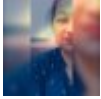


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SRI NANDANAR AND MAHADEV

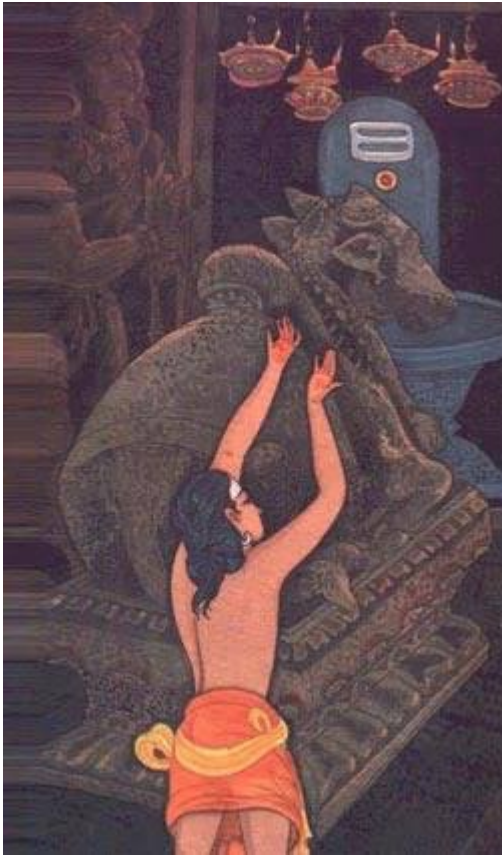
Nandanar, one of the 63 Nayanars, was a Shiva bhakt who was born in a lower caste.

Once, he went to Tiruppungur and stood outside to have darshan. However, he could not see the shivlingam as Nandi was blocking his view.



It is said that at Shiva's command, Nandi moved a few feet to the right so that Nandanar could view the lingam. Even today, at Tiruppungur, Nandi sits to one side.

Nandanar longed to visit the Chidambaram Mandir but feared that due to his low birth, he would not get entry.



As he postponed his visit daily, he was called Tirrunalaipovvar (He who will go tomorrow). Finally, one day he went to Chidambaram. He kept circumambulating the mandir a number of times, in desperation to have Nataraja darshan. Soon he was exhausted and dozed off.



It is said that Shiva appeared in his dream and told him to enter the Mandir through the yagna fire. Nandanar entered the yagna fire. He reappeared with matted hair and the sacred thread across his chest.

As he entered the garbhagriha, his form merged and became one with Shiva.

