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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**OFFERINGS THROUGH KARUNELLINATHA SWAMI TEMPLE AT THIRUTHANGAL - A
HISTORIA CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY**

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Abstract

The inscriptional evidences “we got to know that Thiruthangal had been one of the most important and thriving villages” in the history of Tamilagam. As per the inscriptions it is known that the social status and livelihood of the people at Thiruthangal had been well enriched. By the contributions to their society show that how much of an evolved people has been residing in the village of Thiruthangal. On the whole, Virudhunagar is not only a place of historical importance but also it is one of the tourist attractions in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu.

Introduction

As there are many microlithic tools and black and red ware ceramics from Thiruthangal, (Latitude of 9^o28’19.79” N and Longitude: 77^o47’ 19.79” E) which is very close to Sivakasi from Virudhunagar, it dates back to the microlithic period. Thiruthangal appears to be a plain terrain geographically. The river “Arjuna”, which empties into a tributary of Vaippar, is the primary source of drainage for it. Anyone passing this community will notice the black

and red surface soil that occurs throughout the entire sea. This town developed into one of the very well-known learning centres in Tamilagam.

This town quickly developed into one of the most well-known centres of learning, and as a result of this development, some poets of the Sangam classics had hailed from this town. This development appears to be at least partially due to the town's location on one of the ancient highways that connected the Chera country with Madurai, the capital of the Pandyas.

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Etymology

Parasaran, a Vedic scholar who was making his way after collecting his award issued by the Chera Emperor reached Thangal which was later on named as Thiruthangal.

Karunellinathaswami Temple

The temple is dedicated for the Hindu lord Shiva, and he is worshiped as Karunellinathar, and is represented by the lingam and his consort Parvati is depicted as Chokki Amman. According to legend, Pandyas constructed the Karunellinathar temple. Throughout the temple, there are several inscriptions that provide details on the gifts that were given to the building. A 1032 CE inscription identifies the temple as being the home of Paramaswamy, who voluntarily picked the hilltop. The temple was next to a lake known as Vallabha Pereri.

When Sundara Pandya was Sundara Pandya's minister in 1233 CE, the temple is said to have been enlarged by Gurukalathirayan. After achieving martyrdom in a battle at Thiruthangal, Ulli Bomman Kalangatha Kanda nayakar was honoured by giving his family the land nearby. The shrine contains a picture of the combatant. Karunellinathaswami temple is also accompanied with a very old temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu called Sri Nindra Narayana Perumal temple which is exactly adjacent to this temple with equally important historical value.

Legend

Hindu mythology claims that Andal's devotion captured the attention of Ranganatha, the reclining form of Vishnu from the Srirangam Ranganathaswami temple. To ask her for her hand in marriage, he set off on a pilgrimage to Srivilliputhur Divya Desam. He made the decision to spend the night there when he arrived because it had grown dark. He resided here; hence it became to be as Thiruthangal, and the hill became to be as Thalagiri.

A different tradition claims that the exiled Pandavas from the Mahabharata were free to traverse

the Western Ghats wilderness. In order to do their daily pooja, they were unable to obtain water. One of the princes, Arjuna, prayed to Ganga just as the sun was rising, and he then launched an arrow that divided the ground and created a river after asking her for water.

Today, it is said that the Arjuna River is the river from where it all began. Irunellinathar, which subsequently became Karunellinathar, was the name given to the location of the temple because it was said to be home to two Amla trees, or nellis as they are known in Tamil.

Inscriptions

The temple has around 6 inscriptions created by the great Pandiyan Emperor Sundara Pandiyan during his 17th regnal year. As the temple is considerably old, these inscriptions are very useful for decoding the empire's economic status widely during the Pandya reign. In their respective historical periods and geographical areas, the Pandyas both appeared to have large economies. The governing and higher classes, as well as the general populace in and around their nation, had all made donations. The majority of donations made to temples were in the form of land, water wells, and livestock like cows, goats, and others, which were used to light twilight and permanent lights in the donors' honour.

The inscriptions talk about series of events during the reign of Sundara Pandiyan such as the contribution made by different community towards the temple, gifts that has been offered to the temple by the people of the village, also mentions about the taxes that has been collected by the government and the land donations that has been given to the temple for the greater well-being;

Inscriptions in Karunellinathaswami temple walls;

| S. No | A. R. E | Place of Inscription | Remarks |
|--------------|----------------|---|--|
| 1. | 575/1922 | On the south wall of the central shrine and store room, in the Karunellinathaswami temple on the same rock. | Records the construction of the temple of stone for Tangal-Isar and his consort Gauri by Soran Uyyaninran alias Gurukulattarayan of SIRRUR, and states that he instituted a service in his own name in the temple of Tirunelveli Nadu and thus enables the god to discontinue begging his daily bowl of bali, |
| 2. | 576/1922 | On the same wall of the same shrine. | Records the gift by purchase of share of the village Udaippangiam for worship of the god Karunellinathaswami and the goddess Minakshi-Amman by a certain Kamara-Rangappa Nayakar. This land was perhaps a Rajabhaga gift of Venkitapati-Muddala-Nayakkar Tambirantolan. |
| 3. | 577/1922 | On the boulder to the north of the same rock. | States that Thiruthangal chermali was the gift for bloodshed (rattakkani) to Ullibomman Kalangadaganda-Nayakkar, the follower of Varatungaramat-Tanippali Kalangadaganda-Nayakkar. Adjacent to the inscription is the figure of a standing warrior whose sword has almost cut off the head of a horse on whose back is seated another warrior with a sword. By the side of the hero is another soldier on horseback. |

| | | | |
|----|----------|---|---|
| 4. | 578/1922 | On another boulder about two miles west to the same village. | States that this is the northern boundary-stone of the four stones set up on the four sides of the big tank of Anaiyar in Karunilakkadi-nada which was the property (kani) of Gurakalattarayar mentioned above, and the taxes on which had to go to the temple on the hill at Thiruthangal. |
| 5. | 579/1922 | On a boulder called Urundaiparai about two miles south of the same village. | Enumerates the boundaries of the land granted for a feeding house by a certain Ambalavanasvami of Chidambaram |
| 6. | 580/1922 | On a slab set up in a field about two miles south of the same village. | Damaged. Seems to enumerate the boundaries of the land granted by a certain Pradani-Nayakkar. |

Offerings from the Inscriptions

In their respective historical periods and geographical areas, the Cheras and the Pandyas both appeared to have large economies. The governing and higher classes, as well as the general populace in and around their nation, had all made donations. People in the Chera and Pandya nations enjoyed a very successful economic situation because they could afford to donate a large amount of money to temples as well as live animals, land, and wells. This demonstrates both their cultural authenticity and level of independence.

The literary works from the Sangam period mention that, in addition to contributions, their economy was booming and growing. The people who lived throughout the Sangam period engaged in a

variety of economic activities, such as trade balances, exports, imports, hunting, and draining out. The residents of Thiruthangal used horticulture in their farming, growing vegetables like onion, tomato, and chillies as well as spices like coriander and fruit crops including mango, banana, guava, and jackfruit.

Conclusion

From the inscriptional evidences “we got to know that Thiruthangal had been one of the most important and thriving villages” in the history of Tamilagam. As per the inscriptions it is known that the social status and livelihood of the people at Thiruthangal had been well enriched. By the contributions to their society show that how much of an evolved people has been residing in the village of Thiruthangal. On the whole, Virudhunagar is not only

a place of historical importance but also it is one of the tourist attractions in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu.

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