

HISTORY OF THIRUKOLUR AND VAITHAMANIDHI PERUMAL TEMPLE IN TIRUCHENDUR TALUK

K.REVATHI

Ph.D Research Scholar,(Part Time)
Department of History,
V.O. Chidambaram College,
Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli,
Tamil Nadu, South India – 627012.

Abstract

As the God fearing people, the Tamils never preferred to settle in villages which had no temple and considered such villages as haunted places and unfit for human inhabitation. The temple is a place where God dwells in various forms embodied in sacred images or Symbols of deities which constitute the most important part of Hindu art. The images that were formed under the trees became temples made consequently on bricks being used for constructing temples. Since then several kinds of temples have come into existence. Silapathikaram contains reference about Vishnu temple. The Sixth and Seventh centuries A.D. was marked by the adoption of stone as medium by the Hindu and Jains of South India. The temples of South India still survive in thousands and are in use and maintain their importance and sanctity. The contributing factors for the state of the South Indian temple are the comparative freedom from foreign invasions and disruption in peninsular India, the strength and stability of the Kingdoms. The great empires of the South, the Chalukyas the Pallavas, the early Pandyas, the later cholas and the later Pandyas extended their patronage for the construction of the temples.

KeyWords: TenTiruperai, Navathirupathi, Thirukolur, Vaithamanithi temple.

Introduction

History of Pandya country, Karaikudi, 1962.7. Jagadesan, N.,History of Srivaishnavism in Tamil Country, (Post Ramanuja), Madurai, 1977 Tiruchendurregion sustained and nurtured ancient civilization for many centuries that man can remember. The historical places. Alvarthirunagari, Angamagalam, Tenthirupperai, Tirukkolur, AlagiyemanaValapuram, Malavarayanattam, Poraiyur, Suganthalai, Kurumpur, Nallur, Kayalpattinam, Virapandyapattinam, Speak the historical antiquity and soil fertility of Tiruchendur. The state department of Archaeology and museums and the Archaeological survey of India conducted an elaborate survey in this region. In their half way excavations they found many things in the lower valley of Thamiraparani. Three km south west of TenTiruperai is the Vaithamanithi temple at Thirukolur. The nine Vaishnava shirines hailed as

Navathirupathi are considered to be related to the Navagrahaas or the nine planets or celestial bodies and the deities in these temples are worshipped as the Navagrahaas themselves : They are

Sooriyan (Sun)	-	Srivaikuntam
Chandran(Moon)	-	Varagunamangai
Angaarakan (Mars)	-	Thirukolur
Budhan (Mercury)	-	Thirupuliankudi
Guru (Jupiter)	-	Alwarthirunagari
Chukran (Venus)	-	Thenthiruperai
Shani (Saturn)	-	Perungulam
Raghu, kethu	-	Irettaithirupathi

In his hymns on this temple, Nammalwar, assumes the role of the heroine's mother, who complains of the young girl forsaking everything to be with her Lord at Thirukolur. The first stanza captures the essence beautifully. "The food she eats the water she drinks even the betel leaves she chews are all submerged in here passion for kannan. Eyes streaming in the pangs of separation she winds her way to the town Thirukolur, which travelers say is the finest in the world.

The forest vergines talked secretly about the town. This is said as 'Kol" in Tamil. Hence this town got this name Thirukolur.

In inscriptions, this town was mentioned as Thiruvazhuthi Nattu Thirukolur, Rajaraja Pandi Nattu Thirukolur, Utthama chola vala Nattu Thirukolur, Thirukolurana Chinthamani Nallur, and Thirukolurana Uzhaka Chinha manipuram.

Inscriptions of The Vaithamanithi Perumal Temple

The temple is rich in inscriptions though some are undecipherable. The oldest inscriptions of the temple belongs to Rajarajan - I. It denotes that this temple might be built during his period. The name Vaithamanithi, of the main deity was first mentioned in the inscription of the year 1414A.D. Before that the Lord was called as Salasayanathu Kidantha Emmeruman or Pallikondaruliya paraswamy.

The later inscription is found in the reconstructed building of the temple, It belongs to Kulothungachola. It shows that this temple was reconstructed by Kulothungachola.

The other inscriptions which were made during the reign of first Maravarman Sundara Pandya (1216 - 1239 A.D), Second Maravarman Sundara Pandyan (1238-1251 A.D), Sadavarma Chola Pandyan (1050-1076 A.D) Sadavarma Srivallabha (1090-1130AD), Sadavarma kulasekaran (1205A.D)

Emmandalamumkonda kulasekara Devar (1289 A.D), Varaguna Pandyan, Uthayamarthandan and Tirunelveli Perumal. All these inscriptions have the records of gifts granted by the kings to the temple. It also throw light on the political powers under which this town had developed.

Society of Thirukolur

People of this town are living together with communal harmony. The Different communities of this town are yadavars, Pillaimars, Brahmins, Maravas, Kambers (they play musical instruments of temple), Nadars, Pandarams (flower merchants), Vannars, Paravas (they are all converted Christians) and other depressed classes. The profession of the people is depends upon their communities. Most of the people depend on Agriculture.

The river Thamiraparani is the main water source for the town. There is a reservoir across the river. It situated between Srivaikuntam and Pudukudi. Captain Horsely built this dam during 1855. Tirunelveli board president Mr. Gopal Nayakkar opened this reservoir. Thus Thamiraparani provides limitless water for irrigation. Further the physical features of the land helps in establishing the character of the land as the region of scenic beauty with plenty of resources in water and soil.

Religious life

The major sects of Hinduism namely Saivism and Vaishnavism exalt the place Thirukolur. Because there are two major temples, One belongs to Vaishnavas namely Vaithamanithi Perumal Temple another one belongs to Salivates namely Siva temple. In addition to the major temples there are many small temples in Thirukolur. There is an old temple of god Chola Pandyesvaran which is called as Chera Chola Pandyesvara temple. It was built during the period of Maravarma sundara pandya. There are three Amman temples, one Vinayagar temple and three sattanism temples. They are i) Nithyakalyani Amman Temple, ii) Isakki Amman Temple, iii) Mutharamman Temple, iv) Vinayagar Temple, v) Sudalai Madan Temple, vi) Sastha Temple, vii) Karuppa Swamy temple.

Madurakavi Alwar

Thirukolur is the birth place of Madurakavi Alwar. He was the ardent devotee of Nammalwar. One day Madurakavi Alwar worked in his paddy field. At that time an old cow grazing over his paddy. He had ride it out with a stick. The cow ran away and fell down. Suddenly it died. Madurakavialwar felt very sorry for the cow's death. He thought that he done sin. In order to relieve himself from the sin he went to North Indian Vaishnava temples. There he saw a bright light on the sky one night and he began to follow the light. After several days he reached Alvarthirunagari.

There the light disappeared. It made him to think that the light was Nammalwar who lived in Alvarthirunagari. From that Madurakavialwar became the student as well as a devotee of Nammalwar. The

hymns sang by Madurakavialwar about Nammalwar are seen on the walls of vaithamanithi perumal temple. There is a small shrine for Madurakavialwar in perumal Templel.

Ramanujar

One time Ramanujar was going to Thirukolur. In the outskirts of the divyadesam, a lady came and bowed to him. He asked her, "From where are you coming" she replied that she was coming out of Thirukolur. Upon hearing. it Ramanujar said, "Sharing one person's cloth between seven people and eating anything everyone tries to enter Thirukolur, How is it that for you it is a place to leave?" The lady replied her answer as eighty one statements which are called as Thirukolur Animal Varthaigal. From that she said that she had not possess such a knowledge same as of those mentioned in the eighty one statements. Because of that she wanted to leave Thirukolur. Hearing her words Ramanujar was pleased and visited the lady's, home and ate meal at her home. It was mentioned by Periya Vanamamalai Jeeyar having heard it from Thiruvaymozhi.

Conclusion

The deification of Alvars and Acharyas led to the expansion of temple complexes and separate shrines for them. This trend is seen in the big temple complexes of Alvar Tirunagari, Tentirupperai and Tirukkolur. There is a separate shrine for Nammalvar in Alvar Tirunagari. Madurakavi the disciple of Nammalvar and a native of Tirukktilur has a separate shrine in Tirukkolur temple. Tentirupperai temple houses Manavala Mamunigal. The popularity of the avatara concept was found expression in the sculptures from Nava Tiruppatigal Narasimha, Krishna as Venugopala, Govarthanagiridhari, Kaliyamardana Kodandarama are the beautiful sculptures seen on koshtas of gopuras and Vimanas in Nava Tiruppatigal. The huge temple complexes which were the result of the deification of Alvars and Acharyas in turn served the purpose of the conduct of a number of festivals. The people from different communities visited these temples during these festivals which naturally led to the promotion of temple culture.

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