

R. GOPALAKRISHNAN

THE YOGA OF SIDDHA TIRUMULAR — Essays on the Tirumandiram: T. N. Ganapathy, KR. Arumugam; Pub. by Babaji's Kriya Yoga and Publications Inc. Canada and distributed by Babaji's Kriya Yoga Order of Acharya's Trust, P.B. No 5608, Malleswaram West, Bangalore-560055. Rs. 550.

Tirumular's Tirumandiram is a treasure trove since this text deals extensively with philosophy, religion, morality, Tantra and Yoga. The essays in this book written by the two authors give a comprehensive and vivid picture of various themes such as Saiva philosophy, Saiva religion, Yoga, mysticism, twilight language, human body, Guru and social concern. . The authors attempt seriously to justify the name of this work and to show that it is not translated from Sanskrit but is an original Tamil work of Tirumular. Besides, the name of the author has also been authentically established. The arguments offered to this effect are really clinching.

The chapters on philosophy, Yoga and Saivism meticulously substantiate the subject matter of each topic with subtitles. This shows the thorough reading, wide knowledge and clear understanding of the verses of the holy text. Especially the chapter on twilight language is really innovative and shows the intricacies of linguistic analysis. To comprehend the inner as well as other meanings of the verses, the hermeneutical technique becomes inevitable. The authors have followed this method to elucidate the deeper insights of this text.

Social relevance

The social concern of Tirumular is the most relevant message required today. Religion not as a stagnant pool, but as a living stream must serve as the uniting force of the people. Tirumular's social orientation is reflected when he states that there is "only one lineage and only one God." The term 'Nava yoga' has been translated as a "new type of yoga" whereas B. Natarajan (whose translation the authors frequently quote and depend on) refers to it as 'nine-yoga'. The author calls it a new type of yoga since it deals with Chakras, Pranayama, Pariyanga yoga and twilight language. But he has failed to state why Natarajan calls it as nine kinds of yoga. The equation of lotus with space (vettaveli) is not well annotated. The book, on the whole, is rich in content and in presentation.

THE  HINDU

Online edition of India's National Newspaper
Tuesday, Feb 13, 2007