



A STUDY ON THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIRUKOILUR SRI VIKRAMA SWAMY PERUMAL TEMPLE AT VILUPPURAM DISTRICT IN TAMILNADU.

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Abstract

Thirukovilur is held sacred by Vaishnavates as it is here that the Divya prabhandham was first composed. The first three Alwars met each other and sang the glories of Lord Vishnu here. The Vishnu temple here is very big. The vision of three Alwars at Thirukovilur for the first time established the fact that God was neither exclusively Purusha nor Sthri, it was harmonious blend of the two viz. Thirumal where in Thiru refers to Lakshmi, Mal to Vishnu. Moolavar in this place is Thiruvikrama. The historical background of Thirukovilur Thiruvikrama temple is most remarkable spiritual centre in Tamilnadu.

Key words: *Historical values, spirituality, Vaishnavate Temple, Thiruvikarama perumal, Epigraphically highlights*

Introduction

Thirukoilur is one among the Nadu divya Desams. Close by is Sri Mushnam which is also a famous puranic place. Thirukoilur Lies on the Viluppuram. Kadpadi railway line. The Temple is about 2 kms from station. This is one among the Pancha Krishna Narayana Kshetrams. The other four are Thirukkannagudi, Kabistalam Thirukkannapuram and Thirukkannamangai. The sthalalpuranam of this place is related in Brahmapuram as well as Padmapuram, the administration of this temple is under the control of Thirukkoilur Sri Emperumanar Jeer Swamy. Thirukoilur is famous in ancient Tamil literature as the head quarters of Malyaman chieftains who were known for their valour, generosity and, love for literature. Avvaiyar and also Kabilar , two famous Tamil poets are connected with this place. The chieftain Pari's daughters Angavai and Sangavai were married here. The Vishnu Temple here is big. Bronzes of the first three Alwars are in the Garbagraha. It appears that the major portion of the Temple was built during the Nayak rule.

Structur and Historical Significance of Moolavar

Moolavar in this place in Thiruvikrama. He is seen in a pose with the right leg lifted high as if it has measured the entire heavens. He is seen facing east. The Utsavar is known as Ayanar as also Gopala. The Thayar is known as Poongovai Nachiyar. There are several Theerthams in this place. The important ones being Penni river, Krishna theertham and Chakra theertham. The Vimanam is Shikara Vimanam God appeared to Balichakravarthi, Mirikandu rishi, Bhrama Sounaka rishi Kasyappa rishi, Kalava rishi, Kusadwaja king and to the first three Alwars.

The story of Thiruvikrama is too well known to bear detailed repetition. However, suffice it to say that Bali Chakravarthi who was known for his generosity was troubling the Devas. The Devas approached Vishnu for help. Vishnu decided to tackle this generous Asura viz., Bali by exploiting his weak point viz., generosity. Vishnu therefore came to this world as the son of Ksyapa rishi and his wife Athihti. He took on the form of Vamana Murthi. In course of time this Brahmachari went to Bali Chakravarthi and asked for gift of the land which could be covered by his three steps. Bali Chakravarthi agreed. The Vaman then assumed the viswaroopa and covered the entire earth with one step, the Heavens with the second step and at the request of Bali put the third step on the head of Bali and pushed him into Pathala . It is said that this Thiruvikrama Avatara of Lord was at Thirukoilur.

When this avataram took place, Muirukandu rishi, i.e the father of Markadeya rishi was not that place He was doing tapas elsewhere. When he heard about this avataram of the Lord from Brighumini, he left very disappointed at having missed this opportunity of seeing this avtaram. He therefore undertook severe penance wanting the God appear before him in the same form. In course of time, Mirukandu rishi visited Gaya, pushkaram, Badri, etc. Finally reached the Bank of Krishna badra river where the Krisharanyam forest were located. He reached Krishnapuri and at that Kshetram, he was assured by Brahma that his penance would be rewarded by Perumal. One an old Brahmin accompanied by his wife was very hungry and tired. He wanted food immediately. Mirukandu rishi went inside his asramam. He knew that in his asramam , there was not even one morsel of food. However, he went inside, he asked his wife Mitravathi to somehow do the necessary athihthi pooja to the old Brahmin and his wife. His wife Mitravathi prayed to Mahalakshmi and thanks to the sincere prayers, she was able to feed the Brahmin and his wife to their complete satisfaction Immediately the Brahmin appeared in his true form holding the sankhu and the chakra in his two hands. The old couple was none other than Perumal and Thayar. Mirukandu rishi then prayed to God to show him his Thiruvikrama roopa so that he who had missed it earlier could derive the divine satisfaction. God



obliged and gave him dharshan in his *Thiruvikrama roopa* at this place. *Mirukandu rishi* prayed to God to continue to stay in this place so that other devotees could also have the similar drashan

Ephigraphical Highlights

The temple contains a large number of inscriptions. Most important is the record of the 6th year *Rajendradeva* II according to that inscription, the central shrine of the temple which had been built partly of bricks had become old and had cracked. One *anakesari* .Raman alias *Narashimavarman* belonging to the Bhagava race and reported to be the Governor of the area of the Miladu province had the old building pulled down and rebuilt the central shrine entirely of fine black granite, set up five *stupis* and also built the enclosing *verandha* and a mandapa in front of the temple . He also presented the central deity a copy of pearls. What is touching interest is that this gentleman after rebuilding the central shrine got re engraved on the walls of the new central shrine true copies of the records found on the walls of the earlier structure.

A number of inscriptions relate to the construction of the temple. An undated record mentions that a chief known as Raman Narasinghan put up a gold stupid. Another record relating to the period of the Saluva Narasinghavarman found on the northern wall of the central shrine says that the outer wall and the gopuram had collapsed were repaired by a certain Annamma Rasa.

A record relating to the period of Kulottunga I refers to the conquest of Ratta country and states that the sabha of Thirukoilur recorded on a stone, the boundaries of the villages granted to the Perumal temple. A Sanskrit verse in honour of Thiruvikrama avatar is found above this inscription.

Another record relating to Vikrama pandya king refers to his victory over the Kakatia ruler Ganapati and a gift of two lamps to the temple. Another inscription refers to gifting of Lamp free of taxes to Thiruvidaikkh Alwar at Thirukkivilur for the conduct of Thirumanjana ceremony on the day the Uttarayanam and Dakshinayanam.

Yet another inscription registers a gift of 96 sheep for meeting the expenses towards lighting a perceptual lamp for the deity of Thirukoilur temple of Vasudevan. It also registers the sale of land by the sabha of Thirukoilur for offering of 10 appam, betel leaves to the deity of the temple on the occasion of Thiruvonam in the month of Aipasi.

Yet another inscription refers to the various conquest and victories of the king Rajendrachola. It also records the sale of land by the Sabha of Thirukoilur for feeding Srivaishnava during the festival in Aipasi for nine days.

On the western wall of the central shrine in the Thiruvikram perumal temple at Thirukoilur, South Arcat District, there is an inscription relating to the Saluva deva Narasinga Maharaja king belonging to the Saluva dynasty in Tamil records a gift by the residents of Thirukoilur of certain lands on certain portions of the banks of the river Pennai to God Thirukodaikali Nayanar of thirukovilur.

On the belt of the varandha round the same shrine and on the Northern wall of the second prakara of the same temple, there are inscription relating to the Chola king Thirubuvana chakravrthi in Rajrajadeva which records gift of land by Vanakovaraiyar for seven perpetual lamps to be burnt in the temple and records gift of money by private individual for creating flower garden and for supplying flowers daily to the God to Viraseakara vinnagar in the third prakara of the Perumal temple at Thirukovilur.

Conclusion

The Almighty supreme lord *Srimannarayana*, purely out of compassion and mercy, wishes to redeem the mortals like us from the mundane cycle of birth and death and bless them with eternal bliss. For this purpose he dwell in his favorite abodes called one hundred and eight *SriVaishnva Divya Desams*. Here, he reveals his luminous presence to us in lovable and enchanting forms so as to accept our lovable service and worship. One of the most illustrious shrines among the above sacred abodes is Thirukovilur which is the most prominent among the five Krisnaraya kshetras too. This Holy City is reserved and glorified by ancient Rishis and Alwars alike. The glorious history of Thirukovilur Sri Thiruvikrama Swamy temple is the remarkable spiritual centre in Tamilnadu

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