



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE HISTORY OF THIRUMARUTHUDAIYAR OR ARCHANESHWARAR TEMPLE AT  
KADATHUR

Saraswathi V.K

History Sri GVG Visalakshi College for Women Udumalpet, Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu

ARTICLE INFO

Received 19th February, 2017  
Received in revised form 16th March, 2017  
Accepted 5th April, 2017  
Published online 28th May, 2017

Keywords:

History Of Thirumaruthudaiyar,  
Archaneshwarar, Kadathur

ABSTRACT

Kongu nadu has a special cultural heritage like Chera, Chola and Pandiya dynasties. In those days Kongu nadu was divided into three major divisions Upper Kongu, Northern Kongu and Southern Kongu. The holy places like Palani, Thiruvavinangudi, and Thirumurthi hill lie in this southern Kongu. The villages like Kolumam, Kumaralingam, Kannadiputhur, Kaniyur, Karatholuvu, Kadathur, and Solamadevi are popular in Kongu nadu. These villages are also called as 7 k villages they are historically significant as they remained as Devadana villages during the Kongu Chola period. These villages are famous for Shiva temples. There are eleven Shiva temples located on the way from Kolumam to Karur. All these Shiva temples have their own pride over the infinite power of lord Shiva and its Theertha. So Karaivalinadu has a fame of its own location. Kadathur is situated in the north of Madathukulam which lies on the path of Udumalai-palani highway. It is about ten kilometers away from Madathukulam and eighteen kilometer away from Udumalai. It is inscribed in the stone carvings that there is a fort wall with an army in the past related to this there is a place called Kottaimedu in the border of Kadathur and Palani road. Arjuneswarar Koil is situated on the banks of Amaravathi River in Kadathur. This has the tallest Swayambu Lingam in the Kongu Region. Swayambu Lingams manifest on its own that is not made by man. They appear suddenly or mysteriously without any human efforts. The main deity, Moolavar in this temple is Arjuneswarar. The alternate names for the Moolavar are Marudheesar, Marudhudaiyar and Marundheesar.

Copyright © 2017 Saraswathi V.K., This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

Kongu nadu has a special cultural heritage like Chera, Chola and Pandiya dynasties. In those days Kongu nadu was divided into three major divisions Upper Kongu, Northern Kongu and Southern Kongu.

The holy places like Palani, Thiruvavinangudi, and Thirumurthi hill lie in this southern Kongu. The villages like Kolumam, Kumaralingam, Kannadiputhur, Kaniyur, Karatholuvu, Kadathur, and Solamadevi are popular in Kongu nadu. These villages are also called as 7 k villages they are historically significant as they remained as Devadana villages during the Kongu Chola period. These villages are famous for Shiva temples. There are eleven Shiva temples located on the way from Kolumam to Karur. All these Shiva temples have their own pride over the infinite power of lord Shiva and its Theertha. So Karaivalinadu has a fame of its own location. In Chola kingdom there were two hundred and forty three Shiva temples among them only some have still fame while

some are fully changed. But the temples in Karaivalinadu, in spite of many problems stand still owing to the visit of the noble souls. Some Shiva temples have been renovated and retained their fame still now to the divinity of God.

The divine temples lie on the banks of Amaravathi river which is otherwise called as Ann Porunai river and Amba river. The river Amaravathi flows through Udumalpet Taluk and makes it fertile. Here there are not only many famous Shiva temples which are known for their ancestral history but also there are places whose names started with the letter "K". They are Kolumam, Kumaralingam, Kannadipudhur, Kaniyur, Karatholuvu, Kadathur, and Solamadevi.

It is told that in the period of Ramayana, Panchapandavas were hiding in this place. In order to capture their enemies they caught the cattle from this place and hide them somewhere. So this place was named after cattle as Karatholuvu alias Kadathur. There were warehouses of weapons and forts in this place. It is also told that enemy of this king has captured the cattle of this place. So it got its name as Kadathur.

\*✉ Corresponding author: Saraswathi V.K

History Sri GVG Visalakshi College for Women Udumalpet, Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu

In the middle age the Amaravathi river side lands were also called as Karaivalinadu. The Karai means two sides of river. So bank of Amaravathi river side places are also called Karaivalinadu. It is noted for its nature's beauty with full of coconut farms and remains as a religious centre with Shiva temples of historical importance visited by the devotees from Palani, Udumalpet and nearby villages.

Kadathur is situated in the north of Madathukulam which lies on the path of Udumalai-palani highway. It is about ten kilometers away from Madathukulam and eighteen kilometers away from Udumalai. It is inscribed in the stone carvings that there is a fort wall with an army in the past related to this there is a place called Kottaimedu in the border of Kadathur and Palani road.

Arjuneswarar Koil is situated on the banks of Amaravathi River in Kadathur. This has the tallest Swayambu Lingam in the Kongu Region. Swayambu Lingams manifest on its own that is not made by man. They appear suddenly or mysteriously without any human efforts. The main deity, Moolavar in this temple is Arjuneswarar. The alternate names for the Moolavar are Marudheesar, Marudhulaiyar and Marundheesar.

The consort of the main deity is worshipped in the name of Gomathi Amman. The temple was built during the Chola reign. The temple is maintained by donations and grants from many people, who are native to this region. The maintenance of the temple is done by the Arjuneswarar trust. Though legends place the earliest temple here around the 10<sup>th</sup> century, it is Vikrama Chola who is mentioned as the King who discovered the lingam, which dates it around the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

Cows seem to have a close relationship with this village, for the discovery of the lingam of Arjuneswarar, is also linked to them. At one time, Kara Thozhuvur was famed for its cows, and the cattle were taken to the palace everyday so that fresh milk could be provided for the royal family. It was noticed that all the cows but one gave ample milk, and on closer observation, the cowherd realized that one cow discharged its milk every day at the foot of an Arjuna tree (called Marudha maram In Tamil).

The King ordered the roots of the tree to be dug up, and when the axe struck the root, blood started oozing out. The king immediately staunches the flow with his golden ring, and then carefully cleared the area, which brought to light an ancient lingam underneath. The lingam still bears the marks of the roots of the Arjuna tree under which it was buried, which is probably the actual reason for the name of the Lord here. Incidentally, the lingam is huge, easily over five feet in height, including the avudaiyar or base, and is said to be the tallest lingam in the Tiruppur area.

During the Mahabharata time Pandavas had lived in the area around Dharapuram a nearby town. The Lord here is a form of Shiva, and he gets his name from Arjuna of the Mahabharata, who is believed to have worshipped him here. It is also believed that the Pandavas spent some time in this area during their exile, and the village also gets its name from an incident which occurred during that period.

It is said that Dhuryodhana once seized cows with the idea of inciting the Pandavas, and kept them hidden on the other bank of the river. The place came to be known as 'Kara (bank) Thozhuvu (stable) or Kara thozhuvur and over the years, the name evolved to Kadathur. It is a belief that during that period, Arjuna had worshipped this Linga. This is one of the reasons why the deity has been named Arjuneswarar.

The Lord is called Marudha vaneswarar, since he was found under a Marudha maram. Since the roots of the tree have medicinal properties, worshipping the Lord here is believed to cure one of many ailments. During the Kongu Chola Vikrama Cholan III's (1302AD) rule Vikrama Cholan Thirubhuvana Singhan had diabetes. He worshipped Arjuneswarar and donated lands to the temple. He got cured and hence there is a belief that praying to Arjuneswarar cures one of diabetes. So today, with diabetes growing more and more common, the temple is attracting a growing attention. Offering a cure to the disease by worshipping the Lord.

By worshipping in this temple Lord Shiva and visiting temple on Sunday 4:30p.m to 6 p.m will clear the obstacle in marriage. In the temple history once there lived a king and his daughter marriage was met drastic struggle. By visiting this temple those barriers marriage were removed and her marriage happened.

#### *Special features of the temple*

1. It has the biggest Sanctum roof, the biggest Swayambu linga and a Shivalinga with Avudaiyar.
2. Amaravathi river flows around the temple. In the morning sun's rays fall on the river and get reflected on to the Lingam. Two times in a year sun's rays directly falls the Lingam. This is the wonder of this place. This speaks volumes of the temple architecture of Tamilnadu.
3. The main Sanctum was built of stone. Arthamandapam, Maha Mandapam, Vasantha Mandapam are about 90 feet length. Even at the time of Uthrayanam and Dakshinayanam sunrays fall without any obstruction.
4. There are 11 Shiva temples on the banks of Amaravathi, but Kadathur alone has a Swayambu Linga, which has the speciality of its own.
5. The temple has a marble statue of Sri Dakshinamurthy, which was brought from Kasi.
6. The Gomathi Amman temple is on the right side of the Lord which is a special feature. Just like in Kasi, there is a cremation ground right in front of the Deity's Sanctum. The Gomathi Amman Sannithi is to the right of Moolavar. There is a large mound near the entrance to the Amman Sannithi. Earlier, there was a wall between the Sivan and Ambal Sannithi. It is also to be noted that the temple for Mother is in a separate building partitioned by a compound wall, hence both are separate temples with separate Mandapa, entrance, and kitchens-madapalli.
7. A Shivalinga is on the left side of Mother temple around the Arali plants. It is still growing upward.
8. It has temples for both Shiva and Lord Vishnu.

### **Historical Background of the Temple**

Kadathur belongs to Chola dynasty, which had its Capital as Dharapuram, which was formerly called Rasa Rasa Nallur. Vikrama Chola Deva already ruled it with its Capital as Dharapuram and Karur. Rasanallur was considered to be very fertile in those days during 1020-1118 and the temple of Kadathur was built in that era. The sculptors carved on the stones were with much care and interest. There are forty three stone carvings in the Shiva temple of Kadathur. But many inscriptions have been damaged in modern times. There are names of the Kings who built the temple as Vellainattur Kumaran of 19<sup>th</sup> Century and of Sri Vikrama Chola of 19<sup>th</sup> Century, son of Rasanallur Avudaiyar Muthel Kulothunga Chola.

As it lies on the bank of Amaravathi it is called as Karaivalinadu Nadu. And the Chola Kings got their family name as Udaiyar, which meant those who ruled the country in those days. This history came to light through the scriptures on the stones in the temple. Some more information about the Chola Pallava King who built the temple before nine hundred twenty seven years was Vikrama Chola. It was called as Chola and Chola Keralam. This holy temple was divided into four divisions as Sanctum, Artha Mandapam, Maha Mandapam and Vasantha Mandapam. This main Sanctum lies in the center of the temple, which has ninety feet length and eighteen feet breadth.

The particulars of daily Poojas, donations and Nivanthams are carved in the stone inscriptions inside the holy shrines walls and pillars. The Sanctum is in the rectangular shape, which has eighteen feet breadth and thirty feet length. The roof of Sanctum has figures in cylindrical rounds and there are square rings carved in stones. The main five-stage roof is forty five feet height. There are Sigaram, Kreevam and Kalasam are square in shape.

There are many figures having Gatha weapon in their hands. Dhuvara Balakas are found in all four sides of the roof. There are also figures like Dwarasakthi Kopuram Thangi, Lord Maheswara and Lord Sadhashiva craned beautifully. The architecture is known for its even-living talent of the Sculptors. For the sculptors had used their special paints made of herbal plants. There are so many stone carvings like Demons, elephants, lions, monkeys, musicians, dancers, wrestlers, the procession of palanquin bearers flute players, Drum beaters, the various stages of human growth and so on. The pictures are painted in Arthamandapa and in Mahamandapa.

The Sanctum walls have four pillars. They are carved artistically. Those pillars have the face of Demons. The eight pillars, which are situated in the Mahamandapa, are carved with finest figures. Here there are two pairs of pillars between the square shaped pillars. Totally there are sixteen stripes carved artistically. Those pillars have the face of Demons.

The eight pillars which are situated in the Mahamandapa are carved with finest figures. Here there are two pairs of pillars between the square shaped pillars. Totally there are sixteen stripes carved artistically. In the entrance, stands the torch of snake figure, Eluthogam and kabothagam. In the southern entrance there are two artistically carved pillars and a small

Mandapam with inner wall on the northern side of the Manadapam.

It was believed that before sixty-five years a man ventured into the tunnel way of this temple. He covered almost five hundred feet. But he couldn't move further out of fear so he returned back by collecting the statue of Lord Nataraja.

If research goes by archaeology department some more truth will be found out. The sanctorum is measured of eleven feet breadth and fifteen feet length. This temple has a good conference hall and front hall. Throughout the Mandapam wall there are many artistic carvings, which illustrate ancient culture and tradition.

The Raja Gopuram which is located in front of the Shiva temple. On the eastern entrance, have three stages of about thirty six feet height. The casement is 16 feet breadth. Four Mandapa of this temple are located beautifully with wooden ceiling. The Gopuram pictures illustrate several stories and scriptures are carved on all the four sides of it.

The idol of Shiva lingam of Kadathur is popular for its gracefulness, blessings and its holiness. This divine linga symbolizes the figure of God Shiva and his power.

The name Gomathi means one who has beautiful face like moon which emits silvery light of its own. The stone Scripture expresses the Goddess name as Thirukamakkottathu Nachchiyar. Gomathi Nachchiamman of Kadathur has infinite power. She has a separate shrine. The statue of Amman stands at the height of four feet with two divine hands.

Most of the Shiva temples have a separate shrine for Goddess in the left side of main Shiva temple. But Kadathur temple has Amman shrine in the right side of Shiva. The speciality of this Gomathi Amman of Kadathur is that she is compared with KanchiKamatchi and Madurai Meenakshi. The Goddess of Kadathur is also called Gomathi Amman and Sankarankovil Amman.

Lord Vishnu, Nandhi, Lord Vinayaga, Lord Muruga, Kalabhairava, Dhakshnamoorthy and Lord Narayana are the other main Gods of Shiva temple in Kadathur. These are the main Gods for Shiva temple in Kadathur. The statues of seven spinsters stand on the bank of Amaravathi river flowing on the left side of the temple.

From the scriptures of the stones it is inferred that this temple was built by Veera Narayanan (1135-1145AD) and it was extended in the period of Veera Chola (1163-1206AD) and Veera Rajendra (1207-1255) and many other Kings joined their hands in renovating this temple.

For daily Poojas and Amudhu, people donated money and land. Andal Thiruppavai was recited in those days. There were dancing girls called Devaradiyars who lived there. People who lived around the temple did the Poojas.

Every Saturday there is oil Pooja for all deities and regular Poojas also performed properly. Many stone scriptures declare different names of Shiva and the rule of Kings in their area. The land where the temple is constructed was donated by Kachinarayan.

And during this period Kammalars were benefited more. This is evident from the scriptures. There are so many stone scriptures other than this. One of this declares that King Veera Rajendran had donated a land in Kannadiputhur for the temple to rectify this problem. People belonging to different sects have donated money to show their devotion to God.

The study of this temple is very helpful to learn the historical significance of the Kongu region, the history of the Karaivalinadu, and historical background and deities of the temple. It also reveals the religious beliefs, customs & culture of the qualities of an ideal temple. It will make it clear that, the temple belongs to the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

The temple is not only the place of worship but also a place of social get together. The people are interested in maintaining the activities of the temple by giving donations and when they are able to do so. The various functions in the temple act as an entertainment to all people, of all ages.

Though the Department of Archaeology, Archaeological survey of India and some departments of Universities in Tamil Nadu, have attempted to record, and edit a number of inscription for the past few decades, there are thousands of inscriptions yet to be recorded which are spread all over Tamil Nadu. They have ample sources of information to the ancient past, since Kongu country played a dominant role in the history of south India.

The construction of the temples and the arrangement of the deities show their careful planning to the minutest details. The close study of the origin and artistic beauty of the temple and their role in fostering the unity amidst the diversity reveals the engineering and artistic skills that existed in the olden days. Thus the temples become an embodiment of architectural achievements, artistic excellence and sculptural beauty.

It is the duty of every citizen to preserve our national heritage. The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Board should come forward to take measures to preserve the temples and their institutions and the walls of the temple.

## References

1. Annual Report of Epigraphy 1909
2. South Indian Inscriptions Volume V and XIII
3. South Indian Temple Inscription, Inscription published by Tamilnadu of State Department Archaeological Museum.
4. Kongu Encyclopedia
5. Abbe J.A. Dubois., Hindu Manner Customs and ceremonies, Puviyarasi Pathippagam, Coimbatore.
6. Ambuijam Anantharaman., Temples of south India, East West Books Pvt Ltd, Chennai, 2006.
7. Arunachalam.M., Cultural heritage of Hinduism in India, The Kasimath, Tiruppanandal, Tamilnadu. 1982.
8. Bhuvaneshwari. K. A., Kongu Cholas, Puviyarasi Pathippagam, Kovai, 2000.
9. Chaturvedi., Faiths, fairs and festivals of India, Abhisek Publications, Chandigarh, 2001.
10. Das. R.K., Temples of Tamilnadu, Bharatiya vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2001.
11. Ganesan. M. & Jagadesan.R., Kovai Mavatta Kongunattu Kalvettukal, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, 2001.
12. Gandhi.M & Sundaramoorthy Sivam., Stala Varalaru, Sri Archaneshwarar, Anbuneri Pradosa Kulu, Kadathur, 2002.
13. Lakshmanan., Stala Varalaru, Kadathur, 1997.

\*\*\*\*\*