I.4. GENERAL CONTENTS OF SARVAJNANOTTAYAGAI
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The Śaivaite āgamas are traditionally divided into four classes, to wit the Śaiva proper, the Pāśupata, the soma and the Lākula (Nakula). The first class is divided into three groups:

1. The Vāma āgamas: those of the Kāpālas, Kālamukhas, Aghoras

2. The Daksīṇa āgamas: Those of the Kashmirian Trika system based on the Svacchanda and other āgamas

3. The Siddhānta: Consisting of twenty eight beginning with the Kāmikā-Āgama.

Tirumūlar, the noted Tamil poet states that the āgamas contain the one imperishable truth, viz. Vedānta siddhānta or pure Śaivism - are twenty-eight


in number and they come from the nine manifestation of 
Kudra and are divided into three parts namely, *Karma*, 
*upāsanā*, and *jñāna* i.e., rites, worship and knowledge. 
As a matter of fact, in the text themselves the fourfold 
division, is more natural and in keeping with the principle 
at least.¹ Knowledge comprising the sections on the 
genesis of the work - the avatāras, the formation of 
mantras, the significance of initiation and three other 
parts of a practical nature: imparting skill in turning 
the love contained in the first part.

The *Yoga*, *kriyā*, i.e. ritual and *caryā*.

It may be mentioned that not withstanding the *Jñāna* 
portion laying down the philosophical doctrine of the 
three fold reality, namely, *Pati*, *Pasu* and *Pasa* these

1. This principle of quadripartition has been reinterpre-
tated in the Tamil *Śaiva Siddhānta* works. 
Vide. Brunner-Lachaux, 
Soma Śambhu paddhati, I, p. VII.
scriptures are primarily intended to teach the bhakti way, renunciation being an important of it.¹

Lord Śiva revealed his doctrines through these works which is believed to be one, homogeneous and indivisible, notwithstanding this fourfold division. These twenty eight works are traditionally assumed to have been revealed through Śiva's five mouths.²

Our discussion, however, would be on the contents of Sarvajñānottara, at present. Before doing so it would not be out of place to present the importance of this text, though already presented, in a nutshell.

1. See the observation of Narayana Pillai, "the reciter of an āgama must be original bhakta, p. 380.
also see, M. Dhavamony, Love of God according to Śiva siddhānta, Oxford (1971) p. 119.

2. for details, vide J. Gonda, op.cit. p. 181.
We have already noted that Sarvajñānottara has not been included in the list of the main Āgamas or Upāgamas. Still it has received considerable attention even from the early times. Its own name Sarvajñānottara indicates that the wisdom taught in it is higher than the wisdom contained in all the other Āgamas. The author of Tamil commentary on the Jñānapāda portion of the work, P. Muthaiah Pillai goes so far as to say that other Āgamas must be so interpreted as to be in conformity with the Sarvajñānottara in view of its importance. Another reason cited by the author for its importance is that whereas other Āgamas are in the form of instruction by Śiva to other sages, Sarvajñānottara happens to be in the form of instruction imparted by Śiva to Lord Subramanya himself. Śiva himself states that the nature of liberation is a secret which he has not explained in any other work and he has done so only in Sarvajñānottara. It is this portion of the work which was found significant by Śivāgrayogin who made repeated reference to it in his works, Sivajñānabhodabash Śhāsyam and Śaiva paribhāsa. It is also clear that he wrote a commentary on Sarvajñānottara in Sanskrit besides translating it in Tamil.¹

¹ Śaiva Paribhāsha - Suryanarayana Sastri, Madras University, (para 38).
Another important feature of the teaching in Sarvajñānottara, which S. Suryanārayana Sāstry also has pointed out in his *Sivādvaitanirnaya of Śrīkāntṭha* is, that apart from the three categories of Patī, Paśu and Paśa, there is Śivam which is higher Patī. Patī corresponds to the Saguna Brahman and Śivam, though does not correspond to the Nirguna Brahman of Advaita vedanta, approximates to it. The kind of Advaitic contemplation advocated in this work received great attention at the hands of the commentators and became a subject-matter of conflicting interpretation among them. Sri S. Suryanarayana Sastry further observes that Śrīkāntṭha, the author of Śivarkamani Dīpika could not have been unaware of such an important Āgama as Sarvajñānottara and his conception of Śivadvaita was most definitely influenced by Sarvajñānottara.

Realising the significance of the teachings in Sarvajñānottara, Aghorasiva one of the prolific writers of the Śaiva Siddhanta School wrote a Vṛtti (Commentary) on this Āgama. Śivāgrayogin, who is an important preceptor in the post-Meykandar period, extensively quoted from Sarvajñānottara in his works. He is also believed to have translated Sarvajñānottara in Tamil. The introduction
to the publication of Śivāgrayogin's Śaivasanyasa Paddhati. Contains the additional information that Sarvajñānottara happens to be the Āgama assigned to the Šcandaparampara to which he belongs and at the time of initiation into the Sanyasi order, his preceptor Śivakolundu Śivacarya Swami imparted the Āgama to Śivāgrayogin. Unfortunately, Śivāgrayogin's works in Sanskrit and Tamil pertaining to Sarvajñānottara are not available.

We shall now proceed to examine the contents of Sarvajñānottaragama. As in the case of other Śaivasāmas there are four parts as follows:

I. Yogapāda: Śloka 32 (1 Chapter)
II. Jñāna pāda: Śloka 176 (3 chapter)
III. Kriyāpāda: Śloka 1137 (23 chapters)
IV. Čaryāpāda: Śloka 27 (2 chapter)

I. The yogapāda consists of one single chapter (prakarana) of 32 slokas concentrating upon the state of mind and knowledge required when one is engaged in the meditation of Śiva. The teaching contained here is a blend of Hatha yoga and Pātañjalyoga. On mokṣa it is stated that after realising the essence of the
tantra the seen does not take rebirth. It propounds that the true knowledge of Pati and Śiva leads to liberation.¹

II. The Jñānapāda or the Vidyāpāda of Sarvajñānottarāgama deals in eight chapters having 176 ślokas. We have devoted a full chapter for a critical study of this pāda.²

III. Kriyāpāda consists of 1137 ślokas in twenty three chapters. The subject discussed here are: the source of mantra, its origination, the choice of mantra, various rituals associated with the worship of Śiva, baths, adoration, the rite of initiation, fire rituals, the rituals like construction and installation of Liṅga, preservations and the reinstallations of Liṅgas, the worship of God Śiva, reconstruction of old temples, bhiksācaryā vītti etc.

1. for a more detail, vide infra. I. 6. p. 64.

IV. **Caryāpāda** is of 27 Ślokas in two chapters. The first chapter called **Bhasma snāna prakarana** deals with the rituals of preparing **bhasma** (**Vibhūti**). The materials utilised and the specific ritualistic instructions are also mentioned here regarding the time and other things.

The second chapter is devoted for the description of **Kamandala**, how it is to be prepared and the ritualistic observances associated with it.