THE CULT OF ŚIVA

with special reference to the dances of Śiva

TAMBYAH NADARAJA

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Śiva's dance of bliss at Cidambaram

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DEDICATED

TO

THE HONOURED MEMORY

OF

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY
(1877-1947)

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ILLUSTRATIONS

1. On front cover: Śiva. Bronze image, c. 11th century; height 67 cm., 26.8 in.; Polonnaruva, Sri Lanka. National Museum, Colombo.

2. Frontispiece: Śiva's dance of bliss at Cidambaram. Bronze image, 10th century; height 76.2 cm., 30 in.; from Tamil Nadu. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

3. Facing page 122: Śrī Cakra.

PREFACE

This book had its origin in a modest study of Śiva as a dancing god, one of the most important aspects of his divine personality. In that study an introductory chapter was followed by a detailed examination of three sets of dances of Śiva with reference to the mythology, the iconography and the philosophy associated with each dance. A foreign student of comparative religion, who read this account of Śiva as a dancing god, suggested that a few preliminary chapters might be added relating to theories about the origins of Śaivism, the gradual emergence of the concept of Śiva as the Supreme God and the representations of him used in temple and domestic worship, so that the book could serve as an introduction to the cult of Śiva in general. I have acted on this suggestion, and this work is now offered to readers (whether Hindus or others) who might like to get a general perspective of the chief features of Śaivism in the light of recent research.

Some explanation is perhaps necessary with regard to the arrangement of the material presented in this book. The text of each chapter is much shorter than the notes, which appear at the end of the text. I have put into the text of the chapters what I regard as essential or of general interest, and have relegated to the notes references to authorities, illustrative examples and analogies as well as the discussion of matters that call for an extended treatment. I venture to suggest that on the first reading of a chapter the text alone should be read through, and that thereafter each paragraph of the text should be read along with the relevant notes. Since parts of the book present information and interpretations which may be new to some readers, I have taken pains to provide in the notes full references to authorities for my statements. The frequent interjection of references may irritate some readers; but they will no doubt be considered by the more thoughtful reader as a valuable feature of the book.

This book has been produced under the auspices of the Sri Ponnambalavanesvara Temple, which was established in Colombo by my great-grandfather, Raja Vasal Mudaliyar Arunasalam Ponnambalam, a hundred and thirty six years ago. It was dedicated to Ponnambalavanesvara, "the Lord residing in the Golden Hall," the gilt-tiled innermost sanctum, of the Temple of Nataraja at Cidambaram in Tamil Nadu. That temple is regarded by Tamil Śaivites all over the world as being preeminently

The Temple or House of God; and in its Golden Hall the centre of the stage is occupied by an icon that depicts Śiva as Nataraja, King of Dance, performing the most famous of his many dances (see pages 87, 88 and 98). It was Arunasalam Ponnambalam's nephew, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, who first explained the elaborate symbolism which permeates this eloquent image as well as the mystical significance of this cosmic dance of Śiva, with references to Tamil philosophical and devotional texts. I have, therefore, dedicated this book to the memory of that distinguished scholar, who has been acclaimed as one of the great seminal minds of the twentieth century.

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T. Nadaraja

Maha Śivaratri
19 February 1993

ABBREVIATIONS

Anon.	Anonymous
BS	Board of Scholars (see Bibliography)
cf.	(from Latin confer) compare
ch.	chapter
c.	(from Latin circa) about
DED	Dravidian Etymological Dictionary (see Bibliography)
edit.; edn.	edited, editor; edition
e.g.	(from Latin exempli gratia) for example
Enc. Brit.	Encyclopaedia Britannica (see Bibliography)
et seqq.	(from Latin et sequentia) and the following [pages]
Fig.	Figure
i.e.	(from Latin id est) that is to say
Illust.	Illustration
ibid.	(from Latin ibidem) in the same place [book, passage, etc.]
loc. cit.	(from Latin loco citato) in the place cited
n., nn.,	note, notes
op. cit.	(from Latin opere citato) in the work cited
p., pp.	page, pages
PL.	Plate
q.v.	(from Latin quod vide) which see [used for cross references]
SED	Sanskrit English Dictionary (see Bibliography)
s.v.	(from Latin sub verbo) under the word
TL	Tamil Lexicon (see Bibliography)
transl.	translated, translation
v., vv.	verse, verses

TRANSLITERATION OF SANSKRIT AND TAMIL WORDS

When Sanskrit and Tamil words are transliterated in English, so-called diacritical marks in the form of dots and straight or curved lines are placed above or below some letters of the English alphabet in order to indicate approximately the sounds of the Indian letters. In this book the widely accepted system of diacritical marks has been followed, with some exceptions.

One exception is that the names of Indians of the 19th and 20th centuries have been given without diacritical marks: for example, the surname of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy has been spelt as he and his father before him spelt it (and not as Kumāracuvāmi). Similarly, well known place names, such as Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Tamil Nadu, have been given in their Anglicised forms without diacritical marks. However, in the case of less known place names of districts, towns and villages in the Tamil country, the transliterated Tamil names with diacritical marks have been used.

Absolute consistency in the transliteration of Tamil names is unfortunately impossible. Dr K. V. Zvelebil in the Index of his book on Tamil Literature (1974) says (at page 299): "The bewildering variety of transcriptions and transliterations of some names and titles ... reflects the actual state of affairs in various handbooks and articles on Tamil literature, both Tamil and English." This is largely because in Tamil and English texts references to deities, temples, persons and places often intermingle Sanskrit and Tamil names; indeed a single name may itself be a compound of both Tamil and Sanskrit elements. Consequently, in writing and pronouncing names the Tamil forms are sometimes coloured by association with the equivalent Sanskrit ones.

A guide to the pronunciation of transliterated Sanskrit and Tamil words will be found in the Appendix (pages 131-132) of this book.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I begin my list of acknowledgements with my debt to Mrs Kathryn Moy, who originally suggested the need for a book such as this and persuaded me to undertake what proved to be an exacting but absorbing task. She also read through the first untidy manuscript, pointing out various matters that needed elucidation, and replaced the amended manuscript with a neat typed copy.

I am indebted in a special way to Dr K. Kailasanatha Kurukkal, Professor of Hindu Civilisation in the University of Jaffna, whom I consulted on many occasions. He readily shared with me his deep knowledge and understanding of Hinduism, particularly its mythology, iconography and rituals.

I must next record my gratitude to Mrs Ratna Navaratnam, Mrs Kathryn Moy, Dr Anandan Sinnatamby and Mrs Irene Kamalabaskaran, who lent me books which were not available elsewhere in Sri Lanka. I also offer my sincere thanks to those who helped me by checking references and sending me photocopies of articles in journals and other material, especially Mr Krishnaraj Selvaratnam, Mr Ratnasabapathy Sri Hari, Professor Gnana Kulendran, Mr Muttusamy Sanmuganathan and Mr Kanapathipillai Thiyagarajah. An American linguist, the Venerable Chandobhasa Bhikkhu, helped in the difficult task of checking the spellings and the diacritical marks of Sanskrit and Tamil words and reading the proofs, for which I am much obliged.

The photographs of the bronzes that appear on the cover and as the frontispiece of this book are reproduced by kind permission of the authorities of the Colombo National Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art respectively.

I am grateful to Mr Reginald J. C. Wijesekera, Director of Aitken Spence Printing (Pvt) Ltd., who broke new ground by printing a book that contained diacritical marks for Sanskrit and Tamil words. He skilfully guided his staff to face the problems that inevitably arose during the course of the printing of this book.

I come last to the biggest debt of all, that which I owe to my wife. In spite of many other duties she readily undertook the task of editing the later versions of the typescript. She also compiled the Bibliography and the Index, and she was one of the two persons who checked the final proofs when I was unable to do so myself. I do not know how to thank her adequately for all the unstinting and invaluable assistance she has given me, for which I am deeply grateful.

I [Śiva] am that god who sets everything in motion and who, absorbed in yoga and enjoying highest bliss, is always dancing.

Kūrma Purāṇa 2.4.33

Think of our Lord as the dancing master who, like the heat latent in firewood, pervades all bodies and makes all souls dance.

Kaṭavuḷ Māmuṉivar,
Tiruvātavūrar Purāṇam 6.75

At the still point of the turning world ... there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

T. S. Eliot, Four Quartets

I

ORIGINS

The two great forms of modern Hindu theism are Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. This division of cults is based on the divinity, Śiva or Viṣṇu, which the followers of each cult regard as best symbolising and expressing the Supreme Reality. Of these two cults Śaivism is probably the older[1]; indeed it has been described as "the most ancient living faith in the world."[2]

Śaivism and the other forms of Hinduism as they exist today on the Indian subcontinent – that is, approximately the area covered by the modern states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka – are the result of a long development to which, in the course of time, many diverse cultural strands have contributed. From time immemorial successive waves of migratory peoples of different races have intermingled,[3] and the mosaic of modern Indian civilisation reflects the differences in their languages, literatures, beliefs and customs.

The earliest available literary sources of Hinduism are the Vedas, texts composed in a somewhat archaic form of Sanskrit by an Aryan people speaking an Indo-European language akin to most languages of Europe and also to Iranian. When they entered the Indian subcontinent about 1500 B.C. they encountered peoples of different racial origins speaking the prototypes of the Austric languages (for example, Muṇḍa) of many tribal peoples of various parts of modern India and the Dravidian languages of present-day South India[4] (of which Tamil is the most important).[5] Consequently the subsequent development of Hinduism reflects the constant interaction between the doctrines, myths, cults and ways of life of two main traditions – the so-called "great" or Sanskritic tradition, which through the agency of priests and teachers belonging to the highest caste of Brahmins and expressing themselves in Sanskrit, gradually became pan-Indian in extent, and the so-called "little tradition" of local or folk cultures expressed in non-Aryan languages.[6] Each of these two main streams of tradition was fed by a number of tributaries, and the interpenetration, assimilation and transformation of the two streams have resulted in the cultural amalgam that constitutes modern Hinduism, in which it is often impossible to distinguish the Aryan from the non-Aryan elements.

As might have been expected, such a cultural amalgam could not be uniform throughout the whole vast area of the Indian subcontinent. Historical, geographical and other factors gave rise to variations; and for a proper understanding of any particular form of Hinduism as it exists today it must be studied in relation to particular regions. For example, the Śaivism of South India differs from that of other parts of the Indian subcontinent; and, as we shall see, within the southern region certain special features characterise the cult of Śiva in the Tamil-speaking areas of India and Sri Lanka.

The origins of Śaivism are enshrouded by the mists of prehistoric antiquity, and the genealogy of Śiva is one of the major unresolved questions in the history of Hinduism. Some scholars believe that the strikingly similar rites, symbols and myths appearing in different parts of Asia and Europe from about the sixth millennium B.C. attest the widespread diffusion of Śaivism and its western form Dionysism, the cult of Dionysus (which deriving from that of a pre-Aryan deity adapted and assimilated by Aryan invaders,[7] was widely prevalent in the ancient Graeco-Oriental world).[8] "Shivaite rites and symbols," it has been said,[9] "appear almost simultaneously in different parts of the world."[10] However, only in India have these traditions and what are known as Dionysiac rites been maintained without interruption from prehistoric times until today. Greek texts speak of Dionysus' mission to India[11] and Indian texts of the expansion of Śaivism towards the west.[12]

Even if, however, our purview of the history of Śaivism is restricted to the Indian subcontinent, we find that scholars are divided in their opinions with regard to the roots of Śiva's origins. Until the nineteen twenties these were looked for in the Vedic period of Indian civilisation, which in the absence of material remains meant in effect the literature of the Vedas. This, as we have seen,[13] was composed in an archaic form of Sanskrit by an Aryan people speaking an Indo-European language, who are believed to have entered India about the middle of the second millennium B.C. Some references in this literature to the pre-Aryan inhabitants constituted practically the only source of information about their culture. But in the nineteen twenties and nineteen thirties excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro in what was then North-western India and is now in Pakistan provided material evidence of an earlier advanced civilisation containing no traces of Vedic Aryan influences that flourished in cities of the Indus River Valley[14] between about 2500 and 1700 B.C.[15]

Sir John Marshall, who excavated the city of Mohenjodaro, considered what appeared to be a three-faced, ithyphallic figure seated in a yogic posture and surrounded by various beasts, which was depicted on some seals, as well as a stone statuette of a male figure in a dance pose to be prototypes of forms of Śiva and stone conical objects to be the *liṅga*[16] emblem of Śiva.[17] Although his views have been accepted by some scholars, they have been challenged by

others[18]; and their correctness cannot be established with certainty, since the brief pictographic inscriptions on the seals have not yet been conclusively deciphered.[19] Recent research suggests that the language of the inscriptions may be related not to the Indo-European, or to the Muṇḍa, but to the Dravidian, family of languages.[20] Teams of Russian and Finnish scholars, working independently and using computers, have claimed that the language of the inscriptions was proto-Dravidian and connected with Old Tamil; but this view has yet to win general acceptance.[21]

In the present state of our knowledge many questions about the people of the so-called Indus Valley Civilisation remain unanswered: for example, their racial and linguistic affiliations and the extent to which features of their religion and culture survived the advent of the Aryans and influenced the religion of the Vedic and later eras.[22] Consequently opinions with regard to the interpretation of the Indus Valley artefacts, especially in relation to the religious beliefs and practices of the inhabitants, must for the present be tentative hypotheses subject to revision in the light of future discoveries.[23] Students of Śaivism in its historical development tread on firmer ground when they move from the period of the Indus Valley Civilisation and enter the Vedic period, as we shall do in the next chapter. For although the Aryans of the early phase of the latter period have left scarcely any material remains, their literary texts recording traditions long transmitted orally provide much information of a semi-historical nature.

NOTES

1. Monier-Williams (1891), p. 75.

2. Marshall (1931), p. vii (see n. 17). "Śiva's image, arising in the depth of prehistory, appears to be that of the most ancient of all the gods" (Daniélou (1964), p. 192).

3. See Sarkar (1958), passim.

4. Strictly speaking, four main racial-linguistic groups have to be distinguished in the Indian subcontinent – the Sino-Tibetan, the Austric, the Dravidian and the Aryan. "Compared with the Aryan and the Dravidian languages, those of the Sino-Tibetan (except Manipuri) and Austric groups prevalent in India were in a backward state for a long time ... . They had ... a kind of village or folk culture which was never written down as the languages lacked any system of writing, which the Aryan and Dravidian possessed from very early times." (Chatterji (1978), p. 659).

5. "Of the four great Dravidian languages [Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Telugu], Tamil has preserved its Dravidian character best ... . The other

three ... have, in the matter of their words of higher culture, completely surrendered themselves to Sanskrit, the classical and sacred language of Hindu India. Tamil has an unique and a very old literature, and the beginnings of it go back about 2000 years." (Chatterji (1978), p. xxiii). "Tamil can claim one of the longest unbroken literary traditions of any of the world's living languages" (Zvelebil (1974), p. 2). "Tamil literature is the only Indian literature which is both classical and modern; while it shares antiquity with much of Sanskrit literature and is as classical, in the best sense of the word, as e.g., the ancient Greek poetry, it continues to be a vigorously living modern writing of our days." (Zvelebil (1973), p. 11).

6. The early religion of the aboriginal speakers of the proto-Austric and proto-Dravidian languages was largely animistic in character. Gradually, with the spread of Sanskritic culture by conquest and by adoption (as where local chiefs of the non-Aryan peoples voluntarily accepted the patronage of Brahmins in their attempt to rise higher in the social scale), the nature spirits, demons and deified heroes of the older cults were transformed and elevated by association with the gods of the Sanskritic tradition. (See, e.g., Bhattacharji (1978), pp. 4-6, 9-16, 203-207 and 354-363). The incorporation of older cults, which the orthodox tradition could not ignore, facilitated the evolution of a more widely acceptable religion, which was to spread throughout the Indian subcontinent and even outside its borders.

7. Dionysus was the Greek name of a pre-Hellenic, i.e., pre-Aryan deity, connected with Thrace and Asia Minor, who was a nature god of fertility and vegetation, especially a god of wine, intoxication and ecstacy. Originally a god of the common folk, his cult was associated with orgiastic rites practised by his devotees. In the course of time, however, Dionysus was admitted to the circle of the high gods of the Greek pantheon and finally his cult was transfigured and spiritualised by association with the reforming movement of Orphism. Thereafter his followers regarded him as the supreme god, who having relinquished life and been reborn, was a symbol of eternal life and with whom they might attain full communion and rebirth in a mystical sense by sacramental and magical methods. See, e.g., Guthrie (1950), especially chs. 6, 7 and 11.

8. Daniélou (1984), pp. 35-37, citing, inter alia, Willetts (1962). "Dionysism was, in fact, none other than the ancient Shivaism of the Indo-Mediterranean world, little by little, re-establishing its place in an Aryanised World." (Daniélou, op. cit., p. 37). Earlier W. Kirfel (1953), had suggested a connection between the cults of Śiva and Dionysus by way of a common association with a bull cult (Long (1971), pp. 196-197).

9. Daniélou (1984), p. 32.

10. "The first true Shivaite images are found at Çatal Höyük in Anatolia [Turkey], dating from about 6000 B.C." (Daniélou (1984), p. 33; cf. pp. 113-114).

11. Daniélou (1984), pp. 38, 94 and Woodcock (1966), pp. 21-23.

12. Daniélou (1984), discusses the similarities and interconnections between the twin cults of Śiva and Dionysus, their wide diffusion throughout the Mediterranean world, the Near East, India and many other parts of Asia and Europe and their persistent resurgence after their incorporation in the new religions brought by Aryan invaders in the third and second millennia B.C. Several features in the cult of Dionysus also have striking parallels in the cult of another Hindu god Murukaṉ-Skanda (Clothey (1978), p. 41 and p. 211 n. 41). Murukaṉ was an old Dravidian god, who in the course of time was absorbed into the Śaiva pantheon as a son of Śiva by the accretion of elements associated with gods of the Brahminic Sanskritic tradition, like the warrior god Skanda (cf. ch. 2 n. 11).

13. See p. 1.

14. The earlier sites of this culture to be excavated were in the Indus Valley – hence the name "Indus Valley Civilisation," which has continued in use even after subsequent discoveries extended the geographic area of the culture far outside the Indus Valley. The "Harappan civilisation is the most spatially extensive of all the early civilisations we know ... . There are about 1000 Harappan sites spread over an enormous area. Recently, the French discovered a settlement close to the Oxus River, deep in Central Asia, and the Russians some apparently proto-Indian seals at Altyn Tepe" (Zvelebil (1990), p. 84).

15. In its mature or urban phase the culture is considered to have flourished between about 2100 B.C. and 1750 B.C. (Huntington (1985), p. 10). Cf. Zvelebil (1990), p. 84.

16. For the *liṅga* see ch. 4 p. 35.

17. Marshall (1931), i, ch. 5. He went on to declare that "among the many revelations that Mohenjodaro and Harappa have had in store for us none perhaps is more remarkable than this discovery that Śaivism has a history going back to the Chalcolithic Age or perhaps even further . . . and that it thus takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world." (op. cit., p. vii).

18. See, e.g., Srinivasan (1984), pp. 77-89.

19. Marshall himself wrote: "In the absence of decipherable documents, we can of course but argue on the probabilities of the case." (op. cit., p. 78).

20. See nn. 3, 4.

21. For a recent comprehensive survey of research relating to the "Indus Valley" inscriptions see Zvelebil (1990), ch. 6 passim, especially pp. 96-98.

22. For example, it has been suggested that Yoga practices were known to the Indus Valley people (Marshall, op. cit., p. 54; Dandekar (1953), pp. 136-7; Dhyansky (1987), pp. 91 et seqq.).

It has also been suggested (Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 135-137) that another pre-Aryan institution derived from the religion of the Indus Valley people

(which was later adopted by Vedic Brahminism) is the distinctive form of worship called *pūjā* (Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 128-130; Chatterji (1951), pp. 160-161). *Pūjā* is the worship of a consecrated image by adorning it with clothes and ornaments, offering to it flowers, produce of the earth and incense, and waving lights before it. It is quite different from the characteristically Vedic rite of the *homa,* in which offerings of food, in the form of butter, milk, barley and meat (representing animal sacrifice), as well as the exhilarating juice of the *soma* plant were made to gods, not represented by any image, through the fire of an altar fed by the oblations. (Chatterji, loc. cit.). Eventually the Vedic *homa* was almost completely superseded by *pūjā*. (Dandekar, op. cit., p. 130 n. 2).

23. Cf. Marshall, quoted in n. 19.

II

THE SUPREMACY OF ŚIVA

Many strands of belief and practice have entered into the concepts that have gathered round the complex figure of Śiva down the ages, and scholars are divided in their views with regard to the precise nature and the relative importance of these strands. For Śiva embodies many traits that originally belonged to other gods; and both Aryan or Vedic and non-Aryan ideas, including elements drawn from tribal, folk, regional and local cults, have contributed to form the syncretistic Śaivism of modern times.

The word Śiva, meaning "auspicious", "gracious", "benevolent" in Sanskrit,[1] is not used in the earlier Vedic texts as a proper noun for the name of a god but is an adjectival epithet expressing attributes or qualities. Among the gods to whom this epithet was euphemistically[2] applied is Rudra,[3] who appears in the Ṛg Veda as a relatively minor god but who in the course of time came to be considered the early predecessor of Śiva, the Great God of later Hinduism; and by about the fourth century B.C. Śiva is used as one of the names of Rudra.[4]

The meaning of the word Rudra has been the subject of much discussion.[5] It is said to mean "The Wild One" and Rudra is thus the Fierce God.[6] But according to later Vedic tradition the word Rudra is derived from the root *rud,* meaning "to cry"[7] and is usually taken as describing the Howler or Roarer, the god of the raging tempest,[8] or (on the basis of another meaning of *rud,* "to shine") as describing the fiery lightning, rather than the noise of the thunderbolts, of a storm.[9] Another explanation of the name Rudra is that it is derived from a lost root *rud* meaning "to be red or ruddy."[10] This last derivation enables the names Rudra and Śiva to be linked together, as being synonymous in meaning, since the word Śiva (which, as we have seen, means "gracious" in Sanskrit) is in its Tamil form derived from a Dravidian root *cevv,* meaning "red" or "ruddy,"[11] and this bears the same meaning as the Vedic word Rudra.[12] It has been suggested that the name of the Red God of the Dravidian pantheon[13] became Rudhra in the Aryan speech,[14] and that the resemblance between the names Rudhra and Rudra and their common connotation of redness contributed to the identification of the Dravidian and the Vedic gods and the assimilation of their cults.[14a]

If there has been some debate with regard to the meaning of the word Rudra, there has been even more debate about the essential character of the Vedic Rudra, especially amongst those who search for his "original character." One view is that he was the deity of the Indian hot season before the rains, when the incidence of disease among human beings and animals was highest.[15] Another view is that Rudra was a god of mountains and forests, whence come the spirits of sickness to human abodes.[16] Other views are that Rudra represented the elevation to godly rank of the chief of the spirits of the dead[17] and that he was a God of Death,[18] derived from pre-Vedic antecedents with roots in the Indo-European Aryan tradition[19] or in a non-Aryan milieu.[20] But perhaps the most widely accepted view is that Rudra was a god of storm and tempest,[21] or, in more generalised terms, that he represented the power of the dangerous, unpredictable and much feared forces of nature.[22]

The diversity of these views about the essential character of Rudra, which are based on statements in Vedic texts of different periods, reflects the multifarious nature of a complex expression of divinity. The multiple facets of Rudra's character, derived from a variety of cultural traditions, and the contradictions between some of these facets continued to be features of Rudra's figure as well as that of his successor, Rudra-Śiva, from early Vedic to modern times. The great post-Vedic epic of India, the Mahābhārata, declares that "the glorious, multiform, many-named Rudra" is "single, twofold, manifold ... a hundred thousandfold" and that "Brahmans versed in the Veda know two bodies of this god, one awful, one auspicious, and these two bodies again have many forms."[23] It is by no means easy to give a short account of the evolution of the concept of Rudra-Śiva down the ages, but an attempt must be made to describe the main lines of that development.

Already in the Ṛg Veda (dating from about 1300-1200 B.C.), the most ancient text of the Indian religious tradition, Rudra is described as the "fierce, tawny god of many forms,"[24] "ferocious as a wild beast,"[25] whose shafts of lightning kill men and cattle.[26] But this terror-inspiring god is also said to be beneficent,[27] kind and gracious[28] and he is implored not to kill or injure men and cattle[29] and invoked to drive away disease and distress[30] for he has choice remedies at his command.[31]

There is a much more detailed and vivid picture of Rudra in a later collocation of various epithets, names and attributes relating to him and his associates that appears in the Śatarudrīya (c. 1000 B.C.), a litany of the Yajur Veda.[32] This litany, which has long been considered by Śaivites as the most sacred and efficacious of hymns and is chanted even today in their home and temple services,[33] consists of a series of prayers and oblations to Rudra in his hundred *(śata)*, and more than hundred, aspects.[34] The formulae, usually beginning with "obeisance" or "homage" *(namaḥ)* to Rudra in various

manifestations and activities, to his weapons and to various beings of whom he is the lord or leader.

The epithets, names and attributes which have been heaped upon Rudra and his associates in the Śatarudrīya are of the most heterogeneous description and bewildering in their variety, especially since some of them contradict others. Thus Rudra is said to be dwarfish as well as gigantic,[35] to have a shaven head[36] as well as to have hair (straight[37] or braided[38]) and to be red in colour with a blue neck and a thousand eyes.[39] He is described as wearing the sacred thread[40] that is a mark of Brahminical orthodoxy; but there are several indications in the Vedic literature that Rudra differed from the other Vedic gods because of his peculiar relation to accepted Vedic ritual practices[41] and that he was closely connected with the followers of non-Vedic religious cults and practices.[42]

In the Śatarudrīya itself Rudra is said to be clad in animal hide,[43] and to be associated with mountains[44] and forests[45] and with those who live in them,[46] isolated from human settlements.[47] He is also said to be the patron of various disreputable and lowly sections of the population. For example, he is the lord of nocturnal prowlers, poachers, cheats, thieves, robbers and murderers,[48] persons who by inclination or calling were outside the pale of Aryan society; and he is also the patron of various classes of artisans, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, potters and chariot-makers.[49] These and other indications in the Vedic, epic and purāṇic literature that the cult of Rudra was alien to the accepted religious ideology of the Vedic Aryans and that Rudra-Śiva was for long regarded in orthodox Aryan circles as an outsider, who had been somewhat reluctantly admitted to the Vedic fold by the pressure of circumstances,[50] suggest that the Vedic Rudra had assimilated features borrowed from the cults of gods of non-Aryan peoples,[51] who had been reduced to the status of the lowly caste of *śūdras* or menials, and even of outcastes, by the Aryan invaders.[52]

Rudra is also portrayed in the Śatarudrīya as armed with a hundred bows and thousands of arrows,[53] as surrounded on all sides by thousands of Rudras,[54] extensions of his spiritual essence,[55] and by other attendants[56]; and he is the bellowing general of fierce combat troops.[57] But although the terrifying aspects of Rudra's personality are still much in evidence in the Śatarudrīya, his benevolent aspects are also emphasised. Thus, he is described as most auspicious,[58] deliverer,[59] bestower of welfare,[60] most bountiful[61] and the source and the cause of prosperity and happiness[62]; and he is invoked in his auspicious form *(śivatanu)*, which is propitious and heals disease,[63] to be gracious to his worshippers.[64]

A striking feature of the Śatarudrīya is that in it the range of Rudra's powers and activities is widely expanded and he appears as a great cosmic force present at all levels of existence in the animal and vegetable kingdoms

and natural phenomena. He is the god not only of the orthodox and the upper classes of the population but also of the underprivileged and even the unsocial sections of it[65]; he is the lord of animals[66] and moving creatures[67]; and he is the lord of the quarters of the universe,[68] present in the flowing streams[69] and lakes,[70] in forests[71] and busy roads,[72] in deserts and habitable places,[72] in gravel[72] and dust,[73] in dried things and green things,[73] in fertile earth and threshing floor,[74] in mist[75] and sunshine,[76] in clouds and lightning,[76] in rain,[76] wind and storm.[77] Thus, the Śatarudrīya portrays Rudra as a deity whose powers are manifested in every form and aspect of life in nature and society – in other words, it presents him in a universal form *(viśvarūpa)* as a god manifesting in all and yet transcending all.[78]

It is not surprising that in this form Rudra should symbolise not only numerous partial manifestations of divinity but also opposite aspects of it. This latter feature, the ambivalence of opposite attributes, expresses a paradox of divine reality in many religious traditions; but in such a "coincidence of opposites" all contradictions between limited attributes of divinity are deemed to be negated and transcended in the total unity of the divine.[79] The multiplicity and ambivalence of Rudra's powers invested his figure with an aura of numinous sublimity, which well exemplifies the sense of a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans,* an uncanny mystery exciting both awe and fascination, that is a central element in the idea of The Holy.[80] This sublimity qualified him for elevation to the status of a High God; and the Rudra of the Śatarudrīya has indeed travelled far on the road to becoming an All-God – a process that culminates in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (c. 400 B.C.), which elevates Rudra-Śiva to the rank of a Supreme God.

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, a comparatively late upaniṣad dating back to about 400 B.C.,[81] marks an important stage in the history of Hinduism, more particularly Śaivism. It begins with an inquiry about the ultimate cause or origin of the universe, the foundation by which all beings live and the ruler who governs the different conditions of their existence.[82] It declares that there is One Supreme Reality, which underlies all existence,[83] and that Reality is identified with a deity whose preeminence among the gods had been clearly established by the time of this upaniṣad, the god who in the worship of the masses was known first as Rudra and later as Śiva.[84] In this way the claims of theistic religion, with all that this phrase connotes (including the efficacy of *bhakti,* loving devotion to the worshipper's favourite deity as a spiritual discipline[85]), were asserted in this upaniṣad for the first time in Hinduism.

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, it has been said,[86] is "brimful of contradictions .... Beneath the characters of theism are discerned, half obliterated, pantheism and under the latter again those of idealism."[87] This is not surprising in a work that contains many passages from older Vedic texts (including earlier upanisads) dealing with different aspects of the divine essence that underlies

the phenomenal world, which is referred to under names like Puruṣa,[88] the Primordial Cosmic "Person,"[89] and Prajāpati,[90] the "Lord of Progeny"[91] (who are the subjects of two creation hymns of the Ṛg Veda) and Brahman,[92] the unchanging Spiritual Reality that pervades and supports the Universe.[93] Interpreting these earlier texts in a monotheistic sense, this upaniṣad identifies the Supreme Reality referred to in them with the god Rudra-Śiva.[94] This view of Rudra-Śiva as the inheritor of attributes of Puruṣa, Prajāpati and Brahman, explains the frequent alternations of thought and language in this upaniṣad between the personal and the impersonal aspects of the Supreme Reality: on the one hand we find the mythical imagery and popular conceptions connected with a Vedic *deva,*[95] a provincial or parochial god controlling a department of nature or human activity,[96] and on the other hand there are the qualities and attributes of the impersonal Supreme Reality.

The great God, whose majesty and powers are described in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, is said to be the sole primaeval God,[97] who does not derive his existence from any other source,[98] who has no beginning or end,[99] who is eternal,[100] immortal[101] and transcendent.[102] This one[103] God is the overlord of all[104] – gods and living beings,[105] material nature that is perishable and imperishable souls[106] – and rules all the worlds with his sovereign powers.[107] This omnipotent and omniscient[108] God is also the maker of all:[109] by wielding *māyā,* his wonder-working power of creation acting in nature,[110] he emanates the worlds,[111] protects them[112] and in the course of time withdraws them.[113] Although he is invisible,[114] he pervades the universe,[115] is present everywhere[116] and encompasses all[117]; and he is hidden in all creatures,[118] dwelling in their hearts as their Inner Self.[119] This Almighty God's sovereign position and wide-ranging powers make the term Īśvara, "Lord," the most appropriate designation for him; and in this upaniṣad Īśvara and kindred terms, occur frequently,[120] and he is also referred to as Maheśvara,[121] "Great Lord," and even as the "Supreme *(parama)* Great Lord (maheśvara) of Lords."[122]

In this upaniṣad the Supreme God is depicted not only as being concerned with grand cosmic functions but also as a personal god, who is the protector and refuge of all[123] and who grants desires[124] and confers blessings.[125] He is an adorable god,[126] with whom his worshippers may establish personal relationships. In particular, since he is the cause of the embodiment of souls in wordly existence,[127] the overseer of actions[128] and the cause of both reincarnation[129] and liberation[130] from its bondage, a worshipper who shows extreme love and devotion *(bhakti)*[131] to him can receive his grace[132] and thereby obtain deliverance from sorrow[133] and become immortal.[134] This upaniṣad thus projects the conception of Śiva as the super-personal deity of Hindu monotheism – as the Supreme Lord, Parameśvara[135] who (despite his preeminently exalted position and powers, derived largely from the ascription

to him of qualities and attributes of the impersonal Supreme Reality, Brahman) is readily accessible to those who worship him as their favourite personal deity.

The divine grace and love that links the personal God and his devotee are but faintly indicated in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad. They were made much more explicit in the great classic of Vaiṣṇava devotion, the Bhagavad Gītā, the "Song of the Blessed Lord" (of the third or second century B.C.). In this text Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu as the Supreme Personal God declares that when the need arises he appears in the world to destroy the wicked and protect the good,[136] and that those who perform their worldly duties in a spirit of disinterested self-surrender and worship him with loving devotion are very dear to him and will, by his grace, achieve communion with him.[137] In the Īśvara Gītā (of about 1000 A.D.), which is modelled on and strongly reminiscent of the Bhagavad Gītā, it is Śiva who expounds the path of salvation, combining Śaiva theism, *bhakti*, yoga and upaniṣadic doctrines.[138]

We began this chapter with the observation that many strands of belief and practice drawn from a wide variety of sources have contributed to form the complex figure of the Śiva of modern Hinduism. Similar processes were at work in respect of the other High God of Hinduism, Viṣṇu. By about the beginning of the Christian era Śiva and Viṣṇu had been endued with attributes and manifestations as well as families and retinues that made each of them the Supreme Personal God for their respective followers. In subsequent centuries the mythology, the beliefs and the practices of both Śaivites and Vaiṣṇavites were elaborated in numerous texts of various kinds – literary, philosophical, liturgical – such as the epics, the purāṇas and the āgamas.[139]

The coexistence of more than one claimant to the position of the Supreme God is a striking feature of Hinduism. In spite of many contacts (both friendly and unfriendly) between the cults of Śiva and Viṣṇu, a distinct tendency developed for the adherents of each god to regard the other god and the doctrines of that cult as complementary to their own, and as the next best approach to truth, rather than to reject them entirely.[140] Kindred conceptions that promoted the absorption and assimilation of the doctrines of coexisting cults were that of Hari-Hara, which regards Viṣṇu and Śiva as equal parts of the same Highest Being, and that of the Trimūrti ("three forms"), the triune Highest Being, who in the aspect of Brahmā is the creator, of Viṣṇu is the preserver and of Rudra-Śiva is the destroyer. But these comparatively late developments inspired by philosophers and theologians had little effect on the beliefs and practices of the masses. The average devotee of Śiva or Viṣṇu[141] continued to regard his own favourite deity as the Supreme Personal God embodying the totality of the manifestations in the universe of the One Ultimate Reality, a much wider concept of Divinity than that of Śiva or Viṣṇu regarded as merely the destroyer or the preserver respectively.[142]

In the space at our disposal it is not possible to trace the later history of Śaivism in any detail. While all Śaivites regard Śiva as the One Supreme Personal God, in the course of time Śaivism as practised in different parts of the Indian subcontinent developed regional variations in matters of rituals and dogmas. This led to the recognition of different schools of Śaivism – such as the Śaivism of the Tamil-speaking areas of the south, the Vīra Śaivism of the Kannada-speaking areas also of the South, and the Kashmir Śaivism in the North.[143] Of these Tamil Śaivism is the most important and it has shown a remarkable vitality and capacity of adapting to changing conditions and times. A learned Christian missionary once described the Śaiva Siddhānta, which is the distinctive philosophy of Tamil Śaivism, as being "the most elaborate, influential and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all the religions of India."[144] In this connection it is relevant to mention a striking feature of Tamil Śaivism as expressed in its theological[145] and especially its devotional[146] literature – namely, the prominence given in them to the concept of *bhakti* as the basis of the emotional link between the devotee and a god believed to be capable of responding graciously to the devotee's love. In a later chapter of this book we shall refer to the great *bhakti* movement which began in the seventh century and ushered in a revolution in the religious, cultural and social conditions of the people in South India[147]; and in other chapters we shall have occasion to mention several doctrines and practices of Tamil Śaivism.

NOTES

1. SED (1988), s.v. Śiva, p. 1074 and s.v. Rudra, p. 883; Daniélou (1964), p. 197. In Tamil Śiva meant "red" or "ruddy" (see p. 7 at n. 11).

2. The idea that a fearsome god could be propitiated by speaking of him euphemistically, in gentle terms, is also exemplified in Greek religion (Harrison (1922), p. 553) – e.g., the Furies were called Eumenides, the "Gracious Ones."

3. See, e.g., Ṛg Veda 10.92.9.

4. See, e.g., the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.11; 5.14.

5. Thus the 14th century commentator Sāyaṇa (ad Ṛg Veda 1.114.1) gives no less than six explanations of the word for which see Muir, iv (1873), p. 303 n. 9; cf. n. 8.

6. Mayrhofer (1976), s.v. Rudra, cited Kramrisch (1981b), p. 5.

7. Kramrisch, loc. cit.

8. "Because he howled *(arodīt)* in the sky, giving rain and lightning to men, he is praised ... as the howler." (Bṛhad-devatā 2.30, transl. Daniélou (1964), p. 194).

Crying, in the sense of weeping, has also been connected with the explanation of the name Rudra: either because Rudra himself when a baby wept for want of a name – an omission rectified by his father naming him Rudra (Daniélou, op. cit., p. 194) or wept when some treasure, abandoned by the gods and appropriated by him, had later to be surrendered to them (Sāyaṇa, cited Muir, iv (1873), p. 303 n. 9); or because Rudra is the cause of tears in living beings at the destruction of the universe (Sāyaṇa loc. cit.; cf. Daniélou, op. cit., p. 395).

9. Grassmann (1873); cf. Dandekar (1953), p. 133. It is said that in the Ṛg Veda Rudra is more particularly represented as a god of red lightning (op. cit., p. 105) – a view which would connect this aspect of Rudra as a storm-god with the view that his name derives from a root meaning "to be red or ruddy" (see p. 7 at n. 10).

10. Pischel and Geldner (1889), p. 55; cf. Dandekar.

11. DED (1961), p. 131; and *ceyyavaṉ, ceyyaṉ, cēyōṉ, ceyyōṉ* mean "person of red or brown complexion." (loc. cit.). Cf. TL iii (2), pp. 1001, 1603 and 1633 (where Cēyōṉ is given as a name of Skanda, the war god, and of Śiva).

The connection of the name Cēyōṉ with Skanda is explained by the fact that Cēyōṉ is one of the names of an old Dravidian god of hill and hunting tribes, best known in early Tamil literature as Murukaṉ (the "Youthful or Beautiful One"), who in the course of time, by the accretion of elements associated with gods of the Brahminic, Sanskritic tradition (like the warrior god Skanda), was absorbed into the Śaiva pantheon as a son of Śiva. During the centuries the attributes of Murukaṉ-Skanda have proliferated greatly. In South India he has long been considered "the Tamil god *par excellence*" (Zvelebil (1973), p. 130; cf. pp. v and 246); and he is regarded by his devotees as being the counterpart of Śiva, possessing the same qualities and powers. (Cf. Kantapurāṇam 1 (Uṟpaṭṭi Kāṇṭam) 14 (Tiruvilaiyāṭṭuppaṭalam) 19).

In connection with the derivation of "Śiva" in its Tamil form from the Dravidian root *cevv,* it may be mentioned that one of Śiva's names, Śambhu, which in Sanskrit means the "Abode of Joy" (Daniélou (1964), pp. 197, 202; cf. SED (1988), p. 1055), is said to be connected philologically with the old Tamil word *cempu* "copper," the red metal. (Chatterji (1951), p. 162).

12. Chatterji, loc. cit.

13. Śiva is often described in Tamil devotional literature in terms of fire and light and as having the glowing red form of fire (see, e.g., Appar Tirumuṟai 4.112.5 and 9; Māṇikkavācakar, Tiruvācakam 7.43.4 and 8.75 (Pope (1900), pp. 109, 123). Similarly, in the Ṛg Veda Agni is a manifestation of Rudra, with whom he is identified (2.1.6, cf. n. 34); and Rudra is described as "the ruddy boar of heaven" (1.114.5), who "shines in splendour like the sun, refulgent as bright gold" (1.43.5).

14. Chatterji, loc. cit.

14a. After this identification the word "Śiva" as an epithet or as a name for Rudra came to be understood in the Sanskrit sense of the word, i.e., as meaning "gracious" (Dandekar (1953), pp. 134-135).

15. Hillebrandt (1899), pp. 179-208; cf. Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 111-113.

16. Oldenberg (1894), pp. 216-224; cf. Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 113-117.

17. Schroeder (1895), p. 248; cf. Dandekar, op. cit., p. 123 n. 2.

18. Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 117-136.

19. Arbman (1922), sees in Rudra a refinement from an ancient cannibalistic death-demon (Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 117-118 and 121-124).

20. Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 125-136.

21. Keith (1925), p. 117 at n. 3; cf. Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

22. Gonda (1970), p. 5. The view of Rudra as a storm-god is connected with another view of Rudra that he was derived from a vegetation spirit (Keith (1907), p. 933; cf. p. 948), by the fact that the rains let loose by the storm have a fertilising function (Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 105-106). Similarly, the view of Rudra as a god of death is not inconsistent with the view of him as a god of fertility, for in many cultures gods of death are also regarded as gods of fertility (Dandekar, op. cit., pp. 123-124).

23. 13 (Anuśāsana-parvan) 140, transl. Muir, iv (1873), p. 204.

24. ṚV 2.33.9.

25. ṚV 2.33.11.

26. ṚV 1.114.10.

27. ṚV 1.114.3.

28. ṚV 1.114.9.

29. ṚV 1.114.7, 8.

30. ṚV 2.33.2.

31. ṚV 1.114.5. He is said to be the best of all healers (2.33.4).

32. The two chief versions of the text of the Śatarudrīya are the Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā 16. 1-66 of the Śukla Yajur Veda (English transl. by Muir, iv. (1873), pp. 326-331, by Eggeling (1897), pp. 150-155 and by Long (1983) in Clothey and Long (1983), pp. 123-128) and the Taittirīya Saṃhitā 4.5.1-11 of the Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda (transl. by Keith, ii (1914), pp. 353-362 and Sivaramamurti (1976), pp. 13-32).

33. It is, therefore, "one of the most ancient and long-lived hymns in the history of religions" (Long (1971), p. 182 n. 6). The significance of the hymn is heightened by the fact that it contains the five-syllabled Pañcākṣara mantra, *Namaḥ Śivāya* (Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā 16.41), to which Śaivites attach the highest sanctity.

34. The hymn is chanted to accompany 425 oblations offered into the sacrificial fire, after the great fire-altar *(agnicayana)* has been piled up and Agni, personifying the sacred fire, has been identified with Rudra. The altar fire is the visible manifestation of Rudra-Agni in his most awe-inspiring form,

and the oblations and the recitation of the hymn are meant to appease him (Long (1983), pp. 113-116).

Apart from the chanting of the Śatarudrīya to accompany oblations made in a sacrifice, the recital of it unaccompanied by a sacrificial ceremony was also recognised as a means of entering into spiritual contact with the deity, obtaining expiation from sin and final release (Gonda (1980), pp. 79-82). The Tamil saint Rudra Paśupati Nāyaṉār is said to have obtained release by fervently chanting the Śatarudrīya at all hours while standing up to his neck in the waters of a pond (Periyapurāṇam 1036. 5-6, transl. Vanmikanathan (1985), pp. 572-4).

35. Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā 16.30.

36. VS 16.29.

37. VS 16.43.

38. VS 16.10.29, 43, 48. Since the braided hair was spirally twisted in the form of a cowrie shell *(kaparda)* Rudra is called Kapardin (ṚV 1.114.1 and 5).

39. VS 16.7.8; Cf. 16.29. Elsewhere it is said that at a single glance he could look round the whole world (Atharva Veda 9.2.17, 25; Muir, iv (1873), pp. 336, 337).

40. VS 16.17.

41. When the other gods attained heaven by ritual means Rudra remained behind (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.7.3.1). Unlike the other Vedic gods Rudra is excluded from the *soma* sacrifices. He receives not the sacrificial oblations proper but the remnants or what is injured in the sacrifices to other gods (SB 1.7.4.9); and the officiating priest who makes the offering to Rudra is asked to perform a purificatory lustration (ibid.). Cf. Dandekar (1953), pp. 97-98 and p. 114 cited in n. 47.

42. For example, *Munis* and *Vrātyas* (Dandekar (1953), pp. 99-102).

The *Munis* ("silent ones") were ascetics vowed to silence, who were regarded as inspired and as having acquired miraculous powers (ṚV 10.136). The *Vrātyas* were wandering religious mendicants with a social order, a cult and traditions of their own that were outside the sphere of Brahminic culture. Their leader, deified as Ekavrātya ("Sole Vrātya") is described as the Supreme Being of the Universe, Mahādeva; and Ekavrātya was identified with Rudra (AV 15.5.1-7). For different views about the origins of the *Vrātyas* see Karmarkar (1950), pp. 18-28.

43. VS 16.51 and 3.61.

44. VS 16.2, 3, 4, 29 ("mountain-dweller").

45. VS 16.18, 20 ("lord of forests"). In Vedic literature Rudra is sometimes represented as a wild hunter. In the primordial myth of Rudra he appears as the wild hunter whose arrow stimulated creation in the first dawn of the universe (Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 3-6, 98-99, 422-428). In post-Vedic literature also Śiva appears as a *kirāta,* a wild hunter of a mountain tribe (e.g.,

Mahābhārata 3, (Vanaparvan) 39, 40, 41 passim, Muir iv (1873), pp. 230-1; Kramrisch, op. cit., pp. 257-8).

46. For example, Niṣādas (VS 16.27), "a wild non-Aryan tribe" (SED (1988), p. 561), probably of proto-Australoid stock (Sircar (1971), p. 102).

47. Rudra is normally worshipped outside the village and offerings to him are not derived from the village but from the forest, and nothing connected with the *Śūlagava* or spit-ox sacrifice offered to Rudra at the outskirts of a village should be brought back to the village or the house. (Dandekar (1953), p. 114).

48. VS 26.20, 21, 22. As the god worshipped by various nefarious types of persons, Rudra is himself described as a prowler, cheater and deceiver (16.20, 21)!

49. VS 16.27.

50. An illustration of this is the well-known legend of Dakṣa's sacrifice. The Vedic sage Dakṣa, who had invited all the gods except Śiva to a great sacrifice which he was celebrating, explains the omission by saying that Śiva was an impure abolisher of rites and demolisher of social barriers because, among other things, he had taught the sacred Vedic texts to Śūdras. Śiva arrives at the scene of the sacrifice and completely destroys it. But on Dakṣa's acknowledging Śiva's supremacy over all gods and giving Śiva a share of the sacrifice, Dakṣa is forgiven by Śiva (see Bhāgavata Purāṇa 4.2. 4-18 cf. ch. 6 p. 64).

51. Cf. ch. 1 p. 1 and n. 6 and the references therein.

52. Traces of the transition from the ancient pre-Aryan to the Aryan cults are to be found in some South Indian temples, where in some cases outcaste paraiyans still act as priests and in others they have the prior right to make offerings to the gods, and only after they have finished do the Brahmins begin their services (Frazer (1920), p. 92).

53. VS 16.29, 53.

54. VS 16.6, 54, 63-66.

55. According to one myth of the origin of Rudra, these Rudras came into existence at the same time as Rudra himself (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 9.1.1.6; Muir, iv (1873), p. 349).

56. "Shouting, long-haired, devouring hosts" (Atharva Veda 9.2.31) and "wide-mouthed howling dogs who swallow their prey unchewed" (AV 9.2.30).

57. VS 16.19.

58. VS 16.41.

59. VS 16.40 and 19.

60. VS 16.40.

61. VS 16.11, 29, 51.

62. VS 16.41.

63. VS 16.49; cf. VS 16.5 ("foremost divine healer").

64. VS 16.49. Cf. 16.50, reproducing Ṛg Veda 2.33.14: "May the missile of Rudra miss us, may the great malevolence of the Impetuous One depart from us. Loosen thy strong bow that it may not harm our nobles and be gracious to our children and descendants" (transl. in Clothey and Long (1983), p. 127 and in Muir iv (1873), p. 309).

65. See p. 9 and n. 48.

66. VS 16.17, 40.

67. VS 16,18; cf. Atharva Veda 11.2.9: "Thine are these five distinct sorts of animals – kine, horses, men, goats and sheep" (transl. Muir, iv (1873), p. 336).

68. VS 16.17. The quarters taken together represent the entire universe (cf. Atharva Veda 11.2.10 and 11: "Thine ... are the four regions, the sky, the earth and the wild atmosphere; thine is everything which has a spirit and which breathes upon the earth. This is a vast and wealthy storehouse of thine, within which all these beings are contained" (transl. Muir, op. cit., p. 336).

69. VS 16.31, 43.

70. VS 16.37.

71. VS 16.18, 20.

72. VS 16.43.

73. VS 16.45.

74. VS 16.33.

75. VS 16.45.

76. VS 16.38.

77. VS 16.39.

78. Raghavan (1958), p. 21; Sivaramamurti (1976), pp. 3, 60-61. A later and better known description of the *viśvarūpa* form of god is to be found in chapters 10 and 11 of the Bhagavad Gītā, where Kṛṣṇa reveals his universal form to Arjuna.

79. Eliade (1958), p. 419. For illustrations of this paradox of divine reality from different religious traditions see, e.g., the section "Resolution of Contraries" in Perry (1971), pp. 835-838.

80. In his Das Heilige (1917), Rudolf Otto used the phrase *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* to describe the content of the transcendental experience of the numinous (Happold (1970), p. 85).

81. Gonda (1977), p. 152; cf. Gonda (1970), p. 18.

82. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.1.

83. SU. 1.3 et seqq.; 2.15-17; 3 passim; 4 passim; 5 passim; 6. 1-18.

84. Referred to as Rudra in SU. 3.2, 4-6; 4.12, 21, 22; as Śiva in 4.18; 5.14; cf. 3.11; 4.14; and as Hara ("the Remover"), a name of Śiva (Daniélou (1964), p. 196), in 1.10.

85. The Sanskrit term *bhakti* (derived from the root *bhaj*, signifying "to share" or "to participate"), when used in a religious context, means the loving participation of the soul in the divine and thus the adoration by a worshipper

of a personal deity. The term appears in the last verse (6.23) of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, and this is said to be the first occurrence of the term in its technical religious sense in Sanskrit literature (Dhavamony (1971), p. 67).

86. Deussen (1906), p. 178.

87. In the comparatively late verse upaniṣads (like the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad), "there is a ... movement away from a monistic-pantheistic view of the universe towards a more overtly theistic one. God begins to detach himself from the universe and to take on personal characteristics" (Zaehner (1969), p. 54).

88. See, e.g., SU. 3.8 et seqq.

89. In the Puruṣa Sūkta, the hymn to the Primaeval Puruṣa (Ṛg Veda 10.190) he is described as the All, one fourth of whom are all beings in the phenomenal universe and three fourths are transcendent in heaven. This hymn, which exercised a great influence upon later philosophical and mythical conceptions, visualised creation as a sacrificial rite in which Puruṣa was the oblation or victim, whose dismembered body became portions of the universe. For the applications of the Puruṣa Sūkta in both Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism see Gonda (1970), pp. 25-33.

90. See, e.g., SU. 4.2.

91. Prajāpati, appearing at the beginning of the universe as Hiraṇyagarbha, the "Golden Embryo," was the sole Lord of all creation (Ṛg Veda 10.121).

92. See, e.g., SU. 5.1; 3.7.

The Sanskrit word *brahman,* derived from a root *bṛh* connoting growth, expansion (SED (1988), p. 737), meant originally "sacred utterance" and, derivatively, "the power of the sacred utterance" as well as one imbued with sacred power. Thus, the word *brahman* and kindred words came to be used to describe the changeless Spiritual Reality that underlies the universe (Brahman in the neuter form), the creator god (Brahmā in the masculine form) and a member of the highest caste versed in the sacred knowledge (brāhmaṇa; brāhman or brahmin in English). (Zaehner (1962), pp. 61-65).

93. Brahman is sometimes referred to as Brahman-Ātman, a compound term indicating that the Supreme Reality pervades both the macrocosm of the universe and the microcosm of the soul *(ātman)* of every individual being in the universe.

94. See, e.g., the verses of the SU. referred to in n. 84.

95. For example, SU. 3.6 (appeal to Rudra, dweller among the mountains, arrow in hand).

96. See n. 120.

97. SU. 4.18; 6.5; 3.21.

98. SU. 6.16.

99. SU. 5.13.

100. SU. 6.13; 6.5.

101. SU. 1.10; 6.17; 3.12.
102. SU. 6.7.
103. "He is One, there is no place for a second" (SU. 3.2).
104. SU. 3.4; 4.12; 4.15.
105. SU. 4.13.
106. SU.1.10.
107. SU. 3.1, 2.
108. SU. 6.16.
109. SU. 6.16.
110. SU. 4.9, 10. The application of this power *(śakti)* is referred to as *śakti-yoga* (4.1). In later texts the Lord's *śakti,* which is inherently inseparable from him (1.3), is represented mythologically as his consort: "only when united with Śakti is Śiva able to exert his powers as Lord, but without her he cannot even stir." (Saundaryalahari 1.1; cf. ch. 8 n. 130).
111. SU. 3.2.
112. SU. 4.15; 1.8.
113. SU. 3.2; 4.11.
114. SU. 4.20.
115. SU. 3.9; 3.11; 3.21; 2.17.
116. SU. 6.17.
117. SU. 5.13; 3.16; 4.14, 16; 6.2.
118. SU 4.15.
119. SU. 3.13; 6.11.
120. The Supreme God of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad is sometimes referred to (see, e.g., 1.8, 10; 4.11, 13, 16; 6.7) as *deva.* This word, when used with reference to Vedic parochial or provincial gods, denotes powerful beings regarded as possessing supernormal faculties and as controlling a department of nature or human activity (Gonda (1985), p. 133). But in this Upaniṣad *deva* is often used in the sense of *Īśvara* (and the kindred terms *Īśa* and *Īśāna*). The word *Īśvara* gradually came to be preferred as being most appropriate to describe the Highest God when conceived of as the personal God (op. cit., pp. 137-163). Although Īśvara was a designation that could be used of both Śiva and Viṣṇu, it came to be specially preferred in Śaivite circles; while the title Bhagavān ("the Holy or Adorable One, the Blessed Lord"), which was sometimes used (e.g., SU. 3.11) in connection with Śiva, was constantly used in later days by followers of Viṣṇu to describe the Supreme god of their cult. (Gonda (1970), pp. 35-36).
121. See e.g., SU. 4.10; 6.7.
122. SU. 6.7 *(īśvarāṇāṃ parama maheśvara).* But in the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, Īśvara is not used exclusively in the sense of Parameśvara, the "Supreme Lord." That usage of the word was to come later on, in the later Śaiva upaniṣads and other literature (Shastri (1935), pp. 495, 501).

123. SU. 3.2, 17; 4.15; 6.17, 18.
124. SU. 6.13.
125. SU. 4.11.
126. SU. 4.11; 6.5, 7.
127. SU. 6.16.
128. SU. 6.11 *(karma;* cf. 5.11, 12.).
129. SU. 6.16 *(saṃsāra).*
130. SU. 6.16 *(mokṣa).*
131. SU. 6.23 (see n. 85).
132. SU. 3.20 *(prasāda).*
133. SU. 4.7; 6.12.
134. SU. 3.7, 8, 10, 13; 4.15; 6.15. He is the ruler of, and the highest bridge to, immortality (3.15; 6.19); and those who know him, with heart and mind, as dwelling in their hearts become immortal (4.20; cf. 3.13).
135. Parameśvara ("Supreme Lord") was a designation by which Śiva came to be known to his devotees later. Cf. n. 122.
136. Bhagavad Gītā 4. 7, et seqq.
137. See, e.g., B.G. 18.64-5; 11.55; 7.17; 12.20.
138. Gonda (1970), pp. 96-7.
139. See ch. 5 nn. 23, 24 and 28.
140. For many aspects of the interrelations between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism see Gonda (1970), chap. 5.
141. Brahmā, the third member of the triad, receded into the background in later popular Hinduism. Very few temples were dedicated to Brahmā (Monier-Williams (1891), pp. 555-7), and nowadays there is no cult of Brahmā worshipped as the God of creation. However, his image appears in a subsidiary position in temples of Śiva or Viṣṇu (Rao (1916), 2 (ii), p. 502); and he is still invoked as guardian of the sacrifice in certain domestic rituals, such as marriage and funeral ceremonies (Carpenter (1921), p. 286).
142. For example, in the literature of Tamil Śaivism Śiva as the Primal Highest Being is differentiated from the destroyer god of the triad of Brahmā the creator, Viṣṇu the preserver and Śiva or Rudra the destroyer. He is more ancient than, includes and transcends all these three gods, actuating each of them in their limited powers of creation, preservation and destruction. (Tirumūlar, Tirumantiram (1984), i, Pāyiram 1.5, 6; Māṇikkavācakar, Tiruvācakam, 3.13-15, transl. Pope (1900), p. 19; Civañāṉacittiyār, Cupakkam 1.34, 35, 49, 60, transl. Nallaswami Pillai (1948), pp. 26, 33, 53).
143. See ch. 5 n. 33.
144. Pope (1900), p. lxxvi.
145. See ch. 5 n. 28; cf. n. 39.
146. See ch. 5 n. 15.
147. See ch. 5 p. 52.

III

REPRESENTATIONS OF ŚIVA (1)

The representation of the formless Absolute in mainifest forms is essential for the great majority of human beings: as the Bhagavad Gītā says,[1] "a being imprisoned in a body cannot grasp the ways of the Unmanifest." Thus, most religions have found it necessary to admit representations of the Absolute in manifestations of various degrees of subtlety and concreteness.[2]

Such representations may be verbal or they may be visual. To the former class belong *mantras* or syllables and words regarded as embodying the energy of cosmic powers in the form of sound: these are subtle instruments (indicated by the suffix – *tra* in Sanskrit) for evoking visions of deities[3] in the mind (etymologically connected with the Sanskrit root *man*) and establishing contact with them. *Mantras* may be monosyllabic, such as the basic *bīja* ("seed") mantras[4] (the best known of which is OṂ or AUṂ, considered the most abstract symbol of divinity[5]), or they may be longer verbal formulae, such as the *pañcākṣara* ("five letter") *mantra* of Śiva[6] or the *aṣṭākṣara* ("eight letter") mantra of Viṣṇu.[7] Visual representations of cosmic powers are called *yantras*. A *yantra* is an instrument designed to control (*yam* in Sanskrit) psychic forces by concentrating them in such a way that they may be reproduced by the worshipper's power of visualisation.[8] Such a visible instrument for stimulating inner visions and meditation may be an abstract geometrical linear diagram[9] – or *yantra* in a narrow sense (which is the common usage of the word) – or it may be a more concrete representation, either an image, pictorial or iconic,[10] or an aniconic symbol like a pillar.[11]

Thus, representations of deities are most explicitly and concretely manifested in icons, more abstractly in *yantras* in the narrow sense of the word and most subtly in *mantras;* and a worshipper may use any one or more of these instruments of worship that suits his temperament. But all these representations, though they vary in degrees of subtlety and concreteness, are parallel manifestations of aspects of the deities which they symbolise and they complement each other in the rituals of both public and private worship. The basic component of these rituals is the visualisation in the worshipper's mind of the particular forms of divinity which he has been accustomed to worship; and the religious and philosophical texts of his cult provide detailed

descriptions of the forms and the rituals for both inner and external worship.[12] The appropriate *mantras,* when repeated in the course of concentrated meditation *(dhyāna),* aid the worshipper in visualising the deity's figurative image[13]; and after his body and mind have been sanctified by various yogic techniques,[14] the worshipper projects the divine power of the deity whom he has conjured up in inner vision into the *yantra* or the icon.[15] The close connection between these two externally visible symbols of the deities on the one hand and *mantras* on the other is also illustrated by the practice of inscribing a *yantra* with the *mantras* appropriate to the deity concerned,[16] and by the association of a deity's *yantra* with his icon in ritual practice, for example, by burying it below the icon.[17]

In the present book we shall be concerned mainly with icons representing various aspects of Śiva as well as with the related myths and philosophical doctrines, which explain the external features and the inner significance of the icons. Myths are a basic form of religious symbolism,[18] as are symbolic objects like icons and symbolic behaviour such as rituals. It has been said that myth "is the proper language of metaphysics[19]" and "embodies the nearest approach to absolute truth that can be stated in words[20];" and myths have been found indispensable in providing answers to fundamental questions relating to the origin of the world and to man's place in it and his ultimate destiny.[21] Hindu mythology, which has a continuous recorded history of some three thousand five hundred years, is one of the richest and most varied in the world,[22] and it is closely connected with literature, dancing, painting and sculpture. The myths serve as popular vehicles of philosophical teachings,[23] while the icons visually crystallise the myths and also serve as a focus for ritual worship and meditation. It has been suggested that preaching sermons to icon worshippers would be superfluous, since the icons themselves provide silent sermons all the time.[24] Indeed many great myths and symbols have been found to possess a perennial and almost inexhaustible vitality.[25]

In Hindu mythology Śiva figures in many roles and assumes a wide variety of forms. Like the names and the epithets applied to him by his worshippers,[26] the forms also express different aspects of his essence and powers as manifested in the universe: the forms are sometimes referred to as *līlāmūrtis* or "sportive forms"[27] in which Śiva's cosmic energy is displayed in various manifestations. Some of the forms express aspects that are contradictory of others, but the contradictions are reconciled and transcended in the total unity of the great god's being.[28]

There can be no fixed canon of the kaleidoscopic theophanies of Śiva. A Tamil work describes and illustrates with line drawings sixty four forms of Śiva,[29] but generally the texts mention a smaller number.[30] Usually the forms that are reckoned to be important in temple sculpture and ritual are twenty five in number.[31]

Classifications of Śiva's forms may be made from various viewpoints.[32] For our purposes in this book the forms may be classified as follows:

(1) *Saṃhāramūrtis* (destructive manifestations),[33] (2) *Anugrahamūrtis* (gracious manifestations),[34] (3) *Nṛttamūrtis* (dancing manifestations),[35] (4) *Dakṣiṇāmūrtis* (teaching manifestations),[36] (5) *Bhiksāṭanamūrtis* (wandering mendicant manifestations),[37] (6) Miscellaneous manifestations.[38] However, the forms that emerge from different episodes in some of the myths of Śiva cut across the categories of such a classification. Thus we shall see in a later chapter[39] of this book examples of Śiva's heroic feats, in the course of which he defeats wrongdoers, executes victory dances and confers grace on the repentant sinner. But the difficulty of arriving at a completely satisfactory classification of Śiva's forms is met by the view expressed in some Śaiva texts that all Śiva's forms (and not merely his *anugraha* manifestations) are inspired by his gracious love for his creatures and concern for their spiritual advancement.[40]

Before we conclude this chapter on Representations of Śiva, we must mention certain elements of Śaiva speculative thought by which theologians and philosophers sought to explain the nature and functions of God, the derivation of the universe from him and the relations between him and the universe. The theories in question are based on the view that Śiva is half male and half female and on the view that Śiva has five faces. These doctrines, and especially the latter, are often referred to in the literature of Śaivism and illustrated in Śaiva art.

In many cultures primordial divinity is conceived of as bisexual, embodying in a single form the twin eternal male and female principles that are opposites but are also complementary[41]; and the projection of the world and everything in it is regarded as taking place by the splitting of the androgyne into its two component elements[42] and by their subsequent interaction.[43] This symbol of androgynous biunity has been known from early times in India.[44] In the Śaiva tradition the hermaphrodite god is called Ardhanārīśvara, Śiva as the Lord *(Īśvara)* who is half *(ardha)* woman *(nārī);* and in iconography the image of Ardhanārīśvara is male on one side (usually the right[45]) and female on the other.[46]

The symbol of the androgynous god has been used in Hindu mythology for many purposes and thus variations in the myths relating to this form also express differing ideas of the relationship between its male and female halves.[47] The origin of Ardhanārīśvara is explained in one of two ways. One represents the androgyne as the response of Brahmā the Creator when Śiva refused to procreate mortals[48]: from the forehead of the angry Brahmā there issued a fearsome figure, half-male and half-female, holding out in the contiguity of its two halves the promise of their fruitful interaction. But the physical contiguity of these two parts was such as to prevent sexual activity, and it was only after Śiva at Brahmā's entreaty split the two parts of his body

and sent the female part out into the world that procreation of mortals took place.[49] The other explanation of the origin of the Ardhanārīśvara form is that it came into existence by the fusion of the bodies of Śiva and the Goddess. One myth relates that the exclusive devotion of the sage Bhṛṅgi to Śiva irked Pārvatī and led her to seek and obtain an inseparable union with her consort.[50] Other myths make the fusion follow severe austerities and penitentiary rites performed by the Goddess in expiation of her fault in covering Śiva's eyes – an act which had plunged the world into darkness; Śiva was pleased with her penance and devotion and accepted her as part of his body.[51]

The other doctrine, that of the five faces of Śiva, is based on the conception of him as the Great God from whom the cosmos is derived and who pervades it at all levels, both of his transcendental reality and his immanence in manifestation in the phenomenal world. Each face is assigned the name of a deity representing an aspect of Śiva's total reality – Sadāśiva, Mahādeva, Bhairava, Umā and Nandin – as well as a *mantra,* a formula by which that aspect may be evoked in meditation and in a variety of ritual ceremonies. The five *mantras, pañcabrahmans* or *pañcasuvaktramantras* (the "formulae of the five auspicious faces"), are the Īśāna, Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Vāmadeva and Sadyojāta *mantras;* and they collectively constitute the body of Śiva, which though often visualized or described anthropomorphically,[52] is not one of any material substance but a subtle body composed of pure energy *(śaktiśarīra).*[53] The five *mantras* and the faces that they evoke are also associated with the *pañcakṛtya* or the "five acts" or functions of Śiva in relation to the universe and its beings – thus, Sadyojāta is associated with the evolution or creation of the universe, Vāmadeva with its maintenance, Aghora with its involution or destruction, Tatpuruṣa with the obscuration of souls in the cycles of births, deaths and rebirths, and Īśāna with the bestowal on them of the grace that leads to final deliverance[54]; and the five faces of Śiva are also associated with the revelation of the sacred texts of the Vedas and the Śaiva āgamas.[55]

In the course of time the pentad of Śiva's five faces became the basis of many more sets of pentads thought of as associated with or corresponding to it. In the space at our disposal we must be content merely to list the more important of these other correspondences.[56] Thus, the five faces and their corresponding *mantras* are also related to: (1) colours (crystal, yellow, black, red, white); (2) directions of the cosmos (Sadāśiva facing upwards, Mahādeva eastwards, Bhairava southwards, Umā northwards, Nandin westwards); (3) elements, both gross (the *mahābhūtas* of ether or space, air, fire, water, earth) and subtle (the *tanmātras,* sense data, of sound, touch, form, taste, smell); (4) sense powers *(indriyas)* of the organs of cognition (hearing (ear), feeling (skin), seeing (eyes), tasting (tongue), smelling (nose)) and the organs of action (speech, grasping, moving, evacuation, procreation); (5) ontological

principles (cosmic spirit or essence *(puruṣa)*, cosmic substance *(prakṛti)*, universal intellect *(buddhi)*, individuating personality *(ahaṃkāra)*, cosmic mind *(manas)*; and (6) transcendental principles (the *tattvas* or "reals" of Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva, Īśvara and Sadvidyā) and their powers *(śaktis)* (Cit-or Parā-śakti, Ānanda-or Ādi-śakti, Jñānaśakti, Icchāśakti, Kriyāśakti). These many ramifications of the conception of Śiva's five faces, covering a wide range from the highest metaphysical principles of transcendental reality through descending cosmogonic and ontological principles to the innumerable manifestations of the phenomenal world, explain why Śiva is considered the origin, the basis and the essence of the entire cosmos (including the microcosms of the bodies and the minds of individual human beings).[57]

The five faces or aspects of the total reality of Śiva are emanations from and manifestations of Paramaśiva,[58] the "Supreme Śiva," the Ultimate Absolute Reality, which being beyond differentiating, limiting and individualising qualifications is formless and invisible. Periodically the transcendent Supreme Śiva in conjunction with his *śakti* or inherent energy or power of action[59] evolves or creates the innumerable forms of the manifested universe, which in the course of time, at the end of an aeon, are taken back into himself; and thereafter there are again new cycles of evolution followed by involution. The highest and most comprehensive form of the Supreme Śiva that can be imaged visually is usually called Sadāśiva, the "Eternal" (or Ever-existent) Śiva.[60]

In iconography and painting Sadāśiva appears as a "five-bodied form" *(pañcadehamūrti)*, consisting of five images of which four stand facing the cardinal directions and the fifth stands in the middle with its head higher than those of the others,[61] or as an image with a single body with five heads and ten arms. Sometimes only four heads are shown, because the fifth head, that of Īśāna symbolising *ākāśa* (space) and looking upwards to the vault of the sky *(vyoma)*, is said to be beyond the comprehension of even yogis[62] and is therefore invisible.

The five faces of Śiva appear also in *mukhaliṅgas* or "face *liṅgas*." The faces (sometimes they are busts rather than "faces"[63]), usually four in number[64] looking out in the four directions of space,[65] appear at the top end of the upright column or pillar, called the *liṅga*, which is the chief object of worship in the cult of Śiva.[66]

NOTES

1. BG 12.5.
2. "The highest state is that in which the presence of Brahman [the

Supreme Reality] is perceived in all things. The middle state is that of meditation. The lowest state is that of hymn and *japa* [repetition of *mantras*] and the state lower than the lowest is that of external worship [through a *yantra* or an icon]." (Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, quoted in Woodroffe (1970), ii, p. 341).

3. Zimmer (1953), pp. 140-141; Daniélou (1964), pp. 334-335.

4. Daniélou (1964), pp. 338-344.

5. Op. cit., pp. 338-341. Cf. ch. 8 n. 65c.

6. *Namaḥ Śivāya*, Daniélou (1964), p. 348. See also ch. 2 n. 33 and ch. 5 n. 28.

7. *Om Namo Nārāyaṇāya* (op. cit., p. 348); or the twelve-letter mantra of Viṣṇu: *Om Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya* (Khanna (1970), p. 39).

8. Zimmer (1953), pp. 141-142.

9. The best known linear *yantra* is the *Śrī Yantra* or *Cakra,* for the significance of which see ch. 8 p. 99 n. 160. The linear *Śrī Yantra* or *Cakra* may also be represented in the three-dimensional form of a pyramid of nine levels, called the *Meru Cakra* (see Khanna (1979), plate 59 on p. 95).

10. Zimmer (1984), pp. 70-72, 124-125, 142. According to the traditional Indian view, the artist fashioning an icon must approach his task like a worshipper and the practice of mental visualisation of the deity's image is an essential precondition for the success of his work; see the Hindu and Buddhist texts cited in "Hindu View of Art: Historical" in Coomaraswamy (1948), pp. 43-45.

11. For example, the vertical stone column, called the *Śivaliṅga,* which stands in the innermost central shrine (the *garbhagṛha* or "wombhouse") of Śaiva temples (see ch. 4 p. 35), is considered the chief object of worship (the *mūlavigraha,* "fundamental form"); and the various anthropomorphic images of Śiva are generally of less importance.

12. See ch. 5 p. 53 and nn. 27-32 with reference to the cult of Śaivism.

13. *Dhyāna ślokas,* meditation verses for visualising forms of deities, are contained in various texts (see, e.g., the references to the Prapañcasāra Tantra for Gaṇeśa, different forms of Viṣṇu, Śiva and various goddesses, in Zimmer (1984), pp. 137-143). For *dhyāna ślokas* relating to Śiva as Naṭarāja dancing the *ānandatāṇḍava,* the dance of bliss, see Arunachalam (1981), pp. 84-86.

14. See Ravi Varma (1956), pp. 450-451. By these techniques the worshipper's physical body is conceptually destroyed and transformed into a subtle body of the deity, in accordance with the principle that "God should be worshipped by none but God" *nādevo devam arcayet* (Zimmer (1984), pp. 42,221).

15. This projection is called *āvāhana* "drawing (the divine force) to," the *yantra* or icon (Ravi Varma (1956), p. 451 n. 28).

16. See, e.g., Khanna (1979), plates 6, 7, 14, 50-53; Rawson (1978), Plate 43.

17. And sometimes, especially in the worship of the Goddess, placing it in front of the icon: see, e.g., Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 70; Krishna Sastri (1916), pp. 221-222.

18. Myths may be described as accounts of extraordinary beings believed to have existed, and of events believed to have taken place, in former times and circumstances quite different from those of ordinary human experience. (Bolle (1974), p. 793).

19. Coomaraswamy (1944), p. 19.

20. Coomaraswamy (1943), p. 33. Cf. Toynbee (1956), p. 280.

21. There may be several versions of a particular myth, separated from each other by long periods of time, and in extracting meanings from the myth a comparison of the versions may yield significant results. For a myth is capable of interpretation at different levels of reference which are not necessarily alternatives, and several meanings complementing each other may be derived from the same myth (O'Flaherty (1981a), pp. 1-4, 11-16). Centuries ago a great Tamil mystic Tirumūlar (see ch. 5 n. 39) pointed out (Tirumantiram (1982), v. 343) that only fools would interpret myths literally, and that when a well-known myth (see ch. 6 pp. 67-68) describes Śiva as destroying the three citadels of the demons what he was destroying was the three impurities, or *(malas)* bonds of human souls (See ch. 8. n. 120).

22. Many strands have contributed to form Hindu mythology. There are the myths of the Sanskritic "great" tradition and those of the "little" folk or local traditions of various parts of India; and there have been constant interactions between these two traditions down the ages (cf. p. 1). For example, in the Tamil *tala* purāṇams, "ancient stories of temples" (see ch. 5 p. 53) of the Tamil districts of South India, myths of the gods of the classical Sanskrit tradition have been transformed by the incorporation of elements from myths of local gods, so that the deity of the local temple has a local name and mythical history as well as names, attributes and myths derived from the classical deity with whom he is identified. For numerous examples of such adaptation see Shulman (1980).

23. Zimmer (1953), pp. 39-40 and Zimmer (1956), pp. 25-26.

24. "The devotee is permitted to soak in the meaning of the divine symbol in deep silence and in his own good time .... Many ... details of life and local custom are ... interpreted and ... validated in the details of the ... idols. In this way, the whole of life is made into a support for meditation." (Campbell (1956), p. 130).

25. "A great motif in religion or art, any great symbol, becomes all things to all men; age after age it yields to men such treasures as they find in their own hearts" (Coomaraswamy (1948), p. 84, referring to the myths relating to the cosmic dance of Śiva, which is often represented in Hindu sculpture (see ch. 8)).

26. For example, the hundred *(śata)* and eight names and epithets in The Śatarudrīya (see ch. 2 pp. 8-10) and the thousand *(sahasra)* and eight names in the later Śiva Sahasranāma Stotras, e.g., Mahābhārata 12, (Gonda (1970), p. 15 and p. 148 nn. 127 and 130).

27. Cf. ch. 6 p. 67 at n. 76 and ch. 8 p. 98 and n. 135.

28. Cf. ch. 2 p. 10 at n. 79.

29. The Civaparākkiramam by I. Ratnavelu Mudaliyar, first published in 1895. The author says in his Preface ((1932), 3rd edn., p. 14) that he follows the enumeration of sixty four forms given by Kesi Muni in the Sanskrit Skanda Purāṇa, Śaṅkara Saṃhitā.

30. The Māyāmata mentions sixteen forms (transl. Dagens (1985), ch. 36 vv. 43b – 46a); the Kāśyapa Śilpa Śāstra eighteen (Subrahmanya Sastri (1960), ii, ch. 64-81); the Śilparatna twenty (Vedanatha Acharya (1961), ii, ch. 22.

31. The list, which seems to be based on the Kāraṇāgama (Krishna Sastri (1916), p. 76 n. 1), appears in Rao (1916), 2(ii), pp. 369-370. Rao (1916), 2(i), pp. 145-146 gives details of these twenty five forms as well as several others.

32. See, e.g., Rao (1916), 2(i), pp. 145-146; Banerjee (1974), pp. 464-465; Karmakar (1950), p. 78; Zimmer (1953), p. 126.

33. See, e.g., the eight heroic feats of Śiva described in ch. 6: (1) the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice; (2) the decapitation of Brahmā; (3) the destruction of Kāma; (4) the defeat of Yama; (5) the destruction of the Triple City of the Asuras; (6) the defeat of Gaja; (7) the defeat of Andhaka; (8) the destruction of Jalandhara.

34. See for example, the conferment of Śiva's grace on (1) Caṇḍeśa (Rao (1916), 2(i) pp. 205-209), (2) Viṣṇu (op. cit., pp. 209-212), (3) Vighneśvara (op. cit., pp. 213-214), (4) Arjuna (op. cit., pp. 214-217), (5) Rāvaṇa (op. cit., pp. 217-220), and (6) Candra (ch. 8 at n. 93). Apart from the above forms of Śiva in which Śiva confers his grace on individuals, there are other forms which show him as a universal saviour. For example, one of his names Nīlakaṇṭha (the blue throated) refers to the gracious act of Śiva who had drunk the deadly poison which, emerging at the churning of the ocean by the gods and demons had threatened to engulf the whole earth (ch. 8 n. 105); (Rao (1916), 2(i), pp. 356-358); and another of Śiva's names Gaṅgādhara (the Bearer of the Ganges) refers to his gracious act of receiving on his head the waters of the river Gaṅgā as they came down from heaven in torrents, which would otherwise have destroyed the earth (see ch. 8 p. 95 at n. 96).

35. For example, Naṭarāja, dancing the *ānandatāṇḍava* or dance of bliss (see ch. 8).

36. See ch. 5, n. 13.

37. See ch. 6, p. 65 at nn. 40, 41.

38. For example, Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara the "half female" Lord (see pp. 24-25); Śiva as Kalyāṇasundara the handsome bridegroom at his wedding ceremony (Rao (1916), 2(i) pp. 337-349); Śiva as Umā Sahita, Umā-Maheśvara and Āliṅgana Candraśekhara mūrtis, seated or standing beside his consort. (Rao, op. cit., pp. 117, 120-124, 130-135; Kramrisch (1981a), pp. 58-64, 122-125, 127-130); Śiva in the family group of Somāskanda, i.e., Śiva with his consort Umā and their son Skanda (Rao, op. cit., pp. 131, 134; Kramrisch, op. cit., pp. 66, 134-137 cf. ch. 9 p. 123). Śiva in the composite figure of Hari-Hara (see ch. 2 p. 12 and Rao op. cit., pp. 332-335).

39. See ch. 6.

40. Thus a well-known text of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta school of philosophy declares that Śiva "can assume any form out of his grace ... . His form is love; His attributes and knowledge are love; His five functions are love; His organs like arms and feet ... and His ornaments like the crescent moon ... are also love. These things are assumed by the ... God, not for his own benefit but for the benefit of mankind ... . Unless the Supreme can assume Forms, we cannot have manifestations of his *Pañcakṛtya,* and of His Grace to His Bhaktas (devotees). We cannot get the sacred Revelations. We cannot eat the fruits of our Karma, and seek release by Yoga, and by sacred initiation." (Civañāṉacittiyār, Cupakkam. 1.36.45.47.54, transl. Nallaswami Pillai (1948), pp. 31, 33, 49). Compare, also with regard to the five great cosmic functions *(pañcakṛtya)* of Śiva, ch. 8 p. 98 at nn. 134-137.

41. Campbell (1956), pp. 152-153.

42. Op. cit., pp. 278-280.

43. The divine androgyne "divided his body into halves, one was male, the other female. The male in that female procreated the universe." (Manu Smṛti 1.32). Cf. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.3-4.

44. A Syrian writer of the second century A.D. records a description given to him by the head of a visiting Indian embassy of the statue of a hermaphrodite god in a mountain cave in India (Prialux (1873), pp. 151-159).

45. A sculptural representation of an Ardhanārīśvara that is female on the right side comes from Tiruvāti (Tiruvaiyāṟu). (Krishna Sastri (1916), Fig. 80). Cf., in painting, Kramrisch (1981a), p. 162 P-3.

46. The male and female halves of the image are differentiated in various features and attributes: e.g., hairstyle, dress, ear-rings, the breast and (where that feature is present) by the erect phallus, which itself in accordance with textual prescriptions (e.g., Matsya Purāṇa ch. 260), is sometines bisected (Williams (1987), ii, p. 300). For a striking 11th century stone sculpture from Purapara, near Dacca, Bangladesh (now in the Varendra Research Museum, Rajshahi) see Huntington (1984), Fig. 227. See also the sculptures from Elephanta, c. 5th-6th century, Zimmer (1955), ii, Plates 256, 258 and Kramrisch (1981b), Plates 3, 11, 12 and pp. 448-452; from Kumpakōṇam,

10th century, Rao (1916), 2 (i), Plate XCV Fig. 1 and Sivaramamurti (1977), Fig. 305 p. 349 and p. 427; from Abaneri, 9th century, Sivaramamurti (1977), Fig. 61 p. 91; from Tiruccennampūṇṭi, early 10th century, Kramrisch (1981a), no. 17, p. 18; and the bronze from Tiruveṇkāṭu, 11th century, Sivaramamurti (1977), Fig. 68 p. 101.

Figures of Ardhanārīśvara have a varying number of arms: an eighteen-armed figure from Nepal is shown in Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 369. The arms may be equally balanced on both sides or, exceptionally, the male side may have more arms than the other (e.g., the 11th century Cōḷa bronze from Tiruveṇkāṭu, now in the Madras Museum; Sivaramamurti (1974), Fig. 68). In Orissa and Nepal Ardhanārīśvara is often shown with Śiva's vehicle *(vāhana)*, the bull (see ch. 5 p. 54 and n. 55), near the Śiva half and the Goddess's vehicle, the lion, near her half (op. cit., p. 79; Sivaramamurti (1974), pp. 91, 369). When Ardhanārīśvara dances, the vigorous *tāṇḍava* of Śiva and the gentle *lāsya* of the Goddess are both components of the dance (ibid.).

47. The androgyne plays a major role in Tamil mythology (Shulman (1980), p. 351).

48. Śiva turned himself into a pillar or, according to another version of the myth, castrated himself. (see ch. 4 p. 37).

49. Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 201-205, 222-225, 238-240. In some versions of the myth the procreation took place when, after the splitting of the androgyne, the female half sent out of the conjoined body produced replicas of herself as wives for the gods (Liṅga Purāṇa 1.70.300-339; Vāyu Purāṇa 10.42-59); while in other versions the male part directly mated with the female part. (Śiva Purāṇa 3.3.1-29; Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.7.1-19; Padma Purāṇa 5.3.155-172; Vāyu Purāṇa 9.67-93; Mārkeṇḍeya Purāṇa 47.1-17). For the different versions of the myth see O'Flaherty (1981b), p. 313.

Although the splitting of the androgyne and the appearance of separate forms of the female part take place in different aeons for different purposes, the separation of the two parts is unnatural; for Ardhanārīśvara is a primary mode of Śiva's manifestation (expressing a conception of divine biunity on a higher plane than that of Śiva and his consort in separate proximity). Consequently, some myths state that the female half having accomplished the purpose for which it had been detached from the conjoined body, reentered it. (Saura Purāṇa 24.55-67, 25.10-28; Śiva Purāṇa 3.3.28).

50. See ch. 6 n. 98.

51. According to Tamil tradition the first stage of the penance was performed at Kāñcipuram, the second at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai. (Shulman (1980), pp. 60, 179). While doing penance at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai (whither she had been directed by Śiva), the gods appealed to her to save them from Mahiṣāsura who had been harassing them; and she was forced to send Durgā, a fierce form of herself, to destroy him. Since he was a devotee of Śiva, further penances were

necessary to expiate the sin of killing him. Ultimately Śiva fused with her and Ardhanārīśvara was formed (Chadwick (1951), pp. 61-72 and Shulman, op. cit., pp. 179-180).

52. Thus, the *mantras* correspond to different parts of Śiva's body – the Īśāna to his head, the Tatpuruṣa to his mouth, the Aghora to his heart, Vāmadeva to his private parts and Sadyojāta to his feet respectively; and they are used to recreate Śiva in the body of the worshipper or in the icon or aniconic symbol. (Diehl (1956), pp. 75-76; cf. p. 27, nn. 14, 15).

53. Śiva is, therefore, said to be *pañcamantramūrti,* embodied of the five *mantras,* and is called *pañcamantratanu,* he whose body *(tanu)* is the five *mantras* (Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha 7.59 et seqq., transl. Cowell and Gough (1914), pp. 117-118).

54. Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha, op. cit., pp. 116-117. We shall see that these five acts are symbolised in the image of Śiva as Naṭarāja dancing the famous *Ānandatāṇḍava,* the vigorous dance of bliss (see ch. 8). In this dance Śiva is believed to have expressed the rhythms of the *jātis* or scale patterns of Indian music which are said to have issued from his five faces, (Popley (1921), p. 74). The great South Indian composer Tyagaraja (1767-1847) says in one of his songs that Śiva is Nādatanu, the embodiment of Sound (nāda, see ch. 8 p. 92), who delights in the art of the seven *svaras* or basic notes of Indian music (sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha and ni), which issued from his mouths (Ramanujachari (1981), p. 288).

55. According to one tradition Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Vāmadeva and Sadyojāta revealed the Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma and Atharva Vedas respectively, and Īśāna revealed the twenty-eight Śaiva āgamas (Arunachalam (1983), p. 44). According to another tradition, accepted by Māṇikkavācakar (Tiruvācakam 2.19 – 20; cf. ch. 5 n. 28), Sadyojāta, Vāmadeva, Aghora and Tatpuruṣa revealed five āgamas, while Īśāna revealed eight (op. cit., (1983), p. 22). For the names of the āgamas revealed by the different faces see op. cit., pp. 22, 100-103 and Gonda (1977), p. 181.

56. For details see Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 182-189 and Gonda (1970), pp. 42-48.

57. "With the knowing of the five-fold Brahmans, consisting of Sadyojāta and others, as the preliminary step, one should know that all this phenomenal world is the Parabrahman, Śiva, of the character of the five-fold Brahmans; nay, he should know whatever is seen or heard of or falls within or lies beyond the range of his inner and outer senses, as Śiva of the character of the five-fold Brahmans alone." (Pañcabrahma Upaniṣad 26, transl. Ayyangar in Murti (1953), p. 111). The "eternal verity of Śiva is of the character of the five-fold Brahmans" (the same Upaniṣad 31, transl. op. cit., p. 112).

58. Or more strictly of Paraśivam. Śivam (Civam in Tamil) is the neuter form of the names Śiva (masculine Civaṉ in Tamil) and Śivā (feminine Civai

in Tamil). The Tamil saint Māṇikkavācakar says of Śiva that he is "male and female and neuter" (Tiruvācakam 3.57 and 134-135; 5.29 and 7.18). Each of the three forms of the name is appropriate in different contexts: e.g., Śivam when referring to "the Highest State of God in which he exists as pure Intelligence" (TL. 3 (iii) (1928), p. 1446 and Śiva and Śivā to the manifestations of God and of his energy *(Śakti)* personified as his consort (op. cit., pp. 1447, 1449).

59. See ch. 8 nn. 130, 131.

60. Nīlakaṇṭhadīkṣita, Śivatattvarahasya, quoted in Mitra (1933), p. 231 n. 2. Sadāśiva represents one of the ontological levels in the descent from the transcendental Supreme Śiva to matter. (Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 186, 480).

61. Such an image was gifted by the Cōḷa king Rājarāja to the Rājarājeśvara Temple which he built in Tañcāvur. (South Indian Inscriptions (1892), ii, no. 30 at pp. 137-138). The image has not survived; for an artist's impression of the image based on the details given in the inscription. See Nagaswamy (1981), in Meister (1984), at p. 178.

62. Rūpamaṇḍana 4.94 quoted Banerjea (1974), p. 574. Where images or paintings show the fifth head, it appears on top of the other heads – either facing upwards (e.g., Sharma (1976), Plates XXI; Kramrisch (1981a), P-9 on p. 169) or facing the front of the image (e.g., Rao (1916), 2 (ii), Plate CXIII; Sharma Plates XV, XVII, XXIV) or it appears in line with the other four heads (e.g., Sharma, Plates XX, XXII, XXIII).

A rarer form of Sadāśivamūrti is Mahāsadāśivamūrti, a figure with twenty-five heads and fifty hands (Rao (1916), 2 (ii), Plate CXIV; Sharma (1976), XXXI), representing the five times five-fold *tattvas* (or "reals") which in the Sāṃkhya philosophy are the basic categories in the evolution of the universe from subtle essence to gross forms. (Rao, op. cit., pp. 373-374).

63. For example, the *Liṅga* in the Paśupatināth Temple in Kathmandu, Nepal in Majupuria (1981), pp. 94-98; cf. Krishna Deva (1981), in Meister (1984), pp. 82-83. Sometimes full-length figures project from the four sides of the *liṅga* (see, e.g., Zimmer (1953), Plate 64 and p. 199 and Zimmer (1955), ii Plate 566 and i, p. 210).

But not all such figures or faces on a *liṅga* represent the five aspects of Śiva. The *liṅga* may be a *pañcāyatana*-("five supports or abodes or altars") *liṅga* (see. e.g., Banerjea (1974), Plate XLVI Fig. 2 and pp. 545 and 541-542), symbolising the five chief Hindu cults – those of Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu, Pārvatī, Sūrya and Śiva (represented by the *liṅga*). Gods other than those mentioned (e.g., Brahmā) may be represented on a *liṅga* (see, e.g., the 6th century *liṅga* in Meister (1984), Plate 60 and p. 78. Further, on a single *liṅga* the four faces of Śiva may appear at the top and the figures of various gods may project at a lower level, as in the 8th century *liṅga* from Kalyānpur, Rajasthan and the

11th century *liṅga* from Kāmān, Rajasthan, in Meister (1984), Plates 54, 55-58 and 61, on which see Maxwell (1981), in op. cit., pp. 76-79.

64. Consequently, what is conceptually a *pañcamukha* ("five-faced")-*liṅga* is visually a *caturmukha* ("four-faced")-*liṅga* (e.g., the 8th century *liṅga* from Nachna-Kuthara, Madhya Pradesh, in Kramrisch (1965), Plate 108 and p. 207 and the 8th century *liṅga* from Bihar in Kramrisch (1981a) no. 7 p. 8). Usually the fifth face on the top is implied; but exceptionally it also may be depicted – as in the *liṅga* from Bhīta, Uttar Pradesh, of the 2nd or 1st century B.C., in Rao (1916), 2 (i); Plate 1 and pp. 63-65; Sharma (1976), Plate 1; Meister (1984), Plate 22 and p. 35 and p. 3 at n. 6; and Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 179, 446, n. 6).

The colossal bust of a majestic three-headed figure dating from about the 6th Century A.D., carved out of the rock of the cave Temple of Śiva on the island of Elephanta near Bombay (Zimmer, (1955), ii, Plates 253-257; Kramrisch (1981b), Plates 4, 6-10), is usually called Maheśa-(or Maheśvara-) mūrti, the "Great Lord's form." It has been interpreted (e.g., Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 177, 445-446 and (1981 c), in Meister (1984), pp. 7-10 as a representation of Sadāśiva (see p. 26) and is "the iconic form of a *pañcamukhaliṅga*." (Kramrisch (1981b), p. 445). Only the three faces visible to the worshipper from the front have been carved by the sculptor, because the back (where the fourth of the usual complement of four faces should have appeared) was inaccessible to both sculptor and worshipper. (Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 445-448 and (1981c), in Meister (1984), pp. 4-8.

65. The number of faces of a *mukhaliṅga* in the innermost sanctum of a temple normally corresponds to the number of doors of the sanctum (Rao, (1916), 2 (i), pp. 97-98; Banerjea (1974), pp. 460-461). Where there is only one door, the single face (e.g., in the 5th century *liṅga* from Khoh, Madhya Pradesh in Frédéric (1959), Plate 93 p. 130; Sivaramamurti (1974), Illust. 253 p. 341 and Agrawala (1984), Plate IV; the 6th century *liṅga* from Bhumara, Madhya Pradesh in Agrawala, op. cit., p. 5 and the *liṅgas* in Kramrisch (1981a), nos. 1-5 pp. 2-6) implies the other faces and represents the total reality of Śiva.

66. The doctrine of the five faces of Śiva is complementary to another doctrine that also emphasises the identity of God and the universe and his omnipotence and omnipresence in it. This is the doctrine of Śiva's eight forms or embodiments *(aṣṭamūrti):* these are the five elements (space, air, fire, water and earth); the sun and the moon, representing the measurers of time (ch. 8 nn. 89, 90); and the initiated sacrificer, representing the mind or consciousness of the consecrated worshipper. As Aṣṭamūrti Śiva is present in each of these forms or aspects of his being, which are basic aspects of nature and life; these collectively constitute Śiva as well as the universe, which is identified with Śiva (Gonda (1970), pp. 35, 40; Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 110, 182).

IV

REPRESENTATIONS OF ŚIVA (2): THE ŚIVALIṄGA[1]

Of the various representations of Śiva used in both public and domestic worship the anthropomorphic icons and the aniconic symbol of the pillar or column called the *Śivaliṅga*[2] (which will hereafter be referred to as the *liṅga*) are the best known.[3] There are several well-known anthropomorphic forms of Śiva – such as Naṭarāja, the Dancing Lord[4]; Dakṣiṇāmūrti the "south-facing form" of Śiva as teacher[5]; and Somāskandamūrti, Śiva with his consort Umā and his son Skanda.[6] But, however great the emotional appeal some of these forms have for worshippers as subjects of their devotional fervour, the *liṅga* is considered the *mūlavigraha,* the "fundamental form" of Śiva, as being the most abstract as well as the most comprehensive in meaning of all the visual representations of Śiva. Consequently, it occupies pride of place in the innermost central sanctum, the *garbhagṛha* or "womb house," of the temples of Śiva. In the cult of Śiva it is indeed the most sacred object in both public and private worship, while the anthropomorphic images are disposed in niches in the outer walls of the *garbhagṛha,* or in shrines in the corridors and the courts that surround it, or they appear on the gateway towers *(gopurams)* of the temples.

Liṅgas may be made of various kinds of materials. Those intended for temporary use to be discarded thereafter may be made of ephemeral transitory *(kṣaṇika)* materials, such as sand, river-clay, rice, sandalwood paste, flowers or molasses; while for more durable *liṅgas* stone, metal, precious stones,[7] wood or earth may be used.[8] Indeed the substance of a *liṅga* may be any one of the five constituent elements of the universe, the *pañcabhūtas* of earth, water, fire, air and ether.[9] *Liṅgas* may be movable *(cala liṅgas)* or immovable *(acala liṅgas)* and they may be man-made *(mānuṣa liṅgas)* or "self-born" *(svāyambhuva liṅgas)* which are highly venerated as they are believed to have come into existence spontaneously and to have existed from time immemorial.[10]

The man-made immovable *liṅgas* made of stone, which are set up for public worship in temples, consist of three parts: the visible cylindrical uppermost part, called the *Rudrabhāga,* the Rudra part or *Pūjābhāga,* to

which the rituals of the temple service *(pūjā)* are directed; and two lower parts that are not visible (because they are inserted in and covered by the supporting pedestal) – the intermediate octagonal *Viṣṇubhāga,* the Viṣṇu part, and the lowest square *Brahmabhāga,* the Brahmā part.[11] The visible *Rudrabhāga* of the *liṅga* may be embellished in various ways. Thus, it may have plain vertically demarcated facets[12]; or vertical and horizontal lines may be incised on it and miniature *liṅgas* may be carved in the spaces formed by the intersections[13]; or faces, busts and even full-length figures, representing the five "faces" that are aspects of the total reality of Śiva,[14] may be carved on and project from the *Rudrabhāga.* Apart from the immovable *liṅgas* established for public worship, smaller movable *liṅgas* are used in private worship or are worn on the person – for example, by members of the Vīraśaiva ("Stalwart Śaivas") or Liṅgāyat ("Liṅga-wearer") sect.[15]

It is interesting to speculate on the circumstances that may have influenced the choice of an upright pillar or column for the *liṅga.* It has, for example, been suggested that the veneration of Buddhist votive stūpas or reliquary mounds, especially miniature ones, must have contributed to the idea of a column as a religious emblem.[16] But, whatever the merits of this suggestion, a more likely prototype of the *liṅga* may be found in the stones, in the form of megaliths, menhirs or dolmens, which in India (as in many other countries all over the world) were erected to mark the places where the bodies or the ashes of departed saints and heroes were enshrined.[17] Thus, in India, Śaiva shrines with the *liṅga* in the central sanctum were built over the tombs of great saints[18] and memorial stones (in Tamil *vīrakkals,* "hero stones," or *naṭukals,* "planted stones"), set up on the graves of warriors who had fallen in battle or of other persons whose heroism merited commemoration, became invested with divinity in the course of time.[19]

But those who are familiar with Tamil literature consider the most probable prototype of the *liṅga* to be the *kantu,* a small pillar or post representing divinity which, according to early Tamil texts dating from about the beginning of the Christian era, was established for worship in public places.[20] The word *kantu* is said to mean "post" or "pillar" and "post representing a deity"[21] and the word *Kantaḷi,* the name for the divinity represented by the post, is a compound of *kantu* and *aḷi.*[22] One meaning of the latter word is "straw,"[23] so that *Kantaḷi* has been interpreted as meaning the "post to which the sacrificial victim was bound with straw or rope."[24] Later *Kantaḷi* was explained, in accordance with higher and more abstract conceptions of the Divine, as "the supreme substance, the Being above all elements of matter[25];" in other words, as "the Reality, transcending all categories, without attachment, without form, standing alone as the Self."[26] It may be mentioned here that in the temple of Śiva at Kaṉṟāppūr, near Tiruvārūr, in Tañcāvūr District, Tamil Nadu, he is

worshipped as Naṭuṯaṟināṯaṉ, the Lord *(nāṯaṉ)* of the *Naṭuṯaṟi* or "the planted post."[27]

We must now consider the meaning of the *liṅga* with particular reference to the related myths and philosophical conceptions and its representations in art. The word *liṅga* means "sign" and, with reference to a male, the distinctive sign of that sex, the phallus.[28] As the formless, transcendent, unmanifest Absolute, Śiva has no *liṅga* or distinctive sign[29]: "Śiva is signless (sexless), without color, taste, or smell, beyond word and touch, without quality, changeless, motionless."[30] But as the Absolute in manifestation Śiva is perceived through the distinctive sign of the *liṅga,* which is one of the most abstract shapes under which the nature of the unmanifest can be represented,[31] as well as in a variety of more concrete anthropomorphic forms. "Śiva as the undivided causal principle is worshipped in the *liṅga.* His more manifest aspects are represented in anthropomorphic images. All other deities are part of a multiplicity and are thus worshipped in images."[32] In the cult of Śiva the worship of limited and partial manifestations of his total reality in anthropomorphic forms is regarded as a lower stage than worship of the abstract *liṅga* forms[33]; but it is also recognised that a higher stage than even worship of the material, externally visible *liṅga* is the worship of the subtle internal *liṅga* within the devotee's heart,[34] and that the former is only a preparation for the latter.[35]

We shall next turn to the chief views with regard to the origin of the liṅga that appear in the mythology of Śiva. "In the ongoing myth of ... Śiva events unfold across the aeons"[36] and in many different settings of time and place, and "each new cosmos repeats and carries further the fundamental themes."[37] The kaleidoscopic theophanies of the god in the myth are well illustrated by the parts of it that relate to the origin of the worship of the *liṅga.*

The essential feature of these parts of the myth is that of the ascetic god who, when asked by Brahmā the Creator to procreate, refused to produce fallible mortals and turned into a motionless pillar *(sthāṇu)*[38] or who, according to another version, castrated himself.[39] When the severed limb fell to earth, it raged about agitating the universe and its inhabitants; and it came to rest only when Śiva's spouse, the Great Goddess, received it in her womb *(yoni).* This resulted in the worship of the *liṅga* column on a *yoni* pedestal.[40] But another explanation of the origin of the worship of the *liṅga* is that it represents the burning pillar of fire which, according to some versions of the myth, appeared between Brahmā the Creator and Viṣṇu the Preserver when, at the end of one aeon and the beginning of another, they were each arguing for his own supremacy – a pillar whose physical limits and meaning neither could fathom, until Śiva's miraculous manifestation from within the flames led to both acknowledging him as the Supreme God[41] and to the establishment of the worship of the *liṅga* on earth.[42]

Thus, two conceptions of the *liṅga* emerge from the myth of Rudra-Śiva – one that it represents the severed phallus of the ascetic god who did not wish to procreate and the other that it represents the fiery pillar of light that appeared at the beginning of a world aeon. Although the latter is the conception that the vast majority of Śaivites have in mind when worshipping the *liṅga,* it is necessary to consider the other view too and to explain its true meaning.

In this connection we must notice some changes in the form of the *liṅga* that took place in the course of its historical development. Broadly speaking, the earlier *liṅgas* are large and realistically phallic in appearance[43]; but gradually, from the period of the Gupta kings (fourth to sixth centuries A.D.) onwards up to late mediaeval times, there was a reduction in the size of the *liṅga* and its naturalistic appearance was also subdued until it assumed the form of an abstract pillar or column, a form which has continued to modern times.[44] Another historical development was the change in the nature of the support for the upright *liṅga*. Originally the pillar established for worship as a *liṅga* rose from the ground or from a plinth and it was not set (as it is nowadays) within a supporting pedestal *(pīṭha)* with a projecting spout at its upper end (which serves the purpose of draining off the water poured over the *liṅga* in the course of rituals).[45] A square *pīṭha* for the *liṅga* was introduced in the first century A.D., and the *pīṭhas* that were octagonal and circular in cross-section appeared in the seventh and eighth centuries.[46] The introduction of the circular *pīṭha* led to the interpretation of it as a *yoni,* the female principle complementing the male principle of the *liṅga*[47]; and the two in conjunction – the male principle being Cosmic Spirit *(puruṣa)* and the female Cosmic Substance *(prakṛti),* the imperceptible substratum of the phenomenal world – were envisaged as responsible for the manifestation of the world.[48] This was a late development, which has been traced to the influence of Tantric[49] ideas.[50]

These twin fundamental principles of duality pervade the cosmos[51] and, in describing the blending of the two, sexual metaphors inevitably came to be used.[52] But in this context the *liṅga* and the *yoni* should be suggestive of no improper ideas, since they are symbols of the mysterious creative force which rules the universe, manifesting itself unceasingly in the transitory forms of the universe and individual creatures.[53] This great force was one of the earliest subjects of worship not only in India but in many other countries throughout the world; and the veneration of an upright column or pillar (like the *liṅga*) in some form or other, regarded as a symbol of the link[54] between the two sexes and of the force that kept the tribe together and ensured the continuity of the human race, became a fundamental feature of both religion and philosophy.[55] It is relevant to point out that the appearance of the *liṅga* in its conventional form and the rituals for its installation and worship[56] have for centuries been perfectly decorous[57]; and the *liṅga* is never associated in the minds of its

worshippers with anything but feelings of the purest reverence and devotion. But this reverence is not based only on the view that the *liṅga* is a symbol of Śiva as the source and the embodiment of cosmic energy. There are also other conceptions evoked by the *liṅga,* even when it is regarded as the phallus of Śiva, which we must now consider.

Images of Śiva have been known for over two thousand years. Some of them show his standing figure carved on the front of the stone column of the *liṅga* itself[58]; while others show him in various anthropomorphic forms, sometimes with the *liṅga* erect *(ūrdhvaliṅga).* This last feature is found in iconic representations of many forms of Śiva,[59] including Śiva absorbed in yogic contemplation.[60] This last form especially, the ithyphallic yogi, raises the question of the true meaning of what a western scholar has called "The Central Paradox of Śaiva mythology, [that] of Śiva, the erotic ascetic."[61] But there is really no paradox in the form of the ithyphallic yogi; for, although the erect phallus of images of Śiva is ordinarily thought of as a sign of erotic stimulation leading to the release of the seeds of procreation, it is in the eyes of initiates in the doctrines of Tantric yoga a sign of continence and chastity,[62] not of licentiousness. The ascetic who, without expending his procreative powers, conserves and concentrates them within himself by yogic disciplines,[63] is believed to be qualified to attain supreme mystical realisation. Thus, Śiva as the ascetic god who, refusing to procreate, became a pillar or castrated himself[64] and also as Yogeśvara, the Lord of Yoga, "stands for complete control of the senses and for supreme carnal renunciation."[65]

Consequently, both the *liṅga* pillar in the temple (which, it must be noted, rises from the pedestal with its head pointing upwards, away from the latter and without penetrating it) and the erect *liṅga* of anthropomorphic images of Śiva are to be understood as connoting the control of sexual power and its transubstantiation within the body of the yogi from the earthly to the transcendental plane.[66] This connotation is most clearly indicated in, but is not restricted to, the *mukhaliṅga* ("face *liṅga*"),[67] which by the unified combination of phallus and face[68] forms a "symbol of the ascent and transmutation of sexual into mental power, a channelling of the procreative into creative faculty."[69]

The other view of the *liṅga* that emerges from the myth of Rudra-Śiva is that the *liṅga* represents the fiery pillar of light that appeared in the primaeval darkness at the beginning of a world aeon. This is the conception that the vast majority of Śiva's devotees have in mind when they worship the *liṅga.* This cosmic pillar of light is in fact a form of the *Axis Mundi,*[70] the central vertical axis of the universe connecting the netherworlds, the earth and the heavens[71]; in this Axis of Existence every cosmic process has its beginning, its sustenance and its end. Etymologically the word *liṅga* is said to be derived from two roots, *lī* "to dissolve"[72] and *gam* "to go out"; so that *liṅga* "means

the ultimate Reality into whom the creatures of the world dissolve and out of whom they evolve again."[73] Thus, as a form of the *Axis Mundi* the *liṅga* is a visible symbol of the formless Parama-(or Para-) śivam ("Supreme Śiva"), Ultimate Absolute Reality.[74]

The fiery *liṅga* has been "equated with the shaft of light or lightning *(vajra, keraunos)* that penetrates and fertilises the *yoni*, the altar, the Earth, the mother of the Fire, for 'light is the progenitive power.' "[75] The language of sexual metaphor thus used with reference to the *liṅga* regarded as the cosmic pillar of light representing the Absolute connects that concept of the *liṅga* with the view that it represents the phallus of Śiva. For, as we have seen,[76] the phallus of the ascetic god, the Great Yogi, is not so much a symbol of procreative power as of such power, controlled by yogic discipline and transmuted mentally to the enlightening wisdom that leads to Ultimate Reality. In this way a link is established between the two apparently divergent concepts of the *liṅga* which emerge from the myth of Śiva; and we would be justified in saying that devotees of Śiva regard the *liṅga* as a visible symbol of invisible transcendental Divinity, a symbol which evokes the presence not merely of the creative energy of Śiva but of his Total Reality.[77]

A distinguished Western scholar, Stella Kramrisch, has written: "There is no object in the world of Śiva more sacred than the *liṅga*[78] ... . In the world of Śiva the significance of the *liṅga* is comparable to that of the Cross in the Christian world, and that of the figure of Śiva with the *liṅga* or of the faces of Śiva together with the shape of the *liṅga* to the figure of the Savior on the Cross."[79] It has been said of the Cross that it "bespeaks evolution in religion ... . It begins with one thing[80] and ends with another."[81] This statement would be equally true of the *liṅga*.

We have now considered the *liṅga* with reference to the myths of its origin and in relation to changes that took place, in the course of historical development, in its external form in art as well as in the philosophical conceptions as to its meaning. We have seen that the two chief views of the origin of the *liṅga* that emerge from the myths are that the *liṅga* represents the cosmic pillar of light that appeared at the beginning of a world aeon[82] and that it represents the severed phallus of the ascetic god who had refused to procreate.[83] The former is the view of the *liṅga* that is held by most Śaivites who worship it, in temples and in homes, as representing Śiva conceived as the supernal Light of the World and the Axis of Existence.[84]

The other view of the *liṅga* as representing the phallus of Śiva has often been misunderstood. Thus the Roman Catholic missionary, the Abbé J. A. Dubois, who worked in South India between 1792 and 1823,[85] described the *liṅga* as an "obscene symbol" and "an insult to decency."[86] In thus describing it he was expressing "the point of view of the religion which has prevailed in

the West, in which the dominant sexaphobic complex considers the sexual act impure and not susceptible of being made sacred,"[87] whereas "the sacralisation of sex ... was achieved by many traditional civilisations,"[88] including the Hindu. Apart from this, the Abbé himself conceded that "the obscene symbol contained an allegorical meaning and was a type, in the first instance, of the reproductive forces of nature and the generative source of all living being"[89] – in other words, that it was a symbol not of the individual sexuality of Śiva but of his cosmic creative energy. We have explained above other ideas relating to the *liṅga* when it is regarded as representing the phallus of Śiva, which suggest an even higher conception of its meaning than as the symbol of cosmic creative energy – namely, that it also connotes the control of sexual powers by yogic discipline and their transmutation mentally to the enlightening wisdom that leads to Ultimate Reality.[90]

In the light of these considerations, it is clearly quite misleading to describe the *liṅga* as a phallic symbol unless the profound philosophical ideas which elevate the phallic elements[91] in the concept of the symbol are emphasised. These ideas are unfortunately unknown to most of those who use the phrase "phallic symbol" as a shorthand mode of expression.[92] But the use of that phrase without reference to those ideas results in what has been called "the degradation of the symbol"[93]; for "when the mind is no longer capable of perceiving the metaphysical significance of a symbol, it is understood at levels which become increasingly coarse."[94] A modern Christian missionary (who possessed a much better understanding of the origins and historical development of both Hinduism and Christianity than was possible at the time when the Abbé Dubois wrote in the first quarter of the nineteenth century) has rightly declared: "When thinking of sexual symbolism one's mind should remain on as lofty ... a plane as that for which the symbol stands. One should no more degrade this [*liṅga*] concept than one would the concept of the New Testament where the Church is said to be the bride of Christ, a concept with as much grist for the mill of the vile-minded as the other."[95]

NOTES

1. This chapter is a revised and shortened version of the author's "The Meaning of the Śivaliṅga" published by the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, 1989.

2. Writers in English use *liṅgam* (which in Sanskrit is the nominative case of the neuter noun) and *liṅga* (the uninflected base form of the same word) interchangeably. In the present book *liṅga* is used, except in quotations in which *liṅgam* appears.

3. There are also verbal representations (such as *mantras*) and visual representations other than anthropomorphic icons and the *liṅga* (such as *yantras* or abstract geometrical linear diagrams).

4. See ch. 5. p. 51.

5. See ch. 5 n. 13.

6. See ch. 9. p. 123.

7. Crystal *(sphaṭika) liṅgas* are highly regarded, "because ... the crystal ... has no colour of its own but reflects the colour of the object with which it comes into contact signifying that Śiva becomes what an ardent devotee desires Him to be. He is the source of all colours and all colours merge in Him." (H. H. Sri Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati in Anon. (1969), p. 180).

8. Pūrva Kāraṇāgama 30.5, 6, transl. Curtis (1973), p. 65.

9. Tamil traditions associate these *liṅgas* with particular temples in the Tamil land – temples situated in Tiruvārūr and Kāñcipuram (earth), Tiruvāṉaikkāval (water), Tiruvaṇṇāmalai (fire), Kālahasti (air), and Cidambaram (ether), for the last of which see n. 74 ad fin.

10. Some texts give lists of sixty eight *svāyambhuva liṅgas* (see, e.g., Rao (1916), 2(i) pp. 82-85). A *svāyambhuva liṅga* that is not immovable is the *liṅga* of ice in a rock cave in Amarnath, about 80 miles from Srinagar in Kashmir. This *liṅga* gradually forms in the bright half of a lunar month (culminating in its fullness on the full moon day) and gradually melts away in the dark half of the month (Daniélou (1984), p. 58 and Plate 5; Anon. (1940), pp. 321-322).

11. Rao (1916), 2(i) pp. 87, 89. The three parts of the *liṅga* thus represent the three high gods of Hinduism. (Liṅga Purāṇa I. 74. 19-20 and II. 47.11, transl. BS, v, (1973), p. 368 and vi, (1973), pp. 767-768); and the Female Principle, thought of as Śiva's consort, is also represented in the supporting pedestal (Liṅga Purāṇa I. 74.20-21 and II.47.8-10, transl. ibid. and Śiva Purāṇa I. 11.22-23, transl. BS, i, (1970), p. 69; and see p. 5 at n. 47).

The legend relating to the *liṅga* in the Kaccapeśvara ("Lord of the Tortoise") Temple at Kāñcipuram, Tamil Nādu, illustrates the Tamil Śaiva view of the supremacy of Śiva over the other gods. Śiva, after destroying everything in the universe in one night, danced with his consort and then, appearing in a *liṅga* of light, recreated everything he had destroyed. Brahmā paid adoration to this *liṅga* and obtained the power of creation; while Viṣṇu, who in the form of a tortoise had terrorised the area, was subdued by Śiva and forgiven upon worshipping the *liṅga*. (Kāñcippurāṇam 23.1-12, summarised in Dessigane, Pattabiramin and Filliozat (1964), pp. 29-30).

12. See, e.g., the *liṅga* from Tiruvorriyūr in Rao (1916), 2 (1), Plate X Fig. 3.

13. See, e.g., the *liṅga* from Tiruvorriyūr in op. cit., Plate VIII Figs. 1 and 2, the latter of which is a *sahasra* ("thousand") *liṅga* containing a thousand miniature *liṅgas*.

14. See ch. 3 pp. 25, 26.

15. They are averse to the worship of Śiva in anthropomorphic forms and regard the *liṅga* as the most sacred symbol of Śiva's divinity. "The distinctive mark of Vīraśaivism is ... the wearing of a *liṅga* upon the body ... . The *liṅga* ... becomes symbolic of the presence of god in the body galvanising ... every cell in it ... . The *liṅga* ... is given by the guru to the body at ... birth. It should always be borne on the body from ... birth to ... death." (Kumaraswamiji (1956), pp. 100, 102).

16. Fergusson (1876), p. 167; Havell (1908), p. 56 n. 1; Sir Charles Eliot (1954), ii p. 143, points out that scenes like that depicted in Grunwedel (1901), p. 29 Fig. 8 could easily be supposed to represent worship of the *liṅga*. Thor Heyerdahl (1986), pp. 271-272 reports: "Both in Sri Lanka and here, on the Malabar coast [of South-West India] I had come across sacred sculptures of the phalloid form we had excavated in the Maldives. [See op. cit., p. 127]. Here, among ... Hindus, they were still in ritual use as Shiva-liṅgam [while] similar sculptures ... in Sri Lanka were considered to be miniature stupas."

17. Many ideas have contributed to the veneration attached to such stones: see Eliade (1976), ch. 6. passim.

18. Even after cremation became the chief method of disposing of the dead in Hinduism, the bodies of spiritually advanced persons, who were believed to have reached God and attained liberation from the cycle of births, were not cremated but buried (Eliade (1958), p. 422), usually seated in a yogic pose. (Śiva Purāṇa, Kailāsa-saṃhitā, ch. 21, transl. BS., iv, (1970), pp. 1760-1765).

19. See, e.g., Aravamuthan (1931), ch. 8, where many references to ancient Tamil texts and South Indian inscriptions are given. Cf. Nagaswami (1980), pp. 51-54.

20. E.g., Paṭṭiṉappālai 248-249, Akanāṉūṟu 307 (both referring to a public hall *(potiyil)* containing a pillar in which a god dwells).

21. TL. 2(i) (1962), p. 719. The word is said to be derived from the Sanskrit *skandha* (ibid.).

22. TL 2(i) (1962), p. 218.

23. TL 1(i) (1956), p. 162.

24. Srinivasa Aiyangar (1930), p. 22. Another interpretation is that *kantu* refers to the withered stump of a sacred tree and *aḻi* means "to destroy"; so that *Kantaḻi* refers to a stone post installed for worship to replace a sacred tree which has been destroyed by the ravages of time (Subramania Pillai (1948), pp. 123-124).

25. Srinivasa Aiyangar (1930), p. 22.

26. Naccinārkkiniyar in his comment on Tolkāppiyam, Poruḷatikaram, ii, 88, transl. Arunachalam (1981), p. 116. Cf. the Tamil verse quoted by Naccinārkkiniyar (Ganesaiyar (1948), p. 302), describing *Kantaḻi* as:

"Standing by Itself, propless and formless, for all things It is the mainstay, Eternal Bliss, transcending word, deed, thought and wisdom's flight, It is the pure, stainless Light." (transl. Subramania Pillai (1948), p. 123, slightly adapted). In passing we may note that the Tamil texts relating to the *kantu* and to *Kantaḻi* do not connect them with the phallus, with which (as we shall see) the *liṅga* is sometimes identified.

27. *Naṭutaṟi* TL. 3(v) (1929), p. 1807 and 4(i) (1963), p. 2143). According to the local tradition a devotee of Śiva, who was married to a Vaiṣṇava husband, used secretly to worship the post to which calves were tethered as Śiva; and when the husband, observing this, cut the post with an axe, Śiva emerged from the post. Consequently, the place was called Kaṉṟāppūr ("calf-post-place") and the god established there was called Naṭutaṟi (Suppiramaniya Pillai (1912), p. 85). Śiva is referred to as *Kaṉṟāppūr Naṭutaṟi* in Tamil hymns of Appar (Tirumurai 6.61).

28. "The distinctive sign through which it is possible to recognise the nature of some one is called a *liṅga*" (Śiva Purāṇa 1.16.106, transl. Daniélou (1964), p. 222).

29. Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.9.

30. Liṅga Purāṇa 1.3.2-3, transl. Daniélou (1964), p. 222.

31. "From the signless comes forth the sign, the universe. This sign is the object of word and touch, of smell, colour and taste. It is the womb of the elements, subtle and gross." (Liṅga Purāṇa 1.3.3-4, transl. Daniélou, ibid.).

32. Karapatri (1941-1942), transl. Daniélou (1964), ibid. Cf. Śiva Purāṇa Vidyeśvara Saṃhitā 5.8-15, 17-24, transl. BS, i. (1970), pp. 50-51 and Skanda Purāṇa Kāśī Khaṇḍa 97. (Kṣetratīrthavarṇana) 5-6. The last sentence of the quotation from Karapatri requires some qualification. For Viṣṇu and Devī, the Goddess, are worshipped in the aniconic forms of a śālagrāma stone (Krishna Sastri (1916), p. 70) and a *Śrī Yantra* or *Cakra* respectively. But these are not placed as the sole object of worship in the central sanctum of a temple (as the *liṅga* is), although they may be given pride of place in domestic worship. (op. cit., pp. 70-71, 222; Banerjea (1974), p. 394).

33. In a temple of Śiva the installation of a *liṅga* is considered primary, while that of anthropomorphic images is secondary; and a temple with the latter is "unfructuous" if it has no *liṅga* (Śiva Purāṇa Vidyeśvara Saṃhitā 9.46 (transl. BS, i (1970), p. 63). The Pūrva Kāraṇāgama 30.7.8 transl. Curtis (1973), p. 66), considering different representations of Śiva for worship, states that a painted canvas is superior to a transitory *liṅga* (made for ephemeral use, see p. 35), "a bas relief superior to a canvas, an image better than a bas relief .... A Liṅgam is more excellent than an image. Superior to a Liṅgam (is) the Formless."

34. Ramaṇa Maharṣi (1879-1950), the great sage of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai in Tamil Nadu, declared: "The *jīva* (life principle), which is the Śivaliṅga, resides in the heart-lotus, ... The body is the temple; the *jīva* is God (Śiva).

If one worships Him with the 'I am He' thought, one will gain release." (Osborne (1968), pp. 26, 27).

35. Śiva Purāṇa Rudrasaṃhitā 1.12.51-58, transl. BS. i, (1970), p. 228; Liṅga Purāṇa 1.75. 19-22, transl. BS, v, (1973), p. 371; cf. Kūrma Purāṇa 2.11. 94-95 and 98-99, transl. BS, xxi, (1982), p. 384.

36. Kramrisch (1981 b), p. 110.

37. Op. cit., p. 120.

38. "Keeping the semen drawn up, Sthānu stood still until the great deluge. Because he said 'Here I stand *(sthito'smi)* he is known as Sthānu (one who stands)." Vāmana Purāṇa 10.64, transl. Kramrisch (1981 b), p. 119. cf. Mahābhārata Anuśāsanaparvan v. 7510: "since standing aloft, he consumes the lives of men and since he is fixed and since his Linga is perpetually fixed, he is therefore called Sthānu." (transl. Muir, iv (1873), p. 405). For Rudra-Śiva as Sthānu see Kramrisch, op. cit., pp. 117-122, passim.

39. Op. cit., pp. 127-133 and 153-158.

40. Op. cit., pp. 241-243.

41. For this Liṅgodbhavamūrti, "Liṅga Manifestation Form" see ch. 6 p. 64. For three sculptural representations of this form from South India see, e.g., Munshi (1957), p. 110, Meister (1984), Plate 194 and Banerjea (1974), Plate XXXI Fig. 4 (11th century, Bṛhadīśvara Temple, Tañcāvūr); Kramrisch (1981 a), p. 10 (12th century, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); and Zimmer (1953), Fig. 30 and pp. 130-131 (13th century, Musée Guimet, Paris).

42. Kramrisch, op. cit., pp. 158-161. In a few Sanskrit purāṇic versions (e.g., Vāmana Purāṇa 6.57-73) of the Liṅgodbhavamūrti myth the cosmic pillar of light is a transfiguration of the dismembered limb of Śiva; but most versions (e.g., Kūrma Purāṇa 1.26; Liṅga Purāṇa 1.17; Śiva Purāṇa Jñāneśvara Saṃhitā 2) do not connect the two. Nor does the Tamil Kantapurāṇam.

43. For example, the *liṅga* in the Parasurāmeśvara Temple at Guḍimallam, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh (Rao (1916), 2 (1) Plates II and III; Coomaraswamy (1927), Fig. 66; Eck (1983), p. 70). The Guḍimallam *liṅga* is ascribed to the 3rd – 2nd century B.C. by Kramrisch and Srinivasan in Meister (1984), at pp. 3 and 33-34, to the 2nd century B.C. by Sharma (1978-1979), pp. 50-54, and to about 50 B.C. to 50 A.D. by Mitterwallner in Meister (1984), at p. 19. However, Sarkar (1986), pp. 118, 120, ascribes it to the 4th century A.D.

44. For a detailed analysis of the development of the form of the *liṅga* see Mitterwallner in Meister (1984), pp. 12-20, summarised at pp. 26-27.

45. Banerjea (1974), pp. 169, 456.

46. Mitterwallner (1981), in Meister (1984), pp. 26-27.

47. Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 80, 167.

48. "The symbol of the Supreme Man *(puruṣa)*, the formless, the changeless, the all-seeing eye, is the symbol of masculinity, the phallus or *liṅga*. The symbol of the power that is Nature, generatrix of all that exists, is

the female organ, the *yoni*." (Karapatri (1941-1942), p. 154, transl. Daniélou (1964), p. 223).

The *liṅga* column surrounded by the *yoni* pedestal has thus been taken as representing sexual union and the combination of the two has been regarded as a symbol of androgynous biunity, representing Śiva and Śakti, the primordial parents of the universe. The anthropomorphic symbol of this biunity is the figure of Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara, "the Lord who is half woman", which is male on one half of the body and female on the other. This figure is sometimes found carved on the column of the *liṅga* (cf. n. 58). In the temple of Kāṇappēr (Kāḷaiyārkoyil), Maturai District, Tamil Nadu, there is a *liṅga* the right side of which is black and the left golden in colour, which according to the local legend was the result of Śiva fusing with a part of the golden-hued goddess Gaurī, who had demanded that he marry her so that they might never be separated again (Shulman (1980), pp. 268-270). The goddess component of the *liṅga* is also shown in icons depicting her emerging from the *liṅga* (see, e.g., Banerjea (1974), pp. 508-509 and Plate XLV Fig. 2, Huntington (1985), Fig. 18.29 p. 410 and p. 409 n. 17); which are counterparts of the much more common representation of the Liṅgodbhavamūrti or Śiva emerging from a pillar of fire (see p. 37 for this myth of the origin of the *liṅga*).

49. "Opinions of what Tantrism is are quite diverse ... . Tantra is essentially a method of conquering transcendent powers and of realising oneness with the highest principle by yogic and ritual means – in part magical and orgiastic in character ... . Tantrics take for granted that ... the macrocosm and microcosm are closely connected. The adept ... has to perform the relevant rites on his own body, transforming (it) into a 'cosmos.' The macrocosm is conceived as a complex system of powers that by means of ritual-psychological techniques can be activated and organised within the individual body of the adept ... . The Tantric movement is (often) inextricably interwoven with Śāktism." (Hinduism, "Enc. Brit., Macropaedia, viii (1974), p. 896). Saktism regards the goddess as the energy *(śakti)* and as the activating power of a divine couple, of whom the male deity is thought of as passive until activated in an union which gives rise to all the manifestations in the universe. See ch. 8 p. 97 at nn. 130-132.

50. Mitterwallner (1981), in Meister (1984), pp. 26-27; cf. Banerjea (1974), pp. 456 and 169. In the earlier phases of the development of the *liṅga* form (when the idea of the sexual union of Śiva and his consort was absent), the *liṅga* was a symbol of fecundity and fertility, resulting in prosperity (Mitterwallner, op. cit., pp. 26-27).

51. Daniélou (1964), pp. 34-35, 44, 223-224. "Every being ... of the masculine sex should be known to be of Içana [Śiva], while every being ... of the feminine sex should be known to be of Umā [Śiva's consort]. This universe of mobile and immobile creatures is pervaded by (these) two kinds

of forms." (Mahābhārata, Anuśāsanaparvan 14.231, transl. Ray (1893), p. 74). Cf. Civañāṉacittiyār, Cupakkam 1.69 which says that throughout the universe God has created forms which are similar to each other but also distinguishable in respect of the differences between males and females and that Life itself has arisen from the interaction between Śiva and Śakti, his power or energy regarded as his consort.

52. For the widespread use of sexual symbolism in various religious traditions, including the Christian, see Coomaraswamy (1938), in Lipsey, ii (1977), pp. 231-240.

53. Monier-Williams (1891), pp. 224-225; Eliot, ii (1954), p. 144. In "the *liṅga* we worship Śiva who pervades all individual generative powers ... . From the relation of *liṅga* and *yoni* the whole world arises. It is divinity which under the form of all individual *liṅgas* enters every womb and procreates all beings." (Karapatri (1941-1942), pp. 154, 163, transl. Daniélou (1964), pp. 227, 225).

54. "The Sanskrit Lexicon gives the word *link* as closely related to [the word *liṅga*]" (Carpenter (1927), p. 87).

55. Carpenter (1927), pp. 87-91 and (1920), ch. 15. Several traces of the reverence for the organs of generation and of the sexual symbolism connected with them have persisted down to modern times in some practices followed even in Christian countries (see e.g., Daniélou (1984), pp. 57, 60, 61; Mees, i (1985), p. 40).

56. See, e.g., Agni Purāṇa ch. 95; Liṅga Purāṇa I chs. 27, 79; Kūrma Purāṇa 39. 1-12.

57. Rao 2 (i) (1916), pp. 70-71; Eliot, ii (1954), p. 143; Wilson (1862), p. 64.

58. For example, the Guḍimallam *liṅga* (see n. 43) and the *liṅga* of the late 1st or the early 2nd century A.D. from Mathura, Uttar Pradesh (Kramrisch (1981a), No. 10 p. 11 and (1981b), p. 166). Sometimes the figure of Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara (see n. 48) is carved on the *liṅga;* e.g., the *liṅga* from Agroha, Haryana, now in Gurukul Jhajjar near Delhi, and that from Mathura, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, both dating from between the 2nd and 4th centuries (see Williams (1987), Plates 1, 3, 5 and pp. 299-301).

The first known occurrence of the juxtaposition of an icon of Śiva and the *liṅga* was in the Guḍimallam *liṅga* (see n. 43), and it has been suggested that the sculptor felt it necessary to carve the figure of Śiva on the *liṅga* because at that time the connection between Śiva and the worship of the *liṅga* had not been definitely established. (Banerjea (1935), p. 39, following the earlier suggestion made by Bhandarkar in 1921).

59. For example, Śiva dancing (Gaston (1982), Plates 15, 16, 17b, 36a, 36b, 37, 38, 90, 91, 94; Sivaramamurti (1974), Figs. 9, 172, 173, 174, 202,

pp. 172, 298, 299, 300, 322); Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara (Huntington (1984), Fig. 227); Śiva seated or standing with his consort (Kramrisch (1981a), Plate 50 p. 60, Plate 54 p. 65 and Plate 47 p. 56); Śiva as Bhairava (op. cit., Plate 92 p. 112).

60. For example, Śiva as Lakulīśa, a Śaiva teacher of about the 1st or 2nd century A.D. who systematised the doctrines of the Pāśupata sect of Śaivism and came to be regarded as an incarnation of Śiva (Banerjea (1974), p. 480). For various types of Lakulīśa images see Shah (1981), and Mitra (1981), in Meister (1984), chs. 7 and 8 and the annexed Plates. Śiva as the Lord of Wisdom has two forms – Lakulīśa and Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the latter being more common than the former in South Indian temples (Sivaramamurti (1977), p. 78).

61. O'Flaherty (1981a), p. 4.

62. "It is the liṅga, raised up, which the rishis, gods, gandharvas and apsarasas worship ... . When his liṅga remains constantly in a state of chastity and people reverence it, this is agreeable to the great god" (Mahābhārata, Anuśāsana-parvan v. 7516, transl. Muir, iv (1983), pp. 405-406).

63. "Control of the seminal fluid is thought to entail control of all passions and the achievement of desirelessness." (Bharati (1965), p. 294). "The inner reabsorption of the seed is ... the drinking of the elixir of immortality [which] requires complete mental control ... . Thus the yogi alone drinks the ambrosia, which the man of the world spills." (Agravala (1937), p. 497, transl. Daniélou (1964), p. 77).

64. For the myth see p. 37.

65. Bharati (1965), p. 296.

66. Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 12, 164, 180-181, 242-243, 249, 430.

67. See p. 36.

68. The faces appear at the top of the cylindrical part (called the *Rudrabhāga*) of the consecrated *liṅga* in the temple, which is composed of the *Rudrabhāga* and two lower parts, the *Viṣṇubhāga* and the *Brahmabhāga* (see p. 36). It may be added that the body of a follower of Śiva which by his devotions has become imbued with Śiva's presence is also regarded as a *liṅga* consisting of three parts: the part below the navel, the Brahmā part; that from the navel to the armpit, the Viṣṇu part; and the face or head, the Śiva part, which, significantly, corresponds to the phallus of Śiva (Śiva Purāṇa, Vidyeśvara Saṃhitā, 17.143-146, transl. BS, i (1970), p. 117).

69. Kramrisch (1981b), p. 181; cf. p. 430.

70. Coomaraswamy in Zimmer (1953), p. 128 n.

71. For the sacred site (e.g., mountain, temple, palace, city), which is identified with the centre or navel of the universe as being the place through which the *axis mundi* passes, see Eliade (1976), pp. 374-379. Two well-known Indian sites of the localisation of the *axis mundi* in the form of the *liṅga* of light are Kāśī (Vārāṇasī) and Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, see ch. 6 nn. 25, 26.

72. *Lī* is related to *laya* "dissolution"; "everything is dissolved in (the *liṅga*)." (Liṅga Purāṇa 1.19.16, transl. BS, v. (1973), p. 69).

73. Kumaraswamiji in Radhakrishnan (1952), p. 399. Cf. Suprabhedāgama, cited in Rao 2(ii) (1916), p. 364: "the *liṅga* is so called because at the time of destruction beings dissolve into it and at the time of creation they emerge from it."

74. Kūrma Purāṇa 1.26.78-85, transl. BS, xx (1981), p. 227. "In the *liṅga* dwell all the gods" (Skanda Purāṇa, transl. Daniélou (1964), p. 228): "nay, everything beginning with Brahmā the Creator and ending with an immobile thing is founded on ... the unchanging Liṅga." (Liṅga Purāṇa 2.46.15-21, transl. BS, vi (1973), p. 766).

A similar view of the *liṅga* is reflected in some temple rituals. For example, in the Naṭarāja Temple of Cidambaram in Tamil Nadu (which Tamil Śaivites regard as being The Temple *par excellence*) the priests invoke in the *liṅga* nine of the higher *tattvas* or transcendental principles in the evolution of the universe; from the bottom upwards in ascending order of subtlety, these are Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Maheśvara, Sadāśiva, Bindu, Nāda, Śakti and Śiva; and then in the space above the *liṅga* they invoke what is sometimes called the *Ākāśa Tattva,* which is the source of all the other *tattvas*. (Nagaswamy (1984), in Meister (1984), pp. 178-180 and Nagaswamy (1987), in Nagaraja Rao, i (1987), pp. 241-242). *Ākāśa,* "ethereal space", is the primary and most subtly pervasive manifestation of Divinity and is an invisible symbol of Ultimate Reality; and the *ākāśa* enclosed by the walls of an otherwise empty chamber is sometimes described as constituting an *ākāśa liṅga* – as in part of the Citsabhā ("Hall of Pure Consciousness") of the Naṭarāja Temple of Cidambaram (see n. 9).

75. Coomaraswamy in Zimmer (1953), p. 128 n. "In the older Christian nativities it is represented by the Ray that extends from the sun above to the interior of the cave in which the Earth-goddess bears her Son." (ibid.). For Light as the progenitive power see Taittirīya Saṃhitā 7.1.1.1, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 8.7.1.16 and Eliade (1971), pp. 3-4.

In the Vedic imagery the *liṅga* of light was conceived as the arrow *(bāṇa)* piercing the earth and the heavens with its two ends. (Agrawala (1984), p. 44; cf. pp. 3, 43). Śiva's arrow is the vehicle of his energy, no less than the *liṅga,* with which it has been equated. (Zimmer op. cit., p. 187).

76. See p. 39.

77. Many legends, illustrated in iconography and painting, describe Śiva as emerging out of the *liṅga* to help his devotees: e.g., Mārkaṇḍeya and Śveta, who were about to be removed by the God of Death (see Kramrisch (1981a), pp. 48-49 and 221). Compare also the legend of Śiva emerging from a *liṅga* to help his devotee Tiṇṇaṉ or Kaṇṇappaṉ (the "Eye Devotee") at Kālahasti (see n. 9) (Pope (1900), pp. 141-145).

78. Kramrisch (1981a), p. xv.

79. Op. cit., p. xvi.

80. "The well-known T-shaped cross was in use in pagan lands long before Christianity as a representation of the male member and also at the same time of the 'tree' on which the god ... was crucified; and the same symbol combined with the oval (or yoni) formed the Crux Ansata [ankh] ... of the old Egyptian ritual – a figure which confessedly indicates the conjunction of the two sexes." (Carpenter (1920), p. 183). It has even been said that the "fundamental basis of Christianity is more purely Phallic than that of any other religion now existing." (Hannay (1913), pp. 25, 257).

81. Rocco (1898), p. 6.

82. See p. 38.

83. See p. 38.

84. See pp. 39-40.

85. Dubois (1924), pp. vii and xxviii.

86. Op. cit. p. 631.

87. Evola (1971), p. 179, transl. Daniélou (1984), p. 151. The application of Judaeo-Christian ways of thinking to Hindu society and culture has also resulted in Freudian interpretations of Hindu myths and symbols by some scholars, like Wendy O'Flaherty (see, e.g., n. 61). But it would not be justifiable to apply insights derived by a psychotherapist, brought up in the Judaeo-Christian tradition and who worked in Vienna in the last two decades of the 19th and the first quarter of the 20th century with patients drawn from a restricted economic, social and cultural milieu, to the behaviour of peoples of all cultures at all times (cf. Zvelebil (1987), p. lvi).

88. Ibid.

89. Dubois (1924), p. 631. H. K. Beauchamp, an editor of Dubois' book, points out (op. cit., p. 111 n. 1 at p. 112) that the obscenity "is from the European point of view. From the Hindu point of view [it] symbolises spiritual and religious truths connected with the divine origin and generation of mankind."

90. See p. 40.

91. See, e.g., the reference to the phallus in one version of the myth relating to the origin of the *liṅga* (p. 37); the naturalistic appearance of early *liṅgas* (p. 38); and the late development associating the *liṅga* column with its pedestal interpreted as the *yoni* (p. 38).

92. They are not known even to educated Hindus, except those with a scholarly knowledge of the Tantric background (Bharati (1965), p. 296).

93. To use the language of Mircea Eliade (1965), p. 100 (where he is referring to the theme of the androgyne).

94. Ibid.

95. Piet (1952), p. 147 n. 1.

V

THE DANCES OF ŚIVA

Śiva is not the only god associated with dancing in Hindu mythology.[1] But in mythology and iconography he appears in a larger variety of dances than any other god; and he is regarded as being the essence of Dance and the personification of the Nāṭya Śāstra,[2] the authoritative text on dramaturgy, which indeed attributes to him the creation of dance as an art form.[3] Thus, as Naṭarāja,[4] the Lord of the Dance and the King of Dancers, Śiva has always been regarded as the Dancing God *par excellence*. Manifestations of this theme are numerous and have taken varied forms in the literature, painting, sculpture, music and dance of many parts of the Indian subcontinent and wherever Hindu culture has penetrated.[5]

The best known visual representation of Naṭarāja is undoubtedly the bronze image of a four-armed god dancing with the right leg on a prostrate dwarf and the left leg lifted up and drawn across the body, which has been acclaimed as one of the greatest achievements of Indian art. Naṭarāja in this dance pose, which is called the *ānandatāṇḍava* or "vigorous dance of bliss," is the presiding deity of the celebrated temple of Naṭarāja at Cidambaram[6] in Tamil Nadu in South India. The great Cōḷa emperor Rājarāja I (985 – 1012),[7] was a fervent devotee of the Naṭarāja of Cidambaram[8]; and at least from his time the now familiar *ānandatāṇḍava* form of Naṭarāja has been installed in a separate shrine[9] in every Śaiva temple of importance in South India and in countries where South Indian influences have predominated.

Thus, it is not surprising that in modern times there is a common belief that Naṭarāja, the Dancing Śiva – and not merely the *ānandatāṇḍava* form of Naṭarāja – is known only in South India. This view is incorrect, for a very wide variety of Śiva's dances is depicted in sculpture and painting in many other parts of the Indian subcontinent.[10] But it would be correct to say that it is in the Tamil-speaking districts of South India that the mythology and the philosophy associated with the various dances of Śiva – especially the best known dance, the *ānandatāṇḍava* – have found the fullest and most profound expression.[11] Of course, the cult of the Dancing Śiva is only a particular manifestation, though it is one of the most important manifestations, of Śaivism in general; and Śaivism holds a special place in the hearts of the

Tamil people. Their poet-saints have emphasized the particular association of Śiva with the Tamil land,[12] especially in his forms of Naṭarāja and Dakṣiṇāmūrti (the "south-facing form" of Śiva as a teacher of spiritual knowledge and music).[13]

In this connection it is relevant to mention certain aspects of the great efflorescence of the spirit of Hindu devotional fervour *(bhakti)* which took place in South India in the second half of the first millennium A.D.[14] From the beginning of the seventh century onwards a reaction against Jainism and Buddhism set in; and gradually a vast multitude of Hindu temples built and endowed by kings and chieftains appeared all over the Tamil land, and the two other religions receded into the background. The chief vehicle of this *bhakti* movement, which ushered in a revolution in the religious, cultural, social and political conditions of the Tamil people, was the hymns of the Tamil Śaiva[15] and Vaiṣṇava[16] poet-saints of the seventh to the tenth centuries. Of these two branches of the *bhakti* movement, the Śaiva was earlier in making its impact felt and it was also more vigorous.[17] We must now consider some features of the *bhakti* movement which explain why it constituted such a tremendous moving force in the lives of the Tamil people.

A striking feature of the Tamil *bhakti* poetry is the emphasis placed by the poet-saints on the emotional link between the devotee and a personal deity believed to be capable of loving communion with his votaries.[18] They declared that a devotee could attain salvation, even while still living in society, by fervent self-negating love and adoration of his god. In this respect their views contrasted sharply with the largely intellectual and ethical conceptions of the Jains and the Buddhists, whose ideals of asceticism and renunciation of the world as the path to salvation they rejected. The popular appeal of *bhakti* as an easier pathway to God than asceticism was reinforced, firstly, by the fact that the hymns were written not in Sanskrit (which had hitherto been the only language used in the temple services, although it was unintelligible to the average worshipper) but in Tamil and – a feature which further enhanced their popular appeal – were set to music; and, secondly, by another cardinal feature of the *bhakti* movement, the concept of God not as a mere metaphysical abstraction but as dwelling close at hand in the concrete form of the image in the familiar local temple of the district.

This concept of what has been called "henolocotheism"[19] carried with it many emotional undertones, which explain the rapid spread of the temple cult in the Tamil land. The local temple became the centre of most of the religious, cultural and social life of the people.[20] By about the eighth century the singing of the Tamil hymns (which, significantly, came to be called the Dravidian Veda),[21] to the accompaniment of music and dance, formed an essential and popular part of the temple services.[22] These hymns refer to many aspects of the personality and powers of Śiva, based on the epics[23] and the purāṇas,[24]

which were a great source of mythological lore; and these colourful myths also began to be illustrated visually in the anthropomorphic forms of temple sculpture and in painting. In this connection mention must be made of the extensive mythological literature contained in texts connected with individual local temples in the Tamil land, most of them popular places of pilgrimage. These *tala* purāṇams (*sthala* purāṇas in Sanskrit), "ancient stories of sacred temples," record the traditional history of the temple, which is glorified over all others as the place where salvation may be obtained most readily.[25] These texts embody a rich tradition of mythology, combining elements both from the northern Sanskritic tradition of the classical mahāpurāṇas (which are not tied to a specific place) and from indigenous southern local traditions.[26]

As we have remarked earlier in this chapter,[27] the theme of Śiva dancing has been manifested in many and varied forms in the literature, sculpture, painting, music and dance of different parts of the Indian subcontinent. For a proper understanding of the significance of many features of Śiva's dances as expressed in sculpture, painting and dance, it is necessary to turn, inter alia, to the texts of the Śaiva āgamas[28] (which deal with such matters as the construction of temples, the consecration of images and the rituals of worship), the *śilpa* śāstras (which deal with the forms of the images and the canons of proportion to be observed in making them), the Nāṭya Śāstra[29] (which deals with dramaturgy, including the dance forms), the purāṇas[30] (including the *sthala* purāṇas)[31] and the devotional and the theological literature of the Śaiva saints[32] and theologians.[33]

This vast variety of texts comes from different periods and geographical areas and includes works in both Sanskrit and the regional languages of India. Consequently it is not surprising to find that, in the iconographical representation of dances, regional variations are found,[34] and also that there are considerable differences with regard to the names given to the different types of Śiva's dances, the descriptions of them[35] and the myths associated with their origins.[36]

Classifications of Śiva's dances have been attempted from different viewpoints.[37] The Tirumantiram of Saint Tirumūlar (who probably lived in the seventh century),[38] which is one of the earliest and most authoritative works of Tamil Śaivism,[39] contains many verses dealing with different forms of Śiva's dances; and a variety of names, both in Tamil and in Sanskrit, is used to describe them. For example, one verse[40] says that the Lord of Cidambaram,[41] that is, Siva-Naṭarāja "dances the *Koḍu Koṭṭi, Pāṇḍam, Kōḍu,* the eight making up the *Saṃhāra* dance,[42] the five dances and the six dances"; but the commentators on the Tirumantiram are by no means agreed about what exactly are the eight, the five and the six dances referred to.[43] In the present study we propose concentrating attention on certain dances of Śiva that have become localised by tradition in various temples in the Tamil-speaking areas

of South India: eight victory dances *(aṣṭavīrasthānas)*[44]; six dances expressing, either separately or collectively, Śiva's five great cosmic activities *(pañcakṛtya)*[45]; and lastly seven dances in seven temples *(sapta viṭaṅka sthalas)* in which the image worshipped is a *viṭaṅka* one, that is an image believed not to have been made by human hands but to have appeared spontaneously.[46]

The word *tāṇḍava* is often used with reference to the various dances of Śiva.[47] *Tāṇḍava* (Sanskrit) and *tāṇṭavam* (Tamil) are derived from *tāṇṭu*, meaning "to jump, leap across, dance" a Dravidian word[48] found even in the non-literary tribal Dravidian languages.[49] Generally *tāṇḍava* is used with reference to the vigorous and virile forms of dance associated with Śiva as contrasted with the gentle and graceful *lāsya* forms associated with his consort Pārvatī.[50] An explanation of the word *tāṇḍava*, based on Śaiva mythology, connects the name of the dance with that of Taṇḍu, one of Śiva's attendants, who having watched him dancing classified the dance poses[51] and communicated his knowledge, at Śiva's request, to Bhārata Muni, the author of the Nāṭya Śaśtra.[52] Taṇḍu is identified with Nandi or Nandin (the "Joyful" One),[53] a favourite disciple of Śiva,[54] who is commonly represented in iconography as a bull,[55] although he is also depicted in human form, sometimes with a bull's head.[56] Nandi is one of the mythical teachers of music and dancing[57] and is called *tāṇḍavatālika*,[58] because he provides the *tala*, the rhythmic timing[59] for Śiva's *tāṇḍava*, being especially skilled in the art of drumming.[60]

NOTES

1. Kṛṣṇa, Murukaṉ, Durgā and Lakṣmī are also said to have executed many kinds of dances after defeating enemies (see, e.g., The Cilappatikāram 6. 41-67, transl. Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939), pp. 124-125, cf. p. 58).
2. Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa 73, 47; Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 157. The Nāṭya Śāstra, attributed to the semi-legendary sage Bhārata, is an encyclopaedic work dealing with drama, dance, music, poetics and aesthetics.
3. Nāṭya Śāstra 4. 2, et seqq.; Gonda (1970), p. 132.
4. This, the best known name of the Dancing Śiva, is common in South India, where Naṭeśa and Naṭeśvara are also used. Regional variations are Narteśvara in Bengal, Naṭāmbara in Orissa, Nāṭyeśvara in Central India and Nṛtyeśvara and Nāṭakeśvara in Cambodia (Sivaramamurti (1974), pp. 142, 155).
5. See Sivaramamurti (1974), and Gaston (1982), passim.
6. See ch. 8. p. 90.

7. He has been described as "the greatest monarch of Southern India" (Nilakanta Sastri (1955), p. 653).

8. The tutelary deity of the Cōḷas was the Naṭarāja of Cidambaram (Sivaramamurti (1974), pp. 141, 223, 385, cf. ch. 8 p. 90). Rājarāja's greatgrandfather Parāntaka I (907-955), is credited with having covered the roof of the Naṭarāja shrine of the Cidambaram Temple with gold (Nilakanta Sastri (1955), pp. 135, 137 n. 68) – hence the names Kanakasabhā (Sanskrit) and Poṉṉampalam (Tamil) of that shrine (see ch. 8 n. 12).

Inscriptions dating from the time of Rājarāja refer to gifts of metal images of "Āṭavallāṉ," the "Master Dancer," – i.e., Naṭarāja in the *ānandataṇḍava* pose – made by him and his queen Cōḷa Mahādevī to the stately Rājarājeśvara or Bṛhadīśvara ("Great Lord") temple which he built in his capital city of Tañcāvūr (Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 141); and the name Āṭavallāṉ was even applied to the units for measuring weights and keeping accounts (Nilakanta Sastri (1955), pp. 620-622). The fine image which is still in worship in the Naṭarāja shrine of the temple (see, e.g., Sivaramamurti (1963), Fig. 23 and p. 72 and (1974), Fig. 90 and p. 229; Venkataraman (1985), pp. 158, 160, 260, 261) is probably that gifted by Rājarāja. (Nagaswami (1980), pp. 110-112).

9. The principal object of worship in a temple of Śiva is the stone *liṅga,* a cylindrical column symbolising Parama-(or Para-) śivam, the "Supreme Śiva," which is fixed in the central shrine, the *garbhagṛha* or "womb-house" of the temple (see ch. 4 p. 35). Various anthropomorphic images (like that of Naṭarāja) are housed in subsidiary shrines in different parts of the temple. Exceptionally, for various reasons, one of these latter images may be accorded higher reverence than the *liṅga,* as in the case of the Naṭarāja of the Cidambaram Temple or the Tyāgarāja of the Tyāgarāja Temple at Tiruvārūr. See ch. 8 p. 90 and ch. 9. p. 123.

10. See, e.g., Gaston (1982), ch. 4, where the chief features of various types of Naṭarāja sculptures are discussed with reference to four chronological periods and to four regions of the Indian subcontinent.

11. See ch. 8 pp. 91 et seqq.

12. For example, Māṇikkavācakar often describes Śiva as the Lord of the Southern land (e.g., Tiruvācakam 8.2, 8.5, 11.9, 43.9 and 47.4; Pope (1900), pp. 118, 119, 155, 323 and 335); and Cuntarar 7.38.8 even claims that Śiva is "the Lord of the south and his mind never turns to the west or the north or the east." There are also Tamil traditions specially associating Śiva with Tamil – e.g., that reflected in the Kāñcipurāṇam and the Tiruvīḷaiyāṭaṟpurāṇam, which asserts that Śiva taught Tamil to Agastya, the Vedic sage who is credited with being the pioneer of the Aryanisation of South India (Zvelebil (1975), p. 63). This tradition has its parallel in the revelation by Śiva of the basic speech sounds to the grammarian Pāṇini (see ch. 8 p. 96 at nn. 112, 113) – a

revelation which, according to Tamil tradition, took place in the Tiruvorriyūr temple in the Tamil land (Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 79). In passing, however, it must be pointed out that it is Śiva's son Murukaṉ even more than Śiva whom Tamil tradition regards as the Tamil deity *par excellence*, the patron of the Tamil language and the tutelary god of Tamil-speaking people (Cf. ch. 2 p. 14 n. 11).

There are also many examples of Tamil writers interpreting classical or pan-Indian notions of cosmology and theology with reference to particular temples in the Tamil land. Thus, each of the five constituent elements of the material universe – the *pañcabhūtas* of earth, water, fire, air and ether *(ākāśa)* – are associated with temples in Tiruvārūr and Kāñcipuram (earth), Kalāhasti (air) Tiruvaṇṇāmalai (fire), Tiruvāṉaikkāval (water), and Cidambaram (ether); and, as we shall see, various dances of Śiva have by tradition become localised in temples in the Tamil land (see chs. 6-9).

13. The image of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, which occupies the central niche on the outer south wall of the main sanctuary of a temple, is regarded with particular sanctity in South India, especially in the areas where Tamil is spoken. The name Dakṣiṇāmūrti is said to be derived from the fact that he faced south *(dakṣiṇā)* when he taught the sages such spiritual disciplines as yoga and jñāna (Rao (1916), 2 (i) pp. 273-292). But *dakṣiṇā* also means "gift", as well as "understanding" or "wisdom"; and Dakṣiṇāmūrti gives the gift of the understanding of one's Self to his worshippers (Dakṣiṇāmūrti Upaniṣad 31 and Sūtasaṃhitā 3.4.45-51, cited in Kramrisch (1981b), p. 57 n. 9).

14. For *bhakti* in earlier Sanskrit texts, see ch. 2 pp. 11-12.

Even Sanskrit sources suggest that in India the *bhakti* movement on a large scale began with the Tamil mystics of the south, whence it spread to other parts of the country. For example, in the Padma Purāṇa bhakti personified says: "Born in Drāviḍa country, I grew up in Karnāṭaka. In Mahārāṣṭra and Gujarat I became old." See the Padma Purāṇa, Bhāgavata Purāṇa and the Bhāgavata Māhātmya quoted in Dhavamony (1971), pp. 101-102.

15. The best known of the Śaiva poet-saints or Nāyaṉmār ("lords" or "masters"), are Tirunāvukkaracar (or Appar) of the late sixth to seventh century, Campantar of the seventh century and Cuntarar of the late eighth to ninth century – the three authors of the hymns called the Tēvāram (i.e., "Divine Garland") and Māṇikkavācakar, who is usually assigned to the second half of the ninth century and was the author of the famous Tiruvācakam ("Holy Utterances"). About the tenth century Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi (see ch. 8 n. 3) made an anthology of the above and other Śaiva hymns (Zvelebil (1975), pp. 132-135). Finally, with the inclusion of the Periyapurāṇam of Cēkkiḻār (c. 1135), (ibid.), which has been said to have "influenced the lives and thinking of the Tamil Śaiva population more than any other book" (Zvelebil (1975), p. 178), the canon of Tamil Śaiva

devotional literature came to be codified in the twelve Tirumuṟai ("holy books") (op. cit., pp. 132-135).

16. Of the twelve Vaiṣṇava saints called Āḻvārs (i.e., those "immersed" or "absorbed" in the contemplation of the Lord) the best known are Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār, Kulacekara Āḻvār, Periyāḻvār (the author of the Tiruppallāṇṭu, the most popular of the Vaiṣṇava hymns), Āṇṭāḷ (the woman author of the Tiruppāvai), Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār and Nammāḻvār, the most famous and most voluminous of the Āḻvārs and the author of the Tiruvāymoḻi. These six saints lived in the ninth and early tenth centuries. The canon of Tamil Vaiṣṇava devotional literature is contained in the Nālāyira Tivviyappirapantam ("Four Thousand Divine Songs"), arranged in four books, each containing about a thousand verses, compiled by Nātamuṇi in the tenth century (Zvelebil (1975), pp. 152-154).

17. This was partly because the Śaivites outnumbered the Vaiṣṇavites and partly because of the feeling that Śaivism was the original Dravidian religion and that Vaiṣṇavism (which was more closely connected with Brahmanism and Sanskritisation) was something imported. (Zvelebil (1975), p. 152); cf. Hart (1975), pp. 71-72.

18. Of the Śaiva *bhakti* literature Sir Charles Eliot ((1921), ii, p. 217) wrote: "The remarkable feature of this religion ... is the personal tie which connects the soul with God. In no [other] literature ... has the individual religious life – its struggles and dejection, its hopes and fears, its confidence and its triumphs – received a delineation more frank and more profound." L. D. Barnett ((1908), p. 82), declared: "No cult in the world has produced a richer devotional literature or one more instinct with brilliance of imagination, fervour of feeling and grace of expresion."

19. Zvelebil (1973), p. 201. A century earlier Max Müller ((1867), i, pp. 27 et seqq., 354 et seqq.) had coined the term "henotheism" (from Greek *heis theos,* "one god") to describe a form of religion which accepts a plurality of gods but accords supremacy to the one which is being invoked at any particular time.

20. Many activities were carried on in various *maṇṭapas* or temple halls: e.g., halls of grammar, dance, drama, music, hymns and purāṇas (see n. 24) are mentioned in literature and inscriptions. Meetings of local assemblies were held in the temples, and public documents and grants were preserved by being inscribed on temple walls. (Rangaswamy (1958), p. 12).

21. Zvelebil (1975), p. 141 n. 65. For the Vedas see n. 33.

22. Rangaswamy (1958), p. 17; cf. Zvelebil (1975), p. 141 n. 65 and p. 150 n. 132.

23. The two great Sanskrit epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata.

24. Compositions dealing with ancient *(purāṇa)* times and events. Traditionally eighteen Sanskrit Mahāpurāṇas (great purāṇas) are listed (Shulman (1980), p. 355 n. 4; Rocher (1986), pp. 30-48).

25. But notwithstanding their attachment to the deities of their local temples, most worshippers also recognize the sanctity of some other temples whose fame transcends local and even regional boundaries. For example, Hindus have for centuries accorded a special status to the ancient city of Kāśī, the "luminous" or "resplendent" city, later called Vārāṇasī (now its official name) and Banāras or Benāres. Śaivites especially regard Kāśī as very sacred, since Śiva is said to have chosen the city for his special abode and made it sacred to himself after severe austerities (Monier Williams (1891), p. 434; Eck (1983), pp. 94-95); and the most famous of the numerous Śaiva temples of Kāśī, that of Viśvanātha or Viśveśvara, the "Lord of All," holds a very special place in their hearts. Of the South Indian temples, the Naṭarāja Temple at Cidambaram is The Temple *par excellence* for southern Śaivites (see ch. 8 p. 88). The Aruṇācala Mahātmyam (the "Greatness of Aruṇācala," i.e., Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, declares (transl. Chadwick (1951), p. 34) that one can attain salvation by seeing Cidambaram or by being born in Tiruvārūr (see n. 12), or by dying in Benares, or by merely thinking of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai (see n. 12).

26. See Shulman (1980), especially ch. 1.

27. See p. 51.

28. *Āgama* (meaning traditions that have "come down") is a general term for certain texts which reflect the beliefs and practices of various Hindu cults. There are three chief sets of āgamas – Śaiva āgamas, Vaiṣṇava āgamas (often called saṃhitās) and Śākta āgamas (often called tantras).

The Śaiva āgamas are believed to have issued from Śiva. The Tamil tradition is that they were revealed by him from his five faces (see ch. 3 n. 55) on the Makēntiram hill in the Tamil land (Tiruvācakam 2.19-20). There are said to have been 28 principal āgamas and 207 subsidiary ones (upāgamas) derived from the former. They were probably first written in Sanskrit; and versions of them in regional languages of the south (e.g., Tamil), have also survived (Radhakrishnan (1960), p. 68; Gonda (1977), p. 178). The dates of their composition are uncertain: some of them predate the Christian era (being as old as some parts of the Vedas), although they were not reduced to writing until the early centuries of that era. The four sections *(pādas)* of an āgama – few āgamas contain all four – are the *jñāna* (or *vidyā*) *pāda* dealing with philosophy; the *kriyā pāda* dealing with the building and consecration of temples, the making and consecration of images, the forms of worship and rituals and the conduct of religious festivals; the *caryā pāda* dealing with the rules of personal conduct for worshippers, including the ceremonies to be performed at various stages of a person's life from birth to death; and *yoga pāda* dealing with the physical and mental disciplines of yoga.

It has been suggested that the āgamas represent one of the two main strands that have formed the Hindu religion and philosophy – the non-Vedic, very largely Dravidian, element complementing the other, the Vedic, strand.

(Chatterji (1953), p. 58 and (1958), p. 83). So far as the practice of modern Śaivism (whether in temple or in private worship) is concerned the āgamic elements are more important than the Vedic, which they have largely superseded.

There have been various views with regard to the relation between the brahmanical Vedic traditions and the more popular religious currents of the āgamas. A conservative view is that there is really no contradiction between the Vedas and the āgamas. For example, the followers of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta regard both the Vedas (see n. 33) and the āgamas (which are sometimes called the Fifth Veda) as authoritative revelations from Śiva. But the Vedas are considered general, and the āgamas specific, revelations: the latter are said to be better adapted to the needs of the present age (the *kali yuga*) and also specially relevant to Śaivism (Tirumūlar, Tirumantiram, transl. Natarajan (1982), v. 2397; Civañāṉa Cittiyār 3.8.15).

Consequently, Tamil Śaiva Siddhāntins would not follow parts of the Vedas which assert the absolute identification of the individual self with the Supreme Self (which is contrary to the qualified monism of the Śaiva Siddhānta) or which extol other mantras above the mantra having prime significance in Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy, *Namaḥ Sivāya* ("I bow to Śiva"), the *pañcākṣara* (Sanskrit for "five letters," *aintelluttu* in Tamil) mantra (Śaiva Siddhānta Paribhāsa, quote in Arunachalam (1983), pp. 41, 44.

29. See n. 2.
30. See n. 24.
31. See p. 53.
32. See p. 52 and n. 15.
33. The most important of the various Śaiva schools of philosophy are: (1) in the Tamil country, the Śaiva Siddhānta (i.e., the "accomplished end", or the "final truth", as its followers claim, of the Śaiva and all other philosophical systems); (2) in Karnataka, Vīra (i.e., "Heroic" or "Stalwart" in the worship of Śiva) Śaivism; and (3) Kashmir Śaivism, also called the Trika (i.e., "Tripartite" referring to three basic principles, variously described), the Spanda (i.e., "Throb" or "Stir" – from absolute unity to the plurality of the world) and the Pratyabhijñā (i.e., recognition of the soul's identity with Śiva). All three are āgamic systems which recognise the Śaiva āgamas (see n. 28) as their basic authoritative texts. Of these three the first has had the widest influence and by reason of its provenance is especially relevant to the subject-matter of the present study.

The sources of the Śaiva Siddhānta system are the Vedas (four collections of hymns, chants, sacrificial formulae and charms, written in an archaic form of Sanskrit, which record what is believed to be the eternally existing Divine Wisdom as revealed to certain sages and which constitute the primary scriptures of Hinduism); the Śaiva āgamas (see n. 28); the Tirumuṟai or the

canon of Tamil devotional literature (see n. 15); and the Meykaṇṭa Śāstra, fourteen Tamil theological texts, dating from the last quarter of the twelfth century to the first quarter of the fourteenth century, in which the philosophical tenets of Tamil Śaivism, already expressed in many parts of the Tirumuṟai were systematically formulated for the first time. The most important of the Meykaṇṭa Śāstra are the basic text, the Civañāṉapōtam of Meykaṇṭār ("Seer of Truth"), which consists of a dozen aphorisms *(sūtras)* of forty lines with explanatory comments; the Civañāṉacittiyār of Aruḷnanti Civācāriya (part of which discusses critically fourteen rival schools of philosophy, including some Buddhist and Jain ones); and the Civappirakācam of Umāpati Civācāriya (see Zvelebil (1975), pp. 198-207).

34. See, e.g., Gaston (1982), ch. 4.

35. See, e.g., Raghavan (1956), pp. 20-25.

36. As to a possible reason for these differences, it has been suggested (Rangaswamy (1958), p. 452), is that it is impossible to reconcile the classical dance forms described in the Nāṭya Śāstra with popular variations described in the purāṇas and reflected also in the āgamas, the authors of which appear to have combined the classical and the popular forms of dance. It has been said that the well-known *ānandataṇḍava* dance form of Naṭarāja is not among the dance poses described in the Nāṭya Śāstra and was derived from a *deśī* or local dance tradition not known to the exponents of the classical dances (see ch. 7 p. 80).

37. See, e.g., Gaston (1982), chs. 3 and 4. The author reviews earlier classifications by writers like Ananda Coomaraswamy, Gopinath Rao and V. Raghavan and, in the light of her own experience as a dancer, classifies sculptural representations of Naṭarāja on the basis of the positions of the feet, which are fundamental in determining the dance poses.

38. Zvelebil (1975), p. 138. Cf. Zvelebil (1985), p. 47.

39. The Tirumantiram became the tenth book of the Tirumuṟai, the canon of Śaiva devotional literature (see n. 15). It is one of the bases on which the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy (see n. 33) was elaborated – the Tamil word *cittāntam* (Sanskrit *Siddhānta*) was used for the first time in the book (Zvelebil (1975), p. 138 n. 41) – and it is also the most elaborate treatment of yoga in Tamil literature (Zvelebil (1973), p. 226).

40. V. 2687, (1980), vol. 2.

41. See ch. 8.

42. "The *Koḍu Koṭṭi* is the dance after the destruction of everything; *Pāṇḍam (Pāṇṭaraṅkam)* is the dance after the destruction of the three cities, wearing the ashes of those cities; *Kōḍu* or *Kāpālam,* is the dance holding Brahma's head in the hand; *Saṃhāra* is the dance at the time of destruction [of the universe]." (Visvanatha Pillai's commentary on the verse in the 1912 edition of the Tirumantiram, translated from Tamil by Narayana Ayyar (1936), p. 362).

43. Contrast, e.g., the commentary of the editor of the 1912 edn., quoted in Narayana Ayyar (1936), pp. 362-363 and the commentary of the editor of the (1980), edn., ii, p. 1108.

44. The Tamil equivalent of the Sanskrit *aṣṭavīrasthānas* is *aṭṭavīraṭṭāṉams*. The Tamil Lexicon defines *vīraṭṭāṉam*, which is sometimes contracted to *vīraṭṭam*, as (1) sacred places where Śiva's heroism was manifest and (2) a kind of dance. (TL (1934), vi p. 3756); and the word is used for the temples associated with Śiva's exploits, the exploit themselves and the victory dances thereafter.

45. See chs. 7 and 8.

46. See ch. 9 p. 124.

47. See, e.g., ch. 7 pp. 80-81.

48. TL, iii (4), p. 1828; DED (1961), p. 204.

49. Zvelebil (1985), p. 2. For the South Indian, particularly Tamil, contribution to the concept of the best known of the *tāṇḍavas* of Śiva, the *ānandatāṇḍava*, see p. 51 and ch. 8.

50. Abhinayadarpaṇa 3-5 (Ghosh (1957), p. 40); Coomaraswamy (1917), p. 14; Vatsyayan (1968), p. 25. The *lāsya* and the *tāṇḍava* are both components of the dance of Śiva in his form of Ardhanārīśvara, the "Half Female Lord" (see ch. 3, p. 24); and Śankarācārya says (Ardhanārīnaṭēśvara Stotra, transl. Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 130) that the *lāsya* part of the dance brings the universe into existence and the *tāṇḍava* part destroys it.

51. Raghavan (1956), p. 22.

52. Nāṭya Śāstra 4.17-18 (Ghosh (1967), p. 47. For the Nāṭya Śāstra see n. 2.

53. Rangaswamy (1958), i, p. 470. Nandi is also called Nandīśa or Nandikeśvara, the "Lord of Gladness."

54. His "Lord High Chamberlain" (Pope (1900), p. 207). Śiva initiated Nandi into the truths of the āgamas (see n. 28), which Nandi thereafter communicated on earth through a long line of sages, like Tirumūlar (see n. 38) the author of Tirumantiram (see, e.g., vv 67-102; Natarajan (1982), pp. 186-189), to Meykaṇṭār the author of Civañāṉapōtam (see p. 60 n. 33), and his disciples, like Aruḷnanti Civācāriya, the author of the Civañāṉacittiyār (see, op. cit., Cupakkam, Preface 12, Nallaswami Pillai (1913), p. 116).

55. The *vāhana* or vehicle of Śiva. The *vāhana* is a theriomorphic representation of the energy and character of a god (Zimmer (1953), pp. 48, 70). The bull is also the emblem on Śiva's banner (Daniélou (1964), p. 219; see e.g., Tiruvācakam 20.1 (Pope (1900), p. 207). In iconography Śiva is often shown standing by, or seated on (Krishna Sastri (1916), pp. 113, 114), or dancing on, a bull (Banerjea (1974), pp. 475, 534-6; Gaston (1982), p. 130).

In temples of Śiva Nandi appears as a recumbent bull, placed on a raised pedestal facing, and with his eyes riveted on, the *liṅga* emblem of Śiva in the

main sanctum and with his back to the *balipīṭha* or altar on which oblations of worship are placed. According to the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy (see n. 33), the *liṅga,* Nandi and the *balipīṭha* symbolise the three eternal entities which constitute the totality of existence: *Pati* ("Lord") or Śiva, *Paśu* ("cattle") or the individual soul and *Pāśa* or the ("bond"), (see ch. 8 n. 120) which restrains the soul from finding release in union with Śiva (see, e.g., Tirumantiram, v. 2411, Natarajan (1982), p. 406); and their relative positions in the temple – Nandi facing the *liṅga* and with his back to the *balipīṭha* – represent the soul gazing steadily at God after being freed of the bonds which it has shed and left behind (Satchidanandam Pillai (1952), p. 60 and (1954), pp. 34-35).

56. Daniélou (1964), p. 220; Rao (1916), ii (2) pp. 455, 459-460. See, e.g., the 10th century sculpture from Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh in Daniélou (1984), Plate 6.

57. Daniélou (1964), p. 220.

58. SED (1988), p. 441.

59. Op. cit., p. 444. Cf. ch. 9, n. 21.

60. Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 77. In the South Indian Bhārata Nāṭya dance tradition Nandi is included as a drummer in the orchestra for the dance of Naṭarāja (Gaston (1982), pp. 130, 232 n. 34).

VI

THE VICTORY DANCES

In Śaiva mythology Śiva is depicted as emerging victorious in contests with gods and other beings possessing superhuman powers, such as demons *(asuras)*[1] and sages. In this chapter we shall consider eight heroic feats of Śiva,[2] which are frequently discussed in Śaiva literature – both in Sanskrit and in regional languages[3] of India – and which also figure prominently in the forms of visual art.

The two best known exploits of Śiva are the Destruction of the Three Cities *(Tripura)* of the demons *(asuras)* and the Destruction of Dakṣa's Sacrifice *(Dakṣayajña)*.[4] There are numerous versions of Dakṣa's sacrifice both in Sanskrit and in Tamil, and these shed interesting sidelights on the evolution of Hinduism – firstly, on the conflict between the ritualism of the orthodox Vedic religion of the Aryan Brahmins and some of the unorthodox traditions of Śaivism, which were probably derived from an earlier, largely Dravidian, stratum of Indian civilization[5]; and, secondly, on the rivalry betwen the followers of Śiva and Viṣṇu, the two great gods of later Hinduism. It is not possible in the space at our disposal to consider in detail the differences between the various versions.[6] For an understanding of the iconography of Śiva's dances the basic elements of the Sanskrit versions of the myth may be stated as follows.[7]

Śiva was married to Satī ("Faithfulness"), daughter of Dakṣa ("Skill").[8] Dakṣa did not approve of his son-in-law's unorthodox and non-conformist behaviour and did not show him honour. When he prepared a great sacrifice, all the gods except Śiva were invited. The sage Dadhīci tried unsuccessfully to convince Dakṣa that a sacrifice without Śiva participating and being given his due share would be ineffective. Hearing of the great sacrifice, Satī went there and rebuked her father for not inviting Śiva; when Dakṣa in reply reviled Śiva, she died – in one version of the myth by immolating herself in the sacrificial fire and in another version by being consumed in the yogic fire of her own anger.[9] When Śiva heard of this his anger created a fierce monster Vīrabhadra,[10] who destroyed the sacrifice,[11] cut off Dakṣa's head and punished some of those who had assisted in the sacrifice. Later, Śiva restored the sacrifice and put a ram's head on Dakṣa, who on reviving acknowledged

Śiva's greatness, praising him and giving him his full share of the sacrifice.[12] Śiva conferred his grace on the repentant Dakṣa and made him a leader of his attendants.[13]

Śiva is said to have executed a dance of victory after the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice.[14] A stone representation of Vīrabhadra from Teṉkāci, illustrates this dance.[15] Śiva is also said to have taken up Satī's corpse and roamed about, dancing wildly in the frenzy of his grief[16]; and this is represented in both sculpture and dance.[17]

The destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice took place, according to Tamil tradition, in Paṟiyalūr, now called Paracalūr, near Māyavaram, Tañcāvūr District.[18] To the south of the temple there is a tank called Karikuḷam ("charcoal tank"), which is said to be the site of Dakṣa's sacrifice.[19]

Śiva's decapitation of Dakṣa was a re-enactment of his earlier exploit, the decapitation of one of the heads of Brahmā.[20] Śiva was the mind-born son of Brahmā[21]; and indeed one of the reasons for Śiva's exclusion from Dakṣa's sacrifice, which led to the death of Satī and Dakṣa, was that Śiva had been guilty of the great sin of decapitating Brahmā, who was his father and also a Brahmin.[22]

There are several versions of the myth of the decapitation of Brahmā by Śiva.[23] In most of them the reason for the beheading is traced back to a contest for supremacy between Brahmā, the Creator of the universe, and Viṣṇu, the Preserver. In the course of the contest a blazing pillar of fire, with no visible beginning or end, suddenly appeared between them; and they decided that Brahmā in the form of a wild goose should fly upwards to seek its upper limits and Viṣṇu in the form of a boar should dive downwards to find its lower limits. After many years of futile search both gods returned exhausted, and when they saw the figure of Śiva revealed in all his glory within the fiery pillar, Brahmā and Viṣṇu acknowledged his supremacy. This myth of Liṅgodbhava ("*liṅga* manifestation"),[24] describing the origin of the worship of the *liṅga,* is associated with many places in India, particularly Kāśī,[25] that is, Vārāṇasī or Banaras, and in the Tamil tradition Tiruvaṇṇāmalai in the North Āṟkāṭu District of Tamil Nadu.[26]

Some variants of this myth of Liṅgodbhava connect it with the myth of the beheading of Brahmā's fifth head. While Viṣṇu acknowledged the supremacy of Śiva on returning from his fruitless search for the lower end of the fiery *liṅga,* Brahmā had untruthfully declared that he had seen the top of the *liṅga*[27] or, in another version of the myth, had addressed Śiva patronisingly as his son and offered him paternal protection.[28] As a punishment Śiva or, in another version of the myth, Bhairava (the "Terrible"), a fierce emanation[29] from Śiva, cut off the offending head of Brahmā and performed a terrifying dance, which threw the whole universe and all its beings into paroxysms of terror.[30] This led finally to the acknowledgement of Śiva's supremacy by Brahmā also.[31]

According to Tamil tradition, the decapitation of Brahmā took place at Kaṇṭiyūr, five miles northwest of Tañcāvūr.[32]

A sequel to this exploit of Śiva in the form that cut off Brahmā's head (Brahmaśiraśchedakamūrti) is also connected with a dance of Śiva. Since Brahmā was a Brahmin, Śiva-Bhairava was guilty of the great sin of brahminicide.[33] Consequently Brahmā's head stuck fast to Bhairava's hand and became a begging bowl as he wandered about dancing off and on,[34] pursued by his sin,[35] and begging for his livelihood, following the *kapālavrata* ("vow of the skull"), the traditional method of expiating the sin of brahminicide.[36] After visiting many places of pilgimage, Bhairava entered the holy city of Kāśī and there the skull fell from his hand[37]; and he danced with relief at his liberation from the sin that had so long pursued him.[38]

The texts refer to a wide range of varieties of Bhairava.[39] Śiva-Bhairava wandering about with Brahmā's skull in his hand is shown in sculpture in different settings, usually with a countenance expressing the fear of the consequences of brahminicide that pursued him rather than the fierce countenance associated with Bhairava's anger at the time of the decapitation of Brahmā. Thus, he appears as Kaṅkālamūrti, (the "skeleton (bearing) form") carrying on his shoulder a staff to which is attached the skeleton *(kaṅkāla)* of Viṣṇu's doorkeeper Viṣvaksena whom he had killed when refused admission to Viṣṇu's house[40] or as Bhikṣāṭanamūrti, in the form of a beggar who in passing by the hermitages of sages and their families in the Deodār or Pine Forest on different occasions revealed various aspects and modes of his divine being.[41] These two forms of Śiva are said to be more popular in the South than in other parts of India.[42]

A sequel to the Destruction of Dakṣa's Sacrifice is the Destruction of Kāma, another of the exploits of Śiva. After his wife Satī gave up her life in disgust at the manner in which Dakṣa insulted her husband, Śiva retired to the Himālayas and became absorbed in the severest ascetic practices. In the meantime, in another aeon, Satī was reborn as Pārvatī, the daughter of the Parvata Rāja ("Mountain King") Himavat, a personification of the Himālayas (the "abode of snow"); and from childhood she sought by arduous austerities to prove herself worthy of becoming the wife of the Great Yogi Śiva. But in order to rouse Śiva from his asceticism the gods, who were then being harassed by a powerful demon Tāraka, had to employ the services of Kāma, the God of Love, to shoot his flowery arrows at Śiva,[43] so that he might beget a son who would destroy Tāraka. When Kāma's arrow disturbed Śiva in his meditation, Śiva showed his anger by opening his third eye momentarily, and sparks issued from it, burning Kāma to ashes.[44] Later, on the entreaty of Kāma's wife Rati ("Desire"), Śiva graciously restored him to life.[45]

The form of Śiva as destroyer of Kāma, Kāmāntakamūrti or Kamādahanamūrti, is described in some āgamas as being similar to that of

Yoga Dakṣiṇāmūrti or Śiva as a teacher of yoga, seated under a banyan tree[46] but with the addition of the figure of Kāma, bow and arrows in his hands, fallen on the ground; and one text adds that Kāmāntakamūrti should have a terrifying expression.[47] There are sculptural representations of Kāmāntaka on a panel on the base of a *maṇḍapa* (hall) of the Airāvateśvara Temple at Tārācuram,[48] Tañcāvūr District, on a pillar of an unfinished *maṇḍapa* near the tank of the Ekāmbareśvara Temple in Kāñcipuram,[49] Ceṅkaṟpaṭṭu District, and in a niche in the outer north wall of the central shrine of the Gaṅgaikoṇḍacoḻeśvara Temple at Kaṅkaikoṇṭacōḻapuram,[50] Tiruccirāppaḷḷi District. In the myths relating to the Destruction of Kāma, there is no reference to a dance of victory by Śiva after the destruction, and there is no dance shown in the sculptural representations of that episode. But although there is no externally visible dance, the dance may be regarded as having taken place internally in Śiva's mind: Kāma disturbed Śiva when he was engaged in a "meditation of rare penance,"[51] in the course of which the passions were burned, and Śiva danced in the fire of the great sacrifice of the burning of the passions.[52]

According to Tamil tradition, the Destruction of Kāma took place at Kuṟukkai,[53] five miles northwest of Māyavaram,[54] Tañcāvūr District.

Another of the heroic feats of Śiva is the destruction of Yama, the God of Death, and in this form Śiva is called Yamāntakamūrti or, since Yama is also Kāla (Time),[55] Kālāntakamūrti or Kālasaṃhāramūrti. According to the myth a sage who had long prayed to Śiva for a son was given one named Mārkaṇḍeya, who was doomed to die at the age of sixteen. When Yama came to claim him at the appointed time the boy, who was a great devotee of Śiva, embraced the temple *liṅga* and Yama's noose encircled both the boy and the *liṅga*. Śiva then emerged from the *liṅga* and kicked Yama to death. Later Śiva restored Yama to life at the request of the gods, who complained of the overcrowding of the earth in the absence of Yama.[56] Thus Śiva reveals himself as the Supreme Being, giving grace both to Mārkaṇḍeya, who represents proper discernment *(viveka)*, and also to Yama, who being intoxicated by power represents delusion *(moha)*.[57]

According to Tamil tradition, it was in the Amṛtaghaṭeśvara Temple at Kaṭavūr (now called Kaṭaiyūr), Tañcāvūr District[58] that Mārkaṇḍeya clung to the *liṅga* and was saved from Yama.[59] The *liṅga* in this temple bears the impression of the clasp of Mārkaṇḍeya and the noose of Yama.[60] In this temple there is also an image of Kālasaṃhāramūrti at the foot of which there is a figure of an attendant of Śiva, who is shown dragging away the corpse of Yama.[61] Yama is said to have prayed to Śiva in the Dharmapurīśvara Temple at Tarumapuram, close to Māyavaram in the Tañcāvūr District, in the expiation of his sin of encircling with his noose the *liṅga* at Kaṭavūr.[62]

A similar legend is related of a devotee of Śiva called Śveta, who was bound by Yama's noose when praying to Śiva, but was saved by Śiva emerging from the *liṅga* and killing Yama.[63]

Local tradition at Tiruveṇkāṭu, near Cīkāḻi in the Tañcāvūr District relates that a child devotee of Śiva called Śvetaketu, who had been worshipping Śiva at Cidambaram and was approaching the end of the appointed span of his life, had come to Tiruveṇkāṭu, where he had installed and was worshipping a *liṅga*. When Yama came to take him, Śiva intervened to save him, and the place came thereafter to be called Śvetāraṇya.[64]

Good sculptural representations of Śiva as Kālasaṃhāramūrti dancing on Yama's prostrate body are to be found in the Kailāsanātha Temple, Kāñcipuram[65]; in the Rājarājeśvara Temple at Tañcāvūr[66]; in the Gaṅgaikoṇḍacoḻeśvara Temple at Kaṅkaikoṇṭacōḻapuram[67]; in a temple at Paṭṭīśvaram, near Kumpakōṇam, Tañcāvūr District[68]; in the Uttarapatīśvara Temple at Tirucceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi[69] and in the Mūvar Temple at Koṭumpāḻūr near Putukkōṭṭai, Tirunelvēli District.[70]

It has been said that the heroic feats of Śiva as Tripurāntakamūrti, the form which put an end *(anta)* to the Triple City *(Tripura)* of the *asuras* or demons is the favourite myth of the Sanskrit poets describing Śiva's feats.[71] After Śiva's son Kārttikeya had killed the *asura* Tāraka[72] the latter's three sons, who had acquired extraordinary powers as a result of severe austerities and penances, obtained from Brahmā the boon that their three magic cities of gold, silver and iron (from which they roamed at will through the triple worlds of the universe – the heavens, the air and the earth) should be indestructible except when all three cities should come together once in every thousand years and be pierced by a single arrow.[73] When harassed by these three *asuras,* the gods appealed to Śiva for help. Riding on the earth as a chariot, drawn by the Vedas as horses and with Brahmā as charioteer, Śiva confronted the three fortified cities just when they had become conjoined into one; and he shot his arrow, reducing the cities and their inhabitants to ashes.[74]

In some Sanskrit versions of the myth[75] Śiva's mere glance at the three cities destroyed them, but thereafter at the request of the gods Śiva with a laugh discharged the arrow as part of his divine play *(līlā).*[76] The Tamil poet saints mention both the arrow shot by Śiva and his smile as causes of the destruction of the three cities. With regard to the latter they say that Śiva, who was amused that the gods believed their help was necessary for him to destroy the *asuras,* smiled when the chariot they had provided broke down when he stepped on to it; and this smile burnt the cities to ashes.[77] After the destruction of the Triple City Śiva executed a victory dance proclaiming his omnipotence.[78] He also graciously accepted the repentance of the *asuras* and when they acknowledged him as their saviour, he made two of them his doorkeepers *(dvārapālas)* and the third one of his drummers.[79]

The popularity of the myth of Śiva's Destruction of the Triple City of the *asuras* is probably to be explained by the fact that the many forms through which the myth passed in the course of its long history, from the Vedic period through those of the epics and the purāṇas and later, contained potentialities for interpretation from many different viewpoints.[80] For example, at one level the myth describes a cosmic drama in which the *asuras,* having usurped the triple world, were defeated by the gods using the techniques of Vedic ritual, which were later replaced by surrender in worship to Śiva as a saviour, a god who is powerful and terrible but is also a god of pity and of love.[81] At another level the drama enacted in the macrocosmic Tripura has its counterpart within the human body; for Śiva is regarded as having the capacity to destroy the *asuras* in that body – namely, the passions and failings of the unregenerate human being.[82] Both these levels of interpretation of the myth meet in the figure of Śiva as the Destroyer of the Triple City; and it is for this reason that the poets can say: "Praise to the victor of the Triple City, to the slayer of the sins of man"[83] and "I pray those flames, born of the arrow of the Triple City's seizer, may burn away your ills."[84]

According to Tamil tradition, the destruction of the Triple City took place at Atikai in the South Ārkāṭu District.[85]

Śiva as a destroyer of the Triple City is frequently depicted in sculpture: good examples are to be found in the Kailāsa Temple at Ellora[86] and in the Virūpākṣa Temple at Paṭṭaḍakal, Karnataka.[87] Śiva's dance of victory is shown in a sculpture in the Mūvar Temple, Koṭumpāḷūr.[88]

In several texts Rudra-Śiva is described as Kṛttivāsas ("clad in a skin"),[89] and various purāṇas explain how Śiva flayed and wore the skins of animals sent to kill him or demons in the form of animals.[90] But the best known form of Śiva as the wearer of a skin is Gajāsurasaṃhāramūrti, the "Slayer of the Elephant Demon," which is connected with the heroic feat of killing the elephant demon Gajāsura.

When this asura was harassing the gods and people of Kāśī (Vārāṇasī), Śiva hastened to their aid and with his trident pierced Gajāsura, who then submitted to Śiva. Śiva graciously accepted his repentance, and agreed to Gajāsura's request that Śiva should wear his elephant skin. At the place of the victory was established the shrine of Kṛittivāseśvara, the "skin-clad Lord."[91] According to Tamil tradition the defeat of Gajāsura and the flaying of his skin took place at Vaḻuvūr, five miles southwest of Māyavaram, Tañcāvūr District,[92] where there is a Tiruvīraṭṭāṉamuṭaiyār Temple.[93]

In one version of the myth it is said that Śiva forced the elephant demon to dance against him and that the dance contest went on until the demon fell dead; and then Śiva, having flayed him, wore the hide as a kind of mantle and executed a dance of victory before the gaze of his alarmed consort.[94] Good sculptural representations of Gajāsurasaṃhāramūrti in metal and in stone are

to be found in the Tiruvīraṭṭāṉeśvara Temple at Vaḻuvūr in the Tañcāvūr District and in the Airāvateśvara Temple at Tārācuram, in the Tañcāvūr District.[95]

In the next two exploits of Śiva, which we shall now consider, he defeats a son who forgetful of his divine origin behaved like an *asura* and required chastisement. One of these was Andhaka.

Andhaka, the "blind" one, was a son of Śiva and Pārvatī.[96] Born blind and ugly, he was also demoniac by nature. He was given by his parents in adoption to the king of the demons, Hiraṇyākṣa ("Gold-Eyed"), whom he succeeded as king. By practising severe austerities he acquired extraordinary powers. He harassed gods and human beings and led a life of violence and debauchery; blinded by lust he even coveted his own mother Pārvatī, Śiva's consort. He asked that Pārvatī be surrendered to him and challenged Śiva, who after a fierce battle between the armies of Śiva and Andhaka pierced Andhaka with his trident. From the drops of blood that fell from the wounds to the earth several other Andhakas sprang up; and to prevent the blood from falling on the earth Śiva produced from the flame issuing from his mouth the *śakti* Yogeśvarī, and the other gods sent their own *śaktis* to assist her in preventing the multiplication of Andhakas. Having kept Andhaka's body fixed on his trident for a thousand years, during which it withered to a skeleton and Andhaka became purged of his demoniac qualities, Śiva graciously accepted his submission and repentance. He restored his body and made him the chief of his attendants, and Pārvatī accepted him as a son. As thus purified he was called Bhṛṅgi,[97] and is shown in sculpture as a member of Śiva's family, sometimes dancing when Śiva dances.[98] Śiva is said to have danced, first after the defeat of the demon forces of Andhaka[99] and again after Śiva had pierced him with his trident, with Andhaka's body held aloft on the trident.[100]

The mystical interpretation of Śiva's victory over Andhaka is that Śiva defeated a demon who, having acquired special powers as a reward for earlier penances, had behaved arrogantly in the blindness of his spiritual ignorance.[101] Thus Śiva representing *Ātmavidyā* or spiritual wisdom defeated Andhakāsura representing *Avidyā* or spiritual ignorance; and the multiplication of Andhakas, which would have occurred if the drops of Andhaka's blood had not been prevented by the *śakti* goddesses from falling on the earth,[102] represent the evil qualities which tend to increase *Avidyā* if they are not controlled.[103]

According to Tamil tradition Śiva's defeat of Andhaka took place in Kōvaḻūr or Kīḻūr, South Āṟkāṭu District.[104] Sculptural representations of Śiva in the form of the Destroyer of Andhakāsura, Andhakāsurasaṃhāramūrti, are to be found in the Virūpākṣa Temple at Paṭṭaḍakal,[105] in the Daśāvatara Cave

at Ellora,[106] in the Dumara Lena at Ellora,[107] the Kailāsa Temple at Ellora[108] and in the Elephanta Caves near Bombay.[109]

Jalandhara ("water borne") was, like Andhaka, a son of Śiva and a king of the demons. He was born from the fire of Śiva's third eye when it was diverted so as to fall into the ocean.[110] Having subdued Viṣṇu and some other gods, Jalandhara challenged Śiva's supremacy and sent a messenger to him demanding (as Andhaka had also done) that Śiva should surrender Pārvatī to him.[111] The messenger having failed in his mission, Jalandhara and his demon hosts fought a long battle with Śiva and his forces. Realising the difficulty of winning by force of arms, Jalandhara sought to take Pārvatī by exercising his magic powers and went to her, assuming the form of Śiva; but Pārvatī was not deceived. Finally Śiva decided to kill Jalandhara. With his big toe he drew a wheel in the waters of the ocean and challenged Jalandhara to lift it. As Jalandhara's only response was to boast of his former exploits, Śiva hurled the discus he had created with his toe at Jalandhara, severing his head.[112] But although Jalandhara's physical remains went to hell, Śiva took back into himself his son's inner light and energy *(tejas),* which merged with his own.[113]

According to Tamil tradition Viṟkuṭi, near Tiruvārūr, Tañcāvūr District, is believed to be the site of the defeat of Jalandhara; and in the local temple there is a figure of Śiva with the *cakra* or discus in his hand.[114]

NOTES

1. From the later Vedic period onwards the word *asura* is generally used to mean demon, although earlier it was restricted to beings of a godlike nature and even to the gods themselves. (Monier-Williams (1891), p. 236).

2. They are sometimes referred to us *vīraṭṭāṉams or vīraṭṭams.* (see ch. 5 n. 44).

3. For example, in the Tamil Tēvāram hymns (see ch. 5, n. 14) dating from about the 6th century A.D. the eight exploits of Śiva are mentioned. The Tirukkaṇṭiyūrpurāṇam v. 5 (1939), p.x. mentions the eight exploits and the places in the Tamil country where they are believed to have taken place.

4. One version of the Dakṣa myth connects it with the Tripura myth by saying that Śiva's first act after the destruction of the sacrifice was the making of the bow and the arrows used to shoot and destroy the three cities. (Mahābhārata 13. 145. 5-29; Shulman (1980), p. 114).

5. See ch. 1, p. 1.

6. For the chief Sanskrit versions and the differences between them see Bhattacharji (1978), pp. 121-124 and Gonda (1970), pp. 133-134. A summary of the Tamil versions, (the chief of which is that in the Kantapurāṇam) and a

discussion of the significant differences between them and the Sanskrit versions are to be found in Shulman (1980), pp. 337-346.

7. See Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 301-340.

8. Particularly ritual skill, the power of rites that links men with the gods. (Daniélou (1964), pp. 320, 121-122). Dakṣa was a son of Brahmā, the Creator, and he himself is represented as a secondary creator; and in later mythology he is personified as a sage (op. cit., pp. 122, 321).

9. Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 319, 335.

10. In different versions of the myth Vīrabhadra is said to have emanated from a fistful of hair that the angry Śiva took from his own head and dashed on a rock (Kramrisch (1981b), p. 322) or from a drop of sweat that fell on the earth from Śiva's forehead (op. cit., p. 330) or from Śiva's mouth (ibid.) or, in a Tamil version, from the eye on Śiva's forehead (Shulman (1980), p. 341).

11. In an earlier version of the myth Śiva destroyed the sacrifice himself. (Kramrisch (1981b), p. 323).

12. Kramrisch (1981b), p. 325. In another version of the myth, in which the sacrifice was destroyed, but Dakṣa was not killed, Śiva came out of the sacrificial pit and Dakṣa in adoration sang a hymn celebrating Śiva's one thousand and eight names (Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 330, 333). In a Tamil version of the myth Dakṣa is said to have become afflicted with madness because his sacrifice was destroyed, and he was cured from madness after worshipping Śiva at Kaṇṭiyūr (Shulman (1980), p. 345), a place associated with Śiva's decapitation of Brahmā (for which see p. 65).

13. Kramrisch (1981b), p. 333.

14. Nāṭya Śāstra 4.234, Kramrisch (1981b), p. 325.

15. Rao (1916), 2(i), Plate XLIV Fig. 2.

16. Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 319-320. In order to calm him and to end the wild dance which might otherwise have destroyed the world, Viṣṇu cut Satī's body into pieces with his discus. Wherever parts of the body fell, shrines (*śākta pīṭhas,* "seats of the Goddess") were consecrated. (Sircar (1973), pp. 6-7. For lists of such *pīṭhas* (originally 4, gradually increased to 108) see op. cit., pp. 8 et seqq.

17. There is a bronze representation of the dance of Śiva with Satī on his shoulder from Trivandrum (Rawson (1959), p. 108); and the episode is shown in the Chhau dance tradition from the Jalda area of Bengal (Gaston (1982), p. 167).

18. Hemingway (1906), i, p. 232.

19. Anon. (1959a), Appendix p. 3. The Mayūranātacuvāmi ("Lord of the peafowl") Temple at Māyavaram is so called because Satī, who had been turned into a peahen for disobeying her husband and going to Dakṣa's sacrifice, regained her form and was reunited with Śiva after many penances,

which included a bath in the Mayilammaṉ ("peahen goddess") tank there. (Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), 271; Hemingway (1916), i, p. 231; Das (1964), p. 180). Sūrya, whose teeth had been knocked out in the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice, is said to have prayed at Talaiñāyiru, five miles west of Vaittīcuvaraṅkōyil (Anon. (1959), Appendix p. 34); and Indra fleeing from the destruction as a *kuyil* bird (Tiruvācakam 14.9), is said to have expiated the sin by bathing in the tank of the Karuṅkuyilnātaṉpēṭṭai ("suburb of the dark *kuyil* Lord") Temple, one and a half miles from Māyavaram. Anon. (1959a), Appendix pp. 19-20).

20. For the myths relating to the manner in which Brahmā had acquired his heads see Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 250-256.

21. Op. cit., pp. 114-115.

22. See n. 33.

23. See Kramrisch (1981b), ch. 9 pp. 259-265.

24. See, e.g., Liṅga Purāṇa 1. 17.6 et seqq.

25. See ch. 5 n. 24. In Kāśī there are three particular *liṅgas* that are claimed to be the *jyotirliṅgas,* (Eck (1983), p. 109), the chief of these being the Viśveśvara Liṅga (op. cit., pp. 132-136). But in the spiritual tradition of Kāśī "the entire sacred field included within the Panchakroshi Road is the liṅga of light." (op. cit., pp. 109, 291).

26. The temple of Aruṇācaleśvara ("Lord of the Red (or Fiery) Hill") at Tiruvaṇṇāmalai is situated at the foot of a hill, which rises to a height of over 2600 feet above sea level and according to geologists is a "rocky mass of granite dating back to the earliest epoch of our planet's crust" (Brunton (1936), p. 14). Tamil tradition regards the hill as being the embodiment on earth, a petrified form, of the fire *liṅga* in which form Śiva appeared between Brahmā and Viṣṇu when they were contending for supremacy. (Kantapurāṇam 6.24 (Takkakāṇṭam Aṭimuṭitēṭuppatalam) 94, 96; Aruṇācala Māhātmyam, transl. Chadwick (1951), pp. 27-30, 42, 44, 46). To commemorate the worship of the fire *liṅga* by Brahmā and Viṣṇu a big festival is celebrated at Tirūvaṇṇāmalai on the full moon day of the month of Kārttikai (November-December), both in the temple and on the hill, at the top of which a fire is lit at dusk in a huge copper urn and kept burning for several days. (Arunachalam (1980), pp. 180-183).

27. Śiva Purāṇa 1.6.10; 1.7.24-25.

28. Kūrma Purāṇa 2.31.28; Śiva Purāṇa 3.8.42-43.

29. "Bhairava" is "derived from *bhiru,* which means ... fearful, in the sense of feeling fear." The "name describes the effect that he created in the frightened eyes of the beholder." It "is an appellation by inversion, placing effect into cause." (Kramrisch (1981b), p. 265).

30. Kāci Kāṇṭam ch. 31; cf. Kramrisch (1981b), p. 264.

31. Śiva stripped Brahmā of his head and also of his power. His cult, unlike that of Viṣṇu, is no longer important in India (Skanda Purāṇa 1.1.6; 3.2.9-15 and 3.1.14; Daniélou (1964), p. 235).

32. Hemingway (1906), i, p. 262.

33. It was the most heinous of the five great sins. Manu 11.54; Monier-Williams (1893), pp. 269-270.

34. Kūrma Purāṇa 2.31.95-97.

35. The fury of brahminicide *(brahmahatyā)*, incarnate as a fierce woman, followed Bhairava in his wanderings until he entered Kāśī (Kūrma Purāṇa 2.31.67-68, 99; Śiva Purāṇa 3.8.36-66 and 3.9.1-57).

36. "With a skull and a staff [in his hands], living on alms, announcing his deed [as he begs], and eating little food, the killer of a Brāhmaṇa, may be purified after twelve years" (Yājñavalkya Smṛti iii, 243; Lorenzen (1972), p. 13). Cf. Rao (1916), 2 (i), pp. 297-300, quoting other texts.

37. This is believed to have occurred at the Kapālamocana ("Release of the Skull") Tank, which is an important centre of pilgrimage. (Eck (1983), p. 119).

38. Skanda Purāṇa, Kāśī Khaṇḍa 31.121-123.

39. There are said to be sixty four varieties of Bhairava. (Rao (1916), 2 (i), p. 180).

40. Kūrma Purāṇa 2.31.77-85.

41. See, e.g., Kūrma Purāṇa 2.31. Śiva visited the Pine Forest on more than one occasion in different episodes in Śaiva mythology. (Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 287-294). For the legend associated with the origin of the *ānandatāṇḍava* dance of Śiva in the Pine Forest see ch. 8 p. 91.

42. Rao (1916), 2 (i), p. 307; Banerjea (1974), pp. 466-467, 483-484. There is a temple dedicated to Pitcāṭanan (Tamil for the Sanskrit Bhikṣāṭana), corrupted to Piccāṇṭar in Tamil, near Tiruccirāppaḷḷi (S. Ind. Inscriptions, ii (1) n. 9; Hemingway (1907), i, p. 314. For stone and bronze sculptures of Kaṅkālamūrti and Bhikṣāṭanamūrti from S. India see Rao, op. cit., Plates LXXXII to LXXXVI.

43. In some texts Kāma is depicted as haughtily confident of his powers over the gods, including Śiva. (Śiva Purāṇa 2.3.17.2 and 22; 2.3.18.1 and 2.3.19.7). Cf. Cuntarar Tēvāram 7.99.7 and 9.

44. Śiva Purāṇa 2.3.19; Matsya Purāṇa 154.235-250.

45. In one version of the myth he was restored in a form visible only to Rati (Kantapurāṇam 1.10.85-90), which explains his name Anaṅga ("Bodiless"). In another version Kāma was reborn as Pradyumna, son of Kṛṣṇa. (Śiva Purāṇa 2.3.51), Mani (1979), pp. 379, 594. The courtship and marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī and the birth of their son Kumāra, the "Youthful" God of War, also known as Skanda and Kārttikeya, who as the leader of the divine hosts (Devasenāpati) defeated Tāraka, is the theme of Kālidāsa's

Kumārasambhava ("Birth of Kumāra"). For the other names of the god and for the coalescence of the Skanda cult with that of the Tamil god Murukaṉ, see ch. 2 n. 11 and Clothey (1978).

46. Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the "south-facing form," is one of the most important forms of Śiva represented in South Indian temples. For the various forms of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, see ch. 5 n. 13.

47. Rao (1916), 2 (i), pp. 148-149.

48. Sivaramamurti (1977), p. 135 and Fig. 395 p. 364.

49. Krishna Sastri (1916), p. 89 n. 3; Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 364.

50. Banerjea (1974), p. 488 Plate XXXIII Fig. 1; cf. Balasubrahmanyam (1977), Plate 220 and Nagaswamy (1970), p. 32 and Illustration 18.

51. Tirumūlar, Tirumantiram (1982), v. 346; v. 332 in (1984), edn., i.

52. Cf. Cuntarar, Tēvāram, 7.10.1 and 7.94.8; Rangaswamy (1958), i, p. 342.

53. Tirumūlar, Tirumantiram, (1982), v. 346; v. 332 in (1984), edn., i.

54. Hemingway (1906), i, p. 230. For the body of her husband to be recreated, Rati is said to have worshipped in the Sundaratīrtha tank at Kāmakavaṉam (now Kāmaracavalli) in the Tiruccirāppaḷḷi District (Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 364, which contains a picture of a bronze statue of Rati from the temple there); or, according to others, in the tank of the Seven Maiden Goddesses at Tirucceṅkoṭu, Cēlam District, (Tirucceṅkoṭṭumāṉmiyam), pp. 200-204, cited Shulman (1980), p. 252 n. 145).

55. Or rather Relative Time (Daniélou (1964), pp. 132, 202). By contrast, Śiva is Mahākāla, Transcendent or Absolute Time. (op. cit., pp. 201-202).

56. Kantapurāṇam 2.5 (Avuṇarkāṇṭam Mārkaṇṭēyappaṭalam).

57. Dakṣiṇāmūrti Upaniṣad 29 in Mahadeva Sastri (1950), p. 76. Cf. Campantar, Tēvāram 1.51.5.

58. Hemingway (1906), i, p. 232.

59. Jagadisa Ayyar (1916), pp. 285-286. At this temple ceremonies of thanksgiving are celebrated by people who have reached the age of sixty and above. (Das (1964), p. 176).

60. Das (1964), p. 178.

61. Op. cit., p. 175. The attendant is Kumbhodara, the "pot-bellied" lion, on whom Śiva first steps in climbing on to his bull mount Nandi (Daniélou (1964), p. 220).

62. Anon. (1959b), pp. 28-29.

63. Kūrma Purāṇa 2.36.12-28, transl. BS xxi, (1982), pp. 553-554, Liṅga Purāṇa 1.30.2-23, transl. BS vi (1973), pp. 122-124.

64. Das (1964), pp. 190-191. Śiva is also said to have danced seven *tāṇḍavas* for Śvetaketu here. See ch. 8 p. 100.

In the outer southern *gopura* (gateway) of the Pañcanadīśvara Temple at Tiruvāti or Tiruvaiyāṟu, about eight miles north of Tañcāvūr, there is an image

of a Kṣetrapāla "guardian of the temple", a form of Bhairava (Krishna Sastri (1916), pp. 159-160; Rao (1916), 2 (ii), p. 498, with a figure of Yama crushed beneath his feet. According to the local tradition, the god came on behalf of a young devotee and killed Yama, who was restored to life on condition that he should not molest those who died within range of the smoke arising from a pit where incense is kept burning to perpetuate the incident (Hemingway (1906), i, p. 276; Balasubrahmanyam (1966), p. 152 n. at p. 153).

65. Sivaramamurti (1974), Fig. 51 p. 203; cf. p. 20; and Gaston (1982), Plate 72 on p. 146.

66. Sivaramamurti (1974), Fig. 1 p. 89.

67. Balasubrahmanyam (1977), Plate 210.

68. Rao (1916), 2 (i), Plate XXXV Fig. 2 and Krishna Sastri (1916), Fig. 88 p. 138.

69. Rao (1916), 2 (i), Plate XXXVI Fig. 1 and Balasubrahmanyam (1977), Plate 51b.

70. Gaston (1982), Plate 74 p. 148 and Sivaramamurti (1974), Fig. 84 p. 232.

71. Ingalls (1965), p. 72.

72. See p. 65 and n. 45 at p. 73.

73. Mahābhārata 8.24.4-12.

74. Mahābhārata 18.24.68, 71, 75, 103, 108, 110-121.

75. The myth appears in several Sanskrit versions other than that in the Mahābhārata, on which the above summary of the myth has been based (see nn. 73, 74). For the development of the myth in its different versions see Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 405-421.

76. Liṅga Purāṇa 1.72.110-114; Śiva Purāṇa Rudrasaṃhitā Yuddhakhaṇḍa ch. 10, transl. BS ii, (1970), pp. 846-850. For the concept of Śiva's *līlā* see ch. 8 p. 98 and n. 135.

77. Tiruvācakam 3.158-159 and 14.5-9; Cuntarar Tēvāram 7.1.6 and 7.77.6.

78. Raghuvaṃśa 3-52; Śivaramamurti (1974), p. 25. Cf. Viśākhadatta, Mudrārākṣasa 1.2, transl. Van Buitenan (1968), p. 185; Cilappatikāram 6.40-45, transl. Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939), p. 124; and Kalittokai, Invocation, transl. Rangaswamy (1958), pp. 308-309.

79. Cuntarar Tēvāram 7.55.8. After shooting at the Triple City, Śiva repented of the deed and lamented the destruction he had brought about (Matsya Purāṇa 140.47 et seqq.; Gonda (1970), p. 117.

80. See, e.g., Kramrisch (1981b), cited in n. 75 and Gonda (1970), pp. 125-126.

81. Cf. n. 79.

82. Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 411-412. Compare the Tamil mystic poet Tirumūlar, who says (Tirumantiram v. 329 (1984), i; v. 343 in (1982)), that

only fools would interpret the myth of the Destruction of the Three Cities literally and that the cities are really the three *malas* or bonds *āṇava, karma* and *māyā* which, according to the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy, fetter the soul of man. (Cf. ch. 8 n. 120).

83. Bāṇa, transl. Ingalls (1965), p. 80.

84. Maṅgala, transl. op. cit., p. 82.

85. Francis (1906), i, p. 318. Śiva is believed to have set out to destroy the Tripura from Kuvam, now Tiruvirkolam, a village in the Ceṅkarpaṭṭu District (Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 258), where there is a Tripurāntakeśvara Temple. (Balasubrahmanyam (1977), pp. 288-289; and the breaking down of the chariot is believed to have occurred at Acciṟupākkam (the "place *(pākkam)* where the axle *(accu)* broke *(iṟu)*)" in the same District (Balasubramaniam (1958), p. 467).

86. Zimmer (1953), Fig. 55 and (1955), ii Fig. 226.

87. Kramrisch (1981a), p. 47. See also, the sculptures in the Kailāsanātha Temple, Kāñcipuram, Rea (1909), Plate xxxiii (6), Plate LIII, Plate LV (1); Tripurāntakeśvara Temple, Kāñcipuram, Rea op. cit., p. 47, Plate LII, Fig. ixx, cix-cxiv.

88. Gaston (1982), Plate 65 p. 135.

89. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Eggeling (1882), p. 443; Śatarudrīya 51; and the purāṇas cited in the following notes.

90. For example, the skins of the tiger and the antelope sent by the heretical sages in the Pine Forest to kill him (see ch. 8 p. 91 and n. 50 at p. 106), or the skin of Narasiṃha, the man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu (Liṅga Purāṇa 2.96.97-98 and 115, transl. BS (1973), ii, pp. 521-523), who was killed by Śiva assuming the fierce form of Śarabheśamūrti – Śarabha was a hybrid of man, beast and bird, a form assumed by Śiva for protecting gods and human beings from Narasiṃha's destructive acts (Rao (1916), 2 (i), pp. 172-174 and (1914), 1 (i), and Plate E facing p. 45).

91. Śiva Purāṇa, Rudrasaṃhitā Yuddhakhaṇḍa 5 ch. 57, transl. BS (1977), pt ii, pp. 1054-1070; cf. Kūrma Purāṇa 1.32.16-18, transl. BS (1981), pt. i, p. 253. The Varāha Purāṇa 27.15-18, transl. BS (1985), pt. i, p. 95 says that when Śiva was on the way to battle with Andhakāsura (see p. 69) a big demon called Nīla (the "Dark One") assuming the guise of an elephant attacked Śiva and after defeating Nīla, Śiva wore his skin as a garment.

92. Appar, Tēvāram, 7.10.1.

93. Balasubrahmanyam (1979), p. 305. The elephant is said to have come out of the temple tank and his figure is installed between the Nandi and the central shrine of the temple (Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), pp. 281-282. The surrounding fields are still known as Āṉaiyurittōṉvayal, "the fields where he flayed the elephant" (Rangaswamy (1958), i, p. 354).

94. Zimmer (1955), i, p. 360 and (1953), pp. 172, 174, but he does not cite the text in question. Some references in literary texts to Śiva dancing with or clothed in an elephant's hide have been understood as referring to a dance of victory after the defeat of Gajāsura. (Sivaramamurti (1974), pp. 101, 103; cf. pp. 84, 342).

95. In metal; Vīraṭṭāṉeśvara Temple, Vaḷuvūr (Balasubrahmanyam (1977), Plate 199; Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 104 Fig. 9; Rao (1916), 2 (i), Plate XXXI facing p. 154). In stone: Airāvateśvara Temple, Tārācuram, (Balasubrahmanyam (1979), Plate 249 and Rao (1916), 2 (i) Plate XXXII Fig. 1 facing p. 155 and Meister (1984), Plate 191 and at Tirucceṅkāṭṭaṅkuṭi (Rao (1916), 2 (i), Plate XXXII Fig. 2 facing p. 155).

96. Pārvatī had once playfully covered Śiva's eyes with her hands, plunging the world into darkness; and the child was conceived when the sweat of her hands on Śiva's forehead was heated by the fire of his third eye. (Śiva Purāṇa 2.5.42.15-26 and Śiva Purāṇa Dharma Saṃhitā 4.4-14; Kramrisch (1981b), p. 375).

97. Vāmana Purāṇa 44.72, 73; Śiva Purāṇa 2.5.46.39 and 2.5.49.41; Kramrisch op.cit., p. 379.

98. Kramrisch (1981a), pp. 45, 51. Bhṛṅgi is also the name of a sage, a devotee of Śiva, who figures (also at one stage in a skeleton form) in a myth connected with the Ardhanārīśvara (half female) form of Śiva (see ch. 3 p. 24). His exclusive devotion to Śiva angered Pārvatī, who caused his body to become a mere skeleton and he was unable to remain erect. But Śiva graciously gave him a third leg to support his body, and Bhṛṅgi praising Śiva danced for joy. (Rao (1916), 2 (i), pp. 322-323; Krishna Sastri (1916), p. 166 Fig. 105; Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 567, Fig. 198). Then Pārvatī performed asceticism until Śiva granted her wish that she should be joined to him in one body. But Bhṛṅgi took the form of a beetle, pierced a hole in the composite body, and went round only its male part. Admiring his persistence, Pārvatī finally forgave him. (Rao, op. cit., p. 323).

99. Varāha Purāṇa 43.69-76 (Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 377, 382, 441).

100. Kūrma Purāṇa 1.16.190; Śiva Purāṇa 29.25-27 (Kramrisch op. cit., p. 441).

101. Tirumūlar, Tirumantiram (1982), v. 339; (1984), i, v. 325.

102. Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 285 n. 1.

103. Vāmana Purāṇa 27.31-35; cf. Rao (1914), 1, (ii), pp. 381-382.

104. Cuppiramaṇiya Piḷḷai (1912), p. 103.

105. O'Flaherty (1981a), Plate 6.

106. Rao (1916), 2 (i), Plate XLV Fig. 2.

107. Agrawala (1984), Plate XXIV.

108. Rao (1916), 2 (i), Plate XLVII.

109. Rao (1916), 2 (i), Plate XLVI; Kramrisch (1981b), Plates 19, 20; and Zimmer (1955), ii, Plate 264. An eighth century sandstone relief from Madhya Pradesh, which is in a private collection in New York (see Kramrisch (1981a), p. 50), shows various stages of the submission of Andhaka and the acceptance of his repentance.

110. The spark from the third eye issued when Indra with his thunderbolt threatened a yogi (who was in reality Śiva) for not answering questions relating to his identity. Śiva diverted the fire, which would otherwise have burned Indra to ashes, into the ocean and Jalandhara was born there. (Śiva Purāṇa 2.5.13, transl. BS, ii, pp. 858 et seqq.). Thus Pārvatī played no part in the creation of Jalandhara, unlike in the case of Andhaka.

111. The messenger was the *asura* Rāhu, "the Seizer," who is responsible for the eclipses of the sun and the moon. (Mahābhārata 1.17.5 - 10, transl. O'Flaherty (1975), at p. 278; Bhāgavata Purāṇa 10.8.9, transl. Daniélou (1964), pp. 315-316). In response to this impudent demand Śiva emitted from his central eye a burst of power in the form of a terrifying lion-headed demon, which seized Rāhu; but when the latter appealed for mercy to Śiva, he was released. On the demon's pleading that his hunger had to be satisfied, Śiva asked him to eat the flesh of its own body: he proceeded to do this until only his head remained. Śiva then made this creature his doorkeeper, and as Kīrttimukha ("Face of Glory") he guards the entrance to Śiva's temples. (Śiva Purāṇa 2.5.19.18-48; Zimmer (1953), pp. 175-184). Kīrttimukha also figures at the apex of the aureole *(prabhāmaṇḍala)* that surrounds icons. Zimmer (1953), p. 182; Sivaramamurti (1977), p. 552.

112. According to Tamil texts Śiva drew the circle on the ground and challenged Jalandhara to lift the discus onto his head. When Jalandhara raised it with difficulty it cut through his body. (Kantapurāṇam 6 (Takkakāṇṭam) 13 (Tatīciyuttarappaṭalam) vv. 262-270; Dessigane (1967), p. 196; Cuntarar Tēvāram 7.16.2 and 7.98.5.

In a sequel to the defeat of Jalandhara, Śiva appears as Cakradānamūrti, the giver of a discus *(cakra)* to Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu obtained the discus which killed Jalandhara by praying to Śiva for it. He performed *pūjā* with a thousand flowers. To test his devotion Śiva hid one flower, but when Viṣṇu found it missing he plucked out his own lotus eye and offered it in worship. (Śiva Purāṇa 3, chs. 34 and 36.1-16; Kantapurāṇam 6 (Takkakaṇṭam) 13 (Tatīciyuttarappaṭalam v. 297; cf. Cuntarar Tēvāram 7.9.2 and 7.66.3). Tirumālpēṟu (now called Tirumālpuram), seven miles from Kāñcipuram, Ceṅkaṟpaṭṭu District, is believed to be the place in which Viṣṇu worshipped Śiva. (Balasubrahmanyam (1971), p. 92); and the gift of the discus is said to have taken place at Cakkirappaḷḷi (cf. Campantar Tēvāram 2.39.4; Balasubrahmanyam (1977), p. 405), an eastern suburb of Aiyampēṭṭai, Tañcāvūr District.

113. Śiva Purāṇa 2.5. chs. 20-24. Even when Śiva had finally resolved that Jalandhara had to be killed, he had inwardly blessed his son "in the heart of his heart." (Śiva Purāṇa 2.5.24-25; Kramrisch (1981b), p. 393).

Like Jalandhara, his son Marutvāsura harassed the gods and when Śiva assuming the terrifying form of Aghoramūrti (Rao (1916), 2 (i), pp. 197-200) killed him, Marutvāsura's life-force also merged with that of Śiva (Shulman (1980), pp. 133-134; Das (1964), pp. 189-190). According to Tamil tradition, the site of this exploit of Śiva is Tiruveṇkāṭu or Śvetāraṇya nine miles east of Cīkāḻi, Tañcāvūr District; and at the Śvetāraṇyeśvara Temple at Tiruveṇkāṭu, Aghoramūrti is one of the chief deities (Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 262) and there is a fine sculptural representation of him there. (Balasubrahmanyam (1979), p. 414; Das (1964), p. 190).

114. Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 251.

VII

THE DANCES OF THE COSMIC FUNCTIONS (1)

Earlier we had occasion to remark that there are considerable differences in the Sanskrit and the Tamil texts dealing with iconography, dancing, religion and philosophy with regard to the names given to the different types of dances of Śiva, the descriptions of them and the myths associated with their origins.[1] This remark is particularly true of the dances which express, either separately or collectively, Śiva's five great cosmic acts *(pañcakṛtya)* – Creation, Preservation, Destruction, Obscuration and Conferment of Grace[2] – six of which have been localised by tradition in temples in the Tamil country.[3] The differences in the names and the descriptions of these dances and the myths associated with them are not surprising, since the wide range of texts involved[4] reflects in varying degrees both the folk and the classical elements of the dances, which cannot always be reconciled.[5] In this connection, it is relevant to mention the fact that the pose depicted in the well-known image of Naṭarāja dancing the *ānandatāṇḍava,* which expresses all five of the *pañcakṛtya*[6] and is the best known of all Śiva's dances, is not among the one hundred and eight movements of the classical dance tradition which are described in the Nāṭya Śāstra[7]: it appears to have been derived from a *deśī*[7a] or local folk dance tradition.[8]

The usual list of Śiva's *pañcakṛtya* dances as localised in temples of the Tamil land is based on the Tirupputtūrppurāṇam. This is a late work belonging to the nineteenth century and in it an attempt appears to have been made to reconcile the Tamil traditions of the halls in which Śiva danced with descriptions of features of his dances given in the āgamas, *śilpa* texts and purāṇas.[9] In the process the author of this purāṇam brings his own temple of Tirupputtūr into the scheme by dividing the function of Preservation into two parts[10] and declaring that one of the two dances of Preservation took place in Tirupputtūr.[11]

The seven *pañcakṛtya* dances and the functions that they represent may be listed as follows:

(1) Creation, represented by the *Kālikātāṇḍava* (Tamil *Kāḷikātāṇṭavam*), also called *Munitāṇḍava* (Tamil *Muṉitāṇṭavam*) in the Hall of Copper, Tāmrasabhā (Tamil *Tāmpiracapai*), at Tirunelvēli in the District of that name;

(2) and (3) Preservation, represented by (2) the *Gaurītāṇḍava* (Tamil *Kaurītāṇṭavam*) in the Hall of Pure Consciousness, Citsabhā (Tamil *Ciṟcapai*) at Tirupputtūr in the Pacumpoṉ-Mutturamaliṅkam District[12]; and by (3) the *Sandhyātāṇḍava* (Tamil *Cantiyātāṇṭavam*) in the Hall of Silver, Rajatasabhā (Tamil *Veḷḷiyampalam*), in Madura (Tamil *Maturai*);

(4) Destruction, represented by the *Saṃhāratāṇḍava* (Tamil *Caṅkāratāṇṭavam*) which takes place throughout the universe and is not localised in any particular temple in the Tamil land;

(5) Obscuration, represented by the *Tripuratāṇḍava* (Tamil *Tiripuratāṇṭavam*) in the Hall of Painting, *Citrasabhā* (Tamil *Cittiracapai*), in Tirukkuṟṟālam in the Tirunelvēli District;

(6) Conferment of Grace, represented by the *Ūrdhvatāṇḍava* (Tamil *Ūrttuvatāṇṭavam*) also called *Kālītāṇḍava* or *Caṇḍatāṇḍava* in the Hall of Gems, Ratnasabhā (Tamil *Irattiṉacapai*), in Tiruvālaṅkāṭu, North Āṟkāṭu District;

(7) All five *pañcakṛtya,* represented by the *Ānandatāṇḍava* (Tamil *Ānantatāṇṭavam*) in the Hall of Pure Consciousness, *Citsabhā* (Tamil *Ciṟcapai, Ciṟṟampalam*) or Hall of Gold, *Kanakasabhā* (Tamil *Kaṉakacapai* or *Poṉṉampalam*)[13] in Cidambaram (Tamil Citamparam), South Āṟkāṭu District.

(1) The *Kālikātāṇḍava* takes its name from Kālikā, which (like the more familiar name Kālī, the "Dark" One), is a name of Durgā, a fierce (as distinguished from a peaceful) form of the Great Goddess,[14] who is considered to be the Śakti, the inherent Energy or Power in manifestation of Śiva, inseparably blended with him as his consort,[15] in his aspect as Kāla, Time.[16] The first phase of the manifestation of this Power in the universe is often referred to as Creation[17] and the *Kālikātāṇḍava* expressed this phase.[18] This dance is also called *Munitāṇḍava,* because it was danced for the *munis,*[18a] the sages, of the Dāruka forest who, as we shall see,[19] figure in the legends connected with the origin of the *ānandatāṇḍava* dance at Cidambaram. After the heretical sages of the Dāruka forest had witnessed Śiva's dance and become repentant, they are said to have gone with the gods to worship Śiva at Tirunelvēli and he danced for them in the Tāmrasabhā, the Hall of Copper, there.[20] A striking ninth century bronze from Nallūr, Tañcāvūr District, is taken as representing this dance.[21]

(2) The *Gaurītāṇḍava* takes its name from the fact that the dance is said to have been performed by Śiva for his consort Gaurī, who after performing severe penances had pleaded for a vision of the dance.[22] Later the goddess Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu's consort, also pleaded that she be given a sight of the dance and Śiva repeated it for her[23]; and hence the dance is sometimes also referred to as *Lakṣmītāṇḍava.* Another name for the dance is *Rakṣātāṇḍava,* the Dance

of Protection.[24] An early ninth century bronze from Kūram, now in the Madras Museum, is taken as illustrating the *Gaurītāṇḍava*.[25]

(3) The *Sandhyātāṇḍava* is so called because it was a dance performed at one of the main divisions *(sandhyās)* of the day – sunrise, noon, sunset and midnight[26]; and the Tiruppuṭṭūrppurāṇam says that a *Sandhyātāṇḍava* was danced in the Hall of Silver at Maturai.[27] The *sthala* purāṇas of Maturai do not use the name *Sandhyātāṇḍava,* although they refer to the dance in the Hall of Silver there as having been performed by Sundareśvara (as Śiva is known in Maturai) for the benefit of his devotees Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda, who play a prominent part in the legends connected with the *ānandatāṇḍava* of Cidambaram.[28] They had come to Maturai to attend the wedding of Sundareśvara to Princess Taṭātakai (she of "irresistible valour"),[29] who was none other than Mīnākṣī, the "fish-eyed"[30] Goddess of Maturai, born as the daughter of the Pāṇḍyan king of that city[31]; but they had wished to leave for Cidambaram without waiting for the marriage feast because they were accustomed to witness the dance of Naṭarāja in the Kanakasabhā or Hall of Gold there at noon. Sundareśvara assured them that he would perform his Cidambaram dance at Maturai for their benefit, which he proceeded to do.[32] Later a Pāṇḍyan king Rājaśekhara (Irācacēkaraṉ) pleaded that Śiva should ease the strain caused to his right leg by his dancing continually with that leg fixed on Muyalakaṉ[32a] and Śiva agreed to dance with the legs reversed.[33] A bronze representation of this dance is to be found in the Hall of Silver (Veḷḷiyampalam), of the famous Mīnākṣi-Sundareśvara Temple in Maturai.[34]

(4) The *Saṃhāratāṇḍava* is the name for the Dance of Destruction, which takes place at midnight[35] everywhere in the universe, and is not therefore localised in any particular temple in the Tamil land.

(5) The name *Tripuratāṇḍava* is given by the Tiruppuṭṭūrppurāṇam to the dance of Śiva in the Citrasabhā, the Hall of Paintings of Tirukkuṟṟālam.[36] But that name is not used in the *sthala* purāṇas of Tiṟukkuṟṟālam, which speaks of the dance there as the Prime Secret Dance of the Lord, in the form of Pure Consciousness or Wisdom,[37] seen only by his consort – a dance which was later repeated at the request of the serpent Vāsuki made on behalf of the gods and sages and which was painted by the god Brahmā, who was a witness of it.[38] This painted representation of the dance explains the name of the Hall, Citrasabhā, of the Tirukkuṟṟālam Temple in which there is a painting on the wall but no icon.[39]

In the name *Tripuratāṇḍava* the word "Tripura" ("Three Towns") refers to the three fortified cities of the demons *(asuras),* which according to a well-known myth were destroyed by Śiva.[40] This victory of Śiva over the *asuras* is one of the eight heroic feats of Śiva, which according to Tamil tradition took place at Atikai in the South Āṟkāṭu District.[41] Śiva as Tripurāntakamūrti, the form of him who put an end *(anta)* to the Three Towns *(Tripura),* is depicted

in well-known sculptures – for example, at Ellora.[42] The Tamil mystic Tirumūlar has said[43] that only fools would take this myth literally, and that the three citadels destroyed by Śiva are to be taken as representing the three *malas* or impurities which, according to the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy, fetter the soul of man in its progress towards God.[44] But even as thus explained, it would seem that a representation of Śiva which shows him dancing on the dwarf Muyalakaṉ, the personification of the spiritual darkness which is a cause of the soul's bondage, and keeping him immersed in worldly experiences[45] could more appropriately be described as a dance of Obscuration than the Tripurāntaka dance, which expresses a later stage in the soul's pilgrimage, its purgation by Śiva's destroying the three *malas* and thus preparing the soul to receive illumination by the conferment of Śiva's grace. A representation of a dance of Obscuration is to be found in an eleventh century sculpture from the Kalleśvara Temple at Arulguppe, in Karnataka in which Śiva dances, stamping with both feet on Muyalakaṉ's body.[46]

(6) The *Ūrdhva*–("erect") *tāṇḍava* is so called because in it one of Śiva's legs is raised straight upwards. It is also called *Kālītāṇḍava,* because it took place in the course of a contest of dance in which the goddess Kālī participated; *Caṇḍa*-("fierce") *tāṇḍava,* because in the concluding stages of the contest the tempo was frightening to the bystanders; and *Anugraha*-or *Aruḷ*–("Grace") *tāṇḍava* because Śiva finally conferred his grace on the defeated goddess.[47]

The *Ūrdhvatāṇḍava* is said to have been performed in Tiruvālaṅkāṭu ("Holy Banyan Forest" in Tamil, Vaṭāraṇya in Sanskrit). Celestials, mortals, animals and birds, being harassed by two demons, appealed to the goddess Devī, who created the terrible goddess Kālī. She killed the demons, but being intoxicated by drinking their blood she rampaged through a sacred banyan forest, which she made her home, devouring all living creatures and causing fear to two of Śiva's devotees, who were engaged in penance awaiting a vision of Śiva's dance in that forest. The sage Nārada told Śiva of this unhappy situation and at his request Śiva came down from Kailāsa to the forest of Tiruvālaṅkāṭu and accepted Kālī's challenge to him to engage in a dance contest. After an initial dance of slow movements, which Kālī imitated quite easily, Śiva danced a fierce *tāṇḍava,* in which he kept one foot pressed on the ground while the other was lifted high towards the sky; and the ferocity of the movements of this made Kālī and the other onlookers giddy. Unable to imitate this dance, Kālī acknowledged defeat and sought and received Śiva's forgiveness and blessing.[48]

Sculptural representations of the *Ūrdhvatāṇḍava* in stone or metal vary with regard to the leg that is lifted upwards. The Tiruvālaṅkāṭṭuppurāṇam says that the left leg was lifted and the bronze image in the Ratnasabhā of the Tiruvālaṅkāṭu temple depicts this.[49] But whichever leg is lifted up, that leg

represents the limb which gave Śiva victory over his opponent immediately preceding the conferment of his grace on her.[50]

(7) The *Ānandatāṇḍava,* which expresses all five of Śiva's *pañcakṛtya* and is the best known of all his dances, will be considered in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. See ch. 5 p. 53.
2. For synonyms for these terms and their significance see ch. 8 pp. 97-98.
3. The *tāṇḍava* representing Destruction is regarded as taking place throughout the universe and is not localised in the Tamil country (see p. 81).
4. See ch. 5 p. 53 at nn. 28-33.
5. Rangaswamy (1958), p. 452.
6. See ch. 8 pp. 91-92, 97.
7. See ch. 5 p. 51 and n. 2 at p. 54.

7a. In Sanskrit *deśī* connotes "provincialism" and *deśīnṛtya* "country dance" SED (1988), p. 496.

8. Nagaswamy (1978), pp. 152-153.
9. See, e.g., Pūrva Kāraṇāgama, Sapta Tāṇḍava Paṭala 4-6; Śrītattvanidhi, i, (3) 17-23 and other texts. (See Sivaramamurti (1974), ch. 11, passim).
10. The preservation of souls while they experience the fruits of their good deeds and the fruits of their bad deeds (Vēṅkaṭasāmi (1967), pp. 42-43, 51-52). This is an innovation by the author of the Tirupputtūrppurāṇam, which is not supported by texts of the āgamas or the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy (Taṇṭapāṇi Tēcikar (1967), p. 126).
11. He says that the first of the two types of the dance of preservation took place in the Citsabhā, the Hall of Pure Consciousness or Wisdom in Tirupputtūr – thus associating this Citsabhā with the profound ideas connected with the Citsabhā of the Cidambaram Temple, which is the site of the famous *ānandatāṇḍava* of Naṭarāja (see ch. 8 p. 88, 98-99). The tendency of the authors of *sthala* purāṇas to glorify their own temples is also illustrated by the fact that the author of the Tirukkuṟṟālattalapurāṇam says (Civarakaciya Kāṇṭam chs. 8 and 9 (Vācuki Tavam and Tirunaṭam); Rangaswamy (1958), p. 446) that the dance of Śiva in Kuṟṟālam took place in the Citsabhā there.
12. Tirupputtūr is seven miles from Kuṉṟakkuṭi, where there is a well-known temple of Murukaṉ and the *maṭam* (monastery) of Kuṉṟakkuṭi Aṭikal, who has been active in the movement to use the Tamil language and non-Brahmins in temple rituals and, influenced by Marxism, has advocated a classless society and a Śaivism responsive to modern needs (Ryerson in Clothey and Long (1983), pp. 177-188).

13. The *ānaṇḍatāṇḍava* image of Naṭarāja is located in the innermost sanctum of the Cidambaram Temple, which is called the Citsabhā; but since this, like the adjoining chamber called the Kanakasabhā, has gilded plates on its roof, the word *Kanakasabhā* is indiscriminately used to refer to both chambers. See ch. 8 nn. 12, 13.

14. For many Hindus, who are followers of the Śākta cult, the goddess is the main representation of divinity; and Kālikā is the primordial Śakti. "At the time of creation Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara and other gods are born of the body of that beginningless and eternal Kālikā, and at the time of dissolution they again disappear in Her." (Nirvāṇa Tantra, cited in Rawson (1978), p. 192).

15. Daniélou (1964), pp. 253-257. Cf. ch. 8 nn. 130-132.

16. Daniélou (1964), pp. 200-202; cf. pp. 268-274.

17. Strictly speaking "creation" is incorrect with reference to Hinduism, since it does not recognise creation in the sense of an origination *ex nihilo,* "from nothing," from what did not exist before (cf. Zaehner (1969), p. 130), but only a manifestation of a change of form in an eternally existing substratum of all Being – a process which could more aptly be described as "projection" or "evolution."

18. In this connection it must be pointed out that although Kālī is usually depicted in art and literature as a fearful goddess of destruction, the higher spiritual wisdom recognises that Kālī has a dual aspect and that the destructive and the creative principles are found combined in the manifestations of the divine cosmic energy in the universe. (Daniélou (1964), pp. 273-274).

18a. See ch. 2 n. 42 at p. 16.

19. See ch. 8 p. 91.

20. Tiruppuṭṭūrppurāṇam, Tārukavaṉaccarukkam; Rangaswamy (1958), p. 442.

21. Sivaramamurti (1974), Fig. 53 p. 205; Krishna Sastri (1916), Fig. 53 p. 87.

22. Tiruppuṭṭūrppurāṇam Kaurītāṇṭavaccarukkam vv. 197-198; Rangaswamy (1958), p. 443; Taṇṭapāṇi Tēcikar (1967), pp. 132-133.

23. Tiruppuṭṭūrppurāṇam, Ilatcumitaṇṭavaccarukkam vv. 113-118; Rangaswamy (1958), pp. 443-444.

24. Vēṅkaṭasāmi (1967), p. 51; Rangaswamy (1958), p. 449.

25. Taṇṭapāṇi Tēcikar (1967), p. 134; Sivaramamurti (1974), Fig. 52 p. 204.

26. Śiva is said to have performed a dance in the evening twilight *(pradoṣa)* of the day in Kailāsa in the Himālayas (Śiva Pradoṣa Stotra, transl. Coomaraswamy (1948), p. 84; cf. Kāraṇāgama, quoted Rangaswamy (1958), pp. 454-455.

27. Tiruppuṭṭūrppurāṇam Kaurītāṇṭavaccarukkam v. 12; cf. Kallāṭam v. 28, Rangaswamy (1958), p. 446.

28. See ch. 8. p. 91.

29. TL 3 (i) (1928), p. 1726.

30. The suggestion in this description, frequently applied to beautiful women, is that "the motion of their eyes resembles the beautiful motion of a fish in water" (Kingsbury and Philips (1921), p. 31) or that their eyes are "love-filled" (Whitehead (1921), p. 112 n. 2), the fish being an emblem of Kāma, the god of Love (Stutley (1977), p. 191). A philosophical explanation of Mīnākṣi's name is based on the belief that the fish hatches its eggs by a glance and that similarly the devotees of the goddess are released from bondage by her *darśana,* auspicious sight (Shulman (1980), p. 207; (see ch. 9 n. 28)).

31. Tiruviḷaiyāṭaṟpurāṇam, 4.1-42 and 5.1-44, summarised in Shulman (1980), p. 202.

32. Hālāsyamāhātmya, summarised in Sivaramamurti (1974), pp. 380-381; cf. Tiruviḷaiyāṭaṟpurāṇam, Maturaikkāṇṭam Tirumaṇappaṭalam and Veḷḷiyampalattirukkūttāṭiyapaṭalam. For a similar story in which Śiva danced the *ānandatāṇḍava* for Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda in a place near Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam see Shulman (1980), pp. 85-86.

32a. See ch. 8 p. 97.

33. Tiruviḷaiyāṭaṟpurāṇam, Kūṭaṟkāṇḍam Kālmāṟiyāṭiṉapaṭalam 24.

34. Plate XLVI in Dessigane (1960), ii.

35. Tiruppuṭṭūrppurāṇam Kaurītāṇṭavaccarukkam v. 14.

36. Op. cit., v. 13.

37. Hence the place of the dance is described in the purāṇam as Citsabhā (see n. 11).

38. Tirukkuṟṟālattalapurāṇam, Civarakaciya Kāṇṭam, ii, chs. 8 and 9. (Vācuki Tavam and Tirunaṭam).

39. Rangaswamy (1958), pp. 441, 193; Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 382. The Citrasabhā of the Dancing Śiva is a few hundred yards away from the main temple of Kuṟṟālanātacuvami close to the Kuṟṟālam waterfalls (Pate, i, (1917), p. 461).

40. See ch. 6, pp. 67-68 and Gonda (1970), p. 125. For the myth see Zimmer (1953), pp. 185-187 and for a fuller treatment of the different versions and meanings of the myth see Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 405-421.

41. See ch. 6 p. 68.

42. See ch. 6 n. 86.

43. Tirumantiram (1984), i, v. 329 and Natarajan (1982), v. 343. Cf. Nallaswamy Pillai (1913), pp. 146-149. For the destruction of the Tripura in the microcosm of the human being see ch. 6 p. 68.

44. See ch. 8 n. 120.

45. See ch. 8 nn. 124, 125, 126.

46. Vēṅkaṭasāmi (1967), Fig. 14 p. 133 and Sivaramamurti (1974), Fig. 128 p. 265.

47. Tiruvālaṅkāṭṭuppurāṇam, Cunantur Upatēcaccarukkam 36; Vēṅkaṭasāmi (1967), pp. 77-78.

48. Tiruvālaṅkāṭṭuppurāṇam 10.1-77, 11.1-32, 12.1-61, 13.1-35, 14.1-55, summarised in Shulman (1980), pp. 214-216; cf. Sivaramamurti (1974), pp. 378-379.

The banyan forest of Tiruvālaṅkāṭu is also associated with Kāraikkāl Ammaiyār, the "Mother of Kāraikkāl" (6th century). She is represented in sculpture (see, e.g., Sivaramamurti (1974), Fig. 1 p. 151 (from Kaṅkaikoṇṭacōḻapuram) and Fig. 40 p. 375 (from Polonnaruva, Sri Lanka)) as a frightful emaciated old woman keeping time with her cymbals for Śiva's dance. Śiva had granted her request that she be relieved of her beauty to prevent all distractions in her single-minded devotion to him and that she be given the form of one of the demons who attended on him; and she made her abode in the banyan forest, where Śiva danced for her. (Periyapurāṇam 5.4.1-50, summarised Pope (1900), pp. 111-113; cf. Schulman (1980), p. 160). Her hymns which are in the eleventh book of the Tirumuṟai (see ch. 5 n. 15), are among the earliest in that collection (Zvelebil (1974), p. 97) and include the earliest Tamil poems devoted to a dance of Śiva.

49. See Sivaramamurti (1974), Fig. 108 p. 251; Balasubrahmanyam (1977), Plate 239. A stone sculpture from Tiruppaṉantāḷ, Tañcāvūr District (Krishna Sastri (1916), Fig. 50 p. 83 shows the right leg lifted up.

50. Vēṅkaṭasāmi (1967), p. 19.

VIII

THE DANCES OF THE COSMIC FUNCTIONS (2): THE DANCE OF BLISS AT CIDAMBARAM

The *ānandatāṇḍava* image of Naṭarāja is situated in the sanctum sanctorum of the Naṭarāja Temple at Cidambaram about a hundred and fifty miles south of Madras in the South Āṟkāṭu District of the state of Tamil Nadu. The temple is located almost at the centre of the city, and for centuries it has been held in higher veneration than any other Śaiva temple of South India. Śaivites there refer to it simply as *Kōyil* (Tamil for "temple"), because for them it is the Temple *par excellence*.[1] Innumerable hymns sing the praises of the temple and its chief deity. Saint Māṇikkavācakar[2] spent the closing years of his life there, and he is said to have attained final beatitude by merging into the divinity in the central shrine.[3]

Cidambaram is referred to in the devotional and other literature and in inscriptions under many Tamil and Sanskrit names. The oldest name appears to have been Tillai or Tillaivaṉam, the forest *(vaṉam)* of tillai[4] trees, in which there is said to have been a *svāyambhuva* (or self-manifested) *liṅga*.[5] Another early name of the city was Puliyūr (Tamil for "Tiger Town"), which is suggestive of connections with the worship of the tiger by some prehistoric tribe.[6] Later, about the tenth century,[7] the Tamil name Puliyūr was Sanskritised to Vyāghrapura, possibly to connect a sage named Vyāghrapāda ("Tiger-foot") of the great or Sanskritic tradition[8] with Puliyūr and its local hagiography.[9] Another Tamil name of Cidambaram is also connected with Vyāghrapāda – namely, Perumpaṟṟappuliyūr, the city of the tiger-foot saint renowned for his deep *(perum)* attachment *(paṟṟu)* to the Lord.

Other names of the city are suggestive of religious and philosophical conceptions associated with the cult of Naṭarāja in the great temple. In the innermost sanctum of the temple the image of Naṭarāja is located in a chamber called the Citsabhā ("Wisdom Hall"); and to the right of the image there is a niche in which there is no visible form but only space, which represents the formless *Ākāśa* ("Space")[10] or *Cidākāśa* ("Spirit Space"),[11] and is sometimes described as the *Ākāśa*-(or *Cidākāśa*-)*liṅga*[11a] of Cidambaram.[12] The terms *Citsabhā, Cidākāśa* and *Cidākāśaliṅga* are connected with the Sanskrit name Cidambaram by a rather fanciful interpretation of the earlier

Tamil name Cirrampalam, the small *(ciṟu)* hall *(ampalam)* or temple,[13] which is the name used for the shrine of Naṭarāja in the Tamil hymns of saints like Appar (c. 580-650) and Cuntarar (c. 780-820).[14] Thus, the common mispronunciation of Cirrampalam as Cittampalam led to its becoming transformed to Cidambaram, which is explained[15] as a compound of the Sanskrit *Cit* (Consciousness, Spirit) and *ambaram* or *ākāśa,* so that the name is understood to mean Cidākāśa, "Spirit Space"; and since the word *ampalam,* meaning "hall" in Tamil, corresponds to *sabhā* in Sanskrit, Cidambaram is also taken to mean *Citsabhā,* "Wisdom Hall."[16] Similarly, the Tamil "Cirrampalam" has been equated to the Sanskrit *Dahara-*(or *Dabhra-*)*sabhā,* "small hall", which later became *Abhrasabhā,* "Hall of *Ākāśa.*"[17]

The city of Cidambaram has another name which also has connotations of great spiritual significance. This name is Puṇḍarīkapura, the "city *(pura)* of the white lotus *(puṇḍarīka)*", that flower being a symbol for the heart centre of the body.[18] In this connection "body" does not refer to the gross *(sthūla)* physical body but to the subtle *(sūkṣma)* body,[19] which Yoga philosophy[20] recognizes as an intermediary between the physical body and the Absolute. Further, since the microcosm of the human body has its counterpart in the body of the macrocosm, the name Puṇḍarīkapura identifies Cidambaram with the heart centre of the Universal or Cosmic Man *(Virāṭ Puruṣa),*[21] who is a personification of the manifested universe.[22] Consequently, Śiva dwells not only in the innermost sanctum, the heart centre, of the temple of Cidambaram, the City of the White Lotus, but also in the lotus of the heart, the inner city *(antaḥpura)* of the individual human being.[23]

This review of various names of the temple and the city of Cidambaram and the meanings associated with those names suggest that the cult of Naṭarāja in Cidambaram is the result of the interaction of several elements of both the little and the great traditions of Hinduism,[24] with their roots going far back to various levels of religious belief and practice. Thus, there is evidence of the existence at Cidambaram of various cults – that of a prehistoric tiger (later transformed by connecting it with a saint of the Sanskritic tradition)[25]; that of a *liṅga* suggestive of an old fertility cult; that of a local mother-goddess (later identified with Kālī)[26]; and that of a dancing god. A study of the complex elements that have gone to form these cults shows that, so far as the most important cult – that of the dancing Naṭarāja of Cidambaram – is concerned, the Tamil contribution to the concept has been most distinctive and decisive.

We have seen[27] that the word *tāṇḍava* itself is of Dravidian origin; and with regard to the concept too the evidence from early Tamil literature is that there existed an independent Tamil tradition of frenzied or ecstatic dancing associated with the old Tamil god Murukaṉ[28] and his mother Korravai, the fierce goddess of war and victory, as well as with Śiva himself. For example,

after defeating the demon Cūraṉ, Murukaṉ danced the *tuṭi* dance.[29] Chieftains and kings with their warriors executed vigorous dances on the battlefield to celebrate their victories[30]; and gruesome rituals were performed by the victors in honour of the goddess Koṟṟavai.[31] Ecstatic dancing while possessed by a deity is associated with Koṟṟavai and also with Murukaṉ[32]: such was the *vēṭṭuvavari,* danced by forest women possessed by Koṟṟavai,[33] and the ritual dance, called *veṟiāṭal* (the dance of possession) by Murukaṉ's priest, the Vēlaṉ ("spear-*(vēl)* bearer").[34] Again, in early Tamil literature references are found to victory dances of Śiva,[35] called the *koṭukoṭṭi,* the *pāṇṭaraṅkam* and the *kāpālam.*[36]

In Cidambaram today there are shrines that are evidence of the various cults that flourished there. Within the temple there are (apart from the central Citsabhā, the Hall in which Naṭarāja dances) an adjacent shrine of Govindarāja or Viṣṇu[37]; the shrine of Mūlanātha, representing the original *svāyambhuva* (self-manifested) *liṅga* of the Tillai forest[38]; and a shrine of Śiva's consort Śivakāmasundarī[39]; while outside the temple there is a shrine dedicated to Tillai Kālī Ammaṉ, the goddess who was originally in control of the Tillai forest but was exiled to the border of Tillai after Śiva defeated her in a dance contest.[40] These shrines of cults which flourished at Cidambaram before that of Naṭarāja was established there have, as we shall see, been connected in various ways with the latter in the legends relating to the dance of Naṭarāja at Cidambaram.

Recent studies of the evolution of the iconography of the Naṭarāja image in the *ānandatāṇḍava* pose[41] show that the early beginnings of that form can be traced back to a stone carving in a cave temple dating from the seventh century A.D.,[42] although certain features of the final form of the image are missing.[43] But the main developments in the canonical form of the sculpture, in stone and in metal, of the *ānandatāṇḍava* image occurred in the Cōḷa period, especially in the second half of the tenth century when the cult of the Naṭarāja of Cidambaram became firmly established as the state cult of the Cōḷa empire.[44] In the devotional poetry of the Śaiva saints from about the seventh century onwards, culminating in the Tiruvācakam of Māṇikkavācakar of the second half of the ninth century, the chief features of the mythology and the iconography of the Naṭarāja of Cidambaram are referred to.[45] Finally, between the tenth and the twelfth centuries, the Brahmin priestly authors of the Cidambaramāhātmya, the *sthala* purāṇa of the Cidambaram Temple,[46] rewrote the old Tamil folk legends of the temple and adapted them so as to ensure a triumphant victory for the cult of the *ānandatāṇḍava* Naṭarāja, overshadowing all other cults there.[47]

Before examining the chief features of the *ānandatāṇḍava* image of Naṭarāja in its developed form, we must consider briefly the legends which explain several of its features and its connection with the cult of Naṭarāja in

Cidambaram. According to the *sthala* purāṇa of the Cidambaram Temple,[48] Śiva's dance first took place in the forest of Dāruka (Tamil Tārukāvaṉam), the Deodār or Pine Forest[49] in the Himālayas, where there lived a colony of heretical sages, skilled in the performance of sacrifices and rituals but having no regard for the authority of Śiva. In order to teach them a lesson, Śiva went to the forest in the form of a handsome beggar, accompanied by Viṣṇu as a seductive woman Mohinī. Their appearance aroused feelings in the minds of the sages and their wives, feelings to which they had long been strangers. When the sages realised that the visitors were more than they seemed, they became angry and tried to destroy Śiva by means of magic incantations. A tiger appearing from the sacrificial fire rushed upon Śiva; but, smiling, he seized it, ripped off its skin and wrapped it round his body. Then a serpent emerged from the fire, but he grasped it and wreathed it round his neck as a garland. Finally, a hideous dwarf appeared but Śiva stepped on him, breaking his back, and used him as a pedestal to stand on.[50] Śiva then performed a violent *tāṇḍava* dance, watched among others by Viṣṇu and the sages, who now acknowledged themselves to be his devotees.

When Viṣṇu recounted these events to Ādiśeṣa,[51] the cosmic serpent on whose coils Viṣṇu reclines, Ādiśeṣa performed severe austerities in order to obtain the boon of seeing Śiva's dance. Śiva told him that when he danced in the Pine Forest the earth had trembled beneath his feet, but that Tillai could sustain his cosmic dance since it was the exact centre of the universe; and he promised that he would reveal his dance to Ādiśeṣa there. Śiva thereafter directed him to change his fearsome form and to join Śiva's other devotee Vyāghrapāda, who had long been performing worship in Tillai, the site of the original Mūlanātha *liṅga*.[52] Accordingly Ādiśeṣa, assuming a new form, part man and part serpent, and a new name, Patañjali,[53] went south to Tillai and joined Vyāghrapāda. Finally Śiva revealed his cosmic dance to both of them there[54] and Tillai continued to be the earthly site of the dance ever since.

Various names of the dance of Śiva as symbolised in the image of Naṭarāja in the Citsabhā of the Cidambaram Temple reflect one or both of two aspects of Śiva – Śiva as the eternal, transcendental, Absolute Reality[55] and Śiva as immanent in manifestation in the changing phenomena of the universe.[55a] The philosophy of Śaivism recognises three phases in the periodic life-cycles of the universe: its evolution or projection from its source in Śiva, out of primaeval cosmic substance, from the subtlest to the grossest elements; its existence in developed form; and its involution or withdrawal to its source in the reverse order to its evolution.[56] The image of Naṭarāja in the Citsabhā represents Śiva as the dancer who is the source of all activity in the universe[57]; and one name of the dance, regarded as symbolising all five of the cosmic operations *(pañcakṛtya)* of Śiva in relation to the universe and its beings, is the *pañcakṛtya-tāṇḍava,* the vigorous dance of the five operations.

The commonest name of the dance of Naṭarāja as symbolised in the image in the Citsabhā is *ānanda-*(or *paramānanda-*)*tāṇḍava,* the vigorous dance *(tāṇḍava)* of bliss *(ānanda)* or highest bliss *(paramānanda).*[57a] This and the first mentioned name of the dance taken together, as the *pañcakṛtya-paramānanda-tāṇḍava,* express the conjunction of what even in sculptural representations of it seem at first sight to be opposites: the serene face, absorbed in the inner bliss of yogic contemplation, represents the Primal Unmoved Mover, the Unchanging Essence in all temporal phenomena; and conceptually it is in striking contrast with the vigour of the movements, indicated by the arrangement of the limbs and the whirling locks of hair,[58] that are expressions of the manifestations of Śiva in his *pañcakṛtya.* But there is really no contradiction in Śiva being the Lord of Yoga as well as the Master Dancer – in fact, Śiva's dance serves a similar function to his yoga and complements it. The narrative of a myth describing the origin of his dance adds: "But there are others who maintain that the *tāṇḍava* of the Lord is due to the bliss of yoga."[59] As Śiva himself once declared, "I am that god who sets everything in motion and who, absorbed in yoga and enjoying highest bliss, is always dancing."[60] The ceaseless quality of Śiva's *ānandatāṇḍava* is reflected in the description of it as the *sadā-* or *anavarata-* ("Perpetual" or "Unceasing") *tāṇḍava* and of Śiva as Sadānṛttamūrti.[60a]

Another name of the dance symbolised by the Naṭarāja image in the Citsabhā is the *cidākāśatāṇḍava.*[61] The explanation of this name is based on the fact that the Naṭarāja represented in the visible image in the Sabhā is considered (as we shall see)[62] to be dancing not only in that part of the Sabhā where the image is physically located but also in the adjoining part, in the niche that represents the formless *Ākāśa-*(or *Cidākāśa-*)*liṅga*[63] and indeed also wherever that *ākāśa* extends, that is, everywhere in the universe. *Ākāśa* is the primary and most subtly pervasive manifestation of Divinity[64] and because of its omnipresence and all-pervasiveness it is often taken to be an invisible symbol of Ultimate Reality.[65]

Yet another name of the *ānandatāṇḍava* dance of Śiva, which relates it to the transcendental Supreme Śiva, is the *nādānta nāṭaka*[65a] or dance *(nāṭaka)* that signifies the end *(anta)* of *nāda,* the primordial sound-vibration,[65b] which is the first stage in the evolution of the phenomenal universe. This first stage is also the final stage in the reverse process of involution at the end of a periodic life-cycle of the universe; and *nādānta* represents a state beyond and transcending *nāda,*[65c] in which only Śiva remains.[65d] In this state Śiva is significantly referred to as Nādānta ("He who is the end of *nāda*") and Nādavarjita ("He who is beyond *nāda*").[65e]

We must now consider the chief features of the *ānandatāṇḍava* image of Naṭarāja in its developed form (which was reached by the end of the tenth century) and the symbolic significance of those features. Incidentally, we may

observe that while the artists who made the sculptures were bound to work within the broad framework of the rules prescribed for the basic features by the iconographic texts, those rules did not limit the free expression of the creative imagination and the aesthetic feeling of the individual artist. Consequently different images show variations in some respects – such as the expression on Śiva's face,[66] the arrangement of his hair,[67] the position of the dwarf below his right foot[68] and that of the mermaid at the top of the image[69] and in the shape of the arch of flames which surrounds the image.[70]

We shall see that several features of the image are not peculiar to the *ānandatāṇḍava* or any other form of the Dancing Śiva but are illustrative of general aspects of Śiva and found also in other anthropomorphic representations of him. But taking into account all the important features of the image, whether they relate specifically to the *ānandatāṇḍava* form of Śiva or not, it can justifiably be said that scarcely any other icon in the world's religions is pervaded by so elaborate a symbolism, expressing the legends of popular cults as well as the profoundest philosophical ideas, as this image. Consequently it is not surprising that the *ānandatāṇḍava* image of Naṭarāja possesses a perennial vitality for devotees as a subject for meditation and worship.

The *ānandatāṇḍava* image of Naṭarāja shows him dancing, with his right leg slightly bent pressing down on the prostrate figure of a dwarf and his left leg lifted upwards with the knee about level with the waist and the heel about level with the knee of the other leg. He has four hands. The rear right hand holds a drum, the other right hand is held upwards displaying the palm, the rear left hand holds fire and the other left hand is stretched across the breast towards the right of the body with the fingers pointing to the uplifted left foot. The whole figure is surrounded by a circular or elliptical arch of flames; and the figures of the god and the dwarf as well as the arch rest on an oval pedestal consisting of two sets of lotus petals.

Naṭarāja has three eyes, the third being placed vertically in the centre of his forehead. In his right ear there is a man's ear-ring and in the left ear a woman's. His matted hair is arranged to form a crown; and above this his head is adorned with a flame-like crest of peacock feathers, in which there is a human skull. On both sides of the head locks of hair whirl outwards in the direction of the surrounding arch of flames, and these flowing locks are decorated with various flowers. In the locks there are also a mermaid on the right side and a crescent moon and a serpent on the left. Serpents are also coiled round various parts of his body, arms and hair.

The body of Naṭarāja is adorned with necklaces (including one of *rudrākṣa* berries), shoulder ornaments, armlets, bangles, anklets and chains with bells round the calves; and there is a thread of three strands running over the left shoulder across the chest towards the right hip. He is dressed in a pair of short

drawers and the end of the sash of a waistband flutters in the air outwards to the arch of flames, indicating, like the whirling locks of hair, the vigour of the movements of the dance.

We shall now consider all the important features of the image in connection with the mythology and the philosophy which explain their significance. Naṭarāja's three eyes,[71] represent the sun, the moon and fire[72]; and with them he can see the three phases of Time – past, present and future.[73] The third eye of fire is located in the middle of the forehead.[74] When the eye is directed outwards the flames from it, generated by the inner heat *(tapas)* of the god's ascetic fervour,[75] have destructive power[76]; but when it looks inwards, it is the eye of sublime intuition and higher perception.[77] It is believed to exist in all persons; but in most of them it remains closed until opened by spiritual disciplines, as in the case of "seers."[78]

The difference between the two ear-rings, the male (*makarakuṇḍala* in Sanskrit; in Tamil Kuḷai) and the female (*patrakuṇḍala*; in Tamil *tōṭu*) indicates that Naṭarāja unites in himself, and transcends, the dualism of the male-female polarity. This indication is more elaborately expressed in sculptural and pictorial representations of Śiva in the androgynous form of Ardhanārīśvara, the "Half-Female Lord," in which half of the figure, usually the right half, is depicted as male and the other half as female in physical lineaments, dress and ornaments.[79]

The hair of Naṭarāja's head and the adornments on different parts of it have great symbolic significance and illustrate many aspects of the cult of Śiva in general. The matted hair (*jaṭā* or *kaparda*[80] in Sanskrit, *caṭai* in Tamil) represents the untended and unshorn hair of the ascetic,[81] for Śiva is the great ascetic, Mahā Yogi, and is described as being *dhūr jaṭī* "loaded with matted hair," and among his names are Jaṭādhara and Kapardin[82] as having matted hair. Part of the hair is braided to form a crown, topped with a crest of peacock feathers resembling flames of fire[83]; while the rest of the hair whirling outwards to the arch of flames is decorated with flowers of the *arka, dhattūra* and other plants associated with the cult of Śiva. Peacock feathers were used to decorate the *kantu,* a small pillar which was a symbol of divinity and a prototype of the *Śivaliṅga,*[84] as well as the lance *(vēl)* used in the worship of the god Murukaṉ, a son of Śiva.[85] The *arka* plant was a symbol for fire and other sources of luminosity, especially the sun.[86] The *dhattūra* was a plant, from which a hallucinogen was prepared[87] – a reminder of the fact that in India, as in many other countries, the use of mind-expanding substances was thought of as a means of transcending the limitations of the human mode of being and sharing, however fleetingly, in the divine. Another tree sacred to Śiva was the *rudrākṣa* ("Śiva's eye"),[88] from the berries of which Śaivites make garlands and rosaries; and such a garland adorns Naṭarāja's neck.

The moon is a symbol of time, for its periodic waxing and waning phases regulate the reckoning of the days and the months[89]; and thus the crescent moon on Śiva's head symbolises his power over the measurement of time.[90] The moon is also the vessel of *soma,* the elixir of immortality which is the earthly equivalent of *amṛta,* the beverage of the gods,[91] and it is therefore an apt symbol of the life-giving principle.[92] Since he wears the moon on his crest, Śiva is called Candraśekhara, "Moon-crested", and Candrānugrahamūrti, He who conferred his grace on the moon.[93]

The mermaid in Śiva's locks is the goddess Gaṅgā, a personification of the river Ganges. Like the moon she is a manifestation of the life-giving *soma*[94] and her waters are said to have flowed down from heaven in great torrents to fertilise the earth and to purify its inhabitants.[95] Śiva is called Gaṅgādhara, the "Bearer of the Ganges", because he graciously consented to break the force of the descent of the waters, which otherwise might have destroyed the earth, by receiving them on his head.[96]

In contrast to the life-giving principle represented by the moon and Gaṅgā in Śiva's hair, the skull in his crown is a symbol of death and a reminder of the transitory nature of all worldly existence. Not only is Śiva shown wearing a skull as a crest-jewel, but in some representations of him[97] he wears a garland of skulls, which explains his names Kapālin and Kapālamālin, "adorned with skulls or a garland of skulls". At the end of each aeon Śiva remains alone, outlasting all other gods and beings: everlasting and imperishable, he survives the cycles of the periodical appearances and disappearances of the universe and its creatures.[98]

In the image of Naṭarāja serpents are found in his hair and coiled round various parts of his body[99]; and in some representation of Śiva the serpent forms the sacred thread (*upavīta, yajñopavīta* in Sanskrit; *pūṇūl* in Tamil[100]), which runs from over the left shoulder diagonally across the body to the right hip. Next to the bull, the serpent is the creature most closely associated with Śiva from early times.[101] Śiva himself is referred to as having the form of a snake[102] and called Bhujaṅga (Puyaṅkaṉ in Tamil), "adorned with snakes."[103]

The serpent is a symbol of many things. Living in the subterranean world,[104] the poison it secretes (representing the forces that create attachment to earthly things and prevent human beings from attaining freedom) is the antithesis of the elixir of immortality of the gods, and is a cause of death. The serpent is thus a symbol of death and destruction.[105] But in the hair of Śiva – where the serpent and the moon, the cup of the elixir of immortality, are placed in close proximity – a different symbolism is attributed to the serpent. It is taken as symbolising the *kuṇḍalinī,* the cosmic energy that lies coiled like a snake in the microcosmic subtle body of a human being at the base of the spine.[106] When this *kuṇḍalinī* is aroused by various yogic techniques and made to ascend from its normal resting place up to the *sahasrāra cakra* (which is

depicted as a thousand-petalled lotus with the moon in the middle[107]) at the top of the brain, the *kuṇḍalinī* is visualised as drinking the drops of elixir in the cup of the moon and the individual is liberated from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The *kuṇḍalinī* operates at the macrocosmic level also: when the *kuṇḍalinī* uncoils at the beginning of an aeon, the universe is evolved from the undifferentiated formless Absolute,[108] and when it coils up again at the end of the aeon the manifested universe returns to its source.[109] Apart from symbolising death and cosmic power, the serpent is also considered a symbol of rebirth and transmigration of the soul from one body to another because it is believed to rejuvenate itself when it periodically sheds its skin.[109a]

We now turn to the limbs of the image, the four hands and the two legs, which are the most important features of the image from the point of view of the iconology of Naṭarāja's dance at Cidambaram. The upper right hand of Naṭarāja holds an hour-glass shaped drum (*ḍamaru* in Sanskrit; *uṭukkai, tuṭi* in Tamil) symbolising the primordial sound-vibration *(nāda)*, which is the first stage in the evolution of the phenomenal universe.[110] All the rhythms of manifestation are believed to have issued from the drum, the beats of which symbolise the rhythmic pulsations of the creative force as the universe unfolds[111] – not merely the physical universe and the beings in it but also various basic forms of knowledge. Thus at the end of his cosmic dance Naṭarāja is said to have struck his drum fourteen times and the fourteen sounds that issued were received by his devotee Pāṇini as aphorisms, the Maheśvara Sūtras, enshrining the fundamental speech sound in their purest primordial form[112]; and Pāṇini's great Sanskrit grammar, the Aṣṭādhyāyī,[113] was based on those aphorisms.[114]

The upper right hand of Naṭarāja holding the drum that symbolises the creation or the evolution of the forms of the manifested universe is balanced, at the other end of the arch of flames, by the upper left hand, which holds a blazing fire, the instrument of the destruction or the dissolution of the manifested forms. When fire has fulfilled its destructive function, only the purified primary elements of what was burned remain behind. At the end of an aeon Śiva is said to have burned up the universe by a flash from his third eye and to have smeared the ashes on his body[115]; and ashes, the pure remnants of burned cakes of dried cow[116] dung[117] consecrated by chanting appropriate *mantras,*[118] are extensively used in Śaiva temple and domestic rituals.[119] In particular the ash is applied by devotees of Śiva on various parts of their bodies, especially the forehead, in the form of three horizontal lines,[120] as a reminder of the impermanence of the material world and as a sacramental symbol of Śiva's power to purify and redeem.[121]

While the rear right and left hands symbolise the balance of the creation and the destruction of the universe and its creatures, the front right hand with its upraised palm in a gesture that declares "Fear not" *(abhaya mudrā)* is a

symbol of maintenance and preservation. The front left hand is stretched across the body in a posture called the *gajahasta mudrā* resembling the stiffened trunk or "hand" *(hasta)* of an elephant *(gaja)*, which is the clearer of the way through the jungle of the world and thus (like Śiva's elephant-headed son Gaṇeśa or Vighneśvara[122]) the remover of obstacles. This hand provides the devotee with the reason for the assurance of protection given by the other hand. For it points to the uplifted left bent leg *(kuñcitapāda)*, which is of great significance in temple ritual and domestic worship as being the leg of grace *(anugrahapāda)*, to which worship and prayers are particularly addressed[123] as the source of refuge and salvation for the soul. By way of contrast to this uplifted leg, the other leg is firmly planted on a dwarf demon, who is called Apasmāra Puruṣa in Sanskrit and Muyalakaṉ in Tamil and is a symbol of the spiritual darkness which causes the bondage of the soul.[124] This leg symbolises the god's power of obscuration: he plunges the soul into the transitory world of matter and keeps it immersed there in the illusions that veil true Reality, until in due course when the soul has realised its divine destiny the veil is removed[125] and the soul obtains what the other leg promises – release from the bondage of worldly existence. Between them the two legs denote the continuous circulation of Knowledge or Consciousness into and out of the condition of ignorance.[126]

The arch of flames (*prabhāmaṇḍala*, in Tamil *tiruvāci*) surrounding the figure of Naṭarāja is said to represent the Sun's rays.[127] However, the philosophical explanation based on texts of the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy is that the aureole represents the dance of Nature or Matter *(prakṛti)* and that within it is contained the informing Power behind that dance, the universal omnipresent Spirit *(Puruṣa)* – Naṭarāja, eternally active in his own Dance of Wisdom.[128]

The *ānandataṇḍava* image of Naṭarāja represents Śiva as the dancer responsible for all the operations of the universe and the source of all activity in it.[129] Strictly speaking these operations are considered to be those of Śiva's Śakti, his inherent Energy or Power in manifestation,[130] regarded as his consort inseparably blended with him[131] as Śiva-Śakti.[132] More precisely the manifestations of the eternal energy of Śiva are grouped under five heads, and the dance is thus regarded as symbolising five great acts (*pañcakṛtya* in Sanskrit; *aintoḻil* in Tamil) in relation to the phenomenal universe and the beings in it.

These five acts, which (as we have seen) are symbolically represented in certain features, especially the limbs, of the image,[133] are (i) projection, unfolding, evolution, creation (*sṛṣṭi* in Sanskrit; *tōṟṟam* or *paṭaippu* in Tamil); (ii) preservation, maintenance *(sthiti; kāppu)*; (iii) withdrawal, reabsorption, involution, destruction *(saṃhāra; oṭukkam)*; (iv) concealment, obscuration – that is, of the true Reality behind the veil of transitory illusions *(tirodhāna,*

tirobhāva; maṟaippu); and (v) favouring, bestowing grace *(anugraha; aruḷ)* – that is, by accepting the devotee's love and granting him release from the bonds of worldly existence and the chain of rebirths. The first three of these five acts may be considered as having reference primarily to the cycle of the creation, the maintenance and the destruction of the cosmos, and the last two acts primarily to the cycle of the births, the deaths and the rebirths of individuals. Taken together, the five acts of Śiva comprehend the manifestation of the Godhead in all aspects of the empirical world and the ultimate reintegration of these manifestations in their source.

Although the last of these five acts of Śiva is specifically described as the conferment of grace, all five acts are considered to be acts of grace.[134] Śiva's acts are often described as his play or "sports",[135] because his omnipotence makes them effortless and joyous; and some philosophers have even said that the creation of the world was the result of a sportive impulse of God unrelated to any conscious purpose.[136] But the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy[136a] repudiates this view. It asserts that the acts of Śiva are not mere acts of capricious playfulness but that in bringing the world and its creatures into existence he had a gracious purpose in view, namely, the redemption of souls.[137] For Śiva embodies souls and sends them out to experience the pleasures and pains of worldly existence in a series of lives; and in due course, when a soul has attained the required degree of spiritual maturity, he interposes his grace in order to confer the enlightenment that leads to emancipation from the cycle of birth and rebirth and to eternal communion with him.

To conclude our examination of the iconology of the image of Naṭarāja in the Citsabhā of the Cidambaram Temple, we may say that the two basic ideas conveyed by the image are those of a God whose dance is the source of all activity in the universe and whose cosmic operations are inspired by the gracious purpose of releasing souls from the cycle of birth and rebirth. These ideas, which invest the dance of Naṭarāja in the Citsabhā with much more than local significance, are also reinforced by the position of the image of Naṭarāja in that Sabhā. In the Holy of Holies in the Sabhā there is a niche to the right of the image, which contains the so-called *Ākāśaliṅga* of Cidambaram.[138] This niche is usually kept covered by a curtain; and when the curtain is drawn aside[139] the niche is found to contain no visible image or *liṅga* but only some strings of golden *vilva*[140] leaves hanging against a background of ethereal space *(ākāśa)*.[141] The image of Naṭarāja and the *Ākāśaliṅga* niche are physically connected by both sharing a common platform[142]; and the juxtaposition of these two representations of Śiva – the dancing image with a visible form *(rūpa; uruvam)*[143] and its invisible formless *(arūpa; aruvam)* counterpart,[144] the *Ākāśaliṅga* – suggests that Naṭarāja is to be considered as dancing in the *ākāśa* in the niche. Moreover, since the *ākāśa* within the limited confines of the niche is symbolic of the vast, all-pervading

ākāśa outside, the true significance of the dance of Naṭarāja at Cidambaram is that it takes place ceaselessly[145] not only within the *Ākāśaliṅga* niche and within the Citsabhā but wherever the *ākāśa* is to be found – that is, everywhere in the universe,[146] including the hearts of all living beings.[147] Even human beings for the most part fail to realise this; but the great mystics declare that true devotees can experience the bliss of Naṭarāja's dance in their hearts and obtain release.[148]

In writings about the Naṭarāja Temple at Cidambaram the *Rahasya* or the mystical "Secret of Cidambaram" is often mentioned. This phrase is generally used with reference to the so-called *Ākāśaliṅga* in the niche to the right of the Naṭarāja image in the Citsabhā.[149] Sometimes it is used to refer to the *Cidākāśa* or the "Spirit Space" itself,[150] while at other times it is used to refer to a mystical diagram, a *cakra* or *yantra* symbolising that Space,[151] which is said to be situated on a wall of the niche.[152] Since this *cakra* is covered with a coating of civet[153] and the officiating[154] priests are not much disposed to talk about it, it is difficult to ascertain its precise form. It has, however, been suggested that the *cakra* takes the form of a circle,[155] which is a symbol of space[156]; while another suggestion is that the *cakra* is a *sammelana* ("combined") *cakra,*[157] a combination of *Śiva Cakra* and *Śakti Cakra.*[158] A third suggestion is that the *cakra* in the *Ākaśāliṅga* niche of the Cidambaram Temple is the *Śrī Cakra,* the best known of all linear *yantras,*[159] (which is a diagrammatic representation of the macrocosm of the universe as well as the microcosm of the subtle body of a human being, both viewed as sanctuaries in which the dynamic interplay of Śiva and Śakti takes place),[160, 161] with the figures of Naṭarāja and his consort superimposed.[162] It is not surprising that there should be differing views about the mystery elements of a religion; but the Formless Pure Spirit in the *Rahasya* area of the Citsabhā transcends all differences of view with regard to its representation in symbolic form.

In an illuminating essay on "The Dance of Civa" (1912)[163] Ananda Coomaraswamy declared that the Dance of Śiva was "the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of ... . No artist of today ... could more exactly ... create an image of that Energy which science must postulate behind all phenomena". Even among modern scientists, "explorers of the infinitely great and the infinitely small",[164] who have uncovered many secrets of our mysterious universe in the decades that have elapsed since Coomaraswamy wrote his essay, there are those who consider the Cosmic Dance of Naṭarāja to be a good metaphor to describe the ceaseless flow of energy that links minute atoms and immense galaxies. One of them, writing sixty three years after Coomaraswamy, says: "Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of matter ... . Every subatomic particle not only performs an energy dance but also *is* an energy dance; a

pulsating process of creation and destruction .... For the modern physicists ... Śiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter. As in Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos, the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomena .... The bubble-chamber photographs of interacting particles, which bear testimony to the continual rhythm of creation and destruction in the Universe, are visual images of the Dance of Śiva equalling those of the Indian artists in beauty and profound significance. The metaphor of the cosmic dance thus unifies ancient mythology, religious art and modern physics. It is indeed, as Coomaraswamy has said, 'poetry but none the less science.' "[165]

Cidambaram is the best known site of the dances which symbolically represent the five great acts *(pañcakṛtya)* of Śiva, individually or collectively. But in Tiruveṇkāṭu ("Holy White Forest" in Tamil) or Śvetāraṇya ("White Forest" in Sanskrit), close to Cīkāḻi in the Tañcāvūr District, Śiva according to local legend danced the *ānandatāṇḍava* and six other dances for his devotee Śvetaketu.[166] As a site of Śiva's dances Tiruveṇkāṭu is said to be more ancient than Cidambaram, as one of its names Ādicidambaram, the "original Cidambaram", implies.[167] The rituals in the Tiruveṇkāṭu temple follow those in the Cidambaram Temple; and here too, as at Cidambaram, there is an *ākāśaliṅga* in a *rahasya* chamber, the curtain of which is drawn aside after the completion of the services performed to the crystal *(sphaṭika) liṅga,* which represents the image of the Dancing God for the purpose of the services.[168]

NOTES

1. It has long been customary for the Tamil word *Tiruccirṟambalam,* the "Holy Wisdom Hall" (see p. 89 at nn. 13-17) of Naṭarāja at Cidambaram, to be used at the beginning and the end of all religious compositions, oral or written, of Tamil Śaivism – not merely those relating to Śiva in the Naṭarāja Temple of Cidambaram but even elsewhere: see, e.g., the dispute about the appropriateness of this word at the first recitation of the Kāñcippurāṇam relating to Kāñcipuram, where Śiva is worshipped as Ēkāmparanātar. (Shulman (1980), p. 87).

2. See ch. 5 n. 15.

3. Pope (1900), p. xxxii. A momentous event in the history of Tamil Śaivism, which is connected with the Cidambaram Temple, was the discovery by Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi (see ch. 5 n. 15) of the long lost Tēvāram hymns in a sealed room behind the sanctum of Naṭarāja in the Temple. (Zvelebil (1975), pp. 132-134). It was also in the Cidambaram Temple that Cēkkiḻār wrote and

published his famous Periyapurāṇam describing the lives of the sixty three Śaiva saints. (ibid.).

4. The blinding tree, *excoecaria agallocha* (TL, iii (1), p. 1925). However, B. G. L. Swamy suggested a novel derivation of Tillai from *"tilla"* or *"tīla"*, which "apparently belongs to an *apabhraṃśa* dialect of North India" and connotes a monastery of yogis (Swamy (1979), p. 21).

5. Cidambaramāhātmya ch. 8, Kulke (1970), p. 7; Zvelebil (1985), p. 62; Kōyiṟpurāṇam, Pope (1900), p. 1xi.

6. Tigers once lived in the district (Francis (1906), p. 28). The tiger was the emblem of the Cōḷa dynasty (Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939), pp. 90, 228, 235), which adopted the cult of the Naṭarāja of Cidambaram as its state cult (see p. 90).

7. Māṇikkavācakar of the second half of the 9th century (see ch. 5 n. 15) and the earlier poet-saints Appar and Cuntarar do not refer to Tillai or Ciṟṟampalam as Vyāghrapura.

8. Vyāghrapāda was the son of a well-known Brahmin sage Madhyandina and married the sister of the sage Vasiṣṭha, by whom he had a son Upamanyu, who became greatly devoted to Śiva (Mahābhārata, Anuśāsana Parva, ch. 14; Liṅgapurāṇa 1.107.1-64; Mani (1975), p. 808; cf. Kōyiṟpurāṇam Vyakkirapātaccarukkam Pāyiram 1 and 23-25).

9. Kulke (1970), pp. 34-36, cited in Shulman (1980), p. 378 n. 81. Vyāghrapāda figures prominently in the Cidambaramāhātmya (see n. 48), which professes to record the traditional legends of the Cidambaram Temple. He is said to have been directed by his father Madhyandina to go southwards to Tillai, a place noted for its great sanctity, to perform devotions and penances there; to have established himself as a devotee of an ancient *liṅga* in the Tillai forest (see pp. 90, 91); and to have obtained as a boon from Śiva the claws and feet of a tiger, in order to enable him to climb the tallest trees for choice flowers for his devotions. He is also said to have met Patañjali (see p. 91) there: and later to have adopted Hiraṇyavarman, the "golden-hued" king, who (in gratitude for his having been cured of a physical disability by a bath in a holy tank in the Tillai forest) brought down to Tillai three thousand learned Brahmins from the heartland of Aryan culture in the north, rebuilt the Cidambaram Temple and established a great festival there which annually celebrates the dance of Naṭarāja (Cidambaramāhātmya, chs. 16, 18, 20-25; Kulke pp. 15-18, 19-25, summarised in Zvelebil (1985), pp. 62, 65-66; cf. Kōyiṟpurāṇam, Iraṇiyavarmaccarukkam v. 62 and Tiruvilāccarukkam vv. 14-17). On the day of Hiraṇyavarman's coronation Vyāghrapāda presented him with a banner bearing the emblem of a tiger (Cidambaramāhātmya ch. 25, Kulke p. 25 and Kōyiṟpurāṇam, Tiruvilāccarukam vv. 5 and 6), which was the emblem of the Cōḷa kings (cf. n. 6).

10. *Ākāśa* is usually translated as "space" or as "ether," which was believed to permeate space "as a sort of universal medium and background of all physical phenomena" (Chatterjee (1979), p. 28), and the word has been rendered "ethereal space" (op. cit., pp. 52-55). *Ākāśa* is "the primary and most subtly pervasive manifestation of the divine Substance, out of which unfold, in the evolution of the universe, all the other elements, Air, Fire, Water and Earth." (Zimmer (1953), p. 152; cf. Zimmer (1955), i, p. 216).

11. This word emphasises the fact that the space in the *Ākāśaliṅga* niche in the Citsabhā of the Cidambaram Temple is not to be thought of as mere *jaḍākāśa,* unintelligent "material space," but that it represents Śiva as "Spirit Space", pure Existence or Being *(Sat),* pure Consciousness *(Cit)* and pure Bliss *(Ānanda)* – "pure" in the sense of there being no differentiation of subject and object. (Arunachalam (1981), p. 93 and (1927), pp. 35-36; cf. (1927), pp. 20-22, 99-108).

11a. For the use of the name *Ākāśa*-(or ether-)*liṅga* see, e.g., Gopaul Chetty (1930), p. 23; Sivaramamurti (1977), p. 504 and the Imperial Gazetteer of India, X (1908), p. 219. The *Ākāśaliṅga* of Cidambaram is one of the five *liṅgas,* each associated with one of the five constituent elements of the universe – earth, water, fire, air and ether *(ākāśa)* – that have become localised in particular temples in the Tamil land. (cf. ch. 5 n. 12).

12. See p. 99. The Citsabhā contains the invisible *Ākāśaliṅga,* the images of Naṭarāja and his consort Śivakāmasundarī and also – apart from other representations of Śiva used on special occasions – a crystal *liṅga* called Candramaulīśvara (see n. 144), a small ruby replica of Naṭarāja called Ratnasabhāpati (the "Lord *(pati),* fashioned of gems *(ratna),* of the Hall *(sabhā),*" and two sandals *(paduka)* – all these being used to represent Naṭarāja in various stages of the daily temple ritual.

These services are performed by the priests in a chamber called the Kanakasabhā or Poṉṉampalam ("the Golden Hall"), which faces the Citsabhā on its southern side and is directly connected with it. These two adjoining chambers have separate roofs of the same type, both covered with gilded plates; and the term Kanakasabhā has been used, both before and after construction of the southern chamber, to refer not only to that chamber but also to the older Citsabhā. Thus, Naṭarāja or Citsabheśa, the "Lord of the Citsabhā," is also called Kanakasabhāpati, the "Lord of the Golden Hall."

13. Cir̲rampalam, the small shrine, is said to have been so called to distinguish it from a larger shrine *(Pērampalam),* in which an ancient mother goddess of Tillai, later identified with Kālī, had long been worshipped. (Graefe (1960), p. 139).

14. Tēvāram 1.1 (Appar) has Tillai-Cir̲rampalam, and Puliyūr-Cir̲rampalam appears in Tēvāram 6.2 (Appar) and 7.90 and 90.4 (Cuntarar).

15. Cidambaramāhātmya, ch. 18 (Kulke (1970), p. 17; Graefe (1960), p. 139).

16. Rao (1914), 1 (i), Introduction p. 44.

17. Raghavan (1941), p. 238.

18. SED (1988), p. 631; Walker (1968), ii, p. 216; Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 24; cf. n. 147.

19. The important features of the subtle body are the *nāḍīs* ("conduits") and the *cakras* ("wheels" or "disks"). The former are the channels through which the vital energy in the form of "breaths" circulate. The three most important *nāḍīs* are the central *suṣumṇā* (corresponding to the spinal column of the physical body) and the *iḍā* and the *piṅgalā,* channels on the left and the right side of the *suṣumṇā* terminating in the left and the right nostrils respectively; and the two vital breaths, the *prāṇa* and the *apāna,* are conveyed by the *iḍā* and the *piṅgalā nāḍīs* respectively. The *cakras* are nerve plexuses, vortices of whirling streams of psychic energy, radiating in petal-like emanations (which explain why the *cakras* are also called and represented in art as lotuses). There are seven main *cakras,* visualised as spaced along the *suṣumṇā nāḍī* and ranging from the *mūlādhāra* ("root support") at the base of the *suṣumṇā,* through the *svādiṣṭhāna,* the *maṇipūra,* the *anāhata,* the *viśuddha* and the *ājñā* up to the thousand-petalled *sahasrāra* at the crown of the head.

By various yogic techniques (bodily postures, breath control, meditation on the cakras, etc.) the *kuṇḍalinī,* the "coiled" energy of the Supreme Śakti the source of all creation (which is represented as a serpent lying asleep at the base of the *suṣumṇa nāḍi* see p. 95 at n. 106) may be awakened and made to rise from the lowest to the topmost *cakra,* resulting in the reintegration of the individual self with the Universal Self. See Eliade (1973), pp. 227-249 and Zvelebil (1973a), pp. 39-46.

20. Especially Haṭha Yoga, which deals with techniques by which the body and its vital energies may be controlled and channelled for spiritual development.

21. Koyiṟpurāṇam 3.68.70-1, transl. Shulman (1980), p. 41.

22. Daniélou (1964), p. 57; cf. pp. 54, 42-46.

23. Cidambaramāhātmya ch. 18; Kulke (1970), pp. 17-18 transl. Zvelebil (1985), p. 64. As we shall see, there is *ākāśa* (see n. 10) in the lotus of the heart of each individual; and this microcosmic *ākāśa* is identical with the *ākāśa* in the *Ākāśaliṅga* niche of the Citsabhā of the Cidambaram Temple. Indeed both are identical with the *ākāśa* of the macrocosm of the universe. See pp. 98, 99.

24. See ch. 1 p. 1.

25. See p. 88.

26. See p. 90.

27. See ch. 5 p. 54 and n. 48.

28. Murukaṉ was later identified with Skanda-Kārttikeya of the Northern Sanskritic tradition. Tamil tradition regards Murukaṉ as the patron of the Tamil language and the tutelary god of the Tamil-speaking people. (Arunachalam (1981), pp. 113, 127; Clothey (1978), pp. 86-87).

29. Cilappatikāram 6.51, Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939), p. 124; while the she-devil *(pēymakaḷ)* danced the fearsome *tuṇaṅkai* dance (Tirumurukāṟṟuppaṭai 1.45-61, Arunachalam (1981), pp. 137-138).

30. Paṭiṟṟuppattu 45.10-12; 72.3-4 (Somasundaram Pillai (1967), pp. 172-173); Puṟaṉāṉūru 22. 14-23 transl. Srinivasa Iyengar (1929), p. 279. Women sometimes joined in the dance (Paṭiṟṟuppattu 52).

31. Zvelebil (1973), p. 126 n. 1 at p. 127.

32. Often the dancer in a state of trance manifested oracular and magical powers.

33. Cilappatikāram canto 12, Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939), pp. 180-181 and Srinivasa Aiyangar (1930), pp. 22-23.

34. See, e.g., Maturaikkāñci 611-617, transl. Srinivasa Aiyangar (1930), p. 24 n. 4. It has been pointed out that "both possession, a functional feature of folk religion, and bhakti, a characteristic of many sects, rest upon a common psychological condition, and that bhakti takes up in more or less sublimated form an aspect of common religion ignored by Brahminic orthodoxy." (Dumont (1970), p. 57). Cf. n. 87.

35. See, e.g., the Invocation to Śiva in Kalittokai (c. second half of the 4th century), transl. Somasundaram Pillai (1967), pp. 44-46 and Rangaswamy (1958), i, pp. 308-309. Cf. Cilappatikāram 6.40-43 and 28.77, Ramachandra Dikshitar (1939), pp. 124, 319.

36. See ch. 5 p. 60 n. 42.

37. It has been suggested that Viṣṇu's role as Mohinī in the Pine Forest myth (see p. 91) reflects an attempt by followers of the Śaiva cult to assimilate the local Viṣṇu shrine of Govindarāja (Kulke (1970), p. 94, cited in Shulman (1980), p. 309).

38. See p. 88.

39. Such independent shrines for the goddess, called *Kāmakkoṭṭams* (after the famous shrine of the goddess Kāmākṣi at Kāñcipuram, which is situated in a part of the city called Kāmakoṣṭha in Sanskrit and Kāmakkōṭṭam in Tamil), were established in later Cōḻa times (Srinivasan (1951), pp. 50-56). The shrine at Cidambaram appears to have been built by Naralokavīra, a commander of Kulottuṅga 1 (1070-1120). (Swamy (1979), pp. 123-124).

40. See n. 54.

41. Especially H. Kulke (1970), C. Sivaramamurti (1974), D. Barrett (1976), and K. V. Zvelebil (1985).

42. Temple at Cīyamaṅkalam, North Āṟkāṭu District, bearing a foundation inscription of Mahendravarman I (c. 580-630). Pictures of the sculpture are reproduced in Sivaramamurti (1974), at pp. 192-193 and he ascribes it to the early 7th century. Barrett (1976), p. 11 thinks that the sculpture itself dates from the late 8th or the early 9th century.

43. For example, Naṭarāja does not carry a drum *(ḍamaru)* and there is no dwarf on whom he stands.

44. Zvelebil (1985), pp. 23-29. Queen Cempiyaṉ Mahādevī, who survived her husband Gaṇḍarāditya and son Uttama Cōḻa (969-984) and died in 1001 during the reign of her grandnephew, the great Rājarāja I (see ch. 5 n. 7), has been described as "the most munificent patron in the history of South Indian art." (Barrett (1970), p. 8). She built many temples and made many endowments for religious purposes; and she played a prominent part in popularising the cult of Naṭarāja of Cidambaram (Zvelebil (1985), pp. 24-25 and n. 23 at pp. 77-78).

45. For example, already in the hymns of Appar (see ch. 5 n. 15) of the 7th century there are references to the essential physical features and the attributes of the *ānandatāṇḍava* form of Naṭarāja and the metaphysical concepts associated with it. (Ganesan (1966), p. 409).

46. See n. 48.

47. It must also be noted that when the authors of the Cidambaramāhātmya wrote that the legendary king Hiraṇyavarman, who rebuilt the Cidambaram Temple, was presented at his coronation (see n. 9) with a banner bearing the emblem of a tiger (which was the emblem of the Cōḻa kings), they were connecting the Naṭarāja cult of Cidambaram as directed by them with the newly established political authority of the Cōḻas (Graefe (1960), p. 142; cf. Gonda (1977), p. 281). On the basis of "some archaeological data and extremely surprising parallels" between the lives of the legendary Hiraṇyavarman and the historical king Kulottuṅga I (c. 1070-1118), Kulke (1970), p. 224 suggests that Hiraṇyavarman was Kulottuṅga I.

48. The chief text is the Cidambaramāhātmya ("the Greatness of Cidambaram"), a Sanskrit text written by the Brahmin priests of the Cidambaram Temple between the 10th and the 12th centuries. (Gonda (1977), p. 280, following Kulke (1970), pp. 146-148). The Kōyiṟpurāṇam ("Purāṇam of the Temple," i.e., of Cidambaram), a Tamil text written in the first quarter of the 14th century by Umāpati Civācāriya, a Brahmin from a place near Cidambaram (Zvelebil (1975), pp. 200, 244), is a close adaptation of the Cidambaramāhātmya (Shulman (1980), p. 32). Summaries of the former text are given in Zvelebil (1985), pp. 62-66 and of the latter text in Pope (1900), pp. lxi-lxvii.

49. The *dāru,* a kind of pine or cedar, is a tree that was associated with Śiva and is called *devadāru* (the "divine *dāru*"), a word often contracted to *deodār.*

There are numerous versions of the Pine Forest myth. But it is noteworthy that in the versions of the Sanskrit texts written in the Tamil areas of South India (e.g., the Cidambaramāhātmya and the Skandapurāṇa, (Śivarahasyakhaṇḍa; Zvelebil (1974), p. 185 and (1975), p. 222) and in the versions in the Tamil texts (e.g., the Kōyiṟpurāṇam (see n. 48) and the Kantapurāṇam of Kacciappa Civācāriya), Śiva's dance is not associated (as it is in some other versions) with features connected with eroticism or a fertility cult. (Kulke (1970), pp. 110-111, cited in Zvelebil (1985), p. 31, and O'Flaherty (1981b), p. 139).

50. The Tamil Kantapurāṇam 6 (Takkakāṇṭam) 13 (Taṭīciuttarappaṭalam) 30-127 gives a fuller list of what the sages conjured up by their incantations from the sacrifice and directed against Śiva: a tiger, an axe, an antelope, several snakes, a horde of demons, a white skull, a drum with a deafening sound, a dwarf and fire (vv. 100-115) – all of which appear as features of various icons of Śiva, including the *ānandatāṇḍava* form of Naṭarāja.

51. The primordial *(ādi)* remainder *(śeṣa)* represents that which is left of the universe in a subtle form, after its destruction at the end of an aeon when only Viṣṇu and Śeṣa remain, and from which the universe will be recreated. (Daniélou (1964), pp. 33, 151, 163).

52. See p. 90.

53. This name is said to be derived from the Sanskrit *pat,* "falling," and *añjali,* "hands folded in greeting." According to legend, Anasūyā, wife of the sage Atri, had prayed for a son; and Ādiśeṣa, reincarnated as a small snake, fell from heaven into her folded hands and in fear she let it fall to the ground. (Cidambaramāhātmya ch. 15; Kōyiṟpurāṇam, Patañcaliccarukkam v. 74).

At Cidambaram the name of Patañjali is also associated with the authorship of texts relating to the rituals of worship followed and the festivals celebrated in the temple (Swamy (1979), p. 71; Soma Setu Dikshitar (1982), p. 2). Whether the author of these manuals or the Patañjali who was a reincarnation of Ādiśeṣa in the legend of the Dance of Śiva (see p. 91) are to be identified with Patañjali, the author of the Yoga Sūtra, and with Patañjali, the author of the commentary on Pāṇini's grammar (see n. 113), may well be doubted. But writers on Cidambaram hint at traditions linking Cidambaram with all these Patañjalis (Somasundaram Pillai (1955), p. 63 n. *; cf. Sivaramamurti (1974), pp. 79-80); and it is understandable that the followers of the Naṭarāja cult at Cidambaram should wish to associate it with the author of the commentary on Pāṇini's well-known work on grammar and even more with the author of the most famous text on yoga, since their cult draws heavily on many yogic doctrines (see, e.g., pp. 95, 96 at nn. 106-108).

54. But before he could do so he had first to reckon with the goddess Kālī, who was already established in a shrine there. She challenged him to a dance contest and he agreed on condition that the loser would leave the site and acknowledge the winner's right to it. Śiva performed the *Ūrdhvatāṇḍava* with one foot raised skywards, a step which female modesty prevented Kālī from executing. She acknowledged defeat and was banished to a shrine at the northern boundary of the town (Tillaiyammaṉ Kōyil History, cited in Shulman (1980), pp. 218-219).

It is possible that the myth of the dance contest between Śiva and Kālī originated at Tiruvālaṅkāṭu (where it forms the central episode of the purāṇa of the local temple (see ch. 7 p. 83)), that it was borrowed from Tiruvālaṅkāṭu by the folk tradition of Cidambaram, and that ultimately it returned to Tiruvālaṅkāṭu, adapted in a secondary form by the redactors of the Tiruvālaṅkāṭu traditions. See Shulman (1980), pp. 213-223, where several versions of the dance contest are examined and differences between the way in which the conflict between the god and the goddess was resolved in Cidambaram and in Tiruvālaṅkāṭu are pointed out.

55. This is the "Supreme Śiva", Paraśiva, or strictly speaking Paraśivam – Śivam (Civam in Tamil) being the neuter form of the names Śiva (masculine, Civaṉ in Tamil), and Śivā (feminine, Civai in Tamil). Śiva is described by the Tamil saint Māṇikkavācakar as "male and female and neuter" (Tiruvācakam 3.57 and 134-135; 5.29 and 7.18); and each of the three forms of the name is appropriate in different contexts – e.g., Śivam when referring to "the Highest state of God in which he exists as Pure Intelligence." (TL (1928), 3 (iii), p. 1446) and Śiva and Śivā to the manifestations of the god and of his energy *(śakti)* personified as his consort (cf. op. cit., pp. 1447, 1449).

55a. As might be expected, these two aspects are not always differentiated in the devotional and ritual literature of Śaivism. For example, in a well-known verse the Tamil saint Cēkkiḻār says: "O You, the Light which is beyond the reach of thought, the very form of Grace, the wonderful Omnipresence, ... that as the Great Expanse of Pure Spirit *(ciṟparavyōmam)* (see n. 61) dances in beauty in the holy Ciṟṟampalam [i.e., Citsabhā, see p. 88], Your flower-foot be praised." (Periyapurāṇam (1950), 4.2).

The cult of the Dancing Śiva has assumed such a predominant place in the Cidambaram Temple, when compared with all other cults there (see p. 90), that the concept and the language of the dance are applied metaphorically to the transcendent Paraśivam, even in the rituals. Thus, when the priest, having invoked the higher *tattvas* or transcendental principles in the evolution of the universe (see n. 56) represented in the *liṅga* (see ch. 4 n. 74), goes on to invoke, in the *ākāśa* above the *liṅga,* the Ultimate Supreme Reality (which lies beyond and is the source of all those *tattvas*), he invokes it as

"Tāṇḍaveśvara", the Lord of the Tāṇḍava Dance (Jñānāvaraṇa Viḷakkam (1957), p. 259), who is described as "the ever dancing Great Light *(sadā nṛttaṃ mahājyotiḥ)*" (op. cit., p. 250) engaged in the *paramānandatāṇḍava,* the dance of highest bliss [see n. 57a] (Jñānānta Paribhāṣā, quoted by Nagaswamy in Meister (1984), p. 179; cf. Nagaswamy (1987), pp. 241-242).

56. See Civañāṉacittiyār, Cupakkam 1.18.27. These elements that are involved in the course of evolution and involution are called *tattvas. Tattva* in Sanskrit means "that-ness", i.e., the essence or real condition or state of a thing, and is used to describe an essential part of an organism. The Śaiva Siddhānta system of philosophy recognises 96 *tattvas,* 36 primary and 60 subordinate ones – many more than other systems like the Sāṃkhya (Subramania Pillai (1948), pp. 31-33). For the *tattvas* of the Śaiva Siddhānta see Piet (1952), pp. 52-53 and 74-90.

57. See p. 97.

57a. Among the names by which Śiva is addressed in the Cidambareśvarasahasranāmāvalī is *Akhaṇḍānanda-cidrūpa-paramānanda-tāṇḍava.* "He of infinite bliss and of the form of Pure Spirit who dances the dance of Highest Bliss." (Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 388). Cf. n. 55a ad fin.

58. But even in the sculptural expression of the concept the "movement of the dancing Śiva is so admirably balanced that while it fills all space, it seems nevertheless to be at rest, in the sense that a spinning top ... is at rest; thus realising the unity and simultaneity of the Five Activities *(Pañcakṛtya ...),* which the symbolism specifically designates." (Coomaraswamy (1927), p. 127).

59. Liṅgapurāṇa 1.106.28, transl. BS, ii (1973), p. 581.

60. Kūrmapurāṇa 2.4.33, transl. Kramrisch (1981a), p. 22. "No figure ... could symbolise the Freedom and Joy of the Creator and his endless resource more perfectly than the figure of a Dancer – throwing out forms of bliss without ceasing and creating beauty by merely liberating his own energies." (Carpenter in Arunachalam (1927), pp. 24-25).

60a. Cf. n. 55a ad fin.

61. Or *Cinmahāvyomatāṇḍava,* the dance in the great *(mahā)* Spirit *(cit)* Space (*vyoma* or *ākāśa*). One of the names by which Śiva is addressed in the Śivakāmasundarī-sameta-cidambareśvarāṣṭottara-śatanāmāvalī is *Cinmahāvyomatāṇḍava,* "He who dances in the Great Spirit Space." (Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 386).

62. See pp. 98, 99.

63. See nn. 11a and 12.

64. *Ākāśa* is the source of all the *tattvas* (see n. 56) or elements which unfold in the evolution of the universe.

65. "The highest *Ākāśa (paramākāśa)*" is "that brightness which is indescribable, all-pervading and of the nature of unrivalled bliss *(ānanda).*" (Maṇḍala Brāhmaṇa Upaniṣad, Brāhmaṇa 4, transl. Narayanaswamy Aiyar (1914), p. 252). The Tamil Śaiva Saint Tāyumāṉavar in his hymn Poruḷ Vaṇakkam, "The Adoration of Being" (Nakaliṅka Mutaliyār (1906), v. 14) meditates on the Ultimate Reality as the "limitless space *(peruveḷi)* which is the birthplace of the five elements, the place where comes the mighty stillness that speaks not, which is mighty bliss beyond the reach of thought." (transl. Arunachalam (1981), p. 223; cf. op. cit., p. 222 n. 10.

65a. Or in Tamil *nātānta nāṭakam* (Uṇmaiviḷakkam v. 39, Singaravelu (1981), pp. 67-68.

65b. Symbolised by the drum *(ḍamaru, ḍamaruka)* in the right hand of the image of Naṭarāja (see p. 96). Sound *(nāda)* is associated with *ākāśa,* ethereal space which is its vehicle (Zimmer (1953), p. 205); and together they "signify the first ... moment of creation, the productive energy of the Absolute in its pristine cosmogenetic strength." (op. cit., p. 152).

65c. *Nāda* is the lower or *Śabdabrahman,* the Absolute *(Brahman)* in the form of Sound *(Śabda)* or the Causal Word (Daniélou (1964), pp. 37-40), which pervades everything and is the source of all activity in the phenomenal universe; and it corresponds to the first three divisions – A, U, and Ṃ (op. cit., pp. 338-341) – of the mystic mantra, OṂ, which is also written as AUṂ in Sanskrit since O is treated as a compound of A and U. (For a comparison of the doctrine of the Causal Word in Hindu philosophy with that of the *Logos* (the Word) in Greek, Jewish and Christian philosophy, see Prabhavānanda (1962), pp. 229-233). *Nādānta,* on the other hand, is the higher or *Parabrahman,* the Absolute in the form of transcendental Light *(nādāntajyoti),* and corresponds to the fourth division of AUṂ, the soundless silence representing the Unqualified Absolute. (Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, transl. Zimmer (1956), pp. 372-378).

65d. Civañāṉacittiyār, Cupakkam 1.35 (Nallasvami Pillai (1913), p. 134). The Tamil Saint Cuntarar asks: "When am I to reach Him who dances the great dance in the wilderness when the air, the fire, and the world are dead?" (Tēvāram 7.84.3).

65e. Cidambareśvara-sahasranāmāvalī (Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 389).

66. While in many images the face expresses a calm detachment (which contrasts strikingly with the vigour of the movements suggested by the position of the limbs and the whirling locks of hair), in others – e.g., an image in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Kramrisch (1981a), p. 115) and one in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 236) – there is a smile on the face and sometimes a slight tilt of the head which suggest that Naṭarāja is enjoying the bliss of yogic contemplation on the inner sights and sounds that his dance has set in motion.

67. The hair may be arranged as a crown with a few loose strands falling on the back and the shoulders or, more usually, the loose strands are shown flying outwards on both sides of the head towards the arch of flames that surrounds the image, thus indicating the vigorous tempo of the dance.

68. In many images the dwarf faces the worshipper or looks towards the right of Naṭarāja, but in some cases – e.g., in the two images referred to in n. 66 – he is shown looking upwards, as if he were trying to get a glimpse of the divine figure standing upon him.

69. In most images the mermaid is seated in the locks of Naṭarāja's hair but in a few images she is shown crawling on the locks towards his ear or perched on the arch of flames that surrounds the image (Sivaramamurti (1974), pp. 228, 229).

70. The arch may be a full oval or it may be more or less elliptical.

71. Hence he is called Trilocana, Trinetra, Tryambaka and in Tamil, Mukkaṇṇaṉ.

72. Bhasmajābāla Upaniṣad 1, transl. Daniélou (1964), p. 214. For the significance of sun, moon and fire in the philosophy of yoga, see n. 83.

73. Mahābhārata 10.1251, Daniélou ibid.

74. According to legend when his spouse Pārvatī, playfully coming up from behind him, covered his eyes with her hands, the world was plunged into darkness and all beings were afraid, until Śiva opened his third eye (Mahābhārata 13.6362; Cuntarar, Tēvāram 7.16.4).

75. Coomaraswamy in Zimmer (1953), p. 116 n.

76. As when it burned Kāma, the god of love, to ashes (see ch. 6 p. 65). But sometimes sparks from Śiva's central eye also have creative power, as in the Tamil version of the birth of Murukaṉ-Skanda (see ch. 2 n. 11 and ch. 8 n. 26) in the Kantapurāṇam. At the request of the gods for a son of Śiva to protect them from the *asura* Cūraṉ, Śiva assumed his ancient six-faced form; and the sparks of fire that he emitted from the eye in the forehead of each of his six heads generated a child, Āṟumukam a "six-faced" form of Murukaṉ (op. cit., 1 (Uṟpaṭṭi Kāṇṭam) 11 (Tiruvavatārappaṭalam) 42-96; cf. Zvelebil (1974), pp. 186-187 and Shulman (1980), pp. 246-247).

77. It "destroys, or rather trans-forms, appearance by its non-perception of duality." (Coomaraswamy (1974), p. 200 n. 52).

78. "Its site is indicated by the spot of sandal or other aromatic paste which Hindus usually wear on their foreheads to remind them of the latent power of vision which it should be their endeavour to waken and master. This third eye is probably connected with the pineal gland, which physiologists regard as the vestige of an aborted eye and in which Descartes placed the seat of the Soul." (Arunachalam (1981), p. 98; cf. Walker (1979), pp. 309-310).

79. See ch. 3 p. 24.

80. *Jaṭā* is in origin a Dravidian word (DED (1961), 1897), borrowed by Sanskrit. *Kaparda,* "cowry", refers to hair that is spirally braided or twisted in the shape of a cowry shell (see ch. 2 n. 38), whence Śiva, like Rudra before him, is called Kapardin.

81. "Supra-normal life energy, amounting to the power of magic, resides in such a wilderness of hair untouched by the scissors ... . [But] anyone renouncing the generative forces of the vegetable-animal realm ... to enter upon the ... path of absolute asceticism has ... to be shaved ... . He must simulate the sterility of an old man whose hairs have fallen." (Zimmer (1953), p. 157).

82. Daniélou (1964), pp. 191, 259. The matted hair is said to represent Vāyu, the lord of wind, "who is a subtle form of *soma,* the flow of offering (see nn. 91, 92) [and] is therefore connected with the Ganges, the manifest *soma,* flowing from Śiva's head." (op. cit., p. 215).

83. The flame-like crest, representing fire, the crescent moon and the *arka* flower, representing the sun (see n. 86), are significant according to the philosophy of yoga. For the sun, moon and fire are the powers inherent in the *piṅgalā,* the *iḍā* and the *suṣumṇā nāḍis* or "conduits" respectively of the subtle body of an individual (see p. 103 n. 19); and the culmination of yogic practices is reached when by yogic techniques the life-breaths of *prāṇa* and *apāna,* moving in the *piṅgalā* (or *sūrya,* sun) and the *iḍā* (or *candra,* moon) *nāḍis* respectively become united in the *suṣumṇā nāḍi* (Chamu (1982), pp. 91-92; cf. pp. 110-113).

84. See ch. 4 p. 36.

85. Clothey (1978), pp. 27, 32, 181. The peacock was the *vāhana* or vehicle of Murukaṉ and played an important role in his cult. The peacock feathers are suggestive of a folk element in the cult of Naṭarāja (Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 94).

86. The botanical name of the plant is *calatropis gigantea. Arka* is derived from the root *arc,* to "shine" or "blaze." The plant was the food offered to Rudra in the Śatarudrīya sacrifice (see ch. 2 p. 8 at nn. 32-34). The ancient Arabs also held the plant in great reverence and used it in rites dedicated to the worship of the sun. (Long (1983), in Clothey and Long (1983), p. 122 n. 38).

87. *Dhattūra* and *dhuradhūra* were the Sanskrit names. The Tamil name is *mattam,* which also means "intoxication" and "madness" (TL, v (1), p. 3046). But quite apart from intoxication induced by liquor or drugs, the ecstatic change of consciousness induced in a loving devotee when possessed by the god of his choice in the *bhakti* cults also results in his behaving like a madman. For illustrations of this devotional madness in Tamil Śaivism, see Yocum (1983), in Clothey and Long (1983), pp. 19-36; and cf. n. 34.

88. The botanical name of the plant was *elaeocarpus ganitrus*. The berries are said to represent tears which fell from Śiva's eyes when he blinked after he had sat for a thousand years of the gods contemplating how the powerful asuras of the Triple City (Tripura), who had been harassing the gods, (see ch. 6 p. 67) could be destroyed. (Devī Bhāgavatapurāṇa, Skandha 11 Adhyāya 4 vv. 7-8).

89. Daniélou (1964), p. 215.

90. Monier-Williams (1893), p. 323 n. 1.

91. "Soma, king moon, dwells in the soma plant, the stalks of which yield an intoxicating juice. The dewlike elixir was the basic ingredient in the sacrificial drink offered to Indra and the other gods in the diurnal rituals of the Vedic period, being regarded as the terrestrial counterpart of the beverage of immortality, *amṛta* (ambrosia), which the gods imbibed in their glorious mansions on the summit of Mount Sumeru and which was contained in the cup of the moon. To attract and feast the gods on earth, the priests prepared an earthly counterpart by a processing of the juice of a terrestrial plant." (Zimmer (1955), i, p. 164).

92. Daniélou (1964), pp. 98, 215. "The moon ..., streaming with the cool milk that refreshes the vegetable and animal world after their vital fluids have been extracted by the scorching sun of the day, is a representative of the life-giving principle; the moon is the effulgent cup from which the gods drink the Amrita, the elixir of immortality." (Zimmer (1953), pp. 175-176; cf. pp. 60, 167).

93. These names are explained by a myth which relates that when the Moon had been reduced to the last of the sixteen phases of his brilliance because of a curse by his father-in-law Dakṣa, he prayed to Śiva and was saved from extinction by Śiva's graciously placing him on his crown. (Kantapurāṇam, Takkākāṇṭam Cantiracāpappaṭalam).

94. Daniélou (1964), p. 215.

95. "Gaṅgā is known as 'the mother who both bestows prosperity *(sukha-dā)* and secures salvation *(mokṣa-dā)*' ... . She spreads fertility over the ... country and pours purity into the heart of the devotee who bathes ... in her fruitful stream." (Zimmer (1953), p. 110).

96. For the myth of the Descent of the Ganges and its representation in "one of the largest, most beautiful and dramatic reliefs of all time" (Zimmer (1953), p. 112) at Mahābalipuram in Tamil Nadu, South India, see op. cit., pp. 112-121.

97. For example, as Bhairava, a terrifying form of Śiva (see ch. 6 p. 64; Kramrisch (1981a), pp. 31-38 and 182).

98. "At the end of the ages, tossing a skull on the vast funeral pyre of the universe, you remain alone, O God! adorned with skulls, as the sole refuge of

whatever consciousness is left, upholding the elements." (Śaiva Siddhāntasāra, transl. Daniélou (1964), p. 218).

99. In some images the dwarf beneath Śiva's right leg also carries a serpent in one hand; this may have dropped off Śiva's body during the course of his dance. In the hand of the dwarf, who is called Muyalakaṉ symbolising forgetfulness and ignorance, the snake is a reminder of the *kuṇḍalinī,* the serpent power dormant within him, which when properly channelled could be the means of his soul's awakening and redemption from its lowly state (see p. 95 at n. 106).

100. The sacred thread, which is obligatory for the performance of sacramental rites *(yajña),* is put on in a rite of initiation *(upanayana),* "in which a guru draws a boy towards himself and initiates him into one of the three twice-born *(dvija)* classes." (SED (1988), p. 201), i.e., the three higher castes of Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas. The investiture with the thread represents a second birth through spiritual wisdom. The "twice-born man has a sacred symbol always in contact with his person ... constantly reminding him of his regenerate condition." (Monier-Williams (1891), p. 378).

101. "The serpent *(nāga)* seems to have been the totem of the ancient Dravidians." (Daniélou (1964), p. 309). For the Nāgas see op. cit., pp. 308-309 and Stutley (1977), pp. 198-199.

102. Mahābhārata 13 (Anuśāsana-parvan) 17. 59, transl. Ray (1893), p. 113; Cf. Śivapurāṇa Rudra Saṃhitā Yuddhakhaṇḍa ch. 49, 5-18, (transl. BS (1970), ii, p. 1016).

103. Śiva Purāṇa, ibid; cf. TL, v (i), p. 2768. Among the thousand names of Śiva in the Śiva Purāṇa Koṭirudrasaṃhitā ch. 35, transl. BS, iii (1969), occur Nāgahārādhṛk, "wearing garlands of serpents" (p. 1407) and Vyālin, "clasped by serpents" (p. 1401), and in Śiva Purāṇa Rudrasaṃhitā transl. op. cit., i (1970), p. 235, Śiva is described as having Vāsuki and other serpents twined round his body.

104. See, e.g., ch. 9 n. 5 for Valmīkanātha, the anthill *liṅga* of the Tyāgarāja temple at Tiruvārūr.

105. Serpents are usually associated with poison and death but they are also, as inhabitants of the subterranean world, believed to have the power of discovering healing herbs (Brewer (1963), p. 815); and in some countries the origin of the science of healing has been traced to snake gods. The snake was a constant companion of Asklepios (Aesculapius), the Greek god of medicine and healing, whose usual attribute was a staff with a serpent coiled round it.

Although Śiva is surrounded by snakes, he is immune to their poison. He is called Viṣāpaharaṇamūrti, the remover (or destroyer) of poison, because according to the myth of the Churning of the Ocean he graciously saved the universe from destruction by swallowing the fiery poison which had emerged

when the gods and demons were jointly churning the ocean for *amṛta,* the elixir of immortality, and which, in one version of the myth (Kramrisch (1981b), pp. 149, 150), was the venom vomited by the serpent king who had been the churning rope. The poison did not harm Śiva but remained in his throat, leaving a dark blue patch visible externally – whence his name Nīlakaṇṭha, the "blue throated." The character of Śiva as the destroyer of poison recalls his better known role of Vaidyanātha, the lord of doctors and "the best of healers" (Ṛg Veda 2.33.4 cf. Vājasaneya-Saṃhitā xvi. 5 and 49, cited in ch. 2 n. 63) – an aspect of Śiva to which temples in various parts of India are dedicated (e.g., Vaittīcuvaraṉkōyil in Tañcāvūr district (Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 260).

106. See n. 19.

107. Ṣaṭcakranirūpaṇa v. 41, transl. Avalon (1953), p. 430.

108. Daniélou (1964), pp. 14-15, 20-22.

109. Śaivites regard the universe as returning to Śiva whence it issues (Daniélou (1964), pp. 190-191, 287; cf. Śaiva Siddhāntasāra, quoted in n. 98).

109a. Monier-Williams (1891), p. 320.

110. See p. 92 and n. 65b.

111. In the middle of each side of the drum there is a string with a knob at the end, and as the drum is shaken, the knobs strike its sides one from above and the other from below. This is taken as symbolising the alternate movements of the *prāṇa* and the *apāna,* the two principal vital breaths which are conveyed by the *iḍā* and the *piṅgalā nāḍis* in the subtle body of a human being (see p. 89 and n. 19). From the union of these two breaths *nāda* is born (Chamu (1982), pp. 87-90).

112. Daniélou (1964), pp. 199-200; Chamu op. cit., pp. 134-139.

113. "One of the most remarkable literary works that the world has ever seen ... . No other country can produce any grammatical system at all comparable to it, either for originality of plan or for analytical subtlety." (Monier-Williams (1893), p. 162). A Mahābhāṣya or "Great Commentary" on the Aṣṭādhyāyī is attributed to Patañjali (cf. p. 106 n. 53).

114. Kathāsaritsāgara, transl. Tawney (1968), i, p. 32. According to Tamil tradition the revelation of the Maheśvara Sūtras by Śiva to Pāṇini took place at Tiruvorriyūr, five miles north of Madras (Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 79; Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 44); and inscriptions on the walls of the Perumāḷ Ātipurīcuvarar Temple there refer to Śiva as Vyākaraṇa-dāna Perumāḷ ("Grammar-giving Lord"). (Jagadisa Ayyar ibid.; Balasubrahmanyam (1977), p. 305 n.).

115. Monier Williams (1891), p. 82. Śiva's body is also said to have become covered with ashes when, at the end of an aeon, he danced in the wilderness of the void (cf. Cuntarar quoted in n. 65d).

116. The cow is revered by Hindus as a symbol of the earth, the nourisher of life (Daniélou (1964), pp. 87, 316). For the veneration of the cow in Hinduism see Karmarkar (1950), pp. 171-180.

117. The ash is called *bhasma,* "what is pulverised or calcined by fire" (SED (1988), p. 750) in Sanskrit and *tirunīṟu,* "holy ash", in Tamil. It is also called *bhūti* or *vibhūti* in Sanskrit, (*vipūti* in Tamil), which means "superhuman power" or "wealth" (op. cit., pp. 762, 978-979; TL, vi (1), p. 3682).

118. For *mantras* see ch. 3 p. 25.

119. On the preparation and the use of the holy ash see e.g., Rauravāgama, Kriyāpāda sec. 8, and for prescriptions in Tamil on the use of ashes see Āṟumuka Nāvalar (1953), ii, ch. 6.

120. The symbolic meaning of the three lines, called *tripuṇḍra* in Sanskrit, has been explained in various ways: e.g., as representing (a) the three impurities *(malas)* – *āṇava,* the darkness of ignorance which conceals true reality from the soul; *māyā,* the primordial stuff from which the universe and its creatures evolved and into which they are periodically resolved; and *karma,* actions and their consequences of merit and demerit which determine the soul's transmigratory course in a series of lives – which, according to the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy, constitute the fetters *(pāśa)* binding the soul (Piet (1952), pp. 18, 57-58) and which have to be burned away before the soul can be reunited with God (Satchitanandam Pillai (1954), pp. 36-37); or (b) the three forms *(kriyā, icchā* and *jñāna)* of the Śakti (see n. 130) of Śiva (Shivapadasundram (1954), pp. 32-33); or (c) Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra (Kāraṇāgama 60, transl. Curtis (1973), pp. 108-109); or (d) the trident *(triśūla)* of Śiva, which itself represents the three *guṇas* (Daniélou (1964), p. 216) the qualities or constituents *(sattva, rajas* and *tamas)* of Nature or Matter (op. cit., pp. 26-27).

121. The external application of the ash by Śaivites is also a symbol of the radiance believed to be imparted to a yogi's body when his seminal fluid, retained in the body and sublimated for spiritual ends, is consumed to ashes within the body by the inner fires of its subtle centres (Daniélou (1964), p. 218).

122. Daniélou (1964), pp. 292, 294, 296.

123. In Tamil devotional literature there are numerous references to Śiva's feet as objects of veneration (See, e.g., Māṇikkavācakar, Tiruvācakam, hymn 1 (Civapurāṇam) and the last stanza of hymn 7 of Tiruvempāvai; Pope (1900), pp. 1-7 and 116). Devotees pay obeisance to anthropomorphic representations of Śiva by placing their heads at his feet or adorning them with flowers or addressing prayers to them as the source of refuge – indeed one of the words for "foot" in Tamil is *caraṇam,* which also means "refuge" (TL, iii (1) p. 1313). But in the *ānandatāṇḍava* image of Naṭarāja it is the

uplifted left foot of grace that is singled out for the purpose of ritual worship or prayer (Chamu (1982), pp. 97-98), and the last service of the day in the shrine of Naṭarāja in the Citsabhā is specially addressed to that foot (op. cit., p. 150). Each of the 315 verses of Umāpati Civācāriya's Kuñcitāṅghristava ("Praise of the Bent Foot") has the refrain "I pay obeisance to the lifted foot."

124. *Apasmāra* in Sanskrit and Tamil (SED (1988), p. 53; TL, i, p. 91) and *muyalvali* in Tamil (TL, vi, (1), p. 3274) mean "epilepsy", which steeps its victims in mental darkness. Apasmāra Puruṣa or Muyalakaṉ is, therefore, a personification of forgetfulness and a symbol of spiritual darkness and ignorance. Cf. Khalil Gibran, quoted in Vanmikanathan (1976), p. 336: "the God-self does not dwell alone in your being. Much in you is still man, and much in you is not yet man but a shapeless pygmy that walks asleep in the mist searching for its own awakening."

At Tiruppāccilāccirāmam (or Tiruvāci), near Tirucciṟāppaḷḷi, Saint Campantar is reported to have interceded with Śiva for the cure of a local chieftain's daughter from epilepsy (Periyapurāṇam (1950), 2.34. vv. 2213-2223 and (1985), pp. 196-199). This miracle explains the absence of a Muyalakaṉ beneath the right foot of the image of Naṭarāja in the temple at Tiruvāci (Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 445); the obscuration symbolised by the missing Muyalakaṉ has been removed by Śiva's grace.

125. In the icon of Naṭarāja dancing the *ānandatāṇḍava* the veil which conceals the true Reality is not specifically shown. But in a sculpture of the dancing Śiva at Elephanta near Bombay, one of his hands holds what looks like a curtain. (Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 30; Kramrisch (1981b), p. 460).

126. Zimmer (1955), i, p. 122.

127. Śilparatna, cited in Krishna Sastri (1916), p. 79 n. 2.

128. Tiruvaruṭpayaṉ 9.3, cited Coomaraswamy (1948), p. 93. The *tiruvāci* is also explained (op. cit., pp. 92, 93), on the basis of Uṇmaiviḷakkam v. 35 (op. cit., pp. 92-93), as the hook of the written form of the mystic syllable OṂ or AUṂ, the three component divisions of which are A, U, and Ṃ; while Naṭarāja in the centre is the fourth division of AUṂ, the soundless silence that represents the Unqualified Absolute (see n. 65c).

129. "Think of our Lord as the dancing master, who like the heat latent in firewood pervades all bodies and makes all souls dance." (Kaṭavuḷ Māmuṉivar, c. 15th century, Tiruvātavūrarpurāṇam 6.75).

130. Śiva as the Absolute in its transcendent state of dormant potentiality is inert; but when united with his Śakti the potentiality becomes manifested in the activities of the universe.

"If Śiva is united with Śakti, he is able to exert his powers as Lord; if not, (he) is not able to stir." (Saundaryalaharī, v. i, transl. Brown (1958), p. 48). According to the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy (see ch. 5 n. 33), Śiva is the efficient cause of the world, creating it from *māyā* or primaeval cosmic

substance, the material cause, through his Śakti, the instrumental cause. (Civañāṉacittiyār, Cupakkam, 1.18).

131. "My head I crown with the lily feet of Śivakāma Sundarī, Who with the Absolute inseparably is blended, As flower and scent, sun and ray, life and body, As gem and lustre, form and shadow, word and meaning, Who to the manifested Lord as Consort shines." (Citamparacuvāmi, c. 18th century, Pañcātikāra Viḷakkam, transl. Arunachalam (1981), p. 89). "On our head we shall receive the gracious flower feet of the Mother, who is the all-pervading Supernal Power, the First Cause of all and the grace, wisdom and energy of the Supreme Being ... . She is the ... holy energy of God, the seed of his five grand functions." (Civappirakācam v. 2 transl. Subramanya Pillai (1945), p. 3).

132. The Goddess is called Pañcakṛtyaparāyaṇā, She who is fond of (or devoted to) the *pañcakṛtya* (Lalita Sahasranāma (1899), 274). Tirumūlar points out that when the form of Śakti, which is all bliss, manifests in the world, it unites with Śiva in bliss to perform what is a single dance (Tirumantiram (1980), ii, v. 2723).

In the *ānandataṇḍava* image of Naṭarāja, the conjunction of the male and the female elements is indicated by the male ear-ring in the right, and the female ear-ring in the left ear (see p. 93).

133. See pp. 96, 97.

Verse 36 of a Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta text, Maṉavācakam Kaṭantār's Uṇmaiviḷakkam (c. 1250) (which closely follows the language of Tirumūlar's Tirumantiram (1980), ii, v. 2753) says: "In the drum (in one hand) is Creation, in (the hand of) assurance inheres Protection, in the fire (in another hand) is Destruction, to the fragrant foot firmly pressing down attaches Obscuration, and in the fragrant foot lifted up look for Deliverance." Cf. also Kumarakuruparar (17th century), Citamparamummaṇikkōvai, transl. Nallaswami Pillai (1895), p. 75, as adapted by Coomaraswamy (1948), pp. 87-88: "O my Lord, Thy hand holding the sacred drum has made and arranged the heavens and the earth and other worlds and innumerable souls. Thy raised hand protects both the conscious *[cetana]* and the unconscious *[acetana]* order of Thy creation. All these worlds are transformed by Thy hand bearing fire. Thy sacred foot, planted on the ground, furnishes rest to the tired soul struggling in the toils of causality *[karma]* ... . It is Thy lifted foot which grants eternal bliss to those who approach Thee. These Five Actions *[pañcakṛtya]* are indeed Thy true handiwork."

134. Civañāṉacittiyār, Cupakkam, 1.37; Civappirakācam v. 18.

135. *Līlā* in Sanskrit; *viḷaiyaṭal, viḷaiyāṭṭu* in Tamil. Śiva is "the Prankster who creates, protects and withdraws this heaven and earth and everything indeed." (Tiruvācakam 7.12, transl. Vanmikanathan (1980), p. 224. In this *līlā* the eternal transcendent Divine Reality manifests itself, through the play

of energies and the display of forms, in the transitory phenomena of the universe (Boner (1952), p. 168).

136. For example, Śaṅkarācārya's commentary on the Vedānta (or Brahma) Sūtra 2.1.32-33, quoted in Eliot, ii (1954), p. 314.

136a. See ch. 5 n. 33.

137. Civañāṉacittiyār, Cupakkam, 1.36, 37, 46, 47, 54 and 5.7, 8; Civappirakācam v. 18.

138. See p. 88.

139. The curtain is drawn aside briefly three times after each daily service for public worship (Natarajan (1974), p. 66). The curtain is black outside and red inside, the colours suggesting the difference between the veiling *(tirobhāva)* of the Reality within when the curtain is in place, and the effulgence of the *ākāśa* within when the veiling curtain is drawn aside by the grace *(anugraha)* of Śiva (Taṇṭapāṇi Tēcikar (1949), p. 25).

140. The *vilva* or *bilva* tree (popularly called *bel* or *bael;* botanical name *aegle marmelos*) is sacred to Śiva and is considered a manifestation of him in the vegetable kingdom (Zimmer (1955), i, p. 165). Its trifoliate leaf, symbolising his functions of creation, preservation and destruction (Monier-Williams (1891), pp. 336-337) and his three eyes, is offered in his worship. For the mythical origin of the connection between the *vilva* tree and the cult of Śiva, see Gonda (1970), p. 112.

141. See p. 88 and nn. 10, 11.

142. The platform is called *Praṇava-pīṭha* (Svayamprakasa Pramentira Sarasvati Avadhuta Swami in Somalay (1979), p. 251), the seat *(pīṭha)* of the *Praṇava,* i.e., the mystic syllable OṂ or AUṂ (see n. 65c), "the most abstract symbol of Divinity" (Daniélou (1964), p. 338; cf. Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, transl. and explained in Zimmer (1956), pp. 372-378).

143. In Sanskrit and Tamil respectively.

144. Intermediate between these two kinds of representations of Śiva is the "formed-formless" *(rūpārūpa, aruvuruvam)* representation – the crystal *(sphaṭika) liṅga* called Candramaulīśvara, the "moon-crested Lord", which most often represents Naṭarāja in the daily services in the Citsabhā (cf. n. 12). There is also another *liṅga* by the side of the *Rahasya* area of the Citsabhā: this is an *ekamukhaliṅga* (a "single-face liṅga") – the face is said to represent Brahmā's fifth head (Umāpati Civācāriya (1958), Kuñcitānghristava v. 7; Soma Sethu Dikshitar (1977), p. 211; Ramalinga Dikshitar (1965)), which Śiva had removed to punish Brahmā for lying (see ch. 6 p. 64).

The crystal *liṅga* is said to have been created by Śiva, from the nectar-like rays of the crescent moon on his head, so that it might be used to represent him in the daily rituals (Ramalinga Dikshitar (1965)), and it is said to have been one of the five *sphaṭika liṅgas* given by Śiva to Śaṅkarācārya, the great philosopher (c. 8th century), who had it installed in the Cidambaram Temple.

The other four were installed by him in Paśupatināth in Nepal, in Kedarnāth in Uttar Pradesh, Sringeri in Karnataka and Kāñcipuram in Tamil Nadu (Lakshminarasimha Sastri and Sankaranarayanan in Anon. (1969), pp. 185, 206; Mani (1975), p. 687).

145. See p. 92.

146. "Everywhere is His divine form. Everywhere is Śiva-Śakti. Everywhere is Chidambaram. Everywhere is the divine dance. Since Śiva is everywhere, the play of Śiva's grace is present at every place and everywhere." (Tirumūlar (1980), ii, v. 2674). This idea of an all-pervading *ākāśa,* "penetrated with intelligence throughout [which] is the form under which all intelligent beings are already understood to be in touch with each other, assumes a solidarity of Intelligence throughout the Universe ... and implies the very modern conceptions of Equality and Democracy, because [they] mean the overpassing of barriers between ... classes and individuals and the discovery of the common ground on which all may meet." (Carpenter in Arunachalam (1927), pp. 99-100; cf. pp. 35-36). In a similar vein the Tamil mystic Tāyumāṉavar (who died c. 1742) had declared that in the *Cidākāśa* of the Citsabhā of Cidambaram followers of various faiths would find that formless Pure Spirit in which their faiths might be reconciled and their feuds forgotten (Citampara Rahasyam v. 12, Nakaliṅka Mutaliyar (1906), v. 143, transl. Tambyah (1925), p. xxvii).

147. "The holy feet that danced in the ancient city of Tillai [i.e., Cidambaram] dance in all living things, in beauty of infinite diversity shining, making, unmaking, earth and heaven and worlds celestial and hosts of sciences, driving away my darkness and taking up loving abode in the hearts of His servants." (Tiruvācakam 2.1-8, transl. Arunachalam (1981), p. 94). For the *ākāśa* in the heart of the individual see Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.1.1-3 and Pañcabrahma Upaniṣad, transl. Srinivasa Murti (1953), p. 114: "In the Brahmapura [i.e., the body that is the city of Brahman] ... is the abode of the form of a white lotus [the heart] known as the Dahara ... . In the middle of it is the ether known as *Daharākāśa*. That ether is Śiva, the infinite existence, non-dual consciousness and unsurpassed bliss." Cf. n. 148.

148. "You dance in the Hall of the heart-temple of gladdened saints." (Tāyumāṉavar (1906), v. 408). "I searched for, and discovered within myself, the dancing feet, the tinkling anklets, the songs sung, the varying steps and the forms assumed by the dancing Supreme Guru – and then my bonds disappeared." Tirumūlar (1980), ii, v. 2714). The passage from the Pañcabrahma Upaniṣad quoted in n. 147 continues: "This Śiva is the witness established in the hearts of all beings ... and manifests Himself to the seeker, in accord with the strength of vision and degree of spiritual development attained by him. Hence this Śiva is known as the heart of all beings and the liberator from the bonds of worldly existence."

149. See p. 88.

150. See, e.g., Gopaul Chetty (1930), p. 9; Sivaramamurti (1974), pp. 14, 383.

151. For *ākāśa,* the primary and most subtly pervasive manifestation of Divinity, see nn. 10, 11 and p. 92 and nn. 64, 65. Cf. ch. 4 n. 74 for the *Ākāśa Tattva.*

152. Chamu (1982), p. 147. Cf. Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 204. There is also said to be a three dimensional version of the *cakra* on the wall set in the floor of the *Rahasya* area (oral communication of a *dīkṣita* who did not wish to be named).

153. Chamu (1982), p. 147. The coating is renewed twice an year (Ananda Nataraja Dikshitar in Somalay (1979), p. 213).

154. The officiating Brahmins are called *dīkṣitas,* those who have received the initiation *(dīkṣā)* which qualifies for performance of the temple rituals. At the present day the *dīkṣitas* number about two hundred and seventy five and they claim descent from the three thousand Brahmins brought down to Cidambaram from the north (see n. 9). They are the hereditary trustees of the temple, with the exclusive right to conduct the rituals in the various shrines of the temple and to administer its revenues. See Somasunderam Pillai (1963), pp. 94, 95.

155. Chamu (1982), p. 147 and p. 34.

156. Uṇmaiviḷakkam v. 5. Cf. Chamu (1982), p. 147 and p. 34; and Daniélou (1964), p. 344.

157. Venkataraman (1956), p. 256; Sivasankara Dikshitar in Somalay (1979), p. 225.

158. Venkataraman, ibid. It is said that the chains of golden *vilva* leaves in the *Ākaśāliṅga* niche (see p. 98 at n. 140) contain the engravings of some *yantras* (Swamy (1979), p. 106) and that these chains also represent a combination of *Śiva Cakra* and *Śakti Cakra* (Chamu (1982), p. 147; cf. pp. 101, 177).

159. See ch. 3 n. 9.

160. The *Śrī Chakra* consists of a square outer frame of three straight lines, indented on each side to represent a boundary wall with four gates opening to the four quarters, enclosing three concentric circles and two concentric sets of sixteen and eight lotus petals, all of which surround the core of the *yantra.* This core consists of nine interpenetrating isosceles triangles of varying sizes (the apexes of which are in line with each other), four triangles pointing upwards representing Śiva and five pointing downwards representing Śakti. The dynamic interplay of the Śiva and the Śakti principles, which is sometimes expressed in metaphorical terms as a Dance of Śiva-Śakti (see n. 132), is regarded as resulting in all the manifestations of the universe – beginning and ending with the unity of the focal power point of the whole

yantra, the *bindu* or dot, which is visualised as the very centre of the interpenetrating triangles and represents the Undifferentiated Formless Absolute. For illustrations of the *Śrī Chakra* see p. 122 and Zimmer (1984), frontispiece and Fig. 10 on p. 165; Khanna (1979), figure 62 on p. 113; and Daniélou (1964), p. 387.

In meditation on the *yantra* the devotee's journey from the *bindu* centre outwards to the square periphery represents various stages in the evolution of the separate entities of the manifested world from the original wholeness of the Undifferentiated Absolute; and the return journey to the centre represents stages in their reintegration in the Absolute. For the nine different segments that compose the *Śrī Yantra* and their significance, see Zimmer (1984), pp. 158-180; Khanna (1979), pp. 70-80, 107-124; and Chamu (1982), pp. 166-178.

161. Cidambaram is said to be a great centre of *Śrī Cakra* worship (Chamu (1982), p. 101). Among the names under which Naṭarāja is invoked in the devotional literature are He who delights in the *Śrī Vidyā mantra* of the Goddess (see ch. 9 n. 39) and who dwells in the *Śrī Cakra* (Naṭeśacintāmaṇi, quoted in Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 134). Compare the names Śrī Cakra Priya, He who is fond of the *Śrī Cakra*, and Śrī Cakra Vāsa, He who dwells in the *Śrī Cakra*, in the Śivakāmasundarī-sameta-cidambareśvarāṣṭottaraśatanāmāvalī (op. cit., p. 387).

The *Śrī Cakra* is the most important of the *cakras* mentioned in connection with the *Rahasya* of the Citsabhā (Soma Sethu Dikshitar (1982), p. 233). For a description of the daily rituals relating to the *Śrī Cakra* in the *Rahasya* niche see the Sanskrit text Nitya Pūjā Pātāñjala Sūtram attributed to Patañjali (see n. 53) in Soma Sethu Dikshitar (1977), pp. 87-97 and cf. Chamu, op. cit., p. 177; and for the rituals of the worship offered to the *Śrī Cakra* in the same niche at the conclusion of the most important annual festival (see ch. 9 n. 32) at the Cidambaram Temple (see Soma Sethu Dikshitar (1982), pp. 233-251; cf. pp. 14-15 in the Tamil Introduction). See also Najan (1977), pp. 24-25 and (1983), pp. 13-14.

162. Natarajan (1974), p. 15. Among the *cakras* mentioned in connection with the *Rahasya* of Cidambaram is a *tāṇḍava cakra*. (Soma Sethu Dikshitar (1982), p. 233). Cf. Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 156: "The *Śilpa Prakāśa* lays down rules for preparing a *tāṇḍava yantra* on which *nṛtya mūrtis* are to be shown ... . There are elaborate texts on the preparation of *Naṭāmbara yantras*." Naṭāmbara is the name used for Naṭarāja in Orissa (see ch. 5 n. 4). Among the texts which deal with the construction and the use of *yantras* are a Śivatāṇḍavatantra and a Śivanṛtyatantra (Goudriaan and Gupta (1981), pp. 103-104).

163. Siddhānta Dīpikā, xiii (1) (July 1912), pp. 1-13, published in Madras. It was subsequently reprinted in "The Dance of Siva: Fourteen Indian

Essays", New York, 1918. Several reprints of this volume (some containing the author's emendations) appeared in the U.S.A., England and India.

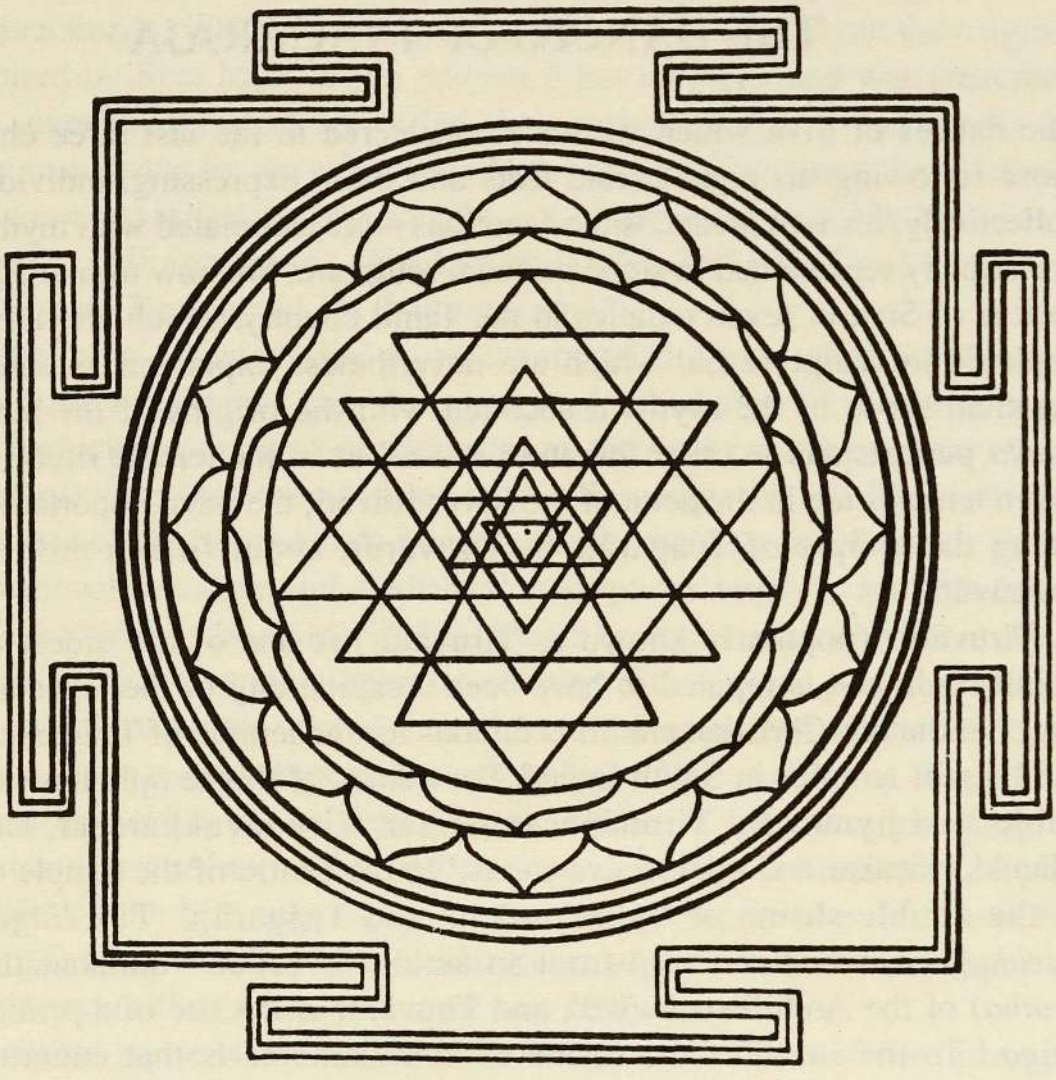
164. This phrase is borrowed from the concluding sentence of Coomaraswamy's essay.

165. Capra (1976), pp. 258-259.

166. Das (1964), p. 190; Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 318. For Śvetaketu see ch. 6 p. 67.

167. Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 318. Tyagarasan and Akoram in Somalay (1979), p. 396. The fame of the temple is attested by the fact that Campantar, Tirunāvukkaracar, Cuntarar and Māṇikkāvacakar (see ch. 5 n. 15) have all sung hymns in praise of the Lord of Tiruveṇkāṭu, and that the names originally given by their parents to Meykaṇṭār, the author of the Civañāṉapōtam (see ch. 5 n. 33) and to the poet-saint Paṭṭiṉattuppiḷḷaiyār (9th-10th century) were Cuvētavaṉapperumāḷ and Tiruveṇkāṭar respectively (Zvelebil (1975), pp. 199 n. 5 and 145).

168. Tyagarasan and Akoram in Somalay (1979), p. 395.



ŚRĪ CAKRA

IX

THE DANCES OF TYĀGARĀJA

The dances of Śiva which we have considered in the last three chapters – those following his eight heroic feats and those expressing, individually or collectively, his five great cosmic functions – are associated with myths which are visually represented in stone or metal sculpture. We now turn to a group of dances of Śiva in seven temples in the Tamil country, which are not visually depicted in sculpture but which are nevertheless explained as dances in a mystical sense in the myths associated with the origins of the temples in *sthala* purāṇas and in other literature as well as in the temple rituals. All the seven temples are in the delta of the River Kāvēri, the most important of them being the temple of Tyāgarāja at Tiruvārūr, about fifteen miles east of Tañcāvūr.

Tiruvārūr (popularly known as Tiruvālūr) is one of the oldest cities of Tamil Nadu and is reputed to have been a capital city of the legendary Cōḷa kings of the pre-Christian era.[1] It is famous for the temple of Tyāgarāja, one of the biggest temples in South India.[2] The deities of this temple have been the subject of hymns by Tiruñāṉacampantar, Tirunāvukkaracar, Cuntarar, Māṇikkavācakar and other Śaiva saints.[3] In the centre of the temple complex is the double shrine of Valmīkanātha and Tyāgarāja. The *liṅga* in the *garbhagṛha,* which rises up from an anthill, is called Valmīkanātha, Lord *(nātha)* of the Anthill *(valmīka)*[4]; and Tiruvārūr is the site of a *pṛthvī* (earth) *liṅga*.[5] To the south of the shrine of Valmīkanātha is that containing the processional image *(utsavamūrti)* in the form of Somāskanda (that is, a composite image of Śiva, his consort Umā and their son Skanda). This is called Tyāgarāja, and is the main deity of the temple, from whom the temple as a whole takes its name. As at Cidambaram, where the image of Naṭarāja in the Citsabhā is held in higher veneration than the *liṅga* in its shrine,[6] at Tiruvārūr too the Somāskanda image called Tyāgarāja has superseded the Valmīkanātha *liṅga* in importance.

The legend relating to the origin of the Somāskanda image[7] is that Viṣṇu, in order to remove a curse placed on him by Śiva's wife Pārvatī, whom he had once slighted, made an image of Somāskanda and placing it on his chest offered worship to it; and as Viṣṇu inhaled and exhaled the image danced up

and down in a dance which came to be called the *Acapānaṭaṉam* (*Ajapānaṭanam* in Sanskrit).[8] Later Viṣṇu presented the image to Indra as a talisman, which gave him victory over some hostile demons. Later still, being unable to prevail against another demon, Indra prayed to Somāskanda, who referred him to his devotee Mucukunda, the mythical ancestor of the Cōḻa dynasty. The latter routed Indra's foes, and when Indra asked what he would like as a token of gratitude the king asked for the Somāskanda image. Being reluctant to part with it, Indra made six replicas of it and, placing all seven before Mucukunda, said he could have the image if he picked out the original one. Inspired by Śiva Mucukunda pointed it out correctly and was presented with all seven images.[9] He installed the original image in the temple of Tiruvārūr in a shrine by the side of the Valmīkanātha *liṅga;* and the other six images were installed in temples in six other places in his kingdom: Tirunaḷḷāṟu, Nākapaṭṭiṉam, Tirukkāṟāyil, Tirukkōḷili (Tirukkuvaḷai), Tiruvāymūr and Tirumaṟaikkāṭu (Vētāraṇiyam).[10]

We must now consider the significance of the names of the dancer, Viṭaṅkar and Tyāgarāja, and the nature of the dance in the temple of Tiruvārūr, which has always been regarded as the most important of the *sapta viṭaṅka sthalas*[11] or the seven centres of the Tyāgarāja cult. At Tiruvārūr the original name of the Somāskanda image was Vītiviṭaṅkar, as references in the early devotional literature and mediaeval inscriptions testify[12]; and that name was superseded by the name Tyāgarāja only in the sixteenth century.[13] "Tyāgarāja" signifies renunciation or self-sacrifice *(tyāga) par excellence;* and it is explained by the legend that Śiva, at the request of a king who had become an ascetic absorbed in the worship of Vītiviṭaṅkar at Tiruvārūr, manifested himself to act as regent for the ascetic's fatherless grandson, a prince who was a minor – the god thus renouncing the unsurpassed and eternal bliss of the heavenly world for the restricted pleasures of a worldly kingdom.[14] But the meaning of the older name of the Somāskanda image has much greater significance and that must now be examined.

The original name of the Somāskanda image of the Tiruvārūr temple was Vītiviṭaṅkar and his dance is described as the *Ajapānaṭanam. Viṭaṅka* literally means "not *(vi)* chiselled *(ṭaṅka),*"[15] that is, an image not sculptured by human hands, like that which (according to the legend mentioned above) was made by Viṣṇu for his own devotions. Another explanation[16] of the word *Viṭaṅkar* is that it means "He" (that is, Śiva, who is stationed in the centre of the human heart[17]) "who binds *(ṭaṅkayati)* the birds *(vin)*" – the birds being *haṃsas* or wild geese[18] symbolising the vital breaths (*prāṇa* and *apāna*) inhaled and exhaled by a human being *(jīvātman),*[19] the control of which by appropriate yogic techniques, prevents the mind wandering to and fro and promotes contemplation on the Supreme Soul *(Paramātman).* The two sounds *sa* and *ham* constantly produced by the rhythm of breathing in and out[20]

constitute the *haṃsa mantra,* which is an *ajapā* ("non-uttered") *mantra,* unspoken but repeated internally. The name of the dance, Ajapānaṭanam,[21] thus has great mystical significance: it refers to the dance of the cosmic breaths in the human body in the eternal rhythm of life as well as to the dance of Śiva, enshrined in the innermost centre of the human heart,[22] who seeks to compose the wanderings of the individuals's mind. *Vīti* in the name *Vītiviṭaṅkar* literally means "path" and refers to the *suṣumṇā nāḍi* along which the breaths *(haṃsas)* move to and fro from the *mūlādhāra* to the *ājñā cakra.*[23]

As stated earlier, these dances taking place within the human body are not depicted in stone or metal sculpture. The legend relating to the origin of the Somāskanda image and the mode of worship of it by Viṣṇu (resulting in the image moving up and down on his chest as he inhaled and exhaled) permitted visualisation of the external motions of a dance by the uninitiated; and even today these external motions are simulated in the temple rituals. On festival days those who carry the Somāskanda image, in a palanquin or a litter which is supported by a single pole[24] dance as they proceed in the procession, the dances being different in the seven *viṭaṅka* temples.[25] In this way there is external representation of the dances taking place internally within human beings.[26]

We have already considered the significant features of the image depicting the *ānandatāṇḍava* of Naṭarāja in the Citsabhā of the Cidambaram Temple as well as the *Rahasya,* the mystical secret, of that shrine.[27] The cult of Tyāgarāja of the Tiruvārūr Temple has several analogies with that of Naṭarāja. In both temples the metal images of Naṭarāja and Tyāgarāja are regarded as the chief deities and the ceremonial worship at their shrines takes priority over that at the shrines housing the stone *liṅgas.* In both temples services are conducted six times a day, in the principal shrines before various representations of Śiva. In Cidambaram a crystal *(sphaṭika) liṅga*[28] most often represents the main image at those services,[29] and in Tiruvārūr too the daily *pūjās* are made to a *sphaṭika liṅga.*[30] Again, the *abhiṣeka* (ceremonial lustration) services for the main images of Naṭarāja and Tyāgarāja are performed on six occasions every year[31]; on two of these occasions the celebrations are conducted on a grand scale,[32] the images of the two deities being taken out of their sanctums to more spacious surroundings, where the large crowds that gather may more conveniently observe the proceedings.[33] Another parallel between the two temples is that there is a mystical "secret" *(rahasya)* connected with each temple. The *Rahasya* of Cidambaram has already been explained in the previous chapter,[33a] and we must now consider the *Rahasya* of Tiruvārūr.

The Somāskanda image of Tyāgarāja is entirely covered with flowers and consequently he is said to occupy a Puṣpasabhā or Hall of Flowers.[34] In fact, even on the six occasions during the year when *abhiṣeka* is performed for the image,[35] it is kept fully covered with a cloth except for the face,[36] although

during the two most important of these six festivals, when ceremonial worship is offered to the right and the left foot respectively, they also are exposed to the view of the worshippers.[37] The reason for keeping the body covered thus is connected with the *Rahasya* of Tiruvārūr. The Tyāgarāja of Tiruvārūr is called Bījākṣarayantra ("seed-syllable diagram") Tyāgarāja, because it is said that in his heart is inscribed the *Śrī Cakra*[38] or *Śrī Yantra,* which is one of the chief instruments of instruction of the *Śrī Vidyā* form of worship,[39] the ritual practice of which is confined to secret circles.[40] In his breast there are said to be located the *bījākṣaras* or the primary seed sounds that give rise to the sounds of speech[41] and which are sometimes found inscribed on the *Śrī Yantra* and other *yantras*. These esoteric conceptions are reinforced on a physical level by the breast of the image always being kept covered with a plate.[42] According to some authorities, the *Śrī Cakra* figures prominently in the rituals of worship in the *Rahasya* area of the Citsabhā of the Cidambaram[43] Temple; and since the *Śrī Cakra* appears to lie at the heart of the *Rahasya* of Tyāgarāja too, a further parallel exists between the cults of Naṭarāja at Cidambaram and Tyāgarāja at Tiruvārūr.

We have already considered the literal meaning and the mystical significance of the names of the dancer and the dance in Tiruvārūr, the chief of the seven *viṭaṅka* temples. The literal meanings of the corresponding names in the other six temples, in which the traditions of Tiruvārūr are followed in varying degrees, may be set out as follows: Nakaviṭaṅkar, mountain-Lord, and Uṉmattanaṭaṉam, dance of an intoxicated person; Cuntaraviṭaṅkar, beauteous Lord, and Pārāvārataraṅkanaṭaṉam, dance of the sea waves; Āticiṭaṅkar, ancient Lord, and Kukkuṭanaṭaṉam, dance of a cock; Avaṉiviṭaṅkar, earth-Lord, Piruṅkanaṭaṉam or Piramaranaṭaṉam, dance of a bee; Nīlaviṭaṅkar, blue Lord, and Kamalanaṭaṉam, dance of a lotus; Puvaṉiviṭaṅkar, world-Lord, and Haṃsapātanaṭaṉam, dance like the gait of a *haṃsa*.[44] The origin of these names and their significance must be sought in the local traditions and legends in the *sthala* purāṇas[44a] and the devotional literature relating to each temple. More research needs to be done in this field.[45] However, we may point out that some of the names of the dances listed contain words of great mystical significance,[46] which we have had occasion to explain in connection with Tiruvārūr and Cidambaram.

In concluding this book we may add, as an epilogue to its last five chapters, that of all the Hindu Gods Śiva has been regarded as the Dancing God *par excellence*. He is the essence of dance[47] and his various dances (however different they may be in their form and in their origin in mythology) are clear expressions of his being and functions. The mystical significance of Śiva's dances is largely derived from the close connection that exists between dancing and yoga. We have seen, for example, that the *ānandatāṇḍava* of

Naṭarāja takes place not only in the Citsabhā at Cidambaram but throughout the universe, including the hearts of all living beings.[48] For the macrocosm of the universe has its counterpart in the microcosm of the subtle body of the individual,[49] and the cosmic energy of Śiva manifests itself both on the macrocosmic and the microcosmic levels.[50] In fact the conceptions of Śiva as the Lord of Dance and as the Lord of Yoga are not contradictory, but complement each other. As Śiva himself once declared, "I am that god who sets everything in motion and who, absorbed in yoga and enjoying highest bliss, is always dancing."[51]

NOTES

1. For example, King Mucukunda (see p. 124). In modern times Tiruvārūr is also renowned as the birthplace of the great trinity of South Indian composers Shyama Shastri (1762-1827), Muttuswami Dikshitar (1775-1835) and Tyagaraja (1767-1847).

2. Its temple chariot *(tēr)* is said to be the biggest in India (Balasubrahmanyam (1971), p. 195).

3. Ponnusamy (1972), pp. 11 et seqq.

4. In Sanskrit *valmīka* means "anthill"; hence the name Valmīkanātha (in Tamil Vaṉmīkanātaṉ) for the *liṅga* in its shrine.

5. In Tamil one of the meanings of *ār* is "earth" (TL, i (1), p. 239), so that the name Tiruvārūr may be explained as "the city of the holy earth *(-liṅga)*." For the legend of the origin of the anthill *liṅga* of Tiruvārūr see Tiruvārūrppurāṇam 6.1-112, summarised in Shulman (1980), pp. 110-111. The anthill is a well-known feature of South Indian folk religion. It is the entrance to the nether world, the abode of snakes and demons, and leads to the subterranean waters, which ants are believed to be able to find even in a desert (op. cit., p. 381 nn. 37, 38). There is also an anthill *liṅga* at Tiruvoṟṟiyūr, five miles from Madras, and there are several parallels between the legends and worship at Tiruvoṟṟiyūr and Tiruvārūr (op. cit., pp. 119-120 and p. 381 n. 55).

6. See ch. 8 p. 90.

7. See Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), pp. 20-30.

8. For the meaning and significance of this name see p. 125.

9. It is said that because Indra parted with the image, he was punished by being incarnated as a Paṟaiyaṉ, an outcaste. Even in modern times "a Paṟaiyaṉ is permitted as an hereditary right to precede the procession on festival days holding a white umbrella, one of the symbols of Indra, from whom he claims to be descended." (Hemingway (1906), p. 249). A Paṟaiyaṉ drummer also

announces the dates of the beginning and the end of the festivals (Taṇṭapāṇi Tēcikar (1955), p. 35; and at the *Niṟaipaṇi* festival on the full moon day of the month of *Puraṭṭāci* (September-October) the representatives of an "untouchable" family that claim descent from Indra and live in Tiruvārūr are granted a special audience with and viewing (*darśana* see n. 33) of God Tyāgarāja (Kersenboom-Story (1987), pp. 145, 175 n. 183).

10. Kantapurāṇam 6 (Takka Kāṇṭam) 23 Kantaviratappaṭalam 117, 118.

11. See ch 5 p. 54.

12. Ponnusamy (1972), pp. 23-24.

13. Op. cit., p. 24.

14. Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 36. The name is also explained on the basis that Śiva renounced his five great cosmic functions of creation, preservation, destruction, obscuration and conferring grace (see ch. 7 p. 80) to five other gods, each of whom was limited to exercising only one particular function (op. cit., p. 36).

15. TL, vi, (1934), p. 3654.

16. This explanation is said to be based on the Ajapā Kalpa (i.e., Treatise concerning the *Ajapā*). (Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 41).

17. In the *hṛdaya kamala,* "heart lotus" (Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 41. Cf. ch. 8 p. 89 at n. 18 and ch. 8 n. 147).

18. *Haṃsa* is "often erroneously translated 'swan', especially by English scholars because ... 'goose' (is) used to denote foolishness and irresponsibility. But this is not characteristic of the wild goose, which is noted for its discipline and beauty". (Stutley (1977), p. 108).

19. Apart from denoting the vital breaths inhaled and exhaled by the *jīvātman, haṃsa* has several other meanings (Stutley (1977), p. 108; Zimmer (1953), pp. 48-50: it symbolises knowledge – thus, in mythology the *haṃsa* is the vehicle of Brahmā and his consort Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning; the spiritually advanced saint *(paramahaṃsa);* and the Universal Soul or Supreme Spirit *(Paramātman).*

20. *Haṃsa, haṃsa, haṃsa* ... or *so'ham, so'ham, so'ham* ..., meaning "I am He" (reading *haṃsa* for *ahaṃ saḥ*) or "He is I" (reading *so'ham* for *saḥ aham*). Danielou (1964), p. 348; Zimmer (1953), pp. 49-50).

21. Also called *Ātmā-Eka-Vidyā-Paramahaṃsa-Naṭanam* i.e., the Paramahaṃsa dance leading to the knowledge of the Sole Reality. Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 54.

22. See ch. 8 p. 89.

23. Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 41. For the *suṣumṇā nāḍi* and the cakras see ch. 8 n. 19.

24. Called *maṇittaṇṭu* ("gem-pole"). The *maṇittaṇṭu* is said to represent the *suṣumṇā nāḍi* (see n. 23), along which Śiva, stationed in the *daharākāśa*

or cavity of the heart (see n. 17), performs the *ajapānaṭanam* (Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 47.

25. Cf. Arunachalam (1980), p. 55. Each dance is said to be performed according to a particular *tāla,* i.e., the rhythmic timing, by drum and cymbals, which guides the feet of the dancer. Cf. ch. 5 at nn. 58, 59.

26. Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 47.

27. See ch. 8 pp. 94-99.

28. See ch. 8 nn. 12, 144.

29. Ramalinga Dikshitar (1965), Somasundaram Pillai (1963), p. 71.

30. This is usually kept in a silver box near the image of Tyāgarāja, and it is also called Vītiviṭaṅkar, the name of the Somāskanda image, which it represents for the purposes of the services (Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 41).

31. Arunachalam (1980), p. 197 (for Cidambaram) and Ponnusamy (1972), p. 25 (for Tiruvārūr).

32. For Cidambaram see Arunachalam (1980), pp. 83, 195-197; Somasundaram Pillai (1963), p. 95; and for Tiruvārūr see Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), pp. 40, 53, 54. The festival of Āruttirātaricaṇam (in Sanskrit Ārdrādarśana, cf. n. 33), when the images of Naṭarāja and his consort are taken from the Citsabhā to the stately Rājasabhā or Thousand Pillared Hall for the ceremonial lustrations *(abhiṣeka)* and other services there, is the most important of all Śaiva temple festivals of South India (Arunachalam (1980), p. 193). It takes place about the full moon day of the Tamil month of Mārkaḻi (December-January), when the asterism Ārdrā is in the ascendant. Ārdrā is sacred to Śiva (Arunachalam (1980), p. 196; Jagadisa Ayyar (1921), pp. 159-160; Sivaramamurti (1974), p. 137), and it "was once the initial star of reckoning in the stellar calendar of the Tamils" (Zvelebil (1985), p. 31).

33. And receive the god's *darśana* (in Sanskrit, *taricaṇam* in Tamil) or "auspicious sight" of the god as a means of securing his blessing. (Diehl (1956), p. 154).

33a. See p. 99.

34. Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 374.

35. As distinguished from the daily services for the *sphaṭikaliṅga* representing the deity.

36. Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 37.

37. Op. cit., p. 40.

38. Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), pp. 36, 38. See ch. 8 n. 160.

39. Khanna (1979), p. 70. "A highly esoteric mantra is the Śrī Vidyā mantra ... which consists of fifteen seed vibrations which are partial aspects of the supreme goddess ... Tripura Sundarī, who in her knowledge aspect is known as Śrī Vidyā." (op. cit., p. 43).

40. The "ritual practice ... is confined to secret circles in which the individual teaching is by oral transmission from the preceptor according to the disciple's level of spiritual awareness." (op. cit., p. 43).

Several names of Tyāgarāja given in the Mucukunda Sahasranāma ("The thousand names (of Tyāgarāja) attributed to Mucukunda") emphasise the connection with the *Śrī Vidyā mantra* (Cuppiramaṇiya Ayyar (1951), p. 38). E.g., Śrīvidyāchāditahṛdaya ("He whose heart is covered by the *Śrī Vidyā*"), Srīvidyātmakarūpa ("He whose form has *Śrī Vidyā* as its essence") and Śrīvidyāyāstrikhaṇḍākhyasomāskandasvarūpaka ("He of the form of Somāskanda who is renowned as the three sections of the *Śrī Vidyā*"): the fifteen seed syllables of the *Śrī Vidyā mantra* are divisible into three groups of five, six and four syllables (Khanna (1979), p. 42).

41. Daniélou (1964), pp. 332, 335.

42. It is said that even the temple priests do not see the breast (Jagadisa Ayyar (1920), p. 375). Since the *bījākṣaras* are embodied in the breast of Tyāgarāja and are inseparable from the image, the *Rahasya* of Tiruvārūr accompanies him even when the image leaves the shrine – unlike the *Rahasya* of Cidambaram, which is connected with Naṭarāja only when he is in the Citsabhā and not when the image leaves the chamber. (ibid.).

43. See ch. 8 n. 161.

44. For various meanings of *haṃsa* see n. 18.

44a. See ch. 5 p. 53 at n. 25.

45. For some interpretations of the names of the dances see Taṇṭapāṇi Tēcikar (1972), pp. 68-70; Chamu (1982), pp. 129-132.

46. For example, *haṃsa* see p. 124 and nn. 18, 19; *kamala,* "lotus" see ch. 8 n. 19; and *unmatta* see ch. 8 n. 87.

47. See ch. 5 p. 51 at nn. 2, 3.

48. See ch. 8 p. 99 at nn. 145-148.

49. See ch. 8 p. 89 at nn. 22, 23.

50. See ch. 8 pp. 95, 96 at nn. 106-109. At the microcosmic level a devotee who responds to the call of Śiva's feet dancing in his heart (cf. ch. 8 nn. 147, 148) can by yogic techniques activate the cosmic energy, visualised as the *kuṇḍalinī,* the serpent power, to ascend from the lowest to the highest *cakra* in his subtle body and obtain release from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth (cf. ch. 8 p. 95 at nn. 106, 107).

51. Kūrmapurāṇa 2.4.33, transl. Kramrisch (1981a), p. 22; cf. ch. 8 p. 92 at nn. 59, 60.

APPENDIX

Pronunciation of Sanskrit and Tamil Words

(see also page xii)

Before we set out the English letters that represent approximately the sounds of Sanskrit and Tamil letters, we may observe that every Sanskrit letter has a fixed sound but that in Tamil the sound of a letter may undergo variations according to its position and the adjacent letters in a word.

Vowels are either short or long, the latter being indicated by a macron, a short horizontal line, placed over the vowel (e.g., ā). In Tamil a, e, i, o and u may be either short or long; but in Sanskrit while a, i and u may be either short or long, e and o are always long and no macron is placed over them.

Sanskrit has a vowel which is unknown to Tamil – ṛ.

The sounds of the vowels are as follows:

a as in rur*a*l (never as in h*a*t); ā as in f*a*ther; e as in m*e*t*;

ē as in pr*e*y*; i as in p*i*n; ī as in mach*i*ne; o as in l*o*ck;

ō as in n*o*te; u as in f*u*ll; ū as in r*u*le.

[*In Tamil e and ē when followed by ṭ, ṇ, ḷ or ḻ acquire different sounds, like the second e in bett*e*r and e in h*e*r.]

The Sanskrit ṛ should be pronounced as ur in the Scottish pronunciation of h*ur*t; but it is now often pronounced in some parts of India as ri in *ri*ng, and ṝ as ri in ma*ri*ne.

Ai and au are dipthongs pronounced as ai in *ai*sle and ou in h*ou*se respectively.

Consonants: in Sanskrit k, c, ṭ, t and p are hard sounds – k being pronounced as k in *k*ing; c as ch in *ch*urch; ṭ as t in po*t*; t as th in *th*atch; and p as p in *p*in. An h sound following any of the above consonants make them aspirated: kh is pronounced as kh in in*k-h*orn; ch as chh in chur*ch h*ouse; ṭh as th in po*t h*ole; th as thh in ba*th-h*ouse; and ph as ph in ha*ph*azard. All the above consonants have hard sounds. The corresponding soft sounds – g, j, ḍ, d and b – are the following: g as in *g*o; j as in *j*oy; ḍ as in *d*o; dh as in th in *th*is; and b as in *b*ook. These soft sounds, like the corresponding hard sounds (kh,

ch, ṭh, th and ph), when followed by an h sound, have similar soft sounds with aspiration: gh as in dog-*h*ouse; geh as in hedg*e* *h*og; ḍh as in ma*dh*ouse; dh as in a*dh*ere; and bh as in a*bh*or.

The nasals ṅ, ñ, ṇ, n and m are pronounced as ng in ri*ng*; nge in si*nge*; n in wo*n*der; n in *n*ot; and m in *m*an.

The letters y, r, l and v are pronounced as y in *y*et; r in *r*at; l in *l*ad; and v in *v*at.

In Sanskrit there are three sibilants – s, ṣ and ś. They should be pronounced as s as in *s*on, ṣ as in *sh*e and ś as in fa*s*cination. But in some parts of India ś is wrongly pronounced like sh in *sh*e, thus blurring the distinction between ś and ṣ.

H is pronounced as h in hut.

Ṃ following a vowel has a nasal sound, resembling that of n in french mo*n*.

Ḥ has the sound of a distinctly articulated and audible h; and where the ḥ appears at the end of a sentence, the h sound is followed by a faint echo of the vowel which always precedes an ḥ.

In Tamil k, c, ṭ, t and p are hard sounds (as stated above for Sanskrit), when they occur in the middle of a word, either when doubled (e.g., kk) or when one of these letters is conjoined with another of the above five letters (e.g., kt). At the beginning of a word, all these letters (c excepted) have a hard sound. C at the beginning of a word has a lax sound like s in *s*on. All these five letters occurring in the middle of a word between vowels also have a lax sound: e.g., the second k in kākam is pronounced as h, like kā*h*am; and c in vācam is pronounced as vā*s*am like the s in *s*on. All the five letters (k, c, ṭ, t and p), when following the corresponding nasals (ṅ, ñ, ṇ, n and m), are softened to g, j, ḍ, d and b respectively.

Of the eight remaining consonants in Tamil, y, r, l and v do not differ in pronunciation from Sanskrit (which has been mentioned above); while the other four, ḷ, l̲, ṟ and ṉ are unknown to Sanskrit. Of these latter four ḷ and l̲ are retroflex sounds peculiar to Tamil and are pronounced by curling the tongue back towards the roof of the mouth; more precisely, in pronouncing ḷ the tongue is curled back and flapped forward; and l̲ is pronounced by drawing back the whole tongue and making the blade spread across the mouth. R̲ is trilled, while r̲r̲ is pronounced as tr in *tr*ap and nr as ndr in lau*ndr*y. The Tamil ṉ and n are not in practice pronounced differently.

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THE CULT OF ŚIVA

This book provides a perspective of the chief features of Śaivism, a Hindu cult that is one of the oldest and most vibrant of the world's living faiths. It begins with an account of various views about the origins of Śaivism, goes on to trace the gradual emergence of the concept of Śiva as the Supreme God and describes the chief representations of him that are used in temple and domestic worship. Thereafter the book examines the theme of Śiva as a dancing god, since his various dances are clear expressions of his being and functions and in discussing them many of the chief features of Śaivism are vividly illustrated. Throughout the book the mythology, the iconography and the philosophical and devotional literature of Śaivism are frequently referred to. The book also reveals the interaction between the diverse strands of belief and practice that have contributed to form modern Śaivism.

The author of this book, Dr T. Nadaraja, is the Chancellor of the University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, and Emeritus Professor of Law, University of Colombo. He graduated from the University of Cambridge with first class honours in the Law Tripos examinations, and having passed the Bar Final examination with first class honours he was admitted to the English Bar. He taught law for over forty years and he was the administrative Head of the Department, and the Dean of the Faculty, of Law at the University. He served on various Law Reform Committees and Law Commissions. His writings have been concerned mainly with law; but he has also been keenly interested in comparative religion and Hinduism in particular. As a trustee of Hindu religious and charitable trusts established by his grandparents and great-grandparents, he has had the opportunity of studying many facets of Hinduism; and he has delivered lectures and contributed articles to various journals on Hinduism.

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