

The Hermeneutics of the Tirumantiram

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Abstract

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In Śaiva Siddhānta, one of the main religious movements in Tamil Nadu, the *Tirumantiram* by Tirumūlar plays an important role. It is considered one of the main texts and though not read as much as some of the other more devotional texts or the more theological and philosophical texts, it nevertheless, stands out iconically as a key text for the movement and its followers. Śaiva Siddhānta is seen by many in Tamil Nadu, as a movement, which sometimes plays out in the discourse of the local Tamil culture, as an indigenous production. However, what is also of interest in this movement is its long relationship to pan-Indian movements and how it participates in these trans-local discourses. Here, I look at the role that the *Tirumantiram* plays in the production of these pan-Indian discourses, especially as they become localized in Tamil Nadu and how the text helps to bridge these two spheres--the local and global, as it gets co-opted into the local Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta movement. I also touch upon how this same text is used by a counter-cultural movement--the Tamil Cittar movement which, in opposition to the orthodox, high-caste Śaiva Siddhānta movement, uses this same very text but interprets it according to its own marginal discourse to make those same practices found in the text, available to a larger audience and set of practitioners.

I do this by first looking at the *Tirumantiram* in a historical and social context as has been studied by some scholars. I then, give a brief synopsis of its contents by looking at the different sections and their contents. I follow this with an analyses of the ideas and practices found within the *Tirumantiram* by looking at them through a mainly Foucaultian enterprise, especially by using some of the ideas and methodologies Foucault developed when looking at ancient Greek and

Roman cultures of the self, to look at how technologies of the self were used in order to construct meanings of subjectivity and relationships to truth. I do this by first looking at some of the general ideas found in the *Tirumantiram* and how they have been analyzed and explained through a corpus of commentarial productions. I then study some of the specific sections which deal with particular bodily and mental practices, in order to contextualize the discourses of Śaiva Siddhānta, especially the concepts of devotion and grace, and how they are embedded even within physical practices. I conclude that the *Tirumantiram* played and plays an important role in the formation of subjectivity and ethics in present day Tamil Nadu.

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Introduction

In Chapter One, “Śaiva Siddhānta and The Siddhas,” I give a historical background on the development and movement of Śaiva Siddhānta and peripherally, some of the other Śaiva schools of India. I especially look into the the most important Śaiva school of thought related to my study of Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta, what is usually known as the Kashmiri Śaiva Siddhānta, and I try to elaborate on its contribution in the development of Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta. I try to point out what some of the most prominent academics in the field have said about the development of Śaiva Siddhānta, and how their studies have helped shaped some of the ideas I develop in this paper. I also look into the role that the development of *bhakti* or devotion, as it developed in the south, had on the theology of Śaiva Siddhānta and how this theology incorporated and subsumed the poetry of the Nāyaṇārs, those itinerant poet-devotees who in many ways helped to create an atmosphere of devotion which became a base for the incorporation and integration of Śaiva Siddhānta and temple worship in Tamil Nāṭu soon after their canonization. Even though most of the Nāyaṇārs repudiated formal temple worship and many social formalities, when they became part of the canon, those ideas were marginalized and most of those voices were silenced or neutralized by the new discourse of Temple ritual. Śiva in all his forms became the new overlord and certain institutions like the Śankaryacharya orders and the temple brahmin priest became the middle-men between the devotee and his preferred deity. Nevertheless, those institutions have played an important role in the social fabric of some sections of Tamil society. On the other hand, as a counter-movement to these new institutions, a salient and radical movement has been the *Cittar* movement, who has also incorporated Tirumūlar and his *Tirumantiram* as part of its corpus, reading it against the grain of Śaiva Siddhānta orthodoxy and in some ways keeping alive some of the silenced voices of the Nāyaṇārs by sharing many of their original objections as part of its own critical voice. Additionally, I also look at some of the difficulties in the analysis of the dating of the *Tirumantiram* and Tirumūlar, and I make use of the wonderful work by Professor R. Venkatraman, *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult*. I was very fortunate to work under him for a similar but more ethnographic project in which his guidance and erudite knowledge helped to clear many questions regarding this subject. In this section, I also make use of some of Foucault’s idea regarding the subjectivity of the self, and basically, how we come about in making sense of the reality around us by incorporating local and trans-local discourses for disciplining ourselves as our own subjects of those practices which we incorporate in our daily life.

In Chapter Two, “Overview of the *Tirumantiram*,” I proceed with an overview of each of the nine sections or *Tantras*, as they are called, of the *Tirumantiram*. I give a very brief synopsis of the contents and context of those sections which contain about three thousand, one hundred and eight quatrains, some of which serve as introduction to the *Tirumantiram* and its alleged author, Tirumular, as well as some interpolations which serve the same purpose as prologue and praise, which form part of most texts in the classical literary tradition of India. All nine *Tantras* have subdivisions, some of which make sense of the subject matter in those sub-sections, others seem quite random. A study of them could easily become another research, and hopefully someday that will be carried out. Even though the *Tirumantiram* seems a bit disorganized, I believe this has been due to the fact that many researchers have tried to find a singular theology weaved throughout and therefore some philosophically constructive argument. My approach has been to look at the text as a practical manual for practitioners already on the path, and therefore more praxis oriented than a philosophical or theological text. To me, this is an oversight and it takes away from the richness of the text and its productivity in showing the methods used by preceptors and their students, which is what I indeed found when I lived in Tamil Nāṭu and came in contact with some practitioners who used the text as a practical instrument and sometimes as support and inspiration for their practice. Still, I understand that there is also a number of people that take the *Tirumantiram* as an icon or symbol of a movement or of a school of thought, and of course, there are also many people who know of the *Tirumantiram* and Tirumūlar through folk stories or through word of mouth because it is so much part of the folklore of the people of Tamil Nāṭu. In Chapter Three, “Disciplines of the Body in the *Tirumantiram*,” I look at the text and Tirumūlar’s concern of the body: how the body should be cared for and looked after; how it should be viewed or was viewed; how it informs and helps to construct a Tamil identity; what was the project of the text at that time and how it was historically situated and how it has been re-presented as part of a canon by glossing over what the text itself seems to put forward. I try to show the text as a mirror of a time and place and how it connects to other pan-Indian movements. Also, how a hybrid text can have so many voices but still contain some unity. Here I also look at the three major categories or notions of body, energy and mind. I also look at the practices the text utilizes for discovering and presenting notions of self and finally at the results the *Tirumantiram* claims can be realized through those practices. The view is one in which the practitioner seeks union with Śiva-- the ultimate reality. The view could also be related with the way Samkhya views

reality, although here as Venkatraman points out, the view could be an integration of the non-dual Upanishadic¹ path, the Samkhya and Bhakti paths all rolled into one which does not always integrate smoothly; the path seems open and rather liberal as it expounds many ways of reaching the goal like yoga², mantras, yantras, and jñāna. All of them seem to be encompassed within bhakti, as the greatest circle or structural context. The fruit is union with Śiva as something transcendent of any deity or duality, as love, as grace, as light--words that are used throughout the *Tirumantiram* as meaning the same. I also make use of the word ‘culture’ in a specific Foucaultian manner, when looking at the ‘culture of self’ called Śaiva Siddhānta. I also look at how co-opting strategies in the Śaiva Siddhānta canon play a role in the way one views the canon and its individual components. I try to see the *Tirumantiram* as a site which contains different levels of structures of different practices, ideas, movements which were happening at the time it was written or compiled. Also at the subverted knowledges and the silencing of the many voices which speak through the text.

In Chapter Four, “The Atṭāṅka Yōkam: A Technology of the Self,” I look at some of the different practices found in the *Tirumantiram* from the point of view of ‘technologies of the self’ and I also attempt a comparative study of the Eight-limbed Yoga in the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali and the Eight-limbed Yoga in the *Tirumantiram* of Tirumūlar.

¹ Tirumūlar seems to have been aware of the *Upaniṣad*. For example, N. Murugesu Mudaliar in his *The Relevance of Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy*, compares the similarity between *Svetasvatara Upaniṣad*, IV. 6 and *Tirumantiram* 7-27.2. (86-7). According to Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, this particular story of the two birds is found in Rig Veda 1.164.20 (34).

² For an excellent discussion on the definition of ‘yoga’ and its varied meanings according to different traditions, see Vasudeva’s *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra*, pp. 235-246.

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CHAPTER ONE

Śaiva Siddhānta and The Siddhas

The *Tirumantiram*³ is a text which records, in many ways, the status of a society in flux around the 12th century in south India.⁴ What I propose to show in this paper is how this text not only records many of the main ideas and practices which must have been prevalent at that time, but how through the spread of these ideas, the text also provided a way to make more concrete and possible the development of both, the orthodox tradition of Śaiva Siddhānta⁵ as well as the unorthodox Siddha tradition in Tamiḷ Nadu.⁶ Śaiva Siddhānta is a religious movement which was extensively propagated in Kashmir around the 9th century. It also spread to the south of India and was incorporated with local brahmanical tradition as well as with local religious movements. According to Prof. Sanderson, the Kashmiri Śaiva Siddhānta “propagated an anti-gnostic ritualism which immunised the consciousness of the Tantric performer of ritual against the mystical and non-dualist tendencies of the Kāpālika and Kaula left, and encouraged him to internalise without inhibition the outlook and values of non-tantric orthodoxy” (*World’s Religions*, p 691). This meant that male brahmins (since one

³ Throughout this paper I will be using mostly the versions of the *Tirumantiram* published by the Palaniyappan Brothers, as well as the one published by The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society and the Sri Ramakrishna Math Printing Press.

⁴ The dating of the the *Tirumantiram* is debatable. I tend to agree with Prof. R. Venkatraman, that the *Tirumantiram* “belongs to a period after the 10th century, but before the 12th century, when Sēkkiḷār wrote his *Tiruttonḍar Puraṇam*, in which a specific mention has been made of the *Tirumandiram*” (Venkatraman 45). Also see the whole of chapter IV, ‘Evolution of the Tamil Siddha Cult.’ Prof. Venkatraman also puts forth the idea that there might have been two Tirumūlar, one who belonged to the 63 nāyanmār tradition and another that comes afterwards (Venkatraman 47-48). For a different take on the dating of Tirumūlar and the *Tirumantiram* see chapter IX, ‘Tirumūlar,’ of C.V. Narayana Ayyar’s *Origin and Early History of Śaivism in South India*. He claims around 600 A.D. as the date. Also, see the Introduction, in *The Yoga of Siddha Tirumular (Essays on the Tirumandiram)* by T.N. Ganapathy and K.R. Arumugan.

⁵ According to Mueller-Ortega, in his *The Triadic Heart of Śiva*, “[t]he Southern Shaiva tradition, in both its Tamil and Sanskrit branches, flourished in the centuries after Abhinavagupta, from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries” (40).

⁶ Regarding the importance of the *Tirumantiram* in modernity, for example, Prof. Gros feels that “its prestige is such that, even though it is poorly edited and more often quoted than studied, a latter day Saivite school goes as far as to oppose it to some extent to the authors of the *Meykaṇṭa Śāstra*, not only in terms of the *yogin* or the *siddha* versus intellectual philosophers, nor of the mystical experience against the rationalism of the pandits, nor as an illumination against inference, but as monism against pluralism” (214).

of its requisites was that it was only open for brahmin males who had had their investiture ritual as twice born) could take advantage of the rituals in this new Śaivite movement and practice them, without losing their social role and power in the wider society. It also meant that they did not have to perform any socially transgressive public acts which would marginalize them, while at the same time, it assured them of maintaining their brahmanical orthodox and exoteric rituals. Thus, they could become initiates of this new unorthodox, but yet conservative movement. This is, no doubt, a very important event socially and historically, because it signifies that they had the flexibility to experiment with new modes of rituals and practices to help them form new paradigms of ethics and new disciplines for subject formation and behaviour. Additionally, it provided them with access to a new theology which in many ways reinforced and emphasized temple worship and re-iterated their hold on power, since it was often accompanied by the support of royal and upper-caste patronage. This gave them access to power and financial support which thereby re-invigorated and strengthened their position in south India. The theology of the Śaiva Siddhānta, in contrast to the other more ecstatic and transgressive Śaiva movements, is especially conducive to this type of structure which was more aligned to the orthodoxy. Rāmakaṇṭha one of the Kashmir Śaiva Siddhānta theologians explains that:

The scriptures of the Śaiva Siddhānta teach that salvation can only be attained by ritual. To be bound to the cycle of death and rebirth (*saṃsara*) is to be ignorant of one's true nature, but knowledge of that nature cannot bring that bondage to an end. This is because the absence of liberated self-awareness is caused by impurity (*mala*).⁷ This cannot be removed by knowledge, because it is a substance (*dravya*). Being a substance it can be destroyed only by action and the only action capable of destroying it, is the system of ritual prescribed in the Śaiva scriptures. (Sanderson *World's Religions* 691)

This theology in turn, gives a great hierarchical importance to ritual in the personal and private sphere, which in time also, especially in the south, gets transferred to the rituals performed in the temple. This gives rise to religious, social and political power which helps to set up a new paradigm for Śaiva

⁷ According to Rao Saheb K. Kothandapani Pillai, in his 'Lecture 4. The Theory of Mala in Saiva Siddhanta and Modern Science,' *mala* "is the storehouse which holds in potency the process of evolution of the fundamental entities out of which the actualities of the world evolve" (In *Collected Lectures on Saiva Siddhanta 1963-1973*).

Siddhānta and its practitioners as it takes root in the south.⁸ In turn, this creates vast changes in the way social relationships are enacted in south India around the new temple activities which change drastically the culture of Tamil Nadu.

As A.L. Bashan points out when looking at the development of Śaiva Siddhānta in Tamil Nadu:

Śaivism too developed a theology adapted to the devotional literature of the hymnodists. The early literature of the Pāśupatas and other Śaivite sects, called *Āgamas* and written in Sanskrit, was supplemented, and then virtually superseded, by texts in Tamil repeating much of the older theology, but incorporating the devotional faith of the Nāyaṅārs. (333)

The Nāyaṅārs were a group of 63 bhakti poets who sang songs and poems in Tamil, in praise of Śiva⁹. Through their devotional outpourings they felt that God would listen to them and thus have an intimate and direct connection with God, this allowed them to dispense with an intermediary, such as a brahmin priest, to carry their request to God.

Even though the Nāyaṅārs practiced a type of bhakti in which devotion and thus, the relationship between the devotee and their chosen deity was of utmost importance, this view changed as the movement became more institutionalized and was incorporated as part of the orthodox temple ritual tradition. As Professor Flood notes:

Bhakti traditions often reject institutionalized forms of religion, such as formal temple worship, yoga and theology, in favour of an immediate experience of the divine. Devotional forms of religion, particularly those which developed in the south during the early medieval period, tend to stress

⁸ For an excellent analysis of the importance of language in the spread of Śaivism in south India, see T. Ganesan's "Sanskrit and Tamil in the service of Śaivism," in M.Kannan and Jennifer Clare's *Passages: relationships between Tamil and Sanskrit*. Unfortunately, T. Ganesan has no mention of the *Tirumantiram*.

⁹ According to a discussion with Prof. Vijayalakshmy Rangarajan in September 14, 2009 at U.C. Berkeley, sixty-three is also the number of the Jain ascetics and probably, this concept is borrowed from the Jain religion since it was very influential in Tamil Nadu. Nevertheless, even if it is not borrowed from them, the auspiciousness of certain numbers is a general pan-Indian element found throughout its many religious movements. Another example, is the use of eighteen, as can be found with the eighteen Tamil Siddhas, whose names in the list might vary but the number of them is constant throughout. See, for example, pp. 198-200, appendix 2 in *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult* by R. Venkatraman, where he looks at three primary sources and five secondary sources, each containing a list of eighteen siddhas. But the list of names has forty--six different names.

the devotee's emotional outpouring for his or her deity and the sense of losing the limited, self-referential ego in an experience of self-transcending love.... Yet devotionism within these traditions has in turn been absorbed into more formal structures which the founders of bhakti movements may have originally been against. (*Hinduism* 131)

An example of one of these 'formal structures' is temple worship which even though it has strong elements of bhakti within it, the ritual is usually presided by brahmin priests who are the physical intermediaries between the deity and the devotee, within a temple structure. Another example is the way in which the 63 Nāyaṅārs have found a place within the temple structure as icons made of metal or stone, to be worshipped or honored by people who go to the temple for puja worship¹⁰.

Also, it is well known that one of the appealing notions of bhakti practitioners was their usual anti-caste and sometimes, anti-gender stands. "Bhakti tends to reject caste and gender restrictions as having any consequence for salvation; all that is needed is love and the grace of the Lord" (Flood, 169). This is in contradistinction to all the restrictions prescribed by the Kashmir Śaiva Siddhānta precepts as mentioned above. Gavin Flood notes:

Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta is therefore a fusion of a number of elements. There is brahmanical adherence to the Veda, though practically it is neglected in favour of the Āgamas; a strong cult of temple ritual, based on the Āgamas and focused on Śiva's forms located in temples throughout the sacred Tamil land; and an emotional *bhakti* cult based on the hymns of the Nāyaṅārs. This emotional *bhakti*, while originating in the south with the poetry of the Nāyaṅārs and Ālvārs, rapidly spread north and the Liṅgayat tradition in neighbouring Karnataka soon became infected by Tamil devotionism. (170-1)

As we can see, this form of practice is centered mainly around the worship of Śiva as the main deity. This suggests that the practice is in many ways a development of a monotheistic type of worship. Even though one finds that from the practical point of view, in south India, among Śaivites it is the whole Śiva

¹⁰ "The Saiva and Vaishnava saints are not merely figures to be revered and admired. rather actual ritual worship is offered them....In siva temples, images of all the sixty-three Nayanmars are aligned in the hall that surrounds the sanctum of Siva. Large wealthy temples such as Tiruvidaimaradur, Tiruvarur and Mayuram, all in the Tanjavur district, contain two complete sets of these sixty-three saints, one of stone and the other of bronze. Even the most insignificant of Siva temples pays homage to the sixty-three Nayanmars, if only by painting them on the walls of the court that surrounds the shrine (p 8-9, *Slaves of the Lord--The Path of the Tamil Saints* by Vidya Dehejia).

family that is sometimes worshipped, e.g. Muruga, Parvati and Ganesha in their many manifestations. Still, it is Śiva the one that is considered topmost.¹¹ Of course, one cannot be too strict with this concept, since many worship Śakti as in the Kamakshi temple in Kanchipuram, or Meenakshi at the Madurai Meenakshi temple, or Muruga (as in the six main temples of Muruga, five which are in Tamil Nadu, and one located in Sri Lanka) as their main god; and, Ganesha is quite important as well. As Gavin Flood suggests: “Theology is thus built up from a level of regional ritual and possession cults and in turn influences those cults. Regional ritual and possession form the basis or substratum of brahmanical theology” (Hinduism 148).

Of course, another very important element which helped to diffuse Śaiva Siddhānta in the south, was the presence of brahmins there, and the ruling classes support of them through the institution of temple worship and yagnas¹². Political and social power was gained through the local kings and upper caste support in the south. As Prof. Sanderson mentions: “The Śaiva Siddhānta has survived to this day in south India among an endogamous community of Śaiva temple-priests, the Ādiśaivas, as the basis of their profession and the guarantee of their exclusive hereditary right to practice that profession” (*World’s Religions*, 703). Śaivism is also an important part of the institution of the Śaṅkarācāryas, especially in regard to their practice of the cult of Tripurasundarī, and their role in south Indian temple society:

The cult of Tripurasundarī...came to pervade the wider community of Śaiva brahmins known as the Smārtas. Purged of its Kaula heteropraxy, it became there the special cult of the renunciate (*saṃnyāsin*) Śaṅkarācāryas, who are the ultimate spiritual authorities of this community. Its emblem, the *śrīcakra*...was installed in the major Śaiva temples to assert their claim to pre-eminence even within the domain of the Ādiśaivas.

(Sanderson *World’s Religions* 703-4)

¹¹ As for the relationship between the idea of the just king and the grace-giving god, see Professor George Hart’s introduction in his *The Purānānūru, The Four Hundred Songs of War and Wisdom*.

¹² *Yagnas* are fire rituals.

As we can see from the above picture, the importance of the elite¹³ classes of Tamil society had much to do with the influx of Śaiva Siddhānta in south India. I believe that it was in response to this that ‘Siddhism’ developed in south India, as an alternative Tantric culture that tried to be independent of the more orthodox tantric and non-tantric movements that had taken root in south India from that time on. In this respect, the *Tirumantiram* is a text that rides and connects both cultural movements and gets used and claimed by both of them, and in that sense becomes a unique medium which the common folk can use to have access to the Tantric movement as a local and syncretic movement which connects them to the pan-Indian culture of tantra in its many manifestations.¹⁴

The Texts

Śaiva Siddhānta thus, is one of the most important religious movements in Tamil Nadu, south India. “The texts revered by the southern Śaiva Siddhānta are the Vedas; the twenty-eight dualist Āgamas which form the ritual basis of the tradition; the twelve books of the Tamil Śaiva canon called the *Tirumurai*, which contains the poetry of the Nāyaṅārs; and the Śaiva Siddhānta Śāstras” (Flood 169).

As we can see, the main devotional texts are part of this collection of twelve texts called the *Tirumurai*.¹⁵ If one looks at these texts as part of religious project

¹³ As Foucault explains the role of the elite in the creation of modes of for the care of the self: “For in actual fact it is obvious that such a prescription (take care of yourself) can only be put into practice by a very small number of individuals... It is an elite privilege... when taking care of the self appears in correlation with a notion we will have to consider and elucidate farther; the notion of free time... So in reality, the care of the self in ancient Greece and Roman culture was never really seen, laid down, or affirmed as a universal law valid for every individual regardless of his mode of life. The care of the self always entails a choice of one’s mode of life, that is to say a division between those who have chosen this mode of life and the rest... in Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman culture care of the self always took shape within quite distinct practices, institutions, and groups which were often closed to each other, and which usually involved exclusion from all the others. Care of the self is linked to practices or organizations of fraternity, brotherhood, school, and sect” (*Hermeneutics*, p112-113).

¹⁴ For example, Smt, Kalyani Mallik, PhD, in her book *Siddha-Sidhānta-Paddhati and Other Works of the Nātha Yogīs* mentions a manuscript of this work ascribed to Goraknath, which she found in south India, but in Telegu script. She also mentions the *Yoga Mārtyanda* and the *Amaraugha Probodha*, two other works ascribed to Goraknath, and the the *Yoga Viśaya* ascribed to Matsyendra (Mallik 28-29).

¹⁵ According to J.X. Muthupackiam: “The name *Tirumuṛai* was used for the first time in an edict of the Chola King Kulottuṅga III. Prior to him the hymns of the *Tēvāram*, extensively used in the liturgy of the Saiva temples of Tamil Nadu, were referred to also as

to legitimate a new religious paradigm, one can then see why it makes sense for the *Tirumantiram* to be included as part of the *Tirumurai* even though it is not strictly a devotional text, and it literally, both supports, in some sections, and questions, in other sections, the orthodox belief system like the worship of stone images and temple ritual, and therefore could be claimed as being ambivalent regarding this. Another way to look at this movement though, is to see it as a syncretic project where ritual worship is seen as a lower level type of practice, and devotion as an essential part to any mode of self-liberating process, thus, both are integrated as part of the complete path of Śaiva Siddhānta. The *Tirumantiram*¹⁶, as one of the *Tirumurai*, helps to create a new paradigm which incorporates the relatively old bhakti movements which had started in Tamiḷ Nadu around the 6th century and becomes part of a new project in which devotionism and the new Tantric ritualism which is being introduced in the south, are used to create this new religion which both encompasses some of the old elements of Brahmanism as well as some of these new movements, like bhakti and tantrism, which appear in Tamiḷ Nadu between the 6th to 12th century and which relegate the Vedas to the margin, although always paying respect to it, as well as subsuming it in some of its components. Śaiva Siddhānta is also one of the orthodox vedic-respecting movements which helps to marginalize the more prominent religious movements of that time in south India, Jainism and Buddhism, and to replace the moral structural belief systems of these two religions with the new religion and ideology centered around Śiva¹⁷. This new morality is not entirely new but, as usual with new religious systems, it displaces them through a process of incorporation, re-

Tiruppatiyam” (Muthupackiam 309). The date of Kulōttuṅga III is (A.D.)1163-79 (Narasimhan 13).

¹⁶ According to K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, in his *A History of South India*, “[t]he *Tirumandiram* of Tirumūlar is a manual of Śaiva mysticism in 3,000 verses. It constitutes the tenth book in the [Śaiva] canon, though it does not appear to be mentioned by name by any author before Śēkkiḷār” (Sastri 334).

¹⁷ It is well documented that between the 6th and 12th century, south India was actually a stronghold of Buddhism and Jainism. As we can see from the surviving literature in Tamiḷ, like the two epics *Manimekalai* and *Silapadikaram* as well as the moral literature preceding them. Even though the Śaiva Siddhānta practiced in the south is unique and particular in many ways, as most localized movements are, it is nevertheless part of a wide pan-Indian movement in which various Tantric practices and schools mixed and borrowed during a vibrant cultural time in a wide region ranging from Afghanistan to Tibet, from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu, from Bengal to Orissa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra and many other regions.

interpretation and marginalization.¹⁸ As Gavin Flood notes about how Śaiva Siddhānta changed in the south, “the significant feature which profoundly affected the tradition in the south was that it merged with the Tamil Śaiva cult expressed through the Tamil *bhakti* poetry of the sixty-three Tamil Śaiva saints, the Nāyaṅārs, the Śaiva equivalent of the Āḷvārs. The Śaiva Siddhānta absorbed bhakti and became a Tamil religion, pervaded by Tamil cultural values and forms, as occurred to Vaiṣṇavism in the south” (Flood, 168).

The *Tirumantiram* and Tirumular as Part of the Local Tamil Siddha Culture

The *Tirumantiram* is also presented as the earliest text in “The Eighteen Tamil Siddha” movement which is part of the pan-Indian siddha/tantra movement or more correctly, culture which is alive, even today. I would say that this is an example of what Foucault calls a ““culture” of the self¹⁹”.

¹⁸ According to Rohan A. Dunuwila in his Śaiva Siddhānta Theology, “[t]he success of the Siddhānta was due at least to three factors: political influence, personal sanctity, and theological learning; without them the Siddhānta would have either remained a minor religious sect or receded into oblivion” (Dunuwila 35).

¹⁹ “I think we can say that from the Hellenistic and Roman period we see a real development of the “culture” of the self. I don’t want to use the word culture in a sense that is too loose and I will say that we can speak of culture on a number of conditions. First, when there is a set of values with a minimum degree of coordination, subordination, and hierarchy. We can speak of culture when a second condition is satisfied, which is that these values are given both as universal but also as only accessible to a few. A third condition for being able to speak of culture is that a number of precise and regular forms of conduct are necessary for individuals to be able to reach these values. Even more than this, effort and sacrifice is required. In short, to have access to these values you must be able to devote your whole life to them. Finally, the fourth condition for being able to talk about culture is that access to these values is conditional upon more or less regular techniques and procedures that have been developed, validated, transmitted and taught, and that are also associated with a whole set of notions, concepts, and theories, etcetera: with a field of knowledge (savoir). Okay. So, if we call culture a hierarchical organization of values that is accessible to everyone but which at the same time gives rise to a mechanism of selection and exclusion; if we call culture the fact that this hierarchical organization of values calls on the individual to engage in regular, costly, and sacrificial conduct that orientates his whole life; and, finally, if the organization of the field of values and access to these values can only take place through regular and reflected techniques and a set of elements constituting a systematic knowledge: then, to that extent we can say that in the Hellenistic and Roman epoch there really was a culture of the self.” (Hermeneutics, 179-180).

Why this is extremely important to note is because I would like to base my reading of this culture and the production of its discourse, texts and practices, as one which has a productive local aspect which both marginalizes certain knowledges while at the same time co-opting and using them to make a new local movement that makes sense regionally and according to the historical process of the society at that time and place.²⁰ In other words, I believe that if one criticizes the movement as a simple borrowing and copying of material from other regions or movements, one misses the most important point, which is the productivity of something for a group of people at a specific time and place, e.g. Tamil Nadu in the 12th century. As professor N. Subrahmanian states in his foreword to Prof. Venkatraman's book *A History of the Tamil Siddha Cult*:

It is necessary to remember that if a way of life or a system of values is to become popular in another society there should be a core of receptive cross-section of that society which already possesses some at least of the characteristics of the oncoming culture and so gets easily and naturally attuned to it. That was the case when brahmanism came to the Tamil society long ago to find there a category of persons willing to be converted to the new set of values coming in. A totally unacceptable value frame can make no headway in an unresponsive society. It will therefore be in order to expect that in Tamil society there already existed a cross-section which enjoyed somewhat at least of the Siddha ways. It is interesting to note that one does come across such a people in the pre-bhakti age of the Tamils. They were known as the *Arivar*...these *Arivar* were a category of wise men who already existed in the Tamil society and they find mention in the pre-6th century literature of the Tamils. (x-xi)

Even though Prof. Subrahmanian is here applying his view in regards to the Siddha tradition and how it became part of Tamil culture, I believe that this can also be applied to the way in which Śaiva Siddhānta became incorporated and assimilated into Tamil society. In other words, there was already a part of Tamil

²⁰ Here I am thinking mostly in the sense in which Foucault describes the term 'subjugated knowledges': "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity...popular knowledge (*le savoir des gens*) though it is far from being a general commonsense knowledge, but is on the contrary a particular, local, regional knowledge, a differential knowledge incapable of unanimity and which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it--that is through the reappearance of this knowledges, that criticism performs its work" (Power/Knowledge 82). And of course, this is specifically true of local religious practices which were incorporated partly or in whole to such widespread movements like the Tantric one, as well as the less elite ones like the pan-Indian movements of the Siddhas.

society which was open to these new religious ideas which were spreading and coming from Kashmir.

The writing of the Eighteen Tamil Siddhas cover a period from c. 12th century A.D. to c. 1800, and are as varied in their metaphysical leanings as their prescribed practices and moral views. Even though it is difficult to pin them down to one set of metaphysical or theological doctrine, one can see them as a cultural movement in the way that Foucault implies, and thereby be able to obtain an overview of their movement historically.

This movement is more transgressive, in contradistinction to what becomes the orthodox movement of Śaiva Siddhānta in Tamil Nadu. Why would two movements that compete with each other in south India use the same text? It is my contention that the Siddha movement keeps its strong anti-orthodox and anti-vedic element throughout, and becomes less ritualistic and more praxis oriented, integrating practices derived from pan-Indian movements, as well as local, whereas the Śaiva Siddhānta becomes an orthodox religion to compete with the already established and sophisticated religions of Jainism and Buddhism which were prevalent in the south at that time. It is also likely that the establishment of the brahmin Ādi Śaivas and their power in Śaiva temple ritual, and on the other side, that of the Sankaracharya and its mutts most have had something to do with the emergence of the Śaiva Siddhānta movement gaining popularity and power in the south.

As Sanderson says when describing practitioners of Śaiva Siddhānta: The followers of these cults, even in their undomesticated form, should not be seen as rebels who rejected a ritualised [*sp*] social identity for a liberated cult

of ecstasy. This popular view of Tantrism overlooks the highly-structured ritual context (Tantric and non-tantric) of these un-Vedic practices. A person who underwent a Tantric initiation (*dīkṣā*) was less an anti-ritualist than a super-ritualist. He was prepared to add more exacting and limiting ritual duties to those which already bound him. (*World's Religions* 662)

In contrast, the practitioners of the 'Siddha' tradition can be said to be less ritual oriented and less conventional than the followers of Śaiva Siddhānta, although there are some which follow both traditions at the same time, in their own way. As far as the *Tirumantiram* is concerned, it would be safe to say that it comes at such juncture in south India, when different religious groups, especially Śaiva ones are competing for pre-eminence.

References to Tirumūlar, the *Tirumantiram*'s author

One of the first references to Tirumūlar is in the *Periya Puranam*²¹ written by Cekkilar in the 12th century. The work is a hagiography of the 63 Nayanmars (Śaiva devotees) of south Indian (Tamil?) Śaivism. In it Cekkilar describes Tirumūlar in the following manner: (quote from periya puranam here).

Some scholars debate whether this Tirumūlar is the same as the Tirumūlar who wrote the *Tirumantiram*. Others debate as to the dating of Tirumūlar²². According to Prof. R. Venkatraman, the fact that the *Tirumantiram* mentions the nine Nāthasiddhas as well as the *Kalacakra*, is evidence of his post-10th century dating:

“It is to be noted that the *Tirumandiram* speaks of the *nava* Nāthas or the nine Nāthasiddhas, as the foremost leaders in the path of penance. Added to this, is the description of ‘*Kalacakra*’, a late Buddhist concept that is said to have come from central Asia to India in A.D. 966 shows that the *Tirumandiram* belongs to a period after the 10th century, but before the 12th century, when Sēkkiḷār wrote his *Tiruttoṇḍār Purāṇam*, in which a specific mention has been made of the *Tirumandiram* (45). According to Prof. R. Venkatraman, “[t]he earliest reference to one Tirumulan is found in the *Tiruttoṇḍattogai* of Sundarar (9th century A.D.). It gives no other detail except that name.” (Venkatraman, p 46).

‘The *Tiruttondar Tiruvandadi* gives two details about Tirumūlar that (i) he migrated into the dead body of a cowherd at Sāttanūr and that (ii) he wrote in Tamil the substance of the *Vedas*’ (Venkatraman 46). This work is supposedly by a Nampi Āṅṅār Nampi (10th century)²³, but according to footnote 31 of Venkatraman, the date is debated in A.S. Gnanasambandan’s *Tattuvamum Bhaktiyum*. Also, according to Venkatraman, there were two Tirumūlars, one from possibly before the 9th century who was one of the 63 Nāyanmārs and the other from the 10th-11th century, who is the one who wrote the *Tirumandiram*. (p 47-8). For the relationship between *Tirumantiram* and Kashmir Śaivism see Venkatraman’s chapter V, (p 76), note 1, which referenced V.V. Ramana Sastri’s *Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India*. See also note 10 of the same chapter regarding L.N. Sharma’s *Kashmir Śaivism*. According to Venkatraman “Tirumūlar seems to

²¹ Also called *Tiruttoṇḍārpurāṇam*. See Kamil v. Zvelebil’s *Lexicon of Tamil Literature* p 545-548.

²² See the discussion of the problematic of dating Tirumular and the *Tirumantiram* in Zvelebil’s *Lexicon of Tamil Literature* p 677-8.

²³ According to Zvelebil’s *Tamil Lexicon* the *Tirutoṇḍartiruvantāti* or “The Sacred *Antāti* of the Holy Servants [of God]” is from around 1100 A.D. and is included in the 11th book of the *Tirumurai* or Śaiva canon. p687.

have been influenced by the Upanishadic idealism, the Āgamas, the theistic absolutism of Kashmir Śaivism and the theistic concepts found in the Tevaram and Tiruvacakam.” (p 76).

According to Prof. Dominic Goodall, the usual given dates of the *Tirumantiram* are probably five to seven centuries too early²⁴. I do agree with Goodall as to the dating of the text, but I would say that it is more of a manual of practice than “a syncretic work of philosophical speculation.” It appears to me that this text is not so much expounding a specific philosophy per se, as its main goal, but a practical manual with some references for practitioners who are already on the path. Therefore the need for propounding a specific philosophical line is not so necessary, thus, very brief and summarizing. I would therefore say that it is more a manual of reference than anything else, and because of that, it is a rich source which shows what was available for practitioners (both siddha or saiva) at that time. As I mentioned before, the text seems contradicting at times, but this is only because it is a reference material which provides information, in a brief way, as to the different ways of approaching the path. Also, one should always keep in mind the nature of oral instructions and the role of the guru²⁵ or teacher and the secondary role that a text like this could have played, in relation to the oral instructions of the guru. In addition, I would say that one can easily be misled about the nature of the text or its purpose if one buys into the way the Śaiva Siddhānta theologians or popular Śaivite readings of its placement within the religion’s corpus is viewed. If one looks more at the place it has, as a living text, within a social environment of the time--the 11th century, then one can see the applicability or pertinency it has as an identity-forming document, and as part of a discourse related to the discipline of the subject.

²⁴ “The impossible dating on slender evidence of one particular Tamil author, namely Tirumūlar, the author of the *Tirumantiram*, to the fifth, sixth or seventh century, gives rise to a highly implausible Śaiva Śiddhānta. I would characterize the *Tirumantiram* as a syncretic work of philosophical speculation that may have been dated six or seven centuries too early. It is plain that it contains a complex of concepts with Sanskrit labels the development of which one can trace in Sanskrit (not Tamil) literature that must certainly post-date the fifth century.” in his introduction to his translation of Parakyatantra, p xxix-xxx).

²⁵ Foucault’s description of a teacher or master is indicative of the importance of a guide: “One cannot care for the self except by way of the master; there is no care of the self without the presence of a master. However, the master’s position is defined by that which he cares about, which is the care of the person he guides may have for himself...The master is the person who cares about the subject’s care for himself, and who finds in his love for his disciple the possibility of caring for the disciple’s care for himself. By loving the boy disinterestedly, he is then the source and model for the care the boy must have for himself as subject.” (pp. 58-9, Hermeneutics).

According to Prof. Venkatraman, “the supreme idea of the Siddha school, in the North as well as in South India, is freedom, perfect health, and immortality, all gained in this life, and it emphasized the value of magic and Yoga as basic means for achieving this idea” (25). What we can see from this, if we are to subsume it as correct, is that the care of the self was very important for a group of people, (mainly men) who through ritual (magic), physical discipline (yoga), and devotion, gained a status of individuality which even though connected to a spiritual²⁶ or supra-mundane goal, it nevertheless has ramifications in the social web of the culture. If we take this Siddhism as a continuation of the Tantric synthesis as per Prof. Venkatraman (p 25), then we can see that it could have been a way for individuals to have a discipline of the self which was outside of the traditional roles they had to play in their everyday lives. On one hand, one could say that magic is a discipline whereby the individual tries to gain control and make use of the forces outside of himself, while yoga is a discipline which tries to manipulate and control--that is, gain mastery of energies and of bodily and mental functions which are normally not under one’s control and which are found within one.

²⁶ According to Foucault, “Spirituality postulates that the truth is never given to the subject by right. Spirituality postulates that the subject as such does not have right of access to the truth and is not capable of having access to the truth. It postulates that the truth is not given to the subject by a simple act of knowledge (*connaissance*), which would be founded and justified simply by the fact that he is the subject and because he possesses this or that structure of subjectivity. It postulates that for the subject to have right of access to the truth he must be changed, transformed, shifted, and become, to some extent and up to a certain point, other than himself. The truth is only given to the subject at a price that brings the subject’s being into play. For as he is, the subject is not capable of truth. I think that this is the simplest but most fundamental formula by which spirituality can be defined. It follows that from this point of view there can be no truth without a conversion or a transformation of the subject. This conversion, this transformation of the subject--and this will be the second major aspect of spirituality--may take place in different forms. Very roughly we can say (either an ascending movement of the subject himself, or else a movement by which the truth comes to him and enlightens him. Again, quite conventionally, let us call this movement, in either of its directions, the movement of *eros* (love). Another major form through which the subject can and must transform himself in order to have access to the truth is a kind of work. This is a work of the self on the self. An elaboration of the self by the self, a progressive transformation of the self by the self for which one takes responsibility in a long labor of ascesis (*askesis*). *Eros* and *askesis* are, I think, the two major forms in Western spirituality for conceptualizing the modalities by which the subject must be transformed in order finally to become capable of truth. This is the second characteristic of spirituality.” (pp. 15-16, *Hermeneutics*).

CHAPTER TWO

Overview of the *Tirumantiram*

According to T.N. Ganapathy and KR. Arumugan, although the *Tirumantiram* is part of the twelve *Tirumurai*--devotional (tottiram) Tamil Śaiva scriptures, it is nevertheless considered both a tottiram and a cattiram (sastra--philosophical treatise) (xv, Ganapathy and Arumugan).

It is divided into nine ‘Tantirams’ or chapters, which contain a total of 232 adhikarams or sections. According to Prof. Venkatraman the *Tirumantiram* “attempts an integration of three basic roads to liberation, viz, Upanishadic knowledge, Yogic technique and bhakti...” (157). “These three roads are referred to as *aṛivu*, *aḍakkam* and *anbu*” (see his note 10 p 157)-- Knowledge²⁷, self-control²⁸ and love²⁹. These could be classified as disciplines which mainly use the mind through knowledge; the physical body through self-control; and the emotions through bhakti. Although one could also argue that each one of them uses all three vehicles but in different degrees and with different emphasis. Disciplining the mind with a certain view, disciplining the body with postures and pranayamas and disciplining the emotions through devotional speech like prayers, mantras and songs and ritual. If we look at these three modes of disciplining oneself we can see that they are for three different type of personalities or for different parts of the person.

“Traditionally the Tantras should cover four topics or stand on four ‘feet’ or ‘supports’ (*pāda*), namely doctrine (*vidya-* or *jñana-pāda*), ritual (*kriyā-pāda*), yoga (*yoga-pāda*) and discipline or correct behaviour (*cārya-pāda*), though only exceptionally do the texts follow this scheme” (Flood, 160). These four topics or supports are covered in Tantra five of the *Tirumantiram* as *cariya* in section 5; *kiriya* in section 6; *yōgam* in section 7; and *ñānam* in section 8. Although, as Prof. Venkatraman mentions above, in the *Tirumantiram* we have *aṛivu*, *aḍakkam* and *anbu*, which could be considered as *aṛivu* equalling *vidya* or *jñana*, *aḍakkam* as *kriyā*, *cārya* and *yoga*, and *anbu* as the path of devotion or bhakti. This is explained in the *Tirumantiram* under the “ñānam” section, verse number 1471:

அறிவும் அடக்கமும் அன்பு உடனே

²⁷ *Aṛivu* can be knowledge, wisdom, instruction or advice according to Winslow’s “A Comprehensive Tamil-English Dictionary” p52.

²⁸ *Aḍakkam* can be restraint, self-control, good behaviour, chastity according to Winslow’s. p. 10.

²⁹ *Anbu* can be love, affection, grace according to Winslow’s p.58.

பிறியா நகர்மன்னும் பேரரு ளாளன்
குறியுங் குணமுங் குரைகழல் நீங்கா
நெறியறி வார்க்கிது நீர்த்தொனி யாமே³⁰

In this section I will give a section by section summary of the *Tirumantiram*. Here, we have to bear in mind, that I will be using mainly the PB version of the *Tirumantiram*, which is the one which was most likely used by Dr. Natarajan, the *Tirumantiram* translator in the Ramakrishna Mutt version. Where necessary and as a supplement, I will also use the Kazhagam version, although this one sometimes follows a different order and at other places it either lacks some of the verses or has some which are not included in the PB version. As a separate project, I hope to some day be able to do a closer study and comparison of these two version and their commentaries. The Kazhagam version is the oldest print of the two. The first printing was in August 1942, whereas the PB first came out in 1978. Since I first started this project with the PB version I will mainly use this one and its commentaries by G. Varatarājan. Depending which edition of the *Tirumantiram* one reads, it either starts with an invocation to Vinayaka, the elephant god, son of Śiva and remover of obstacles, or it starts with the verse “Onṛavan tānē...” A note in the Ramakrishna Mutt version points out that the Vinayaka invocation is most probably an interpolation since Cekkilar says in the *Periya Puranam* that the *Tirumantiram* starts with “Onṛavan tānē...” (p 3). This is most probable since it looks like Dr. Natarajan, the English translator of the RM *Tirumantiram*, most likely used the PB version which includes it, and not the Kazhakam version which does not include it. After the Vinayaka invocation we have the ‘Praise to God (the Protector).’ Including this invocation, the first 112 verses could have been an interpolation which may or may not have belonged with the original text. This of course, could be problematic, since the worship of Ganapathi in south India is late, The first quatrain is a praise for God or as the quatrain says “There is one...³¹” The first fifty verses are usually called the ‘Introduction’ or Pāyiram, they are invocatory and praise Śiva³². The tone is heavy with bhakti or devotion and one could say that it shows the path of bhakti and the importance of grace in order to attain liberation. In this section one sees a definite influence of the bhakti movement. Section two, called “Vētaḥ Ciraṅṅappu” or “The Greatness of the Vedas,” covers verses 51 to 56 and are about the greatness of the Vedas but within the

³⁰ In *Tirumantiram* published by Paḷaniyappa Brothers.

³¹ G. Varatarājan, the commentator for the PB version of the *Tirumantiram* says that “Sivan who is this one who is unique”: “ஓன்றவன் தானே -- ஒரு பொருளாகிய சிவனே” p 1.

³² In these verses it uses different names for god, such as Siva, Nātan (Nathan), Nandi, Isai, Nakkan (Naked).

context of a theology of Śiva, and how they actually proclaim his greatness. It connects Śaiva Siddhānta and the worship of Śiva directly to the Vedas. Section three, “Ākamac Cīrappu” or “The Greatness of the Āgamas,” verses 57 to 66 are about the Āgamas and how they were revealed in both Sanskrit and Tamil. The last two quatrains of this section are interesting in that they praise both Tamil and Sanskrit as privileged languages in which the Āgamas have been revealed³³. Section four, verses 67 to 72, is called “Guru Pārampariyam” or “Lineage of the Gurus” describes eight Nathas or masters, including himself, seven disciples, and four Nandis. Verse 68 actually talks about how he (Tirumūlar) entered into Moolan through Nandi’s grace. Section five, verses 73 to 94 is called ‘Tirumūlar’s History’ and is about Tirumūlar and about how Śiva blessed him. It mentions Tiruvavadutharai in 78 and 79, Tirumūlar worshiping both Śiva and Śakti. It also mentions his tapas under a Bodhi tree much like the Buddha’s. Here Tirumūlar calls it Siva’s Bodhi tree. Section 6, is called “Avaiyaṭakkam³⁴” or “In Modesty” or “In Humility.” In verses 95 through 98 the author humbles himself before starting the proper work. Section seven, “Tirumantirat Tokaicīrappu” or “The Greatness of the *Tirumantiram* Collection” verses 99 and 100 are about the greatness of the *Tirumantiram* and its 3000 verses, and how through the grace of Siva, Tirumūlar wrote them. Section 8, “Gurumaṭa Varalāru” or “Origins of the Gurus’ Lineage Holders,” verses 101 and 102 are about the seven gurus and their orders. Tirumūlar being one of them along with Kalanga, Agora, Maligai Deva, Nadanta, Paramananda and Bhogadeva³⁵. Section nine, “Tirumūrttikaliṅ Cēṭṭa Kaṇiṭṭa Muṟai” or “The Order of Inferior Capacity (power) of the Three Gods”³⁶ verses 103 to 112 are about the greatness of Siva compared to Vishnu and Brahma but also to the one beyond the three. Also, how ignorant people do not know how the three are actually derived from the one (#104). This is the end of the *Pāyiram* chapter.

Tantra One

³³ In quatrain sixty-five it says Ārya and Tamil languages, whereas in quatrain sixty-six, it says Tamil and North languages.

³⁴ According to Winslow, *Avaiyaṭakkam* is “The professed modesty of an author, or the apology he makes in entering on his work, in order to disarm criticism, 2. The modest behavior of a speaker or singer in a public assembly.” (p 47 of his *Tamil-English Dictionary*)

³⁵ All the ones mentioned, he claims, are his disciples.

³⁶ In Kazhagam’s version, this section is simply called *Mummūrttikaliṅ Muṟaimai* or “The Manner (or order) of the Three Gods.” and it also comes as section two of the *Pāyiram*, instead of section nine.

Tantra one, section one is “Upadēcam” (Upadeśa) or “Spiritual Instructions”. verses 113 to 142. This section is much about the need of the grace of Śiva which comes through the guru³⁷. It also references three of the main theological ideas of Śaiva Siddhānta--Pati, Pasu and Pasa, and how they are everlasting³⁸. It also mentions the 36³⁹s in quatrain 125 and 126. Section two, 143 to 167, is called “Yakkai Nilaiyāmai” or “Impermanence of the Body.” This section gives a brief overview of the impermanence of the physical body and the life one leads within society. It does this through a sarcastic view of the life we lead within society. Section three, verses 168 to 173 is called “Celvam Nilaiyāmai” or “Impermanence of Wealth.” It’s topic is about the futility of accumulating riches and the benefit of leading a spiritual life. Section four, 177-186, is called “Impermanence of Youth.” It expounds on how to engage in the path while still young. Section five, 187-196, is called “Uyir Nilaiyāmai” or “Impermanence of Life.” It uses different metaphors like the king’s drum to show how the physical body is abandoned by the life and how beauty and life last only a moment. Section six, 197-198, is called “Kollāmai” or “Non-killing.” It basically says that if you kill you will go to hell. Section seven, 199-200, is called “Pulāl Maruttal” or “Avoiding Meat.” The two quatrains are about avoiding eating meat, killing, stealing, drinking, lusting and lying. Section eight, 201-203, is called “Piraṇmanai Nayavāmai” or “Not Desiring Other’s Wives.” It is not only about not desiring other’s wives but about how men neglect their own wives while desiring other men’s wives. Section nine, 204-208, is called “Makaḷir Iḷivu” or “Women of Low Status.” This section is about the danger of indulging in sex and the danger of women in general. It is a negative view of both sex and women and it is opposed to other sections of the Tirumantiram where it actually talks about the benefits of the sex union in Tantra Three, section 19, “Pariyanga Yōgam” or “Bed Yoga.” Section 10, 209-213, is called “Nalkuravu” or “Poverty.” this section is about how life is a type of poverty without taking refuge in Siva. Section 11, 214-223, is called “Akkiṇi Kāriyam” (Agni Kāriyam) or “Result of Fire (ritual).” Here we see a reference to the Vedic Homa sacrifice but the main point is to underline the fact that Śiva is found within all the fires, as explained in quatrain 222. Section 12, 224 to 237, is called “Antaṇaroḷukkam” or “Proper Behaviour of Brahmins.” This

³⁷ Quatrain 113, line two, mentions how “The cool feet (of Śiva) protected him (Tirumūlar): “*taṇṇiṇra tālait talaikkāval muṇvaittu.*” (p 55 PB *Tirumantiram*).

³⁸ Quatrain 115, line two, says, “Like Pati, Pasu and Pasam are beginning-less”: “*patiyiṇaip porpacu pācam aṇāti*” (p 56 PB *Tirumantiram*).

³⁹ According to Kanti Chandra Pandey, “though the Dualistic Siddhanta School admits three primary categories (1) Pati, (2) Pasu and (3) Pasa: yet it also talks of Thirty-six categories. But they are dependent categories of the above three” (Pandey 73). See also N.K. Singh’s *Saivism in Kashmir*, p. 53.

section is interesting in that it demonstrates not only a positive way of looking at Brahmins and their Vedic rituals, but also what type of actions or ways of behavior actually makes a true Brahmin. Section 13, 238 to 247, is called “Arcāṭci Muṛai” or “the Way of Governance of Kings.” This section gives injunctions of kings’ behavior, and importantly, how they should behave and interact with Brahmins. Section 14, 248 to 249 is called “Vāṇac Cīṛappu” or “The Auspiciousness of Rain.” These two quatrains are about the auspiciousness of rain and how the rain resembles pure love. Section 15, has one quatrain, 250. It is called “Tāṇac Cīṛappu” or “The Auspiciousness of Giving.” It explains the importance of giving, especially food, and how one should serve others before sitting down and eating. Section 16, 251 to 259, is called “Arañceyvāṇ Tīṛam⁴⁰” or “The Quality of Those Who Perform Aram.” This section explains the qualities of those who are charitable and the merit they will get. Section 1, 260 to 269, is called “Arañceyāṇ Tīṛam” or “The Quality of Those Who Do Not Perform Aram.” Here we see a comparison between those who give and attain the grace of Śiva and those who are stingy and the resulting pain and disease from not being charitable. Section 18, 270 to 279, is called “Aṇbu Ceyvārai Arivaṇ Civaṇ” or “Siva Who Knows Those Who Love Him.” This section is full of bhakti and devotion and indicates to what extent bhakti was still a driving force in Tamil Nadu at the time it was written. Section 20, 290 to 299, is called “Kalvi” or “Learning.” This section is about the benefit of education and how it helps to guide one in learning about Siva. Section 21, 300 to 309, is called “Kelvi Kēṭṭamaital” or “Listening and Inquiry.” This section is about how listening to holy words and praising Siva is the way to behave and to obtain many spiritual benefits. Section 22, 310 to 319, is called “Kallāmai” or “Non-Learning.” this section tells of how even the ones who are not learned can attain liberation if they have a vision of the ultimate truth. It basically explains what true learning or true knowledge is. Section 23, 320 to 323, is called “Naduvu Nilai” or “the Middle Path.” According to the PB edition commentator, the topic of this section is about the middle path in regards to awakening the kundalini śakti

⁴⁰ Tīṛam (தீறம்), amongst its many meanings, can signify quality, state or nature as in தன்மை; also strength, vigor, power of force as in வலிமை. Goodness, excellence, eminence, richness, as in மேன்மை. Opulence, wealth, good circumstances as in ஐசுவரியம் (From Winslow’s Tamil-English Dictionary). All of these meanings give the word a polyvalence difficult to translate. The same can be said of many words which give the translator a difficult task in order to convey all the rich meanings which a word can carry. The word Aram (அறம்) has the same difficulty, but usually it refers to moral or religious duty. Also virtue. Very close to the Sanskrit word dharma.

and uniting it to śiva on top of the head above the central channel⁴¹. Section 24,324 to 336, is called “Kaḷḷuṇṇāmai” or “Not Drinking Toddy” This section is about the negativity of drinking and how the ones that follow the left path of tantra, get lost in drinking.

Tantra Two

Tantra 2, Section 1, 337 to 338, is called “Akattiyam” or “Agastya” and as its title implies, it tells the story of the rishi Agastya and how he came to the south. Section 2, 339 to 346, is called “Pativaliyil Vīrattam Eṭṭu” or “The Eight Places of Heroism of the Lord.” This section describes eight myths of Śiva connected to eight different places. Section 3, 347 to 351, is called “Iliṅka Purāṇam” or “Linga Puranam.” This section refers to puranic stories which find their way into Tamil. Here the Tirumantiram seems to use it to develop the sense of bhakti for Śiva. Section 4, 353 to 361, is called “Takkaṅ Vēḷvi” In this section the story of Daksha and Śiva is described. Section 5, 362 to 366, is called “Piraḷayam” (Pralaya) or “Universal Destruction⁴².” Section 6, 367 to 370, is called “Cakkrappēru” or “The Boon of the Chakra.” This section describes myths regarding the chakra of Viṣṇu and how he lost it through his arrogance, and therefore, the story is used to illustrate both the greatness of Śiva as well as his benevolence. Section 7, has one quatrain, number 371, is called “Elumpurum Kapālamum” or “Bones and Skulls.” It refers to Śiva as the one who wears skulls and bones as part of his adornments. Section 8, 372 to 380, is called “Aṭimuṭi Tēṭal” or “Searching the Feet and Head (of Śiva).” It also contains other Puranic stories of Śiva. Section 9, 381 to 410, is called “Paṭaittal” or “Creation.” Here we find a description of creation according to Śaiva Siddhānta creation myth and philosophy. Section 10, 411 to 420, is called “Kāttal” or “Protection.” This section is about Śiva’s pervasiveness in the universe and how he protects all who worship him. Section 11, 421 to 430, is called “Alittal” or “Destruction.” It is not only about destruction but about the different types of mental and spiritual integrations. Section 12, 431 to 440, is called “Maṟaittal” or “Concealment.” Here we find a description of another quality of Śiva, that of concealing himself from his creatures until he bestows his grace on them. Section 13, 441 to 450, is called “Arulaḷ” or “Through Grace.” This is a description of Śiva as the one who bestows grace to his devotees. Section 14, 451 to 491, “Karu Uṟpatti” or “Evolution of the Embryo.” This section is about conception and birth. Section 15, 492 to 500, is called “Mūvakaic Cīva Varkkam”

⁴¹ For example, the *karuttu* or meaning in the commentary of quatrain 320 says, “cakasratalam aṟivil niṟpavar ṅānamutaiyōrāvar,” or “Those who have knowledge of the sahasrara petals (chakra) are in possession of wisdom” (PB *Tirumantiram*. p 150).

⁴² Pralaya is usually described as a cataclysmic destruction which comes at the end of a cyclic yuga or age according to Hindu mythology.

or “The Three Divisions of the Jiva Class.” Here it describes the differences between the Viññānar, the Piraḷayākala, and the Cakalar and how they can each be subdivided, but still, they all still possess the three Mala (impurities) of Āṇava, Maya and Karma. Section 16, 501 to 504, is called “Pāttiram” or “A Worthy Person⁴³” This section is about the behaviour of devotees and the laymen behaviour towards them. Section 17, 505 to 508, is called “Apāttiram” or “The Unworthy.” It shows the futility of giving alms or wealth to people who do not follow god or guru or devotees. Section 18, 509 to 514, is called “Tīrttam⁴⁴” or “Sacred Waters.” This section is more about the esoteric meaning of *Tīrttam* and how devotion is important for the process of purification. Section 19, 515 to 520, is called “Tirukkōyil” or “The Holy Temple.” This section is one of the strongest section in support of temples and the importance of performing temple ritual by Brahmins. Section 20, 521 to 529, is called “Atōmuka Tericaṇam” or “The Auspicious Vision of the Downward Looking Face (of Śiva).” Here we find a description of this unique form of Śiva. Section 21, 526 to 529, is called “Civa Nintai” or “Blasphemy of Śiva.” This section describes what happens to those that worship Śiva and to those that do not worship him. Section 22, 530 to 536, is called “Kuru Nintai” or “Blasphemy of Guru.” Here we find described the consequences of abusing and not respecting not only the guru, but holy people, parents, relatives and wife. Section 23, 537 to 538, is called “Mayēcura Nintai” or “Blasphemy of Worshippers of Mahesvarar⁴⁵.” This section is about the consequences of belittling the devotees of Śiva. Section 24, 539 to 542, is called “Poraiyuṭaimai” or “Patience.” This section is about devotion, and how one has to be patience to receive Śiva’s grace. Section 2, 543 to 548, is called “Periyōrait Tuṇaikkōṭal” or “Receiving Guidance from the Elders.” This last section is about the benefits of being in company with the devotees and wise elders. This is the end of Tantra 2.

Tantra Three

⁴³ This can also contain the meaning of a ‘qualified’ person to receive teachings. It is sometimes used to describe mendicants or devotees, which is probably the case here, since the four poems are about devotees of Śiva.

⁴⁴ Tīrttam is a word loaded with meaning and symbolism. It carries the meaning of sacred river, e.g. the seven sacred rivers of India. The Ganges being the most important one in a pan-Indian context. It can also mean consecrated water used in purificatory rituals. It is always connected to purification and any ritual whether internal or external, esoteric or exoteric.

⁴⁵ This section’s name is actually “Blasphemy of Mahesvara” but the PB commentator says “மகேசுரரைப் பூசை செய்பவர் மயேசுரர்” “Mayēcurar are those who do puja (worship) to Mahesvarar (a name of śiva)” PB p 256. The context is also about worshippers of Śiva, therefore the commentator’s explication makes sense.

In Tantra 3, section 1, 549 to 552, is called “Aṭṭānka Yōkam” or usually known as “Ashtanga Yoga.” It gives a general description of what this yoga is about and especially in relation to Śiva. Section 2, 553 to 554, is called “Iyamam” or “Yama.” It mentions the principle rules of Yama and how devotion is important. Section 3, 555 to 557, is called “Niyamam” or “Niyama.” This section also details the different rules of Niyama and the importance of devotion. Section 4, 558 to 563, is called “Ātaṇam” or what is usually known as “Āsanas.” It lists some of the main Āsanas is dedicated to asanas and explains the importance of physical training as part of the path. Section 5, 564 to 576, is called “Pirāṇāyāmam” or “Pranayama.” It explains in detail many of the main pranayama or breathing exercises and their benefits. Section 6, 578 to 587, is called “Pirattiyākāram” or “Pratyahara.” This section deals with how to withdraw the mind through the use of techniques of breath control. Section 7, 588 to 597, is called “Tārāṇai” or “Dharana.” This section explains how to practice concentration, mainly through the use of breathing techniques. Section 8, 598 to 617, is called “Tiyāṇam” or “Dhyana.” This section describes how to practice various meditation and concentration techniques. Section 9, 618 to 631, is called “Camāti” or “Samadhi.” It describes different types of mental absorptions. Section 10, 632 to 639, is called “Aṭṭānkayōkap Pēru” or “The Results of the Eight Limbed Yoga.” This section does not actually mention the “results” of the practice of Aṭṭānkayōka, but describes more the importance of bhakti or devotion towards Śiva. Section 11, 640 to 711, is called “Aṭṭamā Citti” or “The Eight Great Siddhis.” This section explains the attainment of the eight yogic powers or siddhis. Section 12, 712 to 723, is called “Kalai Nilai” or “Stability of Kala.” This section is mainly about the practice of pranayama and the results of such practice. Section 13, 724 to 739, is called “Kāyacitti Upāyam” or “The Practice of Kāyasiddhi.” This section explains many breathing techniques which according to the author, prolong the life of the practitioner. Section 14, 740 to 769, is called “Kāla Cakkaram” or “The Wheel of Time.” This section gives more details regarding the practice of different breathing techniques. It also gives more information regarding the plexus or cakras related to kundalini yoga. Section 15, 770 to 789, is called “Āyul Parīṭcai” or “Proof of Longevity.” This section explains how to measure the life span of an individual by measuring the strength of their breath. It also explains what are the different experiences one might have through the practice of pranayama. Section 16, 790 to 796, is called “Vāracaram” or “Flow of Breath During the Week.” This section explains how the breath flows and changes depending on the day of the week and the moon’s cycle. Section 17, 797 to 798, is called “Vāracūlam” or “Inauspicious Days.” This section describes the inauspicious directions depending on the day of the week and how to minimize it. Section 18, 799 to 824, is called “Kēcari Yōkam” or “Kechari Yoga.” This section is about how to practice pranayama along

with kechhari mudra. It also describes the benefits of such practice. Section 19, 825 to 844, is called “Pariyaṅka Yōkam” “Pariyanga Yoga.” This section elucidates the practice of sexual yoga with a partner, and all its benefits, as well as precautions and dangers. Section 20, 845 to 850, is called “Amuritāraṇai” or “Urine System.” This section describes how to use urine as a therapy for longevity of the body. Section 21, 851 to 883, is called “Cantira Yōkam” or “Lunar Yoga.” This section describes a particular type of yoga called Lunar Yoga, which incorporates the practice of pranayama along with the cycle of the moon and sun. This is the end of Tantra Three.

Tantra Four

Tantra Four, section 1, 884 to 913, is called “Acapai” or “Ajapa.” This section is mainly about how to form and chant the Śiva mantra; the greatness of Chidambaram, the greatness of the three letter mantra AUM, and all of its meanings. Section 2, 914 to 1002 is called “Tiruvampala Cakkram.” This section is mainly about how to draw different yantras or cakras⁴⁶ using mainly the Siva mantra. Section 3, from 1003 to 1014 is called “Aruccanai” or “Archana” and is mainly about the Kriya practices and how they are an inferior path in relation to Jnana and Bhakti. Section 4, from 1015 to 1044 is called “Navakuṅṭam” or “The Nine Sacrificial Pits.” This section gives an esoteric meaning to the nine fires usually associated with exoteric rituals. Section 5th, from 1045 to 1074 is called “Cattipētam--Tiripurai Cakkaram” or “Śaktibheda--Tripura Chakra.” These verses describe the goddess Tiripurai and other goddesses related to her. Section 6, from 1075 to 1123 is called “Vayiravi Mantiram” or “Bhairavi Mantra.” This section elaborates different aspects of śakti and how to meditate on her. Section 7, from 1124 to 1154 is called “Pūrṇa Cakti” or “Purna Śakti”. It continues the elaborations on śakti and her attributes. Section 8, from 1155 to 1254, is called “Ātāravātēyam” or “The Support and The Supported.” It is a praise to both Śakti and Śiva, but it mostly elaborates her worship in her many forms, and what attainments it gives. Part 9, from 1255 to 1290, is called “Ēroḷi Cakkaram” or “The Chakra of Beautiful Light.” This section explains about the five elements as well as about the importance of different sounds which form mantras. It also gives some information regarding astrology and the twelve astrological signs. It contains a reference to the importance of sounding the letter A while meditating on the ēroḷi chakra and moving the prana energy upward within the central channel. Section 10, from 1291 to 1296 is called “Vayiravac Cakkaram” or “Bhairava⁴⁷ Chakra” and how to worship with it, e.g. what days one should do the worship and what the

⁴⁶ Yantras and Cakras and Mandalas are usually different types of diagrams which can incorporate mantras and deities and are used in yogic practices.

⁴⁷ Vayirava or Bhairava is another name and aspect of Śiva in his more wrathful form.

results are when performed properly. Section 11, from 1297 to 1306 is called “Cāmpavi Maṅṭalac Cakkaram” or “Sambhavi Mandala Chakra.” This section mainly describes how to use and make the Sambhavi Mandala Chakra as a yogic practice. Section 12, from 1307 to 1318 is called “Puvanapati Cakkaram” or “Bhuvanapathi Chakra.” Mainly it is about how to form the chakra using the letters and what colors the letters should have. It also describes how she looks and what benefits she gives to the practitioner. Section 13, from 1319 to 1418, is called “Navākkari⁴⁸ Cakkaram” or “Navakkari Chakra.” This section seems to be about the Sri Chakra and how to make it, perform ritual to it and about the different goddesses connected with it and what their peculiarities are. It talks about the essential bijas⁴⁹ for the nine Śaktis, being Srim, Klim, Hrim, Aim, Gaum, Krim, Haum, Aum and Saum. Tantra Four ends here.

Tantra Five

Tantra 5, section 1, from 1419 to 1422 is called “Cutta Caivam” or “Śuddha Śaivam.” This section gives a brief explanation of the path of Cutta Caivam and its relationship to Vedanta and other paths. Number 1421 is a very important poem since it denotes a step by step process to the path. Section 2, 1423 to 1425, is called “Acutta Caivam.” This section gives more details about the Cutta Caivam path and how it relates to the access of knowledge. Section 3, 1426 to 1437, is called ‘Mārkkā Caivam’ or ‘Mārga Śaivam.’ This section expounds the path of Śaiva Śiddhanta as perceived by Tirumūlar. Section 4, 1438 to 1442, is called “Kaṭuñcutta Caivam” or “Rigorous Śuddha Saivam.” This section explains the discipline of people who follow this path. Section 5, 1443 to 1450, is called “Cariyai” or “Chariya.” This section explains the importance of Cariyai as part of the path, and how it relates to the notions of bhakti and pilgrimage. Section 6, 1451 to 1456, is called “Kiriya” or “Kriya.” This section explains the relationship and the progressive path of the bhakta or devotee, through cariyai, kiriyai, yōka and nāṇa (chariya, kriya, yōga and jñāna). Section 7, 1457 to 1466, is called “Yōkam” or “Yoga.” This section explains the importance of yōka and devotion, as two essential elements of the path. Also, the subdivisions of the yōka practice. Section 8, 1467 to 1476, is called “Nāṇam” or “Jñānam”. This section describes the path of knowledge integrated within a path of devotion. Section 9, 1477 to 1487,

⁴⁸ Navākkari means ‘nine letter,’ thus here the ‘navākkari cakkaram’ is the ‘nine-letter-cakkara.’

⁴⁹ Bijas are the essential seed mantras or unique sounds which represent a particular deity. They are also, the deity itself as sound which precedes their form aspect.

is called “Caṇmārkkam⁵⁰” or “Sanmārga.” This section explains who are the ones that follow this path. Section 10, 1488 to 1494, is called “Cakamārkkam” or “The Path of Sahamarga.” This section explains how the Caṇmārkkam is equal to the Cakamārkkam path. Section 11, 1495 to 1501, is called “Caṇputtira Mārkkam” or “The Virtuous Path.” This section explains how one can take the position of the son of god, as a way of devotion, to reach the goal. Section 12, 1502 to 1508, is called “Tāca⁵¹ Mārkkam” or “The Path of Devotee.” Section 13, 1507 to 1508, is called “Cālōkam” or “Sālokam.” This section explains how being in god’s realm (cālōkam), is one early stage in the path. Section 14, 1509, is called “Cāmīpam⁵²” or “Sāmīpam.” It explains the different types of knowledges attained depending in which stage one is. Section 15, 1510 to 1511, is called “Cārūpam” or “In His Form.” This section is describes how to be one with that state. Section 16, 1512 to 1513, is called “Cāyucciyam” or “Sayujyam” (one with god or in union). This section explains that this stage is the one where the practitioner or devotee, becomes Śiva himself. Section 17, 1514 to 1517, is called “Cattinipātam” or “Descent of Śakti.” This section explains what the experience of grace is like, as light and bliss. Sub-section 17 (a), 1518 to 1522, is called “Mantataram” or “Exceedingly Slow.” This section is about grace received from Śiva and Śakti. Sub-section 17 (b), 1523 to 1526, is called “Tīviram” or “Rapidly.” This section continues the explanation of the previous section. Sub-section 17(c), is called “Tīvirataram” or “More Rapidly.” This section continues the explanation of how grace works. Section 18, 1530 to 1549, is called “Arucamayap Piṇakkam” or “Disagreement of the Six Religions.” This section basically proposes that the only true path is the one which has faith in Śiva. Section 19, 1550 to 1556 is called “Nirācāram” or “Impurity.” This section is an explanation of why it is important to follow the path of Śiva. Section 20, 1557 to 1572, is called “Uṭcamayam” or “Inner Paths.” This section proclaims how the path of Śiva is the right path to reach the goal. This is the end of Tantra five.

Tantra Six

Tantra 6, section 1, 1573 to 1589, is called “Civakuru Taricaṇam” “The Darshan of the Śiva Guru.” It is mainly about how the guru is Śiva himself. Also, about the attitude the disciple should have towards the guru. Section 2, from 1590 to 1604 is

⁵⁰ According to Winslow’s Tamil-English Dictionary, Caṇmārkkam is “[t]he religious course of the ஞானி or the fourth order of the Saiva system” (p 424, Winslow’s). The Tamil Lexicon describes it as “the path of virtue” or “the path of wisdom.”

⁵¹ Tāca or Dāsa can be a slave, servant or devotee. Here it refers of the taking of the attitude of a slave or servant of god, as a path to reach the goal.

⁵² Cāmīpam usually means ‘in the company of god.’ It is a higher stage than Cālōkam, which is only being ‘in the world of god’ but not necessarily close to him.

called “Tiruvāṭip Pēru” of “Obtaining the Grace of the Guru’s Feet.” It is mainly about the grace of the guru’s feet. Here the feet symbolize the guru’s grace and the bestowal of wisdom through him. Section 3, from 1605 to 1613, is called “Ñāturū, Ñāna, Ñēyam” or “The Knower, Knowledge and The Known.” This section is about these three categories in the process of yoga. Section 4, from 1614 to 1623, is called “Tuṛavu” or “Renunciation”. Here it talks about the benefit of renunciation and how it can lead to liberation. Section 5, from 1624 to 1632, is called “Tavam” or “Tapas.”⁵³ It is mainly about the benefit of Tapas or “intensive practice” and the need to do tapas until one reaches the goal. Here it also argues in 1631, the importance of doing tapas as opposed to arguing about philosophy. Also, in 1632 it explains when the disciplining of the body can be stopped. Section 6, from 1633 to 1644, is called “Tava Nintai” or “Misuse of Tapas.” This section is basically a guide as to when one needs to do tapas and when it becomes unnecessary. Basically it states that if you have reached the state of liberation through grace and you find yourself in that state, then it is no longer necessary to perform tapas, otherwise, one should be performing tapas. Part 7, from 1645 to 1654, is called “Arulūṭaimaiyiṅ Ñāṅam Varutal” or “The Guiding Grace of Wisdom”. This section is mainly about god’s grace and the wisdom it confers. Section 8, from 1655 to 1660, is called “Avavēṭam” or “Disrespectful Disguise”. This section is about people who wear the robes of a mendicant or ascetic in order to fool people and the results. Section 9, from 1661 to 1664, is called “Tavavēṭam” or “Robes of Tapas.” This section describes the accoutrement of a Śaiva yogin. Section 10, from 1665 to 1667, is called “Tirunīru” of “Holy Ashes.” It is mainly about the results of wearing holy ashes and the power they contain. Section 11, from 1668 to 1675, is called “Ñāna Vēṭam” or “Robes of Wisdom.” This is an interesting section in that it describes not only what wearing the robes truly mean, but also who are the ones that wear it, without having true knowledge. In 1670, it also gives a distinction between Śiva ñānis and Śiva yogins, but at the same time saying that neither of them need the four paths if they are already liberated. Section 12, from 1676 to 1679, is called “Śaiva Attire.” This section is a continuation of the explanation of who are those who wear the attire of followers of Śaivism. Section 13, from 1680 to 1689, is called “Apakkuvaṅ” or “The Unfit.” This section describes the difference between people who follow the path and those who do not. Section 14, from 1690 to 1703 is called, “Pakkuvaṅ” or “The Mature One.” This section describes the true disciple and his characteristics.

Tantra Seven

⁵³ According to Georg Feuerstein in his *The Deeper Dimension of Yoga*, “Tapas is any practice that pushes the mind against its own limits, and the key ingredient of *tapas* is endurance” (143).

Section 1, from 1704 to 1711 is called “Ārātāram” or “The Six Supports⁵⁴.” This section describes the six subtle centers or chakras, and some of their attributes. Section 2, from 1712 to 1725 is called “Aṅṭa Liṅkam” or “The Cosmic Linga⁵⁵.” This section describes certain aspects of the Linga and Linga worship as well as different kinds of Lingas. Section 3, from 1726 to 1729 is called “Piṅṭa Liṅkam” or “Microcosmic Linga.” This section correlates the human body to the Śiva Linga. It is more about bhakti or devotion to Śiva than about any particular aspect of Linga worship, except for the beginning of 1726 which talks about how the human form is like a Śiva Linga. Section 4, from 1730 to 1752, is called “Catāciva Liṅkam” or “Sadāśiva Linga.” Number 1735 describes the 5 faces of Śiva in terms of color. Section 5, from 1753 to 1762, is called “Ātma Liṅkam” This section correlates the lingam to the atma or soul in the heart. Section 6, from 1763 to 1772, is called “Ñāṅa Liṅkam.” It elucidates the path of bhakti and the importance of worship in order to obtain wisdom. Section 7, from 1773 to 1777, is called “Civa Liṅkam” or “Śiva Linga.” This section describes Śiva as pervading the water, wind and fire. Also, it describes how to do puja or worship to him, and lastly of how to practice kundalini pranayama to accomplish this state. Section 8, from 1778 to 1791, is called “Campiratāyam” or “The Spiritual Tradition.” This section is about how Śiva’s grace gives ultimate liberation and how by true devotion to him one can attain all. Section 9, from 1792 to 1813, is called “Tiruvaruḷ Vaippu” or “The Treasure of Grace.” This section is about Śiva’s grace and how Tirumūlar has received that grace from him and how it has affected him. Section 10, from 1814 to 1822, is called “Aruḷoḷi” or “The Light of Grace.” This section is also about devotion and grace. It describes how grace is another name for ‘vast space.’ Section 11, from 1823 to 1846, is called “Civapūcai” or “Śiva Worship.” This is another section on bhakti. It does not give any details on how to do Śiva worship, but is more general, discussing more the results of worshipping Śiva. Section 12, from 1847 to 1856, is called “Kuru Pūcai” or “Guru Worship.” This section is also about bhakti. It equates the path of ñāṅa or wisdom to the performance of archana or worship. Number 1854 is interesting and unique in the sense that it talks about pranayama and about reducing the body to its elemental constituents (tattvas) as a mode of worshipping Sadaśiva. Section 13, from 1857 to 1867, is called “Makēcuvāra Pūcai” or “Maheśvara Worship.” This section is about the merit of feeding devotees of Śiva. Section 14, from 1868 to 1883, is called “Aṭiyār Perumai” or “The Greatness of Devotees.” This section is mainly

⁵⁴ The six ātāram or supports, here refers to the six plexuses or chakras in the subtle energetic body, which are envisioned in many tantric practices.

⁵⁵ Linga is usually described as a phallus representation, but within the tradition of Śiva, it is usually considered the formless form of the deity, which also represents the male aspect of the dualistic concept of śiva and śakti.

about the greatness of Śiva Yoga Jnanis or practitioners of Śiva yoga, and how the land where they live prospers. It is also about the greatness of Śiva himself. Section 15, from 1884 to 1885, is called “Pōcaṇa Viti” or “Rules for Feeding.” Section 16, from 1886 to 1891, is called “Piṭcā Viti” or “Rules for Receiving Alms.” This section is not really about rules for begging, but more about the quality of begging that Śiva and his followers perform. Section 17, from 1892 to 1901, is called “Muttirai Pētam.” or “Variations of Mudras.” This section explains the benefits of Kechari mudra and other mudras, like Sambhavi and Jnana Mudra. Section 18, from 1902 to 1909, is called “Pūraṇakkukaineṛic Camāti” or “The Path-to-the-Perfect-Cave Samadhi.” This section explains different experiences of samadhi. Section 19, from 1910 to 1922, is called “Camātik Kiriya” or “Samadhi Rituals.” It describes how ṇāni or holy men should be buried. Section 20, from 1923 to 1936, is called “Vinturpaṇam” or “Rise of Bindu.” This section is about Bindu and Nada, two important concepts in tantra. It talks about how Bindu is formed from food, how not to waste it; how it is transformed into mind and kalas. Section 21, from 1937 to 1974, is called “Vintucayam-Pōkacaravōṭṭam” or “Mastering of Bindu--Regulating Its Movement.” This section is interesting since it gives certain disciplines of the body in reference to sexual activity for the refinement of Bindu. How to sublimate the energy, when to have sexual intercourse, how to perform it, how one’s attitude and concentration should be. It also explains the result of not wasting Bindu. It seems from this section that abstinence or/and non-ejaculation are prescribed. Section 22, from 1975 to 1984 is called “Ātittanilai Aṇṭātittan” or “The Position of the Sun--The Cosmic Sun.” This section seems to be about a different aspect of the sun which is not physical, as well as the physical aspect of the sun. Mainly it deals with how the sun affects the different chakras. Section 23, from 1985 to 1987 is called “Piṇṭātittan” or “The Microcosmic Sun.” The two verses in this section are about the internal sun and its relationship to the chakras. Section 24, from 1988 to 1992 is called “Maṇavātittan” or “The Mental Sun.” This section is about the light of the sun within and how it mixes with the moon’s rays. Section 25, from 1993 to 2000, is called “Nānātittan” or “The Sun of Wisdom”. This section is more about Śiva. It compares him to light. Section 26, 2001 to 2004, is called “Civātittan” or “The Sun of Śiva.” This section is about the relationship between Śiva and the sun. Section 27 has two verses, 2005 and 2006, and is called “Nature of Jiva Prana, and is about the relationship between the Jiva and Siva, and how they are truly one. Section 28, from 2007 to 2011 is called “Puruṭaṇ” or “Purusha.” This section is also about the relation between the Purusha and Śiva; how he is within us but we are also within him. Section 29, from 2011 to 2014, is called “Cīvaṇ” or “Jiva.” It is about how the jiva or pasu (the soul which is not liberated) must be led back to god. Section 31, from 2017 to 2022, is called “Pōtaṇ” or “God.” This section is about Śiva who

bestows grace but it is also about the jiva. Section 32, from 2023 to 2030, is called “Aintintiriyam Aṭakkum Arumai” or “The Difficulty of Mastering the Five Senses.” This section is about the benefit of mastering the five senses. Section 33, from 2031 to 2043, is called “Aintintiriyam Aṭakku Muraimai” or “The Method to Master the Five Senses.” This section gives two basic methods of working with the senses; one, through bhakti or devotion and another through ñāna or knowledge. Section 34, from 2044 to 2048, is called “Acarḱuru Nerī” or “Ways of an Improper Spiritual Preceptor.” This section mentions the qualities of gurus who are improper, and some qualities of the proper gurus. Section 35, from 2049 to 2066, is called “Carḱuru Nerī” or “Ways of A Proper Spiritual Preceptor.” This section is about how one can recognize the true guru and how this type of guru can endow one with liberation. This section also shows the significance of the feet of the guru. Section 36, from 2067 to 2083, is called “Kūṭāvōlukkam” or “Improper Conduct.” This section gives examples of conduct that will not gain you the grace of god. It also gives indications of the difference between prana, awareness and knowledge. There is also mention of the tattvas or ‘inherent qualities.’ Section 37, from 2084 to 2101, is called “Kēṭu Kaṅṭiraṅkal” or “Seeing the Ruin and Feeling Pity.” This section is a reminder of the rarity of human birth. It also presents the importance of both yoga and bhakti in order to attain the goal. Section 38, from 2102 to 2121, is called “Itōpatēcam” or “Friendly Advice.” Most of this section is on bhakti to Śiva and to the guru. It talks about Mukti, Jnana and Nada but in reference to Siva in 2115. Also, the last verse is about how the guru is the lord himself (2121). This is the end of Tantra Seven.

Tantra Eight

Section 1, from 2122 to 2138, is called “Uṭalir Pañcapētam” or “Five Characteristics of the Body.” This section stresses the importance of the physical body for the practice of the path. Section 2, from 2139 to 2141, is called “Uṭalviṭal” or “Leaving the Body.” This section is about the wrong and conceited manner of looking at the body and how perishable it is. Section 3, from 2142 to 2166, is called “Avattaipētam--Kīlālavattai⁵⁶” or “Different States--Lower States.” This section is interesting in the way that it describes the relationship between the Tattvas and where they reside. Section 4, from 2167 to 2183, is called “Mattiya Cāḱkirāvattai” or “Mid-Wakeful-State.” Quatrain 2180 is interesting in that it mentions the sound of the letter “A” as the primal tattva. This section also has an interesting reference to pranayama in 2177 and 2178. Section 5, from 2184 to 2186, is called “Attuvāḱkaḱ” or “Advanced Steps.” The most important point

⁵⁶ Avattai are states of the conditioned soul. Five according to quatrains 2142 and 2143: Waking, Dream, Deep Sleep, Turiya and Turiyatita. Also, see PB commentary on these quatrains (p 202-3).

about this section is the mention of the fifth state (Turiyatita). Section 6, from 2187 to 2226, is called “Cutta Naṇavāti Paruvam” or “Total Wakefulness State and Other States.” This section describes sub-states within the main five states. The practice of Kriya, Yoga and Jnana in relation to these states. Section 7, from 2227 to 2268, is called “Kēvala, Cakala, and Cuttam” or “The States of Kēvala, Sakala, Suddha.” This chapter explains a bit about the different states which a human can attain, and how these states are related to each other. Section 8, from 2269 to 2295, is called “Parāvattai” or “The Stage-Beyond-Stage.” This section has more detailed explanations of the different Turiya states that can be attained. Section 9, 2296, which has only one verse, is called “Mukkuṇa Nirkkuṇam” or “The Triple Gunas and The Nirguna.” It describes the relationship between the three guna and the three lower states of consciousness, and the relationship between the Turiya state and Nirguna. Section 10, from 2297 to 2298, is called “Aṇṭāti Pētam” or “The Divisions of the Universes.” It basically says that there are countless universes in space. Section 11, from 2299 to 2300, is called “Patiṇorāntāṇamum Avattaiyeṇak Kāṇal” or “Meditation on The Eleventh State which is Avattai.” It says that in the eleventh state the tattvas do not function anymore. Section 12, from 2302 to 2303, has only two verses, and is called “Kalavu Celavu” or “Mixing and Exiting.” Basically saying that the Jagratatita state is beyond the Kevala, Pralayala and Sakala. Section 13, from 2304 to 2354, is called “Niṇmalāvattai” or “Avasta Which Is Devoid of Malas.” This chapter is about the way to enter into the state of Śiva; the importance of silence; of being pure and purifying the elements; how to receive the grace of shakti; action-less contemplation; grace. Section 14, from 2355 to 2369, is called “Aṇivutayam” or “Dawn of Wisdom.” This chapter is about wisdom and how true wisdom transcends both knowledge and ignorance; the need for Śiva’s grace for true wisdom to be experienced. Section 15, 2370 to 2404, is called “Āraṇtam” or “The Six Limbs.” This section not only talks about the six paths which are Vedānta, Siddhānta, Nadānta, Bodhānta, Yogānta and Kalānta, but also reconciles both Vedānta and Siddhānta into one, saying that both have the same goal and both derive from Śiva. Section 16, 2405 to 2424, is called “Patipacupācam Vēriṇmai” or “The Undifferentiated States of The Supreme, The Bound Soul and The Defilement.” This section describes the importance of grace for the Pacu or Bound Soul to be rid of Pācam (Defilement). Section 17, 2425 to 2434, is called “Aṭittalai Yariyumtiraṅkūral” or “Knowledge of the Relationship Between the Head and Feet⁵⁷.” Section 18, 2435 to 2436, is called “Mukkurram” or “Three Faults.” This section explains the three faults as lust, anger and

⁵⁷ The implication here is the relationship between the devotee’s head which receives the grace, and the feet of the deity’s feet which represent grace. Additionally and a more esoteric meaning, is the head as the seventh chakra situated above the head, and the feet as symbolic of the first chakra situated at the base of the body (see quatrain 2426).

ignorance. Section 19, 2437 to 2443, is called “Muppatam” or “The Three States.” This has a peculiar explanation of Tat Tvam Asi. It also describes the states which transcend the thought of God(2443). Section 20, 2445 to 2451, is called “Mupparam” or “The Three Eminent States.” This section describes three higher states of consciousness. Section 21, 2452 to 2465, is called “Paralaṭcaṇam” or “The Attributes of Para.” This section expands on the different attributes of higher states of consciousness. Section 22, 2466 to 2473, is called “Mutturiyam” or “The Three Turiyas.” This section explains the three Turiya states, Cīvaturiya, Paraturiya and Civaturiya. Section 23, 2474 to 2477, is called “Mummutti” or “The Three Liberations.” The three *mutti* or liberations are Cīva-Mutti, Para-Mutti and Civa-Mutti. Section 24, 2478 to 2484, is called “Muccorūpam” or “The Triple Forms.” The triple forms are form, formless and formless form. Section 25, 2485 to 2487, is called “Mukkarāṇam” or “The Three Functions.” It explains that Cīva, Para and Śiva are one. Section 26, 2488 to 2494, is called “Muccūṇiya Tontattaci” or “The Three Voids of ‘You-Are-That’.” This section explains in various ways the meaning of ‘Tat-Tvam-Asi’ or ‘You-Are-That.’” Section 27, 2495 to 2500, is called “Muppāl” or “Three Spaces.” The three spaces are Māya, Pōta and Upacānta. Section 28, 2501 to 2505, is called “Kāriya Kāraṇavupāti” or “Attributes of The Cause and The Causal.” Here it gives an interpretation of the mantras Aum and Sivaya. Section 29, 2506 to 2511, is called “Upacāntam” or “Tranquility. Basically explaining how the state of peace or tranquility is reached and how it is beyond the Cīva Turiya and Para Turiya states. Section 30, 2513 to 2526, is called “Puṛaṅkūrāmai” or “Total Speechlessness.” This section is more about mediating and thinking constantly about Śiva. Section 31, 2527 to 2536, is called “Eṭṭitalk Kamala Mukkuṇa Avattai” or “The State of the Three Gunas in the Eight Petalled Lotus.” Here there is a reference to the seventh chakra. In 2532 it also mentions transcending the seven centers and going beyond to the eight. But from another poem it seems to still be within the body as opposed to outside or higher on up. He also mentions the eight petalled lotus as Mount Meru (2535), as well as two higher centers, ninth and tenth, located above the eight. Section 32, 2537 to 254, is called “Onpān Avattai Onpān Apimāni” or “Nine Stages and Nine Aspirants.” This section names different states but does not describe them in any great detail. Section 33, 2546 to 2557, is called “Cutācuttam” or “Pure and Impure.” This section talks about the Vedas, karma, maya, kechari mudra and kundalini, the purity and impurity of the body and the worship of Śiva and his grace. Section 34, 2558 to 2565, is called “Muttinintai” or “Denial of Liberation.” This section is about the benefit of following the Śiva path and the result of not believing in it. Section 35, “Ilakkaṇāt Tirayam.” or is called “The Three Qualities.” Tirumūlar here explains basically that the true state goes beyond any grammatical explanation. Section 36, 2568 to 2586, is called “Tattuvamaci

Vākkiyam” or “The Statement ‘Your-Are-That.’” This section is about the different ways to attain to the Truth or to Śiva; through the mantra ‘tat tvam asi’ or ‘tvam tat asi’; through the mantra ‘om’ and through bhakti. Section 37, 2587 to 2594, is called “Vicuvak Kirācam” or “Total Immersion.” This section is about the cīva uniting with Śiva as well as Śiva absorbing the cīva completely. Section 38, 2595 to 2609, is called “Vāymai” or “Sublime Truth.” This section shows the importance of grace in order to get the experience of pure truth. Section 39, 2610 to 2612, is called “Ñāñiceyal” or “The Works of a Sage.” This section describes sages. Section 40, 2613 to 2622, is called “Avāvaṛuttal” or “Cutting of Desires.” This is about how through Śiva’s grace desires can be cut and one becomes a sage. Section 41, 2623 to 2632, is called “Paktiyuṭaimai” or “The State of Devotion.” This section is about the importance of bhakti or devotion. Section 42, 2633 and 2634, is called “Muttiyuṭaimai” or “The State of Liberation.” This section is about receiving Śiva’s grace and being liberated through it. Section 43, 2635 to 2648, is called “Cōtanai” or “Meditation.” This section is also about Śiva’s grace and its importance in obtaining the goal. This section is the last section of Tantra Eight.

Tantra Nine

Tantra nine, section 1, 2649 to 2655, is called “Kurumaṭa Taricaṇam” or “The Vision of the Monastery of the Guru.” This section shows the importance of the *maṭam* or monastery, the importance of the guru or spiritual preceptor, and the importance of knowing that Śiva is within and not without, in anything external. Section 2, 2656 to 2674, is called “Ñāñakuru Taricaṇam” or “The Vision of the Wisdom Guru.” Here it seems to indicate that the *ñāna kuru* or the ‘spiritual preceptor’ is none other than Śiva himself. Section 3, 2675 to 2680, is called “Piraṇava Camāti” or “The Contemplation on the Piraṇava.” This section extols the importance of the mantra *Aum*. Section 4, 2681 to 2697, is called “Oḷi” or “Light.” This section talks about how Śiva is the supreme light and how one can merge with this light. Section 5, 2698 to 2708, is called “Tūla Pañcākkaram” or “Exoteric Five-Letter Mantra.” This section is mainly about the five-letter mantra of Śiva and how it relates to the chakras and how it relates to the Sanskrit alphabet. Section 6, 2709 to 2721, is called “Cūkkuma Pañcākkaram” or “Subtle Five-Letter Mantra.” This section explains how the five-letter mantra that is related to Śiva, Śakti, Cīva, Tirodayi or Mala and Maya. Also how chanting the mantra leads to liberation. Section 7, 2718 to 2721, is called “Aticūkkuma Pañcākkaram.” “The Most Subtle Five-Letter Mantra.” This section gives more details about the benefits of it more about the five-letter mantra. Section 8, 2722 to 2803, is called “Tirukkūttut Taricaṇam.” or “The Vision of the Holy Dance.” This section gives different explanation of Śiva’s dance and what the *mudras* or hand gestures in his dance symbolize. It also explains a bit about the Śiva mantra. Section 9, 2804 to

2812, is called “Ākācappēru” or “The Realization of Space.” This section shows a close connection between *ākāca* or space and light. Section 10, 2813 to 2824, is called “Ñāñōtayam” or “The Rising of Wisdom.” this section connects wisdom with devotion to Śiva. Section 11, 2825 to 2834, is called “Cattiya Ñāñānantam” or “Truth, Wisdom and Bliss.” This section is about the three states of consciousness. Section 12, 2935 to 2846, is called “Corūpa Utayam” or “Manifestation of the Natural State.” This section is about the manifestation of Śiva and what it represents. Section 13, 2847 to 2852, is called “Ūl” or “Fate.” Here it explains that everything comes out of the act you do before. Section 14, 2853 to 2855, is called “Civataricaṇam” or “The Vision of Śiva.” This section is about the grace of Śiva towards his devotees. Section 15, 2856 to 2863, is called “Civacorūpa Taricaṇam” or “The Vision of Śiva’s Svarupa Form.” This section describes in various ways the highest state to be attained according to Tirumūlar. Section 16, 2864 to 2865, is called “Mutti Pētam Karuma Niruvāṇam” or “Liberation, Discrimination, Karma Nirvana.” This section is about different states attained by a practitioner of this path. Section 17, 2866 to 2935, is called “Cūniya Campāṣaṇai” or “Subtle Language.” This section is about the double-entendre of some of the poems, and it plays with different meanings or interpretations of words. Section 18, 2936 to 2953, is called “Mōṇa Camāti” or “The Contemplation of Silence.” Most of this section is about the fragility of language to describe different experiential states. Section 19, 2954 to 2956, is called “Varaiyurai Māṭci” or “The Splendour of the Boundless.” This section gives hints about the experience of the boundless. Section 20, 2957 to 2981, is called “Aṇaintōr Taṇmai” or “The Nature of the Realized.” Section 21, 2982 to 3025, is called “Tōttiram” or “Eulogy.” This section is in praise of Śiva. Section 22, 3026 to 3046, is called “Carva Viyāpi” or “The All Pervasive.” This section is also in praise of Śiva but the last one (3046) is about the text and Tirumūlar. Section 23, 3047, is called “Vālttu” or “Praise.” This section has one quatrain and is on the greatness of Śiva. This concludes Tantra 9 which is the last tantra.

CHAPTER THREE

Discipline of the Body in the *Tirumantiram*

In this section I would like to present as a project the study of the *Tirumantiram*, a 12th century text, as a work which plays an important role in the understanding of Tamil ethics. I would like to use ethics in the sense that Foucault uses it, that is, “ethics as a history of forms of moral subjectivation and of those practices of the self intended to support and ensure the constitution of oneself as a moral subject” (*The Hermeneutics of the Subject* xix). In the Chola Period in south India, this text seems to have tapped many sources and traditions within the subcontinent, and in that way, it generally shows the development of subjectivity within most probably, elite groups, especially males, in the formation of themselves as moral subjects. How was ethics viewed in 12th century south India amongst these men? How did their practices of the self shaped their view of society and their way of acting within that society? How did it shape their subjectivity? How was their energy invested? What kind of practices did they have? What was the source of these practices? Who conferred these practices on them? What did they see as the goal of these practices and views which they shared?

What we can see here is what Foucault called “both a general cultural phenomenon...and at the same time an event in thought.” (*The Hermeneutics of the Subject* 9). It was a ‘general cultural phenomenon’ because if one looks at the Tantric movements in South Asia at that time, one sees a Pan-Indian phenomenon which was not restricted to south India alone, but was a powerful cultural movement which had repercussions on religious, spiritual and social practices, reaching as far north as Afghanistan, Mongolia, Tibet and Kashmir in the north and reaching all the way to Tamil Nadu and the whole of south of India. This movement was an ‘event in thought’ because it created a significant change in people’s attitudes towards the ‘care of the self’ which even though it contained significant things of the past, it was a new model for behaviour, expend of energy and thought. This is what is generally called the Tantric movement which influenced all major religious and spiritual institutions, two of the most important, being Śaivism and Buddhism. As Foucault says: “the stake, the challenge for any history of thought, is precisely that of grasping when a cultural phenomenon of a determinate scale actually constitutes within the history of thought a decisive moment that is still significant for our modern mode of being subjects.” (*The Hermeneutics of the Subject* 9). The key phrase for me here is ‘decisive moment’ since I see the spread of Tantrism as a ‘decisive moment’ which not only affected south India, India, Asia in general but, later on, many parts of the world including Europe and America, especially if we take into consideration the impact Buddhism

and Hinduism (and all their correlated practices like yoga and meditation-- 'practices of subjectivation,' have had on the practices of the care of the self in modernity and what Foucault calls, "our modern mode of being subject") (ibid). Of course, one must point out as Foucault does for Hellenistic and Roman society, that this project was most probably applicable to the elite of this society.⁵⁸ What is the relationship between the subject and truth⁵⁹ in 12th century south India? In what way does the *Tirumantiram* helps us unravel this question? Is it a time when moral codes are changing for the elite? What constitutes as truth to them at this time? What are the methods of reflexivity during this time?⁶⁰ What is the relationship between the care of the self and knowledge of the self at this time and place in south India?

In the *Tirumantiram*, one sees a certain emphasis throughout the text on the notion of *bhakti* or devotion, as a practice and central view, which allows one in conjunction with other practices to realize truths-- depending on the level the subject has reached (in one section he mentions twelve such levels of truth). To isolate *bhakti* as the sole or primary mode of realizing the truth, is what seems to have happened consequently as can be perceived by the eventual development and relegation to centrality, of the *bhakti* movement and the importance given later to the alvars and nayanmars-- *bhakti* proponents, respectively for the Vaiṣṇavite and Śaivite movements in Tamil Nadu. This emphasis on devotion as a mode of practice, overtime, circumscribed, subsumed and eventually almost erased completely the practices which were of great importance at the height of the

⁵⁸ For an interesting study which reflects a similar concern about the role of elite institutions in Indian society see Patrick Olivelle *The Āśrama System, The History and Hermeneutics of a Religious Institution*.

⁵⁹ Truth and access to truth or truths is the basis of many of these practices. According to Foucault "spirituality postulates that once access to the truth has really been opened up, it produces effects that are, of course, the consequence of the spiritual approach taken in order to achieve this, but which at the same time are something quite different and much more: effects which I will call "rebound" ("*de retour*"), effects of the truth on the subject. For spirituality, the truth is not just what is given to the subject, as reward for the act of knowledge as it were, and to fulfill the act of knowledge. The truth enlightens the subject; the truth gives beatitude to the subject; the truth gives the subject tranquility of the soul. In short, in the truth and in access to the truth, there is something that fulfills the subject himself, which fulfills and transfigures his very being. *In short, I think we can say that in and of itself an act of knowledge could never give access to the truth unless it was prepared, accompanied, doubled, and completed by a certain transformation of the subject; not of the individual, but of the subject himself in his being as subject* (p. 16, Hermeneutics)."

⁶⁰ For Foucault's study in ancient Greece it was memory, meditation and method see xxii.

Tantric period⁶¹. We can also see *bhakti* as a mode of ‘acquiring’ knowledge in which access to truth is derived solely or mainly through the practice of ‘devotional’ rites (in some cases, but not always, without the deep understanding of what the rituals actually mean or what their results should be). One of course, could argue, that *bhakti* itself is a spiritual practice which has within it a complete set of rituals, acts and performances which without the intellectual apparatus, lead one to an access of truth, but if one considers the extent of writing that was done in order to support this new movement called *bhakti* one sees that it was at the cost of other, quite rich, tantric and yogic practices which required a different type of effort from the individual-- practices which were more connected with the corporal body⁶² and in which the physical body was given prominence, instead of being slowly effaced and subsequently derided as happened in the later development of most spiritual movements in India. For example in Tantra Three of the *Tirumantiram* we see a review of the whole of Patanjali’s Ashtanga Yoga⁶³ or Eightfold Path, wherein Tirumūlar covers Yama, Niyama, Asanas, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi in the first nine sections of this Tantra. In the same Tantra, in section 13, ‘Method of Kayasiddhi,’ section 16, ‘Breath Rhythm during the Week,’ section 17 ‘Inauspicious Directions During the Week,’ section 18, ‘Kechari Yogam’ section 19, ‘Pariyanga Yogam,’ section 20, ‘Urine Therapy,’ as well as section 21, ‘Lunar Yoga’ are all sections which have to do with bodily practices⁶⁴. If we take the sections which deal with Ashtanga Yoga for

⁶¹ Very similar to what Foucault describes as the demise of some of the practices of discipline in the west: “gradually limited, overlaid, and finally effaced” (p. xxv *Hermeneutics*) This is somewhat similar to what happened in the west in which ‘intellectual cognition alone’ was considered as the sole requirement for the access to truth (p. xxv Introduction by Arnold I. Davidson, *Hermeneutics*).

⁶² In his preface to *Body and Cosmology in Kashmir Śaivism*, Gavin D. Flood describes the importance of the body in Śaivism: “The body provides a framework for a Śaiva Theology of consciousness. We live and experience our worlds in a body; the layers of the cosmos, or spheres in which consciousness operates in varying degrees or particularity, are regarded as bodies; and the pure consciousness of which they are a projection is called a body of consciousness” (xv).

⁶³ According to Pandit Rajmani Tigunait in his *Seven Systems of Indian Philosophy*, “[t]heoretically, the Yoga system is based on the same tenets a Sāṃkhya philosophy, and it also assimilates the teachings of Vedānta” (154).

⁶⁴ Foucault delineates three main principles in looking at this care of the self, which he calls *epimeleia heautou*: one, “a certain way of considering things, of behaving in the world, undertaking actions, and having relations with other people...an attitude towards the self, others, and the world”; second, “a certain form of attention, of looking. Being concerned about oneself

example, we see that what is unique about them is the way in which they are encapsulated within a notion of *bhakti* towards Nandi (Śiva). In comparison, we can see a hypothetical description of the Yoga-Sutra of Panatela in Feuerstein's Introduction to his translation of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*:

Reading and re-reading the *Yoga-Sutras*, one begins to piece together a mental image, or profile, quite hypothetical, of its author. It is the picture of a systematic thinker with a traditional bend of mind, a practical metaphysician who is lucid and precise in his formulations, not over-anxious to enter into polemics with other schools and obviously well-established in the *practice* of Yoga. His work is remarkable for its dispassionate temper. This cannot be accounted for by the extreme terseness of his aphoristic style alone. (Feuerstein, *Panatela* 5)

With Tirumūlar, one could say that he syncretized many of the elements that were prevalent in the culture at that time. Even if we consider him as a fictional character, one can say that the text of the *Tirumantiram* as it stands is a compilation of practices that were known in Tamil Nadu at the time of its composition. In some ways, it looks like a manual on how to think, act and feel in relation to truth or truths and also of one's social comportment. It can be said to be a survey of the many modalities of practices found in the south of India up to the time it was composed around the 11th century. The main point is that this practices found their way into the culture of the southern part of India and if we envision the movement of ideas as being dialogic or many voiced and also moving in many ways, not just one way, as seems to be the hypothesis of many Indologist, then, one can say that people influenced and were influenced by these ideas and the ideas and practices of local cultures. For example, if we look at Tantra three, we see clearly the influence of the ideas expounded in the *Yoga-Sutra* of Patanjali, but contextualized in a very different mode and space that is evidently very local.

When we look at the history of practice of spirituality in India, we can see that there were certain moments which were pivotal according to history. When one looks at classical Tamil literature, the concern with the other world seemed to have been more of an appeasing nature to local deities; ancestor worship and, maybe

implies that we look away from the outside...towards "oneself." The care of the self implies a certain way of attending to what we think and what takes place in our thought. Third, "a number of actions exercised on the self by the self, actions by which one takes responsibility for oneself and by which one changes, purifies, transforms, and transfigures oneself. It involves a series of practices, most of which are exercises that will have a long destiny in the history of Western culture, philosophy, morality, and spirituality. These are, for example, techniques of meditation, of memorization of the past, of examination of conscience, of checking representations which appear in the mind, and so on." (p 10-11, *Hermeneutics*.)

worship of heroes as in the hero stones and what one can learn from some of the Akam and Puṛam poems. Whereas, what we see in the north, in the Rg Veda hymns, is a world in which certain powers were propitiated with elaborate rituals, but also, a certain visionary world which seemed to have been accompanied by some form of practices. Consequently, we have the development of the different philosophical schools, which try to analyze in some ways how the being or consciousness and the universe worked. In the following period where the Upanisads⁶⁵ become a milestone, we can see a movement towards reclusiveness and hermetic lifestyles which could have been a direct response to suburban lifestyles in big metropolises. What we find somewhat simultaneously coming out of the tradition is the development of counter-movements like Jainism, Buddhism, and later, Śaivism, Śaktism and Viṣṇu worship, mainly. Subsequently, we get the development of Tantrism as a pan-Indian movement affecting all of these movements, and even though not having a main proponent or hero, as we have in the likes of the Buddha for Buddhism and Mahavir for Jainism, one gets a movement which could be considered the precursor of modern Hinduism and the Bhakti movements throughout India. This project will focus only on the development of the Tantric and/or Siddha movement between the 9th and 12th century in Tamil Nadu, south India. Specifically, I want to look at the *Tirumantiram* by its alleged author Tirumūlar and how it intersects both, the development of the Tantric movement as well as the Bhakti movement, especially as it was incorporated within southern Śaiva Siddhānta.

Technologies of the Self

The *Tirumantiram* when looked from the point of view of ‘technologies of the self’ can be seen as a rich text in technologies of the self. In this way, our view of it becomes much more productive and we can see that the theme which connects the whole book strongly is the theme of ‘practices of the self.’ In the *Tirumantiram*, what one could call the ‘technologies of the self’ could be those practices like the ones found in Tantra Three, in the section which is very similar and in fact seems to be derived from Patanjali’s *Yoga-Sutra*. The practices of purification can be yogic practices or they can also be practices within the bhakti system such as puja worship (ritual) and pilgrimages to holy sites. If we look at the *Tirumantiram* we see that many of the Tantric practices as well as the practices which we could call yogic from the tradition of Patanjali are restructured or reorganized to fit into this new development of bhakti which takes place in south

⁶⁵ According to O’Flaherty, “[t]he Upanishads are philosophical speculations on the prayers and rituals of the Rig Veda; each Upanishad, like each Brahmana, is attached to a particular Veda” (25).

India with Śaiva Siddhanta, the Nāyaṅārs, as well as with the movement of the Ālvārs. For the *Tirumantiram* the technologies of the self could be generally divided into three categories. We can call these three categories, technologies of the physical body, technologies of the energetic body, and technologies of the mental body. Generally speaking technologies of the physical body are those technologies which pertain or have a great effect upon the physical body in relation to the effect they might have on the other two bodies. for example, even though the asanas or physical postures described in the *Tirumantiram* are mainly for the maintaining and the purification and strengthening of the physical body, and are therefore to be considered more as technologies of the body, nevertheless, these postures do have an effect on the other parts of an individual, the energetic and mental bodies. Likewise, the pranayama or breathing technologies have mainly an effect upon the energetic body, but will also have an effect upon the other two bodies. Finally, concentration and meditation practices will likewise have mainly an effect upon the mental body, but will also effect the physical and energetic body.

How can one apply this concept of technologies from the point of view of Śaiva Siddhānta as practiced in south India. First of all one has to keep in mind the three basic principles of Pati, Pasu⁶⁶ and Pasa.⁶⁷ Pati being the Master, Lord, God or/and Guru; Pasu as the bound soul; and Pasa or Bond-- that which binds the soul-- a fetter or shackle. Pati has also his power or Śakti. The Pasu or bounded soul, is of three types, the Viñānakalar, the Pralayākalar and the Sakalar. The Pasa or bond has three divisions or three types: Ānava-mala, Karma-mala and Māyā-mala. Māyā-mala has two components which are Śuddha-māyā and Aśuddha-māyā. We also have to keep in mind the thirty-six tattvas which Tirumūlar mentions in Tantra 1, number 125, which are usually divided into five Śuddha tattvas, seven Śuddhāśuddha tattvas and the twenty-four Āśuddha tattvas.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ According to K. Subramania Pillai, in his *The Metaphysics of the Saiva Siddhanta System*, “[t]he saiva Siddhantins hold that souls are distinct centres of knowing, feeling and doing, and are countless in number just as the Unintelligent is infinite in extent. Each soul is distinct from God as an entity; for if it were God himself, it could not have an inclination to the Unintelligent and been subject to limitation thereby. But if at the same time contact with the root of matter were inherent in its nature, the soul could never become independent of Nature” (31-2).

⁶⁷ For the relationship between the three substances, pati, pasu and pasa, and the thirty-six tattvas, see H.W. Schomerus’ *Śaiva Siddhānta, an Indian School of Mystical Thought*, Table V, pp. 390-1.

⁶⁸ Dr. B. Natarajan’s note on this quatrain in his translation of the *Tirumantiram* gives a clear explanation of the tattvas: “Tattvas are the fundamental principles of existence. The Saiva Siddhanta School of philosophy postulates them as thirty-six; the five Siva tattvas, the seven vidya tattvas, and the twenty-four prakriti tattvas-- also known as atma tattvas. the Siva tattvas

But, what we are mostly concerned here is with the sphere of ‘prakṛiti’ which is the sphere of the manifested universe. The soul, from the point of view of Śaiva Siddhānta, finds itself within it, and through it, the soul must find liberation. This liberation must be done with the use of the physical body, and it is for this reason, that the *Tirumantiram* pays so much attention to the way in which the soul in the body must act. What this means is that the embodied soul has certain constituents or tattvas which surround it as it were, and through those, it finds itself anchored to the manifested universe. These Prakṛiti tattvas are sometimes called Atma tattvas. ‘Atma’ meaning more or less, the soul. The ‘atma tattvas’ are the impure tattvas or aśuddha tattvas, which bind the soul to the material universe. Of course, to be fair, one must also say that at least in the *Tirumantiram*, the material universe is also seen as the mechanism through which liberation takes place and therefore an important constituent for the liberation of the soul. Tirumūlar is very explicit as to the soul having the capability to be able to exist within the manifested universe as a liberated soul, that is, one whose experience is no longer limited by paśa or the fetters which normally bind the paśu or soul. According to the *Tirumantiram*, through the grace/power of Śivam, the soul recognizes its limitation and through its use of the buddhi or discernment ability and through its purified emotion or devotion, disciplines itself in order to find release from the fetters which bind it.⁶⁹ So, which are the fetters that bind it? If we look at the details of what constitute the ‘prakṛiti tattvas’ we see that we are basically dealing with what are called the senses, sensory organs through which the senses perceive the outside world, the motor organs, and the elements which comprise the outside world for the embodied and bounded soul. There are also the more subtle components such as the energetic body which is comprised of the pranic energy, the plexuses or chakras where this energy sometimes is concentrated, the nadis or venues through which the energy moves throughout the system. In addition, there are the more subtle elements such as the manas tattva or mind and the ahamkara tattva or ego, that component which

arise in the ‘pure maya’ sphere, the vidya tattvas in the ‘impure maya’ sphere and the prakṛiti tattvas in the ‘prakṛiti maya’ sphere. These three spheres may be approximated to the ‘pure immaterial’, the ‘material/immaterial’, and the ‘pure material’ concepts” (Natarajan 20)

⁶⁹ See Tantra Seven, section nine, ‘Tiruvaruḷ Vaippu’ or ‘Granting of Grace,’ as well as section ten, ‘Aruḷoli’ or ‘The Light of Grace.’ Both of these sections enumerate the many advantages of receiving the grace of Nandi or Śiva. Here we should keep in mind the importance of the relationship between *aruḷ* (grace) and *śakti* (power). It is through Śiva’s Śakti that grace is usually received and therefore, grace or *aruḷ* carries both the meaning of Śiva’s compassion as well as the meaning of his force or energy or what is usually referred to as his *śakti*, which also means the goddess or his companion. All of these meanings are inferred when one talks about *aruḷ* or *śakti* within the philosophy of Śaiva Siddhānta.

creates the sense of I-ness or individuality, which separates us from objective world, from ‘the other.’ The buddhi tattva or the discernment component is a bit more complex and difficult to explain, since it is more of an intuitive discernment which could be called and sometimes is translated as the intellect but which carries within it something more than just intellect. It has an intuitive part which discerns and somehow reflects what is called the Purusa.

Paths in the *Tirumantiram*: *Cariyai*, *Kiriyai*, *Yōkam* and *Ñānam*

In the *Tirumantiram* we can see various methods to accomplish this purification of the ‘atma tattvas.’ From a more general point of view, as explained before, we have *arul* or the grace of Śiva and/or the guru, which without it, there can be no liberation. But in addition to this all encompassing and important element, we have practical methods and paths described in the *Tirumantiram* as ways of helping to reach the goal. We could say that tantras three to seven are the tantras that contain the main practices found in the *Tirumantiram*.

One way of dividing the different paths described within the *Tirumantiram* is if we take the four paths or methods⁷⁰ described in Tantra Five: the path of *Cariyai* (Charya), the path of *Kiriyai* (Kriya), the path of *Yōkam* (Yoga), the path of *Ñānam* (Jnana):

பத்தர் சரிதை பாடுவோர் கிரியையோர்

அத்தகு தொண்டர் அருள்வேடத் தாகுவோர்

சுத்த வியமாத் சாதகர் தூயோகர்

சித்தர் சிவஞானஞ் சென்றெய்து வோர்களே (Tantra Five, number 1446)

The faithful follow the path of *caritai*⁷¹,

*Kriya*⁷² practitioners are those who wear the holy garb of devotees,

The pure yogis are those who follow the practices of Yama and the rest,

The Cittars are the ones who have truly attained *ñāna* (wisdom).

⁷⁰ ‘nālvakac caivam’ (PB *Tirumantiram*, Tantra Five, number 1419).

⁷¹ *caritai* or *cariyai* are “observances of the first degree in Saivism which is entered upon by initiation of a Guru. This qualifies for the performance of daily worship by mantras, and the practice of other external religious duties” (Winslow 415).

⁷² *kiriyai* is “the second degree in the religion of Siva-- entitling the disciple to the privilege of performing puja, etc” (Winslow 302).

What becomes clear in this verse is that these four paths are a progression and that there is a hierarchy wherein a practitioner goes through charya, then kriya, then yoga and at the end ñāna. In quatrain 1443 it explains how charya is the basis for the path of Śaiva Siddhānta⁷³. In quatrain number 1421 it also mentions how there are stages upon stages to go through from yoga to ñāna; and whereas the ones who are practicing the charya and kriya path wear external garb to show they are followers of Śiva (1423 & 1424), at the stage of ñāna, the practitioner wears for his garb, wisdom (1427). In other words, he no longer wears or is attached to the outer garb (1438), but it is the internal experience of wisdom (ñāna) which is important, along with the feeling or bhava for Śiva (1434). That it is a progressive path is made clear again in number 1455:

pattan̄ kiriyai cariyai payilvurruc
cutta aruḷāl turicarra yōkattil
uytta neriyur ruṇarkinra ñānattār
cittaṅ kuruvāru ḷārciva mākumē

The devotee (bhakta) takes up the practice of kriya and charya
And through the pure grace⁷⁴ practices the faultless yoga
Then, through the perfect wisdom attains the highest path
Becoming one with Śiva through the grace of the siddha guru.

As we can see here it becomes clear that the practices have a hierarchical structure, but at the same time, it is possible to be practicing them all at the same time, keeping in mind that it is the *ñāna* or wisdom stage which is the culmination of the path. Additionally, all this can be attained only through grace or *aruḷ*.

And what exactly do these paths consist of? The first stage or path is the path of *cariyai*, and it consist mainly of external worship like temple worship and worship of an external deity, what is usually called *tonṭu neri* or the path of the

⁷³ “Listen! to what the upright Mūla says about the path of Cariyai,

Consider carefully, Oh, Kālānki, Kañca, and Malaiyamān,

Ponder carefully, Oh, Kanturu, this path is life itself for the Cutta Caivam.”

⁷⁴ The PB commentator of the *Tirumantiram* explains here that it is through the grace of śakti, which is pure maya, that the faultless and pure yoga is attained: சுத்த மாயை என்ற அருள் சத்தியால் குற்றமற்ற மெய் யோகத்தில் (p 238).

devotee or servant or slave of the Lord⁷⁵. *Kiriyai* is the stage where the practitioner becomes more subtle with his practice and may start to recite the Śiva mantra and other mantras as per the instructions of his preceptor. In the *yōgam* stage, the practitioner takes up the practices of yoga, such as asanas, bhandas, mudras, pranayamas and the *aṭṭāṅka yōkam* or the eight-limbed yoga. The last stage of the path is the stage of *ñānam* or wisdom, which gives the practitioner the realization of becoming one with Śiva as explained in quatrain 1467:

ñānattiṅ mikka arāneri nāṭṭillai
 ñānattiṅ mikka camayamum naṅraṅru
 ñānattiṅ mikkavai naṅmutti nalkāvā
 ñānattiṅ mikkār narariṅmikkārē

There is no better path than *ñānam* in the world,
 There is no better *samaya*⁷⁶ than *ñānam*,
 There is nothing better for liberation than *ñānam*
 The best of the wise are the best of men.

But here what is important is that the concept of *ñānam* is still under what could be called the all-encompassing rubric of *arul*, that is, grace, in the sense that in Śaiva Siddhānta, as opposed to Advaita Vedānta, the individuality of the Jiva is never lost. As Dr. Natarajan states, “The Siddhanta does not say “There are not two,” but it asserts “They are not two” (viii, Tirumantiram). Wisdom is only conferred through the grace of Śiva and the guru.

⁷⁵ The PB commentator explains in the *vilakkam* for quatrain 1501 that *cariyai* is *toṅṭu neri*. In other words, the path of charya is the path of the devotee who usually carries out external worship like performing puja in temples, visiting temples, and holy sites, cleaning temples, etc. That this is the path of the devotee is further elaborated at the beginning of section twelve of Tantra Five, “Tāca Mārkkam” or “The Path of the Devotee” by the comment: தாச மாரக்கமாவது திருக்கோயில் சென்று தொண்டு செய்வது: the path of the devotee consist of going to the temple to perform service (PB 257).

⁷⁶ Here *camayam* (*samaya*) can be either a faith or religion, or it could also mean the promise that one takes under the guru.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ATTĀNKA YŌKAM: A TECHNOLOGY OF THE SELF

In his “Introduction” to the *Tirumantiram*, Dr. B. Natarajan explains that there are four approaches in Śaiva Siddhānta: Charya, Kriya, Yoga and Jnana (p. viii, *Tirumantiram*). Aṭṭānga Yōka could be said to fall under the Yoga path. The opening verse of Tantra Three, verse 549, says:

Of difficult vast to expound
Is the Science of Breath
Closing nostril alternate
And counting time in measure appropriate
Thus did Nandi reveal at length
The eight fold science of yoga great--
Yama, Niyama and the rest (Natarajan 86).

Here we see that Nandi is the one who spoke or taught this science, thus the importance of grace and bhakti (devotion) is contextualized within the first verse of this Tantra. Here, we find no reference to Patañjali but to what the *Tirumantiram* considers the original creator of this science, which according to Tirumūlar is Śiva. In the same way, in section two of Tantra Three, called Iyama (Yama) we read:

A flood may pour down in the eight directions,
Yet practice the ample Iyamas, said the Great One,
Of cool matted locks, of fiery coral hue, showering his grace
To the four sages immersed (in contemplation) (553).⁷⁷

Here again we see that this teaching of the Eightfold Path, which starts with the practice of Iyama, is taught by Śiva to the four sages who have devotion to him. Again, we see the necessity of devotion and grace, and the importance of having both in order to have access to the knowledge.

In section three of Tantra three, called “Niyamam,” we see that the one that practices Niyama is the one who knows Śiva-Sakti:

⁷⁷ The PB commentator here says that “It is necessary to practice Iyama without interruption in the Aṭṭānka yōka” : *aṭṭānka yōkattil iyamattai itaiviṭātu ceyya vēṇṭum* (264).

The Primordial whose meaning is within the Vedas,
The Light which burns with Agni,
He who is one with his other half, Parācakti,
Possessing Truth, the Niyama practitioners know him (555).

In section five, “Pirāṇāyāmam” we also see the importance of the guru in understanding the breathing practices:

The good man has two horses
But he does not know how to control their speed
If he gets his nāta_guru’s grace
He will master their flow and bring them under his control (565).⁷⁸

Section six, “Pirattiyākāram,” also contains embedded within it the idea of the importance of grace in order to accomplish the results of the practice. For example, quatrain 579:

The ones who do not know the mantra
For establishing it⁷⁹ twelve ankula⁸⁰ below the navel,
After they know that mantra for fixing and consecrating,

⁷⁸ The PB commentator explains that this quatrain is referring to the practice of pranayama, especially to two of the most important pranas called *pirāṇa* and *apāṇa*--the two horses. But in order to get the results of pranayama practice one needs the grace of the guru: *pirāṇa ceyam perak kuruvaruḷ vēṇṭum* (270). Horses are usually connected to the air element and therefore, often are connected with the breath and with the energy aspect of an individual. This quatrain also implies that without the initiation of a powerful preceptor the breathing techniques will not give the proper results, as the grace of Śiva-Śakti must flow through a proper guru to a proper disciple.

⁷⁹ Usually, this is in reference to the pranic energy called kundalini, or to the placing and concentrating the consciousness there. As this verse is within the context of the “Pirattiyākāram” section, it is safe to consider it within the context of the exercises of sense withdrawal. From the Sanskrit *pratyāhāra*, that is, withdrawal.

⁸⁰ *Ankula* is usually considered a measurement of a finger’s breadth.

They will dwell with the Lord who has the continuous roar (579).

Section seven, “Tāraṇai”⁸¹ is here as well embedded within a notion where the vision of Śiva becomes important:

From the waterfall on high on the mountain peak of the head
Falling incessantly as if flows through the central channel
When the Roaring Lord performs His sacred dance
I saw the inexhaustible blissful light (589).

Verse 590 in the same section is also embedded within the Tantric concept of Śiva-Śakti:

The maiden of the Vedas who is in the land above,
And Śiva who rises from the place at the base,
If you awaken him to love and to unite with her,
Your life will gain strength, this was Nanti’s vow.⁸²

Section 8, “Tiyāṇam”⁸³ starts with a description on meditation of Śiva and Śakti in number 598:

The ten--
The five elements and the five senses
Being contained, one by the other,
The internal organ Buddhi
In turn contains the senses;
Thus is Dhyana born;

⁸¹ *Tāraṇai* from Sanskrit *dhāraṇā*, that is concentration.

⁸² The PB commentator explains this quatrain in his *karuttu* (concise explanation): *mūlātārattilulla civanai mēlēyulla cattiyōṭu cērumpaṭi payirci ceytāl ilamait taṇmai uṇṭākum*, that is “if one practices uniting śiva, who is found in the base chakra, to śakti who is up above (usually this means the crown of the head or the seventh chakra), one will obtain a youthful vitality” (282). What is also interesting in this quatrain is that usually it is the kundalini śakti which is usually said to be sleeping at the base, and it is awakened to unite with śiva at the crown chakra, but here it is reversed, which is usually from the point of view of śakta tantrikas, that is practitioners who take śakti as the ultimate reality.

⁸³ *Tiyāṇam*, from Sanskrit *dhyāna*, meaning meditation.

The Para Dhyana first
That is on Sakti centred,
And Siva Dhyana next
That is by Guru blessed,
These two are the Ways of Dhyana Yoga.

(Natarajan 94).

Section 10 of Tantra 3, “Aṭṭānkayōkap Pēru” or “Result of the Eight-fold Path of Yoga” is even more precise in the way it shows how devotion to Śiva is an important element. All of the subtitles of the verses in that section have to do with the eight-limbed yoga and are therefore subtitled as Iyamam (Yama), Niyamam (Niyama), Ācaṇam (Asanas), Pirāṇāyāmam (Pranayama), Pirattyākāram (Pratyahara), Tāraṇai (Dharana), Tiānam (Dhyana) and Camāti (Samadhi); but, all of the quatrains are praises to Śiva and only the last one mentions the word ‘Camāti’ within the verse by the same title. All of the poems in this section emphasize the importance of the devotional aspect of the practitioner to Śiva and in return, the grace conferred by Śiva to his devotees, thereby exalting the relevance of *bhakti* or devotion, as well as *arul* or grace, in any type of practice whether it be corporal, vital or mental.

The Eight-Fold Path in the *Tirumantiram* and *Yoga-Sutra*

According to section two of the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali, called “Sādhana-Pāda,” there are eight limbs or stages in yoga. These eight limbs being yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi. The five Yama (abstentions/restraints) are ahimsā (non-harming, non-violence, non-killing), satya (truthfulness, sincerity), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacarya (chastity, sexual restraint) and aparigrahā (non-possession, greedlessness, non-grabbing), whereas in Tirumūlar’s *Tirumantiram* the Iyamam or restraints are ten: kollān (non-killing), poykūrāṇ (not lying), kaḷavilāṇ (not stealing), eṅkuṇan (good virtues), nallān (a good person), aṭakkamuṭaiyān⁸⁴ (one who possesses calmness), naṭucceyya vallān (just and upright person), pakuntunpān (a person that shares his joys), mācilān (faultless), kaṭkāmamillān (does not have liquor nor lust). The ‘observances’ or “Niyama” in the *Yoga-Sūtra* are also five: śauca (purity, cleanliness, radiance), samtoṣa (contentment, satisfaction), tapas (austerity, asceticism), svādhyāya (self-recitation) and īśvara praṇidhānāni (devotion or dedication to Isvara). In the

⁸⁴ *Aṭakkam* can mean calmness, submission, self-control, patient, with endurance. The PB commentator says it is one who possesses humility: *paṇivūṭaiyavaṇ* (264).

Tirumantiram, the Niyamam (observances) are ten in number; five to uphold and five to reject: tūymai (cleanness, purity, holiness), aruḷ (benevolence), ūṇ curukkam (eating frugally), porai (patient), cevvai (correct behaviour, pure, fit), vāymai (truthful), nilaimai (of good character, perseveres); he loathes kāmam (lust), kaḷavu (theft) and kolai (killing).

As we can see, Tantra Three of the *Tirumantiram* has components which no doubt seem to derive from the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patanjali, but the point of view of the *Tirumantiram* is quite different than the *Yoga-Sutra*. all the practices seem to be contextualized from the point of view of Śaiva Siddhānta. The *Tirumantiram* emphasizes faith and devotion to Śiva, considered as the ultimate reality. It incorporates all of the practices within an overall view of the importance of Śiva worship and at many places of Śiva and Śakti worship. Also, within this encompassing theme of what one could call bhakti, or devotion to Śiva, one sees in Tantra Three an emphasis in pranayama practices, that is breathing techniques and its many benefits, in comparison to the other limbs of the eight-fold path described herein. To see these differences between these two texts we will take some examples and compare them. Number 552 is very similar to Sādhana-pāda II.29 of the *Yoga-Sūtra*:

552 of the *Tirumantiram*:

Iyama, Niyamam, and innumerable Ātaṇam

Beneficial Pirāṇāyāmam and Pirattiyākāram alike,

Victorious Tāraṇai, Tiyaṇam and Camāti,

--These eight are the eight iron-like limbs of Yōka.

II.29 of the *Yoga-Sūtra* :

Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi are the eight members.

Iyamam or Yama

The section on Iyamam of the *Tirumantiram*, is also quite similar to the Yama of the *Yoga-Sūtra* II.30:

554.

He does not kill, he does not lie, he does not steal;

Of marked virtues is he; good, meek and just;

He shares his joys, he knows no blemish

Neither drinks nor lusts

--This the man who in Iyama's ways stands (Natarajan 87).

II.30

The Yama are non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, good conduct and greedlessness.

So, even though we see a great similarity between these two verses, what we should note here is the previous verse in the *Tirumantiram* which contextualizes and starts the section on Iyamam (Yama)-- verse 553.

A flood may pour down in the eight directions,

Yet practice the ample Iyamas, said the Great One,

Of cool matted locks, of fiery coral hue, showering his grace

To the four sages immersed (in contemplation).

According to Dr. Natarajan in his note on page 87 of his translation of the *Tirumantiram*, he claims that "Santana, Sanatanam, Sanatkumara, Santana--the four rishis taught by Siva in His aspect as Dakshinamurthi (Southward-looking form). The *Agamas* descended to them from Nandi. They received the title, Nandi and were included among the nathas (masters)." So, here the *Tirumantiram* is claiming that this knowledge came from the *Āgamas* and that it is through the devotion of the Rishis and the grace of Śiva that this knowledge is being shared and that therefore, devotion and grace are part of the context in which these Iyamas or rules of conduct must be looked at and incorporated in the practice.

Niyamam or Niyama

In section 3, of the same Tantra, called "Niyamam" (Niyama), we see the same strategy being used in the text as in the previous section of Iyamam. Verse 555 stresses the importance of the practitioner of Niyamam to understand the importance of Śiva and Śakti:

555.

The Being First,
The Meaning-Central of Vedas all,
The Light Divine,
The Fire within that Light
He who shares Himself
Half-and-Half with his Sakti
And the Divine Justice thereof
--Them, he in Niyama's path knows.

What we clearly see here is the integration between Āgamic belief and Yoga praxis in such a way that bhakti always contextualizes and envelops any yogic practice, and thus creating a new experience and belief of aesthetics and morality. In conclusion, what we see is a different view of being and a new modality of ethics which incorporates and links the emotions and morals towards a central deity of worship--Śiva. After introducing the importance of the worship of Śiva/ Śakti we again see the similarity between verse 556 of the *Tirumantiram* and II.32-33 of the *Yoga-Sūtra*:

556.
Purity, compassion, frugal food and patience
Frankness, truth and perseverance,
--These he cares for;
Lust, thieving and killing, he discerns.
This indeed is the circle of ten Niyama.⁸⁵

II.32.
Purity, contentment, austerity, introspection and devotion to the Īśvara
are the Niyama.⁸⁶

II.33.

⁸⁵ Tūymai aruḷuṅ curukkam poraicevvai/ vāymai nilaimai vaḷarttalē marṛivai/ kāmaṅ kaḷavu kolaiyeṅak kāṅpavai/ nēmiyī raintu niyamatta ṅāmē.

⁸⁶ śauca-saṃtoṣa-tapaḥ-svādhyāya-īśvara-praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ.

For the inhibiting of thought, the cultivation of the opposite.⁸⁷

What we see in 556 is the collapsing of both II.32 and II.33 of the *Yoga-Sūtra*. One of the interesting things about II.32 though, is that it is one of the few places where Patañjali recommends as one of the observances the devotion to Īśvara, who has been assumed to be Śiva in his more monistic aspect.

In 557, embedded within the practices of pure thought, charity, austerities, serenity and repetition of mantras, we see the inclusion of Śaiva vows and Siddhānta learning, burnt offerings and Śiva puja. What we see here is the inclusion and addition of the more bhakti-oriented path of Śaiva Siddhānta, which includes learning the philosophical view of Śaiva Siddhānta as well as Śiva puja and the performance of sacrifices. But what does it mean here by sacrifices? Again, here one clearly sees the contextualizing of Aṭṭāṅka Yōkam within a Śaiva Siddhānta context, in the sense that it prescribes as one of the modes of this yoga, from the point of view of the *Tirumantiram*, as encompassing ritualistic worship and Āgamic practices within a yogic praxis. In some ways, what one could say is that the *Tirumantiram* incorporates the ritualistic Āgamic practices as well as Vedic sacrifice in the same way that the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali integrates in its own manner devotion to Īśvara in II.32 (see translation above), and II.34:

557.

Austerities, repetition, serenity, and prayer,

Charity, Śaiva vows, and Siddhānta knowledge,

Burnt offerings, Śiva puja and beautiful thoughts,

These ten, supremely virtuous ways are the practices of Nyama.⁸⁸

Although the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali does have the element of worship to Īśvara, it seems not so emphasized as in the *Tirumantiram*. But still, if we look at *Yoga-Sūtra* II.44 it says :

From self-recitation integration with the chosen deity.⁸⁹

Here self-recitation could be seen as what Prof. Feuerstein describes in his translation of the *Yoga-Sūtra*, as ‘recitation, silent or aloud, and subsequent meditation of the sacred lore’ (89). More importantly, he says, “[a]t any rate , it is

⁸⁷ vitarka-bādhane pratipakṣa-bhāvanam.

⁸⁸ tavañcepañ cantōṭam āttikan tāṇam/ civaṇṇaṇ viratamē cittāntak kēḷvi/ makañciva pūcayoṇ maticollīr aintu/ nivampala ceyyiṇ niyamitta ṇāmē.

⁸⁹ svādhāyād-iṣṭa-devatā-samprayogaḥ.

obvious that this must not be misconstrued to mean a union with *īśvara*. Such a notion is foreign to Classical yoga” (89). What this would imply is that in Classical yoga one does not find the concept of becoming one with the *Īśvara* but only some experience of realization through it. Although this is a possible interpretation of the Sanskrit word *samprayoga*, it could also mean union, connection, relation, or devotion. Again, when Feuerstein explains sutra II.45 he underscores the different views of what ‘devotion to the Lord’ could mean (88-9). He gives his reading as well as what he sees as the views of Vācaspati Mīśra and Vyāsa, two commentators of the *Yoga-Sūtras*. It seems to me Tirumular’s interpretation of the *Yoga-Sūtra* is closer to Vyāsa in this respect, in the sense that grace⁹⁰ is an important component of the discourse of the *Tirumantiram*. Devotion, which is an important component of the discourse in the *Tirumantiram*, also plays a role in the *Yoga-Sūtra*: II.45⁹¹ says:

Through devotion to *Īśvara* the attainment of *samādhi*⁹².

In reading this Feuerstein says:

The decisive word here is *siddhi* which can mean either ‘perfection’ or ‘attainment’. Whichever meaning is intended by Patañjali, this aphorism clearly underscores the signal importance of *īśvara* in Yoga. It is not evident whether *siddhi*, in either of the two senses, should be understood as a sufficient and necessary condition or as a sufficient condition. In other words, is *īśvara-praṇidhāna* the only means to perfect or attain the enstatic consciousness? Or is it merely one of several ways of achieving the same transformation of consciousness? Vācaspati Mīśra stresses the centrality of devotion to the Lord, stating that the other seven techniques (i.e. the members or *aṅga*) are merely subsidiary. Vyāsa (to III.6) even goes so far as to explain the *yogin*’s ability to move onto the next higher plane of ecstasy as a direct result of the grace (*prasāda*) of the Lord. Implicit in these contentions is the interpretation of the term *siddhi* in the more radical sense of ‘attainment’. On the other hand, ‘perfection’ of

⁹⁰ Tirumūlar uses the word *aruḷ* in Tamil for grace, Vyāsa uses the word *prasāda*, which is grace in Sanskrit.

⁹¹ *samādhi-siddhir-īśvara-praṇidhānāt*.

⁹² *Samādhi* is a complex Sanskrit word with different meanings depending on who is using it. It has a range of meaning such as meditational absorption, concentration, contemplation, etcetera.

enstasy could meaningfully refer to the attainment of the higher forms of enstatic consciousness (such as *asamprajñāta-samādhi*), but this presupposes that the lower types of enstasy may be brought about without devotion to the Lord. According to aphorism I.23, devotion to the Lord is a possible, not a necessary, aid to the realisation [sic] of enstasy. But then, we must remember that *īśvara-pranidhāna* may well have a more central position within the framework of the *aṣṭa-aṅga* tradition than it appears to have in Kriyā-Yoga. (89-90)

Ācaṇam or Āsana

The difference between the Āsana sections of the *Yoga-Sūtra* and *Tirumantiram* is that in the *Yoga-Sūtra* there is no mention of particular āsana whereas in the *Tirumantiram*, Tirumūlar mentions that there are eighty thousand āsanās and names the eight most important ones, describing in detail five of the octad. In the *Yoga-Sūtra*'s section on āsana the emphasis is more on describing the result of the practice of āsana more than in describing how to do the postures.

The beginning of the physical posture section in the *Tirumantiram* starts by explaining what is considered the most important āsana in most systems of Hatha Yoga, where āsana is the base practice.

558.

Starting with Padmāsana, uncountable are the āsanās,
Eight among them are the most important,
Without being sleepy, staying in the comfortable Svastika,
Truly he becomes the Master.

The rest of this section of the *Tirumantiram* is like quatrain 560 and 561, which describe how to perform the asanas:

560.

Place the right leg over the left
Stretch the hands over the calf of leg
Sit in posture firm and erect
That indeed is Bhadrasana (Natarajan 88).

561.

Lift the feet on to the thighs,
Control breath and on elbows raise your body,
Thus seated firm and immobile,
Thou do reach the Kukkudasana (Natarajan 88).

The last quatrain of this section, 553, is important because it names what it considers the eight most important asanas:

Bhadra, Gomukha, Padma and Simha,
Sothira, Veera, and Sukha
These seven along with eminent svastika
Constitute the eight, Eighty and hundred, however,
Are asanas in all reckoned.
(Natarajan 89).

The Āsana section of the *Yoga-Sutra* of Patañjali, as mentioned, is more brief and points out the importance of feeling at ease in whatever posture is taken for the practice:

II.46
Asana is comfortable and firm.

II.47
From the relaxation of striving and uniting with the endless.

II.48
Thus no attack by duality.

II.49
Being in this, prāṇāyāma is the cessation of the motion of inhalation and exhalation.

In this last sūtra Patañjali links āsana practice to prāṇāyāma practice, by suggesting that once there is adeptness in āsanās one can take the practice of prāṇāyāma.

Pirāṇāyāmam or Prāṇāyāma

The section on Pranayama is also interesting from the point of view that it is the earliest text in Tamil which describes breathing techniques in great detail as well as variety. Tirumūlar integrated what seems like the section of the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali with Hatha-yogic traditional practices prevalent during his time, on the practice and benefits of pranayama. In comparison, the *Yoga-Sūtra* does not have any specific pranayama practice but only the attitude and view of how the practice of pranayama can be beneficial as part of the aṣṭāṅga yoga described in the “Sādhana-Pāda” section:

II.50

Its movement is external, internal or stopped⁹³; it is regulated by place, time and through calculation; it can be long and subtle.

II.51

Withdrawing from the external and internal objects is the fourth.

II.52

Thence the covering of the effulgence decreases.

II.53

The mind becomes fit for concentration.

In the the *Tirumantiram*'s section on pranayama, we also get a similar view of the important role which the breathing techniques have for the realization of the soul and for the soul to master the body, energy and mind. The text does this by the use of metaphor sometimes, as well as by the use of simile. It also uses a couched language which could have meanings at different levels, depending on the readers level of initiation. It also makes use of humor in subtle ways and sometimes very directly. In the quatrain below, for example, Tirumūlar uses the words *tulli viluntitum* which means literally to gallop and fall down, as when a horse looses its footing, but here, to show the danger of the soul loosing itself when it does not follow a discipline like the breathing technology.

⁹³ The stopping of the breath is usually called *kumbhaka* in Tantric and Hatha-Yoga texts and the *Tirumantiram* has many references and techniques for achieving this. The *Yoga-Sūtra* uses *viccheda* or cutting-off or arresting the breath.

564.

The master of the five senses; the headman of that place⁹⁴,
Can ride that horse to its redemption; there is no one else,
It is the refuge for the embodied soul,
If it doesn't go, the false one will definitely jump and fall.

Pirattiyākāram or Pratyāhāra

Whereas the “Sādhana-Pāda” section of the *Yoga-Sūtra* has basically two sutras on pratyāhāra (sense-withdrawal), II.54 and II.55, which give in essence the meaning of the word and the practice, the “Pirattiyākāram” (*pratyāhāra* in Sanskrit) section of the *Tirumantiram* has ten quatrains and is mainly an exposition of how to use pranayama and kundalini yoga⁹⁵ in order to achieve pratyāhāra or withdrawal of the senses.

II.54

The withdrawal of the sense-organs is like the disengagement of the mind with its objects.

II.55

In that way, the supreme mastery of the sense-organs.

In 578, Tirumūlar, also looks at the importance of the withdrawal of the sense organs and the mind as a step by step process which is grounded in this plane, therefore through the combination of pratyahara and devotion one achieves the result which the veda did not find. Here, of course, he seems to imply that this path is higher than the strictly Vedic path of ritual, we would have to assume. Although, there is also a veneration for the Vedas but a re-contextualization of its place within a new hierarchy in which the path of Śaiva Siddhānta is higher and more complete as it assumes under it the Vedic path as well:

Step by step withdraw the mind and look within;

⁹⁴ The PB commentator takes ‘place’ to mean ‘the body.’ “The soul which is the master for the body: avvūrt talaimakaṇ - avvuṭampukkuṭ talaivaṇumākiya āṇmā (268). The horse is of course, the prāna.

⁹⁵ The goal of Kundalini Yoga is to awaken the ‘kundalini energy’ dormant in the base chakra of an individual and raise it to the topmost chakra at the crown of the head. According to Georg Feuerstein, “*Kundalinī-Yoga*” is “the unitive discipline of the serpent power(*kundalinī-shakti*), which is fundamental to the Tantric tradition, including Hatha-Yoga (*The Deeper Dimension of Yoga* 37).

Little by little you will see many good things within;
What the ancient Vedas has always searched for,
Is right here and now.

579.

Those who do not experience in themselves the mantra for
Consecrating (the place)⁹⁶ twelve fingers below the navel;
After they experience that mantra for consecrating,
Īcan⁹⁷ who has the sound, will unite with them.

Tāraṇai or Dhāraṇā

In the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali, *dhāraṇā* (concentration) is described in the first sutra of the “Vibhūti-Pāda” as a practice which holds the conscious mind to one spot. This results in *dhyānam* or meditative absorption, which then brings about the realization of *prajñā* or wisdom:

III.1

deśa-bhandaś-cittasya dhāraṇā.

Concentration is to tie down the mind to one place.

The “Tāraṇai”⁹⁸ section of the *Tirumantiram* mentions the benefit of concentration in the first verse, 588 and mentions the word tāraṇai explicitly in the last verse, 597; the other verses in this section seem more related to the practice of kundalinī yoga and pranayamas, which consequently lead, at least in the beginning process, to dhāraṇā or concentration, but also to the realization of Pāra-Nandi (Śiva) and his consort (590):

588.

Concentrate the diffused mind at the base below,

Concentrate on the space within the spine,

Without seeing, without hearing,

This is the way to a prosperous life.

⁹⁶ Usually this is described as the location of the Mūladhara Chakra or the Base Chakra where the Kundalinī energy is dormant and which through prāṇāyāma is awakened.

⁹⁷ Īcan or Īsan is sometimes another name for Śiva.

⁹⁸ *Tāraṇai* in Tamil from the Sanskrit *dhāraṇā* (concentration).

Tiānam or Dhyānam

In the “Vibhūti-Pāda” of the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali we see in III.2:

tatra pratyaya-ekatānāta dhyānam.

Meditation is the extension therein, of a singular notion.

In the *Tirumantiram*, Tirumūlar gives different techniques in which one can integrate the practice of dhyānam. For example, in quatrain 601 of this section he explains four different techniques:

Not once do they meditate on the life within the body,
Not once do they meditate on the soul within life,
Not once do they meditate on the mind which keeps to Śiva,
Not even once do they meditate on the lunar lotus.

Here we see that dhyāna is accomplished by a process of reversal wherein the practice goes more inwardly, stage by stage.

599.

Through the aggregates of the eye, tongue, nose and ear
sensory organs,
There is an Ancient One that sounds harmoniously,
He shows the great expansive Light within the uvula;
He made the body and remove my misery.

In this verse we again see the importance of the ‘Ancient One’ or the importance of bhakti or devotion to the Lord in order to have the realization.

Camāti or Samādhiḥ

In the “Vibhūti-Pāda” of the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali we have a sense of how *samādhi* is a state of mental absorption.

III.3

tad-eva-artha-mātra-nirbhāsaṃ svarūpa-śunyaṃ iva samādhiḥ.

When the purpose alone shies forth as if empty of own form, that indeed is *samādhi* (Chapple 81).

Samādhi is also part of what Patanjali calls the three constraints (samyama):

II.4

trayam-ekatra saṅyamah.

The three together is control.

What seems to be implied here, is that samādhi is here used in a particular way to mean a type of constraint or a gathering of the mind and therefore is definitely not the final realization which is trying to be achieved, or at the least, it is part of the path, as well as the final realization. In the *Tirumantiram* we also have the same concept, but Tirumūlar also brings in the Tantric ideas of Bindu and Nada, as well as the concepts of the chakras and the metaphor of Mount Meru as the crown chakra.

618.

If you ask to say something of the path from Iyama to Samādhi,
The eight Citti are the result of the path from Iyama to Samādhi,
Those who persevere in the path from Iyama to Samādhi,
Will become masters of the path from Iyama to Samādhi.

619.

When Vindu and Nāta flourish in Mount Mēru,
In their meeting, one will join in Samadhi,
Eternal Wisdom of Unique Meaning,
Auspicious Light will indeed manifest.⁹⁹

620.

Where there is minding of the mind,
Right there is also the air,
Where there is no minding of the mind,
There also is no air;

⁹⁹ The PB commentator explains in his *vilakkam* or elucidation, that *vintu* is light, *śakti* (energy), while *nātam* is sound, *śiva* (the un-manifested) (295).

For those who rejoice in minding the mind,
They will attain the dissolution of the mind.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters an attempt was made at looking at how the *Tirumantiram* plays a role in the formation of the subject in Tamil Nadu. I looked at the role this text played in mainly two different movements, that of Śaiva Śiddhānta and that of the Tamil Siddhars. In looking at both of these movements I have pointed out to the importance of ‘technologies of the body’ as disciplines which bring about a particular way of dealing with the self and with the relationship between the self and society. I have also tried to look at what I consider to be the earliest moment in which this event took place in Tamil Nadu in relationship to this text, and how this had to do with a more global or trans-local event that was taking place throughout India, and what this meant symbolically and literally in the local sphere. In the first instance, we have a text, the *Tirumantiram*, which is multi-voiced and therefore subject to multiple interpretations, depending on who is reading it and for what purpose. By this of course, I am primarily talking about the two movements mentioned above, but secondarily, and just as important, I am suggesting that we should look at how the ‘folk’ or what we would say, the ‘general public,’ interprets or views the role that this text plays and just as importantly, the role its alleged author, Tirumūlar, plays in the imaginary and the role they both play in the creation of a certain identity for the subject, but also in relationship to the ‘other.’ By the ‘other’ I mean, not just the non-Tamil speaking people, to which this text has to be translated, explicated or interpreted, but also to academics, and the way in which we analyze another culture and its product in order to try to make sense of a different reality or sphere from the one we are inserted in. The *Tirumantiram* of course plays part of the two main discourses mentioned above, the Tamil Siddhar Culture and the Śaiva Siddhānta Culture, and the practitioners of each of these movements have much to say about how this text should be used in relation to their practices. An ethnographic study of this would add to the understanding of the text, although this might have its own obstacles, since many of the practices found within are considered secret and one can have

full access to them only after taking certain vows and initiations. The importance of the role of a living preceptor is usually one of the salient characteristics of these movements, and therefore, for students of these paths to come out and talk freely about some of the practices is rather an impossible possibility. Nevertheless, the role that the text plays as part of a wider social relationship can be studied up to a certain degree. For example, the story of the peregrination of Tirumūlar from Mount Kailash, a sacred and unique symbol for many people, including Śaivites, and Tirumūlar's arrival and transmigration from one body--from the north, into another body--from the south, can be read at many levels. At one level, of course, it becomes clear that this is an individual that is coming from another place, another 'locality,' travelling through borders, and therefore, moving from center to periphery and from periphery to another center, which indicates the movement of knowledges, of cultures, and just as importantly, of bodies and subjects. On another level, it is only through the movement of bodies from one place to another that this level of interaction and sharing could take place, and therefore, the importance of the body for the access to truth. This of course, is implied and clearly defined in many of the quatrains found in the *Tirumantiram* and I believe it is one of the important features of this text, besides the fact that it carries and spreads new ideas and practices which are incorporated in many ways wherever it is used. From the point of view of transmigration it also carries with it the idea that bodies are also and always somewhat fluid, and that they carry themselves through borders, as well as carrying other 'things' through those same borders while having themselves a border between the 'inside' and the 'outside'; both of these being sides of one space-- the space of the subject. In other words, the relationship between the inner and the outer is one in which we are constantly being engaged in as subjects and one in which a relationship of give and take is constantly being contested. This preoccupation between the inner and the outer is, I consider, a universal concern in which all of us as human beings are constantly engaged in and we devise different methods to deal with it. These methods usually carry within themselves particular social and cultural enterprises. For example, in Tamil Nadu, in the aesthetic sphere, we have the concepts of *akam* and *puṛam*. As Professor George Hart explains in his introduction to the *Puḍanāūāru: The Four Hundred Songs of War and Wisdom*:

Classical Tamil literature is divided into two overarching categories: *akam*, "interior," and *puḍam*, "exterior." The former are love poems, chronicling different situations in the development of love between a man and a woman. These poems are in a sense, about life "inside" the family, especially about

sexual relations between men and women. The “exterior” poems concern life outside the family, that is the king’s wars, greatness, and generosity; ethics; and death and dying. (xv-xvi)

Akam of course has also many meanings all related to the dualistic notion of inside/outside. It can mean the heart or the mind, a house, a dwelling, the earth, depth, place; *Puḍam* can mean exterior, outside, side, place, region, valor, bravery.¹⁰⁰ In the context of Tirumūlar’s story of how he arrived in Tamil Nadu, we can see many levels of this play between the inside and outside as I explained above. Yet another interesting part of the story is his movement from an ascetic to that of a householder as he changes bodies, and what this implicates as far as his change in life and attitude. Being in a new place and with a new body, Tirumūlar must transform all he learned in order for it to be applicable to the new circumstances in which he finds himself. The *Tirumantiram* could be said, in a symbolic and literal way, to represent that change and to point out to the way in which each one of us has to work with the present and with the way in which to work with circumstances in a very practical way. Tirumūlar had to ‘embody’ the new time and place in which he came into. In some ways, this folk story demonstrates the manner of working with unforetold situations and how to integrate these into our lives. Additionally, it also shows how the local deal with the trans-local and how they make something new with both what they have and what is coming from the outside. I try to show this when I compare and contrast the eight-fold path as presented in a different language--Sanskrit and embodied in another text by another author, the *Yoga-Sātra* of Patañjali, to the version found in the *Tirumantiram* by Tirumūlar. I also think this shows the precariousness of a living language like Tamil. The *Tirumantiram* is a great example of this play between two classical literary spheres and how the writer dealt with it. Indeed one sees the use of many Tamilized Sanskrit words, but one also sees a definite Tamil aesthetic and ethical flavor throughout the work. Overall, there is a lot of work to be done with this text and I only hope that at some future point someone will be able to collect the different manuscripts and make a study of them. Another important work would be to do a close study of all the presently available commentaries of this work.

¹⁰⁰ For more definitions of both words see Winslow’s *A Comprehensive Tamil-English Dictionary*.

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