CHAPTER- 2

TEMPLE ATRACTIONS OF KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

Tourism is one of the leading industries in the world today. The traditional areas of tourist attractions like beaches, spas, winter ski areas, religious places, historical monuments and cultural attractions continue to attract millions of visitors. Each place on the place of the earth is different from all others and people will always have a desire to see what other places are like. This spirit of exploration has from ancient times motivated the people to travel. So people have always travelled from one place to other.¹

The temples² are the places where the devotees worship God and so the place of worship should be sacred. Tamil Sangam literature referred as ‘Ko’. It means God. The assembly of the people called ‘il’. So koil is derived from the two words ko + il is koil. Hence the residing place of God is called Koil.³

It is a general belief among the Hindus, that temples are the abodes of gods and goddesses. The temples are considered as places of worship from time immemorial. They are considered to be the backbone of Hinduism. It is said that

² The word temple is derived from Latin root ‘Templum’. It signifies a holy enclosen of a temple. It is a place where gods and goddesses are housed. It is believed that worshipping gods and goddesses in temple infuses divinity and purity in the heart of the devotees. Ganguly, C.O., Indian Architecture, Bombay, 1954. p.48.
³ Pitchimoorthy, T., Kalaikalangiyam (Tamil), Part IV, Madras, 1956. p.304.
by worshipping a god or goddesses the devotees gets comfort and solace. Hence, the ancient king’s chieftains constructed temples, not only for themselves but also for their subjects to worship. So that there will be plenty, and prosperity in the country. They constructed the temples with the specific purpose and plan with architectural beauty and in course of time, these temples became monuments. The best example for the temple monuments in Kanyakumari District are the Kumari Amman Temple, Mondicadu Bhagavathi Amman Temple and Suchindram Temple. In course of time, they were protected and preserved not only by the kings but by the people. Rock-cut cave temples were also found in different parts of the district and they are also regarded as living monuments.

2.1. Kanyakumari Bhagavathi Amman Temple

The land’s end of the Indian sub continent Kanyakumari has unique historical and cultural heritage. Kanyakumari, named after virgin Goddess Kumari Amman, situated at the confluence of three water bodies such as the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean in the southern tip of Indian peninsular.

The Lotus feet of our Mother India are thus washed eternally by the holy waters of the three seas which never allow any ship to get into their haven.

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4 Thirunavukarasu, V., Tourist centers of Tamil Nadu (Tamil), 2000, p.4.
6 Shungoony Menon, P., History of Travancore from the Earliest Times, New Delhi, 1878, p.11.
Visiting this sacred place on 15th January 1937 Gandhiji made the following remarks: “I am writing this at the Cape, in front of the sea where three waters meet, and furnish a sight unequalled in the world, for this is no port of call for vessels. Like the Goddess the waters around are virgin.”

The Kumari Amma Temple, a symbol of Dravidian architecture constructed on the southern corner of Kanyakumari where the three seas namely, Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal meet. This temple is dedicated to the Goddess Bhagavathi, also known as Kanyakumari. Kanni means virgin and Kumari denotes a particular stage of a woman. The Goddess in this temple is a virgin that is why she is called Kanyakumari. There are number of legends speak why she became virgin.

Goddess Parasakthi in the form of Kanni Bhagavathy is continuing her eternal penance here to prevent further encroachment of the sea, and radiating sanctity all round. The supreme Lord and His power are represented as Siva in the name of Kasi Viswanath, and Parasakthi in the name of Kanyakumari Bhagavathy. Sakthi is a creature of the Universe and the primal force of life which underlies all existence.

Tradition goes that Kanni Bhagavathy did tapas to obtain the hand of Lord

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9 Subramanian, S.V. *op.cit.*, p.118.
11 Ibid.
Siva at Suchindrum. The Lord had also agreed to accede to her request. All the preparations for the marriage were ready at Kanyakumari. Finding that the bridegroom did not turn up at the auspicious time fixed earlier, the bride was disappointed and consequently she cursed that the rice and other edibles stocked for the feast be turned into sand, and she herself became a stone image. In accordance with the curse the beach of Kanyakuman is having different colored sands.¹²

The multicolored sand of the beach containing thorium which generates Atomic energy is the manifestation of the miraculous power of the supreme. It is a symbolic representation of Sakthi. While Varanasi is the dwelling place of Siva, Kanyakumari is the abode of Sakthi. This is the significance of the injunction in the Hindu Scriptures that all Hindus should visit Varanasi as well as Kanyakumari to complete their pilgrimage.¹³ The north and the south have thus been spiritually connected from time immemorial.

Kanyakumari was very familiar to the early traders and travelers. In the 3rd century B.C. the first foreign writer Eratosthenes, who mentions the place in his travelogue. The author of Periplus of the 1st century A.D. gives a fine description of Kanyakumari. He writes, “……... those who wish to consecrate the closing part of their lives to religion come hither (Cape Comorin) and bathe and engage

¹³ Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., p.2.
themselves to celibacy. This is also done by women; for it is told that a Goddess once dwelt here and bathed".  

Silappathikaram, one among the five ancient Tamil epics of the second century A.D. mentions that a Brahmin saint named Madalan took a holy dip in the sacred bathing ghat of Kanyakumari during his pilgrimage. The subsequent epic Manimekalai narrates that Sati wife of a Brahmin of Varanasi reached Cape Comorin on foot, bathed in the sea there, worshipped the Goddess and purified her from the sin of unchastely.

The temple dedicated to Bhagavathy at Kanyakumari is of hoary antiquity and of high veneration. The Goddess of Kanyakumari is mentioned even in the Upanishads. In the Mahabharatha mention is made of Balarama’s tour to the sacred shrine of Kanyakumari. It is also mentioned in the epic that Arjuna once visited this centre and worshipped the Devi.

The temple of Bhagavathy situated on a spacious rectangular ground on the very fore-shore is walled off on all sides. There are three prakaras in the temple. The image of Kanni Bhagavathy facing east is a fine piece of marvelous sculptural skill. She stands with a garland in her right hand. Her left hand is placed on her

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14 Ibid.
16 Personal Interview with Dr. Padbhanaban, Archeologist & Historian, Nagercoil, aged 64, dated 12-07-2009.
thigh. The life-like image of Bhagavathy with a smiling face is a combination of innocence, purity and beauty. Smeared with sandal paste, decked with different varieties of valuable ornaments and decorated with beautiful garlands of flowers she creates a sense of devotion and "a peace that passeth understanding" in the mind of every worshipper. To the north of the "garbhagraha" is the shrine of Thyagasundari, the playmate of the Goddess.\(^\text{17}\)

In the south western corner of the inner prakara there a shrine containing the images of Vinayaka and Surya Bhagavan. The Manimandapa in front of the Sanctorum is supported by six inscribed cylindrical pillars four of which are erected at the four corners of the Manirmandapa and the remaining two on either side of the entrance to the Sanctum.\(^\text{18}\)

The Sabha Mandapa containing rows of lightly sculptured pillars on either side, in front of the Manirmandapa. Near the exit of the Sabhamandapa is the Dwajastamba. On the northern side of the Sribali prakara is the shrine of Balasundari, another playmate of the Goddess.\(^\text{19}\) There is no shrine in the third prakara. From the inscriptions found in the temple we learn that it was built by Pandya Kings and the Goddess Kumari Bhagavathy was in fact worshipped as the family deity of the Pandyas.


\(^{18}\) Personal Interview with Mr. Krishna Swamy, M., Member of the Temple aged 54, dated 25-06-2009.

The eastern gate of the temple facing the Bay of Bengal is always kept closed except five times in a year. There is a belief that the sparkling rays from the gem on the nose ring of the image dazzled and blinded the eyes of the mariners and thus led to ship-wreck. To prevent this catastrophe the doors are said to be kept closed.\(^{20}\)

According to one tradition, the original temple dedicated to Kumari Bhagavathy was on the rock which was known as ‘Sripadaparai’, nearly 600 feet from the shore. Consequent on the encroachment of the sea the rock became an island and the old temple had to be shifted to the present site.\(^{21}\) From the records of the temple we find that the rock has been regarded as a sacred place from very early days. On it there is a small projection resembling a human foot which has traditionally been revered as a symbol of the Sreepadam.

The Mandapa with sixteen pillars, the bathing ghat in front of it, the shrines of Adi Sankara and of Swami Vivekananda, Gandhi Smarak Mandir, a shrine dedicated to Virgin Mary, and Vattakottai, a historic fortress of strategic importance, are other places of interest in Kanyakumari for a visitor from outside.\(^{22}\)

The Goddess Kanyakumari is being worshipped from very early days. The worship of the virgin goddess Kumari Amman is referred to in Silappatikaram


\(^{21}\) Ibid.

and Manimekalai. The Mahabharatha mentions of the pilgrimage of Balabhadra to the Kumari Amman temple.\textsuperscript{23}

Originally this temple was constructed on a rock known as “Sri Padaparai” nearly 600 feet away from the shore. Maran Chatayan, a Pandya king who ruled Kanyakumari in between 765 AD and 815 AD\textsuperscript{24} replaced the mortar and used stone for the construction of this temple. There is a Manimandapa in front of the sanctum sanctorum which is support by six inscribed cylindrical pillars. The sahmandapa is located in front of the Manimandapa.\textsuperscript{25}

The Kumari Amman Temple is functioning as a centre of fine arts architecture, Sculpture, painting, music, dance, drama and literature. The ideal of the Devi in the sanctum sanctorum is the most beautiful sculpture found in the temple. The yali sculptures in the Patti Mantapa, front Mantapa and Kanniyaambalam are examples for sculptural masterpieces.\textsuperscript{26}

Before independence, this temple was administered and patronized by various rulers belonged to various dynasties. It is understood from the inscriptions found in this temple. For instance an inscription is engraved on the east wall of the first

\textsuperscript{23} Kasnyakumari (Land’s End), An Solder published by the Department of Tourism, Madras, 1989.

\textsuperscript{24} Personal interview with Rajamonian, N., Aged 52, Kanyakumari, dated 24.1.2009.

\textsuperscript{25} Village Statistical Register, Arudesam Village Office, 2005-2006, p.17.

\textsuperscript{26} Personal Interview with Mr. Sundar Raj, Convener of the Samarakshana Samithi, Parthivapuram, dated 23.1.2009.
prakaram of this temple.\textsuperscript{27} For instance an inscription in Tamil is engraved on the west wall of second prakaram of this temple states that Maniyan Govindan, merchant of Kollam supplied the ghee necessary for maintaining a sacred lamp in the sanctum of Goddess. He also gave a sine lamp with an image of peacock to this temple in 1201 AD. From the inscription found in this temple we learn that the Goddess Kumari Bhagavathi was in fact worshipped as the family deity of the Pandyas.\textsuperscript{28}

The administrators of this temple framed some rules and regulations. According to this, male devotees are requested to remove their shirts, baniyans and foot wears before entering the temple.\textsuperscript{29}

2.2. Suchindram Sthanumalayan Swami Temple

Suchindram is a small village about 12kms north from Kanyakumari and about 7 kms from Nagercoil. Suchindram means the place where Indra attained “Suchi”, i.e., purification. Actually, ‘Suchi’ means purity and “Suchindrum” denotes the place ‘where Indra attained purity’.\textsuperscript{30} It is said that Sthanumalaya Swamy temple is the only shrine dedicated to the Trinity in India. It is dedicated to Sri Sthanu-malaya. (sthan = siva: Mal = Vishnu: Ayan = Brahma in one form).\textsuperscript{31} The

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{27}] Dinakaran, \textit{op.cit.}, 26.02.2008, p.13..
\item[\textsuperscript{28}] Anganwadi Census Report, Parthivapuram, 2006 – 2007.
\item[\textsuperscript{29}] Prathab Singh, C., \textit{Kanyakumari Temples}, Madurai, 1981.
\item[\textsuperscript{30}] Sreedhara Menon, A., \textit{op.cit.}, p.157.
\item[\textsuperscript{31}] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suchindram.
\end{itemize}
temple is a place for purification from lust. It is said that Indra suffered a curse from the sage Gouthama, when he looked with a lustful eye at Ahalya, the wife of Gouthama. To get relieved from the curse Indra prayed to Lord Siva. Lord Siva relieved him of his curse and at his request he named the place as Suchindrum (Suchi = purification). Before this incidence, the place was known as Gnana Aranya.32

Another view is that the trimurthys (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) at the request of their wives came down to Gnana Aranya to test the chastity of Anusuya, wife of sage Athri. The gods suffered a curse from the wife of the sage for their action. They got their purification here.33 The present structure of the temple is the work of a number of persons spread over a number of centuries, and is one of the best specimens and a storehouse of the Dravidian style of art and architecture.

Suchindram has recorded history. The 123 inscriptions of the place (the earliest one belonging to the 9th century AD) narrate a lot about this Chadurvedimangalam, its evolution, distinctiveness and development.34 The King of almost all dynasties of the south had viewed with each other to commemorate their association with 124 long and 72 meters wide main temple, by constructing halls and arranging for the conduct of special poojas in their name. The Chempakarantan mandapam and Senthi pooja along with the Veerapandian

32 Gopalakrishnan, M., op.cit., p.206.
33 Pillai, K.K., Suchindram Temple, Madras, 1953, p.13.
manimandapam and Santhi pooja are just two examples. A brass chair, known as ‘Parakai Narkaly’ presented by the Portuguese to Travancore King is even now used in some temple rituals here.\textsuperscript{35}

The imposing tower nearly 135 feet in height can been seen for a radius of five miles from the temple. The Chenpakaraman mandapa, a huge pavilion embellished with exquisite carvings in stone, the Unchalmandapa in which the Tirukalyanam festival is celebrated, Kulasekharamandapa with the famous musical pillars. The presiding deities are kept during the summer season at Vasanthamandapa.\textsuperscript{36}

Decoration of the Vahanas takes place during festivals at Alankaramandapa. In Navagrahamandapa where the twelve zodiacal signs and nine planets are displayed and Chitra Sabha having stone images of several deities and sages are some of the important edifices in the temple. The temple has four cars (chariosts), the biggest one is the biggest in whole Tamil Nadu, with splendid wood carvings is quite majestic in appearance.\textsuperscript{37}

The Chitra Sabha situated on an elevated part of the temple contains a mirror with the image of Nataraja, the cosmic Dancer, in the midst of various gods of the Hindu Pantheon. The secret underlying it is the high philosophy: “The body is called the temple and the dweller in it is God”.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{35} Gopalakrishnan, M., \textit{op.cit.}, p.206.
\textsuperscript{36} Pillai, K.K., \textit{op.cit.}, 1953, p.13.
\textsuperscript{37} Sreedhara Menon, A., \textit{op.cit.}, p.157.
The temple may be considered one of the storehouses of the richest specimens of art in stone. The colossal monolithic image of Anjaneya with a height of eighteen feet, takes high rank among the huge images of Anjaneya found all over India. The attention of every visitor is attracted by the musical pillars cut out of a single block of granite stone, which produce sounds of different musical instruments when tapped. The gigantic image of Nandi made out of a paste of holy chanks, locally known as ‘Maakkalai’, can be considered the second biggest in India the first being the one at Lepakshi in Andra Pradesh.\(^\text{39}\)

In the temple there are some rare pieces of sculpture. The feminine form of Ganesa equipped with the face and trunk of an elephant, known as Ganesani, Jvaradevar, a rare form of Samharamurthi, Nilakanta Vinayaka with his consort on his lap, and the figure of Parthasarathi with three faces of Trimurthis, Vishnu, Siva and Brahma delivering the message of Getha are among them.\(^\text{40}\)

There are more than a hundred inscriptions of great archaeological importance in the temple. It is said that the earliest litchi record in the temple belongs to the 7\(^\text{th}\) century A.D. Records of the period of the mighty Chola Sovereign Paranthaka I (907 – 953 A.D.) and Raja Raja I (985 – 1013 A.D.) are found engraved on the walls of the temple. These inscriptions find a

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\(^{40}\) Pillai, K.K., *op.cit.*, 1953, p.17.
place in Epigraphic India and the date of the latter inscription has been calculated and verified by Dr. Kielhorn as Tuesday the 29th August, 1999 A.D.\textsuperscript{41}

The contribution of this temple to a typical cultural synthesis is patently original. The presiding deity Thanu (Siva) Mal (Vishnu) Ayan (Brahma) is the linga form, the top, the middle and the base of which are identified with the Trinity (in the above said order).\textsuperscript{42} Once again, there is a tradition that it is in this place that the trimurtis agreed to grant perpetual darshan to Anusuya when she won over them in course of testing her chastity. Again, Suchindram is the confluence of Sankara’s six cults for here, along with others, tradition presents and worships the presence of Surya as well, through that open space of about a decimeter square, over the Kaimukku Square, which permits Sun’s rays to pass inside.\textsuperscript{43}

The formless Supreme also can be seen accommodated in the Chitra Sabha. Even at the entrance, one can find the strange coexistence of Vedic gods and folk gods side by side – in Udayamarthanda Vinayagar, Theradi Madan and Teradi Boothathan.

Ten days festival conducted in the Tamil months of Chithirai, Avani and Margali. Thousands of people participate in the festival season. They have


\textsuperscript{42} Padmanabhan, S., \textit{op.cit.}, 1989, p.50.

\textsuperscript{43} Report from the Melpuram Panchayat Union Commissioner, dated 13, January 1989.
been sung in many folk songs.\footnote{Travancore archaeological Series, Vol.II, pp 125-126.} It has been a must for the newlyweds of the locality to attend the car festival. Worship on Mondays, particularly in the Tamil month of Karthigai, is considered very auspicious. The splendor and richness of the rituals of the temple can be gauged from the fact that in those palmy days, daily 7 bags of rice were cooked and offered to the deities.

The temple, the town and the people show a synthesis of Tamil and Malayalam features. Devotees will be allowed to enter the temple wearing only after removing dothi and shirt which was the yester years practice when Suchindram was under Travancore.\footnote{Dhina Thanthi, (Tamil Daily) \textit{Thagaval Kalagiyam}, Nagercoil, 5.3.2009, p. 14.}

There are two sets of priests – Kerala nambudiris and Tamil nambiars – performing the rituals in their allotted spheres. This dichotomy is seen reflected in the daily routine as well as in the festivals. The symmetrical formation of arrays of closely linked houses in all the four car streets resemble the Tamlian Temp town.\footnote{Personal Interview with Venkat Raman, S., Member of Devaswom Board, Nagercoil, aged, 41, dated 05-06-2009.}

2.3. Nagercoil Nagaraja Temple

The temple popularly known as ‘Nagaraja Temple’ is situated in the heart of the Nagercoil town. It is surrounded by paddy fields, flower gardens and coconut groves. The garden is famous for its Naga flower, a symbolic representation of
The temple with its garden is believed to be guarded by cobras and in that belief nobody steals the flowers or cocoanuts there from. Even though there are plenty of cobras inside the temple no fatal case of snake bite has ever occurred anywhere around the area. This peculiar feature is mentioned in the ‘Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics’, compiled by Dr. James Hastings, “Snake bite is not fatal within a mile of the temple”.48

Among the numerous shrines dedicated to the serpent deity, the temple at Nagercoil has a special significance. The very name Nagercoil is derived from the five headed serpent deity of Nagaraja temple.49 There are three Sreekovils dedicated to Nagaraja, Siva and Krishna. The Nagaraja Sreekovil consists of a Garbhagraham and tow front rooms. There is a Garudamandapam in front of the Sreekovil of Krishna with granite walls and floor and a terraced granite roof.50 There is a large mandapam in front of the three kovils. This serves as the Mukhamandapam. This is built in granite and terraced. There is a ‘Dwajasthambam’ in front of Ananthakrishnan. In between the shrines of Nagaraja and Ananthakrishnan is a ‘Linga’ decked with angi. 51

50 Dhinakaran (Tamil daily), Nagercoil, dated 90.2.1999, p.8.
The outstanding feature of the temple is that the Sanctum Sanctorum is surrounded by walls of mud and has over it a simple roof thatched with cocoanut leaves and bamboo sticks. The exact place where the image of the five headed serpent is enshrined is perpetually marshy.

The sand scooped out of this place is distributed to the devotees as prasadam. The sand prasadam has never diminished in quantity even after its use for many years. It is said that the sand is black for six months and white for the remaining months of the year.\(^{52}\)

It is believed that the worship of Nagaraja eradicates all ills, and it also produces beneficial results and brings about the fulfillment of one’s desires. Incurable diseases, especially chronic skin ailments, are cured by regular visits of the sacred shrine.

On Sunday’s lot of people worship the God here.\(^{54}\) On Sunday and especially the days of ‘Ayilya’ offering milk to Nagaraja is considered very sacred. Devotees throng here every day with their offerings of milk. Milk Abisheka on Sunday is considered to be most auspicious. Ayilya puja is a significant one.\(^{55}\) It is celebrated on Ayilya Star of every month. Ladies who come to visit the temple on that day

\(^{52}\) Padmanabhan, S., *op.cit.*, p.33.


pour milk on the idols of Nagaraja, which are kept under the banyan tree. Further, they offer salt, pepper and wooden articles as offerings to the deity.

2.4. Mondaikadu Bhagavathi Amman Temple

A southern village in Kalkulam Taluk, Mondaikadu is situated on the sea coast, north-east of Colachel port. It is connected with Nagercoil and Thiruvananthapuram by a motorable road. This place is famous for its temple dedicated to Bhagavathi Amman. Mondaikadu Bhagavathi Amman Temple is known as a ‘Sabarimala for Women’. The reputed Bhagavathi temple here is built in the traditional Kerala style of tiled roof and triangular gables. The deity is a mound and worship is offered to her. It is said that the deity grows daily. The sannathi facing north is also a peculiar feature. It dates back to the 7th century BC. The Amman is in the form of ‘anthill’ which is about 12 feet in height and with five heads and believed to be growing gradually.

The presiding deity in most of the temples in the territory between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, stretching from Gokarnam in the north to Cape Comorin in the southernmost tip is Goddess Bhagavathi—a manifestation of Sakthi, the origin of whose worship cannot be traced. Prominent among them are at

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60 Sadasivam, S., *Cheranadum Senthamilum (Tamil)*, Nagercoil, 1949, p.149.
Kodungallur (Cranganore), Chengannur, Chottanikkara, Mandaikad and Kanyakumari. Next to Sabarimala mandala pooja and Makara vilakku, the Mandaikad Kodai in the month of Kumbham (March) is held in high esteem by the Keralites. After 41 days of religious austerity thousands of pilgrims from distant corners of Kerala start on pilgrimage to Mandaikad on foot to witness the Kodai festival.

There is no authentic record as to when and how the deity was first installed. According to the local tradition the area surrounding the temple was once a jungle overgrown with grass and shrubs. The very name Mandaikad is derived from the Tamil word ‘Manthaikadu’, which denotes pastoral land. One day while a shepherd was cutting grass blood began to spurt from the earth. Dazed with fear the shepherd fled to the nearest village and flocked to the nearest village and reported what he had seen. People in large numbers flocked to the spot and witnessed the miracle in the field and worshipped it. Before long, the temple and the festivals have grown. Animal sacrifice formed an important part of the festivals, but this was abolished by Sri Chithrai Thirumal the Maharaja (1931-1949) of Travancore. The Goddess is considered to be a powerful deity and there is firm faith among the devotees that Bhagavathi is sympathetic to the sufferings of her devotees. It is also believed that worship of Bhagavathi at Mandaikad eradicates all ills. Incurable diseases like leprosy are cured by regular visits to this sacred shrine. On every

62 Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., p.95.
Tuesday a large number of pilgrims irrespective of religion assemble here for getting their desires fulfilled. Their offerings include pepper, salt, wooden effigies etc. Among the offerings to the deity a cake of rice flour and sugar known as ‘Mandai Appam’ is very important. The income of this temple is nearly five lakhs a year.

The administration of the temple is in the hands of the Kanyakumari Devaswon Board. The annual festival which lasts for ten days during the month of Kumbham (March) is celebrated by the Board and the Radhakrishnapuram Haindava Seva Sangh. This is one of the biggest festivals in the district of Kanyakumari. On the tenth day of the festival is the famous ‘Kodai’, which falls on the last Tuesday of the month. The ceremonies on Friday night locally called ‘Valia Padukkai’ and on Tuesday night known as ‘Odukku Pooja’ are very important.

The festival committee of the Temple arranges religious lectures and a variety of entertainments which are attended by people from different corners. Thus the temple becomes a center of religious propaganda and other allied activities during this days. Mandaikadu is 75 Kms from Thiruvananthapuram and 95 from Tirunelveli. There is facility in the temple for staying. Charge Rs. 25 and Rs. 50. Lodges are available in Nagercoil also, charges ranging from Rs. 150 to Rs. 400.

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Bus facilities are available to Nagercoil from almost all parts of Tamilnadu. Devotes can reach Mandaikadu by road. Nearest railway stations are Eranial and Nagercoil. Nearest airports are Thiruvananthapuram and Madurai. 69

2.5. Kumarakoil at Velimalai

It is at the foot of the Velimalai hill about 10.5 km. north-west of Nagercoil and 3 km east of Thuckalay. The temple is dedicated to Lord Muruga or Kumaran. It is built on the top of a hillock of about 200’ height. 70 Valli and Subramania are the presiding deities.

The name Velimalai is derived from Velvimalai which means the place where the love marriage of Lord Muruga with Valli took place. It is the same place which is called ‘Najilnattu Velvimalai’ by Tirukooda Rasappa Kavirayar in his Kuttalakuranvanji. 71 In continuation of this the poet further depicted the marriage scene of Lord Muruga by describing Sri Valli’s fear of elephants and the transformation of Muruga to a vengai tree. It is well known that there are numerous elephants in this hilly region.

The visitor can reach the temple at Velimalai ascending a flight of 38 steps. Veerabahu and Mahendra are standing on either side of the Mukhamandapa. Next to Veerabahu is the idol of Kalyana Vinayakar who played the role of an elephant in

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69 Mandaikadu Amman temple Booklet.
70 Personal Interview with Dr. Subramaniyam, History Professor, Thovalai, aged 42, dated 23.5.2009.
the love episode of his brother Muruga. The outstanding feature of the temple is that the presiding deity in varada hastha is about 8’88” in height with the idol of Valli of 6’2”.

As at Tirupparankunram where he stands with Deviyanai, Lord Muruga appears with Valli at Velimali. He presents himself as Elayavar and Manavidakumarar in the southwest and northwest corners of the first prakara. There is a separate sannathi for the Vengai tree which is the Sthalavriksha. This sacred spot is considered to be the place where Lord Muruga assumed the form of a Vengai tree in the course of his love episode.

There is a Kalyanamandapam and a small shrine of Valli on the slope of the hill, nearly two miles from the main temple. Near the mandapam are the places called Viallicholai, vattacholai and Kilavancholai which are all owned by the Devasthanam. There is also a place known as Thinaipunam near Velimalai. All these places are reminiscent of Valli Kalyanam, of the festivals connected with the temple ‘Tirukkalayanam’ held in the above mandapam on Panguni Uthiram, is considered to be the most important. The mock fight between Lord Muruga and the Kuravas is very interesting to witness. The particular place is locally called ‘Kuravarpadukalam’. The actual Kuravars from the hill side used to take part in the festival and a small amount (padithram) is paid to them by the Devasthanam for this purpose.

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73 Personal Interview with Mr. Sivathanu, visitor, Swamiarmadam, aged 37, dated 23.5.2009.
75 Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., p.77.
In Kanthapurana Lord Muruga ironically informed Valli, that he came to the hill to mingle with kanni, (ivvaraiyil kumara theethara aadura vanthanam) which denotes to unite with the virgin Valli and also to take a sacred bath in Kanyatheertham, where Kanni bagavthy is doing her eternal penance to obtain the hand of God Siva. It is very apt to locate the above hill as Velimalai which is only 20 miles north of Kanyakumari. It is also interesting to note that honey and the flour of Thinai form the important offerings to Lord Muruga at Velimalai.

According to the Hindu Religious Endowment Department, Sri Valli was born at Tirukurungudi and was brought up by Nambi, a leader of Kuravas. The place Valliyoor in the name of Valli, the village Mambithalaivanpattayam, and the river Mambiyar in the name of her father in the southern part of the Tirunelveli district, and the palces Kurathiyarai and Kuravanthattuvilai in the district of Kanyakumari are sufficient to prove that this area is closely associated with Valli. From all these details it can be surmised that the divine marriage of Lord Muruga with Valli took place at Velimalai in Nanjilnad and in every respect the sacred place can claim to be the fourth abode of Lord Muruga’s Arupadaiveedugal.

2.6. Bhoothapandi Bhoothalingaswamy Temple

Bhoothapandi is the headquarters of Thovalai taluk, which is one among the four taluks of Kanyakumari District. This panchayat town is known in different

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76 Hindu Religious Endowment Department, History of the temples in Tirunelveli district. p.217.
names as Boothapandi, Bhoothapandi, Bhoothapandy or Bhuthapondy in Kanyakumari district. The town spans an area of around five kms with Thittuvilai, Thuvarancaud, Arasankuzhi, Andithoppu, mannadi, saattupudoor as its sub-villages. The places situated in the vicinity of the town include Azhakiyapadiapuram to the northwest, Easanthimangalam to the southwest, and Thalakudi to the southeast and Aralvaimozhi to the east.

It has been named after the presence of Bhoothalingaswamy Temple (Bhoothapandi), which is famous for its sculptures and architecture. It is surrounded by greeneries. Boothapandi is a green and fertile area and commands a picturesque view of the Western Ghats. The village is only 25 minutes travel from Nagercoil and the beautiful mountains attract many tourists.

The Boothapandi is just seven kms from north east of Nagercoil. The charming village flourishes on the western bank of river Pazhaiyar. Situated at the foot of the hill known as Thadakaimalai which is considered to be the abode of thadakai in Ramayana, it forms a place of legendary importance. The Travancore State Manual gives the information that Bhoothapandi is an ancient place founded by one of the pandya sovereigns and vague traditions are preserved in the keralopatti and Kerala Mahamiyam wherein the Pandiya invasion of Kerala, is referred to in a mythical form. The Mahatmiyam says that the Pandyas invaded Kerala with an army

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78 Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., p.65.
79 Dhina Malar, Thahaval Kalangiyam, Bhoothapandi Bhoothalingaswamy Therotam, Nagercoil, 4-4-2009.
of Bhuthatans (spirits) and they were defeated by Parasurama, the warrior sage. The boundary of Kerala and Pandya kingdoms was fixed at Bhoothapandy as a compromise. A later interpretation brought to bear upon the Parasurama legend is that it is an allegoric representation of the advent of the Aryans into Kerala.  

This temple was constructed by the king Pasum Pon Pandyan who was the son of Bootha Pandiyan. King Bootha Pandiyan was ruled from AD25 to AD50 and then from AD50 to AD75 ruled Pasum Pon Pandyan, so we can consider that the temple was constructed by Pasum Pon Pandyan with his father’s name. Suampulingam Lord of sanctuary other name is called ‘Salian Kanda Thirumani’.  

In the AD17th century Saliar caste people lived in this town. A member of this community was worried that his cow was being milked by some unknown person. In the olden days Bhoothapandy was a little forest surrounded with bushes, trees, during that time a man he belongs to the caste of Saliyar, he was having four cows and used to send the cow to the forest daily morning for their food and drive them back to home at evening. Among the four cows one did not give milk to the man daily. (it didn't have milk too) The man doubted that some hiker drew his cow’s milk daily and so, he followed the cow on next day. He saw that the cow going near a long grass bush and it drew its milk automatically. He was shocked to see this, and cut down the grass suddenly he was shocked to see the cutter was full of blood. He

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81 Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., p.67.
was scared seeing that and called all people, and when they removed the bushes they saw the lord Siva Sculpture. The king built a temple and it became the Bhoothalingaswamy temple, the temple built inside rock.\textsuperscript{82}

This temple is with picturesque surroundings faces east and there is a tank with a small mandapa on the northern side. The presiding deity is called Bhoothalingaswamy. The sanctorum of the temple is crude cell excavated on the eastern face of a huge irregular mass of rock itself. The Linga is also carved in the same rock. There is no Vimana over this shrine.\textsuperscript{83} The Ardhamandapa and Mahamandapa were only later additions. The rock is grit round by a thick stonewall which gives it the appearance of a minor fort. On the right side of entrance to the sanctum is the image of Vinayak and the image of Nandi is in front of the Linga.\textsuperscript{84} On the right side of Nandi facing south is Nataraja with Sivakami ambal. Adithyan, Subramanian with Valli and Deyvanai, Sandikeswarar are other deities of the temple. Outside the prakaram, anyone will be allowed pooja to the Kasi Viswanathar and Ulagayanayagi. Besides this, Bhuthalingaswamy is a separate shrine dedicated to Sivakami Ambal for which there is, a small vimana above the shrine.\textsuperscript{85}

The front of Sivagami Ambal shrine is famous for its sculpture. The sculpture

\begin{itemize}
  \item This temple is a kudaivu kovil and created in the Suyambulingam Sculpture.
  \item http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhoothapandi\_Salian\_Kanda\_Thirumani.
  \item Personal Interview with Mr.R.Sunderlingam, local resident,Bhoothapandi, aged 70, dated 12.6.2008.
  \item http://www.medbib.com.
\end{itemize}
of Manmathan and Rathi attract the viewers. We can see the chain made by stone. The Ramayana says Rama killed Vaali from behind. The sculptor explains this stage superbly, if we stand in front of the sculpture of Rama we can see Vaali’s image, but if we stand in front of Vaali’s image we cannot see Rama’s image. The most beautiful piece of art in the temple lays in the wooden kalyanamedai the mandapa. It has been made so skillfully that the joints are invisible. The medai contains numerous multi-colored images. A Srichakram is engraved on the panel of pillar in the Kalyanamandapa. There is no inner prakara for both the shrines. On the southwest corner of the common prakara of the shrines is Vinayaga who is locally called “Ninaithathai Mudikkum Vinayakar”.  

The place is renowned for its Car Festival during the Tamil month of ‘Thai’ (January-February). The Car (‘Thiruther’ in Tamil) is the heaviest in Kanyakumari District whereas the biggest is the one at Suchindram.

2.7. Kollemcode Sree Bhadrakali Temple

Sree Bhadrakali Temple is located at Kollemcode village which belongs to Kanyakumari District in Tamil Nadu. The village is beside the border area of Kerala. There are two temples for Sree Bhadrakali. One is at Kollemcode and the other one at Venkanji. There are two deities (considered as sisters) — elder sister Bhadra and the younger Rudhra. Bhadra and Rudhra are worshipped at the same

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86 Padmanabhan, S., op.cit., p.68.
87 Personal Interview with Mr. M. Srinevas, Koilpozari, Bhoothapandi, aged 59, dated 12.6.2008.
temple. ‘Bharani’ is the birthday of Sree Bhadrakali. Every year Bharani day is
celebrated in grand manner. On the Bharani Day in the Meenam month (March or
April) of every year ‘Thookkam’ Festival is celebrated. Lakhs of people from all
over India participates in the function.\(^{89}\) The temple is under the control of Sree
Bhadra Kali Devaswom Trust which consists of eleven elected members of eleven
Nair families.

The temple has an extensive history. Travancore province was famous as
various synonyms such as Sreevazhumkode, Vanchibhoomi, Venadu Dharmarajyam
etc. This province was once ruled by Chola Kings, Kings of Shree Padmanabha
Kulashekhara. Kollemcode is a beautiful village located at the seashore in
Vilavancode Taluk of southern Travancore. Kollemcode include among the
provinces of Venkanji, Anukode, Panavila etc which are literally the gift of nature
and famous for their lush green area and natural sceneries.\(^{90}\)

Kollemcode is a feast for eyes with its treasure of green paddy fields, lotus
ponds and a variety of trees, which will take a visitor to the lap of the nature. The
Kollemcode Sree Bhadrakali Devi Temple is a jewel to this natural province.\(^{91}\) Once
praised as the beauty spot of Travancore, Kollemcode Temple now belongs to
Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu.


\(^{91}\) Padmanabhan, S., *op.cit.*, p.72.
Kollemcode temple wakes up with the ‘Omkara’ chanted by Arabian Sea and the Thathwamasi messages emerging from the heart of the universe. Though Shree Bhadrakali Devi is believed to be appeared here as dual form of Shakti viz. Bhadra and Kali, the devotees get the blessings from the unified form of Mother Durga. These Goddess' reside in semi-circular ‘Mudis’, which are decorated with Snake-Hood structures carved from jack tree wood.

Kollemcode is the one and only place of its kind considering the fact that two temples for a single deity in the same province that too in a place which is renowned for its natural beauty. The ‘Moola Kshethram’ (Parent Temple) ‘Shree Vattavila Bhadrakali Mudippura’ is located not too far from the greenish paddy fields of Kollemcode province.

This temple is believed to have Omni presence of Goddess and daily worship is being conducted here. Besides this, there is another ‘Mudippura’ at Venkanji province where festivals are celebrated. The famous ‘Thookka Mahotsavam’ is celebrated in ‘Meenabharani’ which is the birth date of the Goddess is celebrated at Venkanji Temple.

Thookkam is an offering given by the devotees to Sree Bhadrakali. Wedded couples offer thookkam for their children who are one year old or below. They offer

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92 The artificial statue of Goddess.
thookkam for Sree Bhadrakali when children were born without any major health issues by her grace.⁹⁶

2.8. Darisanamcope Raghaveshwara Temple

The Temple of Raghaveshwara is located in Darisanamcope near Bhuthapandi, the head quarters of Thovalai Taluk in Kanyakumari district. It is nearly eight miles north-east of Nagercoil. The name Darisanamcope is derived from the words ‘Thiru Saram and Corpu’, the place where the arrow of Sri Ram pierced the body of Thadakai.⁹⁷ The village with a reputed shrine dedicated to Shiva locally known as Raghaveswara. It is on the western banks of river Pazhaiyar. The temple is situated in picturesque country side surrounded by paddy fields, cocoanot groves and green hills.⁹⁸

At the request of Viswamitra, King Dasaratha sent his son Sri Rama and Lakshmana to destroy Thadakai and her sons, who were interfering in his sacrificial performances. According to local tradition, Thadakai was killed at this place and there are remnants of a Homakunda and the foot prints of Rama near the place. The red stained rock known as ‘Thadakaimalai’ on the southeastern of the village resembles the body of a gigantic woman with matted locks. It is believed that the temple was consecrated by Sri Rama himself to get redemption from the sin of

⁹⁵ Rajesh kumar, S., Suresh kumar, S.S. Prince, V., op. cit., p.7
⁹⁶ Program list of Kollemcode Sree Bhadrakali Temple, 31.3.2007.
⁹⁸ Personal Interview with Mr. S. Murugan, Local resident, Darisanamcope, aged 49, dated 12.6.2008.
Sthrihatya (slaying of a woman). Hence Shiva, the presiding deity of this temple came to be known as Raghaveswarar. A view was put forth that Viswamitra conducted the sacrificial performance at Viswpathi (Vijayapathi) in Tirunelveli District where he consecrated a temple of Mahalinga. The only shrinae dedicated to Viswamitra and the Homakunda at this place are cited as evidence.\(^9^9\)

The temple at Darisanamcope faces east and has two shrines, one dedicated to Sri Raghaveswara and the other to his consort Ulaganayaki. There are shrines of Vinayaka and Subramanya with his consorts in the south-west and north-west corners of the inner prakara. The central shrine is erected on a platform and is of granite up to its top. The exterior portion of the central shrine contains the image of Dakshinamoorthy.\(^1^0^0\)

2.9. Parthivapuram Arulmigu Parthasarathy Temple

Parthivapuram was under the control of Arudesam village.\(^1^0^1\) Arudesam village is situated in the southern side of Vilavancode Taluk of Kanyakumari District surrounded by Killiyoor village in the east, Kulapuram village in the north, Kollencode village in the west, Ezhudesam village in the south-west and Panikulam village in the south.\(^1^0^2\)

\(^9^9\) Travancore Archaeological Series Vol-1, p.238.
\(^1^0^0\) Inscription of Madras and Presidency- Vol-III, Nos, 41 and 42, p.1700.
\(^1^0^1\) Padmanabhan, S., *op.cit.* 149.
\(^1^0^2\) *Ibid.*
The area of Parthivapuram is about 15 sq. kms. Parthivapuram Arulmigu Parthasarathy Temple is located on the western side of Marthandam – Thengappattanam highway. This temple conducted Mahakumbabishekam before 1200 years.

In this temple Parthasarathy is kept in a standing position. He has 4 arms. He holds three things in his three hands while the fourth one blesses the people. In addition to Parthasarathy temple, eight other temples are also constructed there in the main temple. The other temples are Arulmigu Ganapathy temple, Arulmigu Vadakkum Perumal temple, Arulmigu Karakandeshwar temple, Arulmigu Mahadevar temple, Arulmigu Ambadi Kanna temple, Arulmigu Sastha temple, Arulmigu Nagar temple and Arulmigu Durga Devi temple have their own significance and popularity.

Two Huzur Copper plates of Kokkarunandakkar are found in the temple, i.e., Copper plate – side a: The business shall be done without obstruction. Those that serve in the adutum (aganligai) shall bath in the Bhatarar thirty six pots of water, at the rate of twelve each time. Copper plate – side b: In the matter of the festival,

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103 Huzur Copper Plates of kukkarunandadakkar.
104 Thiruvidaikkodu Inscription.
105 Inscriptions found in the Government Museum at Padmanabhapuram Palace.
having celebrated the same for seven days, shall be bathed on the Vijayam of Pangum.\footnote{Padmanabhan, S., \textit{op.cit.}, p.150.}

Many inscriptions are engraved on a small rock in south Prakaram of the Siva temple at Thiruvidainkkodu. The alphabet employed is vatteluttu of the archaic type and the language is Tamil.\footnote{Inscription found in the temple of Adhi Kesava Perumal (Balippeda cover).} Other inscription is found on the same rock as first and is written in the same kind of vatteluttu alphabet as the other. The language of the record is also Tamil.\footnote{Dhinamalar, \textit{Thahaval Kalangiyam}, Nagercoil, 13.4.2009, p.16.}

Parthivapuram Parthasarathy Temple is a lighthouse shedding its luster of spirituality in this region. It is one of the popular temples in Kanyakumari District.\footnote{Thiruvattar is a small town situated in Kalkulam taluk in Kanyakumari District. It is a hilly region. The river Parliyar encircles the place. The old Tamil anthology says that the famous Vishnuite shrine of Sri Adikesava Perumal Temple at Thiruvattar is about 18 miles from Nagercoil and 28 miles from Thiruvananthapuram. The place Thiruvattar was originally known as ‘Adi

2.10. Thiruvattar Sri Adikesava Perumal Temple

Thiruvattar is a small town situated in Kalkulam taluk in Kanyakumari District. It is a hilly region. The river Parliyar encircles the place. The old Tamil anthology says that the famous Vishnuite shrine of Sri Adikesava Perumal Temple at Thiruvattar is about 18 miles from Nagercoil and 28 miles from Thiruvananthapuram. The place Thiruvattar was originally known as ‘Adi
Ananthapuram’ in the ancient city of Ananta. It later became Thiruvattar. ‘Vattar’ means the curved river as it flows encircling the temple. It got its prefix ‘Thiru’ because it is a holy place.\(^\text{112}\)

Sree Adikesava Perumal temple is one of the most ancient Vaishnukite temple of south India. This sacred temple is also known as Adi-Dharma-Stalam and Dakshna Vaikundam.\(^\text{113}\) It consists of a Garbhagraham, having 3 door-ways and an Ottakkal mandapam in front. It is built in granite and provided with a copper sheeted roof. The great antiquity of this place has been described by the Tamil poet Malkudi Kilar in a verse of Purananuru. Nammalvar has sung few poems in praise of Adikesava Perumal temple. We do not know the early temple.\(^\text{114}\) But it is mentioned in the ancient works, inscriptions of other copper coins, etc. on the base of belikkal plate from an inscription relating to king Rajendra Chola I (of Chola dynasty 1013 – 1045 AD) appears. This is the earliest inscription here and it describes the deity as the Thiruvattar God.\(^\text{115}\) The Thiruvattar temple possess 22 inscriptions in Tamil Vatteluthu and Sanskrit Nagari script relating to Chola and Chera royalty.\(^\text{116}\)

In 1741, Marthanda Varma Rajah of Venad made offerings to this temple and

\(^\text{116}\) Pillai, K.K., *op.cit.*, p.78.
worshipped her before going direct to the famous Battle of Colachel in which he vanquished the Dutch.\textsuperscript{117} At Thiruvattar, Lord Kesava appears as Adhikesava reclining on the serpent king Adisesha. A full view of the long image can be had only through the 3 doors of Sree Kovil.\textsuperscript{118}

Adhikesava temple is one of the ancient Vishnu temples of Kanyakumari District. Everyday many people are visiting the temple. It is a centre of cultural contact between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. People belonging to different cast and religion lives in the locality. The temple stands as an ancient monument that creates a sense of devotion among the devotees.

\textbf{2.11. The Agsteeswaramudaya Mahadeva Temple}

Agasteeswaram is a village situated at 17 kilometers distance from Nagercoil and very near to Kanyakumari. The Agasteeswammudaya Mahadeva Temple is one of the holistic Siva temples in Travancore. The temple was built during the reign of the Pandyas. It contains sanctum, andaralam, ardhamandapa and mahamandapa. The epigraphical evidence clearly shows the donations endowed to the temples by the Pandya kings, especially Jatavarman Srivallabha. One of the inscriptions dated 1123 AD, mentions that the Pandya king Jadavarman Srivallabha donated 107½ madai to the temple for various purposes.\textsuperscript{119}


\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Ibid.}, p.24.

\textsuperscript{119} Personal Interview with Mr.Krishna Swamy, M., Member of the Temple aged 51, dated 25.06.2009.
2.12. Chola Rajakoil at Vadassery

The Siva temple popularly known as Chola Rajakoil is situated at Vadassery. The temple faces east and consists of a shrine, ardhamandapa and mugamandapa surrounded by a prakara wall. The shrine of the goddess locally known as Kolvarkulaiswari lies on the northern side of the main shrine. The main shrine is entirely built of granite from top to bottom and it typically portrays the Chola style of architecture. The temple is closely connected with the history of the Chola kings. During the reign of Rajendra Chola, the temple might have been built in the Chola artistic style. From this temple, we come to know the architect of Chola kings.

2.13. Swamithoppu Vaikundaswami Pathi Temple

Swamithoppe Vaikundaswami Pathi is the primary pathi of the Ayyavazhi, the head of all worship centers of Ayyavazhi. Swamithoppe Pathi is located in the town of Swamithope, which lies south-east of the Nagercoil town. Swamithope lies about half-way between the towns of Nagercoil and Kanniyakumari on the Eathancaud-Manakkudi road. This Pathi lies northern most to all other Pathis within Pancha pathi. Swamithoppe Vaikundaswami Pathi is known as Swamithoppu-pathi, Manavai-pathi, Thamarai-pathi or Thulaimaippathi (Thulaimai (chief) + pathi). Here, Ayya Vaikundar performed the ‘Tavam’. Religiously,

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120 Dhinamalar, Thahaval Kalangiyam, Nagercoil, 13.4.2009, p.27.
121 Ibid.
122 Personal Interview with Mr.R. Asokan, President of Hindu Munnani, aged 45, dated 02.03.2011.
Swamithope is considered primary among the Pancha pathi and is the important place where most of the incarnational activities of Vaikundar took place.

According to Akilattirattu Ammanai (or Akilam), a scripture of the Ayyavazhi, was a Manu (father, sovereign) Avatar of Narayana, incarnated as Muthukutty or Mudisoodum Perumal, a Nadar of Swamithoppe, Tamil Nadu (1810 - 1851 A.D).\(^{124}\) He is referred to as Sampooranathevan, a deva (a deity).\(^{125}\) The exact date of birth of Mudisoodum Perumal is unknown.\(^{126}\) It is mostly placed in either 1809 or 1810, while others follow the view of Akilam.\(^{127}\)

In 1809, Muthukutty was born in the southernmost tip of south India, in a holy place named Swamithoppe (then part of a Tamarai kulam village) in the Kanyakumari District. His parents, Ponnu Nadar and Veiyelal, of the lower caste and of very poor means, initially named him Mudisoodum Perumal, meaning ‘Lord Vishnu with a crown’, but due to objections from those of higher caste, the family changed his name to Muthukutty.\(^{128}\)

The religious book, Akilam, states that the child was born dead, and then the soul of the deva Sampooranathevan was installed in the body. The family realized only stillness in the child, for a time immediately after the birth, and then found the

\(^{124}\) Akilathirattu Ammanai, Akilam nine, verse 431-438.
\(^{125}\) Vivekananthan, N., Akilathirattu Ammanai, Moolamum Uraiyum Pakam Ontu, p.414.
\(^{126}\) Chellam, V.T., Thanizaka Varalarum Panpadum, Page 493.
\(^{128}\) Sarveswaran, P., Sri Vaikunda Swamikal- an obscure social reformer of Kerala, Page-3.
child alright. They were completely unaware of the exchange. This was in accord
with the plan of Mayon to defeat the evil Kroni (analogous to Satan) during the sixth
yuga.\textsuperscript{129} Thereafter, that boy grew up called Muthukutty in human history, and
Sampoornathevan in Ayyavazhi mythology.

Muthukutty (Sampoornathevan), a religious minded boy, had special interest
in choosing to worship Lord Vishnu.\textsuperscript{130} The holy book Akilam mentions that he had
set a pedestal for Lord Vishnu in his house and worshipped the deity devoutly. At
the age of seventeen, Muthukutty married Thirumalammal\textsuperscript{131} from the nearby
village of Puviyur, and led a family life with her and their only son. Although
Thirumalammal had been previously married, she was allowed to leave her former
husband since her karma with him was fulfilled.

In his twenty-fourth year, Muthukutty (Sampoornathevan) was struck by a
severe illness that inflicted acute pain and suffering for a year. Muthukutty's mother,
receiving instruction in her dreams, took her diseased son to the temple at
Thiruchendur, during the ‘Fall festival’\textsuperscript{132} 1833 AD. Muthukutty arrived in
Thiruchendur in a cradle, carried by the kith and kin of the family.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{129} Akilattirattu Ammanai Published by T. Palramachandran Nadar, Star Press: Suchindram, 9\textsuperscript{th}
\item \textsuperscript{130} Patrick, G., \textit{Religion and Subalter Agency}, p.79.
\item \textsuperscript{131} She is called Paradevathai in the holy book, Akilam.
\item \textsuperscript{132} 19th day of the month of Masi, in the year 1008 of Malayalam era.
\end{itemize}
In Thiruchendur, Muthukutty went in to the sea and disappeared. Following a full day of waiting for him at the shore, all, but his mother, Veilal, returned to Tamaarkulam, but Veilal alone stayed weeping on the sea-shore. On the third day, Lord Vaikundar appeared on the sea-shore. On seeing him, Veiyelal mistook him to be her son and tried to embrace him. But Lord Vaikundar told her that he was no longer her son, but the son of Narayana. He also told that "Look upon the face of the water of the sea, where I've born" and he told that "Before 1008, Masi you were known as my mother, but now I was born as the son of Narayan and for the dawn of Dharma Yukam I am going to the world with the Vinchais given by Narayana." By saying this he take some sea water (Katal Patham) in his hand, he asked her to drink. Upon her refusal, she fell down and died.

Then as per the instructions of Lord Narayana, inside the sea, he started walking towards Detchanam. The place where Ayya Vaikundar performed the Avataram was a holy place for the devotees of Ayyavazhi and they erected a temple there named Avatharappathi at Thiruchendur.

Ayya Vaikundar, who arose from the sea at Thiruchendur on 20th of the Tamil month of Masi, is considered a unique Avatar. Then in the sea (during the

135 Thechanathu Thuvarakapathi Akilathirattu Akakorvai published by Thechanathu Thuvarakapathi, p.37.
24th year), the soul of Sampooranathevan was granted ‘moksha’ 138, unified to the ultimate soul. Now, the spirit of Narayana along with the Ultimate Soul (Paramatma) incarnated in the body of a human being (Muthukutty). This is the third stage of Avatar and from here he was called Ayya Vaikundar. Then Ayya Vaikundar was given Vinchai by Narayanar.139

So Ayya Vaikundar is not merely a human, not merely Narayana, and not merely the Ultimate Soul, on the other hand he is a human and he is the ultimate soul and he is Narayana. He is the one who had the responsibility to destroy the sixth fragment of Kroni, as told by Sivan earlier. Such a technique was practiced to overcome the boons offered to Kaliyan.140

Having reached Poovantanthoppe, (present-day Swamithope), he undertook to perform the proclaimed tavam. The tavam consisted of three stages, each spanning two years. ‘Akilattirattu’140A says that there were three specific intentions for the respective three stages of the Tavam. There is a tradition that describes his postures during the six-year tavam as follows: during the first two years, he stood

138 It means liberation from the cycle of death and birth, synonymous with heaven.
139 Patrick, G., op.cit, p.81.
140 Ari Sundara Mani, A., Akilathirattu Ammanai Parayana Urai, pp.3-5.
140A It is the main religious text of the Tamil belief system Ayyavazhi. The title is often abbreviated to Akilam or Akilathirattu. Akilam including more than 15000 verses, is the largest Ammanai literature in Tamil and one among the largest works in Tamil which are contributed by a single author.
inside a pit of six depths, during the next two years, squatted on the ground, and, during last two years, sat on a raised platform. His appearance was squalid, "long and entangled plait of hair" and frayed clothes.\textsuperscript{141} He seems have spoken less and subsisted on frugal meals. Akilattirattu speaks of this act of incinerating the evil spirits as an important event in the incarnation of Ayya Vaikundar.

Later Vaikundar was invited by his 'devotees' to their homes and treated in a grand manner. By way of soliciting his blessings, his 'devotees' carried him to different places. During these occasions, he laid foundations in various places for small shrine-like centres; called as ‘Nizhal Thangals’.\textsuperscript{142} Vaikundar came to recognize five individuals as his closest disciples. Through one of his disciples, Hari Gopalan Citar, he wrote the holy book, called ‘Akilam’.

On June 3, 1851, Vaikundar attained Vaikundam.\textsuperscript{143} As he attained Vaikundam his body was interned in a tomb and, around that, a pati (temple) was raised later on. His devotees continued to visit this site, and performed the rituals as they used to do when Vaikundar was alive. His life and works remain the foundation of the religion Ayyavazhi. The head temple of the Ayyavazhi religion is called the Swamithoppepathi and is located in the village of Swamithope.\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{142} Ponnu, R., \textit{Vaikundacuvamikal Valvum Valikattalum}, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{143} Akilattirattu Ammanai published by T. Palaramachandran Nadar, 9th impression, 1989 p.255.
\textsuperscript{144} Samuel Mateer's, \textit{The Land of Charity}, 1985, p.222.
According to Akilattirattu Ammanai, Swamithoppe is the only place Narayana (Vaikundar) slept (in Tamil: Pallikolluthal) after the incarnation. Then he sent 700 families to Thuvayal Thavasu to Vakaippathi and organised festivals and celebrations. And after all the Avathara Ekanais he attained Vaikundam and his physical body was interred in the place which is now the Palliyarai of Swamithoppe.\textsuperscript{145}

The Palliyarai contains two oil lamps (\textit{kuthuvilakku}, an \textit{elunetru},) and a large mirror. On a raised pedestal, covered with kavi cloth, the temple also preserves some articles believed to have been used by Ayya Vaikuntar, including a rattan cane (perampu) and a pair of wooden sandals. The Palliyarai is surrounded by inner corridors.\textsuperscript{146}

There is a fifty-five feet tall Flagmast at a distance of 50 feet from Palliyarai. And in north of flagmast there is an \textit{Unpanpurai}. Here, they used to cook the food and distribute it to the devotees. There is a common well some 300 meters from the main Pathi. Akilattirattu Ammanai states that all the eighteen castes take baths from that well. It was considered sacred to bathe in and to drink the water from that well. Then there found a Paal Kinaru, in the extreme east, Vatakku Vasal in the north and Sivaye Medai, which is also called ‘Karuda medai’ in the west of Palliyarai. Then all these were surrounded by outer corridors. There is a bell tower above the spot where Vaikundar performed the Tavam.

\textsuperscript{145} Frederic Wilkinson, Report of the Nagercoil Mission District for the year 1864, 1864, p.4.

\textsuperscript{146} Poulose, \textit{Advaita Philosophy of Brahmarsi Chattampi Swamikal}, p.24.
There are two yearly festivals for Ayyavazhi.147 The Ayya Vaikunda Avataram is celebrated on the 28th day of the Tamil month Masi (March – April). This is the only Ayyavazhi festival to be celebrated as per the Solar calendar.148 The Thiru Edu-Vasippu is a festival of seventeen days celebrated in the Tamil month of Karthigai (November–December).149 This celebration of textual reciting as a festival itself is a unique feature to Ayyavazhi.


There are many wonders that the name has rendered for Kanyakumari District. Each of them is unique and they have a permanent history. One of the wonders in Keralapuram Vinayagar Statue, Keralapuram Mahadevar Temple is situated near Thukalay just one kilometer away from the Nagercoil-Thiruvananthapuram national highway.

It is believed that this temple has been built in 12th century by the King of Kerala, Keralavarman.150 Here Mahadevar is called as Samyana Moorthy. The Nataraj-Sivakami, Sivan, Umai, standing position of Vinayagar, Kangalanathar,
Subramaniar, Sasther, Manikavasagar statues are also found here. All the status are made up of the five mixed metals.  

Under the papal tree in the temple, there is a Vinayagar statue. The special feature of this statue is that it is made of black granite. This statue remains black from middle of August to middle of February and remains white from middle of February and middle of August. It makes a wonder among the people. Many pious Hindus and tourists used to visit here to see this wonder. In this temple yearly once in between February to March, festival takes place.

2.15. Valvachagostam Temple

It is located about 2 km from Kattathurai on the Nagercoil – Thiruvananthapuram road. It is believed that Parasurama, who had killed his mother Renuka to satisfy the wishes of his father, wanted his sin to be forgiven. So, on the advice of Brahmins he went to Himalayas. He left his sword in his village (Val = sword, Vacha = keeping, Gostam = temple). There the Chera King is said to have constructed a big temple at this place and dedicated it to the Goddess Bhagavathi. The annual festival is held in Vaikasi (May-June).

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151 Ibid.

152 Personal interview with Raghuvarn, R., Visitor, aged 35, dated 23.5.2009.

2.16. Kanyakumari Guganathaswamy Temple

This is a 1000 years old temple. King Raja Raja Chola built this temple. The architectural style of the Cholas is quiet apparent in this temple. It is located near Railway Station. There are 16 inscriptions found in this temple that date back to the years 1038 A.D., 1044 A.D., 1045 A.D as well.\textsuperscript{154}

2.17. Twelve Scared Siva Temples in South Travancore

The shrine at Thirumala, Thikkurichi, Thirpparappu, Thirunandhikkarai, Ponmana, Pannipagam, Kalkulam, Melankodu, Thiruvidaikkodu, Thiruvithancode, Thiruppanikodu and Thirunattalam are considered to be the twelve sacred Siva temples in South Travancore.\textsuperscript{155}

The Holy Marathan for the temples starts from Lord Mahadevar temple at Munchirai. This temple is famous and reputed in history. This temple was famous even during the Stone Age and the time of Ramayana and Mahabharatha. The stone carvings available in the temple are as old as eleventh century AD, i.e., during the reign of Rajendra Chola I. According to this ancient carving, the deity is called as ‘Munchirai Thevar.’\textsuperscript{156}

The Thikkurichi temple is on the banks of the river Thamiraparani and it is the second temple for Lord Siva. The location surrounded by hill and hilly areas are

\textsuperscript{154} Kanyakumari Tourism Booklet, Department of Tamil Nadu Tourism, 2004.

\textsuperscript{155} Report on Twelve Sivalayas (Unpublished handwritten Manuscript) p.2.

\textsuperscript{156} Padmanabhan, S., \textit{Sivalaya Ottam (Tamil)}, Nagercoil, 2005, p. 23.
names as ‘Kurinchi’ in Tamil. Here we have Mahadevar temple with the shrines of Vinayaga and Naga.\textsuperscript{157}

Thirparappu is the third temple for the Sivalaya Ottam. In Sanskrit this place was called Sreevisalapuram and later named as Thirupparappu in Tamil and it became Thirupparappu. As the name suggests, this place is a dwelling place for the goddess Laxmi. Adisankara was staying in the temple and we have his statue carved in one of the pillars.\textsuperscript{158}

This temple for Lord Siva faces the west. The Nandhi, in this temple faces the north. On the outside of the temple there are statues of Lord Krishna with ghee and Lord Murugan with vel. Archeologists say that this temple belongs to the first century AD on the articles and carvings available in the temple. During the 13\textsuperscript{th} century AD, this temple was famous and pilgrims flocked here all over the country. King Sree Visakham Thirunal used to visit this temple and offer prayers from 1890 to 1895 A.D. According to a Sankrit carving, the god was safe-guarding the whole Thirupparappu with his abundant blessings.\textsuperscript{159}

On the bank of the River Nanthi aaru stands the temple of the Siva, which is the fourth temple of the Sivalayam. The conical vimanam of the temple reflects the

\textsuperscript{157} Kanyakumari Inscriptions, Vol., II, Archeological Department, Chennai, 1972.
\textsuperscript{158} Padmanabhan, S., \textit{op.cit.}, 2005, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{159} Report on Twelve Sivalayas (Unpublished handwritten Manuscript), p.4.
Kerala art and architecture. There is also a temple of Vishnu facing Sivalayam, there stands a rock cut cave temple and this one is an ancient one, and probably, upto the 9\textsuperscript{th} century AD, it belongs to the Jains. In the 10\textsuperscript{th} century AD, during the reign of Raja Raja Chola, they kept a Sivalingam there. As ascetic named Veeranandi came from Thirunarunkodai Melappalli and stayed there and preached Jainism. This took place in the 8\textsuperscript{th} century AD, and carved this a rock cut cave temple. That is why the river is called Nandhi aaru and the place of the temple is Thirunandhikkarai. Now this temple is under the care of Archeological Survey of India.\footnote{160} After Thirunandhikka, we have the temple of Ponmanai situated between Pechipparai Dam and the Pandian Dam. The influence of Pandia reign is explicit in this temple.

The Siva temple at Pannipagam is situated amidst paddy fields and hills. King Marthanda Verma made Kalkulam as the capital of his kingdom and renamed it as Padmanabapuram, which contain several temples including the famous temple of Ramawamy. The seventh temple dedicated to Lord Neelakanda, is constructed after the style of temples in Tamil Nadu. According to the stone carving, the main deity is known as Kalkulam Mahadevar. In the Ramaswamy temple, here the story of Ramayana is sculptured 145 panels.\footnote{161}

\footnote{160} Daily Thanti, Tamil daily, Nagercoil edition, 27.2.2011, p.20.  
\footnote{161} Report on Twelve Sivalayas, pp.5-6.
The Siva temple at Melancode is 8th temple in order. Adjacent to this temple is the Melancode Esakkiamman temple. Again beside this temple is the Velimalai Kumaracoil. According to traditions, this is one of the six abodes mentioned by Nakkeerar.\footnote{Padmanabhan, S., \textit{op.cit.}, 2005, p. 26.}

The temple at Thiruvidaicode faces the east. The most ancient stone carving available in the temple belongs to 869 A.D. This was carved during the reign of king Kokkaruna Tradakkant.\footnote{Ibid.} There is yet another carving by the same king in 877 A.D. These two carving is round letters deal with the donations made to this temple. These carvings are in rock outside the temple.

The temple at Thiruvithancode is spread in 3 acres of land. Here Lord Vishnu stands at the left side of the main deity. It is the most ancient temple. Travancore Kingdom was formed after the name Thiruvithancode in the 13th century AD.\footnote{Pillai, K. K., \textit{Tamilaka Varalarum Makkal Panpadum (Tamil)}, Madras, 1985, p.72.}

In the 17th century AD, one Mugilan conquered this place and stole the valuable from the Mahadevar temple at Thiruppanticode. Near Thiruvattar, wasps attacked him and killed him. This temple is constructed after the fashion of Kerala architecture with a two storied plane.\footnote{Report on Twelve Sivalayas, p.9.} Thirunattalam is the last one dedicated to
Lord Siva in Kanyakumari District. This temple stresses the philosophy that Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu are one and the same. Some of the devotees after running to all the twelve temples in Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks, go to Suchindram to worship Lord Thanumalaya in Agasteeswaram taluk.165

2.18. Kanimadam Yogi Ramsuratkumar Manthralayam

Yogi Ramsuratkumar Manthralayam is situated at Kanimadam. It is a small village on the seashore. It has 7km from Kanyakumari where the three oceans meet. Bhagwan Himself went through the plan of construction of the Manthralayam and permitted the devotees to proceed with the work.166 The Manthralayam in the form of thatched shed was opened on 2nd January 1989 by Sri Lee Lozowick an ardent devotee of Bhagwan. The foundation stone was laid on 15th April 1990 with the blessings of Poojya Swami Sachidananda of Anandashram, Kanhangad. The construction was completed and the Kumbabishakam was celebrated on 9th September 1993 in the presence of Poojya Swami Sachidananda.167

Devotees come from far and wide to have darshan of the six feet tall Bhagwan's statue in the temple. Besides, Bhagwan's Padhugai in silver, and an Utsava Moorthy in Panchaloka is kept in the pooja inside the temple. The devotees can sit and meditate peacefully in the Dhyanmandir.

166 Personal interview with Sri T.Ponkamaraj, Yogi Ramsuratkumar Manthralayam Trust, Kanimadam, 24-10-2010.
167 Stone Inscription at Kanimadam Mandralayam.
The routine activities of this temple are Abishakam in the morning, 5 times Pooja and Prayer in the evening. On the festival days, Full moon day and on New moon day Akandanamajabam will be chanted. Bhagwan's Jayanthi day will be celebrated in a grand scale on 1st December of every year. The celebration will last for four days from 28th November to 1st December of every year. Annadhanam will be provided in all these festive days.\(^{168}\)

2.19. Thirunanthikkarai Cave Temple

In Kanyakumari district various religious groups such as the Jains, the Saivities and the Vishnuites came and established their religion.\(^{169}\) Before the 6\(^{th}\) century BC, the Jains established the religious centres at various parts of South India. Kanyakumari District is one among those Jain centers. The most important rock-cut cave temples are the Rock-cut Cave temple at Thirunanthikkarai, Chitharal and Kuranthiyarai.

The Thirunanthikkarai Cave Temple is situated on the north-western part of Kanyakumari District. Thirunanthikkarai is situated 17 kms from Marthandam. Upto 9\(^{th}\) century A.D, it remained a Jain centre.\(^{170}\) After 9\(^{th}\) century A.D, Raja Raja Chola converted it into a Siva temple and from that time onwards the Sivites occupied the temple.\(^{171}\)

\(^{168}\) Personal interview with Sri T.Ponkamaraj, Yogi Ramsuratkumar Manthralayam Trust, Kanimadam, 24-10-2010.


\(^{171}\) Ibid., Vol. III, Part II, p.204.
The rock-cut cave temple at Thirunanthikkarai is on the southern slope of the hill which lies east-west. It consists of a verandah with supporting pillars, one small chamber and a rectangular hall in front of the sanctum sanatorium. The Jains had rock cut cave temples for worship because they believed that in such places, the devotees will feel the presence of God.

The Travancore Archeological Department has officially recorded eleven inscriptions found at Thirunanthikkarai. The earliest of all records is an inscription belonging to the 19th century AD. The line ‘Thirunanthikkarai Bhadarakudutha Bhoomi’ which means that the land assigned to the temple at Thirunanthikkarai was donated by the Bhadarar is clear evidence that the land on which the structural temple of Siva stands was obtained from the Jain monks.¹⁷²

The inscription in the rock-cut cave temple at Thirunanthikkarai mention the name of the Ay king Vikramaditya Varagunan and his activities.¹⁷³ The Huzur office place which belongs to the eighth reginal year (876 AD) of King Varagunan of Ay Kingdom added a lady member of the Royal family of Ay dynasty named Murugansenthi embraced Jainsim in the presence of veeranandhi Adigal at Jain monk.¹⁷⁴ The inscriptions on the eastern wall of the rock-cut cave temple which belongs to the 18th year of the Chola king Rajaraja I (1003 AD) record the grants to the temple for the celebration of a festival in Appasi Sathayam, the birthday of the

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During the period of Raja Raja Chola, the cave temple appears to have passed into the hands of the Hindus. Recently ‘Kanyakumari Historical and Cultural Research Centre’ has discovered that the peedam of foot prints in the cave temple is found on the top of the hill. The Jain origin of the temple is now so completely forgotten that people believe that this cave temple was originally a Hindu place of worship.

2.20. Chitharal Jain Cave Temple

Chitharal is a village situated about 4 miles to the north-west of Kuzhithurai, formerly the headquarters of Vilavancode Taluk in the southern division of Travancore. Near this village stands the small craggy hill called the ‘Thirucharanathu malai’. On the top of it there is a natural cave formed by the overhanging rock resting upon another. This cave has been improved by masonry work into a temple. The 6th century BC marked a significant event in the history of India. Jainism and Buddhism were considered as counter forces to Hinduism.

Jainism and Buddhism are religious movements to purify Hinduism in terms of its practice. Vardhamana Mahavira founded a religion called Jainism. He preached about the adverse impact of caste system and sectarianism.

175 Susan L. Huntingdon, op.cit., p.613.
179 Dhina Thanthi, Thahaval Kalangiyan, Nagercoil, 5.3.2009, p.45.
180 Ibid., 2009, p.45.
In Kanyakumari District, Jain centers are established in different places like Chitharal, Thirunanthikkarai and Nagercoil. Among these, Chitharal appears to be the main centre of Jainism in Kanyakumari District.\(^{181}\) Chithral Jain centre in Kanyakumari district appears to be the regional headquarters of Jainism next to Seravanabelgola.\(^{182}\)

In 1977 a group of Dhigambara Jains from North India visited Chitharal.\(^{183}\) The ancient Tamil literature such as Naladiyar, Nanmanikadigai and Thrukadigam have reference about the spreading of Jainism in Tamilagam.\(^{184}\) These books reveal that Jainsim has flourished in Chitharal, Thirunanthikkarai and Nagercoil.\(^{185}\) The Archeological Department has taken care to preserve some of the records of the Chitharal site. Travancore Archeological Series contain some information regarding this ancient Jain temple at Chitharal.\(^{186}\) The Jain Vihara, the religious school along with the University that existed in the suburbs of Chitharal is even known to the Chinese. So it is said that its antiquity is much earlier.\(^{187}\)

The icons present at Chithral reveal the Valamkaimaalai of Santors and the

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early Tamitians. The fact is that the Mahavira, the 24th Thirutankara of Jainism is depicted as ‘Nataputtra’ (son of Nadan) in Janatri. The temple faces west and stands on a rock. In front of the temple there is a Mandapam, the verandah, the Balipida and the kitchen. On the overhanging rock are curved in half respite where a number of fingers of the Thiruthankaras and of the Goddess Padmavathi Devi. The most important image is ‘Muni’. ‘Muni’ faces west and is sitting in a posture called Padmasana on an elevated stone plinth quite naked having a raft on hair. Jain figures are present in the Goupram.  

2.21. The Rock-cut Cave Temple at Kurathiyarai

The village Kurathiyarai is situated 19 kms north of Nagercoil in the road leading to Kadukkarai near Azhakiapandiapuram in Thovalai Taluk of Kanyakumari District. A uni-cellar cave temple is situated on the Kuravan Thattupparai, which is also known as ‘Chenthipparai’. The survey record mentions the hillock in which the cave temple is situated as Anjugiri. It is caved in at 3 feet depth and 6 feet height forming a uni-cellar measuring 5’3” x 4’2” with walls of irregular shape. An incomplete, bas-relief structure of Vishnu was scooped-out in the cave. About 600 feet in front of the cave, an inscription in Vattaluthu characters engraved on a rock is seen in Kuravanthattupparai. It belongs to 10th century AD of the later Chola period of Parantaka I. The inscription refers to the 31st regional year and the title of the

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188 Ibid.


190 Archeological Department, Kanyakumari Inscriptions, Vol- II, Chennai, 1972.
King ‘Kopparakesari’ without mentioning the name of the king and the year. Two more inscriptions found, mention the name of the king and the year. Two more inscriptions found mention only the reginal year and the title of Kopparakesari in Guhanatheeswarar Temple in Kanyakumari and Thanumalaya Swami temple in Suchindrum. The inscription records a gift of ‘pon’ to the seated Vishnu and also the remittance of seven pon as enhancement of tax by one ‘Ippik Kavisigyan Sathan Sravanan of Kuntrap-palli’ to sree Vaishravanan of that village.

The Kazxhugumalai inscription in Tuticorin District records a gift of two ‘Tirumenies’ by the Thiruchranattu Kurattikal to the Kotturnattu Perumpparrur Palli. The place name mentioned in the inscription as ‘Munoor rivavi Niyamam’. Niyamam means ‘merchant guild’. The Kurathiyarai rock inscription mentions the gift of pon made to ‘Veetrintharulina Emperuman’, i.e., the seated Vishnu. Now, this stone sculpture seated Vishnu is seen in damaged condition at a distance of about 30 feet from the rock edict.

Like the cave temple at Kurathiyarai, the Jain temple of Nagercoil was also converted into a Vishnu temple in the late half of the 16th century AD by the Venad kings. Similarly the Jain cave temple at Thirunanthikkarai converted into...

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Siva temple during the period of Raja raja Chola I, Chithral Jain temple was founded on the depiction given in the Manasara. The cropped head, hanging ear lobes, the complete nakedness of the figures, the meditative mood, the yogic padmasana posture, the simhasana with the figures of Chauri bearing Yakshas and Vidyadharas and the other devotees are all praiseworthy.\footnote{195}

The inscription is engraved on the south of the temple. It is written in Vatteluthu.\footnote{196} Characters are in Tamil language. Another inscription is on a pavement stone in front of pagoda. They are in Kol eluthu or Vatteluthu characters that are in the old Malayalam-Tamil. A stone pillar about three feet fall above the ground is installed nearby the rock cut inscription. Inscriptions are made on the four sides of the stone pillar. Apart from these, the inscriptions found in this temple refer to numerous women Jain ascetics which clearly explain the Jain religious activities of this temple.\footnote{197} At present, the temple is being used by the Hindus. They believe that the temple is a Bhagavathi temple. It appears that the temple has been converted into a Bhagavathi temple before 1250 AD. The Tantri of pagoda is a nambiyar, but the potti performs the poojas as the Nambiyar’s deputy. The temple is called Bhagavathi koil.\footnote{198}