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VYAGHRAPADA AND NATARAJA

Vyaghrapada was a Shiva bhakt in Chidambaram region. Everyday he offered fresh flowers on Shivlinga.

One day, he observed that honeybees used to drink nectar from flowers before he offered them to Prabhu. So he started going to forest before sunrise.



In the course of collecting flawless flowers and tender bilva leaves, he got wounded by the thorns and rough surfaces of the trees. Still he continued his effort. Pleased Shiva gave him the boon of having tiger legs and eyes in the hands and feet.

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Vyaghrapada continued his tapas in the hope of seeing Ananda Tandava one day.
Much later, Mahadev was roaming in Thillai Vanam as a simple wanderer seeking alms.
The forest had some rishis who believed in the supremacy of magic and that Prabhu can be controlled by magic.



Their wives were enchanted by Shiva's divine presence. Seeing this, the rishis invoked scores of snakes. Shiva lifted them and wore them as ornaments. Then a tiger was invoked. Shiva subdued the tiger and wore his skin around his waist. So the rishis invoked an Asura- Muralakan.



Shiva stepped on its back, vanquished it and performed Ananda Tandava in his true form.
Vyaghrapada was finally able to see the divine Ananda Tandava and attained Moksha.
Thillai Nataraja Mandir depicts Vyaghrapada with tiger legs carrying a stick with hook and flower basket.



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