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# اگاستيا

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Thirumoolar and his fellow friend Agastyar are perhaps the most famous immortals. They are great saints and are well known in India.

They have maintained their bodies for millions of years. You can trace their existence through many Indian scriptures, one of which is titled Thirumantarum. Some of the greatest human literature was written by these immortals. Just reading about these beings is a powerful experience. They also worship Babaji.

Churchill, Pola (2007-11-14). *Eternal Breath : A Biography of Leonard Orr Founder of Rebirthing Breathwork* (Kindle Locations 4873-4877). Trafford. Kindle Edition.

# Agastya

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Agastya** is one of the Saptarshis who are extolled at many places in the Vedas and a revered Vedic sage and earliest Siddhar. He is also believed to be the author of Agastya Samhita. The word is also written as **Agasti** and **Agathiyar** (Tamil: அகத்தியர் *Agathiyar*;<sup>[1]</sup> Telugu: అగస్త్య; Kannada: ಅಗಸ್ತ್ಯ; Malayalam: അഗസ്ത്യ; Sanskrit: अगस्त्य; Malay: *Anggasta*; Thai: *Akkhot*).<sup>[1]</sup> A-ga in Sanskrit means a mountain, and Asti means thrower.<sup>[2]</sup> Agastya the Muni, son of Urvashi was born of both Gods, Mitra and Varuna.<sup>[2][3]</sup> Agastya is also the Indian astronomical name of the star of Canopus, is said to be the 'cleanser of waters', since its rising coincides with the calming of the waters of the Indian Ocean. He was son of Pulasthya, son of Brahma.

Siddhar were spiritual adepts who possessed the ashta siddhis, or the eight supernatural powers. Sage Agathiyar is considered the guru of all Siddhars, and the Siddha medicine system is believed to have been handed over to him by Lord Muruga, son of the Hindu God Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi. Siddhars are the followers of Lord Shiva. Agathiyar is the first Siddhar. His disciples and other siddhars contributed thousands of texts on Siddhar literature, including medicine and form the propounders of the system in this world.<sup>[4]</sup> He is considered as the **Father of Tamil literature** and compiled the first Tamil grammar called **Agathiyam**. He is regarded to have lived in the 6th or 7th century B.C and specialized in language, alchemy, medicine and spirituality (yogam and gnanam). There are 96 books in the name of Agathiyar.<sup>[5]</sup> In Tamil language the term 'Agam' means inside and 'iyar' means belong. One who belong inside (soul) is the Tamil meaning for Agathiyar.

## Agastya/Agasthiyar



Agastya depicted in a statue as a Hindu sage.

<b>Sanskrit</b>	Agastya
<b>Transliteration</b>	
<b>Tamil</b>	அகத்தியர்
<b>Affiliation</b>	Rishi (sage), Saptarshi (seven sages)
<b>Consort</b>	Lopamudra

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## Agastya and Lopāmudrā



The left of these two statues represents Agastya as a Hindu sage. It is located in the archaeological museum at Prambanan, Java, Indonesia, and probably dates from the 9th century A.D. Agastya was one of the divinities worshipped at Candi Siva, the main temple at Prambanan.

Agastya needed to marry and sire a son, in order to fulfil his duties to the Manus. Once he resolved upon doing this, Agastya pursued an unusual course of action: by his yogic powers, he created a female infant who possessed all the special qualities of character and personality that would be appropriate in the wife of a renunciate. At this time, the noble and virtuous king of



Agastya and Lopāmudrā

Vidarbha (an area in south-central India, just south of the Vindhya mountains), was childless and was undertaking penances and offering prayers to the divinities for the gift of a child. Having come to know the plight of the king, Agastya arranged for the transformation of the child he had created, to be born the daughter of that noble king of Vidarbha. The child thus born was named "Lopamudra" by her parents. Upon her attaining marriageable age, Agastya approached the king and sought the hand of his daughter. The king was initially chagrined to hear such a suggestion from a renunciate, but found that his daughter, who had already exhibited extraordinary standards of mind and character, was insistent that he should accept the proposal. She was utterly intent upon renouncing the royal palace of her father and set out to live in forest at the hermitage of Agastya. Lopamudra and Agastya were duly married and lived a life of extraordinary felicity and happiness. It is believed that

they had two sons — Bhringi & Achutha. In Mahabharata (Vana Parva: Tirtha-yatra Parva), there is mention of his penance at *Gangadwara* (Haridwar), in Uttar Khand State in India, with the help of his wife, Lopamudra (the

princess of Vidharba).<sup>[6]</sup> Lopamudra attained the rank of one of Mahapativrathas in the world by her dedication to worship her husband Agastya, and remained with other Pathivrathas (Noble exalted wives), like Mandodari (Ravana's wife), etc.

## Legends and beliefs about Agastya

Sage Agastya is often considered the father of traditional Indian Medicine among many other streams of knowledge. In his book, he is believed to have given the description of, and instructions for, the creation of medicines for many types of fevers, cancer, treatments for impotence, abdominal problems, brain and eye problems, bone problems, etc.

Among the various legends associated with him is that of the Vindhya Mountains. According to a story in the Shri Rama-Charitra-Manasa, at one time, Mount Vindhya was continually growing in size due to taunting comments by the Sage Narada. So as to temper the vanity of the mountains, Sage Agastya and his family travelled to South India, via the Mount Vindhya. On their way, when the Vindhya saw Sage Agastya, he bowed with respect and reverence, upon which Sage Agastya, jokingly asked if he would stay bowed and subdued with respect until the sage returned. The Vindhya were truly benevolent and promised to not grow until the seer's return from the South. After passing through the mountain, sage Agastya told his wife that they would never again cross over to the North side of mount Vindhya.

Another reference is in the Mahabharata Book 10 in Sauptikaparva, section-12<sup>[7]</sup> as the sage who gave Drona, the greatest of weapons, Brahmastra (used by both Arjuna and Ashwatthama at the end of the war).

A reference to Agastya is made Paramahansa Yogananda's Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter 33: "Babaji, Yogi-Christ of Modern India", p 333, in the statement "A considerable poetic literature in Tamil has grown up around Agastya, a South Indian avatar. He worked many miracles during the centuries preceding and following the Christian era, and is credited with retaining his physical form even to this day."

## Agastya's Hermitage and references in Valmiki's Ramayana

Agastya is mentioned most among all the existing Hindu texts possibly in the Ramayana. He is mentioned in the oldest and most original existing versions of the Ramayana (those by Sage Valmiki), as having his abode in the form of a hermitage in the Malaya Mountains, at more than one place. His main hermitage is placed by the epic somewhere in the western half of the Indian Ocean, further south of the so-called Malaya Mountains, amongst a series or chain of large islands and submerged mountains.<sup>[8][9]</sup> His hermitage building there is supposedly eighty miles in both length and breadth, and again an astounding eighty miles in height as well, and adorned with inestimable amounts of gold, diamonds, and all other kinds of precious metals and stones.<sup>[8][9]</sup>

## Parallels from Old Tamil traditions

Old Tamil literature contains several references to agam in the sense of 'fort, palace or inner place'. (e.g.) agam 'palace' (Perun<sup>^</sup>.32.100)

aga-nagar 'the inner city' (Cil. 2.15.109; Man@i. 1.72)

aga-p-pa 'inner fortification' (Nar\ 14.4; Patir\ 22.26; Cil.28.144)

aga-p-pa 'matil-ull uyar metlai : high terrace inside the fort' (Tivakaram 5.198)

matil-agam lit., ‘fortified house’; (Cil.2.14.69); the palace of the rulers of Kerala. A clear distinction is drawn in Old Tamil literature between those who ruled from inside the forts and those who served them, even though the expressions for either group have the same base aga-tt-u ‘in the house’. The rulers of the forts were known as: (e.g.) aga-tt-ar : ‘(princes) of the palace’ (Kali. 25.3)

aga-tt-ar ‘those inside the (impregnable) fortification’ (Kurall 745)

aga-tt-or ‘those inside the fort’ (Pura. 28.11)

aga-tt-on\ ‘he (king) inside the fort’ (Tol. III: 68.4, 69.5)

Those who served as palace or temple attendants were known as follows: (e.g.) aga-tt-atlimai, aga-t-ton@tlar, aga-mp-atliyar etc., (Tamil Lexicon). The palace or temple service was generally called: (e.g.) aga-p-patlai, aga-p-pan@i, aga-p-parivaram etc., (Tamil Lexicon). Another important set of Old Tamil expressions for palace and temple attendants is derived from the root culÈ ‘to surround’ > ulÈiyam ‘service, especially in palace or temple’, ulÈiyar ‘palace or temple servants’ (DEDR 2698 > 758). Cf. ulÈi, ulÈai ‘place’ esp. about a king (DEDR 684) which also ultimately looks to culÈ ‘to surround, surrounding area’. Note the distinction between ul\ai-y-iruntan\ ‘minister of state, companion of the king’ and ul\ai-y-all-an\ ‘attendant (in the palace)’ (Tamil Lexicon).<sup>[10]</sup>

## From Etymology to Recorded History

The critical link between Dravidian etymology and history is brought out by the following two sets of entries: DEDR 7: aga-m ‘inside, house, place’ aga-tt-u ‘within, inside the house’ aga-tt-an\ ‘one who is in, a householder’. C.W.Kathiraiver Pillai’s Dictionary (1910) (gloss in English added by Iravatham Mahadevan):

aga-tt-i : (1) agattiya mun\ivan\ (‘Agastya, the sage’)

(2) ulll-irukkir\va-van\ (‘one who is in’)

(3) oru maram (‘Agasti grandiflora’).

*Note how agatti in (1) and (3) get transformed to agasti in Indo-Aryan loanwords.*<sup>[10]</sup>

## Agastya and the southern migration of the Velir

The story of the southern migration of the Velir from Dwaraka under the leadership of Agastya is narrated by Naccinarkkiniyar in his commentary on Tolkappiyam (payiram ; Porull.34).

Agastya's legacy is associated with the Chengannur Temple in Kerala in South India, considered to be first built by Agasthya Muni, where he sat in meditation. Here Siva-Parvathy’s idols are worshiped in the same temple. One half of the temple is dedicated to Lord Siva and the other half behind Siva is dedicated to Goddess Parvathy. It is believed that They are available to Their devotees for worship, as husband and wife here. Interestingly it is believed that even today the idol of Parvathy has menstrual flow, though not regular. But if the



Agastya



priest observes blood (claimed to be tested true menstrual blood) in the 'odayaada' during 'nirmalya pooja', Parvathy's idol is removed and kept in a sanctum opposite to the temple within the premises and after a festival 'tripootaraatu' (7 days) Her idol is placed back into the temple. The festival is celebrated only if Her menses occurs.

## Vathapi legend

Another story has it that two demon brothers, Ilvala and Vathapi, used to kill Brahmins as a revenge in a special manner. Ilvala had once requested a Brahmin to bless him for getting a son as powerful as Indra, the king of gods. The Brahmin refused the request right away. That made the demon angry. He wanted to take revenge on all Brahmins because one of them refused to grant him his wish.

He had a younger brother by name Vatapi. Being demons, the two had special powers. They came up with a plan to take revenge on Brahmins. Ilvala would turn his brother into a goat, [in other version of the legend, Vatapi turns in to a ripe mango]. He would invite any passer-by, especially Brahmins, for a grand feast at his house. He would cut his brother, turned goat, into pieces and cook a delicacy with it. He would offer the guest this special meat dish.

After meal he would call his brother out, "Vatapi". His brother would respond from the belly of the visitor and come out alive in one piece. In the process the guest would be killed. The two demons, later, would enjoy a curry made of human flesh. All the valuables in the possession of the visitor would go into their treasure.

Ilvala was so good at cooking that the smell of the food started attracting Brahmins around. They queued to have a taste of it. Anyone who went inside the eating place never came back and the brothers were intelligent enough to only allow one Brahmin to enter and eat at a time. Thus the numbers of Brahmins began to reduce. One day, Agastya happened to pass through. By the plan, as usual, one changed into a goat and the other disguised himself as a Brahmachari who invited Agastya to a meal. Agastya knew beforehand about the plan due to his immense Vedic powers, he resolves to teach both a lesson. After the meal, Agastya simply rubbed his stomach saying *Vathapi JeerNo bhava*; literally *may Vathapi be digested*, while the other demon tries to bring his brother to life, but in vain. Agastya plainly informed the demon that his brother has been digested and could no longer be brought back to life, and eventually bringing their treachery to end.

## Other facets of Agastya

Very ancient period before Agastya, in the period of "Abhisheka pandian", by the grace of Lord Shiva, "Sundharanandhar" (avatar of Lord Shiva) is a first Siddhar in world. This incident (Thiruvilaiyadal) was held in Madurai, where Sundharanandhar, being an avatar of Lord Shiva, explained to the people about meaning of "Siddhas" and also explained human body is control by "Pancha boodham". Agastya is considered as the first and foremost Siddha. He is considered the guru of many other Siddhas. He is also called Kurumuni, meaning short (kuru) saint (muni). He made contributions to the field of Medicine and Astrology - especially Nadi astrology. He is said to have lived for over 5000 years, and that one of his medicinal preparations, Boopathi



Murti of Agasthya Muni at the top of Agasthyamalai hill



Agastya drinking the whole sea

Kuligai, is so powerful that it can even bring the dead back to life. Two of his students and disciples were Therayar and Tholkappiar.

During the war between the Devas and the trio of Malyavaan, Sumaali and Maali (Ravana's maternal grandfathers), Agastya, at the request of Vishnu, drank up the seven oceans when the asuras hid themselves in the ocean.

## Unity of Vishnu and Shiva

At a Saivite temple named Kutralam, formerly a Vishnu temple, in Tamil Nadu, Agastya, in one legend, was refused entry. He then appeared as a Vaishnavite devotee and is said to have miraculously converted the image to a Shiva linga.<sup>[11]</sup> A symbolic meaning of this conversion is to show that Vishnu and Shiva are different aspects of the one and same God.

## Sage Agastya in Akilam

According to Akilattirattu Ammanai, the religious book of Ayyavazhi, Agastya was created from the mind of Lord Shiva in order to offer boons to Kaliyan (*See:Boons offered to Kaliyan*). As per the order of Siva, Agastya offered many boons including all worldly knowledge to him. Therefore, as per Ayyavazhi, in the Kali Yuga, all the knowledge, including the basic formulae and forms of modern scientific technologies came from Agastya.

## Certain important *Stotrams*

- The Lalita sahasranama, which describes the 1000 names of the Goddess Lalita (known commonly as Dākshāyani, Pārvatī or Durgā), was first revealed to the world when Hayagrīva, a manifestation of Viṣṇu, taught the same to Agastya.
- Agastya is progenitor of the Āditya Hṛdayam, a hymn to Sūrya taught to Rāma just before Rāma's battle against Rāvaṇa.
- Agastya also composed Saraswati Stotram.
- Agastya also composed ekadasa mukha hanumath kavacham.

## Contrast between Northern and Southern Traditions

### Agastya Legend

The Notable differences between the Northern (Indo Aryan ) and Southern(Dravidian-Tamil) traditions relating to the Agastya legend is given in the form of a table in the book "Agastya Legend and the Indus Civilization" by Iravatham Mahadevan:

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<b>Northern(Indo Aryan) Traditions</b>	<b>Southern(Draavidian Tamil) Traditions</b>
Migrates from North to South	Migrates from North to South
Kills the Rakshasas	settled forests(land mullai) later Clears the Forest
Promotes Vedic Aryanism	Promotes agriculture and Irrigation.
Leader of Brahman colonists	Leader of the Velir Clan
Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit Speaker(implicit in the claim of Northern Extration and Aryan leadership)	The greatest exponent of Tamil Language;author of the earliest Tamil grammar
Has no definite historical Context.	Linked to the Indian Historical Tradition of  (a)Ventar-Velir-ay velir-ayar hierarchy of Tamil Sangam Polity  (b)Dravidian ruling classes claiming descend from a pitcher  (c)Yadavas,and (through them) yadava tribes of the Mahabharata Age

[12]

However these so-called differences do not contradict each other even the leader claim. Agastya was met by Rama north of Nashik (in modern India) several years before the break up of the Yadu clan from Dwaraka. He confides to Rama in the Uttara Kanda that he travelled south but did not venture much farther because of Ravana. Ravana was his brother's (Vishravas) son. He destroyed Rakshasas but did not want to destroy Ravana (obliquely his son). Also knowing that Ravana could not be destroyed till his time as a result of Shiva's boon to Ravana and that he was destined to be destroyed by Rama (because of the boon of Vishnu to his guards cursed by the Sanat Kumaras), he stayed his hand. The remnants of Yadu clan could have well taken him for their guide.

Agastya is also celebrated as the third greatest exponent of the Tamil language after Shiva and Muruga.

## Comparison between Northern and Southern Traditions

The Comparison between the Two Traditions shows that the Northern Tradition provides his birth and migration to the south. On the contrary the Southern tradition is more an appropriation of the sage's name to a community like certain communities claiming to being the descendants of a historical figure. These provide a seemingly down to earth account of a historical event,namely the mass migration to the South of the Velir who are identified as part of living tradition at the time of the cankam polity described in the earliest Tamil works.<sup>[12]</sup>

### Agastya's leadership of Velir clan

The fact of Agastya's leadership of Velir clan rules out the possibility that he was even in origin an Indo-Aryan speaker. The Velir-Velar-Velalar groups constituted the ruling and the land-owning classes in the Tamil country since the beginning of recorded history and betray no trace whatever of an indo-Aryan linguistic ancestry. The Tamil Society had of course under the religious and cultural influences of the North even before the beginning of the Cankam Age but had maintained its linguistic identity.From what we now know of the linguistic

prehistory of India, it is more plausible to assume that the Yadavas were the Aryanised descendants of an original Non-Aryan people that to consider the Tamil Velir as the later offshoot of the indo-Aryan speaking Yadavas. The Agastya legend itself can be re-interpreted as Non-Aryan and Dravidian even in origin and pertaining to the Pre-Vedic Proto-historical period in the North.<sup>[12]</sup>

However this assumption of Yadavas being aryanised non-aryans is at loggerheads with the descriptions of their origins with Yadu, the ancestor of Krishna; whose history is also well documented in the Srimad Bhagavata and other Sanskrit sources.

## Martial arts

Agastya is regarded as the founder and patron saint of silambam and varmam -an ancient science of healing using varmam points for varied diseases and southern kalaripayat.<sup>[13]</sup> Shiva's son Murugan is said to have taught the art to Agastya who then wrote treatises on it and passed it on to other siddhar.<sup>[14][15]</sup>

## See also

- Siddhars
- Thirumoolar
- Bogar
- Avaiyar
- Abithana Chintamani - Encyclopedia of Tamil Literature

## Notes

1. <sup>^</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> *Indian History* (<http://books.google.co.in/books?id=CeEmpfmbxKEC&pg=SL1-PA240&dq=Agattiyar+in+Tamil+Literature&hl=en&sa=X&ei=NBWpUY2wBamuigKfz4DQBA&ved=0CEgQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=Agattiyar%20in%20Tamil%20Literature&f=false>). Tata McGraw-Hill. p. 240.
2. <sup>^</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> <http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/MWScan/index.php?sfx=pdf>
3. <sup>^</sup> Manorama Yearbook 2006, Malayalam; pp 398
4. <sup>^</sup> Siddha medicine
5. <sup>^</sup> "Siddha Central Research Institute" (<http://crisiddha.tn.nic.in/siddhars.html>). Retrieved July 19, 2012.
6. <sup>^</sup> Lopamudra (<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/m03/m03097.htm>) The Mahabharata, translated by Kisari Mohan Ganguli (1883 -1896), Book 3: Vana Parva: Tirtha-yatra Parva: Section XCVII.
7. <sup>^</sup> <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/m10/m10012.htm>
8. <sup>^</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> <http://www.venkatesaya.com/255.ramayana/daily.readings.php?m=7&d=1> Valmiki's Ramayana
9. <sup>^</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> <http://books.google.co.in/books?id=mkSzznK3VuEC&pg=PA209#v=onepage&q&f=false>
10. <sup>^</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> Mahadevan, Iravatham (2009). "Meluhha and Agastya: Alpha and Omega of the Indus Script" ([http://www.harappa.com/arrow/meluhha\\_and\\_agastya\\_2009.pdf](http://www.harappa.com/arrow/meluhha_and_agastya_2009.pdf)). Indus Research Centre, Roja Muthiah Research Library, Chennai, India and Harrapan.
11. <sup>^</sup> <http://www.celextel.org/storiesandanecdotes/agasthya.html>
12. <sup>^</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> <sup>c</sup> *Agastya Legend and the Indus Civilization* by கட்டுரையாளர் : ஐராவதம் ி கா தேவன் Mahadevan,

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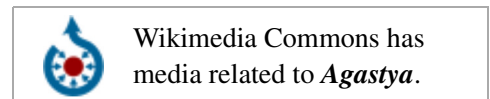
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