



ARCHITECTURE OF THIRUTHALINATHAR TEMPLE IN TIRUPPATHUR-A HISTORICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The study Temple is one of the 14 sacred Lord Siva Shrine in Pandya Kingdom. Thirunavukkarasar, the famous saivite saints has mentioned about the temple of Tiruppathur in his song on "Tiruppathur Thiruthaliyan kan" and Arunagirinathar has described the temple as "Thiruppathuri Maruviyurai tharu perumale". It is believed that the study temple is constructed by the Ramand sethupathy during the period of 1711-1725 A.D. The study temple has three prakaras and rajakoburam. The hoysalas and Muslims damaged the gopurams. The main objective of the study is to highlight the architecture of the Thiruthalinathar temple of Tiruppathur.

KEYWORDS : Architecture, Origin, Prakaras and Vimanam.

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the present paper highlights the architecture of Tiruppathur Thiruthalinathar Temple of Sivagangai District of Tamil Nadu. It lies on 78^o.56'E longitude and 10^o11' N latitude. The study district is well connected by the national high ways of Sivagangai, Pudukottai and Madurai Districts.

The study Temple is one of the 14 sacred Lord Siva Shrine in Pandya Kingdom. Thirunavukkarasar, the famous saivite saints has mentioned about the temple of Tiruppathur in his song on "Tiruppathur Thiruthaliyan kan" and Arunagirinathar has described the temple as "Thiruppathuri Maruviyurai tharu perumale". Mayuragiri Puranam has highlighted the study temple as "then thulikkum narum konrai Vanthirukum sivanai". Hence, the study temple is called as Konraivanam due to existing of the Konrai trees.

Thiruthalinathar temple is also described as Noothana Gram (New Village) in the engraving of Tiruppathur. Moreover, the study temple is called by the other names of Chidambaram, Puthur, Konraivanam, Navapuram, Gowripuram and valmeeki puram.

ORIGIN OF THIRUPPATHUR

According to Puranas, it is believed that the great Sage Valmiki was performed penance under the Kondrai trees of Tiruppathur after confession of his cruel activities of Robbery and Murder. After the long time, he was covered by an ant-hill-Vanmeekam in Sanskrit and Puttru in Tamil. Pleased with his penance, Lord Shiva granted darshan to the sage. As Lord granted darshan near the Puttru, he is praised as Puttreeswarar. The temple is built based on Darshan story. The place also is named Puthur with the auspicious prefix Tiru - Tirupathur. Its boundary expands on Karuppar temple in east, Aanjaneyar temple in west, Poomaiye Amman temple in south and the north wall of Thiruthalinathar temple in north.

The Tamil folk literature "Sivagangai Charithira kummiyam ammanaiyum" described the fortress of Thiruppathur like

*"Therum thirukkulamum sivalayamum sirantha Thiruppathur kottai"
"Thikkellalm potrum Thiruppathur kottai singara thoppu"*

Based on the above mentioned stories, it is believed that the study temple was built by Vijay ragunatha sethupathi of Ramnad (1711-1725 A.D.).

THIRUTHALINATHAR TEMPLE

Thiruthalinathar Temple consists of Garpagraha (sanctum) Arthamandabam and Munmandapam (Main Hall). This Temple is situated in the direction of East. The main shrine of Thiruthalinathar is in the form of Suyambu Linga. Next to the Garpagraha there is an Arthamandabam. In which, bronze icons are displayed. Dwarabalakas stands in front of the Arthamandabam. Generally, half pillars are appeared in wall of sanctum or Munmandapam. Munmandabam, but, 18 full pillars and 3 half pillars are appeared in

this temple. The prasthara is decorated by Bootha vari and Yazhi vari. Dwarabalagas also situated in front of the Munmandapam.

VIMANA

The vimanam is three storied type. A part of Athittanam has hidden into the earth. The vimana is consisted of Jagathi, Muppattai Kumutham, kantam, kabotham and vethigai.

The wall has devakottam and kalvari. The pillars of the wall are structured with kalasam, pathmam, kumbam, palagai and pothigai. The pothigai of this temple resembles like pothigai of pallavas. Generally, the devakottam of Pandiyas do not have sculptures. There were no sculptures in this devakottam also.

There are bootha vari and yazhi vari below the kodungai in prasthara. Kirthi mugas are also found in the kodungais. The centre circle of kirthi mugas are ornamented with sculptures in small size like rishabavahanar, arthanari, kannan and his dancing, killing of Thenuskasuran in south side. In the west side of Kirthi mugas, yazhi, kannan's kalinga dance, killing of kamsan and Linga, Nandhi, Siva pooja of vali, women with child monkeys and three boothams are found in north. Vimana was constructed by stone and it consists of three storied. It resembles like nagara type of vimana. Because, griva and sigara are found in square type. Rishabas are found in the four corners of griva's bottom side. In the centre Kostas with vimana Devathais are found. Above the Kostas, kuduk crowned with Simha heads.

FIRST PRAKARA

In the southern side of the vimana consists of Dhakshina moorthi shrine, which was built by Veerapandiya in 13th century A.D. The inscription mentioned the above information. There is a small mandapam in front of the Dhakshina murthi's shrine. Two pillars of this mandapa bear the lion.

A separate enclosure for the Durga shrine, which is in the northern side of vimana, but, it has been constructed in later period. There is an Agathiya linga shrine in the north east and Sandigeswara in north. Few inscriptions are found on the wall of Agathiyalinga shrine, which belongs to Maravarman Sundara Pandiyan of 13th century.

A well was found in southern side of first prakara. Thirusutru maligai also appeared in this side. There has been four mandapas in the four corners of the Thiru sutru maligai.

In the left side of first prahara, there is a mandapa, in which Saraswathi and lakshmi idols are appeared. But, these idols are erected during the renovation work for Kumpabisheka in 2012. There are Saptamathas in the southern side of Thirusutru maligai, next to the Lakshmi shrine. Sixty three Nayanmars of Tamil are appeared along with Saptamathas.

Northern side of Thirustru maligai has separated like a hall in which Thirumal is appeared in yoga stage along with saint and Poothevi. So, he is called as Yoga naryana perumal. It is an ancient sculpture of this temple.

There is a Mandapa in the eastern side of first prakara. It may be called as Kalingarayan Mandapam as per the inscription of Sundarapandiyan in 13th century. Nadaraja is appeared in this mandapam in the name of Adal vallan along with Amman and Nandhi. The pillars of this mandapa are beautifully ornamented with Naga bandhas and pothigai. Nagabandhas are attached with yazhis. Lot of incidents is displayed in these pillars. Lingothbava is erected in the pillar. Brahma and Vishnu are standing with folded hands in the two sides of Lingothbava. Hanuman and Arjuna images also erected. The east side of the pillar has shown the attempt of Ravana in moving the Kalisasa hill with his ten heads and twenty arms. The important thing is, there is a beautiful kodungais in the ceiling of this Mandapam.

SECOND PRAKARA

The second prakara consists of Nandhi, kodi maram, and palibeedam. The mandapam, which joining the first and second prakara. The navagraha are appeared in this mandapam, which is right side of kodimaram. Madappalli is situated in the south east corner of second prakara. Murugan temple is located next to the madappalli and it faces north. Vannimarathu Vinayagar shrine is in the south west. In the north side, Yoga Bairava temple is situated. Thiruthalinathar temple is also called as 'Vairavan temple' in the name of god Yoga Bairava. This temple is consisted of Karpagrapha, Arthamandapam and Munmandapam. Next to munmandapam there is another mandapam, which was built by Maruthu pandiyars. Their images were also erected in the pillars of this Mandapam.

The vimana of Bairava temple has some unique features. It has upa beedam, athittanam, bitti, prasthara, kriva, sigara and stubi. There is a Pathma jagathi, Virudha Kumutham in upabeedam and athittanam. Kudus are appeared in Kabotham. Devakottam, kumba panchara and kalvarisai are in bitti. Pillars have nagabandham, kal, kumbam, pathmam, palagai and podhigai. There are some stone windows in bitti. Pathmavari and yzhivari are in the kodungai in the Prasthara.

The interior part of Kodungai is well decorated. Kudus are also in kodungai and ornamented with flowers and pearls (muthusaram). The vimana is built by bricks. Idols of Bairavar, Risaba vahana, Ghaja Samhara Moorthi are appeared in top of vimana.

Nageswara temple is situated behind of the Bairava temple and it faces east. Sri Kailasamudaiyan of aruviyur donated things to burn lamp for this temple (1691- 1935). We can know this through the inscription. The vimana of Nageswara temple is also well decorated like Bairava temple.

THIRD PRAKARA

There is a Thirukalyana mandapam in the right side of third prakara, which is renovated during Kumbabishekam. In the east corner of third prakara, there is shed for elephant. In the east side of third Prahara, there are few rooms newly built to keep the vahanams of god.

No idols are in the south side. But, in the north west of third prakara, there is a meru (hill). There is a practice of killing of sheep to meru.

Amman temple is situated in the north east of third prakara. Inscriptions revealed that there is Amman temple even in 12th century A.D. Amman was named as Thirukottamudaiya Nachiyar or Thiruppalli Nachiyar during that period. But, the inscription of Achuthadevaraya mentioned Sivakami Amman in 1530. Now, Amman is called as Sivakami Amman.

The Amman temple didn't have its ancient structure. The building of this temple is modern one. It may be constructed by Nagarathar.

RAJAGOPURAM

There should be gopurams in the entrance of three prakaras. But all gopurams are demolished due to Hoysala and Muslim invasions. An inscription reveals about the renovation of the temple by Visalaya Devan in 14th century. But, there is no gopurams for this temple till 1992. Kumpabishekam was made in 1992 due to the great efforts of Maha Sannithanam (46th of Kundrakudi Atheenam). New gopurams are built in both entrances including Amman temple. They have five storied gopurams. But, there is no artistic work like idols of bootha ganas in it.

CONCLUSION

The present article reveals that the architecture of Thiruthalinathar Siva temple. It is believed that the study temple is constructed by the Ramand sethupathy during the period of 1711-1725 A.D. The study temple has three prakaras and rajakoburam. The hoysalas and Muslims damaged the gopurams. Hence, the study indicates that the special features of Thiruthalinathar in Sivagangai District of Tamil Nadu. It will help to the forth coming historical researcher for knowing the history of Thiruthalinathar Temple of Tiruppathur.

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