

Scientific Contributions or Glories of Ancient Tamils

(compiled from many Articles - Kandiah Thillai)

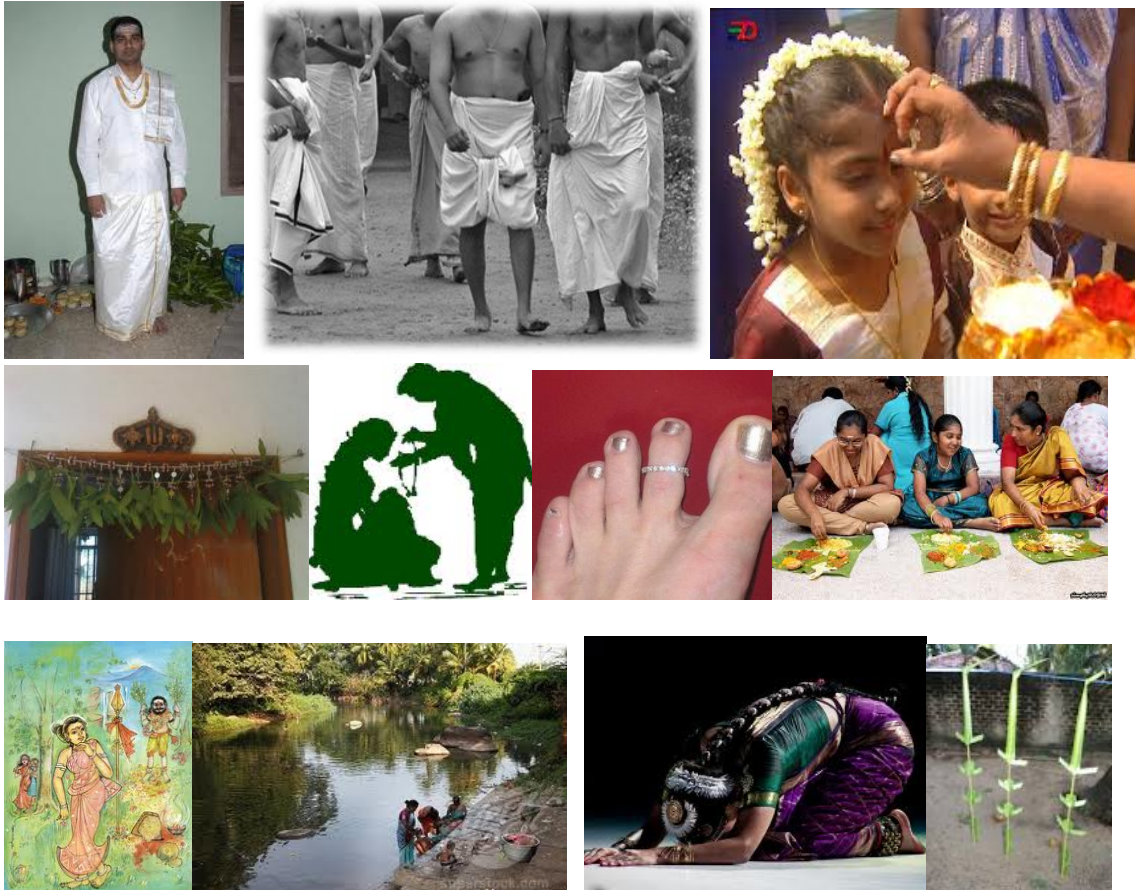
PART 01: Introduction

PART 02: The Ancient Tamil Poetry & Science

PART 03: The Ancient Tamil "Traditions & Customs" and Science

The Ancient Tamil "Traditions & Customs" and Science:





Once an interesting true story appeared in a popular English magazine where a fourth generation lady in a family wants to know why the Easter Turkey was always cut in three and cooked whereas in all other homes the Easter Turkey was cooked whole. The lady in question goes to her mother, who tells that that was how it was always done in the family, and that she had learnt it from her mother – then the inquisitive lady goes to her grandmother who also tells her the same story. Then she goes to her great grandmother where she is told by the great grandmother that cutting the turkey into three was the ONLY way that the turkey was going to fit into the (great grandmother) cooker! Observing this practice, the family had for generations been following the practice of cutting the turkey into three until our inquisitive lady showed up.

Like this, customs, traditions, rituals and practices also have some basis. And sometimes, it could have some simple and functional basis! Many of the practices, customs and traditions or rituals must have started at some point of time because of some need/event. Later on, they get incorporated more as practices as over the years, the actual reasons are forgotten.

Is there a scientific reason behind every tradition?

Most of the practices, customs and traditions have some basis, some of which are truly scientific. The tradition might also be right under the conditions prevailing at the time it was made part of the social conduct. For instance, when disinfectants were not known much, the people have been using cow's urine. Cow dung has been used to plaster mud houses and mud floors. People have been giving water, hot drinks etc to guests in silver tumblers. The guests felt honoured as they were offered drinks in cups made of a precious metal. But the silver metal served a specific purpose for the

host .the metal was germicidal and so it helped prevent any infection that the guests might carrying .the women in the families were required to be kept in quarantine for three days in order to prevent infection (as menstrualual discharge had some toxic substances)and also to give the women the much needed rest during the period. Most of the Tamil Hindu customs and traditions had some scientific reason behind them.

Most of the Tamil customs and traditions are derived from our ancestors. Tamil has a very long history dating back to thousands of years. Education in ancient times was derived from the elders and preceptors of a family. Traditions and customs were taught at a very young age and followed as part of life.

Education brings about a transformation in every Individual. We learn to question, reason and understand what ever we intend to do. It may be very common experience for today's young generation to question our elders when we are asked to follow a custom or tradition.

You may be thrilled and happy to know the real intention of the customs we follow in our day to day lives.

I have listed down a few Tamil Customs & Traditions along with the possible scientific reason with which I got convinced with. Although a lot of care had been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information given, there is no doubt that there will be some errors and omissions which in my opinion are inevitable and I regret these errors and omissions.

Few Tamil Customs & Traditions:

[Majority of Tamils are Hindus by birth and they practice Hinduism following Siva sect [Saivaism] . These people are generally deeply religious but are never religious fanatics. They go to temple to pray whenever possible but not compulsory. There is no hard and fast rule on temple visits. Every important step in the progressive life of a child was a festive occasion for the parents and family and they celebrated with appropriate ceremonies. The Tamil man is devoted to his family and his life is family centered and the family comes first.]



In Tamil culture, the left hand is primarily used for personal hygiene purposes and hence using left hand to receive or hand over anything from anyone is considered as an insult.



After attending a funeral both men and women stay outside the house. Then they go to the well and have a bath, wash all their clothes and then only enter the house. **This is preventing any infection from the funeral house.** This is more prevalent in the **villages. I.e.** Every person visiting the house of the dead person during the mourning period is **believed to suffer from pollution.** The first thing; he is expected to do on leaving the house of the dead person is to have purificatory bath. Only after this bath, he is entitled by custom and usage to have a drink of even a glass of water or to eat and enter the main parts of his own house. The **house where death was occurred is considered polluted** and cooking is not done for few days. The neighbours supply them food.



If anyone in the house suffers from an infectious disease like chicken pox, a bundle of Neem or margosa leaves are hung at the gates of the house indicating there is an infection a brilliant method of isolation.

Also Neem act as anti bacterial, anti parasitic, anti fungal, anti protozoal and anti viral thus helps in protection from all the micro-organisms, which are always ready to invade in our body causing serious ailments. Neem tree is commonly known as margosa tree in English.

Pottu

On the forehead between the two eyebrows a spot considered a major nerve point in human body since ancient times. The Pottu is believed to prevent the loss of "energy", The red 'kumkum' between the eyebrows is said to retain energy in the human body and control the various levels of concentration.

[Note: The blood supply to the face muscles is facilitated: While applying *kumkum* the points on the mid-brow region and *Adnya-chakra* are automatically pressed. This facilitates the blood supply to the face muscles. The entire body emanates energy in the form of electromagnetic

waves - the forehead and the subtle spot between the eyebrows especially so. That is why worry generates heat and causes a headache. The *tilak* and *pottu* cools the forehead, protects us and prevents energy loss. Sometimes the entire forehead is covered with Santhanam/Sandalwood] . Using plastic reusable "sticker Pottu[bindis] is not very beneficial, even though it serves the purpose of decoration.



Traditionally dressed Tamil girls stay at the main entrance to welcome the guest with Panner (Rose water), Santhanam (Sandalwood), and Kunkumam (Vermilion)

APPLYING HENNA BEFORE AUSPICIOUS OCCASIONS:



Henna is typically applied during special occasions like weddings and during festivals. Henna is applied to hair, hands, and feet and believed to bring good luck. Our ancestors have advised applying heena to hands, to the bottom of the feet, and hair, etc, especially at the onset of rainy season.

[Note: This was because during rainy season, the susceptibility to get infected by germs was manifold and henna's anti-fungal and anti-bacterial properties were believed to fight those germs. Though henna is seen as an adornment, scientifically, henna extracts show antibacterial, antifungal, and ultraviolet light screening activity. Henna is anti-fungal and can be effective against psoriasis [A noncontagious inflammatory skin disease]. Henna is most commonly used as a natural hair and skin dye, but henna also contains a compound called lawsone [**hennotannic acid**], which is the what gives heena its antibacterial and antifungal capabilities. Henna is effective against prevention of dandruff too.]

DURING MENSTRUATION WOMEN WERE NOT ALLOWED TO DO ANY WORK OR COOK ANY FOOD ITEMS:



This seems like a regressive thought that our ancestors suffered from, but our ancestors kept in mind the discomfort and trouble that a woman goes through while menstruating, suffering from cramps and exhaustion. To keep women away from all work and to give her the much-needed rest, this theory of banning a menstruating woman in those days and not allowing her to cook (because cooking was a major activity and the woman had to cook for many members) came into being. Though over the ages, it did become a notoriously backward practice.

BATHING:



We find that in olden days people took bath in rivers, mountain pools, waterfalls and the seas. This habit is in vogue even to day. Pulanadal or river bath is described as a significant act in all Tamil Classics. The Tamil proverb " Even if it be the humble gruel to consume, have it after a bath." Summarise the significance Attached to the daily bathing. ie Bathing is an integral part of daily routine in every Tamil's life.

The practice of regular oil bath, men taking on Wednesdays and Saturdays and women folk on Tuesdays and Fridays has been in vogue In Tamilaham from ancient period. Its origins are unknown. Yet its significance can be understood by the advice of AVVAIYAR'S statement that **one should is regular in Saturday's oil baths. (Athi-16)**

That a bath keeps us healthy through personal hygiene is a well known fact. But there are other aspects as well that are not well known. Polygraphic studies proved that water enhances electro-magnetic activity. In the context of this finding, the practices like washing hands and feet before entering temples and taking bath everyday, worshipping with wet clothes and offering prayer standing in the middle of water chest-deep in rivers and tanks etc., seem to be more scientific than a mere act of cleanliness. Human body is centre of electric currents and impulses. A continuous process of generation and consumption of electric energy takes place in the human body. More energy is generated in our body

whenever we are excited and battle various emotions as well as indulge in intense physical activity. However, at night when we retire until the next morning this generation and consumption level of power drops drastically. This is the reason why we feel so lethargic on waking up in the morning. We are neither active physically non mentally. Washing our face immediately clears the cobwebs of drowsiness. A bath certainly freshens up completely and puts us in our best shape. This happens due to the fact that water consumes the electricity in our body. This is known as Electro-magnetic activity. Therefore, taking bath has more to do with such scientific reasoning than merely cleanliness.

DO NOT TAKE BATH IMMEDIATELY AFTER EATING:



There an old Malayalam saying that emphasizes that if you see someone taking bath immediately after having had a meal, you should kick that person. Though this is an old saying, it is based on scientific backing that if a person is immediately taking bath after a meal, the digestion process gets slowed down by a great deal as cold water activates certain chemicals in the body that rushes the blood to the skin to keep it warm and the digestion process takes a backseat. So, it was always advised by our ancestors to take food after having a bath. ie Bath will increase blood flow to the hands, feet and body that causes the amount of blood around the stomach will continue to decrease. This will weaken the digestive system in our stomach.

START ALWAYS WITH SPICY FOOD AND END YOUR MEAL WITH SWEETS:



1. Rice
2. Appalam
3. Rava Kesari (Sweet)
4. Jangiri (Sweet)
5. Banana Chips
6. Banana
7. Picke
8. Salt
9. Vendaikai Kootu
10. Keerai Kootu
11. Cabbage Poriyal

12. Sambar
13. Rasam
14. Vathal Kuzhambu
15. Curd
16. Water

Our ancestors have stressed on the fact that our meals should be started off with something spicy and sweet dishes should be taken towards the end. The significance of this eating practice is that while spicy things activate the digestive juices and acids and ensure that the digestion process goes on smoothly and efficiently, sweets or carbohydrates pulls down the digestive process. Hence, sweets were always recommended to be taken as a last item.

CONSUMPTION OF JAGGERY IN DIET AND IN SWEETS:



[Note: jaggery is an excellent remedy for respiratory diseases. The benefits of jaggery includes its ability to cleanse the body and act as a digestive agent. Jaggery also is full of minerals. Jaggery effectively cleans respiratory tracts, lungs, food pipe, stomach, and intestines. It pulls out dust and unwanted particles from the body. It also helps in giving relief from constipation.

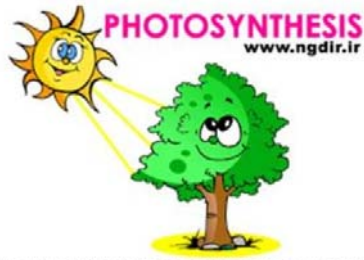
In India, it is recommended to take a small amount of jaggery after having had a heavy meal. Jaggery facilitates the digestion process. Jaggery activates digestive enzymes and speeds up digestion. Unlike sugar, jaggery is very rich in minerals, especially iron with traces of other minerals. While most of the iron in it comes through processing in iron vessels, the other minerals come right from the sugar cane juice, since this juice does not undergo refining or bleaching of any kind. So, jaggery is a very good source of minerals for the body]

MEDITATION UNDER TREES:

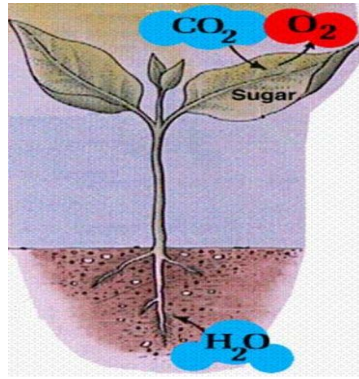
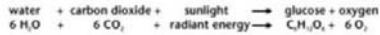


Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment after meditating under a peepal tree [Peepal trees have many medicinal uses. Juice extracted from the leaves is used for eardrops. The bark is used to heal inflammations of the neck and glandular swellings. Chewing the roots of a peepal tree is said to help prevent gum disease.] Many rishis and sadhus wrote great epics of literature sitting under a peepal trees.

what is with trees and enlightenment?



In the process of photosynthesis, plants convert radiant energy from the sun into chemical energy in the form of glucose - or sugar.



[Note:Hence, sitting under a tree meant fresh oxygen for brain cells, and fresh oxygen activated brain cells and people tended to think wisely and intelligently.]

Even Sir Issac Newton thought about gravity while he was sitting under an apple tree.

The four trees “Peepal, Gooler, Banyan, and Pakad are called to be the storehouse of Sun rays. The wood of these trees is considered very auspicious for Havans in Indian scriptures. Peepal tree has been given the prime importance among all these trees and worshipped even today. The reason is right from the root to its leaves; the tree contains the medicinal values and cures many diseases. That was the reason our ancient sages recognized the importance of this tree and declared- Peepal tree is the abode of Gods and Goddesses.



The veracity of the fact has been traced during excavation of an ancient civilization by the name Mohanjodaro and Harappa. It has been ascertained that the civilization existed around 1300- 1700 B.C. The findings establish that the inhabitants of that civilization[Almost all experts call the civilization "proto-Dravidian" and many are of the opinion that they are the ancestors of Tamils] worshiped the tree known as “Peepal”™ in English or in Tamil.They belief that Women circumambulate the peepal tree to be blessed with children or to gain a desired thing or person.

The Peepal tree in Sri Lanka is believed to be 2147 years old. It is one of the longest living trees of the world. "Scientific research suggests that the Peepal tree is best antidote[counteracts or relieves a harmful or unwanted condition; remedy]to all kinds of pollution, specifically, water pollution, air pollution and noise pollution. It is said that this tree [emits oxygen at night](#) also.

The medicinal values of Peepal tree-

- The ripe fruit is used to treat biliousness and heart diseases.
- It also relieves constipation.
- The young bark is used in binding bone fracture.
- The leaves of Peepal are highly effective in treating heart disorders. It helps to control the palpitation of heart and thereby combat the cardiac weakness.
- The bark of the tree is useful in inflammations and glandular swelling of the neck.
- Its leaves serve as a wonderful laxative as well as tonic for the body. It is especially useful for patients suffering from Jaundice.
- Its root bark is useful for stomatitis, clean ulcers, and promotes granulations.
- The powdered fruit is taken for asthma, and the latex is used to treat warts.
- The juice of the bark is used as a mouthwash and to treat gum diseases.
- The root is used for rheumatic pains and the seed is used to treat leprosy.
- The peepal is used extensively in Ayurveda.
- If the leaves of the tree boiled with oil for some time and applied on the wound , the wound heals very fast.
- The bark of Peepal tree is used for boils and acne.
- The most important value of this wonderful tree is that , a person dying with snake bite can be cured and can get life.

Its juice has an enzyme the stimulates child bearing capacity. So people go around the tree for want of a child, by aspiration of the air emanated by the tree. Also this is the only tree that emits oxygen even in night whereas other trees emit oxygen only at day time by photosynthesis.[Most plants largely uptake Carbon dioxide (CO_2) and release oxygen during the day (photosynthesis) and uptake oxygen and release CO_2 during the night (respiration). Some plants such as Peepal tree can uptake CO_2 during the night as well because of their ability to perform a type of photosynthesis called Crassulacean Acid Metabolism (CAM). However, it is not true that they release large amounts of oxygen during the night. Trees will continue to photosynthesise as long as there is light,.... , there is always some light at night, like moonlight etc, but its intensity is less hence provides less energy for photosynthesis]



As peepal tree is huge it gives lots of oxygen during day & lots of carbon di oxide during the night. So people feel giddiness or breathlessness at night when they stand under this tree. People think that there is a ghost or evil spirit under the vast trees like Banyan & Peepal.

NOT EATING DURING ECLIPSE AND STAYING INDOORS:



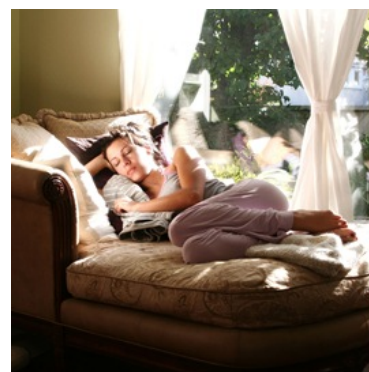
Solar eclipses and lunar eclipses have been dreaded natural phenomena and continue to scare people even now.

[NB: long before the scientific revelations threw light about the harmful radiations coming out of the solar eclipse and the negative effect it could have on eyes and health, our ancestors gave a religious touch to eclipses and prohibited people from venturing out during eclipses and eating anything during the phenomenon knowing the harmful effects the radiations could cause.]

BEGINNING OF THE DAY:

Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.*
-Benjamin Franklin

Early rising means waking up before sunrise. Waking up at this time means that the blood circulation in our body and mind is positive. Waking up after sunrise causes negative blood circulation and blood flow becomes sluggish. Late rising also induces baseless and negative dreaming and weakens the immune system



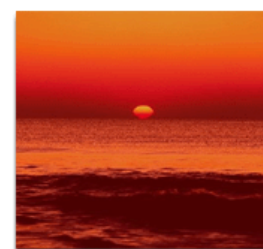
Benefits of rising early

- The body and mind will stay fresh if you get up before sunrise
- Constipation and indigestion will remain under control
- The mind and mood will remain cheerful throughout the day
- You will have sufficient time to think, plan and organise the day lying ahead of you
- The power and capacity of the mind will increase
- The memory will sharpen
- The eyesight will not get weakened

Getting up early before the Sunrise is a must for the Tamils. **(Silappathikaram: 14-5 to 13.)**

This is followed still in all rural parts and by a majority in the urban areas. Avvaiyar in her didactic poem the **AATHICHUDI**, (Ref. 106) advised the children and youth to get up **"BEFORE THE DAY BREAK"**.

Which direction should a bed face for peaceful sleeping?





1] A Tamil treatise on almanac [The Varshaadi Nool] says: Sleeping eastward is good; sleeping southward prolongs life; sleeping westward and northward brings ruin.

There are two Tamil proverbs which run thus:

Vaaraatha Vashvu Vanthaalum Vadakkae Thalai Vaikkakkuudathuâ€œ, meaning; Even in the heyday of sudden fortune, one should not lie down with head to the north, and

Vidakkei ayinum Vadakku akaathu, meaning: Even the head of the dried fish should not be placed northward.

The Ayurvedic physician seats his patients facing eastward before diagnosing the disease or administering his medicine.

2) Vastu sleeping direction :



[Aintiram Ainthi'ram) is a Tamil text on Vastu Shastra attributed to Mamuni Mayan *The Science related to numerical order enables one to know the principles of role of number, space order nature of inner space and significantly know the potency of micro-structure. (atoms)"*

Mayan's Aintiram ...page 347]

East:

Sleeping with head resting in the East enhances memory, health and spiritual inclination. It is usually advised by Vastu Shastra Consultants to plan the children's room in such a way that their Vastu sleeping direction comes out to be east. This leads to higher concentration and retention power.

South:

Vastu Shastra highly recommends this direction as your usual sleeping position with head towards the South. This is believed to provide sound sleep and increase the wealth and prosperity in the household.

West:

This is not a very advisable sleeping position. Vastu Shastra says sleeping with head resting in West might cause disturbed sleep due to nightmares, some major illness and tendency towards violence.

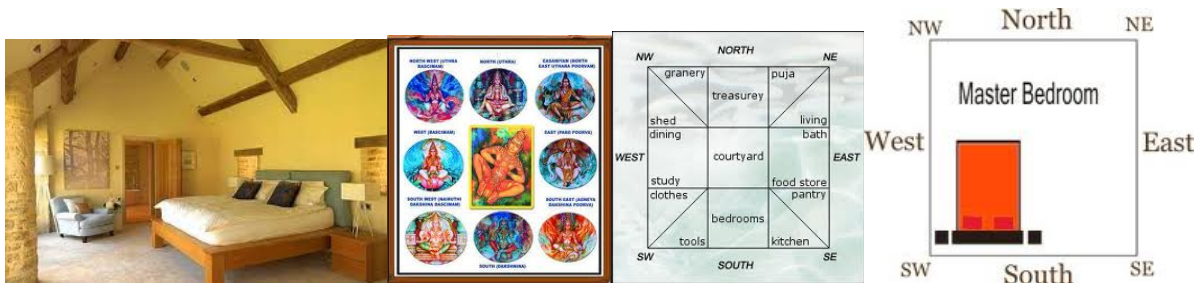
North:

The Vastu sleeping position with head in the North direction is strongly opposed. It

might cause major illnesses and sleepless nights for the person sleeping in such a position.

We are advised to avoid sleeping with our head to the north or west.

I quote the following lines from a Book of Moral codes of *Sangam Era "Achara Kovai"* on the subject of Sleeping:



We all know that our planet has a magnetic pole stretched from north to south with the positive pole at the north and the negative pole at the south. Now, health scientists tell us that we too have a similar magnetic stretch with the positive pole at the head and the negative one at the feet.

It is common knowledge that like poles repel and unlike poles attract not only scientific but also in social spheres. When we lay our heads on the north side, the two positive sides repel each other and there is a struggle between the two.

Since the earth has a greater magnetic force, we are always the losers, and rise in the morning with headache or heaviness.

But when we lay our heads in the southern direction, there is mutual attraction and we wake up fit, fresh and free, unless afflicted by some illness.

We also know that our planet revolves itself from west to east, and sun's magnetic field enters earth from east side. This magnetic force enters our head if we lie with head on the east and exits through feet, promoting cool heads and warm feet as per the laws of magnetism and electricity. When the head is laid towards the west, cool feet and hot head – result - an unpleasant start for morning.

Now we may realize why the ancient people said, that our intellect improves by east facing head or house, and life lengthens with the head facing south.

Throwing Currency Coins into a River:



Many of us would have noticed our co-passengers throwing coins into rivers especially when traveling over river bridges.

The general reasoning given for this act is that, it brings Good Luck back to us. It is also believed that it will bring back Goddess of Wealth, Lakshmi to our households.

[Note:In the ancient times, most of the currency used was made of copper unlike the stainless steel coins of today. Copper is a vital metal very useful to the human body. The intake of copper with water is very good for health. Throwing coins in the river was one way our fore-fathers ensured we intake sufficient copper as part of the water. Rivers were the only source of drinking water. Making it a custom by saying it will bring good fortune to us has ensured that all of us follow the good practice.]

Joining both palms together to greet others :



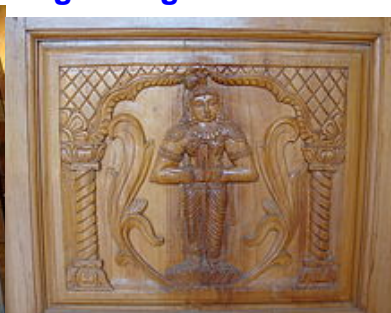
Pranamasana
(Salutation Position)



In Tamil culture, I have seen people greeting others by joining their palms together. This is termed as VANAKKAM" as per Tamil traditions. This is the most common way of greeting others.

[Note:While greeting others, we join both the hands together. Joining both hands ensures joining the tips of all the fingers together; which are denoted to the pressure points of eyes, ears, and mind. Pressing them together is said to activate the pressure points. This helps us to remember the person for a long time.]

Vanakkam: The Tamil way of greeting



The joining of hands at the level of the heart symbolically signifies the greeting from the heart/soul. Both hands join together at the palms straight across the chest signifies a salute from the soul, or a welcome from the heart.

Some others say that it signifies, bow to the God in you or bow to you or my soul bows to your soul.

But what is little known is that the five fingers represent the five elements" this is best expressed in Mudras. Mudras are very common in various dance systems like Bharatha Natiyam, Kathakali and Kuchipudi.

The significance of the five fingers is that Thumb stands for fire energy (which is why we have the thumbs up sign for success or victory?) Index finger stands for Air/Wind energy, Middle finger stands for space/Akash/Shunya“ the ring finger stands for Earth energy (another reason for putting the ring on this finger) and the little finger stands for water energy.

The true meaning of VANAKKAM is the neutralization of all the energies by bringing both the hands together so that each finger of one hand touches the corresponding finger of the other hand, to denote that the person does not have any powerful positive/negative energies to affect the other person. Thus, it is a true gesture of friendship and welcome.



Shaking hands often involve touching an other person. Even though it is a very friendly gesture, it can often transmit unfriendly germs. Sometimes, we might be uncomfortable shaking hands with a person who has a sweaty palm, or whose cleanliness we may not trust. But shaking hands in the corporate world is an accepted norm everywhere. Shaking hands is the most trusting gesture that we can see in day to day life, and is part and parcel of our everyday life. But is shaking hands the only way to greet? No. Just the other day, I was visiting a patient in the hospital, and the attendant was telling everyone NOT to shake hands, as it might transmit germs. This is especially true since we travel in buses, touch the doors, knobs, handles, purse, etc, and we do not know how much of germs we may carry. Whereas the Tamil way of greeting by doing VANAKKAM is so clean, and..cool!

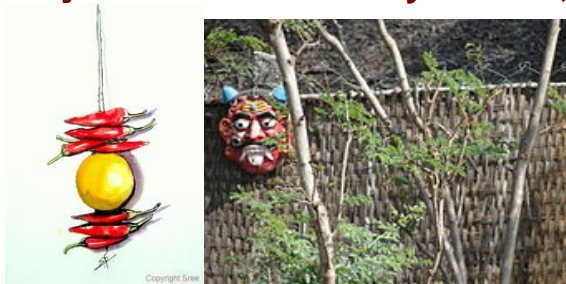
Tying Mango and Neem Leaves to the doors on auspicious days:



The general reason given for this act is that tying mango and neem leaves would not allow the evil powers to enter the house.

[Note:On auspicious days and on special occasions, all of us gather at one place along with our relatives and friends. Photosynthesis is a process where in plants take in carbon-di-oxide and give out oxygen. This process helps in circulation of oxygen and in turn keeps the room temperature at an optimum level. Mango leaves and neem leaves are very effective in the photosynthesis process comparative to other plants. Neem leaves purify the bacteria too. In order to keep the temperature cool and to circulate air, we tie mango leaves and neem leaves to all the doors.]

Why do elders rotate crystal salt, lemon around head?



Dristhi is stated as an evil eye[a look that is believed by many cultures to be able to cause injury or bad luck for the person at whom it is directed for reasons of envy or dislike/’(Kan

padudhal) literally means 'casting an eye'(with an intention to cause harm)/ on the person who feels jealous about others. It is believed that if a person gets "Dristi", he would be ruined or would fall sick due to the evil eye. As a cure and remedy to this evil eye, elders take dristhi by revolving salt or lemon around the person.

[Note: Salt can be considered as the first antibiotic. Not only that, the salty and acidic substances would less affect the magnetic field. Keeping these properties if lemon and salt in mind, we revolve salt and lemon around the person.

The salt and lemon when revolved around, it would kill all the bacteria around the person. It forms an aura layer of antibiotics around the person. Not only has this, revolving around the person balance the magnetic field too. This would make the person affected with dristi feel better.]

Fasting:



A lot of our time and energy is spent in procuring food items, preparing, cooking, eating and digesting food. Certain food types make our minds dull and agitated. Hence on certain days man decides to save time and conserve his energy by eating either simple, light food or totally abstaining from eating so that his mind becomes alert and pure. Since it is a self-imposed form of discipline it is usually adhered to with joy.

Also every system needs a break and an overhaul to work at its best. Rest and a change of diet during fasting is very good for the digestive system and the entire body. The more you indulge the senses, the more they make their demands. Fasting helps us to cultivate control over our senses, sublimate our desires and guide our minds to be poised and at peace.

The act of putting water around the plate :



The act of putting water around the plate in which we have food and to keep some part of what is served in the plate outside the plate on the ground while you sit on the floor to have dinner/lunch. As we know water acts as a repellent to many tiny creatures that roam on the floor seen and unseen, hence the circle of water stops them to approach the plate when kept on the floor also they are attracted towards the part of food kept outside the plate making it safe to consume the food. This practice is redundant while eating on dining table which is presumable cleaner than the floor. Those who still practice it on table are just following tradition without knowing the meaning behind it.

Why is it necessary to wear earrings etc?

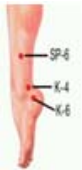


We have nerve branches from all the body at the tip of the ears. and earrings are worn to keep these nerves activated. They say that to check if all organs work fine for a new born baby, they generally pull its ear and if the baby cries out loud, it really is healthy.

The bangles or *kaappu* are worn in hands and it continuously applies pressure on the point as depicted in the figure below:



The anklets are worn in legs and it continuously applies pressure on the points as shown in the figure below:



The *Thaali Kodiâ* [*mangalsootras*] are worn in neck and it continuously applies pressure on the points as shown in the figure below:



Similarly the *Pottu* apply pressure on the third eye area and earrings are worn by getting the ears pierced in the ear lobe area.



Now all these pressure points are the points which when pressed increases fertility both in men and women. These pressure points are used in Acupressure therapy these days to treat fertility related problems in the entire world. Most of these ornaments are used by Indian women after marriage and the sole purpose of the establishment of marriage institution was child birth and survival of the human race. Probably this was the reason

our ancestors and thinkers again associated these ornaments with high dignity and made people feel it to be auspicious, pious and Godly. This tradition of ours is only symbolic mark of a rich tradition now and has lost its significance in today's world of fashion and the mad race of looking beautiful by compromising on its health benefits.

Why did we get this punishment?

Remember the good old school punishments? Holding the earlobes with arms crossed over your chests, bending the knees and then sit and then stand and so on. If you still cannot figure out the punishment just see this picture.



I hope now you remember. Talking about the logic behind this punishment, it is very interesting to know that this particular posture increases the blood flow in the memory cells in brain and synchronizes the right and left side of the brain to improve function and promote calmness, stimulates neural pathways via acupressure points in the earlobe, sharpens intelligence and also helps those with autism, asperger syndrome, learning difficulties and behavioral problems.

Why does "wedding" Prohibit during July- August[month of Aadi]?



The monsoon months are the weakest months of the year, easily causing diseases due to change in the climate because of the pouring rains. Monsoon is strong during these days spreading diseases through water and air. That is why marriages, family celebrations and other communal activities are not held during this month.

These practices link the people to the age old sentiments and customs that have passed on to our modern generations traditionally. According to traditions this month is inauspicious .

The real meaning behind this has many scientific implications. If the bride conceives in this month, she will deliver the child in the second half of May (Chithirai), the hottest period of the year, which may harm both the child and the mother. Moreover, contagious diseases like small pox, measles, etc. are more prevalent during this time.

Another practical reason is that this season is the time for busy agricultural tasks of cultivation. All people have to focus their whole attention to agriculture, Rivers and streams are filled with water due to monsoon rains and men cannot waste their time in other engagements. They have to get up very early in the morning and involve themselves in their duties.

Putting small pieces of Dharbai during an eclipse:



The practice of putting small pieces of **Halfa grass** (Dharbai in Tamil) during an eclipse may seem odd. Normally, the grass is made to float on any water body, including milk, during the eclipse. And after the eclipse, the grass is taken out and thrown and the water/milk used. To the casual observer it may seem a simple ritual. But in essence, the small pieces of grass floating on the surface of the water in the vessels actually disturbs the surface tension, due to which invisible infrared/ultraviolet rays which abound during an eclipse, does not affect the water body since the disturbed surface tension deflects the rays through refraction. Sounds incredible? Also, there is the added feature of Halfa grass that is believed to absorb negative rays. Hence, the practice of putting grass on water during an eclipse seems very much scientific indeed!

The significance of the thoranams



Tamil Hindus festoon the upper frame of their main door with mango leaves and marigold flowers on festivals and auspicious occasions.

The twigs of the green mango leaves and the orange flowers serves as a decorative and also has a lot of medicinal value.



The threshold [An entrance or a doorway or A piece of wood or stone placed beneath a door; a doorsill]below is smeared with a lot of turmeric paste and dots of vermilion kumkum on it makes it a very pretty site. During functions the main door is flanked by banana saplings or trees. This completes the picture of a ceremony.

The significance of the thoranams being:

The saplings and the green mango leaves give a lot of oxygen which is needed in the surrounding area .

The leaves and turmeric have germicidal (anti-germ) properties.

The mango leaves and the marigold flowers also give a lot of positive vibrations which helps the people who gather in that place.

Marigold flowers repels mosquitoes and some insects.

Rangoli



Traditionally made at the doorstep with rice flour everyday afresh. This practice serves a very simple purpose that of feeding the lower organisms as ants and insects thereby keeping them at bay from entering the household.

Take off his/her shoes/sandals before entering:



In the great Biblical story of Moses, when Moses, the hero of Exodus, approaches the burning bush he is asked to take off his sandals. The reason he is told by the voice of God from the burning bush is that it was holy ground that he was standing upon.

In most of the religions, one is required to take off his/her shoes/sandals before entering the holy place, be it a temple, sanctum sanctorum or the altar.

One can safely assume that it is because of general cleanliness.

Why do we light a lamp?

Light symbolizes knowledge, and darkness, ignorance. Knowledge removes ignorance just as light removes darkness. Also knowledge is a lasting inner wealth by which all outer achievement can be accomplished. Hence we light the lamp to bow down to knowledge as the greatest of all forms of wealth.



Traditional dress: Saree & Vaetti

The ancient Tamil people mainly wore garments that were wrapped and draped, rather than sewn[untailored]. This was not because they did not know the art of sewing early Tamil people were experts in fine weaving but because they preferred the flexibility and creativity that draped clothing allowed. Light Loose, flowing garments were practical in the hot climate of southern Asia, and the sari& vaetti woven of cotton or silk, was both cool and graceful.



ie Generally the climate of Indian subcontinent is warm and humid. Saree and its male counterpart *vaetti* [dhoti] was most suited for this land. Earlier there was hardly any difference between Saree and *vaetti* and live by killing blameless creatures there. You do your fishing in my heart, and live by causing me to die.

Oh pray ,be careful not to break your waist,too frail to bear the weight of young breast growing opulent !

Your father kills the buoyant fish caught in the ambush of his net. But you delight to kill all living things caught by your lovely eyes most deadly snare.

Oh pray, be careful not to break your waist, thinner than thunderbolts, for it may yield beneath its load of heavy breasts and strings of pearls!

Your brothers in their swift canoe go hunting creatures that have done no harm. But you kill with the arched bow of your brows; your fame increases with the grief you cause.

Oh pray, protect the slimness of your waist, that growing strong beneath the burden of your breast."

[The great love poems of ancient Tamils from Silapadigaram with English Translation-usually mentioned as 1st century CE, but may vary between 500 BC. and 100 A.D.]

The Ancient Tamil concept of beauty was that of small waist and large bust and hips, and the sari seemed to be the perfect dress as it exposes the waist of a woman and emphasizes the waist and bust with the pleated fabric.

The sari, being an unstitched drape, enhances the shape of the wearer while only partially covering the midriff. In Indian philosophy[example, In ancient Indian tradition and the Natya shastra(an ancient Indian treatise describing ancient dance and costumes)], the naval of the Supreme Being is considered to be the source of life and creativity, hence the midriff is to be left bare by the sari. Hence by tradition, the stomach and the navel is to be left unconcealed.

Along with dhoti [*vaetti*], the *angavastram/shawl*] or *thundu* (an extra piece of cloth) will be draped depending on its use. Farmers carry it on one shoulder and treat it as sweat towel.Also woman used a breast band and a veil or wrap that could be used to cover the upper body or head.



Both could be easily turned into working dress or party-wear.Also both are a versatile piece of clothing, suitable even in our modern societies. The one dress that is universal is the sari & dhoti. It fit every one every body shape. In the clothing trade, one size fits all is a term used to describe a garment which has been designed to fit most average people. Many very large and very small people disagree with this claim, but people of an average body type can usually fit successfully into a one size fits all garment. But saree & vaetti are exceptional .They really applicable for one size fits all ie. saris & vaetti [sarongs] are more or less one size fits all,since these garments are wrapped or tied. If chosen and worn carefully along with the right accessories, saree & dhoti can look good on all women & men



Also sari is comfortable to manage household chores. Working class tucks the same length above the ankles and if they have to work in water or fields, they would tuck the front pleats between the legs to the back, and tie the upper portion round the waist. This left them free movement of hands and legs. [Rani \[queen\] Velu Nachiyar](#), [Belawadi Mallamma](#) and [Kittur chennamma](#) fought enemy troops on horseback, wearing saree this way.

Now a days The sari is usually worn over a [petticoat](#) [*pavada/pavadai* / in the Tamil], with a [blouse](http://uk.mg40.mail.yahoo.com/wiki/%E0%AE%AE%E0%AF%87%E0%AE%B2%E0%AF%8D) forming the upper garment. Younger women generally wore brightly coloured saris, but widows and other women in mourning wore only white ones.

I have stated some of the customs and traditions that have scientific reason. There is no intension to hurt any of the religious believes. These are my personal feelings and views only. I mean there are many more such examples and there are bound to be sound scientific, social, and moral principles behind them. Its just a matter of us taking an effort and looking beyond the obvious and neither dismissing them for a farce nor following them blindly, but understanding the rationale behind them in a positive way.