

# **TIRIKATUKAM**

*Text, Transliteration and Translations in  
English Verse and Prose*



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English Verse and Prose*

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## FOREWORD

The Tamils may justly be proud of the fact that Tamil has won the status of a Classical language, the status it richly deserves and should have got long, long ago. The *Central Institute of Classical Tamil (CICT)*, established in Chennai, has mapped out various plans including preparation of definitive editions of forty-one Classical Tamil texts and translation of these works into English and other major European languages as well as into major Indian languages and writing of a historical grammar of Tamil. Language being the autobiography of a people, our objective is to preserve and safeguard the invaluable treasure of the literary compositions in our language. If only we could delve into our past and recover the riches and wealth of the mighty treasure trove of Classical Tamil poetry, we will be amply rewarded by its lofty poetry, the poetry that strengthens and purifies the holiness of heart's affection and enlarges our imagination. Apart from these, reading the ancient Tamil texts such as *Tolkāppiyam*, *Eṭṭuttokai*, *Pattuppāṭṭu*, *Tirukkuraḷ* etc., provides a foundation for scholarship for the present and in this sense they do provide enlightened education.

It is heartening to write this foreword to the series of publications brought out by CICT, which I am sure, will do full justice to the masterpieces in Tamil without compromising on the quality of production. The *Caṅkam* corpus being a repository of our glorious culture, it behoves our present and future generations to study them and to convey their message and the vision of life embodied in them to the public at large. Let me, therefore, commend the series to the enlightened beings the world over.

Sd/-

(D. PURANDESWARI)



## PREFACE

*Tirikatukam*, one of the eighteen minor works, composed by Nallathanar, comprising one hundred verses that constitute the text and an invocation verse preceding the text is known for presenting three epigrams in 4-line Venpa metre. As the title carries the Tamil term “katukam” which stands for pungent spices or stimulants along with the prefix “tiri” which means three, the work is noted for dealing with educational or ethical themes which are essential for people to be saved from moral turpitude or failings. The three commonly used pungent spices such as *cukku* (dry ginger), *milaku* (black pepper) and *tippili* (long pepper) in the ancient Tamil land as well as the present-day abodes of Tamils are known for the medicinal value and curative function. The three epigrams used in each of the verses are similar in function in saving the people from common human failings that lead them to suffering.

The work presenting two verse (one by S. Raman and the other by T. N. Ramachandran) translations in English and a prose translation by R. Balakrishna Mudaliar, each of the translators being reputed scholars, is sure to serve the purpose for which it is brought out. I would like to commend the efforts taken by the editor-cum-translator T.N. Ramachandran and congratulate the Department of Translation and the Publications Division of the Institute on bringing this work to a successful completion so that researchers, students and the general public can get the benefit from this edition of translations in verse and prose of Classical Tamil literature.

The Hon’ble Minister of State for Human Resources and Vice-Chairman of the Central Institute for Classical Tamil has written the foreword which lends grace to this present volume. I am indeed most happy to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to her.

Chennai

R. GNANAMOORTHY  
*Director*



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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

After a critical analysis of the language, content and tone of the literary works concerned, scholars have come to the conclusion that the *Padinenkilkanakku* (the Eighteen Minor Works) in Tamil really belonged to the post-Sangam period.

In 1940 when S.Vaiyapuri Pillai published an analytical edition of Sangam literature, the first ever compilation so far, he included in it only *Ettuttogai* (The Eight Anthologies) and *Pattuppattu* (the Ten Idylls), leaving out *Padinenkilkanakku* and rejecting the tradition that the last compilation too formed part of the Sangam works. Since then the world of Tamil scholarship has come to consider the *Padinenkilkanakku* as post-Sangam works. That until the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. *Padinenkilkanakku* was not considered a Sangam work is proved by its non-inclusion among Sangam works by the commentator of *Iraiyanar Ahapporul*. Sometime later, it must have come to be counted among Sangam classics.

The very nature of these works goes against the assertion of N.Subrahmanian that “the system of Government and social life depicted in that body of literature (namely, *Ettuttogai*, *Pattuppattu*, *Padinenkilkanakku*, *Silappadikaram*, *Manimekalai* and *Tolkappiyam*) was the same throughout till the age of religious devotion dawned on Tamilaham, i.e. the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D.” The incorrectness of this assertion is brought home by the statement of R.Champakalaxmi that “the main methodological shortcoming in the works on the Sangam period is the tendency to treat the long span of over 600 years as a single unit. “And N.Subrahmanian himself came to revise his earlier view subsequently when he said that the Sangam age came to an end by the third century A.D., and that the culture and civilization of the Sangam age are greatly different from those of the succeeding Kalabhra period (c.A.D.250-600).

The post-Sangam period lasted upto the rise of the Pallavas of the Simhavishnu line (c.A.D. 585) and the Pandya king Kadungon (c.A.D.600), and is illuminated by a good number of Tamil literary works, such as the *Padinenkilkanakku*, *Silappadikaram*, *Manimekalai* and the hymns of the early Saiva and Vaishnava saints. The Tamil scholars describe it

as the Sangam *Maruviyakalam*, meaning the period which immediately followed the Sangam period.

The *Padinenkilkanakku* actually covers the period from about A.D.250 to 700 and this period has been described as the Didactic period or the period of Morals. M.S.Purnalingam Pillai calls the *Padinenkilkanakku* didactics. According to Velu Pillai quite a few ideas of the Tamils of the present day had their origin during this period and nearly all the maxims of the latter-day didactic literature were drawn from the *Padinenkilkanakku* texts. He also adds that the epics of *Silappadikaram* and *Manimekalai* only amplified the moral maxims of these texts.

The qualitative difference between the Sangam and the *Padinenkilkanakku* periods can be gauged from the contents of their literature. It has been estimated that out of the 2381 verses of the Sangam literature over eighty percent (1862 verses) relates to love (*aham*), and only 519 to the rest (*puram*). The *Padinenkilkanakku* works on the contrary contain, out of a total of 3250 verses, only 420 on *aham*, that is less than fifteen percent. Further, in the Sangam literature, verses giving out moral advice are just 215 only, 140 in the *aham* works and 75 in the *puram*, whereas, in the *Padinenkilkanakku* texts the number of such verses is as many as 2790. Not only had the emphasis on *aham* almost disappeared, but the prime of place has come to be assigned to the didactic aspect with the passing of the Sangam age and the dawn of the age of Morals.

Secondly, while the Sangam tradition was to treat social life as containing only the two aspects of *aham* and *puram*, *Padinenkilkanakku* added one more aspect, namely *aram* (morals), and even placed it first; and Tiruvalluvar, the author of *Tirukkural*, was the first to do so.

Similarly, while the kings were praised and their glories sung in the Sangam poems, men of spiritual character alone came to be praised in the latter-day compositions. Martial valour was no longer considered the greatest virtue; instead, compassion, generosity and morality were considered so.

The above facts would sufficiently indicate that the post-Sangam works are representative of an age different from the age of the Sangam. If the society which *Ettutogai* and *Pattuppattu* portray was the earliest documented one of the Tamils, the other one whose portrayal is found in the *Padinenkilkanakku* and other contemporary works can be

described as the society which succeeded it. And this latter society constituted the second stage in the social development of the Tamils, while the period from A.D. 600 to 1300 which R.Champakalaxmi claimed as the second stage would actually constitute the third.

While studying the second stage, we should note the fact that three texts of the Sangam collections, viz., *Kalittogai*, *Tirumurugarruppadai* and *Paripadal*, are so different in character from the other seven that scholars would place them towards the far end of the Sangam age, or even a little later. In fact, their ideas and information are closer to those of the post-Sangam works.

In the thirties, V.R.R. Dikshitar had exhorted, "It is now for an earnest student of Tamil to tackle this source of information" (Viz., the Eighteen Minor Works). "From what we know, none of them excepting the *Kural* and the *Naladiyar* has occupied the critics's, attention in such a degree as it should. It seems desirable and even imperative that a chronological study of these works should immediately be undertaken so as to utilize the materials for an authentic study of the evolution of the Tamil people and progress of their culture in a certain period of study."

No attempt has so far been made to study the society of this period (c.A.D.250-700) in a comprehensive way, making use of the literature of that period, though individual works have been studied with limited objectives. For instance, C.Venkatapathy in his doctoral dissertation entitled *Padinenkilkanakku – Or Aivu* (1972) made only a statistical analysis of the works concerned, their metre, length, theme, bulk etc., in comparison with the earlier works. Yet another doctoral dissertation by name, *Padinenkilkanakku Noolkallil Kalavolukkam* (1978) by Paul Chelladurai took only the secret love-life of the people of the hill tracts (Kurinji) for study. *A Critical Study of Ethical Literature* by R.Sarangapani (1968) studied the entire range of ethical works in the Tamil language down the centuries and their nature. A few scholars have studied one or two of the individual texts, such as *Acharakkovai – Or Aivu* (1972) by S.Ramarajan (1980-81). Many of the above-listed dissertations remain unpublished and are therefore beyond the reach of scholars.

The period represented by the *Padinenkilkanakku* not only carried forward the social and cultural developments of the Sangam age, but constituted a very major formative period, which gave shape and direction to future social and cultural developments.

Certain singular features of the *Padinenkilkanakku* may also be noted, features which give them a special place among Tamil literature and therefore make their study essential. They were the first didactic works, laying down maxims on public and private conduct and ethical and social conventions, and all the ethical literature of later centuries only followed in their trail. Secondly, the earliest books of war-poems (*Kalavali*), ancient proverbs (*Palamoli*), and translation (*Acharakovai*) are to be found in this collection. Thirdly, while all the Sangam works are only collections of poems by numerous authors, seventeen of the eighteen works of the *Padinenkilkanakku*, with the exception of *Naladiyar*, are by individual authors, the great *Tirukkural* being the first of this kind. Fourthly, unlike the Sangam poems, the post-Sangam ones do not sing the praise of any king or individual; they are apolitical.

The process of social and cultural growth is continuous and unbroken, and hence several institutions of this second stage had their roots in the first; similarly, several features of the third had their origin in the second. And, therefore, reference to the Sangam and Bhakti ages become not only inescapable, but a must. Many practices mentioned in the hymns of Appar and Sambandar of the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. or in the epigraphs have been taken to reflect their beginning, or even prevalence, in the previous one or two centuries, though the literature of the Post-Sangam period might be silent about them.

The following table gives the names of the eighteen texts and their authors, and the number of verses each contains. These particulars are based on those given by the great pioneer Tamil scholar R.Raghava Iyengar, in his foreword to his edition of *Tinaimalai Nurraimbadu* and the Table given between pages 5 and 6 of the first edition of *Patinenkilkanakku* by Murray S. Rajam, 1957.

S.No.	Name of the text	Author	Author's Religion	No. of Stanzas	Excess Stanzas
1.	<i>Naladiyar</i>	Jain Saints	Jain	400	1+0+0
2.	<i>Nanmanikkadigai</i>	Vilambi Naganar	Vaishnava	100	2+2+0
3.	<i>Iniyavai Narpadu</i>	Bhudan Sendanar	Vaidika	40	1+0+0
4.	<i>Inna Narpadu</i>	Kapilar	Vaidika	40	1+0+0
5.	<i>Kar Narpadu</i>	Kannan Kuthanar of Madurai.	Vaishnava	40	0+0+1

6.	<i>Kalavali Narpadu</i>	Poigaiyar	Vaishnava	40	0+2+0
7.	<i>Aintinai Aimbadu</i>	Maran Poraiyanar	Vaidika	50	0+0+1
8.	<i>Aintinai Elubadu</i>	Muvadiyar	Unknown	70	1+1+0
9.	<i>Tinaimoli Aimbadu</i>	Kannan Budanan, son of Sattanttaiyar	Unknown	50	0+0+0
10.	<i>Tinaimalai Nurraimbadu</i>	Kanimedaviyar, pupil of the Madurai Tamil Teacher, Makkayanar	Jain	150	0+3+1
11.	<i>Kainnilai</i>	Pullankadanar, son of Kavidiyar of Nallur of Mullinadu of Marokkam	Unknown	60	0+0+0
12.	<i>Tirukkural</i>	Tiruvalluvar	Jain	1330	0+0+0
13.	<i>Tirikadugam</i>	Nalladanar	Vaishnava	100	1+4+2
14.	<i>Acharakkovai</i>	Mulliyar of Peruvai of Kayattur	Saiva	100	0+0+1
15.	<i>Palamoli</i>	Araiyandar of Munrurai	Jain	400	0+3+1
16.	<i>Sirupanchamulam</i>	Makkariyasan, pupil of Makkayanar	Jain	100	1+5+2
17.	<i>Mudumolikkanchi</i>	Kudalur Kilar of Madurai	Unknown	100	0+0+0
18.	<i>Eladi</i>	Kanimedaviyar, pupil of the Madurai Tamil Teacher, Makkayanar	Jain	80	1+0+1
				3250	9+20+10

It is not certain how these excess stanzas got mixed up. The number of them varied from palm leaf manuscript to palm leaf manuscript which were in the possession of numerous families all over Tamil Nadu. And some of the texts also had invocatory verses at the beginning. While

*Tirukkural* had ten of them as a regular part of the body of the text, the rest had them as additional verses. Further, about twenty-five stanzas are found totally missing or badly mutilated due to the impact of time on the brittle palm leaf bits or careless handling or white ants.

Until very recent times there existed some confusion regarding the identity of two or three texts in the collection. The four-line stanza, which gives the names of the texts constituting the Eighteen Minor Works slightly varied from manuscript to manuscript. Some scholars considered Kovai to mean *Tiruchirrambalakkovai* of Manickavasagar, instead of *Acharakkovai*.

*Muppal* was considered to mean some text on morals, and not *Tirukkural*. Then, there was a debate whether *Innilai* or *Kainnilai* must be put into the collection. These points were exhaustively discussed and debated by scholars in the last two decades of the last century, and finally the correct identity of the eighteen texts has come to be established.

The *Padinenkilkanakku* can be divided into three groups on the basis of their contents. Eleven are didactic, six deal with *aham* (love), and one, viz., *Kalavali*, with *puram*.

### **Their Dates**

Chronology has been a difficult problem in ancient Indian historiography, and the same is the case with Tamil history too, at least until the time of the dated epigraphs, that is the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The problem with ancient Tamil literature is still worse, since they do not contain any useful chronological reference, except the solitary case of Senguttuvan – Gajabahu contemporaneity. Therefore, widely different views have been expressed by scholars on the dates of the early Tamil poems. However, it has been conceded by all that a majority of the *Padinenkilkanakku* works belonged to the period that followed the Sangam age. N.Subrahmanian, after discussing the views of different scholars on the dates of the Sangam age, sums up as follows: “Hence it is clear that historians of south India agree that the Sangam age is the period of a few centuries immediately preceding or succeeding the Christian era, and that some of the earliest extant Tamil works belong to the age B.C.” V.I.Subramanian concluded on the basis of computer analysis that the dates of the Sangam poems ranged from 180 B.C. to 290 A.D. M.Rajamanickanar, another eminent scholar of Tamil literature and history, too held that 300 A.D. marked the close of the Sangam age.

It has thus been the near-unanimous opinion of Tamil scholars that the Sangam age closed with the third century of the Christian era and was followed by the post-Sangam period of *Padinenkilkanakku*. M.Rajamanickanar, in continuation of his above statement, said that from about 300 A.D. to 875 A.D. the Pallavas and the Pandyas were the most prominent in the Tamil country and that a majority of the *Padinenkilkanakku* works were produced during this period. (He has overlooked the Kalabhra occupation of the Chola and the Pandya countries between c. A.D. 300 and 575) P.T.Srinivas Iyengar was of the opinion that the Eighteen Minor poems ranged in date from the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. S.Vaiyapuri Pillai assigned A.D. 600 – 850, for these works. He has put down his scholarly reasons for this conclusion in many of his works. He assigns A.D. 600 to *Tirukkural* (A.D. 600–750 to the Sangam texts of *Kalittogai*, *Paripadal* and *Tirumurugarrupadai* and *Palamoli*, A.D. 750–800 to *Inna Narpadu*, *Aintinai Aimbadu* and *Aintinai Elubadu*, and A.D. 800-850 to all the remaining *Padinenkilkanakku* poems.

K.A.Nilakanta Sastri advances these dates by about a century; he places *Tirukkural*, *Kalavali* and *Mudumolikkanchi* between A.D. 450 and 550; *Kar Narpadu*, *Inna Narpadu*, *Aintinai Aimbadu*, *Naladiyar*, *Nanmanikkadigai* and *Palamoli* between A.D. 550 and 650; and the remaining nine works between A.D. 650 and 750. He believes that the Sangam age concluded by A.D. 250, and Sangam literature had been composed before A.D. 300. He thus leaves an interval of about a century and a half between Sangam literature and the earliest of the *Padinenkilkanakku*, namely *Kural*.

T.V.Sadasiva Pandarathar finds no evidences to fix the date of each of the *Padinenkilkanakku* works, and despairs that even the concerned centuries have to be guessed. He however, suggests that the entire collection may be assigned to the period between the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. and the end of the 6<sup>th</sup>. K.K.Pillay estimates that their dates may range from about the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. A little later he adds that *Tirukkural* must have appeared earlier than the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D., while *Kalavali* and *Mudumolikkanchi* “about the 3<sup>rd</sup> century”, the five *Tinai* works during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the purely didactic ones between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Though there is a slight contradiction in these estimates of K.K.Pillay, we can take the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. to the 7<sup>th</sup> to be his assessment. On account of the influence of the Sanskrit *Niti Sastras* on *Acharakkovai* nearly all scholars tend

to believe that the latter was perhaps the last to appear among the *Padinenkilkanakku* works, and M.Arunachalam puts it in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, while Vaiyapuri Pillai places it in the 9<sup>th</sup>.

These views of learned scholars regarding the dating of the *Padinenkilkanakku* underline the difficulty in arriving at a unanimous conclusion, and therefore c. A.D. 250-700 can be taken as the consensus date for the period.

The *Padinenkilkanakku* period (c.A.D. 250-700) was a formative one in the social history of the Tamil people, when the foundations of a number of social, cultural and religious, and also some political institutions of the later centuries, were laid.

The local government institutions of the medieval times came to be organized in this period only, such as the *nadu* assembly, the *brahmadeya sabha*, and the representative system of membership of them. The extensive nature of the Pallava empire – the first ever in Tamil history – and the non Tamil character of the new rulers rendered these innovations very much necessary. The explicit Brahmin settlements called *brahmadeyas*, donations of villages to the temples and *mutts* of all denominations under the names *pallichandas* and *devadanas*, the large influx of *Andanar*, and the autonomous character of the *sabhas* were some of the more important and long-lasting features of this period, which the Imperial Cholas carried still forward.

The *Padinenkilkanakku* period was an age of agricultural expansion; forests were cleared; irrigation tanks, canals and wells excavated, and more land was brought under the plough. The *Padinenkilkanakku* calls these public works as meritorious acts which will be rewarded by a place in heaven. Wet land cultivation was considered more important. Gardens, groves and drinking-water ponds were developed in the inaccessible hill tracts. However, primitive cultivation continued and life did not change much.

The gifts of land and villages mentioned in literature and epigraphs testify to the prevalence of private proprietary rights in land from Sangam times, and the dominant landholders in each village were called Kilars. The kings enjoyed the right of confiscation and redistribution of holdings.

With the advent of the Pallavas and their creation of *brahmadeyas*, *pallichandas* and *devadanas*, tenant-farming and absentee landlordism became very widespread. The non-Brahmin landed proprietors came to be called Velalar. The rural hierarchy consisted of a couple of big landholders, many small ones, tenant-farmers and landless agricultural

labourers. Besides them, there was also a class of village artisans and public servants. The post-Sangam economic system was one of wide disparities, with a good number of beggars. Productivity in agriculture was low, and was probably one of the main reasons for the widely prevalent poverty of the time, though the wars too had contributed their share. Crop failures were so frequent that frugal habits of life were preached by all works.

Land tax, property and professional taxes and other sundry collections were too many and too heavy for the peasantry to bear. *Melvaram* was collected from the tenant-farmers who were also expected to contribute free service for repairing the tanks, temples, roads, etc. With very small holdings per family, the peasant was crushed by this heavy burden of taxes and dues, and frequent crop failures compounded his misery. In this background of inadequate purchasing power with the masses, the artisans and craftsmen could not prosper and grow into European-type guildsmen and bourgeoisie. It was probably in this period that the groundwork was laid for the millennia-long poverty of the common people.

The royal taxes and excavations – the latter were condemned in literature – were collected through the *kilar*-dominated *nadu* and *ur* assemblies, and the *brahmadeya* sabhas.

Partition of family holdings left the heirs poorer and poorer after each generation, and so debts became very common. They were advanced on the authority of written documents for interest.

Roads linked Tamil Nadu with the Telugu country under the Pallavas and tolls were collected on goods transported along them. The Pallavas also promoted sea-borne trade with S.E. Asia, and established colonies there. All Tamil kingdoms maintained close contacts with Ceylon. The contemporary literature provide numerous references to the maritime activities of the people. The Sangam age trade with both the west and east not only continued, but even expanded in the succeeding centuries. India-China trade was very brisk.

Madurai was a flourishing centre of weaving, and cotton, silk and woolen fabrics were sold in its markets. Weaving remained the most important occupation after agriculture.

R. ALALASUNDARAM

*Tamil Social Life* (ca. 250 to 700 A.D.)

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Madras, 1996.



## TIRIKATUKAM: AN INTRODUCTION

The corpus known as the *Patineṅkīl-k-kaṇṇakku* comprises eighteen works. Of them the *Tirikaṭukam* is one. According to Vaiyapuri Pillai, the work was composed between A.D. 650 and A.D. 750. Besides the invocatory verse, this work contains one hundred stanzas in Venpāmetre. The author is known as Nallāthaṅār. Very little is known of him. The work is didactic as well as ethical.

The word “Tirikaṭukam” refers to three pungent herbs, they being “cukku” (dried ginger), “miḷaku” (pepper) and “tippili” (*pipelongum*). These are celebrated for their medicinal value. Every family in Tamil Nadu is aware of the potency of these three. One of these or a combination of all the three is curative. These sharpen the taste buds and offer relief to such ailments as common cold, flatulence and constipation. They aid the free circulation of air within the body.

Each verse of this corpus inculcates three precepts, intended to guide one’s conduct.

Of the many editions of this work, the one painstakingly edited by Vaiyapuri Pillai (1944) contains much scholarly information and is very useful to researchers. This edition merits reprinting.

A list of the editions of this work of which I am aware is furnished below.

- (1) 1887. *Tirikaṭukam Mūlamum Uraiyum* – Published by U.Pushparatha Chettiyar at Chennai. Kalarathnākara Achukkutam. Republished by Sandhya Publishers, Chennai – 600 083; December, 2008.
- (2) 1902. *Tirikaṭukam Mūlam*: Uṛaiyūr Madurai Nayaka Mudaliyar’s son Chokkalinga Mudaliyar’s commentary; Thanjavur Krishna Vilasa Achakam.
- (3) 1922. *Tirikaṭukam* – Commentary by K.R. Govindaraja Mudaliyar, Ripon Press, Chennai.
- (4) N.D. *Bāla Nīti Ceyyul Nūrriraṭṭu* – *Tirikaṭukam* (with meaning) – Publisher’s details are not available (An edition published prior to 1935).

- (5) 1936. *Tirikaṭukam Mūlamum Uraiyum* – Vidwan P.C. Punnaivananatha Mudaliyar, South India Saiva Siddhanta works Publishers, Tirunelveli.
- (6) 1940. *Kaṭukan̄ Kōvai Māmūlam Kāñciyōṭēlāti* (Text only) – SISSW Publishers, Chennai.
- (7) 1944. *Tirikaṭukamum Cirupañchamūlamum* (Old Commentary), S. Vaiyapuri Pillai's Publication, Madras University.
- (8) 1959. *Paṭiñēnkīl-k-kaṇṇakku* – Volume Two, *Tirikaṭukam* (Text only) S. Rajam's Publication, Murray and Co., Chennai–600 001.
- (9) 1995. *Paṭiñēnkīl-k-kaṇṇakku* (Meaning only) Third Part – *Tirikaṭukam* – Dr. Durai Rajaram, Edited by Prof. M. Shanmugam Pillai, Mullai Nilayam, Chennai–17.
- (10) 2004. *Nīti Nūlkaḷ – Tirikaṭukam Mūlamum Eḷiya Teḷivurayum* – C.R. Govindarajan, Sri Indu Publications, Chennai–600 017.
- (11) 2005. *Tirikaṭukam Mūlamum Uraiyum* – Saratha Publishers, Chennai–600 014.
- (12) 2006. *Paṭiñēnkīl-k-kaṇṇakku Nūlkaḷ* (Text and Meaning) Part II – *Tirikaṭukam* – Varthamanan Publishers, Chennai–600 017.

The word 'tapas' is untranslatable. I have retained this word in my translation. 'Penance' and 'austerities' are no substitutes for 'tapas'. Some modern translators use the word askesis (asceticism) to mean tapas. Even this is inadequate. Tapas can be best described in the words of Shelley quoted below.

Dreadful abstinence  
And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,  
Deep contemplation and unwearied study,  
In years outstretched beyond the date of man.

Differences in translation are attributable to the different commentaries followed by the translators. So, uniformity is not a feature discernible in the translations. Again, textual variants add to the absence of uniformity. In some instances, a word has more meanings than one. Preferring one meaning to the other(s), is to be counted as the privilege of each translator.

Of the three translations included in this volume, the first translation in verse is by S. Raman, the second translation in verse is by T.N. Ramachandran and the third translation in prose is by Nalladai Balakrishna Mudaliyar.

All in all, here is a volume of three translations which, I daresay, are readable and well-nigh dependable.

Thanjavur

T.N. RAMACHANDRAN



# A SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION OF TAMIL

## Vowels

### Short

அ	a
இ	i
உ	u
எ	e
ஓ	o

### Long

ஆ	ā
ஈ	ī
ஊ	ū
ஏ	ē
ஔ	ō

ஐ ai

ஔ au

## Consonants

### Hard

க	k
ச	c
ட	ṭ
த	t
ப	p
ற	ṛ

### Soft

ங	ṅ
ஞ	ñ
ண்	ṇ
ந்	n
ம்	m
ன்	ṅ

### Medial

ய	y
ர	r
ல்	l
வ்	v
ழ்	ḷ
ள்	ḷ

## Āytam

ஃ k



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# TIRIKATUKAM

(Text followed: திரிகடுகம், நல்லாதனாரால் இயற்றிய மூலமும், சொக்கலிங்க முதலியாரவர்களால் செய்யப்பட்ட அவதாரிகையும் தெளிபொருள் விளக்கப் பொழிப்புரையும், 1902)

## கடவுள் வாழ்த்து INVOCATORY VERSE

கண்ணகன் ஞால மளந்ததூஉங் காமருசீர்த்  
தண்ணறும் பூங்குருந்தஞ் சாய்த்ததூஉம் – நண்ணிய  
மாயச் சகட முதைத்ததூஉம் இம்மூன்றும்  
பூவைப்பூ வண்ண னடி.

*kaṇṇakaṇ ṅāla maḷantatūuṅ kāmārucīrt  
taṇṇarum pūṅkuruntaṅ cāyttatūum – naṇṇiya  
māyac cakaṭa mutaittatūum immūṅrum  
pūvaippū vaṇṇa ṇaṭi.*

Those which measured the expansive space of cosmos,  
Those which uprooted the *Kuruntha* tree  
Of excellently attractive, cool, fragrant flowers,  
Those which kicked to pieces the charmed cart  
That neared to kill, –  
These three  
Are the feet of the Lord of *Kayambu* complexion.

The feet of Him whose hue is the *Kāyāmpūs* enacted the three  
acts  
Of measuring the extensive cosmos, breaking the *Kurunta* rich  
in  
Cool and fragrant and beautiful flowers and shattering  
The Wheel of Gramary that rushed towards Him.

**Note.** *Kāyāmpū*: The flower of ironwood tree

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The Wheel of Gramary: An Asura since called Sakatāsura who assumed the guise of a fiercely rolling wheel. At the behest of Kamsa, he undertook to kill the child Krishna. Measuring the far-flung earth,<sup>1</sup> felling down the delightfully attractive cool fragrant-flowered Kuruntha tree,<sup>2</sup> kicking up the illusory bandy<sup>3</sup>: these were feats of the (holy) feet of Thirumāl of the kaya bloom complexion.

### நூல்

1. அருந்ததிக் கற்பினார் தோளுந் திருந்திய  
தொல்குடியின் மாண்டார் தொடர்ச்சியுஞ் – சொல்லின்  
அரிலகற்றுங் கேள்வியார் நட்பும் இம்முன்றும்  
திரிகடுகம் போலு மருந்து.

### Nūl

*aruntatik karpiṇār tōḷun tiruntiya*  
*tolkuṭiyin māṇṭār toṭarcciyuñ – collin*  
*arilakaruñ kēḷviyār naṭpum immūṇrum*  
*tirikaṭukam pōlu maruntu.*

1. Shoulders of wives chaste as *Arundhathi*,  
Companionship of the magnanimous of right ancient lineage,  
Friendship of the wise listeners that shun the trivial in  
speech, These three  
Are, like tirikadugam, a medicine.

---

<sup>1</sup> Emperor Bali, son of Veerasenan held sway over the three worlds (upper, middle and the nether). Indra, King of Devas, jealous of his supremacy prayed to Vishnu to put an end to such overlordship. Vishnu agreed. He took the form of Vamana (a dwarf) and approaching Bali, asked for three paces of land as gift. Chukra, the guru of Bali, warned him that Vamana was God Vishnu incarnate and so he should be careful in acceding to his request. But Bali ignoring the warning promised to give the asked-for extent of land. Immediately after, Vamana took on his awe-inspiring divine form and measuring the three worlds with three paces, cowed down Bali, thus dispossessing him.

<sup>2</sup> Once an asura (rakshasa) induced by Kamsa, the uncle of Lord Krishna, was lurking in a Kuruntha tree on the banks of the Yamuna, biding his time to do harm to Krishna. Krishna then dancing and singing with gopis felled the tree with a mighty kick and thus put an end to the lurking rakshasa.

<sup>3</sup> When Krishna as a child was lying in the cradle in the house of Nandagopa, he kicked and killed the asura who approached him in the form of an illusory cart to do him harm at the bidding of Kamsa, his uncle.

Arms of helpmeets like unto the chaste Aruntati's,

2. Kinship with them of hoary and noble lineage  
And friendship with the learned who can rectify the errors  
found in opuses:

These three are like the medicine known as Tirikatukam.

**Note:** Aruntati: The wife of Sage Vasishta, the paragon of chastity.

3. Union with ladies chaste like Arunthathi,<sup>4</sup> association with the renowned come of a flawless ancient line; befriending those who by listening to the words of wise (learned) have learnt to eschew flaws in words, – these three acts will serve one as medicine of triple ingredients that cures one of disease (bodily ills).

2. தன்குணங் குன்றாத் தகைமையுந் தாவில்சீர்  
இன்குணத்தா ரேவின செய்தலும் – நன்குணர்வின்  
நான்மறை யாளர் வழிச்செலவும் இம்மூன்றும்  
மேன்முறை யாளர் தொழில்.

*tan̄kuṇaṅ kuṇṛāt takaimaiyun tāvilcīr  
in̄kuṇattā rēvina ceṭtalum – nan̄kuṇarvin  
nāṇmarai yālar vaḷiccelavum immūṇrum  
mēṇmurai yālar tolil.*

1. Nobility that falters not from its inherent virtue,  
Doing what men of excellent, undiminished sweet nature bid,  
Following the path of men versatile with four Vedas, –  
These three  
Are the profession of those of elevated conduct.
2. The unflawed character of one nobly-born, the performance  
Of deeds commanded by men of sweet and great nature  
And treading the path revealed by the knowledgeable ones  
Well-versed in the four Vedas: these three constitute the lofty  
one's way of life.

---

<sup>4</sup> Arunthathi was the daughter of Kardama and wife of Vasishta. One of the Pleiades and generally regarded as the model of wifely excellence.

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3. Free from blemish to one's noble line, treading the path of virtue, carrying out the behests of those of sweet temper that brings in its train deathless glory; acting in the way pointed out by those of clear understanding versed in Vedic lore (the four Vedas), these triple acts are the ways of the noble.

3. கல்லார்க் கினனா யொழுக்கலுங் காழ்கொண்ட  
இல்லாளைக் கோலாற் புடைத்தலும் – இல்லம்  
சிறியாரைக் கொண்டு புகலும் இம்மூன்றும்  
அறியாமை யான்வருங் கேடு.

*kallārk kinanā yolukaluṅ kālkoṅṭa*  
*illālaik kōlār puṭaittalum – Illam*  
*ciṟiyāraik koṅṭu pukalum immūṇṇum*  
*aṟiyāmai yānvaruṅ kēṭu.*

1. To conduct cultivating the company of the unlearned,  
To beat one's wife of firm chastity with a stick,  
To enter the life of a house-holder listening to the small witted,–  
These three  
Are the evils that accrue through folly.
2. Cultivating the kinship of the unlettered, beating with a stick  
One's wife poised in steadfast chastity and conducting  
The household affairs with the help of the parviscent:  
These three are evils which accrue through folly.
3. Developing friendship with the foolish, beating hard the  
chaste wife with a stick, taking to one's house the ignoble,  
these triple acts are the evils born of one's stupidity.

4. பகைமுன்னர் வாழ்க்கை செயலுந் தொகைநின்ற  
பெற்றத்துட் கோலின்றிச் சேறலும் – முற்றன்னைக்  
காய்வானைக் கைவாங்கிக் கோடலும் இம்மூன்றும்  
சாவ வறுவான் றொழில்.

*pakaimunnar vāḷkkai ceyalun tokaininra*  
*perrattuṭ kōlinriṅ cēralum – murrannaik*  
*kāyvāṅaik kaivāṅkik kōṭalum immūṇṇum*  
*cāva vuvuṅṅ roḷil.*

1. Living ostentatiously before envious enemies,  
Entering a herd of crowding cattle without a stick,  
Befriending an envious foe after deserting his company  
These three are the tasks of one destined to die.
  2. Living the life of luxury in the presence of foes, venturing  
Into the midst of a herd of bulls or kine without a stick  
And befriending the hater who grieves the friendly one;  
These are the acts of one who is destined to perish.
  3. Living in prosperity before one's enemy, going in the midst  
of a herd of cattle, breaking away from one who did harm  
and then seeking friendship with him, these three are the  
acts courting death.
5. வழங்காத் துறையிழிந்து நீர்ப்போக்கு மொப்ப  
விழைவிலாப் பெண்டிர்தோள் சேர்வும் – உழந்து  
விருந்தினனாய் வேற்றார் புகலும் இம்மூன்றும்  
அருந்துயரங் காட்டு நெறி.

*vaḷankāt turaiyiḷintu nīrppōkku moppa  
vīlavilāp peṇṇīrtōḷ cērvum – ulantu  
viruntinaṇāy vērrūr pukalum immūnrum  
aruntuyaraṅ kāṭṭu neri.*

1. Crossing the floods getting down a wharf not in use,  
Embracing the shoulders of women with no comparable  
desire for union,  
Walking on foot to seek refuge in a strange place as a guest, –  
These three  
Are ways that lead to great misery.
2. Entering a disused ford to swim in water, embracing the arms  
Of women who share not equal desire for union  
And entering a new place as a stranger during one's misery:  
These three are the paths leading to immense distress.
3. Wading through rivers in unforded parts, union with prostitutes  
who love not in return, going to other places as unwelcome  
(forced) guests, these three acts land one in great grief.

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6. பிறந்தன்னைப் பேணுங்கா னாணலும் பேணார்  
திறன்வேறு கூறிற் பொறையும் – அறவினையைக்  
காராண்மை போல வொழுகலும் இம்மூன்றும்  
ஊராண்மை யென்னுஞ் செருக்கு.

*pirartannaip pēṇuṅkā nāṇalum pēṇār  
tiraṇvēru kūriṅ poraiyum – aravinaiyaik  
kāraṇmai pōla voḷukalum immūṇrum  
ūrāṇmai yennuñ cerukku.*

1. Modesty when others praise and patronize one,  
Forbearance when enemies speak other than one's merits,  
Doing works of righteousness as the virtuous cloud, –  
These three,  
Are the majesty of a ruler's governance.
  2. Feeling abashed when others praise, forbearing foes  
Who ignore merits and revile, and performing  
Deeds of virtue as of right; these three are  
Constitutive of great and legitimate pride.
  3. Filling with bashfulness (modesty) when others honour one;  
showing forbearance when an inimical person wantonly  
slights one, undertaking munificence like the cloud (without  
any thought of a recompense): these triple acts which  
bespeak noble qualities are a great treasure.
7. வாளைமீ னுள்ள றலைப்படலு மாளல்லான்  
செல்வக் குடியிற் பிறத்தலும் – பல்லவையுள்  
அஞ்சுவான் கற்ற வருநாலும் இம்மூன்றும்  
துஞ்சுமன் கண்ட கனா.

*vāḷaimī nuḷḷa ralaippaḷalu māḷallāṅ  
celvak kuṭiyiṅ piṇattalum – pallavaiyuḷ  
aṅcuvaṅ karra varunūlum immūṇrum  
tuñcūmaṅ kaṅṅa kaṅā.*

1. The lullal bird trying to attack the valai fish,  
One of no manly virtues being born in a rich household,

A rare text learnt by one fearful of an assembly.  
These three are dreams dreamt by a mute in sleep.

2. The attempt of a snipe to catch a scabbard-fish,  
The birth of an effete one in an opulent family and the rare  
Learning of one who dreads the assembly of the learned;  
These three are like the dream dreamt by a dumb one.
3. The little snipe attacking the Valai fish, an inefficient person  
born in a rich household (trying to manage things); the  
knowledge of great works possessed by one who shakes  
with fear in an assembly of the learned, these three situations  
are of the nature of the dream of a dumb man (in sleep).

8. தொல்லவையுட் டோன்றுங் குடிமையுந் தொக்கிருந்த  
நல்லவையுண் மேம்பட்ட கல்வியும் – வெல்சமத்து  
வேந்துவப்ப வட்டார்த்த வென்றியும் இம்மூன்றும்  
தாந்தம்மைக் கூறாப் பொருள்.

*tollavaiyuṭ ṭōṇruṅ kuṭimaiyun tokkirunta  
nallavaiyuṅ mēmpaṭṭa kalviyum – velcamattu  
vēntuvappa vaṭṭārtta veṇṇiyum immūṇrum  
tāntammaik kūṛāp poruḷ.*

1. A noble lineage entitling membership in an assembly of  
elders,  
Scholarship recognized in a concourse of the goodlylearned,  
Resounding victory over foes to the happiness of a warring  
king,–  
These three  
Are subjects not to be spoken of in self-praise.
2. Getting born in a hoary and noble clan, manifesting eminent  
knowledge  
In the assembly of the learned and achieving great  
Victory in a fierce war to the delight of one's king;  
These are not to be articulated in self-praise.
3. The respectability evident in those of an ancient family, the

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rare scholarship in a goodly assembly of the learned, the great victory gained by killing many a foe in a triumphant war much to the delight of one's king, these are things about which no self-publicity is needed (for they are evident by themselves).

9. பெருமை யுடையா ரினத்தி னகறல்  
உரிமையில் பெண்டிரைக் காழுற்று வாழ்தல்  
விழுமிய வல்ல துணிதல் இம்மூன்றும்  
முழுமக்கள் காது லவை.

*perumai yuṭaiyā riṇatti nakaral*  
*urimaiyil peṇṭiraik kāmurru vāṭtal*  
*viḷumiya valla tuṇital immūnrum*  
*muḷumakkaḷ kāta lavai.*

1. Deserting the company of the glorious-virtuous,  
Living with a craving for the company of women, not  
one's own,  
Deciding on doing what are not excellent, –  
These three  
Are the objects of desire of men of wholesome folly.
2. Quitting the company of the glorious,  
Loving and living with women, not one's own,  
And bent upon doing that which is not good: these three  
Are desired by the absolutely foolish ones.
3. Parting with the noble-minded, seeking illicit union with  
women, deeming things ignoble as noble, these are things  
desired by a stupid man.

10. கணக்காய ரில்லாத ஓரும் பிணக்கறுக்கு  
மூத்தோரை யில்லா வவைக்களனும் – பாத்துண்ணும்  
தன்மையி லாள ரயலிருப்பும் இம்மூன்றும்  
நன்மை பயத்த லில.

*kaṇakkāya rillāta vūrum piṇakkarukku*  
*mūttōrai yillā vavaikkalanum – pātuṇṇum*

*tanmaiḥi lāḷa rayaliruppum immūnrum*  
*nanmai payatta lila.*

1. A village that has no preceptor to teach,  
An assembly without elders capable of settling disputes,  
A neighbour without the virtue of sharing what he eats, –  
These three  
Have never bestowed any good.
2. A village without a teacher, a forum lacking in  
Great men who can resolve disputes and living close  
To them who do not share their food with others:  
These three are incapable of conferring any good.
3. A place where there is no (good) teacher; an assembly where  
there is none wise enough to settle a doubt or dispute, the  
presence nearby of one who does not share his food with  
others, these three things bring no good to any one.

11. விளியாதான் கூத்தாட்டுக் காண்டலும் வீழ்க்  
களியாதான் காவா துரையும் – தெளியாதான்  
கூரையுட் பல்காலுஞ் சேறலும் இம்முன்றும்  
ஊரெல்லா நோவ துடைத்து.

*viḷiyātān kūttāṭṭuk kāṇḍalum vīḷak*  
*kaḷiyātān kāvā turaiyum – teḷiyātān*  
*kūraiḡuṭ palkāluñ cēralum immūnrum*  
*ūrellā nōva tuṭaittu.*

1. One that knows not to sing presenting a dance-drama,  
Unguarded utterances of one so drunk as to fall flat,  
Frequenting the house of one that has uncertain doubts, –  
These three  
Are wrongs that the entire village resents.
2. Attending a dance conducted by one who knows not to sing  
The unguarded utterances of even a teetotaller  
And the frequenting of the house of a person lacking in  
Clarity: these three cause harm to the entire town.
3. Witnessing, uninvited, the dance (acting) of a person;