

## The Contribution of Pallavas Towards Saivism in Kanchipuram

\*<sup>1</sup>V. Pradeepa and <sup>2</sup>R. Srinivasan

<sup>1</sup>Department of History, Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Nagercoil – 4  
Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli - 627012

<sup>2</sup>Department of History, C.B.M College, Coimbatore - 641042

\*Corresponding Author - Email: [vpradep.med@rediffmail.com](mailto:vpradep.med@rediffmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*Pallavas played vital role for the development of Saivism in Kanchipuram. They established their capital at Kanchipuram. They were laid strong foundation for construction of temples with granite stones in Kanchipuram as well as other parts of Tamil country. The most of the Pallava rulers were devotees of lord Siva. They developed cultural activities towards Saivism. The Saiva Nayanmars had maintained good relationship with the Pallavarulers. The contributions of Pallava rulers paved the way for Kanchipuram as became the holy centre of saivism.*

**Keywords:** Siva Kanchi, Kachchi, Ekambam, Nayanmars, Mattavilasaprahasana, Pasupatas, Kalamuka, Tondaimandalam.

### Introduction

The pre historic period the Dravidians worshipped a number of deities like Korraivai, Murugan, Varunan, Etc. At the same time they belief in the existence of one supreme. The worship of Shiva was originally Dravidian. In various Neolithic settlements in south India have been found lingams, this is an ample evidence of the worship of siva in the form of a linga existed in stone age.

The Agastya said that he learned Tamil language of south from siva this it may be Inferred that siva was a Dravidian deity.

### Aims of the study

- To know about the architectural style of Pallavas.
- To appraise the contributions of Pallavas.
- To explore the growth of savism during the Pallava period.

### Kanchipuram

Kanchipuram is one of the most ancient cities in India. Once it was the capital of Tondaimandalam which had twenty four kottams. It has been variously called as Kanchipedu, Kanchi, Kachi and conjeevaram. The first name among the others is the oldest and the most original is Kachchi but Kanchi is the more popular. The Kanchi and Kachchi, both find Place in Tamil works composed by Appar and sambandar in the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> century A. D. In the Talgunda inscription of the KandantaKakushtavarman was mentioned Kanchi is called

Pallavandrapuri. Kanchipuram later divided into big Kanchi known as Siva Kanchi, Vishnu Kanchi was known as small Kanchi and JainaKanchi. The Shiva temples were mostly established in Siva Kanchi.

### **Pallavas rule**

The Pallavas ruled Tondainadu from 250 AD to 900 AD. The Pallava rule has been divided into the period of the pallavas of prakrit charters, The period of pallavas of Sanskrit charters, Pallavas of simha Vishnu line and pallavas of Nandivarman – II pallavamalla line. The simhavishnu also known as the lion of the earth is considered to be the virtual founder of the pallavas. The Mahendravarman - I, Narasimhavarman – I, Parameswaravarman – I, Narasimhavarman – II, Parameswaravarman – II, Nandivarman – II, Dandivarman, Nandivarman – III, were important rules of pallava dynasty. Kanchipuram has been regarded as one of the holiest and most important cities even before pallavas, their rule added further glory to the town as they embellished the city with gigantic temples and shrines. The literature and religion received fair patronage which promoted the religious and cultural life of the people. Many Nayanmars were lived during pallavaregime that was extended royal patronage in propagating their ideas and morals. The royal emblem of the pallavas was Nandi (Bull).

The Aiyadigalkadavarkon who has been identified as pallavasimhavarman III, the father of simhavishnu, is regarded as one of the saints. The work kshetravanba of this royal saint who was an erudite scholar both in Tamil and Sanskrit describes the 22 places which he visited on his pilgrimage, Ekambam or Ekambaranatha temple was one among the places on which he has sung. Some of the pallava kings like sivaskandavarman, skandasishyanandivarmanetc bear names which suggest their association with saivism. Even their Bull emblem and the khativanga a weapon of siva on the royal flag may be taken as denoting their allegiance to saivism.

Kanchi was the strong hold of saivism at the time of mayurasarman. Pallavas were staunch saivites and consequently their capital was the strong hold of saivism. Therefore mayurasaraman came for study. The mattavilasaprahasana of mahendravarman – I and the hymns of Appar contain reference to kapalikas, kalamukhas and pasupatas in the pallava period the sculptural representations and inscriptional references to these sects in places around kanchi.

### **Temples and Sculptures**

The closing years of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and advent of the 7<sup>th</sup> century A. D. witnessed a period of greate renaissance as far as the Tamil country and kanchi which was the capital of pallavas of simhavishnu period.

The nayanmars, the avowed devotees of Siva were spread saivism in Tamil country. The soul stirring songs popularly known as Tevaram inspired and influenced the masses. This influence gradually culminated in hatred and autogonism towards the other religions like Jainism and Buddhism which of course were soon totally dethroned from the minds of the people by the indefatigable efforts of these saints. The absolute political control which the pallavas wielded over the Tamil country made the spread of saivism quicker and more rapid.

Mahendravarman and his contemporary saint Appar joined hands to promoting and accelerating to spread of saivism while mahendravarman was building everlasting edifices on stone for siva, Appar carved out a place for saivism in the minds of the people by his sweet verses. The Ekambaranatha temple also received its share from the hands of this benevolent pallava monarch who built a mandapa in that temple complex.

It was mahendravarman – I who caused to be made a temple, probably the first for Ganesa at vallam in the Tamil country, he can be regarded as a pioneer who introduced the Ganesa cult in the Tamil country. The poet mayura contemporary of pallavas who composed a poem of hundred verses in Sanskrit on sun god called as surya – sataka and by singing which in the shrine of surya in the temple of kanchapesvara at kanchi, he got cured of leprosy. According to reliable tradition there existed in the past 108 siva temples in kanchi. The important siva temples are Ekambaranatha, Kailasanatha, Kachapesvara, Onakanthan, Satyavaratesvara, Iravattanesvara, Piravetianeswara, Mukkeswara, Svarchareswara, Kayarohanesvara, Brahmapurisvara etc.

The Narasimhavarman – II's inscription traces the mythical genealogy of the pallavas and mentions his building of Rajasimhasvara. The kamakshi temple inscription of his queen Lokamahadevi states that she was affected by a brahmarakshasa. Another queen Rangapataka is stated to have founded a small shrine in the Rajasimhesvara temple. The Kailasanatha inscription said that mahendra III son of Rajasimha built a siva shrine in front of the Rajasimhesvara's shrine.

The Ekambaranatha temple is one of the largest temples of south India the temple deity sriEkambranatha was known as prithivilinga means linga of earth it is first among the other panchabhutakshetras. In the prakaram round the mango tree is an idol of lingam which is the composite of 108 lingas. There is another one of 1008 small lingas. The ideals of 63 Nayanmars are found near the sanctum. There is a sculptural panel depicting siva destroying manmatha. There are several inscriptions on walls and pillars of the temple which belongs to different pallavas rulers.

The pallava ruler Narasimhavarman – II built kailasanatha temple who ruled between

700 – 728 AD. He was an illustrious ruler of pallava dynasty who initiated to the construction of structural temples in stone in large numbers. There are seven sub – shrines in a row near the entrance facing east which were constructed by some of the queens of Rajasimha. Some of the sculptures found inside the temple were Ardhanareeswara, sage vyasa and sankaracharya.

The Kacchapeswara temple is another important temple of kanchi. The sacredness of this temple is attributed to Vishnu in the form of a kacchapa (Tortoise) worshipped siva here. The linga got the name kacchapeswara.

The Iravataneswara temple belongs to the time of Rajasimha it is dedicated to siva and originally consisted of a dvitalavimana with square sikhara and griva. The Brahma, Vishnu, Dakshinamurthi, Ravaniungrahamurthi, urdevatandava, Chandesaanugraha, Ganga dhara sculptures were found in temple.

The Piravataneswara temple was built during the reign of pallavaNandivarman – II. The temple faces west and it is dedicated to siva. The somaskandar, Brahma, Vishnu, Durga, Lingodbhava, Nrithyamurthi, Gajalakshmi and other sculptures were placed.

The mukteswara temple also known as Dharmahadeviisvaram after the name of the queen of Nandivarman – II. The sculptures depicting Ravana lifting Kailas, Bhikchatana, Gangadhara, Chandesanugrahasurya, Karthikeya, Durga, etc.

The kausikesvara temple, Jwarahareswara temple, Karuneeswara temple, Kayarohaneswara temple, Satyavraksvara temple, Visweshwara temple, Ramanathesvara temple, Mangaleswara temple are other noted siva temples in Kanchipuram.

### **Music**

The songs of Appar, Sambandar and Sundaramurti flourished in this period are filled with music. Appar sang that the shadow of siva's feet is as soothing as the pure music of the Vina, The regular singing of devarams in siva temples, a practice still observed in many of the temples of south india began as early as the days of the pallava kings. The mahendravarman – I also known as “Sankirrajati” because he was also a master of Tala and Wellversed to play musical instruments. Mahendravarman's grandson Rajasimha was also an accomplished musician as known from his surnames. He praised as srivadyavidyadharah, Sri Atodyatumbura, Sri Vinanaradah. The music inscription of kudumiyamalai is all india interest. It is a great historical value. The author of the inscription is mahendravarman – I, a pallava ruler.

### **Dance**

The art of dancing may be traced to a remote antiquity in the Tamil country. Kuttus referred in the early Tamil works were the indigenous dances of the Tamil land. Kuttus has several subdivisions. They were kuravai, Kalinadan, Kudakkuttu, Karanam, Nokku and

Torpavai The Nandivarman – II pallavamalla period dancing girls were attached in the temple at Kanchipuram During Rajasimha's reign his queen Rangapataka has been expert in Bharatanatya. She was associated in the construction of a pallava shrine in the kailasanatha temple.

The dancing girls were called Risabhataliyar, devaradiyal, talicheri – pendugal. There were seven divisions among the women dancers. Namely duttai, vikrutai, prattiyai Bhaktai, Hrdai, Alangarai and Rudrakanikai. The Nayanmars praised these dancers in their hymns relating to different shrines in the pallava kingdom. The muktesvara temple at kanchi and the Tiruvorriyur temple maintained a large number of dancing women for the performance of singing and dancing at the time of divine worship and services during festivals. The pallava king mahendravarman – I in mattavilasaprahasand refers to siva as kapali and his dance Tandava comprising the course of the three worlds. The contemporary hymns of the Devaram and Nalayiradivya prabhandam contain descriptions of siva as a Nrittamurti. The dancing mode of siva was placed in the kailasanatha temple at kanchi. The Iravathaneswara temple at kanchi contains a culture of siva depicting him in the Lalathatilaka mode of dance. The wonderful art of dancing must have been greatly popularized and stimulated in the south by the pallava kings.

### **Painting**

The pallava court played an important part in the development of the art of painting. The Mahendravarman – I was called as vicitracitta, citrakarapuli and Daksinachitra, he was probably the author of south Indian painting. The Ardhanarisvara paintings in Mamallapuram was painted by Mahendravarman – I.

The Svastika, Trisula, Lotus, Bull, Durga ornaments, Mountain were painted in various pallava temples. The Talasampotitapose painted in the Talapurisvara temple at panamalai, Somaskanda panels also painted in various temples at Tondaimandalam. The parvati and dancing siva paintings were found in kailasanatha temple at kanchi. The siva paintings were found in malai cave temple at malaiyadiatti were the contributions of pallavas.

### **Conclusion**

The pallavas were patronizing and contributing to the development of saivism through the Temples, Sculpture, Painting, Musing, Dance, Drama, etc. The pallavas were conducted festivals and pujas in their temples. They also conducted different Yajnas, Rituals and Ceremonies. The various activities of pallavas laid the strong foundation for the upliftment of saivism in Tamil country which later reflected in to all over the world.

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