Some Remarks on the Role of Tamil Literary Tradition in *Śiva Śatakam* of Nārāyaṇa Guru

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Abstract

The paper presents an analysis of the selected stanzas of *Śiva Śatakam* (*One Hundred Verses on Śiva*)—the most important hymn devoted to *Śiva* composed in Malayalam by Nārāyaṇa Guru. The analysis shows that there is a tendency in the hymn to emphasise the equal status of Sanskrit and Dravidian literary tradition. Several stanzas are constructed on the basis of Sanskrit stories or myths; however, this “classical” scheme is filled with Tamil or Malayalam concepts, ideas, and key words. What is more, Nārāyaṇa Guru employs so called twilight language used by authors of Tamil philosophical works in order to provide a receiver of the poem with the opportunity to interpret some stanzas in accordance with Sanskrit as well as Dravidian tradition. The introduction of a person belonging to lower caste of South India as the one who is able to attain liberation, as well as presentation of the well-known philosophical concepts as equal or even subordinated to the Dravidian ideas could become a significant contribution to the social activity of Guru comprising among others the concern for spiritual and social uplift of the lower caste people of Kerala.

Keywords

Śiva Śatakam, Nārāyaṇa Guru, *Tirumantiram*, *Kuṇḍalīnī*, Tamil literary tradition

In the present paper, an attempt will be made toward interpreting selected stanzas from the Malayalam work of Narayana Guru (Nārāyaṇa Guru, 1854-1928), a South Indian philosopher and social reformer from Kerala. In his poem *Śiva Śatakam* (abbr. ŚŚ)—*One Hundred Verses on Śiva*, based on different philosophical systems (*Śaiva Siddhānta*, *Yoga*, *Tantra*, etc.), Narayana combines Sanskrit and Dravidian (Tamil and Malayalam) tradition¹. The intent of the paper is to present the method of introduction of several Tamil ideas into a composition based on the “classical” Sanskrit scheme, attested by ancient Indian literary tradition. Narayana Guru was proficient—as well as in Malayalam and Sanskrit—in Tamil language and literature (Yati 2007: 13; Balachandran 2015: 20-21). He translated into Malayalam a part of *Tirukkuraḷ* “without losing even a bit of its beauty in

language and meaning and retaining its original style” (Balachandran 2015: 21) as well as *Oḻiviloḻukkam*²; he also composed poems in Tamil (*Tēvārappatikaṛikaḷ*—*A Set of Verses on Adoration of Gods*).

This might explain why the first stanza of *Śiva Śatakam* contains an allusion to the Tamil work, although the plot of the story mentioned here is shared by both the Sanskrit and the Tamil tradition. It is the South Indian version of the famous epic *Mahābhārata*, from which Narayana Guru derived the motif of

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writing down the poem, which was considered to be the fifth *Veda*³ by *Ganeśa* with his broken tusk on the slopes of the sacred *Meru* Mountain which served as a palm leaf. Two commentators, T. Bhāskaran and M. N. Prasād, quote the portion of the Tamil *Villi Bhāratam* which could be the literary source of the story included in the first stanza of ŚŚ:

As soon as the best of sages *Vyāsa* who was practicing penance—had composed *Mahābhārata* as the fifth *Vēda*—together with the four *Vēdas* existing in this world surrounded with the ocean, he had bowed to the God (*Ganeśa*), who wrote it down (using) the *Meru* Mountain as a palm leaf and his broken tusk as the pen⁴.

One can find a reference to that extraordinary writing material in the first stanza of ŚŚ: The slopes of (*Meru*) Mountain (*adriyinnēl*) serve as the palm leaf for *Ganeśa*, whereas the tip of his broken tusk becomes the pen (*muṭṭikonbu*):

In olden times, the Perfect-Eared One gracefully wrote down from end to end the story of *Mahābhārata* battle with (the tip) of his broken tusk on the slopes of (*Meru*) Mountain; may the divine form (of Lord)—the manifestation of the Fullness remaining the close friend to his humble devotees, bestow protecting cares on us!⁵

In the subsequent stanza of ŚŚ, another reference to the Tamil literary tradition can be found: The four *Vedas* described here with the expression *arumaṭa*—“the excellent mystery/secret” as well as *param atu*—“what is transcendent, highest, supreme”, ascribed to *Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa* according to Sanskrit tradition, have been chanted in the language of Valluvar (*Vaḷḷuvar*), the author of the famous Tamil poem *Tirukkural* (*Tirukkuṭaḷ*)—thanks to the Speech Goddess *Sarasvati* (*Sarasvatī*) or *Bharati* (*Bhāratī*). It is worth emphasising here that the term *maṭa* denoting secret as well as Vedic texts is of Tamil origin. The name of Goddess has been explained by Prasād in accordance with the context of that stanza: *bhā* means brightness, light, or splendour, whereas *rati* denotes

an experience of bliss. The name *Bhāratī* can be associated with the disposition of attaining bliss within consciousness, knowledge, or light⁶. The second stanza of ŚŚ runs as follows:

“The four excellent *Vedas*, revealed in olden times, were granted as divided into (four) parts to the Rain-Cloud-Dark-Skinned One (i.e. *Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa*); that supreme (Knowledge) was recited in the tongue of Valluvar⁷—may the Goddess *Bharati* protect us eternally”!

In both stanzas given above, there is a tendency to equate Sanskrit works and Dravidian ones; firstly, in the stanza constituting the praise of *Ganapati* (*Gaṇapati*), *Narayana* Guru mentions the great epic (*Mahābhārata*), regarded as the fifth *Veda*—but in its Tamil version; secondly, it has been emphasised in the stanza constituting the praise of *Sarasvatī* that both the Sanskrit *Vedas* and the Tamil *Tirukkural* were revealed thanks to the Goddess of Speech—*Sarasvati* (*Bharati*); as a result, the position and value of both must be admitted to be the same⁸.

The very same importance of Sanskrit and Tamil literary tradition has been suggested by Guru not only at the level of literary tradition and mythological issues, but also from the philosophical as well as from the social perspective. Stanza 24th of ŚŚ, in which one can find the influence of Tamil tradition, seems to touch on the subject of liberation in the context of the social situation and reforms introduced by Guru. It is worth recalling here that ŚŚ was composed during Guru’s stay in Tamil Nadu, at *Marutvāmala*, which was renowned for its medical herbs:

“At the mountain top, there are three remedial herbs, guarded on both sides by snake and tiger; the untouchable one, having attained and taken the half (of such a medicine), shines again. O my heart! May you grasp and taste (the same)”⁹!

The source of the allegory given above has been indicated by two commentators, T. Bhāskaran and M. N. Prasād, both of whom provide the Malayalam summary of a corresponding portion of the Tamil poem

Nantanār Caritam, composed by Gopalākṛṣṇa Bhārati (1810-1896). It presents the story of a Śaivite devotee, belonging to the untouchable community (*paraiyār*), who finally become physically merged with Śiva in a blaze of light: “On the theatrical stage of the great joy and the fullness of bliss, there is a remedial herb which can remove the confusion of mind. No other medicine can be useful for your mind”. “My Lord, I am your slave”—in such words, *Nantanār* speaks to Brahmin, staying in his house in order to work; as soon as he—having taken pains—found snake and tiger, the agricultural work was completed. After the whole world was measured, both *Viṣṇu* and *Brahmā*, having seen it, became filled with joy. Beautiful one, Goddess *Pārvatī*, has eaten one half of it. Another half has remained. Say, may I eat (such a half) as soon as I get (your) consent: “Come here and see”! “As soon as I get the approval, my illness will disappear”¹⁰.

The story given above has been adapted by Guru after several transformations have been introduced. Firstly, the animals (tiger and snake) imagined as an obstacle during agricultural work, became two custodians preventing an ascent to the mountain top, where three remedial herbs are mentioned as growing. The vision proposed by Guru is shared by both the Sanskrit and the Dravidian tradition. The concept of the divine herb, *Soma*, which can cure all diseases and which later becomes identified with the juice of immortality as well as with the Moon, is widely known in Indian tradition¹¹ and obtains a particular meaning in *Śaivism*: the top of mountain, interpreted here by commentators as *Kailāsa* peak, being the abode of Śiva Himself, becomes crowned with the immortality—giving herb or juice. The concept of *Soma*, being identical to the mind and decorating Śiva’s head at the same time, appears in ŚŚ 82-83¹². When interpreted in the context of *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga*, which is present in the South Indian *Śaiva* tradition—especially in *Tirumantiram* (abbr. TM) of *Tirumūlar*—as *Śiva Yoga*¹³, an ascent to the mountain top crowned with the immortality herb can symbolise

the yogic experience, i.e. the ascent of the serpent power (*Kuṇḍalinī śakti*) within the central channel of the human body, called *suṣumnā* (represented by *Meru* Mountain in *Tirumantiram*, whereas *Kailāsa* Mountain represents its top) in order to reach the top of the head¹⁴. The nectar or immortality juice (*amṛta*) is described as flowing down from the moon region of the body, which comprises the head sphere containing energy centers (*cakras*) called *ājñā* and *sahasrāra*, situated respectively between the eyebrows and on the top of the head¹⁵. Hence, the process of the ascension of *Kuṇḍalinī śakti*, finally reaching the top of the yogi’s head, is symbolically described as the absorption of moon digits representing divine powers (*śaktis*) in the moon region of the body in order to compound the full moon. The concept is present in several stanzas of ŚŚ: the 83rd (the fullness of *Soma* symbolising the mind), the 78th (the moon or the mind fixed on Śiva’s head as opposed to the unstable mind of a devotee), the 28th, and the 35th (the expression *muḥumati* denotes the perfect i.e. full moon as well as a perfect i.e. liberated mind).

The three remedial herbs mentioned in the stanza of ŚŚ quoted above are interpreted by T. Bhāskaran and J. B. Nāyar as *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*¹⁶, i.e. they can symbolise the aspect of the ultimate reality having attributes (*Saguṇa Brahman*) or—in accordance with *Śaiva Siddhānta*, the leading philosophical system in ŚŚ—the aspect of Śiva having attributes or parts (*Sakala Śiva*). Accordingly, the snake can be interpreted as deeds (*karman*) or defilements (*malaññāḥ*) binding the individual being, whereas the tiger denotes egotism (*ahanta*)¹⁷; ultimately the first animal can symbolise desire, whereas the tiger can denote anger or hatred¹⁸. There is another concept which has been suggested by Guru and which has been borrowed from a Tamil story: The man is said to eat half of the remedial herb, which is an allusion to the concept of *Ardhanārīśvara* (half-Śiva, half-Śakti, inseparably connected with Him) being one of the pivotal concepts of *Śaivism*; in another stanza of ŚŚ

(ŚŚ 21), Narayana mentions a devotee who yearns for sharing the half of Śiva's body, just like Goddess shares the one half.

Another intriguing concept introduced by Guru has been associated with the term *pulayan*, which means untouchable one; a man belonging to the *pulaya* community; an out-caste. The term has been interpreted by T. Bhāskaran and M. N. Prasād as *jñāni*—"knowing (the higher or spiritual knowledge), liberated one (as a result of tasting remedial herbs)". Another explanation has been proposed by J. B. Nāyar—according to his interpretation, the term *pulayan* defines an individual being bounded by defilements (so an impure one)—*jīvan*. We can refer at this moment to the Tamil source: Since this stanza is based on the story included in the poem by Gopalākṛṣṇa Bhārati, in which the devotee of Śiva is a man belonging to the untouchable caste, the original meaning of that term seems to be well-grounded. However, another possible interpretation has been proposed by M. N. Prasād: He brings our attention to the Tamil term *pulavaṇ*, meaning "learned man". The context allows us to accept both interpretations.

It seems possible that the 24th stanza has been influenced not only by the Sanskrit concept (the divine herb *Soma* growing at the mountain top) and the Tamil poem (the motif of the remedial herb and two beasts becoming an obstacle to getting it, a devotee of Śiva); there is also a story from Guru's life that could contribute to the plot of that allegory. In Narayana Guru's house, there were many servants from the *Pulaya* community who worked in the fields. He became acquainted with a man from the *Pulaya* community named *Cāttan*. At one point, he came to know that *Cāttan* has become a victim of leprosy. In those days, society used to alienate lepers. Narayana marched to the *Pulaya*'s house to give him medicines and *Cāttan* was cured (Poojary 2014: 62-63). Narayana at that time went on with his research in the field of Ayurveda, immersed in the practice of medicines, agriculture, cattle grazing, reading, and

studying. It was during this period that he spent more time on learning Tamil classics (Balachandran 2015: 20-21). Later, while working as a teacher, he could not teach children from the *Nāyar* or *Pulaya* castes, as according to tradition, it was not possible, so he started going to the *Pulaya*'s streets to teach them (Poojary 2014: 64). Could that experience have influenced his heart and mind enough to treat it as an important step on his spiritual path¹⁹? If so, the 24th stanza of ŚŚ can be considered as a particular combination of the Sanskrit, Tamil, and Malayalam traditions, successfully mingling philosophical, social, and literary issues in order to teach a lesson that can be comprehended differently according to the situation, the predispositions of the receiver, and so on. Let us recall the concept of *Kuṇḍalinī* mentioned above, which could be the result of the influence of philosophical Tamil works like *Tirumantiram*. It is not only the concept itself, but also the style and language that Guru adopted in his poems. To express their mystical experience and to conceal the spiritual doctrines of *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga* from the uninitiated, Tamil saints used a kind of paradoxical language called twilight language—"clothed language in which the highest truths are hidden in the form of the lowest, the most sacred in the form of the most ordinary. The meaning of the poems operates at two levels—one, the exoteric and the linguistic, the other, the esoteric and the symbolical" (Ganapathy 2006a: 295-297). Let us make an attempt to interpret one of the stanzas which was influenced possibly by Tamil works—their style, language, and concepts. It is the 11th stanza, which has a particular position in ŚŚ, constituting part of a long and elaborate description of Śiva's body from the top of His head (stanza 7th) to His feet (stanza 17th). The previous 10th stanza depicts the Lord's face (his speech and glance), whereas the subsequent one (12th)—his neck and hands. The whole description has been composed in accordance with the rules of Sanskrit poetics: For example, Śiva's nose has been compared to sesame blossom (as in *Gītagovinda* X

14)²⁰; his teeth—to pearls, cheeks—to the full-moon²¹, etc. What is more, Narayana obeys the Sanskrit rule of grammatical gender agreement²². Among all these stanzas, the construction and intention of stanza 11th seems to be different. The stanza runs as follows:

“Moon-light, sprouting toward the fresh coral mountain, illuminating the whole surface of water-lily, embraces the stars—silver jewels; I pray with folded hands in order to achieve your protection/salvation²³”.

Since stanza 11th is preceded by the description of Śiva's speech and glance and followed with stanza 12th depicting Śiva's neck, the elements included within the passage quoted above can be interpreted accordingly, i.e. following the sequence of parts of the body being described by Guru: Water lily becomes a symbol of Śiva's face (Nāyar 2010: 215) and moon-light—Śiva's smile (Jayakumar 1999: 212; Nāyar 2010: 215; Bhāskaran 2015: 169), whereas the coral hill denotes Śiva's lips (Nāyar 2010: 215) or his reddish matted hair (Prasād 2012: 56), and the stars—his eyes (Bhāskaran 2015: 169) or teeth (Nāyar 2010: 215). However, it is striking that no part of body is mentioned *expressis verbis* in this case. It gives us the possibility of interpreting stanza 11th in a different way, in the context of a yogic experience of *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga*. In such a case, the water-lily (*kuvalaya*) can be treated as a symbol of the lowest (root) energy center (*cakra*) in human body called *mūlādhāra cakra*²⁴, or possibly higher *cakras*. The fresh (i.e. ready to be mounted) coral hill can symbolise the serpent power (*Kuṇḍalinī śakti*) activated in the *mūlādhāra cakra*²⁵, the summit of the *Meru* Mountain, which stands for the central channel in the human body—*suṣumnā*²⁶, the forehead (adorned with the brilliant light of the highest *cakras*—*ājñā* and *sahasrāra*)²⁷, or the *Kailāsa* Mountain placed within (or symbolising) the highest *cakra* (*sahasrāra*)²⁸. The sprouting moon-light denotes the *sahasrāra cakra* situated within the moon region of the body (comprising the head sphere above *ājñā cakra* placed between the eyebrows), or possibly

the nectar (*amṛta*) flow released in the crown of the head²⁹; it can also symbolise two inner forces of *nirvāṇa śakti*—the sixteenth and seventeenth digit (*kalā*) of the moon, called respectively *amā-kalā* and *nirvāṇa-kalā*. The first one is said to be placed in the moon sphere of the body, within the triangle symbolising the *Kailāsa* Mountain (placed within *sahasrāra cakra*), and described as being “as thin as the hundredth part of the lotus-fibre”, lustrous, shaped like the crescent moon turned downward, discharging a stream of nectar. It is receptacle of the nectar that flows from the union of Śiva and Śakti. *Amā-kalā* is both looking towards creation and upwards or towards liberation; it takes the soul to liberation upwards. In the lap of this *kalā*, the *nirvāṇa-kalā* is placed. It is more subtle and also turned downward, bestowing divine knowledge (Avalon 1950: 446-449, 457-458; Goswami 1999: 174). It is liberating *śakti* known also as *amṛtākārarūpiṇī* (having the nature and form of *amṛta* or nectar), more excellent than *amā-kalā*. The famous ancient myth describing the churning of the milk ocean resulting in the nectar flow is presented by Narayana Guru in stanza 35th of ŚŚ, in which the concept of the churned depth of the ocean identified with the mind/moon (*matī*) appears. The expression “sprouting moon-light” (*muḥacceḥum nilāv*)—toward the water-lily—when associated with the description of Śiva's face and interpreted in the context of the second part of the stanza (the act of praying with folded hands for protection)—could also be an allusion to the concept of the sixth face turned downwards (*adhomukha*) by which Lord Śiva looks upon the world with compassion³⁰. The stars (*tārāṇī*), embraced by the moon-light, could be identified in such a case with all the powers (*śaktis*) residing in each *cakra*, described in TM 3 662 as damsels joining their mother, divine grace (*aruḥśakti*) seated in *ājñā cakra*—or with all the powers (*śaktis* or *kalās*) existing in magnified form in *sahasrāra cakra*; when the *yogi*'s awareness merges with Śiva consciousness in the moon region of the head (*candra*

maṇḍala), the moon absorbs all his *śaktis*³¹.

In Table 1 given below, we present several possibilities of interpretation as regards separate elements of the description included in ŚŚ 11th.

To sum up, as regards its position within the passage depicting Śiva's body, stanza 11th can be interpreted as a metaphorical description of the elements of his face (eyes, lips, etc.); when treated as part of a poetic work influenced by the Tamil *Śaivite* tradition using twilight language, it can be interpreted as a metaphorical description of a mystical experience of *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga*.

CONCLUSIONS

The question arises whether the combination of Sanskrit, Tamil, and Malayalam stories, motifs, and concepts made by Narayana Guru was a natural process, spontaneously attendant on the work of a *Malayali* learned man who was proficient in Sanskrit as well as Tamil language and literature. There is a tendency in the first two stanzas of ŚŚ to emphasise the equal status of Sanskrit and Dravidian literary traditions. This equality concerns the oldest Indian scriptures—sacred hymns of *Vedas* corresponding with the Tamil work of Valluvar, as well as later, epic literature represented by *Mahābhārata* composed both in Sanskrit and Tamil language. In stanza 24th, Narayana Guru seems to use as simple and plain plot of story as possible in order to permit the receiver to interpret and complete it in accordance with both Sanskrit and Dravidian traditions; however, the key word, which defines the person who is able to obtain the knowledge as well as attain the liberation—*pulayan*, is of Malayalam origin. The motif of the divine remedial herb has been introduced into composition being the story of *Śaivite* devotee, composed in Tamil language. Those who belong to *Pulaya* caste used to work in fields as farmers. Narayana has associated the story with the concept of ascent up the mountain top; the reason for such an association could be the

influence of Tamil philosophical works like *Tirumantiram*, employing a so called twilight language to describe the mystic experience of *Kuṇḍalinī*. In such case, an ascent up the mountain top means a climb of *Kuṇḍalinī śakti* to the summit of a mountain representing *suṣumnā* channel. It is intriguing that stanza 35th has been constructed by Guru in analogical way: the scheme of Sanskrit myth of the churning of the milk ocean has been used here in order to introduce the well-known in *Śaiva* and *Tantra* tradition concept of churning of the depth of mind (*matiyāḥ*); as a result, the devotee attains perfection, which causes the flow of immortality juice (*amṛta*) and the rise of the Sun being Consciousness—*arkkabimbam*³². Again, the key expression “the end of the flux (of phenomena)” —*oḥviloḥkkaṁ*—directs us to Tamil tradition; it is the title of the famous work comprising ideas of several non-dualistic philosophical systems. Without any doubt, the introduction of an out-caste person as the one who is able to taste the remedial herb and attain liberation, as well as presentation of the well-known philosophical concepts as equal or even subordinated to the Dravidian ideas could become a significant contribution to the social activity of Guru comprising among others the concern for spiritual and social uplift of the lower caste people of Kerala. The elaborate description of Śiva (stanzas from 7th to 17th) containing the enigmatic verse 11th being the suggestion of a mystical yogic experience and the vision of the Lord extending his compassion, composed most likely under the influence of Tamil philosophical work—has its equivalent in the last part of ŚŚ (stanzas from 95th to the last one—100th), where Narayana mentions the head of Śiva decorated with *Gaṁgā* water representing the Lord's grace (*aruḥ*) and bringing immortality (*amaravāhini*)³³. The introductory stanza of such a vision seems to be given earlier—It is stanza 84th constituting the description of Śiva remaining motionless in *Cidambaram*, which means the space of the heart as well as the famous temple in Tamil Nadu. The Lord bestowing his grace

Table 1. Possible Interpretations of the Expressions Included in Stanza 11th of *Śiva Śatakam*

<i>Kuvalayam</i> —water lily	<i>Puttan pavilamala</i> —fresh coral hill	<i>Nilāv</i> —moon-light	<i>Veṇṇmaṇi tāraṇṇaḥ</i> —stars being silvery pearls
Śiva's face (Nāyar); earth (Bhāskaran)	Śiva's lips (Nāyar); reddish matted hair (Prasād)	Śiva's smile (Jayakumar; Nāyar; Bhāskaran)	Śiva's eyes (Bhāskaran); Śiva's teeth (Nāyar)
<i>Mūlādhāra</i> or higher <i>cakras</i> : <i>ājñā</i> , <i>indu</i> , or <i>sahasrāra cakra</i>	Serpent power (<i>Kuṇḍalinī śakti</i>) awakened in <i>mūlādhāra cakra</i> ; the summit of <i>Meru</i> Mountain, which symbolises the central channel (<i>suṣumnā</i>); forehead (<i>lalāṭā</i>) adorned with the brilliant light of the highest <i>cakras</i> (<i>ājñā cakra</i> or <i>indu cakra</i> situated above, called also the <i>soma</i> or <i>candra cakra</i>); <i>Kailāsa</i> Mountain placed within (or symbolising) the highest <i>cakra</i> (<i>sahasrāra</i>)	<i>Sahasrāra cakra</i> associated with the moon region of the body comprising the sphere above <i>ājñā cakra</i> (the head); immortality nectar (<i>amṛta</i>) released from the top of the head; <i>Pati-jñāna</i> —knowledge of Śiva, described in TM as a silvery stream of <i>amṛta</i> ; <i>amā-kalā/nirvāṇa-kalā</i> [sixteenth or seventeenth digit (<i>kalā</i>) of the moon]—both are situated within <i>Kailāsa</i> in <i>sahasrāra cakra</i> , described as extremely subtle parts bestowing divine knowledge or nectar	All the powers (<i>śaktis</i>) residing in each <i>cakra</i> , joining their mother, divine grace (<i>aruḥśakti</i>) residing in <i>ājñā cakra</i> ; digits or parts (<i>kalā</i>) residing in <i>sahasrāra cakra</i> ; when the <i>yogi's</i> awareness merges with Śiva consciousness in the moon region of the head, the moon absorbs all his <i>śaktis</i>

and compassion on devotees remains the Śiva residing in the sacred space of Dravidian territory.

Notes

1. *Śiva Śatakam*—*One Hundred Verses on Śiva*—is the longest and the most important hymn devoted to Śiva, composed by Guru around 1884 during his stay at *Marutvāmala* in Tamil Nadu.
2. Narayana studied among others *Tirukkuṭai* by *Valḷuvar*, *Tiruvācakam* by *Māṇikkavācakar*, and *Oḻiviloḷukkam* by *Kaṇṇuṭaiyavallālār*.
3. Four *Vedas* constituting the collection of ancient Indian hymns are considered to be the oldest layer of Sanskrit literary tradition.
4. *Kaṭṭal cūḷunna lōkatt uṇṭāyirunna nālu vēdaṇṇaḥḷōṭṭoppam aṇcāmatte vēdamāyi mahābhāratam tapassuṇṇa munivaranāya vyāsan uraceytappōḷ mahāmēruparvatam ēṭāyūm tanṇe orṇakkonb eḷuttāṇiyāyūm tīrtta dēvane namaskarikkunnu* [Bhāskaran, T. 2015. *Śrīnārāyaṇaguruvīṇe Sampūrṇakṛtīka!* (*The Complete Works of Sree Narayana Guru*). Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi.

P. 164]. Comparing Prasād, S. M. N. 2012. *Śivaśatakam, Nārāyaṇaguru (One Hundred Verses on Śiva of Narayana Guru)*. Varkala: Narayana Gurukula. P. 28 (*kaṭṭal cūḷunna lōkatt uṇṭāyirunna nālu vēdaṇṇaḥḷōṭṭoppam aṇcāmatte vēdamāyi mahābhāratam, munirājanāya vyāsan paṇṇānu koḷuttappōḷ mahāmēruvine ēṭākkīyūm tanṇe orṇakkonb eḷuttāṇiyākkīyūm koṇṭe atēḷutunna dēvane namaskariccu anpinuvēṇṭe irakkunnu*). Tamil literary sources are given in the Malayalam translation.

5. *Aḷakoḷu bhāratayuddhamadriyinnēl muḷceviyanmuḷikonbukoṇṇumunnam/eḷutiniṇacceḷiyōrkkīṇ aṇṇi nilkkum muḷmutalākiya mūrtti kāttukoḷka //1//.*
6. *Bhā ennāl prakāśam. rati ennāl ānandānubhavam. prakāśattil athavā aṇṇivil ānandam kaṇṇettunna svabhāvattōḷu kūṇiyatukoṇṭāṇ bhāratī enna pēruṇṭāyat* [Prasād, S. M. N. 2012. *Śivaśatakam, Nārāyaṇaguru (One Hundred Verses on Śiva of Narayana Guru)*. Varkala: Narayana Gurukula. P. 33].
7. *Arumaṇāḷumoriḷkalōtimunnam karimukilvarṇṇanu pankuceytunalki/paramatuvaḷḷuvarnāvilum moḷṇṇapparimaḷabhāratī kāttukoḷka nityam //2//.*
8. *Samskṛtavēdavum tamiḷvēdavum orē sarasvatīyil ninnudbhaviccattināl avayute mēnma samamtanne*—“since

both the Sanskrit *Vedas* and the Tamil *Veda* originated from Sarasvati, the position and value of both is one and the same” [Bhāskaran, T. 2015. *Śrīnārāyaṇaguruvinṇe Sampūrṇakṛitika!* (The Complete Works of Sree Narayana Guru). Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi. P. 165].

9. Malayatilunṭu marunnumūnu pānbu puliyumatinnirupāṭṭumuṇṭkāvāḷ/pulayaneṭṭubhujiccupāṭiy innum vilasati nīyumeṭṭutukoḷkaneṇcē //24//.
10. Pērimbam, paripūrṇānandam enna arārṇinuḷḷil cittabhramam māṇuvānuḷḷa marunnirikkunnuṇṭ maṇṇu marunnukaḷkoṇṭ manassinu prayōjanamilla. nātha, nānārṇayut aṭṭimayāṇ—itu nantanār jōlikku ninnirunna vīṭṭile brāhmaṇanōḷu paṭayunnatāṇ—pāmbu puliyum vaḷare paṇṇipeṭṭu tirakkikkaṇṭetti kṛṣi ceyteṭṭatāṇ at. lōkam muḷuvan aḷanna viṣṇuvum brahmāvum atu kaṇṭu santōṣiccu. Pārṇvati ennoru sundari atil pāti tinnu. iniyum pāti irikkunnu. paṭaya, nīyum pōy nōkkuka enuttaravu tannālum. ā uttaravu kiṭṭiyāl enṇe rōgam māṇum [Bhāskaran, T. 2015. *Śrīnārāyaṇaguruvinṇe Sampūrṇakṛitika!* (The Complete Works of Sree Narayana Guru). Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi. P. 176]. Comparing Prasād, S. M. N. 2012. *Śivaśatakam, Nārāyaṇaguru* (One Hundred Verses on Śiva of Narayana Guru). Varkala: Narayana Gurukula. P. 91.
11. The concept of *Soma*—a heavenly herb growing at the top of the mountain, appears in *Rgveda*—the collection of ancient Indian hymns being the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature. *Soma* has been identified with the moon and *amṛta* (immortality juice) in later texts.
12. “*Soma* (the moon) that rose in the pond of flourishing water-lilies, by spreading out his rays, happened to become the charioteer of Eros (i.e. *Kāma*), the flower-darted one. Somehow he lost his brilliance, and with feet immersed in darkness is still undergoing penance, having become fully lost in it (82). Do you feel in your gentle mind that as the growth of *kālas* (digits) become complete, his final merger will occur? Anyway, let him not suffer any more, being seated at the head of the enemy of Eros that you are (83)”—transl. by Prasād, S. M. N. 2006. *Narayana Guru. Complete Works*. New Delhi: National Book Trust. P. 47. The *Soma* (moon) denotes also a mind immersed in primeval darkness (ignorance), still practicing penance; the final merger—after completing all the digits—can symbolise the process of attaining liberation [comparing Nāyar, J. B. 2010. *Śrīnārāyaṇa Gurudēvakṛitika! Sampūrṇa Vyākhyānam* (Works of Sree Narayana Guru With Complete Interpretation). Thiruvananthapuram: The State Institute of Languages. Vol. 1. Pp. 264-266].
13. The Tantric concept of *Kuṇḍalinī*, a serpent power which is coiled at the base of the spine in a state of sleep, and—when awakened—rises up within the central channel of the body (*suṣumnā*), opening six energy centers (*cakras*) in order to reach the top of the head where the last *cakra* (*sahasrāra*) is situated, has been adopted into the South Indian *Śaiva Siddhānta* system mainly through the Tamil work *Tirumantiram* by Tirumūlar, who according to Tamil tradition was born in Tamil Nadu and travelled to *Kailāsa*. He is considered to be one of the first saints to bring the *Tantra* aspect of *Śaivism* from Kashmir to the Tamil world [Tagare, G. V. 2001. *Śaivism. Some Glimpses*. New Delhi: D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd. P. 60]. The *Śaivism* of Tirumūlar comprises *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga*, although Tirumūlar calls it *Śiva Yoga* (Ganapathy, T. N. 2006b. “The Yoga of Tirumandiram.” Pp.157-241 in *The Yoga of Siddha Tirumular. Essays on the Tirumandiram*, edited by T. N. Ganapathy, K. R. Arumugam, and G. Anand. Quebec: Babaji’s Kriya Yoga and Publications).
14. Comparing TM 8 2455 (*Śakti* or *Kuṇḍalinī* unites the *Meru* Mountain which represents *Śiva*); TM 8 2640 (*Meru* represents the *suṣumnā* channel); TM 4 1112 (*Śakti* is a flower twig on the top of *Meru* representing *suṣumnā* channel); TM 3 625 (the mystic mountain represents *sahasrāra*); TM 1 246 (the Mountain *Meru* represents the *suṣumnā* channel; *Kailāsa* represents *sahasrāra*; nectar flows in the moon-space).
15. The whole body is believed to be a conglomerate of parts (*kalās*) or powers (*śaktis*). The highest part of human body—the head—is called the moon region (*candra maṇḍala*). When *Kuṇḍalinī śakti* reaches the moon region at the *ājñā cakra*, one assimilates the moon’s lustre and its coolness. A bright light shines in the centre of the eyebrow and the whole front of the forehead becomes illuminated. Blending with the sixteen *kalās* or the divisions of the moon, the seeker is said to become the moon itself (TM 3 685; 669).
16. *Satt, citt, ānandam enna mūnn auṣadharṇa! irippuṇṭ*—“there are three remedial herbs called *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*” [Nāyar, J. B. 2010. *Śrīnārāyaṇa Gurudēvakṛitika! Sampūrṇa Vyākhyānam* (Works of Sree Narayana Guru With Complete Interpretation). Thiruvananthapuram: The State Institute of Languages. Vol. 1. P. 224]; similarly Bhāskaran, T. 2015. *Śrīnārāyaṇaguruvinṇe Sampūrṇakṛitika!* (The Complete Works of Sree Narayana Guru). Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi. P. 175.
17. *Sañcitam, āgāmi, prārabdham ennī karmmaṇṇaḷ, āṇavam, karmmam, māya ennī malaṇṇaḷ āyirikkum pānb, puli ahanṭayum*—“snake denotes deeds—stacked up deed, deed having future effects, done with deed—eventually three defilements (*āṇavam, karmmam, māya*); tiger symbolizes egotism” [Bhāskaran, T. 2015. *Śrīnārāyaṇaguruvinṇe*

- Sampūrṇakṛitika!* (The Complete Works of Sree Narayana Guru). Kozhikode: Mathrubhumi. P. 175].
18. *Rāgamākunna pānbu dvēṣamākunna puliyum*—“snake being desire and tiger representing anger and hatred” [Nāyar, J. B. 2010. *Śrīnārāyaṇa Gurudēvākṛitika! Sampūrṇa Vyākhyānam* (Works of Sree Narayana Guru With Complete Interpretation). Thiruvananthapuram: The State Institute of Languages. Vol. 1. P. 224].
 19. It is said that after Narayana had seen so many miseries, he rejected worldly life and decided to become an ascetic (*saṁnyāsin*). Poojary, B. S. 2014. *Shree Narayana Guru Vijaya Darshana* (English translation by B. Shashilekha). New Delhi: The Billawara Association. P. 64.
 20. *Dinamanitinkalāṇiññ kaṇṇuraṇṇum maṇimayakuṇḍalakarṇṇayugmavum*
iṭ/kanakatilakkusumam kuniññukūppiddinamanu sēvaka/
ceytiṇṇa mūkkum //8// (“The sun and the moon ornamentally forming the two eyes of yours, the two ears adorned with gem-made earrings; the charming nose before which golden sesame flowers bow low in all humility and perform daily personal service—to perceive all this straightaway is what I yearn for”—transl. by M. N. Prasād. Prasād, S. M. N. 2006. *Narayana Guru. Complete Works*. New Delhi: National Book Trust. P. 27).
 21. *Paḷavinayokkeyaṇṇiṇṇa toṇṇipṇaṇṇi pōriletirttiṇṇa cuṇṇum/ kaḷukiyeṇṇittoru muttoṭṭapallum muḷmatipōle kaviṭṭaṭṭarīṇṇaḷum iṭ //9//* (“While cutting asunder all my harmful latent impressions of the past, your lips constantly fight in beauty with the reddish tondi berry; you rows of teeth, that resemble well-cleansed pearls, the full-moon-like cheeks as well—to perceive all this straightaway is what I yearn for”—transl. by M. N. Prasād. Prasād, S. M. N. 2006. *Narayana Guru. Complete Works*. New Delhi: National Book Trust. P. 27).
 22. Comparing ŚŚ 14, in which the line of hair above the navel (Sanskrit compound *rōmarāji*) of feminine gender has been compared to the *kaḥṇḍakanya* (Malayalam compound borrowed from Sanskrit)—rising up daughter of *Kalinda* Mountain (i.e. the river *Yamunā*).
 23. *Kuvalayamokke viḷarīṇṇiṇṇa puttān paviḷamalaykku muḷacceḷum nilāvum/taḷuvina veṇṇmaṇi tārakarīṇṇaḷum ninnoḷivaṭe rakṣaka/ceyyuvān toḷunnēn //11//*.
 24. *Mūlādhāra* is the lowest *cakra* situated near the coccygeal plexus beneath the sacrum; the higher *cakras* are: *svādhiṣṭhāna*, located two finger-widths above, *maṇipūra* being behind the navel, *anāhata* which is the heart *cakra*, *viśuddha*—the throat *cakra*, *ājñā* located in the space between the eyebrows, and *sahasrāra* above the top of the head. As soon as the awakened *Kuṇḍalinī* reaches the last *cakra*, the individual being attains liberation.
 25. The activated *Kuṇḍalinī* power is described in TM—in the section devoted to *adhomukha*—as a fire of a reddish (coral) hue, that is identical to the Lord (TM 2 520-523).
 26. The image of a sacred mountain representing the *suṣumnā* channel has been associated in *Kuṇḍalinī Yoga* with the well-known myth of the churning of the ocean of milk for the recovery of *amṛta* (TM 3 625). *Mandara* (*Meru*) Mountain stands for the central channel (TM 3 672).
 27. Tirumūlar mentions the Lord in the form of a brilliant light dispelling darkness (over the mount), interpreted by Ganapathy as the forehead decorated with the light of *cakra* situated in the space between the eyebrows—*ājñā cakra* (TM 9 2694).
 28. *Kailāsa* mountain as an abode of *Śiva* in the *Laya Yoga* system is said to be situated in the form of a triangle within the highest *cakra* situated above the top of the head—*sahasrāra*, the moon region, or represents *sahasrāra* itself [Avalon, A. 1950. *The Serpent Power Being the Shat-Chakra-Nirūpana and Pādūkā-Panchakā*. Madras: Ganesh and Co. (Madras) Ltd. Pp. 149-153].
 29. In TM, *sahasrāra cakra* is called *nilā-maṇḍala*—“the moon-light region” (Ganapathy, T. N. 2006b. “The Yoga of Tirumandiram.” Pp. 157-241 in *The Yoga of Siddha Tirumular. Essays on the Tirumandiram*, edited by T. N. Ganapathy, K. R. Arumugam, and G. Anand. Quebec: Babaji’s Kriya Yoga and Publications. P. 174). Nectar is produced by the union of *Śiva* and *Śakti*, and runs in a stream from the top of the head (*brahmarandhra*) to the *mūlādhāra cakra* [Avalon, A. 1950. *The Serpent Power Being the Shat-Chakra-Nirūpana and Pādūkā-Panchakā*. Madras: Ganesh and Co. (Madras) Ltd. P. 484].
 30. When the Lord acts to redeem souls, He acts through *adhomukha* (TM 2 520-525). *Yogis* would say that when *Kuṇḍalinī śakti* is awakened and rises from the *mūlādhāra*, it rises up to join Lord *Śiva* at the crown *cakra*, *sahasrāra*. The compassionate energy of the Lord manifests itself through *adhomukha*, the downward looking face. The union of the two bindus, red in the sun at *mūlādhāra*, and white in the moon at the head, could be referred in *Tirumantiram* (TM 3 728). It is worth emphasizing here that *amā-kalā* mentioned above has also the aspect called *adhomukhī*—“downward-turned-mouthed”.
 31. The stars can be interpreted as the illusory brightness of worldly life, which enslaves countless souls (TM 3 860-862). However, in this case, the term seems to refer to the object of positive meaning, as it has been associated with the verb *taḷukuka*—“to caress, embrace” and with the silver colour (*veṇṇmaṇi*) representing the moon region. The connection between the two words suggesting protection can be found here: *tārakarīṇṇa!* (stars—carrying across; protectors) and *rakṣaka!* (protection/salvation—plural form).

32. *Toḥḷukaḷaṇcumoḥḷiṇṇu tōnni nilkkum muḥumatiyāḷkaṭaṇṇeṭuttumunnam/oḷuki varunnamṇuṇḷumāṇḷupōkāṭ oḷiviloḷukkamudikkumarkkabimbam //35//.*
33. The waves of river *Gaṇḡgā* flowing from *Śiva*'s head can symbolize the process of manifestation of the phenomenal world as well as the flow of the *prāṇa* or *amṛta* (as soon as the individual being attains self-realization, the stream of *amṛta* is said to be released at the top of the head).

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