



Koneswaram



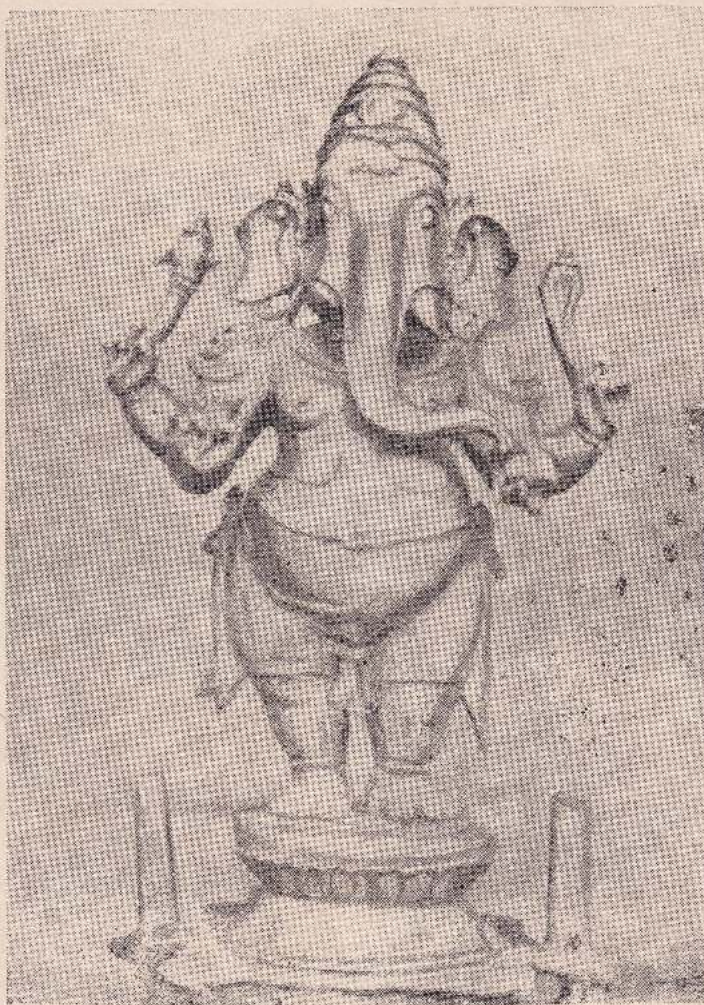
Dr. Sankaran
Sri Ranga Chinnam
Dusse 12. 2
Tamil (S. 2)

C. S. Navaratnam

EVIDENCE
of
PANDITHA RATNA C. S. NAVARATNAM
author of
"Tamils and Ceylon "
"Vanni and the Vanniyas "
"A Short History of Hinduism in
Ceylon ".

Navaly North,
Manipay.
5 - 12 - 68.

6. Aug 1961
15/12/71



GANAPATI

Trincomalee Find—Bronze
A rare Specimen

Ht. 1' - 8" Wt. 65 lbs.

THIS EVIDENCE IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING BOOKS.

- A J. Ancient Jaffna—¹⁹²⁶1927—Mudaliyar C Rasanayagam.
- A R. Archeological Report (South India).
- C J S. Ceylon Journal of Science Vol. II.
- Cul. Culavamsa Part I and II. (Geiger).—Dhammakitti etc.
- D K P. Daksina Kailasa Puranam (Tamil)—14th century—Panditharasar.
- D K M. Daksina Kailasa Manmiam (Sanskrit)—fifth century. A.C.
- E B. Encyclopaedia Britannica.
- E Z. Epigraphia Zeylanica—Volumes III and IV.
- H S S. Hymns of the Saivite Saints (Tamil)—seventh and eighth centuries).
- J C B R A S. Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
- K K. Konesar Kalveddu (Tamil)—15th century?—Kavyrasa Varoethyan.
- K P. Kathiramalai Pallu (Tamil)—17th century.
- M V. Mahavamsa—6th century (Geiger) - Mahanama.
- P P. Periyapuramam (Tamil)—12th century - Sekkilar Swamihal.
- P V P. Paralai Venayagar Pallu (Tamil)—18th century—Sinnathamby Pulavar.
- S H H C. A Short History of Hinduism in Ceylon—1964—C. S. Navaratnam.
- S K V. Sivanamak Kali Venpa—14th century—Umapathy Sivachariyar.
- T B. Trincomalee Bronzes—1953—Dr. W. Balendra.
- T K P. Tirukonasala Puranam (Tamil)—19th century—M. Muttukumarupillai.
- T M. Tirumantiram (Tamil)—(before the 8th century)—Tirumular.
- T P. Tirupukal (Tamil)—15th century—Arunagiri Swamihal.
- T S C C. The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon—Vol. I-VI—
17th century—Father Fernao de Queyros
- T V. Tirukonasala Vaipavam (Tamil)—19th century- V. Akilasapillai.
- U C H C. University of Ceylon—History of Ceylon Vol. I Part I & II.
- Y V M. Yalpana Vaipava Malai—Edited by Mudaliyar Kula Sabanathan
(Tamil)—18th century—Mylvaganapulavar.

KONESWARAM

"A TEMPLE OF A THOUSAND COLUMNS".

DERIVATION

Tirukonamalai is the Tamil name for Trincomalee. Tiru kon malai—Tiru in Tamil means sacred, Kon-(கோன்) a king or god, Malai - a mountain or hill. Tirukonamalai - the sacred hill of God. Trincomalee is a corruption of Tirukonamalai.

Some try to derive the word Tirukonamalai from Tiru gona (Sinh) malai. But the temple was in existence long before the origin of the Sinhalese language. There is a celebrated Sivan temple in South India known as Tirugokaranam (திருக்கோகரணம்) a temple sanctified by the sacred hymns of St. Sambandhar.

ANTIQUITY

When we examine the legends traditions and the beliefs relating to Ceylon in such Indian works as the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Skanda Purana* we are led to infer that Saivism was prevalent in Ceylon at a very early period. The epic *King Ravana* was a great devotee of the Lord of Koneswaram and his devotion to Siva is immortalized in the hymns of the Tamil Saiva saints. Vibhisana the brother of Ravana is still worshipped at Kelaniya. Lakshmana the brother of Rama is worshipped in Sabaragamuwa. There is an ancient temple for Sita Amman at Nuwara Eliya. Ravana is said to have performed the last funeral rites of his mother at the hot springs of Kanniya.

The worship of the *Saptamatrikas*, *Nachchimar* (Tamil - the seven goddesses) was also prevalent in Ceylon. The energetic female principle of the Vedic gods constituted the *Saptamarikas*. Temples dedicated to these goddesses were at Mannakandal, between Odduchuddan and Putukkudiyiruppu. There were temples to these goddesses between Vavuniya and Anuradhapura and in the Jaffna Peninsula. This cult is pre-puranic (320A.C.) and bears evidence of the antiquity of Hinduism in the Island. Some of the images of these goddesses are found in the Anuradhapura museum.

Dr. Paul E. Pieris the eminent Sinhalese historian says about the ancient Hindu temples of Ceylon: "Long before the arrival of Vijaya there were in Lanka five recognized Isvarams of Siva which claimed and received adoration of all India. These were Tiruketheeswaram near Mahatittha, Munneswaram dominating Salawatta and the pearl fishery; Tondeswaram near Mantota, Tirukoneswaram near the great Bay of Kottiyar and Naguleswaram near Kankesanturai. Their situation close to these ports cannot be the result of accident or caprice and was probably determined by the concourse of a wealthy mercantile population whose religious wants called for attention". (JCBRAS. Vol. XXV No. 70 pp. 17-18).

From the remotest period similar gods and goddesses were worshipped in South India and Ceylon. The early Tamils worshipped Murukan and Siva on the tops of hills and mountains. So we find Kalastri, Tiruvannamalai, Palani, Swami Malai, Tiruthany and Tirupparankuntram as ancient places of worship. In Ceylon too ancient places of Saiva worship are on the hills and mountains as in Konamalai, Kathiramalai, Uganthamalai,

Kandaswamymalai, Keerimalai, Sivanolipadam and Kudiramalai (Asuvagiri). Of these **Konamalai** holds an esteemed position among the sacred places of Ceylon.

In the seventh century **St. Sambandhar** in his *Koneswara Pathikam* in stanza 5 refers to **Veddas** as worshippers in the great temple. The **Veddas** were the original inhabitants of the Island. They are closely associated with great temples in Ceylon namely **Kataragama, Tirukovil, Verugal and Thambalagamam**. It seems that when **Koneswaram** was destroyed by the Portuguese, the **Veddas** changed their allegiance to the new temple at **Thambalagamam**. The long continued association of the **Veddas** with any temple seems to indicate the antiquity of the shrine.

The great **Agastiya** after performing penance at **Vetharaniam** in South India continued it at **Tirukarasai** on the banks of the **Mahaveli Ganga** where a temple was founded to **Lord Parameswara**. Later **Agastiya** retired to **Koneswaram** and after receiving the Lord's blessings proceeded to **Thuvaddapuri** to worship the **Lord Ketheeswarar** (S H H C p. 60 and D K M).

One fact is clear from the story of **Agastiya** that before his time **Koneswaram** and **Tiruketheeswaram** had already been in existence. The stories of **Agastiya** are based on historical memories. These stories are the outcome of the large movements of aryanization of South India and Ceylon. It is the opinion of some historians that the aryanization of South India began about 1000 B.C. and reached its completion before the fourth century B.C. These facts help us to form a correct perspective of the founding of the temples.

St. Tirumular who belongs to the early Siddha school in his great mystical work *Tirumantiram* mentions Ceylon as *Sivabhumi*—a land hallowed by the temples to **Siva** (T.M.V. 2747) This is further endorsed in the thirteenth century by *Umapathy Sivam*, one of the Spiritual Patriarchs of the Saivite Church in his *Kovil Puranam*.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: "*The Town (Trincomalee) was one of the first Tamil settlements in Ceylon*". (EB. Vol. 22, Pg. 477)

According to *Konesar Kalveddu* the founding of the temple was in the year 512 Kali-Yuga on Monday the tenth day of the month of **Vaikasi** (May - June). Current Tamil Almanac - The *Panchchangam* - gives the year A.C. 1968 as 5070 Kali - Yuga. Therefore the year 512 Kali - Yuga will correspond to B.C. 2590. The founding of the temple at **Konamalai** was 4558 years ago from now.

Research scholars in archaeology like **Sir John Marshal** states that **Saivism** is the oldest faith in the world and that "**Sivalinga worship**" was prevalent in the period of **Mohanjo - daro** and **Harappa**. Fortunately today a team of French archaeologists have found in **Warka**, a place in **Iraq**, a site contemporaneous with **Mahenjo - daro**. Here too they have discovered the same worship.

The discovery of urn - burials with skulls and bones in the Puttalam District from 1926 to 1957, the discovery of punch - marked coins or puranas by Sir Paul E. Pieris at Kanderodai in 1918 and 1919, the unearthing of a vessel containing punch - marked coins from a well at Mullaitivu in 1888, the recent discovery of dolmenoid cists by Dr. S. Paranavitana at Katiraveli in the North Eastern Coast and the statement in *Konesar Kalveddu* that the temple was founded in 512 Kali-Yuga, all speak of the race that produced the marvellous civilization of the Indus - Valley spread over India to Ceylon. The pre-historic tombs of Hyderabad, the pieces of pottery found in the Tinnevely District, all indicate the long trek of the people from the Indus-valley to Ceylon. The date of the founding of the temple in 512 Kali-Yuga is not a 'puranic' exaggeration but seems to be a possibility in the light of the foregoing facts.

TAMIL INSCRIPTIONS

A Tamil inscription that was found in the Koneswaram Temple before it was destroyed by Constantine de Sa in 1624 gives the story of the founding of the temple. It was translated by the most learned native and certified by an *Ouviador* (Magistrate) of Ceylon and sent to His Majesty the King of Portugal. The translation reads as follows: "*Manica Raja Bau, Emperor of this Lancaue erected this Pagoda to the God Vidia-Mal-Manda in the year.....(According to reckoning it comes to be 1300 before the coming of Christ. There will come a nation called the Franks who will destroy it, and there will be no king to rebuild it once more*". This translation was found in Codex 51 - VIII - 40 in the Ajuda Library of Lisbon (J C B R A S Vol. xxx No. 80 p. 449). There is no God as Vidia-Mal-Manda. The Tamil words must be வீதியம், மேற்றளியம், மண்டபமும், (Vedium, Matthalium, Mandapamum) — premises, edifices and halls the builder dedicated unto the Lord.

As the French were well known in Syria, the people of the East called all Europeans with some corruption of Franguis. The Portuguese themselves were impressed by this prophecy. A search was made for further evidence by examining the rocks used for the building of the fort, but none was found.

Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam gives the following translation of the Tamil inscriptions at the entrance to the fort: "*O King! the Portuguese shall later break down the holy edifice built by Kulakoddan in ancient times and it shall not be rebuilt nor will future kings think of doing so*".

PATRONS

483 B C.

Vaipava Malai a record of the historical traditions of Jaffna written by Mylvagana Pulavar makes a positive statement that **Prince Vijaya** before assuming the kingship of the land renewed the **Koneswaram Temple** in the East, **Santhirasegaram** at **Dondra Head** in the South, **Naguleswaram** in the North and rebuilt **Tiruketheeswaram** on the West, which had been in ruins (YVM. p. 6).

As the kings of Ceylon from Vijaya to Devanampiya Tissa (247-207 B.C.) were Hindus, Hindu institutions flourished during this period. With the coming of Buddhism in the third century B.C. Hinduism received a setback, but during the long reign of King Elara (145-101 B.C.) it regained its lost position, though Buddhism was the state religion.

Writing of events in the fourth century A.C., the author of the Mahavamsa says : " The King (Mahasena) built also the Manihira Vihara and founded three viharas destroying temples of the Brahmanical Gods. The Gokanna Vihara and another Vihara Erakavilla and a third in the village of the Brahman Kalanda " (Mv. (Geiger) Chapter. 37 V. 41). All these places were in the Eastern Coasts.

The author of the Yalpana Vaipava Malai who had no knowledge of the Mahavamsa and the chronology of the rulers of Anuradhapura says that during the reign of King Pandu in the Saka era 358 (436 A.C.) Kulakoddan, a Chola Prince repaired to Trincomalee and restored the temple and made endowments for the daily services of the temple. The Pandu Kings ruled at Anuradhapura from 433 to 460 A.C. The building of the temple by Kulakoddan is supported by the lithic record that is now at the entrance to Fort Frederick.

Daksina Kailasa Manmiam which is a section of the great Skanda Puranam (Sanskrit) of the fifth century gives a general survey of Hinduism in Ceylon. It says that from very ancient times nine sacred shrines were famous for the Hindus. Of these seven are in India, and two in Ceylon namely Koneswaram and Tiruketheeswaram.

In the seventh century St. Sambandhar one of the four most famous Saiva saints had sung the praises of this temple in one 'Pathikam' containing eleven stanzas. The following is a part of one stanza :

கரைகெழு சுந்துங் காரகிற் பிளவும்
மளப்பருங் கனமணி வரன்றிக்
குரைகடல் லோத நித்திலங் கொழிக்குங்
கோணமா மலையமர்ந் தாரே.

" Konamalai is the abode of our Lord where the raging waters of the sea scatter on the shore, sandalwood, ahil, precious stones and pearls—all of value high ". (Ahil a fragrant wood of North Ceylon was one of the ancient exports of Ceylon from Matota. Deforestation has brought this species near to extinction).

St. Appar who was a contemporary of St. Sambandhar has referred to Koneswaram in one of his inimitable Thiruthandagams.

தக்கா ரடியார்க்கு நீயே யென்றுந், தலையார் கயிலாயன் நீயே யென்றும்,
அக்காரம் பூண்டாயும் நீயே யென்றும், ஆக்கூரில் தான்றோன்றி நீயே யென்றும்,
புக்காய ஏழுலகும் நீயே யென்றும், புள்ளிருக்கு வேளுராய் நீயே யென்றும்,
தெக்கார மாகோணத்* தானே யென்றும், நின்ற நெய்த தானுவென் நெஞ்சுளாயே.

*திருக்கோணமலை

The Pallavas were great navigators. The culture of North India found its way to the South through the Pallavas. The civilization of the Tamils spread to distant lands of South East Asia through them. The Bhakti movement a fervid emotional surrender to God found literary expression in the *Thevarams* of the Saivite Saints. Numerous temples were built by Pallava Kings for the first time in stone for the worship of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Ceylon obviously marked a stage in their expansion over South East Asia. They seem to have taken great interest in Koneswaram, for some of the Sanskrit inscriptions unearthed in the Trincomalee District are in the Pallava Grantha Script. From the pillars and decorated stones that were found in the fort area, we have to infer that the temple was rebuilt by the Pallavas and it is the ruins of this building that is now in the bed of the sea.

Manavamma, son of Kassapa II, when he was overthrown by Dathopatisa fled to India where he took service with the Pallava King. He partook in his wars. Afterwards Narasimhavarman, the Pallava King helped him to regain the throne of Lanka. Manavamma ruled for nearly thirty five years. The Koneswaram Temple might have been built during the time of Manavamma (676 - 711) when the alliance between Ceylon and the Pallavas was strongest.

It was during the Pallava period (300 - 900 A. C.) that Hinduism became a living faith in South India. The new Hindu Revival had its own repercussions on the cultural history of the Island. It was during this period that the temple to Vishnu at Dondra Head and the temple to Skanda, at Mavittapuram were founded. This revival seems to be the explanation for the absence of Buddhists in the Jaffna Kingdom when the Portuguese took over the administration. Many Tamils who were Buddhists might have become Hindus.

In South India, the Pallavas gave place to the Cholas and the Pandians, and Ceylon came under the direct rule of the Cholas in the eleventh century. The Cholas built many beautiful temples to Siva and Vishnu in Polonnaruwa, Matota, Padawiya and Trincomalee Districts. They donated lands, cows, money, flower - gardens etc., for the maintenance of these temples. Hindu institutions received considerable patronage and support. At the same time they made donations to Buddhist institutions and encouraged Buddhism. (C.J.S. Vol. II p.p. 185 and 199).

As the Kings of Ceylon who followed the Cholas at Polonnaruwa had strong links with the Tamils they continued to extend the same patronage to Brahmans and their temples as in the days of the Cholas. Vijaya Bahu I (1070 - 1114) founded Vijayarajeswaram at Kantalai. (E.Z. Vol. IV p. 24) (Palmottai Tamil inscription).

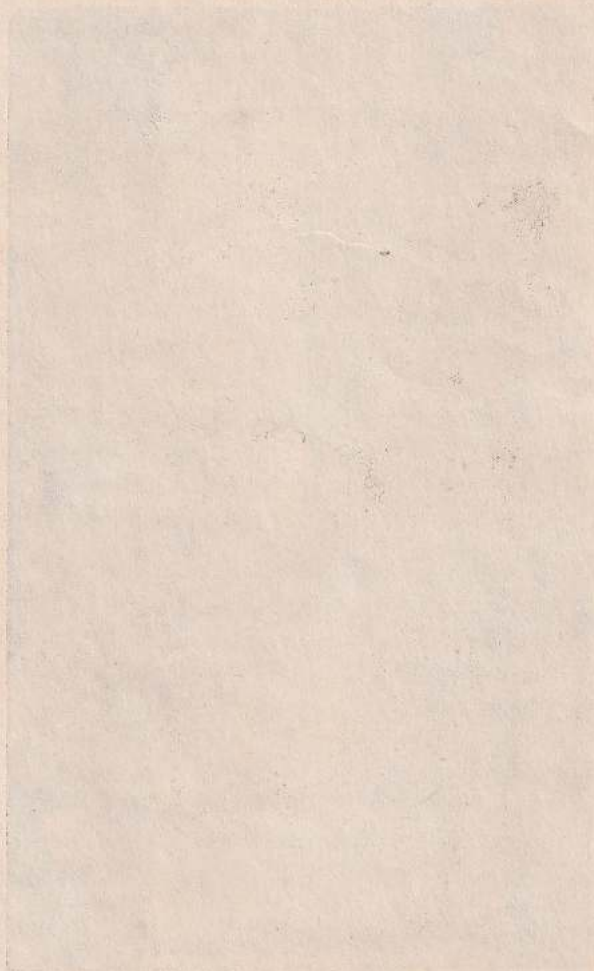
Vikrama Bahu II (1116 - 1137), son of Vijaya Bahu I, was a great devotee of Siva. He founded a Saiva shrine Vikrama - cala - mega - Iswaram at Magala also known as Vikrama Calamegaiswaram. (E Z. Vol. III Page 308).

Gaja Babu II (1137 - 1153) son of Vikrama Bahu, founded the Siva Devale I at Polonnaruwa (J C B R A S. Vol. XXIV No. 68. p. 191). He made offerings to Brahmans attached to the temple of Koneswaram (D K P. III VV 95 - 97).



One of the pillars of the Ancient temple of
Koneswaram.

M. Sathyanarayana
Sri Ranga Museum
Museum No. 2
Kumbakonam (S. I.)



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF NEW YORK

12-11-1960

Parakrama Bahu I (1153 - 1186) erected buildings for the Brahmins. (Cul. Chap. 73. V. 71). He also built thirteen Hindu Temples, and restored and rededicated seventy nine ruined temples to the gods. (Cul. Chap. 79. VV. 19, 22).

Nissanka Malla (1186 - 1197) built the Parvati Alms Hall at Kantalai. This small town was known as *Saturvedabrahmapuram*—the city inhabited by Brahmins who were proficient in all the four Vedas. Thus it will be seen that all the kings who followed the Cholas at Polonnaruwa were great supporters of Hinduism and Hindu institutions.

ENSIGN

Kalinga Magha (1215 - 1244) was a staunch Hindu and was the head of a new dynasty that began its rule over the Jaffna Kingdom in the thirteenth century. **Vira Pandyan** invaded Ceylon about 1263 and after his victory he left his *ensign* the double fish at the main entrance of the sacred shrine of Koneswaram. This *ensign* can still be seen at the entrance to the fort. (U H C Vol. I Part II p. 685). This is endorsed by the Kudumimalai, South Indian lithic record (A R. No. 356 - 1906).

Later the **Arya Chakravaties** of Jaffna took some special interest in the temple. One of these kings caused the *Daksina Kailasa Puranam* (Tamil) to be written in praise of this shrine. The Arya Kings of Jaffna were the custodians of Tamil learning and Saivite culture for more than four hundred years from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

The temple was under the direct management of the **Vanniya Chieftains of Trincomalee** until the advent of the Portuguese. These Chieftains were under the suzerainty of the Kings of Jaffna and sometimes independent (Y V M. p. 11). The Vanniya Chieftains of the North gave each a portion of their revenue to the temple (Y V M p. 12).

Many of the Tamil books refer to Koneswaram as *Daksina* (South) *Kailayam*. Mt. Kailas is known as *Uttara* (North) *Kailayam*. One is in the mountains and one is in the sea. It is interesting to note that Mt. Kailas and Trincomalee are in the same meridian. The Buddhists of Tibet used to go on pilgrimages to Mt. Kailas as the Hindus.

THE BOOKS

The books which deal with the story of the temple are *Daksina Kailasa Puranam* (Tamil), *Konesar Kalveddu*, *Tirukonasala Anthathy*, *Tirukonasala Venpa*, *Machchapuranam* etc., References have also been made by **Arunagiri Swamihal**, **Sekkilar Swamihal**, **Umapathy Sivam** etc.

Sekkilar Swamihal who lived in the twelfth century says in his *Periyapuranam* :

அந்நகரி லமர்ந்தங் கணிணிது மேவி
யாழி புடைசூழ்த் தொலிக்கு மீழ்த்தன்னின்
மன்னு திருக் கோணமலை மகிழ்ந்து செங்கண்
மழ விடையார் தமைப் போற்றி வணங்கிப் பாடிச்.

*He (St. Sambandhar) reached that town and dwelt in comfort,
In Ilam surrounded by the raging sea
He enjoyed the site of the Konesar Hill
And praised and worshipped and sang
The glories of the Lord of the bull.*

Shri Umapathysivachchariyar, one of the spiritual patriarchs of the Saivite Church who lived in the **fourteenth century** in his *Sivanamak Kali Venpa* has referred to Tirukonamamalai temple.

மன்னு திருக்கோண மாமலையின் மாதுமைசேர்
பொன்னே கோணேசப் புராதன—நன்னயஞ்சேர்.

The *Konesar Kalveddu* gives in detail the duties allotted to the administrators of the temple who were mostly chosen from the Vellalas and given the dignified title of 'Pandarathar'. A Governor was placed over these and invested with the title of Vanniya. The book further gives the duties and services to be performed by **Thanaththar**, **Varippaththar**, and **Pasupathar** (priests). It also explains the services to be performed by the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages towards the maintenance of the temple. The five types of town servants as smiths, potters, barbers, washers and pariahs were allotted lands for their maintenance. At **Thambalagamam** and **Kantalai** immense tracts of rice fields were dedicated to the shrine. According to the temple Chronicles several princes like **Gaja Babu**, **Jeyaveera Singai Aryan**, **Pararajasekaran V**, etc., have made endowments to the temple.

These endowments have been endorsed by the Kankuveli lithic record which was seen by the Dutch Governor Van Sanden in 1786. He has made the following observation in his diary of 20-5-1786. The record was in Tamil and when translated it was as follows:

"The Wannia of Trincomalee and the seven headmen or the Adipanners of the village of Kankuveli have dedicated this field and other advantages to be derived from that village to their God Konainathan. Whomscever intrudes on this gift or takes any of these advantages to himself will grievously sin. This dedication was confirmed in the presence of two priests of the castes, Eanam and Warrallepattoem".*

Hugh Nevill also published this in his Journal "Taprobanian".

Arunagiri Swamihal of *Tirupukal* fame has sung the praises of this shrine in the **fifteenth century**.

நிலைக்கு நான்மறை மகத்தான பூசுரர்
திருக்கோணமலை தலத்தாறு கோபுரம்.....

The temple priests were well-versed in the four Vedas - It is a temple with six towers.

* This information was given by Mr. J. R. Sinnathamby.

Kathiramalai Pallu an outstanding work of the **seventeenth century** says about this sacred hill.

காசில் பொற்சிலம் பின்சிக ரத்தைக்
கால் பறித்தே யெறிந்திட வந்த
மாசில் தென்கோண மாமலையைச் சூழும்
மாவலி கங்கை நாடெங்கள் நாடே.

*The crest of the golden mount
The raging wind did wrench and hurl,
It landed in the South and eventually
Came to be known as Konamamalai
Mahaveli Ganga surrounds this mount
And this river flows in our land* (K.P. 8)

De Queyros an eminent Portuguese historian of the **seventeenth century** says that the temple was “*The Rome of the Orient*”, and was more frequented by pilgrims than Rameswaram or Joganath in Orissa. (*De Queyros* Bk II - p. 236)

About this great shrine the same book says: “*Over that large harbour (Trincomalee) there juts out from the land into the sea a rock on which the Kings of Ceylon erected three pagodas two at the extremities of the hill overhanging the sea and one in the middle and the highest point which was the principal one and one of the most venerated in India*”. (*De Queyros* Bk I-p. 66)

Though the great temple was demolished the *Paralai Venayagar Pallu*, a famous **eighteenth century** work of *Sinnathambypulavar* refers to the sacred hill.

பொருவில் கோணச் சிகரத் தருகிற்
பொழிந்து லெள்ளம் வழிந்து போய்ப்
பூந்தண் குறிஞ்சி வளைந்து வேடிச்சி
காத்தன் சேவடி வணங்கியே.

The shower that fell near the crest of Konamalai flowed down and encircled the fertile mountain region, at the same time worshipped the feet of Skanda Lord of the Vedda damsel. (P V P. V. 74).

Machchapuranam is another **eighteenth century** work composed by *Vedamalai-appapillai*, a South Indian in praise of the Lord of Koneswaram.

One of the finest pieces of Tamil literature produced by East Ceylon is the *Tirukonasala Anthathy* an unpublished work by *Subramaniam Arumugam* of Trincomalee. It seems to be a work of the **early nineteenth century**. The last stanza of the *Anthathy* is the following:—

உன்னுநினைவு முலையானினைவு முயர் மதியும்
பன்னாறுவும் பதஞானமும் பகை சினம் பொய்
மன்னுவறிவும் மருவானியும் வராபிறப்புஞ்
சொன்னு வருமின்ப முத்தா கயிலைத்து ஹையன்பனே.

Dear Lord of Koneswaram—the sacred abode known as the Southern Kailayam—bless me with instinctive devotion towards you, fruitful actions and a penetrating intellect; bless me with an unwavering will, and a consciousness pure and serene unblemished by enmity, wrath and falsehood. Destroy my karmic sequence and the chain of transmigrations. Bless me, O Lord! with the bliss of chanting your Holy Name.

SACRED RELICS

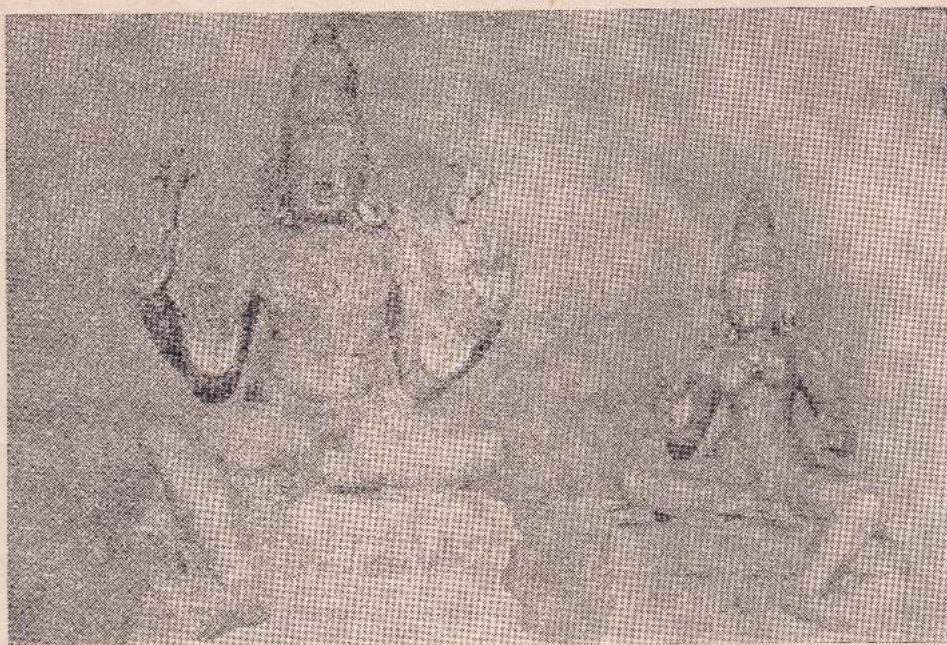
Fortunately in 1944 two images, a **Vishnu** and a **Maha Lakshmi** were unearthed inside the fort area. Later, two bronze images one of **Ganesha** and the other of **Parvati** (seated) were discovered accidentally while digging a well in a private garden (date unknown). The image of Ganesha found in this place is one of the best of its kind in Ceylon or even in India. A **Trisulam** (Trident) and a figure of a bird (the traditional **annam**) perhaps the top of a lamp were unearthed with the other finds.

Again on July 3, 1950, a committee was appointed to decide as to the image, the temple would be dedicated to when it was rebuilt. The Committee had to submit its report on August 6, 1950 with regard to the restoration of the temple, and also to examine a method of procuring a 'Lingam' from Benaras. On July 27, 1950 three images of **Siva** (seated), **Parvati** (standing) both of bronze and a **Chandrasegara** (inferior metal) came to light just in time to satisfy the long persistent and widespread yearning of the Ceylon Saivites to rebuild the historic temple. **It is good to note that with the dawn of independence and with the rebuilding of the temple He (the Lord of Koneswaram) should reappear from his long seclusion of 326 years to restore benign grace on his numerous devotees.** So far no images of Skanda has been unearthed in the precincts of the sacred edifice. Images of Nadarajah also have not come to light.

The measurements and weights of the Trincomalee finds :

Siva (seated)	1' — 8½" x 10" — 70 lbs.	(more gold and copper)
Parvati (seated)	1' — 4" x 8" — 30 lbs.	do do do
Siva (standing)	1' — 8" x 7" — 25 lbs.	(more white lead)
Parvati (standing)	1' — 8" x 5" — 30 lbs.	(gold and copper)
Ganesha (standing)	1' — 8" x 10½" — 65 lbs.	(more gold and copper)
Tirusulam	1' — 7" x 1" — 8 lbs.	(more brass)
Lamp Top (annam)	1' — 5" x 12" — 7 lbs.	do do

The seated Siva and Parvati are on two separate cushions and are specimens of superb Chola metal work. The Polonnaruwa finds of 1908 and 1960, are inferior to the Trincomalee finds in beauty, grace and expression. **The Trincomalee Siva (seated) is the most outstanding example of Hindu metal casting, and symbolism of the highest conception of the Infinite. The Parvati (standing) is also a rare specimen of the ingenuity of the great artists. The Siva (standing) seems to be a crude specimen of an earlier era. The image of Ganesha has few similar types either in India or Ceylon in respect of its form, beauty and strength. The statues of Vishnu and Lakshmi excavated inside the fort in 1944 are definitely Pallava sculptures.**



SOMASKANDA MURTHI SKANDA MISSING

Trincomalee Finds — Bronze.

Siva Ht. 1' - 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " Wt. 70 lbs.

Consort Ht. 1' - 4" Wt. 30 lbs.



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VANDALISM

It was New Year Day in 1624, the temple lamps were lit and the ceremonies were in progress one after the other. The processional statues of Siva and Parvati were taken in a chariot from the hill to the town. A great crowd was following the chariot. The temple was deserted by the people who left its premises. A 'fifth Column' attack was engineered by the Portuguese. Soldiers dressed as Hindu priests entered the colossal temple and began to loot and plunder. Priests and servants who remained in the temple were put to the sword. The accumulated gold, silver jewels and treasures of centuries were looted. Some priests escaped carrying with them whatever things they could carry.

Later, Constantine de Sa demolished 'the temple of a thousand columns' in order to employ its materials for the building of the fort. It would have been a venerable piece of Hindu antiquity in this island had not the Portuguese destroyed it. Some of the images of this sacred edifice were taken to Thambalagamam where later a temple was erected by Rajasinha II (1635 - 1687) to the Lord of Koneswaram (K P). Before the destruction of the temple a picture of the magnificent building was drawn and its dimensions were also noted. The picture was discovered in the Lisbon Library, and Mudaliyar C. Rasanayagam has inserted it in his book "Ancient Jaffna" on page 379. Tradition, oral and written states that the temple had a thousand-pillared hall and a bathing tank in addition to the halls and courtyards.

Six years later retribution followed De Sa. Hindus and Buddhists joined hands to avenge the destruction of Konesar Temple. De Sa and his comrades were enticed to enter the jungles of Badulla to conquer the Kandyan Kingdom. De Sa's Ceylonese fifth columnists fell on the Portuguese soldiers and slaughtered them to a man. No white man was left behind to tell the sad tale.

Rodrigo de Sa, the son of Constantine de Sa, wrote apologetically for his father's sins: "The Portuguese domination of Ceylon began to totter after the destruction of the Konesar temple and the regime gave way to the Dutch". Every action has a reaction not only is true in the physical plane but also in the moral plane. Every cause has an effect and every effect has a cause. This is the theory of Karma. This is one of the greatest discoveries of the ancient sages of India. None can escape these great moral laws.

As long as the Dutch were in possession of Trincomalee no permission was granted for public worship at Swami Rock. When the British displaced the Dutch in 1795, Hindus were permitted to perform their religious ceremonies at the sacred rock.

Another important event in recent years is the erection of a beautiful new shrine to the Lord of Koneswaram. After Ceylon became independent many patriotic Hindus in the Eastern Province and other leading members of the Hindu Public greatly longed for the restoration of this ancient shrine and so in July, 1950, these well-wishers met and resolved to collect the necessary funds for its restoration.

Thereafter, a splendid temple was erected to Lord Koneswara at the ancient site and on March 3, 1963, the sacred images were installed with appropriate ceremonies. Once again after a lapse of 340 years Lord Koneswara and his consort Mathummai Ammai have begun to bestow benign grace upon their devotees. This in brief is the story of the temple.

Our thanks must go to Mr. Mike Wilson and to Mr. Rodney Jonklaas two great underwater explorers who discovered the ruined temple below the sea. The stone column that was salvaged by them might be the 'Lingam' of the old Koneswaram temple.

From all what has been said the following conclusions may be formulated :

- (1) Trincomalee is one of the oldest sites of worship in the world.
- (2) Some sort of civilised religion existed in Ceylon before the birth of Buddha-Saivism.
- (3) The approximate age of the temple is about 3268 years according to lithic records.
- (4) The temple was in continuous existence from 1300 B. C. to the fourth century A. C. It might have been in ruins between the fourth and fifth centuries A. C. Though there was no temple between 1624 and 1963, there was congregational worship at the sacred site after 1800 to the inauguration of the temple in 1963.
- (5) The site of the Gokanna Vihare is not mentioned.
- (6) The magnificent temple with its towers, halls and edifices and its adjacent district formed a great principality under a Governor as Vanniya. The people in the district had allotted services to the temple in some form or other. The income from the neighbouring villages were allotted to the temple.
- (7) Tamil and Sinhalese Kings except Mahasena patronized the celebrated temple.
- (8) Kings and princes who endowed the temple also endowed those who served the temple so that they might be above wants.
- (9) The temple had an international reputation.
- (10) The temple that was demolished by the Portuguese might have been built in the latter half of the seventh century by the Pallavas.
- (11) The bronze images that were unearthed are definitely Chola sculptures. Cholas seem to have taken great interest in the temple.
- (12) The stone images that were discovered belong to the Pallava period.
- (13) The prophecy with regard to the destruction of the temple by the Portuguese has accurately been foretold.
- (14) With the temple as a nucleus a great literature has been produced.
- (15) The fortunes of Koneswaram is closely linked with the fortunes of Ceylon.
- (16) The Koneswaram temple from the beginning of the Agamic period has been carrying out all religious ceremonies in accordance with the injunctions of the Agamas.
- (17) Trincomalee was a great port from pre-historic times and was a populous district that was colonized at a very early date.
- (18) A walk round Fort Frederick will convince any searcher the awe-inspiring romance of those aged granite stones over which time and war have flowed unavailing over the centuries. The old temple's existence is incontrovertible.

===== The end =====

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