in the temple at Tiruvavaduthurai for a period of 3000 years. He sang the three thousand Mantras called Thirumanthiram at the rate of one stanza per year and returned to Mt. Kailas.

32. THANDIYADIGAL

Thandi Adigal belonged to Thiru Arur. He was born blind. He desired to deepen the tank at Thiru Arur. Hence he planted a wooden post on the bank, set up another stake

at the bottom of the tank and connected them with a rope. With the help of the rope, he stepped down into the tank, dug out the earth, filled it in a basket, went up the tank and threw the earth on the bank. The Jains hated him and obstructed him from doing this odd job. The Saint did not pay heed to their talk. So they mocked at him by saying, "O blind one! Did you become deaf also?" and snatching the basket threw it away. Thandi Adigal got wild and exclaimed, "What will you do if I get back my sight?" "We will vacate Thruvarur", suddenly they replied. The next day in the presence of the ruling king, he dipped himself in water and rose up with eyesight. All Jains became blind and left Thiru Arur. The Saint after doing selfless service reached the Feet of Siva.

33. MOORKKA NAYANAR

In Thiruverkadu (near Madras) there lived a Vellala who was an adept at gambling. He used to play with dice and with the money he won he used to feed the devotees of Siva. Once he visited Kumbakonam wherein also he fed the devotees with the black money he earnt. One day while he was playing with dice, a gambler was at fault and hence the Saint stabbed him. Thence he came to be known by the name Moorkkar (wrathful one). Continuing his service of feeding the devotees of Siva, he attained the Feet of the Lord.

34. SOMASIMARA NAYANAR

Somasi Marar was a native of Ambar. He used to feed the devotees of Siva. He performed many Vedic Sacrifices. He was in the habit of chanting Panchakshara (mystic Five Lettered Mantra) incessantly. He went to Thiru Arur and worshipped with devotion the feet of Suntharar and became seated in Sivaloka.

35. SAKKIYA NAYANAR

In Thiruchchangamangai there lived a Vellala, Sakkiyar by name. He went to Kanchipuram and became a Bhuddhist. After realising that it was an alien faith, he acquired sound knowledge of Saiva religion and its tenets and began to worship Siva in the robes of a Buddhist. He was in the habit of worshipping Siva Linga and then alone he would dine. One day he saw a Siva Linga in a public place and as he had no flowers to offer in worship, he threw a stone as flower and worshipped the Lord. From that day he took it as his moral duty to worship the Lord only by throwing stones at Him. One day he failed to follow the self imposed injunction and went for dinner. Suddenly he remembered his moral duty, ran up and threw a stone at the Siva Linga. Lord Siva, immensely pleased with his devotion, summoned him to His world.

36. SIRAPPULI NAYANAR

In Akkur there was a Brahmin Saint called Sirappaliyar, He used to feed the devotees of Siva with ardent love. He would besmear his body with sacred Ashes. He would recite Vedas and perform Vedic Sacrifices. He would unceasingly chant the mystic Five Letters—the Panchakshara. By such acts of austerity he attained the Feet of Siva.

37. SIRUTHTHONDA NAYANAR

There lived in Sengattangudi one Paranjothiyar. He was a physician and well versed in the science and art of medicine. He was also a commander of troops. He marched his army as far as Vatapi and returned with abundant booty. He was also blessed with mystic union with Siva. Whenever he would meet the devotees of Siva, he used to consider himself very small before them. Hence he came to be known by the name Siruththondar. His wife was Thiruvekkattu Nangai. He had a son by name Siralar. Thirugnana Sambanthar once

visited his abode and sang in praise of Siruththondar in a decad. Siruththondar was in the habit of feeding a devotee of Siva every day before he ate and one day he was not in a position to find a devotee. Lord Siva came in the guise of a Bhairava and demanded the curry of a child if he should dine in his house. As directed by the guest, the Saint cooked his own child as curry, leaving its head uncooked. The maid servant, Santhananangai, prepared a dish with the flesh of the head. The divine guest was invited for dinner. He wanted the Saint to call his son to keep company with. What would the Saint do? He and his wife went out of the house and called their son. By the grace of the Lord, Siralan came. But before they went in, Bhairava had disappeared, and appearing before them in Somaskanda form blessed them all.

38. CHERAMAN PERUMAL NAYANAR

In Kodungolur or Magothai of the Chera country, there lived a king called Cheraman Perumal. He was gifted with the art of understanding the speech of every being and hence he was popularly known by the name Kazharitru Arivar. He used to worship Lord Nataraja and on completion of worship he would hear the tinkling sound of the anklet of Lord Nataraja. One day he heard the sound very late. Becoming aggrieved, he wanted to put an end to his life. The Lord informed him that he was enamoured by and engrossed in the songs of Suntharar and hence he was late to grace him with the tinkling sound. On hearing this, Cheraman Perumal desired to meet Suntharar.

On the day of coronation, Cheraman went on procession in the royal streets and a washerman was coming. It rained and the fuller's-earth which he carried became wet and soaked. As the sun shone, it became dried up and the washerman looked as if he besmeared his body with the sacred Ash. The king

was much pleased to see the dhobi and getting down from the elephant greeted him. The dhobi becoming perplexed said that he was after all his slave—a dhobi. The king replying that he was the devotee of the Lord, said that he reminded him of the loving sacred guise of the devotees of Siva and that he might go unembarrassed.

There was a minstrel—a lute player called Pana Bhadra at Madurai and he went to Cheraman with an epistle beginning with “Mathimalipurisai” composed by Lord Siva at Madurai. On receiving the letter of introduction in verse, Cheraman gave him abundant wealth and the minstrel returned to Madurai.

To meet Sunthara moorthi Swamigal, Cheraman went to the Chola country, sang a minor poem “Pon Vannaththu Anthathi” at Chidambaram and “Thiru Arur Mummanikkovai” at Thiru Arur. He was the guest of Suntharar for some time and visited many shrines in the Chola and Pandya countries. Suntharar paid a visit to Thiruvanjaikkalam, the city of the Cheraman and returned with bounteous wealth. While Suntharar visited the Chera capital for a second time, he mounted on a white elephant and proceeded to KAILAS and Cheraman mounting on a horse followed him. It was in the presence of the Lord that Cheraman presented his poem under the caption “Thirukkailaya Gnana Ula”.

39. GANANATHA NAYANAR

In Sirkazhi there lived a Saint called Gananathar who was devoted to the Lord in the temple of Sirkazhi. He maintained flower gardens, and with the flowers he made various kinds of garlands and trained other devotees in this service. He supplied tools needed for this purpose. He used to worship with devotion the feet of Thirugnana Sambanthar. Finally he reached Kailas and became the chief of Siva ganas (Siva's hosts).

40. KOOTRUVA NAYANAR

There lived in Kalanthai a chieftain called Kootruvan. He vanquished many chieftains. He was blessed with all royal -ties pertaining to a king except the crown. He requested the Brahmins of Thillai to crown him as king. As he did not belong to the Chola dynasty, they refused to crown him. Further they kept the crown in the safe custody of one at Thillai and left for the Chera country. Kootruva Nayanar entreated the Lord, the Dancer at Thillai who crowned him with His Feet. With ecstatic joy, the Saint ruled his terrain adored the Lord in several shrines, effected repairs to the, temples and attained eternal bliss.

41. POY ADIMAI ILLATHA PULAVAR

They are a group of scholars like Kapilar, Paranar etc. They were litterateurs well versed in all arts and sciences. They were skilled to compose four kinds of poetry viz.* asu, mathuram, chiththiram and viththaram. They would compose verses only on the Feet of Lord Nataraja, and adore Him. Those that possessed such characteristics were known by the name Poy adimai illatha pulavar.

42. PUGAZHCHCHOLA NAYANAR

He was a Chola monarch ruling the Chola domain having Karur as his capital. One day one Sivakami Andar an ardent devotee of Siva was carrying flowers in a basket to the temple at Karur. The state elephant pulled out the flower basket

* [ASUKAVI, *One who composes verses impromptu satisfying certain conditions.*

MATHURA KAVI: *One who composes verses in sweet language.*

CHITHTHIRA KAVI: *"One who composes variety of metrical compositions fitted into fanciful figurese."*

VITHTHARA KAVI: *"One capable of composing a lengthy poem on a single theme'."*]

and scattered the flowers. Enraged at this, a Saint called Eripaththar killed the elephant and the mahout on the spot. The king, on hearing this, thought that a foe had come and killed the royal elephant and rushed to the spot. To his astonishment he saw the devotee of Siva, and prostrating at his feet offered his sword to kill him to expiate his sin.

Once this Chola king had a combat with Athigaiman. His solidiers cut the heads of the soldiers of the foe and placed them before him. Among the slain there was a head having a matted lock. He thought that it should be the head of a devotee of Siva and felt that he had committed a sin by killing a devotee. He placed the head on a golden plate and carried it over his head. Then he tended a sacred fire, circumambulated the fire chanting the Panchakshara, entered into it and attained final beatitude.

43. NARASINGA MUNAIYARAIYAR NAYANAR

He was a feudatory under the Pallavas. He used to feed the devotees of Siva on Thiruvathirai days and offer 100 pon (gold coins) as gift. One day there came a devotee besmeared with sacred Ashes but with signs of lust. The Saint went forward to welcome the guest, fed him and gave 200 gold coins. He took care of the temples in his terrain and obtained beatitude.

44. ATHIPATHTHA NAYANAR

There lived in Nagappattinam a fisherman called Athipaththar. His occupation was fishing and the best of his first harvest (catch), he used to set free in the sea as oblation to the Lord. Lo! It was the will of the Lord that he got only one fish every day and the first fish was let away in the sea according to his cherished notion. Hence he lost his main income and he became very poor. One day he caught a golden fish decked with gams; but even this fish he let off in the sea. By this selfless act, he, blessed by god, reached the Feet of the Lord.

45. KALIKKAMBA NAYANAR

Kalikkambar was a native of Pennakadam. He belonged to the Merchant's Caste. He was in the habit of feeding Siva's devotees daily. One day a devotee came. He was once his servant, and leaving his service he became an ardent devotee of Lord Siva. While Kalikkambar was washing the feet of the devotee, his wife who was supplying water to wash the feet found that the devotee was no other than their servant formerly, and hence she was not inclined to supply water. The Saint got wild, cut the hands of his consort, washed his feet and fed him. Continuing his devotion and service to the devotees, he got the blessings of the Lord.

46. KALIYA NAYANAR

In Thiruvotriyur there lived a Saint in a caste called Sakkarappadiyar (owning oil-press). His name was Kaliyanar. He used to conduct the service of lighting lamps throughout the temple. Alas! he became poor. He engaged himself as a worker in oilpress, got wages and continued his services in the temple. After some time, he could not get employment in the oil-press. Hence he wanted to sell his wife. None came forward to purchase her. The hour to light the lamps came. He determined to use his blood in the place of oil to light the lamps and he was about to cut his throat. Hurrah! The Lord held his hands from cutting his throat and blessed him with salvation.

47. SAKTHI NAYANAR

In Virinjiyur there lived a Saint by name Sakthiyar. He used to worship the feet of Lord's devotees and chant the Panchakshara incessantly. If he heard any one talk with reproach the Lord's devotees he would at once cut their tongue with his knife. By doing this ferocious act, he attained beatitude.

48. AIYADIGAL KADAVARKON NAYANAR

He was a king of the Pallava dynasty, who held sway from Kanchipuram. He was erudite in Samskrit and Tamil. He realised the transitoriness of the body. He went on pilgrimage to various sacred places like Chithambaram, extemporizing verses on each of the temples and attained salvation. This minor poem is called Ksheththirakkovai (a string of verses on sacred places) and this is included in the 11 th canon of the 12 Thirumurais (Saivite scriptures.)

49. GANAMPULLA NAYANAR

He was a wealthy person in a place called Irukkuvelur on the banks of North Vellaru. He used to go to the temple called Thiruppulichchuram (now known as Ilamai Akkinar Temple) at Chithambaram and light lamps with devotion. Alas! his riches dwindled. Hence he gathered a kind of grass called "Ganampul", sold it and with the sale proceeds he bought ghee to light the lamps. Hence he was called Ganampullar. One day the grass remained unsold. He burnt the grass to illuminate the temple. As the grass was insufficient, he used his hair for this purpose. Lord Siva bestowed grace on him and got him to Siva loka (Siva's abode).

50. KARI NAYANAR

Kariyar was a native of Thirukkadavur. He was an erudite scholar in Tamil. He wrote a minor poem called Karikkovai. He went to the court of the three crowned kings (Chera, Chola and Pandya) and by the exposition of his poem, he got presents from those kings. With the money he made, he caused the temples to flourish. He gave everything that the Siva devotees wanted. By these acts of devotion, he attained the bliss of Siva.

51. NEDUMARA NAYANAR

Nedu Marar was a Pandya king. He annihilated his foes in a battle at Nelveli (probably Nenmali in the Puthukkottai district.) He was at first a Jain and by the intervention and grace of Thirugnana Sambanthar, he embraced Saivism. His consort was Mangaiyarkku Arasi. By the "divine sanctifying regenerating and preserving influence" of Thirugnana Sambanthar, he encouraged Saivism in his suzerainty and at last attained the Feet of Lord Siva.

52. VAYILAR NAYANAR

Vayilar lived in Mylapore and he belonged to the Vellala Caste. He always entertained the Feet of Siva in his mind. He transmuted his mind into a golden temple. He illuminated that golden temple by the light "Gnana". He bathed the Lord with the water "Anantha". The oblation was love to humanity. By such acts of divinity, he attained the Feet of Lord Siva.

53. MUNAI ADUVAR NAYANAR

He was a native of Thiru Nidur and he belonged to the Vellala Caste. As he was skilled in warfare, those that were unable to contend in battle wanted his assistance. He would side that party that offered him the largest booty, war against its foes and gain victory. Hence he was called Munai Aduvar (one who contends in battle.) By the enormous wealth he earned by such contracts, he fed the devotees of Siva and acquired infinite bliss.

54. KAZHARCHINGA NAYANAR

Kazharchingar was a Pallava king. Once he proceeded to Thiru Arur to worship Lord Thiyagaraja. His queen smelt a flower in the flower pavilion of the temple. A Saint by name Seruththunai got wild and cut her nose. The king,

while informed of what had happened, said that it was the hand that gathered the flower to smell and that the hand should be cut. So saying he severed her hand. Then the king ruled for a long period, continued his devoted service to Siva and attained His Feet.

55. IDANKAZHI NAYANAR

Idankazhiyar was a chieftain of Kodumbalur and belonged to the clan known as Velir. He is considered to have lived long before Athiththa Chola who plated the divine Hall at Chithambaram with the gold secured from the Kongu country. While he was ruling his terrain, a Saint used to feed the devotees of Siva daily. Once that Saint was unable to secure money to feed the devotees. So he got paddy from the granary of Idankazhiyar by thieving. The guards caught him red-handed and produced him before Idankazhiyar. He told the king the cause of the theft and the king, releasing him, proclaimed that his granary might be freely used by the devotees of Siva. Then he ruled his domain for a long period, helped his might for the growth of Saivism and attained beatitude.

56. SERUTHTHUNAI NAYANAR

This Saint lived in Thanjavur of Marugal Nadu. He belonged to Vellala Caste. It was he who cut the nose of the consort of Kazharchingar while she smelt a flower in the Flower Pavilion of the temple of Lord Thiyagaraja at Thiru Arur. By his intense devotion to Siva he attained final bliss.

57. PUGAZHTHUNAI NAYANAR

This Nayanar belonged to Athi Saiva Caste and he lived in Seruvili puththur. He used to conduct worship as ordained in the Saiva Scriptures. Once owing to famine, he had to starve. One day while he was conducting the bathing of the Lord, he was unable to hold the waterpot and it fell on the

head of the Lord. The Saint felt very sorry for what had happened. The Lord from that day placed a gold coin every day as subsistence allowance. The Saint continued his service in the sanctuary and attained the Feet of Lord Siva.

58. KOTPULI NAYANAR

This Saint was a Vellala by Caste and he lived in Thirú Nattiyaththankudí. He was a commander of an army of the Chola king. He used to store paddy for oblation to Siva. Once while he left for a battle field, he instructed his kith and kin that they should not use the paddy for their personal needs and that the paddy should be used exclusively for oblation to the Lord. He issued this order under the command "Thiruviraiyakkali". After a few days there was a famine. His relatives infringed the oath and used the paddy. The Saint returned and came to know of the violation of his command. He gathered all his relatives under some pretext and killed everyone who used the paddy. A child alone was left and he killed it also saying that it would have suckled the milk of its mother. By the grace of the Lord all were brought back to life and the Saint was blessed by the Lord.

59. PATHTHARAYPPANIVAR *

They are pious persons who render service to Siva and His devotees. They worship the devotees of Siva. They witness the worship of Lord Siva in the temples. They render service to Lord Siva. They cause Aruchchanai.† They hear the stories of the Lord with rapt attention. They engage themselves in uninterrupted meditation. Whether they stand or sit, walk or remain quiet, eat or sleep, they always meditate on the Feet of Siva. If they collect money from public donation for repairs to temples etc., they spend to the last paise towards those purposes only. These eight are the characteristic features of the Bhaktas or pious persons.

From 59—65 are "Groups of Saints" - Thogai Adiyar.

ARUCHCHANAI— "Offering of flowers sacred leaves, or saffron accompanied by a recitation of the sacred names of a Deity in a temple."

60. PARAMANAIYE PADUVAR

They are proficient in Tamil and Samskrit. "We should sing in praise of Siva with pious devotion. By doing so we gain spiritual elevation", so saying they become cheerful, shed tears their hearts melting, and sing incessantly in praise of the Lord.

61. SITHTHATHTHAICH CHIVANPALE VAITHTHAR

They are absorbed in the contemplation of Siva. They free themselves from the influence of the five senses and the four Anthahkaranas,[§] force the prana through the central Nadi (Suzhumunai), hear the sound (or Natha), pray with devotion the gods of the six Adharast[†], proceed farther, witness the Dance of Paranjothi (Light effulgent) and attain Siva Bhoga.[‡]

62. THIRU VARURPPIRANTHAR

Those that are born at Thiru Arur are really blessed. They belong to all Castes. They are renowned personages. They have renounced the worldly pleasures. They are united with Siva. All of them are Siva ganas (Siva's hosts).

63. MUPPOTHUM THIRUMENI THEENDUVAR

They practise penance. They are spotless and impartial. At dawn they take bath in the tank, besmear with sacred Ash, conduct their daily prayer, chant the mystic five lettered Mantra, and perform daily service to the Siva Linga as ordained in the Siva Agamas.

[§] Inner seat of thought consisting of four aspects--Manas, buddhi-chiththam and ahankaram.

Muladhara, Swathishtana, Manipooraka, Anagatha, Visuddhi, Ajnat.

[‡] 'Spiritual experience of the soul in which it merges its individuality in Siva'.

64. MUZHU NEERU PUSIYA MUNIVAR

Sacred Ash is of three kinds – Kalpam,¹ Anukalpam² and Upakalpam.³ The Saints, who besmear any kind of Ash named above, are called Muzhu Neeru Pusiya Munivar. In front of the Lord at the Sanctum Sanctorum, in the presence of the preceptor, before the sacrificial fire, in the public street, at unhygienic or unholy places, one should not besmear Ashes. Adhering to these principles, one should besmear Ashes in Thripundara way (in three horizontal lines on the forehead), or like the crescent, or like the lamp or as a circle in the forehead. Such devotees who besmear throughout the body are known by Muzhu Neeru Pusiya Munivar.

65. APPALUM ADICHCHARNTHAR

Those who have reached the Feet of Lord Siva outside the Tamil country of the Chera, Chola and Pandya suzerainty and those who graced the world before and after the days of Suntharar who sang impromptu the Thiruththondaththogai—are called Appalum Adichcharnthar.

66. POOSALAR NAYANAR

In Thiruninravur there lived a Brahmin Saint called Pusalar. He desired to build a temple for Siva and he constructed it in his mind step by step. He arranged to consecrate the temple and make the Lord enter the temple on an auspicious day. That day happened to be the day when the

1 KALPAM- Sacred ashes prepared according to Agamas from cow dung received directly from the cow by hand.

2 ANUKALPAM- Generally a less stringent alternative to a rule here applied to the sacred ashes prepared according to rule from cow dung picked up in pasture lands.

3 UPAKALPAM- Sacred ashes taken from natural forest fire or from artificially made brick or kiln fire and prepared according to rule. (Tamil Lexicon, M.U.)

Pallava king arranged in pomp and grandeur to perform the consecration of the magnificent temple erected by him at Kanchipuram. The Lord in the dream of the king, informed him that he had proposed to enter the temple of Poosalar at Thiruninriyur on that day and that he might arrange another day for this purpose. Very much amazed, the king proceeded to Thiruninravur, inquired about the temple of Poosalar, met him and found out that Poosalar had constructed a temple in his mind. Poosalar performed the consecration ceremony on the appointed auspicious time and continued daily and special worship to the Lord. Doing so for several days he attained perennial bliss.

67. MANGAIYARKKARASIYAR

She was the daughter of Manimudichcholan and the consort of the Pandyan King Koon Pandiyan, She caused banishment of Jainism from the Pandya country and extended her support for the propagation of Saivite faith. Thirugnana Sambanthar had sung a decad on her. As he expressed "Venthanum onguga" in one of his verses, Koon Pandiyan, was cured of hunch back. She and her husband Koon Pandiyan by their devoted service to Saivism obtained Siva's bliss.

68. NESA NAYANAR

This Saint lived in a town called Kambili and he belonged to the Weaver's Caste. He used to meditate on Siva in his mind, chant the mystic five Letters by mouth, and offer alms by his hand to Siva mendicants. He gave clothes, Keeludai† and loin cloth to the devotees of Siva and worship them and by this pious act he attained infinite bliss.

† *Girdle of an ascetic generally a long strip of cloth.*

69. KOCHCHENGAT CHOLA NAYANAR

In the Siva temple at Thiruvanaikka, there was a spider which used to spin its web up above the Siva Linga daily. A white elephant used to go there everyday, destroy the spider's web and conduct worship. This happened for a long time. The spider lost patience and one day it entered the trunk of the elephant. The elephant could not brook the bite of the spider, dashed the trunk against the ground and died. The spider too met with death. The spider was blessed to become a Chola king in its next birth and accordingly it was born as a son to the Chola king Subadeva and his consort Kamalavathi. He became known by the name Kochchengat Chola. While he held his sway as a Chola king, he constructed several Siva Shrines in the Madakkovil style.† He worshipped Lord Nataraja at Chithambaram and built mansions for the Brahmins of Thillai. At last he attained beatitude.

70. THIRU NEELAKANTA YAZHPPANA NAYANAR

At Thiru erukkaththampuliyur there lived in the Panar's Caste a Saint called Thiru Neelakanta yazhppanar. By the grace of Lord Siva he got a golden plank and played on yazh standing on it on a rainy day. Then he went to Thiru Arur and worshipped the Lord by going into the temple through a separate passage. Afterwards he went to Sirkazhi and worshipped the feet of Thirugnana Sambanthar, joined his confederation and accompanied his improvisations on yazh wherever he went. In the end he entered the Siva Jothi at Thirupperumana Nallur on the wedding day of Thirugnana Sambanthar and attained finite bliss.

† Siva temple with narrow passage built on mounds.

† PANAR- An ancient class of Tamil bards and minstrels

71. SADAIYA NAYANAR

He belonged to Athi Saiva Caste and lived in Thiru Navalur. His consort was Isaigananiyar. He was the father of Sunthara moorthi Swamigal.

72. ISAIGNANIYAR

She was the consort of Sadaiyanar. She used to adorn herself with sacred Ashes. She was very fortunate to give birth to Suntharar. By chanting her very name one can attain Sivagnana.

APPENDIX

The fourth in the list of Saiva Samaya Acharyas is Manikkavachakar. Sekkizhar in his Periyapuranam has not devoted a chapter on this Saint. It is said that as Suntharar had not mentioned Manikka Vachakar in his Thiruththonda-ththogai, Sekkizhar had not written about him. Any how the story of Manikkavachakar is given in brief hereunder.

MANIKKAVACHAKAR

Manikkavachakar was born at Thiruvathavur near Madurai and he was called Thiruvathavurar. The then ruling king Arimarthana Pandya, having heard of his attainments, appointed him prime minister and conferred on him the title Thennavan Brahmarayan. Once he went to Thirupperunthurai with bags of money to purchase horses and saw Lord Siva seated under a Kurunda tree with a large congregation. He forgot his mission, prostrated before Him and got His grace. Then he sang the sweet and thrilling songs, and Siva on hearing the "holy word" of Vathavurar bestowed on him the name Manikkavachakar and disappeared. Manikkavachakar then spent all bags of money he had in repairing and rebuilding the Siva temple there. The king having heard of what had happened, summ-

oned Manikkavachakar to his court. Manikkavachakar not knowing what to do implored the Lord who told him to return and inform the king that the horses would arrive on the Avanimoolam day.

On the appointed day Lord Siva converted all the jackals of the jungle into horses, converted himself and the demons into horsemen, rode to Madurai, delivered the horses to the king and disappeared. In the night all the horses turned again into jackals and fled away. When the king heard of the great fraud, he frowned and put Manikkavachakar to torture. The Saint appealed to the Lord. There came a huge flood in the river Vaigai. The king ordered that every family should send one member to do the work of strengthening the banks of the river. All obeyed. There was an old woman called Vanthi a vendor of rice cakes and she wanted a servant to represent her. Lord Siva appeared as a Kooli and offered his services in return for the Pittu (made of rice) that she could give as wages. His name was enlisted. He did no work, but he chatted with others wasting their time also and finally laid himself down to sleep. The king summoned him and gave him a blow with his stick. The blow was felt by the whole Universe and the king too felt the blow. The Divine Labourer poured one basket of the earth in the portion allotted to him and vanished. The king realised the greatness of Manikkavachakar and permitted him to retire.

Manikkavachakar went on pilgrimage and reached Chithambaram. There he held a dispute with the Buddhists of Ceylon, and defeated them by making a dumb girl to answer their questions. The answers through the dumb girl are immortalised in a hymn called Thiruchchalal.

It is said that Lord Siva came in human form, requested him to dictate all his Thiruvachakams and wrote them

Himself. He then requested him to say his Thirukkovaiyar and after writing it down, subscribed his name, placed them at Ponnambalam (the Golden Hall) and disappeared.

Manikkavachakar attained beatitude on the Makha day in the month of Ani.

Of the Tiruvachakams, Sivapuram, Tiruchchathakam and a few others were sung at Tirupperunthurai; Neeththal Vinnappam at Uttarakosa Mangai; Tiruvembavai and Tirupalliezhuchchi at Tiruvannamalai and a host of others at Chithambaram.

Whether he was prior to the Thevaram Trio or posterior to them is immaterial to Siva Bhakthas. His Tiruvachakam and Kovai are gems of sacred Literature and they embody doctrines of Saiva faith as found in the Vedic lore.

Om Namassivaya !



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