

## **Thiruthangal Nintra Narayanan Perumal Temple Inscriptions from a Historical point of View**

PROF.KALAM NARREN

Assistant professor, Department of History,

S.B.K. College, Aruppukottai.

[raghavanhistory@gmail.com](mailto:raghavanhistory@gmail.com), [rajapandi7388@gmail.com](mailto:rajapandi7388@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

Thiruthangal is located near Sivakasi on the way from Virudhunagar to Sivakasi. It is evident that human inhabitation had happened since 4000 BC by the findings of black and red pottery shreds in this town. There are references in Silapathikaram that a highway through Tirutangal was connecting Chera Kingdom from Madurai, which was the capital of Pandya Kingdom during the Sangam age. A temple has been built for the Nintra Narayana Perumal in such a special town. The temple was being hailed by the saints Thirumangaiyalvar and Bhoothathalvar in their hymns and it is also considered as one of the 108 Vaishnava Divya Desams which means holy temples. This research has been carried out focusing on the inscriptions in this temple.

### **Keywords:-**

Devadanam, Chaturvedi Mangalam, Santhi Puja, Religion, Culture, Women

**Introduction:**

Worshipping Tirumal or Lord Vishnu worship is ancient practice in Tamil Nadu. We can find references to Tirumal in Sangam literatures such as Tolkappiyam and Paripadal. These references can be considered as the evidence that the Thirumal worship had happened in the life of the Tamils since the Sangam period.

**Thiruthangal in history:**

The town is located on the way from Virudhunagar to Sivakasi. The Neolithic tools found in this place are shreds of black and red colored pottery. These were evidences that human inhabitation had been there in this area since 4000 BC. Thiruthangal, during the Sangam period, was the one of the preferred places to live and Tamil literature had also flourished here. The songs of three poets from Thiruthangal have been featured in the Sangam literature. The 313<sup>th</sup> song in Natrinai of Sangam literature was written by Thangal Porkollan Vennaaganaar and the 386<sup>th</sup> song by Thangal Athreyan Senkanannaar and Thangal Mutkollanaar had written the 217<sup>th</sup> song in Kunthogai, another Sangam literature. Two of these three poets were goldsmiths as evident by their names. Therefore, Thiruthangal area must have been excelled not only in literature but also in jewelery industry during the Sangam period. Among the 108 Vaishnava Divya Desams, Thiruthangal is revered as one of the eighteen holy temples located in the Pandiyan Kingdom and has been revered in the hymns by Bhuthathalvar and Thirumangaiyazhvar as well.

**Nintra Narayana Perumal Temple:**

Narayana Perumal temple is situated on a hill in the north-eastern part of Thiruthangal. In this temple, Thirumal, the main God, is seen in a standing position

along with Sri Devi, Neela Devi, Bhumi Devi and Jambavathi. A rock-hewn temple of the early Pandyan era is located on the north-west side of this temple. In the sanctum sanctorum of rock-hewn temple Lord Ranganathar is seen reclining on a snake. 53 Tamil inscriptions, 2 cursive inscriptions, 1 Grantha inscription and 1 Tamil Grantha inscription are found in this temple. Among the temples found in Virudhunagar district, Thirutangal temple is having the largest number of inscriptions. These inscriptions carry very important messages. In the inscriptions, the name of this town is mentioned as the place donated for the temple in Thirutangal of the country of Karunilakudi. The word 'Thiruthanka' means 'cool oasis' in Tamil.

### **DIFFERENT NAMES OF THIRUTHANGAL MENTIONED IN INSCRIPTIONS:**

The name of Thiruthangal in the inscriptions of the time of Maravarman Tribhuvana Chakravarti I Kulasekara Devan is mentioned as Karunilakudi Nadu (Nadu means country), in the inscriptions of the time of Sadayavarman Kulasekhara Devan, it is mentioned as Madurodaya Valanadu, Arinadu, Tirumala Nadu and Vembu Nadu. The inscription of the Chola king Parakesarivarman is calling Thiruthangal as Malli Nadu, and in the inscription of Kulothunga Chola period, it is called as Madhurandaka Valanadu and Raja Rajapandiya Nadu. It is also mentioned as Punga Nadu in the inscription of Sundarapandiyan who is called as Thiribhuvana Chakaravarthi. As we read through the inscriptions, we can assume that the kings who ascended thrones named the region according to their own fantasy.

**Names of Towns in Inscriptions:**

In an inscription from the time of King Sadayavarman Kulasekaradevan, a town called Pusiyoachanthanallur is mentioned. In the inscription of Maravarman Sundara Pandyan's time, the town mentioned are Aanaiyur and Thennavan Chittoor and the town of Thadanganni Chittoor is mentioned in Sundarapandian's inscription. The towns Anthanur and Sirukampur are scripted in the inscription of Sadayavarman Kulasekhara Devan. The name of the person who made donations to the temple of the Lord were mentioned along with their towns to identify them easily.

**Devadhaanam and Chaturvedi Mangalam in inscriptions:**

During the rule of the Pandyas, the land donation given to the Siva temple was called as Devadanam, the land donation given to the Tirumal temple was called Thiruvidaiyatam, the land donation given to the Jain Buddhist temple was Palichandam, and the land donation given to the Anthanas was called Brahmatheyam Pattavritti. One of the inscriptions here mentions that Sadayavarman Kulasekarapandian founded the Kulasekhara Chaturvedi Mangalam in the name of Kulasekaran and in the other that there was Parakrama Chaturvedi Mangalam as Arinattu Brahmadeyam. From this it can be known that the Pandya kings in the Pandya Kingdom established Devadhaanams and Chaturvedi Mangalam and performed charity.

**Construction works mentioned in the inscriptions:**

Thiruvaranga Devan in an inscription from the time of Maravarman Kulasekara Devan said that 'Thiruvaranga Devan had donated the land of Thirutangal temple to build a holy hall'. The inscription mentions that Uyya

Nintraaduvaana Gurukulatharaiyan, a nobleman who served as the minister of Maravarman Sundarapandiyan I, was the one who built the Tirumal temple and the Siva temple using stones/rocks for more sustainability in AD 1232 and built the temple sanctum sanctorum, artha mandapam and mahamandapam. During the period of King Maravarman Sundarapandiyan, one Thiruvarangadevan built monasteries for studying the Mahabharata and Ramayana. An inscription where the king's name is not available had mentioned that Chola Ulla Nindaduvaanaaka Gurukulatharaiyan made some concessions to renovate the temple and built a stone mandapam. This shows that the construction work of this temple has been going on in periods of various Kings.

### **Festivals mentioned in the inscription:**

During the time of Maravarman Sundarapandian, one Thiruvaramba Devar and his brother had made land grants to the Thirutangal temple to conduct the annual Vaikasi Visakha Festival. Athrayyan Kundreduthan Srivallabhan donated land for the Naivedyam and the cost of the Lord's Thiruvadi procession for the Jayanti festival in the Tamil month Aavani. In the forty-second regnal year of Kulothunga Chola, one and a half veli of land was donated to this temple without taxation. The produces of the land donated was meant to meet the expenses incurred for conducting worships in the temple on new moon days and for the procession called 'Thiruveedhi Ula' of the Lord. From these we come to know that the kings and general public had donated generously to the temples for keeping up the festivals to go on.

### **The Charities By Women In The Inscription:**

Women played a major role in the development of the Narayanaperumal temple. More messages related to the contribution by women are widely seen

especially in later Pandyan era inscriptions. Tirunangai Andaal, the spouse of Uyyaninraduvanana Udaiyar Kalingarayan of Andanur Sirukampur of Mutthootru Kootram had made a land grant for maintenance expenses of a pond in which the red Lotus grown and used the same during the worships. In one of the inscriptions of Kulasekhara Pandyan period fifty goats are offered by a woman for permanent lighting of a Nanda lamp. It is also mentioned in another inscription that a woman from the country known as Vembu Nadu had donated thirteen goats to the temple for lighting the lamp during evening worships and Pooja. From these we come to know that there were active participation from the women on grants given to the temples to meet the expenses for worships, flowers, and lighting the lamps.

### **Sandhi Poojais in Inscription:**

Apart from the daily poojais performed in the temples, there were also special worships . One of the poojai is called Sandhi Poojai. This special worship of Sandhi Poojai was established by the royal families and high-ranking officers. Sandhi Poojais were often named after the person who is prayed for. Gurukulatharaiyan, the minister of Pandyan, has donated a part of village called Tennavan Chittur to the Thirutangal temple to perform the worship of ‘Sunderapandian Sandhi’. And it can be known from the inscriptions that Gurukulatharayan had conducted a Sandhi Poojai in his name and it is also written that when he comes to the temple, musical instruments sound like ‘Kurukulatharaiyan is coming’. And it is also written in the inscriptions that by this Sandhi poojai, he had helped stopping the Lord from begging for his food.

### **Conclusion:**

Thiruthangal, which is called the Brahmadeyam of Karunilakudi country, is a symbol of a long tradition. Through the inscriptions here, one can know the

regime changes in the Pandyan Kingdom and the importance given to the temple and the cultural traditions from the king to the officials and the people. Women, like men, have contributed and helped developing cultural traditions. They have donated lands for the daily activities of the temple and the expenses incurred by it, and have made the work of the Lord special. The temple was built on the hill during the early Pandya reign and after each era, the construction works have been steadily carried out for maintaining the temple and hence it is now witness of an integrated architecture of different eras and reigns.

**Footnotes:**

1. Tolkappiyam Agathinai song no. 5
2. Paripadal 3, 63-68.
3. V. Vedachalam, G. Sethuraman, Madhura Krishnan, Virudhunagar District An Archaeological Source Book, Srinivas Fire Arts Ltd., Sivakasi, 2000, p.57.
4. P. Rajendran, S. Shanthalingam, Historical Perspective of Virudhunagar District, Center for Pandyan History, Madurai, 2014, p.96-97. (written in Tamil)
5. ARE: 564/1922, 562/1922, 559/1922, 551/1922, 561/1922, 558/1922, 541/1922, 550/1922, 551/1922, 548/1922, 546/1922, 553/1922, 542/1922, 547/1922, 548/1922, 556/1922, 568/1922, 570/1922, 566/1922, 563/1922, 565/1922, 567/1922, 569/1922, 572/1922.
6. K. Bhagavathy, Place Names in Literature, World Tamil Research Institute, Chennai, P.68-69. (written in Tamil)
7. ARE. 540/1922
8. ARE. 543/1922
9. ARE. 553/1922

- 10.ARE.569/1922
- 11.ARE.569/1922
- 12.ARE. 564/1922
- 13.ARE. 572/1922
- 14.ARE. 543/1922
- 15.ARE. 549/1922
- 16.ARE. 554/1922
- 17.ARE. 554/1922
- 18.T.Sri.Sridhar, Virudunagar District Inscriptions, Vol-II,Tamilnadu  
Archaeology Department, Chennai, 2009, Serial No.222/2005, P 3-4.
- 19.ARE. 549/1922
- 20.ARE. 540/1922
- 21.ARE. 554,575/1922
- 22.ARE. 546/1922
- 23.ARE. 554/1922
- 24.ARE. 546/1922
- 25.Virudhunagar District Inscriptions, Vol – II, Serial No. 253/2005, p.51.  
(written in Tamil)
- 26.ARE. 564/1922
- 27.ARE. 562/1922
- 28.ARE. 559/1922
- 29.ARE. 567/1922
- 30.ARE. 569/1922
- 31.ARE. 548/1922
- 32.ARE. 575/1922
- 33.ARE. 543/1922