

kāran and repeats the programme of his predecessor. Because the dance (āṭṭam) is done before a white (vella) cloth the dance is called Vellāṭṭam.

After the vellāṭṭam before midnight Tirayāṭṭam begins. The dresses of the teyyas differ slightly from each other. Some Tiras wear jackets and skirts while some wear flower garlands made of Tulasī leaves (basil plant) and ceṭṭi (jungle geranium). All the tiras rush to the temple in great spirit and they are followed by lamp-holders and torch-bearers to the accompaniment of loud sounds of musical instruments and uproars from the spectators. When the first round of dances is over, the 'Teyya' stands dancing, pouring blessings to the people and deciding ways of atonement for the sins done. Then food is offered to the gods and the function ends with a 'Vela' circling the temple.

TIRUJÑĀNASAMBANDHA (R). He was one of the four Dākṣiṇātya Śaivamatācāryas. He lived during the early part of the seventh century. The book on Dākṣiṇātya Śaivamata is called Tirumura. There are twelve songs in that book. They were compiled by Nambiyāṇḍār Nambi who lived during the period of Rājaraṅga Cola. The first seven of these are devotional songs called Tevāras. They were composed jointly by Tirujñānasambandhar, Tirunāvukkaraśar and Sundaramūrti. The first three tevāras are of Tirujñānasambandhar. The twelfth tirumura is called Periyapurāṇa. Its author was Śekkizhār. He was called Arulmozhitteva also. He was the chief minister of Anapāyacola who ruled during the period 1063 to 1112 A.D. The theme of Periyapurāṇa is the life history of sixtythree Śaivasiddhas who were renowned as Nāyanārs and Aṭiyārs. It is in the sixth chapter of the second part of this book that they discuss Tirujñānasambandhar.

He was born in the village of Śīrkāzhi (Brahmapura) near Kumbhakoṇam in the district of Tanjāvūr. His father was Śivapādarāya and mother Bhagavatiyār. Once when Śivapādarāya went to bathe in the temple tank called Brahmatīrtha he took along with him his son Sambandhar also. Keeping his son on the steps of the tank Śivapādarāya plunged himself into the waters. Śiva and Pārvaṭī who came that way saw the child sitting alone and Pārvaṭī went and fed him with her breast-milk. From that moment onwards the child started singing songs in praise of Śiva and Pārvaṭī. When he grew up, he did many wonderful deeds visiting many Śiva temples of Pāṇḍirāṅga. His father fixed up a marriage for him and the bride's party assembled even before time at the Cidambara temple. Tirujñānasambandhar came there in time and standing before the temple deity sang a song in praise of Śiva. The song was greatly appealing and at the end of the song before all those assembled there Sambandhar to the astonishment of all merged with the deity.

TIRUNĀVUKKARAŚA (R). He was a Śaivaite like Tirujñānasambandhar (Refer above) and a disciple also of the latter. He was born in the village of Tiruvāmūr in South Arcot district. His father was Pugalanār and mother Madiniyār both of whom were Vellālas. They got a daughter named Tilakavatiyār and a son named Marulnikkiyār. It was this Marulnikkiyār who became famous as Tirunāvukkaraśar. This siddha who acquired divine knowledge has composed 4900 songs in praise of Śiva of which only 312 are in use now.

TĪRTHA. A holy place. Even from very ancient times the people of Bhārata believed in the sacredness of holy places and they considered a pilgrimage to holy places as a part and parcel of their life. Almost all the Purāṇas have praised the greatness of holy places.

It is not true that all those who visit holy places and bathe in the sacred ponds there would get salvation. In Chapter 11 of Padma Purāṇa it is stated thus:

He would get salvation whose limbs, mind, knowledge, austerity and fame are under his own control. He who lives clean in body, without egoism, contented and never accepting gifts for services done would get salvation by visiting holy places. He who would fast if he did not get food, whose organs of sense are all under control would get salvation if he visits holy places. He who is righteous, free from anger, treats all animate objects like himself would get salvation if he visits holy place.

Once the great sage Cyavana told Prahlāda thus: "Only those who are pure in heart would get the benefit of visiting sacred places. It is a sin for others to do pilgrimage. The banks of Gaṅgā are crowded with villages and cities. Many types of people like Parayas, Fishermen, Vaṅgas, Khasas, Huns and Mlecchas live there. They bathe in the holy river and drink the holy water, but they do not get salvation because their mind and heart are not clean." (4th Skandha, Devī Bhāgavata).

TĪRTHAKOṬI. A holy place. He who visits this place would attain Viṣṇuloka after obtaining the benefit of doing a Puṇḍarika yajña. (Śloka 121, Chapter 84, Vana Parva).

TĪRTHANEMĪ. A female attendant of Subrahmaṇya. (Śloka 7, Chapter 46, Śalya Parva).

TĪRTHAYĀTRĀPARVA. A sub-divisional Parva of Vana Parva. This comprises Chapters 80 to 156 of Vana Parva.

TITIKṢĀ. One of the sixteen daughters born to Dakṣa of his wife Prasūti. Of these thirteen were married to Dharmadeva. Titikṣā was one of them. The others were Śradhdhā, Maitrī etc. (4th Skandha Bhāgavata).

TITIKṢU. A King born of the family of Turvasu. He was the son of Uśīnara and father of Ruṣadratha. (Chapter 277, Agni Purāṇa).

TITṬIBHA. An asura. This demon shines in the court of Varuṇa. (Śloka 15, Chapter 9, Sabhā Parva).

TITṬIBHASARAS. A sacred pond near the āśrama of Vālmiki. There is a story about this pond. Once a water-fowl lived there with his mate. One day the male fowl went out for food and as he was returning home he found a few other water-fowls going that way and the male fowl suspected the chastity of his wife. The male fowl decided to abandon his mate and the innocent shefowl prayed to the Aṣṭadīkṣapālakas for help. The Aṣṭadīkṣapālakas instantly appeared there and made a pond and said that if the she-fowl could reach from one shore to the other without getting herself drowned she must be treated as chaste. The she-fowl was accordingly put into the waters and asked to swim to the other shore which she did without any accident. From that day onwards the pond was called Tiṭṭibhasaras. (Tiṭṭibha = water fowl. Saras = pond).

When Sītā came to the āśrama of Vālmiki after being abandoned by Śrī Rāma, Vālmiki wanted to test her chastity. So the sages asked Sītā to enter the pond and reach the other shore. "Oh goddess of Earth, if even in