Chapter - IV

Religious Conflicts
CHAPTER – IV

RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

Religion can play a predominant role in society in two ways ie. either by claiming so much of the man’s attention and conscience that he has little of his personality left over for other affairs or by feeding the fire of religious fanaticism and generating intro-social antagonism.

Religion not only bring in ethics, creativity, holistic development, relationship, accountability, devotion and faith, hope and inspiration, inner experiences and mystical visions etc., but it also can instill divisions, hatred, disunity, exploitation, domination, revenge and violence. The positive and creative aspects of religions and their harmonious co-existence may help a society. The negative aspects of religions and their mutual hatred and clash may create a great harm to any civilized society.

Religious conflicts arise mainly due to Jealousy and also another reason that one wants to propagate his own. For this purpose, they try to convert other religionists into their fold. In the name of helping the poor and brought them into their fold. For this purpose, orphanages were instituted. In the name of helping the uneducated, they came forward to offer free education, taught their scripture, by the lapse of time offered them jobs in schools and colleges, and converted them. Another effective tool was hospitalization. The poor who could not pay for their treatment were offered free medical aid
and converted. Therefore, all over the world the Christian orphanages, schools and hospitals do function. The method chosen by the Muslims was completely different. They depended upon their soldiers for the purpose of conversion. A small religion born in the barren soil of Arabia around Mecca and Medina, within a few centuries of its birth the soldiers of Islam in the name of *jehad* moved in the east and west and converted most of the countries. The whole of Middle East came under their control. The Arabs, Turks and Mongols to begin with had their own tribal cults. All were brought under the fold of Islam. The innocent Africans follow either Islam or Christianity. Islam moved into Europe also at a lesser speed and European Muslims are called Moors. In South Asia and Southeast Asia, they had to encounter Hinduism and Buddhism. Historians says it was mainly to the inquisition of Islam that Buddhism completely disappeared from the land of its birth. The Hindu India of the immortal past, what historians call Bharatavarsa of Jambudvipa, extended from Gandhara (Afghanistan) in the northwest to Kamarupa (Assam to the borders of Burma), and Kashmir in the North to Kanyakumari in the South. Today, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and about 10 per cent of the Indian population follow Islam. Beginning with Mohammad bin Kasim in the 8th century AD, the *jehad* continued to operate in South and Southeast Asia. They spread the message of the Koran at the point of sword and riffle. In areas where their instrument of terrorism will not work, they imposed taxes on the Hindus and tried to convert them.
Hinduism is a religion basically not interested in conversion. Religious lineage comes to them by birth status. The society was divided into two broad sections called *dvija* and sudra, followed by *avarna*. *Dvijas* were twice-born, i) natural birth from the mother’s womb, ii) investiture with the *yajnopavita* (sacred thread) at the time of *upanayana* (school going age). The Brahmanas, Ksatriyas and vaisyas were *dvija* and by birth status entitled to wear the sacred thread and utter the scriptures. The sudra is the fourth *varna*, servants to the other three *varnas*. They were not entitled to wear the sacred thread and read the scriptures. For them, entry into the residential quarters of the higher *varnas* and temples was prohibited. *Avarnas* were the fifth estate that were born of inter-*varna* marriages. They were treated as untouchables and held lower in status than the sudras. The sudras themselves treated them as their servants. Marriages were permitted only among members of the Varna. A brahmaṇa could not marry a Ksatriya or vaisya. If any such marriage took place and a child born, the child was pushed to the *avarna* status. Similarly, the sudra will not marry a *avarna*.

It is due to such a complicated social formation, Hinduism never permitted conversion. If converted to which of the *varnas* the convert is to be permitted. Consequently, the Hindus treated all aliens whether Muslim or British as mlecchas. They could not be permitted into the residence of a caste-Hindu and offered drink or food. This was the societal background of Indian history down to the 18th - 19th century until the reform movements came. Even today, they hold that
caste has on Indian society is very strong. Even though inter-caste marriages take place at large, it could not be specified how many of them are recognized within a caste group. The married couple and their children are treated outlandish and stand ostracized.

In case of Christianity and Islam when these two came to logger heads there was protracted warfare for many centuries. A good example is the crusades. For taking possession of the holy land, they fought incessantly. When Christianity bifurcated into Roman Catholicism and Protestantism these two factions took to armed conflict as during the Thirty Years war. Under the Tudors after Henry VIII the Catholics were supported or persecuted under different rulers, depending upon their sectarian affinity. The unity of all the divinities worshipped, there is no persecution in this country unlike in the west where even now hostility to other religions is widely practised.\textsuperscript{319} In India whether north or south there is no such case of religious war reported during the pre-Islamic days. Though there was no such an armed conflict occurred in India, or Tamilnadu there were other modes and methods adopted by which religious disharmony or conflict came on the stage during 7\textsuperscript{th} to 9\textsuperscript{th} century AD.\textsuperscript{320} The age of Bhakti movement has not only called as reformation resurgence. But also revolutionary age or what we called it as \textit{Camayapuratci kalam}.

\textsuperscript{319} M.Periyakaruppu, \textit{Matha Nallinakkam}, (Tamil), Reni co publishers, Madras, 1999, p.93.

\textsuperscript{320} Mayilai Seenivenkatasamy, \textit{Mahendravarma-I} (Tamil), Madras, 1955, p.103.
Religionists adopted the following modes to strengthen their powers.

1. Strengthening one’s own sect and to make them more active or virulent.
2. Tendency towards absolute claims for its own religion.
3. Ridiculing other religions and their principles.
4. Verbally challenging the authority and basic principles of other religions.
5. Destruction of worship and sacred places, Idols, scriptures and religious literatures.
6. Destruction and execution of other religionists.

In the matter of Religious unarmed conflicts the above said factors were adopted to sustain their powers.

Religious conflicts among the Indian religions (Hinduism [consisting of Saiva, Vaisnava, Sakta etc.], Buddhism and Jainism) were like family feuds. Conversion never took place among these three major factions. A Hindu remained a Hindu, a Buddhist a Buddhist and a Jain a Jain. If conversion takes place within the subsects of Hinduism accommodating them within the varnasrama is not a factor. If a Saiva becomes a Vaisnava, he belongs to the same varna of his birth. Evidences of Saiva or Vaisnava temples converted to other could not be ruled out. Similarly, evidences of Buddhist or Jain temples converted to any of the Hindu factions could also be established. These took place without any violence.
For example, in a case of Jain-Saiva confrontation the method of operation was by negotiable means.

The Saivites considered Siva as their supreme God and other Gods inferior to Siva. In the same way the Vaisnavites considered the Saivites inferior to the Vaisnavites. The Jains and Buddhists were not exemptions to this. They also criticized strongly and expressed their hatred towards the Saivites and Vaisnavites. They were indulging in terrible invectives against Saivites and Vaisnavites. Nilakesi, a Jain literature and Kundalakesi a Buddhist literature criticize the religious beliefs faiths and practices of Saivism and Vaishnavism. The Jains were tortured by the Saivites. It is well attested in the Murtinayanarpuranam. Thandiyadigal puranam, Kulacciraiyar, Naminandiyadigal, Appudi Adigal and Itanculi Nayanar Puranams.321

For instance, the traditional Kun Pandya (hunched) (AD 642-670) of Maturai was a Jain by faith. He was married to a Chola princess called Mankaiyarkaraci. She was an ardent Saiva. She wanted to convert her husband from Jainism to Saivism. With a view to effect this, she invited Nanacampantar from the Chola country to Madurai to take up the responsibility of the conversion process. When the saint arrived at Madurai, the cunning muruttamanar sent a magical cyclopean elephant to destroy the city.

According the myths related in the *Tiruvilaiyatal Puranam*, Siva shoots an arrow at the elephant and killed him. The Jains moved to the west and sent a huge cow and snake. These two were petrified. To this day, there are three hillocks in suburban Madurai called Anaimalai, Pacumalai, and Nagamalai. That are reminiscent of the myths. The Jains told to the king that it was a great sin to see campantar and to hear the hymns. (*Kandumuttu* and *Kettumuttu*).  

The Jains hatred the saints activity. “*Neetru Meniyarayinar Melutra Katruk Kollavu Nill a Vamanar*”. The Jains wanted to destroy campantar. So they set fire to campantar’s mutt.  

Saivar Val Matatamanarkal Ittath Teethalalpoi Paiyave Sentru Pandiyarkakena Pannitar. At once the king got the *veepunoi*. Jains efforts to cure the Veepunoi ended in vain. Finally campantar cured his Veppunoi. Jains had a *Vaatam* (argument) with Campantar. The understanding was that they must prove that, their god is great. Both of them agreed to undergone the *analvaatam* and *punalvaatam*.

The understanding was that the Jains and the Saiva saints were to throw their holy scriptures into fire (*anal vaatam*) and did so. But the Jains scriptures became an ashes at the same time Hindu Saiva Saints scriptures were not burned. Then the scriptures were throw into

---


“Nitru meniyarayinar melutra Katruk kollavu nilla vamanar”.


“Saivar Val matathmanarkal ittalaththeeththalap poip Paiyave centru pandyarkakena panithar”.

324 *Periyapuram*: 4 – 35 – 2685 - 89.
the water into the river Vaikai, whose God is great, their scripture would float against the current of the water and defeated one’s scripture would be flushed along the current of the water.

Nanacampantar’s Tirumurai, called Tevaram, moved against the current of the water (near Tiruvedagam) and thus got for the saint a victory over the saints of Jains.325 It is recorded in the Tiruvilaiyatal Puranam that Kunpandya after his conversion, he sent the Jains to the stakes, thus killing 8000 of them.326 Nevertheless there is no contemporary inscriptionsal evidence for this mass killing of the Jains. Even though the Jains are supposed to have been killed, no case of armed conflict is on record. Campantar won the Jains by debate and the king punished the audacious Jains. The Buddhists and Jains were also indulging in terrible invectives against the Saivites and Vaishnavites of that period and reaction to that was equally vigorous.

Campantar undergone an other intellectual argument with the Buddhist leader called Cari Buddha in Podimangai and finally won over him and curb their pride.327

Another ranqour quoted in Tevaram is that Thandiyadikal a blind by birth native of Tiruvarur wanted to dig the pond to extend its depth. On the eve of this work he was condemn by the Jainists and also ridiculed his blindness and his beliefs. So he was upset and pray

325 Periyapuranam: 4-35-2748-49.
326 Ibid., 4 – 35 – 2751; M.Rajamanickam Pillai, op.cit., p.279.
327 Ibid., 4-35-2821 & 22.
to god to teach a lesson to the puntalaiyars. At last his prayer was answered; he got his eye power in turn most of the Jainists became lost their eye sight and finally they were driven away from that place and confiscated their *pallis* by the cola ruler Kulottunga II.\textsuperscript{328}

Mahendravarman I to begin with was a Jain converted to Saivism by Navukkaracar. The Tiruchinopoli inscriptions registered the conversion of Mahendravarman from Jainism to Saivism by Apparadikal.\textsuperscript{329} Marulneekkiyar the original name of Appar hailing from an orthodox Saiva vellala family from Tirumunaipadi. He lost his faith in Saivism and attracted to Jainism\textsuperscript{330} in his early days and joined the Jaina monastery at Pataliputra as a monk. He won in many intellectual arguments and got the title *Dharmasena*\textsuperscript{331} that means heads of the Jainas. He was lived about 6\textsuperscript{th} century (AD 575-656) and contemporary of Pallava ruler Mahendran I. Jainism got the prime seat and support from the royals. The legend is that his sister Tilagavathiyar, who has watched her brother’s change of faith in Saivism to Jainism with untold regret implored to Siva’s help.\textsuperscript{332} Her prayer was answered.

\textsuperscript{328} Ibid., 5.37-3601-3615.
\textsuperscript{331} *Periyapuranam*, 5 – 27 – 1304 – 1305.

“Citanilai Ariyata Teraraiyum Vaadinkan uitta unarvinil ventre ulakinkan oliyudaya, Vittakarai Amansamyat Talamaiyinil Mempattar”.

\textsuperscript{332} *Periyapuranam*: 5 – 27 – 1312.

“Tavamentru payitukkitt talaiparittu ninrunnum Avamontru nerivelvan velame arulum.
Dharmasena became the victim of an incurable abdominal disorder (ie. *Soolai Noi*) with which all his fellow Jains failed to cure his *Soolai Noi* with their mantra *cikctai*. So he was compelled to go and seek his sister’s aid. She secured his cure by the grace of Lord Siva at Tiruvatigai. The news of his defections greatly upset the Jain monks of Pataliputra, who triumphed against many false charges foisted against Dharmasena and poisoned the mind of the Pallava ruler against him. He was subjected to many trials and tortures with which he was easily surmounted from the tortures by the grace of Lord Siva ‘Natrunaiyavathu Namacivayame’. He got the name Navukkaracar/ Vakkisar ie King of songs. The king of songs conquered the heart of the king of state ie. Mahendran I. finally king himself was convinced of the superiority of Saivism and embraced it. He destroyed the Jain *pallis* and temples at Tiruppathiripuliyur and with that things he had constructed a beautiful Siva temple at Tiruvadigai named as Gunatharaecuram.

Appar visited Palayarai Vadatali Siva temple, which was under the control of Jainas, who were the cause to made to hide the shrine. So Appar sat before it. He said that without seeing the lord Siva, he

---

335 Mayilai Seenivengatasamy, op.cit., pp. 28 – 35.
“Vetariyac camanar moli poiyentru Meiyunarnta Katavanum tiruvatigainagarin kan kannutarkkup Pataliputrirattil aman palliyodu paligalum Kudi idittu konartu gunaparavecuram eduttan”.
could not dispersed from the place. This was suppose to be the first fasting struggle and then the Jainas were uprooted from the place.

Another fanatic incident stated in Guruparambarai that Tirumankai Alwar belongs to 8th century A.D has stolen the Buddha Idol made up of gold at Nagapattinam vihar and melted the gold idol with that gold he completed the Srirangam Temple’s 4th prahara construction work. Another Alwar called Tondaradippodiyaalvar hatred and vehemently condemns Buddhists and Jains. He expressed his hatred in his great prapandam that, it is his duty to chop the heads of the audacious Jains and Buddhists.337

Another religious conflict or religious ranquor revealed in Periyapuranam is that a saivitee of Tiruvotriyur planted a palm tree. Fortunately it was a male palm tree on seeing that tree the Jains ridiculing the saivitee to make the male tree into female palm tree. It came under the knowledge of Nanacampantar and he profoundly took the challenge. By the grace of Tiruvotriyur lord, and his mysterious power, he made the male palm tree into female palm tree, with full of flowers. The Jains were ashamed and run away from the place and

“Veruppodu samanamuntar veethiyil sakkiyarkal
..................................................
Kurippenak kadaiyumaki kudumel thalai aanke
Aruppathe karumam kantai arankama nakarulane”.
some of them persecuted. (kaluvetral) It has been proved by the
sculptures of Tiruvotriyur Siva Temple. 338

Manickavasagar also won in the intellectual argument with the
Buddhists of Ceylon held at Citamparam Sangarar (8th c.A.D.) also
won the Buddhist by the way of intellectual argument held at Kanci
and he organised a mutt there.

The Mattavilasa prahasana of Mahendravarmapallava. I present
a pen picture of this kind of religious conflict going in the Pallava
country. In this Sanskrit play a Kapalika, a Buddhist friar and a
Pasupata are at logger heads. 339 The Kapalika is in a drunker state of
mood, he had missed his Kapala. [skull begging bowl, insignia of the
kapalikas]. 340 At that time he meets a Buddhist monk, who moves
carefully hiding something in his surplice. The kapalika drags him
into a quarrel and accuses what he is hiding in his surplice.

The Buddhist monk denies A. Pasupatha comes into the scene
and tries to mediate them. At that time a mad man brings the Kapala
with him which he says he got the Kapala from a ruffian dog. 341 In
this episode, eventhough there is no fight they annoy each other. We
find the way the Buddhist monk was subjected to a torture by words.

340 Idem. The Kapala made a Kapalika a maharratin (one fanatically attached to
Siva) without which he could not be a Kapalika.
341 Rajukalidos, Encyclopaedia of Hindu Iconography, Vol III, Delhi, 2006,
Further more even among the saiva sects, the Kapalika and Pasupatas were not friendly.

In fact Pasupathas were the first to throw of all caste their barriers and consider, equal status to all and also they were the first Indian sect to touch a crusade against caste groups and the anomalies which it produced.

Udayendra–pattayam–recorded–one incident that Nandivarmapallava punished the irregular Jains (Neripiralnta) and make to drive away from his place, confiscated their lands and gave the lands to Brahmins as *Brahmadeya*. According to Tomes Fakes it is a black mark in the history of Pallava rulers.\(^{342}\) There is no record to prove that the Pallava rulers has given lands to Buddhists.\(^{343}\)

The Hindus staged their demonstrations of religious conflict only through literature and art. Few such cases of religious animosity could be enumerated which was proves with evidences from Tamil Saiva and Vaishnava literature in the case of religious conflicts.\(^ {344}\) We find some instances of intolerance towards a rival sect in the Chola period (1133-1150 AD). Kulottunga II was a staunch Saivite. He destroyed the Vaishnava Shrine of Govindaraja (Vishnu Anantasayi)

\(^{342}\) M.Rajamanickam, *op.cit.*, p.277.


from the Nataraj temple at Citambaram and threw it into the sea. His persecution of Ramanuja and other acts of Anti-Vaishnavism only led to the strengthening of their sect through the Acharya who had to flee to Mysore where Vishnuvardhana who had all along supported Jainism discarded.

It would be difficult to accuse Kulottunga II of persecuting the Vaishnavas because it was he who made liberal grants to the Srirangam temple. It is probable that he had a personal score to settle with Ramanuja than with Vaishnavism. Kulottunga must have thought that Ramanuja’s organization of Vaishnavism was calculated to discredit the Saiva king. Except this incident, there is no record of other Acharya being persecuted nor of Vishnu temples being disturbed. Ramanuja converted many non Vaishnava chaturtta to Srivaishnavism. He and his successors converted people from one religion to another and not from one varna to another and not even from one caste to another.\(^\text{345}\)

After the death of Ramanuja the Vaishnavas were falling into two distinct hostile groups. Vadakalai and Thenkalai or the school of Northern learning and southern learning respectively each with particular views on specific religions and social questions, though the beginnings of such differing views may be traced to an earlier period. Their differences were generally doctrinal, ritualistic and social in character. The usual and popular view is that the vadakalai wing

became distinct with Vedanta Desika and the Tenkalai with Manavala Mamunigal. The two schools held different views regarding the position of Lakshmi. The vadakalai school held the view that Lakshmi could not be considered as one different from God, for them she lived in and through him. But the Tenkalai school gives an inferior place to her and argued that she was as much as finite being as anybody else, but held a superior position as a servant of God, and was only a mediator between the sinner and the lord.\textsuperscript{346}

In the matter of observances of festivals and Jayantis there are differences between these two section is calculating the days on which these are to celebrated. As regards the religious ceremonies in the matter of annual sreddha ceremony there were differences between them if it falls on an \textit{ekadasi day} the Tenkalai’s do not perform it on that day but do it on the next day. During the annual ceremonies vatakalai was the feet of officiating Brahmin (\textit{pada Puja}) and drink the water. But Tenkalai reject this practice.

The Tenkalai’s have ‘Y’ mark with a central line and the Vadakalai’s have ‘U’ mark with a yellow or red central line. The name of the lord is pronounced while the mark ‘Y’ or ‘U’ is applied on the forehead and on the body (chest and arms).

The temple disputes between the two \textit{kalai} revolve around certain differences in details of rituals. The usual point of conflict are the \textit{namam} inscribed on the idol and various parts of the temple, the

\textsuperscript{346} P.Subramanian, \textit{op.cit.}, p.250.
Dayapatram mantra to be pronounced, the number of salutation to be made to God, the priority to the *praphandas* or the Vedas. The basic contention is whether a temple has been from a beginning a Tenkalai or a Vadakalai temple. The Tenkalai’s overlook that even Kancipuram a famous Vadakalai temple, turned Vadakalai only in the 19th century. They condemned that the original Tenkalai symbols in the temple were all erased and Vadakalai mark was substituted. The vadakalais naturally disagreed it. The difference between these two *kalais* was due not only to *Abhipraya Bheda* (difference of opinion) but to *siddhanta Bhedha* which created a wedge them.

In the year 885 AD, one dispute occurred among the Jain nuns. There was a large Jain monastery at Vedal in the North Arcot district in which some dispute arose between one nun and her five hundred pupil on the one part, and four hundred nuns on the other hand, and it was put an end to only by the lay Jains of the place taking under their protection one of the parties to the dispute.\(^{347}\)

This period witnessed intensive rivalry between the vedic religion and Buddhism and Jainism. The bhakti movement strive to eliminate the influence of non-Hindu sects and succeeded in ousting from Tamil country. there are many references to the antagonism between these groups and took violent turns with destruction of Jain temples or their forcible conversion to saivite shrines (e.g. Kanci-Kamatchi temple) and the persecution of Jains.

A Jain shrine had once existed within the Nagaraja temple, Nagarkoil, gradually passed into the hands of the Hindus around 1520 A.D. The Tirucharanathumalai is a hill situated in citaral at Kulithurai served as a sacred centre for all devout Jains and others. The inscription testified that it was inhabited by Jains in the 9th century A.D. The temple was renovated and an image of Goddess Bhagavathy instead of Padmavathy was reinstalled in the year 1913.348

A Conflict between Brahminism and Buddhism revealed in Manimekalai. Abutrantiramarivita kadai. Budhi a Brahmin of Vayanankodu which belongs to Cholavalanadu, brought up an orphan child as their own child, called Abutran (s/o a cow). He educated him according to his tradition. Being an adopted son of a Brahmin, he habituated the philosophical idea of Buddha Dharma and Ahimsa. One day he happened to hear the crying sound of cow, tied in the garden of a Brahmin house which was decorated with garland and ready for the cruel system of pali (cow-slaughter) in the Yajna or Velvi. Being bias, he wanted to save the cow from the danger and went with the cow away from the place. But unfortunately they got up by the searcher and got a worst treatment. They scolded Abutron as a Kalvan (thief) and beat him severely. His parents too hatred him as a illegal bad boy and sent him out from their house. He was helpless. He has to beg in the agrahara and led his life. Again he got a worst treatment. They put sand and stone into his begging bowl.

instead of food. So no other way he reached south Madurai of Cintadevi temple and led his begging life there.\textsuperscript{349}

**Vaisnava sectarianism**

A simple way by which the Hindu sects exhibited their sectarianism was to appropriate the name of one God by another. For example, Siva by tradition is known as Isvara (\textit{T. Ican}). This name appears in several of the hymns of the Nayanmar as addressed to Siva,\textsuperscript{350} The name is applied to Vishnu.\textsuperscript{351} Similarly, Saundararaja “King of Liveliness” is a name typical of Vishnu by which the presiding gods of the Alakarkoyil and Tatikkompu are known. Its Tamil equivalent is \textit{Alakan} or \textit{Cokkan}. These two names are attributed to Siva by the Nayanmar.\textsuperscript{352} Madhava (Great Recluse) is one among the twenty-four (\textit{caturvimsati}) forms of Vishnu. Siva is also a great recluse as Yogisvara or Daksinamurti, a teacher’s teacher. The Tamil equivalent of Madhava is Tavattan that is attributed to Siva.\textsuperscript{353} Adimurti (Primeval Lord) is a popular iconographical form of Vishnu in which the Lord is seated on Adisesa.

The Saivas call Siva Adimurtti.\textsuperscript{354} Siva is fond of dance and music and so called Nataraja and Innicaiyar or Elicaiyon.\textsuperscript{355} Vishnu is

\textsuperscript{349} Manimekalai, \textit{op.cit}, 13\textsuperscript{th} Kadai, pp. 142-151.
\textsuperscript{350} \textit{Tevaram} Tirumurai I, Patikam 4, V. 5, 7.
\textsuperscript{351} \textit{Periya Tirumoli of Tirumankai Alvar}: Tirumoli 1, Pattu 8, V. 1.
\textsuperscript{352} \textit{Tevaram} 1.79.1; 3.309.3.
\textsuperscript{353} \textit{Ibid.}, 1.86.4.
\textsuperscript{354} \textit{Tevaram} 4.23.7.
\textsuperscript{355} \textit{Ibid.}, 1.97.11; 1.128.38.
addressed as Innicaiyanavan.\textsuperscript{356} Similarly, Devi has appropriated several of the names of Siva and Vishnu. She is called Sivi, Mahesvari (Mahesvara), Yogisvari, Natesvari, Vaisnavi, Varahi and so on.\textsuperscript{357} The presiding God Visnu at Tirumeyyam is invoked with the epithet Meyyamalaiyalan, Ruler of the Body Hill. Later Pandyan inscriptions attribute this name to Siva as Meyyan.\textsuperscript{358} An epithet or appellation attributed to a God, symbolizes certain ethos typical of him/her. Its appropriation by another word mean he is placed on a par with his competitor. It is a mild way of expressing sectarianism. It seems to have been done so with a view earn the appreciation of other sectarians and thereby encourage conversion. Earlier the Hindu sects appropriated several of the Jain-Buddhist norms, e.g. nudity (Bhiksatana, Bhairava), reclining posture (Ranganatha), in order to lure the Jains and Buddhists into their fold. Visualizing the Cosmic form of Vishnu are Virat Purusa (Visvarupa, Cosmic Man with 1000 heads and 1000 hands) the Vaishnavas would say it was he who gave birth to Brahma in Siva in his umbilicus;

\textit{Nannukak kolumulai}

\textit{Yinru Mukkanicanoty tevupa nutali}

\textit{Muvulakam vilittavunti}.\textsuperscript{359}
That is to say, Vishnu ordained the four-faced Brahma, the three-eyed Isvara, the other gods and the three worlds through his umbilicus. This is definitely a case of superiority claimed for Vishnu, pushing into the background the other great gods of the Hindu pantheon.

At the time of final dissolution of the worlds, Vishnu is said to have devoured Brahma and Siva. To quote,

*Karkkantan Nanmukanotu/untanula kotuyir.*

The absorbed in his stomach the blue-throated (Nilakantha-Siva), the four-faced, all the worlds and the life on it. This is to establish the superiority of Vishnu as creator and annihilator, the omnipotent. Simply, Vishnu is called the several religions on earth. There may be several gods on earth such as Brahma, Siva, Indra and so on. All these are nothing but the many sided personality of Vishnu. Siva who preaches the dharma to four great risis as Daksinamurtti is engaged in praising the Lord who reclines within the pepal leaf. Herein, the greatness of Vishnu is declared before the pigmy Siva. Vatapatrasayi is actually a pigmy who resides in a tiny leaf but at the same time, he could elongate himself into the tallest Virat-Trivikrama (Onkiyulakalanta-uttaman).

Such ideas of sectarianism are redundant in the hymns of the both the Alvars and the Nayanmar. It is worthwhile to see what the Nayanmar have to say on the subject.

---

361 *Tiruppavai*, No. 3.
Saiva Sectarianism

If the Vaisnavas consider Siva a son of Vishnu, the Saivas would claim for him a self-born status, svayambhu. By immortal tradition Siva is worshipped in phallic form. Therefore, the Siva-Linga is called svayambhu. Siva has no father and mother. According to Navukkaracar, the four Vedas declare that the Linga is svayambhu and sthanu. To quote,

Cayampuvenre takutanuvenre caturvetankalinriyampum.362
Cayampu = svayambhu, tanu = sthanu, caturvetam = caturveda.

Nanacampantar goes a step further and says that Vishnu (Varaha “Boar”) and Brahma (Hamsa “Swan”) are servants attending on the Linga. To quote,

Paniyutai Malum Malarinonum
Paniyutai “serve”, Mal = Visnu, Malarinon, one on flower, Brahma
Panri = varaha, paravai = bird, hamsa.

When Nataraja presents his dance recital, Brahma, Vishnu and Sarasvati attend on him. Navukkaracar says,

Kovayavintiranullitaraka kumaranum vikkinavinayakannum
Puvayapitattu melayanum pumiyalantanum porricaippa.364

362 Tirumurai, 4.101.8.
363 Ibid., 1.7.9.
364 Ibid., 6.227.10.
That means the king Indra (Intiran), his retinue (meaning the 
astadikapalakas “eight directional gods”), Kumaran (Kumara, 
Murukan), Vignavinayaka (Vikkinavinayakan), Ayan (Brahma) and 
Pumiyalantan (one who measured the worlds, Trivikrama) and 
extolled the praise of the dancing Lord. Here the host of gods are 
attendants to Nataraja.

Siva who toppled the three aerial forts is called 
Tripurantakamurti. Siva undertook an expedition to dislodge the 
tripuras. The earth served him the chariot while Brahma drove the 
vehicle. Siva carried an arrow of which the head was Vishnu. In this 
account both Brahma and Vishnu are subservient to Siva.\(^{365}\)

In Saivite scripture Siva has his own Visvarupa and he is the 
Virat Purusa. Several of the Tevaram hymns attest the Cosmic Man 
aspect of the Lord. The following constitute the many-sided 
personality of the Cosmic Virat: The trigunas, the four Vedas, the 
pancabhutas, the six tastes, the six religions, seven musical nodes, 
the eight directions.\(^{366}\)

\[\text{The earth, sky, water, fire, wind}\]
\[\text{The animal kingdom, Vishnu, Brahma}\]\(^{368}\)

\(^{365}\)Raju Kalidos, *Sectarianism in Alvar-Nayanmar Literature*, In R. Kalidos, 
(ed.), *Sectarian Rivalry in Art and Literature*, New Delhi, 1977, pp.15-16.

\(^{366}\)Tevaram: 1.11.2.

\(^{367}\)Ibid., 1.42.4.

\(^{368}\)Ibid., 1.53.2.
The seven worlds\textsuperscript{369}

If the Vaisnavas could treat Siva a particle of Vishnu, the Saivas bring Vishnu under the control of Siva.

The Saivite literature enlists sectarian ideas not only in conflict with Vaisnavism but also Saktam and the cult of Brahma. The venue of the Nataraja temple at Citamparam was once a stronghold of Kali cult. Around the 6\textsuperscript{th} century AD, the Saivites occupied the place. To demonstrate the defeat of Kali by Siva myths were nurtured. Siva is said to have competed with Kali in a dancing contest and drove her out of her habitat. This forms the kernel of the mythologies of Citamparamahatmya and Tiruvalankattalapuranam\textsuperscript{370}.

Siva had an occasion to confront with Brahma also. To begin with Brahma had five heads and considered himself equal to Siva because the latter had five heads and was known as Sadasiva. In order to curb his pride, Siva chopped off one of the heads of Brahma. In this aspect he was known as Brahmsirascedakamurti. Navukkaracar says that Siva cut not only the head of Brahma but also Visnu.\textsuperscript{371} The punishment meted out to Vishnu by Siva is retold in several of the puranas such as Linga-. Daksa was a Prajapati “Progenitor” who was anti-Siva. In order to disgrace Siva he conducted a sacrifice, inviting all the gods other than Siva.

\textsuperscript{369} Ibid., 6.233.5.
\textsuperscript{370} Raju Kalidos, Urduvatanavam in the Art of South India, East and West, Vol. 46: 3-4, Rome, 1996, pp. 371-413.
\textsuperscript{371} Tevaram: 5.199.2: Ari Ayan talai vetti vattatinar.
Interestingly, Daksa’s daughter had married to Siva. She went to the sacrificial yard and demanded the rights of her husband and the honours due to him. When insulted by Daksa, she committed suicide by plunging herself into the sacrificial fire. This caused the wrath of Siva who ordained Virabhadra and sent him to destroy Daksa’s illegal sacrifice. Virabhadra, a manifestation of Siva himself, destroyed not only the sacrifice but also all the attending gods, including Visnu.\(^{372}\)

The persecution of Ramanujacarya by Krmikanthacola, as recorded in the *guruparampara* mythologies, is a clear case of Saiva-Vaishnava clash. The story goes as follows. Alarmed at the rising tide of Vaishnavism, Krmikantha (identified with Kulottunga I or II) did order Ramanuja to appear in his court for a trial. Smelling some tricks behind, the disciple of Ramanuja, Kurattalvar, advised his guru to migrate to the Hoysala country and himself appeared before the bigot. He was asked to repeat the sentence: Sivat parataram nasti “There is nothing above Siva” (meaning Siva was the God superior). The reply by the Alvar was: Sivat parataram nasti? Dronamasti tat param. “Is there nothing above Siva? The dronam is there (on his head)”. There is a pun in the reply because dronam means a flower that appears on the head of Siva. Therefore, a flower appears above Siva is the meaning. Dronam and Siva are two measures of which the latter was

smaller than the former. In this punning remark, the clever Alvar considers smaller than the bigger measure dronam.

Having been appraised of the meaning of the statement, Krmikantha ordered the eyes of Kurattalvar to be plucked out. This is only a narrative of the puranic type that appears only in Vaisnava hagiology. There is no epigraphical corroboration.

The squabble did not end with this. Krmikatha is said to have dislodged the image of Ranganatha in the Citamparam temple and threw it into the Bay of Bengal. There was no temple for Vishnu after the time of Krmikantha in the Citamparam temple complex. It may be noted that a temple for Vishnu existed on the site since atleast the 8th century AD as immortalized in the hymns of the Alvars. The Lord is called one at Cittirakutarrulan, one in the Cittirakutam. Cittirakutam was the forest-abode of Rama after his exodus from Ayodhya. It was from here that Ravana abducted Sita. The Alvars view the Citamparam venue as the Cittirakutam. A decade in the Perumal Tirumoli (Patikam 10) of Kulasekara Alvar talks of the Lord Rama who was pleased to occupy the ksetra. Krmikantha not only removed the idol but also destroyed the temple. This was a wanton action of aggression on his part. Achyuta Raya of Vijayanagar built the present Vishnu temple at Citamparam. That means for about five centuries from atleast the 12th to the 17th there was no Visnu temple at Citamparam.
The above is a clear case of destroying a temple because even if the destruction is not supported by insessional sources, its resurrection by Achyuta Raya would strongly enhance the magnitude of Krmikanth’s bigotism.

**Sakta Sectarianism**

Among the other cults, the most belligerent was that of Sakta. The Saktas brought both Siva and Vishnu under the control of Devi. A popular expression is Siva without Sakti is sava “corpse”. A popular Tamil adage is: Cakti (Sakti) illenna civanenu iru “If there is no Sakti (in you) remain quite”. It is interesting to note that in this adage civan (Siva) contextually means “remain quite”. In Bengali tradition the popular mode of illustrating Kali is to make her stand on the corpse of Siva and allow her dance.

There is a mythological background for this kind of illustration. Of the several versions of the Ramayana, one is Adbhuta-Ramayna. According to this account, Sri Rama was boastful of his valour after the fall of Ravana. Sita told him that he had killed only dasagriva-Ravana, meaning the ten-headed one and there is one sahasramukha-Ravana, meaning the thousand-headed. She asked him whether Rama could kill him. Rama accepted the challenge and went to the island where Sahasramukha was living. Sita and the vanara “monkey” flanks followed Rama. In the battle that followed Rama could not meet the heroic Sahasramukha and the myth add that Rama fell dead in an

---

encounter with his opponent. Seeing this, Sita could not restrain herself and acquired a ghastly form as Kali. Her tongue and breasts went pendant. She was naked, covered by the cut hands of human beings. She wore a garland of skulls. She roared terribly and pounced on Sahasramukha. She gave him a heavy blow and caused him fall dead. On looking at the dead Rama her anger increased and she started dancing. Bhudevi could not bear the strokes of her dance. She appealed to Siva for help.

Siva laid himself on the ground when Sita lifted a dancing foot. When she sent the raised foot down to lift the other foot, Siva was on the ground so that the resting foot fell on Siva. At the best of Brahma, Rama was resurrected so that Sita fury could quench and return to normalcy. This is an important myth because the Feminine Principle (Sita) brings under her aegis not only Siva but also Vishnu because Sri Rama was none other than Vishnu himself according to the avatara concept. Both Siva and Vishnu become corpses in the presence of Devi. Sakti means power or energy. She has got three basic gunas (mental flavours) such as iccha (love), krya (creation) and jnana (wisdom). Through a combination of these three she creates, sustains and destroys the cosmos. She ordains Brahma, Vishnu and Siva at the beginning of a new a eon and absorbs them at the time of Mahapralaya. In the sakta version, Sakti is the primodial Goddess as visualized by Ilanko in the Vettuvavari of Cilappatikaram and Sankara in the Saundaryalahari. Kannaki for Ilanko is a manifestation of Devi herself and when she resorts to destroy
Maturai, the three goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, Parvati (Malaimakal), Laksmi (Alaimakal) and Sarasvati (Namakal), appear before her and bear witness to her legal action.\(^{374}\)

According to Sankara, Devi the half of Siva and pervades through the entire cosmic order. To quote (Kalidos 1995: 48),

\begin{quote}
Tvayahartva vamam vapuraparitrpretene manasa  
Sarirardham sambhoraparam api sanke hrtamabhut.\(^{375}\)
\end{quote}

The important idea here is that Devi occupies the half of Siva and in this hermaphrodite, the Feminine principle is more important than the Masculine. This theory has been adumbrated authentically.\(^{376}\)

Devi is the Cosmic Virat or Visvarupini.\(^{377}\) She is the Cosmic Reality according to the Saundaryalahari. Her personality expands macrocosmically and cuts across the frontiers of the Brahmanda “Milky way” like the primordial lotus with 1000 petals. All the cosmic elements, the celestials, earthly and unearthly creatures become part and parcel of her many-sided personality.


\(^{375}\) Anandalahari \textit{in Saundaryalahari}, V. 23.

\(^{376}\) Raju Kalidos, \textit{op.cit.}, p.79.

\(^{377}\) Devi is called by the following epithets:
- Bhuvanesvari (Gauryastottaram, epithet No. 21)
- Visvarupini (Lalitasahasranama, epithet No. 256)
- Sarvesvari (Lalitasahasranama, No. 202)
- Viradrupa (Lalitasahasranama, No. 778)
- Visvatomukhi (Lalitasahasranama, No. 780).
Devi is the mind, the sky, the air, the fire, the water, the earth, the universe; there is no alternative to her, it is her personality that transforms into the celestials bodies on the Milky Way.\textsuperscript{378}

Sankara visualizes the cosmic form of Devi in the Saundaryalahari as follows:\textsuperscript{379}

The gems that adorn her kiritamakuta are the twelve Adityas.\textsuperscript{380}
Her forehead is the ardhacandra “halfmoon”\textsuperscript{381}
The eyebrows are the bow of Manmatha,\textsuperscript{382}
The three eyes are Surya, Candra and Agni,\textsuperscript{383}
Pasupati (Lord of Creatures) occupies her hear\textsuperscript{384}
and so she is the karunamurti (Mistress of Compassion),\textsuperscript{385}
Devi’ eyes are red, white and black in colour, symbolic of the three celestial rivers Sonabhadra, Ganga and Yamuna,\textsuperscript{386}
The enchanting look of Devi is the bana of Manmatha,\textsuperscript{387}
Her countenance is the chariot of Manmatha,\textsuperscript{388}

\textsuperscript{378} \textit{Anandalahari}, V. 35.
\textsuperscript{379} \textit{Saundaryalahari}, English translation by V.K.Subramanian, Delhi, 1990, v.42.
\textsuperscript{380} \textit{Idem}.
\textsuperscript{381} \textit{Ibid}, v.46.
\textsuperscript{382} \textit{Ibid}, v.47.
\textsuperscript{383} \textit{Ibid}, v.48.
\textsuperscript{384} \textit{Ibid}, v.54.
\textsuperscript{385} \textit{Ibid}, v.93.
\textsuperscript{386} \textit{Idem}.
\textsuperscript{387} \textit{Ibid}, v.58.
\textsuperscript{388} \textit{Ibid}, v.59.
She is naritilaka, gem among women,\textsuperscript{389}

She is parabrahmamahisi who manifests as Vakdevi (Sarasvati), Haripatni (Laksmi) and Harasahasari (Parvati),\textsuperscript{390}

She is Mahamaya, the Ultimate Reality,

She is the custodian of the triple gunas, satva (best), rajasa (intermediary) and tamasa (lower),\textsuperscript{391}

She is saptasvaramayi\textsuperscript{392} and all creation originates in her,

Brahma who lost his fifth head to Siva seeks protection in Devi,\textsuperscript{393}

Devi resplendent feet represent the essence of the Upanisads.\textsuperscript{394}

All add to the credits of Devi who claims to be the Cosmic Mistress and Mother Superior. She absorbs all the qualities of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Therefore, the Masculine Principle is subservient to the Feminine.

The Devimahatmyam\textsuperscript{395} gives not less than seventy names of who form part of the Devi-Visvarupini who protect human being as seated on several parts of the man. They are the following:

Jaya to the front, Vijaya to the back, Ajita to the right, Aparajita to the left, up and below Caundesvari.

The following occupy the various angas “parts” of human beings:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{389}Saundaryalahari, V.79.
\item \textsuperscript{390}Ibid., v.97.
\item \textsuperscript{391}Ibid., v.53.
\item \textsuperscript{392}Ibid., v.68.
\item \textsuperscript{393}Ibid., v.70.
\item \textsuperscript{394}Ibid., vs. 84-85.
\item \textsuperscript{395}Puvabhagam, Kavacam, VV. 18-36.
\end{itemize}
Udhyotini – tuft,  Uma – head,
Maladhari – forehead,  Yasasvini – eyebrows,
Trineta – centre of eyebrows,  Yamaghanta – right nose,
Sankhini – eyes,  Dvarvasini – ears,
Kalika – cheeks,  Sankari – root of ears,
Sugandha – left nose,  Carcika – upper lip
Amrtakala – lower lip  Sarasvati – tongue
Kaumari – teeth  Candika – Adam’s apple
Citraghanta – tonsils  Mahamaya – lower jaw
Kamaksi – jaws  Sarvamangala – speech
Bhadrakali – neck  Dhanurdhari – backbone
Nilagriva (griva “neck”) –
  outer necks  Nalakubari – neck bone
  Khadgadharini – shoulder  Vajradharini – limbs
  Dandini – hands  Ambika – fingers
  Sulesvari – nails  Mahadevi – chests
  Analesvari – armpit  Lalitadevi – heart
  Suladharini – stomach  Sokavinasini – mind
  Kamini – umbilicus  Guhyesvari – guhya
                                      (secret parts, genitals?)
  Bhutanatha – linga (penis)  Mahisavahini – anus
  Bhagavati – hip  Vidndhyavasini – knees
  Mahabala – thighs  Vinayaki – centre of knees
  Nrsimhi – ankles  Mitaujasi – heels
Sridhari – fingers of legs
Sthalavasini – below the feet

Damstrakarali – nails
Urdhvakesini – hairs

Kaulaberi – roots of hairs
Vagisvari – skin

Parvati – blood (fat, semen, flesh, bone and brain)
Kalaratri – intestine

Mukutesvari – pittam (bile)
Padmavati – adharakamala (testicles?)

Cudamani – kapam (phlegm)
Jvalamukhi – brightness of nails

Abhedya – all joints
Brahmani – suklam (semen)

Chatresvari – shadow
Dharmacarini – pride, mind and intellect

Cakrini – fame and beauty
Indrani – gotra (paternal lineage)

Candika – domestic animals
Mahalaksmi – progeny

Bhairavi – wives
Ksemankari – parental lineage

Vijaya – all directions

Jayanti and Papanasini – all unprotected places and so on.

All these ascribe a status of omnipotence to Devi. She came to be treated as the Cosmic Mistress in Hindu tradition. The Devimahatmyam, Lalitasahasranama and Saundaryalahari, including the Cilappatikaram fix Devi at the top of the cosmic pyramid.

The macro-form of Devi earned her several epithets such as Sahasravadana (1000-faced), Sahasraksi (1000-eyed), Sahasrabahu
(1000-armed) and Sahasrapad (1000-footed). These proclaim the magnified version of the mien of Devi. The Visvarupa form in respect of all the gods is of a common type. They have several faces, eyes, hands the legs. The central face represents either Visnu, Siva or Devi and other faces are those of the other gods. They hold multifarious weapons, characteristic of all the gods; e.g. tanka or malu for Siva, cakra for Visnu, trisula for Devi, aksamala and kamandalu for Brahma, vajra for Indra and so on.

**Ganapatiya sectarianism**

When compared with literature bearing on Siva, Vishnu, Devi and Murukan, the literature bearing on Ganapati is minimal. In Tamil Saivism, he is foremost among the pancamurtis. They are Ganapati, Murugan, Siva, Devi and Chandikesvara. Any invocation the Saivite deities begins with Ganapati. He being vignesvara (creator/remover of obstacles), if not involved properly no job ends successfully. This is proved with reverence to two incidents.

Murukan while resorting to the hilly abode of Valli for lovemaking forgot to invoke his own elder brother Ganapati. Therefore, his love affair in the hill proved to be a fiasco. Realizing his blunder, immediately Murukan prayed for the benevolence of Vignesvara, the creator and remover of obstacles (vigna “obstacle”).

Ganapati came instantly and assuming the form of an elephant, caused the union of Valli and Murukan. This story is related in the

---

396 Raju Kalidas, *op.cit.*, p.87.
Tamil *Kanta Puranam*. The Sanskritic *Skanda Purana* fails to talk about it and it deals only with Skanda’s marriage with Devasena, daughter of Indra.

Another interesting mythology deals with the confrontation between Ganapati and his father Siva. In Hindu tradition, any avocation demands an offering to Ganapati, lest the endeavour shall not be a success. It is said that at the time of Tripura-dahana, Siva moved in his world-chariot without offering a *puja* to Ganapati.

Therefore, the wheels of the moving chariot broke down on the way. When the sacrifice to Ganapati was offered, the chariot started moving. These two mythologies establish Ganapati as a God par excellence in presence of Siva and Murukan. Another mythology deals with the confrontation with Vishnu. Once he ate the *cakra* of Vishnu. In order to get the *cakra* Vishnu made humble prayer with funny (like Toppukkaranam). On seeing it he laughed, the *cakra* came out. So Vinayaka add his uncle's name before his name and thus called Vishnu Vinayaka. It is interesting that an ardent saivite should start the rituals with Vinayagar agaval ie. Suklam barataram, Visnum, Sasivarnam Saturpujam. It is noted that Ganapathi as a god par excellence in the presence of Vishnu.

The forms of Ganapati are 32 according to the *Mudgala Purana* of which one is *Heramba-Ganapati.*³⁹⁷ In this form, the Lord

---

is seated on a lion and has five faces. ie Pancamuka Ganapathi. It is to proclaim the omnipotence of Ganapati. In Hindu tradition Siva and Devi alone have five faces and known as Sadasiva and Sadasivi. 398

**Kaumara sectarianism**

Of the six Hindu sects, Kaumara is the worship of Murukan-Skanda. He was a popular God in North Indian tradition, his glories related in the *Kumarasambhava of Kalidasa* (4th century AD) and the later *Skanda Purana*. Murukan is a popular God in Tamil tradition since the Cankam age as related in the ancient classics such as *Tirumurukarruppatai*. Both the Northern Skanda and Tamil Murukan are merged by about the 4th century A.D. 399

Murukan has several epithets of which one is Sanmukha “the Six faced”. 400 Murukan had an occasion to confront with Brahma and his own father, Siva. These two mythologies proclaim the omnipotence of Murukan.

As a child, Murukan met Brahma, the God of Creation, and wanted him to tell the meaning of pranavamantra, the root of all creative faculties. Brahma thought Skanda was too young to know the meaning and did not tell him. Thinking that he does not know the meaning, Murukan sent Brahma behind the bars and started doing

---

creation himself. In this mythology, Murukan established him supremacy over Brahma, foremost of the Hindu Trinity.\footnote{Idem. The other two gods are Siva and Vishnu.}

Knowing that Brahma is languishing in prison, Siva went to the spot, asked Murukan the reason for his childish prank, and ordered him to release the creator. Murukan would not do it. On the other, hand he insisted that his question be answered first. Siva asked Murukan whether he knows the meaning of the \textit{pranava}. The answer being positive, Siva asked him to divulge it. Murukan insisted that Siva behave like a student and learn the meaning of \textit{pranava}. Thereupon, Siva stood before Murukan with a hand bound to the body and another hand closing the mouth. Murukan was seated on a high pedestal in virasana as a teacher. This is to show that for teaching and learning there is no age. A teacher and a student are expected to follow certain conventional etiquette.

The above two myths establish the God par excellence status of Murukan-Skanda in Hindu tradition. Each sect had a tendency to exalt the prime God of its fold as a God Superior and in doing so god/s of other sects were insulted. This was a mild way of expressing sectarian conflict through a cold war in literature. It had a repercussion in art. The next part of the chapter deals with sectarian rivalry in art.
Sectarianism in Art

A viable medium for the expression of sectarian animosity was through sculptural illustration. All the Hindu sects were no exception to this type of sectarianism.

Saivite Forms

The Saivites in several forms of Siva subordinated Vishnu and Brahma. Few such forms may be considered here. They are Lingodbhavamurti, Harihara, Ardhanarisvara and Sarabhamurti.

Lingodbhavamurti is a form in which Siva appears with the shaft of a Sthanu, Linga. To the right and left appear Brahma and Vishnu. Both have their hands in anjalibandha as a mark of respect to Siva. This mode of portrayal brings Brahma and Visnu under the control of Siva. According to mythology, there was a competition between the Hindu Trinity as to who was superior. Siva said one who is able to trace his crest or feet is the supreme. Brahma took the form of a swan and flew up to trace the crest. Vishnu assumed the form of a boar and dug below the earth to find out the submerged foot. (pl.1) Both failed miserably and acknowledged the supremacy of Siva. In sculptural illustrations, a hamsa is seen flying up. A varaha is delving below the earth. The anthropomorphic Brahma and Vishnu stand on either side of Siva, showing their respects. In this form both Brahma and Vishnu are subordinated to Siva.
Another sectarian form is Harihara. It is a composite that shows Hari-Vishnu and Hara-Siva in the constitution of a single image. Siva is to the right and Vishnu to the left. The right in Hindu tradition commands a superior status while the left is inferior. The attributes typical of Siva (e.g. tanka in right hand, half third eye, half jatamakuta) appear on the right side. The attributes typical of Vishnu (sankha in left hand and half kiritamakuta) appear on the left side. The two appearing in one at the face value would try to broadcast that both are equals. The inner lying idea, having Vishnu on the left side would establish to sociological notion that he is inferior. In this form Vishnu is subordinated to Siva. Another sectarian form is Ardhanarisvara. A composite sculpture, it unites Siva with Sakti. Usually Siva is to the right and Sakti to the left already said, left does proclaim inferior status of the Feminine. This form subordinates Devi to Siva and thereby the Feminine to the Masculine. The attributes of Siva and Devi appear to the right and left. Devi is often endowed with one hand to establish her inferiority.

At the face level, it may proclaim that man and woman are equals but the inner-current is to establish the superior status of Siva. A reaction to this form arose during the Cola period. It tried to establish the woman on the right side and man on the left. Such images of Ardhanarisvara are forthcoming from the early Cola

---

403 Ellen Goldberg, The Lord who is half Woman…, Albany, 2002, p.79.
temples at Karantai, Tiruvetikkuti, Tiruvaiyaru and Tirumalapati, (Pl.2) all falling within a radius of 30 kms from Tancavur. All the silpasastras and agamas are unanimous in telling that Siva should be to the right and Devi to the left. If this norm is violated, that means there must be some strong reason behind. The reason is that the Saktas who could not tolerate the left hand status of Devi sent her to the right and thereby establishes that the Feminine is superior to the Masculine.

Raju Kalidos suggests this was the earliest form of Ardhanari who to begin with was a Goddess and converted into a male during the age of Saivite supremacy. The present subject clearly demonstrates the sectarian bickering of the Saivites and Saktas.

Another virile form of Siva is Sarabhamurti (pl.3) It consists of the features of a man, animal (lion) and bird (sarabha). Sarabha was a mammoth bird that could devour lions. It came as a reaction to the virulent form of Vishnu, called Narasimha. Narasimha was a combination of man and animal (lion). The combination of three species in Sarabhamurti was to proclaim his mastery over that vain, Narasimha. Narasimha overpowered the demon, Hiranya. It was a powerful cult since the Gupta period as the earliest images are found in their cave temples at Udayagiri (M.P.). The Saivites during their heyday under the Colas created the earliest images of Sarabhamurti as

---

a counter to Narasimha.\textsuperscript{405} It is a corollary to the bigotism of Krmikantha Cola. The Saivite mythology would aver that Narasimha turned much more violent after the slaughter of Hiranya and that his ferocious was dangerous to the worlds. Siva manifested as Sarabhamurti and advised Narasimha to desist from terrific activities. Narasimha would not heed. Therefore, Sarabhamurti beat Narasimha, castaway the ugrasimha aspect of Vishnu and brought out the original benign Lord. In sculptural illustrations, Sarabhamurti is shown as beating Narasimha or blessing him.

Other related forms are \textit{Matsyasamharamurti}, \textit{Kurmasamharamurti}, \textit{Varahasamharamurti} and so on. In all these cases Siva curbs the pride of Vishnu’s\textit{ avatars} such as Matsya “Fish”, Kurma “Tortoise” and Varaha “Boar”. Siva as \textit{Kankalamurti} is supposed to carry the kankaladanda, which represents the \textit{dasavatara}s of Vishnu.

Virabhadra is a sectarian form because he punished Vishnu and other gods at the sacrificial arena of Daksa Prajapati. Daksa was an enemy of Siva and friend of Brahma and Vishnu. Therefore, he was beheaded and Visnu beaten according to the puranas.\textsuperscript{406}

Some of the forms subordinate Brahma to Siva. They are \textit{Kalyanasundaramurti} and \textit{Tripurantaka}. In Kalyanasundara,


\textsuperscript{406} Raju Kalidos, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.61-72; Jeyapriya Rajarajan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.42.
Brahma acts as a high priest officiating the marriage Siva with Devi. In Tripurantaka, Brahma serves as a charioteer to Siva who undertakes a war against the tripuras “triple forts”.

**Vaisnava forms**

There are few Vaisnava forms that betray their sectarian character. A cold war type of attitude on part of the Vaisnavas was not to include any of the sculptural forms of Siva in their temples.

On the other hand, Saiva temples included illustrations of Vishnu. The Kailasanatha temple at Kanci includes several forms of Vishnu such as Trivikrama.

On the other hand the Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Kanci neglects Siva and has some sectarian forms in which Siva is found paying *anjali* to Vishnu. The same is the case with the Namakkal cave temple for Narasimha where Siva and Vishnu appear as attendants to Visnu.

A sectarian form is Astamukhagandabherunda Narasimha. Gandabherundah was a mighty bird who could devour sarabhas. Astamukha means “eight heads”. He had eight heads and was a combination of man, lion and bird. The combination of three species makes him equal to Sarabhamurti. He is superior to his Saivite counterpart because he had eight heads.
Raju Kalidos first discovered the image and brought to the notice of the scholarly world. The temple cars at Srivilliputtur and Villiyanur accomodate the image. A painting appears in the Narasimha chapel of the Srirangam temple. A stucco image appears in a gopura of the Srirangam temple.

The eight heads are those of boar, kite, tiger, and lion with protruding teeth, snake, monkey and horse. (pl.4) Therefore, he is supposed to unite in himself the personalities of Varaha, Garuda, Devi, Nrsimha, Nagaraja, Jambavat and Hayagriva. He finds Sarabhamurti place on his lap and cleaves open his bowels as illustrated in the specimens of Srirangam. The wooden temple cars show him seated.

**Sakta forms**

The Kolkatta mode of Kali is a good example. She finds Siva laid up in pretasana mode, stands on his chest and dances. The western rayagopura of the Minaksi temple at Maturai houses an interesting image. It finds Devi seated on the corpses of Brahma, Sadasiva, Vishnu and others.

---

These are supposed to be the *panca* (“five”) – Brahmas since Devi is called Pancabrahmasvarupini.\(^{408}\) It also symbolizes Devi as custodian of the pancakrtas “five functions” of creation, sustenance, destruction, embodiment and release. Therefore, Devi is called pancakrtyaparayana.\(^{409}\) Since seated on the five corpses, she is also known as pancapretasanasini\(^{410}\) Sadasivi. (pl.5)

**Saiva-Buddhist Sectarian Conflict: A Case Study of Mattavilasaprahahasana**

The Mattavilasaprahahasana is a burlesque attributed to the authorship of Mahendravarman, dated in the early 7th century AD. Kancipuram of the then times was a meeting place of several religious groups such as Saivism with its various factions (e.g. Kapalika, Pasupata), Vaisnavism, Saktam, Buddhism, Jainism and so on. Traditional accounts says Mahendravarman to begin with was a jain. The great Saiva saint, Navukkaracar, is said to have converted him to Saivism. Navukkaracar to begin with was himself a Jain who was converted to Saivism by his sister, Tilakavatiyar. He is said to have suffered from an incurable abdominal disease which his sister cured with the use of the sacred ash. Having come to the fold of Saivism,

Mahendravarman like the traditional Kun Pandya did not persecute the Jains or Buddhists. His work, Mattavilasaprahahasana


\(^{409}\) *Lalitasahasranama*, no. 274.

\(^{410}\) Ibid., No.249.
“Farce of the Sport of the Intoxicated One”, presents a peep into the kind of religious disharmony that prevailed in that age. It gives an account of the “foibles, strife, animosity and bickering of religious groups of the early medieval period”\(\textsuperscript{411}\). The work is in Sanskrit and is translated in English\(\textsuperscript{412}\).

The drama’s hero is a kapalika called Satyasoma and the heroine, his wench Devasoma. Other important characters are a Buddhist friar Nagasena and a Pasupata, called Babhrukalpa\(\textsuperscript{413}\). The kapalika and his mate are heavily drunk and in a quaffen, state of affair the kapalika misses his vessel, the begging bowl. The begging bowl, kapala, was an insignia of the members of the order and without it, their credentials could not be proved. The kapalika is in frantic search of his property. At that time a Buddhist bhiksu passes that way holding something in hands and having it hidden under the surplice. The kapalika suspects it may be his kapala and drags him into a quarrel. He wants the bhiksu to display what he holds in his hands. The bhiksu refuses because he carries his food in a vessel.

\(\textsuperscript{413}\) For a historical background of the religious practices of the Kapalikas and kalamukhas see Daivd N.Lorenzen, *the Kapalikas and Kalamukhas: Two Lost Saivite Sects*, Delhi 1991, pp.72-75; K.A.Nilakanta Sastri, *op.cit.*, pp.648-649.
He could not show it because it contained meat-food that the Buddhists are prohibited to eat as they were committed to ahimsa. A *pasupata* joins the dispute, ridicules both and helps to trace the kapala. It was recovered from a madman who had snatched it from a dog. The *kapalikas* were a wandering group of mendicants. They followed tantric mode of worship. Their partnership was not permanent as any one of them could quite and join another fellowship. It is proved in the text because when Satyasoma calls his miss Somadeva by mistake, she quarrels with him, thinking it was the name of his paramour. In spite of the misunderstanding both remain united all the time like Siva and Sakthi and are never separated. Drunk always, they intake madhu little by little to rejuvenate themselves. The kapalikas believed their way was the best and that “*Lord of the Trident founded that road to salvation*”.

Quaffing and drinking are “*irreproachably sweet*” as Devasoma says. The drunken state of mind was akin to the experience of reciting the Holy Scripture and conducting a yaga. The kapali visualization is: “the brandy shop resembles the splendour of the sacrificial yard (yagasala); for in it the signpost is the sacrificial pole (yagasthamba), the brandy is the soma, the tripllers are the priests, the cups are the soma-bowls, the roasted meats and the rest of the

---

The tantric mode involved drinking madhu (sourious drink), eating matsya (fish) and mamsa (meat), mudra (dancing) and maithuna (sexual intercourse). These are known as the pancamakaras.
epptisers are the various fire-offerings, the tripller’s talk is the yajurveda, their songs are the samaveda, the drinking bowls are the oblation ladles, thrist is the fire, and the keeper of the brandy shoe is the master (yajamana) sacrifice”.

Drinking was habitual to the kapalika. He had no scruples about it and did not worry about the society view. The Pasupata and Buddhist mocked the kapali for his indulgence but he did not worry about it. The kapalika was much worried about his kapala because it contained meat.

Another requisite of the kapali was woman. Satyasoma says, “The delight of woman’s love is food for flesh”. He thinks of Kamadeva and admires that his “delights” do good to the world.

The society had no good opinion of the kapalikas. They were considered to be a group of low ascetics. Nagasena calls Satyasoma a “rascal living in Ekambam." The brahmanas followed the order because Satyasoma is understood to be a brahmana. The Mattavilasa presents different dimensions of the religious strife at the beginning of the 7th century AD.

1. Kapalikas assiduously followed the pancamakaras,

---

416 Idem; This is likely to be the present day Ekamresvara temple complex.
2. There was no understanding among the various Saivite sects, e.g. the Kapalikas and Pasupatas,

3. The Buddhists had given up their ethics and took up to the tantric way by eating meat;

4. Therefore, there was no difference between a Kapalika and Buddhist,

5. There were street wrangles among the religionists.

In any case no violent incident is reported. There is a testimony of Pallava king Mahendravarma I, in his Mattavilasaprahasana when the pasupatha of the play suggested the quarrel should be decided by the court of Devasena (kapalika) immediately burst forth with the following statement “why this man (Buddha Bhiksu) has heaps of richest drawn from the revenues of many monasteries and with it he can staff the court officials at pleasure. But I am the maid of the poor Kapalin whose only wealth is snakes skin and sacred ash and what riches have I here that I should go into the court.  

Disputes were adjudicated by Nadu and Village assemblies and communal groups. The Ur enquired into homicide and directed the sinner to light a lamp in the temple.

\[417\] C.Minakshi, *op.cit.*, pp.70-71.
Saiva-Vaisnava Sectarian Conflict: A Case Study of Nanmukan Tiruvantati

The Nanmukan Tiruvantati of Tirumalicai Alvar is replete with sectarian ideas. These are summarized in the following account. It may be noted that *antati* is a type of literature that consists of 100 hymns. The present text consists of only 96 verses. Four could have been missed during compilation.

The last word of a hymn forms the beginning word for the next hymn. For example, the third hymn ends with the word *aru* and the fourth hymn begins with the word, *aru*. The meaning of both may not be the same. The sectarianism spelled out in this literature mainly bears on the Vaisnavas and Saivas.

Verse 1:  

*Nanmukanai Narayanan pataittan Nanmukanum  
Tanmukamaye Cankaranaittan pataittan…..*

Narayana created the four-faced (Brahma) and the four-faced created Sankara-Siva in his own image.

2. They say the Ultimate Reality is one. He is Visnu. Nobody knows the glories of the Lord.

---

418 Tirumalaicai Alvar - *Nanmugan Tiruvantati*, V.2387.  
Ariyar Camariar Ayarnthar Bavuthar,  
Ciriyar Sivapattar .... Maya  
Mayavanai Ethathar - Eenavare'
4. He is the primeval principle. He is the true principal-principle of the gods. Some say Siva is equal to Vishnu. It is a false statement. There is no equal to Vishnu.

5. He is the king of the Cosmos. He has no equal to him. He is the meaning of all the words. He lives in gods, men, animals and plants.

6. The Jains do not know (the glories of the Lord. Nor do the Buddhists know. They are little ones.419

8. The Lord Rama destroyed Ravana who came to war, bear in the bow of Siva.

9. Brahma poured the water from his kamandalu and washed the feet of Vishnu. The water fell on the head of Siva and purified him. He is the Lord who was victorious over Isvara-Siva.

10. The Lord’s mien is golden. One on flower (Brahma) and Siva are not the fit persons to extol the praise of the Lord.

---

419. The Vaishnava literature has very little to talk of the Jains and Buddhists. The Saivites on the other hand a number of filthy terminologies to utter. Note the following:

They are called Puttar, Cakkiyar, Potiyar, Terar or Caman (Tevaram: 1.1.10, 1.2.10, 1.3.10, 2.184.10)

The foul words are: i) Cakkiyappeykal “Cakya ghouls” (ibid., 1.76.10, 1.77.10)

ii) Caman kuntar Cakkiyar “Caman and Cakkiya ruffians” (ibid., 1.103.10)

iii) Uttaivyae camanutu cakkiyar “Filthy mouthed Camanar and Cakkiyar”. 
15. The Lord is extolled by all other gods.

17. He who preached the dharma as seated below the al tree (Daksinamurti) adored the Lord who measured the worlds.

20. You are the worlds. That entire does stand due to your grace. You are the god of gods. You are the fire, the hills and the eight directions.

26. You are the God in my mind. Siva bears witness to it.

27. You ignorant ones, even Siva could not visualize the Lord.

37. The sky, the fire, the wind, the ocean, the mountains, the hot sun, the frigid moon, the jivatmas, the eight directions and worlds are the creations of the Lord, Visnu.

38. The six other religions are of a lower order.

42. Brahma born in a lotus and the three-eyed Siva extol the praise of the Lord by offering lotus flowers.

43. To praise the Lord on the Venkatam, Siva bearing the moon on his crest and Brahma born in lotus go bearing umbrellas, fitted with pearl and other offerings.

48. He holds the cakra in a hand and protects the gods, including Siva.
51. My Lord you are my protector. There is no equal to you in this world.

53. I am a fool; I worshipped a other than the one who destroyed Ravana. Do not think of other gods whose status is low, those who do not possess any divinity and those that are not linked with Sridevi.

54. He is the Lord. He is foremost among the Trinity. He is himself the Trinity. Narayana appeared as Visnu among Surya and Candra.

56. Nobody is an equal of Kannan (=Krsna, Pali Kanha). Siva went to the rescue of Banasura to protect. Visnu defeated him and Siva ran away.

58. The mounther of the bull vehicle, Siva, did not keep Vishnu in mind and accrued a curse. Vishnu showed his magnanimity by removing the curse.

62. Those that do realize think of visnu. Those that are confused select alien gods such as Brahma and Siva.

66. I do not consider the crescent-bearing Siva and Brahma as gods. My Lord was once reliving on a couch of the hooded-snake. Now, he is in my mind.
67. Yama, the God of Death, told his assistants, “Even if some worship other gods, neglecting Visnu do not take them to task. Give up violence and be calm”.

71. Those who do not get acquainted with the glories of Visnu become the enemies of the Lord.

73. Who knows the glories of the Lord told in the Samaveda. Nilakantha (blue-throated)-Siva and Brahma know the meaning of the above said Veda. That means they have digested the glories of Visnu.

75. Siva’s locks of hair are burning. He offers puja to Vaikunthanatha by offering flowers.\(^{420}\)

76. Music, Poetry, itihasa, the multi-knowledgeable puranas, fire sky, Manuniti, upanisads, caturvedas and all others are the by products of the Lord’s thinking power.

78. Uma extolled the glories of Visnu to Siva when he burnt down Visnu’s son Manmatha.\(^{421}\) On hearing this, the heart of Siva

\(^{420}\) Raju Kalidos, *op.cit.*, p.67.
There is a sculptural illustration in the Namakkal cave temple wherein Vaikunthamurti is seated while Brahma and Visnu stand to the right and left and offer him anjali. Several such illustrations may be found in the Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Kanci.

The treatment meted out to Daksinamurti by the Vaisnavas would force them to kill Manmatha. In this form, Siva is called Kamadahanamurti. He was killed but resurrected at the behest of his wife. Visnu has four vyuha forms that are Vasudeva, Samkarsana, Pradhyumna and Aniruddha. Pradhyumna is Manmatha or Madana.
began to melt. It was the status of Siva? What will be the status of an unbeliever.

82. Brahma and Siva offer obeissances to Visnu, father of Manmatha.\(^{422}\)

86. He is protector of all in the cosmos, including Siva and Brahma.

91. He is the master of Brahma born in a flower, Siva who wears snakes all over his body and the all other gods.

96. I come to know that you are final abode, God, to Brahma and Siva. You are the root. You are learning. You are the learnt. All good activities are Narayana.

From the above facts and figures, it is clear that sectarian conflict was a vibrant force in medieval Tamilnadu. The sectarians did not engage themselves in any armed as it happened in the west. (e.g. Crusades) but those to settle their disputes by arguments (T. vatu). Few exceptional cases of inquisition are reported such as the impalement of the Jain by Kun Pandya and the persecution of Ramanuja by Krmikantha Cola. These acts of bigotism are not supported by epigraphical records and are legendary.

\(^{422}\) *Idem.* This is the aftermath of the punishment meted out by Siva to Manmatha.
As a result of the impalement of Jains not only hundreds and thousands of recalcitrant Jains were driven out of the country but many were forced by circumstances to embrace Saivism. With the royal support they attacked the Jain and Buddhist institutions and worship places. The Jain temples at Sendalai, Tiruparankundram, Tirukattupalli, Tirunagesvaram, Tiruvellarai, Palayarai, Narthamalai, Chokkampatti, Malayadikkurichy, Aruppukkottai, Nagarkoil, Citanval Kanchi (Buddha Koil) etc were converted into Hindu temples and there are evidences in these temples itself to prove it. The Jaina images were either destroyed or erased and fresh saivite images were carved or installed in the same place.

Tiruparankundram Jaina palli was converted into Saiva temple during the reign of Maravarma Sundarapandya (A.D.1216-1238).

One Jaina image at Anaimalai Palli was converted into Saiva temple and now it was worshipped as Muniyandsamy by the Village people.\(^\text{423}\)

Thus the combination of various factors led to religious conflicts and resulted in the form of persecution, destruction and conversions of monument and peoples, by the dominant religious group. It is true that religious conflicts and sufferings has come only by the ignorant of the people not the nature of religions.\(^\text{424}\)


\(^\text{424}\) *Kudiyarasu*, 23.11.1946.
As far as religious harmony, the history of medieval Tamil country was a Garden of Eden. Even in the Garden of Eden, there may be few thorns and shrubs that harm the true believers. This was India's as well as medieval Tamilnadu's religious disharmony or conflicts.