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# Pataleswarar Temple at Thiruppadhiripuliyur in South India: A Study of Its History, Art and Architecture

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## Introduction

Generally Temples help us to study about Historical facts, Culture, Arts and Architecture. Tamilnadu has many more Temples. In the ancient period man worshipped the monuments of our ancestors. Later on the tree worship was common in the Human society. After that Temples were belonging to worship place. The Ancient Temples were probably made of wood and other perishable materials. Perhaps the Pallavas were the first in Taminadu to build Temples stones and other Materials. The Pallavas were succeeded by the Cholas. They built many Temples in South India. Those Temples were acted as a centre of ancient South Indian, Polity, religion, economy and Art and Architecture [1]

The Pataleswarar temple at Thiruppathiripuliyur is one among the best Temples in the Cholas. This Temple possess a unique place in the History of south India. So, the Study of this Temple help us to analyse the political, Social, economic and Art and Architectural aspects in the past as well as in the present in detail [2].

## Literature Survey

Many writers deal this temple in various aspects. But no one give much information about this temple. The inscriptions are the main sources of primary evidence. Which deals a lot of information about the Temple. South Indian inscriptions and the ‘ Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy gives a details study of the various kings and there benefits attitude towards this Temple’ [4]. Rangachari in his “A Topographical list of the inscriptions of the Madras Presidency” has given detail inscriptions of the Temple. T.V.Mahalingam in his “Topographical list of Inscriptions in Tamilnadu and Kerala States” has summarized lithic records of this Temple issued by the rulers of various dynasties to trace the history without any break [5]. The hymns of “Devarnam” composed by the Appar and the Sambandar and the Periyapuranam by Sekkilar are giving much information about this Temple and the Thiruppathiripuliyur. ‘Thiruppugazh’ of Arunagirinathar also describe Lord Muruga of the Temple. In addition to the ancient Literature the Historians of South India also briefly mentioned about the Temple in their respective works. T.V.Sadasiva Pandarathar in this

“History of the Later Cholas” mentioned an inscription of this Temple. S.R.Balasubramaniam a notable scholar in the field of Temple survey of Tamil Nadu in his work “Early Chola Temple” [6] analyses the important inscriptions of the Temple and the antiquity of the place. SirpaChennool, Written by GanapathySthapathy helps to describe the images in general. T.M.BaskaraThondaiman in his “VenkatamMudalKumariVarai” describes the Architectural features and the sculptures of this Temple” [7]. C.Sivaramamoorthy in his “South Indian Bronzes”, M.Kirhsnsasthri in his “South Indian Gods and Goddesses” P.R.Srinivasan in his “Bronzes of South India” give a lot of information about the sculptures and 1 cone in general of the Temple” [8]. P.K.Nambiar and K.C.Narayanaguru have made a brief survey on the Temples of Madras state including Pataleswarar Temple in their “Census of India” and South Arcot District Gazetteers which deals about this temple. P.Sambandam in his “Siva Shrines in India and Beyond”, Yogi SuddhanadaBharathi in his “The Grand Epic of Saivism”, T.Subramania Pillai in his “SivasthalaManjari” trace the religious activity of this Temple especially Appar’s re-conversion to Saivism [9].

### **History of the Pataleswarar Temple:**

The Pataleswarar Temple, dedicated to Lord Siva, is situated at Thiruppathiripuliyur in

Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu. In ancient days the place was known under various names such as Kannivanam, Kannikappu, Kannivalampatai, Pathirippulisai. At present the place is popularly known as Cuddalore New Town. The Temple is located almost at the centre of the Town and very near to the Thiruppathiripuliyur railway station on the Villupuram – Mailadudurai railway line.

The Temple is noted for its inscriptions, fine architecture and sculptures. The Temple occupies a unique place in the history of Saivism in South India and is associated with the lives of Nayanmars of Devaram.<sup>1</sup> Gnanasambandar (7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D) one of the Devaram Hymns Sing in praise of the Lord of this Temple. He has glorified the sacredness of this holy place and the existing temple with eleven verses. Thirunavukkarasar (7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D) one of the Devaramhymns, in his early days became a Jain and was known as Dharmasena. He has re-converted to Saivism by his sister Thilagavathi. The Jains could not tolerate his conversion. MahendraVarma I the Pallava Monarch (615-630 AD) under the influence of Jain Guru is said to have resorted to many acts of inhuman persecutions on Thirunavukkarasar. As a last resort, he was tied to a huge stone and was thrown into the Bay of Bengal.

By the Grace of Lord Siva he reached the shore safely to a palace very near to

Thiruppathiripuliyur. This incident gave a permanent name to his place as Karaiyeravittakuppam and hence the main deity is also named after this miracle as ‘KaraiyeravittaMudalvan’. After reaching Thiruppathiripuliyur, he has sing ten padigama in praise of the Lord of this temple as a token of gratitudde. He glorified the spiritual excellence, the glory of Thiruppadhiripuliyur, the sacredness of the deity and urges the peple to worship the Lord in his hymis. This incident isalso mentioned by sekkilar in his periyapuram, a work composed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Thus this Temple was closely associated with the nayanmars of Tamilnadu and this shows an evidence to five the antiquity and Historicity of the Temple [10]

#### **Architecture:-**

The pataleswarar temple is situated in the middle of the town thiruppathiripuliyur. The temple is one most ancient ones in tamilnadu. It functioned not merely as a religions centre, but also a centre of fine arts. The temple remains as the symbol of the various cultures of ancient tamils. An attempt is made in the following pages to bring out the architectural features of this famous temple.

The study of the architecture of this temple which might have been constructed during the time of paramtaka I chola (907 -955 AD) reveals the development of the temple at the

hands of the cholas, later pallava chieftains, the later pandyas and vijayanagar rulers.The temple has been contracted in accordance with the Agamic principles. The temple belongs to the Dravidian style of Indian architecture. Almost every parts of this temple seems to have undergone renovation even in a very late period, as is indicated by the polished structures of the temple complex.

The temple is facing the east and it has all the usual inner structures of south Indian temples live the ganbagraha (sanctum) antarala, arthamandapa, mahamandapa, inner corridor, prahara, raja gopura, and the tank.The significant architectural features of this temple reside in its rajagopuram.The rajagopuram leads to dwafasthanbamandapa which is filled up with nandi, kodi and palipitam it is actually connecting the inner enclosure wall. Adjoining the inner enclosure wall is a fine corridor famous for sculptures. The actual sanctum with its arthamandapa and mahamandapa is situated in the centre of the corridor.The central shine is facing the east. The cella which enshrines a linga on a circular pedestal in the middle is a square chamber, where the presiding deity pataleswarar is housed. It is encircled by a stone wall, which is rising to a height of about 3 metes from the ground.

Compared with the plain interior of thrsanctam, the view of the exterior is majestic and graceful.

The sanctum with its anthamaandapa is raised on the upapithathaupana forma the lower part which has a padmatala. The padma is surroundul by kanda, which has a series of panets on its surface the kanda is superceded by a heavy cornice moulding or kapota, which is adorned by a servies of kudu motifs on all sides at regular intervals. The adhistanam occupied the upper portion, which has a well formed padmam forming the top-course of a stepped – up-upana the padma is surrounded by a jagathi. It is a simple pattern. Over the jagathi. A small sized upward and downward padmas are shown. Between a kanda. The next portion tiranai or tripattaikumuda is foundwith three facets. There is a padmatalam just above the kumuda which is succeeded by a kanda. A plain pattigai is shown at the top of the padamam.

### **Sculpture**

The south Indian Temples are store house of the richest specimens of sculptures of stone Bronze and Panchaloha. The Paaleswara Temple may also considered as one of the tresure house of the sculptures and icons. Most of them are found in the central riches of the devakosthas of the Sanctum, arthaMandaoa and in the cloister all round and all the small shrines. In this chapter an attempt has been made to describe some of the notable sculptures.

The images of Gods and Goddessenshrining the riches are of those DakshinaMorrthy on the South, LingodhBava on the West, and the Brahma on the North wall besides Balaganapathy and Durga on the santhi and north walls of the Arthamandapa respectively.

### **Conclusion**

The foregoing analysis clearly reveals that the Pataleswarar temple at Thiruppathiriuliyur is one of the most important existing shrines of the early Cholas. The Temple is also one of the important Saivite centres of Tamilnadu. Literary Sources of this study reveal a lot to reconstruct the religious history ofthis temple and the antiquity of the place which is closely associated with Appar. The association of Appar andSmbandar prove the existence of the Temple. Even during the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Though the earliest inscription of this temple belongs to the period of parantaka I Chola. (10<sup>th</sup> Century AD) the origin of this Temple goes back to the period of Mahendravarman I.

Raja Raja I Chola (985 AD- 1016AD) bestowed considerable attention to the growth of the Temple be means of various donations. His son Rajendra I also was a patron of the Temple. The inscriptions of Rajendra I also was a patron of the Temple. The inscriptions of Rajendra I fopund in the temple ension his victories in an accurate manner. Some other epigraphs refer to the donations of Rajendra II and Rajamahendra;

a crown prince of the Chola dynasty. A few records of the Temple help us to trace the political history of Tamilnadu and the relationship between the Cholas and the western Chalukyas. The records state that the prime Rajamahendra had been present at the battle of Kuppam (in 1052 AD). The temple was patronised by the Later Palalva chieftains of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is well known from their epigraphs.

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