Characteristics of the Studies of Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta

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1 Introduction　The study of Śaiva Siddhānta has traditionally taken two routes. The first is that of the Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhānta, which developed in Sanskrit texts written by the Śaiva theorists such as Sadyojyotis, Rāmakaṇṭha and Aghoraśiva. The second is that of the Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta (abbreviated as TŚ hereafter), which developed in Tamil texts as represented by *Cittānta Cāttiram*, a series of texts dating from the 12th to 14th centuries.[1] The latter also includes the studies of *Tirumuṟai*, which date from the 7th to 12th centuries.[2]

　As the two routes have different historical backgrounds, scholars have tended to consider Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhānta and TŚ to be separate schools of thought.[3] Tokunaga, however, observed that "because Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta has a theory of divine grace that supplements the religious rites, it is probable that these two schools of Śaiva Siddhānta have a mutually supporting relationship."[4] Therefore, one of the goals of recent studies of Śaiva Siddhānta is to elucidate the relationship between Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhānta and TŚ.[5]

2 A Problematic Assumption in the Studies of TŚ　Although a number of studies of TŚ have been undertaken since the 19th century, they are not particularly helpful for the comparative study because they tend to regard TŚ as a single fixed system. This assumption that the texts of TŚ form a single fixed system is not expressly stated, but it is observed by the fact that the studies are all synthetic and quite hesitant to compare various different theories in the development of the system of TŚ. The words of Piet strongly imply its existence: "Meykaṇṭa-deva, the author of the *Śiva-jñāna-bodha*, summarizes the entire philosophy within the compass of forty lines of Tamil poetry. He wants to show that, logically, the Siddhānta is all of one piece, woven from the finest fabric of the human mind." [6]

Early TŚ, represented by *Cittānta Cāttiram*, spans 100 years, and we cannot deny its theoretical developments. The understanding on "the letter *ōm*" is a good example. The *Tiruvarutpayaṉ* written by Umāpati[7], whom the present author is now studying, contains a chapter on "five letters". The following two stanzas are the beginning of this chapter:

> The books which have [Śiva's] grace, the *Āraṇyaka*[8] and other [texts] are all concerning the nature of the five things[9], if one understands and goes into them.
>
> God, *śakti*, *pāśa*, strong *māyā* and life (*ātman*)
>
> exist in "the letter *ōm*".   (*Tiruvarutpayaṉ* 81, 82[10])

"The letter *ōm*" (*ōṅkāram*) is typically analysed as comprising five elements, namely "*a*", "*u*", "*ma*", "*vintu* (Skt. *bindu*)" and "*nātam* (Skt. *nāda*)". It can therefore be said that the five things beginning with God correspond to these five elements. In TŚ theory, however, the five things correspond to "five letters" consisting of "*ci*", "*vā*", "*ya*", "*na*" and "*ma*". The stanzas quoted above are in fact followed by detailed explanations of the "five letters", and "the letter *ōm*" is not referred to again in *Tiruvarutpayaṉ*. We can therefore conclude that "the letter *ōm*" and the "five letters" became unified in *Tiruvarutpayaṉ*.

This unification is not found, however, in the texts of Meykaṇṭār and his disciple Aruṇanti.[11] The five elements of "the letter *ōm*" are assigned to *akaṅkāram* (Skt. *ahaṃkāra*), *putti* (Skt. *buddhi*), *maṉam* (Skt. *manas*), *cittam* (Skt. *citta*) and *uḷḷam*, and to five *atiteyvam* (Skt. *adhideva*), respectively. This explanation of "the letter *ōm*" takes a position distinct from that of the "five letters".

Conversely, Maṉavācakaṅkaṭantār, another disciple of Meykaṇṭār, mentions only the name of "the letter *ōm*" without reference to its five elements and *atiteyvam*.[12] Approximately 50 years later, Umāpati wrote *Civappirakācam*, which does not mention "the letter *ōm*" at all.

It is probable that the concept of "the letter *ōm*" underwent changes early in the history of TŚ. The assumption held by the scholars, however, prevented them from paying attention to such theoretical developments of TŚ. When we read the texts more carefully, they in fact set forth a number of different theories, and the theorists sometimes even dispute with each other. We can therefore conclude that the assumption is incorrect.

3 Characteristics of the Studies of TŚ A review of the history of the study of TŚ clarifies how this assumption has been formed. There are three types in the aims of studies of TŚ, and the studies can be classified accordingly. Although the types were quite different from each other, all of them resulted in the same assumption.

3.1 Studies Comparing TŚ with Christianity The study of TŚ began with the need for Christian missionaries to understand the religion and philosophy of South India for the sake of their mission. As a result, understanding the outline of TŚ as a theoretical system was more important than elucidating the history of its development and examining the different perspectives of the theorists. Therefore, early studies of TŚ tended to synthesise various theories. The studies of Hoisington, Pope and Schomerus are considered to be this type.[13] Schomerus' studies, which are based on his vast philological reading, completed the first and most elaborate description of the whole system of TŚ theories, and became the most important source of information for the later studies.

3.2 Studies under the Influence of the Tamil Renaissance The first Indian scholar to study TŚ in modern way was Nallaswami Pillai.[14] He aimed to develop an academic standard by which Tamil teachers themselves, rather than Europeans, could teach Tamil and Indian subjects[15] and regain their just pride by removing the stereotype of "the noble Aryans" against the "savage Tamilians".[16]

Nallaswami Pillai began publishing a journal, *Siddhanta Deepika*,[17] in English and Tamil, and encouraged Tamil scholars to study Tamil and Indian subjects.[18] These studies, undertaken by Tamilian scholars who sympathized with his views, were mainly engaged in comparing TŚ with western thoughts or applying TŚ to the contemporary society.[19] For the basis of their studies and as a symbol of their pride, the scholars needed the fixed system of TŚ and paid no attention to its development.[20]

3.3 Philological Studies Philological studies began to be undertaken in the mid-20th century. The studies of Paranjoti, Matthews, Piet, Devasenapathi and Dhavamony belong to this type.[21]

This type of study cannot be satisfactorily defined as philological, however, because these scholars were very eager to deeply expound one text or one concept, but quite reluctant to elucidate the differences among the texts.[22] As a result, they per-

petuated the view of TŚ as a fixed system.

4 Issues in the Study of TŚ and Conclusion   The above analyses of the history of the study of TŚ show that the studies have tended to regard TŚ as a single fixed system. In other words, the scholars always focused their interest on the static aspect of TŚ and have been quite hesitant to consider the dynamics of theoretical development of TŚ in the texts. It is therefore necessary to re-examine the texts of TŚ for more exact understanding, compare them with each other and reveal their roles in the development of TŚ. Only after this re-consideration of TŚ will the comparative study of Sanskrit Śaiva Siddānta and TŚ be possible and meaningful.

1) *Cittānta Cāttiram* consists of the following 14 texts which date from the 12th to 14th centuries: *Tiruvuntiyār, Tirukkaḷirruppaṭiyār, Civañāṇapōtam, Civañāṇacittiyār, Irupāvirupatu, Uṇmaiviḷakkam, Civappirakācam, Tiruvaruṭpayaṉ, Viṉāveṇpā, Pōrrippakroṭai, Koṭikkavi, Neñcuviṭutūtu, Uṇmaineriviḷakkam, Caṅkarpanirākaraṇam.*

2) For outlines of the history of TŚ in Japanese, see Muneo Tokunaga, "Minami-indo no Shūkyō Shisō", in *Iwanami Kōza Tōyō Shisō, Vol. 6 (Indo Shisō 2)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1988, pp. 163–191; Jun Takashima, "Early History of Śaiva Maṭhas — 8th-13th Centuries", in *Journal of the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies, No. 1*, The Japanese Association for South Asian Studies, Tokyo, 1989, pp. 41–59; *do.*, "Śiva Shinkō no Kakuritsu - Śaiva Siddhānta to Minami Indo", in *Dravida no Sekai - Indo Nyūmon II*, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, Tokyo, 1994, pp. 41–53; Sengaku Mayeda, "Śiva-kyō Shoha no Seiritsu to Tenkai - Śaiva Siddhānta wo Chūshin ni shite", in *Indo Chūsei Shisō Kenkyū*, Shunjūsha, Tokyo, 1991, pp. 265–287. See also Muneo Tokunaga, "Civañāṇacittiyār, Parapakkam 264–301", in *Indological Review (Indogakuhō), No. 3*, Indogakuhō-sha, Kyoto, 1981, pp. 1–18 (in English); *do.*, "Śaiva Siddhānta Ha no Śakti Shisō", in *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū), Vol. XXXVII, No. 2*, Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, Tokyo, 1989.

3) For example, in Japan, the following statements were made: "Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhānta is distinguished from Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta of advaita theory, by using only Sanskrit and its viśiṣṭādvaita theory" (Tetsuzan Ihara, *Indo-kyō*, 3rd edition, Daitō Shuppansha, 1981, p. 259; first published in 1943); "Southern Śaivism tends to be treated as a single school of Śaiva Siddhānta, but it seems to be right to think that this Śaiva Siddhānta is divided into Tamil Śaiva Siddhānta discussed in this article and Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhānta represented by Aghoraśiva."(Muneo Tokunaga, "Minami-indo no Shūkyō Shisō", footnote 8, p. 190).

4) Muneo Tokunaga, *op. cit.*, pp. 190−191.

5) This article does not comment on Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhānta. The latest studies of San-
skrit Śaiva Siddhānta are: Dominic Goodall ed. and tr., *Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's Commen-
tary on the Kiraṇatantra, volume I*, Institut Français de Pondichéry, Pondichéry, 1998;
do., *The Parākhyatantra - A Scripture of the Śaiva Siddhānta*, Institut Français de Pon-
dichéry & École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Pondichéry, 2004.

6) John H. Piet, *A Logical Presentation of the Śaiva Siddhānata Philosophy*, The Chris-
tian Literature Society for India, Madras, 1952, p. 6.

7) When comparing TŚ with Sanskrit Śaiva Siddhānta, the most notable theorist of
TŚ is Umāpati, who lived in the 13th and 14th centuries. He is said to be the au-
thor of *Civappirakācam, Tiruvarutpayaṉ, Viṉāveṇpā, Pōṟṟippakroṭai, Koṭikkavi,
Neñcuviṭutūtu, Uṇmaineriviḷakkam, Caṅkaṟpanirākaraṇam, Tiruttoṇṭarpurāṇacāram,
Cēkkiḻārnāyaṉārpurāṇam, Tiṟumuṟaikkaṇṭapurāṇam, Kōyiṟpurāṇam, Aruṇmuṟaittiraṭṭu,
Civattalacivanāmacattināmakkaliveṇpā, Pauṣkarabhāṣya, Śataratnasaṅgraha* (the texts
underlined are in Sanskrit, others in Tamil). Attributions to him of some of the texts
above, such as *Uṇmaineriviḷakkam*, are doubted.

8) "The books which have Śiva's grace" are the texts of Śaivism, and "the *Āraṇyaka*" here
means the four *Veda*.

9) These are in this context the five things given in the next verse.

10) aruḷ nūlum āraṇamum allātum aintiṉ, poruḷ nūl teriyap pukiṉ. (81) irai catti pācam eḷil
māyai āvi, uṟa niṟkum ōṅkārattu uḷ. (82)

11) Meykaṇṭār, a theorist of the 13th century, is regarded as the first systematiser of TŚ
theories by his writing of *Civañāṉapōtam*. Aruṇanti wrote an elaborate commentary on
Civañāṉapōtam, Civañāṉacittiyār, in the 13th century.

12) "The *ōṅkāram* touches the good auspicious *"vā"* and *"ci"*, does not separate from
them and is the prevailing light."(*Uṇmaiviḷakkam* 34)

13) H. R. Hoisington's translations of *Civañāṉapōtam, Civappirakācam* and *Tattuvakaṭ-
ṭalai* in *Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. IV*, 1853; G. U. Pope, *The Tiru-
vāçagam or 'Sacred Utterances' of the Tamil Poet, Saint and Sage Manikka-Vāçagar*,
Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1995 (1st ed., Oxford, 1900); H. W. Schomerus,
*Der Çaiva-Siddhānta: eine Mystik Indiens / nach den tamulischen Quellen bearbeitet
und dargestellt*, J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig, 1912.

14) J. M. Nallaswami Pillai published various studies, such as English translations (*Sivag-
nana Botham of Meykanda Deva*, 2nd ed., Dharmapuram, 1945; *Siva-ñāṉa-siddhiar of
Arunandi Sivacharya*, Meykandan Press, Madras, 1913; *Siva-ñāṉa-siddhiar Supakkam
of Arulnandhi Sivam*, Dharmapuram, 1948). His various studies were edited in *Studies
in Śaiva Siddhānta*, The South India Śaiva Siddhānta Works Publishing Society, Ma-
dras, 1984 (1st ed., 1911).

15) See J. M. Nallaswami Pillai, "Our Aims", in *Siddhanta Deepika*, Vol. 1, No.1, 1897,

p. 14.

16) See *do.*, "Ourselves", in *Siddhanta Deepika*, Vol. 7, No.1, 1907, p. 29.

17) *The Light of Truth or Siddhanta Deepika, a monthly Journal devoted to Religion, Philosophy, Literature and Science*, Vols. 1–14, 1897–1914 (reprinted by Asian Educational Services, Madras, 2001).

18) "Our Journal will devote itself to bring out translation of rare works in Sanscrit and Tamil, both literary and philosophical and religious, will devote its pages to a more critical and historical study of Indian Religious systems, to develop a taste for and to induce a proper and more appreciative cultivation of our Indian Classical and Vernacular Languages and Literature, to bring into the Tamil all that is best and noblest in the literature and philosophy of the west, to supply to it its deficiency in the field of science and history, ancient and modern."(Nallaswami Pillai, "Our Aims", pp. 14–15.)

19) Translations of the Tamil and Sanskrit texts into English are not a few, but they are, in the same way as explained in the next section, far from satisfactory.

20) Nallaswami Pillai's movement has continued, and many universities and institutions are engaged in the studies of TŚ. There are a number of studies in the journals such as *Siddhanta Deepika* and *Saiva Siddhanta, Journal devoted to the Exposition of Siddhanta Philosophy, Religion, Literature and Comparative Understanding*, Vols. 1–26, Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam, Madras, 1966–1993.

21) Violet Paranjoti, *Saiva Siddhānta, Second and Revised Edition*, Luzac & Co., London, 1954; Gordon Matthews, *Śiva-ñāna-bōdham – A Manual of Śaiva Religious Doctrine*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1948; John H. Piet, *A Logical Presentation of the Śaiva Siddhānta Philosophy*; V. A. Devasenapathi, *Śaiva Siddhānta - As Expounded in the Śivajñāna-Siddhiyār and its Six Commentaries*, University of Madras, Madras, 1960; M. Dhavamony, *Love of God - According to Śaiva Siddhānta*, Oxford University Press, London, 1971.

22) There are also some difficult problems in Tamil texts as explained by Takanobu Takahashi in "Before Grammar: Issues on Reading Some Classical Tamil Texts", in *Electric Journal of the Institute of Indology and Tamil Studies, Vol. 9 & 10*, University of Cologne, Köln, 2003 (http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/journal/kolam/VOLUMES/ kolam9&10/takahashi.htm); *do.*, "Bunpō Izen – Koten Text Kaishaku no Shomondai –", in *Studies in Indian Philosophy and Buddhism, Vol. 13*, Department of Indian Philosophy and Buddhist Studies of the University of Tokyo, Tokyo, 2006.

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