

Kalugumalai Inscriptions – A Historical Study

R. Kanagaraj, M.A., M.Phil.
Research Scholar (Part-Time)

=====

Introduction

A humble attempt has been made in the succeeding pages to unfold the distinctive historical features of Kalugumalai. As Kalugumalai is a rich abode of historical monuments such as Kalugachalamurthy temple, Vettuvankovil, Jain relics along with **Vatteluthu inscriptions** and a stone monument erected to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Indian National Congress, it became imperative to enumerate the history of that place.

A scholarly study of the historical importance of Vatteluthu Inscriptions available at Kalugumalai has depend upon monumental, Epigraphical and literary evidences. Subsequently to have a detailed account of the various inscriptions along with the spot study the published versions of the inscriptions in South Indian Inscriptions studied by the Archaeological Reports are utilized for writing this paper.

Kalugumalai is one of the historical and tourist places of South Tamil Nadu, it is located 20 kilometers away from Tirunelveli and 25 kilometers away from Kovilpatti. The aim of the paper is to bring out the significance of this place with special reference to its **Inscriptions** which are available in this study area.

A few inscriptions are also found in the Vettuvankoil of Kalugumalai. Such inscriptions might throw much light on the political and religious aspects of the place happened during the eighth and ninth centuries and those were recorded in the Archaeological Reports.¹ The analysis and interpretation of those inscriptions reveal various facts like the wars of Pandyas and Cholas, the Royal patronage to Jainism, Jain religious orders, Jain education system. Few of the inscriptions of the Pandya and the Chola ruler contain the dates.² Earliest inscription of this place belongs to the **Parankata Nedunjadayan** alias **Maran Jadayan**. His Vatteluttu inscriptions are palaeopolitically assignable to eighth and ninth century A.D. So it will be apt to bring out the historical facts as gleaned from those inscriptions.

¹A.R.No.18to 31 of 1894, 106 to 117 of 1894, 863 of 1917 and 43 of 1908.

² A.R. No. 863 of 1917, A.R.No.438 of 1908, 178 No.116 and 117 of 1894.

The word **Parantaka Virar** available in the inscription found in the rocks wall of the Ayyanar temple of Kalugumalai³ stands to prove the Pandya king **Komaranjadayan** referred this inscriptions and king **Parantaka Nedunjadayan**, who ruled between (7680 and 815 A.D) was one and the same. The date i.e. 42ndregnal year mentioned in the same inscriptions which also attests this fact and the historically important truth adds to the value of Kalugumalai. Further this inscription helps the scholars to settle the controversial issues with regard to the identification of this ruler⁴ who was the grantor of the **Velvikkudi copper plates**⁵ and the **Anaimalai inscriptions**.⁶

As Maranjadayan alias **Parantaka Nedunjadayan** was troubled constantly by the Ay chieftains of the Tirunelveli area he constructed a fort at **Kalakkudi**, which was known as **Karavanthapuram** for keeping a regular watch over the enemies.⁷ Such political feuds are further authentically proved by an inscription of this ruler, a few stone slab installed in the Kopakkudi street of Kalugumalai today.⁸ This inscription bears the date of the 23rdregnal year (791 A.D) of Komaranjadayan, speaks of the defeat of an Ay chieftain called **Sadayan Karumandan** of **Malainadu** and the destruction of his fort at **Ariviur**. This inscription refers to the rule of the Ay Chieftain of Malainaduie, the hilly region. It was also speaks about the Pandyan army led by the **Enathi Mannan alias Mangala Enadi** against the Ay chieftain, two soldiers viz., **Vinayantolururan of Pandanmali** of Tondainadu and **Sattanakkan of Peruirkudi Nadu** died in the Skirmish. Though we get the information that lands upto the value of 20 **Kalanjus** (a measurement of Gold) of Gold was offered by the Enadi in commemoration of their services. It is noted that the people even from far of places were enrolled in the army of the Pandyas. Further the inscriptions also enable the scholar to notice the titles such as Enadi along with the existence of the sabha (local administrative body) whose members called Sabayor are referred in this inscription. Two more donative inscriptions⁹ of the same ruler are available on a rock in the Ayyanar temple of that place. They are recorded during his 31stregnal year i.e. 799 A.D. Both the Inscriptions it is found that the name **Gunasekara Pandarar** a jain teacher, who seems to have been popular them. The donation mentioned in the first inscription is offered to ten more **vairakkiylar**¹⁰ along with him. The second inscription¹¹ refers to the grant given to Gunasekara and other five Vairakkiyar or the disciplinarians of Jain order. Such elongations are lent as **abaradhana** i.e. the donations for food.

³A.R.No.863 of 1917.

⁴Raman, K.V. PandiyarVaralaru 1979, P.70.

⁵E.I. Vol. XVIII of 1923.

⁶A.R.No.453 of 1906.

⁷. Raman, K.V. Uggarakottai or Karavandapuram An Ancient fortified city of the Pandyas, Journal of Indian History, Vol.III 1974.

⁸. A.R. No.43 of 1908.

⁹. A.R. No.166 of 1894 and 117 of 1894

¹⁰. A.R.No.166 of 1894.

¹¹. A.R.No.117 of 1894.

The names of the administrative divisions such as **Vumburkurram** and **Milalaikkurram** are also revealed in them. Thus these two inscriptions of historic value testify the religious toleration of the Pandya king **Parantaka Nedunjadayan** who was a staunch Vaishnavite.¹²

Another record dated 42nd regnal year the reign of the same king **Marajadayan** registers a gift of Gold by a Brahmin called **Manisankara Narayanan**, a **nagarattan** of Tiruchuriyal for burning a lamp during the three services in the shrine of the Devar of Kalugumalai.¹³ The term **Kalanji** means a gold coin. The term also denotes the unit of measurement used to denote the weight of Gold. Here it may mean one of these two. The term **attaivattan** can be taken as the term used to denote a specific period. Further it is obvious from the inscription that ghee was measured by nail. As it is mentioned that the grant was deposited under the **Perurar of Tirunechuram** and it is obvious that Perurar should have been the members of the council, this gift, managed by them was to be protected by the **Tirumalai Virer and Parantaka Viror** such names of knights stand to prove the existence of the tradition of appointing guardians by kings for protection and execution of temple activities.

Another donative inscription¹⁴ of **Sadaya Varman Sundaracholapandya** Deva (1016-1040 A.D); a Chola Viceroy of the Pandyan region¹⁵ ruled in that **andinattu Mudikonda Chola Valanattu Neduchuranattu Perunechuranattu Ur**, is available on a stone lying in the Kalugumalai Sub- Registrar's office compound of today. This grant is announced on the 23rd regnal year i.e. 1039 A.D. of that ruler as per that record. This testifies the capture of the Pandya country by the Cholas during the reign of Rajendra, the son and successor of Raja Raja, the great. It also exposes the existence of the administrative divisions like **Nadu, Valanadu, Mandalam, Kurram, and Ur**. It reveals that the land was also measured by a measurement called Ma. Further such a grant is attested by people of different categories of that place.

Further "no other Jain site in Tamil Nadu has as many sculptures and as many inscriptions as at Kalugumalai.¹⁶ The scholar gets the names of different places such as Kalakkudi,¹⁷ Peruyikudi,¹⁸ Tirukkottiaru¹⁹, Malaikkulam²⁰. Tirunarunkordai²¹, Venbunadu²², Idaikkalanadu²³, Palayuraikkani²⁴,

¹² K.A. NilakantaSastri, The Pandyan Kingdom 1972 P.87.

¹³ A.R.No.863 of 1917.

¹⁴ A.R.No.18 of 1894.

¹⁵ K.V. Raman, op.cit., p.80.

¹⁶ Velupillai, A.Epigraphical Evidences for Tamil Studies.

¹⁷ Ibid., No.19 of 1894.

¹⁸ Ibid., No.21 of 1894.

¹⁹ Ibid., No.24 and 27 of 1894.

²⁰ Ibid., No.25 of 1894.

²¹ Ibid., No.28 of 1894.

²² Ibid., No.249 of 1894.

²³ Ibid., No.30 of 1894.

rkanagaraj64gmail.com

Ilavenbaikkudi²⁵, Tirunechchuram²⁶, Srivelappalur²⁷, Srivenrikkud²⁸, Srinedumarathattam²⁹ and Nalur³⁰. The number of localities mentioned show that Jainism was widely prevalent in South India and the mention of a number of donors from particular localities³¹ may indicate that Jainism had strongholds in those localities and Kalugumalai was not an exception to that. The inscriptions found beneath the base relic Jain figures express that they are carved in memory of Jains of high order. They also speak about the donation of lamps and sheep to the monks.

24. Ibid., No.249 of 1894.

25. Ibid., No.30 of 1894.

26. Ibid., No. 32 of 1894.

27. Ibid., No.106; 112 and 113 of 1894.

28. Ibid., No.107 ; 112, and 113 of 1894.

29. Ibid., No.108 of 1894.

30. Ibid., No.109 of 1894.

31. Ibid., No.111 of 1894.

Conclusion

Kalugumalai inscriptions are of great historic value. They, along with the various information exposed which proved the popularity of Kalugumalai, during the 8th and 9th centuries A.D. These inscriptions also show that Jainism was a living religion and Kalugumalai was then Jain centre in the Medieval period. Moreover, from the study of the Inscriptions of donations offered, the Ay chieftains and the Pandyas, the administrative divisions of Pandyas and Cholas are mentioned. Most of the Inscriptions found beneath the Jain bas-relief structures available in the Northern part of the hill of Kalugumalai are mostly donatives in character. They also show the facts relating to Jainism.

=====

<p>R. Kanagaraj M.A., M.Phil. Research Scholar (Part-Time) Registration No.8055 Department of History Manonmaniam Sundaranar University Tirunelveli. Tamil Nadu rkanagaraj64gmail.com</p>	
--	--

