

# Temples OF Siva IN Sri Lanka



**CHINMAYA MISSION OF SRI LANKA**

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# TEMPLES OF SIVA IN SRI LANKA

*Chief Editor*

**Prof. S. Pathmanathan**

*Executive Editor*

**N. Somakandhan**

*Published by*

**Chinmaya Mission of Sri Lanka**

## **Temples of Siva in Sri Lanka**

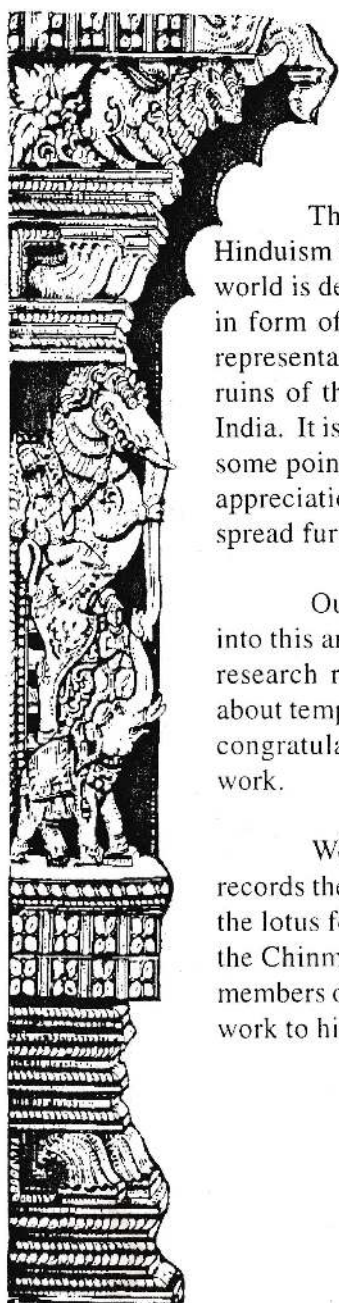
(A Collection of research articles  
on the History of 12 ancient  
Temples of Siva in Sri Lanka)

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## *Dedication*

The main evidence for the claim that Hinduism is the oldest religion now found in the world is derived from the archaeological remains in form of objects which could be identified as representations of Sivalinkam found among the ruins of the ancient river valley civilisations of India. It is therefore not surprising to learn that at some point of time the worship of Lord Siva and appreciation of His pivotal role in Hinduism had spread further South to our Island.

Our learned Professors have delved deep into this ancient and dynamic relationship. Their research reveals hitherto unknown information about temples of Siva in Sri Lanka. They must be congratulated for their excellent and scholarly work.

We humbly submit this volume, which records the findings of research of high quality, at the lotus feet of our Guruji, the Supreme Head of the Chinmaya Mission Worldwide. All the other members of our Mission join me in dedicating this work to him.

*D. Eassuwaren*

*President, CMSL*







*Message*  
*From*  
*Swami Tejomayananda*

It gives me great joy to know that Chinmaya Mission Sri Lanka is bringing out a collection of research works on "Ancient Temples of Siva in Sri Lanka" which will be released on the occasion of my Geeta Jnana Yagna in Colombo in October this year. I am sure this volume will be welcomed by scholars and devotees alike. I wish Sri Somakandhan - the Executive Editor - every success in his noble work.

Lord Siva has endeared himself to countless devotees mainly by His compassionate and generous nature. He is pleased easily. There is an interesting account of Brahma (the creator) requesting mother Parvati (Siva's consort) to advise Siva not to be very generous! Reason? Brahma said, "Lord Siva grants heaven to every devotees and I am tired of making so many heavens!" As far as Siva himself was concerned, He lived only under a tree! I feel that the world badly needs these virtues of compassion and generosity to be a better place to live in. Let us all try to be true devotees of Lord Siva in this respect.

May Lord Siva bless the beautiful country Sri Lanka with all prosperity, peace, and happiness!

*From - Camp : Dares Salaam - 5th September 1999*





# Contents

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<i>Preface</i>	IX
<i>Introduction</i>	XI
<i>The Contributors to this Volume</i>	XVIII
<i>Koṇēśvaram</i>	1
<i>S. Pathmanathan</i>	
<i>Munnēśvaram</i>	40
<i>N. Somakandhan</i>	
<i>Temples of Śiva in Polonnaruva</i>	63
<i>S. Pathmanathan</i>	
<i>Temples of Śiva at Padaviya</i>	120
<i>S. Pathmanathan</i>	
<i>Vijayarāja - Īśvaram</i>	133
<i>S. Pathmanathan</i>	

<i>Vikkirama Calāmēka - Īśvaram of Mākal</i>	147
<i>S. Pathmanathan</i>	
<i>Nakulēśvaram</i>	183
<i>Y. Cellaiyā</i>	
<i>The Temple of Tampalakāmam</i>	196
<i>V. Varathasuntharam</i>	
<i>The Temple of Kailāyanātar at Nallūr</i>	210
<i>V. Sivasamy</i>	
<i>Māmāṅkēśvaram</i>	218
<i>K. Thangesvary</i>	
<i>Thirukkeṭīśvaram</i>	225
<i>S. Pathmanathan</i>	
<i>A Select Bibliography</i>	244
<i>Kalyani Nagarajah</i>	

## Preface

India has been the cradle of Hindu Civilization. Nevertheless Sri Lanka has been reckoned from ancient times as a land where the orthodox form of Hinduism has flourished. In the Hindu tradition the Island is described as a land sacred to the Hindus - Sivapūmi. There are five temples of Siva which are considered as the oldest and most sacred among centres of the Hindu tradition. They are Tirukkētiśvaram, Tirukkōnēśvaram, Munnēśvaram, Nakulēśvaram and Candramauliśvaram. Many scholars have commented on the origins and development of these temples. Yet, it may be said that their origins are beyond the reach of recorded history.

In his *tirumantiram*, a comprehensive treatise on Śaiva ideology, beliefs and practices Saint Tirumūlar describes the country of *Iankai* as a *sivapumi*, a land where worship of Siva flourished. Historical records and archaeological monuments show that there have been a large number of Hindu temples and other institutions in the country before the European colonial conquest of the island.

It was only since the early 19th century that some of these temples which were systematically destroyed by the Portuguese were restored or resurrected in a modest form by pious devotees. In the old dynastic centres of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, which were abandoned to be encroached by jungle, the ruins of Buddhist and Hindu temples were covered with earth to become unrecognizable mounds. These were unearthed by the Archaeological Department since the late 19th century. The details pertaining to the finds were comprehensively reported in the Annual Reports of the Archaeological Commissioner. There has been a shift in official policy since the 1950s. The present Volume is a compendium of articles contributed by several authors and carefully edited by Prof. S. Pathmanathan, who has studied with absorbing interest the historical and archaeological materials pertaining to history and culture of Sri Lanka with special reference of Hinduism over a period of three decades during his post doctoral career as a researcher and University Professor. The articles are very comprehensive and contain a great deal of information which has not been brought to the knowledge of the public so far.



When H. H. Swami Tejomayananda made his first visit to Sri Lanka two years ago, Chinmaya Mission of Sri Lanka released a volume of research articles on *Lanka and the Ramayana* which was highly appreciated by him.

Now Guruji is in Sri Lanka for the second time to conduct Gnana Yagnas. This event is important for Hindu devotees. To mark his visit, we felt that it is appropriate to compile a volume on the history of some of the ancient Temples of Siva in our country and present it to him.

As the time available was limited we could include in this volume the history of only twelve ancient temples of Siva. There are many others about which accounts have to be written. With Guruji's blessings and the support of devotees, a second volume on other temples may be undertaken.

Inspite of his tight academic schedules, Prof. S. Pathmanathan, our Chief Editor, has worked ceaselessly for several months for this volume. If not for his efforts, this volume would not have seen the light of day. We express our gratitude and indebtedness to him for his assistance and co-operation.

Encouragement and support given to me by the Committee - especially by President Sri D. Eassuwaren, General Secretary, Sri K. V. Somasundaram and Vice President Sri P. Balasundaram are immeasurable.

We record with thanks the generosity of the Board of Directors of the Vasumathi Foundation for having come forward to sponsor this worthy cause. The Vasumathi Foundation has met the printing cost of this volume.

Sri P. Vimalendran and his staff at the Unie Arts (Pvt) Ltd have done a wonderful job to bring out this volume expeditiously and attractively.

**N. Somakandhan**

*Executive Editor*

*Chairman - Publication Committee.*

## Introduction

### I

## Hinduism and cultural pluralism in Sri Lanka

*S. Pathmanathan*

Hinduism has exerted a profound influence on the life and culture of the people of Sri Lanka from pre-Christian times. There is evidence to suggest that the cult of Śiva had prevailed in the island even before the introduction of Buddhism during the third century B.C. Pāṇḍukabhaya, the founder of the city of Anuradhāpura, is said to have established a *Sivikasālā* and institutions for the religious observances of *Brāhmanas*. The *Ṭamsatthappakasini*, the commentary *Mahāvamsa* describes the *Sivikasālā* as a shrine housing the image of the Śivaliṅga. In the Brahmi inscriptions which are the earliest epigraphic records found in Sri Lanka, there are many references to persons who had the name Śiva. The fact that the name Śiva was borne by a large number of individuals including some persons who held positions of high rank in society may suggest that Śiva, which was one of the names of God in the Indian tradition, was well known in Sri Lanka from pre-Christian times. Besides, there is a strong and persistent tradition that Rāvaṇa of Lankā, the abductor of Sītā, the consort of Rāmā, was an ardent devotee of Śiva. The tradition had become established by the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. It is articulated in the *tēvāram* hymns of the Śaiva *nāyanmār* and depicted in temple sculptures of Kārṇāṭaka in India. Hindu mythology pertaining to Rāvaṇa of Lanka seems to suggest that the cult of Śiva was practised in Sri Lanka from ancient times.

It is significant that there were Śaiva temples at almost all the dynastic centres in ancient and medieval Sri Lanka. That there were

Hindu temples in the northern sector of Anurādhapura is known from archaeological evidence. That an association of individuals attached to a locality called *kumārakaṇam* in Anurādhapura (*kumāra kaṇattup pēūrōm*) had accepted responsibility for some endowments made to a certain king who had the title *caṅkapōtī mārāyan* is recorded in inscriptions. At least seven temples dedicated for the worship of Śiva were to be found in the city of Polonnaruwa and the architectural design and other details pertaining to these temples are described rather comprehensively in this volume.

Temples of Śiva were established in some of the major dynastic centres of the subsequent period. In the reign of Parākramabāha vi (1412 - 1467) there was in the city of Kōṭṭē a temple of Śiva where Tamil devotional hymns were recited regularly and musical instruments were played at religious services as described in the following lines in a contemporary poem the *sālalihiṇi sandesaya*

" Now perch in the beautiful Īśvara devale here  
 In fumes of camphor and aloes rows of banners wave  
 Thunder of conch and mridanga, and clangour of bells fill the wide air,  
 And people, devotedly, sing Tamil hymns of praise.  
 When you hear the five instruments making morn music  
 Scatter sleep from your eyes, awake with the dawn  
 When like a lantern on a palisade of gold the sun  
 From Udagiriś crest falls the day with light,  
 Observe the forms of ritual performed before Ishavara  
 Cast off your sloth through the blue sky take wing.

Another temple dedicated to Śiva and which was of imposing proportions was what is generally referred to as the Berendi Kovil. It was sited in the northern quarter of Sītavāka and was presumably founded under Māyādunne as it is known to have existed during his time. That it was an edifice of architectural grandeur and monumental design is

clear from the following description of it by the Portuguese chronicler Couto :

" ... and in this part is the super and sumptuous *pagoda* that exists in the whole island which is dedicated to an idol of theirs called Paramisara. The architecture of this Pagoda is strange and it is asserted that nearly twenty years were expended on it more than two thousand workmen employed on it continuously.

The *Savul Sandesaya*, a contemporary poetical work, contains a description of this temple as found in the reign of Rājāsīmha I (1581-1592), by whom it was renovated. In the outer court of this temple graceful women danced to the rhythm of Tamil Music and within on its walls were depicted in glowing colours episodes from the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata and legends from Hindu mythology.

The Kattukalai Pillaiyār Kōyil in Kandy, which was established during the period of the Nayakkar rulers was originally a temple of Śiva. This temple, the architectural design of which is peculiar, has as its principal elements the *mūlastānam* and a *maṇṭapam*. There is no provision for an antechamber. The *Mūlastānam* is divided into three chambers of which the central one houses a Civalinkam. It is flanked on either side by shrines dedicated to Pillaiyār and Murukan. The disposition of the shrines and the traditions pertaining to the origins of this temple presuppose that the Hindu temple in Kandy was originally established as a temple of Śiva. In the days of the Kandyan monarchy it catered to the religious needs of the "Malabar" residents of the city. During the period of the annual festival the streets of Kandy are decorated as according to Hindu custom, and the association of the temple with the Perehera conducted in honour of the Tooth Relic of the Buddha provides an indication of the complementarity of the Buddhist and Hindu religious traditions in Sri Lankan Society.



## II Temples of Tirumaṅkalāy and Kankuvēli

There is an urgent need to conduct an archaeological survey of the sites of ancient Hindu temples which had been abandoned on account of historical circumstances. There are, architectural remains of some ancient Śaiva temples in the Kōṭṭiyārapattu division of the Trincomalee District.

At Tirumaṅkalāy otherwise called Akastiyā Stāpanam are found the remains of an ancient temple of Śiva. These ruins are found in a strip of dense jungle near the river Mahāvali Kaṅkai. A Civalinkam, Kōmuki, Palipīṭam, fragments of stone images and some stone pillars were found at the site around the year 1980. The temple fell into ruins when the areas surrounding it were abandoned by the inhabitants several hundreds of years ago. The ruins were noticed in 1786 by the Dutch Governor of Trincomalee, Jacques Fabrice Van Senden. The origins, and development of this temple could be investigated only after conducting an archaeological excavation of the site.

It is significant that there is a *talapurāṇam* called *tirukkaracaippurāṇam* on this temple. It is still recited by elderly pilgrims on the day of the *āṭi amācai* on which day they have holy ablutions in the waters of the Mahāvali river. It consists of five sections in 170 verses of the *viruttam* metre. The name of the author is not mentioned in the text nor could it be known by any other means. That he belongs to a *cantānam*, a Śaiva religious and educational institution, is clear from his description of his teacher Īcāna Civam as one who had instructed him on the subtle doctrines of the systems of Civacittāntam and Vēṭāntam and one whose mind was always attached to the Universal Lord performing the cosmic dance at Tillai (*aṇṭarpirāṇ naṭamāṭum tillai manṇamatiḷ akālatenrum*). Moreover, he is said to have lived at Korravankuṭi. On account of these considerations



Kumārācamipulavar of Cuṇṇākam expressed the view that the *pāyiram* of *tirukkaracaiṭṭupuraṇam* contains a description of Umāpati Civācāriyār. Such an identification implies that the author of the *talapurāṇam* belonged to the 14th century. It may therefore be assumed that the temple was in existence around that time. The temple as known to the author was of brick construction. It had as its principal components the *mūlastānam* surmounted by a *vimānam*, two *maṇṭapams* and a *aprākāra* wall. According to the text it was established in olden times by the sage Akastiyar, the great sage of the Tamil land (*tentamiḷ māṁuni*). It may be recalled that the *Vāyupuraṇa* mentions of an institution called Agastya Bhavanam near Lankā Paṭṭana in the island of Malayadvīpa.

There was an ancient temple of Śiva at Kaṅkavēli in Kottiyārapattu. That it was one of considerable antiquity is suggested by the fact that it was in ruins when the site was visited by Jacques Fabrice Van Senden in 1786. Such an impression is supported by the contents of a stone inscription found there and was deciphered by him with the aid of his subordinate officers. The residents of the villages of Kaṅkuvēli, Kiḷivetti and Mallikaittīvu have constructed a new temple at this site about 250 years ago.

The text of the inscription from Kaṅkuvēli is engraved in characters of the 14th century. It records an endowment in the form of dues from fields and meadows at Kaṅkuvēli by a Chieftain styled malayil Vanniyaṇār and the *atappar* of the seven villages, *ūr*. The grant was made to the temple of Kōṇainātan. It was attested by groups of people called *tānam* and *varipparru*. The inscribed pillar had probably belonged to the temple at Kaṅkuvēli and it may be assumed that the temple was existing in a good state of preservation when the text of the epigraph was indited. The expression Malaiyil Vanniyaṇār suggests that the chieftain concerned was the *vanniyar* of Tirukōṇamalai

whereas the *aṭappar*, who were headmen of villages, must have been from the villages surrounding Kankvēli. The reference to the *tānam* and *varippattu* in the inscription are of the utmost significance. In the *kōṇecar kalvēṭṭu* the people of the *tānam* and *varippattu* are described as functionaries of the Kōṇēs̥varam temple.

The existence of groups of individuals called *tānam* and *varippattu* are confirmed from the evidence of the Kankuvēli inscription. Whether these designations were exclusively confined to the temple of Kōṇēs̥varam or not cannot be decided on the basis of available evidence. The text of the inscription seems to suggest that these were designations of functionaries serving under the Vanniyar Chieftains in the north-eastern part of the country.

### III

#### *Hinduism in Sri Lanka*

The Hindus of Sri Lanka in modern times are the followers of the cult of Śiva. Śaivism during the course of its development has assimilated a wide range of cults and practices. The cults of the Mother Goddess, Gaṇeśa and Murukan have been systematically and thoroughly absorbed by Śaivism and a prominent place is accorded to the principal divinities around whom these cults were centred. In almost every village and town there are temples dedicated for the worship of Pillaiyār, Murukan and Amman in a variety of forms. They are more numerous than the temples of Śiva. There are also deities of a local character, the representations of whom are enshrined in small or medium-sized shrines where worship is conducted by non-Brahmin priests.

Śaivism as a religion is based on the teachings of the Vedas and the principles of the *āgamas*. Religious conceptions and ideology are traditionally explained within the framework of upaniṣadic thought while temple worship which is the outstanding characteristic of Śaivism

as found in the Tamil tradition is governed by the principles enunciated by the āgamas and the Śivāgamas are said to be 28 in number. Manuscript copies of some of these texts were available until recently in temple archives at Munnēśvaram, Kīrimalai, Māvattapuram and Tampalakāmam.

The compendium of devotional songs called *tirumurai* classified into twelve books is accorded a position similar to that of the Vedas and āgamas. As they are easily accessible they have been studied with a great deal of interest and devotion. the *talāpurānam* and the class of literature called *pirapantam* were taught at traditional centres of learning some of which were attached to leading temples and the *agrahārams* associated with those temples.

The study of Śaiva Siddhānta has been cultivated for a long time in Jaffna and in the Eastern Province. The Hindu revival in the 19th century which commenced under Ārumuka Nāvalar was followed by the development of a number of Hindu religious and cultural institutions. The speeches, writings and activities of Śvami Vivekananda has been a source of great inspiration to the Hindus of Sri Lanka. They continue to influence the thought and outlook of the Hindus even at present.

There has been a long tradition of going on pilgrimages to holy places such as Kāsi, Citāmparam, Irāmēśvaram, Kāñcīpuram Tiruccentūr and Tiruppalāni in India.

The Hindus of Sri Lanka are traditionally secular in outlook in respect of matters pertaining to social issues and are committed to the values of pluralism

## *List of Contributors*

1. **S. Pathmanathan**, B. A. Hons. (Cey.), Ph.D. (London), LFIBA (Cambridge); Professor of History, University of Peradeniya; Member, National Education Commission, 1991 to date; Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission 1994-1999; President, International Association for Tamil Research 1994 to date. Editor - in - Chief, *Hindu Encyclopaedia*, Department of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs.
2. **V. Sivasamy**, B. A. (Cey.); B. A. Hons. (London) M. A. (Peradeniya); formerly Professor and Head of Department, Department of Sanskrit, University of Jaffna.
3. **N. Somakandhan**, Retired Administrative Officer, Author and Creative, Writer; Art and Literary Critic, Freelance Journalist; Editor- *Lanka and the Ramayana*. Editor - *Voice of Chinmaya*.
4. **V. Varathasuntharam**, Author, Journalist; Editor : *Shrine & Sannithi*
5. **Kalyani Nagarajah**, B. A. Hons. (Jaffna); M.Phil. (Madras); formerly Lecturer in History, University of Jaffna; Research Officer and Contributor to the *Hindu Encyclopaedia*, Department of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs, Colombo.
6. **S. Theivanayakam**, B. A. (Peradeniya); Assistant Director, Department of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs, Colombo.
7. **Thangeswary Kathirkaman**, B. A. Hons. (Kelaniya), Cultural Officer, Department of Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs.
8. **Y. Chelliah**, Research Scholar



# Konesvaram

S. Pathmanathan

## Texts and Traditions

By the magnitude of its architectural design, the wealth acquired in the form of endowments made by Kings and princes and the elaborate arrangements made in respect of temple administration and religious services the temple of Kōṇēśvaram had surpassed all other Hindu shrines that had existed at any time in the island. Such an impression is supported by evidence from local chronicles pertaining to this temple and the accounts of Portuguese chroniclers.

The myths, traditions and historical information relating to Kōṇēśvaram are found in a number of poetic works of which the *takṣiṇa kailācapurāṇam*, the *kōṇēcar kalvetṭu* and the *tirikōṇācala purāṇam* are the principal ones. The *takṣiṇa kailācapurāṇam* which belongs to the class of texts called *talapurāṇam* was written by *cekarācēcēkaran*, a King of Jaffna during the 14th century.<sup>1</sup> The royal author claims that he rendered into Tamil verse the *tenkayilāya manmiyām*, a Sanskrit work describing the sacred site of *dakṣiṇa kailāsam* on the promontory of Kōṇaparvatam or Tirukōṇamalai on the eastern coast of the island. Further it is said that he undertook this work on the request of his preceptor Caivaracāpaṇṭitan of unsurpassed reputation on account of his mastery of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Āgamas, Purāṇas and many other branches of learning.<sup>2</sup> The book consists of six sections in 632 verses. In the last section, the *tirunakarac carukkam* the historical traditions

1. pārilan̄ku kayilāca purāṇattirku ēlcarukkam payilvittu oṇkum  
āramuta viruttakavi aṇunūrru muppattu iralavēyāki  
cīr eḷuttuc corporuḷ yāppu alaṅkāram mutaliya nūl terikkum cirttip  
pēr ilaṅku ciṅkaiyāntāre cekarāca cēkaranām perumān mātō  
takṣiṇa kailācapurāṇam (Tkp.) pakuti I,  
ākkiyōṇ yālpāṇattu nallūr makāvittuvān  
ciṅkaic cekarācēcēkaran.porulākkam  
paṇṭitar Ka. Ce. Naṭarāca, paṭippaciriyar Ci. Paṭmanātan, veliyitu intucamaya kalācāra  
aluvalkaḷ tinaikkaḷam, koḷumpu, 1995, pāyiram, ceyyūḷ 14, p. 19.
2. ibid. pāyiram, ceyyūḷ 9-10, pp. 16-17.

relating to the temple are recorded in a poetic form. The activities of two Kings, Kuḷakkōṭṭan and Kōyavaku are described in considerable detail. It is also significant that the *takṣiṇa kāilacapurāṇam* was written at a time when the temple was in a most flourishing state.

The *kōṇēcar kalvetṭu* is a text of considerable historical interest as it contains a substantial amount of information pertaining to some facets of the history of Kōṇēśvaram.<sup>3</sup> The authorship of the work is attributed to a certain Kavirāca varotayan who had presumably written the text for the purpose of recording the traditions and customs pertaining to the temple, its endowments, services and administration. An imaginative reading of the text suggests that the author had written it after the temple had been destroyed by the Portuguese and since the temple of Kōṇanāyakar at Tampalakamam had been established as its successor. It was probably intended as an instrument of legitimation for the claims of the new temple in respect of the traditions, properties and the service obligations associated with the old temple.

In the form in which the text has come down to our own times the *kāṇēcar kalvetṭu* has the appearance of a compilation of accounts and traditions derived from a variety of sources. It has two parts, of which one is in verse while the other one is almost entirely in prose. Perhaps, the name *kōṇēcar kalvetṭu* was originally applied to only that part of the compilation which is in verse form. The main focus in this part of the chronicle is on the customs and traditions relating to the administration of the temple, its endowments and services. The origins of all such traditions and customs are attributed to a prince called Kuḷakkōṭṭan about whom the author had only a hazy notion. He is said to be a Cōla prince, being a son of Vōraramatēvan otherwise called Manuṇitikaṇṭa Cōlan, a mighty King ruling over an extensive realm and one who had established numerous Śaiva and Vaisnava temples in his kingdom. In some important respects the *kōṇēcar kalvetṭu* is significant as a text describing selected themes on the basis of contemporary phenomena.

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3. *kōṇēcar kalvetṭu* (Kk) kavirācavarōṭayan iyarriyatu, patippāciriyaṇṭar I, Vativēl, veļiyitu intukalācāra aluvakal tīpaikkalam, Kqlumpu, 1993. 36 pages.



The prose section of the chronicle is in the form of an uncoordinated account of miscellaneous items under twenty-nine headings. Much of the information recorded in this part of chronicle seems to have been derived, for the most part, from a variety of temple records which had been lost in consequence of the Portuguese conquest and occupation of Trincomalee in the 17th century. The accounts of four items described in the prose section of the chronicle are in the nature of purāṇic accounts while all the others seem to record historical information on social institutions, customs and traditions pertaining to the affairs of the temple.<sup>4</sup> It is particularly noteworthy that six of the twenty-nine parts of the prose section of the chronicle contain descriptions of the origins and development of the Vanni principalities and Vanniyar lineages of the four principalities into which the region of Tirukōṇāmalai was divided in medieval times.<sup>5</sup>

The *tirikōṇācala purāṇam* which may be assigned to the late 18th century on the basis of its contents and style exhibits the basic characteristics of a *talapurāṇam*. The author, whose name is not mentioned anywhere, says that the *maccapurāṇam*, the *kailāyapurāṇam* and the accounts of customs as described by earlier authors were the principal sources for his work. It would thus appear that he had derived his materials from a Sanskrit text—a purāṇa(m) on Dakṣiṇa Kailāsam, the *kailācapurāṇam* of Cekarācācēkaran, the *kōṇēcar kalvēṭṭu* and other works.<sup>6</sup>

The *tirikōṇācala purāṇam* is divided into twenty sections and consists of 1491 verses. The significance of this work lies in its attempt to link up the traditions pertaining to two temples, Kōṇēśvaram and the Ātikōṇāṇāyakar temple of Tampalakamam. A perception of a regional identity based on religious tradition and social customs seem to be reflected in subdued tones. The social formation as found in the period of Dutch occupation and the administrative arrangements made by the

4. Ci. Patmanātan, "kōṇēcar kalvēṭṭu, cila ārayēcik kurippukal", Kk. 1993. pp.1 - 35.

5. *ibid.*

6. *tirikōṇācala purāṇam*. veliyitu: intucamaya, kalācāra aluvalkal tinaikkalam. kolumpu. 1997, 365 pages.

Dutch on the basis of earlier traditions seem to have inspired such a feeling of regional identity.

## *The origins and early developments*

The name Kōṇṇēśvaram is derived from the Sanskrit expression Gokarṇesvara which was applied as the name of the form of Śiva for whose worship the temple at Tirukōnamalai had been dedicated. It may be recalled here that there were in India three important Śaiva shrines named Gokarṇam. One of them was on the western coast of India and the principal deity enshrined at that temple was called Mahabalinātha. Both Appar and Campantar have sung hymns in honour of Śiva enshrined at Gokarṇam, in the seventh century.<sup>7</sup>

In an inscription of Dharmapāla of Bengal reference is made to another sacred shrine called Gokarṇam where his armies are said to have paid homage after they had visited the shrine of Kedāram. Gokarṇam referred to in the inscription of Dharmapāla must have been considered so important as to be placed on the same footing as Kedāram in North India and it is generally assumed that it was a shrine in the foot hills of Nepal.<sup>8</sup> The third Śaiva shrine called Gokarṇam was located on the Mahendra mountain in Kalinga and the presiding deity at that shrine was specifically referred to as Gokarṇa svāmin.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that the Śaiva shrines on the Mahendra mountain in eastern India and the rock facing the sea in Tirukonamalai in eastern Sri Lanka were dedicated to Gokarṇa svāmin and Gokarṇēśvara respectively cannot be an accidental coincidence. It presupposes the existence of close cultural connexions between the people living in the localities in India and Sri Lanka where these shrines were located. The contacts

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7. tirunāna campantamūrtti nāyanār arulicceya tiruppatikankaḷ, Ed. T. Pattucāmi Ōtuvār, Published by Tiruppanantāl ātinam, 1950, pp. 679 -80; tirunāvukkaracu nāyanār arulicceya tēvārappatikankaḷ, Tinnevely: The South India Siddhānta Works Publishing Society Limited, 1928, pp.525 - 527.

8. "The capital of the Kirātas was situated in the jungles of Gokarṇa to the north-east of Paśupati. The History and Culture of the Indian people Vol. 4, The Age of Imperial Kanauj. Ed. R.C. majumdar, Bombay: Bhārata Vidya Bhavan, 1955, pp. 47, 56, n. 19.

established by sea-borne commerce would seem to provide the explanation for this connexion. Tirukōṇamalai was of considerable significance as a point of intersection in the maritime trade linking the ports of the Coromandel and South East Asia. It may therefore be assumed that the temple of Kōṇēśvaram had its origins in the settlement of mercantile communities whose favourite deity was Gokarnasvāmin enshrined on the Mahendra mountain in Kalinga.

The earliest reference to the Śaiva shrine at Tirukōṇamalai is found in the Pali chronicle, the *mahāvamsa*, believed to have been compiled in the sixth century on the basis of traditions and materials derived from an earlier period. While describing the religious activities of Mahāsenā, the *mahāvamsa* says:

The king caused to be constructed the Mañihira vihāra and having destroyed the temples of the gods he constructed three vihāras called Gokaṇṇa and the one called Migagāma Vihāra and the Gangāsenapāravata at Erakāvilla and in the village of the Brahmin Kalanda.<sup>10</sup>

The foregoing account of the *mahāvamsa* is significant as providing evidence of the existence of Hindu shrines at Gokaṇṇa, Erakāvilla and also at another site which is said to have been located in the village of a Brahmin called Kalanda in the eastern littoral, during the reign of Mahāsenā. It should also be observed here that the measures adopted by Mahāsenā against Śaiva institutions are not indicative of a general tendency of the Sinhalese monarchy in relation to Hinduism and its institutions. Mahāsenā's conduct in this matter was exceptional. The Sinhalese kings have generally supported and patronised Hinduism and Brahmins and the Hindu tradition was in effect complementary in certain respects to Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

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9. The inscriptions of the Eastern Gangas record the tradition that the ancestors of these Kings worshipped the God Gokarnasvāmin at the Mahendra mountain and through his favour obtained the Vṛshabha lāncana, "the bull crest", and the insignia of royalty. See *The History and Culture of the Indian People* Vol. 4, p. 141.

10. *Mahāvamsa*, Ed. William Geiger, London: Pali Text Society, 1934, 37; 40, 41. *Mahāvamsa*, Eng. Trans. Wilhelm Geiger, Colombo: The Ceylon Government Information Department, pp. 270 - 271.



In spite of the measures adopted against it, the Śaiva temple of Koṇeśvaram seems to have been restored soon and it flourished in such a manner as to attract the attention of the Hindus living in different parts of India. The *vāyupurāṇa* which was compiled during the age of the Imperial Guptas refers to a great temple of Śiva named Gōkarṇa in the land of Malaya dvīpa. Referring specifically to this temple it says:

tasya dvīpasya vai purve tīre  
nadana mahīpateḥ gokarna nāmadheyasya  
śankarasyalayām mahat.<sup>11</sup>

There is on the eastern coast of that island a great temple of Śaṅkara named Gokarṇa.

The identification of the temple of Śiva named Gokarna referred to in the *vāyupurāṇa* rests on the identification of Malaya dvīpa. It has been the tendency of scholars to identify Malaya dvīpa mentioned in Indian literature as the Malay Peninsula. But in this specific instance, the principal objection to the identification of malaya dvīpa with the Malay Peninsula is the fact that hitherto it has not been possible to adduce any evidence for the existence of a Śaiva temple named after Gokarṇa svāmin in that country.<sup>12</sup>

Besides, the description of Malaya dvīpa as found in this *purāṇa* is more appropriate to the island of Lankā than to the Malay peninsula. Malaya dvīpa is said to have been a land abounding with many mountain ranges and rivers and occupied by tribes of *mleccas*. Of particular importance are the references to the abode of Agastya, the peak of Trikūṭa and the port of Lankā-pattana which recall the sites called Akastīya stāpanam, Trikūṭakiri and Ilankaitturai in the Tirukōnamalai district within which Kōṇeśvaram is located.<sup>13</sup>

11. Buddha Prakash, India And The World, Researches in India's Policies, Contact and Relationships With Other Countries and peoples of the world. Vishveshvaranand Indological Series - 31, Hoshiapur. 1964, pp. 64 - 65; S. Gunasingham, Kōṇeśvaram, Akurana. 1973, p. 55.

12. S. Pathmanathan, "The Religious Traditions of the Kingdom of Yālpāṇam: Hinduism", Lanka 5, December. 1990, Uppsala University, pp. 42 - 79.

13. S. Pathmanathan, "The Religious Traditions Of The Kingdom of Yālpāṇam: Hinduism", Lanka 5, December 1990, Uppsala University, Sweden (pages 43-79), p. 55.

The fact that there are no traditions about any localities called Trikūṭa or having connexions with Agastya in Malaya is also an important consideration against the identification of Malaya dvīpa as the Malay Peninsula. Moreover, the fact that the mountainous portion in the central parts of Sri Lanka has been described as Malaya or Malayadesa in the Pali chronicles also supports the contention that the geographical description of Malaya dvīpa relates to the island of Sri Lanka.<sup>14</sup>

The word Malaya as found in Sanskrit and other Indo-Aryan languages is derived from the Dravidian expression *malai* meaning "mountain" and is generally applied to mountain ranges and lands the physiography of which is dominated by mountain ranges and hills. In this particular instance Malaya is described as a dvīpa and it may also be observed here that the country known as Malaya in South East Asia is not an island but a peninsula, being a projection of the Asian continent.

Just as the name Tambapanni which was originally applied to a coastal port in Sri Lanka was later applied to the whole island, the name Malaya which denoted the mountainous central portion of the island could have been applied to the whole island by the compilers of the *vāyu purāṇa*.

On account of the foregoing considerations it may be assumed that the "great temple of Śaṅkara named Gokaṇṇa" described in the *vāyu purāṇa* refers to the Śaiva temple of Kōṇēśvaraṁ. Such an explanation presupposes that the name Tirukōṇamalai is derived from the fact of its association with Gokaṇṇa, a name of Siva, in whose honour worship was conducted at consecrated shrines from ancient times. Gōḱanna the name by which the port town of Tirukōṇamalai is referred to in the Pali chronicles may be considered as one which had been derived from the Sanskrit word Gōḱarna.

The name Tirukōṇamalai clearly indicates that it had a religious significance. The name itself is formed of three elements: *tiru*, *kōṇam* and *malai*. The expressions *tiru* and *malai* mean "holy" and "hill"

14. Mahāvamsa, 7:68, 24:7, 25:5; Cūlavamsa, Trans. William Geiger and from the German into English by C. Mabel Rickmers, Colombo: Ceylon Government Information Department, 1953, 41:10; The Mahāvamsa, 7:68, 34:7, 25:5.

respectively in the Tamil language. *tiru* which has a its Sanskrit equivalent *srī*, is usually prefixed to the names of famous Śaiva shrines and the localities named after them. Tiruvannāmalai, Tirūvaiyāru, Tirupparaṅkunram, Tiruccentur and Tirukketiśvaram in Sri Lanka are some of the striking examples of this tradition. The expression *kōṇam* in the name would appear to be an abbreviated form of Gokaṇṇa(m), the shrine of Śiva named Gokaṇṇa. Such an explanation is supported by the fact that Tirukōṇamalai is referred to also by the alternate form Sri kōṇaparvatam in an eleventh century Tamil inscription from Nilāveḷi.

Kōṇēśvaram was flourishing as a great centre of Śaiva worship and pilgrimage as suggested by the hymn sung in honour of its presiding deity by the Śaiva saint Campantar in the seventh century. He describes the hinterland behind the temple as one covered with thick vegetation consisting of many trees and blossom-bearing creepers generating cool breezes. The town of Tirukōṇamalai according to him was a spacious and prosperous one supporting a large population.<sup>15</sup>

Of considerable significance are his references to large quantities of gems, pearls, sandalwood and aloeswood found at the shores of Tirukōṇamalai. Although gems and pearls were natural products of Sri Lanka they were not obtained from the north-eastern parts of it. The principal sources for the supply of aloeswood were the countries of South-East Asia. It would therefore appear that these commodities were taken to the port of Tirukōṇamalai by traders for transshipment. The development of Kōṇēśvaram in the seventh century as suggested by the *tēvarāṁ* hymn of Campantar was facilitated by commercial prosperity on account of Tirukōṇamalai being a major point of intersection in the sea-borne trade among the kingdoms of India, Sri Lanka and South East Asia.

The period of three centuries following the Cōḷa conquest of the island towards the end of the tenth century witnessed the development of

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15. tirunāna campantamūrttināyaṇāṇṇ aruḷiceeyta tiruppatikaṇkaḷ Ed. T. Pattuccāmi ōtuvār. pp. 516-518.



Kōṇēśvaram and its institutions on an unprecedented scale. It was during this period that it was revived, enlarged and richly endowed by successive generations of kings so as to attain the proportions comparable to those of some of the leading temples in contemporary South India. Migrations from South India on a considerable scale led to the consolidation of Tamil society in the North-eastern region and the development of its social institutions and cultural traditions. This period also witnessed the origins and development of principalities called Vanni subject to the authority of hereditary chieftains who became the custodians of the Kōṇēśvaram temple and the institutions attached to it. These developments spread over a long period of time are attributed to the activities of a prince named Cōlakaṇkan otherwise called Kulakkōṭṭan and chronicled by Kavirācar in the kōṇēcar kalvettu.

That the temple of Kōṇēśvaram had attracted the attention of the Cōlas is evident from some of the inscriptions set up by them. A fragmentary inscription containing the meykīrtti of Rājārāja in its early stage of development has been recovered from the bed of the sea in the neighbourhood of this temple and is presently kept within the premises of the Kōṇēśvaram temple. The missing portions of this epigraph presumably recorded some donations made to this temple in the reign of Rājārāja I.<sup>16</sup> The fragmentary inscription from Mānāṅkēni dated in a regnal year of a Cōla prince called Cōla Ilāṅkesvara tevar mentions of Maccakēśvaram which was another name for Kōṇēśvaram as testified by the *taḱṣiṇa kailāca puraṇam*.<sup>17</sup>

The text of the fragmentary inscription from Mānāṅkēni may be reconstructed and translated as Follows:

1. rāna uṭaiyār sri cōla il [ṅkēś]
2. [vara] t[ē]varku yān[t]e[ttāvatu]

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16. S. Gunasingha, Three Cola Inscriptions from Trincomalee, Trincomalee Inscriptions Series No. 2. Ed. and published by S. Gunasingham, Peradeniya, 1974, pp. 13 - 15.

17. S. Gunasingham, Two Inscriptions of Cōla Ilāṅkesvara Deva, Trincomalee Inscriptions, Series No. 1. Ed. and published by S. Gunasingham, Peradeniya, 1974.

3. [mummu]ti cōla manta[lāttu]
4. [ira]j[e]ndra co[la]vaṇanā[ttu]
5. [mummu]ti cōla vaṇanā[ttu] kōṇa]
6. [mā]malai sri matsyā[k]ē[śva]
7. [ramuṭaiyār] mūlastānamu[m]...
8. śvaramuṭaiyār kō[yilum]
9. [cō]la māntalattu [irā]je]
10. [ndra ciṅka vaṇanāttu I[nnam]
11. [par] nāttu...
12. vēlān kaṇapati.<sup>18</sup>

"In the eight year of uṭaiyār Sri Cōla Ilaṅkēśvara tēvar [otherwise called...] vēlān Kaṇapati.... of I[nnampar]nātu of irājendra ciṅka vaṇanātu in cōlamantalam... the mūlastanam of Matsyakēśvaram of Kōṇamamalai and the temple called... isvaram uṭaiyār Kōyil..."

The Mānārikēni inscription, despite its fragmentary character and the meagre information found in it, is of exceptional importance in relation to Cōla activities concerning the temple on the promontory of Tirukōṇamalai. It records the name of a Cōla prince called uṭaiyār Sri Cōla Ilaṅkēśvaratevar. The name and epithets of this particular prince and the reference to his regnal year in the inscription suggest that he had exercised some form of royal authority over Ilaṅkai during the period when a major part of the island was under Cōla occupation during the 11th century.<sup>19</sup>

The inscription refers to two Īaiva temples-isvaram and one of these is said to be Matsyakeśvaram at Kōṇamāmalai while the particular name of the second temple cannot be ascertained as the letters on the portion of the text concerned have been lost on account of damage. As the reference in the text is to the *mūlastānam*, "the inner sanctum" of Matsyakēśvaram it may be assumed that the inscription records some constructional activity or the work of renovation carried out on the initiative of some Cōla dignitaries serving under the Cōla prince called

18. *ibid.*

19. *ibid.*

uṭaiyār Sri Cōla Ilankeśvaratēvar. Vēlan Kanavati from Irājendraciṅka Vaḷanaṭu in Cōlamantalam was one of them. The other Saiva temple mentioned in the inscription was probably located somewhere near the site from where the inscription has been found. It may be noted here that Matsyakesvaram was one of the alternate names by which Kōṇēśvaram was known as attested by notices found in the *takṣiṇa kālīlacapurāṇam*.<sup>20</sup> It would appear that the Śaiva temple on the summit of konaparvatam was generally referred to as Maccakēśvaram in medieval times. The points that emerge from an imaginative reading of the fragmentary inscription from Mānāṅkēni are relevant for understanding the traditions pertaining to the activities of the prince called Kuḷakkōṭṭan in connexion with the temple of Kōṇēśvaram.

Matsyakēśvaram is referred to also in the Tamil Inscription from Nilśveḷi which could be assigned to the early phase of Cōla occupation of Sri Lanka. This inscription was brought to light in 1972 and later the text was deciphered, translated, edited and published separately by K. Indrapala and S. Gunasingham.<sup>21</sup> This inscription is also fragmentary as the initial portion of the text has been lost after the inscribed slab was broken to pieces. The text of the inscription reads:

1. sāsanam sasvatam sambhu Sri Kōṇaparvatam Tirukkōna
2. malai Ma(t)syakēśvaramutaiya māhatēvarku niccalaḷ(vu)
3. kku nivantamaka candratittavar ceyta urākīrikama kīri
4. kanta kirikama (ttu) nirnilamum punceyyum (itaṅkalum)
5. .... tēvālayamum mēnokkina ma
6. ramum kilnokkina kinarum utpata innilattu
7. k keḷḷai kilakkuk kaḷi ellai terkellai ka
8. Ilu kutakku ettakampē ellai vatakkel
9. lai cūlakkallākum cutarkkōṇamāmalai ta(ni)

20. According to the Tkp the name Maccakecuram was applied to kōṇaparvatam as it was there that Visnu had cast away the physical remains of his incarnation as a matsya which he had assumed at the behest of Siva for recovering the ornaments of the celestials which had been thrown into the ocean by the Asuras. Tkp, maccavatarac carukkam, V. 42.

21. Karthgesu Indrapala, "A Tamil Inscription From Nilaveli, Trincomalee District", James Thevathasan Rutnam Felicitation volume, Jaffna, 1975, pp. 54 - 69 S. Gunasingham, "A Tamil Slab Inscription at Nilaveli", Sri Lanka Journal of The Humanities, Vol. I, No. 1, 1975, pp. 61 - 71.



10. I nīlakaṇṭaṭṭarkku nīlam ivvicaitta perunān

11. kellaīyil akappaṭṭa nīlam irunūru

12. aiympatirru vēli itu panmūyē

13. surar rakṣai.<sup>22</sup>

"The irrigated lands and dry lands in Urākirikamam and Kirikāṇṭa-Kirikamam, which have as their boundaries the sea in the east, the rock (stone) in the south, (the locality) Ettakampe in the west and the stone carved with the trident in the north, including all objects such as temples, trees (that flourish) on the ground, wells sunk below (the ground) within the said boundaries have been granted to the God of Maccakēśvaram on Sri Kōnaparvatam otherwise called Tirukōnamalai to meet the daily expenses (in the temple) as long as the sun and the moon last. The lands, amounting to two hundred and fifty vēli in extent within these four great boundaries (as described above) shall belong to Nīlakaṇṭar (enshrined) on the peak of Kōnamalai. This grant shall be under the protection of the Panmahēśvarar."

Commenting on this inscriptions K. Indrapala observes:

'As that part of the inscription dealing with the chronological details of the record are missing the date cannot be precisely determined. On palaeographical grounds it can be assigned to the tenth century. The language and format of the record are similar to those of the late Pallava and early Cōla records. The practice of inscribing records partly in Sanskrit and partly in Tamil generally belongs to the Pallava and early Cōla periods, although it is not uncommon in later times. Further in this record which is a land grant there are several stock phrases which occur as a rule only in the Pallava and early Cōla records. The invocatory ending, calling for the protection of the grant by all the mahesvaras is also a peculiarity on the early inscriptions. On account of all these factors, one is inclined to assign this inscription to the tenth century. If

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22. *ibid.*

it were inscribed in the period of Cola rule it could not be later than the period of Rajaraja I. The absence of Cola personal names and place names leads us to this conclusion.<sup>23</sup> While endorsing these views with some reservations it may be noted that the occurrence of the term *veli* in this inscription precludes the possibility of its having been set up in a period prior to the Cola conquest.<sup>24</sup>

As a historical and archaeological monument the Slab Inscription from Nilaveli is of the utmost importance. It provides the interesting information that the temple on the peak of sri konaparvatam had the name Matsyakesvaram (sri konaparvatam tirukonamalai matsyakesvaramutaiya mahadevarku). Thus it provides striking confirmation of the account found in the taksina kailacapuram, which claims that Maccakesvaram was one of the alternate names of the temple on the summit of the rock at Trincomalee.<sup>25</sup>

The inscription records a land grant made to the shrine of Siva (Nilakanta mahadevar) at the temple of Maccakesvaran. The lands were meant to be held in perpetuity and effectually as a *tevatanam* and the expenses for making offerings at the innermost sanctum were to be met from the income from lands that were granted. The grant consisted 250 *veli* of land in the localities of Ura kirikamam and Kirikanta-Kirikāmam.<sup>26</sup> Presently, the name Ūrakirikāmam is not in vogue; nor is there any reference to such a locality in any other text. But in respect of a place called Girikanta there are some references in some Buddhist chronicles and other texts. A district and a mountain called Girikanta are mentioned in the mahavamsa in connexion with Pandukabhaya. In the visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa there is a reference to Girikanda-mahavihara. It is said to have been repaired under Vijayabahu I. The Tiriya Rock Inscription, which could be assigned to the eight century on the basis of its contents describes a Buddhist temple called Girikanda Caitya. On the basis of these references Kirikanta which forms the

23. Karthigesu Indrapala, "A Tamil Inscription from Nilāveli, Trincomalee District", p. 65.

24. The term *vēli* came into vogue in the island only after the Cola conquest and it occurs in a few inscriptions of the 12th century. A *vēli* is equivalent to 6.74 acres.

25. Tkp, maccāvataraccarukkam, V. 42.

initial part of the name Kirikanta-kirikāmam occurring in the Slab Inscription from Nilāveli may provisionally be identified with Kantacāmi-malai near Tiriyay in the Trincomalee District.<sup>26</sup> As the eastern boundary is said to be Kali, "marshy lands on the sea-coast", it may be assumed that the lands granted to the shrine of Nilakaṇṭha Mahādeva at Matsyakesvaram was in proximity to the sea-coast on the east.

### *Kuḷakkōṭṭan and the re-establishment of Kōṇēśvaram*

The *takṣiṇa Kailācapurāṇam* and other similar texts claim that the process of the reconstruction of the temple of Kōṇēśvaram was initiated by the Cōla King called Varamatēvan and completed by his son Kuḷakkōṭṭan. Vararāmatēvan is said to have been the ruler of Cōṇāṭu and Maturai, who had established a number of temples dedicated for the worship of Siva.<sup>27</sup> Once having learnt of the sanctity of Tenkayilai from an exposition of the Maccēntiya purāṇam he was keen to visit the sacred site of Tirikōṇam. Having placed the government of the realm and the armies under the charge of his son, he proceeded to Tirikōṇam with a large retinue by boats. He also made arrangements for transporting a large number of images for the destination of his journey. After having performed worship at (ten) Kayilai he instructed his sthapati to construct a new temple and thereby had the temple renovated and restored. Besides, he had the elements of the *maccēntiya purāṇam* depicted on the various parts of the temple. The King is said to have donated a substantial quantity of gold to the temple and thereafter returned to his kingdom.<sup>28</sup>

On the death of Vararāmatēvan, the *cempiyarkōṇ*, his son Kuḷakkōṭṭan became King. After having heard about Tenkayilai and the developments over there from the representations made by a Brahmin

26. S. Paranavitana, "Tiriyay rock Inscription", *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, IV, pp. 158-159.

27. *Tkp tirunakaraccarukkam*, verses 28 - 29



who had gone to see him after having crossed the sea. Kuḷakkōṭṭan undertook a pilgrimage to Kōṇamalai where he learnt of the benefactions made by his father. The copper plate charter issued by his father was also brought to his notice.<sup>29</sup> Kuḷakkōṭṭan donated gold that was twice the amount granted by his father and this grant was made for the purpose of constructing buildings. Kuḷakkōṭṭan also made gifts to the Brahmins of the *pāsupata* sect who conduct worship at Kōṇamalai according to the principles laid down in the *kiraṇākamam*.

The *tūpi* crowned with golden finials, the *kōpuram*, the *mahāmaṇṭapam*, the *mutanmai maṇṭapam*, the *amman* shrine and the lofty enclosure walls were constructed at Tenkayilai on a magnificent scale so as to make Tenkayilai resemble Uttarakailāyam. Besides, he had a beautiful shrine constructed to house the image of Viṣṇu. Further, the tank called *pāpanācam* was constructed in the vicinity of the temple for sacred ablutions.<sup>30</sup>

As economic prosperity was the means for securing a steady supply of income required for the maintenance of the temple and its services the King had a reservoir constructed with solid embankments and the accessories for regulating the supply of water. He set up a stone inscription pertaining to this undertaking.<sup>31</sup>

The foregoing account, which is extracted from the *tirunakarac carukkam*, the final section of the *takṣiṇa kailaca-purāṇam*, is significant on account of two principal considerations. The information recorded poetically by the author of the *talapurāṇam* was based on an earlier tradition pertaining to historical events and the personal observations of the author. Cekarāca-cēkaran, the royal author, was doubtless impressed by the architectural grandeur of the temple and its endowments and traditions as found during his time. His reference to a stone inscription

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29. *ibid.* verses 52 - 60

30. *ibid.* verses 63 - 69

31. *ibid.* verses 88 - 89

set up by Kuḷakkōṭṭan and a copper plate charter found at the temple may probably suggest that such records had existed during the time of the author. Such an impression is confirmed by references to such records in some parts of the *kōṇēcar kalvettu*. It would appear that the traditions pertaining to Kōṇēśvaram that were known to the author of the *takṣiṇa kalācapurāṇam* contained information about the reconstruction of the temple of Kōṇēśvaram. The reconstruction, according to this tradition, was a fairly long process spread over the reigns of two Kings whose names have not been transmitted in their proper form. However, the epithets *cempiyan* and *manuvēntan* applied to these rulers suggest that they were Cōḷa Kings. There is reason to believe that Cōḷa activities in connexion with Kōṇēśvaram are attributed to Vararāmatēvan and Kuḷakkōṭṭan owing to some confusion.

The *kōṇēcar Kalvettu* briefly alludes to the constructional activities of Manunitikaṇṭa Cōḷan otherwise called Vararāmatēvan and his son Kuḷakkōṭṭan and provides a descriptive account of the endowments made by Kuḷakkōṭṭan to the temple. Besides, it records information pertaining to the arrangements made by him for conducting the temple services on a regular basis and for the management of temple affairs.

In this chronicle it is said that Vararāmatēvan and his son Kuḷakkōṭṭan had come to Kōṇamalai after having heard of the unique character of its sanctity. Later Kuḷakkōṭṭan decided that the services at the shrine of Kōṇēcar should be revived and elaborated with help from the Cōḷa country. He brought craftsmen including smiths from the royal mints (*akkacālaiyar*) and constructed the temple of Śiva with several lofty *kōpuram*, created the sacred springs and endowed the temple with fields and tanks which he had reclaimed and made elaborate arrangements for conducting religious services. He settled at Trincomalee six noble families selected from Maruṅkūr in the Cōḷa country and granted them lands to be held in hereditary succession. He deposited treasures in the temple and ordained that the expenses incurred and the income obtained daily should be recorded by the *tānattār* who were obliged to perform the *ālatti* and other ceremonies.

Moreover, he settled at Trincomalee twenty-one families of *varippatar*, who had been brought from the Cōla country. They were to perform such services as gathering flowers, making garlands, cleaning and preserving silk garments used to decorate the images, carrying banners and umbrellas on festive occasions, singing to rhythm when the dancing girls perform their dances, lighting lamps, distributing sandal powder, pounding rice and polishing the floor. People of the *tānam* and *varippattu* received rice-fields at Paḷḷaveli as remuneration for their services.

Kuḷakkōṭṭan brought Taniyunnāp-pūpālan from Madurai, raised him to the rank of a *vannipam* and placed the administration of the town of Tirukōnamalai under his charge. Furthermore, he settled a chief of a *kārālar* family from Tirunelvēli at Kaṭṭukkuḷam and made him the ruler of the division of Kaṭṭukkuḷam-paru. This chief was assigned lands in Nilāvelī and endowed with the insignia of a *vannipam*. Kuḷakkōṭṭan ordained that the accounts of the income for the Kōṇēcar temple should be in the custody of the *vanniyanār* of Kaṭṭukkuḷam-paru and his successors. The inhabitants of Kaṭṭukkuḷam were required to serve the temple. The people of Nilāvelī were to conduct the festivals. Kuḷakkōṭṭan also proclaimed that the revenues in the form of *aṭai*, *āyam*, *tīrvai* and the dues from the sea(port) should belong to the temple. The order of Kuḷakkōṭṭan, Nilacotaiyan and his armies diverted the waters of the Mahaveli and constructed a huge reservoir. Lands amounting to 2,700 *avanam* were converted into fields and granted to the temple.<sup>32</sup>

The account of Kuḷakkōṭṭan as found in the *kōṇēcar kalvettu* is supplementary to the found in the *takṣiṇa kailacapurānam*. It probably records traditions relating to social and political institutions and focuses

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32. *avanam* is a variant of *amanam*, a unit of land of sowing capacity. In this system of land measurement the extent of land was determined on the basis of the amount of grain sown. S. Pathmanathan, the Kingdom of Jaffna Part I (Circa A.D. 1250 - 1450), Colombo, 1978, pp. 139 - 140.



on the interactions of the temple with communities of people who inhabited the region of Tirukōnamalai and the chieftains who exercised authority over parts of this region in medieval times. The construction of the temple, the endowments made to the temple, the settlement of people belonging to the tanam, varippattu and other categories and the appointment of chieftains called vannipam as rulers of principalities are the principal themes described in the *kōṇēcar kalvetṭu*. The Hindu Tamils living in the region of Trincomalee were, for the most part, bound by custom to render services for the temple. The services that had to be provided by them depended on their vocations and were defined by custom. The Vanniyar as rulers of principalities were custodians of temples and it was their responsibility to supervise and regulate the affairs of the temple and its administration.

The account of the *kōṇēcar kalvetṭu* cannot be considered as a chronicle of historical events in a chronological sequence. It may be construed as a description of contemporary social phenomena on the basis of personal observations of the author and traditions of a quasi-historical character which were somewhat confused as there was a lack of clarity and precision on matters relating to the distant past and the chronology of events.

The origins of settlements which culminated in the development of chieftaincies called *vanni*, obviously were not confined to the reign of a particular ruler. They were spread over a long period of time and it would seem that the developments which had taken place during the period of three centuries following the Cōḷa conquest are attributed by tradition to a ruler who had the epithet *Kuḷakkōṭṭan*. It is claimed that he had the name *Cōḷakanikan*. There is no means of identifying this *Cōḷakanikan*; nor is it possible to ascertain the veracity of this claim. As there is a strong and consistent tradition that *Kuḷakkōṭṭan* was a prince of Cōḷa descent he may provisionally be identified as *Cōḷa Ilaṅkēśvara tēvar*, who is referred to in inscriptions from Kantalay and Mānāṅkeni.

### *Kayavāku and Kōṇēśvaram*

A King of Lanka, who had the name *Kayavāku* is extolled in the

*takṣiṇa kailācapurāṇam* and the *tirikōṇacalapurāṇam* as a devout devotee of Siva and a great benefactor of Kōṇēśvaram. The Tkp gives the following account of his activities at Kōṇēśvaram:

"Kayavāku who regained his eye-sight and had attained spiritual wisdom through devine grace propitiated the Lord. When he had heard about the arrival of two Brahmins who had crossed the sea from abroad he invited them and appointed them as the chief priests officiating at the temple. He conferred on them the rank of 'family priests'. He made grant of lands which had the river verukal, *taruppai-āru*, Karampakam and the sea as boundaries and had the text engraved on stone.<sup>33</sup> He ordained that the property of those who had no heirs, treasures hidden underground, the income from the fisheries, the wealth from the mountains and jungles and the collections from the salt-pans should be apportioned between the temple and its Brahmin priests in the ratio of four to one respectively and had a copper plate issued to that effect.<sup>34</sup>

He made arrangements to conduct six sessions of worship daily for Siva and Ganesa in accordance with the principles laid down in the āgamas. Besides, he had the annual festival conducted in honour of kōṇamalai nātar and Ganapati, the god of wisdom, on the day of *pankuni uttiram*. He also made provision for conducting the act of *tacatānam* daily at the temple."<sup>35</sup>

In the foregoing account, which is an abridged version of the poetic description found in the *takṣiṇa kailāca-purāṇam* kayavaku, a King of Lanka is said to have become a convert to Saivism after he had visited the temple of Kōṇamalai-nātan. The description of his activities as found in the text is basically a sober account of benefactions normally made to temples. He is said to have appointed Brahmins, who had arrived from abroad, as the chief priests, and made a land grant to them. the text of the grant is said to have been recorded in the form of a stone inscription. Another interesting aspect in the account is the claim that

33. Tkp, pāyiram, verse 8.

34. Tkp, tirunakaraccarukkam, verses 95 - 100.

35. ibid, verse 101.



the King had issued a copper plate charter in connection with the endowments made to the temple. As suggested elsewhere there is a strong possibility that the author of the text concerned was aware of the existence of stone inscriptions and copper plates pertaining to the endowments made to the temple and the management of its affairs.<sup>36</sup> In form and contents the account of Kayavaku as found in the *taksina kailācapurānam* is therefore one of unusual significance and it deserves a more careful scrutiny than has been attempted hitherto.

The account as found in the Tkp has been modified and elaborated in the *kōṇēcar kalvettu*, which also records some supplementary information. According to this work Kayavaku went to Tirukōṇamalai when he found that the temple services had been interrupted on account of the death of the head priests, who were of the *pācupata* sect. He is said to have raised to the rank of *mutanmai* two Brahmins who had come from abroad. Besides, he made a gift of 1,100 gold pieces which he caused to be recorded in the register of temple accounts. The King also proclaimed that a tenth of the grain tax and of the income from the sale of all commodities should be given over to the temple.<sup>37</sup>

Kayavaku, the King of Lanka, who had close connections with Kōṇēśvaram may be identified as Gajabahu II (1132-1153), the grandson of Vijayabāhu I (1055-1110) who was ruling from Polonnaruva. The charge made by the Pali chronicler that he had "brought heretical nobles from abroad and filled the land with the briars of heresy" seems to suggest that Gajabahu had strong leanings towards Hinduism.<sup>38</sup> Besides, one of the inscriptions issued by him unmistakably proves that he had propitiated Hindu deities and caused Hindu rituals to be

36. *ibid.*, verses 102 - 110.

37. Cf. Patmanātan. "kōṇēcar kalvettu eila ārayēcik kuṟippukal". *kōṇēcar kalvettu kavirācavarōtayan iyarriyatu. paṭippācēriyar paṇṭitar I Vativēl. intucamaya kālācāra aluvalkal ūṇaikkalam. kolumpu. 1893.* pp. 1 - 35.

38. *ibid.* pp. 99 - 101.

performed. An artisan, a certain Rangitage Hinabi had made the images of Skanda and other gods at the behest of the King for the performance of a *lakṣapuja*, and as a reward for his work he had received a land grant.<sup>39</sup>

The Brahmin settlement of Kantalay seems to have been supported by Gajabāhu in some measure. A Tamil inscription from Kantalay which mentions the name of this ruler records the setting up of a boundary stone to mark the limits of the village. The boundary was delimited in this instance by marching an elephant along a strip of land.<sup>40</sup> In this connexion it is relevant to consider the observations of Sirima Kiribamune. She writes:

"One other clue which suggests Gajabāhu's leanings towards Hinduism is his retirement to Gangataṭāka (Kantalāy) after he had come to terms with Parakramabahu... After a period of long and bitter fighting, Gajabahu had come to the end of the road as it were and whatever hopes and aspirations he entertained earlier had to be abandoned with the recognition of Parakramabahu as heir. The choice of Gangataṭāka at this stage of his career might have been prompted by religious considerations... Thus, it would appear that Gajabahu II, bereft of all hope, chose to spend his last days in a Hindu atmosphere, where he could devote his time to religious activities."<sup>41</sup>

### *Cōḍaganga deva at Gokarṇam*

That a prince called Codaganga deva had visited Kokarnam is suggested by the Fragmentary Sanskrit Inscription from Trincomalee. It was found by military authorities in 1945 while excavations were conducted within Fort Frederick, Trincomalee.<sup>42</sup> The text found in the inscribed stone fragment is an incomplete sentence. The text as

39. Cv. 70: 53 - 55.

40. *Egigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 5, No. 38.

41. Swaminathan, K.D. "An Inscription of Gajabahu II", *Ceylon Historical Journal* Nos. 1 to 4, July 1960 to April 1961, pp. 43 - 46.

42. Sirima Kiribamune, "The royal consecration on Medieval Sri Lanka, the Problem of Vikramabahu I and Gajabahu II," *The Sri Lanka Journal of South Asian Studies*, I (1), January 1976, pp. 12 - 32.

deciphered and translated by S. Paranavitana runs:

Text

1. svasti sri ! devas-sri-co
2. dagangah ksititala tila
3. kam prapya lankam aja
4. yyam sakeb[d]e (sa)
5. mbhu-puspe kriya-bhavana
6. ravau hasta-bhe me
7. [sa]lagne gokarnne

#### Translation

Hail! Prosperity! In the year Sambhu-puspa (i.e. One Thousand One Hundred and Forty-five) of the Saka era, when the sun was in the mansion of Aries, Hasta being the constellation (in conjunction with the Moon), and the point of the ecliptic at the horizon (lagna) being Aries, the illustrious Coḍaganga-deva, having arrived in the unconquerable Lanka, the forehead ornament of the Earth... at Gokarṇṇe...

There are serious doubts about the accuracy of Paranavitana's decipherment of the text. In the case Cōḍaganga deva and the description of Lanka their cannot be any controversy. Lanka is said to be unconquerable (ajayyām). Besides, it is described as the forehead ornament of the earth, (ksititala tilakam). The text contains some astronomical information. When the Sun was in the Mesa lagna the nakshatra was Hasta.<sup>43</sup> The expression Gokarnne is the locative form of Gokarnna, which is according to the Hindu tradition, one of the names of the peak of Kōnamalai. It may be inferred that some activities or transactions that had taken place at Gokarnnam was the subject of description in the inscription. It is also reasonable to assume that the astronomical details pertain to the activities that had taken place. At this juncture it is necessary to consider Paranavitana's decipherment of the expressions in the fifth and sixth lines of the inscription and his

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43. Two stone images - one of Viṣṇu and other of Lakṣmī - and a fragment of a door jamb were unearthed. S. Paranavitana, "Fragmentary Sanskrit Inscription From Trincomalee", *Epigraphia Zeylanica* (EZ) Vol. 5. No. 14. pp. 170 - 173.



comments on them. These expressions as reconstructed by him read *sakeb[d]e [sa]mbhu puspe kriya*. *Sakeb[d]e* cannot be equated with *sakabde* "in the Saka year" and in claiming that the inscription was recorded in an year of the Saka era Paranavitana is reading into the text ideas which are alien to it. In fact Paranavitana's reading in this instance is incorrect and the translation is misleading. The expression concerned may be recognized as *sarakele* "the sport of arrows". Such a reading presupposes that Cōdaganga deva had obtained dominion over the "unconquerable Lanka" in consequence of some victories won in war.

The last word on the fourth line is lost as the portion of the stone bearing it had been cut off. Assuming that the missing letter was *sa* Paranavitana arrives at the conclusion that *[s]ambhupuspe* is a chronogram. Commenting on the contents of the inscription he says:

"Its fragmentary nature does not permit us to come to any conclusion with regard to its purport. The preserved portion mentions the date on which a prince named Codaganga-deva landed in Ceylon. The year in the Saka era is enumerated by a chronogram of which the first syllable is lost. The three legible syllables read *mbhu-puspe* ... Reading the chronogram, therefore, as *Sambhu-puspe*, we get 1145 as the year in the Saka era given in the document."<sup>44</sup>

As seen earlier there is no trace of any expression denoting the Saka era in the inscription. Therefore his belief about a chronogram is unfounded. The expression *[s]ambhu puspe* is followed by the term *kriya*, which means "an act", "rite" or ritual. *[s]ambhu puspe kriya* may therefore be construed as a ritual of flower offerings conducted in honour Sambhu or Siva. In the light of the foregoing considerations it may be assumed that Cōdaganga deva had visited Kōkarnam and had a *puspa kriya* performed in honour of god Sambhu as a measure gratification for the victories he had won in war.

As Paranavitana's belief about the Saka era and the chronogram are unfounded the date of the inscription is uncertain and in this instance the

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44. The sun is in the mesa lagna on the new year day, annually.



inscription cannot be dated with any degree of accuracy on the basis of palaeography alone. The inscription could be assigned to the late 12th or early 13th century. The view that Cōdaganga was a contemporary of Māgha, who had reached Sri Lanka on the New Year day of the year 1223 may now be abandoned as it is untenable.

It would seem that Cōdaganga, who had achieved some success after a military campaign had visited Kōkarnam and made arrangements for conducting a ritual at the temple there.

In the light of the foregoing considerations the text of the inscription may be revised and translated as follows:

Text

1. svasti sri̐ deva sri̐ co
2. ḍaṅgah kṣṭīṭala tīla
3. kam prāpya lankām-aja
4. yyām sarakeḷe [sa]
5. mbhupuspe kriya bhiva...
6. ravau hastabhe me
7. ṣa lagne gokarṇṇe..

Translation

Hail Prosperity! Deva Sri Cōdaganga secured dominion over the unconquerable Lanka, the forehead ornament of the Earth, through the sport of war. On the occasion of the ritual of flower offering at Gokarnna when the nakṣatra Hasta was ascendant and the sun was in the Mesa lagna...<sup>45</sup>

This inscription may therefore be reckoned as a temple inscription, a donative inscription. The ritual referred to in the inscription was conducted at a shrine at Kokarnam. It is relevant to consider here the observations of S. Parānavitana. He says:

"It is reasonable to assume that this fragment of the inscribed door-jamb was found on a site of the shrine of which it formed part. It is equally reasonable to infer that the place-name in the record-Gokarnna was the name, in the thirteenth century, of Trincomalee, where this shrine was located..."<sup>46</sup>

45. S. Parānavitana. "Fragmentary Sanskrit Inscription...", EZ, Vol. 5, p. 170.

46. Ci. Patmanātan. "tirukkōṇēśvarattir coṭakaṇṇan" (16 pages) takṣiṇa kailāca purāṇam pakuti II. intukalācāra aluvkaḷaḷ tīṇaikkalām, koḷumpu, 1995, p. 33.

## *The Portuguese and Pagoda*

The account of the Portuguese Chronicler Fernao de Queyroz is significant as providing a clear indication of the fact that the temple of Kōṇēśvaram had imposing buildings and a large extent of landed property and was resorted to by large numbers of pilgrims most of whom were from India. He says:

"It remains to give a description of Trinquilemale, which means the 'mountain of the three pagodas'... over that large harbour 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 on the middle of the highest point, which was the principal one and the most venerated in India, being worshipped by idolatrous navigators, who descry it from the sea, and much frequented by a concourse of pagans from the whole of India... These lands of Trinquilemale ... were so abundant in rice that in two fields alone which are three leagues from the fortalice called Tambalagama, and Kantale they sowed in those days in each of them 10,000 amanoes of nele... and that twice a year. They are dedicated to the service of pagoda and after the Portuguese garrisoned the fort, there lived in each of them 25 to 30 farmers for the rest had left for Cutiar" <sup>48</sup>

It is clear from the foregoing account that the temple of Trincomalee was found to be a famous and affluent one before its destruction by the Portuguese. It was held in deep veneration by navigators and pious devotees. As a sacred site and a centre of the Hindu religious tradition it was reckoned as one that was comparable to the great temples of Ramesvaram, Tirumalai (Tiruppati) and Jegannath in Orissa and as such it attracted a large number of pilgrims even from India.<sup>49</sup> There were

48. Fernao de Queyroz, *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*, trans S.G. Perera, Book I., Colombo, 1930, p. 238.

49. "The Pagode of Triquilimale was at this time the Rome of the gentiles of the Orient, and more frequented by pilgrims than that of Ramancoir near the shoals of Chilao, and that of Canjavarao, two days journey from S. Thome, and Tripite and Tremel in Bisnaga and Jagarnati in Orixia, and Vixante in Bengal". It should be noted here that all the temples with which the Pagoda of Trincomalee are compared are large and prominent Hindu temples in India. Besides, the description implies that the term pagoda could be applied to each of these temples. *ibid*.

extensive paddy fields in Kantalay and Tampalakamam dedicated to the service of the temple. These were, for the most part, abandoned by the inhabitants once the temple was destroyed. Besides, Fernao de Queyroz believed that the name Tirukonamalai was derived from the fact that there were three temples on the promontory of Trincomalee.<sup>50</sup>

Such an impression is supported by the observations of Paul E. Pieris, the pioneer modern historian of Sri Lanka. He says: "It was the summer of 1624 when de Sa started on this enterprise. The site selected was the lofty headland of Konesar Malai, which was connected with the mainland by an isthmus where the town lay. Three temples occupied the promontory, one at the base, and one half way up, while the summit, rising 400 feet above the sea, was crowned by the most renowned of all. As one of the five Iparam or residences of Siva, this was a centre of great of veneration even beyond what its magnificence and wealth entitled it to; and this was destroyed to make way for a triangular fort of stone and mortar which commanded the entrance to the Bay. By this means the little commerce which the King maintained in cloth and opium at Alut Nuwara was cut off."<sup>51</sup> It is clear from his description that Paul E. Pieris identified the pagoda of Trincomalee destroyed by the Portuguese in 1624 as an *Īsvaram-Kōṇēśvaram*.

It is relevant to recall here the observations made by Charles Pridham on this matter. He says:

"Trincomalee, the capital of the Eastern Province lies 130 miles south-east of Jaffnapatnam. The immediate neighbourhood of the town presents scenery, which for picturesqueness is without a rival, if the situation be consid-

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50. It would appear that the name *tirukōṇamalai* has a connotation different from the one as understood by Queyroz. The expression *Śrī Kōṇaparvatam*, which is the Sanskrit equivalent of *Tirukōṇamalai*, and which occurs in the text of the inscription from *Nilāveli* suggests that *Tirukōṇamalai* is formed by combining three expressions: *tiru*, "holy", *Kōṇam*, "triangle" and *Malai*, "hill" or "peak". Thus *Tirukōṇamalai* would mean the sacred hill of *Kōṇam*.

51. Paul E. Pieris, *Ceylon: The Ceylon Historical Journal Monograph Series-Volume Seven*, Tisara Prakashaya Ltd., Dehiwela, 1983.



ered, consisting of hills covered to the very summit with magnificent timber. The Malabars call it Tirukonamalai, or 'the mountain of the sacred Konatha,' from the Hindoo god of that name, who had formerly a temple on the summit of the hills there, which was celebrated over the whole of India. Trincomalee would appear to have been a place of some note even in the earliest periods of history. According to tradition recognized by Kaviraja Varothayan, an ancient bard of great celebrity, it was founded by King Kulakkottoo Maharaja... The prince was the son of Manoo Nitikanta Solen, sovereign of the east Coromandel, who being apprized of the sacred nature of the mountain of Trincomalee, came over, and having built a temple to Konatha or Koneser on its summit, founded a town below, which (he) settled with immigrants from his father's dominion and gave to Taniunna Popalen, a Malabar nobleman, who became the governor of the place and its adjacent territory. The Wanniyas who subsequently governed the country, traced their descent to this noble, and maintained an independent authority for a long series of years.

"When the Portuguese made themselves masters of Trincomalee, They demolished the spacious temple dedicated to Siva, for which it was celebrated, and erected a fort on the north-west point of the bay out of the materials. The Malabars possess several works in the Tamul language, that profess to describe the extent and wealth of these establishments in the days of their prosperity, as well as miracles performed in them from the time of their dedication, when the King Kulakotu having completed their endowment retired into a secret chamber, and from thence passed body and spirit into the bliss of Siva."<sup>52</sup>

Charles Pridham believed that the Pagoda of Trincomalee de-

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52. Charles Pridham. *An Historical, Political And Statistical Account of Ceylon And Its Dependencies*. Volume II. London. 1850 pp. 544 - 545.



scribed in the Portuguese sources was a temple of Śiva and none other than Konesvaram with which the prince called Kulakkottan is closely associated in the accounts found in the local texts pertaining to this particular temple. In this connection the observations made by Van Senden, the Dutch Governor of Trincomalee in his Diary, during his tour of the province in the year 1784 are of the utmost importance: He says:

"In the evening I went to visit the celebrated temple of Tamblegamme, the situation of which is from E. to W. in length. The Bramin Chief Priest, accompanied by some others received me and gave me the usual gift of a lime and some flowers. I requested him to show me the two celebrated images, the only ones saved from the temple of a thousand pillars, on the arrival of the Portuguese. After much difficulty, which I believe a present which I offered him was very efficacious of removing, he acceded to my request. I was not allowed to nearer than the first place of prostrations, but as the temple was well lighted up I managed to discern, with the aid of my telescope, two idols in a sitting posture on a sort of altar. They were so covered with clothes that the faces alone were seen. In the front was the image of the King Koneasar, and on his left in an oblique line, was that of his Queen Isoewerie Ammen - these images were brought from the Coast by the King Kollekote, the founder of the tank of Kantalay, and by him presented to the temple of the thousand pillars. They came originally, according to tradition, from a mountain to the north of the Coast exactly in the centre of the world, and which can now only be attained by wings. This appears to me to have a metaphorical meaning...

"When the ceremonies were over the priests took an opportunity to represent to me that whilst Tamblegamme was under the Kings of Kandy, the tenth of the produce of the lands were collected as a tribute to that prince, who however relinquished the half, or a twentieth share, in favour of the pagoda; that since the company had taken the entire

tax, death had entered the country and the harvest was diminishing yearly. That before the death of the commandant schoren they had obtained a promise from him that he would request permission to assign at least 600 parrahs of paddy yearly for the support of the temple, that it might not perish from want of funds that as M. Schorer had died before the fulfilment of his promise, they requested the same favour from me. I gave my word that I would forward their petition to Government, on whom alone however the accomplishment of it would depend."<sup>53</sup>

The account of Van Senden reveals that when he recorded his observations in his Diary approximately 215 years ago there was a general impression among the inhabitants of the province of Trincomalee that the pagoda destroyed by the Portuguese was a Saiva temple and that it was of such large proportions as to be reckoned as one of a thousand columns.

The account of Van Senden is significant as providing confirmation of the description of the temple as given by Fernao de Queyroz and of the tradition recorded in the Tirikonacala puranam. This text records that when alien invaders had occupied the town of Trincomalee and became hostile to Saivism some Brahmins and pious devotees had removed a few of the images and fled to Kaṇimalai. Later, they are said to have moved further away, into Tampalakamam, and installed the images at the newly constructed temple there.<sup>54</sup> It is interesting to note that Van Senden refers to one of those images as that of Konecar.

A site plan of the pagoda as it was found before its destruction by the Portuguese has been discovered at the National Library in Lisbon. It shows three temples at the summit of the hill.<sup>55</sup>

53. Journal Kept During A Tour In The Districts Of Koetjaer, Tamblegam, And Kattukolompattu, By The Junior Merchant Jacques Fabrice Van Senden, Governor of Trincomalee, In the Year 1786. (Translated from the Dutch Records for the Ceylon Government Gazette), Supplement To The Ceylon Government Gazette, Wednesday, October 15, 1834.

54. tirikōṇācala purāṇam, ed. A. Caṇmuka irattina Aiyar (1909), 2nd edition paṇṭitar Ka. Ce. naṭarāca. Intucamaya aluvalkaḷ Tiṇaikkaḷam, Kōlumpu. 1997. naimittikappataḷam, vv. 46 - 50;

55. W. Balendra, "Trincomalee Bronzes". Tamil Culture Vol. II, No. 2, 1953, p. 190.

Rodrigo de Sa, the son of Constantine de Sa has described these temples as follows:

"on the first rise to the summit of the rock was a pagoda, another at mid ascent, and the most famous of them all on the highest eminence, which was looked upon and worshipped with great superstition by crowds of wandering pilgrims, and for this reason was more celebrated then for the building itself and the beauties of its architecture."<sup>56</sup>

It is useful to consider here the connotations of the word pagoda as misunderstandings have been created in recent times on account of ignorance. Icons of deities, temples where idols are housed and coins bearing the imprint of the representations of deities are the connotations of the Indo-Portuguese word pagoda. Websters' Collegiate Dictionary gives the following description of this word:

"This obscure and remarkable word is used in three different senses. (A). An idol temple; and also specially in China, a particular form of religious edifices of which the famous 'Porcelain tower' of Nanking, now destroyed, may be recalled as typical. In the 17th century we find the word misapplied to places of Mahommedan worship as by Faria-y-Souza, who speaks of the 'Pagoda of Mecca' (B) an idol; (C) a coin long current in South India. The Coins so called were both gold and silver... The gold pagoda was the *varaha* or hun of the natives."<sup>57</sup>

The definition of the word as given in The Universal Dictionary of the English Language is quite precise. According to this authority it is a term by which Europeans designate religious temples and towerlike buildings of the Hindus and Buddhists of India, Farther India, China and Japan.<sup>58</sup> The word pagoda could therefore be applied to a Hindu, Jaina or Buddhist temple and it is only from the context that one could

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56. *ibid.*

57. Websters' Collegiate Dictionary A Dictionary of the English Language London, G. Bell & Ltd., 1912. p. 652.

58. *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language* Ed. Henry Cecil Wyld. London. G. Bell & Ltd., 1912. p. 586.



determine the specific character of the edifice so referred to. It may also be noted that in a large majority of cases, in respect of South Asian edifices, the word was applied the Hindu temples. The following references may be cited as examples:

"They have (at Bacaim) in one part a certain island called Salsette, where there are two pagodas or houses of idolatry.

Garcia f. 216 e

"And as to what you have written to me, viz that although you understand how necessary it was for the increases of Christianity of these parts to destroy all the pagodas and mosques which the Gentiles and the Moors possess in the fortified places of this state..."

Letter from the King of Portugal  
to the Viceroy

"That he should erect pagods for Gods' worship and adore images under green trees

".. There are many ancient pagods or Temples in this country, but there is one very particular which stands upon a little Mountain near *visagapatam* where they worship living monkies"<sup>59</sup>

A Hamilton 1380 ed. 1744.

Besides there are specific instances in the Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of the Island of Ceylon where the word pagoda is applied to Hindu temples. Commenting on the temple of Pālukamam in Batticaloa Fernao de Queros says:

"... for in religion they are different from the Chingalas and are

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59. Hobson-Jobson, A Glossary of Anglo-Indian Colloquial Words and Phrases and of Kindred Terms by Col. Henry Yule And A.C. Burnell, New Edition by William Crooke, London, 1903. pp. 655-656.



more like those of Jafnapatao, though their principal god is not Rama, as of the latter, but Perumal, to whom in the village of Palugao they dedicated a Pagode with his most shameful figure."

In respect of the destruction of the temple of Munnesvaram the same author records:

"They destroyed for the third time Nigombo, Caymel, and Alugao, and with many other spoils they passed on to the ancient Pagode of Munucarao, razed it to the ground in spite of Atapato Modeliar who garrisoned..."<sup>60</sup>

Furthermore, the Hindu temple of Tirukkovil in Batticaloa is also referred as a pagoda by Fernao de Queyroz. He says:

"Twelve leagues from the port of Batecaloa, and to the South stood that famous Pagode of Tricouili, which in Ceylon had a great cult. The right name was Tuncoule which means a 'three storied, Pagode' or the 'Three Pagodas' because in all of them there were altars and idols. It lasted till the time of the General D. Jeronimo de Azevedo who destroyed it and captured and killed the Ganezas, the persons dedicated to its service".<sup>61</sup>

From the above references it is quite clear that there cannot be any valid objection for identifying the temple at Trincomalee destroyed by the Portuguese as Konesvaram because of the reason that it is referred as a pagoda in some of the Portuguese accounts. The notices of Van Senden, the Dutch Governor of Trincomalee and the Portuguese chroniclers leave no doubt of the fact that this particular pagoda was the Saiva temple called Konesvaram. At this point it may be necessary to recall the references to a prophecy recorded in an inscription found by the Portuguese, and commented upon in a manuscript found at the Adjuda Library in Lisbon. The English translation of the relevant passage reads:

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60. The Temporal and spiritual Conquest of Ceylon p. 427.

61. *ibid.*, p. 65.

"Constantine de Sa de Menezes destroyed these Pagodas, and with the stones thereof made a fortress to close that Port to the Chingala, and as it was not large enough for a battery it also came to have a small garrison. The event of destruction of the pagoda was found engraved on a stone and being authenticated by the Ouvidor of Ceylon, after it had been translated by those most learned in ancient letters of the Chingalas, it was sent to His Majesty, and it said as follows:-

Manica Raju Bau Emperor of this Lancae erected this pagoda to the god Vidia-mal-manda in the year... There will be a nation called the Franks who will destroy it, and there will be no Kings in this island to rebuild it once more.

"This stone was placed at the gate of the fortress; and there is no doubt that it is the Portuguese who are called Franks; ... Nor can I give any account who it was who foretold this truth so distant in futurity to a heathen King., for the dedication of the pagoda implies idolatry; the prediction of its destruction so far implies prophecy, the author of which cannot be manifest to us in the obscure date of the traditions of India. And though Constantine de Sa destroyed these pagodas, their worship continued until the time of the General Dom Nuno Alvarez Pereira, when the last Ganes and Jedacas who carried it on were beheaded."<sup>62</sup>

The inscription referred to in the above passages is obviously the one found at the entrance of Fort Frederick, Trincomalee and the text of the inscription clearly refers to constructional activities of a person called Kulakkottan and the destruction of these buildings by the Parankis meaning the Portuguese. The Portuguese interpretation of the text of the inscription concerned could be a matter for scrutiny but what is significant is their perception that the pagodas destroyed under the command of Constantine de Sa were the ones referred to in this inscription.

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62. W. Balendra, "Trincomalee Bronzes", Tamil Culture Vol II, No.2, - 185.

1953, pp. 184

## *Rituals and worship on Svami Malai*

The British occupation of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon in 1796 had one salutary effect on the inhabitants and this was in respect of the freedom of worship. It was soon realized that under the new rulers the prohibitions imposed by the Portuguese and the Dutch against the practice of non-Christian religious traditions were no longer in force. It was in such a situation that the pious Hindus of the region of Trincomalee, who had a deep veneration for the site of Kōnamalai where the pagodas of Kōnesvaram had existed for a long period of time until the Portuguese conquest, recommenced the tradition of conducting worship. It was conducted on the open ground with reverence and solemnity by Brahmin priests.

Charles Pridham has recorded a detailed and picturesque account of this phenomenon. He says:

"The rocky promontory occupied by the fort of Trincomalee, is by the natives consistently dedicated to Siva, the destroyer, in his ancient name of Eisvara, and is regarded with great veneration by his votaries. They believe that in the earliest wars of the gods, three of the peaks of Mahameru were thrown down and driven to different parts of the world! One of these is Konieswara-parwatie or Trincomalee, which thenceforth became equally with Kailasa the abode of Siva. There is probably no more ancient form of worship existing than that of Eiswara upon his sacred promontory, and it has been connected with the rites of Siva by the votaries of the latter in a later period..."

In Wilson's Sanscrit Dictionary the translation of Eiswara is given as God, 'an universal spirit;' and 'the whole scene' says Forbes, 'as well as the religious ceremonies on the precipice of Trincomalee possesses a character of romantic wilderness and mysterious antiquity. The priest (a Brahmin), with his head encircled by a string of large beads and a yellow cloth bound round his loins, places himself at stated periods and generally a little before sunset, in the giddy height of the farthest rock that rises over the dark and fathomless ocean; some of



the votaries perch themselves, or securely recline on (the) short grass which clothes the promontory. The priest after performing his ablutions places himself in various picturesque attitudes, and occasionally as he drops some betel-leaves or rice into the sea, bows himself with great reverence towards a chasm on the rock, which is believed to be a residence of the spirit, the object of his worship. After the sun is down, the Brahmin waves a censer, then holds it at the full stretch of his arm above his head, while the incense flames up, flickers and disappears, then as the perfume spreads around, he concludes his incantations by casting a coconut into the ocean, and receiving the offerings on behalf of Eiswara. The offerings consist of the smallest copper coins, rice and betel leaves, but the priest derives a poor remuneration for his ministration on such a dangerous alter".<sup>63</sup>

It is significant that this practice has been continued to date without any interruption. Even after the restoration of the temple, the time honoured custom of conducting worship on the summit of the Rock is strictly adhered to. All sessions of worship inside the temple commence after worship is conducted at *cuvāṁimalai*.

That the attitude of the Hindus living in the north-eastern part of the island towards *Kōṇamalai* was characterized by a sense of deep veneration is attested by the *Kōṇamalai antāti*, a text glorifying the sacred site of *Kōṇamalai*.<sup>64</sup> It is said to have been written in 1856 by Arumuka Mutaliyar of the *caiva cantānam* of Tirukonamalai, an institution which had been established to preserve and promote Saivism and Saiva learning. The *cantānam* which had existed from a period prior to the Portuguese occupation seems to have had close affinities with *Konesvaram*. The sacred site of *Kōṇaparvatam* is referred in this text as *Kōṇamalai*, *Kayilai*, *Tenkayilai*, *Konacalam*, *Tenkayilāyam* and *Tirikutam*. At one place the author asserts that *Tenkayilai* surpasses in sanctity even the seven sacred cities of the Hindu tradition: *Ayodhya*, *Kanci*, *Maya*, *Dvaraka*, *Avanti*, *Kasi* and *Mathura*.<sup>65</sup>

63. Charles Pridham, *An Historical, Political And Statistical Account of Ceylon And Its Dependencies* Vol. I. London, 1849. pp. 544 - 545.

64. *Kōṇamalai antāti ācīriyar caivapulavar paṇṭitar I. Vativēl, vēḷiyitu intucamaya. kalācāra aluvalkai tinaikkalam*. Kolumpu. 1990.

65. *ibid.* p. 54.



## The Restoration

On July 3, 1950, a public meeting was held at Svami Rock in Fort Frederick to consider a motion to rebuild the Konecar Temple which was destroyed by the Portuguese Captain General, Constantine de Sa on the Hindu New year Day in 1624. The question was raised by the then Member of Parliament for Trincomalee Town as to what image the temple would be dedicated in case it was rebuilt. As this question could not be answered at once, a committee was appointed and the members of this body decided to meet on August 6, 1950, to report on the proposal to rebuild the Konecar Temple and also to examine a method of procuring a Lingam from Benares, India.<sup>66</sup>

The building programme was completed in 1963 and the consecration ceremony was conducted on an elaborate scale during that year. A Board of trustees was appointed for the management of the temple and after a period of 18 years since the reconstruction of the temple the second consecration ceremony was held in 1981. The component parts of the temple, which are of modest proportions, have been laid out within a walled enclosure, according to the principles set forth in standard treatises on Hindu temple architecture. A lingam brought from Kasi has been installed in the innermost sanctum of the main shrine while the amman shrine houses an image of Matumai-Amman. The twin images of Nataraja and Sivakama-sundari are installed in the *snapanam mantapam* while the representations of Subrahmanya accompanied by Valli and Teyvayanai, Candrasekhara and Somaskanda are found in the *vacanta mantapam*. There are separate shrines for housing the images of Pillaiyar (Vinayaka), cuppiramaniyar (Subrahmanya), curiyan (Surya), cantiran (Candra), Cantesvarar, Nakatampiran, Vairavar and the planetary gods.<sup>67</sup> The *iracakopuram* or entrance tower has been designed in an attractive style and its dimensions are proportionate to the size of the other architectural components of the temple.

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66. W.Balendra, "Trincomalee Bronzes", Tamil Culture, Vol II, No. 2, 1960, p. 176.

67. I. Vaṭivēl, *tirukkōṇamalai māvaṭṭat tīruttalaṅkaḷ veliyiṭu intucamaya kalācāra aluvalkal tīṇaikkalam*, Kolumpu, 1997, p. 6.

\* Six sessions of worship are conducted daily at Kōnesvaram. The annual festival commences on the day of Pankuni Uttiram and lasts for 18 days. The festival is concluded with the *tirttam*, "the water cutting ceremony".

The *Civarattiri* festival is conducted with solemnity on an elaborate scale. For a period of fifteen days prior to *Civarattiri* special rituals are performed. During this period a special consecration ceremony is performed at the principal shrine. On the day following the *Civarattiri* the idols of Konecar and Matumai Amman are taken in procession along the streets of the town. The procession is conducted in the night and during a period of two days the idols are taken to all the principal temples in the town. During the first and second nights the idols are lodged respectively at the temples of Kaci Visvanata Civan and Sri Pattirakali Amman where special ceremonies and worship would be conducted in honour of Konecar and Matumai Amman. On the third day the images are taken back to Konesvaram in ceremonial procession. During this period the streets of the town are decorated and a special effort is made by every household to adorn the entrances as according to Hindu custom for the reception of the divinities taken in procession.<sup>68</sup> It is reminiscent of the *intiraviḷa* described in the *cilappatikāram*.

On the day of *ati amavacai* the New Moon day in the month of *ati* (July - August) the idols are taken down the hill for the water-cutting ceremony. On this occasion, the images of deities from several temples in Trincomalee are brought to the same spot and for the same purpose. A similar exercise is undertaken on the occasion of the *makamaka tirtta urcavam*.

The annual festival is conducted separately at the amman shrine for ten days and the proceedings are concluded on the day of *atippuram*. The period of *tiruvempāvai* is observed in the manner of an annual festival as in most Hindu temples throughout the island. There are

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68. *ibid.* p. 7.

several other occasions in the year on which special ceremonies and rituals are conducted as required by custom.

### *Thes Trincomalee Bronzes*

On July 27, 1950 three metallic images of Hindu deities were found by workmen employed by the Urban Council, while digging a well for the use of tenements on North Coast Road of Trincomalee. These were images of Somaskanda,<sup>69</sup> Siva as Candrasekhara and Sivakami.<sup>69</sup> They were placed under the custody of the Chairman of the Urban Council, Trincomalee.

Two more bronze statues were discovered some months previously when the roots of a coconut tree were being dug out on the North Coast Road. The bronzes were entwined amongst roots of the tree. They were representations of Ganesa and Parvati. These images were ultimately handed over to the Chairman of the Committee, appointed to restore the temple. the details pertaining to these bronzes are as follows.<sup>70</sup>

Deity	height	weight
1. Siva in the seated posture	1' 8½" x 10	70 lbs.
2. Parvati in the seated posture	1' 4" x 8"	30 lbs.
3. Siva in standing posture	1' 8" x 7"	25 lbs.
4. Parvati in the standing posture	1' 8" x 5"	30 lbs.
5. Ganesa	1' 8" x 10½"	65 lbs.

Unlike the Polonnaruwa bronzes, the images of Siva and Parvati are designed on separate pedestals. The seated Siva is four armed—holding an axe in his right hand, and a deer in his left. The right lower hand is in the posture of assuring protection while the left lower hand is in the *kataha* pose. Siva is represented with three eyes. On his right ear he wears a man's ear-ring and on his left ear he wears a woman's ear-ring (*tōtu*). He wears a necklace of berries. The sacred thread

69. W. Balendra, "Trincomalee Bronzes", Tamil Culture, Vol. II, No. 2, p. 176.

70. *ibid.*, pp. 17 - 178.

symbolising the 96 forces which are the constituents of the Universe runs over his left shoulder and under the right arm. The hair of Siva's head is braided and the upper part is tied together to form a crown terminating in a crest. The abdominal bracelet is more prominent than in the Polonnaruva specimens. The decorative chains on the shoulders are less conspicuous than those of the Polonnaruva bronzes. The most conspicuous chest decoration in the Trincomalee Siva is the patakkam ornament.<sup>71</sup>

On the consideration of artistic style this particular image could be assigned to the 13th or 14th century.

The standing image of Candrasekhara, which is of rather crude design may be assigned to the 10th century on stylistic considerations. "The face is Mongolian in appearance with prominent malar bone and oblique eyes. The limbs appear wooden, lifeless and inartistic all canons of human anatomy have been ignored. The beads over the neck and the loin cloth over the pelvis are primitive. The decorations around the ankle and the shoulder ornamentation are crude".<sup>72</sup>

"One of the female figures is in the sitting position and the other is in the standing position. The seated Parvati is resting on a cushion and the figure is exquisitely poised. Anatomical proportions are scrupulously observed but the shoulder, neck and chest ornamentations are not elegantly featured. The head dress is artistically designed.

The image of Ganesa from Trincomalee is reckoned as one of exceptional quality among the bronze images of that deity that have been brought to light so far. The artist has skilfully portrayed his idea of the elephant-headed deity as having the strength of an elephant and the wisdom of a man.

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71. *ibid.* p. 179.

72. *ibid.* p. 180.



# Munnesvaram

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N. Somakandhan

Munnēśvaram, which is referred to also as *periyā kōyil*, “the great temple” is located at a distance of two kilometres to the east of Chilaw, a coastal town in the Puttalam District of the North Western Province.<sup>1</sup> The temple, which is on the Kurunagala Road, is easily accessible to pilgrims travelling from all parts of the country. As a centre of pilgrimage to the Hindus living in the island it is rivalled only by Katirkāmam in importance. Tradition invests Munnēśvaram with a degree of sanctity and antiquity which cannot be surpassed by those of other Hindu temples in Sri Lanka. In fact it occupies a position which is in many ways unique. It has played a vital role in the development of the religious and cultural traditions especially of the Hindus living in the island over a long period of time. The peak of its development was during the period of the Kings of Kōṭṭē some of whom are known to have patronized the temple and the Brahmins attached to it, and made extensive land grants for its maintenance.

As in the days of the Kōṭṭē kingdom Munnēśvaram still continues to be a focal point of Hindu-Buddhist interaction. The temple is supported and patronized also by Buddhists who could be seen at the temple in large numbers during the festival seasons. There has always been free access for all visitors to the temple although the Vedic and āgamic forms of worship are observed here much more meticulously than at any other Hindu temple in the island. Some of the festivals conducted annually at Munnēśvaram are of a special character and are not encountered anywhere else in the country. Besides, the temple is of historical and archaeological importance. The *vimānam* was constructed in the 17th century on the initiative of Kīrti Sri Rājāsinha of Kandy. They exhibit special architectural

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1. At Munnēśvaram there are four other Hindu temples: (1) The Pillaiyar Kōyil called *veṭṭaittirumataṁ*, (2) the temple of Aiyanaṛ, (3) the temple of Kālī and (4) the temple of Kalattup Pillaiyar.

characteristics. Some of the principal icons installed in the temple are very old and had belonged to the temple before its destruction by the Portuguese in the 16th century. They were recovered from wells into which they had been thrown by pious devotees for securing them from falling into the hands of intolerant alien zealots bent on a course of destruction.

Munnēśvaram is located in the midst of paddy fields irrigated by canals issuing from large tanks found in the vicinity of the temple, in the east. The fields are skirted by patches of thick and shady woods the continuity of which is punctuated by isolated and sparsely populated villages covered with groves of coconut palms. The intense heat of the tropical sun is partially relieved by the cool breezes emanating from the surrounding wet fields and the woods and palm groves beyond them.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the sixty-four villages of Munnēśvaram-pattu had formed the exclusive domain of the temple. The inhabitants of this domain were bound by service obligations to the temple and the lands they had occupied and cultivated were held on service tenure. All the requirements of the temple in respect of conducting daily worship and rituals, seasonal and annual festivals, and repairs and maintenance were met with the products and services supplied by them and this was by no means inconsiderable. The temple had a large community of dependants including the residents of the *agrāharam*, temple managers, supervisors of functionaries, collectors of dues and services and temple servants. These impressions are confirmed by the observations of Paul E. Peiris, who says:

“The terras of Munnēśvaram constitute the domain of the Devalaya which the Portuguese destroyed in 1578 and consisted of sixty-four villages of which Munnēśvaram where the Devālaya once stood was the chief and the rest were *aduttha* (appearing in Portuguese as *azuttas*) thereto. The recognised boundaries were in the East, the village of Xenanam in Devamedī Korale; West, the tree Almaroa, presumably some well known banyan tree; North, the village Cirsala in Devamedī Korale; South, the tank Syratallav.<sup>2</sup>

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2. P.E. Pieris, *The Ceylon Littoral* 1593, p. 4.

Moreover, it may be noted here that there was a local tradition suggesting that the chief priest of Munnēśvaram had exercised authority over parts Chilaw and Puttalam in the name of the Goddess enshrined at Munnēśvaram. Commenting on some coins of the 'Fish hook' type H.W. Codrington writes:

"... I came across a coin somewhat allied to this class but known in the country as 'pincers coin' (Tamil - Kuraddu Kasu; Sinhalese - Andu Massa) It was minted according to tradition at Munnesvaram during a period when the Brahman of Munnesvaram temple is said to have ruled Chilaw and Puttalam Districts in the name of the goddess. The shape of the coin is that of a pair of pincers, hence the name. On the outer aspect one of its forks or handles was an inscription which with some difficulty was found to be Chola grantham; the reading of it was, I believe, Parakrama... The coin certainly preceded the Chola invasion of Ceylon in the eleventh century."<sup>3</sup>

The validity of the observations of Codrington could be determined only on the basis of a scrutiny of the relevant archaeological materials, of which those which are extant are meagre.

The historical origins of the Munnēśvaram temple are obscure. As the buildings of temple had been destroyed in the 16th century the epigraphical records of the earlier period have been lost. The only exception being the Tamil inscription of the 38th year of Parakramabahu VI (1412-1467) of Kōṭṭē found on the mouldings of the basement on the northern side of the *garbhagrha(m)*<sup>4</sup> During the reign of Parakramabāhu Munnēśvaram was found in a most developed state. Its antecedents are almost unknown and there are no textual notices of a historical character or any archaeological evidence relating to its origins and development.

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3. H.W. Codrington, "Ceylon Numismatics", *JCBRAS*, Vol. XXIV, No. 68, 1916, p. 186.

4. J.M. Fowler, "Translation of an Inscription at the temple of Monniśvaram", *JCBRAS*, 10 (35), 1887, PP. 118-119.



According to an origin myth recorded in the *Dakṣiṇakailāsa mahātmyam*, a Sanskrit work glorifying Lanka and the temples found in it, the temple of Munneśvaram was originally established by Rāma. The account as found in this work may briefly be summarized here as follows:

After having vanquished the mighty Rāvaṇa, Rāma entered the *puspaka-vimānam* and started on his return journey to Ayodhya. He was accompanied by his consort Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, Vibhiṣaṇa and several others. The *piramakatti* assumed the form of a shadow of dark colour and followed them. When the *vimānam* was passing over the site of Munneśvaram, Rāma found that the strange object was moving away from him. Rāma, who was surprised about this development, realized, on reflection, that they were flying over the holy site of Munneśvaram. They descended on the ground and had ablutions at the sacred *civatīrttam* the sacred waters of which had the efficacy of conferring supreme bliss (*parāmārttam*), absolving one of all sins and securing one from the power of evil. After having bathed at this site Rāma had an exceptionally pleasant feeling. He felt that he was purified and re-invigorated. Accompanied by Sītā, Rāma circumambulated the shrine, worshipped God and had a vision of Śiva who appeared in front of him in the company of the Goddess in the form of Vaṭivāmpikai, the sages Nanti and Pirunki and his attendants. Rāma prayed that he should be relieved of the sin of *piramakatti*. Śiva instructed him to establish under his name the *civalīṅkam* at Munneśvaram, at a site to the north of the stream Māyavanaru and also at Kētiśvaram, Kōṇēśvaram and Cētu. So, Rāma established a temple with subsidiary shrines and installed the *civalīṅkam* known as the *rāmalīṅkam* and made arrangements for conducting regular worship.<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing account represents an attempt to establish the antiquity and sanctity of Munneśvaram. It is also interesting to find that Rāma is represented as a devotee of Śiva. Nevertheless, the origins of this legend cannot be traced back to great antiquity as the *takṣiṇa kailāsa mahātmyam* is sometimes considered as a work of recent origin.

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5. *śrī munneśvara mānmiyam*. Mu. Comaskānta Kurukkal, *munneśvara tevaṣṭanam*, 1927.



The Cōla prince known as Kuḷakkōṭṭan who is said to have re-established the temple of Kōṇēśvaram and its services on an elaborate scale is also associated with Munnēśvaram. The *munneśvara mānmiyam*, which records the traditions and legends' pertaining to Munnēśvaram has the following account of Kuḷakkōṭṭan's activities at Munnēśvaram:

Kuḷakkōṭṭu makārācan, a son of Varāramatēvan of the lineage of Manunītikāṇṭa Cōlan of Tirivārūr in the Cōla kingdom of *paratakaṇṭam* reached ilāṅkāpuri in the year 512 of the *kaliyukam* and constructed the buildings of Kōṇēśvaram and made endowments and arrangements for its maintenance. Thereafter, he visited Munnesvaram and made elaborate arrangements for the development of the temple. The sacred tanks attached to the temple were cleaned of silt deposits and provided with flights of steps. He invited many learned Brahmins from the Cōla country and had the ceremony of *kumbhābhiṣekam*, reconsecration, performed by them.

In order to augment the number of those who perform services to the temple for conducting daily worship and rituals and festivals on special occasions annually, he had brought people who belong to various communities such as *pirāmaṇar*, *caivar*, *ceṭṭi*, *vellālar*, *vīramuṭṭi*, *caṅkamar*, *tātar*, *kollar*, *taṭṭār*, *cirpar*, *taccar*, *yālppāṭi*, *eṇṇaivaṇiyar*, *akampaṭiyār*, *mullai-maṭapaḷiyar*, *caṅkumaṭappaḷiyar*, *carukumaṭappaḷiyar*, *kaikkōlar*, *cēṇiyar*, *ilaivāṇiyar*, *viṛakuveṭṭi*, *nāvitar*, *vaṇṇar*, *timilar*, *valaiṇar*, *varuṇakulattār*, *kuyavar*, *māvarar*, *paḷḷar*, *cāṇār*, *kattikkārār* and *paraiyar*. They were brought from Maturai, Maruṅkūr, Kāraikkal, Kūṭalūr, Tiruccirāppalli, Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam and other areas. They were provided with lands for settlement and cultivation and their service obligations were defined. With a view to provide some administrative arrangements for regulating their service obligations he appointed Taniyupṇāppūpālan, an ornament of the lineage of the *cantirakulam*, as the 'ruler' exercising authority from Munnēśvaram.

He exhorted them to conduct the festivals, and pay the dues from lands and other sources of income and render all other customary services and provided them with land grants. They were obliged to

supply rice, bananas, milk, curd, ghee, betel leaves, arecanut and other such commodities required for the temple. Besides, they were obliged to supply oils extracted from a variety of seeds and large containers for storing oil were installed at the temple.

Kuḷakkōttan laid down the details pertaining to the quantities of offerings to be made to the deities during times of worship in respect of each item. He divided the territories of Munnēśvaram pattu into sixty-four villages and devised a system of hierarchical administration under the Vanniyar residing at Munnēśvaram. The designations of *kōraḷai* and *attukkōraḷai* were conferred as titles of rank on the chiefs of the *vellālar* and *akampati vellālar* respectively. They had to reside at Munnesvaram and were obliged to be in charge of the store-houses of the temple. They were entrusted with the responsibility of organizing and superintending all services respectively at the inner courtyard and the outer courtyard of the temple.

The details pertaining to the settlements of various communities and their respective service obligations as determined by Kuḷakkōttan may be listed here as follows:

1. The *akampati vellālar* were assigned the villages of Elivetti, Kākkappalli, Mānāvari, Karavetti, Kānankatti, Ihalapiramaṇattaluvai, Mūnkilvetuvān, Viḷattāvai, Maṇṭalānai, Virakkompantaluvai, Pirappaṅkuli, Ollittaluvai, Marutaṅkulam, and Tittakkaṭai.

They were obliged to perform duties such as supplying leaves of mango-trees and tender shoots of the coconut palm on special occasions, carrying the images of deities in procession, blowing conches, unhusking paddy, polishing the lamps and utensils, lighting lamps, grinding the sandal paste, cleaning the halls and courtyards of the temple and erecting pandals.

2. The *Vīramuṭṭi paṇṭāram* were settled at *Paṇṭārimūlai*. Polishing the utensils used for conducting daily worship, lighting lamps, gathering flowers, singing the *tēvāram* and *tiruvācakam* and distributing the *vipūti* are the duties assigned to them.
3. The architects and sculptors (*cirpācāri*) were settled at a locality to the south of the temple. They had to carry out the repairs of temple buildings.
4. The *kollar* or Blacksmiths were settled at a part of *Karaveṭṭi* and at *Vaṅkātanai*. They were bound to render service in connection with the chariot. They also had to supply instruments such as knives, axes, and mammoties.
5. The *taccar* or Carpenters were settled at *Vaṅkātanai*. They were to be engaged in the construction and repairs of vehicles and the chariot.
6. The *Kannār* were settled at *Palakuḷam* and *Calāpam*. Their obligation was to repair all lamps and utensils used at the temple.
7. The Drummers and *tēvatāci* were settled at *Munneśvaram* and *Calāpam*. The men were to perform on the instruments while the women had to perform dances and *ālatti* at the temple. They were granted lands for maintenance in other localities.
8. The *kuyavar* were settled at *Munneśvaram* and *Vaṭakalmūlai*. They had to supply kiln-burnt bricks, tiles and earthen ware.
9. The *cunṇavāṇiyar* or "lime-makers" were settled at *Maraveli*. Supplying required quantities of lime and applying colour-wash to halls and walls during the festival seasons were their special obligation.
10. The *kaikkōlar* were settled at *Munneśvaram* and *Calāpam*. They were obliged to manufacture and supply thread, ropes, and cloth required for the chief priest, for festivals and for making banners.

11. The *kōtarikkārar*, “the axe-men” were settled at the two villages of Pahalakamam and Ponnānkaṇi. Their obligation was to supply oils extracted from coconuts, gingelly and the seeds of *iluppai* and *āmaṇakku*. They had also to supply firewood.
12. The Timilar were settled at the Village of Timilai. Providing free transport to the inhabitants across the stream called *Māyavanāru*, supplying ropes for the chariot and dragging the chariot were their principal obligations.
13. The *Cāṇār* were settled at Maṇakkulam. Supplying tender coconuts, decorating the premises, providing cadjan, tender coconut leaves and soft combustible materials for lighting fires were their principal obligations.
14. The *karuppaṭṭikkārar* or “jaggery-makers” were settled at Inikoṭāveḷi. Their obligation was to provide jaggery and baskets required for the temple.
15. The *caṇkūti* or “the blowers of conches” were settled at five villages: Kākkāppalli, Iluppatiṇi, Ciyampalakasveḷi, Karukkuli and Tikamveḷi. They were obliged to render the service of blowing conches at the temple at daily services and festivals, throughout the year.
16. The *mālaikaṭṭi* or garland makers were settled at Munneśvaram and Timilai. They had to perform the service of making garlands required for the temple.
17. The *vaṇṇār* or washermen were divided into four groups and settled at Muṇkantaluvai and Cempukkatti. The supply of cloth required for covers, curtains, torches, ceiling and for spreading on the ground was their obligation.
18. The *paṇaiyar* were settled at the village of Virapāṇṭiyan-munai. They were obliged to serve by the beating of drums during



festivals and also notify to the inhabitants about special events celebrated at the temple.<sup>6</sup>

The foregoing account consists of two principal elements: One of these is a description of the communities living in the "domain" of the temple and their service obligations while the other is the description of the role of the prince called *Kuḷakkōṭṭan*. The description of the communities and their service obligations seems to have been based on the observation of actual social phenomena and established customs. It is also probable that the temple had, in former times, maintained records containing relevant information pertaining to the collection of customary dues and service obligations of the people occupying temple lands. What is in doubt here is not the information pertaining to lands, settlements and service obligations but the chronology of events and the manner in which the whole scheme of interaction between the temple and the inhabitants of its domain had been formulated. It is highly unlikely that all the communities listed here were settled in the villages of *Munnēsvarampattu* at a certain period of time. These settlements were probably the cumulative result of developments that had taken place over a long period. According to the traditions pertaining to *Munnēsvaram* this process had its beginnings under *kuḷakkōṭṭan*, who is described as a prince of *Cōla* descent.

The claim that *Kuḷakkōṭṭan* was responsible for the settlement of communities with the obligation of rendering services to the temple does not seem to have any valid foundation. It is clearly an attempt to explain the origins of the temple and the service obligations of the people attached to it on the basis of the traditions pertaining to *Kōnēsvaram*. The endowments made by kings, princes and pious devotees have been the principal sources of the temple's wealth, which was enormous in the 15th and 16th centuries. It may be useful to recall here the observations of P.E. Pieris, who says: "One of the five *Isparam* or residences of *Siva* in Ceylon, it claimed precedence over the great fanes of *Trincomalee*, *Mantota*, *Kangesanturai* and

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6.        *ibid.* pp. 8 - 11.

Ramesvaram, and was said to have been built by Ramachandra, the Avatar of Vishnu, himself, after the defeat of Ravana. Numerous inscriptions bore record to the wealth which the devotion of successive kings had dedicated to the service of the temple, and the sixty-two villages of the district to which it gave its name, comprised it separate domain".<sup>7</sup>

Of the numerous inscriptions referred to by P.E. Pieris only an inscription of Parakramabāhu VI (1412-1467) of Kotte has survived the ravages caused by the Portuguese. The Tamil inscription of Parakramabāhu VI at Munnēśvaram records the grant of land and money by the king to the temple and its Brahmins. The inscription is of considerable academic interest as it throws some light on the history of the reign of Parakramabāhu and on Munnēśvaram which is one of the principal Saiva temples in the island. It gives some idea of the importance of Munnēśvaram in the fifteenth century.

The inscription is engraved in an admixture of Tamil and Grantha characters. The text of the inscription is drafted in two languages - Tamil and Sanskrit. The main portion of the text concerning the grant is in Tamil but the initial and concluding portions are in Sanskrit. All the Sanskrit expressions and passages are written in Grantha. The epigraph begins with a conventional description of the king's descent, titles and epithets and concludes with a Sanskrit *śloka*.

G.M. Fowler's translation of this inscription was published in 1887. In his introductory remarks Fowler observes:

"I have examined the Monnisvaram inscription several times and much of it is illegible... several of the letters near the joints of the stones are covered by mortar which I think would not be the case if it has been cut in situ. The inscription runs along a kind of cornice and consists of four lines extending for about thirty or forty feet".<sup>8</sup>

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7. P.E. Pieris, *Ceylon: The Portuguese Era* Vol. I.

8. J.M. Fowler, "Translation of an Inscription at the temple of Monnisvaram". *JCBRAS.* 10 (35), pp. 118-119.

As pointed out by S. Pathmanathan, Fowler frankly admits that much of the inscription was illegible to him but he gives the translation of almost the whole text.. “we are therefore led to imagine that he had access to a copy of a record preserved presumably in manuscript form by the temple authorities.”<sup>9</sup>

An article on this inscription by A. Velupillai was published in 1971.<sup>10</sup> He has used the estampage prepared by the Archaeological Department of the Government of Sri Lanka, and in his article a photo copy of the estampage and a transliteration of the text of the inscription have been published for the first time. The letters in the last few expressions of each of the four lines of the inscription were mostly obliterated and any clear trace of them is not to be found in the estampage. The full text of the inscription cannot, therefore, be restored from a reading of the estampage.

The text of the inscription as given by A. Velupillai is incomplete; there are some important gaps. There are also some errors in his decipherment. Some of the expressions which are quite clear and legible on the estampage have been deciphered wrongly. On the basis of the text of a manuscript copy of this inscription found at the Library of the British Museum, which has been published by S. Pathmanathan, it is possible to reconstruct the whole text of the inscription including those portions which have become obliterated on the stone and are therefore not portrayed in the estampage taken by the Archaeological Department.<sup>11</sup> The interesting feature about this particular manuscript is that it contains almost the entire text of the inscription. The manuscript contains also a paraphrase of the text which helps to interpret and translate those passages in the text which are archaic in style and obscure in meaning.

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9. S. Pathmanathan, “The Munnesvaram Tamil Inscription of Parakramabahu VI”, *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JCBRAS)*, X (34), pp. 54 - 68.  
10. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions* Part I, ed. A. Velupillai, Peradeniya, 1971, pp. 37 - 43.  
11. S. Pathmanathan, “The Munnesvaram Tamil Inscription of Parākramabāhu VI” *JCBRAS*, X (34), pp. 54 - 68.



The text as found in the manuscript mostly conforms to the original and if it is the product of the decipherment of the stone inscription it represents a most successful attempt at decipherment of the epigraph. But, unfortunately there is no means of knowing when and by whom this inscription was originally deciphered. It could be surmised that some learned Brahmin attached to the shrine deciphered the inscription at a time when the engraved stones were in a much better state of preservation. It is even probable that this manuscript reproduces a copy of the text either engraved on copper plate or written on palm leaf.

The inscription, which is dated in the 38th year of the king called Parakramabāhu records the grant of land and money to the temple of Munnēśvaram and the Brahmin priests attached to that temple. As Parakramabāhu is said to have been residing at Jayavardhanapura by which name Kōṭṭē was known in medieval times, he was undoubtedly a ruler of Kōṭṭē. Among the kings of Kōṭṭē there were four rulers who had the name Parakramabahu: Parakramabāhu VI (1412-1467), Parakramabāhu VII (1477-1485), Parakramabāhu VIII (1485-1505) and Parakramabāhu IX (1506-1520). As the inscription is dated in the 38th regnal year the ruler mentioned in it is evidently Parakramabāhu VI because none among the other rulers mentioned earlier had a reign of more than twenty years duration. The 38th year in which the grant was made would correspond to A.D. 1450. The King, according to the inscription, had the titles *cāṅkabodhi-panmar* and *rājādhirāja* and the epithets *tribhuvanaccakkaravartti* and *pararājāśekhara-bhujāṅga*.<sup>12</sup>

That Parākramabāhu had close connections with Munnēśvaram is clear from the Tamil inscription found on the mouldings of the *garbhagrha(m)* of the temple. He is said to have invited the Brahmins officiating as priests (*nampimār*) at the temple to Jayavarttanak kōṭṭai and inquired about the affairs of the temple from *Vijasāmagava paṇṭitar*

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12. *cāṅkabodhi-panmar* is the Tamil form of *Sanghabodhi-varman* - a compound of the words *sangabodhi* and *varman*. *Sanghabodhi* (s. *sangabo*) was one of the two alternate titles assumed by the Kings of Ceylon on their consecration, the other being *abhaya silāmegha* (s. *aba salamevan*). The epithet *tiripuvanaccakkaravartti* meaning 'the emperor of the three worlds' was assumed by the Kings of Lanka in imitation of the practices of South Indian Kings.



*purōhitar*. There is some ambiguity in respect of the expressions *viṣāmagava-panṭitar purohitaritam tampiranārutaiya ksēttirankalir ceytikēttu*. Viṣāmagava panṭitar seems to have been the name of an individual. As he is described also as *purōhitar* it is clear that he had the rank of a *purōhitar*, “a family priest”<sup>13</sup>. The implication is that this particular individual was a *purōhitar* of the king. The ambiguity is in relation to the connections he had with the priests (*nampimār*) of Munnēśvaram. It is not clear whether he was a *purōhitar* of the King, who was living at Kōttē, or one of the *nampimār* of Munnēśvaram on whom the rank of *purōhitar* had been conferred earlier. In any case it is significant that the king had made a grant to the temple and its priests after having made inquiries about the temple from Viṣāmagava panṭitar, who was the *purōhitar*. The inscription concerned is one of unusual significance as it reveals the close relationship that had existed between Munnēśvaram and the royal court of Kōttē. It would seem that the *purōhitar* or “family priest” of Parakramabāhu during the period when the text of the inscription was drafted was from one of the learned Brahmin families established at Munnēśvaram.

It is clear from the text of the inscription that the grant made by Parakramabāhu had involved some changes in the classification of the categories of some lands. Some lands held by the *nampimār*, “priest” were transferred to the temple and in order to compensate the loss they were assigned as *pūjaikkāṇi* 22 *amaṇam* of field at Iluppa(i)deṇi(ya), 30 *amaṇam* of field at Kōṭṭaippitti and 8 *amaṇam* of field at Tittakkaṭai. The grant included inhabited localities and forests attached to them. Moreover, the king made provision for the (daily) offering of three measures of cooked rice, curry, betel leaves and incense and a monthly grant of 30 *paṇam* to the chief priests and 11 *paṇam* for each of the other priests to be enjoyed in perpetuity.

13. In the reign of Parakramabāhu VI the position of the *purohita* was held by two Telugu Brahmins. Pōta Ojihalun and his nephew Avuhala Ojihalun of the Sāṇḍilya *gōtra*. The two Brahmins were rewarded for their services with the village Oruvala gifted as a land grant (*dānākṣetra*) and classified as a *banagama*, ‘Brahmin holding’. The Kudumirissa inscription suggests that the *purohita* continued to be an important functionary at the court even after the reign of Parakramabāhu VI. S. Pathmanathan, “Buddhism And Hinduism In Sri Lanka: Some Points Of Contact Between Two Religious Traditions”, *Kalyāṇi Journal* Volumes V & VI (pages 78-112), 1986-1987, p. 100.

According to a manuscript found at the temple the Brahmin called Nīlakaṇṭar was the chief priest of Munnēśvaram when the inscription of Parakramabāhu was engraved on the mouldings of its basement.<sup>14</sup> One of the brothers of this priest is said to have been in charge of temple administration.

In the Saka year 1435 corresponding to the year 1513AD another ruler of Kōṭṭē who had the name Parakramabāhu had made a grant to the Brahmins of Munnēśvaram as a reward for healing the illness caused by lightning to his son. Twelve of the nineteen Brahmins under the leadership of Tiṣkanta cakkaravartti *rācakuru*, Polvattai Kurunaṇahai, Tiṣkanta Kurunaṇahai, *tavakuru paṇṭāram* and Tuṭtukkuṭi Appurālai were granted 140 *amuṇam* of fields in five villages of Munnēśvaram-pattu.<sup>15</sup>

One hundred and forty *amuṇam* of fields having as their boundaries the irrigation channel called Mala Ela on the east, the two boundary posts of Mātampai in the south-east and Māna-māntōṭṭa of Kaḷutiya Pokkunai in the north, and 475 *amuṇam* of land in Kirikaluhattai were granted to seven Brahmins serving at the shrine of Viṣṇu. The grant is said to have been made as a reward for having treated and cured the prince, who had been afflicted on account of the effects of lightning. The lands were to be held as heritable property without any obligations (*carvamāṇiyam*). A copy of the text recording this grant is said to have been engraved as a copper-plate charter and issued to the donees.<sup>16</sup>

Munnēśvaram fell on evil days with the decline in the power and influence of the Sinhalese monarchy and the corresponding rise of Portuguese power in the kingdom of Kōṭṭē. The Portuguese soldiers under the command of Diogo de Mello had this temple razed to the ground when they ravaged the lands of Chilaw and Negombo in 1578.<sup>17</sup> The general Azevedo gave the temple Munnēśvaram to Jesuit priests

14. Pā. Civarāmakirusṣa Carmā. *munneśvara varalāru* Colombo, 1968, p. 9.

15. Pā. Civarāmakirusṣa Carmā. *munneśvara varalāru*, p. 62.

16. *ibid.*

17. Fr. Fernao de Queyroz. *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon* trans. S. G. Perera (Colombo, 1930), pp. 424 - 425.

in the year 1606, and they erected the church of St. Paul. "When the mission was started, the Christians of Chilaw destroyed the 'lingam' which was enshrined in the temple". Commenting on its destruction a Jesuit priest says:

"A mile inland of Chilaw there is a Pagoda formerly well known and very rich, for it possessed 106 villages. It was much venerated for they believe that their god was born there. This god was a block of stone, like marble, of a man's height, placed over another larger and square block, which is called Lingam, and I think that it is the same infamous and indecent divinity as Priapo. This Pagoda the general gave to us. The Provincial going there ordered a church of St. Paul to be built there in our own style and to destroy the infamous stone which the Brahmins maintained was impossible, as it was born there and would bring down evil on any one who dared to lay hands on it. But without more delay than was required to fetch two iron bars from the fort, with which it was destroyed the idol was brought down, exposing the falsehood, superstition and deceit into which the Brahmins had led the people".<sup>18</sup>

### *The Restoration*

On the fall of Portuguese power in the island during the mid-seventeenth century the territories of Puttalam and Chilaw were included in the Kandyan Kingdom. In course of time the Christians were dislodged from the premises of Munnēśvaram which was re-occupied by the Hindus. The chronological sequence of events which led to this development and the details pertaining to it are, however, not clear. It is claimed on the basis of some temple records that the task of the reconstruction of the temple was undertaken and completed during the early years of the reign of Kīrtti Sri Rājāsinha (1747-1782) of Kandy. The ceremony of consecration, *kumpāpiṣēkam*, is said to have been conducted in 1753.<sup>19</sup>

18. E. Aloysius Fernando, *Catholic Chilaw*, 1932; Pā. Civaṛāmakirusna Carmā, *munnēśvara varalāryu*, pp. 56 - 57.

19. Pā. Civaṛāmakirusna Carmā, *munnēśvara varalāryu*, p. 10.



The monarch Kīrtti Śrī Rājāsinha had issued a copper plate recording the grant of lands he had made to the priests of Munnēśvaram. This copper plate cannot be traced but there are references to it in the British official records of the early years of the 19th century. The Brahmins of Munnēśvaram had made representations to the Government regarding the claims the temple had over the produce from paddy lands in and around Munnēśvaram. The Brahmins had made these claims on the basis of a grant made by a king of Kandy in earlier times. In a letter of 10-2-1804 which was addressed to Henry Powney, Secretary to the Board of Revenue and Commerce, Colombo, W.E. Campbell, the Agent of Revenue and Commerce Wrote:

“... I have the pleasure to forward the petition of the padre of the pagoda of Munnēśvaram, requesting me to cause the paddy renter of Chilaw to deliver him the quantity of grain formerly granted (annually) by the King of Kandy to the pagoda. I beg leave to observe for the information of the Board that 512 parrahs is too much to be paid to the Renter of Chilaw alone as valuing each parrah at the rate of Rixdollar, it will amount exactly to one fourth of his rent. The grant was given by the King of Kandy long before the District of Chilaw was ceded to the Dutch at a time when it was full of inhabitants and the whole country in a state of cultivation. At present it is not one quarter inhabited and not a third of the paddy grounds sown. I therefore take the liberty of recommending to the Board that the Chilaw Renter may be exempted from three fourths of the payments and that if it's the intention of Government that the full quantity shall be given to the pagoda that the other paddy Renters of the district may be obliged, to pay their quotas in proportion to their respective farms.”<sup>20</sup>

This letter was brought to the notice of the Governor, His Excellency, the Honourable Frederick North, by the Board of Revenue and Commerce. In their letter to the Governor they wrote:

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20.       ibid. p. 59.



“We have the Honour to lay before your Excellency the copy of a letter from the agent of Revenue at Chilaw with a translation of a grant by the King of Kandy to the pagoda of Mooneseram therein referred to.

“By Mr. Campbells’ letter your Excellency will observe that the priests of the pagoda consider themselves entitled by virtue of this grant to nearly 512 *parras* of paddy Revenue of the District which appears to us a claim that cannot be allowed, the ground in itself is undefined with regard to the particular land given, which cannot now be ascertained and the priests have consequently marked out, the finest fields in the district.

“We are of the opinion that as the original intention of the grant could only be for the proper maintenance of the Priests attached to the pagoda, it should now receive that interpretation, and therefore we have the honour to propose that Mr. Campbell the Revenue Agent and Mr. Dean the President of the provincial court of the District should be appointed to confer with the Priests of the pagoda and compromise the matter in such a way as to allot a piece of ground near the temple as possible, sufficient for their decent maintenance and support”.<sup>21</sup>

The following conclusions emerge from the records of correspondence among British officials in relation to the claims made on behalf of the temple of Munneśvaram:

1. The Brahmins of Munneśvaram claimed a share of the produce from certain lands on the basis of a grant made by a King of Kandy.
2. The British officials found that it was not possible to reject these claims as there was a basis for such claims in the form

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21. *ibid.* p. 60.

of a royal Charter. In fact a copy of that charter was traced and an English translation of it by Casie Chetty, the Malabar Translator, was forwarded to the Governor.

3. As the lands were not under cultivation and, presumably, could not be identified on account of that reason, as claimed by the British officials, it was not possible to concede fully the claims made by the Brahmin priests on behalf of the Munnēśvaram temple.
4. That the validity of their claims were accepted by the British officials is clear from their following observations: "we are of the opinion, that the original intention of the grant could only be for the proper maintenance of the Priests attached to the pagoda, it should now receive that interpretation.

The manner and the extent to which the claims of the priests were settled could only be ascertained by studies in the future.

Kumārācuvāmik Kurukkal (1816-1912) was responsible for the renovation work carried out at Munnēśvaram during the period of his tenure as Chief Priest. He had the *garbhagriha(m)*, *arttamaṇṭapam* and the *mahāmaṇṭapam* repaired by architects brought from India and on the successful completion of that work the ceremony of re-consecration was conducted on an elaborate scale in 1875. Since then worship has been conducted at Munnēśvaram without any interruption and on account of the general improvement of transport facilities in the country there has been a steady increase in the number of pilgrims and devotees visiting the temple from all parts of the island.

### *Buildings and Architectural Design*

The component parts of the temple are found within a walled enclosure which is approximately 120 by 110 in dimensions. The central shrine consisting of the *garbhagriha(m)*, *arttamaṇṭapam* and the *mahāmaṇṭapam* are exclusively of stone construction. On the

consideration of architectural style and design they could be assigned to the 14th and 15th centuries.<sup>22</sup> The ornamentation on the mouldings and plasters is restrained and the architectural design is reminiscent of the Vijayanagara style. The original character of the three component parts has virtually remained unchanged despite renovations made periodically ever since the restoration in the 18th century.

A close examination of the integrated components of the central shrine reveals that they are the remnants of the original *pagoda*, which is said to have been destroyed by the Portuguese conquistadors in 1578. In all probability the original *vimānam*, the superstructure over the sanctum, had fallen down during the process of destruction in the 16th century. It had to be rebuilt in the 18th century during the period of restoration. The present *vimānam*, which rises to a height of 46 feet is entirely of brick construction. This three storeyed *vimānam*, which was constructed in the period of the Kandyan Kings, has undergone modification on account of periodical renovations. In the central niches of each of the three storeys there are figures of *viṣṇu*, *dakṣiṇamurti* and Brahma on the western, southern and northern sides respectively.

The three principal components of the stone-built structure occupy an area which is approximately 33 by 16 in dimensions. The inner sanctum, the *mūlasthānam* houses a sacred lingam on the side of which has been installed an image of the goddess described at *vaṭivāmpikai*. The central shrine containing the image of the lingam is flanked on either side by subsidiary shrines; the shrine of Ganapati on the right and that of Murukan on the left.

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22. The buildings of the Munnēśvaram temple have never been examined and commented upon by professional academics proficient in art history. There are clear indications suggesting that the *garbha grīham* (i), *artamantapam* and *mahāmantapam* belong to a much earlier period than they are generally assigned. In a recent visit to Munnēśvaram we noticed the existence of the carvings of some figures within and outside a circular frame on the ceiling of the *mahāmantapam*. Prominent among these are the representations of the fish or double carp, the dynastic emblem of the Pāṇdyas. The possibility of some Pāṇdyā connexion with Munnēśvaram deserves consideration and examination. It may be noted here that there are toponyms in Chilaw and Puttalam which suggest some Pāṇdyā connexions.



The entire building is roofed and ceiled with plain slabs of stone. There are some carvings on the stone slabs at the centre of the roof of the *mahāmaṇṭapam*. The representations of the figures of fish and the double carp are of unusual significance and may perhaps suggest some Pāṇḍyan connexions. There are four rows of tall and heavy pillars supporting the roof of the *mahāmaṇṭapam*. Those on the northern and southern ends are built into the walls. The design of the pillars in the two central rows is of a peculiar kind. Each of them has been carved so as to project the appearance of alternating parts with rectangular and octagonal shapes. The topmost portion of each pillar is devoid of any ornamental carving. On the whole, the plainness of the surface of the walls of the *maṇṭapam*, and the simplicity and restraint in ornamentation are the hallmarks of the architectural style of those parts of the Munnēśvaram temple that have survived the ravages of man in the 16th century. The enclosed circumambulatory round the temple and the gateway are recent constructions which do not merit a detailed consideration as they do not exhibit any remarkable quality.

### *Festivals and Daily Services*

Almost all the rites, observances and festivals known to the Hindu religious tradition are conducted at Munnēśvaram with a regularity and splendour that could seldom be surpassed anywhere else in Sri Lanka. Worship is conducted six times daily and all activities commence at 5. AM and end at 9.PM when all the doors are closed. The first session of worship called *usatkāla pūcai* or *tiruvanantal* is conducted at 5.30 AM. At *tiruvanantal* offerings consisting of milk and baked rice flakes are offered to the divinities in the shrines of Vairavar, the Mother Goddess and the inner sanctum. The worship is conducted with invocations and glorification of the divinities.

During the *cantippūcai* or the second session the images of all the deities in the temple are consecrated and worship is conducted in honour of all of them. Milk-rice made of a red variety *campa* rice is the principal offering to the divinities.



The third session of worship is called *uccikkālap-pūcai* on account of the fact that it is conducted at mid-day. At this time worship is conducted on an elaborate scale at the *mūlasāṇam* and the *amman* shrine. The fourth session of worship called *cāyaratcaip pūcai* is conducted in the evening. During this session the rituals of *āvāhanam*, *apiṣēkam*, *alaṅkāram*, *tīpārāṇai*, *tōttiram* and *niruttiam* are performed elaborately at the sanctum and the *amman* shrine. This session of worship is conducted in the evening before sunset. During the fifth session, which generally takes place around 7.30 pm, all the images are washed, consecrated and adorned with garments and garlands and the offerings made to them uniformly consist of rice. The days proceedings are concluded with the *arttacāmappūcai* which is conducted at the sanctum and the *amman* shrine. At the conclusion of this session of worship all the doors of the temple will be closed.

*cukkirāvaram*, *taipponkal*, *taippūcam*, *civarātiri*, *paṅkuni uttiram*, *cittirai varuṣam*, *āni uttiram*, *tīpāvali*, *kantacaṣṭi* and *mārkaḷit tīruvātirai* are special occasions on which annually rituals and festivals are conducted on an elaborate scale as in most other Hindu temples in the island.

The annual festival at Munnēśvaram, which lasts for a period of 27/28 days, commences with the *dvaṣārohaṇam* and concludes on the Full Moon day of the month of *āvani*. On each day of the festival the images of Vināyakar, Cuppiramaṇiyar, Ārumukacāmi, Cōmaskantar and *amman* are paraded round the temple. The events of the last week of the festival are of special significance and somewhat peculiar to Munnēśvaram. On the day of the *paktōtsvam* the images of sixty-three *nāyanmār* of the Saiva tradition are taken in procession along with those of the deities. This particular festival is conducted only at Munnēśvaram in Sri Lanka.

The image of Śiva in the form of *bhikṣāṭana* is taken in procession on the day of *bhikṣāṭana utsavam*. The bronze image which is approximately 5 feet 6 inches in height is of an exceptionally high quality of workmanship. On the day of the *natarāja-utsavam* the

image of Siva in the form of *natarāja* is taken in procession. The bronze image used for this purpose is said to have been received from a well in the temple premises.

## Appendices

### A. The Translated version of the Munnesvaram Tamil Inscription of Parakramabāhu VI

Let there be happiness and prosperity.

The King of Kings and 'Emperor of the three worlds', Śrī Sanghabodhi Parākramabāhu deva of the solar dynasty who is (like) the serpent to (the King) Pararājasekhara(n) adores the lotus feet of the Buddha. In the 10th day of the waxing moon of the month of arpaci (October-November) in the 38th year of his reign His Majesty invited the chief priests who propitiate the God of Munnēsvaram and inquired about the affairs of the temple from the (learned) Purohitar called Vijasāmagava paṇṭitar and endowed the lands in the temple district of Munnēsvaram which formerly belonged to the priests as a temple land. For the performance of worship, he granted to the priests, 22 *amanam* of field at Iluppaidēni(ya) and to the Chief Priests, 30 *amanam* of field at Kōṭṭaippitti and 8 *amanam* of field at Tittakkatai with the inhabited localities and forests attached to them. (Moreover), he provided for the (daily) offering of three measures of cooked rice, curry, betel and incense and a monthly grant of 30 *paṇam* to the chief priests and 11 *paṇam* for each of the priests to be enjoyed in perpetuity (till the Sun and the Moon endure) and from generation to generation as a gift free of all taxes. Those who cause any obstruction to this grant will incur the sin of committing the five most heinous crimes while those who support it will attain the position of the Sun.

This proclamation has been issued by Parakrama(bāhu) through the grace of the Lord of Munnēśvaram, the Lord of all beings and the ocean of the knowledge of Saivism.<sup>23</sup>

**B. Translation of the text of a Copper-Plate Inscription issued in Tamil by Kīrtti Śrī Rajasinha (1747 - 1782)**

By the high and mighty Ruler of the world who reigns the eight regions and collects tributes from the Kings of Angam, Kalinkam, Marāttam, Malayālam and from the Kings of the fifty-six kingdoms were granted to the temple of Munnēśvarar situated at Munnēśvaram, the landed property in the form of paddy fields which belong to the Revenue of the said mighty King as follows: four *amanam* at Karavaetti, six *amanam* at Iluppaideniya, two *amanam* at Pirāmaṇattaluvāy, three *amanam* at Kannānkatti, one and a half *amanam* at maṭattuveli, two *amanam* at Paueadee (?), one and a half *amanam* at Mutaliyār taluvāy, two *amanam* at Pirappaṅkuli, Nallanāyakan veli and Maravanveli, four *amanam* at Pallaveli, four *amanam* at Kolluttaluvāy and two *amanam* at Ollittaluvāy.

In all thirty- two *amanam* inclusive of jungle lands, hills, and ditches as *tēvātanam* to the temple of Munnēśvaram to be held in perpetuity. This (endowment has been made) on the order of the King in a copper plate charter issued on Sunday the 14th of August 1675 in the year Srimukam.<sup>24</sup>

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23. S. Pathmanathan, "The Munnesvaram Tamil Inscription..." *JRAS* (Sri Lanka) New Series Vol. XVIII, 1974, P. 68.

24. This is a slightly modified version of translation made by C. Casie Chetty who held the post of "Malabar Translator". His translation was certified by John Macdowall, Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue. A copy of the translation of the text was issued to M. Somaskanda Kurukkal by R. E. Rennus from Colombo on 11-09-1923. Pā. Civarāmakirusṇa Carimā. *munneśvara varalāṅu*, p. 60.



# Temples of Siva in Polonnaruva

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S. Pathmanathan

## *The City of Polonnaruva*

The city of Polonnaruva, which had its origins in the seventh century, in course of time became the principal centre of dynastic power, religious authority and cultural activities in the island. As suggested by its original name Kandavuru Nuvara, it had its beginnings as a military outpost of Anurādhapura.<sup>1</sup> It also served as a secondary capital for some of the Kings of Anuradhāpura since the late seventh century. Aggabodhi III (628) and some of his successors are said to have established monasteries, hospitals and residences for the royalty at Pulatthinagara.<sup>2</sup>

It rose to greater prominence since the abandonment of Anurādhapura by Mahinda V in consequence of an insurrection and the conquest of the northern parts of the island by the Cōlas, which followed it.<sup>3</sup> The fact that Polonnaruva became the principal political

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1. S. Pathmanathan, "The Cities of Medieval Sri Lanka (A.D. 1000 - 1250). Centres of Dynastic Power, Religious Authority and Commercial Activity", *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Science*, Vol.5, No. 1, June 1982, pp. 11-12.
  2. Aggabodhi III is credited with the construction of the Mahāpānadīpa vihāra in Pulatthinagara. Aggabodhi IV (667-683) and Aggabodhi III (772-777) spent the last days of their reigns at Polonnaruva. Towards the end of the eighth century Mahinda II (777-797) is said to have constructed in this city two monasteries, the Dāma vihāra and the Sannirattittha. Udaya I (797-801) moved out of Anurādhapura and took up residence at Polonnaruva after suppressing the rebellion organized against him by the senāpati and the yuvarāja. The chronicle records that he constructed halls for accommodating cripples, the blind and sick persons in Pulatthinagara. Pulatthinagara is again mentioned in the chronicle in connection with some occurrences in the reign of Sena I (833-850). Udaya, one of the princes at the court of Anuradhapura, seized a princess under the king's protection and fled with her to Pulatthinagara. In the early tenth century, Kassapa IV (898-914) is said to have constructed hospitals at Anuradhāpura and Pulatthinagara for combating the *upasagga* disease. *Cūlavamsa* (Cv) Vol. I ed. William Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1927; 44: 122; 46: 44, 48, 174; 48: 173; 49: 5 - 9; 50: 8-9; 52: 25, 55; 22, 57: 66; 58: 4.
  3. Cv, 55: 22



and military stronghold of the Cōlas is attested by historical evidence. The *Mahavamsa* records: "With Pulatthinagara as base, the Cōlas held sway over Rajarata as far as Rakkhapāsana - Kaṇṭha".<sup>4</sup> This claim is further supported by other references in this chronicle to Cōla military activities in the island and attested by archaeological remains of buildings and inscriptions. Polonnaruwa was a fortified walled town provided with gates, which commanded access into it, when it was attacked by the armies of Vijayabāhu I around 1070.<sup>5</sup> Vijayabāhu I celebrated his coronation in the old city of Anurādhapura after having vanquished the Cōlas, but after a brief sojourn of three months there, he returned to Polonnaruwa where he settled down permanently. The city was rebuilt and fortified again by the new ruler. In relation to Vijayabāhu's undertakings in this respect the Pali chronicle asserts:

"In Pulatthinagara he had a high and strong wall built; provided with a long, broad deep trench and equipped with high parapets difficult for the foe to reduce".<sup>6</sup>

The monasteries belonging to the three *nikāyas* and the temple of the Tooth Relic were established at Polonnaruwa under Vijayabāhu.<sup>7</sup> The city of Polonnaruwa reached the highest stage of development during the reigns of Parakramabāhu I (1153 - 1186) and Niśśāṅkamalla (1187 - 1196) under whom constructional activities were undertaken on an impressive scale.<sup>8</sup>

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4. Cv, 57: 66; 58: 4

5. Cv, 58: 51 - 53

6. Cv, 60: 2 - 3

7. The impression that monastic establishments affiliated to the three *nikāyas* were established by Vijayabāhu I, in Polonnaruwa, is confirmed by the *cūlavamsa* which says: "Within Pulatthinagara he had many charming vihāras built at different places, made bhikkhus who belonged to the three fraternities take up their abode there and gladdened them by abundant gifts of the four necessities". Cv(T), 60: 9 - 10.

8. All the principal monuments found distributed over the three main sectors of the city, namely the Quadrangle, the Promontory and the Citadel, have been attributed to the reigns of either Parakramabāhu I or Niśśāṅkamalla. The principal exception was the ruined building designated *aṭṭa-dāge*, which is found in the elevated Quadrangle, and is said to have been constructed in the days of Vijayabāhu I.

The two religious traditions, Hinduism and Buddhism co-existed and interacted closely as could be seen from the notices in the chronicles and the evidence from inscriptions and other archaeological monuments. The presence of Hindu communities, mostly adherents of Śaivism, in Polonnaruwa could be traced from the beginning of the 11th century. Three of the Śaiva temples within the city could be clearly identified as Cōla monuments on the basis of their architectural style and epigraphic evidence. It would appear that these temples were established to provide the needs of a growing Hindu population consisting of elites of Brahmins, traders and government functionaries, some categories of artisans, commodity producers and warriors. They were established not by kings but on the initiative of merchants, warrior chiefs and other dignitaries who had become local residents within the limits of the city.

The basic elements of the Hindu religious and cultural tradition as found in contemporary South India were introduced into the Island during this period. It was in the period of approximately four hundred years of Cōla dynastic power that Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism as found in Tamil society had developed their distinctive features. Both traditions, which had similar characteristics, went through a process of parallel development. They acknowledged the authority of Vedas, conformed to the *āgamas* and were inspired by the ideals of the bhakti schools. The temple was the focal point of religious and artistic expression. All activities in the temples were conducted in accordance with *āgamic* injunctions. Their design and form and the sculptured panels on the walls and towers symbolically represented the ideas of Hindu cosmology, theology, religious ideology and the conceptions and myths recorded in the vast literature of the *purāṇas*. The proliferation in the number of temples, the elaboration of their architectural design and the representation of religious conceptions and myths through the medium of art and the compilation of manuals on art and architecture became some of the outstanding characteristics in the development of Hindu culture during this period.

Another remarkable development in Śaivism and Vaisnavism was the collection and compilation of the devotional hymns of the *nāyanmār* and *ālvār* into compendia called *tirumurai* and the *tivviyap pirapantam* respectively.<sup>9</sup> They were conceded a status equivalent to the Vedas and the tradition of reciting selected groups of hymns daily and on festival occasions at temples was established, and in some instances endowments were made for their regular recital, with elaborate arrangements for the administration of such endowments. The authors of these hymns, the *nayanmar* and *alvar*, were raised to super-human status. Consecrated images representing their physical forms were installed in temples and they became objects of regular worship. Sometimes such images were housed in separate shrines attached to large temples of great antiquity.

On account of its multifaceted character the temple became a focal point of religious, social and cultural activity and a medium of social and cultural interaction. There were concentrations of specialists in vedic ritual and learning, artisans, temple servants and merchants in the vicinity of temples. The brahmadeya or *caturvētīmaṅkalam* and the *nakaram* were two social institutions which became closely linked to the temples. Some ancient and famous temples were situated within the limits of the brahmadeyas and the institutional links between the two entities was suggested by the expression *tēvatānap pirammatēyam* found in inscriptions.<sup>10</sup> Many of the medieval *nakarams*, "market

9. The *vaiṇava* devotional hymns of the *ālvār* are believed to have been collected, arranged and compiled by Nātamuni in the tenth century. According to the Śaiva tradition recorded in the *tirumurai kantapurāṇam* and other works, the *tēvāram* hymns were collected and arranged into the compendium called *tirumurai* by Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi of Tirunāraiūr on the direction of *irācarācan*, the *apaiyakulacēkaran* of Tiruvārūr. This King has been identified as the Cōla King Rājaraṇa I (985-1016) by K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and other leading historians.

10. Tirukkalukkunram and Tiruviṭaimarutūr, which had the Śaiva temples as their nuclei, are representative of the category of units called *tēvatānap-pirammatēyam*. Commenting on Tiruviṭaimarutūr, R. Champakalakshmi says: "The nucleus of this large temple complex was a Śiva shrine which belongs to the period of the *tēvaram*... The *sabhā* or the *brāhmaṇa* assembly of Tiruviṭaimarudūr and the *nagarattār* of Tiraimūr jointly administered the temple endowments, and evidently also managed the affairs of the two major parts of this settlement, the *brahmadeya* of Tiruviṭai-marudūr and the *nakaram* (town) of Tiraimūr. A large contingent of the Cōla army (*senaiyar*) was stationed in this centre and was entrusted with the protection of all major endowments to the temple." R. Champakalakshmi, *Trade Ideology and urbanization, South India 300 B.C. to A.D. 1300* (485 pages). Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996, p. 350.



towns" in South India had developed in the vicinity of temples and were often interacting closely with them.

### *The Nānādesis and religious establishments*

Trade became a major source of Hindu influence in Sri Lanka during the 11th and 12th centuries. The Nānādesis and other merchant groups had played a major role in establishing and renovating temples at towns and cities, where diverse sections of the population intermingled and interacted in considerable measure on account of their vocations. It would seem that the Aiññūruvar, Vīravalāñceyar and other merchant communities had established close links with the royal and monastic establishments as the suppliers of rare commodities of distant origin. It is significant that the rank of *nagaram situ* was conferred by the monarch on leading merchants in recognition of their importance in supplying the needs of the court and the influence they had over some sections of the population in the city.<sup>11</sup>

The inscriptional preambles of the Nānādesis and their associates articulate a strong connection with the Hindu religious and cultural traditions. They are said to have sprung from the lineage of Vasudeva, Kandhali and Mūlabhadra. They are figuratively described as the children of Parameśvari of Ayyapoli-puram.<sup>12</sup> The Mother Goddess was their tutelary deity and they are known to have established

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11. The expression *nagaram situ* occurs in Sinhalese texts as the designation of a dignitary of rank who attended the king's court. It is generally assumed that the person who had this designation was a leading merchant in the capital city. The understanding of this expression may be clarified further in the light of the consideration that there were units called *nakaram* established and dominated by merchant associations at Polonnaruwa when it functioned as the dynastic capital. The word *nagaram*, which forms the initial part of the expression *nagaram situ* presupposes a close connection between the *nakaram* towns and this particular designation.
  12. S. Pathmanathan, "The Nagaram of the Nānādesis in Sri Lanka Circa A.D. 1000-1300" (43 pages) *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* University of Peradeniya, 1984 (published in 1987), Numbers 1 & 2, pp. 122 - 123.



temples dedicated to Her generally in all centres where they were established. The figure of the Mother Goddess was depicted on their seals of which two specimens have been found.<sup>13</sup>

Although the Mother Goddess was the tutelary deity of the Nānādesis they were not exclusively sectarian in their attachment to the cult of Saktism. Among the merchants and others associated with them, there were adherents of a variety of cults within and outside the fold of Hinduism. There are numerous references in their inscriptions found in India and Sri Lanka to their involvement in the establishment and maintenance of Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Jaina and Buddhist temples and the provision of facilities for conducting religious and cultural activities.<sup>14</sup> In matters of religion the outlook of the merchant communities was one of eclecticism.

The presence of the Aiññūṭṭuvar and the Viravaḷaṇceyar in Polonnaruwa is attested by inscriptions. An inscription found at a Śaiva temple between the North Gate of the city and the Rankot Vihāra mentions of a *palli*, a Buddhist temple or monastery at a settlement (*pati*) of the Aiññūṭṭuvar.<sup>15</sup> As the inscription could have been brought to the Śaiva temple from a locality in the vicinity it may be assumed that the settlement of the mercantile community was confined to a commercial sector of the city. The Aiññūṭṭuvar probably had a commercial outpost in the area between the Rankot Vihāra and the North Gate of the city. A fragmentary inscription on the terrace of the Rankot Vihāra records a donation made by them for burning a lamp.<sup>16</sup>

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13. S. Pathmanathan, "The Bronze Seal of the Nānādesis from Hambantota (Sri Lanka)", *Asian Panorama: Essays in Asian History Past & Present*, ed. K.M.de Silva, Sirima Kiribamune, Chandra R. de Silva, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 139-150.

14. Meera Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, Manohar Publications, Delhi, 1998.

15. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions* (CTI), Pt. 2, ed. A. Velupillai, Peradeniya, 1972, p. 12.

16. *UNESCO - Sri Lanka Project of the Cultural Triangle*, Ajahana Privena, Polonnaruwa, third Archaeological Excavation Report, 1982, ed. P.L. Prematilleke, p. 128.

The existence of the *nakaram* in Polonnaruwa is suggested by the re-examination of the Slab Inscription of the Vēlaikkāras found at the Quadrangle in that city. This inscription records that a meeting of 'the great army', *makātantiram* of the Vēlaikkārar was held to consider a request made by the Mahāthera Mugalan of the Uturūḷmuḷai order and some "ministers of state" in relation to the protection of the temple of the Tooth relic and its properties.<sup>17</sup> It is said that the Valaṇceyar and the *nakarattār* also were invited for this meeting. The invitation extended to these two groups was on account of a close association which the military community had with them. The expressions *eṅkaḷ mūtātāikaḷāṇa valaṇceyaraḷiyum* "the Valaṇceyar who are our forefathers" and *eṅkaḷōtu kūṭivarum nakarattāruḷḷittārāiyum*, "the *nakarattār* and others who accompany us" suggest that the Vēlaikkārar who had set up this inscription were in the service of a *nakaram* of the merchant community called Valaṇceyar. Such an explanation is supported by the evidence from inscriptions relating to the market towns established by the Valaṇceyar and/or the Aiññūruvar at Vahalkada, Padaviya, Viharehinna and Māgala. That the Nānādesis were established in the outskirts of Polonnaruwa is also suggested by the Fragmentary Inscription from Anaulundava.<sup>18</sup> The growing influence of Hinduism and the proliferation of Hindu institutions in Polonnaruwa may be partially attributed to the activities of the Valaṇceyar, the Nānādesis and the various communities affiliated to them.

### *Hinduism, Kingship and the Royal Court*

Hinduism and Buddhism as religious traditions were not mutually exclusive or antagonistic, and generally could and in fact did co-exist in harmony. The architectural and artistic monuments of Polonnaruwa adequately reflect the complementarity of the two

17. S. Pathmanathan. "The Nagaram of the Nānādesis ...", *SIJH*, 1984, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 136 - 140.

18. D.M.De. Z. Wickremasinghe. "Polonnaruwa: Anaulundava Slab Inscription", *Epigraphia Zeylanica (EZ)*, Vol. 2, No. 38, pp. 235 - 236.

traditions. Even a zealous Buddhist ruler could worship Hindu deities and support Hindu institutions and such action on his part would not be deemed as detrimental to Buddhist interest. Traditionally, the monarch exercised a custodial function in relation to Hinduism and Hindu culture.

During the 11th and 12th centuries court life at Polonnaruwa was saturated with Hindu influences. The dynastic marriages contracted with some of the Indian ruling families had the effect of exposing the court to Hindu religious and cultural influences in an unprecedented manner. Indian princes and princesses and their retinue, who had taken up residence at the royal establishments in the city, continued to follow their traditional ways. They worshipped Hindu gods, patronized temples and introduced elements of Hindu culture into the circles of the court where Hindu practices were adopted and ideas and conceptions expressed in Hindu treatises were accepted and assimilated into the local traditions of kingship.

Some princes and princesses had strong leanings towards Śaivism and even practised Hindu beliefs and customs. Tilokasundarī, the chief queen of Vijayabāhu I, had publicly exhibited her attachment to Śaivism in such a manner as to cause anxiety in the minds of some leaders of the fraternities of monks.<sup>19</sup> Her son, Vikramabāhu II (1111 - 1132) and his son and successor, Gajabāhu II, had strong leanings towards Śaivism, and so was Mānābharaṇa, the nephew of Vijayabāhu. The expressions *pārvaṭī pati dattāsir vīra-mahavṛṣa*, "the great bull of a hero to whom benediction has been granted by the husband of Parvatī", applied to Vikramabāhu in the Sanskrit preamble of an inscription in his reign unmistakably shows that he was a devotee of Śiva.<sup>20</sup>

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19. Cv, 60: 54 - 55

20. S. Paranavitana, "Kahampiliyava Slab Inscription of Vikramabāhu", *EZ*, 5. No. 39, pp. 404 - 408.



Gajabāhu II propitiated Hindu deities and had Hindu rites performed at court. He had a *lakṣapūjā* performed in honour of Skanda and other gods, and the artisan called Hinābi, who made images for that purpose, was given a land grant as a reward for his services.<sup>21</sup> As shown elsewhere in this volume he was a great patron of Brahmins and the brahmadeya at Kantalāy was a recipient of his benefactions. In the Śaiva tradition he is glorified as a great devotee of Śiva and a patron of the temple of Kōṇēśvaram.<sup>22</sup> The charge made by the author of the *Mahāvamsa* that he had "brought heretical nobles from abroad and filled the land with briers of heresy" may also suggest that Gajabāhu had strong leanings towards Hinduism.<sup>23</sup>

References to Mānābharaṇa in the *Mahāvamsa* suggest that Hindu influences were dominant at his court where he had a *purohita* and many other Brahmins proficient in the Vedas and Vedangas by whom the *homa* sacrifice and other rites were performed.<sup>24</sup> Hindu ceremonies were conducted to mark important phases in the early life of his son Parakramabāhu. The birth rites and other connected ceremonies were performed for him according to the rules laid down in the Veda.<sup>25</sup> The infant prince's body marks were also examined and analysed by the *purohita* and other learned Brahmins at the king's request. Later, the ceremony of *upanayana* or initiation was also performed for the young prince.<sup>26</sup>

Parakramabāhu I (1153 - 1186), the events of whose reign are chronicled in epic proportions, chiefly on account of his patronage of

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21. C.E. Godakumbura. "Kapuruvaḍu Oya Pillar-Inscription of Gajabāhu II", *EZ*. V. No. 38, pp. 394 - 404.

22. There are two separate sections in the *kōṇēcar kalveṭṭu*, which describe the activities of a king called Kayavāku at the Kōṇēcar temple, Trincomalee. The same ruler is glorified as a great devotee and patron of the Lord of Kōṇēśvaram in the concluding section of the *Takṣipakailāca purāṇam*.

23. *Cv*, 70: 53 - 55

24. *Cv* 62: 33

25. *Cv*, 62: 45

26. *Cv*,



Buddhism, is also known to have supported Hinduism. The *mahāvamsa* records that he had constructed thirteen temples for the gods and had restored seventy-nine temples of gods, which were in a state of disrepair.<sup>27</sup> He is said to have made gifts to Brahmins at the celebrations held in honour of the successes achieved by his armies in the Pāṇḍya Kingdom.<sup>28</sup> Niśsaṅkamalla was another ruler of Polonnaruva who showed concern for the welfare of the Brahmins and Hindu institutions. A slab inscription inside Śiva Devale No. 1 in Polonnaruva records that it was set up after Niśsaṅkamalla had completed the function of lustral bathing in connection with the ceremony of (*navagraha sānti*) propitiating the nine planetary gods.<sup>29</sup> It may be assumed that this ritual was performed at the temple where the inscription has been found.

The Court of Polonnaruva was influenced by a variety of forms of Hindu literature on politics, warfare and kingship. It is also noteworthy that it is only when we come to the Polonnaruva period that the *mahāvamsa* refers to such texts in relation to kingship and court life. The same chronicle credits Parakramabāhu I with having mastered the work of Kautilya, and the *yuddhārṇava*, a text on warfare.<sup>30</sup> Besides, the long account of Parākramabāhu as found in this chronicle bears clear traces of the influence of Kautilya's masterly work. The details relating to espionage as found in the *cūlavamsa* and the *arthaśāstra* are so similar that it cannot be the result of any accidental coincidence. It presupposes a familiarity with Kautilya's treatise on the part of the author of the *mahāvamsa*. *kaṇṭakasodhāna* and *dharmādhikaraṇam*, the names of two judicial tribunals, which are found in some Sinhalese inscriptions presupposes a knowledge

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27. Cv, 79: 21 - 22

28. Cv, 77: 104

29. EZ, 5, No. 38

30. Cv, 70: 56 - 57

of the concepts and practices relating to the judicial system in contemporary Indian kingdoms.<sup>31</sup>

The *manusmṛti*, a famous Hindu treatise on kingship, law and administration, is referred to in *mahāvamsa* in relation to the rulers of this period.<sup>32</sup> In the 12th and 13th centuries Manu's work was held in high esteem as an authority on politics, law and government. It was undoubtedly one of the texts consulted by the rulers of Sri Lanka. Vijayabāhu II (1186 - 1187) and Parākrama Pāṇḍya are said to have ruled in accordance with the Laws of Manu.<sup>33</sup> Another monarch, Parakramabahu II (1236 - 1271) is described as one who was well versed in the ordinances of Manu (*manu nīti vicārato*).<sup>34</sup> It is remarkable that some of the ideas expressed in the *Manu Smṛti* are echoed in the Sri Lankan inscriptions of this period. Manu for instance asserts: "Even an infant king should not be despised from an idea that he is a (mere) mortal, for he is a great deity in human form".<sup>35</sup> The same idea is conveyed in the Galpota inscription of Niśsaṅkamalla which asserts that "though kings appear in human form they are divinities and must therefore be regarded as gods".<sup>36</sup>

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31. P.E. Fernando, '*Nissankamalla asoka hā kautīlīya arthasastraya*', *abhinava sangrahaya*, P. 3; S. Pathmanathan, "Kingship in Sri Lanka: A.D. 1070 - 1270, The Dhammic Conception. Divinity of Kingship and the Heroic ideal", *Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities* (SLJH), Vol. 8, Nos. 1 & 2, 1982 (published in 1985), pp. 120 - 145.

32. S. Pathmanathan, "Hinduism In Sri Lanka (Circa A.D. 1000-1250): Indian Influences On The Development Of Śaivism", K.W. Goonewardene Felicitation Volume (Special Issue) *Journal of Modern Sri Lanka Studies*, Vol. 2, 1987. Ed. C.R. de Silva and Sirima Kiribamune. University of Peradeniya, 1989, pp. 52 - 56.

33. Cf. 80: 9, 53

34. Cf. 83: 6

35. *Sacred Books of the East* Translated By Various Oriental Scholars And Edited by F. Maxmuller Vol. 27 *The Laws of Manu* (First published by the Oxford University Press, 1886) Reprinted by Motilal Banarsidas, Jawahar nagar, Delhi. 1988. p. 8. v. 7.

36. EZ, II, p. 121

The kings of the Polonnaruva period, while continuing to encourage the cult of the *bodhisattva* king, included into the court ideology ideas from Hindu political thought which helped to strengthen further the authority of the monarch. Hindu influence on ideas of kingship in Sri Lanka have been recognised and commented upon by some scholars: G.C. Mendis, for instance says:

"The ideas of kings too changed to some extent during this period... According to Niśsaṅkamalla an impartial king was like a Buddha, and though kings appeared in human form they were to be regarded as gods, and Niśsaṅkamalla's statement clearly shows the strong influence of Hinduism at this time."<sup>37</sup>

Regina Clifford also makes the following pertinent observations:

"Lanka has also been greatly influenced by Hinduism, which is sustained through the presence of numerous Hindu queens and a large Hindu population. The *Nīti* literature of India has also pervaded the Ceylonese courts, especially the *arthasastra*... The latter two influences are of special import. The purpose of the *arthasastra* is to enumerate efficient means of establishing and expanding a kingdom."<sup>38</sup>

The divinity of kingship found full expression in the Sinhalese inscriptions of this period. The conception of the *bodhisattva* king had as its counterpart in the Hindu tradition the divinity of kingship. To Manu and his school this conception had served to reiterate the need for coercive power for the maintenance of a political society.

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37. G.C. Mendis, *The Early History of Ceylon*, Calcutta, 1940, p. 99.

38. Regina T. Clifford, "The Dhammadipa Tradition of Sri Lanka: Three Models within the Sinhalese Chronicle", *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Sri Lanka*, ed. Bardwell Smith, p. 44.

They refer to the functional similarity of the king to the gods and this is done metaphorically. In course of time, however, this conception was interpreted loosely to suit court vanity.

It was owing to the influence of treatises like the *manu smṛti* that expressions describing the functional similarity of the king to the gods came to be included in Sinhalese texts. The epithet *rājanarāyāna*, 'a king like unto Viṣṇu', is applied to Vikramabāhu in one of his inscriptions.<sup>39</sup> The Ambagamuwa Inscription of Vijayabāhu describes the king in the following manner:

"He has surpassed the sun in the majesty inherent in him, Maheśvara (Śiva) in prowess, Viṣṇu in haughty spirit, the chief of the gods, (Indra) in kingly state, the lord of the riches (Kubera) in inexhaustible wealth, Kitsuru in (bestowing) happiness to living beings, the preceptor of the gods (Brhaspati) in the fertility of wisdom, the moon in gentleness, Kandarpa in the richness of his beauty and the bodhisattva in the fullness of his benevolence."<sup>40</sup>

The same idea is expressed in connexion with Parakramabāhu I in the Devanagala Inscription in almost identical language. Under Niśṣaṅkamalla the conception of the divinity of kingship is asserted forcefully in the documents emanating from the court. His Galpota inscription for instance, asserts that "though kings appear in human form they are divinities and must therefore be regarded as gods."<sup>41</sup> It is also significant that the same idea was articulated in contemporary

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39. S. Paranavitana, "Kahampiliyāva Slab Inscription of Vikramabahu", *EZ* 5, No. 39, pp. 404 - 408

40. D.M. De Z. Wickremasinghe, "The Ambagamuwa Inscription of Vijayabahu, *EZ* 2, No. 35, pp. 215 - 216

41. *EZ* 2, No. 17, p. 121

Commenting on the ruins of this temple Burrows who conducted the excavations in 1885 - 86 says:



Sinhalese literature. The *rasavahini* echoes the *manu smṛti* when it asserts: "Kings conduct themselves on earth as if they were created out of the six divinities, namely Yama, the sun-god, the moon-god, Mrtyu (the god of death), Kuvera (the god of wealth) and Agni (the god of fire)".<sup>42</sup>

## *Architectural Remains of Hindu Temples*

The architectural remains of not less than sixteen Hindu temples are found scattered at several localities in the city. Some of them are found in isolation while the others are in groups of two or three ruined shrines in close proximity to one another. Five of these temples were found in the inner city. Śiva Devale No. 2 stands within the walled confines of the old city, about a hundred yards from its north-east corner. Śiva Devale No. 1 lies just south of the elevated quadrangle within which is found a mixed coterie of Buddhist monuments. The remains of a group of three temples each of which was dedicated to Śiva, Viṣṇu and Gaṇeśa respectively occur near the North Gate within the city. At the angle of the city moat a small temple of Viṣṇu built entirely of granite was discovered and excavated in 1885 - 86.<sup>43</sup> A finely wrought image of Viṣṇu and several excellently carved stone figures were found at the site.

42. *University of Ceylon History of Ceylon* Vol. I. Pt. 2 ed. S. Paranavitana, University of Ceylon Press, Colombo, 1960, p. 532.

43. H.C.P. Bell. *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report (ASCAR), 1908, Ceylon Sessional Papers, 1913*

Commenting on the ruins of this temple Burrows who conducted the excavations in 1885 - 86 says:

"At the angle of the city moat a small temple of Vishnu, built entirely of granite, was discovered, and has been excavated. Its inner shrine contains a good statue of Vishnu, which has been replaced in position. Several excellently carved stone figures were found here, two of which have been photographed, and also the greater part of the large bold frieze of lions. Two small fragments of inscriptions were also uncovered, one let into the platform of the outer shrine, and one near the outer wall: but there is not enough of either to be of any use. In the immediate neighbourhood of this temple were found another fragment of an inscription, which proves to be a copy of Nissanka Malla's slab near the Dalada Maligawa; a broken statue of the familiar Pillaiyar, or Ganesha; a broken statue of the Kataragama Deviyo, with his peacock; a statue of Iswara; a broken statue, which cannot be identified; and a flag staff holder all of granite".

A temple of unusually large scale and peculiar design was located immediately opposite the Viṣṇu Devale No. 2, to the right of the road leading into the city from the north entrance. This monument has been identified as a temple of Gaṇeśa on the rather dubious consideration that a terracotta figurine of Pillaiyār and a stone image of his vehicle, the rat, have been found in the course of excavations at the site. The remains of Śiva Devale No. 7 are found at a distance of 20 yards to the south of the temple identified as that of Gaṇeśa. As the lingam in the sanctum is supported by a stone bearing an inscription of Niśśahkamalla (1187 - 1196), Śiva Devale No. 7 may be considered as a monument erected during the early 13th century.

A majority of the temples were located on the outskirts of the city. The remains of a group of three temples were found on either side of the road from Minneriya to Topavāva. These temples were dedicated respectively for the worship of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Durgā.<sup>44</sup> The temples of Śiva and Viṣṇu have been designated by the Department of Archaeology as Śiva Devale No. 4 and Viṣṇu Devale No. 3.

Another group of three ruined temples are found near the minor road from Topavāva to Alut-oja at the deflexion of the cart track to "Kiri Vehera" and the ruins which adjoin it. This group consisted of an isolated shrine, Śiva Devale No. 3, which was constructed of granite and situated some 30 yards east of the right bank of the Yoda-ela, and two Devalas, Śiva Devale No. 5 and Viṣṇu Devale No. 4.<sup>45</sup> About half a mile to the north of these monuments, further along and close to the minor Road occurs another Hindu temple built of brick, the Śiva Devale No. 6. Just outside the premises of this temple, to the south, stood a shrine with a vestibule belonging to Viṣṇu which has been designated as Viṣṇu Devale No. 5. Thus, it is clear that each of the

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44. H.C.P. Bell, *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report 1902*: Colombo 1907, pp. 7 - 10.

45. H.C.P. Bell, *ASCAR*, 1908, Colombo, 1913, pp. 4 - 8.

temples designated Śiva Devales 1 and 2 stood alone in isolation whereas all others were in groups of two or more shrines. It is significant that there was a temple of Viṣṇu and one or two temples of Śiva in each group. There were four such groups, one within the walled confines of the city and the others outside it. The disposition of these temples in close proximity to one another may suggest that there were no sectarian differences of a noticeable kind among the adherents of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. It is even probable that they were supported and maintained by all irrespective of sectarian differences. The existence of five temples dedicated to Viṣṇu, all of which were situated in close proximity to the temple of Śiva, is significant as providing an indication of the degree of importance that was attached to Viṣṇu by the Hindu population in the city.

### *Siva Devale No. 1*

One of the principal Hindu monuments of Polonnaruwa is Śiva Devale No. 1, which is significant on account of its location in close proximity to the Quadrangle containing a coterie of Buddhist monuments the construction of which could be attributed to the principal rulers of Polonnaruwa, and because of the consideration of its developed and ornate architectural style. Commenting on the remains of this temple. H.C.P. Bell, the Archaeological Commissioner who conducted the excavations at the site says:

"With the exception of the "Gal-Vihare" this striking ruin of the Saivite cult, constructed entirely of gneiss, strangely for years past, and still popularly misnamed the "Dalada Maligawa" or "Shrine of the Tooth Relic", the palladium of Southern Buddhism - has naturally attracted the chief attention of visitors to Polonnaruwa.

"It lies just south of the elevated quadrangle within which is situated that mixed coterie of Buddhist shrines, where architectural features of Ceylon, of Southern India, of



Kambodia, and perhaps of Burma, meet in strange yet harmonious grouping.

"At the conclusion of the excavations at the 'Gal - vihare', digging was concentrated on the Devale. Before the seasons' work closed, its extensive premises had been dug out everywhere from end to end down to the original ground level.

"Like the similar Saivite shrine, Siva Devale No. 2, this more ambitious, though slightly smaller, structure comprised no more than the customary triplet of united yet distinct parts. An outermost *maṇḍapam*, walled in but open to the sky, preceded the *antarāla*, or pronaos, and the domed *vimāna*, the *garbha griha* or innermost sanctum, both roofed and ceiled with stone slabs.

"It still further resembled the sister Devale No. 2 in being wholly constructed, from basement to dome, of ashlar dressed and moulded, with walls faced exteriorly on similar general lines—pilasters and half pilasters flanking central niches—but exhibiting many artistic modifications in form supplemented by surface adornment not bestowed on the less ornate temple.

"In style the architecture of this handsome ruin is pronouncedly Dravidian. Not a finer example exists in Ceylon... The cupola—if, as is most probable, it was finished in stone—and the horizontal ceiling of the *vimāna* have completely disappeared. None of the slabs have been so far identified amid the fallen members recovered from the *debris* around; all stones which may have formed the superstructure of the antechamber have also gone, but its flat trabeated ceiling is still in position; a considerable portion of cut-stone facing the cella's exterior wall on the north has fallen out, exposing the loose irregular rubble packing behind; at other points the



walls show clear signs of having spread, the steps at the front (east) entrance to the *propylaea* no longer exist; the greater part of the wall of the *mandapam* above the lowest course has vanished; and but one or two images have survived the evil days when the Devala was sacked and partially destroyed.

"Yet withal the excellent preservation of so much of the maltreated temple as has stood the stress for centuries is surprising.

"Inside, the walls of the vestibule and *adytum* are virtually as perfect as ever; as are exteriorly those of the former everywhere, and of the shrine at back for some lateral bulging.

"Displacement-chiefly of wall slabs- was to be expected from the forces of nature alone, though the hand of man is clearly responsible for most of the damage wrought. But on the whole the structure stands at this day so stable that entire rebuilding is hardly essential at any point.

"This Hindu temple was laid out with customary precision and conformity to broad universal Southern Indian canons, subject merely to subordinate modifications characteristic of the cult.

"The plan of the *propylaea*, if regular in shape, would form an approximate square, 36 ft. 3 in. From front to back by 34 ft. 6 in. Down the north and south sides, at the foot of the basement; and within walls at floor level the open area would measure 26 ft. 8 in. by 28 ft. 3 in."<sup>46</sup>

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46. H.C.P. Bell, *ASCAR*, 1907. Colombo 1911, pp. 18 - 19.

The continuity of the north side was broken by a bay 22 ft. in breadth by 6 ft. deep, thrown out from the line of the stereobate on that face, adding 14 ft. 3 ins by 6 ft. 2 in. to the interior space. To match this projection on the north an oblong platform, of the same length was outside the south wall. A flight of steps mounted at its east end, and from this landing a central doorway through the wall of the *mantapam* provided access on this side.<sup>47</sup>

The opening inserted at the north-west junction of the vestibule and *mantapam* is virtually a mere aperture cut through the three lower courses of the wall. Its proportions, 3 ft. 9 ins. by 1 ft. 10 in. are so restricted as to necessitate in close crouching passing through. It is entered from a small landing, at the head of a low flight of moulded steps ascending from the north. The facing of this platform quite differs from that of the long landing to the stairs on the south; but both were found to be on a level with the basement torus. The southern platform was plain and reverted on rectangular lines throughout-squared plinth dado with half a dozen flat-pilaster strips, broad and narrow, and coping recessed above and below.

The much smaller platform on the north-west was found to exhibit in miniature a moulded and semi-ornate facade intended to copy, with necessary limitations, that of the main building.<sup>48</sup> The footing comprises rectangular socle and sub-plinth, ogee plinth covered with *pala-peti* carving, surmounted by short vertical block with *pedroits*, and projecting coping-a pseudo cornice rounded and undercut-which is capped by a small false blocking course slab exhibiting a band of six diminutive *vyāghras*...

Both stairs are uniform in possessing four steps; in each flight the lowest step is moulded and has returned nosing; and almost precisely

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47. *ibid.* p. 19

48. *ibid.*

similar balustrades, undulating, with faint flutes and helix terminations, flank both sets.<sup>49</sup> The podium of the *maṇṭapam* rises 4 ft. 5 in. in height exteriorly. Its moulded outlines affect a severe angular simplicity which heightens the contrast with the rich curved lines on the stereobate of the roofed antechamber and shrine. The basement of *vimāna* and vestibule at Śiva Devale No. 2 was reproduced in the *maṇṭapam* of Śiva Devale No. 1 with slight alterations for further chasteness.

The *upapīṭha* consists of six horizontal members in seven courses, usual side; vertical block plinth; doubly chamfered torus placed directly upon the plinth, but separated from the dado by a straight fillet; second bowtell-a fascia between fillets-of less projection, and purely rectangular shape; dividing into two sections the perpendicular dado, which is plain save for its pilaster strips, these being virtually the continuation downwards of the shafts of the wall pilasters; finally an angular coping softened by an ovalo. The sole difference in point of fact between the members of the two basements consists in the introduction at this propylaea of a string course of small lotus-petal ornamentation for the upper part of the canted torus, and similar, but invected, moulding on the soffit of the coping. The vertical wall of the *maṇṭapam* also followed with little variation the form of the wall facing to be seen at Śiva. Devale No. 2. The wall was left unadorned except where it found relief in a series of oblong niches, edged by semi-pilasters, bisected perpendicularly, and flanked at intervals by taller pilasters, single and cantoned.<sup>50</sup>

Each of the niches is supported by two dimidiated pilasters, with one full pilaster on the intervening smooth wall face, in addition to similar but double-faced pilasters serving the corners. This symmetrical arrangement had provided the quadrangular facades altogether with 8 niches, bordered by 16 half, and 8 complete, pilasters running up to the cornice, exclusive of the 4 duplicated at the quoins.

49. *ibid.*

50. *ibid.* p. 19 - 20

This scheme was followed for half the perimeter, or along the east and South faces. The dovetailing of the pronaos into the back (west) of the mantapam smothered the inner niches, reducing them on that side from four to two, one to north and south. The projection of the blind bay on the north face necessitated the relegation of the lateral niches to its flanks, east and west and the substitution of a central niche, in lieu of a doorway opposite that in the southern wall.<sup>51</sup>

The *mantapam* niches measure 3 ft 6 in. by 1 ft. 4 in., and are headed by a single stone architrave with horizontal hood mouldings curvilinearly edged above. In design the half pilasters- divided vertically-are almost exact copies reduced to three fourths (3 ft. 5 in.), of the tall side pilasters (4 ft. 7 in.) and they approximate to those of Siva Devale No. 2 but are differentiated by recessed necking and vase or bulb underlying the spreading shaft top. In the dimidiated niche pilasters of Śiva Devale No. 1 the neck, head and capital mouldings (1 ft. 6½ ins) are but 4 inches less than the rectangular shaft (1 ft. 10½ in) over a height of 3 ft. 5 in. in all-a proportion nearly maintained in the full pilasters, which give 2 ft. 5½ in. to shaft against 2 ft. 1½ in. for upper mouldings. The main variation between the pilasters of the two temples lies in the introduction at the *mantapam* of Śiva Devale No. 1, of a *kalasa* head to the shaft, above receding and advancing neck fillets; and the adoption of a flat-bottomed, in lieu of the wholly rounded cushion (*kumudam*). In the pilasters of the vestibule and shrine walls of Devale No. 1 the difference is very prominent owing to the shaft, bulb head, cushion and expanding capital assuming octagonal contour, and taking on surface and invected ornamentation.<sup>52</sup>

The western side of the *mantapam* was found to overlap the front part of the roofed edifice, *antarala* and *garbha-griha* conjoined, by 9 ft. 4 in on either side. The exterior wall stretch of pronaos down its sides was reduced to 18 ft. on each of the four sides on account of

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51.    ibid. p. 20

52.    ibid



the coalescing of the vestibule's basement and front wall with the back of the *maṇḍapam*. The shrine proper, divorced from its oblong and narrow vestibule is a square measuring exteriorly 18 ft. on each side as compared with 20 ft. 6 in. for that of Śiva Devale No. 2. But the form of this structure is modified by a shallow central bay, 9 ft. by 10. in.

The broad treatment of the protruded portion of the *vimāna* follows that of Śiva Devale No. 2. The corners are held by tall double-faced pilasters, and in the middle a niche (4 ft. 6 in. by 1 ft. 10 in.), with short dimidiated pilasters at its edges, is sunk into the wall face and carried down to the dado of the basement. On top a slab with plain central pattern curls down with rounded horns overlapping the niche's cornice.

The stereobate mouldings of the vestibule and shrine, differ materially in contour. The angular and almost plain revetment gives place to a graceful combination of rectangular and rounded lines, engrailed lotus petal moulding at plinth, and a fauna dado in bas-relief. The simplicity of the three lower functional members - straight faced ground table, stepped plinth, and vertical block - are retained along the base of the vestibule, as well as so much of the shrine as runs in squared plane flanking the protruding central bays. The splayed torus above this level, topped by *pala-peti* purfling, and the second dado of tongued form with the piedroit-lined block from which it projects, have been transformed into a rounded torus of special boldness. It is surmounted by a continuous dado displaying a procession of *vyāghras* in single file and framed between an astragal beneath and cyma recta string-course above. The stereobate finally terminates in a coping similar to the crowning member of the podium of the *maṇḍapam*.<sup>53</sup>

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53. *ibid.* pp. 20 - 21

"A further refinement, providing additional charm to a revetment of exceptional beauty, was introduced at the three broad rectangular bays which off-set the shrine to north, west (back), and south. The plain block below the lower torus was converted into an exquisite curvilinear moulding representing large lotus petals, curling well upward, acuminate sharply into clean cut arises. The extreme hardness of the gneiss from which the pinnaced mouldings were carved has preserved its edges with marvellous crispness.

"The *vyāghras* follow each other outwards to either side of a central lion. At the corners of this shrine and its bays the dado of beasts terminates in false beam ends carved like *makara* heads, each faced with a square panel on which the figure of a dancing god is shown in low relief.

"The richness and variety imported into the stereobate of pronaos and *vimāna*, composing the main edifice, was carried upwards in the pilasters adorning the plain wall face.

"The proportions of the pilasters are the same as those of the *maṇṭapam*. But, their form and expression are modified and chastened by eliminating much of the stiff angularity and flatness of design. Instead of the purely plain square shaft seen in the *maṇṭapam* walls, that of the colonnette runs up as a rectangular base, surface carved in shallow tracery, for one-half (1 ft. 2 in. by 7½ in.) of its height only, the upper half being stop chamfered into the octagon with the *nāgabandha*. The necking fillets and every member beyond - the *kalasa*, or vase, with its spreading lip mouldings, the *kaṇṭha* or neck extensions above the intermediate compressed cushion and the *palakai* capital, were given an octagonal configuration. The upper part of the *palakai* is gracefully adorned with petaliform frills. The face of this cornice is broken by a series of dormers not greatly dissimilar to the

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54.     *ibid.*, p. 21

"Chaitya windows" ornaments of Śiva Devale No. 2. Directly above the cornice ran a blocking course displaying a frieze of *vyāghras* assimilated more or less to the dado on the basement.

"The corner pilaster strips, on a broader dado, are covered with shallow carving in creeper trail pattern of one twist; between are three fronting lions *sejant*, on each of the three faces. The frieze of the false blocking-course, which forms the top of the altar slab, bore in front five *vyāghras* moving outward to right and left from a full-faced lion at centre, and seven more of the same quaint-beasts on the sides moving north."<sup>54</sup>

The wall face is broken on each side by a niche bordered by a pair of vertically dimidiated pilasters flanked by a tall pilaster and all these are of ornate design and confined to the exterior facades of the shrine and vestibule. Below, rising on 1 ft. 10 in. above the floor of the *maṇṭapam*, are represented the two continuous upper members of their stereobate, the dado of *vyāghras*, capped by the cyma coping.

The antechamber has the likeness of a cubical chest made of granite, squared trimly, except for cornice moulding where flat roof joins straight wall. A double vaulted door on the east gives access from the *maṇṭapam* into the adytum. It is 5 ft. 5 in. in height and 2 ft. 9 in. wide.

The vestibule or *antarāla* was made of single stone slabs laid transversely, except near the shrine doorway; walled by six horizontal courses; and coiled by four massive monolithic beams, placed crossways. It had an interior space 8 ft. in width by 7 ft. 9 in. in height. The breast of *garbha graha* pierces the back wall of the vestibule, the facade of which coalesces with that of the *maṇṭapam*. The plain architraval entrance on either side is flanked by full-length pilaster. The delicate purfled leaf ornamentation of the pilaster capitals has been well preserved on account of their sheltered position.<sup>55</sup>

55. *ibid.* p. 22

56. *ibid*

In plan the interior dimensions of the *garbha-graha* slightly exceed those of its *antarāla*. It is exactly 9 ft. 1 in. square and in height it conformed rigidly to that of the vestibule. The pavement was made of stone slabs, headers and stretchers, laid alternately leaving a gap in the middle 3 ft. 1 in. square, which held a lingam with its pedestal. A shallow channelette in the pavement passed the water and other substances used for the ceremony of consecration during the periods of worship, through the north wall, along a *somasūtra* or stone spout, shaped at the end like a drooping stalk and flower. It discharged at the level of the basement dado into a gully 2 ft. 10 in. square and 4 ft deep in dimensions.<sup>56</sup>

The *prākāra* or brick walled enclosure is an irregular oblong area of about 36 yards in length and 25 yards in width. The east wall is broken at the middle by a portico, a stunted entrance tower built on to the wall exteriorly projecting 10 ft. and covering a lateral breadth of 33 ft. 6 in. A central passage, 5 ft wide and mounted by half a dozen plain steps, bisects the portico and descends into the *temenos* by one or two similar steps.

The temple is situated 27 ft. behind the portico and the *maṇṭapam* occupies the centre of the premises and the sanctum of the temple is separated from the west boundary wall by an intervening space of less than 6 yards.

Excavations have revealed that there were three subsidiary shrines. Traces of a shrine dedicated to Gaṇeśa have been found at a location to the south west of the sanctum of the principal temple. The image of Pillaiyar carved on a stone slab was unearthed at the sanctum of this miniature shrine. The corresponding shrine on the north-west yielded to excavation three pedestals side by side against the back wall of the cella inside, and a small slab face-cut with the figure of an eight-armed god. It may, therefore, be assumed that this sub-shrine, like its counterpart at Siva Devale No. 2 was dedicated for the worship

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57. *ibid.* p. 23



of Skanda or Kantacuvāmi. The ground plan of these shrines is similar to those at Śiva Devale No. 2. They were single buildings measuring 9 ft. 6 in. by 8 ft. 9 in. and 9 ft 9 in. by 9 ft. 6 in., respectively and preceded by vestibules of proportionate size. They were built entirely of brick, except the door slabs, with ordinarily moulded basement.

The third sub-shrine was built against the north wall near the north-east angle of the temenos. Its design varied entirely from the others. It was single roomed, had no antechamber and stood on a platform about five yards square, and faced west. The deity for whose worship it was designed cannot be identified as no images were found in the course of excavation.<sup>57</sup>

### *Statuary and Bronzes*

A description of the Śiva Devale No. 1 would remain incomplete without a consideration of the images and icons found within its premises during the course of excavations. Numerous fragments of stone images scattered about were collected during the course of excavations at the site. The best preserved among such items were the figures of Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya and Kālī. The image of Gaṇeśa, which has a height of 1 ft. 4 in., is four armed. It is in a seated posture with a rat mounting on its face. The image of Kārttikeya is in the *sthānaka* pose and has a height of 1 ft. 4 ins. It is eight armed, holding various insignia in the several hands. The image of the goddess, which is 2 ft. 2 in. in height has been designed with a high-peaked head dress and waist cloth, with the usual face, body, and limb ornaments.<sup>58</sup>

A number of metallic images, which were once housed in the temple were discovered while running a trench along the outside of a southern extension of the front wall of the temenos. These items seem to have been buried in a pit during a period of uncertainty and

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58. H.C.P. Bell, *ASCAR*, 1907, Colombo, 1911, p. 36.

anarchy. Seven of these images deserve attention on account of their religious and historical significance. The first item is a representation of Śiva in the form of Natarāja while the second and third items are the representations of Śiva and Pārvatī. The goddess is depicted in two other bronzes in the standing posture. The last two items are the representations of Appar and Māṇikkavācakar, two of the four principal exponents of the southern school of medieval Śaivism.<sup>59</sup>

The discovery of these bronzes provides an indication of the fact that there were arrangements for conducting festivals in honour of the principal deities in the Śaiva pantheon and the Śaiva saints, the *nāyanmār*.

The bronzes from Siva Devale No. 1 were initially identified and described by Sir P. Arunachalam in a Note published in the *SpoliaZeylanica*. Commenting on the image of Natarāja, he says:

"The dance represents the operations of the universe carried on by forces of which Śiva is the director or ruler, hence he is called Natarāja, or Lord of Dancers.

"The hair of the head is braided, forming a crown at the top and, at the back, a circular knot, the lower braids whirling in the dance. On these, on the right is a mermaid or *Matsyanāri* representing the river Ganges; on the left a crescent moon and a serpent. At the base of the crown is a skull, symbol of destruction. He wears a necklace and skulls of Brahmas, Vishnus, and Rudras, symbolizing the successive evolution and involution of the universe through aeons. He has three eyes (one on the forehead), representing the sun, the moon, and fire; and wears on the right ear a round earring such as is worn by women, and on the left a man's earring, for Siva is both male and female.

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59. *ibid.* pp. 36 - 37

"He is represented with four arms:-

- (a) The hand of the right upper arm holds a small drum shaped like an hour-glass and symbolizing vibration, the first stage in evolution.
- (b) The left upper hand holds fire, symbol of destruction or involution, and of Śiva's purifying grace.
- (c) The right lower hand is raised in token of dispelling fear and assurance of protection.
- (d) The left lower hand points to his raised foot, the refuge of the soul. The other foot rests upon a prone Asura or titan, holding a snake, symbolizing the cosmic illusion which is trampled under the foot and crushed by Śiva in the emancipation of the soul.

"The figure stands in a halo or circle of flame, and the whole rests on a lotus, the lotus-throne or *padmāsana*. The serpents coiled in various parts of the body may be relics of the old serpent-worship, and are doomed symbols of Siva's destructive energy and of his obscuring energy (the cosmic illusion).

"The total height of this image is 3 ft." One of the images represents "Siva seated at ease (*sukhāsana*) with his consort Pārvati or Siva-kami, his cosmic energy, 'mother of world-clusters, yet Virgin by the Vedas called'. On Siva's crown are the sun, moon and the Ganges. In one of his hands he holds a deer, in another a battle axe... Pārvati holds a lotus bud in hand. Both figures are seated upon the lotus throne, or *padmāsana*." <sup>60</sup>

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60. *ibid.* p. 37:

The other two figures have been identified as those of the Śaiva Saints Appar and Māṇikkavācakar as noted earlier. Appar, who was a contemporary of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I, had visited all the principal temples of Śiva in the Tamil country and recited soul stirring hymns in praise of Śiva. These hymns which expound the principal tenets of Śaivism in the light of the author's own spiritual experience, in verses, which are unsurpassed on account of poetic qualities, are included in the *tirumurai*, the vast compendium of sacred literature on Śaivism in Tamil. In the image concerned the saint is depicted as holding in one of his hands the representation of the *uḷavārappatai*, the implement used for the removal of grass from the ground. According to tradition Appar always carried with him this implement with which he cleaned the premises of the temples he visited.<sup>61</sup>

The bronze which represents a male figure in the standing posture, holding in his hands an object which has the likeness of a palm leaf manuscript, has been identified as that of Māṇikkavācakar, who is supposed to have lived in the ninth century. He was, according to a persistent tradition, the chief minister of a Pāṇḍya King, who had the name Varaguna. His *tiruvacakam* and *tirukkōvaiyār* together form the eighth book of the *tirumurai*.

The images of the Śaiva Saints, Appar and Māṇikkavācakar, found buried in the premises of Siva Devale No. 1 suggest that the practice of installing the consecrated images of the *nāyanmār* in Śaiva temples, conducting worship in honour of them and taking them in festival processions had become an established practice in the scheme of temple worship in Sri Lanka, during the 11th and 12th centuries. It may also be assumed that there were arrangements for the recital of the *tēvarām* and *tiruvācakam* at this temple.

## *Siva Devale No. 2*

Siva Devale No. 2, one of the oldest Hindu temples in Polonnaruwa, was constructed of granite and limestone, in architecture

61. *Studies And Translations. Philosophical and Religious* by Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam (First published in 1937). Department of Hindu Affairs, Ministry of Regional Development, Colombo, 1981 (305 pages), pp. 97 - 102.



essentially Dravidian. It stands within the walled confines of the old city, about a hundred yards from its north-east corner. It was established during the early part of the 11th century and called Vānavan māṭēviśvaram. It was found to be in a far better state of preservation than any other Hindu temple in Polonnaruwa brought to light through archaeological excavations during the past one hundred years.

The principal temple had as its component parts the *garbhagrha*, *antarāla*, *ardha maṇṭapam* and the paropylaea or *maṇṭapam*. The temple, as originally constructed, seems to have stood unenclosed, and open to approach on all sides. The rough wall enclosing a space of about 96 ft. by 84 ft., is believed to have been erected at a later period. The city ramparts bound the temenos to north and east. To the south run from east to west two ancient thoroughfares, a minor street within less than 20 yards, and at 83 yards distance one of the great arteries serving that city, which entered through the eastern ramp some 110 yards from its north-east angle.<sup>62</sup>

Of the entire building complex only the sanctum and the antechamber have survived while the rest had collapsed and their remains have almost totally disappeared. A portion of the socle and the moulded plinth belonging to the propylaea or *maṇṭapam* were the only remnants of the structure constructed in front of the central shrine. There are, however, no stumps to suggest that the extra adjunct to the temple was pillared and roofed in. The indications are that this structure overlapped the square sanctum of the shrine by 4 ft. 9 in. on either side. From north to south it was 30 ft. wide. If its depth was in proportion to the vestibule, the outermost *maṇṭapam* must have measured 22 ft. down its north and south sides.<sup>63</sup>

The *vimāna* rises pyramidally in three storeys to an octagonal dome, from a moulded basement which supports a slightly recessed

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62. *ibid.*, pp. 106 - 107

63. H.C.P. Bell, *ASCAR*, 1906, Colombo, 1910, p. 18.

ground floor, whose exterior walls are niched, pilastered, and capped by a pronounced cornice of ogee flexure relieved by "Chaitya window" ornamentation. It is a four-storeyed structure, inclusive of the basement storey, constructed of both granite and limestone. Starting exteriorly at the ground floor, the moulded treatment of the podium conforms to an exemplar commonly employed for the *upapitha*, or stereobate of Hindu shrines found in the island.

"The *upapitha* consists of six horizontal members in seven courses-usual socle (4 in. high); vertical neck plinth (9in.); doubly chamfered torus (10¼ in.) placed directly upon the plinth, but separated from a dado by a straight fillet; second bowtell-a fascia between fillets of less projection and purely rectangular shape (10½ in.); dividing into two sections (each 5½ in.) the perpendicular dado, which is plain save for its pilaster strips, these being virtually the continuation downwards of the shafts of the pilasters; finally, an angular coping (6 ½ in.) softened by an ovolo.

"In plan at base footing the shrine is 20 ft. 6 in square. The stereobate rises 4 ft. 1 in. from the ground, and above it the naked wall stands back 12 in. all ways. This quadrature is broken from the basement upwards by a duplicated recess in the outline of the wall on each face 1ft. 10 in. wide by 1 ft. deep having a middle projection 7 ft. 6in. breadth, with one (ft. 8 in.) at either side between each recess and the corner of the wall. The angles of the central and flanking projections are cantoned by pilasters of low relief (1 in.) shafts, or six for each facade."<sup>64</sup>

The side bays had no ornamentation, but at the middle the wall was pierced by an elongated and semi-circularly arched niche 5 ft. 8 in. in height by 1 ft. 8 in. in width and a foot deep. It is carried down to the second member of the basement.

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64.    ibid

"Each of the four niches is crowned by a single bossage slab cut to form smooth vaulted soffits, with plain curling archivolt suggestive of a makara-torana left uncarved. A pair of semi-pilasters of the same type as the full pilasters supported this canopy.

"The pilasters comprise plain shaft, 3 ft. 4 in. in height by 6½ in. section; to this succeeds a spreading - still rectangular head; then a round member like a flattened cushion (*kumuda*), between fillets separated by block continuations (*kantha*) of the shaft both from the lower mouldings and from the expanding cyma capital (*palakai*) and its straight abacus. This broad capital supports a further plain shaft neck ending in a tripartite and panelled bracket - rectangular above and canted below. Upon this uppermost bracket capital there rests an architrave - mouldings - two horizontal bands, slightly projected over the bracket, a frieze of concave dentils around a bold continuous cornice of double flexure (*padma*) well undercut.

"The ground floor of the shrine and vestibule may be said to have terminated at a heavy flexed cornice, which gives it externally a height from the ground of 11 ft. 3 in., or above its stereobate of 7 ft. 2 in.

"The first storey, or part of the shrine elevation ( 3 ft. 6 in. in height by 18 ft. 9 in. square) immediately above the ground floor, simulates a flat roof with a parapet wall crenellated by a series of cushions - and embrasures, represented by domical and waggon - roofed cells united to intervening vaulted corridors, exactly as at 'Thuparama'Vihara." The first storey in this Siva Devale is purely ornamental and there is no space for circumambulation.

"The recessed outline of the basements and wall face is carried from the ground floor to the top of this first storey, but not higher. Its facade, below cells, is moulded in imitation of a miniature podium and cornice - crowned wall face. The plinth is of a rectangular order, and marked at bottom, by a line of closely set 'nailed head' dentils.



There is no torus, the coping moulding of the imitated basement simply capping a narrow dado with pilaster strips - four on the side bays, four for each recess, and six at middle - which run up the wall face to its angular and ogee cornice.

"Upon this cornice stands, at each of the outer corners of the shrine, a pseudo - monastic domed capital, bell-shaped and four-square (3 ft. at bottom, and 2 ft. 8 in. high). The exterior sides of the roof of the square cells and each set of cloisters show a vertical dormer window, exactly like those of the ground floor cornice, whilst the oblong central cells are given in, besides one in each gable. So, too, three-armed finials crown the square cells and gables of the elongated cells, similar to, but proportionately larger than; those on the corridors.

The second storey is 13 ft. 6 in. on each side at base and rises 4 ft. 3 in. to the surface of its cornice. It is footed by the representation of a moulded basement with cyma plinth and coping and wholly plain dado band. The face of the wall above is adorned with plain shafted pilasters, - by transverse bracket capitals, resembling those at the ground floor elevation, but unpanelled.

"There are twelve of these pilasters in all the four sides, one at each angle and two between at equal distances apart. The cornice of this tower is rectangularly stepped below, and ogee flexured. Between this cornice and the real plinth of the third and highest storey horizontal string courses intervene as a lysis moulding.

"The third storey of the shrine is octagonal in plan each face measuring 4 ft. 6 in. at foot. The wall moulding approximates very closely to that of the second storey, the only appreciable difference being the reversion of the peidroits, or plain strip *pilasters*, as noticeable on the faces of the domical cells of the first storey, in lieu of the bracket-headed pilasters. These vertical strips, four in number, are found only on the cardinal faces of the domical octagon, the intermediate octants being left blank.



"From the flat top of the cornice of this eight-sided drum (2 ft. 9 in. high), forming the lower part of the storey, sprang an octagonal dome splayed like a bell and ribbed at the angles. The dome was 11 ft. 3 in. in diameter at bottom."<sup>65</sup>

The vimānam as it once stood seems to have had a height of 31 ft. 9 in. above the ground. It was capped by lotus boss, *mahā padma*, which was 3 ft. 8 in. in diameter. The shaft of finial which rose from its centres was set on socket 4 in. square. From all the sides of the octagonal dome a single "*chaitya window*" protrudes boldly as a barge-boarded dormor.<sup>66</sup>

"The ground floor of the vestibule differed in face ornamentation from the shrine only in the omission of niches and reduction in the number of pilasters, from six to four on the sides and to two in front, with a pair of semi-pilasters flanking the entrance. Of the flat lower roof of the vestibule less than half the elongated slabs which ceiled it horizontally, from east to west, remain in position.

"The floor of the vestibule is about 3 ft. 1 in. above the ground outside, or a foot lower than the top of the basement dado outside.

"Formerly, before the *ardha-mandapa*, and outer mandapam, were destroyed, access to the *antarala* and *garbhagriha* beyond would have been almost on level, the rise occurring at stairs from outside into the propylaea. Now the vestibule has to be entered on the front by mounting steps roughly improvised from fallen slabs of its ceiling.

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65. *ibid.*, p. 19

66. *ibid.*, pp. 19 - 20

"Exteriorly the pronaos had a breadth, north and south, of 16 ft., and runs back for 9 ft. 4 in. to meet the last wall of the shrine at middle, leaving a right angle return of 2 ft. 3 in. to either side. The interior space is reduced by the thickness of the walls to a width of 9 ft. 4 in.

"The walls inside are severely plain, vertical from top to bottom. This box like chamber, which is lighted only from the doorway in front, has a height of 7 ft. 2 in."<sup>67</sup>

The doorway into the cella from the pronaos is through an aperture 3 ft. 6 in. wide, with a half ornamental pilaster on either side in the massive wall of the shrine. The opening at the doorway is 5 ft. 7 in. by 2 ft. 8 in.

The inner dimensions of the *garbahgriha*, or adytum, are 9 ft. 4 in. square. This is maintained vertically for 5 ft. 8 in. at which point the roof rises steadily for a further height of 11 ft. 4 in. from the flagged floor of the shrine. The *lingam* and its pedestal, which were found outside during the course of excavation have been replaced in the sanctum. The pedestal is 2 ft. 3 in. square, with a spout on one side. Into the centre was sunk the *lingam* 8 in. in diameter, so as to stand out 1 ft. 8 in. The spout, which is moulded and semi-rounded at the end, passed off the substances used for the *abhiṣeka*, from the basement on the north side of the *vimāna* at 3 ft. 3 in. above the ground.

The ground plan of minor buildings and other evidence from architectural remains suggest that there were two subsidiary shrines within the premises of Siva Devale No. 2. To the south-east of the principal shrine there was a minor shrine set apart for the god

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67.    ibid. p. 20

Ganapati. It had two chambers, a vestibule, 6 ft. long and 5 ft. wide and an 8 ft. square cella. This shrine, which was entirely of brick construction, was raised slightly above the ground level over a moulded basement. It was entered on the east and had a double door.

A similar edifice was constructed at a distance of three yards of the north west angle of the shrine. Its rough construction, with irregular slab edging and absence of steps, points to a date later than the other buildings. It has been assumed that this shrine housed the stone image of skanda on the consideration that a broken image of that deity standing in front of his vehicle, the peacock, was exhumed with other sculptures within the precincts of the Devale.

### *Inscriptions and endowments*

There are five inscriptions on the walls and mouldings of Śiva Devale No. 2. Three of these inscriptions were found to be badly damaged when estampages were prepared by the employees of the Archaeological Department under the direction of H.C.P. Bell. One of these, which contains the initial portion of the inscription of Rājendra Cōla I suggests that the temple had been established when this inscription was engraved during his reign.<sup>68</sup> The second fragment only contains expressions which refer to the name of the temple-Vanavan māṭēviśvaram uṭaiyar kōyil, and the diety enshrined in the temple.<sup>69</sup> In the third fragment only the expressions *alakiya maṇavāḷarai eluntarulivittu*, "after having installed (the image of) *Kalyanasundara*", are to be found.<sup>70</sup>

The other two inscriptions, which record donations of lamps, are fairly long and are found to be in a good state of preservation. The

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68. *ibid*

69. *South Indian Inscriptions (SI)* 4 ed. K. Krishna Sastri, Archaeological Survey of South India. Madras. 1915. No.1389. p. 490.

70. *ibid*, No. 1389, p. 490

texts of these inscriptions have been deciphered except at a few places. The major portion of the texts contain the meykīrtti of Adhirājendra, who had a very brief reign before the accession of Kulottunga Cōla I (1070-1122).

One of the epigraphs records the endowment of a twilight lamp, *tārānilai viḷakku*. The *panmahesvarar* accepted responsibility for the administration of the endowment.<sup>71</sup> The portion of the record mentioning the name of the donor is lost.

The other inscription of Adhirājendra, which records an endowment made in the third year of the king, by a certain Pallavaraiyan of Maṅkalappāti in Virpēṭṭu-nāṭu, a sub-division of a certain *kōṭṭam* in Jayankōṇṭa Cōla-maṇṭalam.<sup>72</sup> The endowment consisted of a perpetual lamp, *tirunantā viḷakku* and some money. The oil required for burning the lamp was to be supplied from the interest that accrued from the monetary deposit. The donor was obviously a dignitary who had gone to the island from South India as an agent of the Cōla king and was living in Polonnaruva towards the end of the period of Cōla occupation.

This inscription is significant as one which records the designations and even the names or epithets of some functionaries attached to this temple. There are references to several classes of Brahmins, *uvaccar*, *paricāraṅkar* - temple servants, *nāṭṭavar* - the inhabitants of the nāṭu (where the temple was situated), *tevāratīyār* and the *panmahesvarar*. They were jointly entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining the lamp. Further it said that a twilight lamp of the length of four fingers (*nālviral niḷattut tārānilai viḷakku*) was given to the *panmahesvarar*, who accepted responsibility for its maintenance.

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71. *ibid.* No. 1390, p. 490

72. *ibid.* No. 1392, p. 491



From the description of the various categories of persons associated with the temple it is clear that Vānavanmāteṣvaram was supported by a large community of people (*nāṭṭavar*) living in the larger territorial division (*nāṭu*) within which Jananātamānkalam was included and had a system of administration to regulate the affairs of the temple. There are references to three classes of Brahmins attached to this temple: *patipātamūlap pattutaip pañcācāriyat tēvakanmikaḷ*; Sivabrāhmaṇar and *kiramavittar*. Besides, there were other Brahmins who conducted worship on a system of rotation (*talaimāru tivārātanai paṇṇuvār*). Kaṅkaikoṇṭaṭācōla-māṇikkam, Kāman tiruviyāna Kōtukula-māṇikkam, Kōvintan Aṭavallān otherwise called Nārpatteṇṇayira-māṇikkam, Tēvan-kāmi otherwise called Rājendra Cōla māṇikkam, Tēvan Uyyavanān otherwise called Muṭikoṇṭa cōla māṇikkam are the names of some of them. Besides, there were also *paricārakar*, *uvaccar* (drummers) and *tēvaratṭiyār* (young women who perform the activities of dancing and singing at the time of worship) attached to this temple.

The Fragmentary Slab Inscription found in the Archaeological Museum in Anurādhapura, which was discovered in the premises of Śiva Devale No. 2 is in an excellent state of preservation.<sup>73</sup> As the initial and final portions of the text had been lost the name of the King in whose reign it was engraved cannot be ascertained. Yet, on palaeographical considerations it could be assigned to the 11th century. It records the donation of 24 cows for the supply ghee required for burning lamps at this temple. Those who had received these animals were obliged to supply a quantity of ghee amounting to 3 *ulakku* and 1 *ālakku* per day. The epigraph records the interesting information that Pulainari otherwise called Jananātapuram was a unit of the territorial division called *nikariliccōla-vaḷanāṭu*.

73. *ibid.*, No. 1388, pp. 489 - 490

### *Siva Devale No. 3*

The small Śaiva temple situated some 30 yards east of the right bank of the "Yoda-ala" is an isolated building of stone construction confined to a small area of 34 yards by 22 yards. In the premises, besides, the central temple there were two subsidiary brick shrines lying to north-east and south-west.<sup>74</sup>

The central temple was found to be in an advanced state of ruin on account of the growth of trees within the area enclosed by the walls of the building. The superstructure of the sanctum has disappeared and heavy slabs of the ceiling of the entire edifice had fall end down. The central temple, which fronted east as generally, consisted of three parts: a quadrangular open *maṇṭapam*, with a smaller portico attached it on the front side, a vestibule attached to it, and the square sanctum. The temple had a length of 51 ft. 6 in and nearly two-thirds of it was covered by the vestibule and the sanctum.

Exteriorly, the *maṇṭapam* measured 22 ft. by 20 ft., inside 16 ft. by 14 ft. 4 in. The vestibule measured 8 ft. 4 in. by 6 ft. inside and the sanctum measured 21 ft. 2 in. from outside, and only 6 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft. 4 in. within.

Like in all stone-built Hindu temples of Polonnaruwa the walls were merely faced inside and out with dressed ashlar while the interspace was filled with loose broken stone. The *upapīṭha*, or basement appears to have been uniform in its moulding throughout from portico to sanctum

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74. This fragmentary inscription is presently found in the gallery of stone inscriptions at the Archaeological Museum, Anuradhapura. It appears that this fragment is only a small portion of a large slab, which was originally set up within the premises of the temple concerned. The initial and concluding portions of the inscription have been lost after the slab was broken into fragments. The fragmentary portion of the text which could be deciphered without difficulty, records the donation of 24 cows for supplying 3 *ulakku* and 1 *ālakku* of ghee daily for the purpose of burning lamps at a shrine at Pulainari otherwise called Jananātapuram in Nikariliccōla valanāṭu.

as in the case of Siva Devale No. 2. The podium, which is 3 ft. 4 in. in height, has five planes: (1) usual low socle, (2) high vertical plinth, (3) chamfered torus set directly upon the plinth and topped by straight fillet (4) second bowtell and (5) upper dado.

Above the basement the vertical surface was relieved, as at the shrine of Siva Devale No. 2, by plain bays, separated at middle by pilasters on either side of the niche. But, in this instance the bays were reduced from five to three, and the full pilasters from six to four, of which the outer two were cantoned at the corners.

The face ornamentation conformed to Siva Devale No. 2, with such diminution as the proportionate size of the two temples demanded. A noteworthy feature in the design of the pilaster capitals is the adoption of that of the mantapam of Siva Devale No. 1 where a kalasa, or vase, heads the shaft above receding and advancing neck fillets, and below the flat bottomed cushion (kumutam) and neck extensions (kanṭam) which terminate in expanding cyma (palakai) capital and straight lined abacus.

"The centrally placed niches were in shape an attenuated oblong (1 ft. wide), square-headed at top, with architrave of horizontal mouldings finished by an ogee-shaped coping in rough imitation of the makara torana slabs of the shrine facades at Siva Devale No. 1. The niches (3 ft. 5 in. in height) ran down into the basement as far as the rectangular bowtell moulding."<sup>75</sup>

Inside the walls of antarala and the *garbha griha* were severely plain. A stone window, found in this temple which is 1 ft. 11 in. by 1 ft. 9 in. in dimensions, is of exceptional interest. It is chastely carved in front and of nine lights. These were provided by three rows of square incised panels, voided with openings like four-pointed stars, between a pair of equally spaced mullions and transoms. The cross-bars are beaded and their junctions bear a four-petalled flower.

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75. H.C.P. Bell. *ASCAR*, 1908, Colombo, 1913, p. 3.

## *Śiva Devale No. 4*

Archaeological excavations conducted almost a hundred years ago had brought to light the remains of a cluster of three brick-built Hindu temples each of which was dedicated to the worship of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Kālī respectively, on the Minneriya- Topawewa road, "The oblong premises containing the Śiva Devale, with its three subordinate shrines, were surrounded by a brick wall about 2 ft. thick on all sides, except in front (east) where it was nearly double that width. The area enclosed covers a space 136 ft. east and west by 100 ft."<sup>76</sup>

The regular approach to this temple was by a street skirting the precincts on the east, even now clearly marked by its deep depression. From this thoroughfare a set of plain steps, 5 ft. broad, mounted in two series through the middle of an open, raised platform or terrace, which fronted the entrance porch, which was of the plainest design. The porch projected both inside and out of the enclosure wall, the thickness of its outer walls almost equalled.

There were two other entrances into the temple premises. These were mere gateways without porches. One of these was through the southern wall near its west end; the other in the back wall directly behind the main shrine. The central temple stood back about 20 ft. in line with the entrance porch. The ground plan exhibits an irregular, semi-cruciform plan, which was probably a result of a departure from the original design owing to later modification and extension of the *maṇṭapam*, and the addition of a slightly larger second *maṇṭapam*.

A *maṇṭapam* measuring about 22 ft. by 18 ft. 6 in. fronted the building and the roof of this *maṇṭapam* was supported by eight stone pillars 6 ft. in height. Connected to this *maṇṭapam* by a doorway on the west was a passage 15 ft. in length divided into two compartments, each about 7 ft. 6 in. by 6 ft. 6 in. in dimensions. They were shut off from

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76. *ibid.* p. 4



each other by a cross wall and doorway in line with, and similar to, that from the *maṇḍapam*

The innermost sanctum behind the vestibules was entered by a mere doorless gap, 3 ft. 6 in. wide, fronting the lines of doorways through the vestibules and *maṇḍapam*.

The *garbha-griha* was 13 ft. 6 in. square exteriorly. Inside it measured 9 ft. by 8 ft. 4 in. The *liṅgam* and its pedestal were set up in the centre of its floor.

"The additions to the building took the form of an extra hall, or *maṇḍapam*, sixteen pillared, and 24 ft. in width united on the east, to the original *maṇḍapam*. From this first built *maṇḍapam* two wings, not matching precisely, were thrown out north and south in transept form. These bays were walled in; and that on the right (north) was accessible only from within the building.

"The later exterior *maṇḍapam*, could have been entered by one narrow doorway, 3 ft. 4 in. wide, in its south wall, where a small lotus-carved moonstone step remains in situ. The thickness of the walls (3 ft.) suggest an upper storey. At the north-west and south-west corners of the larger *maṇḍapam* were brick altars or some such accessories.

"Within the outermost *maṇḍapam* a small Nandi was exhumed unbroken. The bull is sharply sculptured in limestone, and has been perfectly preserved by the *debris* under which it has lain for centuries. The trappings on the animal are as sharp as when first cut."<sup>77</sup>

There were three subsidiary shrines behind the sanctum, which are situated near the west wall of the temenos enclosure. The one near the south-west corner is a small, double roomed building approximately

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77. H.C.P. Bell, *ASCAR*, 1902, Colombo, 1907, p. 8.

18 ft. 4 in. by 9 ft. in dimensions. It consists of two component parts, the sanctum and a *maṇṭapam*. The interior spaces were limited to 7 ft. 2 in. by 4 ft. 3 in., and 5 ft. 4 in. by 5 ft. respectively. In the sanctum are enshrined a granite *lingam* and an argha were found.

The second shrine is a smaller replica of the first one which it adjoins, and like it has an entrance on the east. The third shrine lies towards the north-west angle of the quadrangle, and on the other side of the gateway through the west wall. The design was similar to that of the others. In dimensions it was 21 ft. by 11 ft. 9 in. The inside spaces of the sanctuary and the *maṇṭapam* were 7 ft. 8 in. by 7 ft. 5 in. and 7 ft. by 6 ft. 10 in. respectively. They were separated by a cross wall, with middle opening. A plain semi-moonstone step, and a door sill were found to have marked the east, and only, entrance when the site had been fully excavated. A stone yantra of 25 partitions was one of the principal finds here.

### *Siva Devale No. 5*

The temple referred to as Siva Devale No.5 is one of the two ruined temples to the west of the road which divides them from the solitary *maṇṭapam* on the left bank of the *Yoda-ala*. Almost all the superstructures and walls of this large monument had fallen down, and before excavation the main building, shrine and vestibules had the appearance of an unsightly grass-covered mound from which large and irregular lumps of brick and mortar protruded here and there. The semi-circular dome, which had fallen behind the sanctum, was found almost intact among the *debris* of its architectural remains.

This large temple of brick construction consisted of six component parts: *garbha griha*, *antarāla* or inner vestibule, *ardha maṇṭapam* or outer vestibule and three *maṇṭapam*. The second and third *maṇṭapam* were more or less of the same size. The outermost *maṇṭapam*, which was much larger, was a forty-pillared hall laid down as a transept.

"The entire temple was surrounded by a prakāra, or outermost liminary wall the outlines of which have been lost. The *kōpuram*, or porch, through which access was provided into the temple premises, pierced the wall on to which it was built within. Only a few yards of this wall (3 to 4 ft. high) remain, with two of the tall roughly wedged pillars at the entrance. The *kopuram* had a central passage 8 ft. 6 in. wide, separating two small rooms, each about 8 or 9 ft. square.

"About twenty yards behind the porch the first of the united *maṇḍapam* and rooms forming the main devale is reached. This was a transept-like hall measuring inside 75 ft. 6 in. down the axis from north to south by 33 ft. 9 in. front to back.

"Besides the doorway in the middle of the east face and that to the west by which access was gained to the second *maṇḍapam*, the building had an entrance at each end, once mounted by wide steps now missing on to the north. To left or west, of the southern stairs, outside, was a square sunk cistern (6 ft. 6 in.) of bricks work.

"The columniation of this spacious hall followed its configuration. The roof was sustained on forty pillars-here as in other *maṇḍapam*, heterogeneous in size and outline, most squared, some dressed, a few octagonal - arranged in four rows of ten pillars, of which 24 were engaged to the brick walls and 16 left free standing. The widest inter-spacing was from north to south.

"The interior plan of the second *maṇḍapam* was almost square (24 ft. by 23 ft.). The even distribution, therefore, of its 16 pillars (nine stand unbroken) only 4 quite free - was to be expected. The four central pillar shafts are shapely dressed, and probably once sustained the roof tree on the spreading capitals of limestone now lying outside the building. These

capitals exhibit a band of six *hamsas* on each face, three on either side of a lotus bud. A doorway gave entrance to this *maṇḍapam* on south and north, in addition to the doorway from the *mahāmaṇḍapam* in front and that into the third *maṇḍapam*, of which the side walls run straight on from those of the second, was oblong in shape, 25 by 22 ft., and needed 24 pillars in all as roof support. Four squared pillars were ranged in line from front to back in six rows, the pair flanking the entrance to the outer vestibule being octagonal.

"In addition, this *maṇḍapam* threw out from the south wall a rectangular bay (9 ft. by 7 ft.) four pillared, as occurs at Śiva Devale No. 4 on the Minneriya road."<sup>78</sup>

The only difference between the vestibules was in the slight variation of their dimensions. The *ardha maṇḍapam* was 9 ft. 3 in. by 8 ft. 9 in. the *antarala* being 7 ft. by 9 ft. In plan the *garbah griha* was laid out as a square of 9 ft. within and 21 ft. exteriorly.

The shrine, its vestibules and the two inner *maṇḍapam* were shut in by an inner brick-walled enclosure. This rectangular enclosure started from the north-west and south-west corners of the *mahāmaṇḍapam*, which formed the eastern limit of the *temenos*.

Within this enclosure were located three subsidiary shrines of the usual double chamber type, besides a fourth, which was single-roomed. The one to the south-west was set apart for *Gaṇeśa*. The figures of *sapta-mātri* carved on three stone slabs found in the vicinity, may, perhaps, suggest that they were enshrined in one of the other minor temples. The third shrine was located in proximity to the north wall of the *ardha maṇḍapam*, facing south, and the fourth one was in the north-east as at Śiva Devales Nos. 1 and 3. Between this was a well which was 4 ft. in diameter and 20 ft. in depth.<sup>79</sup>

78. *ibid*

79. H.C.P. Bell, *ASCAR*, 1908. Colombo, 1913, p. 5.



The brick-built Śiva Devale No. 5 conformed, very closely with some modifications here and there to the exterior form, mouldings and ornamentation of Śiva Devale No. 2 constructed of granite. In respect of the vestibule the nakedness of the north and south walls, broken at Śiva Devale No. 2 by four pilasters on a plain face and nothing more, is here relieved by an arched niche ( 4 ft. 9 in. by 1 ft. 7 in.) headed by a *makara torana*, and flanked by a pair of half pilasters, similar to those on all the walls of the shrine except in front. The basement, which is slightly higher at Śiva Devale No. 5 ( 4 ft. 8 in.), the coping and the pillar capitals of the two temples are alike.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, at the shrines of both devales the "quadrature is broken from the basement upwards by a duplicated recess in the outline of the wall on each face, leaving a middle projection with one less broad at either side between each recess and the corner of the wall". The respective width of these, however, differs slightly.

"In addition to the elongated central niche ( 4 ft. 9 in. by 1 ft. 7 in.) with its dimidiated pair of pilasters and the full pilasters common to both devales, a distinct variation was introduced at Śiva Devale No. 5 by inserting in the recess on either side of the central bay an extra niche exactly similar to that of the middle save in its diminutiveness. These dwarf niches, which once contained small standing figures of gods in stucco, were only 2ft. high by 10 in. across.

"With the exception that the shafts on the pilasters taper slightly, and that the soffit of the ogee coping of the ground story (left here at Śiva Devale No. 2) is here ornamented by a string of *hamsas*, there is practically no other divergence from the face ornamentation found at Śiva Devale No. 2."<sup>81</sup>

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80.    ibid

81.    ibid, p. 6

The dimensions of the Vimāna exceeded those of its counterpart of Śiva Devale No. 2 as illustrated in the following table:

	Śiva Devale No. 2		Śiva Devale No. 5	
	Ft.	ins.	Ft.	in.
Stereobate	4	1	4	8
Ground storey	11	3	12	0
First storey	3	6	4	6
Second storey	4	3	6	0
Third Storey, dome; and final	8	8	9	2
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	31	9	36	4

The *vimāna* of this Devale, which was taller than that of Śiva Devale No. 2. by 4 ft. 7 in. seems to have had a full height of 36 ft. 4 in. ground to finial.

The introduction of an oblong sunk panel, containing a seated figure, centrally on all faces except to east or front, was a notable departure from the layout of the first storey replace the four plain shafted pilasters headed by transverse bracket capitals on the walls of the corresponding storey at Siva Devale No.2.

"The third or uppermost storey at Siva Devale No. 2 was throughout octagonal, with each alternate octant showing on its basement and wall alike four plain pilasters. Hence only the base of the dome was octagonal, the upper part of the dome being circular.

Each side of the drumbase bore four pilasters with rectangular branching capitals and the circular superstructure had a couple of pilaster strips. The brick cupola of Siva Devale No. 5, exhibited, like the dome of Siva Devale No. 2, eight dormor, "Chaitya windows" as relief ornament to its curvilinear outline, and in addition a frieze of low-relief *hamsas*, 55 in all, moving from left right, worked in stucco. Exteriorly, the dome measured 33 ft. in circumference.

A ruined *maṇṭapam* measuring 26 ft. north and south by 32 ft. crossways was found on the west bank of the Yoda āla. All that remained of it was the bottom of the bricked walls, some brick pavement and some pillars of exceptional height, 12 - 13 ft. On four of these pillars the following brief Tamil inscriptions were to be found:

1. *Srī mōkanūr uṭaiyān tiruppuvanatēvan*  
 "(Hail) Prosperity! Tiruppuvana-tēvan, the uṭaiyān of Mōkanūr.
2. *Srī tillaiḱkaracu tiyācintamaṇi mūvēnta vēḷān*  
 "(Hail) Prosperity! Tiyaḱacintāmaṇi, (a) mūvēntavēḷān, who was "the ruler" of Tillai.
3. *Srī mukarināṭālvān makaḷ karpakam*  
 "(Hail) Prosperity! Karpakam, the daughter of the nāṭālvān of Mukari
4. *Sri nallūruṭaiyān paṇcaṇetivānan*  
 "(Hail) Prosperity! Paṇcaneti vānan, the uṭaiyān of Nallūr.<sup>82</sup>

Each of these epigraphs records the names of persons and titles of rank. Two of them, Tiruppuvanatēvan and Paṇcanetivānan had the designation *uṭaiyān*. The third one, Tiyaḱacintamaṇi had the title *mūvēntavēḷān*. He is described as *aracu*, a designation which is applied to him in connection with the locality called Tillai. Obviously, he had a rank signifying some kind of authority or position of influence in that locality. The fourth person Karpakam had no such designation, but she is said to be a daughter of one who had the designation *nāṭālvān* in relation to the locality called Mukari. The expressions *uṭaiyān*, *aracu*, *nāṭālvān* and *mūvēntavēḷān* were generally used as designations of rank in the Cōla kingdom. Besides, the localities referred to in these inscriptions were also to be found in South India. It may therefore

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82.     ibid

be assumed that the individuals referred to in these undated inscriptions had gone over to the island from South India and were residing at Polonnaruva, where they performed certain functions under the direction of the agents of the Cōla ruler. It would appear that the four persons referred to in these inscriptions were responsible for establishing the *maṇṭapam* the superstructure of which was supported by the pillars some of which had these inscriptions. This structure was co-eval with Śiva Devale No. 5 during a major part of the period of its existence and had served some function in relation to that temple, but presently there is no means of determining precisely what it was. On the basis of these considerations it may be assumed that the temple concerned had come into existence during the period of Cōla occupation. On the grounds of architectural style it may be assigned to a period that intervened the establishment of Vaṇavanmātevisvaram and the later and more ornate Siva Devale No. I.

## *The Bronzes*

No stone images were found in situ at this temple probably on account of the fact that it was sacked and looted during a period of turbulence in the city. A roughly carved bas-relief of Gaṇeśa in the seated posture; a pillar with sunk-relief figurine of the same god; sculptured slabs of *sapta mātri*; a four-armed Viṣṇu in the *sthānaka* pose; a bas-relief figure of Kālī depicted with two hands, in the *sthānaka* pose; a bas-relief figure of a seated deity holding a club on right shoulder and something on left palm were the principal items of statuary in stone picked up from the debris of architectural remains.

The largest number of bronzes hitherto discovered from the premises of any historical monument in Sri Lanka are from Siva Devale No. 5. These bronzes, which are remarkable on account of their variety and the quality of workmanship, have been found during the course of excavations conducted at the site of this temple in successive stages, during the years 1907, 1908, 1960, and 1981. All



the items of metal sculpture that had come to light during the excavations conducted by H.C.P. Bell and Charles Godakumbura respectively in 1907-8 and 1960 have been identified and described in official publications. These items occupy a position of eminence among the collections in the possession of the Archaeological Department and adorn the galleries of three museums. A description of the items discovered in course of excavations conducted by the Cultural Triangle is yet to be published.

In all seventeen bronzes were obtained from this site in 1907-8, and they are of several categories.<sup>83</sup>

The principal items, which are of outstanding importance for the study of religion and iconographic art may be listed here in the following order:

1. Śiva in the form of Natarāja: height 2 ft.
2. Śiva in the form of Natarāja: height 1 ft. 11½ in.  
(Both bronzes are incomplete, without the halo, and one of them without the whirling braids.)
3. Śiva, dancing: height 1 ft. 10½ in.
4. Pārvatī standing: height 1 ft. 4½ in.
5. Pārvatī standing: height 2 ft. 3½ in.
6. Pārvatī seated: height 1 ft. 11 in.
7. Sūrya: height 1 ft. 5½ in.
8. Tiruñāna-campantar: height 1 ft. 4 in.
9. Appar: height 1-ft. 7 in.
10. Cuntaramūrti *nāyanār*: height 1 ft. 8 in.
11. Cuntaramūrti *nāyanār*: height 1 ft. 4½ in.
12. Cāntēsvarar: height 1 ft. 2 in.

Śiva is represented in half dancing pose, called *sāndhya-nṛtta-mūrti*, "Lord of the evening twilight dance" in No. 3. The principal items among these images are those of Śiva in the form of Natarāja (2 figures), Pārvatī, his consort, Śiva and Pārvatī seated in the *sukhāsana* posture, *sandhyā nṛttamūrti*.

83. SII, 4, No. 1393, p. 491

Excavations during 1960 led to the discovery of a substantial number of bronzes remarkable on account of their variety and artistic quality. Charles Godakumbura, who conducted the excavations, and was therefore responsible for their finds says:

"On the 18th of September 1960, in the course of clearing the debris at the site of Siva Devale No. 5 referred to earlier, a bronze statuette of a female, 5½ inches high, was found between this shrine and Viṣṇu Devale No. 4. On the right wrist of the figure rests a bird. This may be a parrot. Considering this bird and the headgear of the figurine, one may identify it as a representation of Sarasvatī, the Goddess of learning and the consort of Brahma.

"A month later further bronzes, this time very much larger ones, were noticed behind the same Siva Devale near the spot where its massive brick *vimāna* lies fallen. On the 19th of October, the day of the Dīpāvali festival... the Archaeological Department commenced excavations at the spot. There was a group of images, together with the pedestals of some of them and halos of others buried in a pit 5 feet by 5 feet from the level of the foundation of the devale. The pit had been dug purposely to bury the statuettes. These images were carefully arranged in the order of their precedence in the Hindu pantheon accepted at the period. Pride of place even in this earthy grave had been given to a statue of Śiva as Natarāja, 37 inches in height. Its tuft of hair was not found, but the pedestal and halo were found separately. With the pedestal and *prabhā* this statue measures 56 inches.

"There was also a seated statue of Śiva, in Somaskandhamūrti 21 inches high with the protruding leg. Its pedestal and *prabhā* were found separately. The seated consort and the son, however, were missing.

"A standing figure of Viṣṇu in the **Bhogasthāna-mūrtti** was the third find. Its pedestal was found separately. The complete height with the pedestal is 30½ inches. The *gāda* or club in the left front hand is missing.

"In an attitude of attending on the male gods were two images of goddesses. One may be that of Pārvatī, the consort of Śiva and the other that of Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu; or both may be represented by Pārvatī herself.

"In the position of paying adoration and homage to the gods were the statues of two bhaktas or devotees of Śiva. The devotee wearing a crown and standing on a lotus pedestal may be identified as Chandeśvara. The devotee in plain headgear, not provided with a pedestal may be taken to be Sundara-murti svami.

"A sudarsana-cakra, the Asura slaying discus of Viṣṇu, was also among the finds of this day. An earthen censer with charcoal in it bore silent testimony of a final ritual accompanied with burning of incense.

"Within a week after the collection of the above finds, further objects were discovered at the site of the same devale. On 26th of October, a number of small statuettes and other objects were found in an earthen pot at a point 27½ feet from the southern plinth of the building. These statuettes, though small, display the greatest skill in workmanship. Among them are also figures which serves as peculiar examples of Hindu iconography. Following are the bronzes found buried in the clay pot:-

- (i) Śiva in Natarāja-murti complete with tuft of hair, halo and pedestal.
- (ii) Śiva as Batuka-Bhairava with dog behind.

- (iii) Śikhivāhana-skandha.
- (iv) Balakṛiṣṇa, poised on one leg and dancing.
- (v) Two goddesses, standing
- (vi) do
- (vii) Goddess seated.
- (viii) Nandi, the bull sacred to Siva, his Vāhana.

"A bronze statuette depicting an emaciated female figure was discovered on the same day as the above figurines, on the same side of the building and 11 feet away from its foundation. The figure is identified as Kāraikkāl ammaiyaṛ, a devotee of Śiva. This is the most beautifully wrought figure of this female devotee of Śiva that has so far been published. It is nearly 11½ inches in height...

"On the next day, namely 27th of October, a large statuette of Gaṇeśa of exceptional beauty and manifesting special characteristics was found at a spot 18½ feet west on the *devale* foundation, and 2½ feet below the ground level. ... The statue is 23 inches high and is placed on a lotus pedestal 9 inches high...

On the 28th of November, a statue of Viṣṇu in the *bhogasthāna* posture was unearthed on the northern quarter of the shrine, 6 feet away from the northern entrance. The image has no pedestal. In physical characteristics, in the arrangement of the drapery and the display of ornaments it differs from the other image of Viṣṇu found previously at the same site.

### *Siva Devale No. 6*

The Śiva Devale No. 6, which was situated on the left bank of the Yoda-āla and in close proximity to other Hindu temples, Siva Devale No. 5 and Viṣṇu Devale No. 5, was a temple of modest



proportions consisting of the usual component parts: sanctum, vestibule, *ardha maṇṭapam* and *maṇṭapam*. The oblong enclosure of this temple measured 40 yards east to west and 33 yards north to south. There were three subsidiary shrines within the enclosed premises.<sup>84</sup>

The ground plan of this temple, which was constructed mostly of brick, was similar to that of Śiva Devale No. 5. The square *garbha griha* at the back was preceded by a double vestibule, to which was attached a *maṇṭapam*, pillared and broader. As the stone figure of a Nandhi and its pedestal were placed in front of the *maṇṭapam*, on the east, the *maṇṭapam* was not entered from the front. The only entrance to the temple was through the north end of the east wall of a 17 ft. square room built on the side wall of the *maṇṭapam*, which had 6 pillars in three rows of two from front, and measured 20 ft. 6 in. by 14 ft. 9 in.<sup>85</sup>

The floor of the sanctum, which was 8 ft. square was flagged with stones. The length of the outer vestibule, which had a width of 7 ft. 6 in. was almost double that of the *antarāla*, which was only 4 ft. 8 in. on ground dimensions. The door frame between the two vestibules was cramped, but there was no doorway at all between the sanctum and

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84. H.C.P. Bell, ASCAR, 1908, Colombo, 1913, PP. 17 - 18.

85. In a lecture delivered at the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Charles Godakumbura presented a description of these bronzes. S. Paranavitana, who presided over the meeting, Kanthiah Vaithianathan and W. Banlendra made some observations on the identification of the bronzes and on the comments made by Godakumbura. S. Paranavitana made the following pertinent observations: "These bronzes, mainly Śaiva in Character... are of great artistic value and their study gives rise to various questions of historical, aesthetic and iconographic import... while the artistic value of these bronzes is very great, the figures of Natarajas in this collection do not approach the excellence of the famous Natarāja bronzes in the Madras Museum and that found previously at Polonnaruwa and now in the Colombo Museum. Some of these bronzes have peculiar iconographic characteristics. Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam has suggested that some of the bronzes discovered earlier at Polonnaruwa have certain Ceylonese traits, but in the main all these bronzes follow South Indian traditions and are representative of South Indian art." Charles Godakumbura, "Bronzes from Polonnaruwa", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch) Vol. VII, Part 2 (New Series), Colombo, 1961, pp. 239 - 153 + 8 plates.

the inner vestibule. The roof of the sanctum and the vestibule was flat ceiled by horizontal stone slabs.

From front to back the whole temple had a length of 54 ft. 6 in. of which 25ft. 6 in. was occupied by the *maṇṭapam*, 15 ft. by the vestibules and 14 ft. by the sanctum.

The wall face of the vestibule and sanctum was a replica of that of Śiva Devale No. 3 in every respect. The basement was of the usual pattern.

Within the premises of the temple there were three subsidiary shrines set apart for minor deities. The *pillaiyār kōyil* was slightly behind the main temple to the south west and was facing east. A bas-relief figure of Gaṇeśa was found in an undisturbed position in this shrine. The second shrine was located to the north of the *ardha maṇṭapam*, and the third was situated in the north-east corner of the *prakāra* and faced west.

In all three items of statuary in stone and thirteen bronzes were picked up from the premises of this temple during the course of excavations. A bas-relief of Gaṇeśa, the figure of a two armed Viṣṇu flanked on either side by his two śaktis and a bull couchant are the images in stone. Of the thirteen bronzes three were representations of deities while the rest were temple accessories. One of the three images is a representation of Śiva in the form of Natarāja while the other two were those of Pārvaṭī.<sup>86</sup> A bronze bell found at this site had, on its base, the inscribed label *sri āṇṇṭṭai perumāl*, in characters of the 11th century. As the images found at this site exhibit all the basic characteristics of the Coḷa bronzes of the 11th century, it may be assumed that Śiva Devale No. 3 was established during the period of Cola occupation of Polonnaruva.

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86. *ibid.*, p. 242.

## Śiva Devale No. 7

The temple referred to as Śiva Devale No. 7 is one of the two shrines immediately opposite Viṣṇu Devale to the right of the road leading into the city from the north entrance. The Śiva Devale was situated about twenty yards to the south of the Piḷḷaiyār Kōyil. Only the bare outlines of the ground plan of this temple were exposed by excavation. This temple seems to have comprised a long (20 ft. 4 in.) *mantapam* with a narrow enclosed verandah in front, a vestibule of the same width and a stone paved square sanctum of 8 ft. 6 in. The temple was united to a portico of two rooms on either side of a passage, 3 ft. 9 in. wide.<sup>87</sup> On account of the paucity of its remains a detailed consideration of the architectural design of Śiva Devale No. 7 has not been possible.

In conclusion it may be noted that seven of the fourteen Hindu temples at Polonnaruva were dedicated for the worship of Śiva. Most of these temples were located in close proximity to temples of Viṣṇu, and such a situation presupposes that there were no strong sectarian differences among the Hindus living in the city. All these temples were probably supported by the same groups of people who were established in the city. Another noteworthy consideration is the location of Hindu monuments in close proximity to Buddhist monastic establishments, save for a few notable exceptions. Such a disposition of the historical monuments suggests that social life in the city was characterized by a spirit of understanding, harmony and tolerance of a high order.

In their architectural design all the Hindu temples exhibited certain common characteristics. They stood within brick *prākāra* or enclosure walls and had entrances on the east, the only exception being the Viṣṇu Devale No. 2. Four, or possibly five, of the main

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87. H.C.P. Bell. *ASCAR*, 1908, p. 8.

shrines were constructed of stone while all the others were of brick construction. On the basements, which were of a uniform character, rose plain walls, relieved on three sides by a simple central niche flanked by pilasters with capitals more or less embellished and shapely, all of which were crowned by a well-defined curvilinear cornice. The *antarāla* and *garbha griha* of all Śaiva temples were flat-ceiled with stone slabs, and the sanctum was surmounted by a dome in brick or stone. Each *vimāna* contained at least three stories. The dome was ornate and graceful, and was either circular or octagonal. There were two or more subsidiary shrines attached to each temple. The discovery of a substantial number of bronzes at the sites of some of these temples presupposes that a local school of bronze casting had developed in Polonnaruva since the establishment of these temples.



# Temples of Śiva at Padaviya

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S. Pathmanathan.

## *Multiculturalism, Urbanization And The Nānādesis*

The architectural remains of a city that flourished during medieval times in the vicinity of the Padaviya tank located on the borderline of the Northern, North-Central and Eastern Provinces have been partially explored by archaeological excavations. The antiquarian remains are chiefly from two localities, Moragoda on the northern bund of the tank, and Buddhanehela, which is located about four and a half miles to the north of it.<sup>1</sup> The settlements in and around these focal points of habitation had grown into a large town since the early 11th century. Agricultural prosperity and commercial activities seem to have provided the impetus for its development. It would appear that Padaviya was the largest among the cities and towns in the island, which were not centres of dynastic power and authority. The peak period of constructional activity was in the 11th and 12th centuries, when a large number of Buddhist and Hindu temples, some of which were remarkable on account of their large proportions and artistic quality, were constructed.

Since the early years of the 11th century Padaviya had a multifaceted development. It developed as a fortified military outpost and as the centre of commercial activity. There was commercial, constructional and cultural activity of an impressive kind. The inner core of the city was a fortified area of approximately eight acres, which was surrounded by walls and a deep moat.<sup>2</sup> The centre of habitation,

1. *Seeing Ceylon* (272 pages), R.L. Brohier, Lake House Investments Limited, Colombo (Third Edition), 1981, p. 77.
2. R.L. Brohier, "Antiquarian Notes on Padaviya", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Ceylon Branch), Vol. 8, pt. 2 (New series), 1963, pp. 245 - 261.

commodity exchanges and religious activities were located outside the fortified portion of the city.

The Nānādesis otherwise called Aiññūruvar, the most celebrated among the mercantile communities of medieval South India, had secured a foothold in the city after the Cōla conquest. They were interacting closely with warriors and officials posted at Padaviya during the early 11th century. They seem to have actively participated in some constructional activities and the establishment of religious institutions.

In course of time, the settlement of the Nānādesis at Padaviya developed into a *nakaram*, "market town", called Ayyampolil paṭṭinam. Some activities of the merchants affiliated to this *nakaram* are recorded in two slab inscriptions which could be assigned to the late 11th and 12th centuries on palaeographic considerations. One of these, which contains a *praśasti*, records the names and epithets of some leading personalities of the *nakaram*.<sup>3</sup>

The long text of this inscription consists of two parts: the initial portion is a *praśasti* of the mercantile community called Aiññūruvar, while the final portion records the names and epithets of eight persons most of whom were merchants. This portion is not formulated in the form of a sentence. It is merely a list of names and other expressions. It does not record any activity, and, as there is reason to believe that the engraver(s) had indited the entire text given to them, it may be assumed that the objective in setting up this inscription was the proclamation of the names of individuals, who were appointed to carry on duties in respect of an institution which the Aiññūruvar had established at the locality where the inscription was found. The impression that such an institution was a *nakaram* seems to be confirmed by the reference to Ayyampolil paṭṭinam in another inscription from Padaviya.

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3. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, A. Velupillai, Peradeniya, 1971, pp. 54 - 55.

Among the individuals described in the epigraph five were merchants from separate territorial units called *nāṭu*. They are *Aiññūruvar nāṭu*, *Kāranāṭu*, *Pillai-nāṭu*, *Civacaraṇacēkara-nāṭu* and *Cōruṭai-nāṭu*. It is thus clear that the *paṭṭinam* at Padaviya was not dominated and controlled exclusively by local residents. It appears to have been constituted and regulated by merchant communities conducting commercial operations in collaboration over a wide area. Several territorial divisions styled *nāṭu* seem to have been brought together to form a single trading unit. The representation in the *nakaram* seems to have been on the basis that each territorial division in the trading unit called *nāṭu* should be represented by at least one person. It may therefore be assumed that the *nakaram* of the *Nānādesis* at Padaviya was a focal point of collection, exchange and distribution, where itinerants dealing with products of distant origin and seaborne commerce interacted with local merchants and commodity producers established in the region in which the *nakaram* was the focal point. A major consideration that arises from a scrutiny of the inscriptions from Padaviya is the co-ordination of effort on the part of the *Aiññūruvar* and the *Valaṇceyar* in establishing and maintaining the *nakaram* in which representatives of both communities were accommodated. Between them the *Aiññūruvar* seem to have been the major partners. The reference to *caṅkaramanutan* in the epigraph is significant as providing an indication of the presence of merchants belonging to the group called *caṅkarapāṭiyar*, who were dealers in oils.<sup>4</sup> Some merchants of that community were probably established at Padaviya and were affiliated to the *Nānādesis* on account of close interaction and the complementarity of their roles.

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4. The *caṅkarapāṭiyar* are frequently referred to in South Indian Tamil inscriptions. They are generally mentioned in connection with endowments made for burning lamps. They often accepted responsibility for supplying oils and also for maintaining lamps. That they had a settlement at Tirukkēṭiśvaram in the 11th century is suggested by the text of an inscription found there. In the city of Kāñcīpuram, which was one of the principal centres for the collection and distribution of oils there was a large concentration of the *caṅkarapāṭiyar*, which formed the nucleus of a separate *nakaram*.



The second long inscription from Padaviya, which records some activities of the Nānādesis, could only be partially deciphered on account of its worn out condition and of its letters being engraved too closely to enable recognition.<sup>5</sup> The fact that the *nakaram* of the Nānādesis at Padaviya was called Ayyampolil paṭṭinam is known exclusively from this inscription. It contains a description of Śiva and records the donation of images (*vikkirakaṇ ceytu kuṭuttōm*) to a certain institution. An important detail recorded in the inscription relates to the *tāvaḷam*. It is called *vikkirama kaṭikait-tāvaḷam* of Ayyampolil paṭṭinam. Although the inscriptional preambles of the Nānādesis and their associates refer to the sixty-four *kaṭikait-tāvaḷam*, the *tavalams* are seldom referred to in epigraphic records in association with specific units called *nakaram*. It is significant that the inscription concerned described the *vikkirama kaṭikait-tāvaḷam* as an integral unit of the Ayyampolil paṭṭinam.<sup>6</sup>

The *tāvaḷams* were, as suggested by the expression *kaṭikai* (period) prefixed to them, periodic markets held on designated days of the week. They are specifically referred to in the inscriptional preambles as sites where the traders called *ceṭṭi* and *ceṭṭiputtirar* conducted commercial transactions in accordance with the norms (*dharma*) of the *samayam*, the corporate organization of long distance traders. It is generally assumed, with some justification, that bands of traders halted with their caravans at such centres for conducting commercial transactions with local traders and commodity producers. It would appear that the *tāvaḷam* and *nakaram* were closely connected to each other in a commercial network encompassing internal and foreign trade. The decipherable portion of the inscription from Padaviya suggests that the collections from the *Vikkirama kaṭikait-tāvaḷam* were deposited with the *nakaram* of Ayyampolil paṭṭinam. It may therefore be assumed that this *tāvaḷam* was under the control of the *nakaram*.<sup>7</sup>

5. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions* Pt. 2, A. Velupillai Peradeniya, 1972, pp. 19 - 20.

6. S. Pathmanathan, "The Nagaram of the Nanadesis in Sri Lanka Circa A.D. 1000 - 1300", *The Sri Lanka Journal of The Humanities*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2, University of Peradeniya, 1984 (published in 1987), pp. 132 - 134, 150.

7. *ibid.*



A noteworthy feature of the *nakaram* of Padaviya was its military power. The names of two army units are mentioned in one of the inscriptions. The one called *kālikanap-perumpatai* was obviously named after Kālī, a form of the mother goddess, the favourite deity of the Nānādesis and the mercantile, military and artisan communities associated with them.<sup>8</sup> Another such unit was 'the second army allied to the *nakaram*' (*innakaram iranṭām mitturukanap-pataiyār*).<sup>9</sup> The leaders of military communities serving the *nakaram* seem to have been accorded some privileges and positions of honour as claimed in some inscriptions. A representative of the *kālikanap-perumpatai* seems to have been associated for some time, with the governing body of the *nakaram* at Padaviya. Another warrior, a certain *aṅkakkāran*, also had a similar position in the *nakaram*.

### *The temples of Padaviya*

The development of Hindu temples at Padaviya seems to have been connected with the activities of the Nānādesis and other merchant communities. The remains of five Śaiva temples have been identified at Padaviya during the course of archaeological explorations and excavations conducted on different occasions during the past one hundred years. The most conspicuous among these institutions was *Iravikulamāṇikka-īśvaram*, which was so named after an epithet of the Cōla King Rājarāja I (985 - 1016). The inscriptions on the foundation stones of this temple, which is nowadays referred to as Śiva Devale No. I, record the names of individuals some of whom were merchants. These inscriptions read:<sup>10</sup>

1. *nārāyaṇan tiruccirṇampalam uṭaiyān iṭṭa kallu*

"The stone laid by Nārāyaṇan, the uṭaiyān of Tiruccirṇampalam."

8. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions* pt. I, p. 55.

9. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, pt. 2, p. 19.

10. *ibid*, pp. 23 - 24

2. *svasti sri ikkallu varutan tirumāl iṭṭatu. ikkallu aḷakan uttamarālayan iṭṭatu*  
 "Hail prosperity. This stone was laid by Varutan Tirumāl. This stone was laid by Aḷakan Uttamarālayan.
3. *svasti sri ikkalu aḷakan uttamanāna tēci ayyattunai ceṭṭi iṭṭatu.*  
 "Hail prosperity. This stone was laid by Aḷakan Uttaman otherwise called Tēci. Ayyattunaicceṭṭi."
4. *svasti sri ikkallu patiyil vaṇikan tani appan iṭṭatu.*  
 "Hail prosperity. This stone was laid by Tani Appan, a merchant of Padaviya'.

These inscriptions, which were engraved on the mouldings of Śiva Devale No. I record the names of some of those who had contributed to the establishment of the temple. Nārāyaṇan who is mentioned in the first inscription was obviously a person who had come from the Cōḷa kingdom and was posted at Padaviya on some assignment. It is significant that he is described as *Tiruccirāmpalam uṭaiyān*. The designations of Varutan Tirumāl and Aḷakan referred to in the second epigraph are not mentioned. The persons whose names are recorded in the third inscription, Aḷakan Uttaman and Ayyattunaicceṭṭi, were undoubtedly merchants. One of them is said to have been a *tēci* and the other a *ceṭṭi*. As *tēci* is an abbreviated form of *nānātēci* it may be assumed that Aḷakan Uttaman was a Nānādesi merchant established at Padaviya. The *ceṭṭi* referred to in the same inscription was probably one of his associates. The last inscription states that the stone bearing it was laid by a certain Tani Appan, a merchant from Padaviya. So, three of the six persons whose names are recorded in the foundation inscriptions were merchants. The scrutiny of these inscriptions reveals that itinerant merchants and local traders, who probably had some connection with the itinerants were interacting with the agents of the Cōḷa ruler in respect of the construction of Iravikula māṇikka-īśvaram at Padaviya in the early years of the 11th century. Such an impression is confirmed by the contents of the long inscription

dated in the 26th year of Rājarāja, which was found among the architectural remains of this temple.<sup>11</sup>

It would appear that the construction of the temple had been completed by the 26th year of Rājarāja. The inscription of that year records endowments made by a number of individuals belonging to the official, military and mercantile classes. Their donations consisted of twelve lamps of two categories, some gold and a number of cows. The principal donors were *Maruṅkūr uṭaiyān*, Pālaippākkam *uṭaiyān* and the Nānādesi merchant Koṇṇavil Venkāṭan.<sup>12</sup>

The second slab inscription of the Nānādesis from Padaviya, the text of which has been formulated in versified form, seems to contain some descriptions of Śiva, which are not clearly recognizable on account of the damage on the inscribed slab. Those who had set up this inscription, the Vīrakkoti, a military community allied to the Nānādesis, claim to have made images and donated them to the temple.<sup>13</sup>

It is not possible to form a clear idea about the Architectural design of Śiva Devale No. I as that edifice has crumbled down during the course of several centuries of abandonment during which the accumulated debris of its ruins had assumed the shape of a mound overgrown with thick vegetation. It was identified during the course of excavations initially conducted at the site in 1891. The annual report of the Archaeological survey for that year says:

"Mr. Wickramasinghe cleared jungle round the buildings, etc., at the "Moragoda" ruins about a mile outside Padaviya tank, north-

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11. K. Indrapala, "An Inscription of the time of Rājarāja Cōla I from Padaviya", *Epigraphia Tamlica* pt. I, Jaffna Archaeological Society, 1971, pp. 32 - 36.

12. *ibid.*

13. *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions* pt. 2, p. 19.

east... excavated the "Patirippuwa" (Siva Devale). The design of the mouldings recalls Berendi Kovil in the three korales (Kegalla District), but does not equal it for variety and grace. On the coping fillet are cut two lines in old Tamil letters, not very legible. In laying bare the elevation more letters were discovered on a portion of the block. Opened up the sanctum, which is lined with stone and has at centre *in situ* a lingam, with its *argha*, or socket pedestal, well preserved.

"Photographed a pillar inscription (Sinhalese) of " "Kasub Siri Sangabo" (Kasyapa IV., 912-29 A.D.), the inscribed (Tamil) slabs near the "" "Patirippuwa", its moulded basement, a carved pillar, a "stand," stone bull, figure of Padmapāni, a sedent Buddha, the dagaba, a stone lattice window, the fallen lion, and one of the ancient wells... The ancient remains at Moragoda are situated immediately below Padaviya tank, stretching north for half a mile or so.

"The whole group seems to comprise:

- (i) A walled enclosure, irregularly shaped, containing three or four sites of buildings and ten wells.
- (ii) A Siva Devale, enclosed.
- (iii) Buddhist temple premises.
- (iv) Another enclosure with a shrine or two, near a colossal stone lion, now prone and much damaged."<sup>14</sup>

Further excavations at Moragoda, at a much later period, revealed that there were several Saiva temples at Padaviya when the city had flourished. *The Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon* for 1961 - 62 says:

"The structure within the citadel, and its entrance, was excavated. A clay figurine of Gaṇeśa was found.

"Outside the moat on the western side a site probably of a Siva Devale was excavated. Some stone pillars, one with an

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14. H.C.P. Bell, ASCAR, Colombo, 1904, pp. 10 - 11.



inscription, are *in situ*. The pedestal of a *lingam* in fragments was found at this site. On the eastern side, also outside the moat, a Siva-Devale, which had been noted earlier was excavated. Here a crystal reliquary shaped like a dagoba was found. The dagoba features above the dome, of this reliquary were missing. This excavation showed that sculptured stones belonging to a building within the citadel were used in the structures here. Of these particular mention has to be made of an elaborately carved pillar which now stands at the entrance of the structure and a stone window sculptured with lotus motif in chequer pattern."<sup>15</sup>

Conservation work of the Siva Devale (No. I) was undertaken in 1965. "The ancient brickwork was retained as far as possible without dismantling and resetting. The stones of this structure were numbered and dismantled, except where they were embedded in the brickwork, after which a strong cement foundation was set up. A notable find here was a brick containing the representation of a four-armed deity." <sup>16</sup>

The Siva Devale No. I had as its main components the sanctum, the vestibule and a *maṇṭapam* all of which were raised on a common platform which consisted of two sections, the *upapīṭham* and the *adhiṣṭhānam*.

It was surrounded by an enclosure wall which measured 166 ft. from east to west and 100 ft. from south to north. It had two gateways, one in the east, and the other in the west. The entrance on the east was fronted by a porch.<sup>17</sup>

15. *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Ceylon Administration Reports*, 1961 - 62 [Part IV - Education, Science and Art] p.G. 67.

16. *Administration Report of the Archaeological Commission* for the financial year 1965- 66, (136 pages) C.E. Godakumbura, Colombo, 1968, p. G. 78.

17. *Administration Report of the Archaeological Commissioner* for the financial year 1968 - 69 ( 90 pages), R.H. de Silva, Colombo, 1980, p. G. 69.

A bronze image of Pārvati, in the *sthānaka* pose, was found at the site of this Devale during excavations conducted in 1968. The image, which is supported on a louts pedestal, is in a very good state of preservation and has a height of 26.3 in. the pedestal has a circumference of 27.5 in.<sup>18</sup> The figure is two-armed and thrice bent. The right hand, which is raised upwards holds an object resembling a floral bud while the left arms hangs down. The crown on the head is of the class of *karaṇḍamakūṭam*. The facial expression is stiff and in the quality of workmanship this particular bronze does not measure up to those from Polonnaruva.

### *Siva Devale No. 3*

That Śiva Devale No. 3 at Padaviya was called Valakaḷi is evident from a 12th century inscription found among its architectural remains. The text of this inscription runs:

Svasti Sri. Uttamar taṅkōyil valakaḷi enalum  
nitta niyamam neṇivaḷar  
citamuṭan cīṇḷamai cērnta patiyil  
viḷai - ārampa pēṇḷamaiyār taṅkaḷ pēr  
nāvāyirah koṇturaippar tiru  
tikkantamāka muyanṇān muyanṇa tiru.<sup>19</sup>

"Valakaḷi is the temple of *uttamar* (Śiva). The wealth acquired  
18. *ibid*, p. 82

19. This inscription was deciphered, translated, edited and published by A. Velupillai in 1972. The text given here, in certain places, differs from the text published by him. The expressions found on lines 11 - 16 of the inscribed slab have been deciphered as follows by him: *pēṇḷamaiyārt tukaḷ pōt-āv-āyirah-koṇ-uraippar tiru cūttam-āka myanṇān muyanṇa tiru*.

The expressions *taṅkaḷ pēr nāvāyiram* and *tikkantamāka* have been erroneously constructed by him. The errors in decipherment have resulted in a misunderstanding of the text as is evident from his translation of it. It runs: "Hail prosperity. As soon as one says Valakaḷi, the temple of the Supreme Spirit, (he attains) the wealth of one who with daily religious austerities and with his thought directed to salvation, chants (the name of God) with the offering of thousand flowers at the dust (of the feet) of the Ever Young One who was the beginning of the origin (of everything) in Padaviya which is young and prosperous. (That wealth is equivalent to) the wealth of the accumulator who accumulated justly." *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions* pt. 2, p. 29.

by those who pronounce, a thousand times, the name of Pēriḷamaiyār flourishing at Pati, which abounds in prosperity on account of the regular performance of religious rites, is equivalent to the wealth obtained by one after reaching the extremities of all directions".

The text of this inscription is in the form of a panegyric, *praśasti*, briefly extolling the Pēriḷamaiyār. They are described as residents of Pati, and also as a group of people worthy of praise. As the text of the inscription commences with a reference to Valakaḷi, which is described as a *kōyil* of Uttamar it may be assumed that Valakaḷi was applied as the name of a shrine. As *uttamar* was one of the epithets of Siva, and because of the consideration that the inscription concerned was found at Śiva Devale No. 3 it is clear that this temple was called Valakaḷi, at least around the time this inscription was engraved. The setting up of this inscription presupposes that the Pēriḷamaiyār had a close connection with Valakaḷi. They were probably its founders and benefactors.

The Pēriḷamaiyār are obviously compared with a mercantile community of long distance traders, as it is specifically claimed that the fortunes that one could obtain by praising them a thousand times is equal in measure to the wealth that could be acquired through ventures undertaken up to the extremities of (all) directions. This poetic description seems to convey the notion that the Pēriḷamaiyār were superior to the long distance traders in prosperity and in acts of philanthropy. It may be assumed that the Pēriḷamaiyār, who were prosperous and were engaged in supporting religious and cultural activities in the town of Padaviya, were competing with the Aiññūṟṟuvar for positions of honour and influence.

The Pēriḷamaiyār, however, were not an important or large community in society. There are no references to their settlements in any other historical site in Sri Lanka. The references to them in Indian inscriptions are confined to records of the reign of Rājarāja I (985 - 1016) from Uttaramēṟūr and Māmallapuram. In the inscriptions from Uttaramēṟūr the Pēriḷamaiyār are referred to in connection with the maintenance of lamps.



An inscription of the 21st year of Rājarāja I records the donation of a lamp, by a resident of Nārayaṇac-cēri, to Veḷḷaimūrtti - āḷvar of Sri Veḷi-Viṣṇu *grha*, which had to be maintained by the Pēriḷamaiyār.<sup>20</sup> A Brahmin lady of Vāmanac-cēri donated a lamp to this shrine in the 22nd year of the same reign, and the Pēriḷamaiyār were made responsible to the *sabhā* for its maintenance.<sup>21</sup> In the 23rd year of the same king a person called Udayan Ādittan of Taṇṇirmuṭṭam in Malai-nāṭu made a donation of 96 sheep for burning a lamp at this shrine and the Pēriḷamaiyār of the place (*ivvūr*) accepted responsibility for the endowment.<sup>22</sup>

An inscription of the 25th year of Rājarāja from Māmallapuram records an order relating to the division of land and some privileges among the *nakaram* and the Pēriḷamaiyār, which was issued while Putukkuṭiyān Ekātiran Aimpatinman, who was settling (the affairs of) Āmūr kōṭṭam, was present in the *nantāvanam* (flower-garden) to the south of the temple of Jalasayana-deva of *nakaram* Māmallapuram.<sup>23</sup>

The precise social status and vocation of the Pēriḷamaiyār cannot be ascertained on the basis of information from the Uttaramēṇūr inscriptions. Generally, those who undertook to maintain lamps at temple premises belonged to the communities of stock breeders (*manrāṭi*), agriculturists and merchants. The maintenance of lamps involved a regular supply of oil or ghee and it was primarily on account of that reason that the Caṅkarapāṭiyar, who were dealers in oils, and the *kōṇār* or shepherds were usually assigned the task of maintaining lamps gifted by pious donors.

The evidence from the inscription from Māmallapuram suggests that the Pēriḷamaiyār enjoyed a position of high status in society and

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20. *The Colas*, Vol. 2, pt. 2, K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, University of Madras, 1939, p. 508

21. *ibid.*

22. *ibid.* p. 511

23. *ibid.*



were entitled to certain privileges akin to those of the *nakaram*. On the correlated testimony of the inscriptions from Uttaramērūr and Māmallapuram it may be assumed that the Pērilamaiyār were a group of people who had become merchants.<sup>24</sup> They were probably dealers in oils like the Caṅkarapātiyar. The impression that they were a class of merchants of high status seems to be confirmed by the fact that they were conceded the privilege of using a *prasasti* as suggested by one of the inscriptions from Padaviya.

### *The Bronze Seal of the Temple*

An item of utmost importance is the bronze seal from Padaviya, bearing a Sanskrit inscription in Grantha characters of the 12th and 13th centuries.<sup>25</sup> The figure of a recumbent bull, *nandhi*, seated on a well designed pedestal is depicted on this seal. The bull faces right and is flanked on either side by figures of lamps. Behind its head and on line with the horns appears the crescent. A canopy is designed above the bull and on either side of it is found the figure of a fly-whisk. All these figures are encircled by the text of an inscription engraved on the edge of the circular seal.

The inscription reads: *svasti. Srimat dvijā vāsa sripati grāma vāsinah mahesasyai tadindrādi mauli rājita sāsanam,*

"This inscription issued by Mahēsa who has his abode at Sripati grāma inhabited by the twice-born, and whose feet are adorned by the diadems of Indra and others."

Obviously, the seal was issued by a temple dedicated for the worship of Śiva, at a settlement of Brahmins within the city of Padaviya. The seal used by the temple concerned presupposes that it had arrangements on a formal basis for conducting its affairs. The seal is unique as it is the only one of its kind found in Sri Lanka.

24. Prof. Y. Subbarayalu of the Department of Epigraphy, Tamil University, Tanjavūr, is of the opinion that the *pērilamaiyār* were a community of agriculturists in medieval South India. It is probable that some of them migrated to Sri Lanka and settled at Padaviya in the 10th and 11th centuries. It is also not unlikely that the *pērilamaiyār*, who were originally agriculturists, became merchants in certain contexts.

25. Ceylon Observer, Nov. 28, 1970, p. 2.

# Vijayarāja-Īśvaram

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S. Pathmanathan

## *Archaeological remains at Kantalāy*

The Śaiva temple called Vijayarāja Īśvaram was one of the principal religious institutions at Kantalāy, which had become a centre of Hindu influence in medieval times.<sup>1</sup> It was found within the limits of the *brahmadeya* called Vijayarāja Caturvedimaṅkalam.<sup>2</sup> Both the temple and the *brahmadeya*, which had their origins in the earlier period, were named after Vijayabāhu I during his reign.<sup>3</sup> The two institutions seem to have interacted closely and it would seem that they enjoyed some measure of royal patronage during the 11th and 12th centuries.

During the peak period of its prosperity Kantalāy had a multifaceted development. It became a focal point of Hindu religious and cultural activity. On certain occasions it served as a military outpost of those who exercised authority over the north-central plain, and for a

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1. In relation to Kantalāy S. Paranavithana says: "probably Kantalāy became a centre of Hindu influence during the period of Cōla rule in the eleventh century; and the Sinhalese kings who succeeded the Cōlas maintained the Brahmins and patronized their shrines... The place kept its character as a seat of Brahmins for at least a century longer, for we read in an inscription of Nissāṅkamalla found there that it was then named Caturveda Brahmapura and that an alms-hall called Pārvaṭī-satra was maintained there by that monarch." S Paranavithana, "A Tamil Slab-Inscription from Palamottai", *Epigraphia Zeylanica (EZ)* 4, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1943, pp. 191 - 196.
  2. This is evident from the following description as found in the epigraph: *kantalāyāna vijayarāja - caturvedi - maṅkalatu tenkailācam sri - vijayarāja - īśvaram - utaiyarkku*, "To the God of Sri Vijayarāja - īśvaram otherwise called Tenkailācam of Kantalāy otherwise called Sri Vijayarāja-caturvedi - maṅkalam." *ibid.*, p. 194.
  3. During the period of Cōla rule the *brahmadeya* was called Rājārāja caturvedimaṅkalam: Archaeological evidence suggests that there was a temple of Śiva at Kantalāy during that period.

brief period the ruler of Polonnaruva had established his residence in that town. Agricultural prosperity in the surrounding plains had provided the impetus for the development of Kantalāy as a town of some significance. Irrigation facilities made available by means of the canals of the reservoir were the mainstay of economic prosperity.

Archaeological remains of Hindu temples attached to the brahmadeya have been found at some sites in and around Kantalāy. Some remains of a medieval Śaiva temple and other buildings were found at the centre of a field at the Pērāru Colony at Kantalāy.<sup>4</sup> Among the objects of archaeological and antiquarian interest found at this site were two headless images of Hindu deities, a Sivalinga and an *āvūtaiyār*, which were collected from the debris of a ruined building and subsequently lodged in a shed. Recently, a temple of Śiva has been constructed partly as a measure of resurrection of the ancient temple and partly for the purpose of catering to the religious requirements of the small population of Śaivites residing at the locality. The most sensational archaeological find at this site was the inscription dated in the tenth year of a prince called Cōla Ilankēśvara tēvar. Another epigraphical record of considerable importance is the Tamil Slab Inscription from Palamōttai which was discovered in 1933.<sup>5</sup> It is said to have been found among the ruins of a Śaiva temple at a place called Palamōttai near Kantalāy in the Trincomalee District of the Eastern Province. Commenting on this locality Paranavitana says: "The site is now overgrown with jungle and the remains of the temple are buried in an accumulation of debris. The shrine seems to have been mainly of brick construction, stone being used only for the basement and pillars. The architectural style of this ruined temple enables us to assign it to the Polonnaruva period—a conclusion which is confirmed by what we learn from the inscription. Among the ruins is to be seen the upper

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4. S. Gunasingham, Two Inscriptions of Cōla Ilankēśvara Deva, Trincomalee Inscriptions Series No. 1, Peradeniya, 1974, pp. 26.

5. S. Paranavitana, "A Tamil Slab-Inscription...", *EZ* 4, pp. 191 - 196.



half of a mutilated stone image of Pārvati."<sup>6</sup> The antiquarian remains noticed by S. Paranavitana in 1933 were probably those of the Śaiva temple referred to in the Tamil Slab Inscription from Palamottai, which was deciphered, translated and edited by him. The tenor of his description suggests that the temple was architecturally one of modest proportions. A pillar inscription set up during the time of Gajabāhu II (1132-1153) and the Kantalai Gal Āsana Inscription of Niśśāṅkamalla (1187-1196) are two other inscriptions which record some information about the *brahmadeya* of Kantalāy.

The long Tamil inscription on a stone-seat at Kantalāy was found to be badly damaged when it was discovered and it is impossible to retrieve the text of this most important inscription which was set up to record the grant of some lands and cattle by a ruler for conducting regular worship at a shrine. Commenting on the state of the inscription A. Velupillai makes the following observations:<sup>7</sup>

"Not much could be made of this long record in spite of the attempt to make out words as far as possible. The following words may give some clue about the purpose of the record: - *ney*, 'ghee', *viḷakku*, 'lamp', *pāḱku*, 'arecanut', .. *puncey* "dry lands", *irai*, 'tax', *nivantam* "endowment", *nanṭā*[*viḷakku*], 'perpetual[lamp] and *pacu* 'cows'.

"Line 2 seems to be mentioning elephants, horses and chariots. Most probably, these had something to do with the King. Most probably a ruler made an endowment and had it engraved on this stone... The word *ippati*, "thus" occurs in a number of lines, such as 51, 55 and 56. Some other words that can be clearly made out are *pākam*, 'portion', *āram* 'garland', *puram*, 'city', *viṛṇu*, 'having sold'..<sup>8</sup>

6. *ibid.* pp. 191 - 192

7. A. Velupillai, *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, pt - 2, Peradeniya, 1972. pp. 39 - 41.

8. *ibid.* p. 41.



The few words and expressions that have been recognized by A. Velupillai seem to suggest that a ruler had visited Kantalāy with his entourage and, while sojourning there, had made a grant for burning perpetual lamps and for providing a regular supply of certain items required for rituals. The grant seems to have consisted of some income due to the ruler from lands and levies on the sale of commodities. Here we have a clear indication of royal support and patronage extended to a Hindu institution but regrettably the details about such benevolence cannot be ascertained as the epigraph is in an advanced state of damage. The identity of the ruler could also be a matter of speculation. As the record could be assigned to the 12th century on palaeographical considerations the probability is that it was set up under Gajabāhu II or Niśśaṅkamalla who are known from other sources to have visited Kantalāy and stayed over there for brief periods.

### *The brahmadeyam of Kantalāy*

The earliest reference to the *brahmadeya* at Kantalāy is to be found in the Kantalāy Inscription dated in the 10th year of Cōla Ilāṅkēśvaran. The inscribed slab which is presently found in the midst of a field and among the remains of a medieval Śaiva temple at the Peṛāṇu Colony, Kantalāy, as noted earlier, has been found to be broken into two fragments. The first of these containing ten lines of writing is 1'11½" in length and 1' 11" inches in width. On account of its bad state of preservation and the damages caused by exposure to rains and wind only a few expressions in the second fragment could be deciphered.<sup>9</sup> It is, however, significant that there are in this portion references to canals, irrigation channels and fields. There is a reference to two canals: *vācutēva(vāykkāl)* and *vikkiramacōla vāykkāl*. Besides, irrigation channels called *iraṇṭān kaṇṇāru* 'the second channel', and *mūṇṇān kaṇṇāru*, 'the third channel' are referred to. Some strips of

9. ka. Intirapālā, "kantalāyir kaṇṭupitikkappaṭṭuḷḷa cōla ilāṅkēśvaran kālattuk kalveṭṭu". Pāvālar turaiyappāṭṭṭai nūṇṇāṇu ninaivu malar, viḷākkuluccapai, makājanak kallūri, tellippalai. 1974. pakuṭi 2, pp. 1 - 9.

fields are also mentioned and there is a clear reference to a 'third square plot', *mūnṛāṇ caturam* and some wet lands, *nirnilam*.<sup>10</sup>

The initial portion of the inscription which is in a fairly good state of preservation runs:

*Svasti Śrī. Kō cāṅkavarmarāṇa ūtaiyār śrī cōla ilāṅkeśvara  
dēvarku yāṇṭu pattāvatu rājendra cōlavaḷa nāṭṭu rājaviccātira  
vaḷanāṭṭu brahmadeśam śrī rājarāja caturvvedi maṅkalattup  
peruṅkuripperumakkaḷōm iyyāṭṭaik kumpa nāyarrup-pūrva  
paksattu dvādasiyūm cevvaṅkilamaiyūm perra āyiliyattu  
nāḷanṛiravu nammūr taṇṭukinra Muttāṅkai kōyil māni .....<sup>11</sup>*

"Hail Prosperity. The tenth year of His Majesty the illustrious king Cōla-Ilāṅkeśvara tēvar otherwise called Cāṅkavarmar. We, the *perumakkaḷ*, of the assembly (*peruṅkuri*) of Śrī Rājarāja caturvedimaṅkalam, the *brahmadeyam* of Rājaviccātira vaḷanātu otherwise called Rājendra Cōla vaḷanātu, (having met) in the night of Tuesday, which was the twelfth day in the first fortnight of the month of February - March (*kumbha*), when the *naksatra* Āyiliyam was on the ascendant, ... the young *brāhmaṇa* attached to the temple of Kālī, who collects the taxes in our village..."

This inscription specifically mentions the name of the *brahmadeya*, the name of the territorial division to which it was attached and the name or epithets of the ruler during whose period of authority it was set up. The *brahmadeya* is called Rājarāja Caturvedimaṅkalam and obviously it was named after the Cōla King Rājarāja. The

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10. S. Pathmanathan, "The Slab Inscription of the Virakkoti at Budumuttava. Nikaweratiya: Urbanization at Magala", SLJH 10, Nos. 1 & 2, University of Peradeniya, 1994 (published in 1995), pp. 15 - 30.

11. S. Paranavitana, "Two Tamil Pillar Inscriptions From Budumuttava", EZ 3, p. 311.

*brahmadeya* is said to have belonged to the territorial division which had two alternate names: Rājendra Cōla Valanātu and Rājaviccātira valanātu. Cōla Ilankēśvara tēvar in whose tenth regnal year the inscription was indited was the Cōla prince who was consecrated as "the king of Lanka" in the reign of the Cōla King Rājendra I (1014 - 1044), who claimed to have effected the conquest of the whole Island.<sup>12</sup> The expression Cōla Ilankēśvaran, which is analogous to Cōla Pāṇṭiyan, was a title which had the connotation that the one on whom it was conferred belonged to the Cōla dynasty by descent and in rank was reckoned as the 'king of Lanka'.<sup>13</sup> It may be assumed on the basis of the evidence from this particular inscription and the Mānānkēṇi inscription dated in his regnal year that Cōla Ilankēśvaran was residing in the island for some time and exercising royal power and authority as a deputy of the Cōla Emperor, Rājendra I.

The inscription recorded in the tenth year of this ruler was not set up on the orders of the King. As the executive committee of the assembly of the *brahmadeya*, the *peruṅkurip perumakkal* are referred to collectively in the first person plural, it may be assumed that it was set up on the initiative of that committee. It seems to record some arrangements made by the assembly in respect of a young Brahmin employed as the collector of the dues from the settlement and some fields which were fed by some irrigation channels. The precise nature of the arrangements made in relation to them cannot be ascertained on account of the mutilated character of the text.

The information found in the inscription provides some indication of the character of the *brahmadeya*. Like similar institutions

12. *ibid.*, pp. 8 - 18

13. One of the sons of Rājendra Cōla, Cuntara Cōlan, was consecrated as king of the Pāṇḍya kingdom and conferred the title Cōla - Pāṇṭiyan. He resided at a palace specially constructed for him and exercised royal power. Inscriptions dated until his 26th regnal year have been found in the districts of Maturai, Tirunelveli and Irāmanātipuram. A succession of Cōla princes styled Cōla-Pāṇṭiyan exercised delegated authority over the southern Tamil kingdom until the reign of Kulōttunka Cōlan (1070-1122).



in contemporary South India the *brahmadeya* at Kantalāy had developed into a self-governing institution with arrangements for local administration. It had probably exercised some supervision over the cultivation of lands, the supply of irrigation facilities and the collection of local revenues. By the time the inscription was set up the institution was established on a durable basis, and it may be assumed that an influx of a fresh stream of Brahmins into the locality after the Cōla conquest had provided it with a further infusion of strength. As *brahmadeyas* were dominated by Brahmins most of whom were specialists in Vedic learning and rituals they supported Hindu religious and cultural institutions. There was a temple dedicated to the mother Goddess as suggested by the reference to *muttaṅkaik kōyil*. The existence of a Śaiva temple within the Brahmin settlement at Kantalāy is suggested by the consideration that the epigraph recording the decision of the assembly of the Caturvedimankalam has been found among the architectural remains of a medieval Śaiva temple. It may be suggested that the meetings of the assembly were conducted at the hall of the Śaiva temple.

Kantalāy is described as Vijayarāja caturvēdimankalam in the Tamil Inscription from Paḷamōṭṭai, dated in the 42nd year (A.D. 1097) of Vijayabāhu I. As there could not have been two separate *brahmadeyas* at the same locality, it may be assumed that the name of this institution was changed after the accession of Vijayabāhu. It was renamed after him just as Polonnaruva was called Vijayarājapuram in the same manner. Even in Tamil inscriptions set up in Polonnaruva, in the period subsequent to his coronation, the name Jananāta maṅkalam, which was applied to that city earlier under the Cōlas, was dropped and the name Vijayarājapuram was recorded.<sup>14</sup>

Some information pertaining to the *brahmadeya* is recorded in an inscription set up during the time of Gajabāhu II. It is said therein

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14. The Goddess Kālī is referred to as *muttaṅkaik* in inscriptions.



that a boundary stone was planted by Gajabāhu tēvar at Itaiyarkallu, a locality in Kanṭalāy pirammaṭēyam, after an elephant had walked over it, to define the limits of the village.<sup>15</sup> The locality of Itaiyarkallu is otherwise unknown and an etymological explanation of the name may suggest that it was a hamlet occupied by stock breeders.

Under Gajabāhu II Kanṭalāy had developed as an area of strategic importance. In the wars between Gajabāhu and his cousin Parākramaḃāhu it became a target of attack for the armies of Parākramaḃāhu. In this connection the *cūlavamsa* records:

"To the Senāpati Deva shut up in Pulatthinagara, the monarch then sent his house breakers, fetched him thither, gave him a great army, like the army of the gods, and sent him, aware of the right method to Gangataṭāka.<sup>16</sup>

Towards the end of his career as ruler Gajabāhu II had moved out of Polonnaruva and lived at Kantaṭāy. He is said to have died of disease at his residence in that town.<sup>17</sup>

The monarch Niśśankamalla, one of the successors of Parākramaḃāhu I, had visited Kantaṭāy during his reign. The Kantalai Gal-Asana Inscription engraved during his reign refers to the *brahmadeya* as Caturveda-Brahmapura and records some of his

15. The expressions *pulanariyāna jananaṭamaṅkalam*, "Pulanari otherwise called Jananaṭamaṅkalam" are found in some of the Cōḷa inscriptions from Polonnaruva. In Tamil epigraphy these were replaced with the description, *pulanariyāna vijayārajapuram*, "Pulanari otherwise called Vijayarājapuram after the accession of Vijayabāhu to the throne in A.D. 1070.

16. The text of the inscription runs: *svasti sriṅ lankēśvaran gajabāhu tēvar kantaṭāy brahmadeyam piṭi naṭanta bhuṁi itaiyar kallil ūr tikku nāṭṭina kal.* A. Velupillai, *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions* pt. 2, p. 37.

17. *Cūlavamsa* (Cv) Vol. 2 ed. Wilhelm Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1927, 70: 285 - 6.

activities there. He is said therein to have witnessed the almsgiving at the institution called Pārvaṭi Sātra and the performance of arts such as dancing and singing.<sup>18</sup> The inscription concerned is significant as providing a clear indication of the close and harmonious interaction between the monarch and the *brahmadeya* and the custodial function that the king had exercised in relation to Hinduism and Hindu culture. The king's visit to Kantalāy was probably in connection with a festival conducted at one of the principal shrines attached to the *brahmadeya*, and as a special event to mark the occasion he had arranged for the distribution of alms. The alms hall called Pārvaṭi Sātra was probably constructed at the behest of the king. It may also be noted here that Pārvaṭi was the name of his mother as well as that of Umā, the consort of Śiva. The reference to the Kantalāy tank in two of his inscriptions is also noteworthy. It is claimed that he gave security to all animals in Rantiśa, Miṇihoru, Gangataḥa and Padi.<sup>19</sup>

### *The Temple of Tenkailācam*

In the reign of Vijayabāhu I, the temple of Śiva at Kantalāy had two names: Tenkailācam and Vijayaṛāja-īśvaram.<sup>20</sup> The first of these names presupposes some connection with Kōṇeśvaram, which

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18. Cv, 83: 16

19. The editor of this inscription, D.M. De. Z. Wickremasinghe says: "... the stone seat on which the present epitaph is engraved, was the one that His Majesty Kīrti Niśśāṅkamalla, after his return from the Indian campaign, used to occupy whilst witnessing the various diversions such as alms-giving, dancing, singing, on the Pārvaṭi-sātra erected at this King's request in Caturveda-Brahmapura, 'the city of the Four-Vedic Brahmins ... If Kantalai is the original site of the present gal-asana, then this locality must have been once the town called Caturveda-Brahmapura, probably occupied mostly by Brahmin families for whose benefit an almshouse called Brāhmaṇa-sātra was also established by this King Niśśāṅkamalla." D.M. De. Z. Wickremasinghe, "Kantalai Gal-Asana Inscription", EZ 2, p. 284. \

20. D.M.De Z. Wickremasinghe, "Polonnaruwa: Rankot Dagaba Pillar- Inscription", EZ 2, pp. 137 - 142; "Polonnaruwa: Stone Bath Inscription". EZ 2, pp. 143 - 145. *Vijayaṛāja - caturvedī - maṅkalattu ten kailācam vijayaṛāja - īśvaram*, "Ten Kailācam (otherwise called) Vijayaṛāja-īśvaram of Kantalāy".

had as one its names Tenkailācam (Dakṣiṇa kailācam) and the second name provides an indication of the fact that the temple was renamed after Vijayabāhu during his reign. It would appear that Tenkailacām was the earlier and original name of this temple. The fact that the temple was conferred the name Tenkailācam may probably suggest that its founders were the adherents of the Pāśupata sect of Śaivism. According to a persistent tradition the Pāśupatas had close connexions with Kōṇēśvaram on the eastern coast of the island. It may therefore be assumed that the temple of Ten Kailācam at Kantalāy was established by persons who had a deep veneration for the temple of Ten Kailācam at Kōkarṇam and were closely associated with it.

The Slab-Inscription from Palamōttai records the details pertaining to a donation made to the temple by a Brahmin widow, Naṅkai Cāni, for the merit of her husband, Yajñīya Kramavittan, a resident of the *brahmadeya* of Kantalāy. Her donation to the temple consisted of the following items: a crown of six *kaḷaṇcu* of gold; a necklace of three *kaḷaṇcu* of gold; one *kācu* for maintaining a flower garden; one *kācu* granted for the purpose of making up any loss to this gold; a further amount of two *kācu* to make up for losses in gold; twenty-three *kācu* for maintaining, on the compound interest from this amount seven women as dancers attached to the temple (*tēvaraṭiyār*) after having placed brand marks on their fore-heads. In all an amount of 35 *kācu* and *akāḷaṇcu* of gold were deposited.<sup>21</sup> The responsibility of administering the endowment was vested with a company of soldiers called *vikkirama calamekat terinta valankai vēḷaikkāra(r)*.<sup>22</sup>

A close scrutiny of the inscription reveals that the temple of Ten Kailācam was intrinsically an institution that was integrated to the Brahmadeya. Yajñīya Kramavittan for the merit of whom the endowment was made and his spouse Naṅkai Cāni were *Śiva brāhmaṇas* who belonged to the *brahmadeya*. It would appear that the rituals and religious services conducted at this temple conformed

21. S. Parānavitana, "The Tamil Slab Inscription From Palamottai", *EZ* 2, p. 194.

22. *ibid.* pp. 194 - 195



to the norms practised by the Śaivas in contemporary South India where the temple had developed as the focal point of Śaiva religious and cultural expression. The rituals in the inner sanctum were conducted by Śiva brāhmaṇas who were specialists in Vedic lore and the āgamic tradition. A vast majority of the adherents of Śaivism around this time were inspired by the traditions of the *bhakti* school. Worship was accompanied with singing and dancing during specific periods of time and this was done by the *tēvaratīyār*. It is significant that the endowment made by Nāṅkai Cāni had provision for all important aspects of ritual and worship at the temple concerned.

The presence of a company of soldiers of the category of Vēlaikkārar at Kantaḷāy is attested by the Slab-Inscription from Palamōṭṭai. The administration of the endowment made by Nāṅkai Cāni became the responsibility of the Vēlaikkārar. The relevant portion of the inscription runs:

*"ippaṭi ceyyappaṭṭa iddharmam aḷivu vārāmaḷ nilai  
niruttuvārāka sṛī vikkirama ṣalāmēkat terinta valāṅkai  
vēlaikkāran enṛu tirunāmaṇi cattiyaṭu".*<sup>23</sup>

"The 'sacred' Vikkirama Calāmēkat terinta Valāṅkai Vēlaikkārar have been named as the custodians of this endowment so that they could secure its maintenance and prevent any loss".

The endowment was expected to be a perpetual one and the custodianship of such an endowment suggests that the Vēlaikkārar were established in the vicinity of the temple on a permanent basis.

The gold and money seems to have been deposited with the Vēlaikkārar who accepted responsibility for administering the endowment. It may be inferred that they were Śaiva devotees who regularly visited the temple and participated in its activities. The tone and character of the description in the text seems to suggest a more

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23. *ibid.* p. 195

24. *ibid.* p. 195



intimate connection between the temple and the Vēḷaikkārar than what has been recognized by those who have hitherto commented on the text. It would seem that they were closely associated with the management of the temple.

On the basis of the name of this company of soldiers, Vikkīrama Cālāmēkat terinta Valāṅkai Vēḷaikkāran, S. Paranavitana imagined that it was named after Vikramabāhu, the son of Vijayabāhu I. He says:

"... If the record was dated in a regnal year of Jayabāhu then Vikramabāhu was the actual ruler of the northern part of the island when this inscription was indited. And it would be perfectly natural for a regiment to be named after him, *as it is in this record, and for his personal name to have the throne name appended to it.*"<sup>24</sup>

It is clear from his observations that Paranavitana believed that the regiment of Vēḷaikkārar was named after Vikramabāhu. The basis for such a belief is the consideration that the expression. *vikkīrama cālāmēkan* was a component part of the name of the regiment. The expression *vikkīrama cālāmēkan* is in fact a combination of two words, *vikkīrama* (*vikrama*) meaning "prowess" and *cālāmēkan*, which is the Tamil form of the Pāli word *Silāmegha*, "the cloud on the mountains". Aba Salamevan which is formed by prefixing Aba to Salamevan, which is the Sinhalese form of the Pali word *Silāmegha* was applied as one of the two alternate consecration names of the kings of Lankā. It has to be emphasized here that consistently, in all epigraphic documents, the consecration name is prefixed to the personal name of the ruler. We are yet to see an epigraph which has the arrangement of these expressions in the reverse order. Moreover, the word Salamevan by itself does not have the significance of a consecration name. Another important consideration is that a consecration name is never formed by combining a part of the personal name of a ruler with a component part of the

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24. *ibid.*, p. 195

consecration name that could be conferred on him. The belief that *Vikrama Salamevan* was a consecration name, however, presupposes that such a combination was a normal or a possible one. Paranavitana and all other historians who followed him were obsessed with the untenable notion that the two words *Vikrama* and *Salamevan* were the equivalents respectively of the personal name. Vikramabahu and the consecration name Aba Salamevan. As shown elsewhere *Vikrama Salamevan*, which was analogous to *Vira Salamevan* and *Rājavēsihujāṅga Sīlamegha*, was a royal epithet. As it is mentioned in an inscription dated in the 42nd year of *Vijayabāhu I* it may be assumed that it had belonged to him or one of his predecessors. So, the regiment of the *Veḷaikkār* had no connection whatsoever with *Vikramabāhu* but the fact that the royal epithet *Vikkirama Calāmēkan* was prefixed to their corporate name presupposes that they had once served under a ruler who had *Vikrama Salamevan* as one of his epithets, and this ruler could have been either *Vijayabāhu* or one of his predecessors.<sup>25</sup> It is not possible now to ascertain whether this particular regiment of *Veḷaikkār* were engaged in royal service when the inscription was engraved or whether they were employed by the governing body of the *brahmadeya* as mercenaries for the protection of temples and other public institutions and the wealth of such institutions. It is also probable that the *brahmadeya* had entered into a contractual relationship with a regiment serving the king and posted at a military outpost at *Kantalāy* for some specific purposes. It may be recalled here that the *Veḷaikkāra* mercenaries of a *nakaram* in *Polonnaruwa* were appointed as the custodians of the temple of the Tooth relic and its properties by the hierarch of the *Uturulmulai* fraternity of monks and some ministers of state.<sup>26</sup>

From the text of the inscription it is not clear by whom the inscription was set up. All the parties mentioned therein are referred to in the third person. Obviously, it was not set up at the behest of the

25. *ibid.* p. 193

26. As for instance in the following descriptions of *Vijayabahu* and *Jayabahu*: (1) *ciri caṅkapōṭivarmarāṇa uaiyār Sri Vijayabāhu devār* (EZ 2, p. 194); *apaiya calāmēka pannarāṇa cakkatavartitikaḷ Sri Jayabāhu tēvar* (K. Kanapathypillai, 'Mankanai Inscription of Gajabahu II, University of Ceylon Review. 22, No. 1, 1962, p. 13)

king; nor was it done on the initiative of Nankai Caṇi or the Vēlaikkārar. On the basis of ascertained knowledge pertaining to *brahmadeyas* and numerous temples it may be assumed that it was the work of the temple administration or a committee of the *brahmadeya* which exercised some designated functions in respect of temple administration.

Finally it remains to consider Paranavitana's observations on the connections that Vijayabāhu had with the temple concerned. He says:

"The Śaiva shrine at Kantalāy, since it was called Vijayarāja īśvaram, must have been founded by Vijayabāhu I, or at least under his patronage. The chronicles, and the inscriptions of Vijayabāhu so far brought to light, represent that monarch as a great patron of Buddhism, who exerted all his power to raise that religion from the degraded position to which it had sunk during the period of Cola dominance. But his zeal for Buddhism did not, as shown by this record, prevent him from extending his patronage to such other faiths as were prevalent among his subjects."<sup>27</sup>

In this connection it may be observed that there is no empirical evidence to support the claims made by Paranavitana. The temple of Ten Kailācam, as seen earlier, had been established before the accession of Vijayabāhu. What appears to have happened is the renaming of the institution during his reign. There are numerous instances of temples and other institutions being renamed and often, in such instances, they were named after the names of reigning kings.<sup>28</sup> There is also no record of any donations made by Vijayabāhu I to this temple. Yet, the existence of a harmonious relationship between the monarch and the *brahmadeya* cannot be precluded.

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27. S. Pathmanathan, "Vikramabāhu and Vikrama Salamevan", *SLIH*, Vol. 9, Nos. 1 & 2 1993 (published in 1995) pp. 93 - 111.

28. S. Pathmanathan, "The Nagaram of the Nānādesis in Sri Lanka Circa A. D. 1000 - 1250" *SLIH*, Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2, 1984 (published in 1987) pp. 122 - 163.



# Vikkirama Calamēka - Īśvaram of Mākal

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S. Pathmanathan.

## *Archaeological remains of a Śaiva temple at the Rajamahā Vihāra*

The archaeological remains of a medieval Śaiva temple were among the building materials used for the construction of the Rajamahā-vihāra, a Buddhist monastic institution established at Budumuttāva, a small town on the Puttalam road in the Kurunāgala District of the North Western Province, during the period of the Nayakkar rulers of Kandy. Among these remains four stones bearing Tamil inscriptions and two stone figures of the Śivalinga are easily identified as items which had been brought to their present location from the premises of a Hindu temple in ruins during the period of the Kandyan Kings.

The inscriptions are recorded in Tamil and indited in characters of the 12th century. Three of these records were noticed by E. Muller who refers to them in his *Ancient Inscriptions of Ceylon*.<sup>1</sup> He could not, however, ascertain their contents. Later, in his list of Tamil Inscriptions appended to the *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon* for 1911 - 12, H.C.P. Bell has given brief notes about them.<sup>2</sup>

These inscriptions were recopied by S. Paranavitana in 1929 and his preliminary observations on them were recorded in the

1. E. Muller, *Ancient Inscriptions in Ceylon*, London, 1883, p. 60.
2. Though H.C.P. Bell found the inscription to be "much damaged" he could recognize the words *lākamāta* and *vīramākāḷam*, which were in his opinion, names of a goddess. H.C.P. Bell, *Archaeological Survey of Ceylon, Annual Report 1911 - 1912*, Colombo, 1915, p. 115.



Epigraphical Summary of the *Ceylon Journal of Science* (G).<sup>3</sup> Two of these inscriptions on pillars supporting the superstructure of the hall of the shrine were successfully deciphered, edited and published by him subsequently.<sup>4</sup> They are dated in the eighth regnal year of Jayabāhu, the successor of Vijayabāhu I. (1155-1110) on the throne of Polonnaruva and contain references to Mānābharana I, his nephew and heir apparent. One of these inscriptions records the donations made by Cuntamalli, a Cola prince and consort of Mānābharana, to a Śaiva temple called Vikkīrama Calāmēka Īśvaram.

The second pillar inscription records a 'royal order' relating to the settlement of a dispute between artisans (*kammāḷar*) and washermen (*vaṇṇār*) subsequent to an investigation conducted by royal officers. These inscribed pillars seem to have been set up originally to support the superstructure of a hall attached to a Śaiva temple referred to in one of the inscriptions. Two polished stone figures of Sivalinga built into the walls of the Buddhist shrine where these inscriptions are now found and the uniform size, shape and quality of about a dozen rectangular granite pillars including the ones bearing these inscriptions, which support the superstructure of a hall attached to the modern Buddhist shrine suggest that the architectural remains of the 12th century Śaiva temple were used for the construction of parts of the Buddhist temple at Budumuttāva during the period of the Kandyan kings.<sup>5</sup>

The contents of the inscription on the rectangular slab found near the Bo-tree until recently could not be ascertained by S. Paranavitana. He remarks: "Near the modern stūpa there is a slab

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3. *The Ceylon Journal of Science*, 2 ed. A.M. Hocart and S. Paranavitana. Colombo 1933. Section G. (inscr. No. 475) p. 117.

4. S. Paranavitana, "Two Tamil Pillar Inscriptions from Budumuttāva", *Epigraphia Zeylanica* (EZ) 3, pp. 302 - 312.

5. S. Pathmanathan, "The Town of Vikkīramacalāmēka-puram in the Twelfth Century A.D.", (pp. 120 - 131) *Tamil Cāḱittiya Viḷā 1993 cīrappu malar, intu camaya, kalācāra aluvakal, tīṇaikkāḷam, ilaikkai*, pp. 120 - 121.

containing another Tamil inscription which is too weathered to admit of its being satisfactorily deciphered."<sup>6</sup>

After a preliminary examination of the slab in July 1986 the present author made the following observations on it:

"[Our] examination of the Tamil Slab Inscription at Budumuttāva has revealed that it records some transactions of the *Aiññūruvar* and a military community allied to them. *Aiññūruvan palli*, *patinenpūmi* and *vīramākālam* are some of the expressions recorded in that inscription which enables one to identify that epigraph as one set up by the *aiññūruvar* and the warriors in their service... A major portion of the inscription is badly damaged on account of the fact that the stone slab has been used roughly for different purposes. The concluding portion of the inscription which consists of twenty-seven lines of writing could be deciphered if an estampage of it could be prepared. The slab is also of unusual interest on account of the symbols depicted on it."<sup>7</sup>

These impressions have been confirmed by recent studies on this inscription by a team of Japanese, Indian and Sri Lankan historians and archaeologists led by Noboru Karashima.<sup>8</sup> Several copies of the estampages of this Slab-Inscription were made and it was possible, on their basis, to decipher and retrieve a major portion of the inscription which is of considerable significance as a source of historical information. The slab inscription found at Budumuttava, which contains a *prasasti* of the *Aiññūruvar*, is one of the longest epigraphic

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6. S. Paranavitana, "Two Tamil Pillar Inscriptions....." *EZ* 3, p. 302.

7. S. Pathmanathan, "The Nagaram of the Nānādesis in Medieval Sri Lanka, Circa A.D. 1000 - 1300", *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities (SLJH)*, University of Peradeniya, Vol. 9, Nos. 1 & 2, 1984 (published in 1987), pp. 125 - 126.

8. Noboru Karashima, Yashushi Ogura, Y. Subbarayalu, P. Shanmugam, Malini Dias, S. Deraniyagala and S. Pathmanathan were the members of this team.

records set up by the Virakkoti in the island.<sup>9</sup> It records useful information on a variety of items not obtainable elsewhere. It provides insights into the transformation of the locality of Māgala into a town called Vikkirma Caḷamēkapuram. The importance of the record is further enhanced by the consideration that it records information which enables one to determine precisely the functions of the Virakkoti, who are referred to also in many other inscriptions from several places in Sri Lanka. Besides, there are references to two religious institutions, the Aiññurrūvan-palli and a temple of the Mother Goddess called *Viramākāḷam*, which were supported and maintained by the merchants and other communities closely associated with them.<sup>10</sup>

The fourth inscription found at the Rajamahāvihāra has hitherto remained unnoticed by archaeologists and antiquarians. It is engraved on the fragment of a pillar set up on the floor in front of the *paṭimaghara* of the temple, and is nowadays used as a receptacle for offerings. This fragmentary pillar, a portion of which is sunk below the ground, contains an inscription engraved in Tamil characters interspersed with a high proportion of letters in the Grantha script. From an examination of this hexagonal stone pillar it is rather difficult to recognize any expression, as the entire inscribed surface is covered with a thick coating of white paint. The cumulative evidence from these inscriptions and other antiquarian remains associated with them provide some insights into the development of Māgala as a market town and the social and religious institutions that developed there.

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9. The revised text of the inscription has been published in the *āvanam*, a journal published by *tamiḷakat tolḷiyal kaḷakam*, "The Archaeological society of Tamiḷakam". e. cupparāyalu. pa. caṇmukam, "*ilaṅkaṭṭiyil aiññūruvar kaḷveṭṭukaḷ*" (pp. 32 - 39). *āvanam* itaḷ: 9, July 1998, p. 37.

10. S. Pathmanathan, "The Slab Inscription of the Virakkoti at Budumuttāva, Nikaweratiya: Urbanization at Māgala", SLJH 10, Nos. 1 & 2, University of Peradeniya. 1994 (published in 1995), pp. 15 - 30.



## Vikkirama Calāmēkapuram

One of the pillar inscriptions at Budumuttāva describes Mākal as Vikkirama Calāmēkapuram (*mākaḷana vikkirama cālāmēkapurattu*).<sup>11</sup> The expressions *vikkirama cālāmēkapurattu perumakkal*, "the great men of Vikkirama calamekapuram", are found in the slab inscription from the same site.<sup>12</sup> These expressions confirm the impression that Vikkirama Calāmēkapuram was a self governing *nakaram* or market town established and dominated by a mercantile community and managed by a corporate assembly of elders as it was the case in respect of most similar towns in Sri Lanka and South India during this period.

Of the two names, Mākal was undoubtedly an old one. It is the Tamil form of the name referred to in Sinhalese and Pali sources as Māgala and Mahāgalla respectively. It is applied not only to the large tank at Nikaweratiya but also to a locality in its proximity.<sup>13</sup> Māgala has been a flourishing agricultural settlement from the early centuries of the Christian era and the principal source of its prosperity was the Mahagalla tank said to have been constructed by Mahāsena.<sup>14</sup> That there was a Buddhist establishment around Budumuttāva during the Anuradhapura period is suggested by the two headless dolomite images of the Buddha, datable to the eighth and ninth centuries and presently found within the premises of the Rajamahāvihāra.

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11. S. Paranavitana, "Two Tamil Pillar Inscriptions From Budumuttava", EZ 3, p. 311.

12. e. cupparāyalu, p. caṁmukam, "ilaṅkaīyil aiṇṇūṟṟuvar kalveṭṭukkal", *āvaṇam itaḷ*; 9, p. 37.

13. "The town of Māgala must have been in the vicinity of the tank at Nikavaratiya, near Budumuttāva, as that reservoir is still known as Māgalavāva ... The name Vikkirama-Calāmēgapura was, presumably, given to Māgala in honour of Vikramabāhu who was at this time ruling at Polonnaruva." So says S. Paranavitana in "Two Tamil Pillar Inscriptions..." EZ 3, p. 310.

14. *Mahāvamsa* trans. into English by Wilhelm Geiger. Pali Text Society, London, 1964, 37; 49.



Notices in the Pali chronicle suggest that Māgala was considered to be an area of some strategic importance. When Saṅghatissa secured the throne of Anurādhapura, his rival Moggallana is said to have occupied Mahāgalla and fortified it with a view to advancing towards the north against the ruler of Anurādhapura.<sup>15</sup> Much later, in the eleventh century, Mahāgalla was one among the many strongholds occupied by the Cōlas in Dakkhinadesa. Around 1070 it was taken over by the forces sent by Vijayabahu I to occupy that principality.<sup>16</sup> So, it would appear that Māgala was rising to prominence as a central place on account of demographic changes, market oriented exchanges of agricultural and other products and strategic considerations.

It would appear that the name Vikkīrama Calāmēkapuram was applied to Mākāl only after the Cōla conquest. The fact that this ends with the suffix *puram* has to be conceded to be of some significance. As the expression *pura(m)* is generally applied to towns and cities, it may be assumed that Vikkīrama Calāmēkapuram had reached a state of development so as to be reckoned as a town during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>17</sup> It would appear that the penetration of the Aiññūruvar into the area had provided an impetus for such a development. Mākāl, which until then had served as a market place for the exchange of local products brought from the surrounding settlements of agriculturists seems to have been linked to the arteries of long distance trade through the agencies of itinerant merchant communities. The activities of the Aiññūruvar and their auxiliaries resulted in the settlement of traders, commodity producers, artisans and warriors affiliated to the itinerant merchants and the introduction of fresh elements into the population seem to have led to the development of a tradition of multi-culturalism and some social tensions.

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15. Cv, 44: 13

16. Cv, 58: 42 - 43

17. S. Pathmanathan, "The Town Of Vikkīramacalāmēka-puram ...", *Tamil Cākitiya viḷā*, 1993, *ciṟappu malar*, p. 122.

One of the pillar inscriptions at Budumuttāva indicates that some degree of social tension had prevailed at Mākāl at an occasion owing to an inter-caste dispute between the artisans (*kammālar*) and Washermen (*vaṇṇar*).<sup>18</sup> It would seem that one of the parties, probably the artisans, were newcomers into the locality, and the Washermen, who were perhaps among the old residents, had felt that they had no service obligations to the newcomers. The refusal of the Washermen to perform some services in connection with the funeral rites of the artisans was the cause of the dispute. The matter had become so serious that it had to be referred to the ruler Mānābharaṇa on whose instance the case was examined by a group of five royal officers (*pañca pradhānikal*). After having investigated the customary practices concerning the issue, they declared that the artisans were entitled to the services of the Washermen, who were obliged to provide head-cloth (*mukattiṭu*), foot-cloth (*koṭasalu*) and cloth for spreading on the ground (*pāvātai*) at funeral processions.

Their decision was drafted in the form of a royal order and caused to be inscribed on stone by Makkalinkam Kaṇavati, who was one of the five principal dignitaries serving under Mānābharaṇa. The engraving of a royal order meant to be read and adhered to by the public and the parties to the dispute in particular, on a pillar at a temple at Maḡala suggests that the two communities involved in the dispute were local residents, who were in some capacity associated with the temple. It could also be inferred that the inquiry on matters relating to the dispute were conducted by the King's officers from a hall of the temple of Vikkīrama Calāmēka-Iśvaram to which the inscribed pillar had originally belonged.

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18. S. Paranavitana, "Two Tamil Pillar Inscriptions", *EZ3*, pp. 305 - 307.

## *Vikkirama Calāmēka-Īśvaram and other temples of Mākal*

The Śaiva temple called Vikkirama Calāmēka-Īśvaram is referred to in one of the Pillar Inscriptions from Budumuttāva.<sup>19</sup> As there are indications to suggest that merchants were closely associated with the foundation and maintenance of Śaiva shrines in the 11th and 12th centuries at such localities as Māntai, Padaviya, Anurādhapura and Polonnaruva, it is not unlikely that the Nānādesis or a company of soldiers under their service were associated with the establishment and maintenance of the temple dedicated to Śiva at Mākal. It is necessary to consider here the views of Paranavitana in relation to the foundation of this temple. He says:

"The object of the epigraph was to register certain gifts made by the princess above mentioned to a Śaiva shrine named Vikkirama-Calāmēga-Īśvara in the town of Māgala alias Vikkirama-Cālamēga-pura. ... The name Vikkirama Cālamēga-pura was presumably, given to Māgala in honour of Vikramabāhu who was at that time ruling at Polonnaruva. Mānābharāṇa the ruler of the Dakkhinadesa in which Māgala was situated, had several contests with Vikramabāhu to deprive the latter of the sovereignty of Ceylon and at last succeeded in confining his authority to the northern half of the island. According to the *Mahāvamsa*, it appears as if *Manābharāṇa* was virtually independent but the fact, that an important town in his dominions was named after Vikramabāhu suggests that he acknowledged the suzerainty of the latter.

*"Not only the town of Māgala, but the Śaiva shrine at the place was also named after Vikramabāhu; and it is possible that he was its founder. This shows that Vikramabāhu had leanings*

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19. *ibid.*, pp. 311 - 312.



towards the *Śaiva faith* and, in keeping with what we learn from this inscription, he and his contemporaries are described in the *Mahāvamsa* as rulers who were hostile towards the Buddhist religion. From this and other epigraphical remains of the period, it becomes clear that from the death of Vijayabāhu till the accession of Parakramabāhu, the South Indian influence was dominant in Ceylon though the island was not politically subject to the neighbouring Dravidian kings."

He further continues:<sup>20</sup>

"It also appears from this record that *Vikramabāhu had the throne name of Aba Salamevan (Calāmēga)*. His predecessor, Jayabāhu, also had the same title and from the fact that Parakramabāhu was called Sirisangabo, Vikramabāhu's son and successor, Gajabāhu II, should have had the same throne name. As these two titles were borne alternatively Vikramabāhu should have been a Sirisangago. Perhaps, *the reason why the throne name was not altered till Parakramabāhu was because neither Vikramabāhu nor Gajabāhu II was duly consecrated.*"<sup>21</sup>

Thus, Paranavitana has arrived at the following conclusions: (1) Vikramabāhu had in all probability exercised a sort of overlordship over his rival cousin Mānābharana; (2) the town of Makāl and the temple of Śiva there were in fact named after Vikramabāhu; (3) he was possibly the founder of that temple and (4) Vikramabāhu had the throne name Aba Salamevan. The basis for all these conclusions is the fact that the town of Mākal and the Śaiva temple there had names of which the expression Vikkīrama Calāmēkan was a component. In fact there is no other basis for any of these conclusions. In raising arguments to support his conclusions Paranavitana does not seem to recognize the need for any empirical evidence.

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20. *ibid.* pp. 310 - 311.

21. *ibid.* p. 311



A fundamental flaw in his line of argument is the assumption that Vikramabāhu had the throne name Aba Salamevan and that it was an equivalent of Vikrama Salamevan. What Paranavitana refers to as a throne name is in fact a consecration name and it may be noted here that the medieval Kings of Lanka assumed one of the two alternate consecration names, Aba Salamevan and Siri Sangabo, on their accession to the throne. It may be pointed out here that Vikramabāhu and his son Gajabāhu, had not gone through the ceremony of consecration. Rulers who were not consecrated could not be expected to have had any of the two alternate consecration names. It is strange to find that Paranavitana, who was well aware of this fact and focuses attention on it, entertained the belief that Vikramabāhu had the 'throne name' Aba Salamevan. In fact the consecration name Aba Salamevan is never applied to Vikramabāhu and his son in the epigraphical documents issued under them. Almost all Sinhalese and Tamil inscriptions set up during their period are dated in the regnal years of Jayabāhu, who had the consecration name Aba Salamevan.

Paranavitana confounded his confusion further by equating, rather unimaginatively, the expression Vikkrama Calāmēkan with Aba Salamevan. This was, perhaps, on account of the consideration that the expression Vikrama Salamevan had been formulated by combining the initial part of the name Vikramabāhu and the final part of the consecration name Aba Salamevan. Such a combination is unusual and in fact never encountered in the literary and epigraphical sources relating to this period.

The occurrence of the expression Vikkrama Calāmēkan in the Tamil Slab Inscription from Paḷamōṭṭai of the 42nd year (1097) of Vijayabāhu I clearly shows that it had no connection with Vikramabāhu or the consecration name Aba Salamevan. As Paranavitana himself has pointed out Vikramabāhu had not been formally appointed as *yuvarāja* by the time this inscription was set up. It is thus clear that the compound expression had a significance that was altogether different from the one understood by Paranavitana.

A further consideration is the fact that the temple of Vikkīrama Calāmēka-Īśvaram was at Mākal otherwise called Vikkīrama Calāmēka-puram, a locality in Dakkhinadesa, a principality under Mānābharaṇa, a rival cousin over whom Vikramabāhu could not exercise any formal control. Nor, is there any evidence to show that Mānābharaṇa had recognized the suzerainty of Vikramabāhu. Paranavitana was well aware about such a situation as indicated by his own pronouncement on the matter. He says:

"Manabharana, the ruler of Dakkhinadesa in which Māgala was situated, had several contests with Vikramabāhu to deprive the latter of the sovereignty of Ceylon and at last succeeded in confining his authority to the northern half of the island. According to the Mahāvamsa it appears as if Mānābharaṇa was virtually independent..."

So, the explanation of Vikrama Salamevan as given by Paranavitana is misleading as it is based on false assumptions. Besides, his arguments in support of his conclusions are contradictory and inspired by fundamental misconceptions. Vikkīrama Calāmēkan does not seem to have had any connection with Vikramabāhu on account of two principal considerations: it was the component part of the name of a military community considerably before Vikramabāhu was appointed to a position of responsibility; it had formed part of the names of a temple and a town in Dakkhinadesa, which was under Mānābharaṇa and over which Vikramabāhu had no control whatsoever.<sup>22</sup>

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22. The institutions and localities associated with *vikkīrama calāmēkan* as found in epigraphic notices may be listed here in the following order:

1. *vikkīrama calāmēkat terinta valankai vēḷaiikkāṇar* - army unit at Kantalāy. (A.D. 1097).
2. *vikkīrama calāmēka-īśvaram* - Śaiva temple at Mākal (A.D. 1118).
3. *vikkīrama calāmēka-puram* - alternate name of Mākal (A.D. 1118).
4. *vikkīrama calāmēkan nāṇṇapaṭai* - army unit of the Vēḷaiikkāṇar at Ututtuṇai, a locality close to Tiriyāy in the Trincomalee District (A.D. 1128).
5. *vikkīrama calāmēkan perumpallī* - Buddhist shrine at Mayilankuṭam (A.D. 1128).

Vikkirama Calāmēkan could be construed as a compound expression formed by combining the words *vikkirama* meaning "prowess" and *calāmēkan*, which is the Tamil form of the Pali word *silāmegha*, "the cloud on the mountains". It could have the significance of a royal epithet as in the case of Vīra Calāmēkan, Rājavēsibhujāṅga Silāmegha and Jayāṅkoṇṭa Calāmēkan. It was customary to refer to some kings by their epithets. The royal epithets were so formulated as to project the distinctive qualities, characteristics and achievements of rulers. Functionally they were different from personal and consecration names. In other words, in their connotations the royal epithets had an association with royal charisma, both perceived and manifested. It was also not customary to incorporate a king's name either fully or in part into an expression which had the function of an epithet. A king may be referred to by his personal name or his epithet for the purpose of identification; or else he may be referred to by both, the personal name and the epithet. A combination of a part of the personal name and a royal epithet into a compound expression is not known to have been effected in the local tradition.<sup>24</sup>

As the names of institutions and organizations which had the expression Vikkirama Calāmēkan attached to their names in the form of a prefix were to be found in both Rajarata and Dakkhinadesa, it may be assumed that the ruler who had this epithet was Vijayabāhu I or one of his predecessors. The fact that the earliest occurrence of the epithet is to be found in an inscription dated in the 42nd year of Vijayabāhu seems to confirm such an impression. In the light of the above considerations it may be assumed that the Śaiva temple at Mākal was named after a ruler who had the epithet Vikkirama Calāmēkan or a regiment of soldiers who had the compound expression Vikkirama Calāmēkan as part of their name.

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24. S. Pathmanathan, "Vikramabāhu and Vikrama Salamevan", (18 pages), SLJH 29, Nos. 1 & 2, 1993 (published in 1995), p. 109.



The probability is that the temple of Śiva at Mākal, which was a market town dominated by the Aiññūṭṭuvar, was founded by that merchant community and at some point of time it was named after a regiment, which had the expression Vikkirama Calāmēkan prefixed as a part of its name. Such an impression seems to be supported by the consideration that another Hindu temple at the same locality was called Vīramākālam after the name of the regiment of the military community called Vīrakkoti.<sup>25</sup>

The endowment to the temple of Śiva by Cuntamalli, a consort of the ruler Mānābharapa, consisted of a lamp and ten gold coins. Her concern for this shrine located at considerable distance from the establishments of the royal court probably suggest that Vikkirama Calāmēka-Īśvaram was significant both as a centre of religious tradition and as an architectural monument of imposing proportions. The square, solid granite pillars of about ten feet in height and a large number of granite blocks which had been removed from the site of its remains and built into the parts of the Rajamahāvihāra suggest that the twelfth century Śaiva shrine was a stone structure of relatively large proportions by local standards, involving the investment of resources in considerable measure.

The existence of a Hindu temple dedicated to the worship of the Mother Goddess, Paramēśvārī, the tutelary deity of the Nānādesis, at Mākal, when they were established there is suggested by the

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25. The fact that the *vīramākālam* was the name of a military unit is confirmed by the evidence from the *kantapurāṇam*. An entire section, the *mākālar* varu paṭalam in the *acurakāṇyam* of that work contains a description of *vīramākālar*, an invincible valiant warrior who terrorized the Asuras guarding the consort of Indra while she was in captivity. The *kantapurāṇam* seems to be elevating to the plane of the gods matters relating to worldly affairs in respect of the *vīramākālar*. The name *vīramākālar* as found in this text could be explained as one which denotes a person who belonged to a group called *vīramākālam*. That such a group was a military unit is clear from the descriptions found in this work.



expression *lōkamātāvai vīramākālamengu pēr cātti*, found in the slab inscription.<sup>26</sup> These expressions translate: "having named the supreme goddess as *vīramākālam*". Idiomatically these expressions have the connotation that either the image or the temple of the supreme Goddess was named *vīramākālam*, after the name of a group of warriors. The validity of such an explanation is confirmed by the reference to the *a(i)nūṭṭuvan-pallī* in the same inscription. Just as a Buddhist temple was named *a(i)nūṭṭuvan-pallī* after the name of a community of merchants, the *a(i)nūṭṭuvan*, the name of a military community allied to them, *vīramākālam*, could have been applied to a temple of the Mother Goddess. It is also noteworthy that there are many instances where temples and images of deities enshrined in temples have been named after kings, and mercantile or military communities.

An alternate interpretation of the expressions is also possible because of the different connotations attached to the word *pēr cātti* as found in epigraphic usage. A corresponding expression *tīrunāmaṇ cāttiyatu*, 'having applied the sacred name', is employed to convey an altogether different idea in the Tamil Slab Inscription from Palamottai, which records an endowment made by a Brahmin widow to a Saiva Shrine at the *brahmadeya* of Kantalāy.<sup>27</sup>

The endowments and the specific duties attached to them were placed under the custody of a regiment of the *Vēlaikkāraṅ*. The phrases "... *valaṅkai vēlaikkāraṅ enṇu tīrunāmaṇ cāttiyatu* as found in the inscription from Palamottai were intended to convey the idea that the endowments made by the Brahmin widow were registered in the name of the *Vēlaikkāraṅ* and placed under their custody. The expressions *lōkamātāvai vīramākālam enṇu pēr cātti* as found in the Slab Inscription from Budumuttāva may have been employed to describe a similar arrangement. It could also, therefore, be assumed that the military unit called *Vīramākālam* at Mākal assumed a custodial relationship in respect of a temple of the Mother Goddess.

26. S. Pathmanathan, "The Tamil Slab Inscription of the Vīrakkoti...", *SLIH* 20, Nos. 1 & 2, 1994, p. 21.

27. S. Paranavithana, "A Tamil Slab Inscription from Palamottai", *EZ* 2, p. 195.

The Slab Inscription from Budumuttava refers to another temple called *aiññūruvan paḷḷi*, which was obviously a Buddhist temple established or restored and maintained by the mercantile community called *aiññūruvar*. Moreover, this inscription records the interesting information that there was a shrine of *lōkapperuñ cettiṃyār* at that temple. The expressions *lōkapperuñ cettiṃyār* are not encountered elsewhere. They may be construed in the light of the description of Skanda or Murukan as *cetti* in Cuntarar *tēvarām*.<sup>28</sup> The impression that the relevant expressions in the slab inscription refer to Skanda seems to be confirmed by the fact that Skanda was reckoned as one of the guardian gods of Lankā since medieval times. Such an explanation presupposes that Skanda had gained admission into the pantheon of Buddhist deities in Lankā during the early part of the twelfth century when this inscription was set up.

It is significant that the *Vīrakkoti* established at Mākal had made certain benefactions to two temples affiliated respectively to two separate religious traditions, Buddhism and Hinduism, which were established and maintained by the mercantile community. Such benefaction on their part is said to have been a reciprocal measure for the support and privileges extended to them by the *Perumakkaḷ* of the *paṭṭinam*. On an occasion when *valaṅkaiyāṇṭān* of the *Vīrakkoti* and his associates were surrounded, attacked and detained by a hostile party, the *Perumakkaḷ* had initiated action which resulted in their release after the offenders had been stabbed to death. Besides, those who had distinguished themselves in this skirmish were allowed to be included in the *vīrakkoti-tantiram*, "the army of the *vīrkkoti*". Moreover, "[the temple of] *lōkamāta*, "the mother of the *vaiśāṇavar* of the *patineṇṭāmi*" had been named after the army of the *Vīrakkoti* as *vīramāḱāḷam* by the

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28. The expression *cetti* is one of the epithets of Skanda-Murukan. In one of his hymns on Tiruvārūr Cuntarar describes Civan as *cettiyaṇṇam*. The relevant expressions are ... *cūr taṭintitṭa cettiyaṇṇam*, "the father of *cetti*, who had subjugated *cūraṇṇam*". The word *cetti* is identified by lexicographers as an appellation of Murukan. *cuntaramūrti cūvāṇikaḷ tēvāram makācivarāntiri veḷvāṇu, kācināṭam tiruppanantāl*, 1987, *tiruvārūṇṭar paṭikam ceyyāl*, 10, p. 114; *Madras Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. 3, University of Madras, 1982, p. 1583.

*perumakkaḷ*.<sup>29</sup> As the *Viṛakkoti* were gratified and honoured by these and other similar activities of the *perumakkaḷ*, they are said to have reciprocated by giving up their right of collecting a monetary levy and oil (from the *paṭṭinam*) for maintaining lamps at the temple of *lōkamātā* and the shrine of *lōkapperuṇ ceṭṭiyār* at *a(i)ṇṇūruvanpaḷli*. They decided to maintain the lamps thenceforth on their account and the slab inscription was set up by the *Viṛakkoti* to record this resolution made by them. The text of this inscription presupposes a close interdependence between the merchant community and the *Viṛakkoti* at *Mākal*. As pointed out elsewhere the warriors concerned were in the service of the *perumakkaḷ* of the *paṭṭinam*. It is clear from the foregoing analysis that the *perumakkaḷ*, the governing authority of the *paṭṭinam*, were involved in the establishment and maintenance of temples, Hindu and Buddhist, at *Mākal* and that the *vīramākāḷam* was assigned certain specific functions relating to their maintenance by the authorities of the *paṭṭinam*. On the analogy of the names *a(i)ṇṇūruvan-paḷli*, *vīramākāḷam* and *vikkirama calāmēkan perumpalli* it would appear that *vikkirama calāmēka-īśvaram*, the Saiva temple at *Mākal* was named after *vikkirama-calāmēkan*, a royal epithet which had become the component of the name of a military unit established at *Makal* during the 11th and 12th centuries.<sup>30</sup>

29. The expression *vaiśrāvaṇarai vayiru vāyṭa lōkamātā*, "The mother of the world who had conceived in her womb the *vaiśrāvaṇar*", may be explained in the light of the epigraphic usages pertaining to the *a(i)ṇṇūruvar*. In their *prasastis* they are described as *ayyapoliṭṭura paramēśvarikku makkaḷākiya*, "the children of Paramēśvari of Ayyapoliṭṭu". Kubera is sometimes referred as *Vaiśravaṇa* and, perhaps, on account of their affluence the merchants are associated with him. Such an impression is supported by the occurrence of the expression *vaiśrāvaṇa paṭṭam āṇimukam ceṭṭiyār* in a copper-plate inscription of a merchant community, from *Koyamuttūr*. *ee. iṛācu*, "*kāṇampalli āvaṇaikaḷ*" (9 pages), *āvaṇam, itaḷ*; 9, 1998 ed. *cu. iṛācakōpāl*, *tamiḷakat tolḷiyal kaḷakam*, *tañcāvūr*, 1998, p. 91.

30. "A Buddhist institution called *vikkirama calāmēkan perumpalli* is referred in an inscription from *Mayilankulam*, dated in the 18th year of *Jayabāhu devar*. This epigraph provides the interesting information that an army unit of the *Vēlaikkāṇar* and a Buddhist shrine had the respective names *vikkirama calāmēkan nārpaṭai* and *vikkirama calāmēkan perumpalli*. The temple was so named by the military leader *Kaṇavati* as it was placed under the protection of an army unit of the *Vēlaikkāṇar* called *vikkirama calāmēkan nārpaṭai*." S. Pathmanathan, "Vikramabāhu and Vikrama Saḷamevan", *SLIH* 19, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. 99 - 100.



# The Temple of Tāntōṇṛīśvaram at Kokkaṭṭiccōlai

S. Theyvanayagam

The temple of Tāntōṇṛīśvaram at Kokkaṭṭiccōlai, in the District of Batticaloa (*maṭṭakkaḷappu*) in the Eastern Province, is unique among the ancient temples of Siva in the island. It has been associated with the traditions of Vīraśaivism since the early 13th century, and as a centre of Hindu worship and pilgrimage it has flourished with an unbroken continuity ever since that time. Among the temples of Siva in the whole Eastern Province it is rivalled only by Kōṇēśvaram in importance, and in the local Hindu tradition it was reckoned as one of the seven *tecattukkōyilkaḷ*, temples visited and supported by the people of the entire *tecam*.<sup>1</sup> The others were Kōṇēśvaram, Verukal, Katirkāmam, Katiramalai, Tirukkōvil and Cittiravēlāyuta cuvāmi kōyil, Pōratīvu.

In former times, the annual festival at this temple was a major event for the Hindu Tamils of Batticaloa, who congregated in large numbers at the temple premises for participating in the proceedings of the festival. Tāntōṇṛīśvaram was richly endowed by Kings and Vanniyar princes with lands and revenues from the proceeds of which it was maintained.<sup>2</sup> The temple served as an agency for social integration and it is significant that social customs and hierarchical ranking of functional groups were defined in relation to their

1. The word *tēcam* means "country. But, here it is used in a restricted sense. In the literary traditions of the Tamils of Batticaloa it is often applied to designate a region, the region of Batticaloa. So, we have the expression *maṭṭakkaḷappu tēcam* occurring in some of these texts. *Maṭṭakkaḷappu tēcam* is sometimes alternatively described as *mukkuva tēcam*. Besides, the word *tēcam* is also applied in respect of the minor polities within the region of Batticaloa. The word *tēcam* in the combined expression *tēcattuvannimai* refers to a minor polity, a vanni principality.
2. vi. ci kantaiya, "kokkaṭṭiccōlāit tāntōṇṛīśvaram" (10 pages), *Maṭṭakkaḷappu caivak kōyilkaḷ, intucamaya kalācāra aluvaḷkaḷ tinaikkaḷam*, Kōlumpu, 1997 (2nd impression), pp. 19 - 29.



interactions with the temple. The regulations pertaining to temple services, which are claimed to have been laid down by monarchs in medieval times, are embedded in the *tiruppataik kāvīyam* recited on the occasion of the annual car festival. The text also contains a list of all kuṭis of all the principal Tamil castes that had inhabited the principalities included in the entire *Maṭṭakkaḷappu tēcam*.

Kokkatticcōlai, where the temple is located, is a large village in *patuvāṅkarai*, the portion of the Batticaloa District on the western side of the lagoon. It is situated about four miles off the road from Batticaloa to Maṇmunai, which is on the fourth mile post of the trunk road from Batticaloa to Kalmunai. The settlements in the village are surrounded by vast stretches of paddy-fields. The temple of Tāntōṇṛśvaram is skirted by parks of natural vegetation where the effects of the tropical sun are relieved by the cool breeze of the monsoon winds, and the stillness of silence is broken by the cries of birds which find shelter in the shade of the woods.

The temple of Tāntōṇṛśvaram, dedicated for the worship of Śiva, has been renovated from time to time, and it would appear that it was originally of brick construction. Only the sanctum and its superstructure exhibit characteristics of ancient architectural design. All other component parts of the temple as found at present are modern substitutes for the original ones, the traces of which have completely disappeared in the course of time. So far, even an exploratory archaeological survey of the site has not been attempted. Besides, there are no stone inscriptions in the temple premises. Although it is claimed that there are several copper plates recording endowments made by rulers in olden days, no one seems to have had any access to them. The two chariots which have been used for parading the images of deities annually on the day of the car-festival are undoubtedly of great antiquity. These chariots which have been used for hundreds of years had been the work of Indian craftsmen from Malabar.<sup>3</sup> They are the oldest among the chariots to be found in the temples of Sri Lanka.

3. Civacampu Taṭṭaṇāmūrtti, "*Kokkatticcōlai Tāntōṇṛśvaram*", *ilankai intukkōyilkaḷ pakuti 1 patippācīriyar* ci. Patmanātan, *intucamaya kalācāra aluvalkaḷ iipaikkaḷam*, Kōlumpu, 1994, pp. 19 - 49.

## The Origins

In the account of the origins of the temple as found in the *tiruppataik kāvīyam* myths and historical traditions have become so intermingled that it is difficult to disentangle one from the other. The account includes sections pertaining to personalities called Ulakanāyaki, Tarumaciṅkan, Mākōn and Vimalataruman.

There are, in fact, two versions of the story relating to the origins of Tāntōṇṛśvaram, and one of them identifies a certain person called Kokkaṭṭiyār as the one over whose interned mortal remains the temple was constructed. The account found in the *tiruppataik kāvīyam* may be briefly summarized here as follows:

Two mendicants, Muttuliṅkar and Kokkaṭṭiyār, went on pilgrimage to Katirkāmam. This event occurred in ancient times. Kokkaṭṭiyār, who succumbed to the ardours of the journey, died on the way. His body was buried by Muttuliṅkar, who latter proceeded alone on his pilgrimage. A *liṅkam* had appeared on the spot and it was completely covered by the *kokkunetti* trees. Some hunters, who had gone there in search of honey, were surprised to find a stream of blood flowing from the tree as they started cutting it. Another pilgrim to Katirkāmam, a *ceṭṭiyār*, who had come to know of this incident in a dream, constructed a temple on the spot. This temple is known as Tāntōṇṛśvaram of Kokkaṭṭiccōlai. It was visited by Indian pilgrims to Kataragāma. Here worship was conducted according to the customs of the Vetar (hunters).<sup>4</sup>

On the face of it the foregoing account is incredible. It has the likeness of a fable fabricated for the purpose of explaining the origins of the names of the temple and the locality where it is situated. This version of the story is adopted from a folk tradition. But, the references to pilgrims proceeding to Katirkāmam passing through Kokkaṭṭiccōlai and the association of Ceṭṭiyār merchants with the establishment of

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4. *ibid*, pp. 21 - 22.

the temple may reflect the impressions of a community formed on the basis of some historical experience.

There were a number of temples called Tāntōṇṇīśvaram in India and Sri Lanka. The expression *tāntōṇṇi*, the Sanskrit equivalent of which is *svayambhū*, is an epithet of Śiva, and it conveys the idea that Śiva is the primeval, eternal and transcendental energy existing by itself without any cause. These ideas came to be associated with the *ilīṅkam* as it was deemed to be a symbol of Śiva. So, we have in this particular legend the notion of a *tāntōṇṇi* or *svayambhu ilīṅkam*. The claim that the temple was constructed by a *ceṭṭiyār* was probably inspired by the tradition of the involvement of those of the Ceṭṭippōṭi kuṭi in the management of the temple.

The second version of the account of the origins of the temple revolves round a person called Ulakanāyaki. This account may be summarized here as follows:

Ulakanāyaki, the daughter of Kukacēnan of Kalīṅka *tēcam*, came to Ilāṅkai, with her brother Ulakanātan when Kuṇaciṅkan was ruling over Maṭṭakkaḷappu. They brought with them the Tooth relic of Kautama Puttar and a *civalīṅkam*, which their ancestors had obtained from Kailācam. She gave the Tooth relic to king Mēkavaṇṇan. She had requested the king to grant her a piece of uninhabited jungle tract. King Mēkavaṇṇan acceded to her request and sent a message in writing to Kuṇaciṅkan to the effect that she be given a land-grant. Kuṇaciṅkan granted her Maṇmunai and after clearing the jungle settled some families and constructed a residence (*mālīkai*) for Ulakanāyaki.

After having taken up residence at Maṇmunai she settled 106 families of Mukkuvar and 30 families of service castes whom she had obtained from India through the efforts of Ulakanātan. Besides, she constructed a temple at Maṇmunai, had the *civalīṅkam* installed there and made arrangements for conducting worship. In the jungle, to the south of the lagoon, Tiṭakan, the chieftain of the *vēṭar*, who was engaged in clearing the vegetation, had accidentally cut a *kokkuneṭṭi* tree. To



his surprise he found a stream of blood flowing from that tree and the man arrested the flow by wrapping a part of his garment over the affected portion of the tree. Later, he went to Ulakanāyaki and informed her of the incident. Ulakanāyaki visited the spot and found there a *civalinkam*. She had the woods cleared, created a settlement and constructed a temple. She had brought some families from *vaṭatēcam* (India) and assigned to them some duties in relation to temple services. Thus 10 families of garland makers and 3 priests (*paṭṭar*) were settled in the vicinity of the temple. She appointed the *paṭṭar* as priests and ordained that the garland makers and other temple functionaries should be under the direction of the temple priests. She endowed the temple with paddy-lands for its maintenance. Ulakanāyaki married Kirācēnan, a brother of Kuṇaciṅkan and had two children. Those who belong to the *Ulakippōṭi kuṭi* are their descendants.<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing account seeks to explain the origins of Maṇmuaiparru, Ulakippōṭi kuṭi and the temple of Tāntōṇṇisvaram. The traditions pertaining to the activities of the *vēṭar* in relation to the *kokkunetti* tree have been absorbed into this account. Besides, it is claimed that Ulakanāyaki was a Kalinga princess, who had come to the island with the Tooth relic, during the reign of Mēkavaṇṇan. The account of Ulakanāyaki seems to be a modified version of the *Mahāvamsa* account of the introduction of the Tooth relic.<sup>6</sup> According to that Chronicle, a princess and her brother from Dantapura in Kalinga came to Anurādhapura with the Tooth relic of the Buddha, in the reign of Meghavaṇṇa Abhaya, the son and successor of Mahāsena (274-301). The Tooth relic was presented to the king and it was deposited

5. *ibid*, pp. 21 - 26; *maṭṭakkaḷappu māṇṇiyam* paṭippācīriyār F.X.C. nāṭaracā, Kōlumpu, 1964.

6. When Kalinga was invaded by a hostile king the son and daughter of the ruler of that Kingdom came to Anurādhapura with the Tooth relic of the Buddha, which they gave over to Meghavaṇṇa Abhaya, the king of Anurādhapura. The Tooth relic was deposited in a chamber in the vicinity of the palace. Later, it became an object of veneration for the fraternities of monks attached to the Abhayagiri Vihāra. *Mahāvamsa* Ed. W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1908; English tran. By W. Geiger, Pali Text Society, London, 1912, Reprinted with Addendum by G.C. Mendis, Colombo 1950.



in a building in the vicinity of the palace. The Pali chronicle does not record the name of the Kalinga princess but the Tamil tradition of Batticaloa identifies her as Ulakanāyaki. It is significant that the Tamil tradition claims that this princess had brought two objects of veneration, the Tooth relic of the Buddha and the *civalinkam* obtained from the Kailāsa mountain in the Himalayas. Obviously this account does not record historical events. It may be construed as an explanation of the origins of the temple of Tāntōṅṇīśvaram and the principality of Maṇmunai on the basis of impressions pertaining to existing social phenomena. Ulakanāyaki was probably the ancestor of the matrilineal clan called Ulakippōti kuṭi the scions of which were vanniya chiefs of Maṇmunaip parṇu, and in that capacity were the custodians of the temple. Ulakanayaki and her following are said to have obtained their lands from King Mekavappan. The King is said to have informed the ruler of Maṭṭakkaḷappu about the land grant he had made to Ulakanāyaki. The account presupposes the existence of a system of polity where authority was diffused and divided and was exercised at different levels, by the king from a remote centre and the local chieftains, who were theoretically vassals of the former. The local ruler of Maṭṭakkaḷappu is assigned in this tradition an intermediate status. The rulers of Maṇmunaipattu and Maṭṭakkaḷappu probably had a kinship connection, and the account suggests that the latter had precedence over the former in hierarchical ranking. Such an impression is consistent with historical facts pertaining to *maṭṭakkaḷappu tēcam* in medieval times.<sup>7</sup> The claim that Ulakanāyaki had brought the Tooth relic of the Buddha and a sanctified *civalinkam*, which is made by a modification of the *Mahāvamsa* tradition, seems to reflect the

7. The expressions *maṭṭakkaḷappu tēcam* are found in the Campānturāi plates recording a grant of land made by the king of Kandy, Rājasinha, to a Brahmin called Rāmanāta(n). The portion of the text relating to the land reads: *maṭṭakkaḷappu tēcattil Campānturāikku aṭutta paṇṭittivu velippattukkuc cernṭa kōṇavattavān veliyum kōṭṭānpattum itukkatutta yilavacamun ulpaṭa rāmanāta pīrāṇanarukku pillai pillai talamurāikku tāṇṭamāka kuttuttatu*, "Kōṇavattavān veli and Kōṭṭānpattu of Paṇṭittivu velippattu near Campānturāi in Maṭṭakkaḷappu tēcam have been given with all immunities to the *pīrāṇanar* Rāmanāta(n) to be held (as a family inheritance) by him and his descendants."

As the inscription is dated in the year (saka) 1615 which corresponds to 1693 A.D. the text of this inscription must have been written after the reign of Rājasinha II. A Velupillai, "Some Comments on the Campānturāi Copper Plates", *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions* ed. A. Velupillai, Peradeniya, 1971. pp: 62 - 70.

perception of a relationship characterised by harmony and co-existence between two religious traditions, Hinduism and Buddhism, within the realm. In fact, in the traditions pertaining to Śaiva temples and other institutions in the eastern littoral, during the 17th and 18th centuries, the Kandyan monarch is represented uniformly as a benefactor, patron and custodian.

### *The Activities of Kulakkāṭṭan*

The *tirupaṭaika-kāvyam* attributes the further development of Tāntōṇṇīśvaram to the activities of Kuḷakkōṭṭan. He is represented in the Tamil traditions as an ancient ruler who promoted the cause of Śaivism by establishing, and renovating temples and by making elaborate arrangements for conducting temple services regularly. The text concerned contains the following poetic description of Kuḷakkōṭṭan:

"He enriched the resplendent isle of Lankā and caused the religion of Śiva to flourish therein. He constructed shrines on the sacred Māṇikka-kaṅkai and at Katiraimalai. He raised temples and gate towers at Tenkayilai, Tāntōṇṇīśvaram, Verukal and Tirukkōvil. Besides, he made arrangements for conducting regular worship, for singing the *tēvāram* and for the performance of temple services".<sup>8</sup>

A verse in an account pertaining to the temple of Kaḷutāvalai mentions that Kuḷakkōṭṭan otherwise called *manuṇṭi kaṇṭān* had once administered the temple of Tāntōṇṇīśvaram. It is further claimed that an exponent of Vīrasaivism, *kuruliṅka caṅkamakkuru* and a *paṇṭāram*

8. cīrmēvu ilāṅkaippati vālvutaru celvamum civanēca miku camayamum ceppuṭaṅkaritāna māṇikka kaṅkaiyum cekamēvu katirai malaiyum ērperum tenkayilai vāḷ kōṇaliṅkamum mēnmaiperu tāntōṅgu liṅkamum verriṇunai mayūra citra caṅkāraṇel vellaiṇāvar patiyatām pērperum tentirukkōyil cīvālayam cīvapūcai tēvāramum ceymuraikaḷ engeṇṇum niṭṭūlkālamum tēcantaḷampāmalum ērperuku paritikuḷa rācankuḷakkōṭṭan evvulakumuyvātāka ēḷu kōpuram kōyil toḷuvār tinam tēji eṅkumiyaṅṇārē ka. Makēśvara liṅkam. "kōkkatticēḷai tāntōṅṣīvarar kōyil". (7 pages). maṭṭaḷkaḷappu makkaḷ vaḷamum vāḷḷakaiyum tokuppācīriyar vittuvān F.X.C. Natarāca, maṭṭaḷkaḷappu, intu vālipar munnai veljiyū. 1980, pp. 137-138.

had gone on a pilgrimage to Katirkāmam from Tāntōṇṇīśvaram during the time of Kuḷakkōṭṭan.

There is no corroborative evidence from any authentic source to confirm the traditional accounts pertaining to the activities of Kuḷakkōṭṭan at Tāntōṇṇīśvaram. In some of the texts on Kōṇēśvaram Kuḷakkōṭṭan otherwise called Cōḷakaṇkan is credited with having re-established the temple and reorganised the temple services on a very elaborate scale. In subsequent times, on account of the influence exerted by the *Takṣiṇakailāca purāṇam* and other similar works and the popularization of this tradition by pilgrims visiting Kōṇēśvaram, Kuḷakkōṭṭan became the principal character in the foundation myths relating to all the ancient Hindu temples in the island.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, the Cōḷa descent attributed to Kuḷakkōṭṭan and the details pertaining to his activities as described in the *kōṇēcar kalvetṭu* and other texts may suggest that he was a Cōḷa prince exercising authority in Lankā for some time, as an agent of the Cōḷa king, in the early part of the 11th century. In fact the presence of such a prince in the island during the period under consideration, is attested by inscriptions.<sup>10</sup> In this instance, tradition has preserved, in a confused manner, some recollections of some activities in relation to this temple during the time of this particular Cōḷa prince.

### *Mākōṇ and the advent of Vīraśaivism*

It would appear that Tāntōṇṇīśvaram was transformed into a centre of Vīraśaivism during the period of Māgha, who is referred to

9. Commenting on the tradition pertaining to Kuḷakkōṭṭan vi. ci. Kantaiaṇ says: "All those who have a close connection with this temple firmly believe that it was constructed by Kuḷakkōṭṭan. This impression has been created on account of the influence of the *kōṇēcar kalvetṭu* over these areas." vi. ci. Kantaiaṇ, "kokkatticcōḷait tāntōṇṇīśvaram", *maṭṭakkalappuc caivakkōyilkal*, (11 pages) ācīriyar vi. ci. Kantaiaṇ, *veḷiyiṭu: intu kalācāra aluvaḷkal tīpaikkaḷam*, (2nd impression) Colombo, 1997, p. 23.

10. There are two inscriptions, at Mānāṇkēni and Kantaiaṇ, dated in the regnal years of a Cōḷa prince called Cōḷa Iṇṇakesvara tēvar. He had the epithets *kō*, *utaiyār* and *caṅkavarman*. S. Gunasingham, *Two Inscriptions of Cōḷa Iṇṇakēśvara Deva*, Trincomalee Inscriptions Series No. 1, Peradeniya, 1974, pp. 26.



as Mākōn in the local Tamil texts. The epithet *makālīṅkavācan* applied to Mākōn in the *tiruppataikkāviyam* suggests that he was an adherent of Vīraśaivism, which had its origins under Vasabha, in Karnāṭaka, during the 12th century, and was fast spreading all over South India, in the subsequent period.<sup>11</sup> Mākōn is described as a Kalinga prince sent to the island, by his father, for the sake of promoting the cause of Śaivism.<sup>12</sup> He is said to have landed at a site called maṇipuram and from there proceeded to Tōppavai, (Polonnaruva) where he dislodged Anīkankan from power, occupied the city and divided the territories subject to it and assigned them to the *paṭaiyāṭci vanniyaṛ*. He was responsible for bringing Mukkuvar from Kāḷikaṭṭam and other localities and settled them in the region of Maṭṭakkaḷappu.<sup>13</sup> Those who were the leaders of the armies serving under him were conferred the rank of *vannipam*. One of them, Cukatiran, was posted at Maṇmunai, where he lived at a residence that had been constructed for him on the orders of Mākōn.

The reign of Mākōn was significant on account of the social changes that took place in the eastern littoral during that time. The matrilineal Mukkuvar of Malayāḷam extraction, who served under him as warriors, seem to have been granted lands on service tenure (*cēnāpōkam*). Their leaders were appointed to the rank of *vannipam* over local principalities and on account of this position the Mukkuvar secured a position of dominance in society. They imposed their laws and customs over the other communities, and the origins of the Mukkuvar Law could be traced from the days of Mākōn. It is significant that the local chronicles claim that Mākōn had established the tradition of classifying each functional group in society into seven matrilineal

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11. *maṭṭakkaḷappu māṇṇiyam (mm)*, paṭippāciṛiyaṛ F.X.C. naṭarāca, koḷumpu. 1962, pp. 74 - 29.

12. *ibid.* p. 96.

13. *ibid.* S. Pathmanathan, "Feudal Polity in Medieval Ceylon: An Examination of the Chieftaincies of the Vanni", *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies* Vol. II (New Series) No. 2 (July - December 1972), p. 122 - 123.



clans called *kutī* and defined their social status, hierarchical ranking, and assigned to them designated functions in respect of the services to be performed at the temple of Tāntōṇṇīśvaram.<sup>14</sup>

Vīraśaivism, which rejected the authority of the Vedas and the orthodox scheme of social organization, naturally found support among the Mukkuvar who found in its basic tenets the legitimacy for the new social order which they dominated. The rituals performed on the occasion of the annual car festival were symbolic of the re-arrangement of the hierarchical ranks in Tamil society in the region of Batticaloa in consequence of the social and political dominance secured by the Mukkuvar and the dominant influence of Vīraśaivism.

### *The King's intervention in a temple dispute*

There is a reference to the intervention of a king called Vimalataruman in a dispute that had arisen between the *vannipam* and the *Vellālar* concerning customary observances in relation to the temple. Vimalaturuman may be identified as Vimaladharmā Sūriya, who established himself as the ruler of Kandy in 1591.<sup>15</sup> As the *Vanniyar*, who was the local ruler, could not settle the dispute, the intervention of the king became inevitable. The king is said to have visited the temple on the occasion of the *vēṭṭait-tiruvilā* and conducted an inquiry from the hall of the temple. He had the proclamations issued by previous kings read in his presence, and then instructed that the affairs of the temple should be conducted in accordance with the provisions embodied in them.<sup>16</sup>

14. Civacampu Taṭṭaṇāmūrti, "Kokkatticcōḷai Tāntōṇṇīśvaram", *ilāṅkai intukkōyilkaḷ* pakut 1, pp. 38 - 39.

15. His personal name was Konappu Bandara. He had joined the Portuguese, undergone baptism as a Christian and was conferred the name Don Juan. Later he deserted the Portuguese, gave up Christianity and led a revolt in Kandy, which resulted in his accession to power over the mountainous kingdom. He legitimized his claims to kingship by marrying Dona Catherina, the heiress to the Kandyan throne, whom he had taken captive when the Portuguese suffered a humiliating defeat in Kandy.

## The architectural components

There are no descriptions of the temple or any of its component parts in extant texts. It is not possible to ascertain the chronology of its origins and development on the basis of architectural design or remains. In fact there are no architectural remains of ancient buildings at the temple site. Of the original structures only the *garbha-graha* has survived whereas all the other component parts had fallen or withered away without leaving behind any residue. Their modern substitutes are unimpressive in appearance and design.

Before this temple was renovated in 1946 the building consisted of three component parts: the sanctum, *artha maṇṭapam* and *alaṅkāra maṇṭapam*.<sup>17</sup> On the south there was an *amman* shrine. All these were found to be old buildings but for how long they had existed could not be ascertained. The *vimānam* was not reconstructed in 1946. It was only repaired. It is of brick construction and appears to be a building of considerable antiquity. The dome has the appearance of being disproportionately large and exhibits the characteristics of the "Dravidian" style of architecture modified by Kerala influences. The *vimānam*, which is somewhat inferior in the quality of design, in comparison with the one at Tirukkōvil, may be assigned to the 13th or early 14th century.<sup>18</sup>

When the temple was restored shrines dedicated for the worship of Pillaiyār, Murukan, Valli, Teyvayānai, Viṣṇu, Nākatampiran and the planetary gods were newly constructed. The *makāmaṇṭapam* and the *cāpamaṇṭapam* were new additions. Originally, there was no entrance tower here. Recently, construction work on the *irācakōpuram* has

16. Cīvacampu Taṭcaṇāmūrti "Kokkatticcōlai...", *ilaṅkai intukkōyilkal pakuti* 1, p. 32; *maṭṭakkalappu māṇṇiyam paṭippācīriyar*: vittuvān F.X.C. Natarācā, *maṭṭakkalappu kālācārap peravai* (Reprint), *Maṭṭakkalappu*, 1998, p. 113-114.

17. Cīvacampu Taṭcaṇāmūrti, "Kokkatticcōlai...", *ilaṅkaiyin intukkōyilkal pakuti* 1, p. 33.

18. In the opinion of Vi. Ci. Kantaiya this temple is of the same style as Tirukkōvil and it must have been constructed in the 13th century. His opinion may not be considered as authoritative as he was not a specialist in the history of temple art and architecture. Yet, it is significant that his views on the matter are more or less the same as those of the present author, *maṭṭakkalappu cāivakkōyikal*, p. 22.

progressed up to the level of the second storey. The *koṭittampam*, the flag-post, which has been assembled with twenty component pieces made of copper is of a height of 60 feet.

## ***Administration and temple services***

For hundreds of years the temple was administered by a group of functionaries under the direction of the Vanniyanār. Until the 20th century the Vanniyar of the *pūpāla kōttiram* had supervised the temple administration. They were Veḷḷāḷar and belonged to the Kāliṅkā kuṭi. When there were no legitimate claimants to the rank of *vannipam* in that kuṭi the rank was conferred on those who belonged to Attiyā Kuṭi. The names of several vanniyar belonging to two distinct lineages are listed in the texts pertaining to the temple in the following order:

### **1. The Vanniyar of pūpāla kōttiram**

1. Ampakap paṇṭāra vannimai;
2. Cellappaṇṭāra vannimai;
3. Kaṇṭakap paṇṭāra vannimai;
4. Kanakaraṭṭa paṇṭāra vannimai;
5. Alakaratna paṇṭāra vannimai;
6. Arunācala paṇṭāra vannimai;
7. Ānanta paṇṭāra vannimai;

### **2. Kukan Irāca-vannimai**

1. Veṭiyaracu kaṇṭarāca-vālaracu venra vannimai;
2. Vālaracu kaṇṭarāca-pōrvira venra vannimai;
3. Tānaracu kaṇṭarāca-taṇṭavāḷ munnitta vannimai;
4. Taṇṭavāḷ muṇṭarāca-muṇṭa vannimai;
5. Kāliṅkarāca-moraṇṭa vannimai;
6. paṭaiyāṇṭarāca-aracu nilaikāṭṭa vannimai.<sup>19</sup>

19. Civacaimpu taṭcaṇāmūrtti. "Kokkaṭṭicōlai... 'ilaikaṭṭiṇ intukkoyilkaḷ pakutī 1. p. 34.



The names of the vanniyaṛ of the lineage of Pūpāla kōttiram appear to have been personal names while those of the chieftains who had the designation *irācavanimai* appear to be epithets with martial connotations. In the period of colonial rule the power and authority exercised by the Vanniyaṛ over the administration in their respective principalities were gradually diminishing. Yet, they continued to exercise considerable authority in matters pertaining to the administration of temples. In recent times however, they have lost their titles and hereditary rights, and their traditional role as managers of temple affairs has been taken over by boards of trustees either appointed by court orders or elected by the community attached to the institutions.

As in the case of the other leading temples in the Batticaloa region the management of the temple of Tāntōṇṛśvaram has been the responsibility of functionaries called *vaṇṇakkar*. There were three of them, each representing respectively one of the three principal clans: *ulakippōṭi kuṭi*, *kālīṇkā kuṭi* and *paṭaiyāṇṭa kuṭi*.<sup>20</sup> The origins of this system, which had existed for centuries with an unbroken continuity, are obscure. The expression *vaṇṇakkar* signified a hereditary title claimed on the basis of matrilineal descent. Once appointed, a *vaṇṇakkar* could retain his title for the rest of his life; or else he could on account of old age, infirmity or ill health, relinquish his title at an assembly of the community, and in such an event, a successor could be appointed. Nowadays, there is also a management committee consisting of nineteen members. Apart from the three *vaṇṇakkar* and two members elected by those who perform services at the temple all the others are elected from the seven *kuṭis* or matrilineal clans who conduct the annual festival.

Those who perform services at the temple are called *ūḷiyakkāṛar*, "servicemen", who had lands specifically assigned to them. It is claimed in the *tiruppataik kāvīyam* that the services that had to be performed at the temple were defined at successive stages by Ulakanāyaki, Kuḷakkōṭṭan, Mākōṇ and Vimalataruman. In respect of Mākōṇ the *maṭṭakalappu pūrva carittiram* says:

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20. *ibid.*, p. 36.



Kaṇṭan, Carupilli, Kaṭṭappattan Kāvuttan, Attiyāyan, Ponnācci and Vayitti are the names of the seven clans (*kuṭi*) into which he had divided the community of *kōvaiciyar*. He assigned them respective duties to be performed at the temple of Śiva and made them swear in the name of gods that they would render the services assigned to them.

Lighting lamps, gathering flowers, removing the dust, polishing the floor, cleaning the vessels, making garlands, beating the drums, preparing the sandal paste, pounding rice, carrying the palanquins during festivals, installing the curtains, preparing the milk-rice served as offering to the gods, providing water and domestic assistance to the chief priest are the duties so assigned by him.

Mākōn declared that even if they were to be made captive, fettered with chains, beaten and tortured by rulers in the future they should not violate the arrangements made by him. If they would transgress his commands they and their descendants up to the seventh generation shall be condemned to hell and a life of poverty for ever.<sup>21</sup>

Besides, the services to be rendered by each community or caste of people are listed in the following order:

1. *mātular*                      cooking the food offerings;
2. *kōyilār*                      grinding the sandal paste;
3. *paṇṭāram*                    distributing the sandal paste and betel leaves;
4. *paṇṭārappillai*            cleaning the premises and streets; polishing the utensils; drawing water; hoisting the flag; ceremonially handing over the *iracamēlam* and the *irācaparai* to the valḷuvar; decorating the streets;
5. *kucavar*                      supplying pots and other earthen ware;

21. *maṭṭakkalappumānmiyam paṭippācīriyar vittuvān* F.X.C. naṭarācā. maṭṭakkalappu, (2nd impression), 1998. pp. 78 - 79.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 6. <i>kollar</i>  | supplying knives, axes and such other implements of iron;  |
| 7. <i>mutalikal</i>   | supplying cloth for decorating the idols and burning lamps.  |
| 8. <i>vāṇipar</i>   | supplying oils; pouring oils into the lamps;   |
| 9. <i>nampikaḷ</i>  | carrying fireballs;  |
| 10. <i>vaṇṇār</i>   | cleaning the garments;   |
| 11. <i>ampattar</i>   | hair dressing;   |
| 12. <i>cāṇār</i>  | cutting tender coconut leaves and flower shoots for decorations;   |
| 13. <i>paḷḷar</i>   | supplying syrup (treacle) for auspicious occasions; cutting the woods and preparing the funeral pyre on the crematorium; |
| 14. <i>paraiyar</i>   | beating the drums; laying the foot-cloth, pāvātai at funeral processions;  |
| 15. <i>tavacikaḷ</i>  | making garlands and decorating the pandals;  |
| 16. <i>kaṭaiyar</i>   | supplying lime powder;   |
| 17. The <i>mātular</i> , <i>kōviyar</i> , <i>kōyilār</i> , <i>paṇṭāram</i> , <i>paṇṭārapillaḷ</i> and the <i>tavaci</i> | were obliged to erect pandals and decorate them. <sup>22</sup>   |

## Temple lands

Tradition claims that in former times kings, princes and chieftains had made grants of land to this temple. The records of such grants have not been maintained and a large proportion of the temple property has been appropriated by tenant cultivators and others. Some plots of lands on which cultivation had been abandoned are presently covered with shrub jungle. Records pertaining to temple lands acquired since the beginning of the 19th century are available, and presently the temple owns about 260 acres of paddy fields. Most of these were donated during the past two-hundred years by some pious devotees and prosperous land-owners. They are in ten plots in different localities and may be listed in the following order:

1. Tēḷilā munaikkaṇṭam-Ceṅkal cuṭṭān māri - 28 acres

22. *ibid*, p. 103.

2. Tēlilā munaikkaṇṭam-Kannakkuṭā	- 21 acres
3. Cevukapparru-Uppaḷam	- 27 acres
4. Cevukapparru-Kiḷalkaṇṭam Kāla vayal	- 75 acres
5. Turaiyaṭi munmāri-Kokkaṭṭiccōlai	- 12 acres
6. Kannakuṭā - Kāyānmaṭu	- 10 acres
7. Kollanmalaikkaṇṭam	- 06 acres
8. Pēril Kāl pōṭṭa maṭu	- 11 acres
9. Ālaiyaṭi munmāri - Karaiyākkamaṭu	- 06 acres
10. Attiyā munmari	- 98 acres

Of these lands the 98 acre plot at Attiyā munmāri is in the possession of Kuñcilaipaypōṭi *vannimai* and Katirāmappōṭi *vannimai* while all the others are in the possession of the temple. Periodically they are rented out on auction for cultivation. Six acres of the field called Turaiyaṭi munmāri has been allocated to the *kurukkaḷ*, temple priests. This field and those at Uppaḷam and Cēvukapparru are said to be lands granted by kings in olden days. The other lands were granted by devotees and well wishers. The land at Paljikoṇṭānveḷi was granted for the settlement of priests attached to the temple.<sup>23</sup>

It is customary for the cultivators of fields in the whole of *paṭuvāṇkarai* to make a small contribution from the yield to the temple, at the time of the harvest. From each field a bundle of the harvested crop is given as a contribution to the temple, and this is collected by the agents of the temple. The large amount of paddy collected in this manner is used for meeting the expenses incurred in respect of day to day affairs of the temple.<sup>24</sup>

## Rituals and Festivals

Rituals and worship at Tāntōṇṛśvaram, as at most other temples in Batticaloa, are conducted by Caṅkamar called *kurukkaḷ*, in accordance with the Vīraśaiva tradition as laid down in the *vīrākamam*.

23. eivacampu taṭcaṇamūrtti. "Kokkaṭṭiccōlai...". *ilaṅkaiyin intukkoyilkaḷ pakuti* 1. pp. 39 - 41.

24. *ibid.* p. 41.

They claim descent from ancestors who had come to the island from Nākārjunapuram in India during the time of Mākōn. They wear the metallic figure of the *linkam* which is held in position by means of a thread worn round the neck. They officiate as priests and conduct all the rituals and worship at the temple. Their Lingāyat associations and the traditions of their origins suggest that Vīraśaivism had exerted a strong influence over the Hindu communities of Batticaloa in medieval times. This is a matter which deserves a special and detailed investigation as it is presently a closed chapter in the history of religion in Sri Lanka. Presently the traces of Vīraśaivism at Kokkaṭṭiccōlai are noticeable only in external observances.

Worship is conducted at the temple thrice daily; in the early hours of the morning, at noon and during twilight in the evening. Festivals are conducted on special occasions such as *taipponkal*, *taippūcam paṅkuni uttaram*, *New year*, *tirukkārttikai*, *mārkaḷit tiruvāirai*, *civarāttiri* and *kantacatti*. On each of these occasions special rites are performed in accordance with textual prescriptions.

The annual festival, generally known as *tērōṭṭam*, commences on the New Moon day in the month of āvaṇi (August - September) and lasts on average for eighteen days.<sup>25</sup> The festival on the day previous to the Car festival is the responsibility of the Ceṭṭi-Vellālar. The festivals during the period preceding that occasion are conducted by the community of Mukkuvar, each of the seven days being allocated to one of the seven *kuṭis* of that community. The first ten festivals are conducted by the communities traditionally engaged in the performance of temple services.

During the first ten days of the annual festival the images are

25. In former times the annual festival was conducted in the month of paṅkuni (March - April). Nowadays the festival commences on the New Moon day of the month of āvaṇi (August-September) and ends with the water-cutting ceremony (tirttam) on the day following that of the Full-Moon. The duration of the annual festival could vary from 17 to 19 days. Vi. Ci. Kantaiya. *maṭṭakkalappuc caivak kōyilal*, p. 27; civaṇampu taṭcaṇāmūrti. "Kokkaṭṭiccōlai...", *ilaṅkaṭṭi intukkōyilal*, pakui 1. p. 41.



not paraded on vehicles around the temple. The eleventh day festival, the *capparat tiruviḷā* is conducted on a grand scale. The images of deities are taken in procession on an elaborately ornamented wooden car. The images of Civan and Rājarājeśvari flanked on either side by those of Piḷḷaiyār and Murukan. They are placed on the raised platform on the wooden car and taken in precession.<sup>26</sup>

The car festival, *tērōṭṭam*, marks the culmination of activities and celebrations during the season of the annual festival. In former times large numbers of pilgrims from all parts of the littoral on the east visited the temple on the day of this festival. The two chariots used here until recently are the oldest of their kind to be found in the island. According to tradition they were made by artisans brought from India in the year 4060 of the *kaliyukam* on the initiative of Tarumacinkan, a ruler of Maṭṭakkaḷappu. Three chariots are said to have been made during his time. But, presently, there are only two chariots at the temple and there are no traces of a third one. These are called Cittirat tēr and Piḷḷaiyār tēr. They are of different sizes, and the larger one is provided with five wheels which have a diameter of six feet. The base of the cittirattēr is square in shape with each side measuring sixteen feet. The platform on which the idols are placed at a height of 21 feet. Purāṇic themes relating to Śiva are carved with superb skill and remarkable artistic talent on the base of the chariot. The roof is designed in the form of a five storeyed *vimānam* and decorated with ornamental carvings. The sides of the smaller chariot, which has a height of 16 feet, measure 12 feet at the base. Its roof consists of three storeys. The images Śiva and Pārvaṭi in the form of *umānakēśvarar* are placed on the larger chariot while the smaller one carries the images of Piḷḷaiyār and Murukan placed together.<sup>27</sup>

Certain functionaries among those who are bound by custom to perform services at the temple enjoy some privileges in connection with the car festival, *tērōṭṭam*. Before they are decorated for the occasion the chariots are cleaned and polished with oils by the *valluvar*.

26. *ibid.* p. 42.

27. *ibid.* pp. 42 - 43.

The *ūliyakkāṇṇar* or temple servants have the exclusive privilege of decorating the chariots. Those of the Kurukulam of Āraiyaṃpati have to be taken in ceremonial procession to the temple for tying the ropes to the chariots. Once they reach the temple the ropes have to be handed over to them by the *ācāri*. Once the ropes are tied to the chariots the Vanniyar hands over the ropes to the multitude of devotees who set the chariots in motion by pulling the ropes.<sup>28</sup>

Once the idols are placed on the platform of the chariots the temple priests and the *ūliyakkāṇṇar* ascend the platform and conduct the rituals as the chariots are taken one after the other in procession round the temple. Always, the *Piḷlaiyār tēr* is taken first. The larger chariot is taken round with great difficulty on account of its heaviness. The nature of the tract, the surface of which is covered with layers of loose sand, adds to the difficulty of the task. On the conclusion of the car festival, the idols are removed from the chariots and taken in ceremonial procession to the temple and deposited at their usual place of lodgement.

The *vēṭṭaittiruviḷā*, the festival of "hunting" is conducted on the following day. It is an event of considerable significance. It serves to reinforce and legitimize the traditional norms and processes of the ritual ordering of hierarchical society and the exercise of authority over a society organized along such lines. The images of deities are decorated with jewellery and silk garments and taken in procession led by the Vanniyar. The idols are kept on palanquins and taken to the *vēṭṭaittaḷam*, "the hunting ground". While others rest there the Ceṭṭis, with the support of the Vellāḷar "steal" the garland decorated with rubies found on the principal idol. The *paṇṭāram* who witness this act report it to the Vanniyar. He instructs them to seize the Ceṭṭis and Vellāḷar and put them in fetters and beat them. The *paṇṭāram* carry out the instructions of the Vanniyar. Thereafter a mock hunt is enacted. The priest styled *irupākai mutanmai* hands over a spear to *kanakacapaip paṇṭāram* who attacks an object made of flour in the shape of a hog. The proceedings that follow this incident are of special interest. All

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28. *ibid.* p. 43.

those who participate in the proceedings assemble together. The Vanniyar chiefs sit by the side of the idols. The three *vannakkar* of the temple occupy positions close to them. All others would be seated around them. In the meantime a person of the *paṭaiyāṇṭa kuṭi* would recite a text called *kuṭukkai kūrum kalvetṭu*.

After the reading is over the Ceṭṭis and Vellālar are released and powdered saffron diluted in water is sprinkled over them. The Vellālar then distribute the earthen pots filled with the offerings to those present in the assembly in order of their respective ritual ranking.

The rituals performed at the annual festival at Kokkatticcōlai are unusual and have implications relating to the structure of social organization in the eastern littoral of Sri Lanka. the Vanniyar, who figures prominently in the proceedings, is at the apex of the hierarchy of traditional ranks and on account of his rank he is the custodian of laws, customs and institutions. The festival provides an occasion for him to ritually assert in public that position. The tying and beating of the Ceṭṭis and the Vellālar by the paṇṭāram, who were normally reckoned to be of a lower status is in conflict with the general understanding of traditional norms governing caste based hierarchical societies. On the other hand the treatment meted out to the Vellālar and Ceṭṭis for having committed an offence presupposes the subordination of all classes to the political authority. It also reinforces the notion that the Vanniyar, who exercised authority as the local ruler, was the custodian of the laws and customs of the country. Another consideration that arises from a scrutiny of the accounts relating to the temple festival is the removal of contradictions in a traditional society where social organization was based on the hierarchical ranking of castes and the requirements of a polity in which the hierarchical order of ranks ignored, at some levels, the norms of a caste based society. It would seem that the rituals conducted at the conclusion of the festival represent a readjustment of social relations and hierarchical ranking on account of Mukkuvar dominance and the inspiration provided by the ideology of Vīraśaivism.



# Nakulēśvaram

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Y. Cellaiya.

The temple of Śiva at Kīrimalai, which is perhaps the oldest temple of Śiva in the Jaffna peninsula had two names: Nakulēśvaram and Tiruttampalēśvaram. It occupies a prominent position among the Hindu temples in the northern part of the island on account of its importance as a pilgrimage centre and the close connections it had with kingship as represented in the local tradition. There is reason to believe that this temple had its origin as a centre of the Śaiva sect called Nakulēśvara Pacupata(m). For hundreds of years, pilgrims from all parts of Jaffna have been visiting Kīrimalai during the festival season and on certain occasions of special religious significance. Its location at the sacred site on the northern coast of Jaffna where the post funerary rites of *capinīkaraṇam* and *asticañcayanam* are conducted have invested it with a degree of sanctity comparable with that of Katirkāmam, Koṇēśvaram and Tirukkētiśvaram.

Some traditions relating to the origins of Nakulēśvaram were recorded in the *yālppāna vaipavamālai*. Its author, Mayilvākanap pulavar, who lived in the 18th century, says:

“King Vijaya had established four temples of Śiva in the four quarters for protecting them, before assuming the reins of power. In the eastern quarter he established the Kōṇēcar Kōyil of Tampalakāmam. In the western quarter he renovated the temple of Tirukkētiśvaram which was in a state of decay. In the southern quarter he constructed the temple of Cantiracēkarēśvaram. In the northern quarter were constructed the temples of Tiruttampalēcuran and Tiruttampalēcuvāri. In proximity to these temples the shrine of Katiraiyāṇṭavar was established. For the purpose of conducting worship at these temples he had brought Vāmatēva-ācāriyar, a Brahmin from



Kāśi, who was the third son of Nīlakaṇṭha-ācāriyan, and his spouse Vicālāṭci Ammāl. He created an *akkirakāram* and settled them.”<sup>1</sup>

The foregoing account is anachronistic and confused. It cannot be the basis any historical investigation. Yet, two important points that arise from a scrutiny of this account have to be noted. The first relates to the antiquity of Tiruttampalēcuram and the other is the concept of a guardian god of Lanka as found among the Śaiva Tamils of Jaffna.<sup>2</sup> During the 18th century, when the *yālpāṇa vaipavamālai* was written, there was no temple at Kīrimalai. The old temple at the site had been destroyed by the Portuguese. But memories of that temple had persisted in the minds of people and the site where it had stood was venerated as a sacred one. Mayilvākanap pulavar, the author of the chronicle, who was a resident of the adjacent village of Mātakal, seems to be recording the beliefs and impressions his contemporaries had of Nakulēśvaram. The belief was that it was a temple of great antiquity, and one which had connections with the royalty. The chronology of the origins and development of the temple cannot be precisely determined as there is no archaeological evidence or contemporary literary notices. The claim that the temple was established by King Vijaya is unfounded and the royalty that seems to have had close connexions with this temple were entrenched in positions of power and authority, locally at a much later period.<sup>3</sup> The ideas that could be extracted from an examination of the

1. *mātakal mayilvākanap pulavar eḷutiya yālpāṇa vaipavamālai (Ym) mutaliyār kula capāṇāṇan avarkaḷ eḷutiya arāyēccik kurippukaḷuṭan, intucamaya kalācāra aluvakaḷ, tinaikkalām, (mūnṛāṇ patippu)*, kolūmpu, 1995, pp. 6 - 7.
2. The concept of guardian gods had become an integral part of Buddhism in Sri Lanka since the 14th century. Nātha, Viṣṇu Kanda Kumāra and Pattini have been reckoned as the four guardian gods since the beginnings of the Kandyan kingdom. In an earlier period Saman, Vibhīṣaṇa and Upulvan were included within this category but by the 17th century they had given way to others. The Hindu Tamils of Jaffna, who seem to have been aware of this tradition, seem to have modified the concept in the context of Śaivite ideology. So we have the notion that Vicayarācan established temples of Śiva in the four directions with a view to provide security to his kingdom. According to this concept Śiva takes over the role of custodianship of Lanka.
3. Elsewhere, the *Ym* states that the Kings of Jaffna had a close connection with the temples at Kīrimalai. *Ym.*, p. 32.

account of the temple of Kīrimalai as found in the *yālppāṇa vaipavamālai* may be formulated as follows:

- (1) During the time of its author it was considered that the temple of Kīrimalai was of the same antiquity as Kōnēśvaram;
- (2) there were in former times, two separate temples dedicated for Tiruttampalēcuvaran and Tiruttampalēcuvari at Kīrimalai;
- (3) Nakulēśvaram was considered to be the oldest and the most important of the temples of Śiva in Jaffna; and (4) there was an *akkirakāram* of considerable antiquity at Kōyirkaṭavai, the residents of which had served as priests of the temple from ancient times.

There are some myths which seek to explain the origins of the temple of Kīrimalai. One of them pertains to a person called Nakulamuni about whom the *yālppāṇa vaipavamālai* records the following account:

“Once upon a time a person called Nakulamuni had lived at the foot of the cliff found there. He had his ablutions at the sanctified spot in the sea, and as a result of which he found that his facial deformity was removed. He was surprised at this development and came to believe that waters of the sea at that spot had miraculous powers. On account of that impression he decided on Kīrimalai as the most suitable site for him to settle down and perform his austerities. As his deformity, which had transformed the appearance of his face into that of a mongoose had disappeared in consequence of the magical potency of the waters on that spot the site was called Kīrimalai by the people.

“Once the temple of Śiva was constructed by King Vijaya (*vicayarācan*) at that site, Nakulamuni lived in the premises of that temple and performed regular worship. It was on that account that the temples of Tiruttampalēcurar and

Tirutampalēcuvari came to be known as those of Nakelēśvaram and Nakulāmpikai.”<sup>4</sup>

*nakulam* is the Sanskrit equivalent of *kīri*, the Tamil word for mongoose. The stories pertaining to Nakulamuni and his associations with Kīrimalai and Nakulēśvaram seems to have originated on the basis of the associations of the *nakulēca pācupatar* with the locality.

An account of Kīrimalai is found in the *takṣiṇa kailācapurāṇam*. It records:

“A *kantaruvan*, Cucaṅkītan by name, had witnessed the mighty Irāvaṇan playing on the *yāl* instrument, at the sacred site of Kōṇam, to the great delight of Śiva and Pārvaṭi who were residing there. The *kantaruvan* who was captivated by the musical notes of that instrument became desirous of possessing it, and was waiting for an opportunity to seize it.

He had the opportunity when the mighty Irāvaṇan was struck down with an arrow of Rāma. The *kantaruvan* assumed a human form, seized the *yāl* instrument of Irāvaṇan and proceeded to Kīrimalai, and after an ablution at the sacred *tīrttam* played on the *yāl*. The sound of his wonderful notes reverberated throughout the quarters and permeated the heavens. Śiva, who was deeply appreciative of his performance, appeared before him, and as a reward for his skill, conferred on him the authority for establishing a kingdom and city called *vīṇāpaṇam* after clearing the jungle. Thereby, Cucaṅkītan cleared the jungle, created settlements, renovated the dilapidated shrines, established the city and made arrangements for conducting regular worship at Nakulēśvaram.”<sup>5</sup>

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4. *Ym.*, pp. 7 - 8

5. *takṣinakailāca purāṇam*, paṭippācīriyar Ka. Civacitaṁpara Aiyar, Kalāratnākara accuṅkūṭam. cennai. 1887, *tirunakaraṇa caruṅkam*, vv. 15 - 18.



In this account, which is probably the earliest version of the account of Yālppāṇan, the temple of Kīrimalai is associated with the origins of the kingdom and the city called Yālppāṇam. A close scrutiny of the elements of this story suggests that there was a general belief that Nakulēśvaram was a famous and ancient temple which had existed from the days of the earliest settlements of agricultural communities within the peninsula of Jaffna.

Legends pertaining to Kīrimalai as a sacred centre are to be found in the account of Mārutappiravalli about whom the *yālppāṇa vaipavamālai* records:

“The Cōla governor called *ticaiyukkira* Cōlan had a daughter called Mārutappuravalli. She was suffering from an incurable disease on account of which her body had become emaciated. As she found that her disease could not be cured by physicians she decided to seek relief through pilgrimages to sacred sites. She set out from Kāviriippūmpattinam and went on pilgrimage to many temples. In the course of her wanderings she came across a *canniyāci* called Cāntalinkan. He said to her: “your disease cannot be cured by any specialist or professional physician. It is the course that you have now undertaken that will bear results. There is on the northern coast of Ilankai a peak called Kīrimalai. It is on the sea-coast. There is a confluence of a stream of fresh water flowing from the highland with the waters of the sea. It is the most important among all the sacred sites for ablutions. If you reach there and have ablutions at that site, you will be cured of your painful disease.”

“Thereupon, Mārutappiravalli set out on the journey to Ilankai, accompanied by a large retinue of companions, attendants and warriors, and landed at a spot in the vicinity of Kīrimalai. She encamped at the locality called Kumārattipallam. There, she had the occasion to meet Nakulamuni and receive his blessings. He had told her of the sacred character of Kīrimalai and as to how he was relieved of his facial deformity in



consequence of his association with that sacred site. Mārutappiravalli continued to have ablutions at this site and regularly propitiated God enshrined at Nakulēśvaram. In due course she was cured of her disease and her facial deformity which had the likeness of a horse's face was removed. She had regained her natural appearance of incomparable beauty."

"Around that time Ukkiraciṅkan came to perform worship at Nakulēśvaram. He had come on his third visit to Kīrimalai and encamped at the locality called Vaḷavarkōṇ paḷḷam. He met Mārutappiravalli at the temple of Nakulēśvaram. As he was attracted by her exceedingly beautiful appearance he desired to have her as his spouse."<sup>6</sup>

The foregoing legendary account represents a combination of four traditions; the story of Nakulamuni; the legend of Mārutappiravalli; the tradition pertaining to the legend of Ukkiraciṅkan and folk-etymology pertaining to the toponyms Kumāratti-paḷḷam and Vaḷavarkōṇ-paḷḷam.

The first two elements in the account are legends pertaining to the sanctity of Kīrimalai. It was according to tradition, the site of holy waters which had the efficacy of healing incurable diseases and physical deformities. It was here that Nakulamuni regained his natural form after sacred ablutions. The Cōla princess Mārutappiravalli had a similar experience and through divine blessings she became the consort of a ruler. The legend of Mārutappiravalli seems to contain some faint traces of the confused memories of the activities of a Cōla prince and his consort at Kīrimalai.

During the period of the Ārya Cakravarttis the temple of Kīrimalai had received the support and patronage of the Kings of Jaffna. The first King, Ciṅkaiyāriyan, who established Nallūr as the capital of the Kingdom is said to have had connections with Kīrimalai:

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6. *Ym.*, pp. 15 - 18.

The *yālppāṇa vaipavamālai* says:

"The King Cīṅkaiyāriyan and his minister Puvanēkavāku had gone to Kīrimalai where they worshipped at the temple after having sacred ablutions. They proclaimed that the affairs of the temple should be under the purview of the King's officers and later they proceeded to the Kantacuvāmi Kōyil, where they were hosted by the priest Citampara Tīṭcitar, a son of Periyamanattuḷār.<sup>7</sup>

The impression that the temple of Kīrimalai is one of the oldest temples of Śiva in the entire Jaffna peninsula and that it was one of principal Hindu temples in that region prior to the Portuguese occupation around 1620 is confirmed by the foregoing account. It may also be noted that in all legends and traditions pertaining to the origins of settlements in Jaffna and the origins of kingship in that region the temple of Kīrimalai is accorded an important position. It was a temple of such antiquity as to be reckoned as one founded by Vicayarācan, the first in the line of the Kings of Lanka. In the Story of Cucan̄kītan as found in the *takṣiṇa kailācapurāṇam*, which is the earliest version of the legend of *yālppāṭi* found in literature Kīrimalai is mentioned as a sacred site. It is reckoned as the holiest of all sacred places in the traditions of Mārutappiravalli and Ukkiraciṅkan. The account of Cīṅkaiyāriyan as found in the *yālppāṇa vaipavamālai* suggests that the temple at Kīrimalai was supported and administered by the Kings of Jaffna.

### *The Architectural Components*

There is a tradition that there were three *pirakāram* and five entrance towers (*kōpuram*) at Nakulēśvaram before its destruction by the Portuguese. It is said that on the death of their *protégé*, Pararācaciṅka mutali, even the temples such as Nakulēśvaram, the Kantacuvāmi Kōyil at Māvīṭṭapuram and the Kantacuvāmi Kōyil at Nallūr, which had been spared earlier, were destroyed. At that time

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7. *takṣiṇakailācapurāṇam* (1887), tirunakaraccarukkam, vv. 15 - 18.

the Brahmin called Paracupāṇi Aiyar is said to have thrown into wells the images and other precious objects belonging to the temples of Kīrimalai.<sup>8</sup> In like manner a large number of images in stone and metal had been buried underground. In later years some of these were recovered by chance during the course of excavations but, so far, none of the images that had belonged to the temples of Kīrimalai has come to light.

Śaivism revived in Jaffna during the 19th century as there was no prohibition of non-Christian religious practices under the British administration. The temples of Kīrimalai were restored after a period 260 years after their destruction. On the 24th day of the month of Vaikāci in 1878 Ārumuka Nāvalar published a pamphlet on the temple of Kīrimalai. Commenting on his contribution to the restoration of the temple his biographer T. Kailācapillai says:

"The temple which existed at Kīrimalai in Yālpāṇam in former times was destroyed (by aliens). As he wished that a new temple should be constructed at that site he wrote a pamphlet under the title *kīrimalaic civan kōyil* and published it in his own name. He visited and inspected the site and appealed to Brahmin priests to take an interest in the matter. The temple found presently was constructed at the site selected by him and was a culmination of the steps he had taken"<sup>9</sup>

In a booklet he had published in the month of Aippaci in the year Cittirapānu, which coincided with 1882 A.D., Ka. Tiyaṅkarācak kurukkal has recorded in detail the activities of Ārumuka Nāvalar in relation to the temple of Kīrimalai. The construction of the temple was completed with the support of V. Arumukam of Vaṇṇārpaṇnai and other philanthropists and the consecration ceremony was held in the month of Āni (June-July).

In 1918 there was an accidental fire on account of which the buildings had suffered considerable damage. Repairs and renovations

8. *Ym.* pp. 15 - 19

9. *ibid.* p. 81



were undertaken periodically since that time. In 1953 the reconsecration ceremony was conducted on a grand scale by Śaiva dignitaries highly proficient in the Śivāgamas, who were brought from India. Since 1955 the annual festival was conducted and since 1976 such a festival has been conducted at the Amman temple also.

The principal architectural components of the temple of Śiva at Kīrimalai are the *mūlastānam*, *arttamaṇṭapam*, *mahamaṇṭapam*, *nirutta maṇṭapam*, subsidiary shrines, the entrance tower and the *pirakāram* all of which have been laid out according to the principles of *silpa sāstra*. The basement has been constructed with white sandstone. The pillars carved with ornamental designs and the storeys of the *vimānam* are also of the same kind of stone. In the niches of the southern wall of the *garbhagṛha* are figures of Dakṣiṇāmūrti and Lingodhbhava. On the day of *mahācivarāttiri* the images of Lingodhbhava is consecrated and special worship is performed.

The scene of the *tirukkalyāṇam* of Pārvati and Paramēśvaran is painted on the front wall of the *nirutta maṇṭapam*. The scene depicting Brahma as the officiating priest and Viṣṇu in the role of performing the *kanyā tānam* is represented here with consummate skill. The churning of the milky ocean by the gods and asuras; the spread of *ālakālam*, the poison emitted by the serpent Vāsuki, over the world, Śiva as Nīlakaṇṭhan absorbing the poison and retaining it in his throat; the descent of the Ganges from the skies, for the deliverance of humanity, in response to the penance of Bhagīratha are the principal purāṇic themes depicted with a telling effect on the walls of this temple.

Around the principal shrines and within the enclosure walls are found subsidiary shrines dedicated for the worship of Piḷlaiyār, Caṇmukar, Cōmaskantar, Makāviṣṇu, Mahālakṣmī and Śiva in the form of *pañcalīṅkam*. The shrines of Vairavar and the planetary gods, *navakkirakam*, are located to the east of the main temple. There is provision to carry the images of deities enshrined in the subsidiary shrines on festival processions. The image of Natarāja facing the south is found installed on the northern side of the *nirutta maṇṭapam*. There



is a temple of Durga on the northern side, within the second *pirakāram*. The *navarāttiri* and *mānampū* festivals are annually celebrated at this temple.

At Nakulēśvaram the daily rituals and festivals are conducted according to the prescriptions of the Āgamas. Activities at the temple commence during the early hours of the morning with the *tiruppalli elucci* and worship accompanied with rituals are conducted six times daily. *mātappirappu*, *varuṣap pīrappu*, *cittiraip paurṇami*, *vaikāci vicākam*, *āṇi uttiram*, *āvaṇi mūlam*, *mānampu*, *purattātic canivāram*, *aippaci vellī*, *kārttikai viḷakītu*, *tīrudevempāvai*, *ekātaci*, *taipponikal*, *taippūcam*. *māci makam*. *paṅkuni uttaram* are among the special occasions on which festivals are conducted at the temple. Besides, the rituals on the day of *cōmavāram* in each month assume the proportions of an elaborate festival. In the month of *kārttikai* (Nov.-Dec.) these festivals are concluded with *caṅkāpiṣēkam*. On Fridays a large number of pious devotees, who observe fasts, visit the temple. On Saturdays in the month of *purattāci* festivals are conducted at Nakulēśvaram. On the last Saturday of that month devotees from all parts of Jaffna visit the temple. On that occasion they burn lamps with gingily oil at the shrine of the planetary gods. Besides, expiatory rites are conducted on that occasion to ward off the evil influences of planets.

The annual festival at the temple of Śiva is conducted in the month of *māci* and it ends with the water cutting ceremony on the day of *civarāttiri*. The annual festival at the Amman shrine is celebrated in the later part of the month of *paṅkuni*. It is concluded with the car-festival on the New-year day. Large number of pilgrims congregate at the temple premises during the festival season. There are some arrangements for providing shelter and accommodation to a limited number of them, in the vicinity of the temple.

The tradition of *purānapatanam* or recital of the texts belonging to the category of *purānam*, is widely prevalent in Jaffna where it had deep roots in the religious traditions developed by the Śaivites in medieval times. The tradition has had a close connection with

Nakulēśvaram for a long period of time. The *purāṇapātanam* involves the recitation of a whole text over a period of time. Generally the recitation is done by a pious and learned man. As the text is in verse the recitation is followed with a commentarial exposition by others. It assumes the form a religious rite in which a large number of devotees participate as a congregation.

The *kantapurāṇam*, *periyapurāṇam*, *tiruvilaiyārtapurāṇam* and *tiruvātavūratikal purāṇam* are texts that are recited in temples in this manner. In addition to them the *nakulālaya purāṇam* and *ekāṭacippurāṇam* are recited at Nakulēśvaram. The recitation of the *periyapurāṇam* and the *nakulālaya purāṇam* is always conducted in front of the *kotittampam* of the main temple. The recitation of the *kantapurāṇam* takes place at the shrine of Murukan whereas the *ekāṭacippurāṇam* is recited at the shrine of Visnu. During the period of the *tiruvempāvai* festival in the month of *mārkaḷi* (December-January) the recitation of the *tiruvātavūratikal purāṇam* accompanied by a commentarial exposition is conducted annually.

The *purāṇapātanam* at Nakulēśvaram, as at any other temple, is conducted with a great deal of solemnity and religiousness. In conformity with an old custom the *purāṇapātanam* at the temples of Kirimalai is inaugurated by Brahmin priests who are subsequently joined by others. Ērampa aiyar, Appācāmi aiyar *vittuvacirōmani* Ponnampalapillai and *Ta. Kailācapillai* were some of the learned men who had contributed to the development of this tradition into an exercise combining scholastic skill of a high order with a deep knowledge of the Hindu religious and philosophical tradition. The high standard to which it was elevated by these men was in subsequent times maintained by Cankarappillai of Karukampānai, Katirippillai, Cankarapillai and Namaśivāyam all of whom were men of high accomplishments in Tamil learning.

## Literary Traditions

The Śaiva revival in Jaffna during the 19th century and the reconstruction of temples, which were earlier destroyed during the early phase of European colonial occupation led to a upsurge of literary activity inspired by religious piety and the basic elements of Śaiva literary heritage. A large number of poems of the category of *pirapantam* were produced in the 19th century. These were devoted to the glorification and description of temples and the deities enshrined in them. The authors were men of learning who were conversant with the works on grammar, poetics and *caivacittāntam*.

The most important of the treatises on Nakulēśvaram is the *nakulācala purāṇam* written by Ērampa Aiyar (1847-1914), a son of Cuppiramaṇiya Cātiriyār of Mātakal. He was a disciple of two renowned scholars in Tamil, Campantap Pulavar of Nallūr and Cankara Paṇṭitar of Nīrvēli. He is said to have been the author of *nīti cāttiram*, *nākēśvari tōttiram*, *kuvalālampūr civaperumān uñcal*, *kavaṇāvattai vairavar uñcal*, *mātakarpiḷḷaiyār uñcal* and *kālikkatirēcar uñcal*.<sup>10</sup> The *nakulācala purāṇam* belongs to the class of works called *talapurāṇam* and in this text the legends pertaining to Kīrimalai have been recorded in an elaborate form. A commentary on this work was written by Ce. civappirakācam.

Another text, the *nakulēśvara māṇimiyam*, was written in Sanskrit by paṇṭitar Ca. Civappirakācam of Nīrvēli and this text was translated into Tamil by A. Kumāracāmi-pulavar.<sup>11</sup> The *nakulamalaik kuṇavañci* written by Vicuvanata cāttiriyār of Araly is a work of considerable poetic merit. The author, who lived during the mid-nineteenth century, was a son of Nārāyana Cāttiriyar, a descendant of Irāmaliṅkar who published the *vākkiya paṇcankam* (almanac) on

10. Ta. Kailācapillai. *sīlasrī ārumukanāvalar carittiram*, *ārumuka nāvalar vittiyāṇupāṇana accakam*, cennai (*nāṅkām paṭippu*), 1955, pp. 95 - 96.

11. *Ḥattut tamilk kavitaik kalañciyam* tokuppācīriyar kalāṇiti A Catācivam, Cākkittiya mantalam, koḷumpu, 1966. p. 266.



16-05-1667.<sup>12</sup> The sanctity of Kīrimalai and the legends of Mārutappiravalli and Ukkiracīnkan are described in this *kuravañci* with considerable poetic merit. The authorship of the text called *vaṇṇaikkuravañci* is also attributed to him.

*Nakulēcar uñcal* written by Kumāracāmp pulavar is recited at the conclusion of the water cutting ceremony at the end of the annual festival. The *pirapantam* called *nakulēcar catakam* is said to have been a work of *paṇṭitar* Namacivāyam. There are several texts of the class of *kīrttanai* on Nakulēśvaram composed by Ce. Civacuppiramaṇiyam. The *nakulēcuvarar vinōta vicittira kavip pūñkottu* is a work of ornate style written by Mayilvākanap pulavar (1875-1918). He was a resident of Varuttalaiviḷān, and was a son of Kaṇapatippillai. He was a student of Kumāracāmp pulavar of Cuṇṇākam. *Mayilai mummaṇimālai, vināyakarakaval, mayilaic cuppiramaṇiyar viruttam, uñcal, vairavar tōttiram, māvaip patikam, iṇuvaip patikam and tuṇaivaip patikam* are some of the texts attributed to him.<sup>13</sup>

In conclusion it may be stated that Nakulēśvaram at Kīrimalai, is one of the oldest temples of Śiva in Sri Lanka. As a centre of the Hindu religious tradition it has played a key role in the development and sustenance of the ideology and practice of Śaivism with a local flavour in the peninsula of Jaffna.

12. ibid,

13. ibid, p. 154

14. ibid, p. 154 - 6

This account of Nakulēśvaram is the translation by the editor of an article written in Tamil and published earlier elsewhere. *vittuvan va. Cellaiyā, "Kīrimalaic civan kōyil", ilankaiyin intukkōyilkal, pakuti I, patippācīriyar pēracīriyar ci. patmanātan, intucamaya kalācāra aluvalkal tinaikkalam, kolumpu, 1994.*



# The Temple of Tampalakamam

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V. Varathasuntharam

Āti Kōṇanāyakar Cuvāmi Kōyil is the principal Hindu temple in Tampalakamam, which is situated about 24 kilometres from the town of Trincomalee and is surrounded by a vast stretch of paddy-fields. The temple has as its main components the *garbhagrha* or adytum, *artha maṇṭapam*, *makāmaṇṭapam*, *snapana maṇṭapam*, *stampa maṇṭapam* and *irācakōpuram*, of which the sanctum or adytum is about 350 years old and the entrance tower, the *irācakōpuram*, is a recent addition to the building complex. The smaller structures between these two parts have been renovated or reconstructed from time to time ever since the temple was originally established in the 17th century. The temple, which is mainly of stone construction is surrounded by a circumambulatory or *pradakṣiṇa pāṭha* enclosed by a brick wall beyond which there is an outer *prakāra*.<sup>1</sup>

There are separate shrines for Gaṇeśa or Piḷḷaiyār, Kantacuvāmi, Caṇṭēcar and the nine planetary deities. An image of Katirkāma Cuvāmi is installed in the *artha maṇṭapam*. The Amman shrine to which an *artha maṇṭapam* is attached houses the image of the Goddess called *Hamsagamanāmbikai*. The metallic images of Somaskanda, Piḷḷaiyār, Murukan, Vaḷḷi Amman, Teyvayānai Amman, Astiratēvar and Pattini Amman, which are usually taken on festival processions, are lodged in the *makāmaṇṭapam*.<sup>2</sup> In the *snapana*

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1. I. Vaṭivēl, "tampalakamamātīkōṇanāyakar kōyil", *tirukōṇamalai māvaṭṭa tiruttalaṅkaḷ, intucamayai tīṇaikkāḷam, piratēca apivirutti amaiccū*, kōlumpu, 1982, pp. 19 - 25

2. *ibid.* p. 24

*maṇṭāpam* there are images of Natarāja and Sivakāmi. The existence of a separate shrine for *Āṭi kōṇanāyakar* in this temple is significant as providing an indication of its origins. This particular shrine seems to have been so named on account of the fact that the idols installed in it had originally belonged to the temple of Kōṇēcar on the peak of Kōṇam, the sacred promontary at Trincomalee on the eastern coast of the island.

The temple of Tampalakamam seems to have been established in the 17th century after the Portuguese conquistadors had destroyed Kōṇēśvaram, occupied Trincomalee and fortified it. According to the testimony of Queyroz the work of the destruction of the temple occurred in April 1624 and was carried out by the Portuguese soldiers under the command of the Captain General, Constantine de Sa de Noronha.<sup>3</sup> This temple was the successor and the substitute for the ancient temple of Kōṇēśvaram. Such an impression is supported by the tradition recorded in the *Tirukōṇācala purāṇam*, a text which was written during the period of the Kandyan Kings. The account of the origins of this temple as found in the *Tirukōṇācala purāṇam* may be summarized here as follows:

"In those days men of evil ways created disturbances, surrounded the illustrious town of Trincomalee (*minnulām tirukōṇamānakar*), occupied it and held sway there by sheer military power. The Brahmins who were well versed in the scriptures and other old residents who had suffered under these wicked men took up residence at Kaḷanimalai, where they continued to propitiate Śiva. After having passed some time in this manner, out of fear on account of the misdeeds of those evil men, they removed the images of our Great Lord, of the Goddess and of the infant God and entered the realm of the king of Kandy (*Cēnkaṭaka mānakar*). They

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3. Fernao de Queyroz, *The Temporal And Spiritual conquest of Ceylon*, tran. S.G.Perera. Book I, Colombo. 1930, p.238.

established a temple and installed the images there. The Brahmins conducted worship regularly at that temple and the people lived in contentment."<sup>4</sup>

The foregoing account presupposes that there was a catastrophe in the town of Trincomalee on account of an invasion by a hostile party. As the invaders were hostile to Śaivism the Brahmin priests and other residents who were humiliated by the newcomers into the town, removed the principal images, which were obviously attached to a Śaiva temple and proceeded to the locality called Kaḷanimalai and tarried there for some time. Subsequently, they moved out from there and entered the territory which came under the suzerainty of the ruler of Kandy. Then a temple was erected and the idols which they had taken with them were deposited there in.

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4. anna nāḷitai nicarkaḷ kalakam uṇṭākkī  
tunnukinṟiṭu cēnaikaḷ toṭarntu cūḷ pōta  
minṇulām tirikōṇa mānakariṭai mēvi  
manniyē iruntu aracu ceytanar valimaiyināl.

āḷila maṇai antaṇar āti marṟu ēnōr  
nicar taṅkaḷāl varuntiyum neṇimuṇai tavaṇātu  
kācūḷa maṇi aruvi pāy kaḷaniyam kiriyin  
vācamāy aran pūcanai marapinil purintē.

aṇṭarum kalar tani uṇātavan mutalānōr  
tiraṇṭa nicarāl varum iṭar tirttu aruḷ ennā  
maruṇṭa tēvaraip param ena matippavar manam pōl  
iruṇṭa kaṇṭanait tinam tinam toḷutu iruntanarāl.

āna cireila pakal kaḷintitūtalum aṭāta  
inar cey anucitaṅkaḷukku aṇciyē emaiyāl  
vānavan tanai maṅkaikai makavoṭu koṭu ceṇṟu  
ūnam aṇṭa ceṅkaṭaka mānakariṭai uṇṇar.

aṅku oru ālayamum iyaṇṇiyē amalanaṇai vaittut  
tēṅkum anpoṭum pūcurar pūcanai ceyyap  
pūṅkalal tuṇai pōṇṇiyē yāvarum pukaḷntu  
ninkal illatōr viruppu taṇ nitam toḷutu iruntār.  
*tirikōṇācala purāṇam* (first published by yāḷppāṇam vaṇṇainakar a. caṇmukarattina  
aiyar in 1909) *intucamaya kalācāra aluvalkaḷ tīṇaikkaḷam* (2nd impression) koḷumpu.  
1997, *naimittikaḷ paṭalam*, verses 46 - 50. pp. 350 - 351.



It is relevant to consider here the observations recorded by Van Senden, the Governor of Trincomalee, in his Diary, after his visit to this temple. In a note which was written on 7th June 1784, he says:

"In the evening I went to visit the celebrated temple of Tamblegamme, the situation of which is from E. to W. in length. The Brahmin Chief Priest, accompanied by some others received me, and gave me the usual gift of a lime and some flowers. I requested him to show me the two venerated images, the only ones saved from the temple of a thousand pillars, on the arrival of the Portuguese. After much difficulty, which I believe a present which I offered him was very precocious for removing, he acceded to my request. I did not attempt to approach nearer than the first place of prostration, but as the temple was lighted up I managed to discern, with the aid of my telescope, two idols in a sitting posture on a sort of altar. They were so covered with clothes that the faces alone were seen. So the first was the image of the King Koneaser, and on his left in an oblique line, was that of his Queen Isoewerie Ammen. These images were brought from the Coast by the King Kollekote, the founder of the tank of Kantalay, and by him presented to the temple of a thousand pillars. They came originally, according to tradition, from a mountain to the north of the Coast exactly in the centre of the world, and which can now only be attained by the aid of wings. This appears to me to have a metaphorical meaning and to signify that a man should so detach himself from the world and cultivate religion as to become a perfect Saint. At last from what they told me, I considered that there is some allegorical idea of this nature.

"When the ceremonies were over, the priests took an opportunity to represent to me that whilst Tamblegamme was under the king of Kandy, the tenth of the produce of the lands were



collected as a tribute to the prince, who donated a half of that amount or a twentieth share, in favour of the Pagoda; that since the company had taken the entire tax, death had entered the country and the harvest was diminishing yearly. That before the death of the Commandant Schoren they had obtained a promise from him that he could request permission to assign at least 600 parrahs of paddy yearly for the support of this temple."<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing account is significant as recording information on important aspects of the history of the temple. The two principal idols, those of Kōṇēcar and Īśvari Amman, at the temple of Tampalakamam, were believed to have originally belonged to the temple of the thousand columns at Trincomalee, which was destroyed by the Portuguese in 1624. It was probably on account of the fact that the idols which were originally at Kōṇēśvaram were installed after reconsecration at the temple of Tampalakamam, that this temple had acquired the name "*āti kōṇanāyakar kōyil*" "the temple of the original Lord of Kōṇam". The temple of Tampalakamam had suffered a loss of revenue in consequence of the Dutch occupation of the principality. Previously, the king of Kandy, who had a claim for a tenth of the produce as tribute from the principality, is said to have assigned a half of that amount to the temple of Tampalakamam. The predecessor of Van Senden is said to have made a promise that the grievances of the temple authorities would be conveyed to the higher authorities, who seem to have made a decision in favour of the temple. In a document on customary laws sent to Alexander Johnstone the headman of the division of Tampalakamam pattu

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5. Journal Kept During A Tour In the Districts of Koetjaer, Tamblegam, And Kattockoekolumpattoe, by The Junior Merchant Jacques Fabrice Van Senden, Governor of Trincomalee. In The Year 1786 (Translated from the Dutch Records, for the Ceylon Government Gazette). *Supplement To The Ceylon Government Gazette*, Wednesday, October 1, 1834.

stated that in Dutch times the dues of the government in the principality were assigned to the temple.<sup>6</sup>

According to the *tirukōṇācala purāṇam* the temple of Tampalakamam was constructed by (Vara) Rācacinṅkan, the ruler of Kandy (*ceṅkaṭaka-nakar*). He may provisionally be identified as Rājasinha II (1630-16...). It is said that the Lord of Kōṇamalai appeared in the guise of a Brahmin in a dream and instructed the king to construct a temple as an abode for Kōṇamalai Nātan and his consort, and to make provision for conducting daily worship and annual festivals, at Tampalakamam (*Tampainakar*) surrounded by paddy-fields provided with an abundance of water. "The king, who was awakened to consciousness, after deep reflection, had a wonderful temple constructed at Tampainakar." Having installed the images of Śiva, "the Goddess" and of Vināyaka he appointed learned Brahmins for conducting worship.

"He deposited gold and made other provisions for conducting rituals and worship daily and on special occasions. Besides, provision was also made for the annual car-festival. He donated houses and gold to the Brahmin priests, to the people of the *tānam* and *varippattu* and to *Perumāl pulavan*, 'the specialist in the recitation of sacred hymns' and made arrangements for them to reside at Tampai-nakar. He conferred ranks and privileges on them and prescribed their respective duties.

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6. In relation to the dues given to the temple of Kōṇēcar the Headmen of Tampalakamam pattu, in their account of local customary laws, assert:  
"Of the profits derived from paddy fields and gardens 10 percent must be given to the Hindu temple (Kōṇēcar).

That the same custom was observed by the inhabitants of Kaṭṭukuḷam pattu is testified by the Vanniyar of that division, who in his remarks on the account of the headmen says:

"In the period of the Dutch government one tenth of the produce of paddy lands were paid to Konesar but now it is taken by the government."

Vide C.O. 54/126. 136 - Alexander Johnstone manuscripts in the Public Record Office, London; S. Pathmanathan, *The Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Trincomalee*, New Century Book House, Ambattur, Madras, 1994 (40 pages), pp. 25, 30.

Having arranged for conducting the regular worship of Śiva in accordance with the rules laid down in the texts he returned to his city."<sup>7</sup>.

It would appear that the foregoing account found in the *tirukōṇācala-purāṇam* records a genuine and authentic tradition concerning the origins of the temple of Tampalakamam. In all the traditions pertaining to the Hindu temples in Eastern Sri Lanka the monarch is represented as the custodian of Hinduism and its institutions. This was particularly so in respect of the kings of Kandy, Vimaladharmasūriya and his successors. There was no clarity in the tradition about the precise name of the king or the chronology of events. The

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7. mānilam pukalum vīravararācaciṅkan ennum  
 mēnmai koḷ vēntan tanpāl vīḷituyil kanavin mēvi  
 vānavar munivar kāṇā malaratip punitanām em  
 kōn aruḷ nirmai tannāl inaiyana kūḷal urrān  
 ulakam atanil caiva neṇi oḷukkam niṅkip poyc camaṇar  
 kalakam mikuntu vevvinai cey kaṭiya nicar pulait toḷiḷkaḷ  
 alakilātu ceyyum anucitaṅkal atikamāy uḷalāl  
 ilaku vaṭivāl vēntē yām iṇaiyiyōḷum uṇaintu aruḷa.  
 kannal vēli varampu uṭutta kaḷani cūlum tampai nakar  
 ennum nāṭṭin anpinōḷum ilaṅkumaṇip ponnin ālayamum  
 conna muṇaiyil tān amaittut tūya pūcai tērt tirunāl  
 mannavan ceykena aruḷi maṇaintān kōṇamalainātan  
 maṇaiyōṇ ākik kanavinkaṇ iṇaṇ vantavāru ellām  
 iṇaiyōṇ eṇṇi uṭan eluntu āṅku iten kōmān aruḷ enṇā  
 muṇaiyāl anpin toḷutu ētti unniyataṅku vēṇṭuvana  
 kuṇaiyā vaḷam cēr tampai nakark koṭupōy kōyil iyaṅṭuvittān  
 viṇṇōr viyakkumpatī kōyil vīṭiyil ceytu muṭittatarpin  
 eṇṇārpuṇam mūṇru erittaruḷum iṇaṇ tanaṭt tēviyoḷum  
 taṇṇār nipa malar māḷait tanayanōḷum taku muṇaiyē  
 paṇṇār maṇaiyōr tamaikkōṭu tāpittup parivāl poṇṇinānē  
 kaṇṇum manamum kaḷikka maṇik kaṇṇan kariya kaṭavuḷukku  
 naṇṇum tinaṅkal tōṇum pūcai naimittikaṅkal tērttirunāl  
 paṇṇummuṇaiyil purivittup pacum pon niti maṇṇu ēṇaiyavum  
 eṇṇumpatikkuk kuṇaivinṇi ellā vaḷanumiyaṅṇi vaittān  
 tampai nakaram tannin maṇaiyōr tānam vaṇippaṇṇāna varkkuk  
 cemponmanai maṇṇu ēṇaiyavum ciṇappin intu tēn iṇaikkuṇ  
 nimpamalar tār pūpālan nikaril perumāḷ pulavanenap  
 pampum ivarkku muṇai varicai palavum aḷittān pārttipanē  
 āṇum piṇaiyūm nāṇu malar ani pūm kaṭukkai muṭi cūṭi  
 ēṇatu eṇṇum perumāṇai imayak koṭiyinoḷum poṇṇik  
 kūru muṇaiyil pūcai viti kuṇaivinṇi iyaṇṇumpatī evarkkum  
 vēru vēṇāk kaṇṇittu vēntan tanatu nakar aṇaintān  
*tirukōṇācalapurāṇam* (2nd impression) veliyitu intucamaya, *kalācāra aluvakaḷ*  
*ṭiṇaikkaḷam*, kolumpu, 1997, tampainakarp paṭaḷam, verses 35 - 42. pp. 360 - 362.



transmitters of this tradition had only a vague recollection about these matters. The king is referred to as *vararācacīṅkan*, which name could be explained as a compound of two expressions *vara* and *rācacīṅkam*. The first of these has the appearance of a qualifying expression conveying the sense of being great or unique, and the second expression in the compound is obviously a name. There were several rulers of Kandy who had the name Rājasinha. It may therefore be assumed that the king called *vararācacīṅkam* about whom the author of the *talapurāṇam* had a vague and confused notion, was a King of Kandy who had the name Rājasinha. He may provisionally be identified as Rājasinha II, who is known to have brought the principalities in the eastern part of the island under the sphere of his influence. So, the adytum and its adjuncts may be assigned to the long reign of Rājasinha II in the 17th century.

The *irācakōpuram* at Tampalakamam, which is 36 ft. by 27 ft. in dimensions at its base, is relatively a recent construction. It rises to a height of 62 ft. 2 in. The foundation stone for this edifice was laid on June 8, 1951 by K. Kanagaratnam, who was the Deputy Minister of Education at that time. The consecration ceremony was conducted in 1953 on the completion of the building. Etymologically *kōpuram* signifies 'the city of the king'. But, in the Hindu tradition it designates the towering edifice erected over the entrance to a temple of large proportions. The word *kōyil* denotes the abode of the king (*kō*) as well as that of God.<sup>8</sup> As an architectural component of the Hindu temple in the Dravidian style of architecture the *kōpuram* was developed since the 12th century, and the monumental examples of this structure are found at Madurai, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, Kāñcīpuram and Sri Raṅgam.<sup>9</sup> The

8. The Tamil words *kō*, *irai*, *aracu* *uṭaiyār*, *aṇṇan* and *ālvār* could be used as synonyms and are generally applied in respect of the King and God.

9. As an architectural component of the Hindu temple the *kōpuram* had its origins in the early Cōla period. Originally it was conceived and designed as a tower of modest proportions at the main entrance to the temple, usually on the eastern side. Since the 12th century it developed into a tower of large magnitude. Under the Pāṇḍyas, during the 13th and early 14th centuries, it overshadowed the *vimāna*, the domical superstructure over the sanctum of the temple, and in the subsequent period its design was developed and elaborated further.

*kōpuram*, an embellished tower of magnificent design, may be considered as representing the limit of the city of God and such an impression seems to be supported by the consideration that the conception of this particular kind of edifice was originally connected with the development of medieval towns with the temple as the nucleus.

The *kōpuram* at Tampalakamam is, by local standards, a large structure with five storeys. Devotees worship it at mere sight as there is a saying, "*kōpura taricanam kōṭi punṇiyam*", which suggests that the view of a *kōpuram* confers unlimited blessings on the pious devotee.

The Āti Kōṇanāyakar kōyil is the repository of the traditions and endowments of the ancient temple of Kōṇēśvaram. The existence of a shrine also called *ātikōṇanāyakar* within the premises of this temple is of unusual significance. It would appear that this shrine was constructed specifically for the purpose of housing the idols removed from Kōṇēśvaram by the priests and other pious devotees when that temple was sacked by the Portuguese. The two idols of Śiva and Pārvati installed at this shrine are called Āti Kōṇanāyakar and Hamsagamanāmbikai. The name by which the Goddess is referred to in modern times is a translation into Sanskrit of the name *annam menṇaṭai* applied to the form of the Goddess in the texts pertaining to Kōṇēśvaram.<sup>10</sup>

As the image of the Goddess is slightly broken in the upper arm it had to be repaired. The original pedestal on which it stood has been lost and the one found presently is a modern improvisation. An inscription engraved in modern Tamil characters records the name of the donor. Some of the ornaments like the *siracchakra*, *tāli*, *tōṭu* and

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10. In the texts pertaining to the temple of Kōṇēśvaram the consort of Kōṇēcar is generally described as *piṭiyanna menṇaṭai*, "the one who has the gait of the female elephant", which is a conventional poetic expression. The *Tirikōṇācala purāṇam*, however, refers to her also as *anna menṇaṭai*, "the one with the gait of the swan". Hamsagamanāmbikai is the Sanskrit equivalent of this form. *Tirikōṇācala purāṇam*, *intu kalācāra aluvalkal tiṇaikkalam veliyitu*, 1997, pp. 202, 247 - 8, 292.

bangles on the image are substitutes for the original ones which had been lost. The high proportion of gold in the bronze, the conspicuous character of the waist girdle and the configuration of the garment suggest that the bronze image of the Goddess could be assigned to the early Cōla period. The image of God in the dancing posture has been designed with great care with attention paid to the minutiae of iconographic details. In the opinion of the master craftsman, V. N. Narasimhan this image could be assigned to the late Cōla period.

### *Annual Festivals*

The rituals and worship at the temple of Tampalakamam are conducted in accordance with the injunctions of the *makuṭākamam*. Worship is conducted thrice a day and on special occasions such as *taip-ponkal*, *taip-pūcam*. New year, *āṭi amāvācai*, *tirukkārttikai* and *mārkaḷitt tiruvāirai*. The annual festival commences on *ani uttiram* and lasts for eighteen days. There are some features of the annual festival which are peculiar to this temple. Duties to be performed at the temple during the annual festival are assigned by custom to various groups of people living in the Trincomalee District. The *pulavanār* (bard), who recites sacred hymns at the temple comes from the village of Campūr. The craftsman who paints the image of the Nandhi on the flag to be hoisted on the flag staff (*kotiṭṭampam*) comes from Kilivetti. The *kāppukaṭṭiyār*, the man who has to wear the sacral thread in the form of a bangle on his arm, and has to reside in the temple premises until the end of the festival is from Kaṭṭukkuḷampattu in the Mūtūr division.

The Katirkāma Cuvāmi festival conducted annually at this temple is of special significance. On that occasion a casket placed on a *mañcam* (couch) is taken round the courtyard on a procession. There is usually a large congregation of devotees at the temple on this occasion. Some of them resort to the temple for the purpose of fulfilling their vows. Large groups of devotees engage in the performance of the *kāvaṭi* and join the procession ahead of and behind those carrying the casket. There are others who perform the *aṅkak-piratakṣiṇam* by rolling their bodies clockwise along the circumambulatory. This is



done as the fulfilment of vows, and it is the belief that its performance secures the devotee from the effects of sinful acts and confers blessings through divine grace. The *katirkāma cuvāmi* festival is non-āgamic in nature and origins. It represents the convergence of the cults of Śiva and Murukan on the one hand and the compromise between the āgamic and non-āgamic modes of worship on the other. Besides, in this festival conducted in one of the principal Śaiva temples in the island the overriding influence of the religious traditions of Katirkāmam is evident.

A traditional ritual with the performance of which the temple of Tampalakamam is associated is the *tirukkuḷattu vēḷvi*, "the sacrificial offering in connection with the sacred tank". As a ritual it is said to have had its origins under Kulakkōṭṭan, who is celebrated in legend and tradition as the founder of the Kantalāy tank. He is said to have made arrangements for the regular propitiation of all the principal deities venerated by the inhabitants of the region and whose images were installed on the banks of the reservoir. The *tirukkuḷattu vēḷvi* was essentially a ritual conducted by agriculturists with the objective of obtaining a regular and regulated supply of water, through divine intercession, from the Kantalāy tank, a massive reservoir considered to be beyond the means of control by ordinary mortals. It has become a tradition among the farmers of Tampalakamam to make vows for rain when their paddy fields require water or make a vow for sunlight when the fields are starved of adequate light or when their crops perish on account of excessive rains.

The *tirukkuḷattu vēḷvi* is essentially a community ritual in which the Brahmin elites do not figure prominently. The leading role is played by the *kāriyappar*, 'the principal manager of temple affairs', who on a Thursday morning proceeds to a well at the site called *ūrttak kaṭarkarai*, 'the coastal site of sacred ablutions' along the beach near the Clock Tower at Trincomalee. He prepares a basket of palm leaves and fills it with items required for the ceremony. He then places it on his head and proceeds along a jungle tract to the temple of Pillaiyār at Umirikkātu and rests there during the night. On the following day, which happens

to be a Friday, people from the villages go to this temple in the jungle and assemble there. They are led in procession by the *kāriappar* to the temple of Tampalakamam with the accompaniment of traditional music. Once they have arrived at the temple the basket is placed in front of Āti Kōṇanāyakar and it remains there throughout the following night. It is covered with a second silk shawl while remaining in that position.

Thereafter it is taken to the Kantalāy tank by the *kāriappar* for the performance of rites. At a selected site on the embankment rice is cooked in large quantities of milk obtained from herds of cows roaming loose in the surrounding plain by the *marikkārar*, a special category of people so called on account this function traditionally assigned to them. The *poiṅkal* is offered as *maṭai*, "mass offering" to the deities. They also offer as part of the *maṭai* a thousand betel leaves, a thousand arecanuts and a thousand flowers. Once in twelve years this rite is observed on a magnified scale and the offerings are proportionately multiplied in quantity. An interesting aspect of this ritual is the display of implements such as knives, axes, crow-bars and other agricultural implements stored up in the temple in a wooden casket called the *nārāyaṇan peṭṭakam*. This casket is carried from the temple to the site where the ritual is conducted, at the time of its commencement.

The assimilation of non-āgamic and local cults found in the Trincomalee region into the fold of Śaivism is indicated by the affiliations which the temple of Tampalakamam had with the shrine of Pattini Amman at Pālampōṭṭāru, a locality in the jungle tract between Tampalakamam and Trincomalee, on the main road from Trincomalee to Colombo and Kandy. A stream issuing from the Kalmutṭiyan reservoir flows past the site of this shrine and joins the sea at Kappalturai.

The image of Pattini belonging to this shrine is usually lodged in the *makāmaṇṭapam* at the temple of Tampalakamam. The ritual at the Pattini temple is conducted once, annually, on a Monday in the

month of *Vaikāci* (May - June). On this occasion a large number of pilgrims go in processions starting from the Pattirakāli Amman and Māriyamman temples in Trincomalee and congregate at the Pālampōṭṭāru shrine. In the meanwhile, the image of Pattini is taken in procession from Tampalakāmam by pilgrims to the shrine in the jungle where it is the centre of attraction, being the principal object of veneration and worship. The *poṅkal* and offerings made to the deity mark the culmination of a day long festival. At the conclusion of the festival in the following morning the image of Pattini finds its way back to its usual abode.

The New Moon day in the month of *āti*, *āti amāvācai*, is traditionally observed as a holy day by the Śaivitis. It is a special occasion for religious activities at the temple of Tampalakamam. The image of *āti kōṇanayakar* is taken by pilgrims in procession to Kaṅkaiṭṭurai in Mūtūr, for the water-cutting ceremony. Pilgrims and other pious devotees, who usually observe fast on this day, assemble in large numbers since the previous evening and participate in religious and cultural activities focused on a small temple established there. A major event in the agenda here is the recital of the *tirukkaracaip-purāṇam*, a medieval *talapurāṇam* on the ancient shrine called *Akattiya-stāpanam*.

### *Administration and endowments*

The temple of Āti Kōṇanāyakar, which was established as the substitute for Kōṇēśvaram became the heir to the traditions and endowments of the earlier temple with the stamp of royal authority. The old designations of temple functionaries seem to have been adopted. In fact the *Tirukōṇācala purāṇam* states that the King of *Cenkataka nakaṛ* (Senkadagala), who had established the temple had also made arrangements for the proper management and maintenance of the temple by settling Brahmins, people of the *tānam* and *variparru*, and the *pulavan* in the vicinity of the temple premises. The Vanniyaṛ of Tampalakamam and Kaṭṭuṅkuḷam paṛṛu seem to have exercised custodial and supervisory functions as the rulers of principalities. The



traditional arrangements for temple administration could not stand the strain of sweeping political, social and administrative changes that took place during centuries of colonial rule. Presently, there are no vestiges of the ancient tradition in respect of administration. The temple was under private management until 1945 when a Board of Trustees was set up by Court order. This Board, which is elected triennially is responsible for the administration of the temple. It should be noted that there has been an improvement in the administration of temple affairs after this Board was set up.

The services in respect of maintenance, daily routine activities and festivals have been assigned to different categories of persons called *tolumpālar* on the basis of old custom and they have been assigned allotments of land for the performance of their respective duties. These allotments are distributed amidst paddy-fields over a vast area in the district. Such allotments are known as *kittu* (strip) in some cases while in others they are referred to as *vayal* (field). Those who perform the recital on the *nātasvaram* have allotments called *kuḷalkāṇan kittu*. The drummers hold allotments called *mēlakāṇan kittu*. The garland-makers have assignments referred to as *mālaikaṇṇu kittu*. The Brahmin priests and some other functionaries have allotments called *vayal*.

# The Temple of Kāilayanātar at Nallūr

V. Sivasamy.

Nallūr, which is situated about two miles to the north of the town of Jaffna, was the capital of medieval kingdom of Jaffna. It was established and developed by the Ārya Cakravartti rulers, who were described as *ciṅkai āriyar* in local chronicles and other texts. Ciṅkai was probably the abbreviated form of an alternate name for Nallūr. The Kings of Jaffna traced their descent from a family of Brahmin generals of the Pāṇḍya Kings, who were established at Rāmēśvaram in the southern part of the Pāṇḍya kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

Under the Ārya Cakravarttis, who were great patrons of learning and the Śaiva religious tradition the peninsula of Jaffna became a stronghold of the orthodox form of Śaivism which had attained the peak of its development in South India during the first three centuries of the second millennium of the Christian era. The Kings of Jaffna had the figure of the recumbent bull, the *nandhi*, as their emblem and assumed the title *cētukāvalan*, which signified their guardianship of Rāmēśvaram and other sacred sites on its vicinity.<sup>2</sup> They established

1. *The Kingdom of Jaffna*, Pt. I, S. Pathmanathan, Colombo, 1978, pp. 161 - 183.

2. The contemporary Tamil texts describe the Ciṅkaiyariyan as *cevaṇi tuvacan* and *viṭaikkoti vēntan*, "the king whose banner was painted with the figure of the recumbent bull". The legend *cētu* is depicted on all the coins issued by the Kings of Jaffna. The *cekarācācēkaramālai* claims that the Kings of Jaffna were the descendants of some Brahmins settled at Rāmēśvaram by Rāma. It records the following account. Rāma, during his exile, killed Virāṭan, Mārican and Vāli and uprooted "the seven great trees" with the single aim of his arrow. Thereafter, having bridged the sea, he entered Lanka, defeated Kumpakannan and Irāvaṇan and relieved his consort, Cītai, from captivity. When Rāma and his large retinue (of divine monkeys) reached the (sacred site of) Kantamātanam, he felt relieved of the sin of having slain the King of the Raksasas. When the sage Agastya heard from Rāma about the sense of his relief the sage narrated to him the story pertaining to the sanctity of the site. Rāma, who was deeply impressed, established a shrine of Śiva at that site and bestowed on it the name Rāmēśvaram. He invited the 512 *āriyar* "of the five villages", *pañcakirāma vēriyar*, and gracefully directed them to officiate at the temple. He invested two of them with the paraphernalia of royalty, granting them the garland of the fragrant tuḷaci, the title of Ariya King (*āriyavēntenum aṇimaṇṇip-paṭṭamum*), the beautiful parasol, the single conch and the victorious bull banner. Ibid, pp. 170 - 171; *cekarācācēkaramālai* ed. i. ci. irakunātaiyar. *cōṭṭa accuyantiracālai*, kokkuvil. 1942, *pāyiram*, vv. 1 - 5.

and maintained temples, supported men of learning and facilitated the compilation of manuals on *āyulvētam*, "indigenous medicine", astrology, poetics and the Saiva tradition.<sup>3</sup>

There were more than 500 Hindu temples in Jaffna before the Portuguese occupation in the early 17th century.<sup>4</sup> Tradition claims that the principal temples in Nallūr and its suburbs were constructed under the first King of the Cīṅkaiyāriyan dynasty.<sup>5</sup> In connection with the establishment of Nallūr as the capital city the *yālppāṇa Vaipavamālai* says:

"Once having arrived in Yālppāṇam the Cīṅkaiyāriyan decided to establish his residence at Nallūr. He had the foundations laid, and constructed palaces and mansions. He provided the city with entrance

3. The *cekarācacēkaram* and *paṇarācacēkaram* were medical treatises in Tamil compiled under the patronage of these Kings. They were based on earlier Sanskrit works which were systematically studied by groups of learned men supported by the Kings. It is also significant that these texts were named after the consecration names of the kings of Jaffna. Another manual on indigenous medicine, the *vaittiya cintāmaṇi* is said to have been compiled under the patronage of these rulers. The astrological work called *cekarācacēkaramālai* contains references to a ruler who had the personal name Varōtayan. The Ārya cakravartīs and some of their kinsmen were highly accomplished in learning. A king who had the consecration name Cekarācacēkaran was the author of the *Takṣina Kailācapurāṇam*, a *talapurāṇam* on the ancient temple of Kōṇēśvaram. He claims that he undertook the task of composing in Tamil verses the *mahāṁmiyam* on the great temple on the request of his preceptor *paṇṭitarācar* who had mastered the *vēṇam*, *upanīṭatam*, *ākamam*, *purāṇam*, *viyākaraṇam* and *cōṭiṭam*. Besides, the work is dedicated to Kumārācuriyan, a prince who had been one of the principal teachers of the royal author. Another member of the royal family, Aracakēcari, who lived until the early 17th century was an erudite scholar. He rendered the Raghuvamśa of Kālidāsa into Tamil. But the style of his *irakuvamicam* has suffered in quality on account of strict adherence to grammatical rules and in it scholasticism has stultified creative poetry.
4. According to Portuguese accounts more than five-hundred Hindu temples in the kingdom were destroyed after the Portuguese conquest in 1619.
5. Among the temples of Nallūr the Kanteuvāmi kōyil seems to have attained a position of pre-eminence since the late 15th century. Such an impression seems to be supported by the references to it in the Portuguese chronicles. According to a stray verse found in the *Kailāyamālai* this temple was established by a ruler called Bhuvanekabāhu. This verse translates: "Puvanēkapāku whose chest was adorned with the garlands of fragrant flowers constructed the city of Yālppāṇam and the temple of Kantavēl (Murukan) in the year 870". *kailāyamālai ākkiyōṇ - mutturāca kavirācar*; ce. ve. *Jampūtinkampillai paṭippittanu, cennai, cāṇṭi accukkūṭam* 1939, p. 23; *The kingdom of Jaffna*, S. Pathmanathan, p. 281.



gates. He had a garden laid out and within it were constructed a reservoir sanctified with holy waters brought from the river Yamunā, and a bathing hall (*snāna maṇḍapam*). Besides, the hall of justice, elephant stables, horse stables and quarters for the armed guards were constructed. He also settled the Brahmin priest Kenkāṭara ayyar and his spouse Annapūraṇi Ammāl, whom he had brought along with him. For the purpose of protecting the eastern quarter he established the Veyiluvanta Piḷḷaiyār Kōyil. For guarding the western quarter he established the Vīramākālī Amman temple. In the northern quarter were constructed the temples of Caṭṭanāteśvarar, Taiyalnāyaki Amman and Cālai Vināyakar".<sup>6</sup>

During the lifetime of Mayilvākanap pulavar, the author of the chronicle, none of these temples was in existence. All of them had been destroyed by the Portuguese conquistadors during the early years of the seventeenth century. So, he was only recording some impressions he had formed on the basis of some tradition. The authenticity of this tradition is suggested by the reconstruction of these temples during the early 19th century at the original sites and under their respective old names. Another important temple in the city was the Kailāyanātar Kōyil dedicated for the worship of Śiva. It was in the southern sector of the city of Nallūr.

The construction of temples dedicated for the worship of various deities in the four directions as claimed in the *Yālppāna Vaipavamālai*, perhaps, suggests that the Tamils of Jaffna, in medieval times, had developed the concept of guardian deities, who were supposed to be protecting the city on all sides from the forces of evil. The temples of Kailāyanātar and Kailāya Piḷḷaiyār are situated so close to each other as to be considered as twin temples. Both these temples were constructed in modern times, at the site of the historic temple of Kailāyanātar established by the Ārya Cakravartti, the founder of Nallūr. An account of its origins is found in the *Kailāyamālai*, which was

6. *Yālppāna Vaipavamālai mutaliyār kula capānātan avarkaḷ elutiya arāyccik kuṟippukaḷutan* (3rd impression), *intucamaṇa aluvaikal, tinaikkaḷam*, koḷumpu, 1995, p. 6

probably written in the 17th century by Mutturāca Kavirācar. According to this chronicle the temple of Kailāyanātar was established as a temple of the royal court. The account of the *Kailāyamālai* may be summarised here as follows:

The king had long cherished in his mind an idea to build a temple at Nallūr for Śiva, whom he had worshipped at Maturai in the form of Cokkanātan. One day Śiva, who cannot be seen by Brahma, Viṣṇu and other gods, appeared to him in a dream. Śiva, who was accompanied by Umā, revealed himself to the King as Kailāyanātan. The King, who was inspired after this incident, sought an auspicious day to commence the work and on the fixed hour started the work of construction. As laid down in manuals he constructed beautiful encircling walls, three divine courts, a shrine of admirable architecture for Śiva, a shrine for Pārvaṭi with side apartments for minor deities, a sacrificial hall, a store-house and a tank for sacred ablutions.

After completing the construction of the temple, he built residences for officiating priests, a chamber for offering incense and camphor, a hall for chanting the *cānavētam* and a free-feeding house, and constructed a street for drawing the chariot. He created a flower-garden and beautiful parks all around, provided with tall trees and with tanks which were beautiful on account of water-lilies and lotuses and artistic terraces. Thereafter, he had an *ilinkam* brought from the sacred site of Ketāram and had it installed at the sanctum of the shrine. He sent a message to the ruler of Cētu requesting him to obtain for him the services of an accomplished Brahmin priest. The ruler of Cētu sent Kaṅkātara Aiyar, a Brahmin from Kāśi who had mastered the Vedas. After his arrival the king had the consecration ceremony performed, and the temple, which was named after Kailāyanātan, became the third Kailāyam.<sup>7</sup>

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7. *kailāyamālai* ce. ve. Jampulinkampillai *patippittatu*, cennai, 1939, pp. 17 - 19.

From the foregoing account it is clear that the temple of Kailāyanātar was a temple of the royal court established on the initiative of the ruler. The description of this temple as "the third Kailāyam", *mukkayilai*, in the chronicle is significant. In the Hindu tradition and mythology the Kailāsa mountain on the Himālayas is described as the abode of Śiva and on account of that reason it is the most venerated of all holy places. It is considered to be the epicentre of the universe from where Śiva and Pārvatī, the primeval pair, sustain the cosmic order. This snow clad peak of the highest elevation over the loftiest mountain range on earth has evoked feelings of awe, admiration and wonder among the people of India from times immemorial. Such feelings have inspired the development of some of the grandest conceptions in Hindu mythology which are embedded in the purāṇic texts. In the Tamil Śaiva tradition Mount Kailāsa in the Himālayas is often referred to as *uttarakailāyam*, "the Kailāyam in the north". Takṣiṇa Kailāyam is said to have been established on the peak Kōkarṇam on the eastern coast of the island by the Wind god.<sup>8</sup> Therefore it is poetic hyperbole on the part of the author to describe the temple of Kailāyanātar at Nallūr as *mukkayilai*, "the third Kailāyam".

The original temple of Kailāyanātar was destroyed by the Portuguese after the conquest of Jaffna around 1620. The images of deities are said to have been removed in a push cart from the temple by the Brahmin priest in anticipation of impending danger and with the hope of taking them to his own village of Maṭṭuvil. As they were found to be too heavy, it is said that he placed the image of the goddess in a well on the way and took the *civalinikam* safely to Maṭṭuvil, where it was put in the well of a temple. After several decades, it was removed from the well when it was noticed by some persons, and later installed

8. This temple has had a succession of Brahmins with a high reputation on account of their learning and deep knowledge of matters pertaining to the Hindu religious tradition. The most eminent one among them was Kumāracuvami Kurukkal. He was succeeded by his son Kurucāmik Kurukkal. The successors of the latter were his two sons Carma Kurukkal and Maṇi Kurukkal.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to *Sivasri* Maṇi Kurukkal, who supplied information pertaining to some aspects of the history of the temple.



at a newly constructed temple called Cantiramauliśvaram. The image of the goddess, which was dropped into a well is also believed to have been recovered and later installed at one of the temples in Jaffna.

Portuguese rule in Jaffnapatnam came to an end in 1658 when it was occupied by the forces of the Dutch East India Company. The materials from the ruins of buildings destroyed by the Portuguese earlier were collected under the Dutch for the construction of the fort and other buildings. An image of Pillaiyār was picked up by employees while the debris of the Kailāyanātar temple was cleared, and this particular object was kept under a *vilva* tree and it became an object of worship among the pious Śaiva devotees. As there was an official prohibition of all forms of "heathen worship" at public places, this was done quietly and in an unnoticeable manner. As there were no restrictions on the religious practices of the native inhabitants, under the British, there was a revival of Saivism in Jaffna during the 19th century. Temples were constructed in hundreds, mostly at sites identified as ones where previously shrines had existed. Steps in the direction of the restoration of the Kailāyanātar temple were taken by Ārumuka nāvalar, the erudite scholar and champion reformer of the Hindus in Sri Lanka. A temporary shed to house the image of Pillaiyār, which was kept under a tree was put up by him. He bought about 100 *lachchams* of land at the site of the old temple for establishing a new temple. Besides, he is said to have bought several plots of paddy fields at Cemmani and Caracālai and gifted them as an endowment. He composed a poem on Kailāca Pillaiyār. Thus, in the process of reconstruction during the 19th century the Kailayapillaiyār temple had come into existence at the site of the Kailāyanātar temple of bygone days.

It assumed the form of a twin temple in course of time as a new temple dedicated for the worship of Śiva in the form of Kailāyanātar was also raised within the temple premises. The temple is sometimes conceived as the representation of the mountain in a miniature form and it is significant that Gaṇeśa is associated with the Kailāśa mountain in Hindu mythology. On one side of the Kāilaśa mountain there is the

abode of Gaṇeśa, the leader of the Sivagaṇas and the remover of obstacles. He is said to be seated there constantly meditating on Śiva and Pārvatī. On account this mythological conception Śiva is called Kailāyanātan and Pillaiyār or Gaṇeśa is called Kailāya Pillaiyār. Thus, the concept of a third Kailāyam at Nallūr has been resurrected in a modified form in modern times. It is also noteworthy that some of images which had belonged to the old temple were discovered in modern times. These include the copper images of Pillaiyār and stone images Śiva and Pārvatī, Vairavar and Cuppiramaṇiyar (Skanda).

On the death of Ārumuka Nāvalar, one of his nephews, Tampu Kailācapillai took charge of the administration of the temple. He had the temple constructed in stone and it was from that time onwards that the temple was known as Kailācapillaiyār Kōyil. The new temple was inaugurated after a consecration ceremony conducted on a large scale in 1902. Subsequently a shrine of Śiva was constructed within the premises. A *civalinkam* and an image of the Goddess were brought from India and installed there. The *civalinkam* was consecrated and called Kailāyanātar but the Goddess came to be known as Apitakusāmbikai. But, this name was later changed to Kailāyanāyaki after the ceremony of reconsecration held in 1988.

After the death of Kailācapillai the administration of the temple became the responsibility of a board of trustees the members which were selected from among his descendants. Some improvements in the buildings were made in course of time. The persons called Maturai Appā and Cuntaram had the floor space laid with blocks of granite and embellished the temple further. After the demise of Cuntaram his sister, Māṇikka Ammaiyaṛ, supported and supervised the building programme and had a consecration ceremony performed in 1944 at all the principal and subsidiary shrines attached to the temple complex.

There are three *garbhagrhas*, here, and these are dedicated to Kailāya Pillaiyār, Kailāyanātar and Kailāyanāyaki respectively. The *Vimānam* surmounting each sanctum is adorned with sculptures of the traditional type. There are, for instance, the figures of *daksināmurti*, *lingodbhava* and Brahma on the *Vimānam* of the Kailāyanātar temple.

Apart from the three *vimānam* the other principal architectural components are the *ardha maṇṭapam*, *makāmaṇṭapam*, *stampamaṇṭapam* and the *nataraja capai*. Besides, provision has been made to accommodate three *palipīṭam* and two flag-posts (*koṭimaram*). There is also a separate shrine to house the images of the nine planetary gods. There are a number of paintings on the walls and curtains.

Worship is conducted six times a day strictly in accordance with Vedic and Āgamic traditions. Special festivals are conducted on occasions such as *taippōṅkal*, *taippūcam*, *paṅkuni uttiram*, *cittirai varuṣam*, *āṭi amāvācai* and *mārkaḷit tiruvātirai*. The annual festivals are held twice in the months of *cittirai* and *āni* at the temples of Kailāya Piḷḷaiyār and Kailāyanātar respectively.

The work on the construction of the *tēr*, "wooden chariot", had begun during the days of Māṇikka Ammaiṃyār, and it was completed by her brother Cōmacuntaram with the assistance of other pious devotees. The chamber for accommodating the *tēr* was constructed on the initiative of C. Cuntaraliṅkam, a former member of Parliament, who had been a professor at the University of Ceylon. Besides, he was mainly responsible for the installation of a *paṅcamuka* Vināyakar made of stone at the south-western corner of the temple. This image, which is the only one of its kind to be found in the island, was specially made in Tañcāvūr and transported to Jaffna. An additional entrance has been provided to enable devotees to gain easy access to the shrine housing the image of Vināyakar. Presently, there are three entrances to the temple on the front side: the first providing access to the shrine of Kailāya Piḷḷaiyār, the second leading to the shrine of Kailāyanātar and the third leading to the miniature shrine of *paṅcamuka* Vināyakar.

There are some modern poems on the Kailāya Piḷḷaiyār temple. One of these poems, the *Kailācapiḷḷaiyār māṇṇiyam*, records local traditions pertaining to some aspects of the history of this temple. There is also an *ūṇṇal* poem on Kailāyapiḷḷaiyār but the date and authorship of this poem cannot be ascertained. The *kaṭṭiyam*, which is a poetical composition recited during the annual festival contains an eulogy of Cīṅkaiyāriyan, the founder of the Kailāyanātar temple.



# Māmāṅkēśvaram

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K. Thangesvary.

Hinduism and Hindu institutions have flourished in the region of Maṭṭakkaḷappu from ancient times with an unbroken continuity. Yet, the origin and history of Hindu temples found there cannot be traced owing to the paucity of historical evidence. The buildings of the oldest temples found in that region cannot be assigned to a period before the 13th century and the archaeological remains of buildings of the earlier period have not survived. In all probability the original structures were mostly of perishable material. The local chronicles, which cannot be assigned to a period prior to the Dutch occupation, seem to have been written on the basis of an oral tradition, the origins of which could be traced from about the 13th century.

There were Hindu temples in Batticaloa during the early centuries of the Christian era and some of these, perhaps, had their origins in Brahmin settlements. There were temples of gods at Erakāvilla and in the village of the Brahmin called Kalanda, in the reign of Mahāsena, during the third century A.D.<sup>1</sup>

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1. In relation to Mahāsena the mahāvamsa says: "The King built the Maṇihīra-vihāra and founded three vihāras, destroying temples of the (brahmanical) gods:- the Gokaṇṇa (vihāra), (and another vihāra) in Erakāvilla, (and a third) in the village of the Brahman Kalanda."

"According to the Tika the Gokaṇṇa-vihāra, is situated on the coast of the 'Eastern Sea', the two other vihāras in Rohana. The Tika then adds: *evam sabbattha Lankādīpamhi kuditthānam ālayam viddhamsetva. sivaliṅgādaya nasetva buddha sāsanam eva patitthapesi.* 'everywhere in the island of Lanka he established the doctrine of the Buddha, having destroyed the temples of the unbelievers. i.e. having abolished phallic symbols of Śiva and so forth.

Erakāvilla may be identified as the Pali form of the name Eruvil. Eruvil Pōratīvu is one of the old divisions into which the region of Batticaloa was divided. The Mahāvamsa trans. into English by Wilhelm Geiger assisted by Mabel Haynes Bode, with an addendum by G.C. Mendis, Ceylon Government Information Department, Colombo, 1950, vv. 40 - 41, p. 270.

The Hindu Tamils of Batticaloa are Śaivites but the Hindu religious tradition of that region has a local flavour. It is a curious mixture of Śaivism and a variety of cults within and outside the fold of orthodox Hinduism. There are only two temples dedicated for the worship of Śiva in the entire region of Maṭṭakkaḷappu and these are Tāntōṇṇīśvaram and Māmāṅkēśvaram. Temples of Murukan, Māri Amman and Kaṇṇaki Amman are found in large numbers and in almost every village and town. The popularity of the Pattini cult in the region may be explained in the context of the absorption of communities of Buddhists into the fold of Hindu social organization.

Māmāṅkēśvaram is of special significance to the Hindus of Batticaloa. It is the resort of thousands of pious devotees and pilgrims from all parts of the region of Maṭṭakkaḷappu during the season of the annual festival which culminates in the water cutting ceremony on the day of makam in the month of māci (February to March). It is famous on account of its sacred tank, the waters of which are believed to possess healing qualities

The origins of the temple of Māmāṅkam are obscure. There are no inscriptions or archaeological remains of ancient buildings at the site. Nor are there written or oral traditions of any significance pertaining to religious services at the temple and its social interactions. There are some folk traditions about the temple and its origins. According to one of them the temple was established by Rāma. He is said to have stayed at the site for some time after the conclusion of his war against Rāvaṇa, and decided on propitiating Śiva. On his instruction Anuman proceeded to the Vindhya mountains for fetching an ilīṅkam. As his return was delayed Rāma made an earthen ilīṅkam and established it for worship. For the purpose of obtaining water for consecrating it he created a spring by planting his bow, kōṭaṇṭam, firmly on the ground. There was a continuous flow of water from that spot and thereby the sacred tank of Māmāṅkam was formed. Later the ilīṅkam brought by Anuman was established within it. The foregoing account is a fable and it only suggests that the people among whom it was current did not have even the remotest idea of the historical origins of the sacred tank. It was, perhaps, of such remote antiquity as to elude any rational reflection on its origins.

The second version of the legend elaborates the story further by adding on to it an account of the role of the vēṭar. The spot where the ilīṅkam was established by Rāma is said to have been covered with jungle in course of time. A chieftain of the vēṭar who had learnt of this in a dream is said to have cleared the jungle, exposed the ilīṅkam to view after removing the stumps and roots of trees, erected a shed with the branches and leaves of trees and conducted worship. According to some versions all this was the work of some vēṭar who had gone from Vintanai for collecting honey. This particular version of the legend and its variants are significant as suggesting a close association of the vēṭar with Māmāṅkam during the early stages of its development. In fact, the origin myths pertaining to all the principal Hindu temples in the eastern littoral to the South of Verukal concede to the vēṭar a prominent role in establishing them.

According to yet another version of the story the ilīṅkam at Māmāṅkam was established and worshipped by two chieftains of the vēṭar, Māmāṅkan and Pillaiyān. On account of that reason the temple was called Māmāṅkap pillaiyār by the Vellālar of Kōṭṭamunai and the people of the kurukulam of Amirtakali. This particular version of the story has a threefold significance. Firstly, it seeks to explain the origin of the name of the temple as one that was dedicated for the worship of Pillaiyār. Secondly, it implies that the vēṭar had a close connection with the temple. Thirdly, it suggests that the residents of the villages, Kōṭṭamunai and Amirtakali between which Māmāṅkam was situated had a commanding influence over the affairs of the temple. It may be noted here that all versions of the origin myths relating to Māmāṅkam assert that a civalīṅkam was installed as the object of worship at the site and this tradition is consistent with the fact that the temple was originally an īśvaram, a temple of Śiva. At some point of time the īśvaram was transformed into a temple of Pillaiyār just as in the case of the Kaṭṭukalai Pillaiyār temple in Kandy.<sup>2</sup> Presently, there is no means of determining as to when this had happened.

2. The central shrine in Kandy contains the civalīṅkam. The image of Vināyakar is housed in a subsidiary shrine adjoining it. The Hindu temple in Kandy had its origins during period of the Kandyan Kings. The architectural scheme of this temple is unconventional. It was originally dedicated for the worship of Śiva. Nowadays, however, it is reckoned as a temple of Pillaiyār.



## *The temple and its buildings*

Māmāṅkēśvaram is referred to along with two other temples, the Māri Amman temple of Kottukkuḷam and the Kṛṣṇan Kōyil of Timilaittīvu in a document recorded in 1837. The buildings found at Māmāṅkēśvaram have been (re)constructed during the period of a little over a century since 1888. The temple is one of modest proportions and simple design. It has as its principal components the garbhagrha(m), antarāla(m), arttamaṇṭapam, mahāmaṇṭapam, tampamaṇṭapam, vacanta maṇṭapam and the mukamaṇṭapam. The architectural design of these buildings is remarkably plain and devoid of ornamentation. The pillars are also plain and do not contain ornamental carvings or sculptured panels.

As the civaliṅkam installed inside it cannot be removed the garbhagrha(m) is never renovated. The vimānam superimposed on it is a small two-tiered structure. On the lower storey of the vimānam there are representations of Śiva in various poses while the upper storey contains the figures of Vināyakar. In the course of renovations carried out in 1963 these sculptures were redesigned. During the same year a subsidiary shrine of Murukan with a maṇṭapam in front of it was constructed at the temple premises. The maṇṭapam, which was at the entrance to the temple has been demolished recently when the building of the irācakōpuram was designed.

In the vicinity of the temple there were in former times, institutions called maṭam named after Maṭṭuvil Katiravērpillai, nottāricu Iracaiyā and Ceṭṭiyār. On account of neglect they are all in a state of dilapidation. Only the Taṇṇirppantal Maṭam is maintained for the benefit of pilgrims during the festival season.

The annual festival at Māmāṅkēśvaram which is of ten days duration concludes with the water cutting ceremony on the day of āṭi-amāvācai, the New Moon day in the month of July-August. Each of the festivals excepting the last one is conducted by a particular group of people, who are residents of nearby localities. They have special committees for managing each of them.

Besides, the annual festival there are special occasions when, as at other Hindu temples, the rituals and worship conducted here assume the proportions of festivals. Cittirai varuṣam, cittirā paurṇami, āvaṇic caturtti, purattātic canī, kantacaṣṭi, navarāttiri, kārttikai tīpam kētāra kauri viratam, tiruvempāvai, taippoṅkal, taippūcam māci makam, civarāttiri and paṅkuni uttiram are observed as holy days when rituals are conducted elaborately according to āgamic norms. It may also be noted here that at Māmāṅkēśvaram, unlike at most other temples in Batticaloa, the officiating priests are Brahmins.

### *The sacred tank at Māmāṅkam*

The temple of Māmāṅkēśvaram has become famous chiefly on account of the sacred tank attached to it. The small tank at Māmāṅkam is made attractive by the array of lotus flowers seen over its waters and its natural surroundings. It is located in the midst of cool and shady woods generating gentle breezes that relieve the heat of the tropical sun. The mud in the tank has the likeness of sandal paste and pious devotees believe that it has the efficacy of healing incurable diseases.

There is a tradition that the sacred tank at Māmāṅkam is at the confluence of the waters of saptatīrttam: anumār tīrttam, kākkai tīrttam, palaiyāru, nannīrmaṭu, pālamīnmaṭu, mattikkali and kiṇṇaiyaṭittōṇā.

There are some legends pertaining to the origin and sanctity of the tank at Māmāṅkam. The first of these is linked to the story of the irāmāyaṇam. Rāma is said to have created this sacred tank for the purpose of generating the supply of water required for consecrating the ilīṅkam he had established at that site. It is said that a spring had appeared at the spot where he had planted his bow, kotanṭam, and in consequence the tank was formed. According to another tradition the tank was purified and sanctified with the waters of the holy rivers, kaṅkai, yamunai, kāvēri, carasvati, kōtāvari, tuṅkapattirai, pavāni and tāmīraparṇi which had been brought in a pitcher by a munivar (sage, holy man) in bygone days.

The legend of āṭakacavuntari seeks to explain the sanctity of the waters of Māmāṅkam. She is said to have been a princess of Uṇṇaracakiri, who had suffered from a physical deformity. She had an unnatural form on account of having three breasts. She is also referred to as mummulait tāṭakai. She went on a pilgrimage to Māmāṅkam, had ablutions regularly in the sacred tank and propitiated God enshrined at Māmāṅkēśvaram. To her surprise she found herself relieved of her physical deformity and endowed with a natural physical form of incomparable beauty. She was further blessed as she became a queen by her marriage with a ruler. Thus, āṭaka cavuntari is the counterpart of Marutapiravalli of the origin myths relating to Kīrimalai in Jaffna.

The annual festival at Māmāṅkēśvaram culminates in the water-cutting ceremony on the day of āṭi amāvācai when large numbers of pious devotees and pilgrims from all parts of the Batticaloa region congregate at the temple premises. They assemble there primarily to have ablutions at the sacred tank and worship God at Māmāṅkēśvaram. They do so on the belief that they would be purified and relieved of their sins and thereby secure happiness in this world and salvation at the end of their earthly existence.

A water cutting ceremony is performed here annually also on the day of māci makam but the number of devotees who participate in that event is comparatively small. Like Kīrimalai in Jaffna Māmāṅkam serves as the venue for the performance of post funerary rites. On account of that reason Māmāṅkam is always visited by at least a few pious devotees and there is evidence of continuous religious activities.

It may also be noted here that Tāntōnriśvaram, the principal temple of Śiva in Batticaloa does not have a sacred tank attached to it. The water cutting ceremony there, therefore, does not assume any significance.

The administration of the temple has been the responsibility of two communities, the Vellālar and those of the kurkulam, who are



respectively the predominant inhabitants of the two adjacent Vilages, Kōṭṭamunai and Amirtakali. A management committee consisting of six members is elected once in three years on the basis of balanced representation between the two communities. In this committee there are two members designated vaṇṇakkar. There are two others who are their assistants while the remaining two members are specifically in charge of temple accounts.

There are a few poems on Māmānkēśvaram written in the 20th century. These poems and the names of their authors may be listed in the following order:

1. māmānkēśvarar patikam - pulavar A Caravaṇamuttan
2. māmāṅkap piḷḷaiyār antāti- kaviṇar Paramahamsatācan
3. māmāṅkam tiruttalak kirttanai - Na. Viramaṇi aiyar
4. māmānkēśvarar kāvaṭiccintu - kaviṇar Ce. Kuṇarettinam.

These texts, which are written in a simple and attractive style, contain brief descriptions of the temple, its surroundings and the devotees who visit the temple. Some elements of the folk tradition pertaining to the origins of the temple and the fundamental Śaiva religious conceptions are reflected in them. They are, however, not works of outstanding quality in relation to literary merit, temple history or religious ideology .

It should be noted that some other eminent Tamil scholars of Batticaloa such as Aruṇācala tēcīkar, pulavarmaṇi Periyatampippillai, kaviṇar Pu. Cinnaiyā, paṇṭitar Ce. Pūpālapillai and paṇṭitar Vi. Ci. kantaiyā have also written some short poems on Māmāṅkam in the form of a compendium is one of the prerequisites for understanding the significance of Māmāṅkam in the religious tradition of the Hindus of the eastern littoral of Sri Lanka.

# Tirukkēṭiśvaram

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S. Pathmanathan

Among the Hindu Temples of Sri Lanka, Tirukkēṭiśvaram at Māntai and Tirukkōṇēśvaram in Tirukōṇamalai held a position of pre-eminence on account of their great antiquity, the degree of sanctity invested by tradition and their reputation as centres of pilgrimages. In the Saiva tradition they are generally described as *pāṭalperṇa talaiṅkal*, “temples honoured by the hymns (of the *nāyanmār*). Two of the leaders of the movement of Saiva revival in South India, Campantar and cuntarar, had each produced a hymn in honour of Siva enshrined at Tirukkēṭiśvaram.<sup>1</sup> In this hymn on Tiruviljmilalai Appar describes Siva as one who resides at Kēṭiśvaram and Kētāram (*kēṭiccara mēvinār kēṭarattār*).<sup>2</sup> In the *kuyirpattu*, Māṇikkavācakar praises Śiva as the Lord of perunturai and as the one who through grace conferred bliss on Vaṇṭōtari of *tennilaṅkai* surrounded by the roaring waves of the ocean.<sup>3</sup> In another context he refers to the Lord of Perunturai in relation to the favours granted to Vaṇṭōtari of Ilaṅkai.<sup>4</sup> Perunturai referred to in these instances may be identified as Mātōṭṭam on account of the consideration that it is referred to in connexion with Vaṇṭōtari, the consort of Irāvaṇan and the country of Ilaṅkai.

Tradition enjoins that temples should be constructed at open spaces and in the vicinity of the embankments of streams, rivers and tanks or on the sea coast. Ceremonial ablutions have always been an essential aspect of Hindu worship and many Hindu temples had bathing ghats in

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1. Campantar had sung hymns in honour of Siva enshrined at Tirukkēṭiśvaram. See *tiruvāṇṇacampanta cuvāṇṇikal tēvaram*. Ed. Paṭṭuccāmi Ōṭuvār, Madras: Sri Kāci Maṭam, pp. 518-20; *cuntaramūrti cuvāṇṇikal aruṭiceyṭa tēvaram*. Ed. T.M. Kumarakuruparan Pillai, Madras: Sri Vaikuṇṭam, 1958, pp.181-183.

2. A Kantaīyā, *tirukkēṭiccaram* Sri Kantā accakam, Yāḷppāṇam, 1968, p. 46.

3. *ibid.* p. 47.

4. *ibid.* p. 47.

their vicinity. Tirukkēṭīśvaram was established on the northern bank of a stream called Pālāvi, a tributary of the Malvatu oya known to the Tamils as Aruvi Āru and was within the confines of the port city of Māntai, the principal emporium of ancient Sri Lanka. The temple owed its origins to the settlement of mariners, traders and seamen in the localities surrounding it and the flourishing commerce at Māntai was the mainstay of its economy.

It would appear that Mahāttittha, the name by which Māntai is referred to in the Pali chronicles is the Pali form of the Sanskrit expression. Mahāṭīrttha meaning the great (bathing) ghat. It may therefore be assumed that Pālāvi, the stream on which the temple stood, had attained eminence as a sacred site, the *punya kṣētra*, on account of it being resorted to by pilgrims during the early centuries of the Christian era. It is even probable that the site had attained celebrity as a sacred site even before the Christian era. What may be considered as the earliest reference to the temple at Mātōṭṭam is to be found in the *Dāṭhāvamsa*, a chronicle on the Tooth Relic of the Buddha. There is a reference in this chronicle to a Hindu temple at Mahāttittha, which flourished during the reign of Meghavaṇṇa Abhaya (A.D. 303-331).<sup>5</sup>

In the seventh and eighth centuries, Tirukkēṭīśvaram was reputed in South India as a great centre of pilgrimage and the Saiva religious tradition. The devotional hymns of Campantar and Cuntarar depict Tirukkēṭīśvaram as an institution flourishing in exceedingly attractive natural surroundings. The temple is said to have been surrounded by parks, gardens and groves of mango trees, areca palms and banana plantations where the humming of bees and the pleasant cries of birds attracted the attention of visitors. The port of Māntai touched by numerous ships arriving with cargo from distant lands was a great centre of sea-borne commerce.<sup>6</sup> What is most remarkable in the description

5. *Dāṭhāvamsa* V: V 1; Vi. Civacāmi. "tirukkēṭīśvaram .narapukalūm aiṭikaṅkalūm", *tirukkuṭat tirumaṇcana malar*, 1976: *tirukkēṭīśvaram ālayat tiruppanīccapai veliyiṭu*, pp. 98 - 101.

6. Cuntarar describes Mātōṭṭam as "The good city of Mātōṭṭam abounding in ships", *vaṅkam malikiṇṇa mātōṭṭa nannakar*. ..



of Tirukkēṭiśvaram as found in the *tēvāram* hymns is the emphasis on the sanctity of the temple and its bathing ghat visited by pilgrims and devotees in large numbers from distant places.

Two Sinhalese inscriptions of the tenth century provide some indication of the extent of veneration on which the Saiva shrine of Māntai and its bathing ghat were held by Buddhists. The fragmentary portion of an inscription from Anurādhapura recording the donations made to the Jetavana temple asserts that those who obstruct the arrangements concerning the donation would incur the sin of slaughtering cows at Mahatoḍi.<sup>7</sup>

Another inscription, which was found at Kataragama, records that those who cause hindrances to certain regulations stipulated in the text of the epigraph would incur the sin of slaying cows at the site of Mahātoḍi (Mahatoṭa).<sup>8</sup> The imprecatory portions of these inscriptions provide a clear indication of the fact that Mahātīttha was considered as a locality of great sanctity, even by the Buddhists. Such a situation presupposes a close interaction between Śaivism and Buddhism during the period when these inscriptions were engraved.

### *Cōla temples at Mātōṭṭam*

The northern part of Sri Lanka was overrun by the Cōla armies around the eight year of the Cōla King Rājārāja I (985-1016). Under his successor Rājendra Cōla I (1012-1044) there was a steady growth of Cōla power in the island a major part which was held by the Cōla armies until 1070 A.D. The port city of Mātōṭṭam occupied a position of considerable importance as an outlet for commercial and cultural interaction among the Kingdoms of South India and Sri Lanka. On account of its multifaceted character it became one of principal strongholds of cola power.

7. S. Paranavitana, "Inscriptions on the Stone canoe within the Citadel, Anuradhapura", *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 3, Humphrey Molford, London: Oxford University Press, p. 133.

8. S. Paranavitana, "Kataragama Inscriptions", *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, Vol. 3, p. 225.

Cōla inscriptions from Tirukkēṭiśvaram in Māntai provide some indication of Cōla activities in that area during the 11th century. Three inscriptions were discovered at Tirukkēṭiśvaram in Māntai several decades ago. Subsequently they were taken to the Colombo Museum where they are still to be found among the exhibits at the stone Gallery.<sup>9</sup> The fourth inscription was discovered about thirty years ago. It is presently found at Fort Hammenhiel off Kayts.<sup>10</sup> There is reason to believe that it was originally at Mātōṭṭam. It records the activities of a Cōla general at Mātōṭṭam.

The Cōla inscriptions from Tirukkēṭiśvaram record some information about two temples of Siva: Rājarājēśvaram and Tiruviramīśvaram. There are no architectural remains of these temples. Presumably they were located at the site from where these inscriptions were discovered.

Rājarājēśvaram, like many other Cōla temples, was named after the Cōla King Rājarāja I. The temple is said to have been constructed at Mātōṭṭam. It has been suggested, with some degree of plausibility, that the ancient shrine of Tirukkēṭiśvaram was restored and renamed Rājarājēśvaram by the Cōlas. The temple was constructed by the dignitary named Tālikumaran who had come from Ciṟukūṟṟanallūr in Vēlār nāṭu which belonged to Kṣatriya Sikhāmaṇi Vaḷanāṭu in Cōlamaṇṭalam.

9. *South Indian Inscriptions* Vol. 4, Ed. H. Krishna Sastri, No. 1412, p. 495; *Ceylon Tamil Inscriptions*, pt. 2 Ed. and published by A. Velupillai, Peradeniya, 1972, pp. 41 - 55.

10. This is a fragmentary inscription. It translates: "Hail! Prosperity! (In) Mātōṭṭam otherwise called Irācarācapuram. Jāyankōṇṭa Cōla mūvēnta vēlār, the Commander-in-Chief and Altikarī, who conquered the whole of Ilam and captured and took away the King of Ilam and his Queen." The fragment contains only the initial portion of the text. This inscription is significant on account of the fact that it records the name of the Cōla general who led the expedition which resulted in the capture of Mahinda V and his Queen. He had the designations *atikārat tantanāyakanār* and *jayankōṇṭacōla mūvēṇjavēlār*. As Mātōṭṭam is mentioned in the inscription the epigraph was probably engraved on a pillar or a moulding of a temple in the city of Mātōṭṭam. It may, perhaps, be assumed that the Cōla general visited a shrine and made some donation while he was returning to the Cōla country.

Tālikumaran made provision for the maintenance of the temple which he had caused to be constructed. The endowments consisting of land and revenues of government were made by him to the temple for the purpose of conducting religious services and rituals daily, and the water-cutting ceremony during the seven days of Vicākam in the month of Vaikāci (May-June) annually.<sup>11</sup>

The land granted in the form of a tax-free *tēvatānam* was situated to the east of the great road named after Rājarāja and to the south of the blacksmiths quarters. The portion of the inscription containing the description of the southern and eastern boundaries of the land has been lost. The grant included all lands within four stipulated boundaries with the exception of the house, mansion and garden of Kunṇan Kāman, a local citizen.<sup>12</sup>

The revenues given over to the temple included the tax on all looms at the rate of a quarter of an *akkam* on each loom per month, tolls on all pathways and ferries leading to Arumalittēva Vaḷanāṭu and the taxes on all commercial transactions at the rate of a *vaṭṭam* on each *kācu* from the buyers and sellers of commodities. The monetary income thus acquired by the temple must have been substantial as Mātōṭṭam being the principal emporium of the islands trade was the centre of a flourishing commerce. A portion of his income was to be used presumably for the maintenance of a *maṭam* a charitable inn or pilgrim's rest.<sup>13</sup>

Rājarājēśvaram is perhaps the only temple in Sri Lanka which is known to have been maintained with government revenues. That Rājarājēśvaram enjoyed the support and patronage of the Cōḷa government is evident from the transfer of government revenues to the

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11. S. Pathmanathan, "Chola Inscriptions From Mantai", *tirukkēṭṭicarar tirukkuṭar tirumaṇṇana malar, tirukkēṭṭicara ālayar tiruppaniccapai veliyūṇu*, 1976, p. 62.

12. *ibid.*

13. *South Indian Inscriptions* Vol. 4, No. 1412. The expression *matapati* occurring in the inscription suggests that there were arrangements for regulating the affairs of the institution.



temple. It was perhaps a replica, in modest proportions, of the great temple which Rājarāja had constructed in Tančāvūr, the Cōla capital.

The temple called Tiruviramiśvaram is referred to in a Cōla inscription of the reign of Rājendra from Māntai. It must have been a temple of Śiva as all shrines referred to as īśvaram were associated with the cult of Śiva. The name Tiruviramiśvaram recalls of Rāmēśvaram, the famous Hindu temple on the other side of the Palk straight. A certain Tēvan who was a *paṇimakan* of the *ciṟutanam* in the service of Rājendra Cōla had made a gift of four gold coins for burning lamps daily at the shrine. Two of the coins were deposited with the Caṅkarapāṭiyar living in Mātōttam. The third and the fourth coins were deposited with the *vāḷakkāy vāṇiyar* (dealers in bananas) and the *verrilai vāṇiyar* (dealers in betel leaves) respectively.<sup>14</sup>

Mātōttam, which had acquired the new name Rājarājapuram, was a unit of Arumolittēva *vaḷanāṭu*, one of the subdivisions of *mummuticcōla maṇṭalam*. Among the ports of Sri Lanka Maṭōttam was the largest and the closest to South India. It served as the landing place for most of the Cōla armies that came to the island. It was the centre of a flourishing commerce and it was of vital importance in the Indo-Lankan trade. Besides, the control of Mātōttam was essential for the Cōlas to maintain links between the court of Tančāvūr and its agents posted in the Sri Lanka. The provenance of numerous Cōla coins at Māntai and the evidence from the Cōla inscriptions reveal that Mātōttam was a vital centre of Cōla power.

Inscriptions record some information on economic conditions and social life in the town of Rājarājapuram. The Rājarājapperunteru, 'The Great Street of Rājarāja was presumably a large road by contemporary standards, and was perhaps the main thoroughfare in the town. There were settlements of Blacksmiths and Weavers in Arumolittēva Vaḷanāṭu. The *caṅkarapāṭiyar*, *vāḷakkāy vāṇiyar* and *verrilai vāṇiyar* were three groups of traders whose range of activity was confined to a limited

14. S. Pathmanathan, "Chola Inscription From Mantai", ... p. 63.

area. The fact that the monetary endowments for the 'perpetual' burning of lamps were placed under their charge suggests that these trading groups had permanent settlements at Rājarājapuram and presumably, in the neighbourhood of Rājarājēśvaram. These trading groups may even have been settled in the neighbourhood of the temple for supplying certain commodities required for daily use in the temple. The Cankarapātiyar were dealers in oils and it is possible that they were settled in the neighbourhood of Rājarājēśvaram, as at several other temple sites for the purpose of supplying oil required for the temple. An individual named Kunran Tāman, an inhabitant of Mātōttam (*ivvūrkuṭi*) is said to have owned a house, a mansion and a garden. His rights over his property were confirmed by the land-grant made to Rājarājēśvaram.

### *The Portuguese and the temples of Mātōttam*

There is a wide gap in the history of the temple of Tirukkēṭīśvaram since the 11th century. The epigraphic records of the subsequent period have not survived on account of the fact that the temples of Mātōttam had been systematically destroyed by the Portuguese in the 16th century. The site where the temple had existed previously had the appearance of a desolate mound until the end of the 19th century when the resurgent Hindu community developed a passionate interest in Tirukkēṭīśvaram as a result of the inspiration provided by Ārumuka Nāvalar, the champion reformer of the Hindus.

Some British officers had written short notes on Tirukkēṭīśvaram in their reports and in some Journals. In his *Administration Report* for the year 1887, William Twynam, the Government Agent of the Northern Province, says: "The tradition is that the temple was as large as the one at Rāmēśvaram and was held in great veneration by the Hindus, who made pilgrimages to it from all parts of India as they now do to the temple at Rameswaram. The Portuguese it is said, destroyed the temple and built the Māntai church with the materials and this is borne out by the discovery lately of some stone images in the foundation of the old

Church, which was built, I believe, on a part of the site of the old temple. Some Roman Catholic Churches in Māntai were also, it is said, built of the temple.”<sup>15</sup> It is claimed that “soon after, the friars got the broken images and the inscriptions buried in the foundations of their new Church at Mantota.”<sup>16</sup>

The impressions of William Twynam seem to be supported by the observations of Hugh Neville who says:

“This city was a great emporium, the population of which mainly belonged to the Kadiyar race, when it attracted the cupidity of the Portuguese. In 1543 A.D., a missionary sent by S. Francis Xavier converted these people to Christianity, but the political use made of this conversion so excited and alarmed the Chakravarti Raja of Jaffna, their ruler, that he extirpated by wholesale executions which took place about 1546 A.D.”

“The trade of the port was then shattered, and when the Portuguese finally destroyed the Tamil rule in 1590, the old port was abandoned in favour of Mannar which could be defended by the shallow channel between it and the mainland, from a sudden surprise by land. When they took final possession they sacked and burned the city of Mantotte, and razed its ancient temple to the ground”.<sup>17</sup>

The observations made by Paul E. Pieris may also be recalled here. He writes: “... the Portuguese (were found) busily engaged in transporting stone for the fortress, the Viceroy himself acting as engineer, the famous shrine of Thiruketheeswaram being demolished to supply materials for the fort and the churches which were subsequently erected”.<sup>18</sup>

15. *Administration Report*, 1887, Sir William Twynam, Government Agent, Northern Province, Colombo: Government Press, 1887, p. 119. A.

16. S. Arumukam, *Thiruketheeswaram*, Second Revised Edition, Colombo, 1990, p. 51.

17. Hugh Neville, “Mantota, its Temple, and Ancient Trade” *Taprobanian* Vol. II, December, 1887, p. 165.



W.J.S. Boake, the Assistant Government Agent, Mannar, who became interested in the ruins of Tirukkētisvaram, conducted amateurish archaeological surveys and trial excavations in 1886. In a paper he wrote on the basis of his finds he says: "Nothing remains above ground of this ancient city except a few fragments of sculptured figures, broken tiles, bricks and pieces of pottery. Its site is entirely overgrown by low dense jungle, the only large trees being a few *tanaku* and *boabub*. Indications may still be seen of the old streets and there are two or three old wells. The foundations of a brick building, somewhere about the centre of a hill, on which I believe the greater part of the city stood, are pointed out as those of the place; and the entrance of the temple is said to have been near the old well..." It is one of the sixty-four sacred places of the Hindus. Its temple rivalled that of Rameswaram and was probably built about the same period."<sup>19</sup>

P. de Hoedt, who was Colonial Secretary had visited the site of the ruins at Tirukkētisvaram on several occasions during the years 1894-1895. He made careful observations and kept notes. His description of what he saw at the site is of interest, as it portrays what the site was like during the period of excavations by Pasupathy Chēttiyar." He says:

"It was in November, 1894 I first visited the deserted sacred place of the Hindus. I had then no notion of its great sanctity for the Hindu, nor of its antiquity. The site was thickly covered with low scrubby jungle trees known as *odai*, the *ellonole*, the *tanaku* and other thorny undergrowths. Some low walls in one particular place were pointed out as relics of temples of by-gone days and dwellings of an extinct people. We came also upon broken pieces of sculptured Hindu saints and small bits of a very white transparent stone not known in the district..."<sup>20</sup>

18. Paul E. Pieris, *Ceylon: The Portuguese Era*, Vol. I, Colombo.

19. S. Ārumugam, *Thiruketheesvaram*, p. 57.

20. *ibid.* p. 59;

## The Restoration

The idea of restoring the Tirukkēṭiśvaram temple was initially conceived by Āṟumuka Nāvalar. In his tract called *yāḷppāṇa camayanilai* he appealed to Hindu public, in respect of Tirukkēṭiśvaram, in the following terms:

“Ilaṅkai is fortunate in having two temples dedicated for the worship of Śiva on which laudatory hymns have been sung by our saints. Tiruñānacampanta mūrtti *nāyanār* has sung a hymn in praise of the Lord of Kōṇamāmalai while both he and Cuntaramūrtti *cuvāmikaḷ* have sung in praise of the Lord of Tirukkēṭiśvaram. Tirukkēṭiśvaram situated near Mannar in the Northern Province is now in ruins and is covered by with jungle.

“So many new temples keep coming up in different parts of Ilaṅkai from time to time. Why are the Hindus of Ceylon not mindful of the greatest of their temples? If every Saivite in Ceylon contributes his mite to this cause what a big sum would accrue?

“If you would only heed my advice and complete rebuilding this Temple (Tirukkēṭiśvaram) Lord Śiva will shower His favours on you, out of the bounty of His infinite grace.”<sup>21</sup>

Āṟumuka Nāvalar thus brought to the notice of the Hindus of Jaffna, the existence, in close proximity to Jaffna, within a hundred miles, an ancient site of Hindu worship sanctified by the *tēvaram* hymns of the *nāyanmār*. His appeal had the effect of initiating a movement, some years later, for the re-discovery of the site of the ancient temple. As interest in the matter has been aroused in the country the Government Agent of the Northern Province decided to visit the area himself and see the location.<sup>22</sup> Prior to that applications were made by Subadar

21. A. Kandiah, *tirukkēṭicaram, srikanthā accakam*, Yāḷppāṇam, 1968.

22. S. Arumugam, *Thiruketheeswaram*, Second Revised Edition, Colombo, 1990, p. 56.

Vaythilingam, Thambaiyah Mudaliyar of Colombo, the manager of the Kantacuvāmi temple, Nallūr, and Asaipillai of Jaffna for the purchase of the site of the temple. They also indicated to the Government their intention of restoring the temple. The *caiva paripālana capai*, "The Society for the preservation of Saivism", made representations to the Government on matters relating to the transfer or sale of land at the site of Tirukkēṭiśvaram by the Government to individuals sponsored by the Society.

On the 13th of December, 1893, William Twynam, the Government Agent, put up for auction at the Jaffna kachcheri, the Crown land of 44 acres of jungle land of no economic value; it was inhospitable for dwelling or for cultivation; but it was a sacred spot for the Hindus. To them it had an inestimable value and to them that was a day of great significance.<sup>23</sup>

As soon as transactions dealing with the purchase of the extent of 44 acres of Crown land was settled by R.R. Palaniyappa Chettiyar with the Government Agent, S.T.M. Pasupathy Chettiyar set out to the site and commenced clearing the jungle, in January, 1894. In his efforts he was supported by the residents of the neighbouring village of Vitattal tivu.

The lay-out of the temple was discerned and the south-west corner wall was located. The walls rose from a depth of over ten feet from ground level to a total height of over twenty feet. The foundations of the wall had been of granite stone after which it had been erected in limestone and continued in the upper portion in brickwork.

The original site of the Temple, which had been destroyed by the Portuguese, was traced in June 1894 from the clue afforded by the old well in the temple land. A *civaliṅkam*, a *nandhi* and an image of Gaṇeśa were the most important archaeological finds obtained during the course of excavations conducted under the supervision of S.T.M. Pasupathy

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23.    ibid. p. 63.



Chettiyar, a philanthropist of great renown and the Honorary Treasurer of the *caiva paripālana capai*. He had taken temple priests, architects, artisans and workmen from Jaffna to Tirukkēṭiśvaram for conducting investigations.<sup>24</sup>

A small temple was erected at the site and it is said to have been consecrated in 1903 by N. Kumāracāmi Tīkṣitar.<sup>25</sup> The *civaliṅkam*, the *nandhi* and the *palipīṭam* were also consecrated on that occasion. The *civaliṅkam* installed at this temple was originally from Benares in India. Later, efforts were made in Jaffna to collect stones required for erecting a large temple at Tirukkēṭiśvaram. They were chiselled, dressed and assembled at the old premises of Saiva Pragasa Vidyasalai for transportation by boat to Tirukkēṭiśvaram.<sup>26</sup> But, since the passing away of Pasupathy Chettiar and other stalwarts associated with him there followed a period of inactivity in respect of the construction of a stone temple.

In the meanwhile, the maintenance and management of the small temple that was consecrated in 1903 had become the responsibility of the *nagarattār*, who were always in the forefront in promoting the cause of Hinduism. So, the management of the temple at Tirukkēṭiśvaram continued as part of the regular activity of the management of the Katirēcan temples in Colombo.<sup>27</sup> A special consecration ceremony was annually performed in commemoration of the *kumbā-abiṣēkam* of 1903 and worship was conducted regularly. The inhospitable

24. *ibid*, pp. 63 - 64.

25. A. Kandiah. *Tirukketiccaram*, Srikanthā Accakam. Yālpānam. 1968. pp.13 - 14, 17.

26. S. Arumugam. *Thiruketheeswaram*, pp. 67 - 68.

27. "The management of affairs of the temple devolved on the Nagarathar, a Chetty community resident at Madampe. Thus commenced the involvement of the Chetty community, an involvement which is to continue for about half a century". "In 1919, the administration of the Temple was transferred to the Nagarathar community living in Jaffna and Colombo. The transfer was effected on Sivarathri day of that year, that was on Saturday the first of March, 1919." *ibid*. p. 71.

environmental conditions made the task of maintenance a difficult affair. Scarcity of fresh water and the prevalence of Malaria made living conditions extremely difficult at the site. In the dry months of the year even the temple priest had to reside in Mannar. The conditions at Tirukkēṭiśvaram are vividly described in a letter written by a devotee He Says:

“It was in 1948 that a Hindu resident of Mannar along with his wife tread the lonely path leading from Mannar-Pooneryn Road at the Adampan junction, to the Holy shrine. The shrine was situated in the midst of thick jungle infested with wild animals and poisonous reptiles. There was a Brahmin priest who performed the pujas and received the pilgrims with a welcome smile and attended to their religious observances. His home old dilapidated, must have been a haven of rest for many a poor pilgrim, who probably walked miles and miles to worship at the shrine.

“There was the Kanakapillai, a lean and alert figure who administered the temple on behalf of the management. The Chettiars visited the temple on important religious occasions and paid their homage.”<sup>28</sup>

### *The Tirukkēṭiśvaram Restoration Society*

The formation of a society for the restoration of the temple at Tirukkēṭiśvaram in 1948 was largely the outcome of the efforts made by Subramaniam Shivapatha suntharam, who was a scholar of high reputation<sup>29</sup> on account of his deep knowledge of all the branches of

28. *ibid.*, p. 77.

29. The following were elected as the first office-bearers of the Society: President: S. Sivapathasundaram.  
Chairman of Committee: K. Kanagaratnam, M.P.  
Secretary: A. Sithampalam  
Asst. Secretary: V. Gunaratnam  
Joint Treasurers: S. Somasundaram; R.M. Palaniappa Chettiyar  
Propaganda Secretaries: S. Saravanamuttu, V.K. Chellapah.

Saiva learning. As a competent exponent of the Śaiva Siddhānta he had published a number of manuals on Saivism, its philosophical tenets and rituals.

In a letter of appeal which he addressed to the Hindu residents of Malaya Shivapathasundaram cited the historical and religious importance of Tirukkēṭīśvaram and urged them to support the restoration of the temple: They responded to his call and formed a Society which has been nobly bearing the cost of erecting the Kauri Amman shrine and the *kōpuram* of that shrine.

When a Society was instituted for the purpose of the restoration of the temple at Tirukkēṭīśvaram, he was unanimously elected its first president. The images of Naṭarāja and Civakāmi Amman found at the temple were donated by him. The Tirukkēṭīśvaram Temple Restoration Society was formally inaugurated at a public meeting held at the old Katirēcan Kōyil, Bambalapitiya, on the 24th of October, 1948.

During the years 1947-1952 considerable progress was made by this Society in formulating proposals and plans for the construction of the temple which turned out to be a project of great magnitude. The Society had consultations with Kumāracuvāmi Kurukkaḷ of Accuvēli and Īcāna Civāccāriyār of Paḷani on the project. The services of the master craftsmen Cellakkaṇṇu *stapati* and Vaittiyanāta *stapati* of Paḷani were obtained for making the plan of buildings. V.M. Narasimhan, consultant Temple Architect of Madras tendered advice.

The order of priority and procedure with regard to construction were decided as follows:

- (1) "The existing shrines of *cuvāmi* and *Amman* to remain as they were at present while work on quarrying for necessary stones for their reconstruction may be started early.
- (2) The work on the subsidiary shrines to be started at once and the construction of the inner boundary wall and *īrācakōpuram* to follow later.



- (3) The Society should undertake the building of the foundation up to basement level for the Prakāra shrines, boundary walls, and *irācakōpuram* from out of general collections. Their superstructures may be allotted to individuals who may wish to make their contributions towards the construction of particular shrines for their choice.<sup>30</sup>

The overall dimension of the perimeter wall measured 218 ft. by 132 ft. The ground plan of Pillaiyār temple in the south west had a dimension of 42 ft. by 13 ft. The shrine of Kantacuvāmi had the same dimensions. The *palli arai* and the shrine of Nataraja required 12' 4" by 10' 3" each. The foundation structure for the *irācakōpuram* had to be laid on a space of 25ft by 20 ft.

The foundation ceremony for the subsidiary shrines was conducted in the presence of a large gathering of devotees on the 26th of March, 1953.<sup>31</sup> With the completion of some of the buildings in 1960 it was decided to install their respective images. Accordingly the ceremony of consecration, *mahākumpāpiṣēkam* was performed on the 31st October, 1960 at the shrines of Pillaiyār, Murukan, Natarācar, Mahalinā kuvāmi and the renovated shrine of Caṇṭeśvarar.

The bell tower was completed in 1961 and a bell outfit was mounted on it. The bell cast in pure copper and tin only has a nett weight of 1 ton 3 cwt., 1 qr. 26 lbs. and nett overall size 50"x 50"x 50". The gross assembly weighs almost two tons.<sup>32</sup>

The original designs of 1952 provided for a three-tiered *kōpuram* in the second *pirākāram* and a seven tiered *iracakōpuram* in the third *pirākāram* both in the eastern wing. Provision was also made for one on the southern wing at the entrance to the Amman shrine. However,

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30. *ibid.* p. 90.

31. *ibid.* p. 118.

32. *ibid.* p. 119.

the temple was adorned with a five-tiered *irācakōpuram* rising majestically to a height of fifty feet from the main gateway structure of the temple. It contains one hundred and sixty sculptures.<sup>33</sup>

Worship and rituals were conducted daily at the subsidiary shrines ever since the images were installed and consecrated on 31st October, 1960. With the completion of construction work at the other subsidiary shrines and the installation of images within them another consecration ceremony was performed on the 19th of August, 1968. On this day the consecration of the completed *iracakōpuram* was also performed and it marked the completion of the first stage of the building programme.

### *The Sanctum and the Amman Shrine*

In the meanwhile steady progress has been maintained in assembling the materials required for the second stage of the building programme involving the construction of the main temple and the Amman shrine. As these structures, would embody the erection of a *vimānam* over each as super-structure, the foundation had to be made suitable enough to carry a heavy loading. The nature of soil available in the foundation was tested for bearing pressure and the design provided for ample cover over the likely load of the founds.

The design adopted had a 22 inches heavily reinforced raft, 21' 6" by 21' 6" at the Civan temple, at a depth of 7' 2" from ground level. The raft at the Amman temple was 16' by 16'. In all 90.75 cubes of concrete were laid.<sup>34</sup>

The ceremonial laying of the foundation commenced in the early hours of 27th August, 1971. R. Namasivayam, who became the Secretary of the Temple Restoration society in 1974, vigorously pursued the execution of the building programme with a deep sense of commitment. Namasivayam who had studied with absorbing interest

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33. *ibid.* p. 122.

34. *ibid.* p. 124.

Saiva religion, philosophy and the history of temple art and architecture throughout his long career had exerted a considerable influence in designing the monuments in such a manner as to project the Hindu tradition at its best.

The sanctum, the *arttamaṇṭapam* and the imposing *vimānam* of each of the temples dedicated for the worship of Kētiśvaranātar and Kauri Ampāl were built in granite. The *irācakōpuram* at the southern entrance of the Amman shrine and the subsidiary shrines for the attendant divinities and Saiva saints were constructed.<sup>35</sup> Images of *tuvārapālakar* and *tuvāra caktikal* were established in front of the main sanctums. In the second *pirakāram* in front of the main *irācakōpuram*, the ancient Nandhi discovered in the course of excavations was installed in a specially constructed shrine. All stone images were carved at the Government College of Architecture and Sculpture at Mamallapuram.

A *dvajastambham* of 31 feet in height covered with copper sheeting was erected. A magnificent *nandhi* and *palipīṭam* were installed along with the *dvajastambham*. Another *nandhi* and *palipīṭam* were established in front of the sanctum of the shrine of Kauri Ampāl. All construction work was done by a team of competent architects and sculptors under the direction of the mastercraftsmen Cellakkaṇṇu *stapati* and his son Cinkāravēlu.

A large number of bronzes of exceptional quality were cast by R. Jakannāta *stapati* and his son Civacaṇkaran *stapati* of Kumpakōṇam. The following items are included within the group of bronzes cast by them:

- (1). Cōmaskantar,
- (2). Kauri Ampāl Samēta Natarācar

35. These shrines are those of *cūriyan*, *cantiran*, *campantar*, *cuntarar*, *cēkkilār*, *nāvalar*, *cantānācāriyar*, Kētu, Arumuka *nāvalar*, *navakkirakamūrtikal*, *caniśvaran* and *atikāra nantī*.



- (3). Piccāṭanar
- (4). Carapāmūrtti
- (5). Piratōṣamūrtti, Ampāl
- (6). Urcava Ampāl,
- (7). Umā Mahēśvarar
- (8). Kalyāṇacuntarar.

Finally, it remains to consider the Kurukulam established at Tirukkēṭīśvaram. The Kurukulam, as conceived by Kanthiah Vaithianathan, was to be a resident training centre for Brahmin youth of promise, who would take up to the vocation of officiating as priests in Hindu temples in Sri Lanka. The course of instruction included the study of the basic tenets of Saivism, its philosophy and rituals.

The institutions was set up under the auspices of the All Ceylon Hindu Congress with funds provided by Lady Sivanandam Thambyah and a few others. The institution had a school, a library and residences for the trainees. It was formally inaugurated on 21-01-1962 and during the period of its existence the progress made by the institution was impressive.

The origins of Tirukkēṭīśvaram are obscure. It is undoubtedly one of the oldest and most sacred centres of the Hindu religious tradition in Sri Lanka. Commercial prosperity in the port city of Mātōṭṭam seems to have provided the impetus for its development in the first millennium of the Christian era. In the seventh and eighth centuries it was in a most flourishing condition. By then it had become famous as a centre of pilgrimage. The temple had stood on the bank of the stream called Pālāvi the waters of which were invested with sanctity by tradition. The belief had gained ground that the immersion in the waters of the stream would relieve one of the effects of sins and confer bliss.

On the basis of epigraphic notices it may be assumed that new temples were constructed at Tirukkēṭiśvaram by Tāḷi Kumaran and others during the early phase of Cōḷa occupation. The temples had existed until the Portuguese Conquest in the 16th century.

The idea of restoration of the temple was conceived by Āṟumuka Nāvalar and later propagated by Shivapathasundaram. The work of restoration was undertaken by the Temple Restoration society and accomplished with the support of the Hindus of the country as well as those of Malaysia. The Government of Sri Lanka and the state governments of Tamil Nadu and Andhara Pradesh in India have extended support to the enterprise in a significant manner. The first phase of the building programme was accomplished under the direction of Kanthiah Vaithianathan while work on the second stage of construction was executed under the able guidance of R. Namasivayam.

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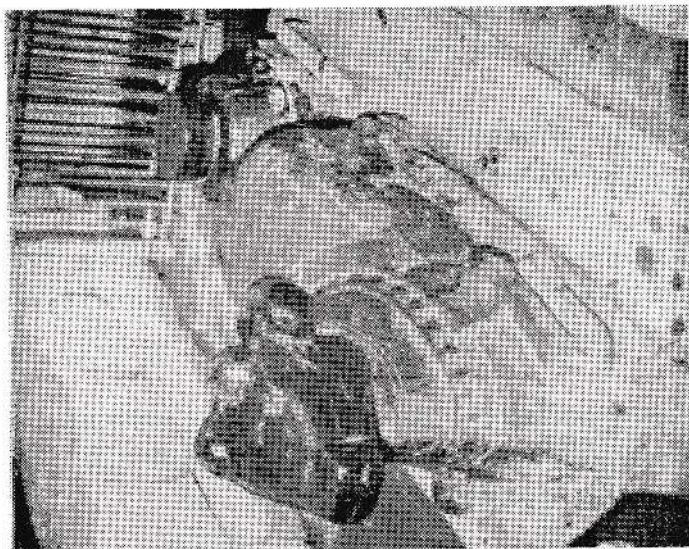
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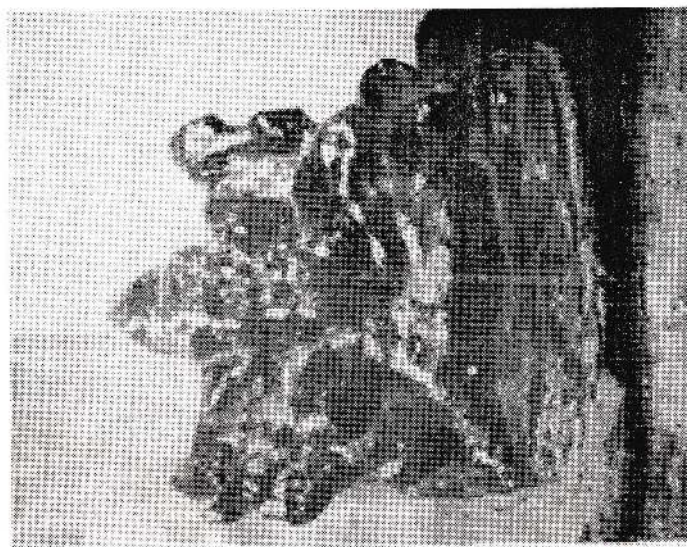


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## TIRUKKETISVARAM



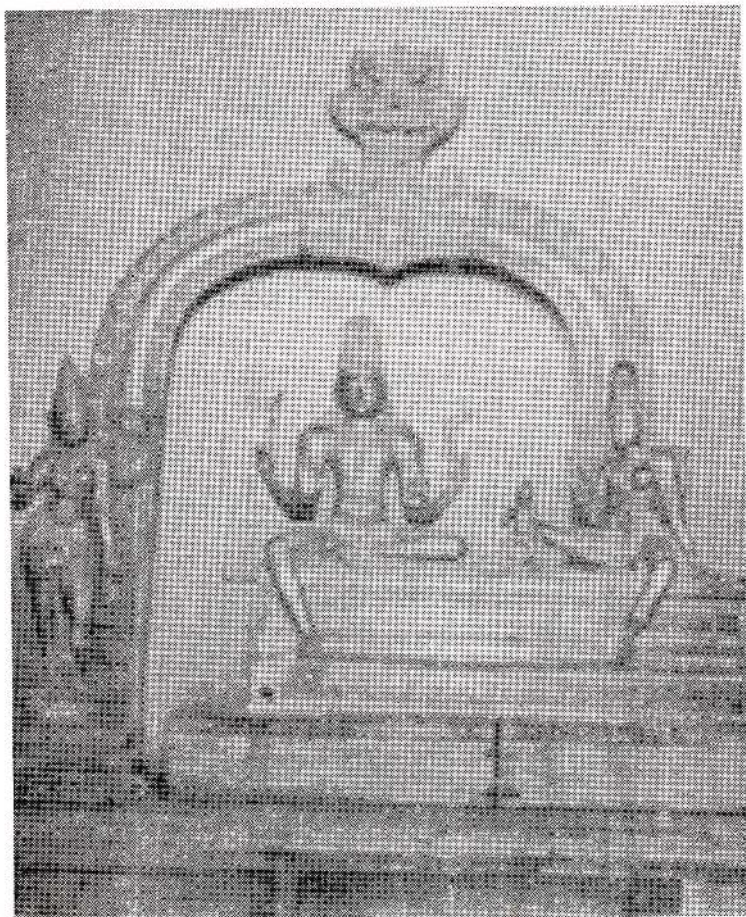
NANDHI UNEARTHED IN 1894.



VINAYAKAR UNEARTHED IN 1894.

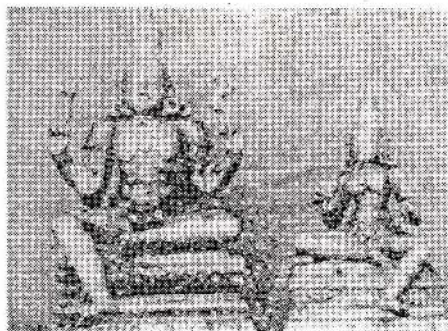


# TIRUKKETISVARAM

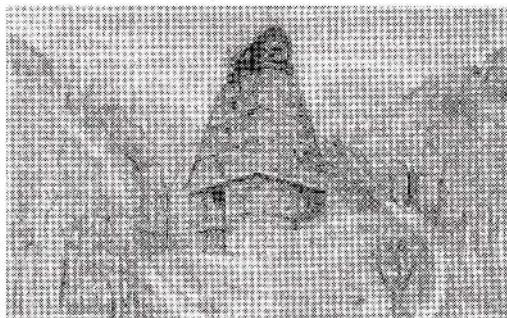


SOMASKANTAR UNEARTHED IN 1894.

# TIRUKKONESVARAM



**MATUMAI AMBAL SAMETA KONESWAR**



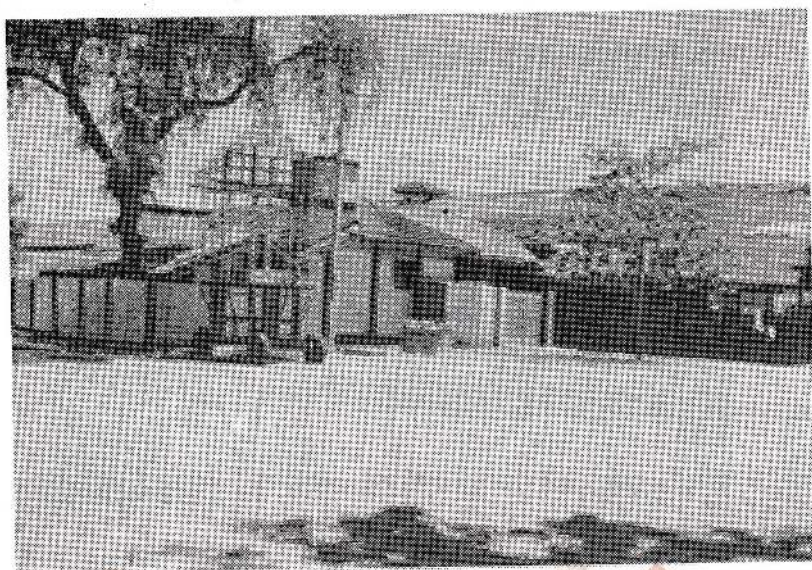
**SRI LEDCHUMI NARAYANAR TEMPLE DESTROYED BY  
PORTUGUESE IN 1624**



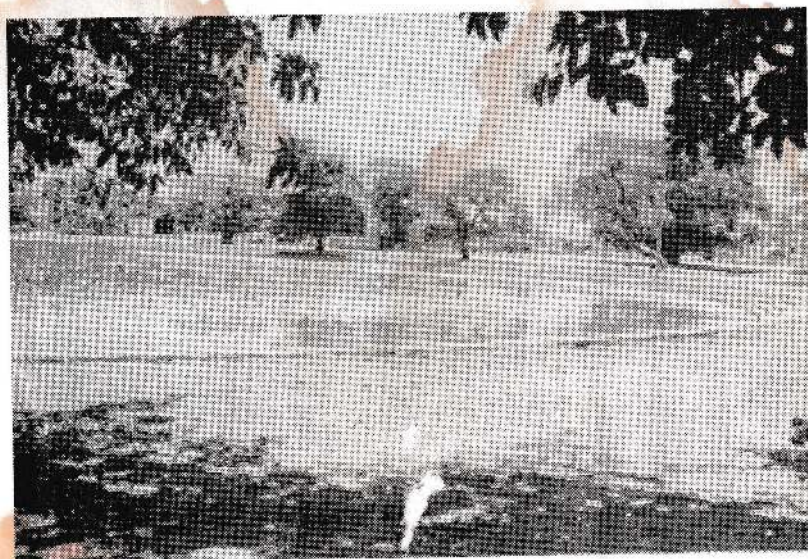
**MATUMAI AMBAL TEMPLE DESTROYED BY  
PORTUGUESE IN 1624**



## MAMANKESWARAM



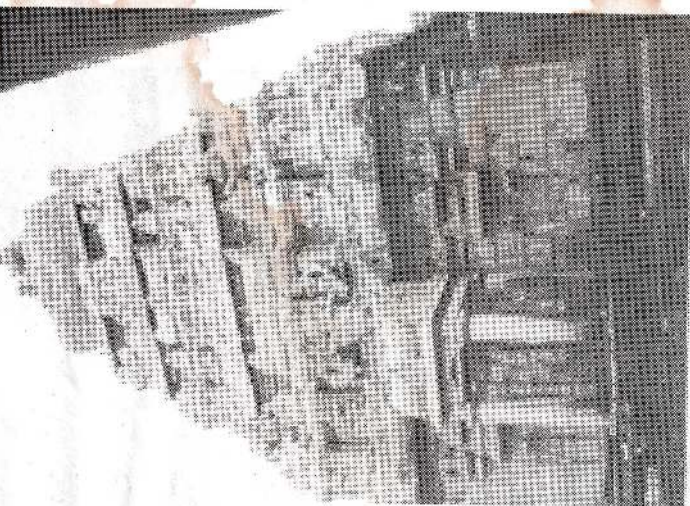
FRONT VIEW



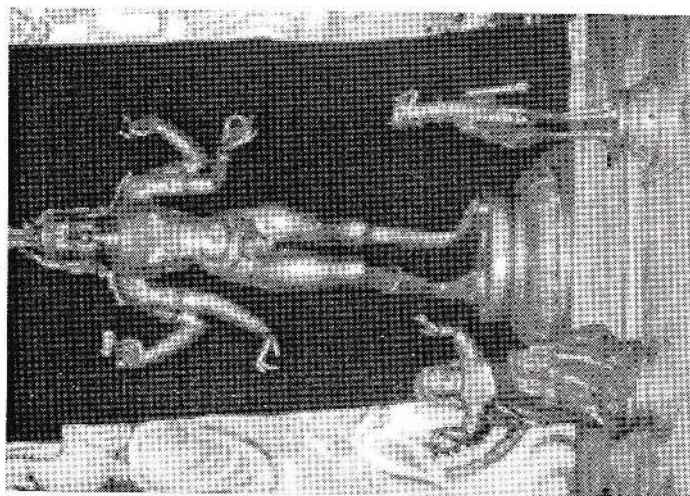
MAMANKAM TANK



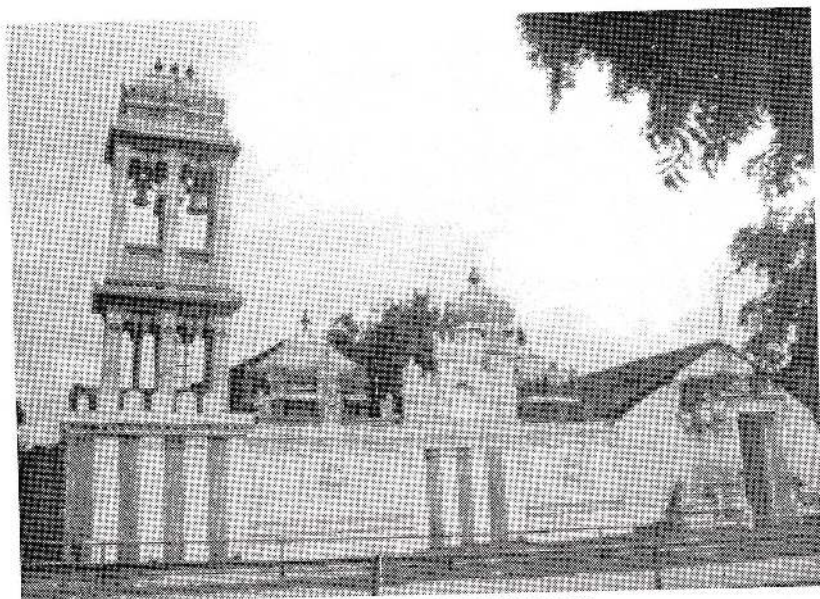
## MUNNESWARAM



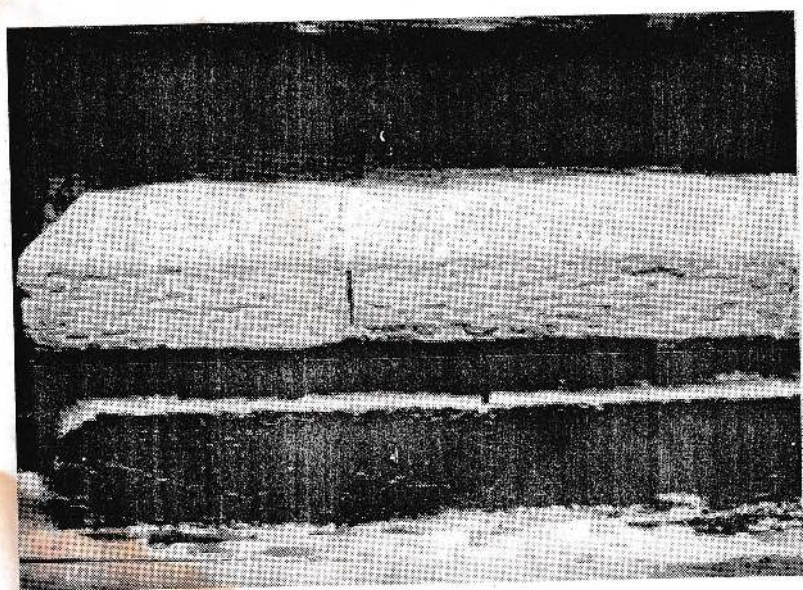
VIMANAM



PIKSHADANAR

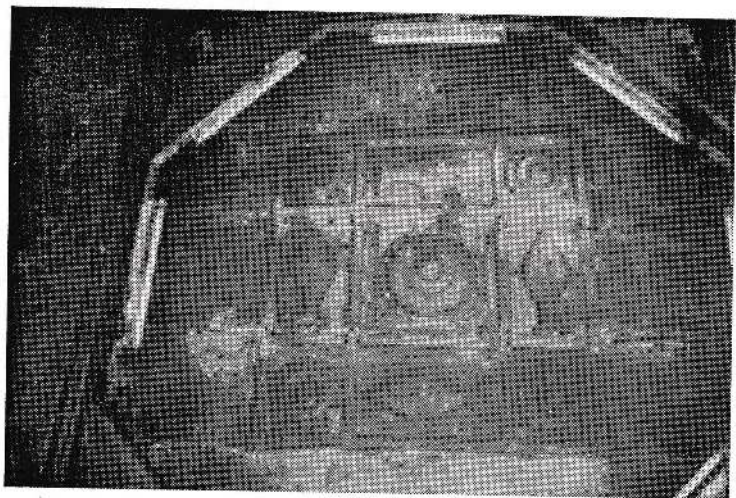


MANIKKUTTU KOPURAM

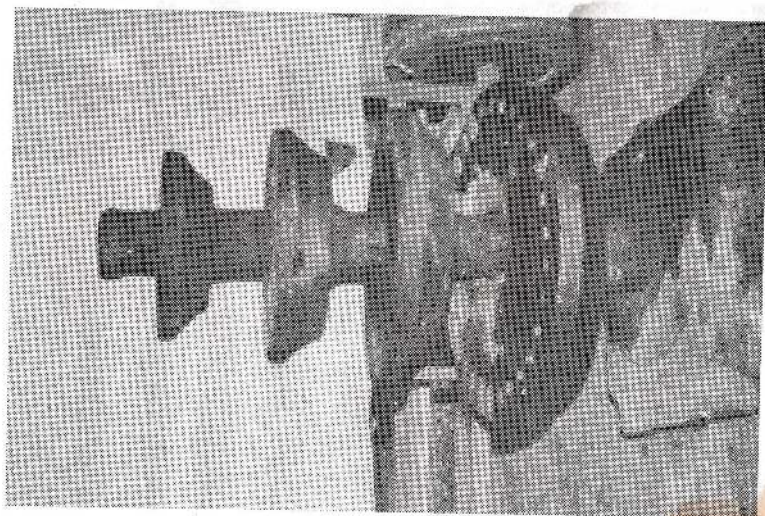


ANCIENT STONE INSCRIPTION





ANCIENT SCULPTURAL WORKS IN  
THE ARTHA MANDAPAM



GIANT STONE LAMP









## *History & Glories of*

- ★ Tirukkonesvaram
- ★ Munnesvaram
- ★ Vanavanmatevisvaram etc.
- ★ Iravikulamanikka-isvaram
- ★ Vijayaraja-isvaram
- ★ Vikkiramacalameka-isvaram
- ★ Tantonrisvaram
- ★ Nakulesvaram
- ★ Atikonanayakar Temple
- ★ Kailayanatar-isvaram
- ★ Mamankesvaram
- ★ Tirukketisvaram