



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

History

STRUCTURE OF SRI THIRUKAMISVARAR TEMPLE AT VILLIANUR - A HISTORICAL STUDY

KEY WORDS: Garbhagraha, Ardhamandapa, Maha Mandapa, Nayakkar Mandapa, Temple Car

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to describe the structure of Thirukamisvarar Temple at Villianur in Puduchery state. Thirukamisvarar Temple was built during the period of the Pallavas. The ground plans of the structure together with their measurement are given and the same are illustrated in general ground plan of the temple. Like other big temples of South India this temple was built at various times. The temple inscriptions furnished evidences for determining the age of structure. Thirukamisvarar temple is a vast and impressive complex of structures enclosed by high and massive compound walls all around occupying a rectangular plot of land. The temple measures 386 feet East to West and 502 feet South to North roughly occupying an area of 4.32 acres.

INTRODUCTION

There are some legendary accounts about the origin of Thirukamisvarar temple. According to the legend once Lord Brahma created IruthabaNasini alias Brahma Theertha in Vilva forest on the Northern bank of river Mutharu and installed a linga here after this place was called as Vilvavanam. As days passed on the idol was completed covered with mud earth because no maintenance was undertaken. Dharamabalachola, the ruler Kamalपुरi, recovered from the leprosy disease with blessing of Lord Thirukamisvarar. He constructed the Thirukamisvarar temple and established Villianur town which in course of the time came to be known as Villianur.

Thirukamisvarar temple was constructed by the Dharmubala Chola of Kamalपुरi. The Primary idol Suyambulinga is of two feet height. Suyambulinga is covered with plate, civet is applied on the idol. Every year in the month of Panguni, ninth, tenth and eleventh days Sunrays focused on the linga. Garbhagraha and Ardhamandapas are Co-jointly known as main shrine and hence the gateway that is in its front has become the Principal entrance. Inside this walled enclosure, series of concentric courtyards, noticed around the central nucleus on which is located the main sanctum of Lord Thirukamisvarar. There are thus two courtyards in the temple and local Saivaites would add the made Veethi or the main street around the temple as third one. The first Prakara encircled around. Sanctum sanatorium. Ardhamandapa and Mahamandapa. The Second Prakara is situated in between the compound wall and inner wall.

The First Prakara is a platform shape encircling sanctum sanctorum. Ardhamandapa, Mahamandapa Gokhilampal Shrine, Palliyarai, Flag mast, Alter and Nandhi. The First Prakara is covered with wall on all sides. In the middle of Eastern and Southern inside walls double half doors are fixed. Southern side entrance leads to the Southern Gopura.

Lord Sri Thirukamisvarar is in ling pose lonely with Copra with his head hoods using it as umbrella appears above the head of Lord. The beauty of Lord is most admirable wearing of glittering gold covering plates all over the body majestically with a beaming face give darshan to its devotees. The Lord was also called Thirukamisvaramudaiyar. Thirukamisvaramudiya Nayanar. Swamy Thirukamiyappar. Thirukamisvaramudiyaswamiyar, Miramisvarar, Naduvainathar and Vilvakesar.

The first Prakara entrance was called as sernthanan entrance. It was established by Thathanurudaiyar. This information engraved on the door frame of first Prakara in fourteenth century. Northern side of the Eastern wall of second prakara Achutha Devarayar inscription was engraved in 1542. This inscription describes about the revolt of Kaikala of Villianur. Damaged 14th Century inscription found on the Upper Thala of Northern Thirusuthiram describes about the Door entrance instituted by the name of Pennainathivanan. Above three inscriptions confirmed second Prakara Thiru Suttru was constructed in 14th century then it was converted to the Thirusuttrumaligai. The Pillars supported the

second Prakara exposed the architectural marvel of Vijayanagar period.

In the Southern walls of Mahamandapas 1341 A.D. and 1352 A.D. inscriptions of Parakiramapandya and 1343 A.D. inscription of Rajanarayana Sambuvaraya and 1381 A.D. inscription of Rajanayana Sambuvaraya engraved on the door frame of Mahamandapa confirmed Mahamandapa was constructed in the fourteenth century. In the fourteenth century, Thirumadaipalli was constructed by one SenkathirSelvarVanathaRayenVanigan Thiruvegamudiyar. His name was engraved on the Door frame of Thirumadaipalli.

Nayakkar mandapa

Nayakkarmandapa is situated in between the Eastern Gopura and First Prakara doors. This mandapa was constructed by the Nayaks in 16th century. This mandapa is supported by twenty five Pillars. The Pillars of this mandapa is decorated with sculptures of the Kings. Soldiers roaring Tigers Siva, two Bulls with Single head, two elephant with single head. Lotus bud, a Cow bore the Milk on the linga, Soldier sitting on horseback. A bear Catchaman, A Solider sitting on the horse back relived him from the bear.

PALLIYARAI

Palliyarai is situated in the Northern side of First Prakara as well as the outer wall of Ardhamandapa facing east. In the Southern wall of this Mandapa bear the two inscriptions of Ariyanudiyar II belongs to the period of 1379 and 1532 A.D. of Achutharaya are found. 14th century Characters letters engraved on the Pida in the Palliyarai was known as Devathanakuradu. It was constructed by Sethirayan. In 1249 A.D. and 1248 A.D. inscription of Kopperumsinga found on the north and southern wall pidas of Muthu Kumaraswamy shrine. It is situated in the north west of first prakara. 1248 A.D. inscription of Kopperumsinga II found on the stage of Natarajar shrine in the first Prakara.

Vasanthamandapa is situated in front of the Eastern Gopura, was constructed by one S.Sathasiva Chettiar of Kalavai in 1887 A.D. Ammanshrine is situated in the first Prakara facing south. The name of the Goddesses is kuilammai alias Gokilambal.

GOPURAS

Eastern entrance is decorated by the five storey Gopura, Southern Entrance is decorated with seven storey RajaGopura. In 1699 A.D. inscription of VenkataDevaraya our one the inscription belongs to the 17th century appeared in the Pidas of Eastern Rajagopuram. In the 18th century inscription found on the southern Gopura. In the north side southern Rajagopura, two head bird. Carrying the elephant was engraved. This bird symbol was the logo of Vijayanagar empire.

Tamil and French language inscriptions belongs to the 1880 A.D. of French Governor of Puducherry Governor De.M.Leonce Laugier found on the wall of Subramaniya Temple situated in the leftern side of Eastern Gopura describes as per the order of Governor, the

temple Gopuras and other building were renovated.

Eastern Gopura is sixty seven feet height; Southern Gopura is of Ninety Seven Feet height

A Mandapa is situated in front of the Eastern Raja Gopura. On the Top of the Mandapa Suthai Sculptures of Sivaparvathi, Muruga sitting on the peacock, Vinayaga sitting on the Mouse mound, Saraswathi, Swain bird, Lakshimi are decorated. In the inner side of the western part of RajaGopura there is a small front mandapa with four pillars. Leftern side Pillar is decorated with the sculptures of Lord Bairava, Rightern side Pillar is decorated with women has one face and various body in Yoga position. Lefted Rightern Pillars are decorated with Vinayaga and Lord Muruga with Peacock.

Southern Gopura is decorated with the sculptures related to the scenes described in the Villaipurana. In the Southern corner of the second Prakara of the temple ThirukkalyanaMandapa is situated. In the opposite side of the Western entrance Agragara or Brahmin settlement is situated, sthavorutcha vilva tree is planted in the Northern Eastern corner of the second Prakara Amman idol is kept under the Vilva tree. Opposite this tree New Sabha Mandapa is situated.

Temple Tank (Theppakulam)

The huge temple tank situates in the Northern side Temple. Temple Tank is situated within the area of 1.8 Acres. The term Teppam means float a wooden blank on which Urchavar is placed and this raft goes around inside the tank full of water. In this Centre a Niralimandapa, the Urchavar is placed in it and Pujas are offered. It is known as Terrkkulam (cartank) Tiruukulam (Holytank) Tirttakulam(Ablution tank) Puskarani(water reservoir) Konard (Square tank) and Sunai (spring). In the centre the Niralimandapa is of fifteen height on three feet height platform and contains four stone pillars one on each side. A Gopura with a height of eight feet situates over the mandapa. It is of open space a Kalasa is fixed on the top of the Gopura on all four sides in this tank, footsteps or Padithurai provided.

Temple cars

The temple car was not just a monument of architectural and iconographical excellence. It was on institution which was deep rooted in the Socio economic and religious traditions of the Indian Society. The temple car seems to have existed since the age of Indus valley civilization (3250-2750 B.C.) Sir Johan Marshall has deciphered on Indus seal as that stone chariot of the greet God. H. Heras associates the sign Oyowithter, (Chariotor car) a Tamil world. The Indus valley civilization is said to have been overrun by the chariot driving Aryas. Their Chariot was a light Vehicle with spoked wheels and drawn by two or more horse. In all Vedic oblations and rituals the chariot was used for transporting the sacrificial requirements as well as the gods from place to place. In the succeeding period the chariots come to be associated with the gods and festivals in a large measure Arthasastra of Kautilya 4th Century A.D. Speaks of devagraha (temple) daiva to protime (image of God) devatadvaja (flag of God) and daivatejjayem. Yatram (festival of Gods). Which prove the existence of temples images cars and festivals. These are confirmed by the inscription of Asoke at Girnar. The earliest car festivals are described by Silapadikaram and Manimekalai. In the pre Pallava period (4th to 6th Centuries) the tempe car began to Prominence.

Temple cars are used as Vahana or Vehicle for Gods in festivals. This temple has three cars one for Lord Thirukamisvarar another two for Lord Vinayagar and Goddes SriGogilambikai. The height of big car is 125 feats. Every year in the month of Chitrai before the chitrapournami day the festival at Thirukamisvarar began with GanapathiGoma, Cappurope tied to Pidari Amman flag hoisting. Every day of the festival Celeberate by the each community with their own cost. Every day Urchavamoorthy go around the car streets with Music. Before the Previous day of the car festival marriage of Thirukamisvarar Gokilambigai was conducted. In the last day Valarpirai Thiriyathesi day and month of Vaikasi swathistar day car festival began in the morning at 8'O Clock. At first the car of Vinayaga second car of Thirukamisvarar and third the car of Sri

Gogilambikai are drawn in the four car streets and finally arrived at Theryattrumandapa.

Renovations

Thirukamisvarar temple is one of the biggest temples in Pondicherry Union territory. In this temple consecrecation were conducted in 1880, 1923, 1987 and 2016.

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