

Tanjavur
Brhadīśvara temple *The Monument and
the Living Tradition*

Liṅga

The Brhadīśvara Liṅga, called Rājarājēśvara, symbolizes all the concepts the great temple stands for. It is one of the biggest Liṅga in Tamil Nadu and was rightly acclaimed as Periyaudaiyar - the great Lord.

The Liṅga was installed as soon as the adhiṣṭhāna was completed. The side walls and the superstructure were added after its installation. The very first order of Rājarāja, gives details about the worship of Liṅga, the associated rituals and the philosophy of the temple.

The total height of the Liṅga is 3.75 m. The piṭha of the Liṅga is 1.65 m in height and the cylindrical shaft, called Rudrabhāga above the piṭha is about 2.10 m. The garbhagriha, the exterior, the height of the Vimāna, the length and breadth of the enclosures, the heights of the gopuras, the sculptures on the walls, the paintings inside and the bronzes consecrated were made proportionate to the Liṅga.

The piṭha is in three parts, the bottom and middle parts and made of a number of carved stones, while the top one is a monolithic piece, cut with a spout and a central hole. While the bottom portions were assembled as pieces, the top portion was slid from the top of the Liṅga and the whole cemented with the traditional cementing material called aṣṭa-bandhana. The physical establishment of the piṭha and the Liṅga is called Sthāpana, followed by consecration by the priest, called Pratiṣṭhā.

