



drishti

## Lord Nataraja

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An antique panchaloha ( **an alloy of gold (Au), silver (Ag), copper (Cu), zinc (Zn) and iron (Fe)**) idol of Lord Nataraja, stolen from a temple in southern Tamil Nadu and smuggled to Australia 37 years ago, has been brought back to India.

- **Nataraja (Lord of the Dance)**, the Hindu god Shiva in his form as the cosmic dancer, is represented in metal or stone in many Shaivite temples, particularly in South India.



- It is an important piece of **Chola sculpture**.

- Some of the features of the Nataraja sculpture are:
  - The upper right-hand holds the drum, which signifies the **sound of creation**. All creations spring from the great sound of the damru.
  - The upper left-hand holds the eternal fire, which represents the **destruction**. Destruction is the precursor and inevitable counterpart of creation.
  - The lower right hand is raised in the gesture of **Abhay mudra** signifying **benediction and reassuring the devotee to not be afraid**.
  - The lower left-hand points towards the upraised foot and indicates the **path of salvation**.
  - Shiva is dancing on the figure of a **small dwarf**. The dwarf symbolises **ignorance and the ego of an individual**.
  - The matted and flowing locks of Shiva represent the **flow of river Ganges**.
  - In ornamentation, one ear of Shiva has a male earring while the other has female. This represents the fusion of male and female and is often referred to as **Ardhanarishwar**.
  - A snake is twisted around the arm of Shiva. The snake symbolises the **kundalini power**, which resides in the human spine in the dormant stage. If aroused, one can attain true consciousness.
  - The Nataraja is surrounded by a nimbus of glowing lights which symbolises the **vast unending cycles of time**.

**Source: TH**