

A RELOOKING ON MURAL'S THE PAINTING TRADITION OF ANCIENT TAMILS IN ROCK CUT CAVE TEMPLE KUDIMAIYANMALAI

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Abstract

The Cave temple at Kudimaiyamalai consists of sanctum, ardhmandapam and a mahamandapam the front mukhamandapam was scooped out during the 7th century A.D., There are forty five inscriptions found in the Rock cut cave temple out of forty five. On the left (South) side of the sanctum sanctorum entrance Grantha inscription records the name of the 7th or 8th string Veena's name as "*Parivathini*" also called as *Vallabi* or *Vibanji*. By the side of the Lord Vinayagar the famous Musical inscriptions are appeared. The inscription records about the Ragas of music or musical notes, believed to be inscribed in 7th Century. The inscription is in 7 parts and starts with Sitham Namasivaya God of music. This paper throws light on the musical inscriptions of Kudimaiyanmalai in detailed manner.

Key Words: Parivadhini, Vallabi, Vibanji, Kalanju, Raga and Thulai.

The Pudukkottai¹ region has much archaeological significance of the human settlements from pre historic age². There is historical splendour monuments with human excellence existed in the Kudimaiyanmalai rock cut cave temple³. The Melakovil rock cut cave temple called by the locals otherwise known as Thiru Metrali⁴.

This Melakovil⁵ is on the foot hills, excavated during 7th century, once called as Thirumulattanam and Thirumetrali.

The Cave temple consists of sanctum, ardhmandapam and a mahamandapam the front mukhamandapam⁶ was scooped out during the 7th century A.D., Adjoining the ardhmandapam⁷, the sanctum in side walls are finished neatly with motif on all four sides of the roof. The Siva Linga⁸ is with square avudayar, an integral part of the mother rock. Lord Vinayagar and Dwarapalakas⁹ are on the walls of the Sanctum in ardhmandapam. The ardhmandapam was supported by two square pillars and two pilasters with a platform enlarged by Raghunatha Thondaiman¹⁰. Somaskandar¹¹ and Chandikeswarar¹² are in sukhasana¹³ in the Mukhamandapam.

These inscriptions belong to the Pandya¹⁴ (Oldest) and the Chola period. The inscriptions records Lord Siva Kuduminathar¹⁵ as "Thirunalagundrathu Perumanadigal¹⁶" the main record also states that the donations made to the temple in terms of money¹⁷, gold¹⁸ and lands¹⁹. The rock cut cave might have been excavated during 7th century or before with the presence of *Parivadhini*²⁰ (a musical instrument -7 String *Veena*) inscription.

One of the Chola King Koparakesarippanmar Parantaka I Chola's²¹ 15th year rule inscription mentions that his son Kothandaraman donated 15 *thulai*²² of gold towards burning of a perpetual lamp. Koparakesarippanmar's

6th regnal year inscription records the endowment of burning a perpetual lamp by Kodumbalur Thazhi Aruran, for the same 11 *thulai* Gold was gifted to this temple. An inscription of Kovirajakesaripanmar on his 10th regnal year refers to the endowment of burning a perpetual lamp for which Seven *Kalanju* Gold was gifted by Kundriyur Nattu Kuththakudi Kanpanthunaiyanen²³.

Another inscription of Kovirajakesaripanmar²⁴ on his 20th regnal year registers the endowment of burning a perpetual lamp, for which 2 *kalanju*²⁵ Gold was gifted by Mutharaiyar Nambi's daughter Eravakko²⁶ alias Nangai Vikrama Kesariyan Achci²⁷, the Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar's²⁸ wife Nangaiyar. In continuation Thaliyuran also²⁹ gifted *Thulaipon* for burning day light lamp.

An inscription of Veerapandya the Pandya King records the sabha³⁰ assembled at the temple to enquire the theft of Gold by Siva Brahmin. During the enquiry, the Karthachan a Siva Brahmin accepted that they had taken 60 pon and the rest was taken by another Siva Brahmin. After enquiry the lands owned by those were confiscated and attached to the temple.

MUSICAL INSCRIPTIONS

On the left (South) side of the sanctum sanctorum entrance Grantha inscription records the name of the 7th or 8th string Veena's name as "*Parivathini*" also called as Vallabi or Vibanji³¹. There are forty five inscriptions found in the Rock cut cave temple. Out of forty five, twenty six are in mukhamandapa front pillars, 18 are in walls of the mahamandapam and one on sanctum pilaster. This inscription is on the left side of the rock cut cave temple on the rock. From the inscriptions, this place was known as Thirunalagundram alias Kundriyur during early Pandiya period and Kudumiyannalai from 17th century.

The four feet Vinayagar bas-relief on the right side of this inscription belongs to 12th Century. On the left side of the rock cut cave temple, 12th Century 4 feet Lord Vinayagar is carved. By the side of the Lord Vinayagar the famous Musical inscriptions are appeared. The inscription records about the Ragas of music or musical notes, believed to be inscribed in 7th Century. The inscription is in 7 parts and starts with Sitham Namasivaya God of music. As per the experts the inscription describes the Ragas and some experts of the opinion that this is the South India's basic musical notes.

Rudrachariyar's disciple a King inscribed the above inscription for learning to the students. On the south west corner "Malai Mangai Amman" stone structure temple was excavated by a Devaradiyar Nachi, daughter of Dhukkaiyandi, which shows how Devaradiyars are who temple servants and their significant position in the society. On the North side of the Vinayagar temple, the Mela Koil was scooped out by the Village 77 of Vayalogam.

Found near the *Parivadhini* an inscription dated the 6th Century. The *vattzhuthu* inscription on the rock records the name of "Paramasevakan Nakkan". This may be of the person who was responsible for excavating the rock cut cave under the Pallava. This is the earliest inscription to the Musical inscription and Maransadyan Pandya inscription. On the back side of the Rock cut cave temple on the rock Lord Siva and Parvathi are sitting on Nandi in the form of Rishaba vahana (bul). On both sides 63 Nayanmars are shown on both sides carved in the form of bas-relief.

LEGENDS

As per the legend, the Sivachariyar gave the flower, which was meant for *Pujas* to a lady. When the King arrived unexpectedly, the Sivachariyar didn't know what to do. So he got back the flower from the lady. The Sivachariyar had done the *Puja* and gave the flower to the King. On receiving the flower, the King noticed a hair in the flower. When the King asked for explanation for the hair, the Sivachariyar told that the hair belongs to Lord Siva. Immediately Lord Siva appeared with a tuft on his head. Hence Lord Siva is called as Kuduminathar³².

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32. The transliteration is given in the following lines:
Mathya kraame sathush pirahaara svaraakamaa
shtjakraame sathush pirahaara svaraakamaa
shaadhve sathush pirahaara svaraakamaa
haathaarithey sathush pirahaara svaraakamaa
panjsaama sathush pirahaara svaraakamaa
kaisika mathyame sathush pirahaara svaraakamaa.