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## DAKSHINAMURTHI WORSHIP IN TAMIL NADU SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE KELAPPALUVUR TEMPLE

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the creativity if the human spirit using a range of media. Thus temple culture has promoted all in a variety of shapes and forms. Human civilization flourished rapidly as a result of the emergence of higher religions. Even during the ancient past there existed a variety of primitive religions called Totemism, Magic, Ancestors worship and the like, and human beings associated themselves with some primitive religions or others. Fair and superstitions are the basic ideas that controlled the entire activities of the primitive religions. In course of time due to the advancement of human civilization and culture, higher religions came into existence in which faith created the central role. India witnessed the birth of great religious sects which came into existence from the old one called Brahmanism. Shivism and Vaishnavism of the two revolted daughters of Brahmanism, observes a reputed Indian philosophy. After the emergence of these new religions, the Indian religious life gained new

### ABSTRACT

**F**rom this study it is known that the history of Shiva Dakshinamurthi worship with its long history and tradition occupies an important place in the religious life of Tamils. Dakshinamurthi form of Shiva has a distinction of its own form the remote past. Archeological sources vouchsafe for the antiquity of the Dakshinamurthi cult. Some epigraphical evidences and literary sources of the study contain variable references relating to this form.

**KEYWORDS:** Dakshinamurthi Worship, Kelappaluvur Temple, Human civilization.

### INTRODUCTION

In the mighty lamp of wisdom, overflowing the oil of vairagya (indifference to worldly objects) and furnished with the wick of bakthi (faith) one should kindle the light of Knowledge and see. Then the darkness of delusion being dispelled, (Shiva) himself becomes manifested.

Dakshinamurthi Upanishad<sup>1</sup>

A temple is a structure where a deity or a holy symbol resides. It is a sacrosanct building. The very purpose of this building is to offer worship to a deity. Indian temples have not only been centers of worship, but have also been venues for expression of

inputs. Enriched with their rites, the two religions begun to attract the people towards them and the Indian spiritual history gained a new momentum.

Religion is an integral part of human life. It enables human beings to transcend from the narrow self-interest to broader world view. In Hinduism, two major religious sects are there, that is Shivism and Vishnuism, the worship of lord Shiva and lord Vishnu respectively.

Shiva worship in universal, he has been one of the most important and popular deity in India, both past ages and at the present times. Lord Shiva means all-round welfare. He is the God of Gods and is regarded as one of the most powerful and venerated Gods of the Hindu trial. He is primarily associated with the acts of destruction, but he is a creator and preserver of the universe as well.<sup>2</sup> Through his frantic motions. He generates the power of evolution, maintenance dissolution of the world.

He saved creation by burning the cupid, by keeping the kalkatta poison in his throat.<sup>3</sup> He destroyed Tripura himself and when the world needed to be purified he opened out his matted locks to receive the mighty floods of the Ganga, which would otherwise have drowned the earth.<sup>4</sup> This benevolent deity, who in his good nature is a generous dispenser of boons, becomes in the end saviourpar excellence.<sup>5</sup> For the common man, the nameless, formless God was presented with names and forms, so that he can easily comprehend the almighty and attain salvation. Lord Shiva has two forms aniconic and iconic (anthropomorphic).<sup>6</sup> The aniconic form is the Linga, with a variety of types. Linga worship is one of the ancient forms, of worship in India and the ancient world. The Linga (orphallus) is the symbol of creation.<sup>7</sup>

The Agmasmention twenty five sportive forms (Lila-murtis) of Shiva.<sup>8</sup> Most of which are usually met with in south Indian temples. These twenty five Shivamurthas have originated from the five faces of lord SadhaShiva.<sup>9</sup> The five faces are Ishana, Tatursha, Agora, Vamadeva and Sadyojtha. The names of the twenty five sportive Forms area as below:

Twenty five Lila murthis (twenty five Shivamurthas).

- |                               |   |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1.Somaskandar                 | } | Form the face of Isanam         |
| 2.Natarajar.                  |   |                                 |
| 3.Rishabarodar                |   |                                 |
| 4.Kalyanasundarar             |   |                                 |
| 5.Chandrasekarar              |   |                                 |
| 6.Bhikshatanar                | } | From the face of Tattpurushanam |
| 7.Kamathaganar                |   |                                 |
| 8.Kalasamboorar               |   |                                 |
| 9.Salandarar                  |   |                                 |
| 10.Triporandhagar             |   |                                 |
| 11.Gajasamharar               | } | From the face of Aghoram        |
| 12.Veerabadrar                |   |                                 |
| 13.Dakshnamurti               |   |                                 |
| 14.Kirathamurti               |   |                                 |
| 15.Neelakandar (vishabaranar) |   |                                 |
| 16.Kangalar                   | } | From the face of Vamadevam      |
| 17.Chakrathanar               |   |                                 |
| 18.Gajandirar                 |   |                                 |
| 19.Chandesanugrahar           |   |                                 |
| 20.Ekapathar                  |   |                                 |
| 21.Lingothbavar               | } | From the face of Satjotham      |
| 22.Sugasanar                  |   |                                 |
| 23.Umamahesar                 |   |                                 |
| 24.Hariharar                  |   |                                 |
| 25.Ardhanareeswarar           |   |                                 |

Out of these twenty five Shivamurthas, one of the most important is Dakshinamurthi called personification of knowledge and wisdom. It came out one of the five faces of SadaShiva called as Aghora.<sup>10</sup> The iconography of Shiva based on his two aspects that is Ghora(terrific) and Sowmya(peaceful).<sup>11</sup> Dakshinamurthi belongs to the aspect of Ghora(terrific) Fire. It means destruction of ignorance.<sup>12</sup> The south face Aghora (that which is not dreadful) is benevolent, benign face of Shiva: and it is directly related to vidya (the knowledge that liberates) and then to fire<sup>13</sup> (illumination).

Sri Dakshinamurthi who corresponds to Aghora the south aspect of Shiva is therefore represented facing south. The sanctum door facing south makes for liberation.<sup>14</sup> Since Sri Dakshinamurthi the Adi- Guru teaches knowledge (Inana- Karaga) that liberates (Makshadan). It seems appropriate the face of south.<sup>15</sup> He is called Dakshinamurthi because of his boundless compassion (Dakshinaya) towards all creation. Sri Dakshinamurthi aka Shiva, one of the kala forms of the Lord Shiva which represents the fire components of the manifestation of thought. The other four are Bhutesha, Kameshvara, and Mrityumjaya and Pashpatha clan.<sup>16</sup>

Sri Dakshinamurthi is one of the eight forms of the Lord Shiva (Ashtamurtis). In this form the deity is presented in philosophical teaching aspects<sup>17</sup> the other seven forms are: Anugrahamuriti or Saumyamurti, Ugramurthi or Rudramurthi or Samharamurthi, Nrittamurthi or Tandavamuriti, Lin Godabhavamurthi, Bhikshtanamurthi, Hari-Haramurthior and Ardhanarishvaramurthi.

Sri Dakshinamurthi is a term of ten met within Saivisam and Saivite Iconography. This form is highly exacted and deeply mystical form of Shiva, conveying him as the lord of Yoga and the embodiment of all knowledge worldly and spiritual. In this Dakshinamurthi icon, one could find the Lord in perfect stillness and perpetual serenity. It is a yogic pose of Lord Shiva himself.<sup>18</sup>

In the Saivite tradition, Dakshinamurthi is not a singular iconographic form, but a class of forms, all of which are Yogamurtis, where in sakti is not separately represented by being implicit within the representation of Shiva.

This Dakshinamurthi can be seen on the southern ghosta niche (Madam) of all Shiva temples and also on the GopuramsVimanas and Prakaras in different aspects.<sup>19</sup> Dakshinamurthi is a familiar expression in the context of south Indian temple sculpture. Generally the term is translated as "The southern or south facing form"<sup>20</sup> and hence the image is placed in a subsidiary shrine (devakoshta) on the southern wall of a temple. Dakshinamurthi as the south facing form is far too simplistic and cannot have been the original intent of the theologians.<sup>21</sup> Shiva is the best of the yogis, and as such he is known under applications Yogindra, Yogeshwara, Mahatapah and Mahayogi etc<sup>22</sup>

Sri Dakshinamurthi is an epithet of lord Shiva as the primordial master; Adiguru seated facing south and imparting supreme knowledge to his discipline, the sanakadimunis through his state of silence.<sup>23</sup> Almost every temple of Lord Shiva in Tamil Nadu has a shrine dedicated to lord Dakshinamurthi. He is verily the form and essence of the parvana (primordial sound), the form of pure knowledge, and the one without blemishes, he who is serene and peaceful one. He is the bestower of all knowledge (jnana) and origin of all explanations (Vyakhyana). Shiva as the Lord of wisdom, in the form of Dakshinamurthi appears in the southern shrines.<sup>24</sup>

Dakshinamurthi is an aspect of Shiva as a Guru (teacher) of all types of knowledge, particularly the Jnana. This form of Shiva is his personification as the supreme or the ultimate awareness, understanding the knowledge. He can be realized by means of Dakshina (knowledge).<sup>25</sup> This form represents Shiva in his aspect as a teacher of yoga, music and wisdom and gives exposition on the shastras.<sup>26</sup> Jnana (knowledge) is known as daksin and since daksin is ever in front of Shiva and is gazing at him in the aspect as Dakshinamurthi, he is called as Dakshinamurthi.<sup>27</sup>

Dakshinamurthi literally means as "one who is facing south (daksina) in Sanskrit. South is the direction of Death, hence change<sup>28</sup> (destruction of ignorance) perhaps, of all Hindu Gods, he is the only one sitting facing south. Shiva teaches sitting on the snowy mountains of the Himalayas. He faces south, towards the Indian sub-continent. By Shiva teaching with his body pointed to the southern direction, he is basically showing to everyone that he is a God and thus above any worldly traditions. This iconographic form of depicting Shiva in Indian art is mostly south Indian in character.<sup>29</sup> Dakshnamurthi is viewed in four main different aspects namely, as teacher of yoga, of vina, of jnana and as also an expounder of the sastras.<sup>30</sup>

The adulation of Dakshinamurthi image during the Indus valley period was proved by the archeological discoveries. The image of the great teacher sitting under a pipal tree surrounded by four sages and by the animals of the forest clearly is derived from that of the Buddha teaching his first sermon in the deer park of Sarnath. The famous Nara-Narayana relief at Deogarh is related to the same concept.<sup>31</sup> A late Gupta terracotta plaque from Ahichchatra (UP) has been interpreted as possible representation of Shiva Dakshinamurthi, it may, however illustrate a different although similar concept.<sup>32</sup>

All known Dakshinamurthi images come from south. Tamil scholars say that the worship of Dakshinamurthi must have been in a developed state at the time of Sangam age. There are references from the Sangam literatures like, Purananuru, Thirumurgaruppadai, Kalithogai, Silappadhikaram and Manimegalai. The Dakshinamurthiform is mentioned by the Mnists Appar (early eighth century) and Sambandar the Dakshinamurthi concept is described by Manikkavasakar.

The earliest existing ones can be seen on Pallava monolithic and structural temples. On the southern side of the Dharmaraja-ratha and on the central tier, a Vinadhara- and on the upper tier, one finds what seems to be a Vykhana- Dakshinamurthi. On the southern side of the Olakkannisvara, also at Mamallapuram, the central which is occupied by a Dakshinamurthi.<sup>33</sup> The same pattern is followed in the Kaileasanatha at Kanchi as well as in the Muktesvara, Iravatanesvara and other local temple of the eighth century.<sup>34</sup> The iconic aspect is the southern side of the vimana. The same pattern continues in the Bana and Lata Pallava temples, i.e. at Takkolan (mid-ninth century), where the half open lips seem to chant the Vedas, as well as at Tiruttani and Tirukkalukkanram. At Velakannampudi (early ninth century), the loose yoga Dakshinamurthi the back hands hold axe and deer. Probably belongs to the group of seven mothers. The same goes for the loose yoga Dakshinamurthi at Tiruttani (with rosary and deer).<sup>35</sup> Carved into the cliff outside the Pandya cave temple at Tirukkolakudi, there is a deep niche with a Saptamatrka group, it is flanked by Ganesa and Dakshinamurthi. In the Muttaraiyar cave temple at Malayadipatti. The seven mothers are accompanied by Ganesa and yoga Dakshinamurthi. The monolithic Pandya temple at Kalugumalai has, like the structural Pandya temples, no sculptural decoration in the Vimananiches (Devakosta). One encounters the Dakshinamurthi, facing south, on the griva.<sup>36</sup> The beautiful icon is most unusual. Shiva is shown as the teacher of music but, instead of playing the lute (vina), he plays the drum (mrdanga) which is associated with the dance. On the later Pandya temple at Tiruvalisvaram, a seated Shiva appears on the Southern side of the griva while the Dakshinamurthi is placed on the principle tier of the superstructure, on the western side, next to the central VinGodhavamurti. In the Muttaraiyar temple at Tillaisthanam Dakshinamurthi appears on the central tier (seated), and on the griva as well (standing). The Irrukuvel temple at Narttamalai has no Vimananiches, Avinadhara- Dakshinamurthi occupies the griva niche on the Southern side. A beautiful Vinadhara Dakshinamurthi from Narttamalai in the Padukkottaimuseum.<sup>37</sup> Probably belongs to the group of seven mothers, he holds trident and rosary. The Muvarkovilat kodumbalur is the most accomplished Irrukuvel temple, two of the original three main shrines are left. The southern shrine has, in the southern Devakosta, a standing Vinadhara- Dakshinamurthi.<sup>38</sup> This is not repeated on central tier and griva. The central shrine's southern niche is empty.

The motif is repeated by the more familiar type of Dakshinamurthi seated as well, on the central tier and on the griva. In the early Cola temple, the standard pattern as it was developed by the Pallavas, with Dakshinamurthi in the southern vimanadevakosta, seems to have been followed without exception. At Tiruvedikudi and at Kumbakonam the original image has been replaced, so it is at Tiruchchatturai repeated on central tier (seated) but not at Srinivasanallu. It has the form of a seated Vinadhara at Tiruppurattur and of a standing one at Lagudy Tiruchchenampundi and at Thudaiyur where again the theme is repeated by a seated Dakshinamurthi on the griva. This standard pattern continues right down to the great temple of Thanjavur and Gangaikondacolapuram. In the larger temple, the Devakostaimage are often repeated on the upper tier or tiers.

There are two early Chola period temples of stone were built at Killaiyur. This twin temple (Irattaiyur) has enchanting sculptures with elegance. These two temples are called 'Agastheeswaram' and Choleeswaram. Both the temples are belonged to the Aditya period but these temples were constructed by the Paluvettaraiyars, described as Kerala kings in the Chola records of the 10th century.<sup>39</sup> They were feudatory to Imperial Chola for over a century, ruling over a territory round Paluvuor in the Trichinopoly district. In the Agastheeswara

temple the southern devakoshta have beautiful sculpture standing Shiva. The figure of Shiva as veenadhara on the west side of the griva is exceptionally fine.<sup>40</sup> He is holding veena on his both hands. His right leg is slightly bent and kept on the little bit higher place than his left leg. His hair is locked with Jatamahutam. His ornaments and lines in the waist dress are still clear and impressive. The sculptural style of his image is the fore runner to the other schools.

One more excellent Dakshinamurthi sculpture is installed in Kelappaluvur temple It is a beautiful structure of the 10thcentaury C.E. He is shown in sitting posture with the right leg hanging down on which the left leg is resting on the right thigh. The wisdom tree is shown behind Dakshinamurthy. He is depicted with Jatabara and four hands. In his eras, on the left and right side makarakundala and padrakundala is adorned. In his upper right hand the attribute is not known, but the upper left hand is having agni. The lower right hand has sinmudra pose and the lower left hand is having a palm leaf.

## CONCLUSION

Shiva the great god is an ambivalent dignity in his role as the teacher, one of his forms has been giving as exceptional importance in the sculpture of Tamil Nadu. The concept of Dakshimurti is found illustrated in the sculptures from the Pallava period in Tamil Nadu. The popularity of Dakshinamurthi cult began to spread from the 7th century C. E. onwards with the increasing production of Saivite images. A religious trend that advocates the esoteric reversal of social values is embodied by the impure Dakshinamurthi.

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