

# Muruga Worship of Ancient Tamils Gleaned from the Tamil Literature

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**Abstract:** Right from early pre – historic times, Vel worship was prevalent in ancient Tamil society and the ancient Tamils had great fascination for the worship of god Muruga. *Tolkappiam* is the first written record available to us to assess the views of the ancient Tamils regarding *Muruga* worship. It refers to *Muruga* as Ceyon in Sankam literature god *Muruga* has been denoted as cutarpuncey, Vel porceey and priympuncey.<sup>5</sup> The ancient Tamils held the view that radiant light shining from the body at *Murugan* is reddish in colour<sup>6</sup>, *Muruga's* cloths, ornaments and garlands are all red in colour and they even considered Vel (spear) he hold in his hand to be red. In *Tirumurugarrupadai* also, it is stated that god *Muruga's* colour his red and he wears red cloths. It may be well assumed that the ancient Tamils considered the red colour as symbolic of lord *Muruga's* rigor and anger in suppressing the enemies and evil forces for the benefit of mankind. The ancient Tamils viewed god *Muruga* as the greatest of war gods with indomitable valour and heroic deeds.<sup>7</sup> god *Muruga* has been denoted as aurtiralka tavul the god of extra ordinary valour and heroic deeds. It is also noted that the ancient Tamils worshipped the goddess of war by name Korravai, Korravai in Tamil means victory in war. In *Tolkappiam*, the worship of Korravai is mentioned as Korravai. Nilai and god *Murugan* was considered as flue son of the war goddess, Korravai by the ancient Tamils. *Tolkappiam* gives conclusive proof of the association of *Muruga* with Valour of a high ethical nature. It is in the context of referring to Karantai that *Muruga* worship occurs in the grammatical treatise. Karantai refers to the theme of retrieval of cattle which war is waged, it is not a war of acquisition or aggression, and it is a just war of self – defence and protection. *Tolkappiyar* mentions religious subjects, heroic themes and worship of hero – stones only in this connection.

## Introduction

The socio– cultural and religious life of the ancient Tamils was intimately connected with *Muruga* worship. It is to be noted that iron representation of Vel and rooster have been found in Adtichanallur graves, an extensive and important pre historic burial place in Tamilnadu<sup>1</sup>. Prof. P.T. *Srinivasa Iyengar*, an authority on the history of the ancient Tamils, has established that ‘Adtichanallur’ excavation dates back roughly 7000 years, and the learned author serves that “here in no evidence of creation at the place, this is assumes greater antiquity of the remains, for the custom of burning corpses spread in south India along with the Aryan cult in north India”<sup>2</sup> Right from early pre – historic times, Vel worship was prevalent in ancient Tamil society and the ancient Tamils had great fascination for the worship of god