

## [2nd International Seminar Announced in Kuala Lumpur](#)

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## 2nd International Seminar Announced in Kuala Lumpur Saiva Siddhantins from Several Nations Will Assemble In Malaysia November 14-16 to Share Ancient Path

Saiva Siddhanta is stirring to life. After centuries of relative slumber, this noble South Indian spiritual tradition is getting moderate international exposure through books, research and institutions. Now comes the Second International Saiva Siddhanta Seminar, to be held November 14, 15, and 16 in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia.

Most of the world outside of India, urged on by Western academic momentum, regards Vedanta as the unique embodiment of India's spiritual heritage. Only in recent decades has a broader understanding of India's rich spiritual diversity come to be studied and published. Among tens of millions of South Indians it is Siddhanta, not Vedanta, which defines and guides dharma.

The first such conference was held in Dharmapuram, Tamil Nadu, in May of 1984, jointly organized by the highly respected Dharmapuram Aadheenam and the Bharati Dasan University in Thiruchirapalli. That well-attended event proved that Siddhantins would support future efforts. The current seminar is a more ambitious undertaking, jointly organized by six leading Hindu groups: The University of Malaya's Department of Indian Studies, the Arulneri Thirukkottam, the Selangor Ceylon Saivites Association, the Malaysia Hindu Sangam, the Sri Maha Mariamman Devasthanam and the Sri Thendayutapani Temple.

Under the spiritual leadership of Shanmuga Desika Gnanasambandha, the head of the Dharmapuram Aadheenam, and the patronage of Dato S. Samy Velu, Malaysia's Minister of Public Works, the Second International Seminar plans to spend M\$200,000 for the entire program which is to include general sessions, panel discussions, cultural events, published papers, lecture tours and more.

An announcement received by Hinduism Today noted that 31 papers have been submitted as of mid-October and further said: "Saivism is one of the oldest religions in the world, and its philosophy, Saiva Siddhanta, is one complete by itself. Though its study has been neglected in preceding centuries, at present there is a sign of revival, with students of this philosophy in all parts of the globe. Yet there is much to be done. One sure way to get the younger generation interested in this system of philosophy is to give clear, simple expositions of its subtle points for the benefit of all." Saiva Siddhanta Church, with international headquarters in Hawaii, has prepared a paper which discusses two distinct theological positions taken by Saiva Siddhantins - one pluralistic and the other monistic.

Hinduism Today will attend and report fully on the seminar. Those interested in participating (registration fees are M\$30 for Malaysian and Singapore delegates and Rs. 75 for Indian and Sri Lankan delegates. Further information or the published results of the event may be obtained by contacting the General Secretary, SISS Seminar, Department of Indian Studies, University of Malaya, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

### Saivism's Six Schools

Saiva Siddhanta is one of six noble schools in the Saivite tradition which are geographically, philosophically and culturally diverse. All six of these schools are both theistic (God, Siva, is both immanent and transcendent) and monistic (Reality is a one whole or existence without independent parts - all is God). One exception to this is the pluralistic interpretation of Meykandar. Hinduism Today has published a four-page summary of the history, beliefs and spiritual goals of Saivism's six schools. It is available at no cost. The six schools are:

**Pasupata Saivism:** A pre-Vedic school with emphasis on asceticism - few modern adherents.

**Vira Saivism:** Revived in 1150 by Basavana, its 10 million followers worship the personal Siva Lingam, respect a work ethic and egalitarian and humanitarian values.

Kashmir Saivism: Founded in the 9th century by Vasugupta, this esoteric, meditative school seeks recognition of the Self as nothing but Siva.

Saiva Siddhanta: Earliest exponent is Saint Tirumular - the largest contemporary Saiva school with over 60 million followers.

Gorakhnath Saivism: Stress on worldly renunciation and siddhis through control of yogas and bodily processes.

Siva Advaita: A philosophical school with no community of followers, purification and meditation on Siva as the Self are stressed.

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