



செம்மொழித் தமிழாய்வு மத்திய நிறுவனம்

(தன்னாட்சி நிறுவனம், கல்வி அமைச்சகம், இந்திய அரசு)

செம்மொழிச் சாலை, பெரும்பாக்கம், சென்னை - 600100

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF CLASSICAL TAMIL

(An Autonomous Institution under the Ministry of Education, Government of India)

Chemmozhi Salai, Perumbakkam, Chennai - 600100

F.No. 11-264/ CICT/2024-25/ Tirukkural Translation Project

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TIRUKKURAL TRANSLATION PROJECT 2024 - 2025

A Careful and impartial survey of the great books of the world found in any of the ancient and modern languages of the world would reveal that there are not many strong contenders for the title of the book of the world. The vision of life embodied in most of them suffers from certain inexcusable limitations which have rendered them obsolete. Compared to the rest, *Tirukkural* is the only work which takes all aspects of human life into consideration and remains relevant despite the massive changes that have taken place in every walk of life and the scientific discoveries about the vastness of the expanding universe. In his emphasis on the oneness of mankind, in his focus on life here and now, in his rejection of all superstitious beliefs about how the world came into being and how it is going to end, about what happens before birth and after death, in his indifference to wild conjectures relating to man- god relationship, and in his unwavering advocacy of an eclectic fusion of meaningful principles from the various religions of his time, *Valluvar* is unique and has no worthy rival for the top position.

The fact that *Tirukkural* has received universal approbation is evident from the comments made by the leading thinkers of the world including *Albert Schweitzer*, *F.W.Ellis*, *sri Aurobindo*, *Tolstoy* and *Gandhiji*. Though written about more than two thousand years ago, it steers clear of religion, nationalism, race, tribe, language, caste and creed and teaches numerous lessons valid not only for its own time but for all the centuries to come.

Central Institute of Classical Tamil has proposed to bring out authentic translations of this great work into various languages:

Instructions

The following guidelines may be kept in mind while preparing the translation anthology:

The order in which the Tamil text, its transliteration and translation in the target language have to appear:

- (1) The Couplet in Tamil
- (2) Its transliteration in the Roman script
- (3) Its translation in the target language

The translation may be in verse (not necessarily rhymed), or poetic or simple elegant prose. A Glossary (of meanings of difficult words) has to be added at the end.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- ❖ The project is to be completed in Ten months.
- ❖ The financial assistance to be given by the Institute for every work is Rs. 1.5. Lakh (Rupees One lakh and fifty thousand only).
- ❖ All those who have specialised in translation are welcome to send their applications.
- ❖ Those who are employed have to route their applications through proper channel.
- ❖ Unemployed individuals have to send their applications through some government Institution/NGO.
- ❖ Translators will be selected by an expert committee constituted by CICT. Applications will be invited to make their presentations before the Committee.
- ❖ Applications from non-governmental organizations should include a Xerox copy of the webpage registered in www.ngo.india.gov.in. They should also enclose a copy of the audit report of the last financial year of the organization.
- ❖ If the applicant is a scholar in Tamil, he should enclose a documentary evidence to that effect.
- ❖ If the translator doesn't possess a sound knowledge of Tamil, he may have the assistance of a Tamil scholar whose acceptance and bio-data should also be sent.
- ❖ Such assistants are not eligible for any remuneration by the Institute.
- ❖ The translation has to be sent only by **Arial Unicode MS**.
- ❖ The translation of the excerpt from the model text given should be sent together with the application.
- ❖ CICT will conduct two meetings of the Evaluation Committee during the period of Translation.
- ❖ CICT will have the exclusive right to the translated text and its publication.
- ❖ Orders will be issued to the selected applicants by CICT as per its rules and regulations.
- ❖ If the completed translation is not sent before the due date, the translator has return the money paid with interest.
- ❖ The application given below may be duly filled in and sent by post **The Director, Central Institute of Classical Tamil, Chemmozhi Salai, Perumbakkam, Chennai – 600 100**, or by email to tirukkuraltranslation@cict.in
- ❖ For more details, see www.cict.in

INDIAN LANGUAGES (55)

1. Ahirani
2. Bagheli/Baghel Khandi
3. Bagri
4. Banjari
5. Bundeli/Bundel khandi
6. Chhattisgarhi
7. Dhundhari
8. Garhwali
9. Gojri/Gujjari/Gujar
10. Gondi
11. Halabi
12. Hara/Harauti
13. Ho
14. Irula/Irular Mozhi
15. Jaunpuri/Jaunsari
16. Kachchhi
17. Kangri
18. Karbi/Mikir
19. Karmali
20. Kharia
21. Khasi
22. Konyak
23. Koya
24. Kuruba/Kurumba
25. Kurukh/Oraon
26. Lamani/Lambadi/Labani
27. Lodhi
28. Lotha
29. Magadhi/Magahi
30. Malvi
31. Mandeali
32. Marwari
33. Mewari
34. Mewati
35. Miri/Mishing
36. Munda
37. Mundari
38. Nagpuria
39. Nimadi
40. Nissi/Dafla
41. Pahari
42. Pahariya
43. Panch Pargania
44. Paola
45. Rabha
46. Pawari/Powari
47. Sadan/Sadri
48. Sambalpuri
49. Savara
50. Surgujia
51. Surjapuri
52. Tangkhul
53. Thado
54. Tibetan
55. Tripuri

FOREIGN LANGUAGES (45)

1. Albanian
2. Amharic
3. Armenian
4. Azerbaijani
5. Bulgarian
6. Catalan
7. Czech
8. Dhivehi
9. Dutch
10. Dzongkha
11. Estonian
12. Filipino
13. Finnish
14. French
15. Georgian
16. German
17. Greek
18. Greenlandic
19. Hebrew
20. Hungarian
21. Icelandic
22. Indonesian
23. Italian
24. Kyrgyz
25. Lao
26. Latvian
27. Lithuanian
28. Macedonian
29. Maltese
30. Mandarin

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|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 31. Mongolian | 39. Slovak |
| 32. Norwegian | 40. Slovene |
| 33. Polish | 41. Spanish |
| 34. Portuguese | 42. Turkish |
| 35. Romanian | 43. Turkmen |
| 36. Russian | 44. Ukrainian |
| 37. Serb-Bosn-Montenegr-Croatian | 45. Uzbek1 |
| 38. Sinhala | |

SAMPLE TRANSLATION TEXT

In the history of world literature, *Tirukkural*, the magnum opus in Tamil, is one work of art that refuses to be tied down to any particular race, religion, land or culture. In an expansive body of 1330 verses that it contains, there is not even a single reference, direct or indirect, to the Tamil language or the Tamil people or the Tamil country that for sure sustained and nurtured its author's genius and that provided the milieu for such a work to be composed. It soars above diversities of nation, language, religion, race and culture and speaks for the entirety of humankind. *Tirukkural* is indeed the miracle of a literary composition where every god, every human trait, every virtue, every emotion, every deed, every relationship is universalized root and branch.

The learned can make every country and every town their home; (397)

*Finding their source of joy making for world's joy too,
The learned will find their learning a thing of love. (390)*

Fools they are.....

Who know not how to live in accord with the world. (14)

It's wisdom's part to live in the world

In accord with the way the world lives. (426)

Tirukkural by intent steers clear of identification with any particular doctrine, ideology or philosophy. Whatever philosophy or ideology that one extracts from this work is altruistic in its core:

*That person truly lives who is alive to public-spiritedness;
The other who is not is deemed one among the dead. (214)*

*To share one's meal and nurture the myriad life on earth
Stands foremost among virtues seen in the collected lore of
the wise. (322)*

Behind this veil of egalitarian simplicity, there is a revolutionary social thinker too, going hammer and tongs against the rotten beliefs and practices of the day:

*All folks stand alike by birth;
Not alike are their merits thanks to their varied callings. (972)*

*Speak not of the way righteousness operates
Pointing to a palanquin bearer and the rider in. (37)*

*Were it to be so that folks live by begging too,
Let the Maker of the world fall to drifting and perish. (1062)*

At a time when the society at large had remained lax to means of doing things, Valluvar uncompromisingly insisted on the means rather than the ends:

*Even if you see your mother suffer hunger's pain,
Do desist from deeds that the wise find disgraceful. (656)*

Look at him defining liberality:

*To go to the succour of the poor is true charity;
All else is of the nature of quid pro quo. (221)*

He follows it up with the exhortation of a seer:

*For one to eat alone all of one's hoard amassed
Is surely more demeaning than to live by begging. (229)*

Here is one with a vibrant scientific temperament in the midst of a whole body of beliefs and superstitions ruling the world of the day:

*Wisdom is to discern the truth in things
Whatever they are and of whatever kind they be. (355)*

*Whatever is heard and whosoever it may come from,
To discern the truth therein is wisdom known. (423)*

Where does Valluvar learn this scientificness from? Look at the pure science that defines the classical Tamil mind:

*A structured blend of
Earth, fire, water, air and space
As the world is.... (Tolkāppiyam 1581)*

Puranānūru inherits this tradition and restates it poetically:

*The five primordial elements constituting nature –
The earth filled with soil,
The sky borne by the earth,
The wind sweeping through the sky,
The fire joining with the wind,
And the water antagonistic to the fire
..... (2)*

All this at a time when a plethora of gods and goddesses peopled the imagination of the Greeks, Aryans and several others and found their way down to creative literature and theology, and ultimately into the worldly consciousness of the people at large.

Obviously, *Tirukkural* conceptually represents a uniquely life-affirming literature, a literature of the here and now rather than the bliss of heaven, standing in significant contrast with the contemporary literatures of both the East and the West. Specifically speaking, the Tamil ethos that *Tirukkural* arose from is essentially anthropocentric that held humankind as the most important element of existence. It was profoundly one of humanist orientation, attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters, where there was an overriding emphasis on the dignity and worth of the human individual. The thematic burden of the akam and the Puṛam genres of the old is this humanism that treats humanity as its god and lays unlimited faith in human virtues. Vaḷḷuvar famously envisions a cāṇṛōn, an ideal individual, and seats him at the centre of his universe:

*Love, sense of shame, beneficence, graciousness and truthfulness –
These five are pillars on which stand character sublime. (983)*

This cāṇṛōn is a complete, secular person, endowed with ripeness of character. All good things are but charges of duty to him (981); he does not dwell on the faults of others (984); the weapon that he wields to bring around the enemies is humility (985); the touchstone of a lofty mind is to accept defeat even from folks of lesser standing (986); high-mindedness is to see that evil done is returned with a good turn (987); poverty and destitution are no disgrace to people standing on the strength of nobility of character (988). And

*Should the sublime virtue of sublime folks decline,
This wide earth would no more bear the burden of its weight. (990)*

Such is the character of the protagonist of Thiruvalluvar's epic-like composition on the art of living. The cāṇṛōn is indeed Vaḷḷuvar's contribution to the ethics of human living, and his *Tirukkural* stands as the true measure of wisdom/didactic literature in general. *Tirukkural* thus bears testimony to the Confucian statement that "it is not truth that makes man great but man that makes truth great."

Again, Vaḷḷuvar lays overwhelming emphasis on the strength, vitality and harmony of the social organization, the community life at large in the couplets extending from "Domestic Virtue" of *Arattuppāl* through the close of the "Essentials of the State" of *Poruṭpāl*. Most of the verses in this component should make for universally valid, timeless guiding principles of life, coming relevant to every conceivable field of human concern. Look at Vaḷḷuvar glorifying the domestic order which is indeed the fulcrum of the stability and continuance of human life:

*He is duly placed among gods in Heaven
Who pursues his domestic course true to its calling. (50)*

At the same time, he does not run down the ascetic mode, a person of accomplished breadth of vision as he is:

*Truly a seed for the fruits of Heaven he is
Who steers his five senses by the goad of wisdom. (24)*

Look at Vaḷḷuvar's poetic exposition of secular love:

*It's love that inspires the quick of life,
Sans which the body is bones encased in skin. (80)*

Look at the truths of life wrapped in excellent poetry and expressed in incredible verbal economy:

*Excellent virtue it is for one to bear one's despisers
As does the earth those who dig it up. (151)*

*Charge of duty asks for no requital:
What recompense can the world offer to the rain clouds? (217)*

Be it noted that *Tirukkural* is no mere collection of ethical codes reading like axioms and aphorisms. An abiding claim for *Tirukkural* as world literature consists in the transmutation of truths of life into truths of literature. Look at the following distiches:

*Patient, physician, medicine and nurse
Are the four factors bearing on the art of healing. (950)*

*What worth do vile folks stand?
Should an hour of woe descend they come in swift for sale. (1080)*

A note on the extraordinary ability of the *Kural* to sustain itself and resist obsolescence through these more than 2000 years of recorded history. Masterpieces of world literature stay immortal because of their abiding aesthetic appeal, and religious scriptures on account of their spiritual appeal. How does *Tirukkural*, which is by and large a treatise on the art of living, sustain itself for so long? The answer lies in Valluvar's exceptional power of perception. As he takes up a subject for treatment, he goes to the bottom and touches the root wherein lie the unshifting foundations of the subject in question. In other words, while most writers take up the diamond, Valluvar's choice is the carbon, the isness of things, whereby he succeeds in identifying the eternal unchanging values of life applicable to people across space and time. A few examples:

*Ruin comes when you do things not right;
Ruin also comes when you leave right things undone. (466)*

*When it is time to be folded up do so as does the stork;
When it is time right to act act like that bird's strike. (490)*

*Having deliberated 'this task by this means this person can do',
Let that person be entrusted with that task. (517)*

Another extraordinary trait that has invested the *Kural* with ageless immediacy and relevance is, as has been already referred to, its consistent emphasis on scientific outlook and scientific approach (355, 423) by which he privileges human effort over fate or destiny or divine hand.

*Be it unavailing through Providence's intervention though,
Toil persevering would bring the reward due. (619)*

Yet another device Valluvar employs to secure his composition against obsolescence and irrelevance is deliberate, consistent treatment of things wisdom- born rather than things that are products of knowledge. The whole of the chapter titled Arivuṭaimai is concerned with wisdom, discrimination, reasoning and rationality acquired from a multiplicity of sources including knowledge.

In essence, *Tirukkuraḷ* is much more than a humanistic document in a metrical garb. It is a masterpiece of world literature in which the poet, through his vast learning, wisdom of the world and catholicity of temper, has identified things that are abiding and constant in the affairs of humanity and transmuted them into absorbing poetry as not many have accomplished in the history of world literature.

We may conclude this piece of writing with one or two quotes from the third book of the *Kuraḷ* on sexual love which embodies some of the best and the finest instances of man-woman emotional relationship, all clothed in excellent poetry.

*Wherever has she obtained this fire from
Which burns when I go apart and cools when I come closer?
(1104)*

*The more you learn the more of mind's want dawn on you;
Such is my passion after every union with the lass in exquisite
jewels decked. (1110)*

*My lover dwelling in my heart, eating hot stuff I shun
Lest it should burn him therein. (1128)*

*The joys of love measure ocean's bounds;
Hurt when it does the pain goes beyond its line. (1166)*

*The moment I wake up he takes my heart for abode,
While he lies over my shoulders in sleep's dreamy hour. (1218)*

Indeed, it is this third book that elevates the *Kuraḷ* to the lofty ranks of an absolute classic.

It bears repetition to state that there are not many candidates around to compete with this miracle of a literary document for the position of world literature.

1. அகர முதல எழுத்தெல்லாம் ஆதி
பகவன் முதற்றே உலகு.

Transliteration:

akara mutala eḷuttellām āti
pakavaṇ mutarrē ulaku.

Translate:

A is the starting-point of the world of sound: even so is the Ancient one Supreme the starting-point of all that exists.

2. கற்றதனால் ஆய பயனென்கொல் வாலறிவன்
நற்றாள் தொழாஅர் எனின்.

Transliteration:

karratanāḷ āya payanenkol vālarivan
narrāḷ toḷāar enin.

Translate:

Of what avail is all thy learning if thou worship not the holy feet of Him of the perfect intelligence?

3. மலர்மிசை ஏகினான் மாண்டி சேர்ந்தார்
நிலமிசை நீடுவாழ் வார்.

Transliteration:

malarmicai ēkināṇ māṇaṭi cērntār
nilamicai nīḍuvāḷ vār.

Translate:

Behold the man who taketh refuge in the sacred feet of Him who walked on flowers: his days will be many upon the earth.

4. வேண்டுதல்வேண் டாமை இலாண்டி சேர்ந்தார்க்கு
யாண்டும் இடும்பை இல.

Transliteration:

vēṇṭutalvēṇ ṭāmai ilāṇaṭi cērntārkku
yāṇṭum iḍumpai ila.

Translate:

Behold the men who cleave unto the feet of Him who is beyond preference and beyond aversion: the ills of life touch them not ever.

5. இருள்சேர் இருவினையும் சேரா இறைவன்
பொருள்சேர் புகழ்புரிந்தார் மாட்டு.

Transliteration:

iruḷcēr iruvinaiyum cērā iraiavan
poruḷcēr pukalpurintār māḍḍu.

Translate:

Behold the men who sing earnestly the praise of the Lord; they will be freed from the pain-engendering fruits of action both good and evil.

6. பொறிவாயில் ஐந்தவித்தான் பொய்தீர் ஒழுக்க
நெறிநின்றார் நீடுவாழ் வார்.

Transliteration:

porivāyil aintavittāṇ poytīr oḷukka
nerinirār nīḍuvāḷ vār

Translate:

Behold the men who follow the righteous ways of Him who burned away the desires of the five senses; their days will be many upon the earth.

7. தனக்குவமை இல்லாதான் தாள்சேர்த்தார்க்கு அல்லால்
மனக்கவலை மாற்றல் அரிது.

Transliteration:

taṇakkuvamai illātāṇ tālcērttārkkku allāl
maṇakkavalai mārral aritu.

Translate:

They alone escape from sorrow who take refuge in the feet of Him who hath no equal.

8. அறவாழி அந்தணன் தாள்சேர்ந்தார்க்கு அல்லால்
பிறவாழி நீந்தல் அரிது.

Transliteration:

aṛavāḷi antaṇaṇ tālcērntārkkku allāl
piṛavāḷi nīntal aritu.

Translate:

The stormy seas of wealth and sense delights cannot be traversed except by those who cling to the feet of the Sage who is the Ocean of Righteousness.

9. கோளில் பொறியின் குணமில்வே எண்குணத்தான்
தாளை வணங்காத் தலை.

Transliteration:

kōḷil poriyiṇ kuṇamilavē eṇkuṇattāṇ
tālai vaṇaṅkāṭ talai.

Translate:

Worthless indeed like the organs of sense which do not perceive is the head that boweth not at the feet of Him who is endowed with the eight attributes.

10. பிறவிப் பெருங்கடல் நீந்துவர் நீந்தார்
இறைவன் அடிசேரா தார்.

Transliteration:

piṛavip peruṅkaṭal nīntuvar nīntār
iraivaṇ aṭicērā tāṛ.

Translate:

They alone cross the ocean of births and deaths who take refuge in the feet of the Lord; the others traverse it not.



செம்மொழித் தமிழாய்வு மத்திய நிறுவனம்

(தன்னாட்சி நிறுவனம், கல்வி அமைச்சகம், இந்திய அரசு)

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Application for the Translation Project on TIRUKKURAL

2024-2025

1.	Name of the applicant in English		Photo
2.	Mother tongue		
3.	Date of birth & Age		
4.	Qualification		
5.	Designation		
6.	Date of Joining		
7.	Total Experience		
8.	Office Address (with Phone Number)		
	Residential Address (with Phone Number)		
9.	Mobile Number		
10.	E-mail Address		
11.	Address of the Institution through which the application is routed		
	* If registered NGO give ID No.		
12.	Target language		
13.	Enclosures Publication details relating to translations already done.		

*Registration on Online is mandatory as per GOI guidelines.

Date:

Place:

Signature of the applicant