TEMPLES OF NANNILAM TALUK

(as Iconographical Masterpieces)

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FOREWORD

This comprehensive research work entitled, "Temples of Nannilam Taluk as Iconographical Masterpieces" highlights mainly the iconographical importance of the temples of Nannilam taluk. The stone and bronze sculptures of the Saurirajapperumal temple at Tirukkannapuram get a blurless artistic description through this work. The iconographical details of the stone images of Venugopala, Navaneetha Krishna, Garudalvar, and the bronze images like Hanuman, Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, of the Tirukkannapuram temple get artistic elucidation. The stone images of Bhairava, Vishnu, Durga, Bhikshatanar, Kankalamurti, Urdhvatandavamurti, Kalasamharamurthi, all being dated to the Chola period, stand as a best testimony to speak of the artistic importance of the Ganapateesvarar temple at Tiruccengattangudi. The icons of the Agneeswarar temple at Thiruppugalur, the Siva temple at Tirumakkalam; the Somanathasvami temple at Achuthamangalam, Sri Brahmanpurisvar temple at Ambal, the Ratnagirisvarar temple at Thirumarugal, Sri Vanjinathasvami temple at Srivanjiam, the Siva temple at Tirumuyachur and Sri Kripasamudra Perumal temple, will surely enrich the Vaishnavite Iconography of Tamilnadu. The book with the inclusion of the images of the aforesaid temples, will ever have its renowned artistic merit for all the years to come.

I earnestby hope that this book would bring credit for the author. Besides, it will be interesting for those who evince knew interest in South Indian Iconography.

28 . 2 . 2001

C.K. Mahadevan

முன்னுரை

தமிழகம் கலைக்கோயில்கள் நிறைந்த புண்ணிய பூமியாக இன்றும் பெருமையுடன் விளங்குகிறது. சோழவளநாடு சோறுடைத்து என்ற பெருமை தஞ்சைப்பதிக்குண்டு. காவிரி பாய்வதால் தஞ்சைப் பகுதி நிலச் செழிப்பு பெற்றிருக்கிறது. இந்நிலச் செழிப்பே கலைச்செழிப்பிற்கு வித்திட்டதெனலாம்.

காவிரியின் இருமருங்கும் கோயில்களைக் கட்டிய பெருமை சோழமன்னன் செங்கணானுக்குண்டு. சைவ, வைணவத் திருக்கோயில் வழிபாட்டுத்தலங்களாக மட்டும் அமையாது நுண்கலைகளின் மையங்களாகவும் திகழ்கின்றன. தஞ்சைப் பகுதிக் கோயில்களின் கலைப் பெருமையைப் பல்வேறு நூல்களில் அறிஞர்கள் வெளிக்காட்டியிருக்கிறார்கள். இருப்பினும் அக்கோயில்களின் படிமக்கலைச் சிறப்பை மட்டும் முதன்மைப்படுத்தி நூல்கள் அதிகம் எழுதப்படவில்லை. இக்குறைபாடே இந்நூல் வெளிவரக் காரணமாயிற்று.

இந்நூலில் திருக்கண்ணபுரம் சௌரிராசப் பெருமாள் கோயிலும், திருச்செங்காட்டாங்குடி கணபதீசுரர் கோயிலும், மற்றும் திருமாகாளம், அச்சுதமங்கலம், ஆம்பல், திருமருகல், சீயாத்த மங்கை, ஸ்ரீவாஞ்சியம், திருமீயச்சூர், ஸ்ரீபுலியூர், ருத்ரகங்கை, அய்யம்பேட்டை, நரிமணம், இஞ்சிக்குடி, திருநந்திகேசுவரம், திருப்பனையூர், கீரனூர் ஆலயங்களின் சிற்பங்களும் இடம்பெறுகின்றன. இக்கோயில்களில் இடம்பெறும் கல், உலோகத்திருமேனிகளின் கலைச்சிறப்பு தெளிவாக இந்நூலில் விளக்கப்பட்டிருக்கிறது. திருக்கண்ணபுர ஆலய வைணவச் சிற்பங்களின் கலைச் சிறப்பு இந்நூலின் மூலமாக முதன் முதலில் வெளிக்கொணரப்படுகிறது. ஆழ்வார்கள், இராமன், சீதை, இலக்குவன், திருமால் செப்புத்திருமேனிகள், சோழர் விசயநகரக் காலக் கலையழகுக்கு நல் சிறந்த உதாரணங்களாகும். தனித்துவம் காட்டும் செப்புத்திருமேனிகளும் இந்நூலில் இடம்பெறுகின்றன. சிறந்த உதாரணமாகத் திருப்பனையூர் ஆலய சோமாசுகந்த மூர்த்தியைக் குறிப்பிடலாம். இம்மூர்த்தியில் சிவனின்

கையில் மாம்பழம் இடம்பெற்றிருப்பது தனிச்சிறப்பாகும். இரண்டு ஆண்டுகளாக ஆய்வுப் பணிகள் மேற்கொள்ளப்பட்டுப் பல நூலகங்களுக்குச் சென்று தரவுகளைச் சேகரித்துப் பல அறிஞர்களோடு கலந்துரையாடல் செய்து எழுதி முடிக்கப்பட்டதே இந்நூலாகும். சில கோயில்களில் நிழற்படம் எடுப்பதற்கு இரவு முழுவதும் செலவிடவேண்டியதாயிற்று.

நுண்ணாக்கம் செய்யப்பட்டு இத்தகு ஆய்வேடு நூலாக்கம் பெறாதோ என்று எண்ணி ஏங்கியிருந்த நிலையில் ஊக்கமும் நிதியுதவியும் அளித்த பெருமை துணைவேந்தர் மாண்புமிகு முனைவர் கதிர் மகாதேவன் அவர்களைச் சாருமெனலாம், மாண்புமிகு துணைவேந்தர் முனைவர் கதிர். மகாதேவன் அவர்களின் முயற்சியே என் முயற்சியால் எழுதப்பட்ட இந்த ஆய்வேடு நூலாக வெளிவருவதற்கு முதல்காரணமாகும். அவர்களுக்கு என் மனமார்ந்த நன்றியைத் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

எனது நண்பர் பதிப்புத்துறை இயக்குநர் (பொறுப்பு) முதுமுனைவர் ம.சா. அறிவுடைநம்பி அவர்களின் ஒத்துழைப்பும் முயற்சியும் இந்நூலாக்கத்திற்கு ஒரு துணையாகும். அவர்களுக்கும் என் நன்றியை உரித்தாக்குகிறேன்.

களப்பணி செல்லும் போதெல்லாம் சிரமம் பார்க்காது எனது ஆய்வுக்குத் துணை நின்றதில் என் மனைவிக்குப் பங்குண்டு. உதவி செய்த எல்லா நல் இதயங்களுக்கும் எனது மனமார்ந்த நன்றியை மனநிறைவுடன் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்கிறேன்.

முனைவர் **ஆ. வேலுசுவாமி சுதந்திரன்**
எம்.ஏ., எம்.லிட்., பிஎச்.டி.,
பேராசிரியர்
சிற்பத்துறை
தமிழ்ப் பல்கலைக்கழகம்
தஞ்சாவூர் - 5.

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CHAPTER - I

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Tamil Nadu is dotted with thousands of temples, many of them old and some in ruins. Apart from the famous temple towns, a good number of villages and towns have two or more temples, each some so ancient and venerated that they have become places of pilgrimage. Most of the temples had played an important role as the centres of fine arts, centres of public administration, centres of public health and lastly as centres of education. The temples at Srirangam, Madurai, Chidambaram, Thiruvanaikkaval, Tanjore, not only played as centres of Fine Arts but also were engaged in other multifarious activities.

Tanjore district in particular occupies the foremost place in the art history of Tamil Nadu. The district is considered to be the Granary of Tamil Nadu, as it produces plenty of paddy compared with the other districts. Due to the river Kaveri, the fertility of the soil is even now maintained. On the banks of the river Kaveri, there are hundreds of temples, mostly constructed during the period of the Cholas, though there are also quite a few earlier temples. The temples are noteworthy for both the artistic and architectural beauties.

Inscriptions of the temples of Nannilam Taluk of Tanjore district clearly reveal the various functions of the temple. But here, for study, only their iconographical importance is taken into account.

The selection of the topic, *Temples of Nannilam Taluk , as Iconographical masterpieces,* is mainly intended to bring out the artistic values of the icons of the temples. So far, no concrete, systamatic and worthwhile attempt has been made to reveal the artistic glory of the temples of this taluk. In the works of the scholars like Sivaramamurti, Gangoly, Barrett, Sreenivasan, Nagaswamy, no sincere attempt has been made to explain the artistic significance of the temples. Sivaramamurti in his three works *South Indian Bronzes, Indian Bronzes, The art of India and Illustration of Indian Sculpture mostly Southern* gives a vivid picture of the superbly executed bronze images belonging to the different periods of the Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, Vijayanagar Kings and Nayaks. From a comparitive point of view, he has described the beauty of the different images of far off places also. But in no place, he has mentioned the artistic values of

the temples of the Nannilam Taluk. Likewise, Gangoly in his work *South Indian Bronzes,* describes many kinds of images and aescribes different dates for them based on artistic and epigraphical evidences. In his work also, temples of Nannilam taluk are not given a proper place. Sreenivasan in his work *Bronzes of South India*, has dealt in detail with the iconographical values of different temples and also dates them dynastically. There the artistic description of the temples of the Nannilam taluk are not given a proper place. In the works of Nagaswamy like *Art and Culture of Tamil Nadu, Masterpieces of Early South Indian Bronzes,* no description has been made of any one of the temples of Nannilam Taluk, in an elaborate manner. Barett in his work Early *Chola Bronzes,* has not given out much importance to the iconographical study of these temples.

Only in the works of Rao and Banerjee, *The Elements of Hindu Iconography and the Development of Hindu Iconography* respectively, some of the stone and bronze images of the Ganapathiswarar temple at Tiruccengattangudi, Nannilam Taluk, have been described and that too not with much elaboration. The works of Balasubrahmanyam like *The Early Chola Temples, Middle Chola Temples, Later Chola Temples and Early Chola Art,* deal with the stone icons of the temple at Tiruccengattangudi.

Therefore, this is likely to be the first work of its kind to describe elaborately with the iconographical values of the temples of Nannilam Taluk.

The primary source for this study are the icons, preserved in the temples. In most of the temples, the images are kept intact. For a comparitive study, the images preserved in the Museums at Egmore, Tranqubar, Gangakondacholapuram and Darasuram are helpful to a satisfactory level. The contributions of inscriptions are also second to none. Even though, most of the images, could be dated mainly from the artistic point of view, in some cases, inscriptions have played a notable part, by dating the images directly, along with the name of the king under whose period, the image was made. No copper plates have been found.

The area of study is confined only to the temples of Nannilam Taluk. To emphasize the study, the images of the extended area, are taken into account. The period of study is not strictly limited. Any how, the work covers mainly the images of the Chola period. Images of Vijayanagar and Nayak periods are also found in most of the temples.

The work covers nine chapters and each chapter deals with both the images of stone and bronze, elaborately. The architectural and epigraphical values of some of the temples are also discussed in some chapters.

The work brings out some of the rare artistic pieces, which have been so far neglected. Many examples can be found in the work. The two bronze images of Somaskanda kept in the temples at Thirunandikeswaram and Thiruppanaiyur respectively, are really considered to be the rare specimens in the field of art. Their artistic specialities are dealt with in the concerned chapters. They are considered to be the masterpieces of the Chola periods of the 10th, and the 11th centuries A.D. The bronze images of Brahma found in the temples at Thiruppugalur and Ambal are also worth to receive encomiums. Likewise a very good number of both stone and bronze images have been discussed in each and every chapter. The stone images preserved in the temples at Thiruccengattangudi will ever speak of the mastermind of the sculptor of the chola period of the 10th, and the 11th centuries A.D. The presence of different sculptures, belonging to the same period, perhapes indicates the fact that this temple might have once served as the centre for prducing both stone and bronze images.

The work will further reveal the artistic greatness of the Tanjore district. The work may satisfy each and every art connoisseure.

CHAPTER - II

SCULPTURE

The temples in the Nannilam area historically cover a time span of nearly 1200 years beginning with the pallavas and coming down to the modern. During this period, rulers of various dynastic lineage like the Pallava, Chola, Vijayanagar rulers and Nayak held sway over the land and patronized the temple building activities. In many of the temples of the region, we find the traces of cultural activity, belonging to the Pallava, Chola, Vijayanagar and Nayak periods. At this juncture, it is essential to lay down the distinguishing mark of the sculptural styles of various periods, in order to understand the sculptural art of the temples of Nannilam Taluk against the historical development.

Sculpture is the art of making statues[1] . Images reveal the abstract concepts and values of metaphysics, religion and immediate spiritual experience[2]. Sculptural art is admittedly more diffucult of execution and perfection than the pictorial art[3]. Hindu sculptures are of the most magnificent chapters in the whole history of the world`s art[4]. Sculpture is generally divided into two categories. The first is the free standing sculpture in which a figure exists independantly in three dimensional volume. In constrast to this form, there is also the relief sculpture in which figures are carved against a background. Sculpture in the round is generally designed for the portrayal of an image of a divinity or secular person.

1. Relief sculpture on the other hand is mainly utilised for decorating the wall surface[5]. Images are also divided into movable *(cala)* and immovable *(acala)*. Among cala images, there are again four kinds (a) those that are meant for worship *(arcana)* called *kautuka beras*.

2. Those that are taken out in vahanas on festive occasions, called the utsavaberas.

3. Those that are intended for the purpose of daily services in offering Bali, are called bali-beras and

4. Those that are employed in bathing cermonies called *snapana-beras*[7]. Mayilai Seeni Venkatasvamy classifies the images into four categories. They are the images of the gods and goddesses, natural images, imaginary images and portrait images of Kings and Queens[8].

General characteristic features of the sculptures of different dynasties which ruled the Tamil country.

PALLAVA PERIOD

The Pallava style, concerns itself with a tall and slender physiognomical form apparently an inheritance from the Vengi idiom of the Andhra country[9]. It is also said that the art was inspired to some extent by the art of Amaravati[10]. The thin and elongated limbs almost tubular in shape, emphasize the tallness of the figure. The emblems are as a rule either held naturally in the hands or placed immediately above[11] them and are without flames. The sculptures show superhuman sublimity, delicacy and elegant balance[12]. The sacred thread flows over the right forearm[13]. The female figures have broad shoulders supported on an elongated torso, no longer nervy in modelling as in the vengi type. The *makuta* is round in form. *Yajnopavita* is flat and the central loop is in "V" form[14]. The face is slightly elongated with a flat nose and double chin[15].

The female figures usually leaning on their male companions are much slighter in appearance with their slender waists. *The sula* in the Pallava sculpture is almost circullar in contour, its outer prongs being fully curved whilst the long central prong projects upwards, the whole is resting on a *pitha* at the point of the handle.

EARLY CHOLA SCULPTURES

The figures are slightly formal in pose and moulding than in the Pallava period, combining the best examples of particular high degree of dignity and grace. The face is rounder. The Images are characterised by a realistic and eloborate treatement of ornaments and costume[18]. In these and other respects, the early Chola sculpture is transitional between that of the Pallava and later Chola periods. The Cholas supplant the Pallavas as the dominant power in the south and inherit along with the political hegemony, their predecessor's art tradition. The Cholas were the worshippers of Siva as the supreme lord and His consort Parvati. The images of the period represent these divinities in their various aspects of the greatest profusion[19]. It is said that the art of the Cholas though soon to show an individuality and vitality of its own was essentially an extension of the art of the Pallavas[20].

LATER CHOLA PERIOD

Poses and draperies became more definitely conventional and the nose more prominent. The torso is some what more strongly

moulded in front. Emblems are usually held on two upraised fingers, those of Visnu being habitually decorated with flames. The *Kirita* is conical. The sacred thread consits of three strands of equal thinness, so arranged as to produce a symmetrical effect. The figures became heavier and were no longer simple, blithe and elegant in form as in the Pallava period.

VIJAYANAGAR PERIOD

The figure in this style look very formal and have little appearance of modelling. The draperies are shaped in eloborate conventional patterns. The faces are expressionless except for the widely shaped eyes which have a perpetual star. The nose is fashioned with a sharp prominence and the chin with a vertical groove. The abdomen usually is emphatically round and somewhat drooping forewards. The navel is in most cases shown with ray-like horizontal and vertical lines.

NAYAK PERIOD

During this period, colossal figures of rearing horses with riders and fantastic animal forms were carved out to serve as pillar suppotrs and brackets. This shows that the idea for naturalism and the refined taste of the earlier period was lost. Portrait sculptures of kings and queens often with folded hands in adoration of deities of the temples were executed. Coomarasamy has pointed out the character of the Nayak style in the following way that it is rather an exaggeration of already existing shapes than to any new development[22]. This was the last phase of the sculptural art of Tamil Nadu.

MODERN PERIOD

The art tradition of the past is continued even in the recent period. New stylistic features are introduced.

TECHNIQUE OF METAL CASTING

Casting of images in bronze by the lost-wax process was increasingly practised from the late Pallava period and attained a high-degree of skill and accomplishment during the Chola period continuing up to the 20th century A.D.[23]

The technique of casting used in India was invariably the cireperdu or "lost wax" process described as *madhuchcheshtavidhana* in the ancient silpa texts[24]. There are various references to the process of cireperdue in some of the ancient religious manuscripts like *Manasara*. The method of casting sculptures is given in a detailed manner in the following way.

In brief, the figure was first modelled in wax delicately and simply, yet expressing all the anatomical details and the grace of the human figure. This was next covered with coats of ever increasing thickness of a special clay mixture containing rice husks and the other toughening ingredients, leaving openings at the top and bottom. The clay coated model was next heated to melt the wax core. The carefully and lovingly made figure, was then allowed to drain off through the lower openings. The molten alloy was poured in from the top, the liquid metal taking the place of the orginal wax model, filling each note and crevice. Now the clay coat was broken apart and the cast figure removed, to be further chasened, chiselled and embellished with hand tools and finally burnished for use. In the case of very large figures, a rough central core of a light metal was inserted in the wax model, the wax model was formed over the metal core. On casting this remained, thus reducing the weight of the figure, as the core was always of a metal much lighter than the alloy used for the casting of the icon. In the *Ghana* or solid method of casting, the image was first fashioned in bees wax often coloured yellow to give to the craftsman a better idea of the final product when cast in copper bronze or brass mixed with other ingredients like castor oil, camphor frank incense, etc. to form a thick semi-liquid on heating. Allowed to cool, this soft clay-like material was then modelled into the form of the figure and as much as possible of the details, ornamental embellishments, and other refinements worked were on this wax original.

The wax model with all its details was next covered with a coat of very fine clay if possible procured from an ant hill, and mixed with rice husks and other similar combustible materials. At first, this clay was thinned down considerably and applied almost as a solution, enabling it to enter into all the holllows, crevices and details of the figure model. Later, thicker coats were applied, the last coat being a thick lump of clay. While this was being done, care was taken to make holes in suitable places for the molten wax to pour out of at a later stage and funnel-like apertures were also made at the top through which was poured the molten alloy.

The clay coated model was then carefully dried in the shade, sun-light and heat being avoided to prevent cracking of the clay coating. After a few days of slow drying, the mould was ready for casting. It was carefully baked in a blazing fire, its intensity raised even further by means of air blown in with a pair of leather bellows just as the blacksmith does in his smithy. The wax naturally melts and runs out of the holes conveniently made for the purpose.

When all the wax had drained out of the clay mould, it was again heated slightly and the molten metal pure or alloyed, poured in from the top through the funnel-like openings. Care was taken to see that the molten metal filled up each and every part of the clay mould, every hollow and detail, the shallowest depression, the narrowest crevice. This alone would produce a perfect cast. Any excess of the molten metal naturally overflowed from the openings through which it was poured. The mould with the molten metal in it was allowed to cool, the baked and burnt clay was carefully broken away, and the cast figures gently removed. If the original wax effigy was very carefully made as it used to be in the past, very little finishing was required, except for the removal of a few burns and cleaning up here and there. But later on, after the 18th century, not so much care was excercised in the first modelling of the figure and so the resultant cast was comparitively rough, requiring a considerable amount of finishing with chisels and gravers.

HOLLOW CASTING

Another method of casting, the Shushira technique, was also occassionally followed. A rough model in clay was first made and this was coated with a layer of wax to reproduce exactly the sublety of the form and its details, refining it wherever necessary. The worked up wax was again covered with a thin coat of fine clay. When dry, further layers were added until the desired thickness of the outer shell has been attained. The whole was then heated, till the wax melted, and ran out through holes left for this specific purpose. Thus a space was left between the orginal clay form and covering clay coats identical with the model and into this the molten metal was poured filling up the area between the model and the clay mould, reproducing all the fine details of the image. When cooled and hardened, the outer clay shell was boken apart and the metal figure further chasened, chiselled and polished. Thus a light cast, hollow inside was obtaind, the thickness of the shell depending upon the thickness of the wax model between the clay core and the heavier claymould. The method first described produces a solid figure, needing a great deal more of the casting metal and thus increasing the cost and the weight of the icon.

A good detailed description of the cireperdue technique is given in the encyclopaedic work Manasollasa or Abhulashitartha chintamani, written by the werstern Chalukya king Somesvara III, who lived in the 12th century A.D.

In the south, atleast the ideal and most highly cherished alloy was the *pancha lauha* or Five Irons consisting of gold, silver, copper, brass and white lead. In the northern region of the country, however the *Astadhatu* was the most desirable one, which contains the eight metals namely gold, silver, tin, lead, iron, mercury, zinc and copper.

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CHAPTER - III

SAURIRAJAPPERUMAL TEMPLE AT THIRUKKANNAPURAM

Thirukkannapuram is a famous Vaishnavite centre situated eight kilometres east of Nannilam Railway Station in Thanjavur District. It is one of the five temples dedicated to Lord Krisna. The other temples are at Thirukkannankuti, Thirukkannamangai, Thiurkkannan Kavittalam and Tirukkovalur[1].

The famous temple dedicated to the Lord Sowrirajapperumal was built in A.D. 1200 during the period of the Cholas. Thirukkannapuram is considered to be specially sacred, as the presiding deity Sri Sowriraja Perumal is belived to be in the form of "Ashtakshara Manthra Swaroopam" (a combination of the spiritual significance of the various forms of the Lord in other holy places. Hence it is belived that those offer worship to the Lord of this place will derive all the benefits of having performed the Ashtakshara Manthra Japam. This place is also considered as the Eastern Gate of Sri Ranganathar of Srirangam in Tiruchi district.)

The Lord of this place is also identified as Neelamega Perumal and His divine consort is known as Kannapura Nayaki. Saint Nammalvar has eulogised the Lord in Thirumozhi.

The temple measures 316 feet east to west and 210 feet south to north roughly occupying an area of 1.50 acres. The huge temple tank "Nithya Pushkarani" in front of the temple is considered to be sacred one.

The glory of the God Sowriraja had been sung by Periyalwar, Kulasekhara Alwar, Thirumangai Alwar, Nammalwar and Sri Andal. Thirumangai Alwar had rendered as many as 104 verses out of a total of 129 verses by all the alwars. The fertility of the place is referred to in various hymns of Periya Tirumoli[2]. The inscriptions of the temple belong to various dynasties like the Cholas, Pandyas and Vijayanagaras.

The inscriptions of the temple, give a clear account of the religious services, performed in those times. Gifts in the form of lands, money, and cow were made for the performance of pujas and

festivals. These celebrations made the temple authorities to keep the icons in perfect condition. As the various services of the temple further emphasis the maintenance of the icons, their account is given below.

During the period of the King Vikrama Chola, a gift of land was made for maintaining the garden of the temple[3]. Another gift was made for the same purpose of keeping a flower-garden by an individual during the period of the Cholas[4]. In the year A.D. 1106, during the period of the King Kulottunga I, a gift of land was made for burning lamps thrice daily in the temple[5]. The same inscriptions mention the gift of money also made for burning lamps thrice daily in the temple[6]. A lady made a gift of 1000 Kasus for a lamp[7]. Like lands and money, jewels were also presented to the temple. During the period of the King Kulottunga I, a gift of silver utensils was made for a twilight lamp[8]. Another epigraph says that a jewel called Virarajendra Chola Padakkam was given to the temple for the grand celebrations of the temple festivals[9].

MANDAPA CONSTRUCTION

An epigraph, dated in the 21st year of the Pandya King Maravarman Vikrama Pandya III says that in the year A.D. 1304, a gift of land was made for building a *mandapa* in the river Mudikondan which flows nearby, for the sacred bath of the God[10].

SETTING UP OF IMAGES

In the year A.D. 1128, during the period of the King Vikramachola, a brahmana of Thirumarugal presented a bronze lamp stand made after his own image[11]. An inscription dated in the 8th year of the King Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I says that a tax-free gift of land was made for performing Pujas for the images of Ellantaliyanaperumal, which was set up in the year A.D. 1259[12]. The image might refer to the pandya King Jatavarman Sundara Pandya who bore the title Ellantalaiyana Perumal and it might have been made out of stone.

CONSTRUCTION OF SHRINES

During the period of the King Kulottunga I, a gift of land was made as *archanabhoga* to the shrine of Thirumangai-Alwar, constructed in the western street by a certain Narayana Tadar. The shrine also houses the image of Thirumangai Alwar.

SETTING UP OF SANDHIS

This process was common during the period of late Cholas and Pandyas. During the period of the late Chola King Rajendra II, a gift was made for a service called Arasa Gundaraman Sandhi[13]. During the period of the Pandya King Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I, in the year A.D.1260, a tax-free gift of land was made for a service in the temple known as Kodandaraman Sandhi, named after the King, who got the title Kodandaraman[14].

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

The main component parts of the temple are the sanctum sanctorum, ardhamandapa, the mahamandapa and the muhamandapa. The entire parts are enclosed by an inner enclosure wall. There is an unnaligai around the sanctum and the *ardhamandapa*. The sanctum sanctorum houses the stone images of Visnu with Sridevi and Bhudevi, Garudalvar and Thandaka Maharishi. The entrance of the ardhamandapa contains some sculptured panels instead of the Dvarapalakas. The panels illustrate child *Krsna* who steals butter from the pot which hangs from a rope. Yasoda is depicted nearby. Near this panel is depicted the low relief image of cankhanidhi who holds the *cankhu* with the help of the two hands. The *mahamandapa* contains sixteen pillars inside and their capitals have lotus flower designs which suggests a period of sixteenth century A.D. Each pillar is divided into two squares and two karukkuppattais. Square portions contain only the lotus medallions. The pillars of the *muhamandapa* are also of the same style of the pillars of the mahamandapa.

GODDESS SHRINE

The shrine is located in the northern *prakara* and faces the northern side. The entrance wall portion of the ardhamandapa contains the panel depicting Krsna in the act of stealing butter. In another panel, he is tied with the mortar (Ural in Tamil). The *mahamandapa* contains eight pillars and their bases have beautiful naga designs. The *Muhamandapa* contains eighteen pillars and they have couching lions at the top. The presence of animals add artistic beauty to the whole pillar. The shaft portions contains rearing yalis, having the elephant trunks in their mouths. One pillar contains an image of a King who is depicted with a knot on one side. A knife is attached with the hip but the hands are in the anjali pose. Representation of the figures of the Kings and queens on the shaft portions of the pillars is a common feature in the periods of Vijayanagar, Nayak

and Sethupati dynasties[15]. As regards the temple, it is known from the inscriptions that the structure belonged to Vijayanagar and not to Nayak and Sethupati periods. Some pillars have sitting low-relief images of Alwars in the *anjali* pose. The left entrance wall of the mahamandapa contains the low relief figure of Hanuman in the anjali posture. Here Hanuman acts as the dvarapalaka. The right wall of the entrance contains a panel which shows dancing Krsna who holds the butter in the left hand. The outer walls of both the main shrine and the goddess shrine contain the pilasters of Vijayanagar style having lotus bud designs. The devakoshtas also decorate the wall portions but they house no images.

THE EASTERN MAIN GOPURA (FIG. NO. 1)

The *gopura* measures 100 feet high and is beautified with the presence of tiers. The *adhisthana* portion contains the usual *upana*, *jagathi*, *kumuda*, and *pattikai*. The kantha portion is plain without any sculptured panels. The wall or kall portions contains the devakoshtas which house the images of the deities. The inner wall surface of the *gopura* contains the brass-relief image of Lord Krsna. The outerwall surface contains the images of Kalianardhana Krsna, Visnu and Dvarapalaka. The presence of the images add a beautiful and pleasing look to the entire gopura structure. The superstructure is decorated with the stucco images of Visnu with Sridevi and Bhudevi, Balakrsna, Gopi Krsna and the like. They are also beautifully done and they speak of the artistic traditional talent of the sculptors.

THE SCULPTURED PANELS OF THE GOPURA

The cornice of the *upapitha* portion of the gopura contains the Chaitya-windows with the beautiful and enchanting simha-heads. Inside the Chaitya-windows, are seen the captivating panels which are related with the Vaisnavite legends. One panel illustrates the killing of the raksasa bird, called as pul in Tamil. The bodily features of the bird reveal its ferociousness. Lord Krsna opens the mouth of the bird forcefully. The body of Krsna shows many flexions which indicates the bodily characteristics of a child. Behind the bird is found a Rishi who is in the *anjali* pose with the raised two hands. This incident is narrated in the work Tiruppavai[16]. Another panel illustrates the killing of Hirayana by Narasimha. The Lord has eight hands. The upper two hands hold the Canku and Cakra. The lower two hands penetrate the body of the Hirayana who is in the lying posture. The ferocious treatment of the face

reveals the artistic skill of the sculptor. Hirayana is depicted with two hands. The hands are depicted in the raised condition which suggests his inability and failure. The facial expression also foretells his defeat. The right hand of Kotippen holds the branchs of a tree. The left hand is placed on the hip in the Katvalampita pose. A big sized side knot is seen, which indicates the Vijayanagar style. The breast is very prominent and no brest band is found. Neck ornaments are very limited, yet its artistic beauty has not been decreased even to the least extent. The dress has the foldings which are rhythmically represented. The slender waist and the broad hip captivates everybody's attention. The arched brows and the full cheeks expose the happy mood of the lady. Dance form of Krsna is shown in another panel. Both the hands are raised in the Natya postures. The flexions of the body reveal the quick and speedy movement of the dance. The two legs are also in the dance postures. The left leg is planted strongly on the floor and the right leg is represented with its figures only restling on the floor. Channavira decorates the chest portion. The tilting head also exhibits the dancing attitude. The figure is half naked. Another panel exhibits the child Krsna who steals butter from a pot. A barking dog is seen. The artistic features of naturalism and idealism are exposed through this panel. Some of the panels depict the alwars in sitting poses. Their hands are in the anjali poses. One panel depicts the Lord Visnu with Sridevi and Bhudevi. Laksmi-Narayana panel is artistically superb. Laksmi sits on the left thigh of Visnu. The face of the goddess exhibits the happy and pleasant mood. The feminine grace is beautifully renderd through the slender waist and the broad hip. The dress of Devi has foldings which are very minutely worked out by the sculptor.

The scultptured panels are seen on a pillar of the right side inner room of the gopura. The panels are found mainly on the square portions of the pillars.The artistic executions of the panel is a highly praiseworthy.The topmost square contains the panel which illustrates the stealing activity of Krsna. The pot hangs from a rope. The movement of the legs and the hands suggest the slow act of stealing butter.The second square contains the figures of Krsna and the Gopis. The Gopis bend their heads down out of modesty and shyness. The face of Krsna exhibits the endless happiness which he could obtain by sitting on one of the branches of the tree.The same square portion also contains a panel which shows the child Krsna with the mortar.

The innocent attitude of the child Krsna is recalled through the face. The other square contains one gymnastic representation of a figure which contains two legs, but at the same time possessing two heads. This kind of representation is common mainly in the Vijayanagar period. Moreover, the Kings of the Vijayanagar dynasty were the patrons of Vaishnavism. They bestowed much attention to carving panels which are mainly related with the episodes of Lord Krsna. One can see such kind of panels on the pillars of the Kalyanamandapa at Vellore also.

At the first sight, one can notice a panel on the right side wall surface inside, which shows a horseman who holds a horse with a rope. The static position of the horse is properly represented through the legs. This panel seems to remind us of the asvamedha sacrifice, performed by the Kings of the Vedic period. The surface of the wall portion of the corner room at the right side entrance of the gopura contains two panels. One panel depicts Krsna who holds the flute with the two hands. His left leg is placed straight and the right is placed cross-wise. The flexions of the body reveals the mastermind of the Lord Krsna in playing the flute. On the two sides of Lord are represented Satyabama and Rukmini. Their facial expressions express their interest in listening to the music of their Lord. On the left side of the panel is shown another small panel, which pictures the dance of Krsna. The two hands are lengthened to the two sides in a dance form. The right leg is placed on the *pitha* and the left leg is raised in the dancing attitude. The flexions of the body indicate the whirl wind speed of the dance. Another small panel is visible to the right side. This panel exhibits Kaliyanardhana Krsna. Left leg is placed on the hood of the snake and the right leg is slightly raised above the hood. Channavira decks the chest portion. Another big sized panel represents bot the Navagrahas and the twelve rasis. The Navagrahas are in the centre and the rasis are represented in a circle form around the Navagrahas. It is a unique panel, illustrating the navagrahas and the rasis with in a circle. This is the only temple in Tamil Nadu, to have such a pannelled representation. The Navagrahas are represented in standing postures. Normally in the other temples, they are in the sitting postures.

STONE IMAGES OF THE TEMPLE

The stone images of the temple are noteworthy for their artistic significance. They reveal the artistic skill and genuis of the sculptors of the contemporary period.

1. KALIYA-KRSHA

It is found on the outerwall surface of the eastern main gopura. He is dancing on the hood of the snake Kaliya. Of the two hands, the right hand is in the abhaya pose and is placed on the knee of the right leg. The left hand holds the tail of the snake. The right leg is placed on the hood and the left leg is on the neck of the snake. The manner in which the dancer is made to stand effortlessely on the heads of the serpent behoves exceedingly well with a divine nature of the dancer. He wears probably a kesa-bandha, a broad kanthi, a tight fitting *channavira* with a tassel hanging from its middle, simple armlets, *vajibandha* without the projecting piece valaya, shorts with three waist-bands and with the dagger-like piece of cloth hanging from the lowest band and padasaras. The face is not only chubby but is full of feeling. The ears do not bear any kundalas. The modelling of the figure as a whole is superb. Quite in keeping with the gentle rhythm of the figure is the subtle sway of the long tail of the snake, the end of which is held by the left hand of the dancer. The beauty of the slow movement of the dance is magnificently enhanced by the vertically held tail of the serpent. The serpent represents the embodiment of all that is vile and wicked in this world. The dance of Krsna represents the fight with evil and its final conquest by the Divine Spirit. The image along with the gopura is dated to the Vijayanagar period of the 16th century A.D.

The puranic story behind this icon is an interesting one. Kaliya was hiding in a pond in the yamuna river making the whole neighbourhood poisionous to all living beings. One day the cattle tended by Krsna and his companions strayed in to this region and were thereby poisioned. Krsna then plunged into the pond and holding the viper by the tail in one hand began to dance heavily on his raised hoods. The demon wreathed under the pressure of the Gods tiny feet, vomitting blood profusely from each of his several mouths and was completely exhausted and overcome.

Then atlast, the serpent Kaliya recornised the Lord and took himself away to a remote island in the far off sea. The esoteric sense of this is clear. The serpent represents the embodiment of all that is vile and wicked in this world. Kaliya Krsna is found only as a decorative figure in temples but not as the object of worship in the central shine. Like the dance of Siva, here the emphasis is on the rhythmic movement of the body and the graceful gestures of his hands[17].

In North India, this cult was very popular, even during the period of the Guptas[18]. Normally the lintel sculptures represent Krsna as Kaliyanardhana with two figures with foldede hands at the sides[19]. Moreover the image in the north has four hands. Normally the lower two hands hold the lotus stalk. The upper right hand is held over the head in a dance ecstasy while his upper left hand carries either cakra or a full blown lotus[20].

In South India, representations of Kaliya-nardhana on the walls of the temples and on gopuras, were mainly introduced during the period of Vijayanagar.

2. VENU GOPALA

Images of the flute playing Krsna generally called Venu-gopala (Muralidhara), are largely worshipped in the temples. He stands on his left leg, with the right bent across and resting on the toe. When the figure is intended for worship in temples, the upper two hands will hold the conch and the discus and there will be usually the images of his two consorts Rukmini and Satya one on either side. Many handed images are also found. An image with ten hands is found in the hundred pillared *mandapa* of the Varadarajaperumal temple at Kanchipuram21. The *Pancharatragama* calls this form of Krsna by the name Madana Gopala. In painting, Venu-gopala is often represented as leaning against a cow with one foot bent cross-wise and resting on the toe. Cows and cow-herds are also often shown gathering round him. *Hemadri* states that the head of the God should be decked with peacock feathers and should have only two arms. The *Silpa-sangraha* also states the presence of two hands and it further emphasizes, that the image should be in the standing pose.

As regards the image which is present on the gopura, the left leg is placed straight and the right-leg is placed cross-wise. The dress is present only up to the thigh. The central loop which connects the two thighs are much lowered down. The *simha-mukha* clasp is prominent and the waist-band is decked with beautiful designs. The position of the flute, held by the hands indicate the master mind of Krsna in playing the music. Two animals are represented on the *pitha* one on each side. They are listening to the music which comes through the flute, played by the Lord Krsna. Their raised hands portrays their undisturbed concentration in listening to the music. The image belongs to the period of the 14th century A.D.

3. NAVANEETHA KRSNA

The image is found on the outerwall of the *gopura*. He is in the standing pose. The hip ornaments are well executed. The sculptor has revealed his artistic scholarship through the minute carvings. The beautiful *yajnopavita* elevates the beauty of the image to a great extent. The naked exposition of the figure mainly reveals the childs innocence. The pitha is quite plain and undecorated.

4. THE DVARAPALAKAS SEEN ON THE OUTERWALL SURFACE OF THE EASTERN GOPURA

Generally, the Vaishnava guardians are named Jeya and Vijaya, but the Saiva guardians have no special names[22]. Like that here also, of the two dvarapalakas, one can be taken as Jeya and another as Vijaya. Moreover it is said that the dvarapalakas of the Visnu shrines are without clubs[23]. But this does not seem to be the correct one, as here the images are depicted with clubs in the lower hands.

a) Right side Dvarapalaka

Of the four hands, the upper hands have the usual weapons called *canku* and cakra. The right lower is in the danda pose and the left is placed on the top of the mace. The broad chest and the shoulders suggest strength and vigour. The big garland is lowered down upto the anklet. The dress is present up to the knee. The hip ornaments with the simha-mukha clasp are well treated.

b) Left side Dvarapalaka

All features are similar to the first one, except the position of the mace which is held in the right lower hand and the left lower which is in the danda pose. Both the images belong to the period of the 15th century A.D.

5. GARUDALVAR

Garuda or Garutman was originally the sun conceived as a bird, and described in the Rig Veda[24]. Garuda is the chief of the bird and the vehicle of Visnu and its cult come into existance in the early centuries of christian era along with the cult of the snakes[25]. In the epic and puranic literatures he is given the name Tarksya. Later he is identified with the bird Garuda, the vehicle of Visnu[26].

References to Garuda as the vehicle of Visnu, are found in the sangam literary works. The Tamil works refer his birth, as one of

the two sons of Vinata. His fight with the devas for the amrta, which he brought for his step brothers in order to get his mother freed from her bondage to her co wife Kadru are also mentioned in the Tamil works. The terms used in the Tamil literature for referring to Garuda are pul or bird and Uvana (Suparna). A number of terms are given in the Sanskrit literary works. They are *Nagantaka*, *Pannagasana*, *Pannagabhojana*, *Uragasana*, *Nagasana* and *Bhujagantaka*.

In the Buddhist iconography, Garuda is represented as a bird with emphasis on the bodily features. A sculptured panel kept on the eastern gateway of Sanchi represents Garuda. In the Kusana period the iconical representations attained perfection. The most common representation in India is the hybrid one, combining the human and animal aspects. In the Gupta period, representation of Garuda was found both on the seals and coins. There Garuda is portrayed like a bird with wings.

In the Tamil country Garuda is mainly represented in two distinct forms. In the first, Garuda is represented with only anthropomorphic features. The wings and the beak of the bird are completely eliminated. Such representations are found in the pallava and early Pandya caves. Later these features began to appear about the eight-nineth centuries A.D. along with the beak-like nose. In the Tamil country, the earliest representation of Garuda is found in the cave temple in Madagappattu in the South Arcot district. He is represented in the dominant human form with wings. In the later period, both stone and bronze icons of Garuda made its appearence in a large number. Separate shrines were also setup near the flag-staff of the temple. The best specimen of the early Chola period is the one found in the place called Sembiyanmahadevi, in the Tanjore district. Being in the anjali pose, the left shoulder is decorated with the snakes which are artistically representated. The head gear is the *karandamakuta*, which is well executed with artistic calibre. The elaborate treatement of the *katisutra* with loops on either side and the beautiful *yajnopavita* add an overall beauty to the whole image. In the late sculptures of fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Garuda is representated as flying and carrying in his hands an elephant and tortoise.

DESCRIPTION OF GARUDA AS FOUND IN THE TEXTS

The *Visnudharmottara* mentions that Garuda should have four hands and of the four, two upper should carry the umbrella and

the pot of *amrta*. The lower two hands should be in the *anjali* hasta. The work again states that when it carries the Lord Visnu, it should have two hands only, which support the feet of the Lord. Regarding the other bodily features, the work prescribed a pot-like belly. The other characteristic features are the rounded face and eye, the nose like that of Kausika and the legs like those of a vulture. Different descriptions are given in the *silparatna*. In one account it is said, that Garuda should have two hands and one of them should be in the *abhaya* pose. In another account, it is prescribed that Garuda should have six hands which carry the vessel of *ambrosia*, *gada*, *canku*, *cakra*, *sword* and a snake. *Sritatvanidhi* states that Garuda should be in the kneeling posture and the crown should be decked with snake. Both face and body are of human form. The two hands are in the *anjali* postures and the nose is raised and pointed. The present image of the temple (Fig. No. 2) is depicited according to the descriptions found in the *Sritatvanidhi*. The pointed nose and the arched brows are very much pleasing to look at. The protruding teeth do not give a dreadful appearance. Instead, we find a devotional look on the face. The curved ears along with the beautified *Karanda makuta* give an overall pleasing look to the whole figure. Four different necklaces adorn the neck. The necklaces are very minutely and delicately treated. The foldings expose the divine quality of the image. The hands are in the *anjali* pose. The armlets and wristlets are well treated. A five hooded snake encircles the wrist of the left hand. The raised hoods are well treated. Fingers are decorated with rings. The broad chest with the folded *yajnopavita* enhances the beauty of the image. The shoulder ornament is beautifully represented. It seems to belong to the 13th century A.D.

GARUDA (MULAVAR)

Garuda is in the standing posture and the hands are in the *anjali* hasta. The right leg stands firmly and the left is slightly bent which denotes action. The dress is seen up to the thigh only. The features are represented with superb artistic beauty. The left wrist is encircled by a five-hooded anake which hangs like an ornament. It seems to belong to the Chola period of the 13th century A.D.

5. VISNU WITH SRIDEVI AND BHUDEVI (Fig. No. 3)

a) VISNU (MULAVAR)

He is in standing posture. Generally Visnu is never shown with *Jatamakuta*[27]. Here also, the image has only *kritamakuta*. Of the four hands, the upper two hands hold the canku and cakra. The

cakra lacks flames. Moreover the cakra is not frontal and so it is called prayoga cakra. The right lower hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left is in the *Katvalambita* pose. In the North, the lower two hands hold the mace[28]. The facial expression with the closed eyes enhances the divinity of the image.

To date this image, many points are taken into consideration. In the Pallava period, the sacred thread flows over the right arm. Secondly the figure lacks the presence of Srivatsava mark and instead of that the figure of Laksmi is seen. Thirdly the median loop from the waist hangs in the semi-circular fashion. Fourthly the weapons *canku and cakra* lack the flames. Fifthly the lower garment is represented in the *hastisaccndika* mode[29]. As regards the present image the above mentioned characteristic features are not applicable. Here the sacred thread does not flow over the right arm. The object *canku* has flames and moreover, it is held in between the middle and index fingres and not between the thumb and index as found in the Pallava sculptures. *Srivatsava mark* is also visible on the chest. Thus the above factors clearly prove that the image does not belong to the Pallava period. No inscriptions also support the Pallava influence both in the architecture and sculpture.

In the Vijayanagar period, the object *cakra* is not in prayoga but in *utyoga* form. Moreover, the canku and cakra have huge-sized flames around them. The objects are placed at the tip of the fingers. Here in the present image the above features are also absent. From this it is clear that the image does not belong to the Vijayanagar period also.

In the Chola period, the objects are placed between the index and middle fingers and that also not on the tips of the fingures. The figure of Laksmi is seen on the chest. Flame like decorations are also visible on the objects. One can notice the above features in the present image. It may be said that the image belonges to the Chola period of the 11th, 12th century A.D. As most of the inscriptions of the temple also belong to the Chola period, it may be said that the image is also of the same period.

b) SRIDEVI

Ears have refined *patra-kundalas*. Beautiful series of rings hold the ends of the *Channavira*. A single, simple bow is seen on either side. In the back, *siras-cakra* is visible with petals but without

the bordering rim. The right hand is in the *lola-hasta* and the left hand holds the flower.

c) BHUDEVI

Makarakundalas decorate the ears. The *yajnopavita* which flows over the body adds a beautiful and pleasing look to the whole image. An ornate bow is visible with the usual end of cloth. *Siras-cakra* with rim decorates the rear side of the head. The left hand is in the *lola-hasta* and the right hand holds the flower.

d) PADMAVATI

She stands to the right side of Sridevi. The right hand is in the lola-hasta and the left hand holds the flower. *Kritamakuta* decorates the head. The beautiful *siras-cakra* adds beauty to the back portion. The group belongs to the period of the 12th century A.D.

7. THANDAKA MAHARISHI

Being in the standing pose, his hands are in the *anjali* pose. The *Krita makuta* adds beauty to the image. Necklaces of various designs beautify the neck portion. The broad shoulders with its broad chest speak of his great valour. The arched brows as well as the closed eyes greatly express the contemplative mood. The sharp nose as well as the smiling lips further enhance it`s beauty. The fingers have rings of various designs. The other decorative ornaments are the *wristlets*, *keyuras* and the *anklets* which add an artistic outlook to the entire image. The nipple is beautifully represented. It belongs to the Chola period of the 12th century A.D.

8) VIRAGATI BHOGAN

She was the wife of one Chieftain, who belongs to the minor Munaiyadaraiyar dynasty. She stands on the padmapitha. Her hands are in the *anjali* pose. It seems that she holds flowers in the closed hands. A number of bangles decorate the wrist portion. Necklaces of various sizes and designs beautfy the neck portion. The breast is rounded and big in size. *Patrakundalas* decorate the ears. The left side knot acts as the natenta for the head. The closed eyes expose her true devotion to the Almighty. The dress has no foldings, but are beautified with chart designs. This pattern is more pleasing to look at. The lower portion of the dress is raised slightly upwards. In this respect, it resembles the *Hoysala* style One can notice a similar representation in the painting of the Sreerangam temple, where the lower portion of the dresses of the gopis are raised upwards. Both

the dresses and the necklets, project the royal outlook of the figure. It belongs to the Chola period of the 12th century A.D.

9) MUNAIYADARAIYAN

He was the local chieftain of this region. In memory of the chief, even now a pongal (sweet rice) is prepared in the temple and that is called Munaiyadaraiyan pongal in Tamil. He stands on the padma pitha. His hands are in the *anjali* pose. The lenghty ears and the beard expose his complete renunciation of the wordly affairs. His closed eyes expose his deep and pure contemplation towards the Almighty. The central loop which connects the two thighs are not much lowered as in the later periods. The complete shaven head also emphasize his complete dedication to the religious services. It belongs to the Chola period of the 12th century A.D.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE CHIEF

The presence of the image of the Munaiyadaraiyan chief reveals an historical account. The chieftains of the Munaiyadaraiyan family ruled the Thirumunaippadi region around A.D. 953. They did a subordinate service under the Cholas, Sometimes, they attained independent status which was known by an inscription which mentions the chief called Munaiyadaraiyan Kulamannickan[30].

One chieftain namely Munaiyadaraiyan Aparajithan Kulamanickerumanar did services under the King Rajendra I[31]. An epigraph of the later Chola King Vikramachola mentions one Seekantadevan Ataraveesiyaduvan Munaiyadaraiyan[32].

After the decline of the Cholas, they changed their allegiance to the pandyas. Inscriptions of the Pandya Kings like Srivallabha and Jatavarman Kulasekhara mention the Munaiyadaraiyan thrones[33].

Like the inscriptional references, there are also literary works, which mentions the name Munaiyadaraiyan. The work *Colamandala Cathagam* mentions the *Munaiyadaraiyan* pongal. The work, *Tamil Navalar Carithai*, narrates the sorrowful and pathetic conditions of the love of Munaiyadaraiyan. The other work " *Vikramacholanula* " mentions one *Munaivarkon*, who should have served under the Chola King Vikramachola. The chieftain who was mentioned in the Vikrama-Cholan Ula might be identified with the one who is known from the epigraph of the same king namely Seekantadevan *Atara Veesiyadunan Munaiyadaraiyan*. In memory of his laudable service, his image might have been installed in the temple.

The stone images like Navaneetha Krsnan, Visnu with Sridevi and Bhudevi, the images of the alwars like Periyalwar, Poygaialwar, Thiruppanalwar, and the other images like Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Hanuman and Hiranya Narasimha belong to the late period of 15th, 16th century A.D.

THE BRONZE IMAGES OF THE TEMPLE

1) HANUMAN

The important position assigned to Hanuman, ther devotee of Rama in the Tamil country is borne out by the inclusion of his image in the early groups of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita bronzes. The separate shrine for Hanuman was constructed even in the Chola period of the tenth century A.D.[34] He is the symbol and model of a perfect servant[35].

He is represented in many postures. When included in the group of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, he stands at a distance on one side or opposite to them in a humble and devotional attitude, with the two hands folded together, with the tail hanging down close to his feet[36].

In shrines, exclusively dedicated to him, he is always the heroic Hanuman who on seeing his beloved masters Rama and Lakshmana faint with fatigue on the battle field of Lanka, flew in an amazingly short time to the Himalayas, and uprooting a whole hill containing drugs, returned to revive Rama and Lakshmana and with them also the millions of dead monkeys. His heroism, strength and devotion are always admired and in sculptures, he carries two hills, one on each hand. Sometimes Hanuman may also be represented with hands showing the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. The *silparatna* mentions a third posture in which Hanuman is described as a Yogin teaching philosophy to a number of pupils who surround him. In other representation, his hand is brought near the mouth, as he reverentially makes a submission to the revered and beloved master Rama[37].

In North India, most of the images carry the hill in one of the hands[38]. An image of Hanuman which is present in South Kensington Museum has the outstretched hands which carries the lingas and not the mountains as suggested by Mr. Harvell. The image is said to have come from ceylon and undoubtedly one of the best pieces of bronze sculptures. It has been attributed to the 15th century A.D.[39] Ananda Coomaraswamy also refers to this image[40].

The worship of Hanuman is a sequel to the Rama worship. Even before the introduction of a sepatate worship of Rama, Cunningham noticed at Khayhrahu, a stone image of Hanuman which is dated to the year A.D. 783[41]. In Tamil Nadu, the sculptured panels depiciting Hanuman made its appearance even during the early Chola period. The best example is found on the *adhisthana* of the Nalthunai Isvaran temple at Punjai. This kind of depicition is present on the adhisthana of the Kambahareswarar temple at Tribhuvanam, which belongs to the later Chola period. In the Vijayanagar and Nayak periods, both high-relief and low-relief images made their appearance in large numbers due to the patronage given by both the Vijayanagar and Nayak kings who were strong Vaishnavites.

In the temple at Thirukkannapuram, the image is in the *anjali* posture The *kundalas* in the ears, the arched brows and the beautiful well carved necklaces add a fascinating beauty to the face. The *Makuta* on the head is well treated and executed. The artistic design of the makuta is very superb. The broad shoulders and the chest protrays his qualities of strength and valour. The wrist ornaments is artistically carved. The nipple is prominent. The dress is up to the knee. The foldings of the dress depict the artistic innovation of the sculptor. The central loop which connects the two thighs is well exhibited. The kirtimukha is treated quite fantastically. In art, one of the most recurring themes of decoration is the design of the *Kirtimukha* which is an arch with the face of a lion in the centre and the figures of tortoise on the terminating ends. The lion or the sign of Leo in the Hindu zodiac represents birth and the tortoise, the termination to life. Hence, the *Kirtimukha* symbolises human life. This is described as *Kalamakaratorana*[42]. The foot is free from any decoration. The shoulder ornaments are systamatically designed. The back view gives a pleasent and beautiful appearance
The petals of the siras-cakra are well executed. The long tail touches the foot portion. The foldings of the tail add beauty to the back view. The image belongs to the period of 15th, and the 16th century A.D.

2. RAMA, SITA, LAKSHMANA

In sculptures, Rama is always represented with smiling lips[43]. Rama has only *krita makuta* and has no mark on the chest. It is clear therefore that the image represents him only as a prince i.e., as the son of Chakravarti Dasaratha. Lakshmana is also represented as a prince but his head-dress is one of *kesamakuta*[44]. Sita is also represented as a princess with *kutila kuntalas*, *dhammila head-dress* and

kankanas and *valayas* on the wrists. The dhammila found in the figure of sita is clearly influenced by the charm of the chalukya dhammila[45].

As regards the group at Thirukkannapuram, the worksmanship is obviously resplendent and the rendering of each one of their details is extremely pleasing and admirable. Their modelling is highly proportionate and the balancing of the individual itmes of the group in the composition as a whole is almost perfect. Above all the sublime expression that characterises the faces of the figures is unparalleled.

RAMA

He stands in the beautiful *dvi-bhanga* posture with the hands in the *kataka* postures. The tapering of the *karanda makuta* is beautifully executed. The *kanthis* and the *makara kundalas* are the fine ornaments of the image. The sculptor has shown his artistic calibre through the pronged *keyuras* with broad tassels which hang from the lower part. The prominent *vaji-bandha* is very beautiful to look at. The simple udarabandha and the waist-band with the simha-mukha clasp add an incomparable beauty to the whole image. The sacred thread flows in a splendid naturalistic manner and is in five strands. The three pronged pendent that hangs on the right shoulder add artistic grace to the image. The dress is up to the thigh level. The flower and creeper designs of the dress is systamatically and rhythmatically treated. The smooth modelling and good proportioning of the limbs and legs expose the artistic genius of the sculptor. The back view of the figure is pleasing to look at. The head has no *siras-cakra*. But its absence does not blur the beauty of the image. The flowings of the sacred thread is well exposed on the back side. The *bahulamalas* on the shoulders are depicted with the artistic patterns. The wristlets, anklets and armlets are the other acessories which enhance the grace of the image.

LAKSHMAMA (Fig. No 4)

The head-dress is of the ornamental kesamakuta variety. Ear ornaments, the arched brows, the smiling lips and the full cheeks projects his royal appearence. The *kanthis* and *vaji-bandha* are well designed. The *yajno-pavita* after the knot, flows in four strands and its foldings are rhythmically exposed. The *udarabhandha* is simple and not broad enough to have the ornamentation. The dress is up to the thigh and foldings of the dress increase the beauty of the image.

The two hands are in the pose of carrying a bow and an arrow. Behind the right shoulder hangs the ambara which is used for keeping the arrows. The *keyuras*, armlets, wristlets and anklets are the other decorative details of the image. The back side appearance of the image gives a pleasing outlook The petalled *siras-cakra* is well modelled. The well line markings of the dress are well visible and their proportionate treatement exhibits the artistic skill and worksmanship of the sculptor.

SITA

She stands on the *padma-pitha* and is in the graceful tribhanga pose. It is a unique specimen and is quite different in feeling and decoration. The left hand is in the *kataka* pose and the right is in the *lola hasta*. The prominent depiction of *Vaji-bandha* gives an attractive appearance to the image. The *kanthis* and the *channavira* add charming beauty to the figure. The necklaces, the *patrakundalas* of the ears, the smiling and the sweet lips, the arched brows enhance the feminine grace. The makuta is ornamented very elaborately. The dress with foldings is seen up to the foot portions. The garland and the creeper designs of the dress are executed with artistic designs. The central loop which connects the two thighs are lowered to some extent and its treatment is very carefully and meticulously done. The wristlets, *keyuras* and the anklets further elelevate the beauty and the grace of the image. The presence of the breast band add further elegance to the image. Infact, this bronze is one of the most charming representations of an ideal woman. The grace of the image is enhanced by dignity and charm of the flower decked and the meticulously arranged braid. In the back, the head has no siras-cakra The narrow waist and the broad hip indicates the feminine grace. The above images belong to the Chola period of the 12th century A.D.

IMAGES OF THE ALWARS AND ACARYAS

The age of the Vaishnava Alwars is seen earlier generally accepted to be the seventh nineth and centuries A.D. with the exception of the first three of them poygai, pudam and pey whose dates are not later than the fifth or sixth century A.D.[46]

Then came the other eight saints, Thirumalaisai Alwar (early seventh century A.D.), Thirumangai (eighth century A.D), a contemporary of Nadivarman II, Pallavamalla (A.D. 731-796), Periyalwar (eighth-nineth centuries A.D.), Tiruppan, Tondaradippodi and

Kulasekhara, also of the same period and lastly Nammalvar and his pupil Madurakavi (nineth century A.D.)

According to the Vaishnava tradition as embodied in the hagiological works like *Divyasuricaritam, Guruparam-paramprabhavam*, the alwars are considered to the the amsas of God Visnu and his various attributes. The first three alwars Poygai, Pudanm and Pey are said to be the amsas of the Pancajanya (Cankha), gada (mace and nandaka) (sword) respectively. They are shown usually in *anjali* pose, either standing or seated. The figures wear a top-knot or a small tuft and a few ornaments. The dress is shown down to the middle of the thigh or down to the ankle. In the temple at Thirukkannapuram, all the three images Poygai (Fig.No. 5), Pudam (Fig. No. 6) and Pey are in the standing postures and the hands are in the *anjali* poses. The dress is present up to the thigh level only. All of them stand on the *padmapithas*. The ears are empty and lenghty. The closed eyes of all of them indicates their unblurred and unblemished contempletion of the Al-mighty. The hands and the legs are free from ornamentation. The head knots are beautifully executed and their presence emphasize their saintly attitude. The three are in the dvibhanga poses. The same bodily features and the facial expressions suggest a period of the 13th, and the 14th century A.D. to all the three images.

TIRUMALISAI ALWAR (Fig. No. 7)

He was the amsa of Visnus cakra, and takes his name from the Tirumalisai village. In the sculptures, he is represented either seated in *Paryankasana* or standing with cymbals in his hands or in *anjali* hasta. The figure is shown either wearing a top-knot or with a shaven head with a fillet of beads.

In the temple at Thirukkannapuram, he stands on the padmapitha. the hands are in the *anjali* pose. Some creeper de-signs seen on the shoulders add an attractive beauty to the image. The dress is lowered up to the foot portion. The nice treatment of the dress exposes the artistic delicacy given by the sculptor. The head ornament is well done and it reveals the saintly quality of the image. The ears are empty and lenghty, suggestive of his complete dedication to the saintly life. The neck, the hands and the legs are free from ornamentation. Yet the beauty of the image has not been hampered even to the least. The lengthy face and the pointed nose indicate a period of 15th, and 16th centuries A.D.

THIRUMANGAI ALWAR (Fig. No 8)

Among the alwars, he occupied an important place. He was a petty chieftain who ruled the Alinadu in the Thanjavur district. In order to perform the renovation work in the temple at Srirangam, a golden image of Buddha was stolen by him from the vihara at Nagapattinam. Most of the hymns in the Divyaprabandham were sung by him. An historical illustration is given in his hymns and this marks an innovation and this kind of historical account is given only in his hymns. His hymns mainly expose the historical achievements of the pallava king called Nandivarma II Pallavamalla. In the sculptures, he is mainly represented with a sword in the right and a shield in the left hand. The other kinds of representation expose him as a great devotee. In such representations, he is free from ornamentation but has distended ear lobes and an elaborate knot the back.

In the temple at Thirukkannapuram, the image stands on the padma-pitha. The head-knot is beautifully designed. The patrakundalas beautify the ears. A strong necklace gives a pleasent look to the image. The two hands are depicted in such a way as if they carry some objects. The facial expression with the smiling lips and the opened eyes portrays his true royal status. He is in the *dvibanga* pose. the dress is up to the thigh level. The treatment of the dress with the creeper designs add an artistic excellence and perfection. The *padasaras* beautify the foot. The facial expressions ascribe a period of 15th or 16th century A.D.

Periyalvar or Visnu citta was the amsa of Garuda. He was hailed from Srivillipputtur and he attained name and fame by being the foster father of Andal. His main religious service was the supply of flowers and garlends to the temple for performing religious services. He appears to be the contemporary of the Pandya king Srimara Srivallabha (A.D. 815-862). In sculptures he is represented either in sitting or standing poses. His hands are mainly in the *anjali* poses and sometimes, they carry cymbals indicating his religious nature.

In the temple at Thirukkannapuram, he stands on the *padmapitha* (Fig No. 9). A very small tuft is present on the top of the head. The ears are lengthly and are with out any ornamentation. Necklaces add grace to the image and all are artistically well treated The dress is up to the foot. The fine *bahulamalas* give an artistic appearance to the image. The ornamentation of the hip is executed realistically. The tight hip ornament exposes the belly. The closed

eyes and the smiling lips suggest his unhindered penance. The image seems to belong to the 15th or the 16th century A.D.

TIRUPPANALVAR

He was considered to be an amsa of the Srivatsa. He did the religious service through the musical instrument called Vina or lute which rests on his shoulder.

The image at Thirukkannapuram, stands on the padmapitha (Fig. No. 10 The dress is seen up to the knee level. The dress is quite plain and without any ornamentation. The ears are empty without any *Kundala*. The hip ornament is in three rows. The side knot of the dress hangs on both sides. The hands carry the cymbals which expose his religious attitude, which he maintained through out his days. The head-knot is well fashioned and it seems to be the fittest ornament for the head. The facial expressions expose his complete renunciation from the wordly life and his true mission in getting the divine grace.

KULASEKHARA ALWAR

He is said to be an amsa of the kaustubha. In sculptures, he is mainly represented as a prince with elaborate ornamentation. But his devotional and saintly life is also revealed through the hands which are in the *anjali* poses. Both sitting and standing images are common. In the temple at Thirukkannapuram (Fig. No. 11) he stands on the *padma-pitha*. The dress is beautifully ornamented with creeper and pearl designs. The fascinating and captivating appearance of the face add a majestic look to the entire image. The ears are well ornamented with the *makara kundalas*. The Kritamakuta reveals his royal status. The noteworthy depicition of the *makuta* further enhance the royal status. The broad shoulders with the ornaments reveal the marvellous artistic execution of the sculptor. The belly is well visible. The wrist ornament is very well executed.

NAMMALVAR

He was the native of Alvar-Tirunagari and Maran was his original name and he got the title Satakopa (Hater of rogues) at his initiation. His hymns reveal mainly the philosophical truth which one has to follow to lead a well and disciplined life. In the sculptural representations he is seated in *paryankasana* with the left hand on the lap or with a book and the right hand in the teaching attitude. Occasionally he is seen in the *anjali* postures. The image of

Thirukkannapuram temple depicts him in the sitting posture. He is in the *dhyana* attitude. The right leg is folded and placed on the left folded leg, indicating his deep and disciplined meditation. The head knot is beautifully executed. The ears are empty. A long garland adds artistic grace to the image. The hands are well balanced and they are in the *anjali* postures. The facial expressions suggest a period of the 15th or the 16th century A. D.

MATHURAKAVI

He was the amsa of Vainateya (Garuda). He was the contemporary and pupil of Nammalvar. In sculptures he is normally represented with long beards and elaborate knot of hair. In the temple at Thirukkannapuram, he stands on the padmapitha. A small knot is visible on the top of the head. The ears are empty and without ornamentation. The dress is lowered up to the foot. The hands and legs are free from any ornamentation and these factors expose his complete dedication to a religious life. A strong garland flows over the chest. The closed eyes symbolize his deep and undisturbed concentration towards the Almighty.

KURATTALVAR

He sits on the padma pitha and the hands are in the *anjali* postures. The forehead ornament is very simple in design. The strong beard stands as a testimony to his dedicated life. The ears are empty. The hands and the legs are free from decorative details. The image seems to belong to the 15th or the 16th century A.D.

ANDAL

Andal or Goda is represented as a beautiful young maiden, a bride with her hair done up as kesa-banda. She stands in a graceful tribhanga pose, holding a flower in her hand. The ears have patrakundalas. She lacks the breast band. The slender waist and the broad hip expose the natural beauty. The dress is well ornamented and its delicate workmanship stands as a proof of the high artistic skill of the sculptor.

The backview expose the head knot, which is in a rounded form. The depiction of the buttocks is rhythmically done. The bahulamalas on the shoulders are treated delicately.

SENAI MUDALVAR

Visvaksena or Senai-mudaliyar is the commander of the

hordes of Visnu and as such he holds an important place in the acharya hierarchy of the Sri-Vaishnavas, next only to Sri or Laksmi. He is invoked by them at the beginning of all auspicious ceremonies. Special puja is performed on all-important festivals. In sculptures, he is represented in the sitting posture with four hands. Of the four hands, the two upper hands hold canku and cakra. The right lower is in the tarjani pose and left lower holds the heavy gada or mace.

The image of the Tirukkannapuram temple is in the sitting posture. The left leg is bent and is placed on the pitha, and the right leg hangs down. The two hands are in the kataka poses. The flowings of yajnopavita and the udarabandha add a pleasant look. The shoulder ornaments are executed with the artistic designs. The makuta is well finished and its proportionate treatment speak of the artistic workmanship of the sculptor. The facial and ornamental features suggest a period of the 15th century A.D.

THIRUKKACCANAMBIGAI

The image of Thirukkannapuram, depicts his devotional attitude. The hands are in the anjali posture. The ears are decked with the kundalas. The necklaces are executed with admirable artistic patterns. Only the right hand has the wrist ornament. The tritanda is attached to the right shoulder. The dress is seen up to the foot portions. The simha-mukha clasp of the waistband is delicately carved. He stands on the padmapitha in the dvibhanga pose. The facial expressions expose his true devotion to the Almighty. One more figures are also found. It differs from the former only in two aspects. One is that it has huge sized knot and the second is that the dress here is represented up to the ankles. Both of them belong to the period of the 14th, and the 15th century A.D.

PILLAI LOKACHARYAR (FIG. NO. 12)

He was the son and successor of Vadakkuttiruvidi Pillai. He was a voluminous writer and is held in great veneration by the Tenkalais. When the Srirangam temple was sacked by the muslims in A.D. 1323, he carried to safety the images of Renganatha and the Goddesses and died in the course of his wanderings.

The image represents him in the sitting posture. The right hand is in chin mudra and the left hand holds the pustak. The empty ears and the complete shaven head portray his real and dedicated

services to God. The closed eyes expose his true concentration towards the Almighty.

MANAVALAMAMUNI (A.D. 1370 - 1443)

The life and activities of Manavala Mahamuni constitute another milestone in the history of Sreevaishnavism. By his writings as well as his organising genius, he has left an indelible impression on a vast majority of Srivaishnava devotees. Manavala was born in A.D. 1370 at Alwar Thirunagari, the birthplace of Nammalvar. He was the disciple of Srisailesa also called Tiruvaymolippillai who was in turn the disciple of the great pillai Lokacharya. After leading a married life for a short period, he settled at Srirangam, where he carried out his saintly life in his matha. He was popularly called Periyalvar. He earned wide popularity due to his propagation of the Periyalvar. He earned wide popularity due to his propagation of the hymns of Alwars. His dedicated service earned him a good name. His illuminating commentaries and the esoteric aphorisms of Pillai Lokacharya like the Sri - vacana Bhushana. Tatvattriyam, Rahasytrayam, Alagiya Manavala Nainars Acharya Hridayam, Amudanars Ramanuja Nurrandadi, ever speak of his scholarship. In order to popularise the works of his predecessors, he wrote a number of digests or Tirattu, like the Idu-Pramana Tirattu, Talvatraya pramana tirattu etc. Besides, a full poem on Ramanjua's greatness yatiraya-vimasati, he wrote a short poetic biography of the alwars and acharyas entitled the upadesarathnamalai, written in limpid and moving style, and this poem has become famous and is recited on important occasions in almost all the Visnu temples[47].

Because of his unparalleled services to the cause of the liberal doctrines of the Alwars, Manavala Mahamuni is given a special place of honour in the temples and his presence and blessings are invoked before the commencement of the recital of the prabandams.

He sits on the padmapitha and his hands are in the anjali postures. Dress with the well suited foldings, is present up to the foot. The empty ears and the complete shaven head portray his acetic life. The shoulders, wrists and the legs are free from ornamentation. Only a necklace is seen and that too is very simple in design.

NATHAMUNIGAL

He is in the sitting pose and the hands are in the anjali pose. He is completely devoid of any kind of ornamentation. The

empty ears are proportionately carved. The closed eyes as well as the position of the hands and the entire body expose his deep penance towards the Almighty.

ALAVANDAR OR YAMUNAITTURAIVAR

He sits on the padmapitha. His hands are in the anjali pose. The ears have plain kundalas. The head is completely shaven. The legs, hands and the shoulders are devoid or ornamentation.

SUDARASANA OR CHAKKARATTALVAR

Chakrattalvar is the personification of the discus, one of the weapons of Visnu. It is an outline of a cakra or circular frame with jvala or flames depicted on the rim. Here the cakra contains only three flames. The centre is in the petalled design. The petal designs are rhythmically worked out. The depiction of the two rearing horses is very beautiful. They are in the rearing poses. Their two legs are in the raised postures.

RAMANUJAR

Ramanuja was born in sriperumbudur in 1071 A.D. The three important acts or Ramanuja were firstly he refuted the mayavada of Sankara and interpreted the Brahmasutras and Upanishads and the Bhagavat Gita in the light of his own visishtadvaitic system; thirdly, he inspired and trained a line a worthy disciples to propagate his tenets. The image stands out for its suppleness and beauty. His hands are in the anjali postures. The complete shaven head and the empty ears mirror his pure and simple saintly life, which he followed during his life time. The legs and hands are free from the majestic ornaments.

IMAGES OF VISHNU

The first group depicts the following characteristic features. He stands on the patrapitha. Of the four hands, the upper two hands carry the canku and cakra. Which are in the prayoga form. The right lower is in the abhaya pose and left lower is in the katvalambita pose. The makuta is well ornamented. The broad chest and the shoulders expose his diving power. The dress is present up to the foot and the line arrangement is proportionately executed. The rear side exposition is very fine. The flower design of the necklace is very elaborately and delicately worked out (Fig. No. 38). Siras-cakra with its petalled arrangement is well designed and properly executed. His consorts are also well depicted. Sridevi

stands on the padmapitha, in the dvibhanga pose (Fig. No. 50). The broad trip as well as the slender waist exhibits the tenderness of the figure. The arms are slender and beautifully proportionate. The angularities are more emphasized. The valayas have become rather stylised. The legs are well executed. The girdle and the waist-bands are pleasing to look at. The broad tight-fittings girdle shows an ornate simha-mukha with the horn like threads on its head and a pair of bow like projections issuing out of its mouth. At the back, sirascakra is not visible (Fig. No. 51). Budevi stands on the padmapitha (Fig. No. 52). The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left hand is in the varada pose. Ears have the patrakundalas. A variety of necklaces with fine artistic execution, add an unparalleled grace to the image. The other ornaments keyuras, wristlets and anklets give an enticing and captivating beauty. The back view is well exquisitely done (Fig. No. 53). The group belongs to the Chola period of the 12th, and the 13th century A.D.

The second form of Visnu has similar characteristic features, with only one difference, that, here. The cakra faces frontal (Fig. No. 54). The backside view is pleasing and fascinating to look at (Fig. No. 55). It is also of the same period. The third piece (Fig. No. 56), is also dated to the same period. The ornamental designs of the dress is a unique one. Each and every part of the dress is treated very nicely. The folding of the yajnopavita and the udarabandha are very clearly visible in the backside (Fig. No. 57). In the last group, the characteristic attributes are of a late style. The artistic representation of the images of Visnu, Bhudevi (Fig. No. 60), with the back view and Sridevi with the backside depict a period of the 17th, and the 18th century A.D.

GODDESS

She is in the sitting posture. The armlets, wristlets and anklets add feminine grace. The makuta is well proportionately worked out. The necklaces are very minutely carved out. The head, in the back, has petalled siras-cakra. The petals exhibit the rhythmic and disciplined workmanship of the sculptor of the contemporary period.

PADMAVATI (Fig. No. 13)

She stands on the padma-pitha. The right hand is in the lola hasta and the left hand is in the kataka pose. Ears have the

patrakundalas. The Karanda Makuta is well treated. The bahulamalas give a beautiful appearance to the shoulders. The breast-band is well finished. The broad hip and the narrow waist enhance the elegance of the image. The tassels hang on each side, are very minutely depicted and look like flower garlands. She is in the dvibanga posture. The head has siras-cakra in the back. The flexions of the body are proportionately portrayed. It also belongs to the Chola period of the 12th century A.D.

NAVANEETHA KRISHAN (Fig. No. 14)

He stands on the left leg and the right leg is raised. The right hand holds the butter and the left are raised in the dancing posture. The makuta on the head and the patrakundalas in the ears are carved with delicate workmanship. The arched brows and the smiling lips and the full cheeks expose the child like quality of innocence. The necklaces are in various designs. The elaborate treatment of the Channavira adds a majestic outlook to the image. The fanwise arrangement of the channavira is an artistic innovation. The keyuras, wristlets and the anklets are carved with pearl like designs. The hip ornament of bells gives a comprehensive beauty to the image. The gap between the bells are systematically worked out. It is dated to the 14th century A.D.

SANTHANA KRSNA (Fig. No. 15)

The child like representation of this form attracts everybody's attention. With the support of the left hand, he sucks the toe of the left leg. The image has an enticing beauty, eventhough the ornaments are very limited. Only the hip ornament is present and the hanging of the bells are exquisitely executed. The fleshy parts of the body suggest the child like quality of the image. The legs have an ornament, which in Tamil is called as tandam. The eye brows and the sharp nose ascribes the period of the 15th, and the 16th century A.D.

KUMUDAVALLI

She stands on the patrapitha. The right hand is in lola hasta and the left carries the flower. The breast band is absent. The neck ornaments are limited. The ears are empty and the head has a knot in the centre. The facial expressions express the diving quality of the image. The hip ornaments are arranged very closely. The image seems to belong to the 15th, and the 16th century A.D.

GOPALA KRSNAN

He is in the *dvi-bhanga* pose. The *makuta* and the ear ornaments add grace and beauty to the image. The head in the back has *siras-cakra*. The petal arrangement of the siras-cakra is a noteworthy one. The armlets, wristlets and anklets elevate the beauty to a great extent.

UPARISARAVASU MAHARAJA

He stands on the padmapitha. The hands are in the *anjali* pose. The ear ornaments and the *makuta* emphasize the beauty of the figure. The foldings of the dress and the tassels are pleasingly patterened. The armlets, wristlets and the anklets are quite suited to the figure. It belongs to the Chola period of the 12th century A.D

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    கிள்ளிக் களைந்தானைக் கீர்த்திமை பாடிப்போய்
    பிள்ளைக ளெல்லாரும் பாவைக்களம் புக்கார்
    வெள்ளி யெழுந்து வியாழ முறங்கிற்று

    Pullin vay keentanaip pollavarakkanai
    Killik kalaintanaik keerthimai patippoy
    Pillaikalellarum pavaikkalam pukkar
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CHAPTER - IV

GANAPATISVARAR TEMPLE AT THIRUCCHENGATTANGUDI

The noteworthy feature of the temple is the presence of two shrines namely Ganapatisvarar shrine and the other is Uttarapatisvarar shrine. The component parts of the two shrines are the sanctum sanctorum, *ardhamandapa*, *mahamandapa* and the *muhamandapa*.

GANAPATISVARAR SHRINE

Inside the sanctum sanctorum is seen, the *linga*. The entrance of the *ardhamandapa* contains two dvarapalakas one on each side The *mahamandapa* contains pillars with cushion capitals. The shaft is divided into three squares. Karukkuppattai portions are found in between the squares.

UTTARAPATISVARAR SHRINE

The entrance of the sanctum contains two pilasters one on each side with cushion capitals. The *ardhamandapa* contains four pillars and they are also of Chola style having cushion capitals. The pillars of *mahamandapa* and *muhamandapa* are of Vijayanagar style having plantain bud designs. All the parts are enclosed by an enclosure wall, which has a Kattaigopura, on the eastern side. The shrines found in the first *prakara* are the Vatapi Ganapati shrine, Natraja shrine and the Candikesvarar shrine. The Vasantha and Attamurthi mandaps are attached with the notrhern enclosure wall. The second enclosure wall encloses the goddess shrine and in the eastern side is present the main Rajagopura The western side alsc contains a *gopura*. The superstructures of the gopuras contain the stucco images like Vinayaka, Subrahmanya with Valli and Deivayanai, Urdhavatandavamurti etc.

IMAGES ON THE WALLS OF THE SANCTUM OF THE GANAPATISVARAR SHRINE

a) Lingodhbhavamurti

It is a manifestation of an elaboration of the phallic emblem[1]. The linga is a phallic sign, and an object of worship before the Aryan invasions. Evidence of the cult is traced in many remains dating from the Indus Valley Civilization[2].

In South India it is one of the common icons and according to the agamas, it should be placed on the back outerwall of the sanc-

tum sanctorum. The Lord took this aspect to contain the self-conceit of both Brahma and Visnu. Siva is depicted with the immeasurable size. The story behind this aspect is illustrated in the Lingapurana. The Kurmapurana. The vayu-purana and the Sivapurana. The puranic story of Lingodhbhavamurti is as follows. At the end of a Kalpa. Visnu was slumbering in the deep abyss of waters and from the great illumination, which occurred near Visnu, emerged the Lord Brahma. Visnu also appeared infront of Brahma, who made a self-introduction to Visnu by saying that he was the architect of the universe. Then Brahma asked Visnu who he was and to that Visnu replied without any hesitation that he was the architect of the universe. Due to the contradictory statement, there arose a quarrel between them. At this moment, there appeared a linga with hundreds of tongues of flames blazing out of it and the linga looked like a great cosmic fire. Instead of prolonging the quarrel, both Brahma and Visnu decided to find out the top and bottom of the huge mass of fire. Brahma in the form of a Varaha penetrated the earth. Both of them failed in their attempts and lastly. They approached the pillar of fire and began to shower encomiums. Pleased with the pleasing words, Siva appeared infront of them in the lingodhbhavamurti form. The iconical attributes of this form are mentioned in the Amsumadbhedagama, Karanagama and Silparatna.

The image at Tirucchengattangudi (Fig. No. 16) is an interesting one. It is carved with exquisite workmanship. The bottom has the representation of a varaha, which is depicted as penetrating the earth. The swan, the vehicle of Brahma is represented on the top of the linga. A garland of flowers decorates the top portion, which show an artistic perfection. The same garland form of depiction is present at the bottom also. The centre is occupied by Siva who is in the standing posture.

Of the four hands, the upper two hands carry the parasu and the deer, which is in the rearing pose with its head turned back. The objects are between the index and the middle fingers. The right lower hand is in the abhaya pose and left is in the Katvalambita pose. The armlets and the wristlets are beautifully carved with artistic perfection. The sacred thread and the udarabandha are well treated. The jatamakuta and the makara kundalas expose the rhythmic beauty of the face. The necklaces are designed with delicate workmanship. The simha-mukha design is worked out with much ornamental details. The tassels which

hang on both sides of the two thighs are depicted in the form of garlands. On the left side is visible, the image of Visnu who has four hands. Normally the lower hands are in the anjali poses and the upper two hands carry canku cakra. Even in the Ellora caves, one can notices the anjali postures. But here the right hand is in the abhaya pose and the left lower hand is in the Katvalampita pose. The image seems to belong to the 10th century A.D.

b) Brahma

He is one of the most important parivara devatas of the first prakara of a Visnu or a Siva temple. The image at Tirucchengattangudi has four hands. The right upper hand carries the aksamalai. The right lower is in the abhaya pose and the left is in the Katvalambita pose. The sacred thread is much lowered down and goes over the right thigh. The udarabandha is depicted with pearl designs. The waistband with the simha mukha clasp is well ornamented and they elevate the beauty of the image to a great extent. The central loop, which connects the two thighs, is much lowered down in the form of a garland. The folding of the dress are well executed. The jatamakuta with the well designed makara-kundalas elevates the beauty of the facial expression. It belongs to the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

IMAGES FOUND IN THE PRAKARA

1. APPAR

Appar also called Tiru-navukkarasu was born in the end of the sixth century. He was first a Buddhist, then a jain, and finally a Saivite.

In sculptures, he is depicted with shaven head leaving only the tuft of hair behind called Kudummudimudi. His head and arms are decked with chaplets (rudraksha). He carries the ulavaram, with which he used to dig up herbs in the temple in which he lived. He was the contemporary of Mahendravarman Mamalla and the Pandya Arikesari and the date has been fixed as 580-660 A.D.

Here in the temple, he stands on a patra-pitha with the hands in the anjali postures. The ulavaram is attached to the right shoulder. The shaven head and the empty ears with the closed eyes. Project his highly dedicated religious attitude.

2. SAMBANDAR

He lived by about 600 A.D. From the age of five years, he

took to mendicant life. He is therefore represented as a young child in all sculptures. He was the contemporary of Pandya Arikesari Nedumaran, the victor of Nelveli, whose date is 640 A.D. to 656 A.D.

Here in the temple at Thiruchengattangudi, he stands on the *patrapitha*. He carries cymbals made of metal discs and tied together by a cord. The hip ornament of bells add an artistic grace to the image. The creeper designs which are present on the two thighs, expose the artistic excellence of the image. The bahulamalas, armlets, wristlets and the anklets are very well worked out. The *patrakundalas* and the *Jata makuta* strengthen further the beautiful complexion of the face. The necklaces in various designs expose the tenderness of the image. Another image, having similar features is also found .

3. SUNDARAR

Born by about 800 A.D. at Tirunavalur, he was brought up in the royal family. One day, by means of his religious hymns, he stopped a flood of the river Kaveri. He died at Tiruvanjaikkalam.

In sculptures, he is represented with a tiara on his head, as a sign of his noble birth. In his right hand, he holds a flower of tamara puspa and his left hand rests on a stick, of a special form carried by ascetics, which is called yogatanda.

But in the temple, he is in the *anjali* pose. The closed eyes and the empty ears remind us of his religious sacrifice which he has done for the propagation of saivism.

4. MANICKAVACAGAR

He was born by about 800 A.D. at vadavur, on the banks of the Vaigai near Madura and he was the minister to Atimarddhana Pandya king of Madura. His festival called Avani Mula takes place during the Nakshatram of Mulam (August).

In sculptures, he is represented as carrying a chaplet and a book of palm leaves. In the temple, he stands on the patra pitha. The right leg is planted and left leg is slightly bent forward which represents movement. The fanwise arrangement of the head with the empty lengthy ears add divinity to the face. The right hand is in *chin mudra* and the left hand carries the palm leaves. The above images belong to the Chola period of the 12th century A.D.

VINAYAKA

The stories relating to the orgin of the God are mentioned in the lingapurana, Varaha-Purana, the Matsya-purana and also the Skandapurana. The iconical features are mentioned in the agamas like *uttara-kamikagama*.

In the image of the temple, the stomach is very pronounced The front portion of the head and the elephant proboscis are consequently thrown more forward. The left tusk is longer and jutting out prominently, while the right tusk is shown broken. The upper two hands hold the *parasu* and *pasa*. The right lower one holds the broken tusk and the left lower holds the modaka.

VATAPI GANAPATI (Fig. No: 17)

This Vatapi Ganapati is very popular as evidenced by the Kirttana by Muthuswamy Dikshitar. Vatapi Ganapathim bhaja has become the opening song in any musical concert till today. It is said that this image was brought to Tamil Nadu as a war trophy during the period of the Pallava King Narasimhavarman, by his commander-in-chief namely paranjothi, after defeating the Calukya King. Only from this period onwards, the worship of Vinayaka became very popular in Tamil Nadu. There is no mention of Ganapati in any of the Sangam anthologies, *pattuppattu* and Ettutohai or in Tolkappiyam. Even Tirumurugarruppatai makes no mention of the worship of Ganapati.

The Kings of Tamil Nadu had the custom of bringing beautiful and rare images from the defeated countries. Some examples can be quoted.

Rajaraja, after conquering the Cera country, brought *Maragatha Linga* and installed it in the Siva temple at Thiruppalanam[5]. An inscription dated in the 14th regnal year of the King Rajaraja I [6], also mentions the above incident. Rajendra I, the son of Rajaraja I conquered north India and brought the image of Ganga Vinayaka and installed it in the Nagesvaraswamy temple at Kumbakonam, Kumbakonam taluk, Tanjore district[7]. Rajadhiraja I brought a dvarapalaka image after defeating the Calukyas and installed it in the temple at Darasuram, Kumbakonam taluk, Tanjore district7. The Pala Nataraja image brought by Rajendra I has some interesting features. Here the Lord dances on the *Vrishabha*. The ganas are all dancing along with Ganesa and Skanda[8]. Like the Chola Kings, Krishnadevarayar, the great King of Vijayanagar dynasty took the

image of Krisna from the temple at Udayagiri as a war trophy and installed it in A.D. 1515, in a large temple specially built to house it.

The image at Tiruccengattangudi has interesting iconical features. The upper two hands hold the *parasu* and pasa. The lower two hands hold the sweet objects. The coils of the trunk are turned towards the right and hold the modaka. The trunk is lowered down up to the navel. The armlets, wristlets and the anklets are simply designed. The position of the legs has its own peculiarity. Unlike the images present in the other parts of Tamil Nadu, here the legs are placed in a noval manner. The right tusk is broken and the left tusk is slightly taller than the right one. The images having the trunks turned towards the right is common in the Chalukyan regions[9]. Thus it can be said that the image of the temple is in the Calukyan style. One image from the worcester Art Museum, has an interesting feature. It has a Lotus flower in one of the hands[10].

VISNU DURGA

She stands on the *patra-pitha*. Of the four hands, the upper two hands have *canku* and *cakra*. The right lower is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower is in the *katvalambita* pose.

The slender waist and the broad hip stand for the feminine grace. The breast band is seen. A broad necklace enhances its beauty. The Patrakundalas and the *karanda makuta* along with the facial expressions give a pleasing and fascinating appearance to the image. The armlets, wristlets are not prominently represented. The image belongs to the Chola period of the 10th century A.D.

SATYACATA MAHARISHI

He stands on the *patra-pitha*. His hands are in the *anjali* posture. The beard, the head knot, the empty ears expose his devotional concentration. The hands and the legs are devoid of ornamentation. The hip is also plain. It is dated to the Chola period of the 10th century A.D.

BRAHMA

It is similar to the previous one. The *makuta* along with the *makara-kundalas* elevate further the artistic beauty of the image. The Brahma knot of the sacred thread is not clearly depicted. The treatement of the *bahulamalas* is par excellence. The waving pattern of the dress is proportionately arranged. The simha-mukha clasp

is not prominently exposed. The central loop is lowered down and it has no ornamentation. It is a Chola piece of the 11th century A.D.

CANKANIDHI

The figure is in the sitting posture. *Canku* is represented just behind the two shoulders. The ears have *patra-kundalas* and the head gear is the *karanda makuta*. The stomach has belly.

AUGUSTIAR

He is one of the rishis[11]. There are references to Agastya in the Maha-Bharatha and Ramayana. The name Agastya is explained in the Ramayana. Agastya means one who fixes the mountain, a well known exploit attributed to the sage. In the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. the walls of the ardnamandapa contains, the figures of Agastya mainly on the southern side. The best example one is found in the Naltunai Iswara temple at Punjai[12].

In the temple at Tiruccengattangudi, the image is placed on the pillared veranda. He is in the sitting posture. The object in the right hand is not clear and the left hand holds the *kamandalu*. The *udarabandha* is plain and the sacred thread with foldings flows over the stomach. The long beard, the closed eyes and the empty ears stand for his pure and deep penance towards the Almighty.

DVARAPALAKA IMAGES

The first one is present at the entrance of the ardhamandapa of the Ganapatisvarar shrine (Fig. No. 84). The right hand is placed on the mace. Kundalas of the ears and the *makuta* are treated artistically. A long garland of bells flows over the chest and is lowered down to the right thigh. The neck ornaments are carved with the flower designs. A Naga hood is depicted just behind the right shoulder. It is an excellent Chola piece of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. The second one is seen at the entrance wall of the Uttarapatisvarar shrine (Fig. No. 18). The makuta with the simhamukha face expose the dreadful and fearful appearance. Of the four hands, the upper two hands are in the *Vismaya* poses. The right lower hand is in the *danda* pose and left is in the *gajahasta* pose. The worksmanship of both the legs and the hands add artistic as well as aesthetic elegance to the image. The armlets, wristlets and anklets are done with elaborate worksmanship without any deviation from the artistic frame work. It is a Chola specimen of the 10th century A.D.

ARDHANARISVARAMURTI

The name Ardhanarisvaramurti is a compound of three words, Ardha nari and Isvara, meaning Iswara (i.e. Siva) with the Nari (i.e. half)[13]. It is also called as parangada[14]. Of the composite images combining a male and a female deities, this is the most celebrated one. In such a form, mostly the image is shown vertically into two divisions, the left usually showing female features, pertaining to the iconography of Parvati, and the *right* section depicting male features relevent to the iconography of Siva[15]. This form depicts the attempt to co-ordinate the early worship of Mother Goddess with Siva[16].

This iconic form is not only reffered to as Ardhanarisvara or Parvati Paramesvara, but there are also several other terms, frequently used to denote the combined form of Siva and Parvati. The *Vishnu-Dharmottaram* refers to this image form as *Gaurisvara* and state that this type of image has its left part visualized as the consort of Sambhu or Siva. It further states that this type of image embodies the concept of non-duality of purusa (male principle) and prakriti (female principle).

In this aspect of Siva, the two universal parents, the Father and the Mother, or the Heaven and Earth, are symbolized in the half male and half-female aspects of Siva[17]. The male half is Agni and the female half is Soma. Heaven is father and Earth is mother. Heaven symbolises the immortal world of matters. These are the two eternal symbols of life and matter, the duality of life and matter, the duality of life and death without either of which creation can not go on18. Moreover it brings out the fact that one is complementary to the other in the cosmic evolution[19]. This aspect suggests a unique conception of the closely knit ideal of man and woman, rising above the craving of the flesh and serving as the symbol of hospitality and parenthood[20]. It expresess the union of the two halves on the principle that Siva can unite only with himself[21]. It also reveals the fact that only when combined with Sakti, Siva is powerful enough to discharge his sacred duties[22]. It is also said that this form of Siva represents two fundamentally opposite cosmic forces, named prakrti and purusa, which are constantly drawn together to embrace and to fuse with each other, but separated by an intervening axis[23].

ARDHANARISVARAMURTI IN TAMIL LITERATURE

In the Sangam works, there are references to Ardhanariswaramurti. In puram, a hymn is addresed to Siva, who is described as wearing a garland of Konrai flowers (Cassia-fistula) and the crescent as Ardhanari with his consort Uma embodied on His left side, with the bull as His vehicle and with His throat blackned by poison[24]. He is adorned by men learned in the Vedas and by the ganas. Thirumurugarruppadai mentions Siva as Ardhanari[25].

In the devaram works, there are a number of references to this aspect of Siva. Appar refers in his work to this aspect and describes the beauty of the hair[26]. A number of references are found in the works of Sambandar[27].

Though there are many stories about the orgin of this aspect, the popular one is that connected with the episode of the sage Bhringi[28]. On a certain occasion when Siva was seated with his consort Parvati, on the top of the Kailasa mountain, the devas and risis went there to pay their homage to Him. All of them except risi Bhringi, went round both Siva and Parvathi in their circumambulations and also bowed to both. This risi had a vow of worshipping only one being and in conformity with the vow, he neglected to go round or bow down to Parvathi. Getting angry with the Bhringi, She desired in her mind that all his flesh and blood should disappear from his body. Instantly he was reduced to a skeleton covered over only with the skin. In this state, he was unable to support himself in an erect position. Seeing this pitiable condition, Siva gave him a third leg, so that he could maintain his balance. Bhringi became pleased with his *Lord* and out of joy danced vigourously with three legs and praised Siva for his grace. The desire of Parvati to humble Bhringi, thus failed. The failure caused great annoyance to her who returned to do penance, Siva pleased with his consort granted her wish of being united with his own body. Thus the Ardhanareesvara form was assumed by Siva to make it diffucult for Bhringi to circumambulate or bow to Siva only. But undaunted by this impediment, Bhringi assumed the form of a beetle and pierced a hole through the composite body of Siva-Parvati and circumbulated Siva alone to the great wonder and admiration of even Parvati who became reconciled to Bhringi`s vow and bestowed her grace upon the pious risi for his steadfastness to his vow.

The other story is mentioned in the Siva purana which says that Brahma first begot a number of prajapatis and commanded them to create various other beings. They were found unfit for the task for which they were intended and Brahma feeling uneasy at the pace of creation contemplated on Mahesvara. The latter appeared before him in the composite form of male female and asked him to cease feeling distressed. Hitherto, it did not occur to Brahama to create females also and the sight of Maheswara in the form of Ardhanarisvara made him realise his error. Thereupon, he prayed to the female half of Mahesvara Uma to give him a female to proceed with the act of creation. Brahma`s request was complied with and the creation went afterwards very well.

IDEOLOGY BEHIND THE FORM OF ARDHANARISVARA.

The Ardhanareesvara murti of Siva symbolizes the syncretic ideology as it apparantly emphasized the union of the principle cult deities namely Saivism and Saktism. It is this ideological union of Siva and Sakti, which has been delineated by many early and late texts.

ICONICAL FEATURES OF ARDHANARISVARA

An iconographic description of the image of Ardhanarisvara is given in the *Amsumad-bhedagama*, *Kamikagama*, *Supra bhedagama*, *Silpa-ratna*, *Karanagama*, and a few others. According to these texts, the male half of the image should have a *jatamakuta* on his side of the head which should have be adorned with the crescent of moon. In the right side ear, there should be the *Makara-kundala*, *Sarpa-kundala* or an ordinary *kundala* and the right half of the forehead should have one half of an eye sculptured on it.

The image of *Ardhanarisvara* may have two, three or four-arms, one of the right hands should be held in the *abhaya* pose and the other should hold *parasu* or one hand may be in *varada* pose and the other may carry a *sula* or there may be a *tanka* in one hand and the other may be held in the *abhaya* pose. In short, the whole of the right side of the God should be adorned with the attributes and ornaments peculiar to Siva. The chest on the right side should also be of a *man*. The garments should cover up to knee or below the loins only. On the right half of the chest, there should be a naga *yajnopavita*.

On the head of the female half of the deity on the left side, there should be a karandamakuta. On the forehead, there should be

a tilak mark. If the image has four arms, of the two left ones, one should rest on Nandi, the other should be in the *Kataka* pose, holding a Nilotpala. If there are only three arms, then only one should be shown on the female side. This hand may keep either a mirror, a flower or a parrot and it should be adorned with *keyura, kamkana* and other feminine ornaments. On the left side, there should also be the bosom of a woman. The work *Manosollasa* says that the right chest of the figure should be flat. *Skanda purana* says that the deity should have the fish (matsya) and the bull (risabha) respectively on the left and right sides to indicate the vahanas of the respective deities[29]. Mostly in the North Indian images, the upper two hands have naga and mirror[30]. But it is stated that all the images whether of South India or North India, the droop in the left shoulder, the slim waist and the broad hip should contrast with the broad shoulder and the masculine torso to the right[31].

EXAMPLES

The earliest representation of Ardhanarisvara in Tamil Nadu is found in a niche at the North-East end of Dharmaraja Ratha at Mahabalipuram[32]. Here the image, standing erect, has a *jatamakuta* and on the right side are seen ornaments and anatomical features of Siva. The right upper arm holds a parasu, the lower arm is in the *abhaya* pose. Of the left two hands, one hangs down and the other holds the flower. In the early Chola period, this form was mainly represented on the back wall of the sanctum sanctorum of a temple, particularly during the period of Aditya I. The western wall of the sanctum santorum of the Ujjivanathar temple at Uyyakkondan Tirumalai contains the image of Ardanarisvaramurti[33]. During the period of Uttama Chola, the wall of the *ardhamandapa* has the image of Ardanarisvaramurti. The best example is the Siddhanathasvamin temple at Tirunaraiyur, Kumbakonam taluk, Tanjore district[34]. In the middle Chola period, the image made its appearance on the wall of the sanctum, but not in the western wall as in the temples of Aditya`s period. The best example is the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjore[35]. In the later Chola period, the representation of Ardanarisvaramurti is found on the northern wall of the ardhamandapa. The best example is the Kulottunga Cholisvaram Udaiyar temple at korukkai, Kumbakonam Taluk, Tanjore district[36]

In the Pallava period both three-handed and four-handed images made their appearance. The image found in the Dharmaraja ratha at Mahabalipuram has four hands, which has already been

discussed. The other noteworthy image is found in the prakara of the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, which belongs to the Pallava period of the seventh century. Of the three arms, the front right hand carries a trisula and the back one is raised to the top of the head and holds a Cobra by its tail. A vina is present in the left hand and its elbow rests upon the head of the bull. The significant feature of the image is its sitting posture. This is the only representation, as the ardhanarisvara image is concerned. The unusual sitting posture of the bull adds fame and name to this image.

The ardhanarisvara represented in the rock-cut temple at Badami, has four hands. In one of the right hands, he holds the parasu, wriggling round which is to be seen a snake. The same arm has a sarpa-valaya round it. The remaining right and one of the left hands, hold a vina in them and play upon it.

On the right upper arm, there is a snake ornament. The right ear has the sarpa kundala. Jatamakuta decks the right head. Karanda-makuta decorates the left side. Keyuras, mekhalas, anklets, kankanas on each forearm add beauty to the image. The other left hand holds a nilotpala flower. The whole of the head is surrounded with a prabhamandala. A female attendant stands to the left of the image and she carries a vessel in the left arm. The hair is arranged in a knot called *dhamilla*. The bull is present to the right of the image. The animal is meek and quite. The prominent hump suggests the strength and vigour of the animal. A human figure whose hands are in the *anjali* pose is visible behind the bull and the identification of the figure is not exactly known. The representation of devas with their consorts, flying in the air and their depiction near the head add beauty to the entire image. Ganas with musical instruments in different dance postures are noticed on the bottom most portions of the platform.

Of the three hands of the image present in the Nagesvara temple at Kumbakonam, the right has two hands. One holds the parasu and the other is simply placed on the bull. The left hand holds the mirror.

The image present in the Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram, has also significant features. The presence of eight arms and three faces expose the individuality of the image. Nowhere is found such a representation. The hands carry the objects like akshamala, khadga,

pasa, musala, kapala, lotus flower etc. In the temple at Kotumbalur, the image has only two hands. The objects in the hands are not visible legibly[37].

The temple at Tiruccengattangudi has two images. The first one is present on the northern wall of the ardhamandapa of the Ganapatheeswarar shrine . The image has three hands.The right upper holds the parasu and the left hand holds the flower which emphasize the feminine side. The left ear has the patrakundala and the right ear has the makarakundala. The objects are placed in between the index and the middle fingers. The right lower hand is placed on the head of the bull, which is visible behind him.

The necklaces are delicately worked out. The dress of the right side is up to the thigh level. The left leg's dress is continued up to the foot. The makuta is proportionately worked out. The neck foldings of the bull create the appearance of a garland. The neck ornament of bells is beautifully arranged.

The other image is present on the southern verandah of the *prakara* (Fig. No. 19). Here the features are more refined than in the first one. Each and every part exhibits refinement and perfection. The slender waist of the left side shows the marvellous worksmanship of the sculptor. In the former, the central loop is not represented, but here the loop is well executed. The armlets, wristlets and anklets are artistically finished and they add a combined as well as a coherent beauty to the image. Unlike the bull of the former, here the head of the bull is raised. The neck foldings exhibit the masterly worksmanship of the sculptor.

THE SCULPTURED PANELS OF THE TEMPLE

The *devakoshta* makara-toranas of the temple contain beautiful sculptured panels.

a) One panel depicts the worship of the *linga* On one side is seen a rishi behind him is a King, and one more figure is seen behind the King. A lady figure is seen on the opposite side. The male figures are all in the sitting postures with their hands in the *anjali* postures. The lady is in the sitting posture, with her hands in the *anjali* postures. A garland decorates the *linga*. The story behind this scene is not known clearly.

B) BHIKSHATANA-MURTI

This panel is very beautiful to look at. Of the four hands, the objects found on the upper two hands are not clearly visible. The right lower hand feeds the antelope, which licks the finger of the Lord with its protruding tongue. The left lower hand is pointed towards the Gana, who carries the bowl on its head. With the two hands, it holds the bowl. The exposition of its legs suggests its action.

In front of the gana is visible a lady figure. The patrakundalas, the one side knot on the head, the slender waist and the broad hip project her feminine aspect. With her right hand. She pours alms inside the bowl. The left hand is in the katvalambita pose. The central loop, which connects the two thighs, is very prominent. The foldings of the dress are accurately and minutely worked out.

C) TRIPURANTAKA MURTI

Siva is in the dhvibhanga pose. The upper two hands hold the parasu and the antelope. The right lower hand holds the arrow and the left carries the bow, which is planted on the floor. The left ear has the patrakundala and the right ear has makarakundala. The makuta along with the facial expressions like the arched brows and the smiling lips, express the heroic nature of the Lord. Devi is to his left side. Her right hand seems to carry a flower with a long stalk. The left hand is in the lola hasta. The breast-band is present. The karanda makuta bestow a perfect completion to the artistic work. The folding of the dress are fashioned with great care and attention. Near Devi is present a small figure with the hands in the anjali posture. The figure looks at the Lord with admiration. His hands are in the anjali posture. One more figure is found infront of Siva. The hands are raised above the head in the anjali posture. Dress is found only up to the thigh level.

D) RISHABHA VAHANA MURTI

Siva stands on the left leg and the right leg is placed crosswise. Of the four hands, the upper two hands hold the parasu and the deer. The right lower hand is placed on the head of bull, which faces towards the Lord. The left lower hand is in the katvalambita pose. Devi is present to his left side. The position of her right hand is not clear. The left hand is in the lola-hasta. The karanda-makuta is well executed. To the extreme left is seen a figure in the anjali posture.

E) AN UNIDENTIFIED FIGURE

The head has the karanda-makuta. Ears have patrakundalas. Of the four hands, the right upper hand hold the parasu and the right lower hand seems to hold the akshamala. The position of the left two hands are not easily visible. The left leg bends and the right leg hangs down. Channavira is seen. The image is placed inside the circle.

IMAGES FOUND INSIDE THE ASHTAMURTI MANDAPA OF THE TEMPLE

A) BHAIRAVAR

Bhairavar, can best be described as one of those terrfic (ghora or ugra) forms of Siva which have no connection what so ever with any particular puranic story narrating his exploits[38]. He is so called by virtue of his being a protector of the universe (bharana) and terrific in appearance (bhisana). He is also known as kalabhairava (for even kala. The Lord of Death trembles before him). Amardaka (because he kills bad persons, marddan) and Papabhaksana (because he swallows the sings of his devotees).

Just as vithoee is another name for krsna, so Bhairavar or Bahiroba is another name for Siva[39]. He is also known as Ksetrapala[40]. He has been reffered to also as Bhairom[41]. Appar refers to this aspect[42]. Bhairava is also described as Brahmasiraschhedaka in some of the puranas and the Agamas[43].

Rao has described two different peculiar forms of Bhairavar (a) Batuka-Btairavar and (b) Svarana Karsana Bhairavar[44] and Banerjee mentions that Batuka-Bhairava should have terrific appearance with protruding fangs. The objects found in the hands are a sword, a khatvanga, a sula or a kapala. He is often accompanied by a dog which is the incarnation of kunaodaren. In the Batuka Bhairavakalpa[45], he is mentioned as riding on the dog and the four hands carry a sula, a pasa, a damaru and a kapala. Moreover he is surrounded by a host of demons.

In the image at Tirucengattangudi, he stands on the patrapitha. A garland of bells decorate the whole image. The garland is lowered down up to the foot. The folder sacred thread flows over the right side of the stomach. Of the four hands, the right upper hand holds the udukkai and the left upper hand holds the pasa.

The right lower hand holds the trisula and the left lower carries a vessel. The left ear has the *patra-kundala* and the right has the *makara kundala*. The protruding teeth and the rounded eyes give a terrific appearance. The *makuta* is in the form of the *jvalai* design. The makuta is well designed with the skull and the half-moon. A hound is seen behind him. The head of the hound faces the front and the tail of it is in a coiled form. The facial expressions and other bodily features, along with the jvalai *makuta* ascribe a Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

VISNU DURGA

She stands on the buffalo-head, which has long horns. The ears are well ornamented. The *makuta* is worked out with ornamentation. The necklaces are well designed which are noteworthy for their artistic delicacy and worksmanship. Of the four hands, the two hands have *cakra* and *canku*. The *cakra* faces the frontal and it lacks flames. The objects are between the index and middle fingers. The right lower hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower is in the *katvalambita* pose. The breast-band is seen. The slender waist and the broad hip emphasize her feminine quality. The navel is prominently exposed. The central loop is lowered down and is stylistically patterned. The dress with the foldings elevates the beauty of the image to a considerable level.

BHIKSHATANAR

The description is found in the agamas. The general postures of Bhikshatanamurti are similar to that of the kankalamurti. In both the aspects, the left leg stands firmly and the right leg is bent suggesting action. As regards the postures of the hands, the front right hand and the back left have similar postures. But regarding the other hands, in the case of Bhikshatamurti the front left hand should carry a *Kapala* and the back right one a *damaru*. The head may be either in the *jatabhara* or *jatamandala* with the cresent moon on it. In the Bhikshatana aspect, Siva is always naked and a snake is used as the hip ornament. The iconical features of Bhikshatanamurti are elaborately described in the Suprabhedagama.

The image at Tiruccengattangudi has interesting iconical features It measures 4 1/2 feet in height and belongs to the period of the 11th century A.D. The image stands on the *patra pitha*. The right upper hand carries the udukkai and the left carries the *kankala*. The presence of *kankala* is considered to be a unique feature of this image. Usually, only in the kankalamurti aspect *kankala*

is present. The right lower hand feeds the antelope which is in a rearing posture, sucks the index finger of the Lord with its tongue. The antelope stands on its hind legs and the front two legs are in the raised position. The left lower carries the *kapala*. The *jatabhara* is well executed with more artistic details. The left ear has the *patra-kundala* and the right has the *makara-kundala*. A snake in the form of a garland encircles the two thighs. The *udarabandha* is beautified with pearl designs. The *yajnopavita* with foldings is lowered down and flows over the right thigh. Padasaras are seen. The left leg stands firmly and the right leg is stepped forward which indicates action. The bhutagana carries the bowl over his head with its two hands.

KANKALAMURTI

In the Tamil literatures, there are references to this aspect. Sambandar refers to this aspect[46]. Thiruvacagam refers to the carrying of bones by Kankalamurti[47]. Kankalamurti is a form closely allied to Bhikshatana and almost similar in appearance. The main notable difference between the Kankalamurti and the Bhikshatanar is that the former is clothed and the later is naked[48].

According to the work *Mayamata*, Kankalamurti is drapped in a fine cloth and is surrounded by lovely women. *Kasyapa-slipa* says that he holds the kettle drum in his left fore-arm and a stick (to beat it with) in the corresponding right. The other right hand is in the pose *of simkakarna* pose and touches the mouth of the antelope, while the left carries a bunch of peacock feathers on a staff. *Purva-karanagama* states that in the kankala aspect, Siva should not have the figure of Devi, nearby. According to the *karanagama*, the colour of the figure is to be white. In the *silparatna*, it is prescribed that kankala should have *jatamakuta*. The left leg should be planted and the right leg is raised[49].

Kurma purana mentions a puranic story. Once upon a time, the great risis with a curiosity to know the real author of the world, went to the top of the Meru mountain and asked Brahma, who was seated thereon, to clarify their doubt. Out of egoism and self-conceit with out mentioning the real creator, he uttered that he himself was the architect of the world. Meanwhile Siva appeared and proclaimed that he was the real creator of the world. But, anyhow, Brahma argued in defence of his side. In support of Siva`s argument, the Vedas and the Pranava interfered but theit attempts were of no use.

At last through the will power of Siva, there appeared a huge sized bright pillar, to expose the greatness of Siva. Even on seeing the illumination, Brahma never changed his obstinate idea. The activities of Brahma made Siva to act against Brahma. To punish Brahma, Siva ordered Bhairava to cut off one of the five heads. Brahma suffered very much but anyhow due to his severe austerities accepted the superiority of Lord Siva. However, the sin of having killed Brahma (the major sin called Brahma hatya) possessed Bhairava, who lastely requested Brahma to suggest ways and means to be liberated from the sin of cutting the head. Brahma strongly advised him to do begging with the skull of the head cut by him till he met Visnu who would be the fittest person to suggest ways and means to be freed from the sin. Encircled by the bhutaganas, Siva begged at each and every house. Seeing the beauty of Lord Siva, ladies who came out of their houses to give alms, forgot themselves and stood silently for sometime. Lastly Siva reached the abode of Lord Visnu and made sincere attempts to enter. But the gatekeeper Vishvaksena acted as a barrier and did not allow Siva. The activities of Vishvakena enraged the Lord Siva and a fight was started and in the fight, Vishvaksena was killed. By killing Vishvaksena, Siva was under the grip of the second sin. But anyhow, carrying the body of Vishvaksena, with the help of trisula. Bhairavar (Siva) could enter into the place of Visnu. Bhairavar requested Visnu to suggest the proper way for the removal of the sins. Visnu advised him to go to Varnasi. With the confidence of getting relief, Siva went to Varnasi and as soon as he landed in Varnasi, he was freed from the sin and entered into the otherworld. Siva once again became pure Mahasvara and returned to Kailasa. In the temple of the Cholas, representations of the image of Kankalamurti are found on the walls of the ardhamandapas. In the later period of the Cholas, the images made their appearance on the wall portions of the gopura structures. The eastern gopura of the Chidambaram temple contains the image which finds illustration[50] in the works of many scholars. The image seen in temple at Tiruccengattanguti has interesting artistic features. The head is decked with jatamakuta which is ornamented with the snake and the half-crescent. The left ear has the patrakundala and the right ear has the makarakundala. The left upper hand carries the trisula to which is attached the bond. A naga is seen over the trisula. The yajnopavita with foldings give a pleasing appearance. The Brahma knot is found at the centre of the sacred thread. The right lower hand holds the stick with which, he beats the udukkai, which is seen in the left lower hand. The beautiful depiction of the central loop earned fame and

name to the image. Instead of the inverted 'pa' form, here it is represented in rounded form. Its ornamentation with the flower design can be considered as a unique feature. Nowhere else is found such a representation. The right lower hand feeds the antelope which is in the rearing posture. It can be said that the antelope jumps not to get food but out of joy, by seeing the beauty of Siva in this aspect. The usual padaraksas adorn the foot. Dress is seen only up to the thigh level. The ornamentation of the dress with the hanging creeper designs attracted everybody's attraction. Near him is depicted the butagana, which carries the bowl with the two hands. The face of the gana also indicates its pleasant attitude in carrying the bowl for the sake of the God. In the Bhikshatanar aspect, the hip is encircled by a snake, but here the hip without snake and instead of that, snakes are found as said earlier in the left lower hand and also on the right lower hand.

URDHVATANDAVAMURTI

It has been referred to by various names like Kalitandava, chanda-tandava and Arulnattam[51]. The terms perunkuttu and Anugraha-tandavam refer to this aspect. As Lord Siva danced with Kali it is called Kalitandava. As he danced in a rounded way, it is called canda-tandavam. As one of the legs is raised above the head, the dance is called as Urdhva-tandava. As the dance showers grace on the devotees, the dance is also called Arul nattam or Anugraha-tandavam. Appar refers to this dance as perunkuttu. Karaikkalammaiyar refers to this dance. She mentions that Siva performed this dance in order to contain the self-conceit of the Goddess Durga. The purana moreover relates this dance with the action of destruction. The puranic story related with the dance is an interesting one. Once there arose a dance competition between Siva and the Goddess Kali. Many other Gods and Goddesses witnessed the dance. Ganas were also present to enjoy the dance. Both Siva and Kali equally performed their dance for some time. Lastly Siva adopted a device, by which he removed one of the ear ornaments and again attached the same with the same ear by raising one of his legs to the level of the head. Kali could not raise her leg due to shyness. Finally Kali was defeated and Siva could get victory. In all the sculptures, one of the legs is lifted in Urdhva, or lalatatilakam attitude. Sculptural representations of this form of Siva are found in the temples of the Pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, Vijayanagar and Nayaks.

The iconical features are described elaborately in the works

like *kasyapa silpa sastra*, *Silparetna* etc. In the *kasyapa silpasastra*[55] it is stated that the right leg of Siva should be lifted up to ear level and the left leg is in the *kuncita* attitude. The work prescribes eight hands. *Silparatna* mentions two types of Urdhvatandava murti. In one type Siva has eight hands and in the other sixteen hands. Some of the examples of Urdhvatandavamurti reveal different other types. In the kanchipuram example, the left leg is lifted up to the head level. The eight hands are proportionately arranged. In the Ellora example, the right leg is lifted up to the level of the crown.

Here in the temple art of Tamil Nadu, the image of Urdhavatandavamurti made its appearance from the period of the Pallavas.

The images with ten hands are found in the Muktesvara temple at Kanchipuram and the Nagaswarasvamy temple at Kumbakonam. The image seen in one of the pillars of the *pudumandapa* at Madurai has also ten hands and this image belongs to the period of Nayaks. The opposite pillar depicts the dance of Kali. PIllars of the temples at Gangaikondacholapuram and Darasuram have also similar representations.

The image at Thiruvalnagadu has eight hands only. The image found in the panel No. 8 of the *gopura* of the Chidambaram temple is similar to the one noticed in the Sarangapani temple at Kumbakonam. In all sculptures, Kali has eight hands only[56].

The Nritya Sabha of the Natraja temple at Chidambaram has the image as the main deity. It shows the prominence of this image worship. LIke stone, stucco images also made their appearance. The best example is the one seen on the first *gopura* of the Brihadeeswarar temple at Tanjore. Here the right leg is lifted up to the level of the crown.

In the later period, wooden images are represented in the rathas of the temples. The cars of the temples of Thirukkadaiyur, Virinchipuram, Avudaiyar Koil, Vedaranyam etc have such representations.

The image found in the temple at Tiruccengattangudi has the following interesting features (Fig. No 97). The right ear has the *patra-kundala* and the left ear is empty.

Of the four hands, the right upper hand holds the *udukkai* and the left upper carries the *kapala*. The right lower is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower is raised above the head level. The left leg is placed on the back of Muyalaka and the right is raised up to the head level. The right leg contains virakkalal. The dress with the creeper designs is seen up to the thigh level. The simhamukha is well designed and executed with artistic accuracy. The central loop which connects the two thighs is finished with the fascinating artistic skill. The *udarabandha* is beautified with the pearl design. The sacred thread, after the Brahma knot goes with four strands. The neck ornaments exhibit the artistic grace of the image. The worksmanship of the necklaces are admirable and praiseworthy. The *makuta* is well treated and its worksmanship reveals the artistic calibre and achievement of the sculptor. The arched brows, the pointed nose, the smiling lips enhance the grace of the face.

Muyalaka is placed under the left foot of the Lord. The face of muyalaka is pressed to the floor. Only the right side of the face is visible. The snake which is normally found in the hand is not visible here.

Near his foot is represented a figure in the sitting posture. He plays the panchamukha vadya with his two hands. The *karanda-makuta* is treated with great artistic technique. The facial expressions reveal his undiverted concentration in playng the musical instrument. His ear *kundalas* are depicted in such a way that they also dance in tune with the music. At the other side is seen Kali, whose legs are placed cross wise. The dress is visible only up to the thigh level and that too is well designed with the creeper and the garland designs. The left ear has the *patrakundala* and the right ear is empty. Of the four hands, the upper hand is in the *vismaya* pose and the left upper holds the drum. The right lower hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower is in the *gaja hasta* pose. The facial expressions expose her tierless competitive dance performance. The *jvalai makuta* with the skull in the centre speaks of the artistic glory of the image.

KALASAMHARAMURTI

This aspect of Siva is mentioned by Appar[67]. During the Chola period, this representation is often found in the pannelled form. The northern wall of the *ardhamandapa* of the Brihadeeswara temple at Tanjore contains a fascinating panel which exhibits this aspect

very clearly[58]. In the temple at Tirukkadaiyur, one can notice both high relief and bas-relief images of this aspect.

The puranic story of this aspect is an interesting one. As rishi Mrikandu spent long years in penance, he prayed to God to give him a son. Pleased with the penance, Siva appeared before the rishi and asked him whether he would like to have large number of worthless children or only a worthy and intelligent son whose life is confined to only sixteen years. The rishi chose the later alternative and in due time his wife Manasvini bore him a son who was called Markandeya. The parents were very happy to see the growth of their child with śhrewdness and intelligence. But, they were unhappy, when they began to think of the short and limited life period of Markandeya. Markandeya realised the reason for the unhappy mood of his parents and he wanted to be relieved from the death at the age of sixteen. He visited each and every place of pilgrimage and finally reached a place called Tirukkadaiyur where he performed his puja by worshipping the *linga*, enshrined in the temple. Siva was pleased with the deep and true devotion of Markandeya. As he was nearing the age of sixteen yama, the God of death, sent his emissaries to bring the soul of Markandeya. They failed in their attempt as they could not trace the place of Markandeya. They reported the matter to yama who directly made attempts to trace Markandeya and give a death knell to his life. Yama was succeeded in his attempt in tracing and binding Markandeya, but could not put an end to his life, due to the timely intervention of Siva who with his *trisula* pierced the chest of Yama and saved the life of his devotee Markandeya. Siva blessed Markandaya to be ever of sixteen years of age. As Siva killed kalan the other name of Yama, He was called either as Kalarimurti or Kalasamharamurti. It is belived that the whole incident took place in the temple at Thirukkadaiyur, Tanjore District. The iconical features of Kalarimurti are described in the works like *Amsumabhedagma*, *Kamikagama* and *Karanagama*. *Amsumabhedagama* says that in this aspect, Siva`s right foot should be placed on the *padma-pitha* and the left is lifted up to the chest level. It further says that Siva may have either four or eight hands. *Kamikagama* gives a picturesque account of this image. The work says that the right leg of Siva should be represented in the act of kicking Yama and the left one should be placed on the ground. If the image has four hands, the work says that the right two hands should carry the *sula* and *parasu* and among the left hands, one should carry the *naga pasa* and the other is in the *suchi* pose. The weapon *sula* should be turned head-downwards.

Yama is represented not in a standing but in the lying posture. The side tusks and the rounded eyes expose his fiery activities.

In the *kamikagama*, it is said that Siva should be represented as rising from the *linga*, which is worshipped by Markandeya, whose facial features indicate the fear due to the approach of Yama. Markandeya`s deep and true devotion is exposed through the flowers which he carries in his hands.

In the *karanagama*, it is said that the front two hands of Siva should be in the *kataka* pose, holding the down-turned trident.

In the temple art, images of different types of kalarimurti are noticed. The image found in the Ellora cave has interesting artistic features. Two hands of Siva hold the trisula which is pointed towards the abdomen of Yama.

One hand is in the hip and the other is in the *vismaya* pose. The representation of Siva as if he coming out of the *linga* is a picturesque one. The right leg of Siva is buried up to the knee level of the *linga* and the left leg kicks Yama. In the case of the image from the temple at Pattisvaram, the left leg of Siva rests on the body of Yama, who is in the lying posture and the right foot is placed on the chest of Yama in the kicking posture. The hands carry the downward turned *sula*, the parasu, the mriga and the Kapala. Markandeya with the *anjali* pose stands to the right side of Siva. The facial expressions of Markandeya express his reverential and devotional attitude.

The image from the temple at Tiruccengattangudi has (Fig. No. 20) more or less similar features like the image from Pattisvaram with slight variations. In the image from Tiruccengattangudi, the left leg of Siva is lifted up, to kick Yama, where as in the Pattisvaram image, the right leg is lifted. The second difference is that in the former, the right foot of Siva is strongly placed on the body of Yama, whereas in the latter, the left foot is placed firmly on the body. Thirdly in the former, the head of Yama is seen to the left side of the left foot, where as in the Pattisvaram example, the head is placed to the right side.

The image at Tiruccengattangudi measures 4 1/2 feet high. It seems to belong to the 11th century A.D. The upper two hands carry the *trisula* and the deer which is turned towards the face of

Siva. The *trisula* is pointed downwards. The right lower hand carries the *parasu* and the left lower holds the *kapala*. The *makuta* is well designed and its artistic delicate worksmanship is a highly commendable one. The right ear has *patrakundala* and the left has the *makarakundala*. The sacred thread, after the Brahma knot flows with four strands. Three strands flow up to the right thigh and the one flows over the right chest. The pearl ornamentation of *udarabandha* is very beautiful to look at. The foldings below the navel is beautifully depicted. The dress is up to the thigh level and the simhamukha clasp is worked out with much ornamentation. The central loop which connects the two thighs is elongated with out any artistic worksmanship. The armlets, wristlets and the anklets impart an overall beautiful complexion to the image. Yama is lying on the floor and facing the Lord. His raised right hand show his inability to withstand the attack of Siva. His facial expressions indicate the stage of death. The bodily features suggest his unbearable pain which was caused due to the attack of *trisula*.

TRIPURANTAKA-MURTI

It is one of the seven dances performed by Lord Siva. The other dances are the *Anandatandava*, *Santhiya tandava*, *Gowri tandava*, *Kali tandava*, *Muni tandava* and *Sankara tandava*. It is also one of the eight great heroic acts of god, performed within the sacred princts of Tamil Nadu[59].

TRIPURANTAKA IN TAMIL LITERATURE

Purananuru describes Siva as Tripurantaka, the destroyer of the three asuras and their fortresses in order to bestow grace on the devas[60]. Thirumurugarruppatai also refers to this aspect[61].

Devaram works refer to this aspect of Siva. References are found in the hymns of Appar[62] and Sambandar[63]. Cekkilar describes this aspect[64].

Thirumular also refers to this aspect. He has given the philosophical significace of this aspect. There are many references in the hymns of Manickavacagar.

The story of Tripurantaka is mentioned in detail in the karnaparvan of the Mahabharatha. The commentary of the Vajasaneyi samhita, satapatha brahmana, Taittiriya Samhita and Aitareya-Brahmana narrate the story in a detailed manner

The iconical features are mentioned in the works like *Amsumadbhedagama*, *Uttarakamikagama* and Sri tattvanidhi[65].

In the iconographical representations, one can not easily distinguish the icon of both Tripurantaka and Vinadhara Dakshinamurti. The absence of demon under Siva`s foot in the Tripurantaka aspect, mainly differentiate it from the icon Vinadhara Dakshinamurti[66].

From the Pallava period onwards, the representation of this form made its appearance in the temples. In the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, on the east end of the *ardhamandapa* of the temple, one can notice this image. Gauri is on the left and Skanda is on the right turning away in fright. On the panel No. 19 from the east end of the west side of the court, is another representation which has ten arms. The three side hands carry a serpant, a drum and a valaya.

Of the remaining two hands one is in the *suchi* pose and the another is in the *gajahasta* pose. Of the left side hands, one is stretched straight up to the crown, the other is holding something which could not be identified exactly. The third holds the *parasu*. The fourth palm is held upon and the fifth is in the *khatakamukha* with the palm turned upwards. In the Chola period, this aspect of Siva is represented on the walls of the sanctum sanctorums of the temples. The southern niche of the sanctum santorum of the Sundaresvara temple at Thirukkattalai contains this image and it holds the bow and an arrow[67]. In the middle Chola period this representation attained much importance. In the upper base of the sanctum sanctorum of the Brihadiswarar temple at Tanjore, a number of representations are found, having only two hands. In the later Chola period, representations of this aspect are noticed on the wall surface of the gopuras. The next example is the one present, on the eastern gopuram of the Chidambaram temple. The image present in the Tiruccengattangudi temple is artistically superb The figure poised with dignity is a perfect one, elegant in proportion and well balanced. The face is suggestive of the ease with which the God destroyed the three cities. A high *jata-makuta* with the cresent moon and Datura flower looks very beautiful. The fillet noticed on the forehead is noteworthy for its remarkable worksmanship. The face is oval and chubby. Eyebrows are ridge-like and eye-lids and eyes are moulded in a naturalistic manner. Nose is high and moulded as if it is of flesh and blood The lips are sensitive. The left ear has *patrakundala*. But in the Tandantottam image, the right ear has the *patrakundala*.

Here the right ear has the *makarakundala*. *Udara bandha* seems to be of pearls. The sacred-thread with foldings is lowered down up to hip level. The neck ornaments are well treated with accuracy and delicacy. The torso with the head is bent to the left. The shoulders are well formed, probably to suggest the supreme prowess of the Lord. Behind the right shoulder is seen the raised hood of a serpent and it adds beauty to the figure.

Arms are long and beautifully modelled. The bust of this figure taken seperately will be found to be a masterly work from the points of view of proportions, vigour, restrained decoration and a fine sense of plastic modelling. The legs, like the arms are tapering from the thighs to the anklets and their modelling is also fine. Of the four hands, the right upper carries the *udukkai* and the left upper holds of the deer. The right lower holds the arrow and left carries the bow Anklets, armlets and wristlets are well modelled and their execution is artistically superb.

Tripurasundari, as described in the silpa texts, is shorter than Tripurantaka. The apex of its *makuta* reaches only up to the level of the shoulder. The figure stands in tri-bhanga leaning to the left side. The *makuta* has only three karandas. The oval face, along with the *makara kundalas* in the ears give a fascinating beauty to the image. As she witnessed the awe-inspiring situation namely the destruction of the demons of the three cities by Tripurantaka, her face appears to be slightly dazed. Neck is short and is beautified by a broad kanthi. The sacred thread with pearl designs flows between the full and beautifully modelled breasts. The navel portion is also fine. Shoulders, like those of Tripurantaka are powerful. A lock of hair decorated with flowers falls gracefully on each shoulders. The slender waist and the broad hip reveal the feminine tender grace. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left hand is in *lola* hasta and it appears to be long reaching up to the knees. The legs are thick and fleshy, yet there is a subtle suggestion of a beautiful rhythm in their lines. The postures of the legs are deftly handled. The erect right leg is quite in keeping with gently bending and the slightly advancing left leg.

Each foot has the padasara. The garment which closely clings to the legs, reaches to the ankles and it is done in the characteristic wave-over-wave pattern. The end of the garment is seen attached to the ankle. The armlets, wristlets and the padasaras give a combined and co-herent beauty to the image

GAJASAMHARAMURTI

One of the Sangam works mention this aspect[68] There are references in the Devaram works. Appar gives a picturesque account of this aspect[69]. Cekkilar also refers to this[70].

Images of Siva represented as the slayer of the elephant demon are not uncommon in South Indian Temples71. In this form, he receives the name *Gajahamurti*. He is also known as *Gajari*, *Gajanantaka* and *Virateswara*[72]. The story of this episode is found in the *kurmapurana*, the *Varahapurana* and other sanskrit texts. According to the former work *Kurmapurana*, Siva issued forth from a linga at Kasi, when an asura in the form of an elephant had assailed a part of Brahmanas, engaged in worshipping the image. The God killed the elephant demon and wore the skin of the animal as a garment. *Varahapurana* gives quite a different account, which says that an asura namely Nila, who had secretely planned to kill Siva came out in the meanwhile, in the form of an elephant. Nandi came to know of this and informed virabhadra who took the shape of the lion (the natural enemy of the elephant) and attacked and killed Nila. The skin of this elephant was presented by virabhadra to Siva. It was worn by Siva as his upper garment[73]. *Suprabhedagama* gives another version. One account differs from another, but the fact that Siva killed an elephant and had the elephant skin as his clothing is common to all. A village in the Tanjore district called Valuvur, is associated with this destructive acts of Siva and this is the only place which has beautiful metal image of Gajasamharamurti or Gajahamurti.

ICONOGRAPHICAL FEATURES AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXTS.

Iconical features of this aspect are described in the *Amsumadbhedagama*, the *Silparatna* and other *Saivagamas*. *Amsumadbhedagama* says that the image may have four or eight hands. If it has four hands, one of the right hands, should hold the *pasa*, and the other, the skin of the elephant, while the left two hands should hold the tusk of the elephant and the skin respectively. The left leg of Siva is placed on the head of the elephant. The other leg is raised above the thigh of the other leg. It is stressed in the work that the tail of the elephant should be visible over the *makuta*. The skin of the elephant should be so arranged as to give an appearance of *prabhamandala* to the image of Siva. The garment should be made of the tiger's skin. The work *Sri tattvanidhi* prescribes the presence of the Goddess near the Lord along with her Skanda[74].

Different types of images of this aspect will mirror out the importance of this aspect. In one image, present in the temple at Belur, Coimbatore district, the left leg of Siva is placed on the head of the elephant. But at the same time, in the images from the temples at Tirutturaippundi, Darasuram, and the right leg is placed on the elephant's head. One image found in the mahanasika of the ornamented facade of the Amritesvara temple at Amritapura has sixteen arms. They hold the objects like pasa, danta, trisula, akshamala, kapala etc. two hands hold the skin of the elephant in the form of a prabhamandala. Near the image are found the figures like ashtadikpalas or the guardians of the eight quarters, Brahma who plays on vina with two hands and the remaining two hands carry the kamandalu and the struck, one figure plays on drum called jantha but his identification could not be made. Visnu has six hands. Two hands play on the flute and the objects like canda, cakra, padma and gada, are seen in the remaining four hands. Moreover the figures of Devi with Skanda are found with in the fold of the skin of the elephant, to the right side of Siva, but at the same time, the bull and Bhringi are found to the left. Siva stands firmly on the head of the elephant. One more image seen in the Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid, has sixteen arms. They carry the objets like khadga, ankusa, vajra, damaru, bana, gada, khatvanga, tanka, ghanta, sarpa, dhanus and kapala. Two hands hold the skin of the elephant. The image from Darasuram has eight arms. The four hands of the right side hold the damaru, khadga, trisula and the skin of the elephant. Of the four left fourth one is in the kapala, pasa, and the elephant's skin, and the fourth one is in the Suchihasta pose. The makuta is in the form of jatamandala which is again decorated with the skull and the halfmoon. The other ornaments which enhance the beauty further are the kundalas, haras, udarabandha, keyuras and katakas. The right leg of Siva is planted on the head of the elephant and the other is in an utkutikasana posture which is not mentioned in any one of the agamas. Devi stands to the left of Siva, carrying the child Skanda. The fearful feelings of both Devi and Skanda are revealed through their faces.

The image (Fig. No. 21) present in the temple at Tiruccengattanguti has well executed artistic features. The makuta is in the form of a jatamandala whose workmanship is anybody's imagination. Kundalas of the ears are well ornamented. The forehead ornament is well treated. The flexions of the body are proportionately made. The protruding teeth in no way creates the feeling of terror.

Instead of that, one can see the diving grace of the face. The right side four hands carry the damaru, the pasa, the sula and the elephant's skin. Of the left side hands, one is in the Vismaya pose and the second is in the suchi pose. The third one seems to carry the kapala and the fourth one is in the vimsaya pose. The right leg is placed strongly on the head and the left is raised up to the thigh level and its palm is turned upwards. The right leg is decked with an ornament called Virakkalal. The dress is shown in the flying postures, indicating the speed of the dance. The foldings of the flying dress are very nicely worked out and is of quite pleasing. The knot of the dress, seen on the right side buttock is beautifully exposed. Above all, the orderly arrangement of the hands indicates the artistic superb workmanship of the sculptor of the period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

Kiratamurti The head is well decked with the ornamented jatamakuta. The kundalas in the ears, the arched brows and the pointed nose give a good look and a captivating face. The neck ornaments are accurately and well ornamented without any deviation from the artistic traditional decorations. The treatment of the shoulder ornament bahulamala is worthy of praise. Of the four hands, the upper right holds the udukkai and the left lower is in the gajahasta pose. The flat sacred thread lowers down up to the right thigh. The udarabandha is decked with pearl designs. The dress is seen up to the thigh level and the usual creeper and the flower designs elevate the beauty of the dress. The legs are placed cross wise and the right leg has the virakkalal. The rhythmic arrangement of the legs with the refined depiction of the gajahasta pose give a worthy combination to the image. This, well refined and confined combination add an artistic excellence. Above all, the arrangement of the jatas on both sides of the head brings out the artistic glory of the image. The image seems to belong to the chola period of the 10th, and 11th century A.D.

THE BRONZE ICONS OF THE TEMPLE

CANDIKESVARAR (FIG. NO. 22)

Detailed descriptions are found in the Uttarakamikagama, the parvakaranagama and the Suprabhedagama. He is one of the parivara-devatas or attendant deities in a Siva temple. Normally, the shrine housing the image of Chandesvara is located to the northern side of the sanctum sanctorum. The different accounts are given in the agamas are as follows. The illustration of the different types of

the images of Candikesvarar will explain the importance of this image. From the period of Pallavas, the images of candesa began to appear, where the Lord is shown crowning Candesa with a garland of flowers. In subsidary shrines, he is mostly shown as a two-armed seated figure, holding an axe by the handle.

In the Gangai-kondacholeesvar temple at Gangaikondacholapuram also, on the wall of the ardhamandapa, is found the image of Candesa whose head is being garlanded by Lord Siva.

Metal images began to appear from the early Chola times in the tenth century A.D. and these show him both standing or seated. As a seated figure, he resembles the stone images of the shrines, with his arms holding the axe. As a standing figure, he holds a small garland pressed between the palm of his hand that are folded in adoration at the chest. This axe is shown resting on the shoulder but it is often cast separately. The image seen in the Siva temple at Tiruvorriyur carries the parasu in the right hand and the left hand is placed on the thigh. He sits in virasana pose. The left hangs down and the right leg is bent and placed on the pitha. The udarabandha is flat but undecorated. The knot of the sacred thread is seen on the left side of the chest.

In the bronze image from Marudantanallur, Candesa sits on padma-pitha. Two hands are folded in the anjali postures and the parasu is placed on the left shoulder. The image of the temple at Tiruccengattangudi stands on the padmapitha (Fig. No. 105). With legs apart, the body is bent forward gently in an attitude of submissiveness, with the palms delicately closed in salutation. The eyes indicate the mood of contemplation. He appears to be the very personification, of a gently and lovable and sincere devotee. He is bedecked with jewels, all worked with great care and attention. The axe rests on the upper left arm. The subtle modeling of the face and the thigh jatamakuta enhance the tenderness of the image. The simha mukha clasp is elaborately worked out. The simplicity of the ornamentation and the excellent modeling and the splendid satvika expression on the face make it a superb specimen. It belongs to the period of the 13th century A.D.

CANTANANANGAI

She stands on the padma pitha. The hands are in the anjali postures and it seems that flowers for offerings are kept between

the two palms. The left leg is placed firmly and directly and the right leg is slightly bent and steps forward indicating her action. The dress is visible up to the ankles. The flowing of the dress, touching the two thighs are very nicely and delicately treated. Only a strong necklace with a dollar in the centre decks the neck. The head decoration is also very fine and its artistic execution is of par excellence. The closed eyes along with the unperturbed bodily condition expose her true and sincere devotional attitude. The armlets, wristlets and the anklets are simple in design and execution.

CIRALAN

Two figures are fond. Both of them are dated to the 17th century A.D. from stylistic point of view. In both, he is represented in childish form. The right hand holds the stylus and the left hand holds a pustak. A belt encircles the hip. The anklets and the writstlets are simple in design and finishing.

CIRUTONDAR

Two figures are found. In both of them, the hip ornaments are worked with much stylistic ornamentation. Necklaces are beautifully designed. The ears plain and the makuta is lengthy and are well artistically represented. The hands are in the anjali postures.

The images of Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar (Fig. No. 70) and Manickavacagar (Fig. No. 71) are dated to a period of the 13th century A.D. They are with the usual artistic attributes. The treatment of the dresses of the figures except those of Sambandar is plain and they reveal their renunciation from the material world.

VENKATTUNANGAI (FIG. NO. 72)

The hands are in the anjali postures. The image seems to belong to the 15th, and the 16th century A.D.

VINAYAKAR

He has the usual attributes and is dated to a period of the 15th century A.D.

IMAGES OF PIDARI

Two images are found. Both of them have similarities in

their artistic representations. The usual objects are stylistically exposed. the protruding teeth in no way gives a terrific appearance, as the feminine features dominate the others.

PRADOSHANAYANAR WITH DEVI

Both the images stand on the padma pitha. *Jata-makuta* enhances the beauty of the image of the Lord. The ears have *makarakundalas*. The face is seen with a smiling posture. The dress is only up to the thigh level. The hanging knot of the right side thigh is well exposed. The right leg stands firmly and the left leg is slightly stepped to the front. Necklaces greatly enhance the beauty of the image. Of the four hands, the right upper carries the *parasu* and the left upper holds the *mirga*. The right lower is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower embraces the Devi`s right shoulder.

Devi is in the dvibhanga pose. She stands on the right leg, which is planted firmly and the left leg is slightly bent to the front. The dress with the creeper design is lowered up to the foot. The right hand is in *kataka* pose and the left hand is in the *lolahasta*. The breast band is visible. The karandamakuta is treated tenderly. The left ear has patrakundala and the right ear has makara kundala. The slender waist, with the broad hip add feminine tenderness and sweetness. The anklets, armlets and the wristlets are well exposed with artistic perfection and refinement.

UMA-SAHITA CHANDRASEKHARAMURTI

The name Chandrasekara literally means, wearer of the Moon. Siva in this form is a popular image which is to be found in all Siva temples. The presence of moon, on Siva`s crown is referred to in the Tamil literatures like Tiruvacagam[75] and Kandapuranam[76].

The iconical features of Chandrasekharamurti are found in the works like, *Silparatna*, *Amsumadbhedagama, Uttara-kamikamaga* and *Sritatvanidhi*. The image of Chandrasekharamurti is divided into three classes namely the *kevalamurti*, the *umasahitamurti* and the Alinganamurti.

In the *kevala Chandrasekharamurti,* Siva is represented alone. The upper two hands carry the *parasu* and the black buck. The lower two hands are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. The body is in the *samabhanga* pose. The head is adorned with the *jatamakuta* in which the cresent is prominent. In the Umasahita-chandrasekharamurti, Siva embraces Devi.

The representation of the images of Chandrasekharamurti made its appearance from the Pallava period onwards. In the pallava period, there is no tendency for the nose to project but its tendency is often seen in the late Chola period[77]. Bronze images of this aspect, are made in large number during the period of the Cholas. Almost all the images depict refinement and perfection.

In the temples at Tiruccengattangudi, the image stands on *padmapitha*. *Jatamakuta* with the makara kundalas in the ears give a charming beauty, to the face. Of the four hands, the upper two hands have the parasu and the deer. The right lower is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower is in the *varada* pose. The dress is shown up to the thigh level only. The central loop is prominent. The flowing sacred thread and the *udarabandha* are well treated with artistic worksmanship. He is in the *samabhanga* pose. Devi also stands on the *padmapitha*. She is in the *dvibhanga* pose. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left is in the *lola hasta*. The breasts are very prominent having no breast band. The dress flows down up to the ankles and is executed with exquisite designs. The slender waist with the broad hip add feminine charm to the image. The facial expression along with the *makuta* and the ear kundalas expose the feminine grace to a great extent.

UTTARAPATHISVARAR

The image sits on the *padmasana*. The right leg is bent and is placed on the *pitha* and the left leg is in the *kuttutikasana* pose. The right hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left is placed on the left leg`s knee. Armlets and wristlets are shown. The head is in the form of *jatabhara* and is decked with nagahood, cresent and the skull. Two necklaces enhance the feminine grace and they are well finished. Ears have *patrakundalas* only. The *udarabandha* is well designed in the centre. The dress which has line marking designs, is visible up to the ankle. The lines are quite proportionate and rhythmic.

SUBRAHMANYA WITH VALLI AND DEIVAYANAI

a) SUBRAHMANYA

The *padmasana* on which the figure stands shows petals of lotus with tips emphasised. A line seems to be engraved along the margin of each petal. He stands in the dvibhanga pose. The upper two hands hold the *sakti* and *vajra*. The lower two hands are in the pose of holding an arrow and bow. The right leg is firmly placed.

'he left leg is slightly stepped up to the front. The legs are also well ıodelled and the lines that enclose their masses are also smoothly owing as to make the flexions natural. But the emphasis is given to ıe right hip. The bend of the torso seems to have been over-done. 'he loin-cloth is worked in a simple manner and the loops of the imhamukha knot of the waist-band are delicately modelled. The hort ends of the cloth hanging between the thighs are noteworthy. 'lakara kundalas adorn the ears. An extensive bahulamala flows on ıe shoulders. Normally *karanda-makuta* decorates the head of 'luruga.

) VALLI

She is to the right side of Muruga. Her left hand holds the ɔwer and the right hand is in the *lola hasta* pose. She stands in the *vibhanga* pose. The right leg stands firmly on the *padmapitha* and ıe left leg is stepped up to the front slightly. Breast-band adorns the reast. *Karanda-makuta* on the head, with the *patrakundalas* in the ars enhance the artistic glory of the image. The slender waist and ıe broad hip mirror out the feminine charm.

ı DEIVASENAI

She stands on the *padma-pitha*. The left leg is placed firmly ıd the right leg is slightly bent and stepped up to the front. The ght hand holds the flower and the left hand is in the *lola hasta* pose, ıd more over this hand is away from the hip without touching the ɔdy. The *makara-kundalas* of the ears and the *karandamakuta* are ɔrked out with much artistic skill. The dress with garland and creeper ısigns lowers up to the ankles. Armlets and wristlets are delicately ɔrked out. The group belongs to the Chola period of the 13th cen- ry A.D.

ATARAJA WITH SIVAKAMASUNDARI

NATARAJA

The most profound subtle and beautiful is the dance image Siva in his human manifestation as Nrtya-murti. He is Siva Natraja, ıtesa, Nartteesvara and Natesvara or the Lord of Dance[78]. The ɔrd Nadesa comes from the sanskrit word Natesa[79]. It is the fa- ɔus representation which mostly attracts the western eyes[80]. This nce is the symbol of the ultimate reality, the cosmic energy which rvades the universe[81]. He dances on the dwarfish body of the de- ɔn, *Apasmara purusa* called in Tamil Muyalaka, who represents ıorance, the destruction of which brings enlightenment, true wis-

dom and release from the bondage of existance[82]. This dance is also known as Bhujangatrasa or Anandatandava meaning a dance of ecstasy and nathantha natanam. The whirl of the dance movement also create a circle of fire around him. It signifies the vital process of the universe[83]. On the whole, the dance symbolizes the action of cosmic energy in creating, preserving, and destroying the visible universe[84]. Ananda Coomaraswamy speaks of the greatness of Nataraja image in the following way. It affords an image of reality, a key to the complete tissue of life, a theory of nature, not merely, satisfactory to a single clique or race, not acceptable to the thinkers of one century only but universal in its appeal to the philosopher, the lover and the artists of all ages and all centuries[85].

NATARAJA IN LITERATURE

In the devaram works, there are references to this dance. Appar glorifies the beauty of Natraja. He refers to Muyalakan as one who is always under the foot of Nataraja. Manickavacagar refers to this dance. In the eleventh thirumurai, there is a reference to this dance. The works unmaivilakkam and Chidambara mummanikkovai also refer to this cosmic dance performance.

The iconographical features of Nataraja are mentioned in the *Amsumadhedagama*, *karanagama* and *silparatna*. It is said in the texts that of the four hands of the Lord, the right upper should carry *udukkai* and the left upper *agni* (fire). The right lower should be in *abhaya* and the left *gaja hasta* pose. The right leg should be planted on the back of apasmarapurusha and the left is raised. There is a rare specimen in Madurai in which the left leg is planted and the right leg is raised. The head should be ornamented with peacock feathers, the dhrudhura flowers, a skull, a cobra and the cresent moon. In most of the examples, Ganga is seen on the jata. But there is a rare specimen in the temple at Thiruvengadu, sirkali taluk, Tanjore district where Nataraja is without Ganga. Nataraja shrine should face south, which is the direction of Dakshinamurti and of Yama both of whom are but the substantations of the Rudra Siva Mahadevatattva. In the Deccan and in Central India, the Lord of Dance is frequently shown with Nandi behind him.or at his side. The bull symbolizes ego and ignorance which Shiva conquers through his dance.

By about 969 A.D., the Nataraja concept in ananda tandava has achieved sufficient status to be included in the newly introduced iconographic scheme of the *ardhamandapa*. By A.D. 981, Nataraja

was given the central place of dignity on the south wall of the Chola temples. And during the period of Arumolivarman also known as Rajaraja, Nataraja was given an honoured place in the only available *devakostha* on the southern wall of the temples. After about 1000 A.D., representations of this particular mode of dance of Siva Nataraja both in stone and in metal became more and more frequent[86].

The image of the temple at Tiruccengattuangudi depicts refined artistic features The usual peacock feathers adorn the Head-dress. The feathers were held together at the bottom by a thick, twisted rope like bond. The left side represents the crescent moon, which is artistically placed. The high-relief representation of serpent and skull increases the elegance of the head-dress. The Datura flower which is seen on the left side is not prominently represented.

Excellent worksmanship is visible on the face. The sharpness of the nose focuses the beauty of the face to a great extent. Inclined lines mark the eyes and the eye brows. The *patra-kundala* adorns the left ear and the right ear has the *makara kundala*, the expression is suggestive of supreme bliss. The neck is moulded in a manner suggesting strength and vigour. The ornaments which beautify the neck are a broad *kanthi* and a hara of beads. The wavy form of *yajnopavita* gives a charming outlook. The artistic excellence is noticed in the treatment of the *udarabandha*. The execution of the shoulders is highly refined. The majestic sway of lines of the arms as well as the shoulders is singularly beautiful and this is a proof-positive for the brilliance of the artist. More than the treatment of the shoulders, it is the manner of showing the lower left arm in the *gaja-hasta* pose that distinctly proves the artistic achievement and the greatness of the sculptor. The nice treatment of the tapering arms with the tender fingers enhance the charming beauty of the figure. An exceptional and remarkable worksmanship is visible in the depiction of the torso of the figure which is well conceived and rhythmatically executed. The upper cloth which is spread out flows very nicely and gracefully. The other three arms are beautifully thrown out with ease and confidence. The wristlets and the armlets are the main ornaments of the hands. The right upper hand holds the *damaru*, which represents the creation. The fingers of the right hand are spread out in a fantastic manner. The depiction of two fingers in the raised posture really add grace and charm to the hand. The right lower hand is in the *abhava* pose and a serpent is visible with its

raised hood on its forearm. The snake is represented in such a way that it represents, one of the ornaments of the hand. The wavy tail of the snake is artistically curved. The upperleft arm holds the fire which denotes the destructiion.

The legs are arranged in a splendid manner, and their marvellous well balancce depiction disclose the artistic calibre of the sculptor. The long highly experienced artistic tradition is well visible in the arrangement of the legs. He dances with the right leg stands firmly while the left leg is well balanced. Anklets and Virakkalal adorn the right leg. The only ornament of the left leg is the padasaras. The simple and plain treatment of the lion-cloth in no way decreases the beauty of the figure. Simple bands are seen round the waist.

The treatment of the *apasmarapurusa* is exquisite. The head looks at the Lord. The flames that fringe the *prabha* are represented in a noteworthy and praiseworthy manner. The flames are twenty two in number. Each has five tounges. The topmost flame is treated in a beautiful manner. But unlike the rest, it has more than five tongues.

SIVAKAMASUNDARI

She stands on the *padmapitha* in *dvibhanga* posture. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left hand is in the *lola hasta*. The *karanda-makuta* on the head is well balanced. Ears have the well ornamented *Makarakundalas*. The well balanced *bahulamalas* flows over the shoulders artistically. The rounded breast expose the youthful nature of the figure. On the waist, a gridle of two rows of pearls is noticed instead of the *kirtimukha* clasp. The keyuras in the upper arms are worked out delicately. The bangles worn on the wrist are prominently worked. The dress is deipcted with the wave like pattern. The group is dated to the period of the 13th, and the 14th century A.D.

SOMASKANDAMURTI

a) SIVA

Siva is seated on a padmasana in the erect sukhasana posture. The manner in which the jata-makuta is worked out is pleasing to look at. The facial features are very clear. The expression reveals a subtle smile. Two ears have the beautiful ornamented *makara kundalas*. The *yajnopavita* is in three strands. The bigger strand is ribbon-like and is shown flowing in a beautiful wave form. The

udarabandha is thick and gem set in front. The torso is executed with a classical perfection. The shoulders are beautifully modelled. The dress is seen only upto the thigh level. The sashes are simple but the simha-mukha is eloborately worked out. Of the four hands, the right upper hand carries the *parasu* and the left upper holds the deer which faces the Lord. The front two legs are in the rearing posture. The objects are kept in between the index and middle fingers. The right lower hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower hand is in the *kataka* pose. The treatement of the four arms is fine and exquisite. The modelling is very refined which is beautiful and well balanced.

UMA

The artistic worksmanship of the figure is charming. The *karanda-makuta* is prominent and its finial is very pronounced. It's form is very graceful. *Makarakundalas* adorn both the ears. The well ornamented *bahulamala* flows over the shoulders. The necklaces are well treated and refined. The breasts are prominent and the *yajnopavita* flows between the breasts. The worksmanship of the breast is fine. It is realistically delineated. Only a simple tassel is seen hanging from the right shoulder. The lines of the sides of the torso of the figure become straight and stiff. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left is placed firmly on the *pitha*. The left leg hangs freely and its right leg bends in the *kutkutikasana* pose. The dress with the wave designs looks very beautiful.

c) SKANDA

He is in the standing posture. The well adorned karanda makuta adds artistic beauty to the figure. The presence of channavira shows the heroic strength of the God. The group belongs to the Chola period of the 13th, and the 14th century A.D.

SOMASKANDA-TANI-AMMAN

She stands on the *padmapitha*. The *dvibhanga* posture is clearly portrayed. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left hand hangs freely in the *lola hasta* posture. Armlets, wristlets adorn the hands. The bahulamalas which flows over the shoulders are very refined in their worksmanship. The *karanda-makuta* is treated in a superb manner and it speaks of the artistic glory of the image. The *makara-kundalas* in the ears are delicately worked out. The breasts are well rounded and the sacred thread flows nicely in between the breasts. The dress with foldings is lowered down to the ankles. The knot of the dress hangs attractively on both sides of the two thighs.

The back view is quite pleasing and attractive(Fig. No.125). The petals of the Sirascakra are treated in an excellent manner. The flexions of the buttocks elevate the grace of the rear view.

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24.*Puram* No. 1
25.*Thirumurugarruppadai*, No. 151.
26.சுரிகுழலாள்
படிகொண்ட பாகமும்
Curi Kulalai
pati konda pahamum
Appar, Devaram (Edn.) Kumaraguruparan Pillai, p. 9, 1957.
Fourth Tirumurai, HYMN. No. 7.
27.மருவார்குழலி மாதோர் பாகமாய்த்
Maruvar Kulali mator pahamayt
Sambandar Devaram (Edn.) Kumaragurupara Pillai, T.M., p. 321.
First Tirumurai, HYMN. No. 1.
மாதொர் கூறனை வலஞ்சுழி
Mator Kuranai Valanculi, Ibid, p. 281.
Second Tirumurai HYMN. No. 11.
ஒருத்தியுமை யோடுமொரு பாகமது வாய
Oruttiumai yotumoru pahamathuvaya, Ibid, p. 167.
உமையாளை யொரு பாகம்
அடையாளம் அது கொண்டீர்
Umaiyalai yoru pakam
ataiyalam atu kondeer, Ibid, TIRUVAIYARUPATIKA HYMN. NO.5,p.45
மங்கையோர் கூறுடையீர் மறையோர்கள் நிறைந் தேத்தம்
markaiyor kurutaiyeer maraiyorkal nirain tettam Ibid, HYMN No.6. P. 45.
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Brahman tan ciramaritta periyoy porri-*Thiruttandakam*, HYMN. No.10.

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46.கங்காளர் கயிலாய மலையாளர் கானப்பேராளர்
Kankalar kayilaya malaiyalar kanapperalar
Devaram (Published by the Mutt of Thiruppanandal at Kasi), FIRST THIRUMURAI, HYMN. NO.3

47. நங்காய் ! இதென்ன தவம் நரம்போ டெலும்பணிந்து
கங்காளந்தோள் மேலேகாதலித்தேன் காணேடி !
கங்காளம் ஆமாகேள் காலாந்தரத்திருவர்
தங்காலஞ் செய்யத் தரித்தனன் காண்காழலோ !
Nangai ! Itenna tavam narambot elumpaninthu
kankalan tolmele kathalitten kaneti !
kankalam amakel kalanta rattiruvar
tankalan ceyyattarittanan kan calalo
Tiruvacagam-tiruccalal. HYMN.NO.265.

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52.ஆடினார் பெருங்கூத்து காளிகான்
atinar perunkuttu kalikan
FOURTH THIRUMURAI - HYMN NO.5

53.ஆலவனம் அனைத்தினுக்கும் முதலான
நடனத் தானம் அருள் நட்டம்

மூலம் தாம் அதனகத்துச் சண்ட தாண்டவம்
ககன முகடு நோக்கி
மேலதாக இடத்தாளையெடுத்து வலத்தாள்
ஊன்றி விளைக்கும் நட்டம்
Alavanam anaittinukkum mutalana
natanat tanam arul nattam
mulam tam atanahattuc canta tandavam
kahana mukatu nokki
melataka itattalaiyetuttu valattal
unri vilaikkum nattam.
Thiruvalankattuppuranam, Sunantar upadesaccarukkam,

54.Veeran kotutteryu makali
kopantavira yeturta natattiya epu porri
talonrar patala muturuvat tanvisumbil
talonral andan katanthuruvit-tolonral
tikkanaittum porkkum tirarkali kalatti
nakkanaittan kanta natam
11th tirumurai, HYMN NO. 10

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காலனை உதைப்பர் போலுங் கடலூர் வீரட்டனாரே
Malinaittavira ninra markkant.-erukkaha anru
kalanai utaippar polun katavur veerattanere
Appar *Devaram* HYMN. NO. 7

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62.மூவெயில் தீயெழிச் சிலைவாங்கி திரியும்
Muveyil teeyelac cilaivangittiriyum
Appar *Devaram*, HYMN. NO.7
திரிபுரங்கள் தீயெழுத்தின் திலைகைக் கொண்ட போரானை
tirippurankal teeyeluttin cilaikaik konda poranai
Thiruttandakam, SIXTH TIRUMURAI, HYMN. NO.6
சிலையால் முப்புரமெரித்த முன்னோ பின்னோ
Cilaiyal muppurameritta munno pinno
Appar *Devaram*,

63.**ஒன்னார் புரமூன்று மெரித்த ஒருவன்**
Onnar pura munru meritta oruvan

Sambandar - Devaram
மூவார்புரங்கள் எரித்த அன்று மூவர்க்கருள் செய்தார்
Muvar purangal eritta anru muvarkkarul ceytar
Tiruvannamalai Patika, HYMN. NO.1
சிலையது வெஞ்சிலையாகத் திரிபுரமுன் றெரி செய்த
Cilaiyatuven cilaiyakat tirupuramunreri ceyta
Second Thirumurai, HYMN. NO.7
போரணாவுமுப்புர மெரித்தவன் பொழில்கள் சுழ
Poranavumuppura merittavan polil kal cula
THIRD Thirumurai, Thiruveezhimazhalai Patika, HYMN. NO.7

64.திரிபுரமெரித்தவாறுந் தேர்மிசை நின்றவாறுங்
tiripurameritta varun termicai ninravarun
Hymn No. 4224.

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68.பேரானை ஈர் உரிவைப்
போர்த்தானை ஆயிரத்து எண்
பேரானை ஈர் உருவம்
பெற்றானைப் பேரா நஞ்சு
உண்டானை உத்தமனை
உள் காதார்க்கு அஞ்ஞான்றும்
உண்டா நாள் அல்ல உயிர்
Peranai ir urivaip
porttanai ayirattu en
peranai ir uruvam
perranaip-pera nanju
undanai, uttamanai
ul katarkku annanrum
unda nal alla uyir
Bhaskaratondaiman, T.M., *Venkatamutal Kumari Varai* (Tamil) (Madras, 1960-61), p.106.

69.உரித்திட்டார் ஆனையின் தோல் உதிர ஆ றொழுகியோட
விரித்திட்டார் உமையா எஞ்சி விரல் விதிர்த்த தலக கண் நோக்கித்
தரித்திட்டார் சிறிதுபோது தரிக்கிலராகித் தாமுஞ்
சிரித்திட்டார் எயிறுதோன்றத் திருப்பயற் றூரனாரே.
Urittittar anaiyin tol utira a roligiyota
virittittar umaiya lanji viral vitirtta talaka kan nokkit
tarittittar ciritupotu tarikkilarahi tamum
cirittittar eyirutonrat tiruppayar ruranare
46- *Thiruppayarrur*-hymn. No. 1.

70. கரியினை உரித்தவாறும் தேர்மிசை நின்றவாறுஞ்
Kariyinai urittavarum termisai ninravarun, Cekkilar.Periya puranam Hymn. No.4224.

71. Krishna Sastri, *South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses*, (Madras, 1916), p.125.

72. Gangoly, *South Indian Bronzes*, (India, 1978), p.117.

73. Tiwari, S.P., *Hindu Iconography,* (New Delhi, 1979), p.30.

74. *Sreetattvanidhi* (Edn & Trans), Subrahmanya Sastrigal, (Thanjavur, 1963), p.50.

75. கதியடி யேற்குள் கழல் தந்த ருளவும் ஊண்கழியா
விதியடி யேனை விடுதிகண்டாய் வென்தலைமுழையிற்
பதியுடை வாரைப் பார்த்திறை வைத்து சுருங்கஅஞ்சி
மதிறெடு நீரிற்குளித் தொளிக்குஞ்சடை மன்னவனே
Katiyati erkkul kalaltantharula vum unkaliya
vithiyati enai vitutikantay ventalai mulaiyir
patiyutai valrrap parttirai vaittu curunka anji
matiretu neerirkuli tolikkuncatai mannavane
-- Tiruvacagam Hymn No. 146

76. நெற்றியில் கண்ணுடை நிமிலத் தெம்பிரான்
உற்றவர்க் கருள் புரிகின்ற உண்மையைத்
தெற்றென உணர்த்தல்போல் திங்களின்சுலை
கற்றையஞ் சடைமிசைக் கவின்று பூத்ததே
Nerriyil kannutai nimalat tempiran
urravark karul purihinra unmaiyait
terrena unarttal pol tinkalin kalai
karraiyan catamicaikkavinru puttate
--- Kantapuranam, Hymn. No.43.

77. Karl Khandalavala, *"Masterpieces in South Indian and Nepalese Bronzes in the collection of Mr. S.K. Bhadwar of Bombay ", Marg*, Vol. IV. No. 4, p. 60.

78. Radha Kamal Mukerjee, *Cosmic Arts of India*, (Delhi), p. 117.

79. Tiwari, S.P., *Hindu Iconography,* (New Delhi, 1979), p.27.

80. Abrams, N., *A History of Far Eastern Art*, (Delhi, 1982), p.171.

81. Randhawa, M.S., Natraja - " The Lord of Dance ", *Roopalekha* XLIII, p.12.

82. Heinrisch Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia*, (New York, 1955), p.122.

83. Shakti Gupta, M., *Legends around Shiva*, (Delhi, 1979), p.120.

84. Ramesan, *Temples and Legends of Andhrapradesh*, (Delhi,1962),P.19.

85. Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Dance of Siva*, (Bombay,1948), p.78.

86. Kamil V. Zvelebil, Anandatandava of Siva - Sadanrttimurti, *Journal of Asian Studies*, (Madras,1985), p.25.

CHAPTER - V

AGNISVARAR TEMPLE AT THIRUPPUGALUR

The main parts of the temple are the sanctum sanctorum, ardhamandapa, mahamandapa and muhamandapa. They are enclosed by an enclosure wall. The structures present in the prakara are the shrines for Ahoralinga, Bhutesvarasvamy, Vatapi Ganapati, Appar, Subrahmanya, Saturn (one of the navagrahas), Annapurni, Kalasamharamurti, Nataraja, Candikesvarar and Vitceyesvamy.

The outer prakara of the temple contains the structures like Vahanamandapa, Cintamanisvarar Shrine, Nardanavinayaga shrine, Amman (Goddess) shrine (Fig. No. 80), yagasalai and Bali - pitha. The eastern entrance contains the Rajagopura with five tiers. The walls of the sanctum sanctorum and ardhamandapa are decorated with beautiful images. The griva of the vimana contain stucco images. The outerwalls of the gopura are decorated with pilasters which have lotus hud designs in the capital portions. More than sixty pilasters are seen. The superstructure of the gopura is decorated with the beautiful stucco images of excellent workmanship. The dvaragpalakas are depicted with artistic excellence. The figures like Narasimhamuti, Rishabharudamurti, Agnisvarar, Bhikshatanamurti, Muruga, Valli and Deivayani are well executed with artistic intricacy. On the top is found a stucco panel which illustrates the God Arumuga with six heads and twelve hands. The depiction of one gopura bearer is highly appreciable. The strong moustache and the broad shoulders expose his immeasurable strength.

THE INNER GOPURA (KATTAI GOPURAM)

It contains only three tiers (Fig. No. 23). The super structure is decorated with the stucco panels of excellent and highly admirable workmanship. The treatment of the salais and kutus is a commendable. In the southern side, the stucco images of Vinadhara Dakshinamurti are intricately carved.and executed with a highly artistic talent and caliber. The northern side contains the beautiful stucco image of Brahma in the sitting posture. The wall portion is decorated with the pilasters of the Chola style and also of the devakoshtas which do not have images inside.

The pillars of the temple are stylistically superb. The pillar present around the main sanctum sanctorum contains the simha figure at the bottom. The pillars found inside the ardhamandapa are of Chola style, having the cushion capital (Fig. No. 138). The pillar which is seen along the pillared verandha is also of Chola style, having cushion capital. Moreover, it has some additional features. The shaft of the pillar is divided into three squares. The centre of the square contains beautiful medallions. The pillar present infront of the Natraja shrine contains the simha figure. The pillar of the muhamandapa belongs to a late period of 16th century A.D. having the portion called matalai. Above the matalai, is visible a dwarf human figure.

SCULPTURES PRESENT ON THE WALLS OF THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM AND ARDHAMANDAPA

LINGODBHAVAMURTI (West wall of the sanctum sanctorum)

Of the four hands of Siva, the right upper hand holds the parasu and the left holds the deer. The right lower is in the abhaya pose and the left lower is in the katvalampita pose. The kundalas in the ears and the jatamakuta are beautifully represented. The Kirtimukha of the waist band is well prominently worked. Out. Brahma and Visnu are found on either side of Siva. The interesting and noteworthy fact is that they are with two hands.

DAKSHINAMURTI

Dakshinamurti young in age, preaching to all sages, under the banyan tree in a language of silence, suggests that wisdom has no age, brevity is golden and the simplest open air school is the most natural for developing some of the latest higher intellectual powers[1]. Dakshinamurti is a familiar representation in the context of South Indian temple sculpture. Generally the term is translated as the southern of south facing from and hence, the image is placed in a subsidiary shrine (devakoshta), on the southern wall of the temple[2]. Moreover this aspect of Siva is noteworthy for its peacefulness as Nrittamurti is for joyfulness. It is worshiped as the Lord of wisdom and bestower of intelligence[3].

There are four forms of Dakshinamurti. They are yoga Dakshinamurti, Vinadhara Dakshinamurti, Jnana Dakshinamurti and Vyakhyanamurti. Of the four, the last Vyakhyanamurti is the most common and is mainly kept on the southern wall of the sanctum sanctorum.

VYAKHYANA DAKSHINAMURTI

A picturesque account of the iconical features of this aspect is given in the works like Amsumadbhedagama, Kamikagama and Karanagama. The common posture accepted by all the agamas is the Virasana, in which the right leg hangs down and the left leg is bent and placed across on the right thigh. The presence of Apasmara purusha is optional In the example from the cave at Ellora, the foot of Lord is not placed on the back of the Apasmara purusha. Only four hands are prescribed. Of them, the right lower is in the Jnanamudra or the Sandarsanamudra. The same is referred to as Samdamsa in the Natya Sastras. The lower left hand may be either in the varada pose or stretched out in the danda pose. The upper right hand should hold the akshamala and the upper left should have either agni, a sarpa, lotus or nilotpala flower. The head may be adorned and beautiful with either Jatabhara, Jatabandha, Jatamandala or Jatmakuta or sometimes the Jatas might be held together with a patta bandha. The ornaments which add artistic embellishment to the makuta are the durdhura flower, tinkling bells, serpent with the raised hood, kapala and the crescent moon. In the middle of the Makuta, is visible the Goddess Ganga with the all feminine features. As regards the ear ornaments, it is said that the left ear should have a sankhapatra and the right ear may have sankhapatra or the kundalas.

In all the images, one can notice near the foot of the Lord, risis who are represented as if they are listening to the teachings of their Lord. In the agamas, the name of the risis are given. Amsumadhedagama mentions Narada, Jamadagni, Vasishta, Bhrigu, Bharadvaja, Sanaka and Agastya. Karanagama gives the names as Agastya, Pulastya, Visvamitra and Angirasa. The list of the names in the Kamikagama and Kausika, Kasyapa, Bharadvaja, Arti, and Gautama. The other figures, seen along with the image are the Kinnaras and devas.

The characteristic features laid down in the agamas about Apasmarapurusha are that his left hand should be holding the cobra and the right should be in the sarpamudra pose.

In the temples of Tamil Nadu, from the period of Pallavas onwards, representation of Dakshinamurti is a common feature, on the south wall of the sanctum sanctorum. In the Pallava and early Chola periods, one can notice the presence of the animals like deer and cobra near the foot of the Lord, along with the risis[4].

The best examples are the Nalthunai-isvaram temple at Punjai, Amritagatesvarar temple at Tirukkadaiyur, Valampurinathasvami temple etc. All are in the Tanjore district.

An illustration of the examples of this image, will explain the significant variations found on them. The pitha of the image, from the temple at Avur, is an interesting one, as here one can notice the animals like deer and snake and the risis are abesent. In the image from the temple at Tiruvengavasal.

JNANA DAKSHINAMURTI

The main attributes of the hands are that the right upper should hold the akshamala and the corresponding left upper should have the utpala flower. The right lower hand should be in the jnana mudra pose and the left lower hand is either in the abhaya or danda pose.

VEENADHARA DAKSHINAMURTI

Detailed iconical features of this image are noticed in the Amsumadbhedagama, the Karanagama. According to the account, given in the Amsumadbhedagama, the lower two hands of the Lord should carry the musical instruments called the Vina. Further the work states that the left leg should be kept in the utkutika posture. The representation of this image is common from the early Chola period onwards[5]. The given example is the one found in the Saptarishisvara temple at Lalgudi[6].

In the yoga - Dakshinamurti aspect, akshamala and the flower are common objects, seen in the hands.

VYAGHYANA DAKSHINAMURTI

It is found on the south wall of the sanctum. Of the four hands, the right upper hand holds the akshamala and the left upper carries the naga. The right lower is in chin-mudra and the lower left hand carries the pustak. The left leg is bent and the right leg is placed on the muyalaka. The jatabhara is well treated and it reveals the artistic refinement. The right ear has the makarakundala and the left patrakundala. The delicate workmanship of the necklace enhances further the beauty of the image. Four risis are represented two on either side of the Lord.

NATARAJA (Northern wall of the Ardhamandapa)

It deserves all appreciation for the mastery of technique, it displays. The modeling and rendering of the facial features are superior. The mannerist head - dress, the number of jatas, and the stylistic manner of showing them, the exuberance and the beautiful bend of the arm in the gajahasta pose, all highly speak of the artistic glory of the image.

The right leg is placed on the back of Muyalaka, whose left hand holds the snake. The tail of the serpent is shown prominently in front.

Of the four hands, the right upper hand holds the udukkai and the left upper holds the fire. The right lower is in the abhaya pose and the left lower is in the gajahasta pose. Ganga is prominently represented to the right side. The flowing of the dress to the left side shows the great speed of the dance. The right leg contains Virakkalal. Padasaras are seen on each foot. It belongs to the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

ALINGANAMURTI

Both Siva and Parvati stand on the patra - pitha. The upper two hands of the Lord hold the usual udukkai and the deer, the right lower hand touches the right hand of Parvati. The lower left hand goes behind the left shoulder of Parvati and slightly touches the left breast. The facial expression of Parvati exposes her unbounded pleasure and happiness which she attained due to the touching of the Lord. Her left hand is in the urdhvahasta pose and the hand is much below the hip portion. The dress is visible up to the ankles and it is devoid of wave pattern designs. The slender waist and the broad hip reveal the remaining grace and charm. The karanda makuta and the kundalas in the ears are treated with much artistic delicacy and refinement. Siva wears the beautifully decked jata makuta. The central loop which connects the two thighs, is very nicely treated. The simhamukha of the waistband is worked with much ornamentation.

AGASTIYAR (North wall of the Ardhamandapa)

He sits on the patra - pitha. The right hand seems to hold the akshamalai and the left hand holds the kamandalu. The flat yajnopavita flows with foldings over the right chest. The neck is adorned with a garland of rudrakshmala. The udarabandha is also flat. The strong beard and the empty ears expose his saintly life.

DURGA

It is a popular diety. The name is indifferently applied to all goddesses with a terrible appearance and in a fighting attitude. The iconical features are found in the texts like *kasyapa-silpa* and *silparatna* in a detailed manner.

In the sculptures of the Pallava period, both lion and deer are represented near the Goddess. The literary works also mention the presence of deer along with Durga. The first reference to the deer in association with Durga occurs in Perungathai[7]. In Takkayagapparani, both deer and lion are mentioned as the vahana of Durga. In the Pallava image from Periya Venmani, the deer is represented along with the lion[8]. In the early Chola sculptures also, both lions and deer are represented. The best example is the one found on the northern wall of the *ardhamandapa* of the Nalthunai isvaran temple at Punjai, Mayavaram Taluk, Tanjore district.

Another interesting feature of the images of Durga during the period of Pallavas, is the presence of two human figures, one on each side of the image near the foot. They are in the pose of cutting their heads with a weapon. This denotes the custom of human sacrifice. This practise was prevalent from the ancient period onwards. In the Sangam period, Eyinar had the habit of sacrificing their life to the Goddess Korravai[9]. An inscription[10] from Kutur, Nellore district, Andhra, also supports the prevalance of human sacrifice to the Goddess.

This kind of representation showing Durga with devotees offering heads at her feet, would also recall the Tamil practice of kadan iruttal (கடன் இறுத்தல்) or surttal (சூர்த்தல்) found in many of the Sangam works including Cilappatikaram[11]. Hundreds of memorial stones in several parts of South India point to the widespread nature of this ubiquitous practice. The warrior paid this prize for the victory conferred by the goddess in responsce to their prayer[12]. Many such sculptural examples can be quoted. In the Draupati - ratha, the Goddess rests on the severed head of the buffalo demon. It is said that the standing position of Durga on the buffalo headed demon represents the victory of the good over evil. She is adorned by two male worshippers, kneeling at her feet and four dwarf ganas flying overhead[13].

In the Varahamandapa is noticed two devotees. The one to her right is facing the goddess with his back turned towards the spec-

tator and is severing his own head. The other fellow is seated in adoration. Above are shown two ganas one on either side. Further above are shown a lion to the right and a deer to the left. A parasal is shown above her head. In the Periyavanmani example also two bali offerers are seated on either side.

DURGA

In the temple at Tiruchengattangudi, she stands on the severed buffalo - head. Only four hands are present. The upper two hands hold the *canku* and *cakra*. The right lower hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower is in the *katvalambita* pose. A breast-band is seen. The channavira highly speaks of the heroic achievement of the Goddess. The well fitting *karanda-makuta* add an additional artistic grace to the figure. Two figures are represented one on each side of the feet. One holds the sword above the left thigh and the other figure places the sword on the neck with the help of the right hand and with the left hand, he holds the knot

Two other images noticed in that area also depict the prevalence of the habit of cutting the head with the sword

The above three images are of the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

PARVATI

It is a panelled representation. The panel represents Parvati with *anjali* postures and she is worshipping the *Linga*. The ears are empty. A side-knot decorates the head. Exactly behind her is seen another lady in the standing posture. She carries a flying whisk in the right hand and the left hand is lowered down and is placed on the hip. Two more figures are also visible. One carries the flying whisk in the right hand and the left hand is placed on the hip. The next figure seems to be taller than the first one. The objects in the hand are not clearly visible. The *Linga* is decked by a garland.

OTHER STONE IMAGE OF THE TEMPLE

SATURN

He stands on the *patra-pitha*. The right hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left is in the *katvalambita* pose. The head is ornamented with the *jatmakuta*. The ears are lenghty and plain. The shoulders are treated with proportionate modelling and it`s bahulamalas are well designed. The dress is only up to the thigh level. The dress looks very nice due to the creeper and flower designs. The bird crow, his vehicle, is present behind him. The proportionate arrangement of the feathers impart a natural outlook to the bird.

SUBRAHMANYA WITH VALLI AND DEIVAYANAI

a) SUBRAHMANYA

He is in the *samabhanga* pose which suggests spiritual equilibrium[14]. The torso is modelled in a manner which suggests strength and power and the sewing of the lines of both sides is magnificently rendered. The shoulders and the part between them are done in such a manner as to suggest supreme prowess which is the primary quality of the theme. The arms are also done in a manner suggesting strength. The short ends of the cloth hanging between the thighs are noteworthy. The upper two hands carry the *sakti* and *vajra*. The right lower hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower is in the *katvalambita* pose. The *karandamakuta* is executed with the laudable artistic worksmanship and refinement. The ears have the *patra-kundalas*. The *bahulamalas* are not present. The armlets, wristlets and the anklets are treated proportionately. The vehicle peacock is seen behind. The feathers of the bird are artistically designed and it enhances the tender beauty of the bird.

b) DEIVAYANI

The right hand holds the flower and the left hand is in the *lola* hasta. The manner of depiciting the breasts is in the classical tradition. The fingers are rendered gracefully, the garment with finely workedout folds is charming. The flow of *yajopavita* is delineate in a superb manner and the expression is one of serenity.

c) VALLI

The left hand holds the flower and the right hand is in the *lola* hasta. The breast-band well executed. The ornaments and drapery are noteworthy. Though the limbs display some stiffness in modelling, yet the treatement of the figure is exquisite. In fact, the modelling in general is beautiful and this is exemplified by the excellent treatment of the hips and the breasts.

TRIMUKHASURA

He stands on the *patra-pitha*. The hands are in the *anjali* posture. The unornamented postures of the hands, legs and the face expose his complete renunciation from the material world. The broad shoulders highly speak the energetic power and strength of the asura. It is dated to the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

CANDIKESWARAMURTI

In the depicition of the legs, the element of proportion is

given due importance. The gentle forward bend of the figure which is responsible for the graceful bend of the right leg, is treated in a superb manner. The ecstatic expression of the face further elevates the beauty of the image. A prominent fillet is seen round the head. On the forehead are traces of the third eye which are intended to answer the appellation of Chandika-isvara.

The right ear has the *makarakundala* and the left has the patrakundala. The necklaces are treated with intricate worksmanship. The right hand holds a parasu and the left hand is in *chin mudra*.

IMAGES OF VINAYAKA

Their noteworthy details are the naturalistic animal faces combined in a naturalistic human body. The *karanda-makutas* show refined and delicate worksmanship. The ears are treated with superb artistic calibre. The *udarabandhas* are simple. In the representation of the shoulders, one can notice naturalism and idealism. The arms are proportionately represented. The necklaces are beautifully well modelled and its intricate worksmanship reveals the artistic worksmanship of the sculptor of the contemporary period. All the four images belong to the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

The other three images seen inside the shrine chamber are also of the same style.

ADHIKARANANDHI

He stands on the *padma pitha*. The upper two hands hold the *parasu* and the deer which faces the Lord. The two lower hands are in the *anjali* posture. A long weapon is attached with the left shoulder. The necklaces are intricately designed and they are striking for its confined and rhythmic treatement. The left ear has the *patra-kundala* and the right ear has the makarakundala. The well adorned head gear enhances the facial complexion to a great level. The eyes, the cheeks, the nose and the lips are superbly exhibited without any deviation from the artistic discipline.

DVARAPALAKAS

It is present on the left side entrance of the *ardhamandapa*. It has the following artistic features. The right hand is in the *danda* pose and the left hand is placed on the mace of the *gada*. He stands on the right leg firmly and the left leg is placed on the mace. The *udarabandha* is flat and is pearl designed. The flexions of the body

portray the artistic excellence and workmanship. The dress is up to the thigh level only. The dress is treated with the creeper and flower designs. The knot of the dress flows over the right thigh. The kundalas of the ears in the centre have awl representations. The makuta is well fitted. The protruding teeth are no way adds dreadful look, as the other features are executed with artistic grace and refinement.

In the case of the right side dvarapalaka, the right hand is raised to the head level and is in the vismaya pose and the left hand is in the gajahasta pose and its wrist is well placed on the mace. The face is not in frontal but in profile. The ear ornaments are not clearly visible due to the oiling of the figure. A long garland of bells give a combined and coherent beauty to the whole figure.

To date these figures, various factors have to be taken into consideration. In the Pallava period, particularly during the periods of Kings like Mahendravarman I, Narasimhavarman I and Narasimhavarman II (Rajasimha), the images were represented with two hands only. Moreover they were not frontal but in profile. From the period of the Pallava King Aparajita, the images began to appear with four hands.

From the period of the Cholas, only fourhanded dvarapalakas are mainly made their appearance. The gigantic dvarapalakas are present both in the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjore and the Gangaikondacholeeswaram temple at Gangaikondacholapuram. They are represented frontally.

In the later Chola period, especially in the Kampaharesvarar temple at Tribhuvanam and the Iravatesvaram temple at Darasuram, the images are not so gigantic as in the Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram temples.

Like that both in the Vijayanagar and Nayak period, the images are small in size and mainly, they have four hands.

As regards the images of the Thiruppugalur temple, it is well known that the figures have two hands only. Due to the presence of two hands, one should not come to wrong conclusion that the image belongs to the Pallava period, as no Pallava influence is visible both in the artistic and the architectural styles of the temple. Moreover dvarapalakas with two hands are also common in many temples of the early Chola period. Inscriptions of the temple also date the temple to an early period. From the

foregoing evidences, it seems that the images of the temples at Thiruppugalur belong to the transitional period of the 10th century A.D. One more dvarapalaka is present on the wall of the inner gopura of the temple. This is also two handed and frontal in appearance. The right leg is placed firmly on the pitha and the left leg is placed on the mace. The right hand is in the danda hasta and the left is placed on the mace. The Makuta is not so high as in the other early mentioned dvarapalakas. The kundalas seem to have the representation of the owls in the centre. It also belongs to the Chola period of the 10th century A.D.

AGNI

One of the eight dikpalakas, Lord, Agni, the God of fire, is regarded as the guardian deity of the universe[14]. In the Vedic texts, there are references to the Lord Agni. In the Rig-Veda, Agni is assigned flaming three heads and seven rays, having three tongues, four horns, three feet and seven arms[15]. As he is the prominent of the Vedic Gods, he is celebrated in atleast two hundred hymns of the Rig-Veda. In the Mahabaratha also, he is described as having seven faces[16]. The detailed iconographical features are mentioned in the Visnudharmottara purana. According to this work, Agni should have four arms and a long beard. His consort Svadha is present on his left thigh. His hands hold flames, trident and rosary. It is also known that Svadha is his second wife[17] and in some cases both are represented on either side of him.

In the agamas, four arms are prescribed. The lower two hands are in the abhaya and varada poses. The upper two hands carry sruka and saki. Mention of Agni is found in the Agni and Matsya puranas. Both the puranas mention mesa (ram or goat) as his vehicle. Hemadri mentions the following objects jvala and trident (trisula) in the left hands, and rosary in the right, with his sakti and svadha seated on his left thigh, bearing a pot jewels.

In North Indian images, Agni is represented with a single head, having only two hands and they hold a rosary and a water vessel. Exceptional example with four hands are present in the case of the images of Khajuraho temples. He is represented with a strong moustache. In some cases, his vehicle goat is also represented. He mainly stands in the tribhanga pose. Moreover he is bearded[18]

In South Indian images, two hands, three legs and seven

arms are present in each. In one image from Kandiyur in Travanncore, goat heads are present with three legs and seven arms. But in another example from Chidambaram, only human heads are present and the other features are similar to those of the kandiyur example. In both the examples, an aureole of flames encircle the heads. The vehicle ram is noticed in both the images. Both the images lack the beard.

AGNI (Mulavar)

The images of the Tiruppugalur temple stands on the patrapitha which is devoid of any ornamentation. Of the three legs, only two legs are well visible. He has seven hands. The lower two hands are in the anjali postures. The faces are well represented. The jvalai makuta is beautifully designed and the flames are well represented. The curves are proportionately worked out. The left leg is placed firmly on the pitha and the right is stepped up to the front. The dvibhanga flexion of the body is beautifully and carefully exposed. The image seems to belong to the tenth century A.D.

RISHABHAVAHANADEVAR WITH AMBAL

A) RISHABHAVAHANADEVAR

He stands on the padmapitha. He is in the dvibhanga pose. The right upper hand carries the parasu and the left upper holds the antelope which turns towards the Lord's head. The front two legs of the antelope are in the rearing posture exposing its action. The right lower hand is placed on the head of the bull, which is behind the Lord. The bull with its protruding tongue licks the finger of the Lord. The left lower hand is in the katvalambita pose. The waistband with the simhamukha clasp is executed with much artistic intricacy. The necklaces are beautifully and elegantly carved. The left ear has the patra-kundala and the right ear has the makara-kundala. The jatamakuta is well finished and its artistic workmanship is highly admirable and commendable.

b) DEVI

She also stands on the same padmapitha. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left hand is in the lola hasta. The dress with the wave-pattern design attracts everybody's attention. The central loop is much lowered. The breast-band tightly holds the rounded and prominent breasts. The karanda-makuta along with the patrakundalas and the arched brows of the face highly project the artistic calibre and achievement of the contemporary sculptor. The slender waist and the broad hip expose the feminine features.

c) RISABHA (Fig. No. 23)

It faces to the front. The tail hangs down freely which suggests that the animal is at rest. The neck foldings are appreciably worked out with intricate design. The muscles are well depicted, suggestive of its youth hood. The facial expression with the bodily features ascribe a Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

SOMANAYAKI

She stands on the padmapitam. The dress with the usual wave pattern design is lowered up to the ankles. The upper right hand seems to carry the akshamala and the upper left carries the flower. The right lower hand is in the abhaya pose and the left is in the urdhvahasta. The interesting feature is that the left lower hand is much lowered down below the hip. The slender waist with the broad hip expose the feminine quality in a natural way. The wristlets, aremlets and the anklets are treated with simplicity. The ears and the makuta are not well ornamented but anyhow, this defect is compensated by well designed hands and the well arranged dress.

IMAGES OF NADDI

Three figures are found (Fig. No. 168, 24). Nandi is the name of Siva's vehicle which is a symbol of both the deities generative power and of dharma, righteousness19. The tails are squeezed in between the hind legs. The face is short. Their prominent humps enhance the youthful nature of the figures. They are the excellent Chola specimens of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

NALAN (THE KING)

He stands on the patrapitha. The story behind the King is that after worshipping Saturn on the temple, the King could attain bliss and happiness in his life. The hands are in the anjali postures. The closed eyes depict his deep and true devotion. The hands and legs are free from ornamentation and they expose his renunciation from the material world. Even the head is not depicted with the kritamakuta.

CANDIKESVARA

He sits on the patrapitha. The left leg bends and the right leg hangs freely. The right hand holds the parasu and the left is in chinmudra. The facial expressions along with the pose of the left hand, reveal his deep penance. The left ear has the patra-kundala

and the right ear is lengthy as well as empty. The *makuta* exactly fits the head. The broad shoulders along with the chest expose the sound body. The *udarabandha* seems to be pearl designed.

ANNAPOORNI

She sits on the *patra-pitha*. The left leg bends and the right leg hangs freely. The right hand carries the spoon and the object in the left could not be identified. The face and the *makuta* are completely eroded and that is why their artistic features could not be well exhibited.

SARASVARTI

Worship of the Goddess Sarasvati was more popular even during the period of the Vedas[20]. In the Vedas, Sarasvati was a water deity, Goddess of the river of the same name which flowed west from the Himalayas, through the home of the early Aryans. In India, Sarasvati, Goddess of learning and Fine Arts, occupies a place of paramount importance in terms of her popularity and wide appeal amongst the Gods and the Goddesses of the Brahmanical pantheon. She is variously known as *Vach*, *Vagdevi, Vagisvari, Vani, Sarada, Bharati* and *Vinapani*[21].

In the Brahmanical Mythology, she is acknowledged in two respects namely first as the consort of Brahma and later on as the consort of Visnu[22]. The iconical features are described in detail in a number of texts. In *Amsumadbhedagma*, it is mentioned that the godess is seated on the white lotus. The work further says that of the four hands the upper right should carry the *akshamala* and the lower hand should be in the *Vyakhyana-mudra*. Regarding the left side hands, it is mentioned that they should carry a book and a white lotus[23].

Visnudharmottara-purana also prescribed the lotus as the seat and moreover, it says that the Goddess should be in the *samabhanga* pose. The objects mentioned in the work are a *rosary*, a book and a *kamandalu*[24]. According to the work *Rupamandana*, her hands should possess Vina as one of the objects[25]. The *Purvakaranagama* mentions the lotus seat.

In the *Agnipurana* it is stated that the two front hands should hold the Vina and the one of her right and left hands should hold a *rosary* and a book respectively. *Hemadri* alsso mentions the objects like rosary, book, and kamandelu.

In some of the texts, Sarasvati is also conceived as the Sakti of Siva. In the *Sula-samhita* of the Skanda purana, Sarasvati is described as a female figure, having a *jatamakuta* with the cresent moon over her head. *Devi Mahatmya*, prescribes the objects like a rosary, a Vina, an ankusa and a book. In the work *Silparatna*, ten arms are mentioned and they possess the objects like *cakra, canka, kapala, pasa, parasu, sudha-kumbha, veda* and *lotus*.

As regards her vehicle, it is mentioned that she always rides on the bird peacock[26]. But in practice in the temple art of Tamilnadu, mostly she sits alone on the *padmasana*. In the image from the north, one can notice two male attendants. They are in the possession of drums and both are looking at the Goddess as if in the act of admiring her beauty. On the face one can notice Karuna and santa rasas[27].

SARASVATI

In the case of the image from the Tiruppugalur temple, the Goddess sits on the *patrapitha* with the two legs bent and are placed one above the other. The right upper hand holds the *akshamala* and the left upper holds the kundikai. The right lower hand is in *chinmudra* and the left lower hand holds the pustak. It belongs to the Chola period of the 10th century A.D.

SVALAKESI

She is considered to be the consort of Adhikaranandi. She stands on the patrapitha. She seems to be somewhat leaning to one side. The hip is plain and the central loop which connects the two thighs are devoid of any ornamentation. The breasts are well rounded and are not bounded with the breast-band. The feminine tendency of the hip and the wrist are not neatly exposed to the eyes of the spectator. The ears are empty and the *karanda-makuta* adorn the head. The right hand seems to carry the flower and the left hand is much lowered down below the knee level.

BHAIRAVAR

He stands on the *patra-pitha*. The hip ornament is the snake whose tail is represented with folds. The *udarabandha* looks like a rope which tied round the stomach. The *jvalai makuta* adds a fearful and dreadful attitude. The left ear has the *patrakundala* and the right ear has the makarakundala of the four hands. The upper right hand holds the udukkai and the upper left holds the pasa. The right hand

holds the trisula and the left lower holds the kapala. The other figure has similar characteristic features

SURYA

Surya means brave (suvirya) and is applied to Soma and Indra. The attribute later came to denote an independent Deva namely the Sun[28]. He is the brightest among luminous bodies, the conqueror of the Universe, the winner of wealth, the illuminator of the world and brilliance incarnate. In short he is preeminent. Since the sun dispelled darkness and gave life and warmth, it became an object of worship[29]. He is one of the pancadevata[30]. In the temple art of Tamil Nadu, Surya is in most cases shown as a youth standing erect (*samabhanga*), two armed and holding a lotus in each hand. Karandamakuta is the fitting head-gear[31]. In the north, he is often represented with four hands[32] and attendants are depicted near Him[33].

The Surya representation is noticed in the mandapas of the Mamalla period and they are mainly represented in panels[34].

During the period of the Cholas, separate shrine was built to keep the image. The artistic features are highly refined and proportionate. The iconical features are given in detailed manner in the texts like *Amsumadbhedagama, Suprabhedagama* and *Silparatna*.

In the image of the temple at Thiruppugalur
he stands on the patrapitha. The two hands hold the lotus flowers. The halo is well depicted behind the head. The artistic features are well refined. It can be dated to the Chola period of the 10th century A.D.

APPAR (Mulavar)

He stands on the *patrapitha*. His left leg is planted firmly on the pitha and the right leg is slightly bent and stepped up to the front. The dress is visible only up to the thigh level. His hands are in the *anjali* posture. The ulavaram is attached with the left shoulder. The complete shaven head and the lengthy plain ears express his devotional service.

MURUGA NAYANAR

He is one of the sixty three Nayanars. The plain dress flows up to the thigh level. The complete shaven head and the plain treatment of the ears as well as the neck portions really speak of his simple and austere life. The facial expressions express the devotional attitude. It belongs to the Chola period of the 11th century A. D.

VARUNA (left side figure)

It is a rare panelled specimen. He sits on his vehicle called makara. The right hand seems to hold the *pasa* and the left hand is placed on the left leg`s knee. A dog is represented nearby.

PIDARI (Right side figure)

She sits on the *patra-pitha*. The left leg bends and the right leg hangs down. The upper two hands are broken. The right lower is in the *abhaya* and the left lower is in the *varada* pose. The head is ornamented with the *javalai makuta*. The breasts are rounded. The dress is up to the thigh level and it is beautified with the creeper and garland designs.

VATAPI GANAPATI

The attributes of both the legs and hands could not be clearly visible due to over-oiling of the stone. But anyhow, it seems that the trunk coils to the right side.

KALARIMURTI

This is also found on a slab which is kept in the southern *prakara* of the temple. The figure stands on the *patrapitha*. He stands on the right leg with his toe is planted strongly and the left leg is raised as if in the pose of kicking yama who has fallen helplessly. The unbalanced thrown out postures of both the legs and hands suggest his inability to do anything against the Lord. To the right side is visible a completely shaven headed figure, whose hands are in the *anjali* postures.

Of the four hands of Lord Siva, the right upper hand holds the trisula, which is pointed towards yama. The left lower hand is in the *suchi* pose, pointing towards yama. The upper two hands carry the *parasu* and the deer which looks at Siva. The postures of the hands and the legs portray his action of destruction. The broad shoulders and the strong chest expose the well planned final attack of Siva on yama. The folded yajnopavita is flat and its Brahmaknot is visible on the left shoulder. The dress is up to the thigh level and the simhamukha of the waist-band is exposed with much artistic beauty. The *makuta* is well executed with artistic embellishment. The ornament which decorates the forehead is pearl-designed.

FIGURES ON THE UPAPITHA OF THE MUKHAMANDAPA OF THE GODESS SHRINE

One panel represents seven figures of ladies
Their exact identification is not known. They are in different dancing postures.

ELEPHANT FIGURE

This is noticed on the entrance step of the mukha mandapa. In art, elephant is the symbol of majesty combining power and strength[35]. The position of the legs and the coiled nature of the tail emphasize the fact that the elephant is in action. The neck contains ornaments of bells which are very intricately worked out. The back portion is also beautified with artistic workmanship. The elephant holds a soldier in its trunk. He carries a sword in the right hand and the left hand carries the shield. His facial expressions and the bodily actions expose his unbearable sufferings.

SCULPTURES FOUND ON THE PILLARS

a) APPAR (FIG. NO.)

He stands on the padmapitha and the hands are in the anjali postures. The shaven head, the long empty ears and the only rudrakahamala around the neck expose his true devotional and spiritual life. There is smoothness and evenness in modeling. The closed eyes express his sincere and devoted contemplation.

b) SAMBANDAR

The two hands hold the cymbals. Ears have the patrakundalas. Head is adorned with the kritamakuta. The features of the face and the gestures of the hands are highly expressive. Neck ornaments all artistically worked out and their presence add a charming look to the entire figure.

c) HORSE-RIDER

The horse is represented in a rearing posture. The rider on the back holds the girdle. The poses of both the rider and the horse indicate that they are in action.

d) MITHUNA FIGURE

In art, Mithuna is a symbol of moksha[36]. Its depiction was a universal practice in the whole range of Indian art[37]. It has never been exploited for pornographic ends. It is always associated with religion and art[38]. Mithuna really represents both man and woman enjoying their nearness with one another[39].

In the Upanishads also sexual relationship is favored as one of the means of apprehending the divine grace. Moreover, it is essentially used to express the true relationship between the

human soul and God.

In the present temple, the figures are in the standing postures. The left hand of the male figure embraces the left breast of the female. Lips of both figures are closely touching each other. The male figure has a knot on the head.

BRONZE IMAGES OF THE TEMPLE
VINAYAKA

The image stands on the padma-pitha. The stomach is more pronounced. The front portion of the head and the elephants proboscis are thrown more forward. Bahulamala overflows on either shoulder with a streamer at right angles to it. The line carvings on the trunk portion is proportionately marked out. A waist girdle of three strands encircles the pot like belly. A low skirt encircles the loins with elongated folds on the sides and a square median loop.

NATRAJA

The fillet decorated with festoons is prominent. The facial features are clearly delineated. The waves of the locks are beautifully decked and their ends are curved slightly. The conception of the whole design is beautiful and is execution is superb. The gently movement of the locks effectively highlights the charming rhythm of the dance of Siva. The treatment of both arms and legs is superb and they are rhythmatically arranged. The right upper hand holds the udukkai and the upper left carries the fire. The right lower hand is in the abhaya pose and the left lower is in the gaja-hasta pose. The wrist of the right lower hand is encircled by a cobra and its raised head is worked out prominently. The posture of the left leg is exquisitely represented. The head ornaments are very prominent. The cobra, the dhature flower and the peacock feathers are prominently shown. The right leg is strongly placed on the back of Apasmarapurusha. The features of Apasmarapurusha are realistically executed. His facial expressions and the bodily postures expose his utmost sufferings.

The back view of Natraja is an excellent one. The falling of the jatas on the backside seems to be very charming and graceful.

SIVAKAMASUNDARI

The figure as a whole is extremely note-worthy for its noble features such as slender but proportionate limbs, beautifully modeled torso with f ull breasts and hips. The fingers are realistic. The

calm and beautiful expressions of the face elevate the beauty of the figure to a great extent. The drapery with characteristic lines suggesting folds, the gem-set waist-bands from which hang finely worked festoons and tassels and the beautifully swaying *yajnopavita* add artistic charm and grace to the figure. The very flexion in which the figure stands is graceful. The right hand holds the flower. The left hand is in the *lola* hasta.

The back view seems to be very pleasing. The knot of the dress is artistically executed. The sirascakra is beautifully represented. The falling of the hairs on the back expose the pleasing and charming appearance of the figure. The execution of the foldings of the *yajnopavita* is very well visible on the back. The group is the Chola masterpiece of the 11th century A.D.

TRIPURANTAKAMURTI (Fig. No. 25) **WITH TRIPURASUNDARI**

A high *jata makuta*, almost cylindrical in form with rounded top, is seen on the head The cresent moon, Datura flower and the ornament with prongs are seen on it. They are, however not in high relief. The forehead is beautified with an ornamented fillet. The face is oval and chubby. Eye-brows are ridge like and eyelids and eyes are moulded in a naturalistic manner. Nose is high and moulded as if it is of flesh and blood. The lips are sensitive. The expressions that results from these features is rather serious. The ears are lengthy and free from any ornamentation. The neck is short and the necklaces are worked with much care and devoted attention. The folded *yajnopavita* beautifies the front portion of the figure. The Brahma-knot is visible near the left shoulder. The *udarabandha* is plain and flat. The torso with the head is bent to the left and its modelling is somewhat heavy. The lines on either side retain their purity and rhythmic flow. The chest is narrow. The shoulders are well formed probably to suggest to supreme prowess of the Lord. The bahulamalas are treated with delicate and fine worksmanship. The long and beautifully modelled arms add artistic grace to the figure. The bust of the figure seems to be the masterly work from the points of view of proportions, vigour, restrained decoration and a fine sense of plastic modelling. The upper right hand carries the parasu and the left holds the deer which is in the rearing posture and turned towards the head of the Lord. The objects are placed between the index and middle fingers. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left lower hand seems to hold the bow.

The modelling of the legs is superb and like the arms, they

are tapering from the thighs to the anklets The right leg is firmely placed on the well designed *padma-pitha*. The left leg is slightly bent and its foot is just projected to the front. The pearl designed *padasaras* adorn the feet. The loin cloth is tight-fitting and the dress is present only up to the thigh level. The creeper and garland designs enhance the artistic style of the garment. The waist-band with the simha-mukha design is worked out elaborately, but at the same time within the artistic frame work. The back-view gives a beautiful and charming appearance. The petalled *sirascakra* is executed in a superb and praiseworthy manner (Fig. No. 198). The encircling udarabandha is clearly visible. The group belongs to the period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

TRIPURASUNDARI

The image, when compared with Tripurantakamurti, is short and it shows that the sculptor had not deviated from the rules of the *silpa texts*. The apex of the *Krita-makuta* reaches only up to the level of the shoulder of Tripurantakamurti (Fig. No. 261). The *makuta* is well designed. It is high and conical. Only three karandas are visible on the top and the lower part is well ornamented. The arched eye-brows as well as the sharp nose and the smiling lips enhance the beauty and charm of the figure. The *kundalas* of the ears are stylistically worked out. A strong necklace adorns the neck and is lowered up to the breast level.

Another ornament tightly attached with the neck has a stud at the centre. It seems to be the tali (mangalaya sutra). The *bahulamalas* flow smoothly over the shoulders. The sacred thread with three strands is seen passing between the full, almost and beautifully modelled, breasts. The Brahma-knot is visible just above the left breast. The navel portionis also fine. The shoulders are striking for its fine modelling. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left is in *lola* hasta. The wrists are decorated with the Valayas and the fingers are beautified with the presence of rings. The fingers are delicate and the gestures are very beautiful. A subtle suggestion of beautiful rhythm is well visible in the depicition of the hips. The left leg stands firmly on the *padma-pitha* and the right leg is slightly bent and its knee is protruded to the front than the other. The knee caps are not prominent. The garment which closely clings to the legs, reaches up to the ankles and it is done in the characteristic wave over-wave pattern. The knot of the dress flows on the left thigh. Padasaras adorn the feet.

The padmasana is circular in shape and the petals of the lotus are much evolved. The line of demarcation between the upper and the lower parts is very clear.

SOMASKANDAMURTI

Here the group consists of Siva, Uma and Skanda.

a) SIVA

He is seated on a padmasana in the erect Sukhasana posture. The manner in which the jatamakuta is worked is pleasing. The crescent is scene on the left side prominently. The other ornamental details are not in bold relief. The face is oval and its features are clear. The expressions reveals a subtle smile. The left ear has the parta-kundala and the right ear has the well-ornamented makarakundala. The sacred thread flows into two lines, one goes over the right chest and the another is lowered down up to the right thigh. The udarabandha is thick and gem like infront. The first is executed in a classical manner. The shoulders are beautifully moulded. The treatment of the keyuras and valayas are very fine. The loincloth is beautified with the creeper and garland designs. The sashes are simple, but the simhamukha is elaborately worked out. Padasaras decorate the feet. The treatment of the arms and the technique of joining the upper arms of the finger are superior. The modeling is fine and their postures are beautiful and well balanced. The emblems are treated with much artistic pattern. Of the four hands, the right upper holds the parasu and the left upper holds the antelope. The objects are in between the index and the middle fingers. The right lower hand is in the abhaya pose and the left lower is in the kataka pose. The fingers are beautiful with the presence of well finished rings.

b) UMA

The figure of Uma is of course in the same style as that of Siva and its workmanship is charming. The karandamakuta is well worked out and is depicted prominently. The pronounced finial looks very graceful. The strands of hair falling on either side of the shoulders reach almost the bands of the Keyuras which show broad festoon. The ears have the makara-kundalas which are treated with artistic design. The torso is proportionate. The lines of the sides of the torso of the figure becomes straight and stiff. The workmanship of the breast is very nice. It is realistically delineated. The yajnopavita is shown flowing in a beautiful waveform in

between the breasts. The slender waist and the broad hip enhance the feminine grace and charm. The dress with the wave pattern design is lowered down up to the ankles. Like Siva, she also sits on the padmapitha. The left leg hangs down freely and the right leg is in the kutkutikasana posture. The refined and well-executed padasaras decorate the foot. Of the two hands, the right is in the kataka pose and the left is firmly placed on the pitha (Fig. No. 27).

c) SKANDA

Here the noteworthy feature is that the figure skanda is shown in front. In most of the examples, Skanda is shown behind. Modeling is very beautiful. We see in it, the beauty of modeling, the perfection of proportions and the tenderness of felling in all their glory. The karanada-makuta is executed with refined workmanship. The ears have the patrakundalas. The bahulamalas are treated prominently and it majestically falls over the shoulders. The channavira is well depicted. The waistband is treated with much intricate design. The right hand holds the lotus flower and the left hand is in the iola hasta pose.

The back view of the three figures seem to be very pleasing and attractive. Siva's head in the back has a beautiful petalled sirascakra, and the petals are bound by a rim. The flowing of yajnopavita is well visible in the backside. The back of Skanda's head also contains the sirascakra. The group belongs to the Chola period of the 11th, and the 12th century A.D.

AGNI (Fig. No. 28)

The figure stands on the rounded padma-pitha. The left leg stands firmly and the right leg is slightly bent. Two feets are visible prominently and the third one is behind the right foot. Like that only the two legs are exposed to the front. The dress is up to the knee level. Only the line carvings of the dress are beautifully presented and their exquisite proportionate arrangement depict the marvelous workmanship of the sculptor. The waistband is worked out with elaborate details. The simha mukha design is absent but the central loop connecting the two thighs is designed in an exquisite manner.

The figure has seven hands in total. The right side contains four hands and the left side has three hands. The lower two hands are in the anjali postures. The other five hands are simply hanging below, holding no objects in their hands. The armlets and the wristlets are the only decorative ornaments of the hands. Two heads are

depicted with the same artistic features. The ears are devoid of ornaments. The closed eyes expose the deep contemplation. The protruding teeth in no way create a fearful and dreadful appearance. Instead of that, only a calmful expression is gleaned from the face. The two heads have the common jatamakuta. It contains seven flames. They are in the proportionate order. The skulls on the head are represented prominently. Two horns are visible.

The back view is excellently worked out (Fig. No. 205). The treatment of the makuta in the back is superb. The armlets, wristlets and keyuras are well portrayed. The two side buttocks are rhythmatically designed and their depiction is a stylistically advanced one.

BRAHMA (Fig. No. 29)

He sits on the beautiful well-decorated padmapitha. The three faces are clearly represented. The ears are lengthy and are not ornamented with any kundala. The well-fitted jatamakuta is artistically ornamented. The apex of the makuta is well portrayed. The necklaces are treated with much intricate design. They expose the talent of the sculptor in the jewellary making. The yajnopavita is flat and with foldings, it is lowered down to the right hip. Brahma-knot is visible near the left chest. Udarabandha is treated very simply. It goes around the stomach just like the thin thread. The dress with foldings is present up to the foot. The wave pattern design of the dress is excellently worked out. The waistband is worked out with artistic workmanship. Of the four hands, the right upper seems to carry the akshamala and the left upper carries the kamandalu. The back view gives a pleasant artistic appearance. The execution of the flat folded yajnopavita is well visible in the backside. The side view exposes the proportionate arrangement of the faces. Moreover the depiction of the hands of the right side is well done. It belongs to the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

SOMASKANDA AMBAL

The ornaments and the drapery of the figure are noteworthy. Though the limbs display some stiffness in modeling, the treatment of the figure is exquisite. In fact, the modeling in general is beautiful and this exemplified by the excellent treatment of the hips and breasts. The karanda-makuta is treated with the artistic and disciplined workmanship. The ears are excellently ornamented with the makarakundalas. The well executed bahulamalas flow over the

shoulders and their presence enhance the grace and charm of the image. The breasts are prominent and rounded. The folded yajnopavita flows in between the breasts and its flowing is very pleasant to look at. The exposition of the navel is artistically superb. She stands on the pitha with the right leg planted strongly and firmly and the left slightly bending. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left is in the lola hasta posture. The head has no sirascakra behind. The feminine flexions are clearly visible on the back. The graceful depiction of the buttocks enhance the feminine quality of the figure. It is an excellent Chola piece of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

SUBRAHMANYA WITH VALLI AND DEIVAYANI

a) SUBRAHMANYA

Karanda-makuta is treated with artistic refinement and delicacy. The facial features are sharp and expressive of supreme calm. The torso is moulded in a manner which suggests strength and power and the swing of the lines of both sides is magnificently rendered. The shoulders and the part between them are done in a manner as to suggest supreme prowess of the Lord.

The arms are also done in a manner suggesting strength. The armlets and the wristlets add artistic enhancement to the figure. The right upper hand holds the sakti and the corresponding left holds a vajra. The right lower hand is in the abhaya pose. The legs are also well modeled and the lines that enclose their masses are also smoothly flowing. The loincloth is worked in a simple manner and the loop of the simha mukha knot of the waistband are finely modeled. The short ends of cloth, hanging between the thighs, are noteworthy.

b) DEIVAYANI

She stands on the padmapitha. The flexions of the body seems to be natural. The karanda-makuta depicts excellent and well-disciplined artistic execution. The two ears have the patrakundalas. The breasts are prominently exposed. The folded, beautified yajnopavita flows in between the breasts. The right hand holds the flows and the left hand is in the lola hasta. The dress with the wave pattern design flows up to the anklets.

d) VALLI

She stands to the right side of the Lord. All features are similar to the figures of Deivayani, except the position of the hands. Here, the right hand is in the lola hasta and the left holds the flower.

The back views of the three figures are very pleasant to look at. All the three have sirascakras behind. The petals are artistically carved.

SULIKAMBAL

She stands on the well-executed padmapitha. The flexions of the body make the figure lean to the left side. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left hand is in the lola hasta. The sacred thread branches off into two at the centre between the breasts. The slender waist and the broad hip brings out, the captivating feminine beauty. The waistband is executed with much experienced artistic workmanship. The central loop is minutely carved out. The head in the back has the beautifully petalled sirascakra. The decoration of the waistband is clearly, visible in the back. The feminine grace is exposed through the well-balanced buttocks.

BHOGASAKTI AMMAN

She sits on the padmapitha. The left leg hangs down and the right leg is in the kutkutikasana pose. The design of the dress is treated in a very delicate manner. The waistband even without the presence of the simha mukha clasp looks very beautiful. The yajnopavita with folds flows between the breasts in an attractive and pleasant manner. The necklaces are worked out with the highly advanced artistic technique. The kundalas of the ears ornamented intricately and their presence elevate the beauty of the face to a great extent. The arched raised brows, the sharp and pointed nose; the smiling lips enhance the feminine charm of the figure. Karandamakuta is well executed and the other ornaments of the head are worked is well executed and the other ornaments of the head are worked with the highly advanced as well as experienced mastermind of the sculptor. Pearl designed padasaras deck the feet. The fingers are stylistically represented with the presence of rings. The other image of the Goddess of the same type belongs to the period of the 16th, and the 17th centuries A.D.

PRADOSHANAYAKAR WITH THE GODDESS

Both the figures stand on the padmapitha, which is placed on the patrapitha.

PRADOSHANAYAKAR

He stands with the right leg firmly and the left leg is slightly bent. The dress is present only up to the thigh level and the usual creeper and the garland designs give a majestic and magnificent

outlook to the figure. The sacred thread after the Brahma knot, flows with three strands. The foldings of the dress are rhythmically arranged. The neck is beautified with the presence of well-knit necklaces. The bahulamalas flow over the shoulders and are treated well in proportion with the shoulders. The left ear has the patrakundala and the right ear is with the well-executed makarakundala. The eyes, the sharp nose and with the well-executed makarakundala. The eyes, the sharp nose and the full cheeks enhance the feminine grace of the face. The makuta is closely fitted on the head and a half crescent is prominently present on the left side. Of the four hands, the right upper hand carries the parasu and the left upper hand carries the antelope. The right lower hand is in the abhaya pose and the left lower embraces the left side hip of the Goddess. The shoulders and the arms are well and proportionately treated.

b) The goddess is in the dvibhanga pose. The dress with creeper and garland designs increases the artistic the artistic value of the image. The waistband is very intricately and wisely designed. The slender waist and the broad hip speak of the feminine enticing and the captivating quality. The breasts are prominently represented. The folded sacred thread flows with three strands in between the breasts. The necklaces are worked out with artistic refinement and unequalled delicacy. The ears are ornamented with the unsurpassed artistic grace. The facial expressions expose her unbounded happiness which she could attain due to the embracement. The makuta is well modeled and its execution is an excellent one. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left is in the lola hasta pose. The other group has also similar features.

CHANDRASEKHARAMURTI WITH THE GODDESS (Fig.No. 30)

The face is treated with skill. Its features are somewhat realistic. The jatamakuta is well ornamented. The artistic embellishment of the makuta is a highly superb one. The forehead is portrayed with the refined and disciplined workmanship. The makaraskundalas in the ears are highly attractive. An excellent and exquisite handing is done for the successful finishing of necklace, which give a comprehensive beauty to the whole figure. The bahulamalas are placed over the shoulders and their majestic presence increases the dignity of the image. The strand of hair falling on either side of the shoulders is treated in naturalistic manner. The emblems especially the parasu and the deer are depicted in a praiseworthy manner. The realistic expression of the deer is a highly appreciable and admirable one. The depiction of the antelope is really a wonderful one. The flexions of the parts of the body are done

naturally and they really enhance the grace of the figure. It is indeed a rare representation. It speaks of the greatness of the sculptor. The objects are placed between the index and the middle fingers. The right lower hand is in the abhaya pose and the left lower hand is in the katvalambita pose. The legs are proportionately slender and beautiful. The girdles are gem-set. The uttariya is tied round the waist in a broad sash like manner with a shallow loop. The hanging ends of the uttariya and the bows on either side are also interesting. The treatment of the bows on either side are also interesting. The treatment of the bows is realistic. The udarabandha is a slender one. The yajnopavita with foldings cross the udarabandha just above the navel. The marvelous arrangement of the upper two hands is an unparalleled one. The anklets, wristlets and anklets are proportionately well fitted in their respective positions and their presence gives a pleasing appearance.

The Goddess stands on the padma-pitha. The face is full of divine splendour. The slender modeling of the torso, the elaborately worked necklaces and the armlets beautify the image. The proportionate limbs especially of the legs are of a high order of workmanship. The karanda-makuta and the wave-over-wave pattern of the garments are very fine. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left hand is in the lola hasta. The armlets, wristlets and anklets are worked out in a fascinating manner.

The back views of both the figures are very charming and pleasant to look at. Both have siras cakras behind the head and its petalled arrangement is very clearly and nicely exhibited. The exposure of the buttocks of both the figures is very pleasant. The marvelous group belongs to the period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. One more group is also found.

ASTARDEVAR

The figures of both Siva and Parvati are well modeled. The artistic execution of each and every part of both the figures, is highly commendable one.

The bull is well treated. The neck foldings are treated naturally. The expressions of the ears and the eyes suggest the face that the animal is in an alert position.

NITYA UTSAVAR

Siva stands with the right leg planted firmly and the left

leg is slightly bent. The dress with the wave pattern design is lowered down up to the anklets. The knot of the dress flows nicely on the right and the left thighs. The hanging dress in between the thighs is very pleasant to look at. The waistband is worked out with great care and meticulous efforts. The neck ornaments are marked by an exquisite artistic excellence and its presence highly speak of the artistic glory of the image. The flexion of the body is due to two reasons, one is due to the bend of the left leg and the another is due to the embracing nature of the left lower hand.

The right hand of the Goddess holds the flower and the left is in the lola hasta pose. The position of the left hand is an interesting one. A gap is seen between the hip and the hand and that is mainly due to the embracement of the Lord. The treatment of the necklace expose the artistic excellence of the sculptor of the contemporary period. The high makuta is worked out beautifully and its artistic execution is superb. The kundalas in the ears are ornamented with refined treatment

PIDARI

She sits majestically on the patra-pitha. The left leg is bent and placed on the pitha, the right leg hangs down beautifully. Beautiful and well-decked padasaras adorn the legs. The right leg has the ornament called Virakkalal. The waistband is excellently worked out and its presence is an appealing one. The treatment of the navel is done in a fascinating and captivating manner. The breasts are proportionately rounded and the channavira flows majestically in between them. The necklaces are modeled with exquisite style. The left ear has the patrakundala and the right ear has the makarakundala. Of the four hands, the upper right lower hand holds the trisula and the left lower holds the kapala. Above all above mentioned ornamental details, the jvalai makuta seems to be the fitting as well as a praiseworthy one. Totally seven flames are visible and their proportionate treatment enhances the majestic beauty of the face. One more figure is also found.

BANASURA

He stands on the padma with right leg firmly planted. The left leg is stepped up to the front. The dress is visible up to the thigh level only and the usual garland and creeper designs enhance its artistic treatment. The waistband with the simha mukha clasp looks very beautiful. The treatment of the necklaces and their systematic arrangement depict the sound knowledge of the sculptor

in the field of Art. The hands are in the anjali pose. The patrakundalas adorn the ears. The closed eyes and the lips mirror the deep contemplation towards the Almighty. The krita-makuta is well decorated and its presence add a majestic as well as marvelous appearance to the entire figure. The armlets, keyuras and the wristlets are executed without any deviation from the artistic canons.

RSABHA

Eventhough the size of the rsabha seems to be small in size, its artistic workmanship is superb. The head is depicted in a raised level suggesting its alertness. The horns are short. The ears are also small in size. The eyes are treated very nicely and the eyebrows are curved artistically. The neck contains three garlands. The inner garland seems to be of pearl designed. The other two garlands are made of bells. The gap between the bells is proportionately marked out. The depiction of the legs speak of the artistic genius of the sculptor. The ornamentation of the back portion is also noteworthy. The hump is not prominent. A garland of flower design, hangs from the hump and it is artistically done.

SULIKAMBAL

The figure stands on the padma pitha. She stands on the right leg firmly and the left is slightly bent. The dress with wave pattern design along with the well-marked creeper and the garland markings give a beautiful and pleasant look to the figure. The knots of the dress flows on the two thighs very smoothly. The feminine grace and charm are further enhanced by the slender waist and the broad hip. The position of the navel is easily seen due to its projections along the surrounding fleshy parts. The sacred thread flows very smoothly in between the well-rounded breasts. The necklace with a central bead design is closely attached to the neck. The well-designed and artistically executed bahulamalas flow gracefully over the shoulders and their presence add artistic grace and dignity to the image. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left is in lola hasta. Ears have the stylistically advanced kundalas. They are proportionate with the facial exposition. The arched brows and the sharp nose along with the smiling lips speak of the feminine grace and charm. The makuta is well placed and its treatment is done very minutely and delicately.

The back portion seems to represent a coherent and disciplined view. The exposition of buttocks is graceful. The

feminine slenderness is revealed through the well-designed buttocks. The falling of the necklaces in the back portion is beautifully portrayed. The petalled sirascakra elevates the elegance of the makuta to a high level of appreciation. The ear ornaments are designed with fine workmanship. The makuta with flames expose the terrific and dreadful nature of the Goddess. Only nine flames are visible and their proportionate representation give an overwhelming beauty to the figure.

SUKRAVARAAMBAL

She stands on the well-executed padma-pitha. She stands with the right leg firmly planted and the left is slightly bent to the front. The dress is lowered down up to the ankles and their well-executed design greatly elevate the grace and charm of the figure to an incomparable level. The bent left leg and the right lola hasta pose naturally create feminine flextions in the body. The slender waist and the broad hip further emphasize the feminine character. The breasts are rounded and they reveal the youthful appearance. The nice and gently fall of the necklaces over the breasts show the mastermind of the artist. The ear kundalas along with the bahulamalas beautify the shoulders to a remarkable level. The oval face along with the arched brows and lovely lips enhance the enchanting and captivating beauty of the face. The fillet with the disc design decorates the forehead to a level of marked appreciation. The karandamakuta with the well-arranged karandas one above the other, really add a divine dignity to the figure. The right hand is in the well-stylised kataka pose. The image from a stylistic point of view seems to belong to the 15th, and the 16th century A.D.

CHANDIKESVARAMURTI

He stands on the patma-pitha which is placed on a well-treated patra-pitha. The gentle forward bend of the figure which is responsible for the graceful bend of the right leg is treated in s superb manner. The waistband is designed in a superb way. The central loop with the simha mukha clasp is worked out elaborately with ornamental details. The ecstatic expression of the face and the anjali pose of the hands have made the figure a rare masterpiece for the study of an ardent devotee. It seems that he carries flowers in between the two palms of the hands. Three well-ornamented valayas decorate each wrist. Armlets are also very fine. The necklaces are well arranged and each one of them exhibits the highly experienced rhythmatically well planned workmanship. The kundalas in the ears

hang in a beautiful way and their presence reveal the majestic as well as the magnificent nature of the figure. The nose is fleshy and realistic. The makuta is executed with artistic perfection and the composition, as a whole is an exquisite one. A long well finished parasu, is inserted in between the palams of the hands and its head portion is attached with the right shoulder. The facial expression and the attributes of hands and legs suggest a period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

VINADHARA DAKSHINAMURTI

He stands on the padma-pitha. The face is round and chubby and the features are distance. Simple fleshy nose, the elongated eyes and the naturalistic eyebrows, tender lips beaming with subtle smile and low hanging ears are especially noteworthy. The features of the hands are almost similar to those of other images of this type, which belong to the temple at Tirupparambiyam, now present in Tanjore Art Gallery. The second is from the temple at Seyyanam, now preserved in the Government Museum, Madras and the third one is from Musse Guiment, Paris[40].

The ears are free from any ornamentation. In this case, the image is similar to the images of Tiruppurambiyam and the other from Musee Guimet, Paris. In the case of the image from Seyyanam, the left ear has the patra-kundala and the right ear has the makara kundala.

As regards the makuta, the treatment is an excellent one. The fillet ornament reveals the fair complexion of the image. A marked tilaka on the forehead seems to be a very remarkable one. The shoulders and the chest are treated in a satisfactory manner. The treatment of the necklace expose the sound knowledge of the sculptor in the field of jewellary. The armlets, and wristlets are well marked. The waistband with the prominent simha-mukha clasp speaks of the highly advanced art standard of the contemporary period. The dress with the wavy lines expose the cleanliness and neatness in the field of art. Of the four hands, the upper two hands hold the usual parasu and the deer which is turned towards the Lord. The lower two hands are in the pose of holding the musical instrument. The artistic features suggest a period of the 11th, and the 12th century A.D. It seems to be an excellent piece of Chola art. The treatment of the backside brings out the artistic supremacy of each and every part. The petalled sirascakra is arranges well proportionately and its presence highlight the artistic execution of the makuta. The falling of the hairs with

knots in the end is treated with much refinement. The exposition of the buttocks is quite fine.

GODDESS

She stands on the padma-pitha. The dress foldings are treated with much intricacy. The falling of the central clasp in the form of a garland is the result of the long experience in the field of art by the sculptor. The waistband is worked out with the elaborate ornamentation of new devices. The slender waist and the broad hip bring out the feminine qualities of tenderness and grace of the figure. The sacred thread falls with three strands with the highly sophisticated foldings between the breasts. The arrangement of the necklaces one below the other with a gap of proportionate measurement highly speaks of the artistic glory of the figure. The fall of the bahulamalas over the shoulders enhance the feminine beauty further. The makarakundalas of ears are delicately worked out, and they elevate the beauty of the image. The fillet further enhances the beauty of the face. The arched brows, the sharp nose and the smiling lips express the devine grace. The karandamakuta with the pot like arrangement one above the other, is seemed to be the best as well as the exquisite presentation of the figure. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left hand is in the lola hasta pose. The armlets, the valayas on the wrists and the padasaras adorn well the figure. The petalled sirascakra with the rounded rim enhance the makuta still further. The folded yajnopavita is quite fine to look at. The rounded buttocks are worked out eminently and their depiction is well planned and well suited. The group belongs to the Chola period of the 11th century A.D.

APPAR

There are three images of the saint Appar. Three of them have similar characteristic features. The dress of each one of them is simple, but the line carvings on the dress are executed with much more refinement and intricacy. Hands are also free from the sophisticated ornaments. A simple rounded garland of rudrakshamala decorate both the arms and the wrists. Necklaces are not of precious but of simple beads. The ulavaram is attached with the right shoulder, which exposes his devoted and sincere service of cleaning the temple premises. The complete shaven head and the lengthy, empty ears stand as evidences to exhibit his true sainity attitude. The closed eyes expose his dhyana attitude. The second figure seems to be a rare one, as no where else it is

found, such a majestic one as we have here. Moreover, it seems to be the tallest one. All of them belong to the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

SAMBANDAR

He dances on the *padma-pitha*. The bending left leg is placed on the pitha and the right leg is lifted up with its toe turned downwards. Both the legs expose the dancing nature of the figure. The hands are also proportionately and realistically displayed and these features speak of the talented dance, performed by the child. The intricately designed *padasaras* adorn the feet. The hip ornaments is made of well designed discs. The knot of the ornaments flows in three lines over each thigh in an artistically attractive way. The *channavira* is executed with great skill. The necklaces are tastefully worked out. The ornamented bahulamalas flow over the shoulders and their presence elevate the elegance and grace of the figure to a level of great admiration and commendation. One can shower encomiums for the well executed *makuta*. The pearl designed arrangement of the fillet add an artistic enhancement and elevation to the figure. The nice touch of the *kundalas* over the shoulders is a pleasing one. The armlets and wristlets are simple. The overall flexions of the body are consummately delineated.

MANICKAVACAGAR

He stands on the *padma-pitha*. The flowing of the knot at the centre of the waist is worked out in an excellent manner and in a way, it represents the custom of the wearing of the dress by the saints and seers. The belly of the stomach is mainly due to the tight wearing of the dress. The natural exposition of the flexion of the body really speaks of the mastermind of the sculptor. The sacred thread with foldings flows down up to the right hip gently and its presence brings out the gentleness of the figure. The broad shoulders with the well exposed chest brings out the soundness of the body and the mind. A long garland of beads goes around the neck and its foldings near the chest is rhythmatically executed. The ears, eventhough they are devoid of ornamentation, look very graceful and nice and seem to be the fittest representation for a saintly outlook. The shaven head with a simple as well a small knot exactly at centre expose his unawareness of the wordly affairs. The right hand with the *chin mudra* carries an *akshamala* in between the thumb and the index fingers. The left hand holds the palm-leaf manuscript. The facial expression along with the smiling lips expose divinity.

MURUGA NAYANAR

He stands on the *padma-pitha*. The foldings of the dress are worked out very well but at the same time proportionately. The legs are free from any ornamentation. He stands with a slight flexion. A long sacred garland with a well designed bead at the centre goes round the neck. A simple *udarabandha* goes round the stomach. The right hand carries the well blossomed flower and the left hand is simply lowered in the *lola* hasta pose. The ornaments of the arm are plain but even then they display the divine nature of the figure. The ear ornamemts are well executed with delicate worksmanship of a high standard. The small head knot at the centre really exposes his spotless saintly life and his least botherisation about the wordly affairs. The artistic features of th face like the nose, the lips and the long arched eyebrows date the figure to a period of the 15th or the 16th century A.D.

APPOODIADIGAL

He stands on the *padma-pitha*. The dress with the wave design marks an advanced stage of refinement. The knots of the dress smoothly hang over the right and the left thighs in a fascinating and fantastic manner. The tightness of the hip portion due to the encircling of the dress around it is the cause of the slight projection of the stomach. The hands are in the *anjali* posture and the folded palms are exactly at the centre of the chest. A broad neck ornament beautifies the shoulders in a grand manner. The empty ears and the shaven head with only a simple ornament at the centre expose his complete renunciation from the luxurious way of life. Those simple features atand as a great testimony to his life of austerity and purity.

FOOT - NOTES

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தன்பட்டை போத்தன் மேதவம் புரிந்ததென்று
படாலிக்கு நவகண்டங் கொடுத்து, குன்றகத்
தலை அறுத்து பிடலிகை
மேல் வைத்தானுக்கு திருவான்மூர்
ஊரார் வைத்த பரிசாவது

Sree Kampa varumarkku yantu irupatavatu pattai
Pottanukku, okkonda nakan okkantin
tan pattai pottan metavam purin thathenru
patalikku navakandan kotuttu, kunrakat
talai aruttu pitalikai
mel vaittanukku tiruvanmur
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CHAPTER -VI

THE TEMPLES AT THIRUMAKALAM

The main component parts of the temple are the sanctum, *ardhamandapa*, *mahamandapa* and the *muhamandapa*. The entire parts are covered with an enclosure wall. The shrines present in the *prakara* are dedicated to the Navagrahas, Nataraja, Somaskanda, Vinayagar, Subrahmanyar and the Goddess *Gajalaksmi*. The eastern entrance is decorated with the presence of Kattai Gopura with three tiers. The outer *prakara* houses the shrines dedicated to the Goddess, Maruthappar, Sivalokanathar and the structures of Vasantha mandapa and Yagasalai. The eastern entrance has the Rajagopuram with five tiers.

The entrance of the sanctum sanctorum contains two pilasters, one on each side and they are of Chola style having the cushion capital with the bevelled-cut design. The entrance contains two *devakoshtas*, housing the dvarapalakas or door-keepers. The mukhamandapa contains two rows of pillars and each having three squares and two Karukkuppatai portions. The Karukkuppatai contains sixteen facets. The pillars of the *muhamandapa* are similar to the pillars of *mahamandapa*. Likewise, the pillars of the pillared verandha are of the same Chola style.

The outerwalls of thre sanctum sanctorum and the *ardhamandapa* are decorated with pilasters of Vijayanagar style, having lotus bud design. It shows that the temple was renovated and reconstructed during the Vijayanagar rule. The outerwalls of both sanctum and *ardhamandapa* contain *devakoshtas* which house the images of Vijanaga, Dakshinamurti, Lingodhbavamurti, Brahma and Durga. The superstructure of Rajagopuram is decorated with the stucco images

THE STONE IDOLS OF THE TEMPLES

1. VINAYAKA (On the north wall of the *ardhamandapa* of the main temple)

The artistic features are delicately worked out. The *udarabandha* is beautified with the flower designs. The sacred thread with foldings flows over the body.

2. DAKSHINAMURTI (Fig. No. 31). (On the south wall of the sanctum sanctorum)

The figure is noteworthy for its glamourous artistic features.

The graceful ornamentation speak of the greatness of the image. The upper two hands hold the naga and fire. The right lower is in *chin mudra* and the left lower hand holds the *pustak*. The depiction of the branches of the tree is superb. One novelty, one can notice here, is the presence of two parrots and one squirrel on the branches of the tree. The impeccable artistic representation brings out the artistic grandeur of the image. The neck ornaments are limited. The flat sacred thread with foldings flows over the right chest and is lowered down up to the right hip level. The *patrapitha* over which the God sits is plain. On either side of Siva, is visible the risis who are represented as if, they are listening to the teachings of the Lord with an unperturbed mood. The image of Lingodbhavamurti has the usual artistic attributes

DVARAPALAKA (Fig. No. :32)

Right leg is placed firmly and the left leg is placed on the mace. Of the four hands the right upper hand seems to be in a threatening pose. The left upper hand is in the *vismaya* pose. The right lower hand and the left lower hand are in the *danda* and *Gajahasta* poses respectively. The entire carving of the figure exposes the artistic ingenuity of the sculptor. The *makuta* is well designed and its ornamentation elicits excessive delight. The facial features are both expressive and expansive. *Patrakundalas* decorate the ears. The fan-wise arrangement of the hairs really speaks of the artistic erudition of the sculptor of the contemporary period. The dress is lowered down only up to the thigh level and the knot hangs in a flowery form in between the two thighs and its presence seems to be an impressive one. The armlets, the wristlets, and the anklets are worked out in an excellent manner.

MURUGA (Fig. No. 33)

He stands on the *patrapitha*. He holds the objects *sakti* and *vajra* in the upper two hands. The *channavira* exhibits his warrior and heroic qualities. Necklaces are depicted with artistic perfection. They extol the art glory of the image. The flawless treatment of the *karanda-makuta* will fascinate every one who looks at. The fillet is decorated with the garland and creeper designs. The artistic arrangement of the hairs on both the sides, speaks of the greatness of the figure. The *patrakundalas* of the ears are carved skilfully. The exact roundness of the *kundalas* add beauty to it. The artistic fairness of the image is further enhanced by the flowing of the *bahulamalas* over the shoulders. The broad shoulders impart an imposing appearance.

The dress is only up to the thigh level. The usual garland and creeper designs decorat the dress in a beautiful manner. The central loop is treated very distinctively. Yhe *simha-mukha* clasp along with the waist band look both transperanty and bright. The treatment of both the legs really speaks the artistic subtlety of the figure. The anklets, wristlets and armlets are carefully worked out.

The artistic treatment of the bird peacock is a laudable one. The stylistic representation of the neck as well as the legs are done in a thrilling manner. Moreover the exposition of the feathers is very lovely. The bird holds a snake in its peak. The curved tail and the raised hood are the natural representation. Its worksmanship is exemplary .Both the representation of the feathers and the raised neck suggest the fact that the bird is in action (Fig. No. 34).

VALLI (Fig. No. 35.)

She stands on the *patrapitha*. The position of the legs very pleasent. The dress is carved with the well disciplined and wave-pattern designs. The slender waist and the broad hip reveals the feminine qualities. The flat breast band is well placed over the breasts. The outer necklace is embellished very stylistically. The right hand hangs freely without touching the thigh. The left hand holds the flower. The *patrakundalas* of the ears are precisely worked out. The arched eye-brows, the sharp nose, the full and lovely cheeks, and the smiling lips add artistic grace to the entire figure. The artistic efficacy is mainly due to the presence of *Karanda-makuta*. The placement of the Karandas one above the other expresses the spot-less artistic attainment. The fall of the hairs on either side of the face will enamour any one who observes it.

KALI

It is a beautiful specimen. She is in the sitting posture. The *makuta* with its prominent skull and naga hood, looks graceful. The ears are lengthy and gently touch the shoulders. The flowing of the *bahulamalas* is attractive. The closed eyes indicate his unperturbable as well as deep penance. The upper right hand holds the long *trisula* and the left upper hand holds the *Kapala*. The right lower hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower hand is placed on the folded foot in *dhyana* pose. The breasts are well rounded and they are proportionately projected to the front Two legs are folded and placed on the *pitha*. The folded legs further emphasize her attitude of spotless contemplation.

NAGANATHAR (Fig. No. 36)

He sits on the patra-pitha in a grand pose. The left leg is in Kutkutikasana posture. The right leg hangs down freely and is placed on the pitha. The legs are free from any ornamentation. The dress is up to the thigh level. The broad shoulders with the well-exposed chest disclose the sound body of the figure. The right hands hold the flower which is attached with the right shoulder. The armlets and wristlets are simple and plain and they reveal an artistic eminence and perfection. A broad as well as plain neck ornament is visible and it seems to be the fittest one. The patrakundalas of the ears look very graceful. The fillet is plain and it goes round the head graciously. The makuta is somewhat taller in size and the top is in the form of the piles of pots placed one above the other. They are systematically worked out. The makuta is exactly placed below the big sized naga hood. This paralleled exposition expose the inherent artistic genius of the sculptor. The five naga hoods are gracefully represented. Their impressive appearance really elevate the figure to a great level.

MATHANGARISI (Fig. No. 37)

He stands on the patra-pitha. Anklets are absent. The treatment of the dress gives an incredible beauty to the image. The knot of the dress hangs gorgeously. The two hands are in the anjali posture. The broad shoulders expose his insurmountable will power. Neck is adorned with only by a rudrakshamala, and its presence reveals the saintly attitude. The facial features are treated with artistic thoroughness. The hair knot is beautifully depicted. The closed eyes express his sincere and deep contemplative mood. The moustache and the beard further emphasize his devoted and divine life.

There are two sculptured panels on the walls of the temple. One represents the Linga worship by the Goddess Kali who is in the sitting posture. The hands are in the anjali postures. A broad and artistically executed necklace goes around the neck. The artistically enhancement of the figure is strengthened by the presence of makuta which is treated excitingly with the flames. A garland is beautifully placed over the Linga.

The other panel also depicts the Linga worship by two risis. Their identity is not clearly known. But anyhow, their long beards, free treatment of the neck, hands and legs, suggest that they are of persons who have completely dedicated their life to the religious service. The artistic features of both of them are similar. Their hands

are in the anjali postures. Both of them have head knots. The other parts are mostly eroded.

THE BRONZE IMAGES OF THE TEMPLE

VINAYAKA (Fig. No. 38)

He stands on the padmapitha. The creeper and garland designs embellish the dress. Udarabandha is a highly impressive one. The flat sacred-thread with foldings flows nicely. The armlets, wristlets, and anklets are treated boldly. The strong shoulders and the broad chest express the boundless strength of the Lord. The ears are well portrayed with highly admirable artistic workmanship. The elongated and rounded eyes seemed to be executed in proportion to the size of the head. The length of the makuta is short, but its artistic refinement is a considerable one. The objects are placed between the index and the thumb. The trunk with the tapering end is very beautiful to look at.

UMAMAHESVARI

She stands on the padmapitha. The dress with the foldings look very graceful. The slender waist and the broad hip expose her feminine loveliness. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left hand is in the lola hasta pose. The armlets and the wristlets are well depicted and their presence add artistic glory to the figure. The breasts look attractive. The necklaces with multifarious designs speak of the outstanding workmanship of the sculptor of the contemporary period. The fine and well-accomplished bahulamalas beautify the shoulders. The makarakundalas of the ears seem to be very appropriate. Their minute carvings match the artistic fitness of the image. The lengthy karanda makuta, with its excellent execution seems to be a masterly creation. Its artistic worth will be admirable forever.

PARAVAINACHIYAR

She stands on the padmapitha. Two legs are slightly bent. The profuse ornamentation of the dress highly enhance the beauty of the image. The well-ornamented and flat breast-band goes over the breasts. The necklaces with the multifarious designs add artistic grandeur to the figure. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left hand is in the lola hasta. The bahulamalas lend grace to the shoulders to a high level. The kundalas of the ears are all well designed and their artistic intricacy is of a high order. The treatment of the head is an excellent one. The exquisite combing, elevates the

feminine grace of the image. The image seems to belong to the 15th, and the 16th centuries A.D.

SUNDARAR

The dress is seen up to the thigh level. The artistic design of the dress is tastefully worked out. The central loop is worked out very nicely, and is not lowered down as in other examples. The breast-band is plain. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left hand is in the *lola hasta*. *Kundalas* of the ears are not perfectly completed. The *makuta* is of a peculiar type and it does not suit well the head. The anklets, wristlets and a armlets are simple. On the basis of the artistic features, the image may be dated back to the period of the 16th, and the 17th century A.D.

MANICKAVACAGAR

He stands on the *padmapitha*. The simple and plain dress reveals the spotless saintly life of the saint. Armlets and wristlets are made of sacred beads. A simple garland of beads adorn the neck. The elongated and plain ears along with the shaven head further accentuate the dedicated religious life of the saint. A well knit garland of beads goes round the head. A small knot is visible at the centre of the head. The facial features like the arched and the elongated eyes, the pointed nose and the smiling lips exhibit the refined and disciplined worksmanship of the artist. The image seems to belong to the Chola period of the 11th, and the 12th centuries A.D.

ADIPOORAMMAN

The *samabnanga* pose is properly exposed. The line carvings of the dress are superbly worked out. The right hand holds the *akshamala* and the left upper one carries the flower. The objects are between the thumb and the index fingers. The right lower is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower is in the *varada* pose. The breasts are well rounded. The *bahulamalas* deck the shoulders suitably. The ear ornaments are fantastically treated with artistic refinement. The large sized *makuta* with its intricate design give a grand appearance to the entire figure. The eyes, nose and the smiling lips are all graciously represented. The image seems to belong to the 15th, and the 16th century A.D.

BHOGASAKTIAMMAN

She stands on the sharp petalled *padmapitha*. The execution of the dress is a classic one. In the depiction of the line carvings

of the dress, the element of proportion is given due importance. The waist-band is well placed and its delicate worksmanship deserves both admiration and appreciation. The slender treatment of the waist and the broad hip express the feminine aspects. The breasts without the breast-band, further enhance the feminine complexion of the figure. The folded *yajnopavita* flows between the breasts just like a creeper and it is lowered down up to the right thigh level. The outer necklace, with the bead like design in the centre, further elevates the feminine dignity. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left hand is in the *lola-hasta*. The armlets and wristlets are well worked out. The flow of the bahulamalas over the shoulders highlight the artistic supremacy. The artistic treatment of the *kundalas* and the *karandamakuta* are really appreciable. Their stylistic treatment exhibit the renowned artistic skill, attained by the artist of the contemporary period.

ASTHARADEVAR

He stands in the *sambhanga* pose. The dress is lowered down up to the ankles and the wave pattern design is done in a refined manner. The knots of the dress hang on the two thighs and that too up to the ankles. The workshmanship is highly advanced . The right upper hand holds the *parasu* and the left upper has the deer which is turned towards the head of the Lord. The right lower is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower is in the *varada* pose. One novelty, one can notice here is that instead of the *jatamakuta*, here *karanda-makuta* adorns the head. The *makuta* is prominently worked out. The *bull* is standing behind the Lord. The neck foldings are naturally executed. A garland with a large sized bell at the centre beautifies, the neck. The head is raised majestically. The horns are short. The spread out ears suggest that the animal is in action. The position of the legs are rhythmatically portrayed.

CHANDIKESVARA MURTI

He stands on the *padmapitha*, which is well placed over the patrapitha. The right leg is placed firmly as well as directly. The left leg is slightly bent. The well executed *padasaras* adorn each foot. The waist-band is pearl designed. The hands are in the *anjali* postures. The valayas adorn each wrist. They are simple but at the same time closely encircle the wrists. The pearl-designed garland beautifies both the arms. The cross-wise arrangement of the garland seems to be a fascinating as well as a new one. A well knitt garland of beads goes round the neck. A close necklace with a bead

like design in the centre further increases the elegance of the image. The *bahulamalas* are not lowered down and instead of that they rest above shoulders. The right ear is empty and elongated and not touching the shoulder where as the left ear is ornamented with the *kundala* which rests gently on the shoulders. A highly prominent fillet beautifies the fore-head. The *makuta* is excellently treated with fine as well as striking designs. The facial features and the other artistic features suggest that the image belongs to the period of the 13th century A.D.

ADHIKARA NANDI (Fig. No. 39)

He stands on a well designed padma pitha. The creeper designs of the dress are realistically represented. The waist-band is exhibited with refined artistic features. The upper right hand carries the *parasu* and the left upper holds the deer and its tilted head is towards the head of Lord Siva. The objects are exactly placed between the index and middle fingers. The armlets and wristlets are of simple worksmanship, which add an artistic perfection. The necklaces are well rounded and their worksmanship exhibits the highly experienced and refined worksmanship. The *makara-kundalas* are well prominently exposed. Their finishing exhibits the survival of ancient artistic traditional glory. The fillet is minutely carved and its presence gives a grand appearance to the image. The other notable feature is the *jatamakuta* whose stylistic representation adds an artistic eminence to the entire figure. The cresent on the top is worked out with prominently. The image seems to belong to the 15th, and the 16th century A.D. In another image also Siva has the similar characteristic features (Fig. No. 40)

PRADOSHANAYANAR WITH PRADOSHANAYAKI (Fig. No. 41)

a) PRADOSHANAYANAR

The dress is seen, above the knee level. The central loop clasps the two thighs and is lowered down in an enchanting manner. The knots of the dress hang on the both sides of the thighs in a striking way. The waist-band with the simhamukha clasps add artistic richness to the whole figure. The *udarabandha* is flat and it clasps the stomach very closely. The folded *yajnopavita* with the brahma knot exactly on the shoulder, flows on the chest and finally touches the udarabandha at the centre of the stomach. The broad shoulders and the well exposed chest form an artistic combination. Of the four hands, the object of the right upper hand could not be identified. The left upper hand holds the deer which faces the head of the Lord Siva.

The right lower hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left lower embraces the Goddess Pradoshanayaki. The well designed necklaces exposes the artistic skill of the sculptor. The *kundalas* are worked out artistically. They really enhance the artistic splendour of the image. The fillet along with the highly adorned *makuta* add an incredible beauty and charm to the figure.

b) PRADOSHANAYAKI

The two legs are slightly bent. The facial expression denotes modesty and shyness, which are mainly due to the embracement, of the Lord by touching her in the left hip portion. The dress with the wave pattern design is lowered down stylistically. The waistband is really a classic representation. The right lower hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left hand is in the *lola hasta*. The ornamentation of the necklaces are treated deftly by the artist. The fine *bahulamalas* which flows over the shoulders add an enchanting look to the entire figure. The facial features are very well executed. The height of the karanda makuta is up to the level of antelope. This kind of exposition makes both the figures excellent.

CHOKKAR

He sits majestically on the well executed *padmapitha*. The left leg is bent and is placed on the *pitha*. The right leg hangs down freely. The well designed *padasaras* adorn each foot. The dress is above the knee level and that too is plain. The plainness of the dress in no way lessens the artistic grace of the image. The waist band is devoid of simhamukha design. The folded sacred thread, after the brahma knot divides into two branches. One goes just below the right chest and the other with three strands is lowered up to the waist level and goes over the left hip. The single lined *udarabandha* is closely fitting the stomach. The upper right hand holds the *parasu* and the left upper hand has the antelope. The objects are held inbetween the middle and index fingers. The necklaces, with the multifaceted designs, enhance the beauty of the neck. The left ear has the well rounded *patrakundala* and the right ear has the *makarakundala*. The treatment of the makuta is a majestic one. The expression of face creates a feeling of ecstasy. The image could be ascribed to the 13th, and the 14th century A.D.

GOWRI AMMAN OR CHANDRASEKHARA AMMAN (Fig. No 421)

She stands gracefully on the *padmapitha*. The kneecap is prominently exposed. The dress with the delicate carvings is low-

ered down up to the ankles. The central loop graciously clasps the two thighs. The knot of the dress hangs stylistically on the left thigh. The slender waist and the broad hip, bring out the feminine tenderness of the figure. The breasts are full and sensuous. They are without the breast-band. The *yajnopaavita* is just like a thin thread and it flows in between the breasts. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left hand is in the *lola hasta*. Armlets and wristlets are treated very simply and their simplilcity ennoble the figure to a high level. The necklaces of various designs with their refined as well as rare worksmanship really speak of the great eminence, attained by the artist. The *bahulamalas* are carefully placed on the shoulders. The *kundalas* of the ears are very pleasing to look at. The *makuta* with the limited decoration, looks pleasingly as well as pleasant. The remarkable workshmanship of the fillet add further embellishment to the *makuta*. The image seems to belong to the 14th, and the 15th century A.D.

PIDARI

The right leg is bent and placed on the *padmapitha* which is well placed over the *patrapitha*. The dress with the enchanting flower designs flows up to the anklets. The waistband is tastefully worked out. The hip and waist do not expose the feminine gender to an expected level. The stout and the rounded breasts indicate the valour and strength of the Goddess. The right upper hand holds the *udukkai* and the left upper left bears the *pasa*. The right lower hand is raised up to the top of the *makuta* and this raised position of the hand seems to be an innovative artistic exposition. The fingers of the hand are exactly pointed towards the *kapala* which is in the left lower hand. The necklaces are not modelled with much of artistic refinement. The worksmanship of the *makuta* is of a high standared. Its proportionate treatment is of an appreciable one. The artistic expression of the face and the other bodily features suggest a period of the 15th, and the 16th century A.D.

SOMAYASI MARAR

He stands on the *padmapitha*. The plain dress is lowered down up to the ankles and the plainess well speaks of the purity of his life, which he adopted to propogate the religion. The hands are in the *anjali* postures and the flowers are kept with in the palms. A garland made of rudrakshas flows over the shoulders and it speaks of his dislike of the worldly pleasures. The ears are lengthy and plain. The completely shaven head except a small sized tuft brings out his sincerity which he adopted throughout his life. The lack of ornamentation tells us abundantly of his mendicant life.

SUSILAMBAL

The figure seems to be of a recent period of the 18th century A.D. The dress with the garland design captivates everybody`s attention. The knot of the dress hangs on the right side up to the ankles. The waist-band is worked out elaborately. The position of the hands slightly differs from the other examples. The breasts are big in size and well rounded. The necklaces are designed with simple artistic features and they are visible just like line drawings. The empty ears are treated naturally. The artistic work on the head and on the forehead are exemplary.

BADRAKALI

She suits magestically on the *padmapitha*. Two legs are bent in the *yogasana* postures and are placed on the *pitha*. The right upper hand hols the *trisula* and its one end is firmly placed on the *pitha*. The left upper and lower hands carry the *kapalas*. The objects of the right lower hand could not be identified exactly. The waist-band is plain but anyhow, its presence in no way lessens the beauty of the image. The breasts are well exposed and are free from the presence of breast-band. The necklaces of multi-farious designs are present around the neck and their proportionate arrangement one above the other is quite pleasing. The *bahulamalas* gracefully flow over the shoulders and their presence increase the artistic elegance of the image. Kundalas of the ears are treated with lavish style and is worked out elaborately. The presence of the well adorned *makuta* with the human head at the centre seems to be paramount artistic embellishment of the image.

MURUGA

The right leg is placed on the small *padmapitha*, which is placed on a large-sized *patrapitha*. The left leg is slightly bent and placed on the peacock which seems to be an embodiment of refined beauty. Due to the pressing of the left leg on its back, the bird could not stand erect. Still the neck is raised in an appealing way. The beautiful head-knot over the head enhances the beauty of the bird to a great extent. The artistic features of realism and naturalism are visible in the representation of the bird. The presence of the bird under the foot seems to be a rare representation. The dress with well patterned design highly elevate the elegance of the image. The representation of the knots of the dress on both the sides of the thighs is really an artistic climax. The *udarabandha* is a fantastic exposition with its pearl-design The wavy sacred-thread with three strands moves gracefully over the body. The well exposed broad

shoulders and the well built chest stand as a best testimony for his heroic valour. The artistic dignity is clearly exposed through the rare as well as highly artistically valued necklaces. The gap between the one necklace and another is proportionate. The highly treated *bahulamalas* descends in the rhythmic order over the shoulders. The ear kundalas are meritoriously treated. Both the ears have the *makarakundalas*. The highly ornate *makuta* is well worked out. No part of the *makuta* is left free of carvings. The right upper hand holds the *sakti* and the left upper hand holds the *vajra*. The lower two hands are in the pose of holding an arrow and bow. The objects are exactly placed between the middle and index fingers. The facial features date this figure to the 14th, and the 15th century A.D.

b) DEIVAYANAI

She stands on the *padmapitha*, which is executed with artistic clarity. The petals are well sharpened. The right leg is slightly bent. The dress is of a high standard. The presence of the knots as well as its lowering up to the ankles, projects a beautiful appearance. The central loop and the well exposed waist-band speaks of the artistic intelligence of the artist who took much effort in making the figure a lively one. The feminine gesticulation is well brought out by the tender waist and the enlarged hip. The breasts are in proportionate size. The ornamentation of the figure is a worthy one and the share of the necklaces in embellishing the figure is quite satisfactory. The dangling *kundalas* are of classic variety. The *karanda makuta* is worked out aptly. As regards the hands, the right hand holds the flower and the left hand is in the *lola* hasta.

c) VALLI

The artistic features are more or less similar to the previous one except for some minor deviation. Here the left hand bears the flower and the right hand is in the *lola hasta*. One more factor which distinguishes it from the other is the presence of breast-band.

VRISHABHAVAHANAMURTI (Fig. No. 43)

He stands on the well decked *patrapitha* with the right leg planted firmly and the left bent behind and the tips of the fingures placed firmly on the *pitha* itself. The treatment of the *makuta* is of supreme beauty. It looks very beautiful due to its delicate ornamentation. One can notice prominency in the treatment of the parts of the *makuta*, like the datura flower, serpents and the cresent moon. The high-relief representation of the braided locks add artistic grace to the figure. The exact position of the flower on the top of the

makuta greatly increases the beauty of the crown. The fore-head ornament is of well worked out and enhance the elegance of the figure. The facial features are highly sensitive and the expression as a whole is an impressive one. The parts like eye-lids, nose, lips, cheek and chin are realistically shown. The empty ears in no way degrade the grace of the figure. The neck is adorned with *kanthis* which are commendable for their minute carvings. The *yajnopavita* with the well arranged foldings is lowered down very gracefully up to the right hip. The flowing of yajnopavita with three stands attracts everybody`s attention. The torso is well exposed with fine modelling. The broad chest is impressive. The shoulders are well treated and they really reveal the strength and the power of the Lord. The *bahulamalas* are well exposed and their expressive presence exhibit the artistic grandeur of the figure. The treatment of the *vaji-bandha* further highlights the glory of the figure. The right arm is lowered down and its *kataka* pose is exposed with the artistic precision and clarity. The left hand is represented as if it is placed on the head of the *bull*. The fingers are slender and elongated and are well beautified by the presence of well made rings. Perfect modelling is visible in the exposition of both the hip and the legs. No discrepancey is seen in its expression. It is highly impossible for anyone to find even a trace of error. The continuous line running from the arm-pit down without any barrier until it ends with the toes is quite smooth and fine. The bend of the left leg is astutely done. It further enhances the enticing quality of the figure. The clarity and the cleanliness of the knee caps embellish the figure considerably. The *padasaras* are worked very clearly and their presence adds artistic charm and glory to the figure. The dress of the figure is beautified with the presence of the popular and pleasent wave pattern design. The waist wiith the beautiful marked bands expose the grace of the figure. The three bands are noteworthy for their remarkable refinement. The presence of the *simha mukha* clasp further strengthens the beauty of the figure. The central loop is pleasing to look at. The back view is also of equal charm. The falling of the *jatas* with knots at the ends is quite beautiful to look at. In all eight strands are visible on the back. The *sirascakra* is round and the petals are ornately worked out. The end of the cloth is tucked up in a fan-wise manner in the centre of the waist and its presence speaks of the highly advanced artistic technique of the sculptor especially in the art of dressing. Moreover the exposition of the properly shaped buttocks, the graceful bend of the left leg and the proportionate torso are the distinguishing features which create an indelible impression and which proclaim the artistic

achievement and attainment of the sculptor. The mastery of the sculptors art and its flawless execution is worthy of appreciation. The ability of the sculptor in conceiving the themes and their proper excellent execution is really a gift of God.

The highly adorned padmapitha is a good work of art. The petals with the prominent and pointed tips exhibit the highly developed artistic technique adopted by the sculptor. The gap between the petals, is same. The back view is artistically quite pleasing one (Fig. No. 44).

b) PARVATI

She also stands gracefully on the padmasana. The apparent and the explicit revelation of the grace and glory of the figure are worthy of praise. The graceful flexion of Parvati is noteworthy. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left simply hangs down. The back view is quite pleasant.

c) RISABHA

The bull is majestically seen by the side of the Lord. The excellence and grace of the group is further enhanced by the presence off the bull. The prominent hump is very pleasant to look at. eventhough, it is short in size, the artistic finishing is of a high standard. The natural representation of the muscles of the body is worth seeing. The representation of each and every part of the animal indicates the fact that life pulsates over the body. The raised head as well as the outstretched ears expose the truth that the animal is listening to something with an unperturbed concentration. The intensive observation of the animal is further emphasized by the static position of the legs. The fleshy legs are proportionately executed and they clearly reveal the strength of the animal. The torso is well executed. The tail is lowered down gracefully. The neck ornaments are stylistically worked out. The workmanship of the ornaments very much exposes the painstaking efforts of the sculptor who did it with supreme confidence of making the figure a highly superb one. the ornaments are finished with much intricacy and delicacy. On account of its unsurpassed workmanship, it can be said that this figure is one of the masterpieces of animal studies in bronze.

THIAGARAYAR (Fig. No. 45)

The figure is an excellent one. On account of its rarity and the fine treatment of the entire parts of the body, it is considered to be an excellent masterpiece. He stands on the beautifully well-

worked out padmapitha. The presence of padarakshas clearly brings out the true nature of the figure. The right leg contains the well-designed veerakkalal. The loincloth is of superb quality and its workmanship is the result of tireless efforts put in by the sculptor. The waistband is free without the simha-mukha clasp. But even then the grace of the waist is not blurred even to a small degree. The right hand is lengthy and very nicely placed on the right thigh. The position of the left hand is an interesting one. The touch of the fingers is highly sensitive. The armlets and the wristlets are simple and plain. A long necklace is lowered down attractively on the chest. The other ornaments are highly carved out. The ears are lengthy and plain. The fillet beautifies the forehead to an admirable level. The presence of the headdress enhances the beauty of the image. No where else is found such a kind of head adornment. The figure could claim individuality merely for its head dressing. The back view is a pleasant one (Fig. No. 46). The artistic features of the figure indicate that the image is a masterpiece of Chola art.

NILOTBALAMBAL

She stands gracefully on the padmapitha. The dress is lowered down very beautifully up to the ankles. Padasaras adorn the feet gracefully. The waistband with the highly skilled treatment looks very beautiful. The slender-waist and the broad hip expose the feminine grace. The breasts with out the breast-band appear to be quite natural. The necklaces are very limited, but their workmanship is highly refined. The kundalas of the ears are round in appearance. As they are much above the shoulder level, their precise ornamentation could be seen very well. The fillet highly elevates the artistic glory of the image. The headdress seems to be the first of its kind. Like Thiagarajar, the Goddess also is one of the masterpieces of the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. The sharp nose, the smiling lips and the well-developed cheeks add a divine grace to the image. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left is in the lola hasta. The images of Ganesa and Muruga of this group are the works of very recent period.

SOMASKANDAMURTI

A) SIVA

His august presence is quite pleasing. The left leg is bent and the right leg hangs down freely. The jatamakuta is highly and well ornamented. The eyes, eyebrows, nose, lips and ears are exquisitely and elegantly treated. The treatment of nose and lips have

their own speciality. The *kundalas* of the ears are noteworthy for their beauty. One can notice supreme bliss in the expression of the face. Ornaments of multifarious designs adorn the neck. Outer ornaments are broader in size than the inner. The *yajnopavita* with the curves looks very beautiful and the foldings are treated attractively. The broad *udarabandha* goes well round the stomach and its position is exactly at the centre of the stomach. Moreover, the pearl designed treatment of *udarabandha* is a technically advanced one. The exceedingly proportionate refined modelling torso, add artistic grace and beauty to the image. The stylistic *bahulamalas* very graciously flow over the shoulders and their presence elevate the beauty further. The refined method, by which the arms are joined well with the shoulders, reveals the artistic acumen of the artist who was more technically advanced in executing each and every part of the bronze images of all categories.

The objects are stylistically held between the index and the middle fingers. The armlets and wristlets adorn the figure very gracefully. The splendid treatment of the legs add an artistic excellenc to the figure. Their modelling is quite fine. The bends of the legs are natural which should have been the result of ceaseless efforts of the sculptor. The loin-cloth is well ornamented. The usual creeper and flower designs are worked out very tastefully. The presence of uttariya is very pleasant and it is wound around the waist in a graceful form. The broad bands are represented both beautifully, stylistically and naturally. The central loop is treated with great care and attention. The simha mukha clasp is very prominently exposed and it is noteworthy for its skilful treatment.

b) UMA

She sits on the *padma-pitha*. The right leg is in *utkutikasana* posture and, the leg seems to be somewhat slantingly placed on the pedestal. The left leg hangs down with ease. The *jatamakuta* with its ornamentation attracts everybody`s attention. The fillet is much broader in size without ornamentation. The features of the face are highly refined. Eventhough the face is much elongated in size, its finishing is beautifully done. The *makara-kundalas* are of highly expressive. The kanthis are of well exquisitely carved out. Their presence is quite pleasing to look at. The sacred thread with the brahma-knot on the left chest flows very gracefully in a wavy form. The foldings are rhythmatically formed. The full breasts with their beautiful modelling bring out the feminine charm of the figure. The artistic elegance of the torso is brought out by the intricate treatement

of the navel, which is very much beautified by the enclosing sensitive rhythmic lines. The shoulders are suggestive of strength and are also more sensuous. The beauty of the arms are mainly due to their proportionate arrangement and the well emphasised gestures. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose. The left hand is firmly placed on the *pitha* and due to that, the figure seems to be slanting on one side. The usual armlets and wristlets clasp the hand. The bahulamalas very enchantingly flows over the shoulders. The legs are very beautifully treated and their exposition is worthy of commendation. The posture is done with great care and attention. The dress with the usual wave pattern design is lowered down very beautifully and remarkably. The uttariya with its tassel highlight the grace of the image. The padasaras adorn the feet. The entire execution is well done.

c) SKANDA

The worksmanship is superb. Each and every part is worked out with much understanding. One can notice perfection in its modelling. The decoration is not of an exaggerated one but of a refined, restained and tasteful one. The position of the hands and legs are superbly done. The two legs are slightly bent to the front. The two hands carry the lotus flowers. The waist-band is worked out very delicately. The *channavira* is very beautiful and it is fastened with the body stylistically. The necklaces are artistically superb and its worksmanship is quite pleasing one.

NATARAJA (Fig. No. 47)

Lord dances on a *Muyalaka*. The arrangement of the peacock feathers as the head-dress is very attractive with the *jatas* spread on either side of the head and their mellifluous flowing are very pleasing to the eyes. The ornamentation between the two *jatas* is excellently executed. Ganga is represented in bold-relief. The eyes and the eye-brows are marked with lines which are very minutely carved. *Patrakundala* adorns the left ear and the right has the *makarakundala* which is noteworthy for its beautiful carvings. A broad *kanthi* with exquisite carvings highlights the grace of the figure. A long hara of beads further increases the beauty of the figure. The wavy form of *yajnopavita* is very beautiful to look at. The treatment of *Udarabandha* is a highly admirable one. The arms with beautiful taperings exhibit the artistic talent of the sculptor. The fingers are treated tenderly and they are very graceful to look at. The treatment of arms along with fingers add charm and beauty to the figure. The arms are thrown

with ease. The exposition of torso is highly expressive. The left leg is very stylistically raised and the foot touches the *prabhavali.* The *padasaras* are of treated with much more intricacy and delicacy. The knee caps are well visible. The dwarf figure who is struggling with life, holds the snake with the left hand. The facial features expose the utmost unbearable sufferings of the dwarf in a very natural manner. The position of his left leg again confirms the efforts made by the dwarf to get release from the burden. The *Prabhavali* is round and the tounges of flames are well represented.

SIVAKAMASUNDARI

She stands to the left of parvati, on the well executed *padamapitha*. The *karanda-makuta* is prominent and its worksmanship is highly refined. The karandas of the *makuta* are orderly formed. The fillet is broad and the worksmanship is marvelous. The *kundalas* of the ears are executed in a grandeur manner. The necklaces are carved very minutely. The well treated *bahulamalas* are placed on the shoulders. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left is lowered down freely. The feminine charm and grace are revealed through the much refined and exquisitely exposed hip and the slender waist. The back is also very remarkably worked out. The buttocks are executed with much care and attention. The bend of the legs is quite visible in the back.

CHAPTER - VII

THE SOMANATHASVAMI TEMPLE AT ACHUTHAMAMANGALAM

The main component parts of the temple are the sanctum sanctorum, ardhamandapa, vestibule with two entrances one on the north and the other south, mahamandapa and the muhamandapa. The entire parts are enclosed by an inner enclosure well which has the main entrance on the eastern side. The structures wall which has the main entrance on the eastern side. The structures present in the inner prakara are the Nandimandapam, Balipitam, Matappalli and the shrines for Somaskanda, Subrahmanya, Gajalaksmi, Linga, Visnu and Natraja. The inner gopura has three tiers. The walls of the inner gopura is beautified with Kumbapanjaras and pilasters of the Vijayanagar style. The Kumbapancharas have the creeper designs on the kumbha. The Rajagopura contains four tiers. The wall portion is decorated with thirty two pilasters and eight kumbapanjaras of Vijayanagar style.

The walls of the sanctum and the ardhamandapa contain the devakoshtas which house the image of Nardhana Vinayaka, Dakshinamurti, Lingodbhavamurti, Brahma and Durga. Kumbapanjaras and pilasters decorate the wall portion. Both the entrances of the sanctum and ardhamandapa have the pilasters of Chola style, having the cushion capitals with the beveled cut design. Moreover, the entrance of the ardhamandapa contains two devakoshtas one on each side, and each one has the image of dvarapalaka. The devakoshtas present on either side of the entrance of the Mahamandapa have the images of Krathamurti and Adhikaranandi. Inside the Mahamandapa, are present eight pillars in two rows. Each row has four pillars of Vijayanagar style having plantain flower designs. The shaft of the pillars is divided into three squares and two Karukkuppattai portions. The square portion is beautified with the presence of lotus medallions. The square portion is beautified with the presence of lotus medallions. The Mahamandapa contains fifteen pillars in three rows and each row contains five pillars which are also of Vijayanagar style. The sculptures found on the pillars are very much picturesque. They are mainly depicted on the surface of the square portions of the pillars. Most of the squares contain dancing ladies in various postures, holding the musical instruments like vina. Some squares contain only the creeper designs with exquisite workmanship. Some

other squares contain the figures of deities like Siva, Bhairava, Rishabhavahanamurti and Vallabhai Vinayaka. They are striking for their artistic excellence. The basement of the southern wall of the mandapa also contains the dancing figures in various postures. The left entrance wall of the Mukhamandapa contains the devakoshta which houses the image of Kalyanasundarar. The right side entrance wall contains another devakoshta, which houses the image of Muruga. The northern walls of both the mahamandapa and muhamandapa contain the devakoshtas which houses the image of Chandesaanugrahamurti, Urdhvatandavamurti, Bhikshatanar and Kangalamurti. The southern wall contains the image of Bhikshatanamurti. The basement of the muhamandapa contains beautiful panels depicting dancing ladies in various postures and sitting lions. The stone images of the temple are noteworthy for their artistic perfection and refinement. The best examples found on the walls of the sanctorum and ardhamandapa are Nardanavinayakar, Dakshinamurti, Visnu and Dvarapalaka. The image of Dakshinamurti has the usual attributes. But one can see refinement in it's execution. The risis with the folded hands sit in unperturbed devotion in absorbing the teachings of the Lord. The facial expression of the Lord reveals his mastermind. The image of dvarapalaka is artistically executed. The proportionate execution of each and every part bringsforth the artist's unparalleled skill.

Images seen on the walls of the mahamandapa and muhamandapa are the excellent pieces of the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. In the case of the image of Chandesaanugrahamurti, one can notice an artistic perfection. The reverential attitude of Chandesa towards the God and Goddess is expressed through his facial expressions. The image of Bhikshatanamurti has the usual characteristic features. The image of Kangalamurti displays restraint ornamentation and decoration. The treatment of the image of Tripurantakamurti is an admirable one. The heroic pose is well visible through the face. The images of Gajasamharamurti and Ardhanarisvaramurti are beautifully and well executed.

KALYANASUNDARAMURTI

It is said that Kalyana is welfare of humanity and Sundara is lovely or beautiful, hence the form Siva took at the time of his marriage with Parvati is called Kalyanasundaramurti[1]. Siva in this aspect is also called as vaivahikamurti[2]. Siva is represented as a

lovely person, devoid of the usual ghastly ornaments like the snakes and skulls[3]. Silparatna mentions the name of the bride as Svayamvara and the bridegroom as Sambhu. The Amsumabhedagama, Uttarakamikagama and the Purva-karanagama describe the image of Kalyanasundaramurti. In the case of the image of the temple, the artistic features of both the figures of Siva and Parvati are sharp and expressive of supreme calm. The facial expressions of both of them depict their unbounded mirth and happiness. The image of Muruga is artistically finished. The magnificent rendering of the sewing of the lines of both sides is a noteworthy one. The treatment of both the shoulders and the part between them are done in such a manner as to suggest His supreme prowess. A series of monoliform festoons and tassels hang beautifully from the upper hand.

They are of fine workmanship. The presence of both the bows and the hanging ends of cloth on the side is evident from the frilling of the tips of the ends as well as their stiffness. The image of Kirathamurti is executed in a superb manner. The border of the dress is beautifully represented. Of the bands of the waist, the central one is pearl designed. The channavira is pearl designed and tits presence shows the strength and valour of the figure. The right hand holds the arrow and the left has a long bow whose one end is placed on the floor and the other end goes behind the head-knot. The strong moustache and the long beard are excellently worked out. The arched eyebrows and the elongated eyes are exquisitely finished off. The head-knot is very pleasant to look at. A garland of flowers goes round the head. The image of Ganapati (Fig. No. 48) is well depicted. The elephant head is very naturalistic in appearance. This is remarkably borne out by the stylistic ears, the well depicted tusks and the co-herent depressions on either side of the forehead. The execution of the two elevations on the head are adroitly performed Ratna pattas and tassels add a beautiful complexion to the makuta. The rhythmic exposition of the line of the sides of the torso is of a praiseworthy one. Angularities are minimised to a great extent and this elevates the grace of the image to a considerable level.

Images found in the prakara are also of Chola style having well developed characteristic features. The noteworthy are the images of Adhikaranandi (Fig. No. 49), Surya (Fig. No. 50), Bhairavar and Visnu with Laksmi.

In the case of Adhikaranandi, the dressing is well modeled. The creeper and the flower designs are well designed and they greatly increase the elegance of the figure. The flexion of the body is natural, which is due to the slight bent of the left leg. The hands are in the anjali postures. The armlets and the wristlets adorn the figure in a noteworthy manner. The right upper hand carries the parasu and the left upper holds the antelope which turns towards the head of the Lord. The objects are between the index and the middle fingers. A long weapon is attached to the right shoulder. The necklaces are well treated and their workmanship deserves appreciation. The left ear has the patra-kundala and the right ear has the makarakundala. Both the kundalas are above the shoulder level. The fillet with the jatamakuta impart a good appearance, which speak of the artistic value of the figure. The parts of the makuta like the datura flower, crescent is well and prominently marked out. The full cheeks and the lovely lips bring forth the divine beauty of the figure.

The modeling surya figure is superbly well done. The parts are beautifully executed. The yajnopavita with the rhythmatic foldings flows at the centre of the chest and is lowered down up to the hip and again runs gracefully over the right thigh. The waistband with the simha-mukha clasp looks very beautiful and their workmanship is worthy of commendation forever. The treatment of the shoulders is very splendid. The necklaces are intricately carved and their presence really add artistic grace and grandeur. The Kundalas of the ears are noteworthy for their delicate and intricate workmanship. The noteworthy features of this excellently modeled image are the nimbus behind the head and the characteristically tapering karanda-makuta.

The static posture of the Bhairava figure is a dignified one. The snake is used as the hip ornament. Its presence elevates the artistic glory and grandeur of the figure. The raised hood is portrayed naturalistically. The shoulders are broad in size. The proportionate treatment of the arms add artistic perfection. The Kundalas of the ears are well treated and their presence is highly expressive of the ears are well treated and their presence is highly expressive as well as impressive. The jvalai makuta seems to be the fitting crown. The flames are realistic and naturalistic in appearance. Its presence further emphasise the dreadful aspect of the figure.

The modeling of Visnu is perfect and charming. The hand

poses are life-like and more expressive. The facial features greatly expose the divine splendour. The torso is well modeled and its refined perfection greatly exposes the intricate value of the figure. The makuta is ornamented very elaborately and its exposition is of supreme beauty.

The figure of Laksmi is, in the samabhanga pose. The dress with the wave pattern design looks beautiful. The upper two hands hold the canku and cakra. The cakra faces frontally and the canku lacks flames. The thickly adorned bahulamalas give a beautiful unparalleled look. It looks like the cluster of garlands. The ear kundalas are highly ornate and they reveal further the feminine grandeur. The nose, eyes and lips are executed with understanding and the expression conveyed by the manner of their workmanship, is serenity which is quite appropriate to the figure. Their stylistic representation seems to be of Chola style and all of them belong to the 10th, and the 11th century A.D.

The bronze images of the temple are of a late period of the 15th, and the 16th century A.D. The image are Ganesa, Palliarai Chokkar, Palliarai Chokkamman, Chandikesvaramurti, Chandrasakharamurti, Goddess, Skanda, Bhogasakthiamman, Muruga. Deivayanai, Valli, Visalakshi, Adipooramman, Astaradevar and Pradoshanayanar with the Goddess. In the image of Vishalakshmi, she sits with the right leg bent while the left hangs down freely. The right upper hand holds the parasu and the left upper carries the pasa. The right upper hand holds the parasu and the left upper carries the pasa. The right lower is in the abhaya pose and the left lower hand is in the varada pose. The sacred thread flows between the two breasts very gracefully and its presence greatly elevates the grace and charm of the figure. The makuta is excellently treated. The makarakundalas of the ears and the makuta of the Goddess Adipooramman, highlight the beauty of the figure.

The Somaskanda Goddess is an excellent Chola piece of the 10th, and the 11th century A. D. She stands elegantly on the padmapitha with the left leg slightly bent. The waistband and the central loop are exhibited exquisitely and elegantly. The breasts, the narrow hip and the broad waist highly speak of the artistic calibre of the sculptor who executed them with proper care and undiverted attention. The right hand is in the Kataka pose and the left hand is in the lola hasta. The makarakundalas of the ears, the

well flowing bahulamalas and the stylistically executed necklaces excellently exhibit the feminine grace and charm of the figure. The karanda makuta with the well decked filled looks with captivating beauty. The facial features like the elongated arched brows, the sharp nose and the smiling lips are worked, with artistic perfection.

The images of Natraja and Sivakamasundari from stylistic points of view, belong to the Chola period of the 12th, and the 13th century A.D. As regards Siva, the arrangement of the headdress, with the fascinating peacock feathers is very pleasing to look at. The flowing of the jatas on either side of the figure is highly impressive. The prominent exposition of Ganga, on the side of the jata, is a novel feature. Normally, the figure is present on the right side. The raised posture of the left leg, above the right knee level is excellently done. The feminine beauty of Parvati is clearly presented through the breasts, the narrow hip and the well-balanced broad waist. The makarakundalas of the ears, the bahulamalas and the makuta with the fillet are the artistic executions of the mastermind of the sculptor, who with indefatigable energy had, completed each and every part of the figure with perfection.

FOOT-NOTES

1. Tewari, T.P., *Hindu Iconography*, (New Delhi, 1979), p. 120.
2. Naline Kanta Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahamancial Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, (New Delhi, 1972), p. 120.
3. Srinivasan, T.N., *A handbook of South Indian images*, (Tirupati, 1955), p. 48.

CHAPTER - VIII

SREE BRAHMAPUREESVARAR TEMPLE AT AMBAL

Ambal village is famous for the shrine of Sri Brahmapureesvarasvami temple. It is situated about four kilometres from Poonthottam Railway Station. The presiding deity of the temple is Brahmapureesvarar and his consort is Poonkuzhal Nayaki, known in Sanskrit as Sugandha Kunthalambigai.

The parts of the temple are enclosed by an enclosure well. The pillars of both Mahamandapa and Muhamandapa are of Chola style. The superstructure of the Vimana is decorated with the stucco images.

The bronze images of the temple are executed with much more care and attention. The images of Vinayaka, Adipooramman, Palliaraichokkan with the Goddess, Chandrasekharamurti (Fig. No. 51) with the Goddess (Fig. No. 52), Muruga (Fig. No.53) with Valli and Deivayani Goddess Pidari (Fig. No. 54) Pradoshanayanar with the Goddess cattanathar (Fig. No. 55), Bhogasakthiamman and Chandidesvaramurti are dated to a late period of the 14th, and the 15th century A.D.

The figure Chandrasekharamurti stands on the padmapitha which is intricately carved. Its petals are stylistically well executed with artistic precision. The cloth is well modeled and design is of superior standard. The waistband with the simha-mukha clasp is a striking feature of the figure. The shoulders are broad and their exposition is quite naturally done. The objects of the hands are attractive and are held naturally.

As regards the Goddess, the waistband is well adorned and its simha-mukha clasp, with its highly evolved face captivates every one's attention. The navel and the surrounding parts are very carefully worked out. The sacred thread with the three strands flows between the breasts enticingly. The breasts are rounded and their placement is properly done. The necklaces are very closely arranged and even in their close proximity, the workmanship of each and every

necklace is clearly seen. The ear ornamentation is performed in a grand manner. The *makuta* with its broad fillet reveals the fact that the sthapathi who made it was a man of great artistic acquirements.

The image of Muruga is in the *samabhanga* posture. The dress with the well adorned artistic pattern looks very graceful. The knots of the dress fall on the two thighs attractively. The artistic enhancement of the figure is further emphasized by the gestures of the hands. The arrangement as well as the execution of the hands are superbly done. The grace of the figure is further elevated due to the stylistically well treated necklaces. The *kundalas* of the ears are well modelled and their presence enrich the beauty of the image. The *channavira* is well exposed on the broad chest. The *kundalas* of the ears are ornate and exquisitely charming. The presence of the *krita makuta* elevate further the artistic grandeur of the figure.

The modelling of both the Goddesses is very slender and graceful. Their restrained and appropriate artistic details, highly speak of the artistic greatness and worth. The exquisite modelling of the torso is praiseworthy. The worksmanship is excellent. Both the figures are in the *tribhanga* postures and the swaying lines on either side further beautify the figure. The shoulders of both the figures are well beautified by the highly refined *bahulamalas* and their flowing is very elegantly executed. The anklets, armlets and wristlets of both the figures are simple and plain. The pronounced draperies are noteworthy for their well developed worksmanship. The *makutas* are well exposed in both the cases and their ornamentation is well processed.

The goddess Pidari stands in the *samabhanga* pose, over the stylistic petalled *padmapitha*. The dress is well protrayed and the usual garland and creeper designs are gracefully well exposed. The rounded breasts add a feminine charm and grace to the figure. The modelling of the torso is well done and it portrays indirectly the great force which the Goddess is in a position, to quell the evil spirits. The necklaces along with the *bahulamalas* add a feminine complexion. The left ear has the well rounded *patrakundala* and the right ear has the *makarakundala* of intricate worksmanship. The terrific quality is well visible through the presence of *jvalai makuta* which has a skull at the centre.

Shattanathar figure is in the *samabhanga* pose.The right hand is in the *chin mudra* and the left holds the mace. A long garland of bells goes over the body. The head arrangement is of a peculiar type.

The Goddess Bhogasakti sits very charmingly on the *padmapitha*. The right leg is in the well executed *Kutkutikasana* posture. The left leg is lowered down very gracefully. The dress with the wavy pattern elevates the grace and charm of the figure. The beautiful flow of the *yajnopavita* between the two breasts is very pleasing to look at. The right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left hand is placed firmly on the pitha. The fingers are in the raised posture. The well flowing *bahulamalas* along with the necklaces speak of the elegance and charm of the figure. The *kundalas* of the ears are very beautiful to look at. The *makuta* is of novel type and its execution is quite admirable. The smiling lips, the arched elongated eyes and the smooth cheeks highly speak of the divine quality of the image. The image seems to belong to the 13th, and the 14th century A.D.

Chandrasekharamurti stands elegantly on the *padmapitha*. The left leg seems to be slightly bending. The dress with the creeper and flower designs beautifies the figure. The hands are in the *anjali* postures and the *parasu* is well placed on the right shoulder. The shoulders are well balanced.

In the Somaskanda group Siva and Uma are majestically seated on the oblong *bhadrapitha* (Fig. No. 56 The asana is simple and plain. Siva is seated in the *sukhasana* pose. The *jata-makuta* is well done. The cresent moon, the Datura flower, the serpent and the patta on the forehead are clearly visible. The exquisitely moulded eyes, eye-brows, nose, lips and ears, highlight the beautiful complexion of the image. The superb finishing and the magnificent exposition speak of the artistic merit of the image. The entire parts from the top to the bottom expose well modelling with perfection. The treatment of the fingers is noteworthy for its delicacy and tenderness. One can notice much more refinement in the fingers of the left hand which is in the *ahuva-varada* pose. The necklaces are marvellously treated. The left ear has the *patrakundala* and the right ear has the beautifully decked *makarakundala*. The upper right hand has the usual *parasu* but its position is somewhat interesting. The upper left hand holds the deer which directly looks at the figure of Uma. Uma's right leg is stylistically bent and placed on the *pitha*. The left leg hangs down freely. The dress is lowered down up to the ankles in a highly fascinating manner. The atrophied breasts are worked out very promptly. The tapering hands are well executed and they expose the feminine tendency of the figure. The treatment of the *karanda makuta* has an individuality. The kundalas are noted for its intricate well carvings of multifacetted designs.

SKANDA

He also sits with a majestic posture. The right hand is in the kataka pose and the left is simply places on the thigh. The kundalas and the karanda-makuta are all well treated and they are quite proportionate with the body of the child. The backview of all the figures is also remarkable for its beauty. The sirascakra of Siva is noteworthy for its well-marked and sharp petals. The flowing of the hairs on the back is pleasing. The depiction of the buttocks is exquisitely done. The sirascakra of Uma is highly ornate. The feminine flexion is made visible from the backside. The sirascakra is well visible at the back of the child skanda and is quite striking for its exemplary treatment. The group belongs to the Chola period of the 11th century A.D. Another separate image of the Somaskanda Goddess is also of the same period. She stands on the padmapitha and the left leg is slightly bent. The shoulders with the pearl designed bahulamalas speak of the feminine enticing quality of the figure. The karanda makuta is treated very nicely and it exposes the feminine grace of the figure.

Image of Appar (Fig. No. 57), Sambandar, Sundarar (Fig. No. 58), Manickavacagar (Fig. No. 59) also belong to the Chola period. Their facial expressions as well as the treatment of the dresses exhibit their saintly attitude. The image of Brahma (Fig. No. 60) is an excellent Chola piece. The figure which is present in the Agneeswarar temple at Thiruppugalur is in the sitting posture, but here, it is in the standing pose. The upper two hands hold akshamala and kamandalu. The lower two hands are in the anjali postures. The shoulders and the hands are well balanced. The three faces are quite proportionate and balanced. The intricacies of the necklaces are well visible. The well-exposed stylistic features, ascribe a period of the 10th, and the 11th century. The back view is highly attractive (Fig. No. 61). The other Chola specimens dated to the same period are the Rishabhavahanamurti and Natraja. In the case of the first one, the figures Siva and Uma are represented with natural attributes. As regards Siva (Fig. No. 62) the expression of the face is very much pleasing to look at. The high artistic quality of tenderness is well visible in the treatment of the figures. The angularities of the elbow are conspicuous. The stereotyped disposition of the arms is highly expressive and exemplary. In the case of Uma, the lines of the legs exhibit grace. The foldings of the dress are rhythmatically worked out. The waistband is very

minutely executed. The navel and the surrounding fleshy parts are well depicted and they express the feminine complexion. The treatment of the breasts is invested with grace and charm. The exquisitely carved fingers enhance the feminine charm and grace of the figure. The left leg is bent slightly so as to make the figure, in the beautiful abhanga pose. The exposition of the animal is highly naturalistic. The left foreleg is stepped up to the front, suggesting it's action. Images of Natraja are three in number and their artistic features are quite refined (Fig. Nos. 63, 64, 65). The back views express the nice falling of the hairs (Fig. Nos. 66, 67, 68). The presence of well spread out peacock feathers, the well depicted crescent-moon, the raised naga-hood and the well placed skull, add artistic Excellency to the head-dresses. The excellent finishing of the face, greatly elevate the majestic appearances. The eyes and the eyebrows are significantly marked by the incised line. The ornaments of the necks are intricately worked out. The pose of the arms and their disposition are seemed to be the result of the highly imaginative talent of the sculptor. The modeling of the fingers has been conceived and executed in an exceptionally remarkable manner. The exposition of the arms is beautifully completed with ease and confidence. The handling of the object damaru in the upper right hand is quite interesting and the pose indicates the fact the Lord is the master of music. The treatment of the legs is done in a splendid manner. The tapering ends below the knee are very graciously worked out. The treatment of the three figures is highly effective. The balanced treatment of each and every part of the three figures, is a highly commendable.

Regarding the exposition of the jatas, the second one shows a slight variation. Here the jatas are not so extended as in the other two cases.

The images of the Goddesses are also equally treated well. The wiry necklaces, sharp features of the face, the angularities of the elbow and the garment highly enhance their beauty. Their poses are dealt with in an exceptionally brilliant manner. The modeling of the breasts of all the figures is superb. The shoulders with the pearl designed bahulamalas speak of the feminine grace of the figure. The back views are very much pleasing to look at. The falling of jatas, attracts everybody's attention.

CHAPTER - IX

THE RATNAGIREESVARAR TEMPLE AT THIRUMARUGAL

The temple seems to have been reconstructed recently. The *gopura* with the superstructure, beautifies the temple

The stone images of the temple like Lingodbhavamurti, Brahma, Dakshinamurti are seemed to be later period.

SAPTAMATRIKA GROUP

The matrkas are also called Kannimars[1]. They are considered to be one of the parivara devatas or avarana devatas[2]. The other parivara devatas are Ganesa, Subrahmanya, Surya, Candra, Chandikesvara, Jeyestha and Nandi[3]. The *kasyapam silpam* also mentioned the saptamatrikas group as one of the parivaradevatas. The other according to the work are Vrshaba-devar ((nandi), Agnidevar or Agni, Durgai, Utrabhadrar, Vinayaka, Shanmugha, Jyestha and Surya. *Mayamata* mentions the following parivara devatas namely Vrshabha, Ganatipan, Brahma, Saptamatrikas, guhan Aryan, Achyutan and Chandesan. According to *Manasara* the shrines for the parivara devatas should be built at the cordinal points of the inner most or the first court of the temple[4]. According to *Kasyapa simpa sastra*, the matrika row must be facing north in the first courtyard (prakara)[5]

The sapta matrikas represent the embodied energy and proweess of seven famous Gods, of their male counter-parts such as the Visnu, Kumara, varaha, Indra, Brahma, Mahesvara and others[6]. The group consist of Brahma, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Camunda. They are flanked by Ganesa on one side and Virabhadra on the other. Ganesa and Virabhadra are the protecting Gods for the saptamatrika group[7]. It is also said that the saptamatrikas were the independant manifestations of Parvati[8]. The saptamatrikas appear to be the favourite deities of early Chalukyas and from there the cult seems to have spread to Tamil Nadu[8a] and the date has been fixed as the 5th century A.D.[9] But the small shrines for them were constructed in the temples of Tamil Nadu mainly from the period of the nineth century A.D.[10] The Nayanmars and the Alwars did not favour the growth of the cult of the Saptamatrikas in the initial stage[11]. But anyhow the practice of constructing the parivara shrines continued till the period of the 11th and the 12th centuries. By the later Chola period, the matrikas dissappeared from the temple[12].

In South India, the Saptamatrikas are represented in sitting postures but in the North India, they are mainly in standing postures[13]. Moreover, in the north they carry each a child in one of their hands[14].

Puranas give a different account regarding the members of the Saptamatrikas. *Varaha purana* mentions eight mothers, they being Yogesvari, Mahesvari, Vaishnavi, Brahme, Svayambhu, Kaumari, Indraja, Yanadandahari and Varahi. Brahmanda purana adds Mahalaksmi as the eighth mother.

Skanda purana and *Devi purana* also describe mothers. Whatever may be the differences regarding the number, the accepted matrikas are seven only[15]. The number seven is considered to be the auspicious number[16] and that is why the number of matrikas is also confined to seven. Several texts mention different mythologies about the orgin and importance of the matrikas[17]. Puranas like *Markandeya* and Agni also tell different stories about the orgin of the matrikas. The iconical features are mentioned in the *Amsumadbhedagama*, the *Suprabhedagama,* the *Purva Karangama*, the *Vishnudharmottara-purana*, the *Markandeya purana*, the *Matsya purana* and the *Rupamandana.*

Amsumadbhedagama says that Brahmani should have a *sula* and an *akshamala* respectively in the back and left hands. The lower right hand is in the *varada* and the left lower is in the *abhaya* poses. The work prescribes six hands and in this case, the right two hands hold *pustak* and a *kamandalu* and the third one is in the *abhaya* pose. The left two hands carry *sutra* and *Sruva* and the third one is in the *Varada* pose. Presence of four hands is mentioned in the purva-karanagama. Both the agamas mention *karandamakuta* as the common head ornament. Her vehicle is the hamsa[18].

As regards Vaishnavi, Amsumadbhedagama says that she should have *kirita-makuta* and four hands. The upper two hands carry *canku* and *cakra* and the two lower are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. *Vishnudharmottarapurana* mentions six-hands and the right two hands hold *gada* and *padma* and the third one is in the *abhaya* pose and among the left hands two have *canku* and *cakra* and the third one is in the *Varada* pose. According to *Devi-purana*, the Goddess should have four and they hold *canku*, *cakra*, *gada* and *padma*. *Purva-karanagama* agrees with the *Devi-purana.*

According to *Amsumadbhedagama*, Indrani carries *vajra* and *sakti* in the two upper hands and the lower two are in *abhaya* and *varada* poses. She is generally counted as the fifth of the saptamatrika[19]. *Vishnudhar-mottara purana* prescribes six hands and they carry *Sutra, Vajra, Kalasa* (a pot) and *patra* in the four hands and the remaining two hands are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. Indirani is also known as Shaci, Aindri and Pulomi[20]. Her vahana elephant represents an excellence of physical development and strength[21].

According to *Amsumadbhedagama*, Chamunda should have four hands, and the upper two should carry the *kapala* (skull) and the *sula* and the lower two hands are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. *Vishnudharmottara purana* mentions the presence of ten hands and the objects in the ten hands are the *musala, bana, ankusa, khadga, khetaka, pasa, dhanus, danda* and *parasu*. *Purvakaranagama* mentions owl as her vahana. It is said that Camunda is the contraction of the name canda and munda for having killed two demons of that name[22]. Mundamala is the special garland[23]. As regards Mahesvari, *Amsumadbhedagama* says that she should have four hands. Of the four hands, the upper two should carry *sula* and *akshamala*. The lower two hands are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. It also mentions bull as her vahana. According to *Vishnudharmottara purana*, she should have jata-makuta and five faces. Of the six hands which the *Vishnu-dharmottara purana* has prescribed, four carry the *sutra, damaru, sula* and *ghanta* and the remaining two are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses.

As regards Kaumari who is also called Karttikeyani *Amsumadbhedagama* says that she should have four hands and of the four, the upper two hands should carry the *sakti* and *kukkuta* and the remaining are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. The same work prescribes peacock as her vahana. Six faces and twelve arms are mentioned by the work *Vishnudharmottara purana*. Among the twelve hands, two are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses and the remaining ten hands carry the *sakti kukkuta, dhvaja, danda, dhanus, bana, ghanta, padma, patra* and *parasu*.

Regarding Varahi, it is mentioned in the *Amsumadbhedagama* that of the four hands, the upper two hands should carry the *hala* and sakti and the lower two hands are in the *abhaya* and the *varada* poses. *Vishnudharmottara purana* mentions six hands and of the six, four hands hold the *danda, khadga, khetaka*

and pasa. The work again says that she should have the belly stomach. Her vahana is the elephant. According to the work Purva karanagama, the four hands of the Goddess carry saranga, dhanus, the hala and the musala as her weapons. As regards the temple at Thirumarugal, the images are kept in the northern side of the prakara. The group consists of eight images including Brahma sasta.

a) BRAHMA SASTA

He sits on the patrapitha. The left leg is bent and placed on the pitha. The right leg hangs down freely the dress is visible only up to the thigh level. The flat Yajaopavita with the foldings flows over the body in a lovely manner. Udarabandha is thick and plain and it tightly encircles the stomach. The necklace is treated with utmost care and its presence adds much beauty. The spreaded hairs are worked out proportionately. Two short horns are well visible over the head. Of the four hands the right holds the mace and the left upper carries the akshamala. The right lower hand is in the abhaya pose and the left lower is placed on the thigh.

b) BRAHMI

The three faces are executed with an advanced artistic style. The kundalas of the ears are well place. The makuta is short and it is well symmetrically executed. The necklaces are worked out very intricately the armlets and the wristlets are very simple and plain. A flat breast-band is seen and its presence beautifies the breast which are well rounded. The broad hip and the slender waist expose the feminine quality. The right upper hand holds the akshamala and the left upper carries the kundikai. The right lower is in the abhaya pose and the left lower is placed over the thigh.

c) MAHESVARI

The makuta is well placed and its artistic treatment is an excellent one. The kundalas of the ears are worked out with elaborate ornamentation. The shoulders and the hands are proportionate. The flat Yajnopavita flows in between the breasts in a fascinating manner. The upper right hand holds the parasu and the left upper holds the akshamala. The right lower is in the abhaya pose and the left lower hand is placed on the thigh. One notable feature here is the presence of risabha just behind the left upper shoulder. The risabha with the prominent hump and the horns looks very beautiful. On the right upper portion is visible the dvaja stamba.

d) KAUMARI

The spreaded hairs of the head are portrayed with intricate

design. Exactly above the head is seen a human head. The arched brows and the elongated eyes give an exquisite beauty to the face. The necklace falls down on the breasts and their treatment is done in a superb way and moreover it exposes the painstaking efforts bestowed by the sculptors in carving out the such sophisticated artistic patterns. The right upper hand holds the trisula and the left upper carries the flag which depicts the risabha. The right lower is in the abhaya hasta and left lower is placed on the thigh.

e) VAISHNAVI

The treatment of the makuta of the head is an excellent depiction. Likewise the ear kundalas also add grace to the image. The line drawings of the dress are well seen. The upper right hand holds the cakra and the left upper carries the canku. The cakra is not looked at frontally and so it is called as prayakacakra. The right lower is in the abhaya pose and the left lower is placed on the thigh.

f) VARAHI

The face is naturally exposed without any deviation from the artistic principle and rules. The karanda makuta is well placed and its finishing is worthy of appreciation. The shoulders are broad enough and the postures of the hands are beautifully done. The armlets, wristlets, and anklets even with their plain treatment, look charming. The upper right carries the plough and the upper left holds a naga which faces towards the varaha head.

g) INDIRANI

The completion of the makuta with the refined well-modeled workmanship is a striking one. The head knot has its own individuality, as regards its artistic appearance. The upper right hand carries majestically ankusa and the left upper holds, the akshamalai. It can be said that makuta is the outstanding contribution of the artist.

h) CAMUNDA

The makuta with the ear ornaments add a good as well as artistic complexion to the whole figure. The upper right hand holds the parasu and the left upper carries the fire.

The facial features as well as the position of the legs suggest that all the figures belong to the period of the 11th century A.D.

THE BRONZE IMAGES OF THE TEMPLE

The images like Vinayaka, Mariamman, Kali, Subrahmanaya with Deivayanai and Valli, Pidari, Candikeswaramurti.

astaradevar, and Sambandar are of a later period of the 16th century A.D. Their stylistic representation are worked out with artistic clarity and refinement.

Vinayaka stands on a beautifully petalled padma pitha. The ears are portrayed with intricate finishing. The shoulders and the postures of the hands are all well exposed with out blemish. The karanda-makuta is short but its artistic fitness is unequalled one. The well-designed udarabandha adds a magnificent outlook. The navel is treated with novelty. The sacred thread flows with foldings and its presence adds a graceful appearance. The extension of the belly is done in an exact proportion in comparison with the other belly is done in an exact proportion in comparison with the other parts of the body. The waistband is depicted as if it is responsible for the projection of the belly. The central loop which clasps the two thighs are portrayed in a garland form. The dress, is executed as if it is responsible for the projection of the belly. The central loop which clasps the two thighs are portrayed in a garland form. The dress, is executed with dignity and decorum. Armlets, wristlets and anklets impart an overall beauty to the whole figure. The trunk is somewhat lengthy. The line drawings are visible on them. The left tusk is longer than the right. The upper right hand carries the usual parasu and the left the pasa. The right lower holds the broken tusk which is sharp on one end. The top of the trunk is placed on the left lower hand, beautifully.

Goddess Mariamman sits majestically on the patra pitha. The left leg bends and is placed on the pitha. The right leg hangs down freely. A flat ornamented breast-band goes over the breasts. The right upper hand carries the udukkai and the left upper pasa. The right lower hand carries the trisula and the left lower holds the kapala. The disc like ear ornament touches the shoulder, gracefully. Even though, the karanda-makuta lacks artistic touches, in no way, it under-rates the beauty of the image. The javala-makuta with the well marked flames are the work of a talented sculptor. The long arched brows with the fleshy and full cheeks expose the beauty of the God.

Goddess Kali (Fig. No. 39) sits on the beautifully decorated padmapitha. The left leg is bent and is placed on the pitha and the right leg hangs down freely. The dress with the intricate ornamentation flows up to the thigh level. Apart from the anklets, the right leg contains the beautifully executed veerakkalal. The well designed padsaras adorn each foot. The dress full of line drawings, has its individual grace. The flat breast band tightens

the breasts. The channavira flows prominently and its lower portion goes beneath the breasts. The Udarabandha is plain and it clasps the body tightly. The postures of the hands are treated with fine modeling. The kundalas are impressive for their round look. The flames of the makuta are worked out naturally and the end of the each flame is finished with a slight curve. Apart from the anklets the padasaras on each foot are treated with artistic perfection.

God Muruga stands, with the bodily flexion, on the well padma-pitha. The right leg stands firmly and the left is slightly bent and is stepped up to the front. The waistband is designed with much articulation. The simha-mukha clasp speaks much more of the art value. The strong shoulders with the well arranged hands reveal the fact that the God can face any force which may come either directly or indirectly. The well treated makara-kundalas adorn the ears and their presence along with the facial features, the long arched raised brows, the sharp nose and the smiling lips bring out the artistic richness of the figure. Above all, the makuta is planned and designed in an unparalleled way.

Goddess Deivayani stands on the pitha. She has all artistic feminine characteristic features. The narrow waist exposes the enticing and captivating beauty of the figure. The breasts are rounded and striking for their tenderness and youthhood. The shoulders and the hands are proportionate to one another and this kind of representation further enhances the feminine grace of the figure. The high karanda with its well exposed ornamental details, enhances the beauty of the image to a great level.

Goddess Valli stands on the padma pitha. The artistic features are similar to those images of Deivayanai, except for the poses of the hands. Here the left hand holds, the flower and the right hand is in the lola-hasta.

Goddess Pidari stands in the samabhanga pose. The dress is only up to the thigh level. The legs are free from any ornamentation. The central loop is plain and flat. The slender waist and the broad hip expose her feminine features. The sacred thread with many sided foldings flows in an attractive way. The breasts are beautifully represented. Intricately designed necklaces deck the neck portion. The makuta with flames adds a comprehensive as well as an overall beauty.

In the case of Chandikesvaramurti, the shoulders and the chests are well done with an artistic excellence. One group represents Sambandar with a bride and the bridegroom who were the devotees of the saint.

The images of Appar, Somaskandamurti, Somaskands Goddess, Nataraja and sivakamasundari belong to a period of the 13th century A.D. In the case of Appar, the expression is one of supreme self-absorption. The chest is broad and the shoulders are drooping. In the case of Siva, of the Somaskanda group, the finely worked out jatamakuta adds a majestic as well as a pleasing appearance to the figure. The parts of the makuta are prominently worked out. The excellent modeling of the Goddess Uma, is praise-worthy. The depiction of the saree is sophisticated. The figure of skanda is executed with great skill, as evidenced by the restrained decoration and the smooth flowing lines. As regards the individual image of the somaskanda Goddess, the fingers are tender and life and the poses of the arms are realistic. The drapery and the festoons on the waist too are executed with taste and refinement. The image of Natraja is noteworthy for its stylistically well advanced artistic features.

Jatas of Natraja are spread out on either side of head proportionately. Each side contains nine jatas. The knot seen at the end of each jata, is beautifully made. Highly adorned Ganga is visible on the right side. The makuta here is striking for its treatment. The bold-relief representation of the ornaments like the crescent moon, datura flower, skull and naga hood further enhances the stylistic appearance of the makuta. The beautifully designed fillet goes round the figure. The superb treatment of the face is the outcome of the efforts of an outstanding sculptor. The features of the face are noted for its naturalism, majesty and supreme tranquility. The grandeur of the image, is further enhanced by other artistic features. The necklaces are beautifully modeled with much intricacies. On the left arm is visible the piece of cloth and that too between the left two arms very nicely. The hanging end of the dress is broad and the other end is worked out in a wavy form. The torso has a dynamic look. The gajahasta pose is quite suited and its excellent modeling is a centre of attraction. The artistic treatment of the other three hands is equally grand and its slender and nice modeling elevates the beauty to a great level of appreciation. Above all, the important factor is the proportionate arrangement of all hands. Beautiful Valayas adorn the wrists. The fingers are beautified with rings which are closely fitting. The tapering ends of the fingers are treated exquisitely. The snake with its raised hood, is naturally depicted. The udarabandha is rounded and plain. The raised position of the left leg exposes the magnificent conception and

execution. These qualities along with the other factors make the figure an excellent work or art. The treatment of both the legs is also commendable. The parts of the figure are all arranged in a co-herent manner and their exposition is well balanced.

One can see a remarkable artistic workmanship in the prabhavali also. It is worked in an extremely tasteful manner. Flames are visible on its outer fringe. The frame of the prabha, having no grooves incised on its, looks like an inflated tube. The representation of the flame at the centre of the figure shows a slight variation when compared with all other flames. There are forty-two flames in total. Much emphasis is given to the depiction of the tongues. Each flame contains five tongues. The splendid appearance of the flame enhances the elegance of the entire figure. One can notice a grand perfection in the conception of the prabha as a whole as well as its execution. Considering the artistic features of the prabha, it can be said that it was executed by a trained sculptor of a high order.

SIVAKAMASUNDARI

The fingers of the hands with the tapering ends add feminine grace and charm. The armlets and wristlets are simple. The proportionate treatment of the arms and the realistic representation of the postures speak of the great artistic technique, adopted by the artist. The whole figure is noteworthy for its charm which is mainly due to the gentle sway of the left arm. The graceful tapering of the legs towards the feet is done with much care and attention. The slender waist and broad hip enhance the feminine charm. The bend of the line on the right side from the stomach to the ankle is exquisite. The kneecap of the left leg is clearly visible. The end of the uttariya which is wound round the waist hangs on the right thigh, with slight foldings. The central loop touches the two thighs very gracefully. The flowing of the folded sacred thread between the breasts is appealing. The careful treatment of the necklaces along with the bahulamalas is highly laudable. The absence of the kundalas of the ears, suitably compensated by the highly refined filled which goes round the head. The karanda-makuta is very intricately ornamented and no part of it is free from artistic workmanship. It's majestic look elevates the grace of the entire figure.

As regards the Goddess Sivakamasundari the hands have the usual artistic, attributes.

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SREE BRAHMAPUREESWARAR TEMPLE AT SEEYATTAMANGAI

The stone images of the temple are the excellent products of the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. The images like Ardhanarisvaramurti, Durga, Bhikshatanar, Brahma, Lingodbhavamurti (Fig. No. 71), Dakshinamurti (Fig. No. 72), Agastiyar (Fig. No. 73), Allinganamurthi, Dancing Vinayaka are the notable examples. The innovative feature, are regards the image of Durga, is the presence of a parrot on the wrist of the left lower hand.

The images of the dvarapalakas are carved with the excellent workmanship. A newly designed kundalas adorn the ears.

THE BRONZE IDOLS OF THE TEMPLE

Most of the images belong to a late period of the 15th, and the 16th century A.D. The images of Vinayaka are worked out with artistic precision and accuracy (Fig. No. 74). The treatment of the waistband, reveal the artistic fitness of the image. The trunks with both the broad and tapering ends present a natural look. The other images like Chandrasekharamurti with the Goddess (Fig. No. 75), Muruga with Deivayanai and Valli, Kali; Pradoshanayanar with the Goddess, Palliarai Chokkar, Palliaraiamman, Astradevar, Mariamman (Fig. No. 76) and the Somaskanda Goddess (Fig. No. 77) are renowned for their intricate and delicate workmanship.

The Somaskanda group, from an artistic point of view is dated to the period of the 12th century A.D. The well designed bahulamalas and the artistically completed necklaces highlight the beauty and grace of the image. The facial expression is marvelously executed. The jatamakuta is the product of the mastermind of a sculptor. As regards Uma, the right hand is in the kataka pose and the left hand is firmly placed on the pitha. The two hands of Skanda hold the flowers. The highly exposed channavira bringsforth the youthfulness of the figure. The image of the God Muruga, who sits of the back of the vehicle peacock, is very attractive. The right leg hangs down freely and the left is bent in the kutkutikasana posture (Fig. No. 78). The representation of the bird is natural and its tilting head to the front is very impressive to look at. Likewise, the image of the Goddess Sarasvati is of an artistically refined one. In stone,

normally, the images of the Goddess are in the sitting postures having the usual object calle ` the pustak. It is rare to come across the image in bronze. Here, th images is depicted with much refined characteristic features. The patrakundalas of the ears emphasise the grace and charm of the figure. The right hand holds the flower and the left the pustak. It seems to the belong to the 13th century A.D.

The images of Nataraja with his consorts are well modeled (Fig. No. 79). All of them belong to a period of the 13th century A.D. As regards Nataraja, it can be said that the exposition of the arms, with the tapering ends is the target of attraction for every one who looks at them. The torso of both the figures is well modeled and is done in a masterly fashion. In the second figure, the extension of the lower left hand is very much pleasing to look at. As regards the Goddess, their karandamakutas are worked out both rhythmatically and proportionately. Their feminine charm and grace are further emphasised by the well rounded breasts, the narrow hip and the broad waist. The images of Appar, Sambandar (Fig. No. 80), Manickavacagar, Thiruneelakandayalpanar, Mankaiyarkkarasiyar all belong to a period of the 12th, and the 13th century A.D. The postures of all the figures expose their religious attitude. Normally, in a temple, one can notice the bronze image of the first four saints. The addition of the two more images, in the saiva Iconography, really speak of the artistic greatness of the temple.

SRI VANJINATHASVAMI TEMPLE AT SRIVANJIYAM

Situated at a distance of about ten kilometres west of Nannilam on the Kodavasal, Srivanjiayam is an ancient Saivite centre, on the southern bank of the river Cauvery.

The temple is noteworthy for the presence of two sanctum sanctorums. One contains the linga and the other, the bronze image of Somaskanda. Both of them separately have ardhamandapa and mahamandapa. There is a common Mahamandapa. The pillars of Muhamandapa are of Nayak style. Some of the pillars contain the portrait images of ladies, with the characteristic Nayak style. One pillar contains the portrait images of a lady whose hands are in the anjali postures. The facial expression expresses her devotional attitude. The eyes are stylistically elongated. The presence of side knot add artistic elegance to the figure.

The temple in total covers an area of 3. 5 acres. The temple contains three enclosure walls. The pillars of the pillared verandah of the inner enclosure wall are of Chola style having cushion capitals.

The architectural style of the main vimana is a superb one. The presence of rearing yalis at the corners of the cornice, elevate the beauty of the vimana. The superstructure of the vimana contains the beautiful stucco images. There is a five tiered majestic rajagopura at the entrance of the temple on the northern side of the first prakara. The sacred tank, Guptha Gangai which is parallel to the temple and about 440 feet in length has fine steps around it. The stone images, from stylistic point of view belongs to the period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. The images of Dvarapalakas are executed with superb workmanship. Vismaya poses of the hands are exposed with artistic excellence. The intricate ornamentation of the makutas elevate the artistic style of the figures. Even though the images of Dakshinamurti and Brahma, have the usual characteristic attributes one can notice perfection in their execution (Fig. No. 81). As regards Dakshinamurti the objects, held between the index and the middle fingers are the snake and akshamala and their presence, highlight the artistic grace of the figures. The makutas are well treated. In the case of Brahma

also, each and every part is well finished. The artistic design of the dress is also superbly worked out.

The images of Durga, from artistic point of view, differs from the others. E·en the materials also reveals slight variation, when compared with the other images of the temple. She stands on the well decked patrapitha. The right leg is placed on the pitha and the left is planted on the backside neck of the asura. Behind the right leg is visible, the lion, the vehicle of the Goddess. The upper two hands hold the canku and cakra, in between the index and middle fingers. The cakra is in the prayoga form. With the trisula, in one hand she attacks the asura on his back, whose bodily exposition expresses his dying condition. One hand heavily presses the head of the asura. The remaining four hands hold the objects like knife, shield etc. One can notice a realistic workmanship in the treatment of the makuta as well as in the kundalas of the ears. The rare features of the image indicate the fact, that the figure might have been taken from the north as a war-trophy, during the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. But, regarding this, no information is available from the inscriptions of the temple.

The other noteworthy image of the temple is the Bhoga Bhairavar. The artistic attributes greatly differ from the other forms of Bhairava, which, we have discussed earlier. The sitting posture is itself a stylistically a variation. The left leg is bent and is placed on the pitha. The right leg is in kutkutikasana posture. Of the four hands, the right upper holds the trisula and the left upper has the udukkai. The right lower hand holds the knife and the left lower is placed on the thigh. A garland of skulls, which goes over the chest, emphasise the terrific quality of the figure. One more rare image of the temple is Rahu (Fig. No. 82). Nowhere else is found such a kind of representation. The lower part of the body is encircled by the tail of the snake. The seven hoods of the snake are proportionately worked out. Their natural workmanship is a highly appreciable one. The treatment of the kundalas of the ears and the necklaces are worked out quite aptly with much intricacy and delicacy. The right hand holds the knife and the left the shield. This rare piece also seems to have been taken from the north as a war trophy, as no such representation is found in any one of the temples of Tamil Nadu. In the other image of the Goddess Lakshmi, one can find the nice treatment of the foot. The legs are in the yogasana attitude. The elongated eyes and the sharp nose elevate

the grace of the figure. It seems to belong to a period of the 15th, and the 16th century A.D.

The bronze images of the temple like Chandrasekharamurti and the Goddess of the Somaskanda group and Bhikshatanamurti are the best specimens of the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. In the case of the figures of the Somaskanda group, all are treated with intricate details. The figure of Siva, lacks ornamentation, but its artistic dignity is not affected to a least degree. The feminine complexion of Uma, is exposed with naturalism. In the case of the image of Bhikshatanamurti, the artistic expression is a highly refined one. The encircling of the cobra around the waist and the raised hood are noteworthy for their natural exposition. The yajnopavita, after the brahma knot, branches off into three. First one goes just behind the right chest. The central one flows up to the right hip and the third one flows over the left hip. The posture of the antelope is natural. The raised two forelegs and the standing hind legs are superbly modeled. The titling of the head towards the Lord is very realistic. The long neck of the animal is pleasing to the eyes.

The other images of the temple are dated to a late period of the 15th, and the 16th century A.D. Their workmanship in highly adorable. In the case of the image of Vinayaka the sacred thread with the well planned and precise foldings, flows very nicely and lowered down very gracefully up to the fight hip. The brahma knot is designed in full blown flowery forms. The image of Chattanathar is an attractive piece (Fig. No. 83). Normally the images of this deity are made out of stucco. One such fine example is found on the wall of the ardhamandapa of the Svetaranyesvara temple, at Tiruvengadu, Sirkali Taluk, and Tanjore district. The artistic features are similar to one another. The treatment of the makuta of the image in the temple at Sreevanjeeyam, is laudable. The best decorative element is the garland of bells. The proportionate arrangement of the bells, exhibit the artistic mastermind of the sculptor of the contemporary period. The other images like Kali (Fig. No. 84), Bhogasaktiamman (Fig. No. 85) and the images of the saints Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Manickavacagar are stylistically represented. The figure of Siva, Parvati and Uma in the Astaradevar group are treated with the highly advanced artistic technique. The images of Muruga with Deivayanai and Valli are also the products of the same period.

THE TEMPLES AT THIRUMIYACHUR

The main parts of the temple complex are the sanctum sanctorum, ardhamandapa, mahamandapa and muhamandapa. The entire parts are enclosed by an inner enclosure wall. Inside the prakara are present, the shrines like Vinayaka, Nataraja, Muruga, Sakalabhuvanesvarar etc. the entrance of the enclosure wall is beautified by the presence of a short gopura having only three tiers. The outer enclosure wall is decorated with Rajagopuram which has five tiers. The pillars of the mahamandapa are of Chola style, having huge palagai with pumunai designs. The upapitha of the muhamandapa contains beautiful dancing figures. Along with the dancing postures one can notice beautiful simha figures of excellent carvings and the well executed creeper designs. The wall portion of the Sakalabhuvanesvarar shrine contains the pilasters of the Chola style. The design of the kumbapancharas is delicately planned and minutely carved. The adhisthana of the main vimana contains the parts like upana, jagathi, padma, kumuda, kantha and pattigai, whose architectural treatment is of an excellent order. Sikhara is in the form of an elephant's back. The griva portion contains the stucco images of Brahma, Dakshinamurti etc.

THE STONE IMAGES OF THE TEMPLE

IMAGES PRESENT ON THE WALL OF THE MAIN SANCTUM SANCTORUM AND THE ARDHAMANDAPA OF THE TEMPLE

The images of Vinayaka, Alinganmurti, Dakshinamurti, Lingodbhavamurti, beautify the wall portions of both the sanctum sanctorum and the ardhamandapa. They are the best specimens of the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. In the Alinganamurti aspect, the right hand of Siva holds Ganga along with the jata and the left upper holds the deer. The right lower embraces Uma, by touching her breast and the left lower holds the hip of Uma, out of love. The other ornaments like waistband, simha-mukha clasp, kundalas of the ears, enhance the beauty of the image. On either side of Lingodbhavamurti is visible images of Lord Visnu and Brahma whose hands are in the anjali postures.

SCULPTURES PRESENT ON THE WALLS OF THE SANCTUM AND ARDHAMANDAPA OF THE SAKALABHUVANESVARAR SHRINE.

Like the main sanctum, here also the images like, Brahma, Durga, Rishabhavahanamurti, Chandikesvaramurti greatly beautify the shrine. One interesting feature regarding the attributes of Brahma and Visnu is that the lower two hands of both the images are in anjali postures. Likewise, the novel feature of the image Chandikesvaramurti is the presence of four faces. The artistic treatment of each and every face is proportionate to one another. The image of Durga, with the eight hands give a fascinating appearance. The image of Dvarapalaka, seen infront of the shrine Muruga, has interesting features. Instead of having four hands, it has only two and they carry a knife and a shield. The treatment of Makuta has its own individuality.

THE SCULPTURED MAKARA TORANA PANELS OF THE TEMPLE

The Makaratoranas of the devakoshtas present of the walls of the various structures of the temple, depict beautiful as well as artistically finished sculptured panels with much more intricate details. The panels present on the walls of the main sanctum and ardhamandapa are those of the kalasamharamurti, Mahisasuramardhini, Gajasamharamurti, Alinganamurti, Kalyanasundaramurti, Narasimhamurti, Visnu Durga and Natarajar with Sivakamasundari (Fig. No. 86). Siva, in the kalasamharamurti panel, has the usual characteristic features. The eight hands carry the objects like parasu, deer, knife, shield, pasa, trisula etc. The devotes Markandeya, with devotion embraces the linga. The spreaded hairs of Yama, project at fearful and dreadful appearance. One of the hands holds the pasa. The figure of the Goddess Mahisasuramardini, holds objects like bow, arrow, shield, knife etc. Her heroic postures suggests her readiness to fight with the Mahisasura, who is an embodiment of evil spirits. The buffalo head shows his mudance quality. The lion, the vehicle of the Goddess is itself in a ferocious posture, raising its front legs. The figures of yalis with riders are seen around the Goddess. The figure of kalyanasundaramurti has interesting features.

SIVA

The tri-bhanga pose in which Siva stands is beautiful and majestic in appearance. The extremely well finished jatamakuta highlights further the august posture of the figure. The kundalas of

the ears enhance the beauty of the figure. The beautiful depiction of nose, hip and chin enhance the complexion further. The arched eyebrows are very striking. On the whole, the expression of the face is one of supreme joy.

The pearl-designed necklaces adorn the neck. The hara is intricately carved. The beauty of the image is further elevated by the broad and stiff udarabandha. The naturalistic representation of the postures of the hands testify to the artistic greatness of the figure. The legs are well modeled and they expose the strength and power of the figure. The power is well kept under control by means of the refined lines and rounded modeling. The sculptor has adroitly depicted and bend of the right side of the figure. The left leg is planted firmly. Tbe beauty of the figure is further enhanced by the turning of the right foot towards the right side. One can notice a slight projection on the left hip which is mainly due to the bend to the right side. The workmanship of the dress is done in the wave-over wave form design. The waistband is broad and its floral design is beautifully executed. The simha-mukha clasp is prominently worked out.

The figure of Parvati is also equally interesting. The rhythmic flowing of the bodily lines enhances the charm of the figure. The intricate carvings of the ornaments expose the artistic genius of the sculptor. The entire figure is treated with tender and soft features as she is in the marriage form. The facial expression reveals the coyness and shyness of the figure. The arms with the tapering ends fascinates everybody's attention. The tender fingers are treated very nicely. The karanda-makuta with three tiers look very beautiful. The knob on the top is well placed. The decoration on all the sides of the makuta is beautifully executed. The fillet is thick and its workmanship in the form of a row of petals is an admirable one. Moreover, the projection of the fillet is proportionately done. The well treated kundalas and the ornamented necklaces enhance the artistic glory of the figure. The three stranded yajnopavita (sacred thread) with the well treated foldings flows very gracefully through the collapsing breasts. Artistic perfection is well visible in the treatment of the torso and the breasts. The exposition of the shoulders is very graceful to look at. The treatment of the shoulders suggest youthfulness and vigour. The execution of the arms is well done. The prominent depiction of the keyra and the hanging tassels below them expose the artistic grace and glory of the figure. The wristlets are proportionately executed.

The execution of the parts below the waist further adds beauty to the figure. The rendering of the atibhanga of the right leg, is perfectly done. The padasaras and the rings are treated in a masterly fashion. The dress with the wavy form design seems to be very attractive and enchanting. The beautified uttariya goes around the waist very elegantly with the pearl like strings. Narasimhamurti panel, on the whole creates, a dreadful appearance. With the two hands, the Lord penetrates the stomach of Hirayana, who lies helplessly on the thighs of the Lord. The facial expressions expose the inability of Hiranya, to do anything against the Lord. One leg of Hirayana is stretched out lengthwise which is held by one of the right hands of the Lord. Another leg of Hirayana hangs below. The facial expression and the postures of the hands expose the intense anger of the lord. The object canku, present on the right upper hand of Durga is in the prayoga form. The curved tail of the animal lion, expresses the feeling that the animal is in action. Moreover, the exposition of both the body and legs suggest the strength and power of the animal. Both the figures of Nataraja and Sivakamasundari, are excellently worked out. The postures of the hands and the legs of both the figures are exquisitely worked out. The flowing nature of the dress of Siva, is quite pleasing to look at. The bodily flexions of Parvati are exposed very distinctly.

The panels present on the walls of the Sakalabhvanesvarar shrine expose the figure of Muruga with Nardana vinayakar and the Mahisasuramardini which has their usual artistic attributes. In the case of Nardana Vinayaka, both the right leg and the left upper hand are in the dancing postures. Two more figures could not be identified exactly, but, their artistic workmanship is highly admirable one. Most of the bronze idols of the temples are of a late period of the 15th, and the 16th century A.D. The best examples of this period are the images like Vinayaka, Pidari, Chandikesvaramurti, Chokkar, Palliarai ambal, Pradoshanayanar with the Goddess, Murugan with Deivayanai and Valli, two figures of the Goddess Bhogasakti, Adipooramman, Mariamman and the images of the saints like Sambandar and Manickavacagar.

The images of Tripurantakamurti is well treated. The torso is rhythmatically modeled and the exposition of the hands with the objects is quite pleasing. The grace is further enhanced by the artistic design of the waistband and the well finished of the simhamukha clasp, which elevate the grace of the figure. Likewise,

the makarakundalas of the ears, the karanda-makuta with the fillet, the highly delicately carved necklaces of the image of the Goddess, speak of the artistic calibre of the sculptor. Of the Somaskanda groups, the first group is dated to the 13th century A.D. and the second one to the 16th, and the 17th century A.D. In the first group, the exposition of the hands and the broad shoulders expose the well balanced treatment of the figure of Siva. The smiling lips and the makuta with the fillet, further emphasise the beautiful complexion of the figure. As regards Uma, the well exposition of the hip and the waist brings out the feminine majestic quality. The makarakundalas of the ears, the necklaces, and the well flowing bahulamalas reveal the artistic excellence of the figure. The figures of Nataraja, with Sivakamasundari, and Chandrasekharamurti with the Goddess are excellently finished off. The proportionate execution of the parts of the body in the case of both Nataraja (Fig. No. 87) and Sivakamasundari (Fig. No. 88) highlight their beauty to a very great level. The gestures of both the hands and the legs expose the feminine tenderness of Sivakamasundari. Likewise the treatment of the figures of Chandrasekharamurti with the Goddess is in no way a sub-standard one. The artistic expression is quite pleasing one. The facial treatment of both the figures is well executed.

image of Visnu in various forms reveal the icongraphical value of the temple. They are all dated, from an artistic point of view, to the period of the 11th, and the 12th century A.D. The images of Kirubasamudrapperumal are treated with much artistic precision and clarity (Fig. Nos. 89, 90). Their upper two hands hold the usual object canku and cakra which have small flames. The objects are placed between the index and the middle fingers. The modeling of torso is worthy of appreciation. The image or Sreenivasa being in the Samabhanga posture, looks very beautiful. The objects canku, cakra are placed on the shoulders stylistically. The left lower hand is in the urdhva hasta and the fingers are touching the thigh very gracefully. The facial features are treated with artistic care and precision. The beauty of one image, Selvar (Fig. No. 93) is greatly enhanced by the makuta with the flat fillet. The facial expression is of supreme beauty. The treatment of the various parts of the images of sreeyagaberar and Sree Senai Mudaliyar date the figures to the 13th century A.D. The left lower hands of both the figures hold the mace. The exposition of the torso is highly expressive. The depiction of the parts like the ears and the makutas exhibits the refined quality of the images. The two images o the God Rajagopalan fined quality of the images. The two images of the God Rajagopalan are artistically exposed. The ornamentation of the hands, the chest, the hip and the shoulders is very pleasing and captivating. Both of them are dated to the 12th, and the 13th century A.D. The artistic child like representation of the figure Santhanakrisna is beautifully carried out. He sucks the right toe of the right leg by raising the hip with the help of the right hand. The left leg is stretched out freely. The fleshy parts of the body further emphasise the childish quality. The hip ornament is marvelously treated. The raising of rive hoods increases the grace of the figure. It can be dated to the period of the 12th, and the 13th century A.D. In the case of the image of Dancing Krsna (Fig. No. 91), the left leg is placed on the padma-pitha and the right leg is raised in the dancing posture. The hands are proportionately represented in the dancing postures. The facial expressions like the arched brows,

the smiling lips and the short makuta reveal the artistic greatness of the figure. The image can be dated to the period of the 13th, and the 14th century A.D. The image of Garudalvar is noteworthy. A naga hood is visible on the right shoulder. The figures of Kulasekhara Alwar, Nammalvar, Udaiyavar, Periyalwar, Tondaradippotialwar, Thirumangai Alwar, Thirumilisai Alwar and Manavalamamunigal (Fig. No. 92) belong to a late period of the 13th century A.D. Their artistic treatment exposed their sincere religious services for the propagation of the religion. The images of the Goddess are excellently worked out. The feminine aspects are treated with the naturalistic styles. The youthness and the tenderness of the figures are exposed through both the bodily and facial features. The ornaments like the necklaces, the kundalas of the ears, the bahulamalas, the fillets of the makutas, bringforth the artistic dignity of the figures. The exposition of both the legs and hands is rhythmatically worked out. The treatment of the dresses of all the figures elevate the artistic glory. The good examples are the images of the Goddess like Andal (Fig. No. 93), Budevi, Satyapama and Rukmani. The breasts and the treatment of the hands in the lola-hasta poses, further enhance the grace and charm of the figures.

The artistic representation of the mother Goddess is superb. The refined facial features and the rhythmic arrangements of the ornaments, the exposition of the hands and the sitting postures of the legs, highly speak of the artistic significance of the figures. In one figure of the Goddess Thayanayaki (Fig. No. 94) the two legs are placed in the yogasana posture. The upper two hands hold the lotus flowers. The right lower hand is in the abhaya pose and the left is in the varada pose. Its feminine features is emphasised by the well developed breasts, delicate treatment of the ears and the minute carvings of the makuta. One more figure called Celvar Thayar has similar artistic features. The kundalas of the ears are executed with a fascinating style. The face is round and the entire facial features are finished off gracefully.

The temple at Rudraganagai, has the best artistic specimens of the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. The static posture of the god Dakshinamurti is well exposed. The falling of the hairs on either side of the figure, is well balanced. Arms

are devoid of the precious ornaments, except the simple valayas and armlets. The left leg is raised in an orderly form and is rhythmically placed on the right thigh. The unbearable burden of Muyalaka is seen through the facial flexions and the postures of the legs and hands. All the parts of the figure Saturn (Fig. No. 95) are artistically well done. The right hand is in the abhaya pose. The well exposed broad shoulders convey the strength and power of the figure. A broad sized necklace seems to decorate the neck, but its carvings are not intricately done. The kundalas of the ears, and the well treated facial features, enhance the beauty to a considerable level. The karanda-makuta with the fillet is well executed. The simhamukha clasp is not prominently visible. The bird, crow is naturally represented. The head of the bird is raised up to the level of the palm of the right hand. The sitting posture of the Goddess Lakshmi is excellently done (Fig. No. 96). The well depicted breasts along with the breast-band add feminine grace to the figure.

Muruga stands in the samabhanga pose (Fig. No. 97). The loincloth is well modeled. The central loop is rhythmatically balanced. The usual garland and creeper designs highlight the beauty of the dress. The simha-mukha design is prominently carved out. The exposition of the broad shoulders speak of the unsurpassed strength and power of the God. The channavira goes over the chest and its presence expose the heroic attitude of the God. The treatment of the necklaces is well and properly done and they enhance further the grace of the figure. The fan-wise arrangement of the hairs on both the sides of the head is very pleasing to look at. The kundalas of the ears and the facial attributes exhibit the artistic grandeur of the figure. The face of the Goddess Deivayanai is not frontal but in profile. The right hand holds the flower and the left hand hangs freely up to the knee level. The right leg seems to be bending slightly and this is the main reason for the slanting position of the figure. The slender arms with the well exposed rounded breasts emphasise the feminine nature of the figure. The karanda-makuta is executed with excellent finishing. The artistic features of the Goddess Valli are quite similar to those of the Goddess Deivayanai. Visnu stands in the well balanced samabhanga posture. The waistband is without the simha-mukha clasp. The central loop beautifully grasps the two thighs very gracefully. The foldings of yajnopavita are treated more accurately and it flows over the right thigh with its beautiful flexions. The broad shoulders along with the stout arms expose the power of the

god in subduing the evil forces. The kundalas of the ears and their gentle touch over the shoulders are well done and they really increase the beauty of the figure. The makuta with the filet upgrades the excellence of the figure. The objects are placed between the middle and the index fingers and their exposition above the shoulder level contributes an overall beauty.

The somaskanda group seen on the back wall of the sanctum sanctorum from artistic point of view, seems to be a rare specimen (Fig. No. 98).

Siva sits on the patrapitha. The left leg is bent and placed on the pitha. The right leg hangs down. Padasaras beautify the feet. The presence of Veerakkalal on the right leg exhibits its beauty. The loincloth is well decorated. The knots of the dress flow on the pitha in an enchanting manner. The simha-mukha clasp is treated very excellently. The sacred-thread after the brahma-knot on the chest, branches off into three. One branch goes just below the right chest and the other two are lowered down to the hip level and their rhythmatic foldings elevate the grace of the figure. The necklaces of multifarious designs expose the artistic refinement of the figure. The bahulamalas with the full-blossomed flower designs are highly attractive. The left ear has the rounded patra-kundala and the right ear has the makara-kundala. The arrangement of the hairs on either side of the head is very beautifully performed. The jatamakuta with the well designed fillet will attract everyones attention. One interesting feature, regarding the makuta is the presence of a figure of a child at the centre. Nowhere else is found such a kind of representation. The presence of the figure is mainly due to a local traditional story. The story is as follows. Once, a Brahmin family went to take bath in the river Kaveri that flows near the temple. Their only child named Ganga, due to her ignorance of swimming, was swept away by the water. The parents tried their level best to trace the child but all were in vain. Finally they prayed to the Almighty. Siva appeared before them and showed their child on his head. Normally, only on the back walls of the sanctum sanctorum of the temples of the Pallava period, one can notice the presence of Somaskanda group. The best examples are the shore temple at Mahabalipuram and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram. The representation of the group in the temple as Rudragangai, also perhaps, indicate the Pallava influence.

The bronze images of the temple are of a late period of the 16th, and the 17th century A.D. But even then, the artistic treatment

denotes perfection and refinement. One can notice a co-herent and rhythmatic finishing in the images of Vinayaka, Pradoshanayanar with the Goddess, Subramanya, Deivayanai, Valli, Astaradevar, Nataraja (Fig. No. 99) and Sivakamasundari. The stylistic completion of the headdress of Nataraja, highlight the glory of the image. The facial complexion is enhanced by the treatment of the kundalas. The position of the hands brings out the balanced and pleasing dance.

The bronze image of Ayyampettai highly speak of the artistic greatness of the temple. The stylistic features of the images indicate a late period of the 16th, and the 17th century A.D. They stand as the best examples to expose the undying traditional artistic workmanship. The figure of lord Muruga is treated with refined artistic characteristic features. The exposition of the samabhanga pose of the figure is worked out with artistic perfection and clarity. The facial expression as well as the bodily postures of the Goddess Deivayanai, stand as a good testimony to her feminine complexion. The Sarasvatiambal at Koothanur, is enriched with the presence of some best specimens. The images of Rama, Sits and Lakshmanan (Fig. No. 100) are the best products of the 12th century A.D.

The treatment of the image of Nataraja, has its own individual characteristic features (Fig. No. 101). The left lower hand is raised to the shoulder level and not lowered down as in the other examples. The Goddess Ganga is not placed on the Jata, but in stead of that, it is placed on the top of the right shoulder. The arrangement of the headdress has its own distinctive features. It is a rare one to have such a kind of headdress. The head is devoid of the usual ornaments like datura flower, peacock feathers, and crescent moon. It is dated to the period of the 12th century A.D. The image of the Goddess Sarasvati (Fig. No. 102) shows the popularity of the temple. The right upper hand holds the akshamala and the left upper carries the kundikai. The right lower hand is in chin mudra and the left lower holds the pustak. The kundalas of the ears and the makuta are worked out elaborately and prominently. It is also dated to the same period of the 12th century A.D. The image of the goddess Saratha (Fig. No. 103) is noteworthy for its artistic perfection. The bronze images of the temple at Bolagam, are of a late period of the 14th, and the 15th century A.D. Images of Rama, Sita, Lakshmanan and Hanuman can be quoted as the best examples. Likewise, the bronze image of the

Thirugnanapureesvarar temple at Thirumegnanam, from an artistic point of view, can be dated to the same period. The formation of the headdress, with the peacock feathers and dature flower excels the other decorations of the figure of Nataraja. The falling of the jatas on either side of the head is systematically worked out. Each side contains three jatas. The left side jata contains the prominent crescent moon. The modeling of torso, the position of the arms with the tapering ends and the tender fingers, the raised posture of the left leg and the position of the right leg, highlight the artistic glory of the figure.

The images of Rama, Sita, Lakshmanan and Hanuman both in stone and bronze in the temple at Mudikondan are the best products of the Chola period of the 10th, and the 11th century A.D. The right hand of Rama, in stone holds the arrow and the left the bow. In bronze, the right hand is in the kataka pose and the left is in the pose holding the bow. The position of the weapons itself indicates his mastery in the field of archery. The krita-makuta speaks of his royal status. The facial expressions speak of his heroic achievement. In the case of Sita, the flexions of the body speaks her feminine quality. The artistic significance of the image is exposed through the ornaments like the kundalas of the ears, armlets, keyuras, and wristlets. Like Rama, the hands of Lakshmana hold the objects like arrow and bow. The position of the objects and his facial expression suggests his readiness to face any danger. The bronze image of Hanuman is noteworthy for its refined artistic features. The hands are in the anjali postures. The facial expressions expose his]dedicated service to Rama.

The temple at Narimanam is noteworthy for the presence of the bronze image of Ayyanar with his consorts.

AYYANAR

Ayyanar, Hariharaputra or Mahasasta, is supposed to be as his name implies, a son of Siva and Visnu[1]. The puranic story related with his birth is an interesting one. Due to the churning of the ocean by the asuras and devas there came out the celestial nectar. Both devas and the asuras, quarrelled with each other about the distribution of it. Visnu, assuming the form of Mohini, attracted the asuras and made them agree to depute her to distribute the precious liquid to all equally. But, finally Mohini deceived the asuras by her partial distribution of the liquid only to the Gods. At this moment Siva saw Mohini and was enamoured of her. He wedded her and the result of their union was Hariharaputra.

The iconical features are mentioned in the works lilke *Amsumadbhedagama*, the *Karanagama*, and the *Suprabhedagama*. It is stated in the work called Amsumadbhedagama, that sasta should have four hands and the upper two hands should carry *khadga* and *khetaka*. The lower two hands are in the *abhaya* and *varada* poses. The work prescribe *padmasana*.

Suprabhedagama prescribed only two hands. The right arm should have a crooked stick (known in Tamil as the Sendu) and the left hand should hold the fruits. Moreover the same work advocates the presence of two wives namely Madana and Varnai, one on each side of him.

In the *karamagama* it is stated that Sasta may have either two or four hands. In the case of the one with two arms, the right hand should have a *vajra danda*, which is a crooked stick. Elephants and bulls are mentioned as the vehicles of the God. The work also prescribes both *yogasana* and *sukhasana* postures.

The image from Tirupparaaiyaru in the North Tranvancore has interesting features. It has only two arms, the right

hand is in the *abhaya* pose and the left is placed on the thigh. The right leg is bent and is in Kutkutikasana posture and the left leg is bent horizontally and is placed on the pitha. The facial expression and the broad shoulders suggest that the image is in the *virasana* pose.

The bronze image from Sastankottai has also two arms. the right hand carries an arrow and the left holds the bow.

In the another two armed bronze images from Tiruppalatturai, the right hand is in the *kataka* pose and the left is placed on the left knee. The left leg is in the *kutkutikasana* pose and the right is bent and placed on the *pitha*. The bronze image from Valuvar depicts the god on the back of the elephant. The bronze image from the temple at Tiruvalangadu, Tanjore district is noteworthy for the presence of two wives namely Purna and Pushkala[2].

REFERENCE IN THE TAMIL LITERATURE

The period between the sixth and eigth centuries is the appropriate era when the God comes to be known as Sasta and Aiyanar becomes more visible in the South. The literary reference also support the above date. The Saiva Nayanar Appar while singing in praise of Siva in his manifestation in Tiruppayarrur speaks of Cattan as the son of Siva. In the other work, Panniru Pattiyal[3], Cattan is included as a deity to whom invocations are done. Similarly the Tivakaram, probably the oldest Tamil Dictionary, dating just before the middle of the eight century, cites five names for this deity. In addition to Cattan the other names are Kolikkotiyon (he who has a chicken on his banner) Catavakanan (he who has the elephant as his mount) Kari (black one). He is called Sastha and Mahasattan, in the ancient Tamil literatures like Cilappathikaram. The sculptural representation began to appear only from the Pallava period onwards[4]

AYYANAR GROUP

The three figures are worked out very diligently. The treatemnt exposes the great scholarship of the artist of the contemporary period.

The august appearance of the figure of Ayyanar in the temple at Narimanam is mainly due to its artistic precision and accuracy. The hairs are arranged dexterously. The left leg in *Kutkutikasana* is well placed on the *padma pitha*. The right leg hangs down freely. A

iat *yogapatta* goes over the left knee by encircling the hip. The dress is visible only up to the thigh level. The well patterned design of the dress exposes the dexterity of the artist who executed the work with a ceaseless effort. The *udarabandha* is flat and plain. The neck ornaments are the products of the marvellous work of the sculptor. The arrangement of the necklaces is in conformity with the artistic rules and regulations. Moreover the necklaces are placed conjointly and in an orderly manner. The flowing of *bahulamalas* on each shoulders up to the elbow contributes to the beauty of the figure. The *kundalas* of the ears are well treated. The hair-arrangement is done exquisitely. The exposition of the hairs reminds us of the masterly attainments of the sculptor. The right hand holds the cendu and the left hand is placed on the knee. The downward position of the fingers of the left hand is pleasing.

The Devi on the left side sits with an elegant posture on the *padmapitha*. The right leg is bent and placed on the *pitha*. The left leg hangs down freely. The right hand holds the flower and the left hand is placed on the thigh. The breasts are prominent and the sacred thread with rhythmatic foldings, flows gracefully between the breasts. The *makuta* with the two raised horns increases the beauty of the figure.

The Devi on right side sits on the *padmapitha*. The right leg hangs freely and the left leg is bending and placed on the *pitha*. The left hand holds the flower and the right hand is simply placed on the thigh. The breast-band is present and due to its binding the breasts are well balanced. The flowing of the *bahulamalas* over the shoulders, is appropriately worked out and it brings out the artistic skill of the sculptor. Here, one innovative feature is the presence of only one horn and that also on the left side. The *makuta* is well fitted and its execution is highly commendable.

FOOT NOTES

1. Krishna Sastri, H., *South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses*, 1974, p. 229.
2. Nagaswamy, R., *Tanjore Nayak Bronzes, South Indian Studies*, II, Page.40.
3. Panniru Pattiyal - . . . . . 106.
4. Nagaswamy, R., *Art and Culture of Tamil Nadu*, 1980, p. 50.

The Parvateesvarasvami temple at Injikkudi is noteworthy for its artistic richness. The images of Dakshinamurti (Fig. No. 104), Ardhanarisvaramurti (Fig. No. 105), Brahma (Fig. No 106), Durga (Fig. No. 107) Rishabhavahanamurti (Fig. No 108) are the excellent pieces of the Chola period. In the case of Ardhanarisvaramurti the hands are treated with dignity. The upper two hands carry the parasu and the flower and the right lower is placed on the head of the risabha. In the case of the image of Brahma, the arched brows, the smiling lips and the sharpness of the face enhance its beauty. In the case of the image of Rishabavahanamurti, the curved ears and the full cheeks expose its artistic glory.

The other images like the hunter and the dvarapalakas (Fig. No. 109, 110, 111) are intricately worked out. In the case of the hunter both the headdress and the kundalas exhibit his true hunting life. In the case of the dvarapalakas, the necklaces are orderly arranged and their execution is quite admirable. The rounded eyes and the protruding teeth expose their dreadful appearance. The makutas are well exposed their dreadful appearance. The makutas are well exposed and each and every part of them are carefully worked out. The well orderly arrangement of the hands exhibit the artistic talent of the sculptor. As regards the dvarapalakas, the ornamentation is elaborately worked out. The makutas are well exposed and each and every part is excellently carved. The dresses, with the stylistically arranged creeper and garland designs appear to be marvelous. The flowings of the knots, on the two thighs are rhythmic and the expression enticing. The eyes of the first two images are rounded and reveal a dreadful appearance. In the case of the third figure, the eyes are not much rounded, but at the same time they are elongated and arch-like. The bronze images of the temple are of very late period.

The Somaskandamurti image found in the temple at Thirunandikesvarma is noted for its rare artistic features. The characteristic features of both Siva and Skanda in the group are common to many groups. Siva sits on padmapitha. The upper two hands of Siva have both Parasu and deer, which are placed between the index and middle fingers. The right lower hand is in abhaya pose and the left lower hand is in kataka pose. The left ear has patra-kundala and the right has makara-kundala, jata-makuta adds beauty to the image. The siraschakra with lotus petals is very adds beauty to the image. The siraschakra with lotus petals is very much pleasing. Wristlets, keyuras, anklets add beauty and charm to the image. The right leg hangs down and the left is bent and placed on the pedestal.

Skanda is in a dancing pose. The head is decorated with the karanda-makuta. The hip ornaments is decked with bells. The right hand holds the flower and the left hand simply hangs down. Channavira adds beauty to the chest. Wristlets, keyuras, anklets add beauty to the entire image.

Among the three figures of this group, the position of Uma deserves special mention. The features of Siva and Skanda are common as in many examples. The presence of Nandi, in the left hand or Uma is considered to be the unique feature as it is the only image which has such a representation of Nandi. A vivid and detailed account of the various images of Uma of Somaskanda groups will project the unique of the present image.

The earliest stone representation of the Somaskanda group occurs in the monuments of the Pallava period, especially in the Dharmaraja ratha.[1] In this panel, Siva as indicated by his attitude of imparting words of wisdom, and Uma is bending the tip of her right ear with her forefinger so as to catch every word. Uma is seated in profile, Uma's back abuts the niches edge. Uma's left hand is infront clasping Skanda's wrist. The Uma of the Somaskanda panel of the Ramanuja mandapa at Mahabalipuram has similar features as the Dharmaraja ratha's group.[2] In the Somaskanda panel of the shore temple at Mahabalipuram, Uma leans on her left arm which does not hold anything.[3] In all the Somaskanda panels of the Rajasimha period, the left hand of Uma is without the Nandi.[4] In the Pallava period, Somaskanda representation is also found in painting. The shrine No. 41 of the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, Chengleput District, Tamil Nadu, contains the beautiful Somaskanda painting. Here

also Uma's left hand is without Nandi. Here Uma, the mother of Skanda is a painters dream, a merit of brush work, a delicate subject, treated tenderly. Uma is seated on a couch, with the right leg on her seat, and the left is hanging down to rest on a cushioned footstool which is lost. The face is obliterated and one can imagine its beauty from the gem-decked crown. The right hand caresses the child, and the left simply rests on the seat and holds nothing.[5]

During the periods of the Cholas, the images of the Somaskanda group were of mainly in bronze. In all the images, representation of Nandi is absent. The Somaskanda group present in the Pallavaneeswaram temple at Kavirippoompattinam, Sirkali Taluk, Thanjavur district, is a notable example of the Chola period of the 9th century A.D.[6] Here the right hand of Uma holds the flower and the left is in *varada* pose. Here the right leg is bent and the left hangs down. In the Somaskanda group from Thiruvalangadu, the right hand of Uma holds the flower and the left hand is in *kataka* pose. This bronze is clearly of the transitional period from Pallava to Chola with greater affinity to the Chola, form as seen in the 9th , and the 10th century early Chola sculpture. The unconventional pose of Devi with her right leg lifted up and bent on the seat recals similar Pallava figures. The presence of the lotus in her hand, and the little boy Skanda seated in a natural way almost lost in a reverie, in nearly almost the same fashion as in Pallava groups of Somaskanda, all suggest a very early date. [7]

In the Somaskanda group from Thiruvengadu, which belongs to the 10th, and the 11th country, the right hand of Uma is in the *kataka* pose and the left is simply placed on the pitha and without Nandi.[8] Similar, features are found in the examples from the Vaideeswarankoil which belongs to the last quarter of the 12th century A. D. In the Somaskanda groups from the temples at Nidur, Mayavaram, Thiruvidaimarudur, Thanikottam and Vellur Seruvarai, the right hand of Uma is in the *Kataka* pose and the left is in *varada*. In one Somaskanda group from Kunnandarkoyil in the Pudukottai district, the right hand of Uma is in *kataka* pose and the left hand is in *simhakarna* pose. The left leg hangs down and the right leg is in *Kutkutikasana*. In another image from Albart Museum, which belongs to the beginning of the 13th century A. D. the right hand of Uma holds the flower and the left is in *varada* pose.

In the Vijayanagar period, the Somaskanda images appear in large number. Separate *mandapas* were constructed to house the images in the *prakaras* of the temples. No images of this period depict the presence of Nandi in the left hand of Uma. At Srisailam, in the Mallikarjuna temple, there is a metal image of Siva and Uma with the baby Skanda in their midst. It is an excellent piece, bearing a splendid testimony to the skill and power of Vijayanagar craftsmen. In one image from Nellore, the left hand of Uma is in the *varada* pose and the right is in *kataka* pose. In another group from the Siva temple at Madeour, the left hand of Devi rests on the pitha and the right hand is in the *kataka* pose.

UMA AS DESCRIBED IN THE TEXTS

In no texts is mentioned the presence of Nandi in the left hand of Uma of the Somaskanda group. The work *Sakaladhikara*, says that the left hand of Uma carries the lily flower and the right hand is in *varada* pose. *Silparatna* states that the right hand of Devi should Keep utpala flower and the left hand is held in the *varada* pose or it might rests on the *pitha*.[10] *Kasyapa Silpa Sastra* states that the left hand is in *varada* pose and the right hand holds the flower. [11] The *Karanagama* states that in her right hand Uma should keep a lotus flower the left hand may be held either in the *Simhakarana* pose or keep it straight resting on the seat.

From the above detailed account of the Somaskanda images of different periods, it is clear that the left hand of Uma is without the figure of Nandi. Even the texts do not prescribe the presence of Nandi.

In South India, in bronze casting, the sculptors rarely adopted the custom of expressing the local traditional story into a sculptural form. The presence of Nandi in the left hand of Uma of the Somaskanda group is also due to the local story which says that after killing Ravana, Rama went to worship Lord Siva in the place called Thirunandeesevaram, which is just five kilometres to the east of Thiruppugalur. Nandi acted as a barrier for his worship. For the easy worship, Uma held Nandi in her left hand and blessed Rama in Somaskanda form. The image seems to belong to the 12th century A. D.

The Somaskanda image from the temple at Thiruppanaiyur is also noteworthy for its rare feature of having the presence of the

mango fruit, in the left lower hand (Fig. No. 112). The novel presence of the mango fruit is mainly due to the story, related with the Lord Muruga. Siva arranged a competition between Lord Vinayaka and Muruga and declared that the prize of the mango fruit will be given to one who comes first, after going round the world. Lord Muruga, on his vehicle, started his journey. Lord Vinayaka, thinking that Siva is the embodiment of the world, made a circumambulating of Lord Siva and thereby succeeded in the competition. Like the Somaskanda from Nandikeswaram, this also stands as the next evidence to represent the habit of the sculptor, in depicting the religious story into a sculptural form. The other best specimen of the Chola period of the 11th century is that of the Tripurantaka with the goddess (Fig. Nos. 113, 114). In the case of Tripurantakamurti, the exposition of the hands give a soothing and congenial look. divine artistic features express the godliness of the figure. The presence of a naga hood on the top of the shoulder brings out the individual artistic position of the figure. The prominent representation of datura flower, and crescent moon, emphasise the beauty of the crown. The treatment of each and every part of the figure of the Goddess is done with great delicacy. The feminine quality of tenderness is visible in the treatment of all parts and in the proportionate execution of both legs and hands which highlight the grace of the figure. The design of the dress has its own peculiarity. It differs from others. The exposition of the broad hip and the slender waist is an excellent one. The other notable figures of the Chola period of the 12th century are the images of Muruga (Fig. No. 115) with Deivayanai (Fig. No. 116) and Valli and Manickavacagar (Fig. No. 117). The physical features are beautifully exposed. The images of a late period of the 14th century are of Vinayaka Chandikesvara and Adipooramman.

The Sivalokanathasvami temple at Keeranur is noted for the presence of beautiful sculptures of both in stone and bronze. The dvarapalaka image, present at the entrance of the ardhamandapa, is artistically well executed. It has only two hands. The right hand is in the Vismaya pose and the left is placed on the mace. The makuta contains the trisula emblem. The base of the mace, has the combined figure of a snake and an elephant. In this respect, the image is similar to the dvarapalaka images of the Brihadiswarar temple at Tanjore. On the other side, the dvarapalaka image, contains only the simhamukha design on the makuta and not the trisula emblem. Both of them belong to the Chola period of

the 10th, and the 11th centuries A.D. The image of Vinayaka is also well executed and its artistic features indicate a period of the 10th century A.D. The image of Nataraja is a worthy one for its fine artistic execution and superb-workmanship. The facial expression with the smiling attitude and the arched brows of the eyes, highly speak to the artistic talent of the sculptor of the Chola period of the 10th century A.D. The face is not frontal but in profile.

Ganga is seen just above the objet udukkai. Normally in most of the images, the position of Ganga is on the century of any one of the jatas, which is spread on the right side. The leg is without ornament called Veerakkalal, which is normally present, in almost all the images of this kind. Karaikkai Ammaiyar, is depicted in the sitting posture, near the foot of the Lord and she is in the anjali posture. In this aspect, the image is similar to the one, found in the Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple. The image of Augastiyar depicts the saintly features. The long beard and the closed eyes expose his deep contemplation.

The other praiseworthy images of the temple, which belong to the Chola period of the 10th century are Dakshinamurti, Lingodbhavamurti, Brahma, Ardhanarisvaramurit, Durga, Bhikshatanamurti and Surya.

Like the above mentioned stone images, the noteworthy bronze images are of Nataraja with Sivakamasundari, Ayyanar and Somaskandamurti. They seem to belong to the period of the 12th, and the 13th century A.D.

FOOT NOTES

1. Lockwood, Siromony, Dayanandan, *Mahabalipuram Studies*, (Madras,1974), p.20.
2. Sreenivasan,K.R., *Cave Temples of the Pallavas*, (New Delhi,1964), p.45.
3. Maity, S,K., *Masterpieces of Pallava Art*, (Bombay,1982), p.23.
4. Sreenivasan,K.R., *Temples of south India*, (New Delhi,1971), p.112.
5. Sivaramamurti,C., *South Indian Paintings*, (Delhi,1971), p.60.
6. Sreenivasan,P.R., *Bronzes of South India*, (Madras,1963), p.120.
7. Saletore,R.N., *Vijayanagar Art*, (1982), p.107.
8. Gopinatha Roa, T.A., *op.cit*, (1971), p.134.
9. *Sakaladhikara*, (trans & edn), Vasudeva Sastri, (Thanjavur,1961), p.3.
10. *Silparatnam* (trans & edn) Devanathachariyar, (Thanjavur,1961), p.5
11. *Kasyapa Silpa Sastra*, (trans & edn), Subrahmanya Sastrigal, (Thanjavur,), p.259.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

The above mentioned chapters reveal clearly the artistic greatness of the different temples of Nannilam taluk of the Tanjore district. Both stone and bronze images bring out the artistic significance of the temples. Some images have rare features, which are not seen in any of the other images of the temples, described elaborately by different scholars in their meritorious works. The Somaskanda images from the temples at Thirunandikesvaram and Thiruppanaiyur will ever speak of the artistic achievements of the sculptors of the 12th centuryA D. The presence of Nandi in the left hand of Uma of the Somaskanda group from the temple at Thirunandikesvaram is a noteworthy one. Such a rare feature is considered to be a artistic addition in the Indian Art. Nandi is represented with all naturalistic features. Likewise, the other rare Somaskanda group from Thiruppanaiyur is considered to be the praiseworthy one. The presence of a mango fruit in the left hand of Siva has really a speciality of its own. It can be said that they are the artistic innovations of the Chola period. The bronze images of Brahma, found in the temples at Ambal and Thiruppugalur really speak of the importance of Brahma worship in the Tamil country during the period of the 12th century. Rao, in his work *Elements of Hindu Iconography* has mentioned only a limited number of bronze images of Brahma. He has not included the above images. The image of Risabhavahana from the temple at Thirumakalam is also artistically a praiseworthy one. From a stylistic point of view, it could be dated to the period of the 10th century A. D. The combined artistic beauty of Siva, Parvati and the risabha really speak of the artistic excellence of the group. Their proportionate execution is highly commendable. The Somaskanda group from the temple at keeranur is also noteworthy for its rare feature of the presence of a snake in the right hand of Uma. The puranic story behind it is not known. In the agamas as well as in the other Sanskrit works, no mention is made about the presence of such a creature.

The bronze image of Appar, one of the sixty three saints, found in the temple at Thiruppugalur excels all others, expecially in its stylistic expression of the face. The image of God Agni, eventhough it belongs to a late period of the 14th century A. D.,is

considered to be a rare one, as it is a good specimen to stand as the best example to reveal the prevalence of fire worship in south India. Some of the bronze images stand as the best examples to speak of the artistic achievement of our sculptors in Vaisnava Iconography. The bronze images of Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and Hanuman found in the temples at Thirukkannapuram and Mudikondan are the best specimens of vaisnava art. The images of Always are executed with divine features. Likewise the Vaisnavite images present in the temple at Sripuliyur add credit to the Vaisnavite Iconography. Like the bronze images, there are also some rare specimens in stone. The stone image of Somaskanda found in the temple at Rudragangai, is a highly laudable one. The presence of the figure of the child Ganga, on the forehead of the Lord, elevates the artistic excellence of the whole figure. The location of the group, on the back wall of the sanctum sanctorum, also adds an artistic merit to the entire group. Normally, only in the temples of the Pallavas, one can notice such a group on the backwall of the sanctum. In the shore temple at Mahabalipuram and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram the backwalls of the sanctum sanctorums contain such representions. Based on the above facts, the image at Rudraganggai could be dated to the transitional period of the Pallavas and early Cholas. Moreover the presence of the figure of the child Ganga, indicates the prevalence of the practice of depicting local traditional story into sculptural form in such an early period.

The presence of the image of Vatapi Ganapati in the *prakara* of the Ganapathisvarar temple at Thiruchchengattangudi, speaks of historical and sculptural importance. Likewise, the Durga image at Sreevanjiyam has its own historical and artistic aspects. The stone image of Chandikesvaramurti found in the temple at Thirumiyaccur, is noteworthy for the presence of four heads. Another noteworthy feature as regards the image is that it is found on the outerwall of the Ardhamandapa. Normally in the temples, Chandikesvara images are found inside separate shrines. The present image is an exceptional one.

At Achutamangalam, the stone images present on the outterwalls of the mandapas of the temple are worthy of commendation. The images of Ardhanariswaramurti, Tripurantakamamurti and Bhikshatanamurti are skillfully handled and their presence gives a beautiful appearance to the entire temple complex. The stone images seen on the walls of the temple at keeranur, like Nataraja, Durga and Surya are the excellent pieces of the chola period. The

dvarapalaka image of the temple is artistically similar to the one present in the Brihadiswarar temple at Tanjore. The only difference is that the latter is greater than the first in size. Most of the worthy specimens discussed above are belong to the period of the Cholas. This clearly proves the fact that this area was under the strong contral of the cholas. The political atmosphere was very peaceful and it made them to devote more attention to the development of the temples as well as in producing more beautiful icons both in stone and bronze. In the subsequent periods of Vijayanagar and Nayaks, their political control over this area was only for a short period and that was why, they could not concentrate more in developing the art and architecture. The images of very recent period, seen in some of the temples, are also executed according to the agamic principles. Their artistic beauty, really express the traditional artistic calibre of the sculptors of the modern period.

The bas-relief images of the temples at Thirumiyachur, Thiruppugalur, Thiruchchengattangudi and Achutamangalam also speak of the artistic attainment of our sculptors. Mostly the bas-relief sculptures are found on the *makara toranas* of the *devakoshtas* seen on the walls of the sanctum sanctorums and *mandapas* of the temples Some are depicted on the *upa-pithas* of the structures of the temples. Most of them are related with the puranic stories and some simply expose the dance poses as in the temple at Achutamangalam.

As some images are exposed to air and rain, they are in damaged condition. Some other images are not under daily worship and due to the carelessness of both the priests and the administration of some of the temples, the images are by and large losing their artistic glory. If everything is maintained properly, the images will ever speak of the artistic greatness of our renowned ancestors.

ANNEXURE

ILLUSTRATION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

TEMPLE AT THIRUKKANNAPURAM

1. The Eastern main gopura
2. Garuda
3. Visnu (Mulavar) with Sridevi and Bhudevi
4. Lakshmana
5. Poygai Alwar
6. Pudattalwar
7. Tirumalisai alwar
8. Thirumangai alwar
9. Periyalwar
10. Tiruppanalvar
11. Kulasekhara alwar
12. Pillai Lokacharyar
13. Budevi (Padmavathi)
14. Navanitha Krsna
15. Santhana Krisna

TEMPLE AT THIRUCCENGATTANGUDI

16. Lingodbhavamurti
17. Vinayaka
18. Dvarapalaka
19. Ardhanarisvara
20. Kalasamharamurti
21. Gajasamharamurti
22. Candikesvar

TEMPLE AT THIRUPPUGALUR

23. Salais and kutus (inner gopura)
24. Risabaha
25. Tripurantakamurti
26. Tripurantaka with Tripurasundari
27. Uma

28. Agni
29. Brahma
30. Chandrasekharamurti with Ambal

TEMPLE AT THIRUMAKALA

31. Dakshinamurti
32. Dvarapalaka
33. Subrahmanya
34. Murugan with peacock
35. Valli
36. Naganathar
37. Mathangarishi
38. Vinayaka
39. Adhikaranandhi
40. Adhikaranandhi
41. Pradoshanayanar
42. Gowriamman
43. Rishabhavahanamurti
44. Back view of Rishabhmurti
45. Thiagarajar
46. Back view of Thiagarajar
47. Nataraja

TEMPLE AT ACHUTAMANGALAM

48. Vinayaka
49. Adikaranandhi
50. Surya

TEMPLE AT AMBAL

51. Chandrasekharamurti
52. Chandrasekharamurti Goddess
53. Muruga
54. Pidari
55. Chattanathar

56. Somaskandamurti
57. Appar
58. Sundarar
59. Manickavacagar
60. Brahma
61. Back View of Brahma
62. Rishabhavahanamurti
63. Nataraja
64. Nataraja
65. Nataraja
66. Back view of Nataraja
67. Back view of Nataraja
68. Back view of Nataraja

TEMPLE AT THIRUMARUGAL

69. Kali
70. Bhikshatana
71. Lingodbhavamurti
72. Dakshinamurti
73. Agastyar
74. Vinayaka
75. Kali
76. Mariamman
77. Somaskanda goddess
78. Murugan on peacock
79. Sivakamasundari
80. Sambandar

TEMPLE AT SREEVANJIAM

81. Dakshinamurti
82. Rahu
83. Chattanathar
84. Kali
85. Bhogasakthiamman

TEMPLE AT TIRUMIYACUR

86. Nataraja with Sivakamasundari
87. Nataraja
88. Sivakamasundari

TEMPLE AT SRIBULIYUR

89. Kirubasamudrapperumal
90. Kirubasmudrapperumal
91. Dancini Krsna
92. Manavalamamunigal
93. Andal
94. Thaiyal Nayaki Thayar

TEMPLE AT RUDRAGANGAI

95. Saturn
96. Gajalakshmi
97. Murugan with Deivasena and Valli
98. Somaskandamurti
99. Nataraja

TEMPLE AT KOOTHANUR

100. Lakshmana
101. Nataraja
102. Goddess Sarasvati
103. Goddess Saratha

TEMPLE AT INJIKKUDI

104. Dakshinamurti
105. Ardhanarisvaramurti
106. Brahma
107. Durga
108. Rishabhavahanamurti
109. Dvarapalaka
110. Dvarapalaka

111. Dvarapalaka

TEMPLE AT THIRUPPANAIYUR

112. Somaskanda group
113. Tripurantakamurti
114. Goddess
115. Muruga
116. Deivayanai
117. Manickavacagar

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

A

1. abhanga - slight flexion

2. abhava - The gesture of Protection. In this hand-pose, the palm of the hand is fully open and the fingers point upwards. The palm faces the onlooker.

3. adhisthana - moulded basement usually resting on an upa-pitha (optional) for names of mouldings, refer to Tillaistanam inscription 31 of 1895

4. ahuyavarada-mudra - hand pose beckoning the devotee to confer boons on him.

5. akshamala - Rosary of beads which is of two types 1) Rudraksha and 2) Kamalaksha. The rosary is usually found in the hands of Brahma, Sarasvati and Siva. Sometimes it is found with other divinities also.

6. Alidhasana - A particular asana or attitude of legs in all aspects similar to the attitude adopted in drawing the bow. The right leg is outstretched while the left leg is slightly bent. The attitude should be distinguished from pratyalidha attitude in which case the left leg is outstretched while the right is slightly bent and placed behind.

7. anchita gana - a gana with graceful flexion.

8. angada - an ornament tied round the upper arm by a string.

9. anjali - a gesture of worship

10. anjali mudra - a pose of *anjali* with the palm of

	the hands joined together near the chest.
11. ankusa	-elephant goad with a hook.
12. àntarala	-ante chamber leading to the shrine.
13. antariya	-lower garment
14. apasmara	- An ugly demon personifying igorance and the bonds (malams) that fetter the soul from reaching God-usally seen under the foot of Nataraja.
15. ardhamandapa	-front porch (also, uru-idak-kattu: Gandaradittam inscription 202 of 1928-29
16. ardha-paryankasana	also called Maharajalila. is a sitting pose. Both the legs are on the same pedestal. One of the knees is raised,while the other is bend in the usual position of the Buddha. This attitude should be distinguished from the *Lalitasana* in which case, one of the legs is pendant, while the other is bent in the usual position of a Buddha. when both the legs are pendent, the attitude is called *Bhadrasana.*
17. ardhoraka	-shorts
18. asana	-The word in Sanskrit may mean a seat or an attitude exhibited in the lower limbs. The word *Padmasana* means the seat of lotus. Similarly *Simhasana* means any easy attitude of sitting. It may be the Paryankasana, the Lalitasana or the *Ardha-paryankasana*. Infact, in the Sadhanamala the word Sukhasana is not used in the technical sense when used in a technical sense asana is of various kinds. such as the *Paryankasana vajraparyankasana*, *Lalitasana*, *Pratyalidhasana* etc.
19. asta-dikpalas	-dikpalas - This Astadikpalas are the guardians of the directions. These

are Indra-East, Agni-South East, Yama-South, Nirti-South west, Varuna-west, Vayu-North west, Kubera-North and Isana-North East. The Asta-dikpala-pata is a panel showing these eight guardians of the quarters.

20. atibhanga -body bent at many places.

B

21. bahulamala -festoons hanging down the ear - ornament across the shoulders are known as bahulamala.
22. badrasana -bhadrapitha -square or rectangular supplemen tal pedestal to which an image and its padmapitha are attached and on which they rest.
23. baji-bandha -an ornament (a string of beads) encircling the arm at the elbow.
24. bali-pitha -altar for offerings to deities.
25. bha-mandala -halo
26. bhramaraka -ringlets of hair.
27. bhujanga-valaya -ornament on waist in the form of a coiled snake.
28. brahmabandha -The knot of the strings of the yajnopavita ususally over the left chest.
29. brahma nandi -one of the many images of Nandi placed in the Siva temples.
30. brahmotsavam -a temple festival conducted for sev eral days usually occuring in summer.
31. bringipada -an ornament (with a string and bell attached)worn on the right leg (high up)

C

32. chandra -moon
33. chandrakala -representation of the crescent

moon.

34. channavira -a gold ornament in the place of a *yajnopavita*, consisting of a middle strand passing down between the breasts and then bifureating in to two strands one on either side of the abdomen.

35. chudamani -a golden ornament worn on the head dress in the middle and at the sides.

36. chutti -a small round ornament for the head dress worn by children.

D

37. damaru -hand-drum
38. danda -stick
39. danda-hasta -hand held straight like a stick.
40. datura datura -a thorn apple with strong narcoticproperties usually the flower is represented.
41. devakoshta -niche for subordinate deties (their occupants are called vimana-devata parsva-devates in kalinga).
42. dharmachakra-murda -The gesture of teaching the Doc trine of Law. This was the hand pose used by the Buddha while preach ing the law. In this, the two hands are raised before the chest.
43. dhoti -cloth over the waist.
44. dhyana -meditation.
45. dhyani-mudra -the position of hands with in meditation. The hands with palm up wards lie one upon the other on the lap with all the fingers stretched.
45. divya-mandapa -hall supported by between 108 and 1008 pillars.
46. dvara -gopura, temple gateway.

kinds:sobha-dvara:gopuram with 1 to 2 storeys (nilais)
sala-dvara :gopuram with 2 to 4 storeys (nilais)
prasada-dvara:gopuram with 3 to 5 storeys (nilais)
harmya-dvara:gopuram with 5 to 7 storeys (nilais)

maha-maryada:gopuram with 7 to 16 storeys (nilais) or maha-gopura

47. dvarapala -guardian deity at the door or gate way.
48. dvara-sakhas -jambs

E

49. ekavali -one-stringed big necklace of pearls

F

50. festoon -hanging harlands.

G

51. gada -mace, stout stick.
52. gana -a dwarf-attendent of Siva.
53. gajjai -an ornament of very small gold or silver bells fastened by strings and worn on the waist of ankles.
54. garbhagriha -literally womb-house; the dark sanctum of the temple housing the principal image of the temple.
55. ghana-dvara -false door adorned with toranas.
56. go-mani -a bell tied around the neck of a cow or bull.
57. gomukha -gargoyle
58. gopura -The entrance gateway of a South Indian temple. Like the spire of a temple, it has a broad base and becomes pointed as it roses to its pinnacle, which is pointed. It is filled with sculptures of gods and goddesses, apsaras and mythical ani mals.
59. govala -The posture of the hand hanging down in the manner of the tail of a cow.
60. graiveya -jewelled necklet.
61. griva -literally, neck:part between the top most tala of the vimana and the sikhara.

95. kinkini-jala	-chain of bells.
96. kirita	-crown
97. kiritamakuta	a conical cap sometimes ending in an ornament top carrying a central pointed knob. It is covered with jewelled discs in front or all sides and has jewelled bands round the top as well as the bottom. It is worn exclusively by Visnu.
98. kirti-mukha	-The face of Glory - a manifestation of the terrible aspect of god.
99. kodik-karukku	-foliage decoration (Especially over the edges of the sikhara or kodungai).
100. kodungai	-cornice, moulded projection over a tala.
101. kolusu	-a wristlet or anklet of woven pattern.
102. koshta	-niche
103. koshta-panjara	-niche with cage-motif decorations.
104. kshudra-mandra	-hall resting on between 4 and 28 pillars.
105. kucha-bandha	-breast-band.
106. kumbha-panjara	-niche adorned by a vase and foli age.
107. kumuda	-a basement moulding.
108. kundala	-ear-ornament(of various kinds such as makara, preta, patra and naga)
109. kunchita	-a graceful bend or tilt.
110. kuta(m)	-square ornamental pavilion on the storeys of vimanas.
111. Lalitha	-graceful form.
112. linga	-The phallus symbol of Siva. According to some the hemispherical tip of the Siva linga consists in reality of thousands of heads, each of the size of a point. The sides of the cylindrical figure are equally true representations of the thousands of eyes, hands and faces. The circular bottom is similarly representa tive of a thousand feet; the semi-

circular top resembling the visible horzon is truely symbolical of the universe which surrounds the universe on all sides. Thus the Siva linga is the closespossible approximation to the cosmic purusha.

M

113. madhya-nadi	-interspace between walls.
114. madhyasthayee	- first string sarini producing a middle note on the vina instrument.
115. mahamandapa	-hall infront of the Mukha-mandapa.
116. maha-maryada or maha-gopura	main temple-gate way with 7 to 16 storeys.
117. maharajalila	-seated pose of ease like a king, with the right hand resting on the knee of the bent right leg.
118. makara	-a mythical animal with a crocodile face.
119. makara-torana	-a decorative arch with the makara used for decoration.
120. makara clasp	-a clasp with the motif of a makara.
121. makara-chudamani	-a golden ornament worn in the centre of the head-dress with the makara motif below.
122. makarakenti	-a stiff necklace with the makara motif.
123. makarakundala	-ear ornament with makara motif.
124. makuta	-crown
125. mandala	-halo
126. mandala	-pillared hall
127. mangamalai	-a necklace with a motif of mangoes.
128. manimala	-string of beads.
129. mauna	-silence
130. mauktika-jalaka	-pearl festoons
131. mekhala	-broad girdle
132. mr(i)ga	-deer
133. mithuna figures	-amorous couples used as a decorative motif to adorn door-jambs.

134. mukha-mandapa -hall infront of the ardhamandapa
135. mukha-yama -facade
136. mulasthana -the sanctum sanctorum (Garbhagriha)
137. muyalaka -the demon under the foot of Natraja.

N

138. nabhi -navel
139. naga -a serpent
140. naga-angada -an angada with the motif of snakes.
141. naga-bandha -a section having a frieze of nages.
142. naga-valaya -wristlet with a frieze of nagas.
143. nagayanasutra -snakes twisted to form the sacred thread or yajnopavita.
144. nameskara-mudra -hands folded before thechest to show respect or to pay obeisance.
145. nasi -interspace between sala and kuta in the talas of the vimana.
146. nilai -storey of a gopura.
147. nilotpalam -a long tublar flower.
147a.nivi-bandha -This is the term applied to the knot of the lower garment of the females.
148. nritta-mandapa -hall of dance
149. nupura -anklet

P

150. padakkam -a pendant in laid with jewels.
151. pada-pitha -foot-stool
152. padasara -ornament round the anklets.
153. padukai -wooden sandal.
154. padma -a lotus
154a. padma-bandha -lotus-frieze.
155. padmasana -lotus-pose:pose of ease with the legs corssed and the soles turned up.
156. padmapitha -a pedestal with a motif in the form of an invented lotus.
157. panigrahana -the ceremony of giving a bride away in marriage.

158. palagai	-abacus or tailoir part of the capital of a pillar.
158a. panchara	-a small pavilion used as a decorative motif.
159. parasu	-battle axe - It consists of a steel blade fitted to a wooden handle.
160. parivara deity	-tutelary deity
160a. parivaralaya	-one of the sub-shrines, round the main shrine, housing subordinate deities.
161. paryankasana-dhyanasana	-sitting cross-legged in a meditative work.
162. paryanka-bandha	-legs bound with a strap in a yogic pose.
163. pasa	-a noose of ropes employed in binding, the hands and legs of the enemies. It is represented in sculpture as consisting of two or three ropes made in to a single or double loop.
164. patli	-close fitting bangles often formed by one or more continuous spiral
165. patrakundala	-ear-ornament in the form of a leaf-scroll
166. pattigai	-a basement moulding.
167. potika	-corbel or bracket surmounting the capital of a pillar.
168. pitambaram	-flowing silk garment.
169. pitha;pith peedam	-a horizontal slab or pedestal over which an image is seated.
170. pottu	-a circular mark on the fore-head.
171. potika	-corbel or bracket surmounting the capital of a pillar.
172. prabhai	-a halo; an arch with tongues of flame attached to it.
173. pradakshina-patha	-circumbulatory passage.
174. prakara	-one of the circuits round the sanctum. Generally there are five prakaras; antara-mandala, antra hara, madhyahara, bahya-hara and maryada (The temple at Sreerangam has seven prakaras)

175. prasada -temple in general classification according to shape sama-chaturasra, vritta, chaturdirgha, hasti-prishtha, vrittayata, shatkona and ashtasra (respecttively, square, circular, rectangular, apsidal, eliptical, hexagonal, and octagonal.

176. prastara -entablature:part of an order above the column including the architrave, frieze and cornice.

177. pravala -necklace of mixed gems.

178. prathamagana -the chief gana.

179. prayoga -chakra-discus in action.

R

180. rasikala -appreciation

181. rudraksha -bead or a garland therof.

182. rudrakanti -a stiff necklace of rudraksha cor als.

S

183. Sabhamandapa -main hall of the temple.

184. sadharana - mandapa -hall resting on between 28 and 100 pillars.

185. sakti -a spear

186. samabhanga -standing erect

187. sangam age -the classical age of the Tamil Nadu prior to Christian era.

188. sandhya -evening

189. sankha -conch

190. saptamatrikas -The seven Divine Mothers. They were worshipped by the chalukyas as protectors of their dynasty. They claimed to have been nourished by them. They are said to have been crected by Siva. Their worship becomes very popular.

191. sarpakundala -serpent shaped ear-ornament.

192. sarabamudra -a pose like a hooded serpent.

193. sarini -one of the strings of the vina in-

	strument.
194. saryalalitasana	-The sitting position in which the left leg is hanging below.
195. sikhara	-The spire of the temple. It is usu ally built above the shrine.
195a. silpasastra	- Science of Sculpture.
196. simha-mukha	-the lion -mouth. Used as a decorative motif on armlets and waist-band.
197. simhamukha clasp	-a clasp with simhamukha.
198. siraschakra	-a circular ornament provided behind the head designed like a wheel or lotus (for attachment of flower garlands).
198a.sirastraka	-turban.
199. skandamala	-ornament or streamer of the tassels (of strings, beads etc) shown at right angles on the shoulders.
200. snapana-mandapa	-hall for the ceremonial bath of deities.
201. srivatsa	-an auspicious sign of varying design representing Sridevi often decorating the chest of vishnu.
202. stambha	-pillar. According to Isanasivagurudeva Misra (as quoted in the "Tantrasamuchchaya" of Narayana), the five parts of a pillar from the bottom to top are oma, ghata,mandi, virakanda and potika. According to Tamil tradition,the parts of a pillar from the bottom up are: vari,kal, padma-bandham, kalasam, tadi,kumbham, idal, palagai, potikai, uttiram and kapotam.
203. sthana-hara	-necklet touching the breasts.
203a. stupi.	-finial; pot-shaped crowning element over the vimana or gopuram.
204. sulam	-a trident
205. suryakala	-a motif of sun.

T

206 tali	-shrine

207. tandavakaranas	-dance poses.
208. tarjanimudra	-The hand pose used to frighten a person or to keep him quiet. The forefinger is kept pointing upwards as also the thumb. The other three fingers are closed.
209. tatanka-chakra	-circular ear ornament.
210. tilaka	-a circular mark on the forehead.
210a. tiruch-churru-maligai	-peristyle-enclosure wall with a mandapa.
211. tiru-idaik-kattu	-ardhamandapa or vestibule (refer to the Gandaradittan inscription 202 of 1928-29).
212. tiru-nadai-maligai	-covered mandapa round the sanctum (refer to the koneri rajapuram inscription 660 of 1908-9).
213. tiru-thali	-a marriage token worn at the throat.
214. tiru-vachi	-see prabha
215. tribhanga	-body bent at three places.
216. trisula	-the trident of Siva.
217. trisula dhvaja	-flag hoisted on a trident.
218. triveli	-The three folds on the abdomen of a woman considered a mark of loviliness and grace.
219. tudi	-a streamer or loop shown at right angles on the shoulder.

U

220. udara-bandha	-This is an ornamental band round the waist, simple or elaborate. It may be worn like a scarf with fluttering loose ends. The udara-bandha is most specially seen in figures of Nataraja in the gyrating motion of his eternal dance.
221. upanam	-the lowest moulding of the basement.
222. upa-pitham	-the basement below the adhishtana. H.D. Smith, in his edition of "Pancharatra Prasada-prasadhanam" (Chapters 1 to 10 of

"Paumasamhita"), remarks that Chapter 7 there of "does not even use the terms upapitha and adhishthana carefully... and there are far too many variant readings to afford any certain reading of the text by technicians."

On the other hand, Narayana's "Tantrasamuchchaya"clearly states: "The six main parts of the temple are: adhishthana (basement), pada (foot or pillar), prastara (entabla ture), gala (ceiling), sikhara (roofing) and stupika (finial)...

Upapitha and padma (or padma-puduka) are two other parts of the structure to be constructed beneath the adhishthana, but they are optional... These parts give stability and beauty to the building... The upapitha has got its own angas (parts) just like the adhishthana.

Jouveau-Dubreuil uses the term upapitha to denote the part which Narayana names adhishthana.

223. upavita -a sacred thread worn across the left shoulder and under the right arm, see also yajnopavita.

224. urdhvalinga -erect phallus

225. urdhva-pattika -lintel

225a. urumalai -a festoon hanging from the girdle, round the hips and down one thigh.

226. ushnisha -literally turban generally applied to the cranical protruberance on the head of Budha

227. utkutika -a pose of the tucked up on the seat.

228. uttariya -a shawl like garment worn across the upper part of the body; upper garment, an upper cloth.

229. uttiram -cross beam.

V

230. vada-sala	-hall of disputation
230a. vaijayamantimala	-Only seen in the image of Vishnu - long necklace composed of groups of gems, each group containing five.
231. vajra	-a thumder bolt weapon represented with double trident together. Associated with Indra.
232. vajrajudha	-vajra instrument.
233. vahana	-a vehicle, generally applied to animal mount of various deities.
234. valaya (kankana)	-wristlet.
235. valamsuli	-The proboscis of Ganesa turned right instead of the left.
236. vama-lalitasana	-A sitting position in which the right leg is folded and kept on the seat and the left leg is left hanging below.
237. vanamala	-Visnu's garland.
238. vanki	-A stiff decorated ornament worn on the upper arm.
239. varada-mudra	-hand-pose conferring a boon.
240. vastu-sastra	-science of architecture.
241. vastu vidya	-science of architecture.
242. vel	-a single edged spear.
243. ventalai	-a human skill.
244. viiarka-mudra	-It is the Dharmachakra mudra. In this hand-pose, the thumb and the index fingers are joined to form a ring, while the rest of the fingers are kept open along with the palm.
245. vidyadhara	-celestial being shown as flying in the air.
246. vimana	-The sanctum together with its superstructure (from the upa-pitha to the stupi).
247. vimana-devata	-sculpture of a deity placed in a niche on the outher wall of the garbhagriha or on the upper talas of the vimana.
248. vina	-a lute; a stringed instrument.

249. vina-danda	-The hollow shaft of the vina instrument.
250. virakkazal	-an ornament worn in token of heroic deeds, usually worn high up on the ankle.
251. vyaghra-chamara	-tiger-skin.
252. vrishabha-vahana	-The vehicle bull.
253. vyakhyane-mudra	-hand-pose in the attitude of exposition.
254. vyasa	-The great seer who edited the vedas.

Y

255. yali	-leograph
256. yajnopavita	-The secred thread.

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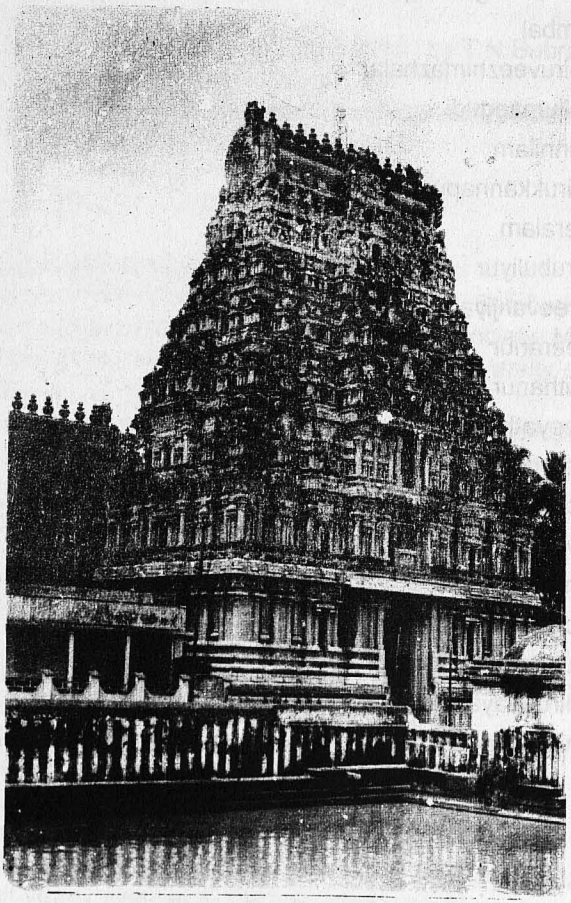
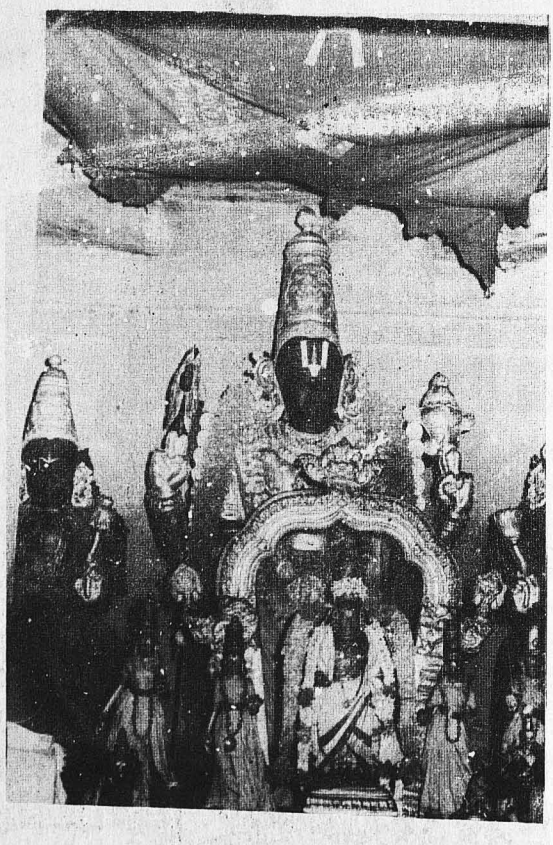
ILLUSTRATION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

TEMPLE AT THURUKKANNAPURAM



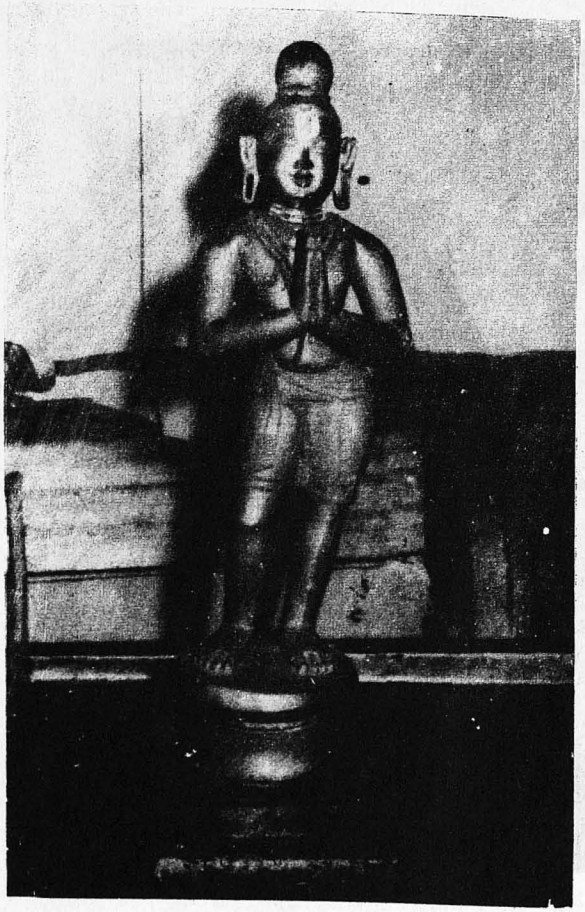
1. The Eastern main gopura

2. Garuda

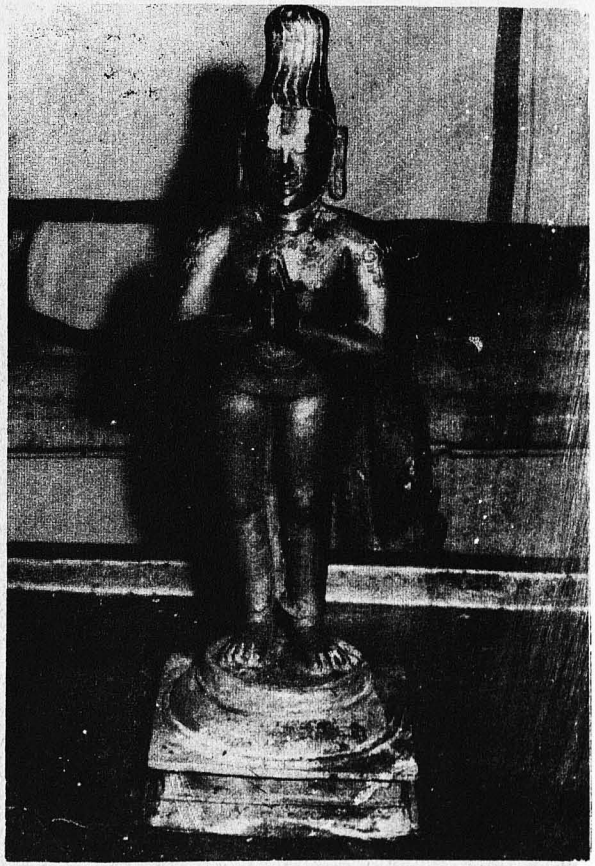


3. Visnu (Mulavar) with Sridevi and Bhudevi

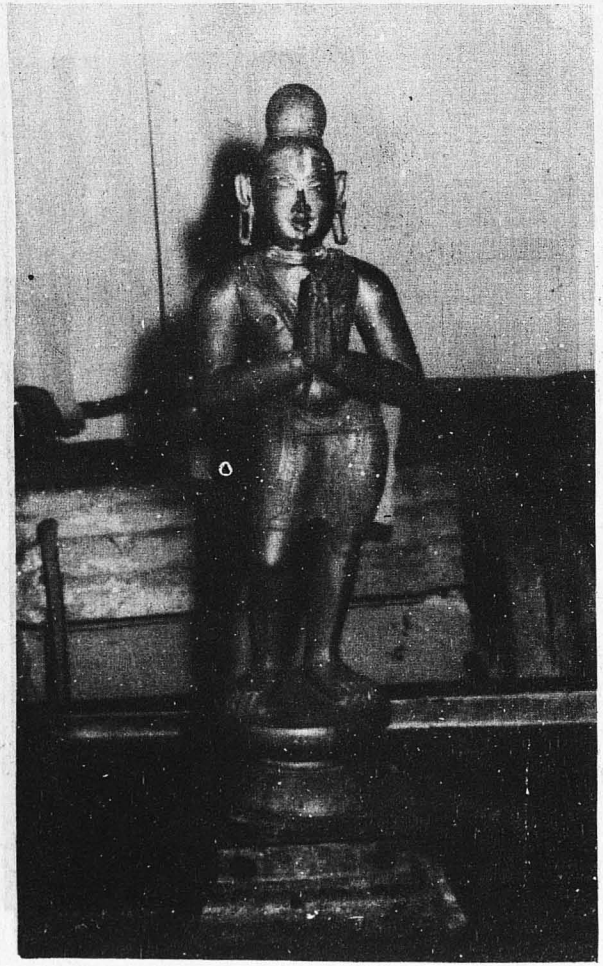
4. Lakshmana



6. Pudattalwar

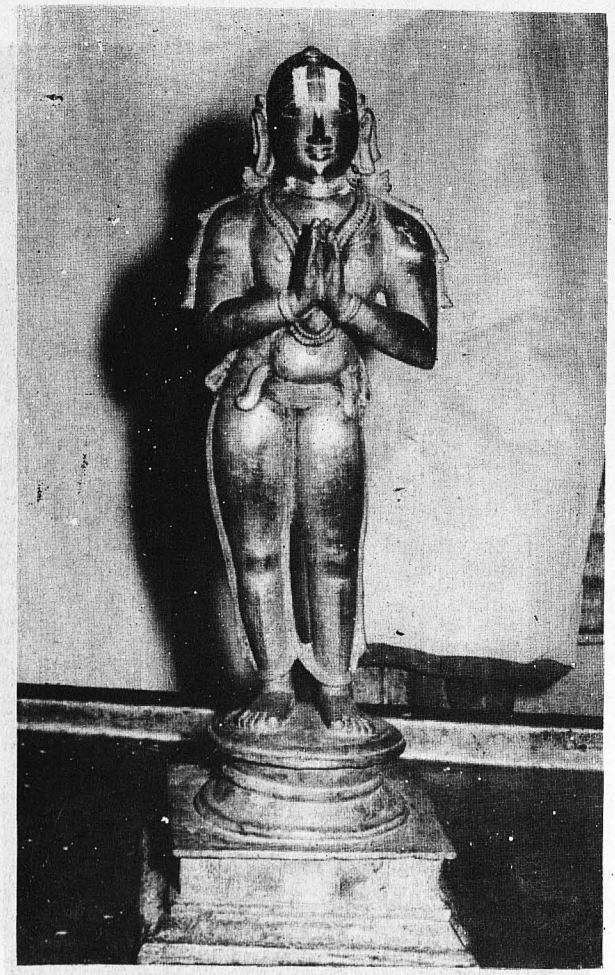


7. Tirumalisai alwar



5. Poygai Alwar

8. Thirumangai alwar



9. Periyalwar

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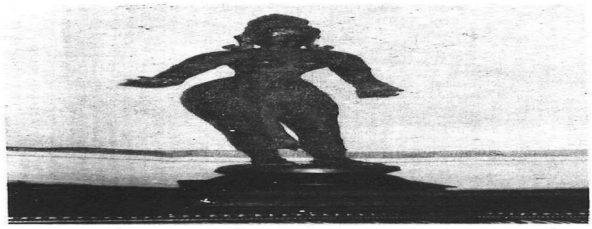
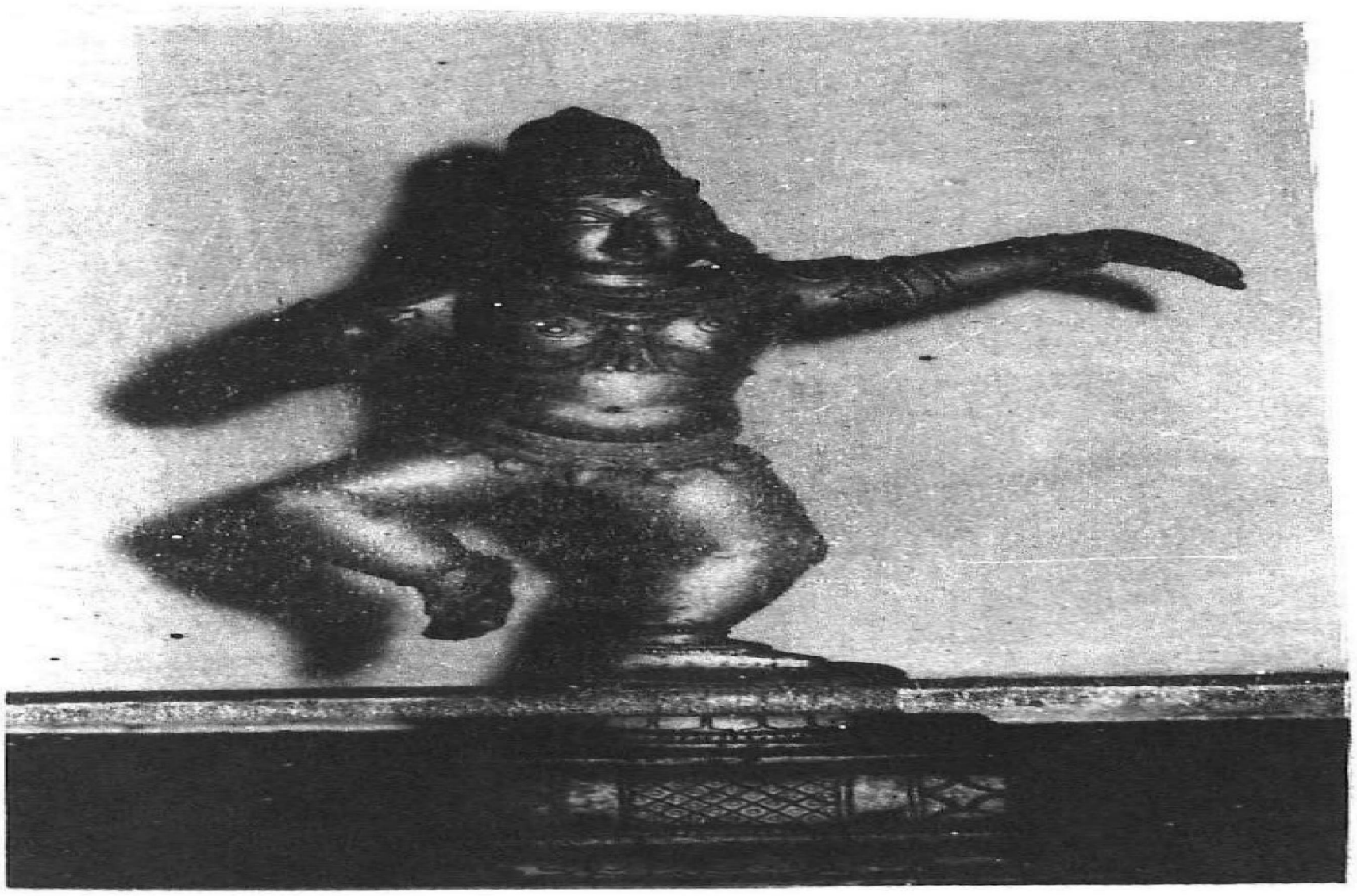
11. Kulasekhara alwar

12. Pillai Lokacharyar



13. Budevi (Padmavathi)



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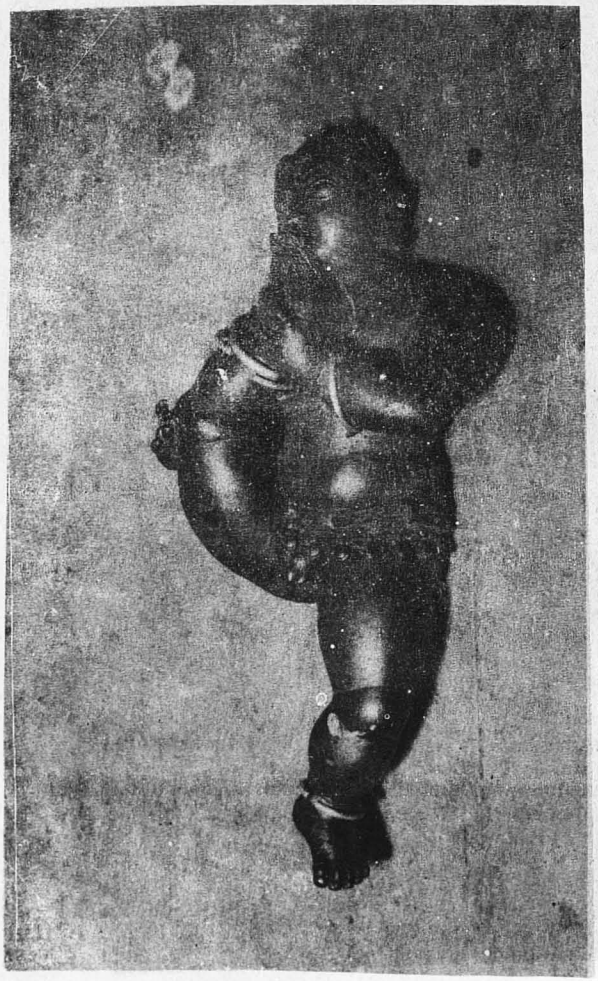
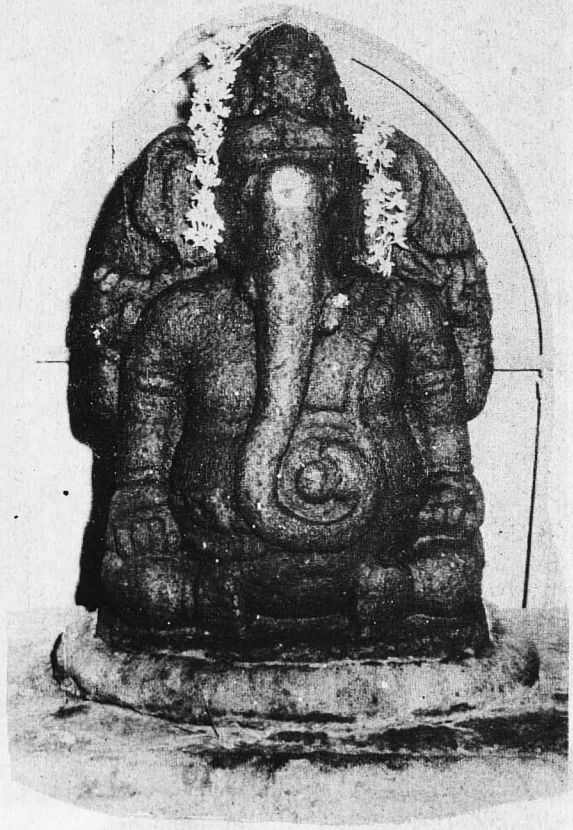


15. Santhana Krisna

TEMPLE AT THIRUCCENGATTANGUDI

16. Lingodbhavamurti

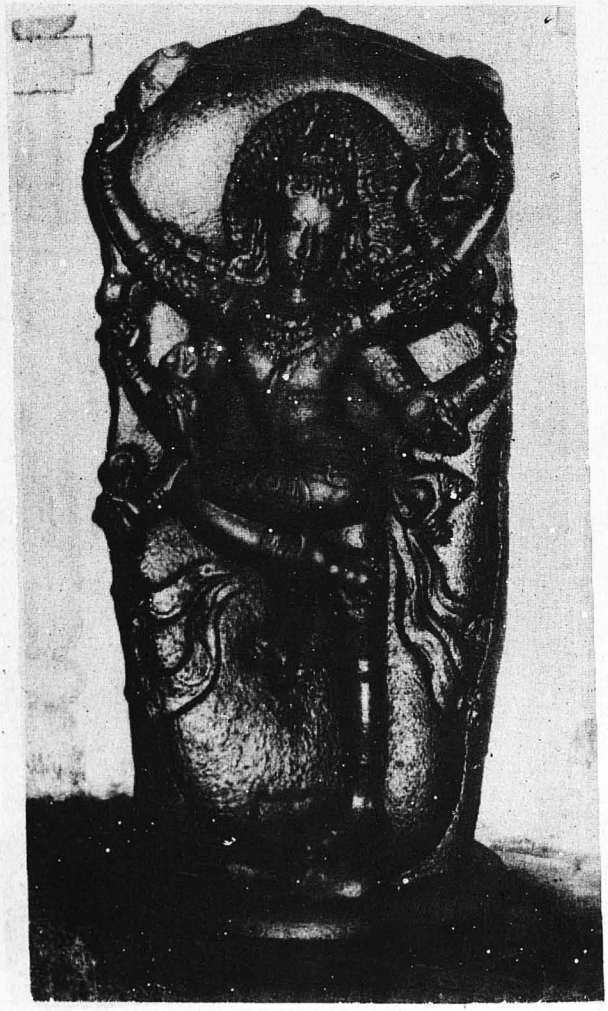


17. Vinayaka

18. Dvarapalaka

19. Ardhanarisvara

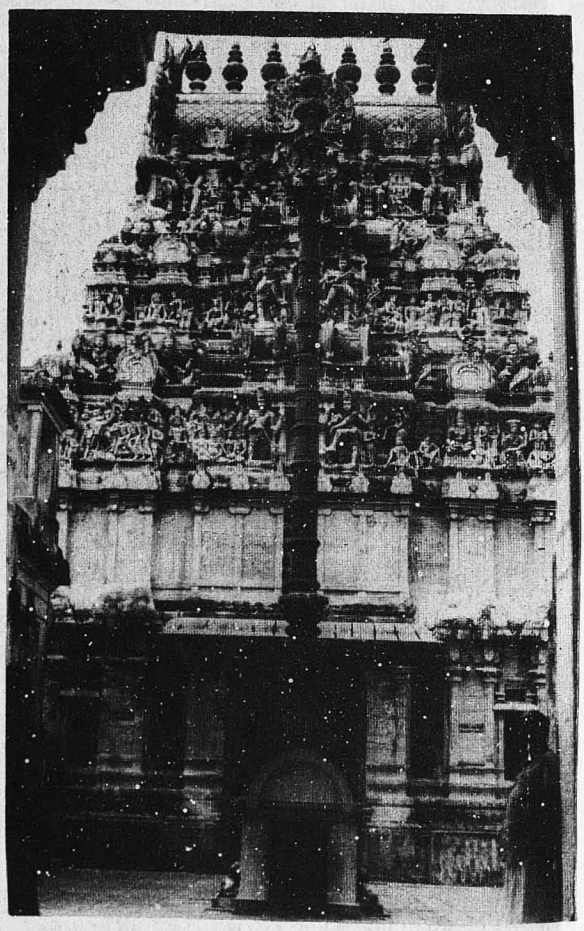
20. Kalasamharamurti



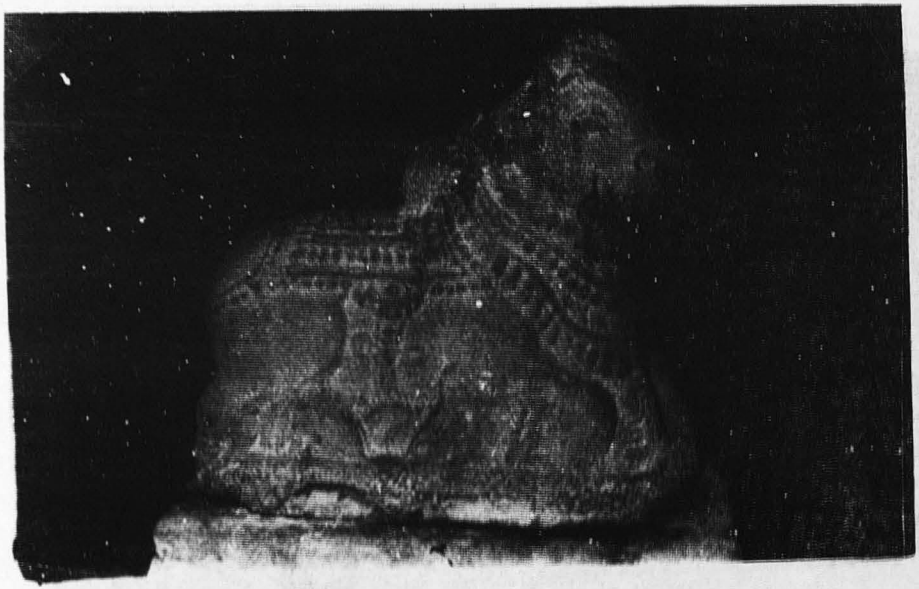
21. Gajasamharamurti

22. Candikesvar

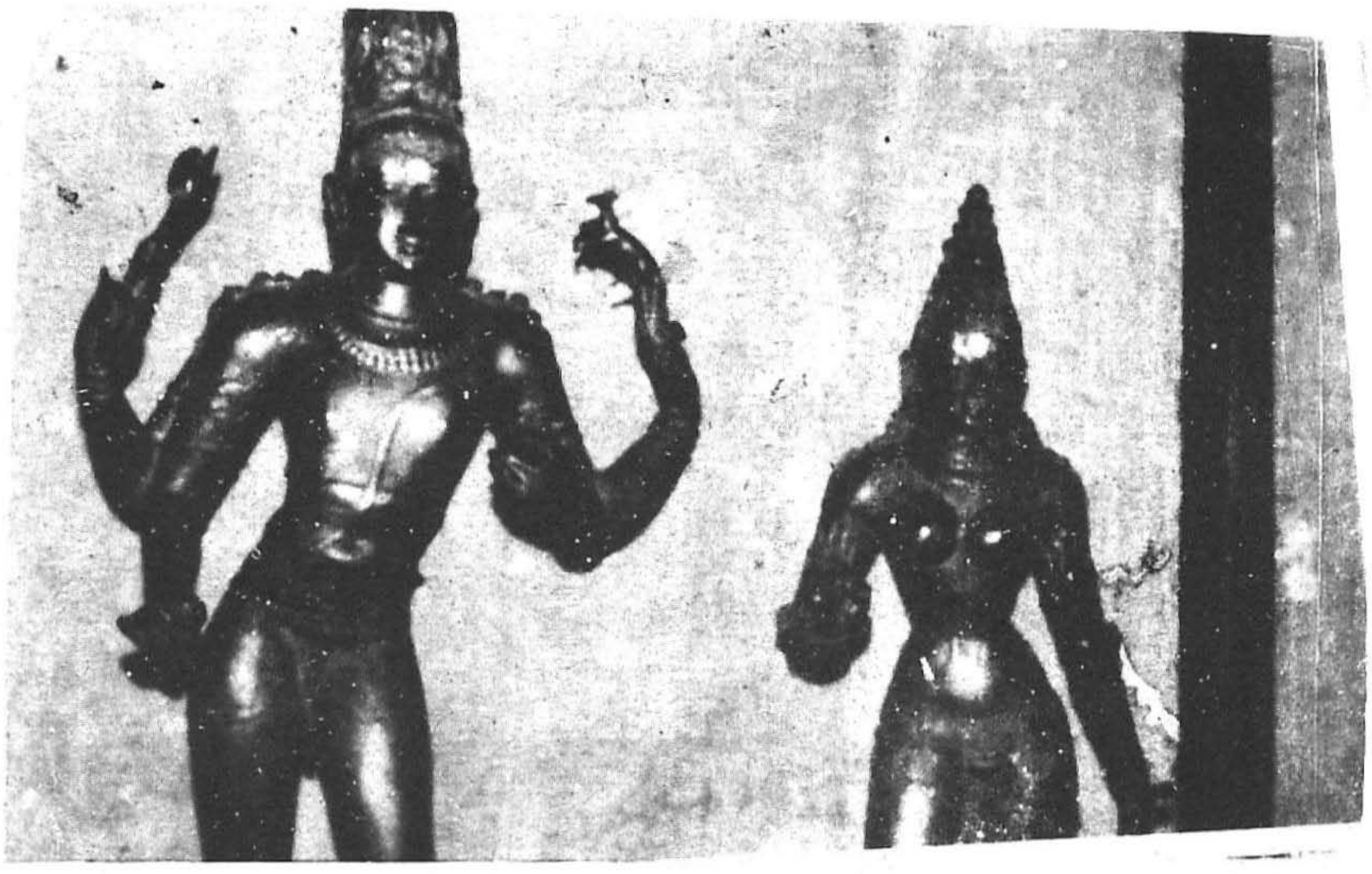
TEMPLE AT THIRUPPUGALUR



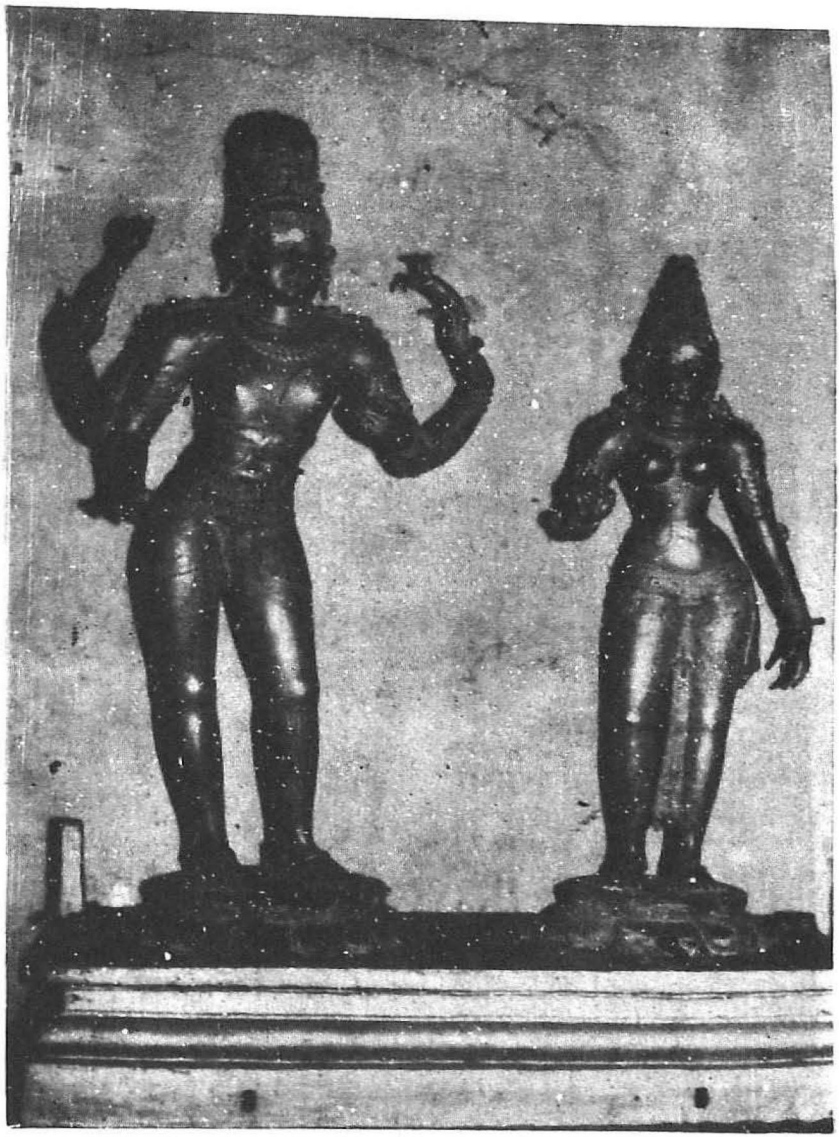
23. Salais and kutus (inner gopura)



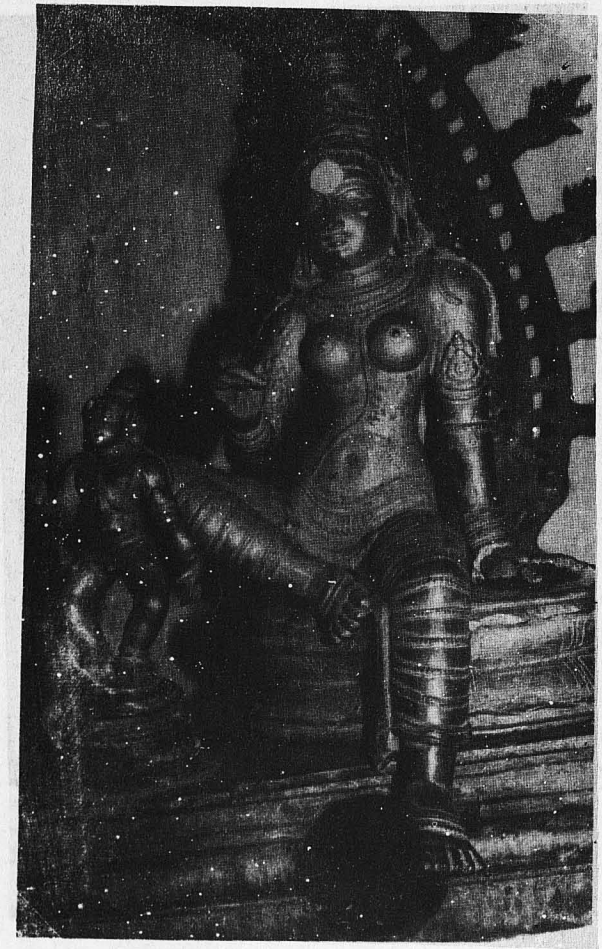
24. Risabaha



25. Tripurantakamurti



26 Tripurantaka with Tripurasundari



27. Uma

28. Agni

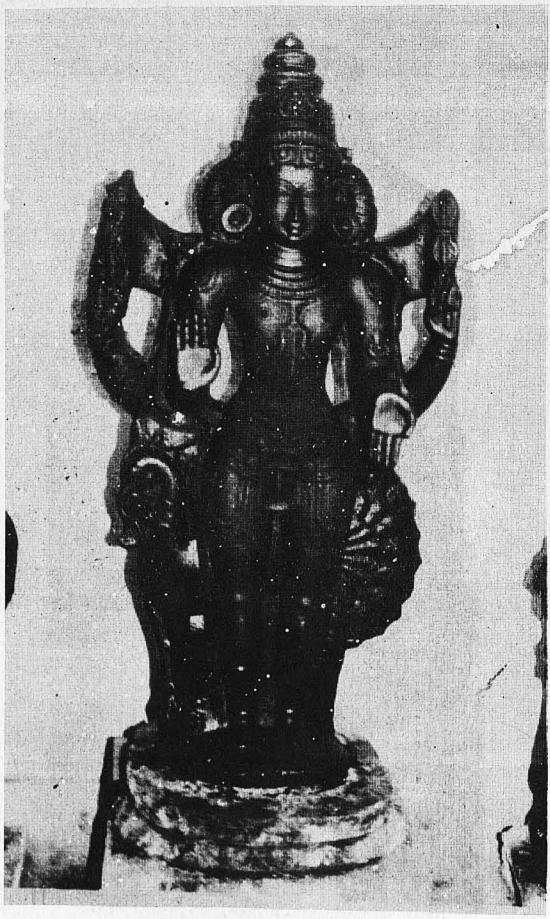
29. Brahma

30. Chandrasekharamurti with Ambal

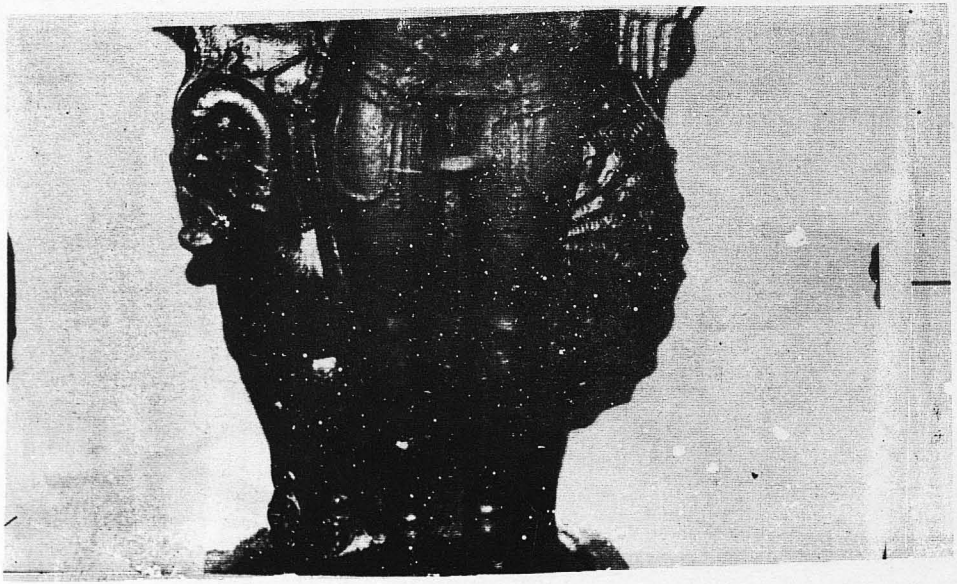
TEMPLE AT THIRUMAKALA

31. Dakshinamurti

35. Valli



33. Subrahmanya



34. Murugan with peacock

32. Dvarapalaka

36. Naganathar

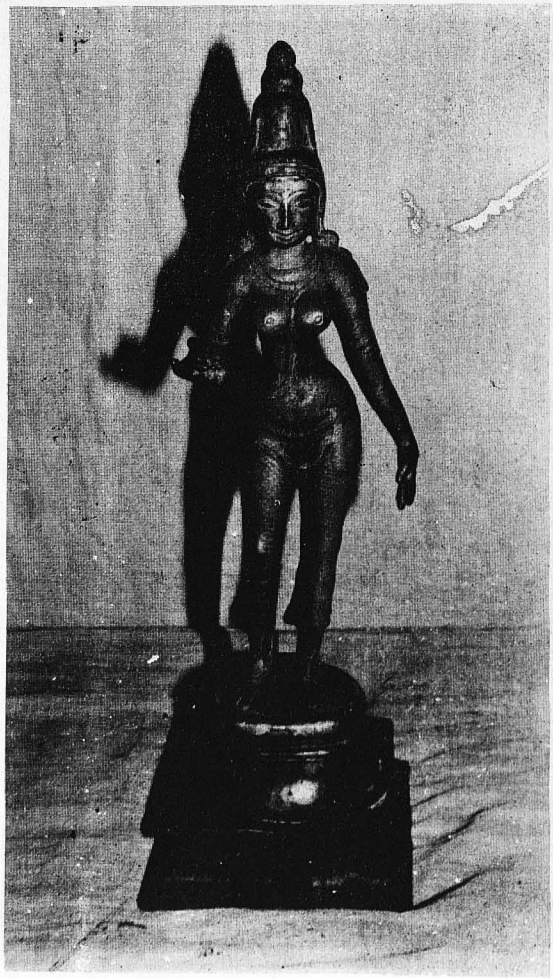
37. Mathangarishi

38. Vinayaka

39. Adhikaranandhi

40. Adhikaranandhi

41. Pradoshanayanar



42. Gowriamman

43. Rishabhavahanamurti

44. Back view of Rishabhmurti

45. Thiagarajar

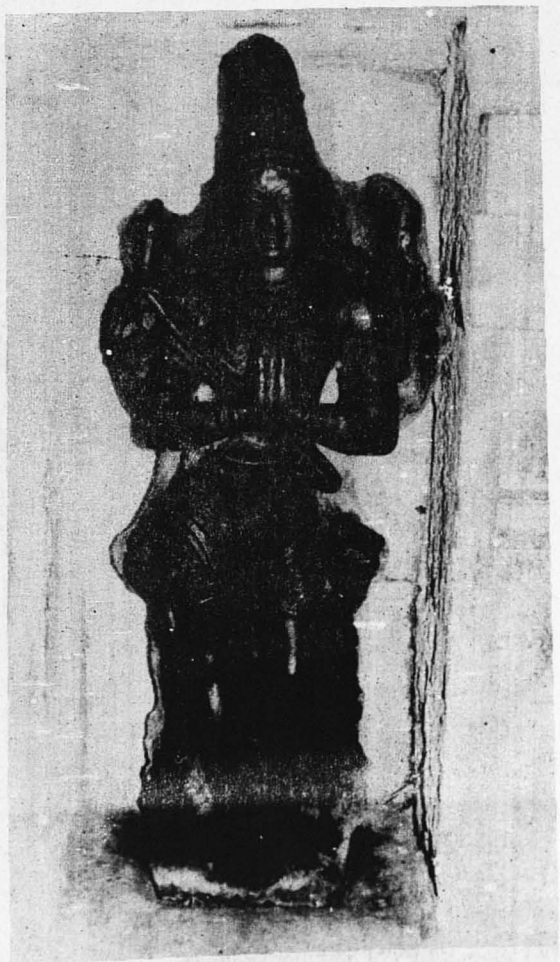
46. Back view of Thiagarajar

47. Nataraja

TEMPLE AT ACHUTAMANGALAM

48. Vinayaka

50. Surya



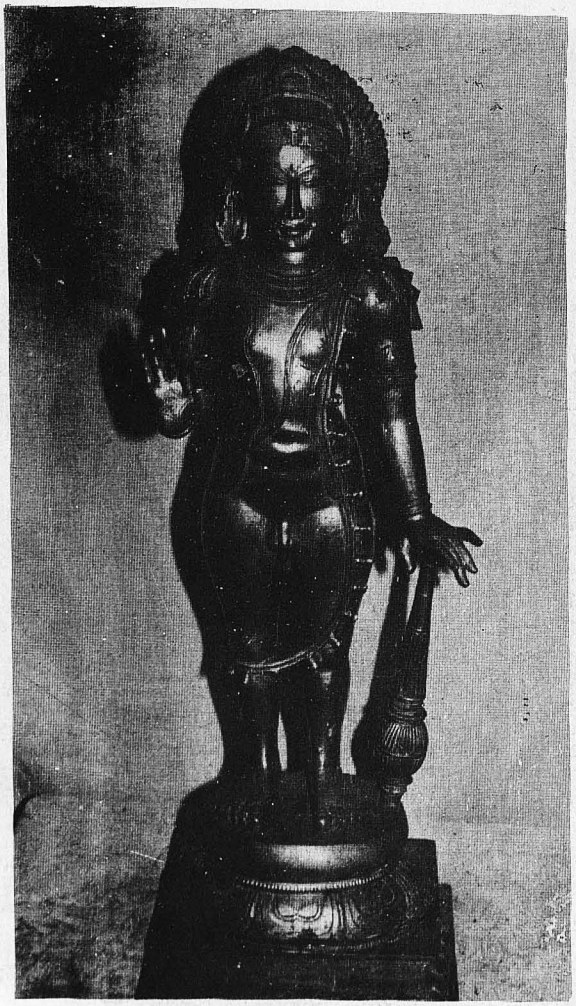
49. Adikaranandhi

51. Chandrasekharamurti

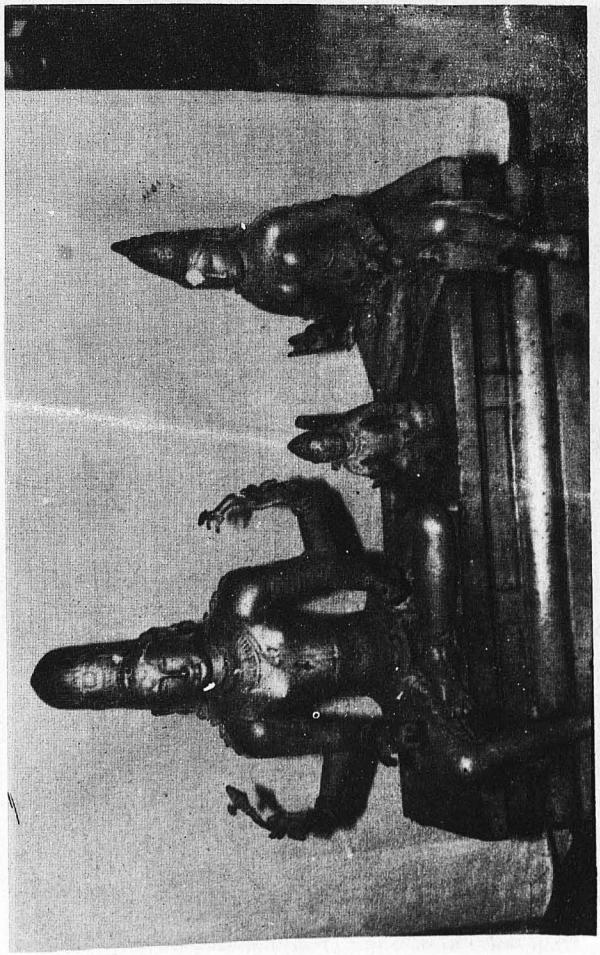
52. Chandrasekharamurti Goddess

53. Muruga

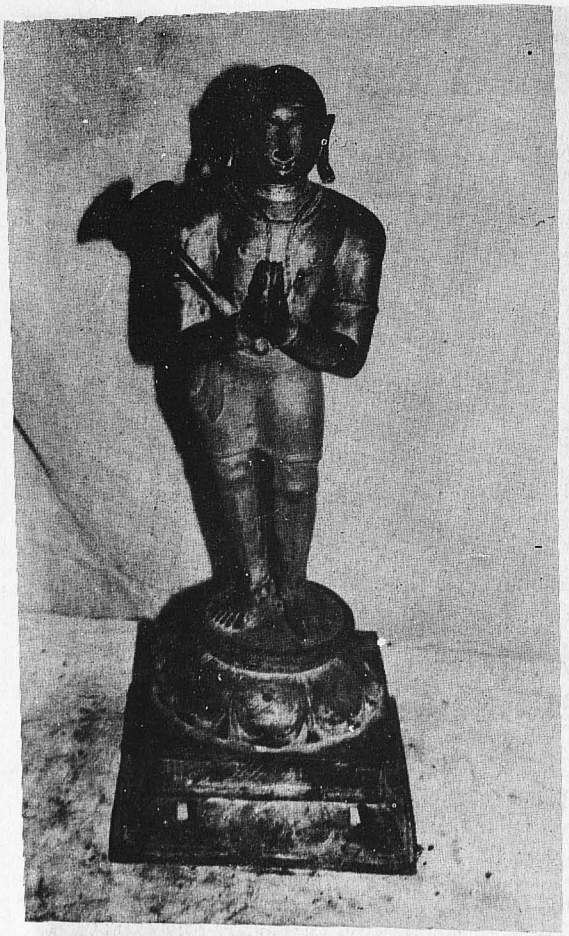
54. Pidari



55. Chattanathan



56. Somaskandamurti



57. Appar

58. Sundarar

59. Manickavacagar

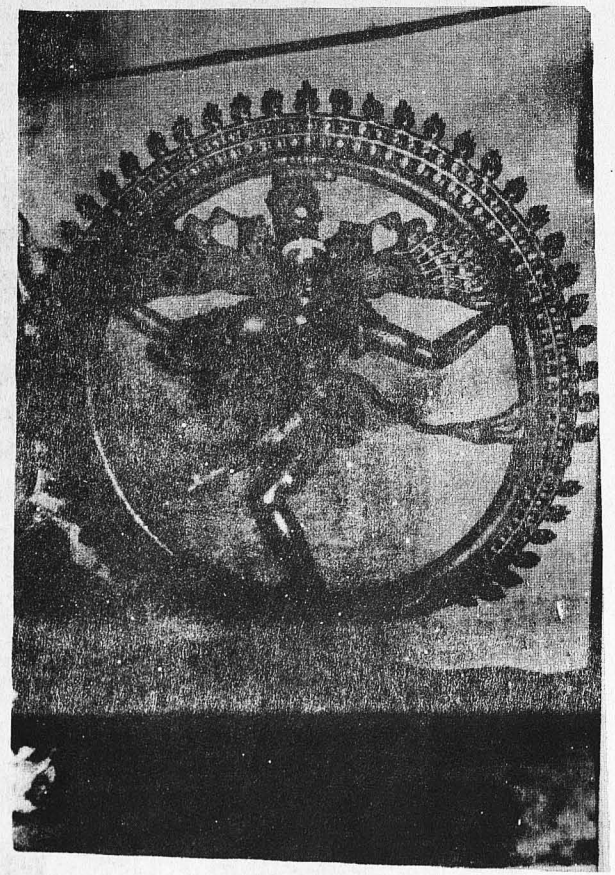
60. Brahma

61. Back View of Brahma

62. Rishabhavahanamurti

63. Nataraja

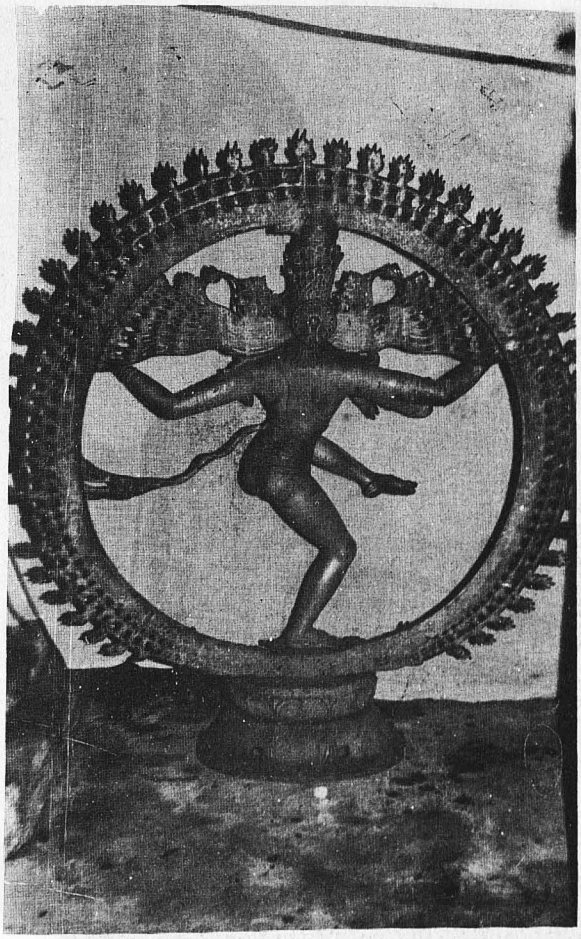
64. Nataraja



65. Nataraja

66. Back view of Nataraja

67. Back view of Nataraja



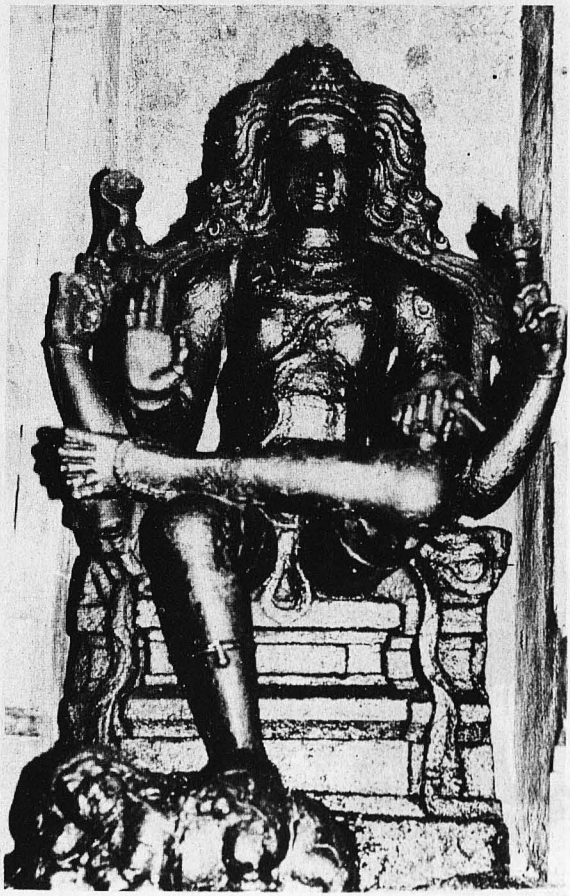
68. Back view of Nataraja

TEMPLE AT THIRUMARUGAI.

69. Kali

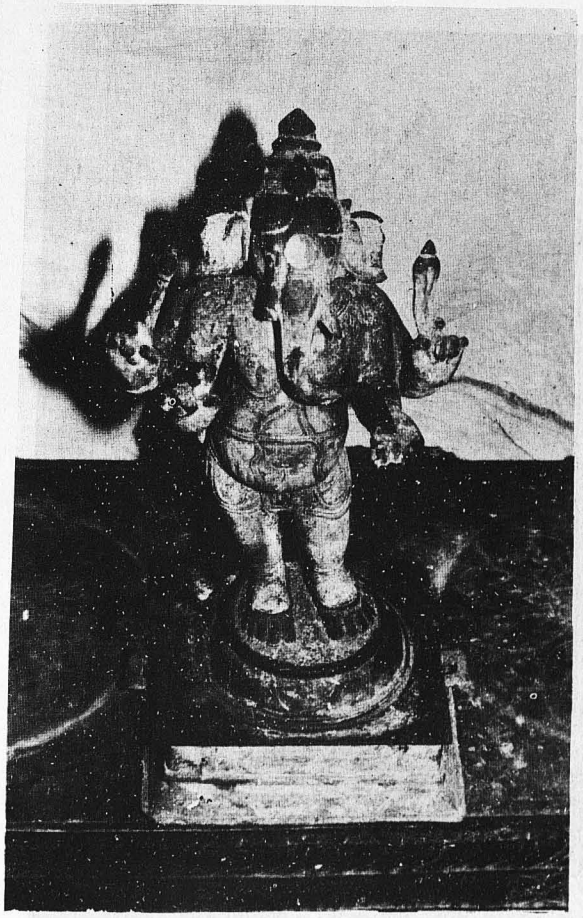
70. Bhikshatana

71. Lingodbhavamurti

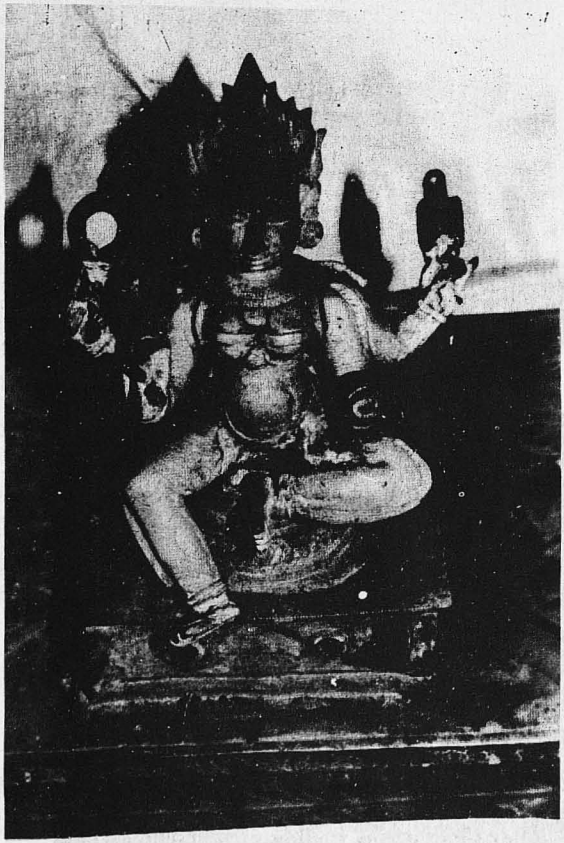


72. Dakshinamurti

73. Agastyar



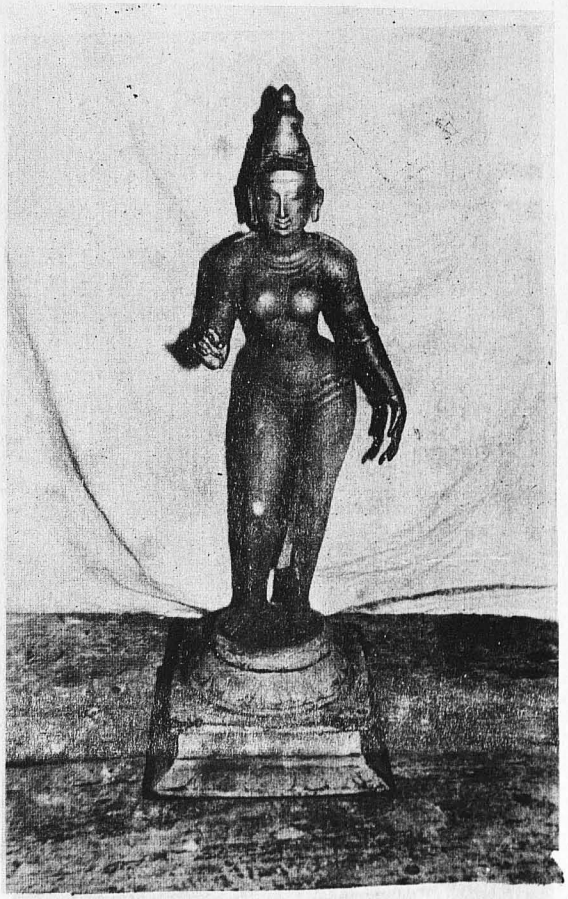
74. Vinayaka



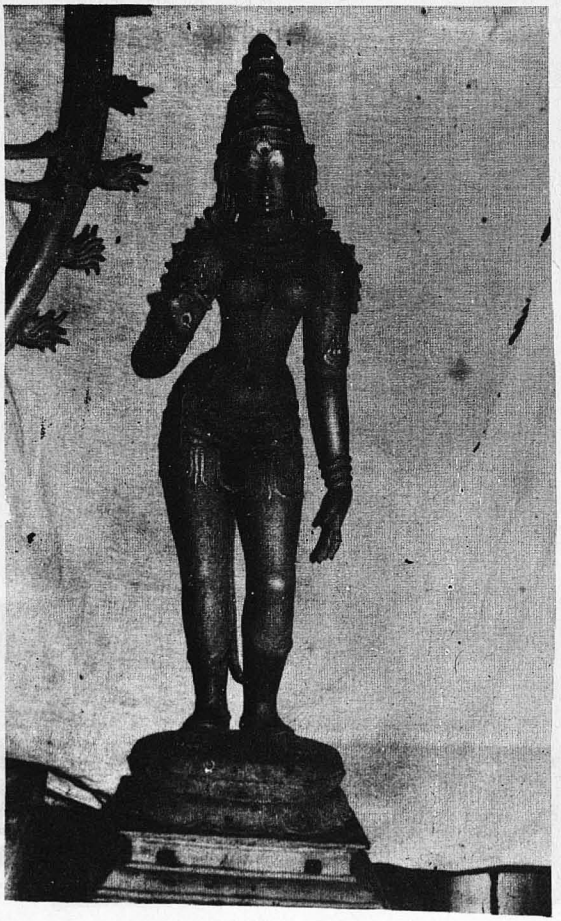
75. Kali

76. Mariamman

78. Murugan on peacock



Somaskanda goddess



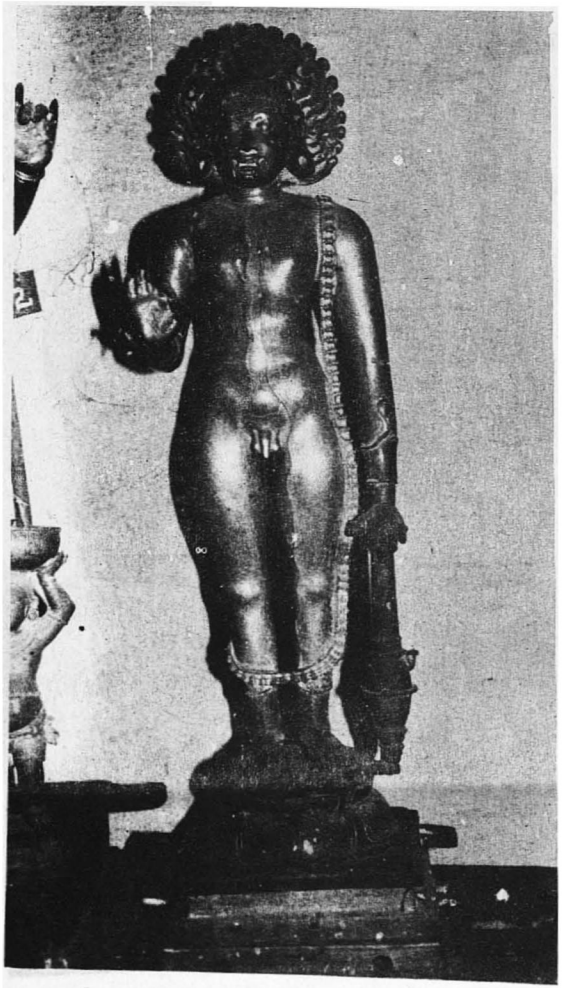
79. Sivakamasundari

80. Sambandar

Rahu

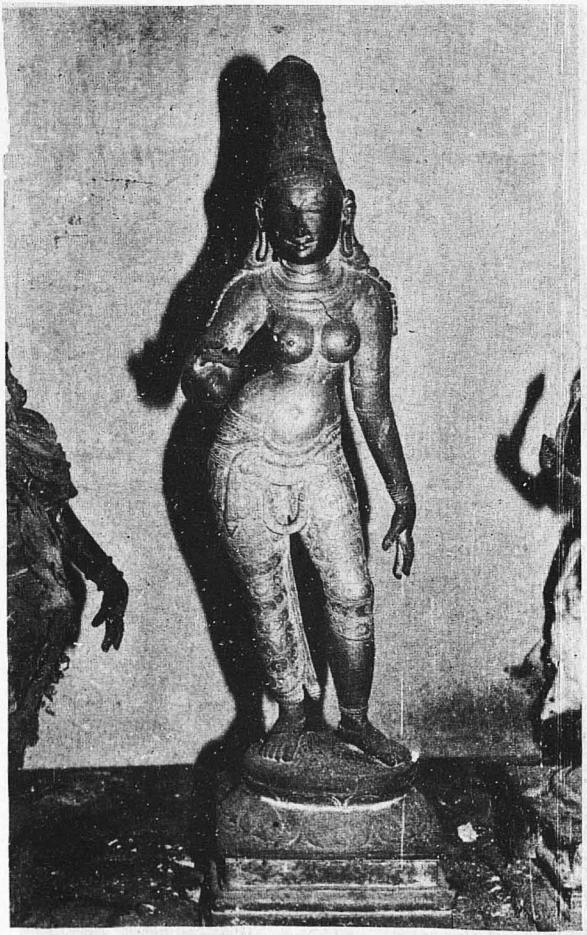
TEMPLE AT SREEVANJIAM

Dakshinamurti



83. Chattanathar

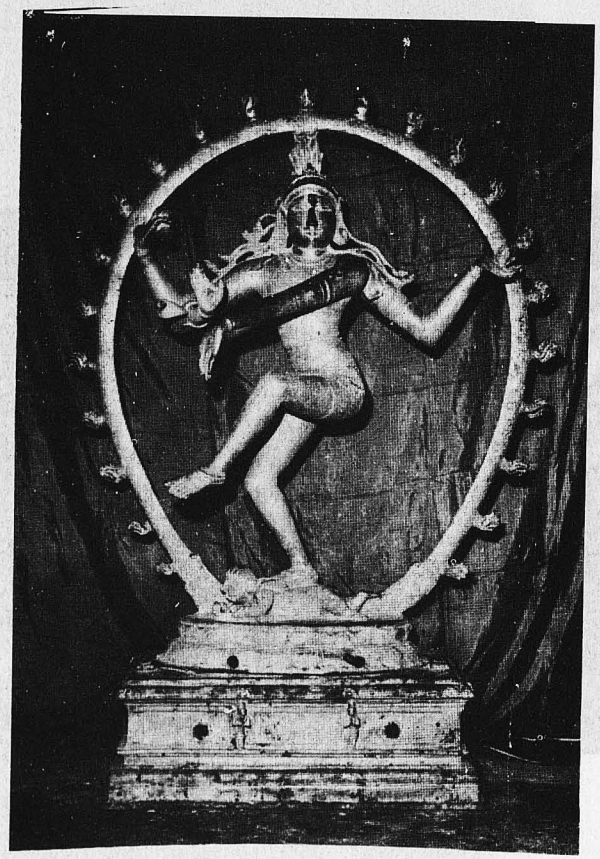
84. Kali



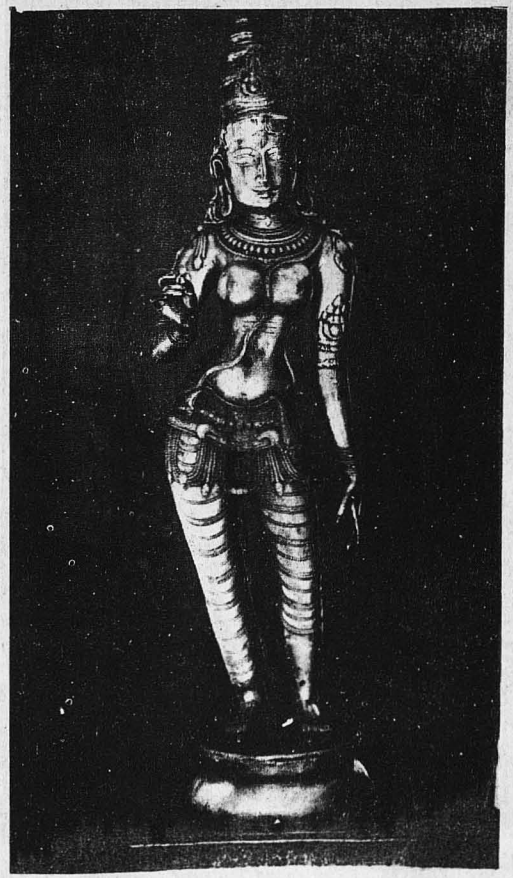
85. Bhogasakthiamman

TEMPLE AT TIRUMIYACUR

86. Nataraja with Sivakamasundari



87. Nataraja



88. Sivakamasundari

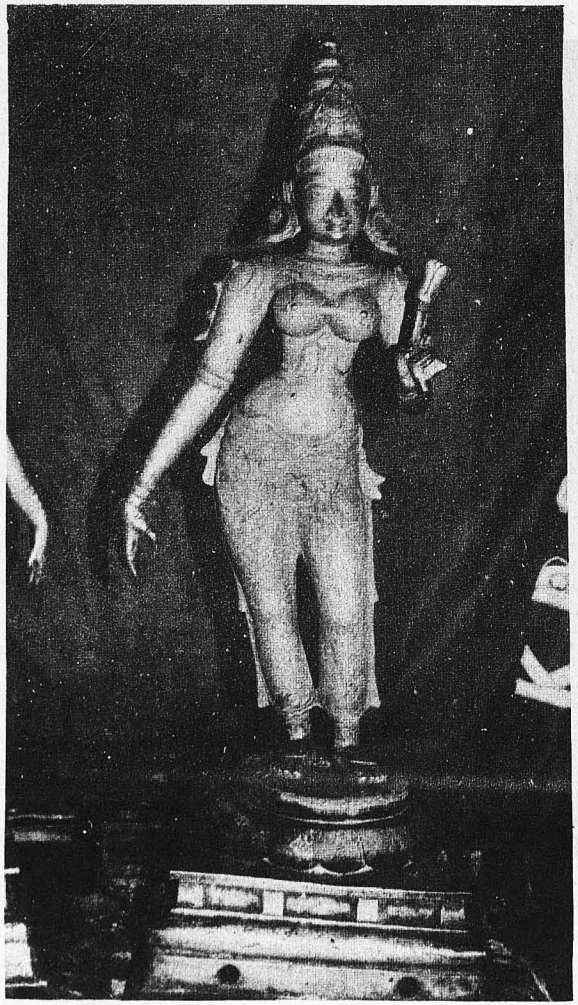
TEMPLE AT SRIBULIYUR

89 Kirubasamudrapperumal

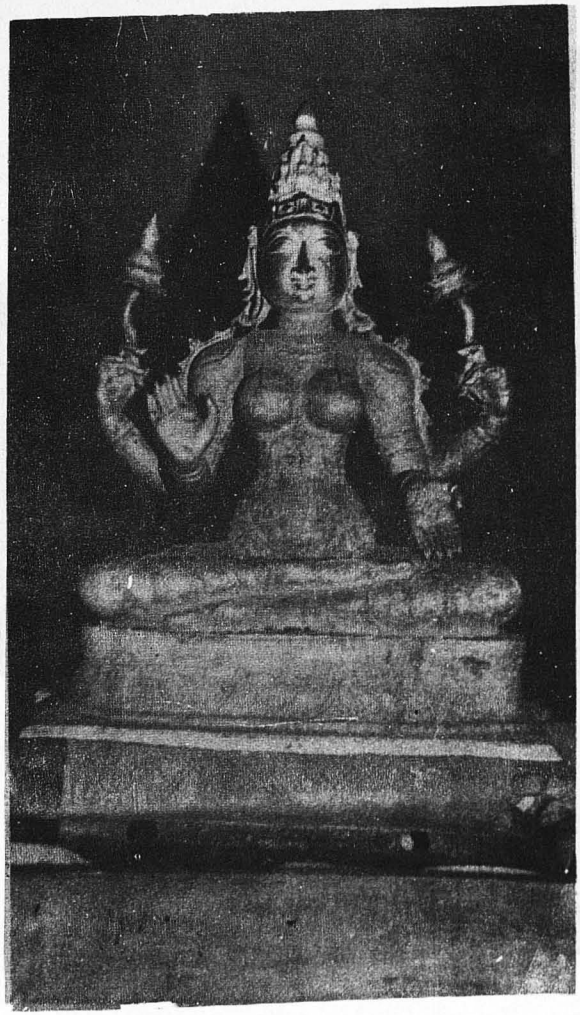
90. Kirubasmudrapperumal

91. Dancını Krsna

92. Manavalamamunigal

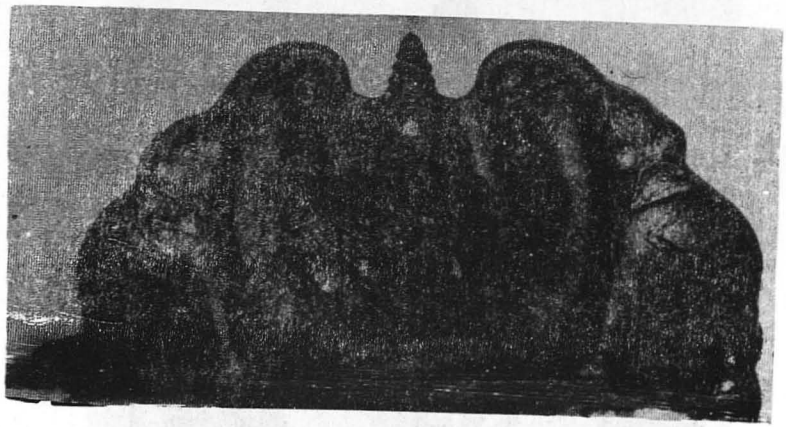


93. Andal



94. Thaiyal Nayaki Thayar

95. Saturn



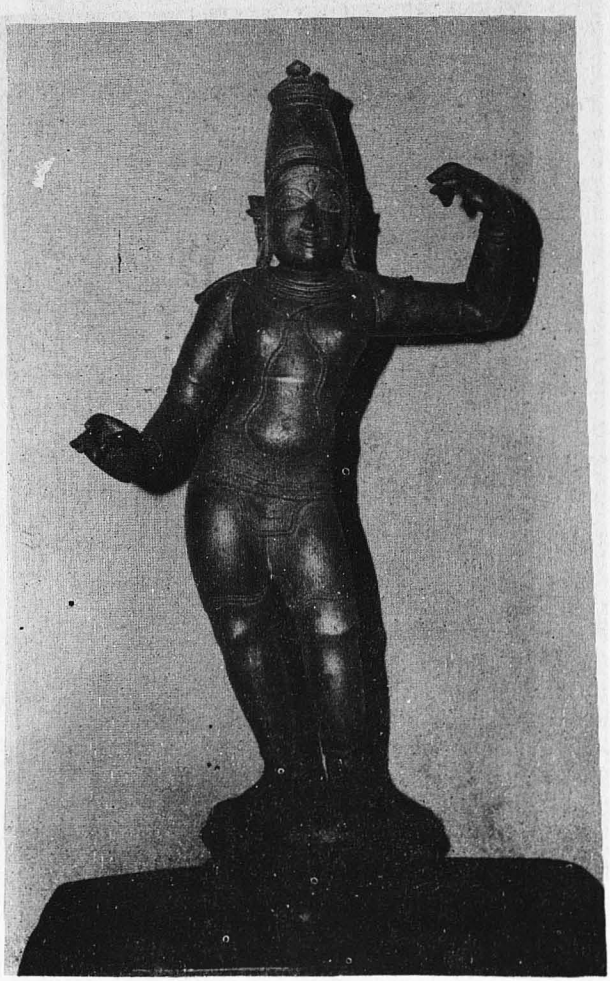
96. Gajalakshmi

97. Murugan with Deivasena and Valli

98. Somaskandamurti

99. Nataraja

TEMPLE AT KOOTHANUR



100. Lakshmana

101. Nataraja

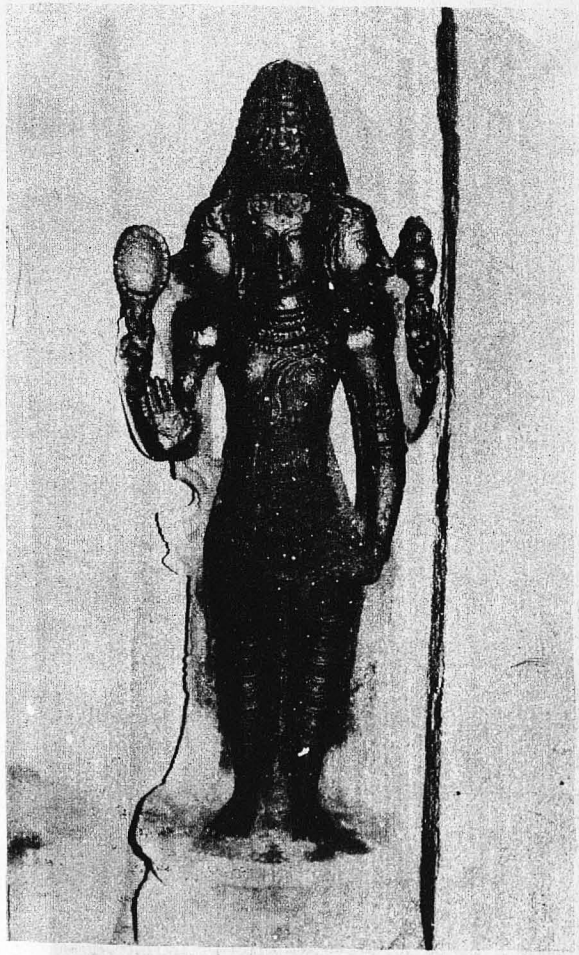
102. Goddess Sarasvati

103. Goddess Saratha

TEMPLE AT INJIKKUDI

104. Dakshinamurti

105. Ardhanarisvaramurti



106 Brahma

107. Durga

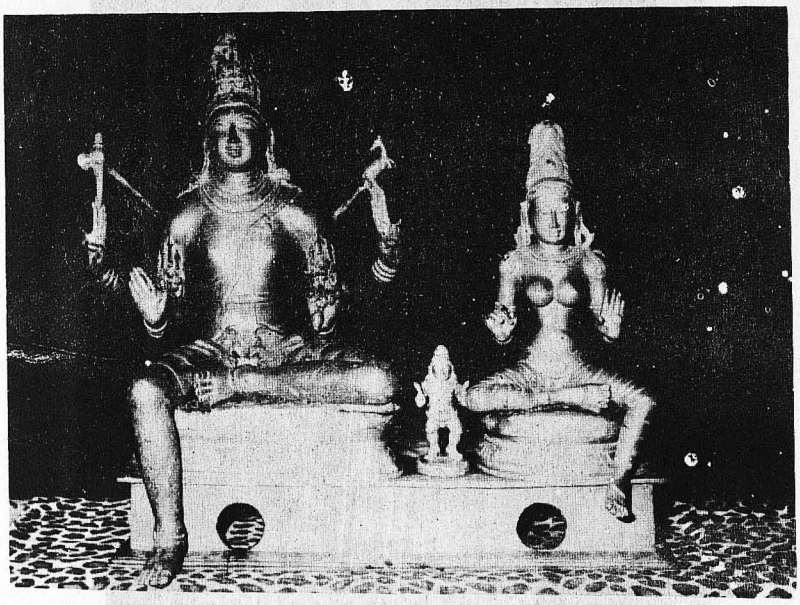
108. Rishabhavahanamurti

109. Dvarapalaka

110. Dvarapalaka

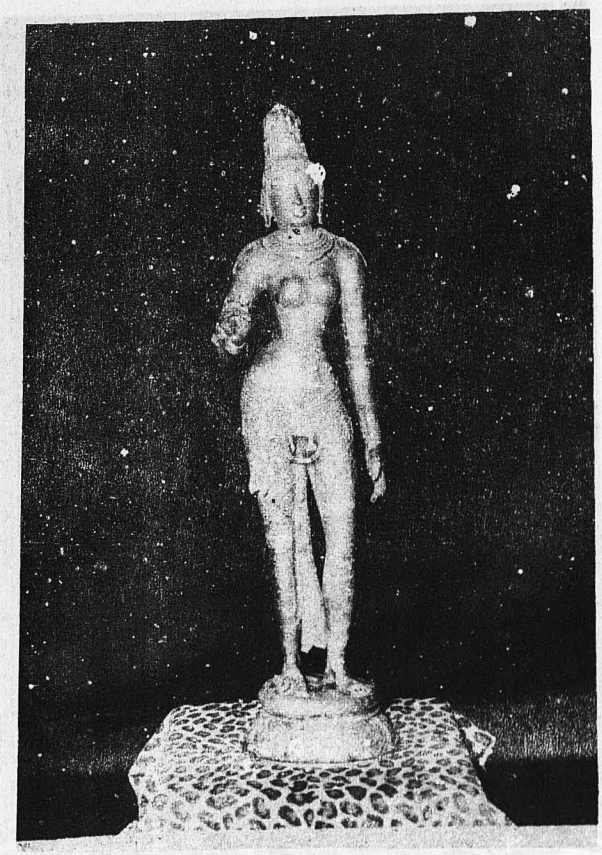
111. Dvarapalaka

TEMPLE AT THIRUPPANAIYUR

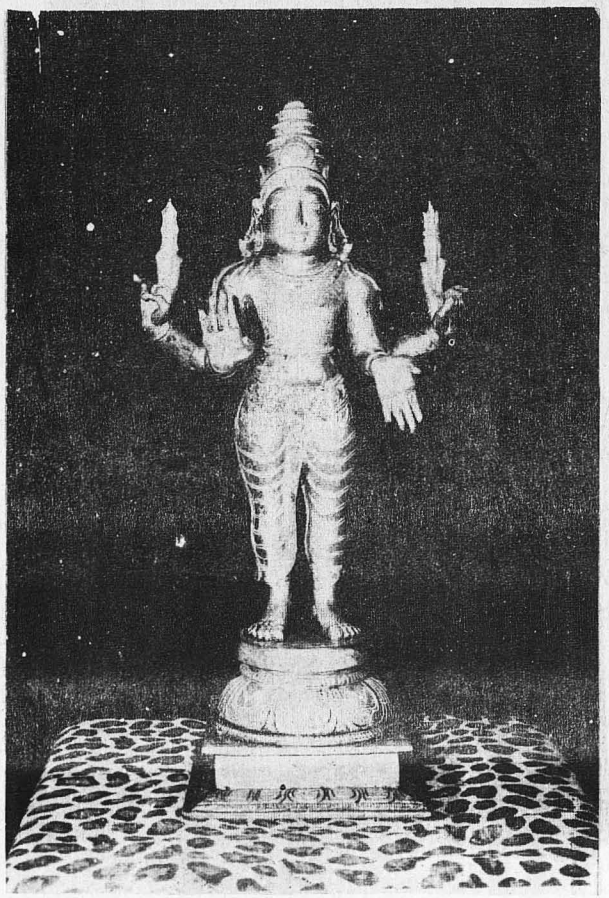


112. Somaskanda group

113. Tripurantakamurti



114. Goddess



115. Muruga

116. Deivayanai

117 Manickavacagar