

## ”Puffing and Swelling as Bubbles”: Mantra and Music in Sri Sabhapati Swami’s Yoga

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The Tamil yogin Sri Sabhapati Swami (ca. 1828–1936) is known for his elaborate visual depictions of the Royal Yoga for Śiva (Śivarājayoga), but much lesser known is the attention paid to musical poetry, mantra, and sound within his Sanskrit publications that span Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, and English language worlds. In addition to lyrical songs and poetic compositions, Sabhapati also included instructions on the aural recitation of musical notes (*svara*) and Mantric seed-syllables (*bijamantra*), framing them as fragmented powers (*kalā*) of the syllable Om. Furthermore, he was probably the first modern yogin to develop a practice of silent chanting that was linked to the purification of the five elemental principles (*tattva*) and other components of his embodied system of cakras or lotuses (*kamala*), which he also called “bubbles” and described as “puffing and swelling.” This paper analyzes how singing and aurality played such an integral part of Sabhapati’s yogic and mantric literature as well as today at a contemporary temple devoted to him, and focuses on how this practice was designed to enhance meditative practice as well as benefit audiences of devotees.

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