Aintinai in Tolkappiyam

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Abstract The objective of this paper is to introduce what is Aintinai? and how Aintinai plays an important role in Tolkappiyam. Especially, the Akam and Puram application of Sangam life style with different tinai landscape. This paper focus the key features and functions of time, season and landscape in Aintinai.

Keywords: Akam, Puram, Tinai, Sangam landscape, space

What is Tolkappiyam?
Tolkappiyar’s monumental grammar work in Tamil titled Tolkappiyam, which deals with almost all aspects of Tamil language and literature namely Orthography, Phonetics, Morphology, Etymology, Syntax, Semantics, Prosody and Rhetoric. It is considered to be the most valuable and authentic record of the glorious past of the ancient Tamil Culture. The uniqueness of Tolkappiyam is deemed to lie in its scholarly exploration of the rules and regulations, not only for words and letters, but also for life.

Tolkappiyam – Framework
Tolkappiyam is broadly divided into three main sections namely,
1. Orthography and Phonology (Elutta)
2. Etymology, Morphology and Syntax (Col)
3. Themes and forms of literature (Porul)

Each section contains nine chapters. According to Illakuvanar, the first section gives an excellent exposition of the sound system in Tamil language and the second section describes syntax, parts of speech, vocabulary, semantics, morphemes, synonyms and dialects in Tamil Language. The third section is an intellectual exploration of the immense bulk of ancient Tamil literary activities, which chiefly happened before 6 B.C and gives an analysis of the various themes and forms of the ancient Tamil literature.

Akam Puram – Bifurcation of Tamil Poetry
The ancient Tamil literary convention bifurcates the bulk of Tamil literary works into two major divisions, namely, ‘Akam’ which means the “Interior” and ‘Puram’ which means the “Exterior” (ThaniNayagam 12). Literally, ‘Akam’ means “Home” and ‘Puram’ means “Abroad” referring to the subjective and objective ideas respectively. In ancient Tamil poetry, Akam refers to love and Puram refers to war (Pillai 29). According to T.P. Meenakshi Sundaram, the ‘Akam’ poetry is the poetry of the phenomenon and the ‘Puram’ poetry is the poetry of the nomencl (Meenakshi Sundaram3). D. H. Lawrence’s concept of the dual vision of life namely ‘being’ and ‘knowing’ closely resembles the division of ‘Akam’ and ‘Puram’ bifurcation in Tamil poetry (Murugan 8).

Naccinarkkiniyar, one of the popular commentators of Tolkappiyam says, The great overflowing heavenly bliss blossoming out of the noble union of the chaste hearts of the lovers is so delicate that it is not meant for open expression of the mind called Akam (Tolk: Poru -10). In short, the “Interior” or Akam poetry includes the Tamil poetical works, which express themost delicate, internal, personal and directly in expressible human feelings and thoughts, stimulated by the supreme force of mankind called love. The other poetical works, which do not express these emotions are categorized under the titled “Exterior” or Puram poetry.

Aintinai: an Overview
“Akatinai” or the brief survey of the general principles and the themes of ‘Akam’ literature is the first chapter found in the book ‘Porul’. The seven types of ethical codes of love are sorted out into three main divisions, namely, ‘Kaikkilai’, ‘Peruntinai’ and ‘Aintinai’ (Illakuvanar392-395). ‘Kaikkilai’ refers to the unrequited or one sided or subnormal love. ‘Peruntinai’ refers to the unequal love (Ganasampandhan 14). But Aintinai, the division taken for this study, gloriously extols the sublime nobility of the perfect love that naturally blossoms in the reciprocated
happy, voluntary union of two equally loving hearts. The word ‘tinai’ refers to the particular geographical region as well as the code or conduct of love assigned to it. The Tamil word ‘Aintu’ refers to the number “five”. In short, ‘Aintinai’ refers to the five different aspects of perfect or noble love. Aintinai is divided into three major divisions namely,

1. MutalPoral or Space and time, (Principle Factors)
2. KarupPoral or the remarkable and appropriate natural objects or components of the particular region,
3. UrippPoral or the essential aspects of perfect love, in perfect harmony with the natural setting of the particular region or ‘tinai’.

Among the three divisions, Mutalporul is important; Karupporul is more important; and Uripporul is the most important of all (Tolkappiyar 949). Tolkappiyar strictly says that only one region must be brought in an Akam poem (Tolkappiyar 958). However, he gives an exemption to write a poem in a particular tinai with some of the seasons, time or the flora and fauna of another region. This is commonly known as ‘Tinaimayakam’ or ‘Regional interchange’. Tolkappiyar presents a detailed picture of the ancient literary conventions explored by his careful critical scrutiny of the great ancient Tamil literary works, which were written even before 6 B.C. Tolkappiyar, with his profound critical sensibility and scholarship, analyzed the ancient Tamil works and formed his literary theory on the basis of traditional literary principles and conventions which were followed by the ancient Tamil poets before his age. Supporting the same view, Dr. M. Varadharajan says, “Tolkappiyarnar has explained the literary conventions ofusage and stated that he based his observations on the usages honored by the practice of thegreatpoets (pataul payrinlavai natunkalai)” (Varadharajan 130).

Thus in Aintinai, Tolkappiyar forms a new literary theory which asserts that the particular landscape, seasons, hours, god, human inhabitants, birds, animals, name of the inhabited area, kind of water sources, flowers, trees, type of food taken by the people, the kind of drum and stringed musical instruments used by them, the typical name of their folksongs and their various vocations are properly fixed as the natural setting, to be in tune with the particular aspect of the ‘perfect’ love or the ‘Uripporul’.

Every human emotion is in perfect harmony with the rhythm of Nature. The sense of oneness with Nature forms the basis of Tolkappiyar’s literary theory found in Aintinai. Every aspect of perfect love is efficaciously dramatized by means of Nature’s silent communication with man. Corroborating this, Dr. R. Sanmugam says, “Everything in nature beats in unison with the heart of the hero and the heroine. The landscape becomes the inscape and every description of Nature is a part of the description of the human action in the drama of love” (Sanmugam Vol-1).

**The Five - fold Division**

Tolkappiyar says that all land is primarily divided into four regions, the mountainous, the pastoral, the agricultural and the maritime and therefore the world is called Nanilam or the land of four kinds (Tolkappiyar 951). The terms ‘Katurai Ulakam’ and ‘Maivarai Ulakam’ suggest that the whole world is subjected to this regional classification (Tolkappiyar 951). So, primarily there are only four divisions. But there is a fifth division of land called Palai or desert. In Tamilnadu there is no conspicuous region which can be called a desert region, as found in Arabia or Africa?

Akadiyanan, who was the teacher of Tolkappiyar excluded Palai from the list, for the same reason that in South India desert land of any considerable size was not in existence (Pillai47). But, the arid tract formed by acute drought conditions was usually called Palai. Illango Adigal explains that especially the mountain and pasture lands become temporarily desert-like in times of the failure of seasonal rains (Illango Adigal 60-66). Ilampuraran gives another convincing explanation. He says, “Since during the acute summer time the plants wither away and only a tree named Palai survives the holocaust, bearing the flower ‘palai’, the region in which the flower is found, is termed Palai region”(Ilampuranar25). So Palai region can be considered the fifth division of the geographical classification. Tolkappiyar acknowledges this Five-fold division of the land of Tamilnadu.

Thus the ancient Tamils had divided the landscape of South India and subsequently the whole world into five significant regions. The mountainous region including the mountains, hills and hilly tracts like the Nil Gris, the Palani hills and the Western Ghats, was termed ‘Kurinci’. The name ‘Kurinci’ is the name of the most remarkable flower of that region which blossoms onlyonce in twelve years. The pasture land consisting of the half-shrubbery, half-jungle regions generally seen in Truchirappalli, Madurai, Salem, Coimbatore and Ramanapatapuram Districts was called ‘Mullai’, named after a white tender flower. ‘Marutam’ comprises the agricultural land normally seen in Tanjore and Truchirappalli districts. The coastal region or the maritime zone is named ‘Neytal’(Thani Nayagam 73-80).

After having chosen the regional setting for his theme, the ancient Tamil poet chose the congenial time of the day and the suitable season of the year to enhance the aesthetic impact and the decorum of the poetic expression. The time factor is clearly bifurcated into two divisions namely the ‘short period’ (cirupoluttu) or a day, a period of twenty-four hours, and the ‘longperiod’ (perumpolittu) or one complete year of twelve months. The day is further divided into six time units namely, 1. Midnight (Yamam), 2. Vaigaraai (Dawn), 3. Early Morning (Vitiyarkalai), 4. Mid-day (Nanpakal), 5. Evening (Malai), and 6. Sunset (Erputu).
The full year consists of six seasons,
1. The early rainy season (Kar: Aug to Sep)
2. The later rainy season (Kulir: Oct to Nov)
3. The early winter season (Munpani: Dec to Jan)
4. The later winter (Pinpani: Feb to March)
5. The middle hot season (Ilaveni: April to May)
6. The hot season (Mutaveni: June to July)

Thus the two major factors namely the land or space and time combine to form the division called MutalPorul. The second division called KarupPorul or the seed-topic explains various natural things belonging to the particular region or ‘tinai’. Tolkappiyar clearly specifies the following title under which the components of ‘Karupporul’ are systematically classified, such as the god, noble persons (inhabitants of the region), commoners, birds, animals, name of the place, water sources, flowers, trees, types of food, types of drum, types of lute, the name of the tune, and the various vacations pursued by the inhabitants of the particular region. Though Tolkappiyar stops just with the mention of classified titles, Naccinarkkiniyar and Illampuranar, the two famous commentators of Tolkappiyam suggest the various components under each title. They also give ample literary evidences from Cankam poetry, which were drawn from the period before the age of Tolkappiyar.

The third division is UripPorul or the typical aspects of perfect love of the particular ‘tinai’, inspired by the manifestation of Nature. They are (1) Voluntary union (Pamartal), (2) Separation (Prirntal), (3) Staying at home in patient expectation of the return of the lover (Iruttal), (4) the pining of the lady love in the absence of her lover (Irankal), and (5) The sulking or the feigned quarrel between the lover and the beloved (Utal).

Here, each tinai is described in detail with its ‘principle topic’ (Mutal Porul), Seed topic (KarupPorul) and Essential topic or the aspect of perfect love (UripPorul) in accordance with Tolkappiyar’s logical ordering of the five aspects of perfect love. The sequence of five aspects is Union, Separation, Waiting, Pining and Sulking. (Tolkappiyar960).

Naccinarkkiniyar gives an excellent interpretation of the logic behind the systematisation of these five aspects of love in this particular order. Since union is the most important aspect of love in which both the hero and the heroine take equal part, it is stated first. The hero is separated from the heroine by duty. The pangs of separation will be more intense only after a happy union. So separation is given the second place in the order. After the separation, heroine anxiously awaits home for the safe return of the hero. So, the patient waiting is mentioned after that, the hero may frequent the houses of the prostitutes. The heroine at home pines for her husband. So pining comes next. Sulking is given the last place since it is common to the other four aspects of love. (Naccinarkkiniyar 36)

References