

The *Ātticūṭi* of Auvaiyār :
Na. Mu. Vēṅkaṭacāmi Nāṭṭār's Commentary and Its
Translation (Part 1)

by Hiroshi YAMASHITA

Ātticūṭi is a little book of moral aphorisms traditionally believed to have been composed by Auvai or Auvaiyār, a celebrated woman saint in the Tamil country, South India, in the early mediaeval period. This work, commencing with words beginning with letters in their order in the Tamil alphabet, is so called from its opening word *ātticūṭi* found in the invocation at the very beginning of the work. "*Ātticūṭi*" literally means Lord Śiva, the god wearing the garland of the *ātti* tree.

This work has been enjoying great popularity throughout history even to this day, and numerous commentaries have been composed so far. The original (*mūlam*), which consists of 108 (or 109) lines, is too abridged, condensed or sometimes even misleading to understand properly without the help of a commentary (*urai*).

In this paper I will take up a Tamil commentary written by Na. Mu. Vēṅkaṭacāmi Nāṭṭār (1884-1944), one of the distinguished commentators of the modern period, to serve for the proper understanding of the work. This complete Japanese translation of the original *Ātticūṭi* along with its commentary will be an introduction to the detailed study on the didactic literature (*nīṭṭalakkīyaṅkaḷ*) and its significance in the Tamil culture and society both of the mediaeval and the modern periods.