CHAPTER IV

DAILY PŪJĀS AND ANNUAL FESTIVALS
DAILY PŪJĀS AND ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Introduction

In a Hindu temple the daily offer of worship to the various deities, at different times, in the day is of fundamental importance. It is conceived of on the belief that the idol inside the temple is the very incarnation of God. Devotion expressed through image worship is a sort of aesthetic approach to God. Although the whole universe is God's body, animated as it is by him, yet the idol is treated as his special manifestation and hence comes to be adored. For a devotee the icon, is a real and communicating presence of God.

The daily pūjās

The pūjā or worship performed in the temple is governed by the Āgamas. The word āgama in sanskrit means 'that which came' i.e. that which came from all knowing Śiva. Āgamas are the essence of vedas and pronouncements made to rishis by lords Śiva and Vishnu.

Saivāgamas are a set of sacred works connected with the Śiva sect, twenty eight in number, which are emanated from the five faces of Śiva. Each saivāgama is generally divided into four sections - īnana (wisdom) yōga (meditation) kriyā (rites) and cāryā (action). The first deals with philosophy, the second with yōgic practice, the third with architectural and
sculptural traditions and the last with rituals or worship performed in the temple. The āgama-worship is of two kinds ātmārtha or internal (worship by the self for his own benefit) and parārtha or external (worship in temples for the benefit of others). The parārtha or external form of worship includes rituals for creating of temple installation of deities, according to mantras (chanting of hymns). Modes of performance of worship are in three degrees - nitya (basic) nāmītikā (special) and kāmya (motivated). Further, performance of diksha (initiation), kumbabisekam (abulation of the sacred pots at the top of the temple towers for purification) mahotsavam (the supreme festival) prāyavaschita penance for any fault that occurred in acts of kriya or rites) have also been prescribed. The nithya puja (daily worship) or nithya karmanushtanam (ordinary worship done daily) are offered four to six times a day. They are fundamental service to preserve the sanctity of the temple. Such pujas in South Indian temples are carried out according to the principles of āgama which had codified the religious formalities.

In the Vilināthaswamy temple at Tiruvilimilalai pujas are performed in accordance with karunāgama and kāmiyāgama (both being the oldest). The puja in the Vilināthaswamy temple takes place five times a day, that are known as kalai sandhi (morning) uchikalam (noon) sāyaratchal (evening) upasandhi (time in between evening and night) and arthajānam (mid night) respectively. The kālaïsandhi or morning puja takes place around 7 a.m. during which the first honour is due to Sūrya (Sun God) and this is followed by sthavana puja by which punyāvachanam (purification) is performed with pānca cavyam
that consists of the milk, curd, ghee, urine and faeces of the cow. The morning worship is of six āsanās (stages) namely the mantrasana (chanting of hymns) abishēkāsana (holy bath), alankārāsana (decoration) mantra pushpāsana (offering flowers) and savanāsana (sleep) All the first five āsanās are ritually done each lasting for 15 to 20 minutes. The subsequent four pūjās are the repetitions of the morning pūjā, the uchikāla performed at 12 noon, sāyaratchai at 5 p.m. upasandhi at 7 p.m. and ardhañama at 10 p.m.

Abhishekam or holy bath

The abhishekam is performed early in the morning to Kalyānasundaramūrti and Amman, during (noon) uchikālam to Vilināthaswāmy (utsavamūrti), in the evening to Mūlanāthar Māppillaiswāmy, Natarāja and Amman and at (mid night) arthajāmam to Vilināthaswāmy only. There is no abhishekam at upasandhi pūjā performed around 7 p.m. The abhishekam is normally performed with milk, turmeric, honey, oil, tender coconut water. Special abhishekams are done on the request of individual devotees, when sandal paste, lemon, rosewater, banana fruit and jaggery are added, After the holy bath is over the images are dried with cloth, dressed and decorated with fresh garlands.

The sāyaratchai or evening abhishekam is performed between 5 p.m and 6 p.m which time is called pradōshakālām. The term pradōsham denotes the time at which Śiva safe guarded his devotees from asurās or demon. The pradōshakālām or auspicious time generally is 4.30 p.m to 7 p.m during which
time lamps are lighted by devotees with ghee, and flowers are offered along with food offerings such as rice with jaggery. Having a glimpse of the lord during this time is believed to ward off evil and sufferings in life.

The entire process of abishēkam at Vilināthaswāmy temple is done in a very simple manner in the present day.

Food Offerings

Offering a prasādam or amudhu (sacred food) and tirtham (holy water) to the deities on different occasions at specified hours and distributing the same to the devotees is an important item in the daily pūjā. The prasādam is offered to the deity in different form such as curd rice in kālaisandhi (morning) plain rice in uchikālam (noon time) and sāvaratchai (evening), tamarind rice during upsandhi (between evening and night) and peppered rice at arthajāman (midnight). At present the Tiruvāvaduthurai Adinam that manages the temple sanctions 4½ marakkal or 18 measures of rice, 2 litres of milk, ½ litre oil and ghee for daily Amudhu (food) and pūjāll (worship).

Dīpārādhanai (waving of lamps)

After neiveidhyam or food offerings to the deity, at all five times dīpārādhanai is performed. This is a long and systematized procedure in which varieties of lamps are waved. They are called adukku dīpam (tiered lamps) nakshatra dīpam (lamp in the form of a star), panchamuka dīpam (five faced lamp) nāga dīpam (lamp in the shapes of a cobra) vrushaba dīpam
(lamp with a figurine of a bull on it), purushamuga dipam (a single lamp) kumba dipam (lamp in the shape of a pot). The diparadhanai (waving of lamp) is a ritual performed after abishekam (holy bath) and naivedhyam (food offering) and appears to be the climax of the puja of the season. This is followed by various upacharas (services).

Upacharas (Services)

While Tantraloka lists 64 Upacharas or service done in a hindu temple, Siddha Yamaha mentions only 16 in vogue. They are asana (seating), swagatha (welcoming), padya (washing the feet with water), arighya (washing the hands with water), achamanam (washing the mouth), snana (bath) varanabhusham (dressing and decoration), vagnopavithram (sacred thread), grantham (sandal paste), pushpam (flower), dippa (incense) dipa (waving lamp) neivedhya (food offerings), thambula (betelnut, with camphor and spices), namaskaram (prostrating) pradakshina (circumbulating) visarjana (send off).

The special upacharas given now are waving an umbrella, fly wisk, or a fan and showing a mirror, which are all considered to be royal prerogatives.

Sandhi or special pujas

Sandhi or special pujas were instituted in the temple for evoking the blessings of the deity for general welfare of the person especially kings and officials. Such special offerings were made apart from the pujas. An inscription of Kajaraja I dated 997 AD states about the holy water (tirumanjana) for
abisheka being brought from the river Arisilāru three times a day for special pūjā. Another inscription of the same king dated 1007 AD of his 22nd regnal year speaks of Kālai sandhi and mālai sandhi (morning and evening special pūjās) respectively for which requirements for lamps, for reciters of hymns were provided. An epigraph of Vikrama chōlā (1123 AD) speaks of donation of land for holy food during uchi (noon) and iravu sandhi (night pūjā) to be offered to the deity. Yet another epigraph of Kulōttunga II (1140 AD) mentions that for lighting 20 special lamps (sandhi vilakku) during night, for which oil being donated by king every day. At present sandhi or special pūjās are not performed.

Endowments

Besides contributing to sandhi the kings offered cows, goats, kāsu (coin) and paddy for the purpose of lighting lamps in the house of God. These perpetual lamps were offered by Rājarāja I donating mukkuruni paddy, by Kulōttunga III by offering ulakku (400 gms) ghee by Vikrama chōlā by giving 16 kāsu. An Inscription of Rāja Rāja III states the donation of 3000 Kāsu which eventually fetched 15080 Kāsu, as capital and interest.

FESTIVALS

Introduction

Festivals are considered significant from the social and religious points of view. They contribute to group feeling, mass participation, in the society and create renewed sanctity
of the deities worshipped which normally is expected to promote prosperity to the worshipped in the religious sense. Three kinds of festivals are worth mentioning namely nīthya (routine annual festival), naimithika (occasional festival for participation during eclipse, earthquake etc), and kārya (festival to accomplish the cherished goal of the people and commemoration of birth day etc). The festivals are conducted usually only after daily pūjā. The time component of the festival varies, such as 1 day, 3 days, 5 days, 7 days, 9 days. For festivals of short duration flag hoisting is not normally seen, but for major festivals of longer duration essentially flag is hoisted. kāranāgama prescribes erection of flag staff as first ceremony connected with the festival. The flag is hoisted by the chief priest of the temple. For the flag hoisting and the concluding day, auspicious time and day are fixed in relevance to planetary movement. The temple flag usually bears the figure of Indra.

(Festivals of long duration have certain ceremonial observances. On the first day the flag is worshipped. On the second day the flag is hoisted. On the third day nine kinds of seeds (paddy, gingelly, millet, til, pepper, black gram, mustard, mudga, simba and kaulatha) are sprouted in separate earthen pots and offered to God, the significant feature is to protect the sprouts by invoking the spirits in eight directions during night.

During the subsequent days vāgas (fire sacrifices) are performed. The flag is lowered on the final day. The major and the most important festival in Vilināthaswāmy temple is
Brahmotsava called so, on account of Brahama being the chief of God. The minor festivals are such, arranged by wealthy influential devotees to celebrate their own birth anniversaries. Thus the festivals in Hindu temples can be classified into two categories, major festivals of long duration with more importance, and minor festivals of short duration with comparative less significance which create religious fervour among people.

General features of the festivals

1. In all festivals the deity is beautifully decorated with several costly jewels, mounted on various yāhanaś (vehicles) like bull, serpent, horse, elephant, lion, peacock etc. and taken in procession to the main street of Tiruvilimilalai.

2. The procession is taken in all paraphernalia like umbrellas and fly whisks. The deity halts at many places on its way to enable the devotees to offer fruits and coconuts to receive the blessings.

3. In front of the procession, proceed the persons bearing the sacred banners and festoons, then follow the trumpet and drum announcing the arrival of the Lord. Following the deity is the Bajanai ghōshti or the singing group of Tēvāram hymns.

Major festivals of the temple

There are three major festivals observed in the
Tiruvilimilalai (1) Brahmotsava, (2) Navaratri Utsava and (3) Adipuram festivals. A description is given here on various festivals of major importance.

Brahmotsava or Mahotsava is the most important major festival that is celebrated in the Tamil month of chittirai (April-May). The festival highlights the marriage of Kalyana Sundarar with Kāthiyayani. It attracts huge crowds from the villages around Tiruvilimilalai contributes to rural folk with a spectacular entertainment. Two days prior to commencement of Brahmotsava, a festival for Tirunāvukkarasar and Tirugñānasambandar is conducted called Padikkāsuv Teysavam which signifies the donation of kasu (coin) by the Lord to these two, to help people of the village get out of famine. This is followed by dwajārohanam or flag hoisting as a ritualistic observance of the commencement of the grand festival, ordained by the āgamas. On the same evening Vishnumūrti is taken in procession to the tīrtham (holy water-river Kāveri) accompanied by the Panchamūrti namely Somaskandar, Amman, Vināyakar, Subramanya and Candikeswarar in different Vāhanās assigned to each one of them. This procession signifies the prayer of Vishnu to Śiva who was stationed in Kailāśa with his consort Pārvathi accompanied by Sivaganās and Tirunandī. Vishnu was able to create a lotus pond according to the instigation of Śiva with the help of Kāveri who took a diversion in the name of Arisilāru near Tiruvalanjuli towards west and reached Tiruvilimilalai.

The second day festival starts with Tiumulaipāl Utsavam which is also performed in Sirkāli in the same grandeur.
Tirugnānasambandar stated to have acquired divine knowledge after being blessed with breast milk (Tirumulaipāl) of the Goddess Pārvatī when he was a three year old child. The image of Tirugnānasambandar is taken in procession in the prākāra to the mahāmandapā of Vīlīnāthaswāmy shrine where the Othuvar (temple hymn reciters) recite the hymns followed by karpuraartī (camphor lighted on a plate) taken to the Lord Śiva and Tirugnānasambandar. In the evening the image of Vishnu is taken in procession with thousand lotus flowers to the main shrine. Legend states, the worship of Śiva by Vishnu with thousand lotus flowers, who ultimately was blessed with Chakra (divine wheel), in the procession of Vishnu in the main street of the place, the Panchamūrtis in their vāhanās accompany, to grace the divine dance of Thyagaraja-swāmī.

On the third day of the festival the legend on Suvethakēthu a devotee of Śiva who was also destined to live only for sixteen years, worshipped Śiva at Tiruvilīlimalai, is enacted in the form of recitation of hymns.

On the fourth day in the same manner the Samhara of Yamā by Śiva on account of Suvethakēthu is enacted. On both days, Panchamūrti, Suvethakēthu and Bikshandār are taken in procession. The significance of the fifth day of the festival is the penance of Rathidevi for the life of her husband Manmathān in the Amman Shrine which is also a legend that runs thus.26 Once Lord Śiva facing south blessed four saints namely Sanka, Sanantha, Sanatha, Sanarkumāra with Čnanopadeśa (divine sermon) for a second which time was equivalent to several years in earth, procreation became stagnant and hence the
Dēvaś pleaded with Manmathā to distract Śiva which he reluctantly did and incurred the curse of Śiva. His wife Rathi was stated to have come to Tiruvēlimalai to worship, Amman and the Lord, which highlights the glory of the deities.

The sixth day is the most important of the Brahmōtsava. It is the marriage of Kalyāṇasundarar with Kāthyayani on Maha Nakashtra 27 (star: Maham) during Dhanur Lagna. 28 The deities are taken in procession in the morning within the prakāra and are then taken to the Tirukalyāṇa mandapā. 29 The rituals of marriage are elaborately performed in the night thereafter the deities are seated in the Kalyāṇa mandapā for a period of time, when the images of Vishnu, Tirugnānasambandar Chandikēsvarar, Kāthyayana rishi and his wife Sumangalai are all taken to the mandapā in procession. The legend says that Śiva was able to prove his identity by showing the eye of Vishnu surrendered at his feet in order to complete his floral worship and to beget the chakrā. A nivēthanam (offering) of fruit is offered to indicate Śiva’s blessings to Milalai Kurumbar (yet another legend) and the same is distributed to the devotees. The sixth day festival of marriage of the Lord comes to a finale by aarti in elaborate style to the main deities and others that signify their visit to the marriage and the ultimate blessing they were bestowed with. On the subsequent three days procession of deities in rathā which ought to have taken place, now not followed due to changing circumstances and financial constraints.

Inscriptional references throw light on the active participation of the kings in festivals through donation of
various kinds. An epigraph of Rājarāja I (1009 AD) explains the celebration of Brahmoṭsavā festival in the month of chittirai for seven days during which time a donation of 21 kalahs of rice (Three kalahs per day and 21 kahls for seven days) was given to the Sivayōginis (saints) who visited the temple.30

An inscription of Kulōttungā I dated 1091 AD found on the west wall of the inner prākāra illustrates grant of number of articles such as ghee, curd, vegetables, for neiyamudhu (ghee rice) thayiramudhu (curd rice) and adakkāyamudhu (vegetable rice) and oil for temple, new cloths for deities during chittirai festival.31 The epigraph reads thus:

"Thevarāha Kavaraikāyaka Thēvarukkum Ivar Namirattiyārkkum Thirupuvana Sundaravishnuvathanāgaramanaperumāl Thirumēnī Kalyānathirumēnīyāha"

The ten day festival exemplifies the supreme power of the Lord to bless Vishnu with Chakra, Suvēthakētu with long life and Rathi with marital bliss. It also denotes the joy of the devotees to worship Śiva in his Kalyānathirukōlam (in the form of marriage) significantly it is a great festival of Tiruvēlimilalai.

Another major festival Navarāthri (nine nights) is celebrated in the Tamil month of Purattāsi (September-October) with fun and frolic of exhibition of dolls which is popularly known in Tamil as kolu. The nine days from the day next to the new moon day in the month of purattasi is considered sacred to the Mother Goddess. In the evening of all nine days Amman
(Goddess) is placed in a mandapa in the third pākāra called Kolu mandapā in the temple, well decorated with festoon, Kōlam drawings on the floor and lamps, receive special pūjās and neiveidyam which are distributed to the devotees. According to Markandeya Purana Pārvati waged a war against Mahisāsurā a terrible demon whom even the holy triad of the Hindu Pantheon could not control. After warring with him for nine days Pārvati better known as Durga in this respect came out victorious and her victory was celebrated by the Dīvas (celestial Gods) on the tenth day called Vijayadasami. It is an allegory symbolising the victory of wisdom which is divine over ignorance its concomitant activity which is demonic. In the Amman shrine of Tiruvillimilalai Chandi hōmam (a special sacrifice) is performed during nine days and special pūjās are performed to Amman Durga and Saraswati.

The third major festival in honour of the Amman is Ādi Pūram celebrated for ten days in the month of Ādi (July-August) The Utsavabhera Amman of pancha lōka (five metals) (namely gold, silver, bronze, brass, copper) is given abisheka in Kāveri water and after special pūjā and karpūra ārtī, is taken to Tiruvādi Ulā (Procession in street) in different Vāhanās (vehicles) for all ten days. On the eighth day ādiperukku (fresh water flows in river Kāveri) festival is performed in which uchikālā (noon) pūjā is performed in grandeur for Amman, She is given holy bath with several pots of milk and holy water of Kāveri. This festival is indicative of the new water flow in the river that signifies the commencement of the season to sow seeds of various crops by cultivation, with the blessings of Goddess and holy river
Kāverī.

Of the three above mentioned festivals only Brahmoṭsava is performed at present with the prescribed norms for the full length of time, whereas the other two are performed symbolically with less grandeur on account of circumstantial and financial constraints.

Minor Festivals

Minor festivals for less than 7 days duration celebrated in the temple are discussed below:

Vaikāsi paurnāmi (full moon day in the tamil month of vaikāsi: May-June) is celebrated with special pūjās to the deities. Āni Tirumanjanam (Special holy bath in the month of āni: June-July) is performed on three days of Maham, Uthrādam and Tiruvādirai stars according to tamil calender. The festival of Ānimaham for saint Manickavasagar is also conducted during this month. Another minor festival is Pavitroṭsava (a festival relating to the sacred thread) celebrated in Āvaṇī (August-September) with an object to expiate the sin of omission and commission arising in the daily worship and other religious rites performed in the temple. It is a purificatory ceremony. The God is decorated with pavitramāla or purificatory garland made of silk threads. Another minor festival is Skandasashti for six days in aippasi (October-November) the seventh month of Tamil Calendar. The festival signifies the samhāra (massacre of Sūra who was a demon, by Lord Murugā (also called Kandan, Subramanya, legendary son of Lord Śiva & Pārvatī). The images of Subramanya, Valli and Deivānai (the two consorts of
Subramanya) are taken in procession on the sixth day of the festival signifying the marriage of Subramanya with Deivanai and Valli. At present the festival is celebrated only for a day i.e. on the sixth day after full moon in the month of aippasi, and the procession of deity is accompanied by rural cultural entertainment.

In the month of kārtikai (November-December) is celebrated Kārthikai Dīpam on the full moon day sacred to Śiva and observed with joy. The festival is based on a puranic story according to which once Brahmā and Vishnu quarrelled regarding their superiority in the cosmic scheme of things and came to Śiva for adjudication. Śiva took the form of boundless linga and told the contenders that who ever finds His (Śiva) head or feet (either end of the cosmic linga) shall be considered the supreme deity. Brahmā tried to find the head and Vishnu the feet of Śiva and both failed and soon realised that Śiva is the Supreme most Lord. As this event is supposed to have taken place on a full moon day in the month of kārtikai, every pournamī (full moon day) is observed with great devotion, besides, elaborate pūjās, abhishekams and procession. The day is especially note worthy for huge bon fire, (signifies the appearance of Lord Śiva in the form of fire when the moon is in the asterism kārtikai). The temple premises and private houses outside are all profusely illuminated with the traditional earthen lamps. This is observed to propitiate agni (fire) one of the pancha bhūtas (five elements namely earth, water, fire, sky and air). Apart from this festival every somavara (Monday) in the month of kārtikai has its significance for Muruga devotees. Special
pūjās and light decorations are done in the shrine of Subramanya and is taken Vidi ulā (street procession) Kartikai vridham or the vow is observed in the month especially by female devotees.

Tiruvādirai festival is conducted in the month of mṛgali (December-January) Tiruvādirai is the birth star of Śiva. Śiva in the form of Natarāja his five activities namely shrishti (creation) sthithi (preservation) samhāra (destruction) tirobhava (veiling) anugraha (release-salvation-grace). These separately considered are the activities of the deities Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Mahēswara and Sadāsiva respectively. Śiva’s dance in the golden dance hall (kanaka sabai) is the dance of bliss or ānandatāndava. Symbolically represented in Chidambaram (60 km from Tiruvilimailai). The removal of the veil is the removal of ignorance behind the veil is the real truṭh-sat-chit-ānanda representing Natarāja form itself. This representation of either space or void represents the rahasya of Chidambaram or the mystery, the Čhitsabha here is where Natarāja danced and gave a glorious vision to Patanjali Vyagrapāda and other sages collectively called as Sanat Kumarās and the glimpse is called Arudra Darsanam.

Every Śiva temple has an image of Natarāja and in the Vīlimāthaswamy temple there is a separate shrine for Natarāja in the inner prakara. The image of Lord Natarāja is taken in procession on the day of tiruvādirai star around the temple called as Tiruvādirai Tiruvulā. Tiruvembavai hymns are chanted throughout the month in the temple along with regular Dhanur Māsa (month of mṛgali) pūja. A partially distorted
inscription of Rājendra II dated 1054 A.D. on his 3rd regnal year found on the west wall of first prakāra mentions about donation and arrangements made for Tiruvādirai festival. The epigraph reads "Tiruvādirai talikāla. Tiruvilimilalai Uddyārakku vander intiriravadu mudal dēvadanam Irayilikkakka" That illustrates dēvadanā donation of land to the Viśnūthaswāmy temple for celebration of Tiruvādirai festival and incidentally tiruvādirai was the birth star of the King Rājendra II.

Makara Sankarāṇthi (denoting the birth of uttarāyana or the bright half of the year) is a festival of the tamils in the name Pongal. In the morning of the first day of the month of thāi (January - February) Pongal (rice cooked with milk and sugar candy) is offered to all the deities in the temple. A grand abhisēka is performed to all the Utsava bheras.

Śivarāthri is another minor festival but with religious significance. As the Krishnapaksha (dark fortnight of the waning moon cycle) comes to a close, the moon disappears, and the night is known as Śivarāthri (the night of Śiva) for that brief period when there is no moon people fast throughout the day to seek His protection. The prayers are answered on the following day when the crescent moon is seen and devotees feel the comforting presence of Śiva once again. Śiva is the metaphor for auspiciousness, has no birthday, no day associated with his beginning nor to his end, for He has neither. Every month before the most inauspicious time when there is no moon the night is commemorated as Śivarāthri and in the month of māsi (February-March) when the constellations
and the planets are in special configuration Maha Śivaraṭhri is celebrated. The festivities of Śivaraṭhri differ in various parts of India. In Karnataka people believe that it was on this dark night that Śiva appeared in the form of magnificent pillar of light to drive away the dark ignorance and blind egoism of Brahma and Vishnu. The Viswanatha temple at Kasi in Varaṇasi celebrates this linga and the manifestation of Śiva as the light of Supreme Wisdom.36

The Śiva purana’s description of the story of the linga of light ends with Śiva declaring that the event would always be commemorated as the night of Śiva. The puranas offer a collection of stories of the benefit gained by fasting and to Śiva on Maha Śivaraṭhri. In the Vīlīnāthaswāmy temple, the fervent saivites observe fast the entire day and keep awake the entire night, which they believe is a great penance fulfilling all desires and warding off all sins. Puja takes place continuously during the whole night called the yama puja. A yāmam is a duration of 3 hours and the night is divided into four yāmams (4 x 3 = 12 hours) from 6 p.m to 6 a.m the next day. On all the four yāmams, abhishekam, archanā and neiveidyam take place which keep the devotees awake. The details are stated in table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Type of Abishēka</th>
<th>Flower for Pūjā</th>
<th>Neivedyam (food offering)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Yāma 6p.m - 9p.m</td>
<td>With chanting 108 names of Śiva</td>
<td>With Vilvā (Beal) leaves</td>
<td>Cooked rice with green gram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Yāma 9p.m - 12p.m</td>
<td>With water held in 49 pots</td>
<td>Lotus flowers</td>
<td>Pāyāsam, rice or lentil pudding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Yāma 12p.m - 3a.m</td>
<td>With water in 25 pots</td>
<td>Jasmine or mullai flowers</td>
<td>Cooked rice (seasoned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Yāma 3a.m - 6a.m</td>
<td>With water in 16 pots</td>
<td>Nandyavata flowers (East Indian Rose bay)</td>
<td>Pure cooked rice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elders conduct discourses and seminars on the glories of Śiva to keep the devotees awake the entire night. At present due to lack of funds on the part of Ādinam, individual sponsors are requested to organise discourses.

The pūjā and festivals are conducted in the temple at Tiruvilimilalai by Ādinam of Tiruvāvadururai. The Ādinam has appointed a priest to perform the pūjā. The priest is a Sivāchaśryā a person set a part from time immemorial for the due performance of the parārtha pūjā. The Āgamās lay down that the Sivāchaśryā performing pūjā in the temple should have had all the dikshās sanava, visishṭa, nirvāna and achārya abhisēka. The position of Sivāchaśryā can not be claimed by
birth but only by the āgamic prescription of diksha, and proficiency in āgamic and śaivite śāstras.40

The ādīnam has its own funds and with the support of the local communities such as vellalas, vanniar, yadhava and padayāchi who are willing to help the temple pūjās and with the support of the government officials, is managing the conduct of pūjās and major and minor festivals of the temple in a simple manner.
REFERENCES


5. Ibid, p.194.


7. Scholar's interview with S. Viswanatha Sivachariar, Chief priest Mylap Kapaleeswarar Temple on 4.11.1994. The pūjā performed in Vilināthaswāmy is similar to Sri Kapaleeswarar temple at Mylapore, Madras.


9. S. Viswanatha Sivachariar, Mahapradēsa mahimai, (Tamil), p.3.

10. Ibid, p.3.


12. S. Swaminatha Sivacharyar, Op cit, p.54


14. ARE; 445 of 1908, TNSDA; 560 of 1977.

15. ARE; 423 of 1908, TNSDA; 535 of 1977.

16. ARE; 388 of 1908, TNSDA; 572 of 1977.

17. TNSDA; 527 of 1977.

18. ARE; 422 of 1908.

19. ARE; 386 of 1908, TNSDA; 517 of 1977.

20. ARE; 387 of 1908, TNSDA; 511 of 1977.

21. ARE; 389 of 1908, TNSDA; 593 of 1977.

22. Sambhava - one day festival.
Saiva - Festival of 3 days.
Brahma - Festival celebrated for 5 days.
Asha - Festival for 7 days.
Sakta - Extends to 9 days and more.


27. According to astronomical calendar there are 27 stars. They are Asvani, Barani, Kārthikai, Rōhini, Mīrgasīrda, Tiruvādirai, Punarpūsam, Pūsam, Ayīlyam, Maham, Pūram, Uthram, Hastham, Chittirai, Swāthi, Visākam, Anusham, Kēttai, Mūlam, Pūradam, Uthrādam, Tiruvōnam, Avittam, Sadayam, Purattādi, Uthirattādi, Rēvathi.

28. Lagna is calculated on solar movement - and the twelve lagnas with equivalent sun signs are as follows:

- Mēshā - Aries
- Rishaba - Taurus
- Mithunā - Gemini
- Kācēkā - Cancer
- Simhā - Leo
- Kanyā - Virgo
- Thula - Libra
- Vṛichikā - Scorpio
- Dhanur - Sagittarius
- Makarā - Capricorn
- Kumbā - Aquarius
- Meenā - Pisces

29. Karanagama says, that every aspect of Śiva should be brought out on procession every day. The aspects are Chandrasekara, Hariharā, Aradhanāri, Gangaḥarā, Kalyānasundara etc.

30. ARE; 422 of 1908, TNSDA; 536 of 1977.


32. See FN No. 27 for the list of stars according to Tamil astronomical calendar.


34. Ibid, p.70.

35. TNSDA; 520 of 1977.


39. Ibid