

# SRI DAKSHINAMURTI SCULPTURE AT THIRUMANIKKULI – A STUDY

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## Abstract

Sculpture is one of the visual arts. It forms the aesthetic expression in which designs are created in space. It can be fashioned from such durable materials as wax, ivory, stone, clay, wood, metal, bone, and the like. Sculptures elucidate the progress of art and architecture. They stand as a testimony to the developments of civilization from early stages. The history of sculpture is as old as the history of mankind. It has appeared in almost every culture of the world. Indian sculpture is not only valued as an object of worship but also as a work of art. Merely building the temple carving the images, moulding and shaping the idols cannot be done according to our own wishes or desires for which rules are laid down strictly in the Agamas and *Silpasastras*, and they should be followed. The mythological stories relating to the temple, and also figure of Dakshinamurti are common in the southern devokotsha of garbhagraha of the Sri Vamanapurisvarar at Tirumanikkuli. From the above mention stone and others sculptures one can in far that this temple is considered as one of the treasure house of richest specimen of sculptures.

**Key words;** history of sculpture, mythological stories, Dakshinamurti and Sri Vamanapurisvarar  
**Introduction**

Sculpture is one of the visual arts.<sup>1</sup> It forms the aesthetic expression in which designs are created in space. It can be fashioned from such durable materials as wax, ivory, stone, clay, wood, metal, bone, and the like. Sculptures elucidate the progress of art and architecture. They stand as a testimony to the developments of civilization from early stages. The history of sculpture is as old as the history of mankind. It has appeared in almost every culture of the world. Indian sculpture is not only valued as an object of worship but also as a work of art.<sup>2</sup>

Merely building the temple carving the images, moulding and shaping the idols cannot be done according to our own wishes or desires from which rules are laid down strictly in the Agamas and *Silpasastras*, and they should be followed. Accordingly certain *silpa* text and *agamtis* specifically point out the iconographic details and lay down the data for the measurements and moulding of the sculptures.<sup>3</sup>

### Location

The village is 6 miles to the south of Karamanikuppam from Cuddalore railway station. Though the temple is an ancient one and there are numerous Inscriptions relating to the Cholas, Pandyas and Vijayanagara periods, very little is known about it at present. Some of the stone inscriptions show that Sri Nataraja of Chidambaram was the family deity of the Chola rulers and that they held a coronation darbar at Chidambaram. After sending Mahabli to the world Sri Vishnu as Vamana incarnation,<sup>4</sup> worshipped the lord here who, therefore, came to be known as Sri Vamanapurisayarar. As the lord did not desire to be disturbed while Sri Vamana was offering poojas, the former installed Bheema Rudra, one of Ekadasa Rudras at the entrance to give dharsan to the devotees. The first Deeparadhanai is performed for Bheema Rudra a picture of whom made of fine silk, is hung before the Lingam, "Mani" in Tamil mean bachelor, as Vamana was a bachelor the place is called Mani Kuli.<sup>5</sup> The Lingam is a Swayambu.<sup>6</sup>

### Dakshinamurti

Dakshinamurti is one of the twenty five sportive forms of Siva (Limurtis)<sup>7</sup> Siva's forms are classified into three aspects, that is vega aspect, boga aspect, and yoga aspect.<sup>8</sup> Dakshinamurti form comes under the yoga aspect. He is regarded as the repository of all arts and wistom.<sup>3</sup>

### Mythological Shrines

The original of this form is interesting. Once upon a time, Daksha, the father-in-law of Siva, insulted Him and His consort Uma, by not inviting them to a sacrifice which he was

performing. Uma, went there without invitation, but begin of neglected. Jumped into the fire-pit and destroyed herself. This made Siva furious. He created Virabhadra out of his hair who destroyed Daksha. Then Siva retired to a forest and sat underneath a Banyan tree deeply engaged in meditation. After some time, Siva gave up His penance and married once again Uma, who had now incarnated herself as Parvati. Dakshinamurti is always conceived as a youthful teacher, seated beneath a Banyan tree, teaching aged sage and removing their doubts, by his very silence.<sup>9</sup>

### Various forms of Dakshinamurti

There are different forms of Dakshinamurti like Jnana Dakshinamurti, Yoga Dakshinamurti, Vinadhara Dakshinamurti, Meda Dakshinamurti, Sakti Dakshinamurti, Vyakhyana Dakshinamurti and more.<sup>10</sup>

The images of Dakshinamurti can be seen in the walls of the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, in many varieties.<sup>11</sup> In the Pandya country, a unique piece of Dakshinamurti is found in the south just under the eaves of the Vimana at the top of rock cut temple at Kalugumalai. In this singular instance Dakshinamurti plays the mrdanga of the ankya type (Musical instrument) which is placed on his lap. He is sitting in the sukasana pose with his right leg bent and the left resting on an apasmar apurasa. The rear right hand holds aparasa while the left holds an akshamala. He has a mrdanga in his front left hand and the figures of the right hand are playing on it.<sup>12</sup>

The images of Dakshinamurti are common in the south side devakoshta of the garbhagrha of Siva temples datable to the Chola period.<sup>12</sup> Those are better executed than those of the previous period. In the different forms of Dakshinamurti, Vykhyans Dakshinamurti is most

frequently found in these temple. Two images of Dakshinamurti pertaining to this period are found in Tirumanikkuli Siva temple.<sup>13</sup>

### **Vyakhyana Dakshinamurti : Tirumanikkuli (Plate No. 1)**

One of them, is Vyakhyana Dakshinamurti an expounder of Sastras installed on the South Deva Koshta of the Central shrine. He is not shown here under a Banyan tree as found in several other images. He is seated on a raised seat in a secluded spot on the Himalayas, in the Virasana posture, with his right leg hanging down below the seat. His left leg is bent across to rest on the right thigh. He is represented with two pairs of hands. His back right hand carries a hooded serpent and the left carries an agni.<sup>14</sup> A serpent and an agni are facing Dakshinamurti as if they are keenly listening to the philosophy being taught by Him. His front right hand is held in Vyakhyana Mudra and the left rest upon the lap in gajahasta mudra carrying a pustaka.<sup>15</sup>

A broad forehead with a vertical eye, bent eye brows, slightly opened eyes gaze settled on the tip of the nose, pointed nose, and slightly opened mouth are the distinguishing features of his tranquil face. He has a fine Jatabhara in which the braids of hairs are disheveled on the side of the head. On the top, the hairs are tied together by a snake with a skull. Patta goes round the forehead. The right ear has a Makarakundala whereas the left ear has a Patrakundala, Kandigai, Sarappalli, and Savadi adorn the neck.

The Yajnopavita seen from the left shoulder is divided into three strands. A short strand is running below the right chest<sup>16</sup> a long strand is hanging low on the waist, and another short strand is reaching the stomach. There is a knot brahmamudichchu at the joint of the sacred threads over the left chest. The shoulder ornaments armlets, and bangles are shown in their appropriate places. Udarabandha is very simple around his diaphragm. Tiger's skin called Vyagrasarmam is shown around his lions, suronipattai hangs in between the thighs. A band with

kinkini hanging from it in front is round the right side calf. Padasaras are seen in the feet. Apasmarapurasn prostrated<sup>17</sup> under the right leg of Dakshinamurti lifts his head with Vyakhyana Mudra in his right hand and a snake in his left hand.

Dakshinamurti has four rises as disciples (**Plate No. 2**). Two on either side are found in the sides of the semi pilasters. The rises are found with Jatamakatus braided hairs, flowing beards and moustaches. They wear undarabandhas and the by yajnopavitas. The seem to be fully conscious of the upadesa of Dakshinamurti.<sup>18</sup>

On the right side, two rises are depicted as thick bodied and with appropriate bellies. They are sitting in Laditasana posture<sup>19</sup> showing Vyakhayana mudra in their right hands. The nearest rise has a book in his left hand, and the outer one has the palms of his left hand raised upwards. In the left side, two rises are sitting with crossed legs and resting their left hand on the laps. The nearest one is seen with Vyakhyana mudra<sup>20</sup> in his right hand and outer one is raising his right hand as if he is offering salutations.

The mythological stories relating to the temple, and also figure of Dakshinamurti are common in the southern devokotsha of garbhagraha of the Sri Vamanapurisvarar at Tirumanikkuli. From the above mention stone and others sculptures one can in far that this temple is considered as one of the treasure house of richest specimen of sculptures.

## Conclusion

He is represented with two pairs of hands. His back right hand carries a hooded serpent and the left carries an agni. A serpent and an agni are facing Dakshinamurti as if they are keenly listening to the philosophy being taught by Him. His front right hand in held in Vyakhyana Mudra and the left rest upon the lap in gajahasta mudra carrying a pustaka. The nearest rise has a book in his left hand, and the outer one has the palms of his left hand raised upwards. In the

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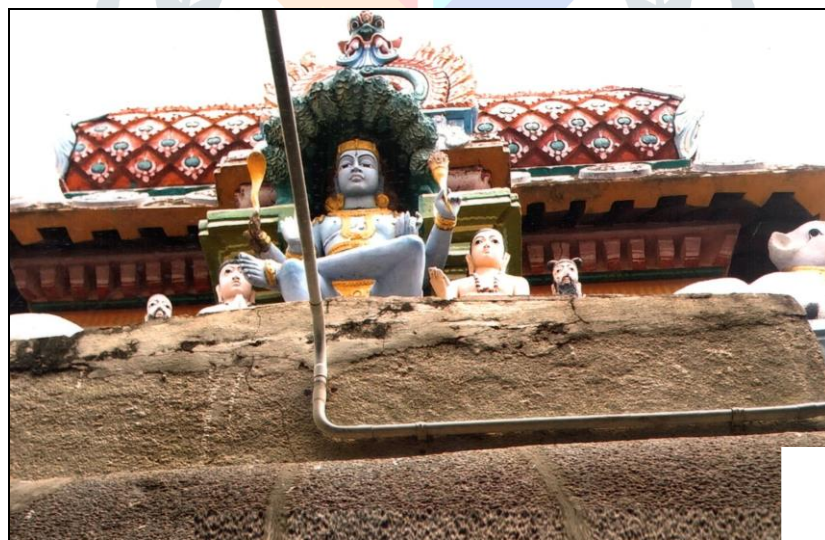
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**Plate No. 1 : Vyakhyana Dakshinamurti**



**Plate No. 2: Dakshinamurti**