



Figure 5. Gigantic *nandi* and *linga* in workshop – Thanjavur.

3. burning of ghee lamps;
4. periodical performance of *kumbhabhisheka* (reconsecration);
5. *sadaya vizha* (birthday of Rajaraja I).

The *pradoshapuja* entails the anointing of the *Nandi* with various liquids, including nearly 1 000 litres of milk. The idol is then bedecked with flowers. This new religious event is witnessed by 50 000 to 60 000 devotees each year.

As this *puja* was confined to the *Nandi* in front of the sanctum, no special drainage provision had been made near this *mandapa*. The ASI analyzed the situation and made provisions for a new concealed underground drain to provide drainage for the sacred anointed liquids. However, permission for the erection of permanent structures for the priests to perform the anointing was denied because of the presence of paintings on the ceiling of the *mandapa* and the impact of such a structure on the aesthetic appearance of the building. The paintings are constantly monitored by the ASI.

The image of *Dakshinamurthy* is enshrined in a niche in the southern wall of the sanctum at a height of 6 m. This popular special *puja* is held every Thursday. To increase the available approaches, another temporary structure was provided to facilitate access. An approach way was also provided to improve access to the *Sarabesvara* image in the niche of the southern wall of the Darasuram Temple. These minor alterations have been carried out to meet the needs of the changing functional aspects of the living temple.

In ancient times, the practice of burning ghee lamps to illuminate dark areas of temple interiors was considered to be a pious deed. This has now become a social and religious practice, though its functionality has been lost. The burning of ghee lamps has resulted in various