

# THE CONQUEST OF THE DRAVIDIAN GODS IN MODERN HINDUISM

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## Abstract

The aim of this Article is explained the Dravidian gods in the modern Hinduism peoples. It's also expressed into every detail of this life and knowledge of their daily religious ceremonies. There is no lack of authoritative works on Hinduism as a system of religion. No other system, with the exception of Christianity, is so interesting, so fully known, or has attracted so many to its study. With such abundant interest, it seems somewhat strange that a great branch of nominal Hinduism has been very largely neglected in these Works. This branch is the Worship of local and village deities. It is estimated, and probably conservatively, that eighty per cent of the people of South India address their worship almost exclusively to such minor deities, and yet these deities receive little attention in studies of Hinduism. The reasons for this apparent neglect not difficult to discover. There is no systematized teaching connected With village cults or worship. No interesting systems of philosophy lie behind them. The Dravidians are not a literary people, and their religion has no literature. There are no Vedas or other writings telling of their gods. Their history is contained in the some what confused legends recited by wandering singers who attend the festivals and assist in the worship. The difficulties of learning about the subject are considerable. The material, while almost limitless, is very fugitive. There is scarcely any other way to gain necessary information than by protracted residence in India, by securing one point at a time, by coming into as close contact with the people as possible, by observing their worship, by learning as much as possible about each local deity met with, and obtaining one story here and another there. The reasons for the customs are quite commonly unknown to the people themselves, and it requires persistent effort to discover what traditions, former practices, and sub-conscious ideas are responsible for a great deal that takes place. Another reason for lack of investigation in regard to these Dravidian gods is that the subject has not been considered an attractive one. There is no historic leader or founder around whose personality any interesting facts or legends may cluster. It is not a worship that any one is proud of, for that any one of ordinary enlightenment attempts to defend. In fact, it would not be classed by most people as coming within the range of the study of Comparative Religion, but would be assigned to Anthropology, or discussed in connexion with primitive customs. Educated Indians have not cared to undertake this study, and the foreigners who write on Hinduism usually confine themselves to what they can learn from the sacred books of the Hindus, or from the educated classes.

## Introduction

The term Dravidian is commonly used to refer to all of the non- Aryan population in the peninsula of India. The Dravidians are considered to be the aboriginal inhabitants of the land. They predominate in the southern and eastern parts of India, but form a considerable part of the population on the northwestern

part where the Aryans predominare. The history of the Dravidian is lost in antiquity. Long before the Aryans came to India they were the domiciled inhabitants. They save preserved no literature and left no monument which throw light upon their origin.

The word sakti is from the Sanskrit, and means energy, force. Or power. In Hinduism it is used to express the energy of the gods as manifested in their wives. In this ways the wives of the chief Hindu gods have come to be called saktis. Especially is this name applied to parvati, wife of via. These wives of the gods receive worship, but there has arisen a definite worship called sakti puja. This arises from the Tantras, which are later than the puranas. The object of the worship is the adoration of tdhe female principal. And its worst orgies are exceedingly loathsome and immoral.” These orgies are conducted at night and in secret. Few Hindus would admit that they have anything to do with them, or know anything about sakti puja.

There is still a third use of the word sakti, and it is with this form of sakti worship is deals. It is common to call female Dravidian deities saktis. It is probable that they have no original connexion with the Hindu saktis, but as they are female deities, this was the easiest classification. The most of them are said to be incarnations of parvati, the wife of siva. While any village goddess is commonly called a sakti, the term is usually applied to the fiercer ones, and especially to those which have not been incarnated, and have no fixed temple or image. They are really terrible female devils. The sakti ceremonies in the Dravidian worship are an entirely different matter from the sakti puja of the Tantras. These ceremonies foun in Hihduism.

### Key words

**Dravidian, Saktis, Village, Worship, Hinduism, Sacrifice, Kati Ankamma, house hold, Cow-Dung,**

### Worship of Dravidian Gods

The worship of these Dravidian saktis is simply propitiation to prevent their doing some evil, as the following illustrations will show.while the worship of the village deity is proceeding, it is feared that saktis will be watching, and through jealousy or some other unworthy reason, may do harm, even to the extent of destroying the good that was hoped for from the jatara. To prevent any such consequences, the saktis are propitiated at midnight, after the day when the sacrificial buffalo was killed. An out-man is brought to the scene of the sacrifice. He smears his body with blood from the beheaded buffalo, winds the intestines around his neck, and takes the liver in his mouth. A pot containing food soaked in blood is placed in his hands, and accompanied by men armed with sticks and old swords, he starts to go to the boundaries of the village. As this weird procession moves along they shout Bali! Bali! The sacrifice, the sacrifice,’ and the people who are in their houses remain in deathlike stillness for fear of the saktis and evil spirits which are hivering over the procession.

This men in the procession shout and flourish their swords and sticks, to keep off These spirits. The man carrying the bloody offering is held up by ropes. End even then often falls to the ground, saying that he sees the spirits. When he thus falls ,limes. are cut in two and thrown into the air. and lambs. ere sacrificed on the spot. The men then recover, from his pretended swoon. and the procession goee forward. After they have arrived at the boundary of the village the bloody rice in left an an offering, and the men who carried it divests himself of his bloody trappings. Often he swoons, or appears to do so and is carried to the temple of the village goddness, where water is poured over him to revive him. Sometimes the

procession, after arriving at the boundary, continues around the village, the bloody rice being scattered to keep out the saktis

A variation of this ceremony, as reported by Bishop Whitehead, 'consists in carrying the buffalo head around the village in order to draw a line over which no evil spirit may pass. Any house which has not contributed to the expenses of the worship will be omitted from this protection. At times individual saktis are worshipped, the gruesome ceremonies always having the one object of mollifying the anger of the sakti. Among these saktis, kati Ankamma is one of considerable importance. She is the sakti of the place where the dead are buried or burned, and is feared accordingly. She is said to live on corpses and to kill young children. She also sets fire to houses, and like all other Indian demons, delights in killing cattle. The worship is by one household, or at times by two or three households in union. It takes place when there has been some unusual trouble which may be attributed to kati Ankamma. It appears that the household gods are jealous of this worship of kati Ankamma. And so they must first be propitiated. Accordingly the day before that set for kati Ankamma, these gods. Such as Dilli polas have their ceremonies. The household gods are taken to the water in the evening, and kept submerged all night. The next day the pujari comes with the musicians, and also with any persons who are possessed by demons. And joining with the worshipping household. They go to the water.

After removing the gods from the water they burn incense and sacrifice a sheep. The procession then starts and when the people reach the middle of the village they offer another sheep to the household gods, and when they arrive at the house still another sheep. The gods are then replaced with much ceremony, are smeared with saffron, and worshipped. It is hoped that by these attentions no harm will result from the impending worship of sakati Ankamma. The next day the worship of kati Ankamma begins, and is of short duration, for it is not pleasant enough to be extended any longer than is actually necessary. The madiga story-teller goes to the burial ground accompanied by the people in whose interest the worship is conducted. together with a crowd from the village.

The story-teller disguises himself by dressing as a woman. For he has no desire to be recognized later by any of the other deities as the one who did honor to the sakti. He takes earth and with the help of cotton to make it stick together without unnecessary delay. He hastily makes a rude image. Eggs are placed in the head for eyes. And shells for teeth. The image is dressed with a bodice and koka. And glass bangles are placed on the arms. After preparing the image, food is cooked and a heap of it placed before it. A black goat is brought and killed and its blood is caught and poured into the mouth of the image. This is an unusual proceeding, and shows the terrible nature of the sakti and its thirst for blood. The image is then worshipped with many prostrations. While the musicians keep up a turbulent drumming and dancing. But the people soon leave the piece. As the ceremonies are not pleasant. And the dangers are many. As the worshippers return homeward they sacrifice another goat about midway between the burial ground and the village. So that in case kati Ankamma is not satisfied she will stop for this blood and not follow them into the village. When they come to the house door still another goat is sacrificed. to be doubly secure.

The goat sacrificed in the burial ground is given to the story-teller; that sacrificed on the return journey is given to the washer man who has assisted in the ceremonies; and the owners of the house eat the one sacrificed at the door. On the next day. In order to make certain that the household gods have not been offended, they are again worshipped. The story-teller comes and makes a sacred muggu in five colours before the gods. Over this he spreads a sheet on which he makes offerings of limes, coconuts, and various

fruits. He singe some story while the musicians keep up a terrible din outside to drive away evil spirits, especially kati Ankamma. Another goat is sacrificed. and the worship comes to as close

Donga Sakti is the name of another of these terrible saktis. Donga means thief. And the fact that she is thought to come by stealth and kill the cattle for her own benefit. Probably accounts for her name. The worship is at night. For she is believed to be an enemy to gods and mens circumstances which also may account for her sobriquet. The worship of Donga sakti is a kind of last resort. After the usual worship of the village goddess, if Trouble or disease does not disappear, the villagers again consult the diviner. Then the possession of Donga Sakti will come upon her and she will say, 'You have worshipped your own gods, but are they the only ones that you should worship? You have thrown me away on the boundaries and left me out in the rain; and so now I am bringing these troubles upon you.' The people hearing these words are terrified. for Donga Sakti is a demoness not to be trifled with, and money is at once raised for the worship. The ceremonies take place in the night and are concluded before daylight. Women do not come near, as the danger from evil spirits is great. Among the men only the bravest are present. At the dead of night the potter makes an image in his house. A Brahman comes and performs the ceremonies to induce Donga Sakti to enter the image. A sheep is killed and the blood mixed with rice, which is offered as naivedyomu, the oblation presented to Hindu gods.

The idol is then taken in procession through the darkness with flaring and smoking torches. A booth is hastily improvised in the centre of the village, and the rest of the night is spent in offering, bloody sacrifices, accompanied by the beating of the drums, which does not cease for a moment, but at times lulls while the story-teller recites tales of the acts of the terrible demoness. After offering the sacrifices, food is cooked and placed before the image and another image upon which many offerings are placed is drawn in the dust. As morning approaches, the procession starts again, this time to the boundaries of the village. A pot is smeared with cow-dung, and on this the muggu is drawn. With powdered lime. Another sheep is killed and food is again cooked. Mixed with blood. And offered to the sakti. Since every particle of this food must be eaten. All sit down and partake of the bloody meal. When all has been eaten. They turn the face of Donga sakti away from their village and towards another village, and say 'Amima. Now we have done everything for you. Please go away and do not enter our village again. By this time it is nearly morning, and all slip back into the village by devious ways. Hoping that Donga sakti will not follow them and that they will be free from her for a time.

Nadividhi sakti is another of their group. Her name means 'the middle street.' The significance appears to be that she comes into the very centre of the village to commit her depredations. The method of making the image and inducing her to enter it shows some variations. A booth with two apartments is constructed in the middle of the village. The inner compartment is called the holy place and only the potter enters it. In the outer part stand the priests who are to perform the life-giving ceremony. While the potter is at work within making the image, the priests trace a rude drawing of the image in the dust outside. When the image is finished, it is brought out and placed near this drawing. The drums are beaten. At the loudest, and the men yell wildly to keep away interfering spirits. A goat is sacrificed and charms are performed and repeated until it is thought the sakti has surely consented to enter the image.

In the worship of this sakti, the household gods are propitiated as in the worship of kati Ankamma. After this the ceremonies are somewhat the "same as those in the worship of village goddesses. There is the buffalo sacrifice and a large number of sheep and goats are killed. Blood is sprinkled freely over the



sakti a rite which is not performed with a village goddess. It appears that Navididhs. Sakti is not quite so terrible as, some of the other saktis, and may possibly at some time become a village goddess

## Conclusion

This worship is found largely among uneducated people, and not only are they unable to give any connected account of their gods or the principles of their worship, but as soon as they see any systematic attempt being made to learn of these things they are filled with superstitious fears, and it is almost impossible to them to tell what they do know. The educated people of the land know little about these local gods, and affect to know less. Any questions are met with the reply that their worship belongs to out-castes and the lower orders of society, and that they know nothing about it. The Brahmans have a considerable interest in these gods, as will be seen later, and no doubt know far more than they are willing to admit. They are ashamed of their connexion with this worship and of their fears of the gods. Then too, since this worship is almost exclusively that of propitiation to avert some evil which a local god may be perpetrating or intending, the Brahmans do not wish to run the risk of incurring the displeasure of a god by careless remarks about it, or even of attracting its attention by allusions to it. They therefore pretend complete ignorance.

## Referances

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