



# Siva's Demon Devotee: Karaikkal Ammaiyaar

*Elaine Craddock*

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*An exploration and translation of the work of Hindu poet-saint K?raikk?l Ammaiy?r.*

The Hindu poet-saint K?raikk?l Ammaiy?r describes herself as a demon, accompanying the god ?iva as he dances in the cremation grounds. She is believed to be the first to write devotional poetry to ?iva in the Tamil language and is considered the first of the sixty-three Tamil poet-saints. Written in the sixth or seventh century, her beautiful poetry presents the path of love and service that brings liberation. In ?iva's Demon Devotee, Elaine Craddock provides a historical, literary, and ethnographic exploration of K?raikk?l Ammaiy?r and her work. An annotated translation of the poet-saint's 143 verses is included along with an introduction to the Tamil literary tradition. Craddock's analysis of this poetry in its ancient context and of the narrative tradition that developed around the life of K?raikk?l Ammaiy?r centuries later reveals cultural tensions concerning women's roles and the devotional path.

“The book's greatest strength is its systematic and comprehensive approach to Ammaiy?r ... What Craddock has contributed to the study of South Asian religious traditions is a detailed, informative, well-written book that I anticipate will be recognized as the standard work on K?raikk?l Ammaiy?r.” — Tracy Pintchman, Religion

Elaine Craddock is Professor of Religion at Southwestern University.

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