



Available online at: <http://www.advancedscientificjournal.com>
<http://www.krishmapublication.com>
IJMASRI, Vol. 2, issue 1, pp. 225- 228, Oct. -2023
<https://doi.org/10.53633/ijmasri>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY ADVANCED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (IJMASRI)

ISSN: 2582-9130

IBI IMPACT FACTOR 1.5

DOI: 10.53633/IJMASRI

RESEARCH ARTICLE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MULASTHANEESWARAR TEMPLE AT PAKASALAI – GLEANED THROUGH INSCRIPTIONS

Dr. N. Preetha

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Meenakshi College for Women (Autonomous), Kodambakkam, Chennai – 600024

Abstract

A study of the formal aspects of a region's epigraphs is crucial for a clear understanding of its cultural past. It not only provides us with a glimpse into the operation of the socio-political machinery of the royal court, but also aids in the reconstruction of chronology and allows us to track the beginnings and progression of numerous modern formalities, including social, religious, and even political ones. The history and its spatial chronology are also presented in the inscriptions found in the Mulasthaneeswarar temple in Pakasalai. The significance of the Temple and the area is mostly discussed in the inscriptions pertaining to the endowment of the land.

Keywords: Mulasthaneeswarar, Pakasalaai, Kannara Deva, Navakandam, Udhirappatti, Archanabhogam.

Introduction

Inscriptional evidence opens the path for reconstructing India's past. Temples serve as knowledge reservoirs all across the world, but primarily in India and more specifically in South India. The Mulasthaneeswarar Temple in Pakasalai, Tiruttani Taluk, Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu, is the subject of this study. Through inscriptional evidence, which provides us with references about the land endowments given for specific ancient rituals, it aims to determine the temple's age, vitality, and spatial significance.

Location

Pakasalai, the historic settlement, located 22 kilometres from the Thiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu. It has a total size of 233.38 hectares¹ and is located at 13.1759 N and 79.6164 E latitude and longitude, respectively. According to the Rashtrakuta ruler Kannara Deva inscription, it is evinced that Pakasalai owes its existence from Nandivarman a feudatory who descended from the Pallavas lineage.

Etymology

The term "Bhaga," which implies wealth or fortune or a person who distributes the wealth equally,

is where the name "Paka" would have come from. As a result, the person who shares the riches is referred to as "Bhagavan" or "Bhaga"¹. The word "Saalai" refers to a food offerings with a connected Pathasala or school. In addition, the word "Saalai" now refers to a road, but it was originally used to refer to a cattle grazing pathway. Allchin² claims that this cattle grazing lane later changed its name to "Peruvazhi"² or "Highway." The word "Bhaga" in this context refers to wealth of any type, but cattle were the most significant at the time, from which the name "Pakasaalai" would have sprung.

Inscriptional data of the Temple

The Mulasthaneeswarar Temple contains a total of three inscriptions. The first inscription was inscribed at the Pachaiamman temple in Pakasaalai, and two more inscriptions are also found here. The second inscription of feudatory of the later Chola (Nandivarman) is located on the back wall of the Garbagriha of the Mulasthanaswamy temple. The third inscription was inscribed on a Hero stone that was kept parallel to the Ponniamman shrine wall. From the time of Kannaradeva to the Vijayanagar period, the inscriptions' chronological range begins.

The first inscription was written in the 16th century during the Vijayanagar era, although the king's name is not known. The inscription begins with the auspicious and exalted phrases about "Saluva Tipayya Deva Maharaja,"² who is presumed to be a feudatory descended from the Saluva family and is mentioned in the first few lines of the text. This inscription lays on the floor of the Pachaiamman temple, which is located close to the Mulasthaneeswarar temple in Paakasaalai, this inscription describes the endowment of a land along with the trees for the purpose of carrying out the renovation work of Mulasthanaswamy and Thiruvudainayagi Amman.

The second inscription, which belongs to the later Chola period in 931 C.E., it pertains to a feudatory by the name of Nandivarman who would have descended from the Pallava lineage. The endowment was provided in Nandivarman's 24th year who was Chola feudatory. The inscription, which can be found on the Mulasthanaswamy temple's wall, describes how

a plot of land was given as a gift so that the "Sribali" ceremony may be held in the Mulasthanamudaiyar temple²

The third inscription is found on a Hero stone that is aligned with the Ponniamman shrine wall at the Mulasthaneeswarar temple and dates to the 27th regnal year of the Rashtrakuta King, Kannara Deva, in 965 C.E. A territory was given to the family of a hero named "Deva" who self-immolated to "Pidari" as a symbol of the king's victory, according to the inscription² this inscription refers to the "Udhirapatti"² or "Neethorpatti"² type of reward, which was typically granted to someone who gave their life to help a king win a battle.

Navakandam [Hero Stone]

Let's now focus on the Hero stone inscription, which dates to Kannara Deva's 27th reign. Since "Navakandam" is the category under which this form of Hero stone falls, "Navakandam" is typically never referred to as an "Archanabhogam"² type of Hero stone. Navkandam¹ is the practise of offering one's own head to "Durga," "Pidari," or "Kali" after nine other body parts have been offered. The Garbagriha of the Draupadi Ratha at Mamallapuram has one such early sculpture carved in the relief of the back wall³.

Another illustration may be seen in a bas-relief in the Varaha cave temple, which depicts the devotee to Durga's right holding the blade far lower than the level of his tuft of hair, making it clear that he is not cutting his hair but rather offering his own head³

Literary Reference about the "Navakandam"

The intricate rites associated with such human sacrifices made to the Goddesses "Durga," "Kali," or "Pidari" are recounted in "Silappadikaram,"³ which also discusses the offerings made to the Goddess as a reward for helping the respective King win. This "Navakandam" is mentioned in the Sanskrit work "Dasakumaracharita"³ by Dandin, a poet who lived during the reign of Narasimhavarman I. "Manimekalai"³ and "Kalingattuparani"³ contain the first references to the "Navakandam" rite. K.R. Srinivasan asserts that the warrior class made this kind

of commitment when they desired success in battle for their ruler.³

Some academics claim that the so-called anthropomorphic graves in the "Modur"³ and "Udaiyanatham"³ both belong to the "Navakandam" period, which goes back more than 2,500 years. This kind of "creative sacrifice" dates back to prehistoric times, and one example may be seen in the "Settavara" rock paintings, which depict a bull sacrifice in a picturesque manner. Both the native Dravidian cult and the Brahminical cult developed this kind of practise simultaneously. This type of idea might be referred to as the "Creative Sacrifice³," The world is created, or recreated, after the terrible destruction of an earlier creation, as we have seen in the tales of the cosmic flood. The flood contains the essential seed of new life. The fundamental Indian ocean of sacrifice—life emerging from death, chaos, and darkness³—is shown by the flood stories on the level of cosmic processes. This idea is present in both the traditional sacrifice system of the Brahmins and the village cults of southern India. In the Hindu universe, nothing can be created without first destroying or changing something else. The two sides of a single, never-ending cycle are life and death³

Conclusion

The narrative about Mahishasuramardini, or Kali's confrontation with the two demons Nimpān and Cūpān, etc., makes this sacrifice element or blood more numerous or brings it about. Accordingly, difficult and combative battles carry out these kinds of ritual sacrifices for their kings, and this inscription highlights the opposition Kannaradeva encountered from the local chieftains in the Tondaimandalam region as he struggled to maintain the captured territory, and as a result, the hero committed suicide, for which the family received a land grant during the king's reign.

The endowment also mentions the "Archanabhogam" to be done for the demised hero, which is not seen elsewhere in the comparable kind of "Navakandam" hero stones. This is another special characteristic of this inscription. As a result, this might

be considered a crucial datum demonstrating the acculturation of the "Great Tradition" and the "Little Tradition."

Despite these hypotheses, the Pallava period is when the majority of the hero stones relating to livestock raids were discovered. The Pallavas were known as the "Kadavas" in South Indian inscriptions because they understood the significance of cattle at the time they created and developed their dynasty from the forest region. From "Paalavar" came the name "Pallava". Therefore, the fundamental purpose of these references is to demonstrate that even though the brahmin sector of society had numerous benefits, the "Little Tradition" or hero stone worship and practise persisted at the same time. A feudatory of the chola who belonged to the Pallava lineage gave endowments at the Mulasthaneeswara temple, which served as the centre of "Little Tradition."

References

1. Chandramouli.C., Census of India, Series 33, Part A & B, 2001, p.224.
2. Sasikala.G., "Thai Vazhi Samoogam: Vaazhvum Vazhipaadum"(in Tamil), Thadagam Publication, Chennai, 2021,p. 59.
3. Allchin.F.R., "Neolithic Cattle – Keepers of South India: A study of the Deccan Ashmounds", 1964, "American Anthropologist", Vol. 66, Issue 1, p.170.
4. Poongundran.R., "Tholkudi Velir Arasiyal – Chengam Nadukarkal Oru Aiyvu", Heritage Treasure Publishers, Chennai, 2016,p.102.
5. Krishnamoorthy. S., Tamizhnattu Kalvettu - Thogudhi – XVII (Thiruvallur Maavatta Kalvettugal Thogudhi – I), Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology, Chennai, 2021,p.82 – 83.
6. Ibid., p.84 – 85
7. Ibid, p.86 – 87
8. S.I.I., Madras, Vol.XII, 1943:No. 106.
9. Op.cit., Tamizhnattu Kalvettugal – Thogudhi XVII, P. 86 – 87.
10. Govindharajan.S., "Kalvettu Kalaichol Agaramudali"^{7th to 12th C.E.}, Madurai Kamarajar University, Madurai, First edition, p. 70.

11. Ranganathan.R., “Hero stones of South India with special reference to Tamilnadu”, Thesis submitted for the Degree of master of Letters”, University of Madras, Chennai, 1979, p.127.
12. Vogel.P.H., “Head Offerings to the Goddess in Pallava Sculpture”, in Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, Vol.4., No.2., London, p.539 ff.
13. Minakshi.C., “Administration and Social life under the Pallavas”, Madras, 1938(Reprint – 1977),p. 183 .
14. Silappadikaram,Chapter XII, Vettuvavari,79 – 86.
15. Commentaries of Moreshvar Ramachandra Kale, Bombay, Chapter I, 1900, p.15
16. Manimekalai, Chapter VI, 50 – 51.
17. Parani, “A Poem about a Hero who destroyed 1000 elephants in War”, Tamil Lexicon, Vol.IV.
18. Srinivasan .K.R., “Some aspects of Religion as revealed by early Monuments and Literature of the South”, University of Madras, Chennai, 1960,pp. 29 – 30.
19. Rao.K.P., “Megalithic Anthropomorphic statues: meaning and significance, Indo Pacific Pre History association, Bulletin 19, 2000, p.113.
20. Mohana Bai.R., “Iconography of Sri – Lakshmi in Srivatsa – form in Tamil Country”, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol.61, part Two, 2000 – 2001, p.1241.
21. David Dean Shulman, “Tamil Temple Myths, Sacrifice and Divine Marriage in the South Indian Saiva Tradition”, Princeton University, USA, 1980, p.90.
22. ibid
23. Meena.V., “Temples in South India (1st ed) Kanniyakumari, Harikumar arts, 1974, p.37.
