Chidambaram Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is located in the heart of the temple town of Chidambaram, in the Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu and is about 78 km South of Pondicherry and 235 km from Chennai. Chidambaram is one of the five holiest Shiva temples, each representing one of the five natural elements; Chidambaram represents \textit{akasha (ether)}\textsuperscript{1,2}. The temple complex, spread over 50 acres in the heart of the city, is an ancient and historic temple, where Nataraja and Govindaraja Perumal, the \textit{Shaivite} and \textit{Vaishnavite} deities, are enshrined in one place.

The temple has a lot of cultural as well as religious importance. In the temple, Lord Shiva is worshipped in the form of Nataraja in an \textit{Anandathandava} pose. The Sanctum Sanctorum houses the lord in three forms; the \textit{anthropomorphic} form as \textit{Nataraja}, called the \textit{Sakala Thirumeni}, the \textit{semi-anthropomorphic} form as the \textit{Crystal (spatika) linga} of \textit{Chandramaulishvara}, called the \textit{Sakala Nishkala Thirumeni} and the \textit{formless form} as the space in \textit{Chidambara Rahasya}, called the \textit{Nishkala Tthisumeni}\textsuperscript{3}. Apart from Puri Jagannathar temple, it is the only other place where the Moolavar is taken out as the Uthsavamurthi in procession.

There have been several renovations in its history, particularly during the days of Pallava and Chola emperors in ancient and pre-medieval periods. Literature mentions the tradition of Siva (Nataraja) worship is in existence as early as the \textit{Sangam} period. According to the mythology, the temple was first constructed by a king \textit{Simha Varman} who was cured out of his leprosy, after taking a bath in the sacred pond in the Thillai forest, his body being

\textsuperscript{2} The other four temples in this category are: Thiruvanaikaval Jambukeswara temple of Trichy (water), Kanchipuram Ekambareswara temple (earth), Thiruvannamalai Arunachaleswara (fire) and Kalahasti Nathar temple of Kalahasti (wind).
\textsuperscript{3} Thillai Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram, Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.
changed into a *golden* tinge and hence, later known as Hiranya Varman⁴. He covered the roof of Chit Sabha with gold plates and instituted the formal worship of Nataraja. The later Chola kings [Aditya I (871 – 907) and Parantaka I (907 - 955)] renewed the roof of Chit Sabha with gold plates. The *Nritya Sabha*⁵, as reported in inscriptions, has been renovated by Chola king Kulothunga I in the 11th century. Later, the Pandya kings and the Vijayanagar rulers also had granted many endowments to the temple. There is a stone image of Krishnadavaraya in the North Gopura. Each of the four most revered Saivite Saints (Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manikkavacakar) has worshipped at Chidambaram, and their images are also placed in the temple gopuras.

The structural and architectural features of the temple are much complicated. The temple complex is in rectangular shape and has *five* concentric courtyards or *prakaras*, four of which are accessible to the public, the fifth being only accessible to the priests as it lies within the walls of the main sanctum. The main sanctum, the *Chit Sabha*, is a rectangular wooden structure on a granite base, covered with a gilded *roof* that is shaped with an unusual slant. Within the wooden walls lies the first *prakara*, enclosing the actual sanctum which houses Siva Nataraja, the presiding deity of the temple, as well as several other divinities. In front of the Chit Sabha is the *Kanaka Sabha* (Golden Hall), which is also a rectangular structure with a granite base, slightly lower than the base of the Chit Sabha. It has a wooden roof covered by *copper* plates and not by gold as the name suggests and is supported by granite pillars. These two sabhas are at the centre of the central courtyard which is enclosed by the *second prakara*. A shrine to Govindaraja, the reclining form of Vishnu on the *Aadhisesha* and a shrine to Brahma and Chandikeshvara are seen in this

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⁵ Paramasivanandham. A.M, (Wikipedia the free Encyclopedia).
second prakara. This temple is the only place where the deities of the Hindu Trinities, Siva, Vishnu and Brahma, (who was almost never worshipped) are worshiped in one complex. From this courtyard, two entrances, one on the East and the other on the South side, lead to the third prakara. The East entrance to the sanctum has 21 steps and is guarded by two sphinxes, with the body of a lion and the face of a human. The third sabha, the \textit{Nritya Sabha} (the Dance Hall) in the form of a chariot, the \textit{Deva Sabha} (the hall of Uthsavamurthis), a \textit{Kalyana Mandapa} (the Marriage Hall), a \textit{Moolasthana}

1. Chit Sabha
2. Kanaka Sabha
3. Shrine of Brahma and Chandikeshvara
4. Shrine of Govindharaja
5. Second Prakara
6. Entrance to the sanctum sanctorum
7. Deva Sabha
8. Shrine of Moolasthana Linga
9. Gallery of 63 Nayanmars
10. Kalyana Mandapa
11. Dvajasthamba
12. Nrithya Sabha
13. Entrance guarded by Sphinx
14. Yagasala
15. Raja Sabha (1000 Pillared Mandapa)
16. Sivaganga Tank
17. Temple of Nine Lingas
18. Temple of Murugan
19. Temple of Sivagamasundhari
20. Hundred pillared Hall
21. Third Prakara
22. Ganesha Temple
23. Nandhi
24. Fourth Parakara
25. Fifth Prakara
26. Temple Gopuras
27. East Entrance to the

(shrine to Mahalakshmi and a gallery for 63 Nayanmars are located in this third courtyard. Two gateways, one in the east and one in the west, lead on to the fourth prakara. In this courtyard, in the north-west corner is the Raja Sabha or 1000 pillared Mandapa. In the north-south corner is the temple for Murugan (the Pandiya Naicken Temple). Next to the Murugan temple is the Goddess Sivagamasundhari Temple and the Hundred Pillared Mandapa.

(fig. 2: Chidhambaram Temple – Aerial View)

Between the Amman temple and the Raja Sabha is the Holy Tank, Sivaganga Thirtha. Behind the tank is a temple of nine Lingas. In the south-west corner is a small Ganesha Temple. In front of the Raja Sabha on the west of the Kalyana Mandapa is the Yagasala where Vedic fire rituals are performed. A Nandhi Mandapa is seen as one enters the South gopuram. From the fourth prakara, four gopuras or temple gateways lead to the fifth prakara. The wall has a fifth passage next to the East gopuram, which is used for the festival processions.

The chidhambaram temple is also famous for its iconographical features. In the Chit Sabha, the main shrine is the place where Lord Siva with his consort Parvathi is enshrined and performs the Ananda Thandava. The crystal Linga called Chandramaulishvara is placed at the feet of Nataraja. Immediately to the right of Nataraja is the Chidhambara Rahasya or the Akasa Linga, in the form of a Chakra, behind a silk curtain which is black on the and red on the inside. Between the curtain and the chakra hang a few strands of golden Vilva leaves.

(Fig. 3: Chit Sabha & Kanaka Sabha)  (Fig. 4: Raja Sabha)
Chit Sabha houses one more unique idol, the *Rathna Sabhapathi*, a replica of Nataraj in Ruby form. In the *Ardhamandapa*, a hall in front of the sanctum of the Chit Sabha, are seen two images of *Vyagrapather* and *Pathanajali*, standing with their hands folded in Anjali mudra. In the Kanaka Sabha, most of the daily rituals of worship for Nataraja are performed. The crystal linga is taken out from the Chit Sabha and abhisheaka and pooja are performed here six times a day. The *Nrithya sabha* is constructed in the form of a *Chariot* pulled by two stone horses. In this sabha, the dance *contest* between Siva and *Kali* took place. The dance scene of Siva, performing the *Urdhva Thandava* with his leg lifted above his head, Kali calmed down in one corner, Vishnu playing the *thalam*, is depicted. The pillars are square shaped and are carved with miniature reliefs of *dancers, musicians* and other kinds of mythological figures. In the *Deva Sabha*, built in the third prakara, the festival deities (*Uthsavamurthies*) are kept and daily poojas are performed, which is not open to the public. The Murugan temple is also shaped in the form as a *chariot*, pulled by horses and elephants. In the western wall of the Goddess Sivagamasundhari temple, is seen a relief sculpture of *Kalpa Vriksha*.

The *base* of the four temple gateways or Gopurams, located in the second wall of the temple, is built with granite stones upon which the upper body is built with *bricks* and *stucco* works. On the outside of the granite bases, sculptures of many important as well as minor deities, all in *niches*, are found in a regular order. The inside walls of passages of the gopurams are
decorated with 108 dance movements (Karanas)\textsuperscript{6}, all as described in the Natya Shasthra of Bharatha. The images of the four Saivite saints, Manickavasakar (East gopuarm), Gnanasambanthar (South Gopuram), Sundharar (West Gopuram) and Thirunavukkarasar (North Gopuram), are carved in the walls of the respective gopuram through which they entered the temple. Even though there are four gateways, the procession carrying the uthsavamurthies do not pass through the main, gates but use a separate exit beside the East Gateway called Thitti Vaasal.

The Chidhambaram Nataraja Car\textsuperscript{7} comes under Nagara-dravida\textsuperscript{8} style, having a square base with an octagonal superstructure. It is designed with 6 wheels which come under the Visalakka or Visala type. Basically, the base of the car structure, a square shaped one, rest on two axles (Achuchukattai) which in turn rests on four wheels, guarded with four nails (Kadaiyanis).


\textsuperscript{7} Sketch of Chidhamabaram Nataraja Car by K. Arul, B.F.A., Sthapathi, Theragam Kalaikudam, Mahabalipuram.

\textsuperscript{8} Manasara gives different names to the chariots, based on shapes: they are Naagara (square - shaped), Pattasra (rectangular), Aandhra (hexagonal), Dravida (octagonal), Vesara (circular) and Kalinga (oval).
At the lowermost aadhara part of the car are the Wheels. The kumaratantra describes eight types of temple cars, based on number of wheels; Vijaya: (three wheels), Kantha:(four wheels) Srikara: (five wheels), Visalakka or Visala (six wheels) Nibadhra seven wheel) Srivisala: (eight wheels) Bhadra: (nine wheels) and Badravisalakka: (ten wheels). The Nataraja car has six wheels outer four are made up of solid iron and inner two wheels, are made up of wood. The diameter of the outer wheels is six feet and the width of the rim is nine inches. The wheels are attached to the axles at the nabhi or kudam or nave point. The inner wheels are attached to the inner cross bars and are used to protect the temple cars to maintain balance. (Fig. 6: Nataraja Car Sketch)

The Car comprises of several parts. The Axle (Achuchukattai) which is the connecting beam of the main wheels, is made up of solid iron. Its length is approximately 12 feet. It is usually equal to the height of the plinth or three fourth of it. The width of the achuchukattai is ten inches. The axle band protrudes (Fig. 7: Adivilangu)
through the holes (chhidra) of the wheels. The **axle band (Irusukattai)** is the inner and outer projecting part of the axle. It is called the Irusu, danta or sikha which passes through the holes (chhidra) of the wheels. It is used for fixing the wheels and the wheels are protected by linchpins (axle bolts) or nails (kadaiyanis). The linchpins are circular in shape and are inserted into the axle band about 1.5 inches away from the outer wheels. The **Adivilangu** is an iron rod fixed, from lower part of the achuchukattai to top of the plinth, i.e., upto the level of Narasana to protect the car, at the time of movement of the plinth, i.e., upto the level of Narasana to protect the car, at the time of movement of the car.

The **Boothappar** is a grid like member rests on the axle directly. They are wooden **crossbars** or cross beams arranged **lengthwise**. The cut ends of the front and backside of the boothappar logs are ornamented (Fig. 10: Vigrahappar – One cut Square shape) with motifs (**boothaganas**) in standing postures. It is this part which carries the load of the car. On the Boothappar rests the **Achuchuppar I**. It is formed by arranging lots of logs in criss-cross manner. It is octagonal in shape. On the outer surface, it is covered by various mouldings, namely Upana, Padma, Kampa,
Kanta, Kapotaka and Vajana. Above the Achchuppar I, is fixed the Vigrahappar. It is one-cut-square shaped. On all sides, the panels are decorated with iconographic forms of divine beings in seated, standing or dancing poses. These are interwoven with niches, horses and yalis at the corners. Above the Vigrahappar is the Achuchuppar II, cut out of wood. This wooden member comes above vigrahappar. It has four steps in vertical segments. It is octagonal in shape and projects one foot from the vigrahappar horizontally on all sides. This leaves two platforms or porticos, one in the front and the other in the back of the car. The poomunai and mathalai motifs are placed on all sides, typical of the plantain flowers and are located above the wheels. The poomunais hang from the mathalai.

The Aswabandhanappar, which is in one cut octagonal in shape, is placed above the second achchuppar to which are attached elephant headed yalis in squatting positions at all corners. Achuchuppara III comprises of several layers of wooden slabs, bearing the load of the beams of top members. Architecturally, this member has Uthara, Kampa, Valabhi and Mathalai on top. Below the mathalai are the kattai poomunais fit at each cardinal point. Poomunaippar II is another group of plantain like poomunais, hang from the third achchuppar. The Adhistana comes above the third achuchuppar and it is also in octagonal
shape. Achuchuppar IV which is octagonal in shape, comes as the top level anga of the car. The achuchuppar are fixed lengthwise in the car and the pothigaippar is fixed and breath wise. These beams are fixed with wooden or iron nails. To their part are fixed another set of poomunais. The Narasana is a plain octagonal platform above the fourth achchuppar where the priests and important persons sit at the time of car procession. The peeta, comprising the Devasana and Simhasana stands in the middle of the Narasana, surrounded by pillars. Devasana is an octagonal stage decorated with Upana, Kampa, Kantar, Kapotaka and vajra. This is a primary base for Uthsavabhera Simhasana is fixed above the devasana. Simhasana is raised by several blocks of wood. In Chidhambaram Nataraja car, the Uthsavamurthy is not placed straight on the simhasana. Instead, a swing board is hung from the roof of the first kodungai, upon which the Nataraja statue is fixed during the festival. The corners of the swing board are fixed with ropes to the pillars. The swing is rectangular in shape. Encircling the simhasana are erected a colonnade of pillars which stand at the edges of the platform above the narasana. About 40 pillars are erected from the narasana, 24 pillars are erected from the deavasana and 4 pillars from the simhasana. Altogether,
there are 68 pillars in the car. These pillars are removable and are detached after the festival was over. Above all is the Vimana or dome of the car which again is octagonal in shape and is formed by Kodungai, Greeva, Sikhara, Stupi and a flag. The kodungais are five in number and are formed by interwoven blocks of wooden logs and bamboo sticks, tightened with ropes. The greeva (kanta or neck) is fit with octagonal vedipeedam. The shikara is fixed above the greeva of the vimana and is also called as cupola, apex and spire. This is circular in shape and looks like an inverted cup.

(Fig. 15 : Covered Vimana)

This is designed in Dravida style of architecture. The vimana is covered entirely with multicolored cloth (thiarai seelai) decorated with floral designs, having a painting of Lord Nataraja on the front side. The Stupi or kalasa which is the finial member of the vimana, is spherical in shape and is made of bronze. Above the kalasa, a flag is hoisted with an ensignia of a nandhi.

**ICONOGRAPHICAL FEATURES OF NATARAJA CAR:**

The friezes in Chidhambaram Nataraja car is depicted mainly in Adhisthana, Aswabandhana and Vigrahappar. The covering moulds of achhcuppars also have some miniature reliefs. The main panels of the uthsavabhera, ie, Simhasana on its sides, carry no reliefs while the Devasana contains reliefs of female figures with their hands in anjali mudra, on its outer surface. The iconography projected in clockwise direction depicts various manifestations of Lord Siva, either single or with his spouse Parvathi. Occasionally, images of other deities like Vishnu, Brahma and other minor deities, and images of warriors, rishis
and humans are depicted. Since the car is made of wood, from bottom to top, the images carved are also wooden. They are mostly cut out of solid blocks of wood and fixed to the tiers with the nails and screws. The height of the images ranges from 8 inches to 3 feet. The images are all affixed in an uniform pattern and are arranged in an orderly manner, on all sides. Many of the reliefs are repeated more than once and some are vague in nature and the basic concepts of some of their depictions are unknown. As some of the reliefs are broken and a few others missing, the existing complete images are examined. The Vigrahappar, Aswabandhana and Adhisthana are the three important tiers filled with important friezes. The brackets and corners contain yalis, rearing horses, rearing lions and standing elephants as is usually found in the temple cars.

Chidhambaram temple car has of the sthalapurana, depicted on it. The Boothappar, which is the lower most part of the plinth, has images are bhootahganas, kneeling postures, attached to the cut end of the cross bars, on the front and back sides. They are five in number. The Achchuppar one, two
and three separate the vigrahappar, aswabandhanappar and adhisthana. The outer surfaces are covered with moulds and *miniature* reliefs, of dancing girls guarded by yalis, and rishis in various poses, and animals like lions, monkeys, at regular intervals.

The achchuppars form the pedestal or seat for the reliefs found on the main thalas. At the corners or at the edges, are found the kneeling yalis with their hands folded on their chests, elephant riders and horse riders. The Yali\(^9\) has a catlike graceful body, the head of a lion, with tusks of an elephant (*gaja*) and the tail of a serpent. They have been shown in kneeling posture and has two spanned wings. The *Vigrahappar*, which is the first thala in the car is in *Triratha* type (one cut square) with a cut in the corners and *(Fig. 19: Vigrahappar Sketch)* *(Fig. 20: Front middle panels in Vigrahappar)*

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\(^9\) Rao Gopinatha, T.A: *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, (1914, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi) pp550 – 555. Yali also known as *Leogryph* in English (*Vyala*) is a *mythical* creature seen in many Hindu temples, often sculpted onto the pillars, and in the chariots. They usually have the stylized body of a *lion* and the head of some other beast, most often an elephant (*gaja-vyala*) Other common examples are: the lion-headed (*simha-vyala*), horse (*aswa-vyala*), human-(*nir-vyala*) and the dog-headed (*shvana-vyala*) one.
has twenty sides and twenty corners. On all sides, the middle panel (No. 2 in the figure has three reliefs each. The front and back side panels (No. 1 and 3) have three reliefs and the corresponding right and left panels (No. 1 and 3) are slightly longer and have six reliefs. The small panels adjacent to 2, (Figs. 21: Pathanjali and Vyagrabather and 22: Adhimurthi) have two reliefs on all sides. The middle part of the front has three reliefs, panel images of Ganapathi, Nataraja and Murugan guarded by two Dwarapalagas, one on each side. To the left of the panel in the niches are seen two images, one depicting Pathanjali and Vyagrabather worshipping Thirumulathaneshwarar and the other one is of Lord Siva as Adhimurthy seated on a coiled, five headed Adhisesh. There are also images of two nude rishis and of Gangadharamurthy, a manifestation of Siva in an erotic scene. He stands nude with his consort Parvathi, besides him, touching his genitals. (Fig. 23: Ganapathi)

To the right side of the panel, there is another erotic figure and a scene of Gopivastrdbhaharan. Ganapathi, as Vigneshwara is seated on a mooshika, the mouse vehicle which is rather large in size. Both legs of Ganapathi are bent and kept apart. He has four hands; the left front hand holds a mango, the back left hand holds a valaya (ring), the back right hand holds a pasa and the other one holds an ankusa. His abdomen is tied with a serpent. (Fig. 24: Murugan)
The proboscis hangs down, as if tasting a Mango. The name *Vigneshwara* indicates that the deity is presiding over obstacles on the way and removes them. Lord Murugan or Skandha is the god of war and victory, worshipped in Tamil areas of South India. In Karnataka, he is known as Karthikkeya and Subramaniya. *Murugan*, the second son of Lord Siva and Shakti, is seated on his vahana, the pea-cock (*siki vahana*) in *Sukhasana* pose. There is a hooded serpent under the pea-cock. Both Valli and Devasena, his two consorts are shown standing with him. His front two hands are in *abhaya* and *varada* pose. His two back hands hold *ankusa* and *vajra* respectively. Both his consorts have two hands only, one of their right hands hold *lotuses* and the left ones are resting on their thighs. The devis are standing in a *samabhanghi* poses.

Lord Siva, as *Thirumullathaneshavar* is seen along with *Patanjali* and *Vyagrapaadar* standing on either side of him. *Aadhi Sesha*, (the serpent couch of Vishnu), had heard from Vishnu about the grandeur of Shiva's cosmic dance. Filled with irrepressible desire to witness this dance in person at Chidambaram, Seshan descended to the earth as *Pathanjali* (the one who descended). *Vyagrapaadar*, another devotee of Shiva, who prayed to obtain the tiger's claws so that he could obtain with ease the sacred *Vilva* leaves meant for Shiva's worship at Chidambaram, also wanted to witness the dance. At the appointed hour, Shiva (with *Sivakami*) granted to Patanjali and Vyagrapaadar, a visual treat in the form of his Cosmic Dance of Bliss (*the Ananthahandava*). Patanjali is found as half-man and half-snake. Both were adorned with *kritamakuta*. Both are standing in *Anjali* pose. A five hooded snake is shown towering over the Linga.

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On the second set of panel or left lateral side, in the centre, are three *boothaganas* in different poses each sitting on a throne and stamping one of their legs on the head of a lion. *Boothaganas*\(^{11}\) are a universal theme in the temple cars. The central parts of panels on the second and fourth side of the first tier. are reserved for them. Present in groups, the boothaganas are short, stout, multi-armed standing on a lion, blowing horns, lifting their two hands above as if supporting the base of the car. They carry musical instruments) like horns, pipes, *conches*, *parais* (*drums*) and *matthalams* (*Mrithangams*). They also hold some weapons like clubs, draggers, and *swords*. To the left side panel) (...Fig. 27: Dancing and music playing girls in

left of this panel, is a long panel with 6 images, each containing two girls in different poses like drum beating, dancing and singing. To the right side of the panel, there is a long panel comprising of six images, the extreme left is of Lord Palani Murugan (*Dhandayudhapani*) with a spear in his hand. *(Fig. 28: Pazhani Murugan and other images in right side)*

On the third side or back side of the car are found three images, one from the left is of *Venugopala*, the second icon is of *Vrishabamurthy* with his consort sitting on a *Nandhi* *(Fig.29: Images in back side panel)* and the third one is of *Srirama* with a bow in his left hand standing along with *Sita* on his right side and *Lakshmana* on his left side, bordered by yalis and guarded by *dwarapalakas* on both sides. *Venugopala* is portrayed as playing music with a flute. He is standing in *athibhanga* pose with his left leg firmly placed on earth and his right leg crossing over the left leg is touching the earth with his toe. He has two hands holding *(Fig. 30: Venugopala)*
the venu (flute) against his lips. There are trees around him and a calf stands near him with its tongue on his toe. The sculptural representation of Lord Shiva is the favourite mode of which he is seated on his vehicle, Vrishaba. One day among the ten days, festival in any Shiva temple in South India, the image of Shiva, seated on Vrishaba is carried round the streets in procession. In the relief of Lord Vrishabavahanamurthy. Lord Siva with Parvathi on his left side were seen, seated upon a flat board placed on the bull Vrishaba. Their legs are folded and kept above the board. Siva has four hands, his front hands showing abhaya and varadha mudras, while his back right hand carries parasu and his back left hand carries mriga (Antilope). Devi has two hands, the right one carries an utpala flower and her left hand is resting on her half-raised left leg. Both were adorned with jata-makutas on their heads and various ornaments on the person.

On the fourth side or right lateral side, there are another set of three Boothaganas, in the centre in different poses, each sitting on a throne and keeping one of their leg on the head of the simha. To the left of this panel, is a long panel having six images of erotism, each having a couple engaged in sexual acts. On the right side is another long panel comprise six other images.
The *Aswabandahana* panel is the second *thala* (tier) of the Nataraja car. It is *octagonal* in shape with a cut at the corners. There are *eight* panels in *Aswabandahana*, each comprising *five* images, bordered by yalis, all fixed in an orderly fashion. Next to the yalis, in the niches at the corners, are two small panels, each containing two images. The images are depicted in the *clockwise* direction. The front or first panel has five images. The first one is of *Lord Nataraja* with a spear killing the demon *muyalaka* (*Apasmara*), the second is *Vinayaka* sitting on his *mooshika* vahana, the third one is of *Lord Nataraja* in *Sivathandava* witnessed by *Sivakamasundhari*, the fourth is of *Vrishabamoorthy* standing in front of his *nandhi* and the fifth one is again of *Lord Nataraja* in *Virasana* pose with his consort *Sivagamasundari*.

To the left of this panel are two more images; one is of a rishi standing on his left leg, the right leg being bent and kept on his left knee and another is a couple of human beings, probably a royal couple. To the right of this panel, is seen *Uchistaganapathi* seated with his consort *Vigneshwari*.

*Uchistaganapathi*¹² is an *erotic* theme. In this form Ganapathi is seated on *padmasana*, his devi *Vigneswari* is

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seated on his left thigh. Ganapathi has four arms, the front right hand is in abhaya pose, his back right hand holds ankusa, the back left hand holds pasa and his front left hand holds Devi, touching her yoni. Vigneswari holds lotus in her left hand and her right hand rests on part. Both Ganapathi and his devi are nude. Beneath them is a mooshika. seen.

In the second panel, set in a clockwise fashion depict Veeranarasimha with his eight hands carrying various weapons, fighting with the demon Hiranya, the second depicts third one is of Gangadharamurti. The fourth is depicting Gajasamharamurti and the fifth depicts Jnana Dhakshinamurthy. To the right of the panel are seen two aged sages in standing postures and a boothagana with a spear in a standing posture.

Jnanadakshinamurthy\textsuperscript{13} is Lord Shiva as the universal teacher (Adhiguru). He is worshipped as God of Wisdom. In every Shiva temple, the stone image of Dhakshinamoorthi is installed facing South. He seated is seated under a banyan tree, on a rocky seat. He is wearing a jatamakuta and haras in the chest. His upper right hand holds an angusa and his lower right hand is in Jnanamudra. His lower left hand is in bhu-sparisamudra, that is, touching the earth while his right leg hangs loosely from the seat and the left leg is bent and kept on the seat.

The Third panel depicts five images. The first one has *Vrishabamurthy* on his nandhi vahana, the second is of *Somaskandamurthy* with Murugan and Uma, the third is Lord *Vishnu* with shanka and chakra along with his consort *Lakshmi*, both standing in *dvibhanga* pose, the fourth is of *Brahma* seated on his *hamsa* vahana in *virasana* pose, and the fifth is of *Nataraja* seated on a rock and crushing the demon *Muyalaka* with his bent left leg. To the left of the panel, is seen *Pathanjali* and to the right is seen *Narasimha* killing the demon, *Hiranyakasipu* on his lap.

The fourth panel depicts another five images. The first one is of *Kalasamharamurthy*,

(Fig. 37: Fourth panels in *Aswabandhana*)

a manifestation of Siva, protecting *Markandeya*, the second depicts *Manmatha* with his *sugarcane* bow and arrow aiming his some women, the third one is of *Bikshathana Siva*, the fourth one is
Kalyanasundaramurthy with Lord Vishnu officiating at the wedding and the fifth one is of Siva in Thandava pose. To the left and right of this panel are figures of two rishis in penance. The Kalasamharamurthy represents the rescue of Markandeya from the God of death Yamah (Kala) by Lord Siva. The image beautifully narrates the story behind this. Lord Siva is seen as if emerging from the Linga. His left leg is seen over the linga while his right leg is shown in the act of kicking Kala on his right thigh. His front right and left hands hold the trisula, with its head bent downwards and piercing the chest of Kala. While his back right hand is holding, the ankusa, his back left hand holds sushi mudra. Lord Siva has three eyes and he is wearing a jata-makuta decorated with tusks and a crescent moon. Lord Yamah is seated on his buffalo vahana. While his right hand carries a pasa which is thrown around Markandeya. He is wearing a karanta-makuta and tusks. Below is seen Markandeya, Siva’s ardent devotee, embracing the Sivalinga. On the top, a sivagana in kneeling posture, is seen holding a water jug (amphora with two handles) upside down as if he is sprinkling water over the lord.

Siva as Bhikshatana or Pitchandi is depicted as a mendicant. He is nude but is heavily ornamented. He has worn two snakes as an udharabandhana around his belly and as nagabandhana around his waist. He wears a sandal in his feet. He has four hands. His right upper hand holds a stick made of a bone while his lower hand, holds a bunch of grass, is hanging down in kataka mudra, kept near the mouth of an antelope, who is trying to mouth the grass. His left upper hand holds the trident which is kept horizontally on his left shoulder. His left lower hand, holds a... (Fig. 39: Bhikshatana)

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15 Sivaramamoorthi. C., Nataraja in art, thought and Literature, p104.
small _kapaala_ bowl, is hanging down. To his left side is standing the bhoothagana, holding the bowl on his head.

Siva as _Kalyanasundharamurthy_\textsuperscript{16}, in a marriage scene with parvathi, is standing in a _samabhanga_. He has four hands; the back hand holds the _antelope_ and the _chisel_. The front right hand takes the right hand of Parvathi, while his left is in _varadha_ mudhra. Shiva is wearing _jatamukuta_. Parvathi has two hands, her left hand is in _katakahastha_ and holds a _lilly_. \textbf{(Fig.40: Kalyanasundharamurthy)} She wears a _karandamakutha_. Vishnu is standing in between Shiva and Parvathi, officiating _panigrahana_ with his right hand while the left is held in _katyayalambita_ pose. All are adorned with _skandhamalas_.

Siva is a great master in art of dancing. He danced in 108 modes. All these 108 kinds of dances are sculptured on either side of the Gopuras in the Chidhambaram Nataraja temple. Lord _Nataraja_, in a _Shivathandava_\textsuperscript{17} posture, has given the Shivathandava performance after subduing the rishis of _Dharuka_ forest. He has four hands of which his front right hand is in _abhaya mudra_ and his back right hand holds the _damaru_. Of the two left hands, one is in \textbf{(Fig. 41: Shivathandavam)} _gajahastha_ (suspended like an elephant’s _rohosci_) and the other holds the _agni_. His left leg is lifted graciously in

\textsuperscript{17} Maniyan R., Shiva Worship – Its Origin and Significance (1981, Vivekanantha Kendra Prakasana, Madras), p57.
kunchitha pose. The right leg is bent slightly and tramples the hooded snake, held by a demon called apasmara. The lord is adorned with all kinds of ornaments. Sivagamasundhari, the spectator stands to the right, holds a lotus in her right hand and her left hand rests on her thigh. Another spectator is also seen.

The fifth panel depicts another *five* images. The first one is of Lord Vishnu in *abhanga* pose, the (Fig. 42: Fifth panels of Aswabandhana) second one is of Sarabhamurthy trampling down Narasimha, the third one is of Gajasamharamurthy, seen inside the prabhamandala, made of elephant’s skin, the fourth is of two warriors doing some menial work and the fifth is of Thripuranathaka in Virasana pose in a fighting scene.

Shiva as Sarabhamurthy, takes this form to control and cool down after he had done Hiranyavadha. He is wearing a jatabhara. He wears kundalas, haras and a nagabandhana in his waist. He is eight handed. His two back hands hold a parasu and a khetaka (left hand). His front hands show abhaya and varadha mudras. Two of his right hands are broken. One of his left hand holds a fruit, while the other one is broken. His left leg stands firmly on the ground, while his right leg is raised high and is stamping down Narasimha. A rishi with his

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both hands raised above his head is seen on the left side.  

(Fig. 43: Sarabhamoorthi)

The sixth panel comprising five images are; The first one is of Siva as 
*Ardhanareeswara*, the second one is of *Chandesanugrahamurthy*, the third one is of another 
*Bhikshathana*, holding a trident by his two upper arms over his shoulder and a skeleton held 
by his right lower hand. The fourth and fifth images are not clear and unidentifiable. 
To the right of the panel is a devotee of *Muruga*, shouldering a *kavadi*. 

(Fig. 44: Sixth panels of Aswabandhana)
The name *Ardhanarishvara*\textsuperscript{19} means the Lord who is a half woman. Tamil temple lore narrates that once the gods and sages (*rishi*) had gathered at Shiva's abode, they prayed their respects to Shiva and Parvati. However, the sage Bhringi had vowed to worship only one deity, Shiva, and ignored Parvati. Agitated, Parvati cursed Bhringi to lose all his flesh and blood, reducing him to a skeleton. In this form Bhringi could not stand erect. On seeing this, Shiva granted her the boon of uniting with him, thereby compelling Bhringi to worship her as well as himself in the form of Ardhanarishvara. His is *male* Siva and the *left female half* is *Parvathi*. The image is in standing posture in tribhanga. It has four hands, two for Siva and two for Parvathi. The male half Siva wears a jatamakuta on his head, adorned with a crescent moon. The right ear wears naga-kundala (serpent earring). The eye is smaller than the Parvathi’s eye. There is a third eye in the forehead. He has two hands, the upper hand holds a damaru and the lower hand holds a snake. He has a flat masculine chest, broad shoulder, a wider waist and a muscular thigh. He wears a *yagnopavitha* (sacred thread) across his chest. His loin is covered with a garment, a dhoti, down to the knee, and held in place by a *sarpa-mekhala*, (serpent girdle). His right leg stands firmly on a peeta. The female part, Parvathi, has *karanda-mukuta* on her head. The left ear wears a *valia-kundala* (a type of earring). A *tilaka* or *bindi* adorns her forehead, matching (Fig. 45: *Ardhanarishvara*) Shiva’s third eye. In her two arms, the lower left hand hangs down and her upper hand holds a parrot. Her hands are adorned with ornament like *kheyuras* (armlets) and *kankanas* (bangles). She has a well-developed, round bosom and her neck is embellished with various *haras*. She has a narrow waist and wears a garment down to her ankle and three waistbands around her waist.

When a dispute arrived between Lord Siva and Brahma about who is the supreme power, Siva in his anger, ordered Bairava to cut Brahma’s head. Brahma lost his fifth head (originally, he had five heads) and was near killed. However, the sin of having killed Brahma, the *Brahmahatya*, possessed him and he requested Brahma to suggest a penance to get rid of the sin. Brahma advised him to go begging for food with skull of the head, he had cut off, till he met Vishnu to wipe of his sin. Lord Shiva took the form of *Bikshatana* and go for asking alms. In this icon, Bhikshatana\textsuperscript{20} is in standing posture, with his left leg standing firmly on the ground while his right leg is slightly bent and kept in front, suggesting the gesture of walking. His head is arranged in the form of a circle (*jatamanadala*). The foerhead bears the *viputhi patta*. He wears no clothing, but is adorned with kundalas, haras, *yajnopavita*, kheyuras, bracelets and anklets. In his waist, he is wearing a snake (*nagabandhana* or *sarpabandhana*) as a belt. He has four hands; the upper right hand carries a *damaru* and lower right hand is loosely hanging down and holds a *khatvanga* (a curious type of club made of bones), held in *kataka* mudra. The damaru is held at his ear level. The upper left hand holds the trident (*sula*), which is inclined, horizontally, on his left shoulder. His lower left hand holds a *kapaala* (skull) vessel. On his left side, is standing a *bhoothagana*, carrying a large vessel (*pitcha* bowl) for storing the food collected. In between his legs lies a *bairava*, keeping his head on his folded forelimbs. In the backside is a *prabhamandala*, beautifully designed with *dhudhura* (datura) flowers.

\textsuperscript{20} Rao Gopinatha. T.A. :Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol II, Part I, p308,
The seventh panel contains five freezes. The first one is missing, the second one is of Siva and Parvathi both sitting in virasana, the third one is Ekapadhatrimurthy standing on a single leg, the fourth one is of Siva with an ankusa and antelope in his hands, with Parvathi in virasana pose and the fifth one is of Vinayaka sitting in between Siva and Parvathi. On both sides, the images are missing.

Siva as Ekapadatrimurthi\textsuperscript{21} has a single head and three eyes. He stands on a single but firm leg, on a simple vedipeeta and he is in samabhanga pose. He wears a jatamakuta and various ornaments in his chest and waist. A beaded manimala hangs from his neck. He has four hands: His front hands hold in abhaya and varadha mudras, while his back hands hold an ankusa in his right hand and an antelope in his left hand. From the right side of his waist, emerges Vishnu. Vishnu is single headed and is adorned with a kritamakuta. He is also is well ornamented. He has four hands; the front hands hold abhaya and varadha mudras and his back hands hold a shanka and a chakra. From the left side of Siva’s waist, emerges Brahma. Brahma, with visible three

\textsuperscript{21} Shasthri, Vasudeva: Vishwakarma Vasthu Shasthra, p23
heads, is adorned with a *kritamakuta*. He has four hands; the front two hands show *abhaya* and *varadha* mudras and his two back hands hold a spoon (*sruk*) and a *kamandala*. All the three are seen within a *prabhamandala*. The prabhamandala is richly carved with floral (lotus in top) designs. In opposition, Vaishnavas have similarly represent Vishnu as the supreme God and Shiva and Bramha emerge from the sides of his hip.

In *Umasahithamurthy* relief, Siva is seated with his consort *Parvathi* on a three stepped square peeta. Siva is seated in *sukhasana*, with his right leg hanging down while his left leg is bent and kept on the seat. He has four hands; his front right hand shows *abhaya* mudra and his front left hand holds a *skull* (or a coconut). and his back hands hold an *ankusa* and an *antelope*. He is adorned with a *kritamakuta* on his head and *kundalas*, *haras*, *katibandha*, bracelets and anklets on his body. A *knotted* cloth garland hangs from his waist. Uma is seated on left side of Siva. She is seated in *sukhasana* pose with both of her legs bent and kept on the seat. She has two hands; her right hand holds a *lotus* and her left hand is just hanging down. She is adorned with a *karandamakuta* and is adorned with all type of ornaments. On the first step of the *peeta*, below Siva, is seated *Muruga*, sitting in *sukhasana*. He wears a *karandamakuta*. He has two hands and both of them
flowers. hold lotus Above their heads, is seen a winged yatshini, in kneeling pose, holding an inverted kumba. All are depicted within a Prabhamandala, decorated with floral designs.

In the Vinayagamurthy image, Siva, Parvathi and Balavinayaga are seated on a simple peeta. Siva is seated with his right leg slightly hung from the peeta and his left leg is bent and kept on the seat. He has four hands; His back hands hold an ankusa and an antelope while his front hand shows chinmaya mudra and his left hand is holding Vinayaga. He wears a kritamakuta and various other ornaments. Parvathi is seated with her leg left bent and drawn towards her and her right leg is folded on the seat. She has two hands; the right hand holds a lotus while her left hand hangs down in valambitahastha pose and kept on her left knee. She also wears kritamakuta and various ornaments. Vinayaga with his elephantine head is seated on his father’s left thigh. He also wears a karandamakuta. He is nude and without ornaments. He has four hands; his left side hands alone are visible and they hold a laddu and a gadha. The proboscis is bent towards his left hand as if tasting the laddu. Above their heads are seen two sivaganas. One of their hands and legs are held raised up and the other hands and legs are hanging down, as if in a dance. The prabhamandala is very simple and show some leaf designs.
In the eighth panel, there are five images. The first one is of Siva and Parvathi, Siva holding a (mango) fruit in his left hand, the second is of Lord Brahma with four heads and eight hands sitting in sukhahasana, the third one is of Mukhalinga, the fourth one is of Lingobhava in which Siva is standing within the body of a Linga and the fifth one is of Dhakshinamurthy, posing as a teacher.

The Mukhalinga\textsuperscript{22} is one of the forms of Manushyalingas. The manushyalinga found here, is seen with a single face, the other parts are not visible. The mukhalinga is seen on a padmapeeta upon which the linga juts out like a phallus. He is seen with a smiling face. The forehead has viputhi and kunkuma. The head is hooded with a serpent head and on his right side is seen a bird sitting on a branch of a tree. The linga is ornamented with a flower garland and two haras. Pooja things, coconut and banana, are kept in front of the linga. The upper part of the peeta has a water spout (nala) on the left side. The whole linga is seen under a tree behind which is seen a yakshini peeping above.

\textsuperscript{22} Dagens Bruno,: Mayamatam, (1994,Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Art),p250.
Lord Siva as *Lingobhavamurthy*\(^{23}\) is said to have appeared to quell the pride of *Brahma* and *Vishnu*. Brahma and Vishnu were arguing over who was the most powerful. When a huge shaft of fire appeared between them, that appeared to have no top or bottom, they went to investigate. Vishnu in his boar incarnation dug down into the earth. Meanwhile, Brahma flew into the sky on his vehicle, saw the Hamsa bird, and requested the bird to tell a lie that he seen the top. When neither could find either top or bottom, they realized that the column of fire was more powerful than either of them. Its identity was revealed to them when Shiva appeared out of the shaft, and they bowed down to Shiva as the most powerful deity. He is carved within the body of a *linga*. Siva is seen in a standing posture, with his legs below the knees not visible. Siva has a *third eye* in the forehead, wears a *jatamakuta* (Fig. 53: *Lingobhavamurthy*) with a crescent moon (*chandhra*) on it and is wearing the *haras*, the *kheyuras*, and the *kundalas*. He has *four* hands; his right front hand is in *abhaya* pose, his left front hand is in the *varada* pose, his back right hand holds a *parasu* and the back left hand holds the *Krishna-mriga* (black buck). On the right side of Lingobhavamurthy is seen *Lord Vishnu*, facing Siva admirably. He has *four* hands, his front two hands in *abhaya* and *varada*) mudras and his back hands carrying *chakra* in his right hand and *Shanka* in his left hand. On his left is seen *Lord Brahma*. He has *four* hands, his front hands showing *abhaya* and *varada mudras* and his back hands holding *pasa* and *angusa*. A swan (*hamsa*) is seen on Siva’s right side at his head level and a wild *boar* is seen far below, on his left side, in a digging (the earth) pose.

The Dhakshinamurthy\textsuperscript{24} depicted here is known as Vyakhyana Dakshinamurthy. He is depicted as a teacher, seated on a rock, under a tree. His right leg hangs below the seat, while the left one is seen bent and rested on the right thigh in a virasana posture. The hanging leg rests upon the back Apasmarapurusha. He has four hands; the front right is held in jnanamudra, the front left is held in varada pose, the back right hand holds the akshamala and the back left hand holds a lotus (nilotpala) flower. His head is adorned with jatamakuta, decorated with wild (datura) flowers. In the middle of the makuta is seen the smiling face of Ganga, the river goddess. Some rishis wearing jatamakutas on their heads and rudhraksha garland around their neck, are seated below.

The Adhisthana is the third thala in the car. It is octagonal in shape with a cut in the corners. The images are fixed in an orderly fashion. There are eight panels in adhisthana, each having five images, bordered by yalis. Next to the yalis, on both sides, are two images in the niches at the corners, bordered by a winged yali. The images are described in the clockwise direction. In the front side, five images are seen. The first is an image of three

\textsuperscript{24} Sivaramamurthy. C, Kazhugumalai and early Pandiyan rock cut shrine, pp 20 - 21
rishis standing in a line with their hands in *anjali* poses, the second is an image of *Mohini* and a *rishi*, both in standing posture, the third is a sage with his disciples, doing *Agnihoma* and the fourth is the Lord *Siva* doing *Sivathandava*. All these images depict the scenes of the Sthalapurana of Chidhambaram temple that took place in Tharukavanam. In the Thillai forest (Tharuakavanam) resided a group of sages or 'rishis' who believed in the supremacy of magic and that God can be controlled by rituals and *mantras* or magical words. Siva strolled in the forest with resplendent beauty and brilliance, assuming the form of *Bhikshadana*, a simple mendicant seeking alms. He was followed by his consort, Vishnu as *Mohini*. The sages and their wives were enchanted by the brilliance and the beauty of the handsome mendicant and his consort. On seeing their womenfolk enchanted, the rishis got enraged and invoke scores of serpents (*nagas*) by performing magical rituals. Shiva lifted the serpents and donned them as ornaments on his matted locks, neck and waist. Further enraged, the sages invoked a fierce tiger, whose skins and dons were used by Siva as a shawl around his waist. The rishis gathered all their spiritual strength and performed a Homa and invoked a powerful demon Myalakan, a symbol of complete arrogance and ignorance. Siva wore a gentle smile, stepped on the demon's back, immobilized him and performed the *Sivvatandava* and disclosed his true form. The sages surrender, realizing that Siva is the truth and he is beyond magic and rituals. The fifth one depicts *Lord Siva* in the *Ananthathandava* pose and *Parvathi* and others witnessing the dance. The whole picture is depicted in a temple like niche. On either side is seen Yalis in kneeling posture. To the left of the panel is depicted Siva in *Bikshadana* manifestation with *Mohini* with him. To the right of the panel is *Vishnu* depicted as *Mohini*
In the second set of panel, in the clockwise order, are seen five figures. The first one is of a warrior fighting with a lion, the second is of two fairies with wings, the third is of a Sivathandava scene, the lord crushing Muyalakan under his left leg, the fourth is of a rishi teaching his disciple and the fifth is of the hunter Kannappa transferring his eyes to the Linga. To the left of the panel is seen a poothani (a demoness) feeding Krishna. And to the right of the panel is seen Manickavasakar visiting a Sivanadiyar’s house where he demanded the pillaikkari for his lunch.

Kannappa\(^{25}\) is a staunch devotee of Siva. One day Kannappa noticed that one of the eyes of the Sivalinga was oozing out blood and tears. Sensing that the Lord’s eye had been injured, he proceeded to pluck his one eye out with his arrow and placed it in the spot of the bleeding eye of the linga. This stopped the bleeding in that eye, but to his agitation, he noticed that the other eye of the linga has started oozing out blood. So he thought that if he were to pluck his other eye too, he would become blind. To exactly know the spot where he has to place his second eye over the

bleeding second eye of the linga, he placed his left great toe on the linga’s forehead to mark the spot of the bleeding second eye and proceeded to pluck out his other and only eye. He is seen in the (Fig. 57: Kannappa) relief, with his left toe placed on the forehead of linga. His right leg is on the peeta. One of his eyes is seen fixed on Linga’s forehead and another eye is held in his right palm.

In the third set of panel has another five images. The first one is of the four headed Lord Brahma seated on his vahana Hamsa (swan), the second is of an image of Veerabadra, the third and fourth is of a battle scene of Thripuranthaga fighting with Tharakeshwara, (Fig. 58: Third panel of Adhisthana) and the fifth one is of two yogis (one male and one female figures in nude poses) doing penance. To the left, is a warrior with two female figures in saree costume and to the right of the panel is a scene of Kankalamurthy, another manifestation of Siva surrounded by females figures.

Brahma is seen as Chathurmuha (four headed) and with four hands and eight eyes. He bears a kamandalu (waterjug) in his left upper hand and an akshamala (rosary) in his left upper hand. His lower hands show abhaya and varadha mudra. He wears karantamahuta and is ornamented with various jewels. He is seated on his Hamsa vahana

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26 Acharya Prasanna Kumar, Manasara, chapter 51, pp 13-21
in a *sukhasana* pose. In the back is a *prabhamandala*, with richly designed leaves.

(Fig. 59: Brahma)

In a battle scene, Siva as *Thripurandhakamurthy*\(^\text{27}\) fights with an *asura* *Tharakeshwara*. Siva is represented as fighting from a *chariot* with the *asura* in another chariot. His right leg is slightly raised where as the left one is planted in the middle of the chariot, in a *Veerabhadrasana* pose (warrior pose). The *mukha* of the chariot is tied with a rope and the *charioteer*, *Bramha* is seated in the middle of the mukha. Siva got two hands while one holds the *bow*; the other is ready to shoot an *arrow*. Bramha is driving the chariot which is yoked with two horses. The chariot is seen with four wheels and there are four *kodungai*, with a *kalasa* and a broken *flag* seen in the *vimana*. There are lots of arrows shown shooting towards the demon. There are also heads, hands, legs and other body parts depicted to show that it is a war scenery. The same thing is seen in the other demon chariot, with the demon standing in *Veerabhadrasana* posture.

(Fig. 60:Thripuranthakamurthy)

*Kankalamurthy*\(^\text{28}\), a manifestation of Siva is seen surrounded by five women. He is standing in *dvibangha* pose, with his right leg slightly put forward. He is nude without

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ornaments and has a jatamakuta. He has only two hands; his left hand holds the kankaladanda across his left shoulder. The offal of Visvaksena is tied to the other end of kankaladanda. The right hand, holding a bunch of grass, hangs down loosely (Fig. 61: Kankalamurthy)

and an antelope is trying to eat the grass. There are five women seen. A woman behind Siva is seen half bent and looks like she is offering some food in the vessel carried by the boothagana. A woman standing in extreme left is seen fully dressed in saree. A small boothagana is seen standing on the right side carrying the kapala bowl on his head. On the extreme left upper corner is seen a ferocious looking dog (bairava).

The fourth panel also has five other images. The first one is of a warrior fighting with an elephant followed by two Vrishabamurthies, the fourth is of a female figure (Sita) cajoling a deer and the fifth is of a rishi in padmasana doing a penance. To the left of the panel is seen a warrior feeding sugarcane to an elephant and to the right of the panel is a scene in which a king is receiving treatment from his rajavidhiyar.

In the fifth panel, the sceneries from Ramayana are depicted. The first one is of a Sita Rama Kalyana scene being officiated by Brahma, the next one is of Rama is standing in
alidhapadha pose, the next one is of Rama fighting with Shukreeva, the next is of Rama fighting with the ten headed Ravana and the fifth one is of Sita while in surveillance in Lanka, visited by two sages. To the left of the panel is Srirama with his bow standing in divibhanga pose and to the right is Rama and Lakshkana paying homage to their Rajaguru Vishvamitra.

In the sixth panel, the five images are: The first one is of Ravananugrahamurthy (the description of whom is given in Sivagamasundhari Car) in which the ten headed Ravana is playing the veena, the next one is Parvathi standing alone in abhanga upon a Nandhi, the third one is of Nataraja seated in a virasana pose, the fourth and fifth have boothaganas playing a shanka and a trumpet. To the left of the panel is of Lord Muruga with Valli and Deivanai seated on a peacock and to the right of the panel is of Lord Vishnu with Lakshmi seated in virasana pose.