

nILA sUktam



'Sri nrsimha sevA rasikan'
Oppiliappan Koil Sri VaradAcAri SaThakopan

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Para vAsudevan with SrI, BhU and nILA devi
Thanks: Nedumteru SrI Mukund Srinivasan



॥ श्रीः ॥

नीलासूक्तम्

nILA sUktam



INTRODUCTION

This sUktam is an ancient Veda bhAgam that prays for the anugraham of One of the three devis of SrIman nArAyaNan. SrI devi, BhU devi and nILA devi are the three devis who stay on both the sides of the Lord in Paramapadam. On the right side stays SrI Devi celebrated by SrI sUktam. On the left are BhU Devi and nILA Devi eulogized by BhU and nILA sUktams respectively. Swamy Desikan composed SrI stuti, BhU stuti and GodA stuti to celebrate these three divine consorts of SrIman nArAyaNan.

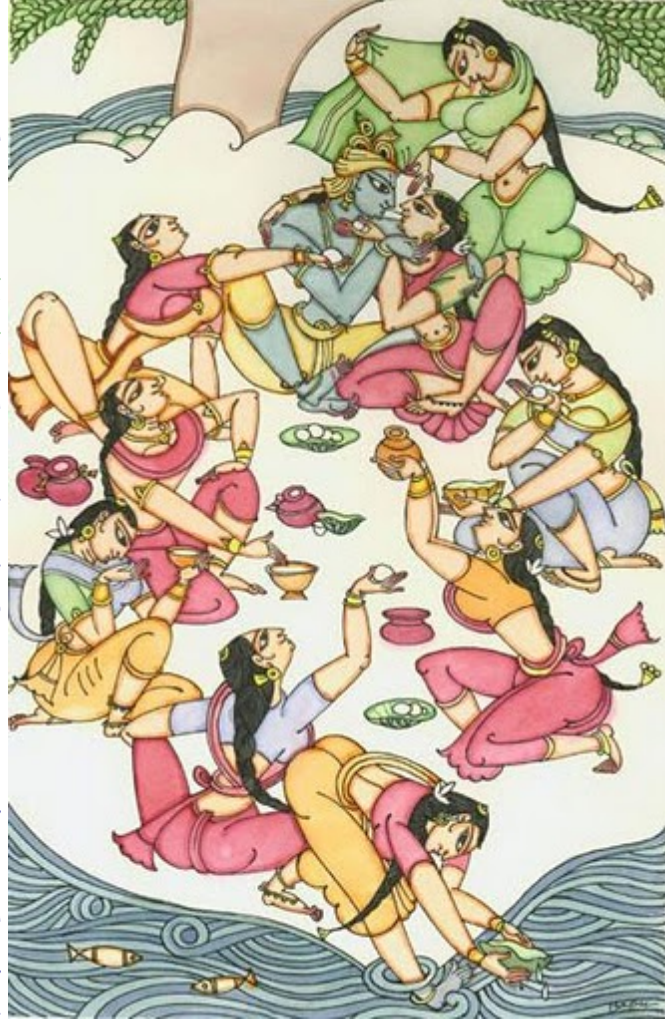
SrI devi (Periya PirATTi) is the embodiment of the Lord's dayA (compassion), BhU devi is the personification of the Lord's kshamA guNam (forbearance and patience to forgive our trespasses) and nILA devi is the personification of the Lord's audArya guNam (koDai in Tamil or generosity). The three devis are addressed by AzhvArs as "Pon MakaL, nila MakaL and Ay MakaL". nILA devi is the bride of KaNNan, who destroyed seven fierce bulls of Kumban, the brother of YaSoda PirATTi in BrndAvanam; KaNNan won the hand of the beautiful Yaadava kula maiden, nILA devi as kanyA sulkam during the KrshNAvatAram through this valorous act.

nILA devi is also revered by AzhvArs and AcAryAs as Nappinnai in their pAsurams and SrI sUktis. This Ayar pAvai with beautiful plaits (nal + pinnai) is celebrated for Her perfect anga saundaryam that drove KaNNan into raptures.

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That is why She is addressed as Pula(n) Mangai, who succeeds in keeping the Lord under Her control through Her sensory bhogams. SrI devi and BhU devi in this context are known as Pon Mangai and nila Mangai. Nappinnai is the amSam of nILA devi and the referral to ghr̥tavatI (abundance in ghee) and payasvatI (abundance in milk) in nILA sUktam connects Her to the avatAram as Nappinnai in the Ayar Kulam that rears cows and calves and produce abundant milk and butter for Bhagavat ArAdhanam as well as ghee for yAga/yaj~nams.



aayarpADi

Here are some tributes by the AzhvArs on nILA devi as one of the three wives of the Lord. In these pAsura vAkyams, the divine saundaryam of NappiNai that intoxicated Lord KrshNa is celebrated:

AZHVAR PASURAM-S ON NILA DEVI

tiruvAimozhi pAsuram-s of NammAzhvAr:

உடனமர்காதல்மகளிர் திருமகள்மண்மகள் ஆயர்
மடமகள், என்றிவர்முவர் ஆளுமுலகமும்முன்றே,
உடனவையொக்கவிழுங்கி ஆலிலைச்சேர்ந்தவனெம்மான்,
கடல்மலிமாயப்பெருமான் கண்ணனென் ஒக்கலையானே



uDanamarkAtalmakaLir tirumakaLmaNmakaL Ayar
maDamakaL, enRivarmUvar aaLumulakamum mUnRE,
uDanavaiyokkavizhunki aalilaiccErndavanemmAn,
kaDalmalimAyapperumAn kaNNanenn okkalaiyAnE (Tiruvaimozhi 1.9.4)

Meaning:

Our Lord has three adoring consorts - Lakshmi, BhUmi and Nappinnai. He has lordship over all the three worlds.

வளவே மூலகின் முதலாய
வானோ ரிறையை அருவினையேன்
' களவேழ் வெண்ணெய் தொடுவுண்ட
கள்வா!' என்பன்; பின்னையும்
' தளவேழ் முறுவல் பின்னைக்காய்
வல்லானாயர் தலைவனாய்
இளவே நேழும் தழுவிய
என்தாய்!' என்பன் நினைந்துநைந்தே.

vaLavEzhulakin mutalAya
vAnOr iRaiyai aruvinaiyEn
'kaLavEzh veNNai toDuvuNDa
kaLvaa!' enpan; pinnaiyum
'taLavEzh muRuval pinnaikkAi
vallAn Ayar talaivanAi
iLavE REzhum tazhuviya



entAi!' enpan ninaindunaindE (Tiruvaimozhi 1.5.1)

Meaning:

He killed the seven bulls to win the hand of Nappinnai of sweet smile.

வம்பவிழ் கோதை பொருட்டா
மால்விடை யேழும் அடர்த்த,
செம்பவ ளத்திரள் வாயன்
சிரீதரன் தொல்புகழ் பாடி,

vampavizh kOtai poruTTA
mAlviDai yEzhum aDartta,
cempavaLat tiraL vAyan
cirIdharan tolpuqazh pADi,

---(Tiruvaimozhi 3.5.4 - first 4 lines)



KrshNA wins the hand of Nappinnai

Meaning:

To win the hand of Nappinnai as the bride, the Lord with beautifully red mouth and lips mortified seven bulls.

‘ கடல்ஞாலம் செய்தேனும் யானே’ என்னும்
‘ கடல்ஞாலம் ஆவேனும் யானே’ என்னும்,
‘ கடல்ஞாலம் கொண்டேனும் யானே’ என்னும்
‘ கடல்ஞாலம் கீண்டேனும் யானே’ என்னும்,
‘ கடல்ஞாலம் உண்டேனும் யானே’ என்னும்
கடல்ஞாலத் தீசன்வந் தேறக் கொலோ?,



கடல்ஞா லத்தீர்க் கிவையென் சொல்லுகேன்

கடல்ஞா லத்தென் மகள்கற் கின்றனவே?

'kaDalj~nIAlam ceytEnum yAnE' ennum

'kaDalj~nAlam AvEnum yAnE' ennum,

'kaDalj~nAlam koNDEnum yAnE' ennum

'kaDalj~nAlam kINDEnum yAnE' ennum,

'kaDalj~nAlam uNDEnum yAnE' ennum

kaDalj~nAlattu Isan vantERak kolO?,

kaDalj~nAlattIrk kivaiven sollukEn

kaDalj~nAlatten makaLkaR kinRanavE? (Tiruvaimozhi 5.6.11)

Meaning:

The Lord, is the consort of all the three Devis : SrI Devi, responsible for His aiSwaryam, BhUmi PirAtti, the land for those aiSwaryams, and Nappinnai, the tender creeper from the Kulam of cowherds .

அங்கும் இங்கும் வானவர் தானவர் யாவரும்,

எங்கும் இனையையென் றுன்னை அறியகிலா தலற்றி,

அங்கம் சேரும் பூமகள் மண்மகள் ஆய்மகள்,

சங்கு சக்கரக் கையவ னென்பர் சரணமே.

ankum inkum vAnavar tAnavar yAvarum,

enkum inaiyai enRunnai aRiyakilaa talaRRi,

ankam cErum pUmakaL maNmakaL aaymakaL,

canku cakkarak kaiyavanenbar caraNamE. (Tiruvaimozhi 8.3.1)





SrI bhUmi devi and nILA devi sameta SrI RanganAtha
Rangasthala, Karnataka (Thanks: SrI L Sridhar)

Meaning:

All sorts of beings (devAs, asurAs and humans) take refuge in the Lord, when he is in joyous company of not only HIS consorts - which would have been enough- but they (Lakshmi, BhUmi and Nappinnai) are progressively more persuasive in their intercessions on behalf of the SaraNAgatAs.

Tirucchandaviruttam of Tirumazhisai AzhvAr

ஆயனாகியாயர்மங்கை வேயதோள் விரும்பினாய்,

ஆய!



AyanAki Ayarmankai vEyatOL virumpinAi,

Aya! (Tiruccandaviruttam 41 - first line)

Meaning:

You incarnated as a cowherd (Ayan) to marry Nappinnai of Ayar Kulam.

TiruppAvai pAsuram-s of SrI ANDAL

நந்தகோபாலன் மருமகனே நப்பின்னாய்

nantakOpAlan marumakaLE nappinnAi (TiruppAvai 18-2)

Meaning:

Oh Daughter in Law of Nandagopalan ! Nappinnai !

குத்து விளக்கெரியக் கோட்டுக் கால் கட்டில் மேல்

மெத்தென்ற பஞ்சசயனத்தின் மேல் ஏறி

கொத்தலர் பூங்குழல் நப்பின்னை கொங்கை மேல்

வைத்துக் கிடந்த மலர்மார்பா வாய் திறவாய்

kuttu viLakkeriyak kOTTuk kAl kaTTil mEl

mettenRa panca cayanattin mEl ERi

kottalar pUnkuzhal nappinnai konkai mEl

vaittuk kiDanta malarmArpA vAi tiRavAi (TiruppAvai 19 - first 4 lines)

Meaning:

Oh Lord KrshNa! Lying on the soft (silky) bed on the ivory cot with Your broad chest resting on the large bosoms of Nappinnai, whose tresses are adorned with bunches of flower blossoms (This Paasuram inspired Swamy ParAsara BhaTTar to compose his famous taniyan : nILAtunga stana giri taTI suptam udbodhya



krshNam).



nILA tunga stana giri taTI suptam udbodhya krshNam!

Tirumangai AzhvAr pAsurams

முருக்கிலங்கு கனித்துவர்வாய்ப் பின்னை கேள்வன்

murukkilanku kanittuvarvAip pinnai kELvan (Peria tirumozhi 6.6.8 - 1st line)

Meaning:

The Lord of Nappinnai with youthful and delectable lips.



அன்னை முனிவதும் அன்றி
லின் குர லீர்வதும்,
மன்னு மறிகட லார்ப்ப
தும்வளை சோர்வதும்,
பொன்னங் கலையல்கு லன்ன
மென்னடைப் பூங்குழல்,
பின்னை மணாளர் திறத்த
வாயின பின்னையே

annai munivatum anRi
lin kura lIrvatum,
mannu maRikaDa lArppa
tumvaLai cOrvatum,
ponnan kalaiyalku lanna
mennaDaip pUnkuzhal,
pinnai maNALar tiRatta
vAyina pinnaiyE (Peria tirumozhi 11.2.5)

Meaning:

The Lord of Nappinnai with gentle gait and tresses adorned with fragrant flowers.

NILA DEVI

In consonance with the SrI VaishNava tradition, ANDAL performs SaraNagati in TiruppAvai at the sacred feet of the Lord through His devi. This is known as the PurushakAra Prapatti. Swamy ParASara BhaTTar through His famous



taniyan for TiruppAvai reminds us of ANDAL awakening Nappinnai for PurushakAra Prapatti. BhaTTar visualizes the Lord sleeping soundly in the middle of the lofty breasts of Nappinnai. ANDAL reminds the Lord of His duties to protect the world and sends the message through Nappinnai, who has perfect vaallabhyam and vaSIkaraNam over Her Lord through Her bhogams.

In the context of discussion on the theological and ontological implications of the doctrine of SrI devi (SrI tattvam), the questions that need addressing are:

- Is She on par with VishNu enjoying equal status as a vibhu?
- Are BhU devi, nILA devi and other Saktis listed in LakshmiI tantram and other PaancarAtra samhitaA-s distinct from SrI devi and one another?
- Are they all to be taken as consorts of VishNu?
- What are their ontological status with respect to VishNu and SrI devi?

VaikuNTha vAsi Dr. S.M.S. Chari addresses the above questions precisely:



tirukkuDantai SrI Aravamuda perumAl in nAcciyAr tirukkOLam



- Through the expression of eka Seshitvam, VishNu and SrI devi exhibit vibhutvam and are upAyam as well as upeyam for a prapannan
- Purusha sUktam, BhU sUktam, Hari vamSam (an appendix of MahA BhAratam) attest to the fact that both BhU devi and nILA devi are VishNu patnI-s
- From an ontological stand point, both BhU devi and nILA devi are regarded as two aspects/amSams of VishNu Sakti, which according to PaancarAtra samhita-s is MahA Lakshmi Herself. BhU devi is the amSam of kshamA and nILA devi is the amSam of audAryam of MahA Lakshmi. Both are worshipped along with MahA Lakshmi without affecting the unitary character of MahA Lakshmi as the inseparable consort of VishNu enjoying the same status as Her Lord. Vishvaksena samhita goes on to point out that BhU devi and nILA devi are not vibhus like MahA Lakshmi and yet both are dear to VishNu and are His consorts. The acceptance of additional consorts for the Lord does not mitigate the unitary character of the Supreme Mother, MahA Lakshmi.

SrI devi has a special place on the chest (**VakshaH sthalam**) of Her Lord as well as on the right side of Her Lord. She has the "**svAbhimata nitya niravadya anurUpa svarUpam**" saluted in AcArya RaamAnujA's SaraNAgati gadyam. She has a beautiful form desired by the Lord, which is changeless and without any blemish and matching Her Lord in every way regarding saundaryam, KalyANa guNams and aiSvaryam. She is the One who is seated on the forever fragrant lotus flower and destroys our pApams. She is the deva deva divya mahishi and is the limit of dayA (**dAkshiNya sImA**). She is the yajamAni in the Lord's household (**grha medini**).

BhUmi devi and nILA devi take their positions on the left side of the Lord. BhUmi devi is like another embodiment (**rUpAntaram**) of SrI devi. She is the object of unceasing reverence by all at SrI VAikuNTham (**anavarata bahumAna vishayai**). She has the most beautiful green hue like the mountain at spring time.



nILA devi has the hue of a dark blue lotus (karu neydal pushpam). She is thus neelotpala SyAmALai. She exceeds the enchanting power of SrI devi, when it comes to overpowering Her Lord through Her bhoga Sakti. The Lord, who is forever awake (nitya bodan) gives up that ever vigilant state in nILA devi's company, relaxes and falls asleep amidst Her lofty breasts (nILA tunga stanagiri taTI suptam). Such is Her power over Her Lord!

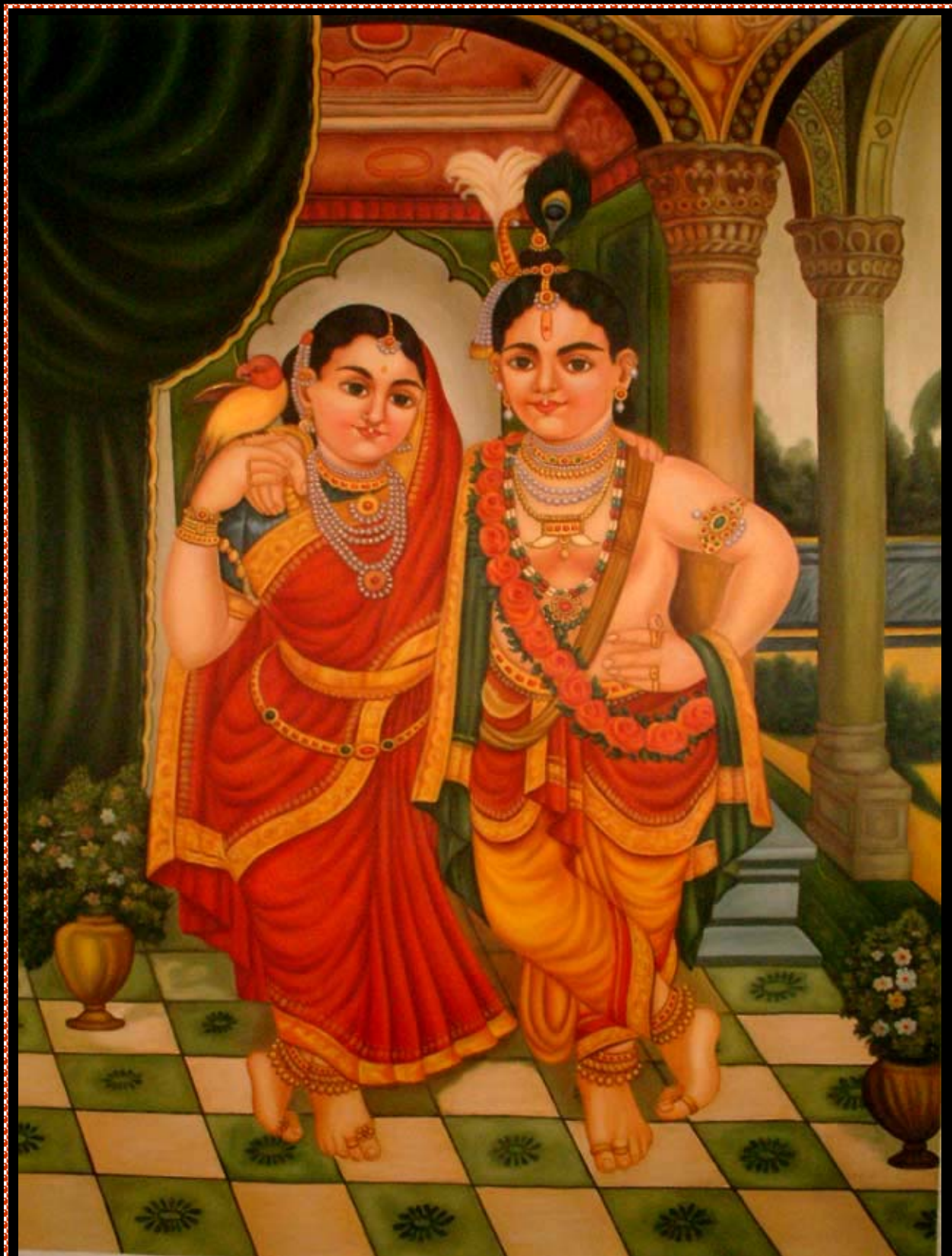
Now let us study the meanings/comments of the mantrams.





Mantrams and Commentaries





The Divine Couple
(Thanks: www.exoticindiaart.com)



॥ श्रीः ॥

नीलासूक्तम्

nILAsUktam

ॐ ☆ ॐ

॥ हरिः ओम् ॥

नीलां देवीं शरणमहं प्रपद्ये सुतरसितरसे नमः ॥

गृणाहि ॥

|| hari: om ||

nILAm devIm SaraNamaham prapadye sutarasi tarase nama: ||

grNAhi ||

Meaning:

aDiyEn seeks nILA devi as my refuge! Hail to Thee, whose vaibhavam is enjoyed immensely by Her children!

घृतवती सवितराधिपत्त्यैः पयस्वती रन्तिराशानो अस्तु ।

ध्रुवा दिशां विष्णुपत्न्यघोराऽस्येशाना सहसो या मनोता ॥

ghrtavatI savitarAdhipattyai:

payasvatI rantirASAno astu |

dhruvA diSAm vishNupatnyaghorA

asyeSAnA sahaso yA manotA ||



Meaning:

Oh Lord who creates and rules this world and its beings! May all the directions where I am, be filled with the abundance of ghee, milk and nourishing vastus and also become pleasant places where the kith and kin as well as friends are protected with (Your) power. May VishNu patni, BhUmi PiraTTi, who blesses Her devotees with mental fortitude and forbearance, accept aDiyEn's ArAdhanam and bless every one in this direction with Her anugraha sankalpam!

बृहस्पतिर्मातरिश्वोत वायुस्सन्धुवाना वाता अभि नो गृणन्तु ।

विष्टम्भो दिवो धरुणः पृथिव्या अस्येशाना जगतो विष्णुपत्नी ॥

brhaspatir mAtariSvota vAyu:

sandhuvAnA vAtA abhi no grNantu |

vishTambho divo dharuNa: prthivyA

asyeSAnA jagato vishNupatnI ||

Meaning:

Brhaspati (the deva guru), the enduring samAna vAyu, the life sustaining Vaayu known as mAtariSvA and other prANa vAyus wish us only hitam (auspiciousness). BhUmi devi, who supports the svarga lokam and stays as the foundation of the BhU lokam is the Lord's dharma patni. She is also the Empress of all the Universe.

Comments:

The mAtariSvAn is the messenger of Vivasvat, a Vedic God, who brought hidden fire to the Bhrgus (Rg Vedam I.93.6). mAtariSvAn can be considered as a Vedic god associated with domestic fire. The fire stick in which the fire grows is also known as mAtariSvAn. In essence, mAtariSvAn is one of the vAyu-s (life currents). It is some times equated with samAna vAyu, one of the panca (five)

PrANAs. These PrANA-s govern critical bodily functions and control the bodily energies through the control of the different cakrAs (mUlAdhAra, svAdhishThAna, maNipUra, anAhata, viSuddha, Aj~nA and sahasrAram). The Panca PrANA-s themselves are: PrANa, apAna, vyAna, udAna and, samAna vAYus. They move in the PrANa maya koSam and are the primary life currents or vital airs. PrANa is the outgoing breath, apAna is the incoming breath, vyAna is the retained breath, udAna is the ascending breath and samAna is the equalizing breath. Control of these breaths through PrANaYama yogam for better health and gaining of siddhis is a major field involving expert guidance.



SrI bhUmi devi, nILA devi sameta SrI sthalasayana perumAL - tirukkaDalmallai
(Thanks: SrI B Senthil Kumar)

विश्वव्यचा इषयन्ती सुभूतिः शिवा नो अस्त्वदितिरुपस्थे ॥

viSvavyacA ishayantI subhUti:

SivA no astvaditirupasthe ||

Meaning:

Surrounding the universe are the invigorating (nourishing good food) victuals.
May these be auspicious for us and stand near us!



Prosperity and subhiksham-s are received through performance of yaj~nas
SrI Ahobila Mutt, SelaiyUr

Comments:

In the spirit of the above mantra, one Yajur Veda Mantram deals with the beauty of the universe (Earth) as a source of prosperity, and happiness, a fit place to dwell upon comfortably, full of corn, milk, sweet juices and fruits. This mantram also points out that such prosperity and subiksham is gained through the performance of yaj~nams with the recitation of Vedic verses in many



metres like GayatrI, trishTup and jagati. This mantram is:

gAyatreNa tvA cchandasaA parigrhNAmi traishTubhena cchandasaA

parigrhNAmi jAgatena tvA cchandasaA parigrhNAmi

sukshma cAsi SivA cAsi syona cAsi sushadA cAsyUrjasvatI cAsi

payasvatI ca

--- Yajur Vedam I.27

VedAs speak at length about flora and fauna at many places. Speaking of flora, the VedAs salute the Lord as Vanaspati, the Master of Forests and plants (atharva Vedam III.8), the food grains, the cereals, the creepers, the fruit bearing trees and non-fruit bearing trees, the medicinal herbs (oushadis).



SrI Dhanvantari bhagavAn - Lord of the Oushadi-s

Thanks: www.exoticindiaart.com





aayarpAdi girls waking up Nappinnai (thanks: www.desikan.com)



The connection between the previous nILA sUkta mantram focusing on the panca prANAs and the abundant food stuffs from the flora (cereals, grains, medicinal herbs) and their utilization for higher goals is seen in another yajur veda Mantram (I.20):

dhAnyamasi dhinuhi devAn prANAYa tvA dAnAYa tvA vyAnAYa tvA
dIrgamanu prasitimAyushe dhAm devo va: savitA hiraNyapANi:
prati grbNATyacchidreNa pANinA cakshuse tvA mahInAm payo'asi

Meaning:

"The foodstuffs and water purified by the performance of yaj~nA strengthen the body and sense organs. May we resort to yaj~nA for sound health, for activities, for vitality, for long life full of happiness and prosperity. The glorious creator and emancipator of Universe, through His perfect Omnipresence, blesses us for dissemination of true sublime knowledge".

ओं महादेव्यै च विद्महे विष्णुपत्न्यै च धीमहि ।

तन्नो नीळा प्रचोदयात् ॥

॥ हरिः ओम् ॥

om mahA devyai ca vidmahe vishNupatnyai ca dhImahi |

tanno nILA pracodayAt ||

|| hari: om ||

Meaning:

We meditate on this MahA devi, nILA PirATTi. For that we devote ourselves to the VishNu Patni. May that nILA devi invigorate us!

nILA devyai nama:

dAsan, Oppiliappan Koil Varadachari Sadagopan

