Chapter – III

Temples as Cultural and Religious Centre
CHAPTER III
TEMPLES AS CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CENTRE

Temples in Musiri Region

The Temple is the ‘House of God’ and ‘a place of worship’. It was the most beneficent institution of medieval India, and its activities touched the life of the people at many points, enriching and ennobling their lives. It was chiefly a place of worship offering comfort and solace to the faithful who believed in good life and hoped for salvation in the life to come.

Temple was also a centre of learning in medieval times. Schools and colleges were located in the temples. Endowments were made to maintain teachers and students in the premises of the temple. Sometimes hostels were attached to the temples to attend to the creative comforts of the members of the educational institutions. Provision was made for the study of the Vedas, the Vedangas, the Tiruppadigam (Devaram) and the Tiruvoymoli.¹

The Temple was the home of music and the fine arts. Music and dancing were mainly devotional in character, and these were meant to glorify god and sublime man.² Often kings came to temples to offer their worship. Each king had his favourite tutelary

² Ibid., p. 24.
deity (Kulanayakam) and such temples received special benefactions. Kings came to temple to celebrate their coronation; such halls of coronation were called 'Rajasabhas'. The hundred and thousand pillared halls at Chidambaram were used as coronation halls by the Cholas and the Pandyan kings.³

Temple in medieval period also served as a meeting place for the village assemblies. The village assembly meets and conduct election to local bodies, committees were conducted in the premises of the temple. The holding of such meetings in the sacred precincts of the temples gave a moral fervor and a spiritual tone to their deliberations. None dared to speak the untruth or do an evil deed in such holy surroundings as elucidated by R.K. Das.⁴

All the temple activities were directed towards the promotion of the welfare and happiness of the community. K.A. Nilakanda Sastri, in his book *The Colas*, mentions about the role of the temples in these words "As landowner, employer and consumer of goods and services, as bank, school, and museum, as hospital and therefore in short, as a centre which gathered round itself are in the art of civilized existence and regulated them with the humaneness born of the spirit of Dharma, the medieval Indian temple has few parallels in the annals of mankind".⁵

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Temple as a Socio-Religious and Charitable Institution

With the same vigour and prestigious status as landlord and the centre of learning and fine arts, the temple continued to be a place of attraction even during the sixteenth, and later centuries. The same old administrative set up in the temple existed. The Stanikas were the temples trustees, looked after the overall administration of the temple. The religious affairs (Srikariyam) were carried out by a group of servants called Parisanam. A large number of religious oriented people lived in the temple premises.

In the Vaishnavite temples a group of Jiyars (Achariyar) well versed in Vaishnavism lived. They lived in separate quarters, called Tirumalihal adjoining to the temple compound or in front of the temple. They were seated in a mutt called ‘Peedam’. These Jiyars were fostered by temples but at times they also made donations to the other temples. Apart from the Jiyars, there lived a large number of Vaishnavite families rendering service to these temples. They were experts in composing devotional verses. The Vedic hymns, Tiruvaimozhi, Tiruvasagam and Devaram were sung in the temples in times of prayers.

Temple slaves (Devaradiyal or Devadasi or Cottu Pendir) lived near the temples, for performing dance and music programmes

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7 Mukkudal Pallu, v.28. Pidam is like a mutt where the head of the religious people live. This may be compared with Hindu religious headquarters like Kanchi Kamakoti Pidam, Madurai Atinam, Tiruvaduthurai Atinam and so on.
8 ARE 373, 374/1919.
9 Mukkudal Pallu, v.28.
10 ARE 651/1919.
11 Kannudaiyamman Pallu, v. 60.
in favour of the god in the temple to which they belonged. They received paddy as their means of subsistence. Their inhabitation called 'Talicceri' or 'Vartamanaceri' was adjoining the temple. Apart from dancing performances, they took active part in the important ceremonies in the temple. In some temples the rituals with the concept of fertility were allowed only to be performed by the Devadasis. This might be for the reason that, the prospect or benefit from a particular work would be more replete as initiated by a woman consecrated to a god, than when initiated by an ordinary woman, while the symbolized fertility in a woman is the basic sanction in the belief.¹⁴

In the temples of Brahminical Gods, Brahmins only enjoyed the right of priesthood (Pujari). In the Vaishnavite temples the priesthood has been called Bhattar. The Bhattar was appointed exclusively for performing daily services (Pujai) some festival ceremonies.¹⁵ He was not a Jiyar and never expected to go for religious discourses or debates. He was practically confined within the sanctum sanctorum. Apart from these, he was supposed to accompany the King or the Dalavai, throughout the temple when they come to worship. Each priest must perform the work allotted to him according to the time table without other assistance.¹⁶ For his work, he received salary both in cash and by things. Bhattar 'Pangu'

(Share) was the paddy to which he was entitled. He could also take one fifth of the monetary offerings, surrendering the rest to the temple treasury.

Apart from these socio-religious aspects, the temple had the functions as an institution of charity. It commanded a great respect in the society. The political and wealthy people out of reverence and devotion made many offerings in cash and by things. Some leaders made endowments in their name and entrust it to the temple to serve the purpose of the endowment for which it was made. Choultries are of this type, which were fostered by the temples by the income from the lands endowed to the temple. \textit{Cattirppadi} was the paddy due that the choultries got from the temples. In these choultries the pilgrims and \textit{tapasvins}, who visited the temple were fed. This practice of giving food appears to be one of the regular features of temple management in those days. Apart from the choultries, religious institutions like Mutts and Ashramas were also fostered by the temples. Some Mutts were practically under the care and control of the temples. And some were maintained by the individuals through endowments made to the temple. These land endowments to

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18 Ibid., p. 117.
19 Mukkudal Pallu, v. 139. In Mukkudal near by the Vishnu Temple a choultry once existed by the charity of this temple now remains desolate and defunct.
20 Ibid.
the religious institutions and matters connected with them were also given tax free as in the case of Devadhanam and Tiruvidaiyattam.\textsuperscript{22}

For the performance of various ceremonies in the temple, different halls (Mandapam) were built around the sanctum sanctorum. Common people and political leaders contributed their labour and wealth for the construction of the various compartments of the temple. Wealthy communities like the Chettis and Pillais spent their money for the construction of halls in front of the sanctum sanctorum (Mugamandapam), halls for the temple mast (Kodimandapam) and huge gateways (Gopuram). People gave rice from the stock in their houses, and the money they got from them was used for meeting the expenses of the construction of the temple.\textsuperscript{23} In some other places the people took the responsibility of supplying anyone of the raw materials like granite stones, mortar, brick, etc. for the construction of the temple.\textsuperscript{24} In this way the whole society contributed to the development of the centres of worship whereas the temples contributed for the development of spirituality, charity and fine arts in the society.

In Musiri there are number of temples situated in and around. These temples are of historical importance. Some of the temples are found on the hill-tops, on the Cauvery river banks. It was found that the godly element was actively at working places of natural beauty.

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid, p. 212.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Palaniappan, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 85.
\item \textsuperscript{24} SII Vol. II, Part II, No. 62. Once a political chief namely Mallappa Nayak ordered the people of a particular village called Puliyr to supply stones for the construction of a Mandapam for Amman shrine in that village. As a regard for their contribution, they got the right for a share in the offerings to the deity.
\end{footnotes}
The early temples of Musiri region were built with perishable materials like brick, wood, stone and thatch. Vedic temples of Musiri Region are classified into two categories viz, Saivite temples and Vaishnavite temples.

**Siva Temples**


**Ehapushpanathar Temple, Thiruthiyamalai**

From 9th century to the 19th century, the temple’s inscriptions say this village was called as ‘Thiruthayam’, Thirutheyam, Thiruthesam and Thiruthesmalai. The people of this area called the main deity as Ehapushpanaatha Swamy. But this temple inscription called it as Thiruthayathu Perumanadikal, Thirudesamudaiyar, Thirutehyathu Perumal, Thirutehyamudaiya Mahadeva, Thiruthesmalai Udaya, Thirudesam Udaya Nayanar and Thirudesmalai Udaya Nayanar. The Goddess name is not mentioned in the inscriptions. But the
people called the main deity as Thayeenum Nallaval. In due course of time, Thirudesamalai become Thiruthiyamalai.\textsuperscript{25}

The Ehapushpanatha Swamy temple is situated 45 kms away from north-west of Tiruchirappalli, and 20 kms from Thiruppaingngili and Moovanur and the place is called Thiruthiyamalai. There are four temples in this village namely Ehapuspha Priyanathaswami temple, Mariamman temple, Pidari temple and Aiyanan temple. Among the above temples, Ehapushpanatha Swami temple is an ancient and historical one. This temple is built on a small mountain and elevated 35 feet from the ground level. Moreover there are two small mountains in the western side and north-western side.

Thiruthiyamalai is a small village situated 20 kms away from eastern side of Musiri. There is a small hill with full of rock, about 20 meter high from the land. The village is scattered in and around the hill. Once upon a time, the people of the village wished to form a temple and rearrange it. So this place is called ‘Thiruthiyamalai’ (Restructured Hill).\textsuperscript{26}

On the top of the hill, there is a temple, known as Ehapushpanathar. ‘Eha’ means ‘One’, Pushpa means ‘Flower’ and Nathar represents Lord Siva. Therefore Lord Siva is staying in this sthala for a flower. In the sanctum-sanctorum there is a Lingam about two feet high. The area of sanctum-sanctorum is about 10x10 feet. Above the sanctum-sanctorum there is a small vimana about 30

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{26} Interview with M. Periyasamy (Age 50), Panchayat President, Thiruthiyamalai on 27\textsuperscript{th} April 2004.
feet. The outside of the sanctum-sanctorum is fully decorated with sculptures.

On the outer side, Ganapathi, Dakshinamurthy statues are installed. On the back side, there is a mandapa having a dozen rounded stone pillars. Its area is 20\times15 feet. The front mandapa is about 50\times50 feet and having 40 stone pillars in the round shape. The temple is mortared with stone bars.\(^{27}\) In the front mandapa there are Navagraha and Mahalakshmi statues. Moreover there is a sculpture of Parvathy seated on the back leg of Siva. In this temple, there are lots of inscriptions in and around the wall of the temple.\(^{28}\)

**Architectural Importance**

The temple’s Unnaaligai (Sanctum Sanctorum) is about 4.30 metre square types and the next is Arthamandapa and inner prahara. The inner prahara is having eight stone pillars. Moreover there is a Praharamandapa which has 48 stone pillars,\(^{29}\) and then there is a Niruthyamandapa in a square shape. Next to that, there is a Nandhimandapa and Pali Beedam. After Pali Beedam there is Amman Sannathi which is situated towards south and the Siva temple is situated towards eastern side. Around this temple, there is a huge wall in about seven metres high. The entrance of the temple is in the northern side through which one can reach the main temple.

\(^{27}\) *Interview* with Hari Iyyar, Temple Archagar, (Age 45) on 27\(^{th}\) April 2004.

\(^{28}\) *Interview* with M. Ganesan, (Age 57), a resident of Thiruthiyanalai on 27\(^{th}\) April 2004.

The main God is in the form of Swayambulinga. On the outside wall of the Garbagriha, there are statues of Dhakshinamoorthy, Thirumal, Brahma and others. But there is no inscription on the wall even though one can assess the architecture of the temple in about 14th and 15th century AD.

**Uma Maheswar statue**
In the Nirudhyamandapa there is a statue of Lord Siva with Uma. Uma is sitting on the hip of the Lord Siva. Siva had four hands of which on the right upper hand there is a Malu (Sutthi), in the right lower hand saviour emblem and two left hands are holding Uma. The right hand of Uma is lifting flower and left hand rests on her thigh.

The left leg of Uma and the right leg of Siva are lying down below the pedestal and the left leg of Siva and the right leg of Uma are bend and vertical above the pedestal. Lord Siva is wearing Magarakuntala and Pathrakuntala on his ear. On his head there is a Jata crown. Uma is wearing Karanta crown. It is estimated that the period of statue based on its art in about 11th and 12th century A.D.

**Inscriptions**
In this temple, there are nine inscriptions belonged to Aditya Chola, Parantaka Chola, Vikrama Chola, Rajendra Chola II, Kulothunga Chola III, Bosala king Vira Ramanathan inscriptions and a Lyric inscriptions. Another inscription is at the entrance of the temple.

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30 Ibid., p. 2.
31 Ibid., p. 3.
32 Ibid, p. 3.
Apart from that, there are ten more inscriptions in and around the temple.\(^{33}\)

**Aditya Chola's Inscription (871-907 AD)**
This inscription mentions about the donation of ‘Aru Ma’ (Six) land to the Thirutheyathu Perumanadigal for daily pujas. These lands were donated by Vayiradi Puhazharai, Nakkanayathani and Isakkan Vayiradi and others. The inscription belonged to the 39\(^{th}\) regnal year of Paranthagan I, speaks about Thiruthalaiyur Sabaiyar’s gold donation and others.

**Vikrama Chola's Inscription (1118-1135 AD)**
In his 15\(^{th}\) regnal year, a lamp was donated for Thirudesamudaiyarkku by Siva Brahmins Kasyappan Panchanana Thillai Moovaayirappattan, Kasyappan Sankaran Thirutheyamudaiyanana Deyavidangapattan Omanjana Koonan Uyya Ninraduvanana Thiruvanaikkalpattan, Alampayangkoothan Kambanana Thirudesappattan, Kasyapan Nathan Thiruppaingili Udayananana Thirukarkkudipattan.\(^{34}\)

**Rajendra Chola II’s Inscription**
Rajendra II’s inscription of his 3\(^{rd}\) regnal year is on the compound wall. There are 196 lines. It mentions about Kopparakesari Panthmarana Udayiyar, devadhana land and the boundary of that area. Moreover it speaks about the rights of the people such as plough,

\(^{33}\) Ibid, p. 4.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., pp. 4-5.
planting and harvest rights and to make building rights. It also explains the social setup of that village such as Paraicheri, Kammalacheri and method of marketing.

**Vira Ramanathan’s Inscription (1260 AD)**

Vira Ramanathan, a Bosala king’s 6th regnal year inscription mentions about the Nattars and their emigration into the Perumal Street of this village. Opposite side of the Subramanyar temple there are some lyrics speaks about the land measuring scale. By the style of writing, one can understand the period of time in about 9th century.

**Wet and Dry Land Measuring Scale**

At the Eastern wall of the temple entrance one can see two + points and mention Nanjah and Punjab. Here Nanjah means wet land and Punchah means dry land. In the place of Nanjah + there is a long gap of about 4.60 metre. At the end there is another one.

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+---------------------------------+
|                                 |
| 4.60 metre                      |
+---------------------------------+
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So in those days the Nanjah lands were measured through this 4.60 metre scale (13 feet 2.5 inches) or ‘kool’. Likewise there is another + point for Punjab land measurement. But the first + point disappeared in due course of time. Even though, there is 1 mark but the plus mark point slightly appeared on the 1 mark there, through which one can understand that, it is for Punjab land measurement.

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35 Ibid., p. 5.
36 Ibid., p. 6.
From the vertical point (1 mark) away from 2.55 meter is a vertical point and from there (after 2.55 metre) there is plus point. So the total length of the scale is 5.10 metre.

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**Punjah Nanjah**

- 2.55 metres
- 2.55 metres

The total length of the Punjah land measurement scale is 5.10 metres or 16 feet and 7 inch.

**Srinivasanallur Koranganathar Temple**

Koranganathar temple at Srinivasanallur is a landmark to the Early Chola art and architecture. Srinivasanallur is about 8 kms from the West of Musiri. There are five temples in the village. They are Koranganathar Temple, the Viswanathaswami temple, (within which situated the Pattabhiraman shrine), the Lakshmi Narayana Perumal, Ramanathaswami Temple and Mariamman Temple. Among these temples, the most important is Koranganathar temple. It was built by during the period of Aditya-I, "who took Madurai and conquered Ilam" (Sri Lanka). It is a temple of modest proportions and has a simple design. Koranganathar temple at Srinivasanallur is the important temple of the development of Chola style. The main shrine has appearance of double storey because of the cornice in the

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37 Ibid., p. 7.
38 S. R. Balasubramanian, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
middle. There is antarala in front supported by four pillars. Along the project niches in the middle of exterior walls, the value of plain space is a notable feature.\(^{41}\) The Chola style of temple architecture reached its zenith during the reign of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I. The main centres of activity of early Cholas were Srinivasanallur and Gangaikonda Cholapuram. It is a medium sized temple.

**Etymology of the Koranganathar Temple**

There is a popular story, which is accepted and repeated by the scholars, that the temple was built by a Sanyasin, and before the shrine was consecrated, he found a monkey (Korangu) at the top of it, this being considered a bad omen, it was deserted.\(^{42}\) But the inscription and walls of this temple which range nearly over 200 years from the days of Aditya I to those of Kulottunga I (21\(^{st}\) years 1091 A.D.) attest to the continuity of the worship of this deity and endowments made to it during this long period.\(^{43}\) Hence the story is unworthy of evidence.\(^{44}\) The desecration if any and the neglect should be due to other causes. It should have been at a later stage of about 12\(^{th}\) century AD.\(^{45}\)

According to the local inscription, the deity enshrined in this temple is called Thirukurakutturrai-Perumanadigal situated in the Brahmadeya village of Mahendramangalam.\(^{46}\) Srinivasanallur should have been included in the Pallava kingdom during the reign of

\[^{41}\] Ibid., p. 1526.
\[^{42}\] S.R. Balasubramanian, op. cit., p. 100.
\[^{43}\] Ibid.
\[^{44}\] Ibid.
\[^{45}\] Ibid.
\[^{46}\] Ibid.
Mahendravarman I, and seems to have been in the past called Mahendramangalam evidently after this Pallava ruler of the seventh century A.D.\(^47\) is said to have seized, "the country of the Cholas embellished by the daughter of Kavera (river Cauvery) whose ornaments are the forests of paddy fields, and where found the brilliant grows of area". Close to this village, there is even now, a hamlet called Mahendramangalam.\(^48\)

Koranganathar temple's overall length is fifty feet from the ground and cornice of the Mandapa and Garbhagraha.\(^49\) Sixteen feet, the cella which has the appearance of being double storied on account of a cornice at its middle height is 12 feet, square inside and entered by an antarala borne on four pillars. A projecting nine in the middle of each of the three free sides of the garbhagraha and the recessed on either side of it, accommodate portrait sculptures, which were of about half life size and of such high relief as to appear almost in the round.\(^50\)

**Temple Plan and Architecture**

The Temple of Koranganathar at Srinivasanallur was built during the reign of Aditya-I.\(^51\) Its peculiar name is due to a local legend which records that on completion; it was defined by a monkey (Korangu) and thus was never consecrated. Consisting of a pillared hall, or sanctuary or Vimana, its total length is 50 feet occupying a

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\(^47\) Ibid.  
\(^48\) Ibid., p. 101.  
\(^49\) K.A. Nilakanda Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 705.  
\(^50\) Ibid.  
rectangle, 25 feet by 20 feet and the latter a square of 25 feet side. The height of the tower or Sikhara is 50 feet while the cornice of the mandapa measures 16 feet from the ground. A small hall having four pillars comprises the interior, with a vestibule and passage beyond leading to the square chamber of 12 feet side.\(^52\)

An inscription of the 2\(^{nd}\) year of Rajakesarivarman, which may be assigned to Rajaraja I, registers the tax free lands belonging to the temple and allots their income for various requirements of the temple, at the instance of Araiyan Acharakanta Brahmadhirajan.\(^53\) The Mulaparishad of Mahendramangalam (Srinivasanallur) appointed a committee (Variyam) for this purpose. And with the help of the committee and the accountant (Kanakkan), they arranged the services of food offering, ghee, and the maintenance of the priest, who offers worship.\(^54\)

This is Dvitala (two storied) temple. The Garbhagriha is in square shape with 26 ft 8 inches (8.13m) side outside and 8 ft (2.44m) square inside. There is an Antarala projecting 4 feet 4 inches followed by the Ardhamandapa. The plinth 5 ft. 2 inches high has plain and Kumudam mouldings surrounded by a Yazhi frieze. The Ardhamandapa is a square measuring 22 feet (6.71 m) side and is 16 ft (4.88m) high and the central shrine with the Vimana is 50 ft high, from the ground level. The Vimana is now of brick and plaster. Most of the early Chola temples were structural stone temples. One

\(^52\) Ibid.
\(^53\) ARE No. 596 of 1904.
wonder if this is an exception, at present only the portion of the Garbhagriha up to the cornice is of stone or a latter renovation after a probable collapse of the original stone structure.\(^{55}\)

On the outer walls of the Garbhagriha, there are three main projecting niches (Devakoshtas). Brahma is in the North niche. Dakshinamurti is in the South: and on the West it is now empty. Sculptures of chauri-bearers and gods are of exquisite workmanship are found installed in the recesses on each side of the Devakoshtas. The Toranas over the niches have wonderful decorative designs. The Torana of the Western niche has a figure of Narasimha and there should have been some form of Vishnu in the Western niche. There are two empty niches in front of the Ardhamandapa where Dwarapalakas should have been housed. Also the two niches on the outer wall of the antarala now empty should have housed Lord Ganapati and Durga.\(^{56}\) The garbhagriha, the antarala and the ardhamandapa are well constructed. The oldest inscription of Aditya I is found on the base of the South wall of the ardhamandapa.

**Main features of the Architecture**

They were brilliantly chiseled with excellent sculptures. They were in the temples built by the Cholas. The Kottams are the symbolic representation of the gods. Among them some statues of the kings and queens are also found. Sculptures of the most elegant ladies with bottleneck waist are the most excellent artistic creations of the best sensuous mind. These are the evidences of Cholas attainment of the

\(^{55}\) Ibid., p. 102.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 103.
pinnacle of the art of sculpture. The Dwarapalakas sculptures have claimed the world's sincere and impartial admiration.  

Royal Patronage  
There is an inscription of Madurai-Konda Parakesari (Parantaka I) on the East wall of the Ganesha Shrine in the Ramanathaswami Temple. There are four inscriptions of Rajakesari Varman, without details of identification; one of them may be assigned to Gandaraditya. But of his 24th regnal year engraved on the base of the South wall of the arthamandapa of the temple can be assigned to Aditya I, an account of his regnal year of the inscription. It may also be mentioned that the arthamandapa is an integral part of the same base. There are two inscriptions of Parantaka-I and above the Rajakesari inscription and another by its side. Therefore it seems legitimate to infer that the temple was in existence earlier than 895 AD and should be considered a temple of the days of Aditya I, not of Parantaka I as generally held.

There are four inscriptions of Parantaka I ranging from his 20th to his 37th regnal years. The earliest of them is one of the 20th regnal years of this king, in the body of which a record of his 19th regnal year is quoted. This is still considered as an oldest inscription of the

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59 *ARE* No. 586 of 1904.
60 *ARE* No. 592 of 1904.
61 *ARE* No. 591 and 593 of 1904.
63 *ARE* No. 592 of 1904 and *SII* Vol. XIII No. 306.
It records a sale of land. The other inscriptions of Parantaka I register a Brahman Lady, gold for a lamp, a water-pot of copper a lamp stand and a silver tray to the temple. The inscriptions of the 14th year of Parakesari may be assigned to Parantaka I or Uttama Chola.

**Pasupatheesvarar Temple, Thinnakkonam**

Long time ago, people belong to the community of Yadhava, also known as Idayar, were living there. The main occupation of these people was to rear cattle while tending the cattle; a cow extracted its milk on a heap of sand lying nearby. As the cow was doing, as usual, the cowherd noticed it one day and assaulted the cow severely. The cow breathed its last the next day on the same heap of sand. The news of demise of the cow was conveyed to Chola king by the Lord in his dream. The Lord expressed his wish to the king that a temple be built in the same place where the cow died. Fulfilling the wishes of the Lord, the Chola king arranged to build a temple on the same heap of sand (which is otherwise called Suyambu Lingam). As the Lord appeared in the form of a heap of sand along with a cow, the deity in this temple was called Pusupatheeswarar. In course of time, the name was changed to be Thinnakkonam.

Thinnakkonam is in Musiri taluk. It's early name was Tirunerkkundram. There is an early Chola temple called Pasupatheeswarar, which has three inscriptions of Parantaka I and

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64 S.R. Balasubramanian, op. cit., p. 102.
65 ARE No. 589 of 1904.
66 ARE No. 594 of 1904.
67 Interview with R. Somasundaram Gurukkal (Age 65) on 25th May 2005 at Thinnakkonam.
the lord is called Tirumadattuk Kunnanar at Tiruneerkundram. One of the inscriptions belonging to the Parantaka I of his 24th regnal year relates to an endowment for feeding a person in the temple and the other two inscriptions record about the gifts for lamps to the temples. There are also two inscriptions of the 48th year of the later Chola King Kulottunga I. It also relates to a gift for a lamp.

There is also an inscription of Vikrama Choladeva (1118 AD) which seems to record a tax-free gift of land called Chaturvedi Mangalam for offerings to God Kunnandar by a resident. Another inscription found on the west wall of the Bairava shrine of the temple Pasupatheeswarar, records about some territorial division of the Nadu namely Valluvappadi Nadu, a sub division of Rajaraja Valanadu.

Kasi Viswanathaswamy Temple, Thuraiyur

Temple of Thuraiyur

There are three temples in Thuraiyur namely Nandikesavaraswamy temple, Kasi Viswanathaswamy temple and Venugopalamswamy (Vishnu) temple, which have to be assigned to the thirteenth century AD. According to a local inscription it is said to be on the banks of Kilp-Palaru in Pachil-Kurram, a sub-division of Rajaraja Valanadu. Thuraiyur being the headquarters of Thuraiyur taluk is situated between the valleys of the Pachaimalai (Green Hill) hills

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68 ARE Nos. 250, 255 of 1932-1933.
69 ARE Nos. 252, 253 of 1932-1933.
70 ARE Nos. 256 of 1932-1933.
71 ARE No. 257 of 1932-1933.
72 Karandai Tamil Sangam’s Copper Plate of Rajendra – I.
73 ARE No. 701 of 1909.
and Kolli (Malai) hills. It is 40 kms away from Tiruchirappalli and 30 kms from Musiri. It must have an important centre on the merchant route from the Chola territory to the Kongu territory in those days.

It is also called Neelivaneswarar temple lies 20 kms North-West of Tiruchirappalli. This shrine is associated with the divine poet Appar, Athikara Vallavar cave shrine who gave rebirth to Yama. The Siva rock hewn shrine is said to be done by Mahendravarman Pallava, otherwise called Gunabaran, during 640 AD. There is also a good fresh drinking water spring, 2 kms north of the temple on the way to Arulmighu Pundarikatsha Perumal temple.

Rajendra Chola – I, Rajadhirajan – I and many Chola kings donated fund for regular daily pujas and maintenance of the temple. There is no navagrahas in this temple, but it will be there normally. Chinnandavar and Periyandavar, rural guardian deities are also located in the temple premises.74 In front of statue of the Nandhi, the Navagrahas are prayed by lighting the stone cavern-hole lamps made on the floor. The name of the goddess is Vishalakshi or Neelinedunkannammal. Karthigai festival is a noted festival celebrated here. This temple is also called ‘South Kailash’. The statue of Suddha Mahamunivar lies in the outer premise of the temple. The shrine of Lord Vishnu in the name of Senthamarai Kannan lies inside the temple. The temple has preserved hundreds of invitations received from those marriages have been solemnized. It

74 Ibid., p. 79.
has a two-storied Srivimana with a round Griva and Sikhara. The figures in the Devakoshtas are Ganapathi, Dakshinamurti, Lingodbhavar, Brahma and Durga. There is a shrine for Amman to the north of the Ardhamandapa, and another for Nataraja in the further east.

**Amarasundareswarar Temple, Singalanthapuram**

Singalanthapuram is situated from Thuraiyur to Tiruchirappalli road. From Musiri the distance is 30 kms towards north-east. It is having its past antiquity from the days of Rajaraja I the Chola king. The victory of Rajaraja Chola I against Sri Lanka, gained a nigh name 'Singalanthan'. His son Rajendra Chola I, (1012 AD) in memory of his father's Sri Lanka victory named this village as Singalanthapuram. In this village, Rajendra I erected a Siva temple known as Amarasundareswarar temple.

This temple is facing eastern side. In the sanctum-sanctorum Amarasundareswarar lingam is seated. Vilva tree, a sthalavriksha of this temple is close to the outer mandapa. The sanctum-sanctorum is 10x10 square feet and the middle mandapa is also the same. The front mandapa is 50x40 feet and is having 12 stone pillars. The temple is moulded with stone and mortar.

At the outside of the temple on its Southern side, one can see the statues of Lord Dakshinamoorthy Lord Ganapathi and goddess Durga statue in the north side. There is a Nandhi in front of the

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temple. There are several inscriptions on the right side and left side of the wall of the temple. These inscriptions mention about several endowments.

Maragathaleswaraswamy Temple, Thiruvengimalai

Thiruvengimalai lies between Musiri and Thottiyam. The hillock is otherwise called Maragathamalai, Thenkailayam, Sivasakthimalai, Malaikkovil and Erattaimalai. Thiruvengi hill is situated about 6 kms West of Musiri. This is a beautiful temple of historical importance. The deity of this temple is known as Maragathaleswar, Maragathasananathar and Malaikolundeerar.

This Siva temple is situated on a hillock of 900 feet height. From the Southern part of this hill one has to climb a plight of 500 steps to reach the Rajagopuram of the temple. The steps are well illuminated and have drinking water facilities for the devotees. The width of this hill is 4.5 kms.

The place name Thiruvengimalai, which is the corruption of Thiru-i-ongi-malai (The Holy High Bees Mountain) and this is so called because the Sage Agastya finding the gates of the Lord Siva temple closed one evening, turned himself into a bee and secured entrance in to this temple to perform his worship.

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77 Interview with Srinivasan Gurukkal, Amarasundareswarar Temple (Age 56), on 13th August 2006 at Singalanthapuram.
Sthalapuranam

In the pre-historic period, there was a challenge between Nagarajan (Adiseshan) and Vayubagavan, the God of the Air to prove their strength. The question is who is strong either Adiseshan or Vayubagavan. In the process of proving its strength, Adiseshan got his thousand heads and closed mountain Meru alias Mahaparvadam. Vayubagavan on his part exercised his full power and brought every thing to stand - still position. The Devars, who could not breathe, prayed and submitted to Adiseshan about this happening. On hearing the news, Adiseshan just lifted one of his heads to make the saints breathe. As the force of air, was extremely high at that time, many areas were detached and were thrown away from their existing place towards South. Among those confiscated, some areas were known to be Lankapuri, Rathnagiri, Vatpokkimalai and Ayyarmalai. (One among them was called Maragathasthalam in ancient times and the same was christened as Thinthirinivanam or Thiru-ingoi Malai. 

The lingam of the Maragathaleswaraswamy temple is said to be transparent and also throws a green shadow when camphor is burned. It is therefore called the Marakatha (Emerald) Lingam. The God is connected with the deities of Kadambar Kovil and Ratnagiri. At these temples, Mondays in the Tamil month of Karthigai and the Tai Poosam day are considered holy. This temple is also known as

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80 Ibid., p. 23
81 Ibid., p. 24.
Southern Kailasam (Thenkailayam). The Sthalavriksha of this temple is Tamarind tree and the important theerthams are Brahma Theertham, Vishnu Theertham, Indhra Theertham, Devisaram, Imaya Theertham, Amirtha Pushkarani, Sarbanathi, Cauvery, etc.

The daily pujas are conducted according to Saiva Agamam. Apart from this, Adipperukku, Karthigaideepam and Brahmotsavam are celebrated in the months of April-May in a grand manner. Inscriptions are found on the eastern side of the Rajagopuram and in the southern and northern side of the sanctum sanctorum which describe the gifts made by Rajaraja Chola and Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar in 1517 AD. At the base of the temple lies Bogar Siddha Temple. 500 vertical steps lead to the temple at the top of the hillock. Poet Nakkeerar has sung a booklet named Engoi - Elupathu (70 Engoi Songs).

Someswarar Temple, Alagarai
Alagarai is a small village situated just one km to the north of Manamedu, a small flourishing village on the road from Tiruchirappalli to Salem. The river Cauvery flows to the south of Manamedu and Alagarai. The view of the land slopes towards the north and a number of canals flow near and through Alagarai. The word Alagarai is derived from the word ‘Aikarai’ meaning ‘five

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83 Interview with Srinivasa Gurukkal, Maragathaleswaraswami Temple, on 26th June 2006.
karais' equal to 150 cawney. Local legends say that it was the capital of God Kubera (God of Wealth) and was known as Alagapuri.

A number of antiquarian remains are found in Alagarai itself. There is a Siva temple consecrated to Someswarar. The deity in the form of Linga is about 2 feet high. The front mandapa is about 50x40 feet and the middle mandapa is 15x30 feet. The sanctum-sanctorum is about 15x15 feet. In the front mandapa there are 12 stone pillars and in the middle mandapa there are four stone pillars. The ceiling is made up of with stone mortar. Above the sanctum-sanctorum there is a small vimana about 20 feet height. In the outer prakara i.e. in the south west corner there is a Ganapathy statue and Dakshinamoorthy statues are also there.

In the northern side of the outer prakara of the temple, there is Durga statue. In front of the temple, Nandhi statue is facing Lord Someswarar. The Sthalavriksha of this temple is Vilva tree. The temple contains three inscriptions. The first two are in Tamil belonged to the reigns of Rajadhiraja II (1166-1180 AD) and Kulottunga II (1178-1218 AD) respectively. The third one is in Kannada language belonged to that of the Vijayanagar king Sadasivaraya.

**Analaadeeswarar Temple, Thottiyam**

Thottiyam is located eight miles West of Musiri. The name is said to be due to the fact that Thottiyans lived in great numbers in the place.
in former times. It is situated on the Tiruchirappalli to Salem high road. It is in the Musiri region and is about 12 kms from Musiri. Here there is a Siva Temple known as Analaadeeswarar temple.\textsuperscript{90} The Sthala is called Brahmapura, Thiripurasamgara and Mathyasthala Shethram. It was because Lord Brahma performed yoga here, hence the place is called Brahmapura. Lord Siva, the God of destruction, who performed Thiripura disaster. Siva took the fire and dancing on the burial ground to save creation, salvation and destruction.\textsuperscript{91}

This temple is situated in a fertile place having two prakaras and car streets. In the second prakara there is Nandhi facing the Lord Siva. In the outer prakara wall there is an inscription in a dilapidated condition. In the first Prakara there is a Surya Bheedam and seven Nimbhs. In the Outer Prakara in the Western side there are the statues of Somaskanda Ganapathi, Subrahmanyar, the four divine poets namely Appar, Sundarar, Sambanthar and Manickavasagar, Thiripura Sundarar, Sundari, etc. In the Northern side there are Navagraha Sannathi and Bhairava statues.\textsuperscript{92}

The temple sanctum-sanctorum is 10x10 feet circumference. Above the sanctum-sanctorum there is a small vimana about 30 feet. The Front Mandapa is 50x50 feet with 35 stone pillars. The top of the temple building is moulded with stone mortar. The Lord Siva i.e. the Analaadeeswarar appeared with Umadevi to save the mankind from the catastrophe. The temple's sthalavriksham is Vilva tree. The

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., p. 8.
temple is presently under the control of Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowment (HR & CE), Government of Tamil Nadu.\footnote{Ibid., p. 12.}

**Shri Valeeswarar Temple, Sri Ramasamudram**

Sriramasamudram is a popular village of Musiri region, located 30 kms away from the Musiri town, 2 kms away from the village Kattupputhur. Sriramasamudram, otherwise called as Ayilur in the olden days. There are number of temples namely Shri Valeeswarar temple, Angalamman temple, Marutha Kaliyanman temple, Kamatchi Amman temple, Bhagavathiamman temple. Among the temples, Shri Valeeswaran temple is historically important. The presiding deity of the temple is Lord Siva who appeared as Swayambu Linga. There are separate shrines for the Lord Kasilingam, Vishvanathar, Nataraja, Dhakshinamurthi on the inner prakara of the temple. It is believed that this temple was constructed about 1050 years ago. There are number of inscriptions which deal about the donations to the temple.\footnote{S. S. Ramar Ilango, Pandiyar Seppedukal Pattu, Ulaga Tamilaraichi Niruvanam, Chennai, 1999, p. 65.}

Ayilur is called as “Sriramasamudram”. Ayilur is on the banks of Cauvery River. It is on the northern side of Akanda Cauvery. The village is a place of historical importance as evidenced by inscriptions and on the authority of K.A. Nilakanta Sastri. It was here that Pandiyan Nedunjadayan Parantaka defeated Adigan of Kongunadu (Chera). The inscriptions at Anamalai and Tiruchirappalli give various names as Jatila, Parantaka and Varaguna
to glorify Nedunjadayan. Nedunjadayan, the son of Rajasimha and Malava Queen was the successor to the throne. He is said to have ruled for nearly fifty years (from 765 to 815 AD). He fought battles at Vellar, Vinnam and Saliyakkudi against the force whose identity is not known. Historical records indicate that he fought two great battles at Ayiraveli Ayirur and Pugalur on the northern banks of the Cauvery. He captured Adigan’s chariot and several of his war houses. As a result of this battle against the Adigan of Kongunadu, the entire kingdom of Chera was brought under the Pandyan rule.

It is believed that Adigan who was repulsed at Ayirur and Pugalur was a feudatory of the Western Kongu chief. References are found in K. A. Nilakanta Sastri’s ‘South Indian History’ and T.V. Sadasiva Pandarathar’s ‘Pandiyar Varalaru’. The Amaravathi River on whose banks this village is situated is also popularly known as Thiruveni Sangamam, the confluence of Cauvery, Amaravathi, Andaravahini. Pushpavanakasi is yet another name by which this place is known.

**Sthala Varalaru**

Vali is a king of Monkey dynasty. He is so powerful that he can control the people who are living with superiority complex and sense of boasting. He ruined Lankapuri and defeated Lankeswaran. He worshipped the idol of Lord Siva that got placed where the holy rivers Cauvery and Amaravathy met. The same idol of Lord Siva is called ‘Vaaleeswarar’. As the King Vali worshipped the deity daily

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and blessed with many things. This temple is situated at (Ayilur) Sri Ramasamudram.\textsuperscript{97}

The temple is the abode of Lord Vaaleeswara Swamy and Sri Soundaranyaka alias Chokkanayaki. There is also Mummurthi Sannathi where Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswarar are enshrined. The Sannathi has the carving in which the following Bindu Trikona Sakona Vridha Ashta Dalabal Yathra is made. The Sannathi of Annai Soundranayaka alias Chokkanayaki is similar to that of Kanyakumari temple. Legends proclaim that King of Vaali of Ramayana worshiped Soundaranayaki enshrined in this temple.

**Sri Kameswarar Temple, Vellore**

Vellore is located in Musiri taluk of Tiruchirappalli district. There is a famous Siva temple called Sri Kameswarar temple, which is now under the control of HR & CE. This temple is located on the northern banks of the Cauvery River.\textsuperscript{98} Vellore in the ancient days was known as Vellatai, but it is now called as Vellore. The name Vellore derived from the two words ‘Vel’ and ‘Ur’. ‘Vel’ means ‘Snake’, ‘ur’ means ‘Sun’. Hence the Snake Athiseshan worshipped the Sun, at Vellatai. In later days, Vellatai changed into Vellore. Above mentioned incidents are depicted in the inscriptions.\textsuperscript{99} This village is also called as Thiru Kameswaram, Kamespuram and Kothanta Ramapuram in ancient days.\textsuperscript{100}

\textsuperscript{97} Interview with D. Dhandapani Sivam Archakar (Age 85) on 10\textsuperscript{th} May 2005 at Sri Ramasamudram.


Musiri in the ancient days, was ruled by a king namely Musuguntha Chakravarthi. He was an ardent worshipper of Lord Siva. One day, Lord Siva gave dharsan to the king. After getting the dharsan the king decided to construct a temple for the Lord Siva, and it was finally the venue was selected for the construction of the temple. Formally it was small temple but during the time of Chola rule, this temple was reconstructed with massive construction. Siva temple is popularly known as Shri Kameswaran temple. Since, Manmathan (God of Love) and Surya (Sun God) worshipped as the presiding deities.

According to the inscription of the temple, it was constructed by a Pallava ruler on earlier day, but later it was constructed by the Chola ruler. The total length of the temple is 280 feet and breadth is 140 feet. There is a separate shrine for the Lord Vinayaga in the outside of the temple. In the southern part of the temple, Madurai Veereswarar temple is located. The Sthalavriksha of the temple is Vilva tree. In the rear of the sanctum-sanctorum there is a separate shrine for the Lord Muruga in the shape of the Somaskandar.

In front of the Garba-griha there is a mandapa with four pillars. The outer mandapa has 20 pillars in which a number of sculptures like dancing girls, worship of Musu Kundan are carved. In the garba griha the prime deity is Lord Siva who appeared in a Linga

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101 ARE No.306 of 1968-69.  
102 ARE No.309 of 1968-69.
form. There are also some separate shrines for the Lord Maha Ganapathi.\(^{103}\)

**Ravi Iswarar Temple, Amoor**

The Village Amoor is situated on the northern banks of river Cauvery, 15 kms away from Musiri and 3 kms from Gunaseelam.\(^{104}\) During the period of Chola, this village was called as Amoor Nadu as the administrative unit of Chola rule. The area of the temple is 1.03 acre. The main deity of the temple is Ravi Iswarar in the form of swayambulinga and goddess namely Ananthavalli Amman.\(^{105}\) The name Ravi means ‘Sun’ and Eswarar represents ‘Siva’. Hence, the etymology proves that the God is in the form of nature.

Vikrama Chola has constructed a small hut in this village for Siva linga. There he worshipped and performed puja. One day, while he worshipped linga, he saw the reflection of the sun light on Linga and named as Ravi Iswarar.\(^{106}\)

In the entrance wall of the temple, there is an inscription in a undecipherable form. The temple’s front mandapa is having 12 stone pillars and is about 50x30 feet circumference. The sanctum-sanctorum is about 10x10 feet. The presiding deity Sivalinga is about 2 feet high. Above the sanctum-sanctorum there is a small Vimana about 20 feet high. In front of the temple there is small Nandhi facing the God. In the outer Prakara there are statues of Lord

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\(^{103}\) Sri Kameswarar Temple Sthala Varalaru, *loc.cit.*


\(^{106}\) *Interview* with Gurukkal Natarajan, S/o Perumal (Age 52) on 30\(^{th}\) December 2007 at Kariyamakkam village.
Dhakshinamoorthy, Lord Ganapathy and Goddess Durga. This temple is covered with a large compound wall. The Sthalavriksha is Vilva tree. Now the temple is under the control of HR & CE.  

Nandhikeswaraswamy Temple, Thuraiyur

Of the three temples, the Nandhikeswaraswamy temple is the most important one. In ancient days, it went under the name of Tiruvalisvaram Udaiya Nayanar temple. It consists of the Garbhagriha, the Antarala, the Svapana-Mandapa, the Mukhamandapa and the Mahamandapa. There is a gateway in the east and a five storied Gopuram in the south. There are sub-shrines for Lord Ganapathi, Subrahmanyar and Chandeesvarar. Bhairavar is installed on the north side of the Mukhamandapa. There is also a Nataraja shrine in the temple. It seems to have been built by a local chief.

The temple has been sung by Appar and Arunagirinathar. According to the inscription of the temple, Nandhikeswarar temple was built in the thirteenth century AD during the period of Rajaraja III. When one enters the temple will be impressed by a Nandhi statue of about five feet tall. It is elegantly decorated with intricate designs and has a regal look benefiting the presiding deity of the temple, Nandhikeswarar. On either side of the pillars there are two tall Dwarapalakas, carved out of the stoutly and tall pillars.

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107 Interview with V. Thangarajan (Age 45), President, Amoor Panchayat on 13th August 2004.
108 ARE No. 700 of 1909.
109 ARE No. 701 of 1909.
The Mahamandapam has some exquisite and unique sculptures. One among them is the sculpture which depicts Rathi on a swan and Manmatha with his sugarcane bow riding in a chariot. In the Mandapa leading to the Nataraja shrine there is an exquisite sculpture of goddess Saraswathi with a Mukhaveena in her hand. Apart from this, there are sculptures of Veerabhadra, Aghora Veerabhadra, dancing Kali and Nataraja in the Rudhrathandava pose. There are two statues of Arjuna doing penance for getting the Pasupathastra. A bow is seen close to his feet. Near to this another statue of Lord Siva in the form of Sattanatha can also be seen.

In the South-West part of the Nandhikeswarar temple, there is Vishnu temple in the name of Venugopalaswamy Sannathi. There is an inscription of Rajaraja III on its north wall.\(^{10}\) There is also an inscription of the 11\(^{th}\) year of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya I. All these temples may be attributed to the days of Rajaraja III.\(^ {11}\)

Another interesting and unique sculpture in the Nandhikeswarar temple is the Koshtam of the sanctum sanctorum. It depicts Lord Siva as Adimudikaana Annal as in the Tiruvannamalai temple. The entire figure is carved at the inside of Sivalinga. At the bottom portion of the Linga, one can see Lord Vishnu with Sangu and chakra and close to his feet Varaha. Opposite to Vishnu, there is Lord Brahma and his vehicle, the Swan, is seen at the top of the Lingam. This is unique and rare feature. Panels depicting the story

\(^{10}\) S.R. Balasubramanian, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 337-338.
of Ramayana and Mahabharatha and that of Anugrahamurthi i.e. Lord Siva and Parvathi blessing Ravana, who is playing Mukhaveena are few examples revealing the masterly skill of artists.\textsuperscript{112}

The Amman shrine walls are exquisitely carved out of huge granite pieces. There is also a beautiful sculpture of a Nagakannika in the temple. According to mythology, she brought a Sivalingam from the abode of demons, offered prayers to the Lingam and attained salvation. Special Pujas are offered to the Nagakannika-idol during Rahukala on Fridays. One can witness the milk turning into blue when it is poured over this idol. A 3\textsuperscript{rd} year inscription of Rajaraja III mentions a gift of land to the shrines of Nallanayaki and Subramanya Pillaiyar, in the temple of Valisvaramudaiya Nayanar at Thuraiyur. There are icons of Ichcha Sakthi, Maheswari, Brahma and Durga are installed.\textsuperscript{113}

\textbf{Kailasanathar Temple, Kargudi}

Kargudi is a village panchayat situated in Musiri taluk and is 30 kms from northern side of Thattaiyangapettai.\textsuperscript{114} In this village there is a Siva temple namely Kailasanathar, and the total area is 60 cent.\textsuperscript{115} The name Kargudi is inscribed as Karigudi in the inscription. Moreover, the temple inscription mentions about the origin of Kargudi village as well as its Revathi Star.\textsuperscript{116} This temple deals with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{112} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{113} S. R. Balasubramanian, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 378.
\item \textsuperscript{114} \textit{Chitta Adangal}, Village Administrative Office, Kargudi, 2005-2006, p.1.
\item \textsuperscript{115} \url{http://www.agnisiksha.org} accessed on 24\textsuperscript{th} June 2004.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Thalavaralaru, \textit{Trust of Kailasanathar Temple}, Kargudi, 2005, p. 2.
\end{itemize}
the nine signs (Navaamsam of the Tamil etymological signs) i.e. the origin of 'Ka'. Such as;

1. Kargudi
2. Kailasanathar
3. Karunakaravalli
4. Karpagavinayagar
5. Kasiviswanathar
6. Kasivisalatchi
8. Kabalabhairavar
9. Karpaganathi

The main deities of the temple are Kailasanathar and Karunagaravalli. In the sanctum-sanctorum Kailasanathar is seen as Jothilinga Maragatha Darshan.\textsuperscript{118} The people worshipped the deities for their betterment in all walks of life, that is, rich and illness. The Sthalavriksha of the temple is Vilva tree.

The front mandapa is having 36 stone pillars and the size is 50x50 feet. The central mandapa is 15x10 feet. The sanctum-sanctorum is 10x10 feet. The temple is completely moulded on stone mortar.\textsuperscript{119} In the left side of the temple, one can see the statue of Akoraveerabathraswamy, Kalabhairavar, Kabalabhairavar and Thottiyar. These are notable ones in the temple.\textsuperscript{120} There is a lot of

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 4.
\textsuperscript{120} Interview with R. Jegatheesa Gurukkal (Age 58) Kailasanathar Temple on 23\textsuperscript{rd} July 2006 at Kargudi.
inscription on the right side of the wall and outside prakara of the Amman Sannathi such as:

1. In the outside prakara of the Amman Sannathi there is an inscription about the origin of the temple for more than 1000 years ago.
2. During the Chola period, King Vikrama Chola named the village as Vikrama Cholapuram.
3. In the year 1297 AD it was under the control of Jadavarma Sundhara Pandyan and Veerapandyan. Then the village is known as Srikargudi.
4. The merchant community people lived in this village and donated lands to Lord Kailasanathar in the year 1619 A.D.
5. For the renovation work of the temple tank, the merchant community people offered two devadhana villages namely Oothanagarai and Alagiakoothanallur.
6. There is another inscription, of the year 1266 AD about the land endowment of Hoysala king Veera Ramanatha to this temple.
7. The Thottiyam Nayaks’ inscription tells about the Thottiyar and king’s statue is installed in the front mandapa of this temple.\(^\text{121}\)

**Chandramouleeswarar Temple, Musiri**

The Siva temple is known as Chandramouleeswarar temple spread over 92 cent. The main God of the temple is Chandramouleeswarar and Goddess Karpooravalli Amman.\(^\text{122}\)

\(^{121}\) Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious Endowment Board, Notice Board 1, available at the Kailasanathar Temple, Kargudi.
Once upon a time, a devotee of Lord Siva, namely Musukundhan, had set up a garden full of Mullai flowers. He used to worship Lord Siva daily by offering flowers from the garden. During this time, saint-poet Agasthiyar was on a visit to Rathiniagireesvarar situated on the southern bank of river Cauvery and the temple of Lord Maragathaleesvarar at Thiruingoimalai, situated on the northern bank of river Cauvery. On the way, Agasthiyar came to the Mullaivanam where Musukundhan was worshipping Lord Siva. The saint praised Musukundhan for his affection and devotion to Lord Siva and accepted the request of Musukundhan to perform a puja at Mullaivanam. The saint performed puja to the deities at mullaivanam. During this puja, Lord Chandran and Lord Eswaran were appeared and blessed Musukundhan and promoted the Mullaivanam as Chandramouleeswarar temple. The name of the temple remains in the same name without any change.123

In front of the temple there is a Nandhi, facing the God. The Sthalavriksha, Vilva tree stands close to the right side of the temple. The front mandapa is 20x20 square feet and stands with 9 stone pillars. The middle mandapa is also the same. The sanctum-sanctorum is having 10x10 square feet where the Chandramouleeswarar is seated in the form of lingam. In front of the sanctum-sanctorum there are two Dwarabalakas statues. After that, there is a Mukha Mandapa 10x15 feet. The top of the temple is moulded with stone mortar.

122 Thiruchirtrambalam, op. cit., p. 467.
In the outer prahara of the southern side at the right the stone idols are for four saints namely Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Manickavasagar facing the main deity of Chandramouleeswarar. In the western side one can see the deity Kasi Viswanathar. In the northern side of the temple, there are separate sannaddhis for Karpagavalli Amman, Brahma, Durga, Bairava, Navagraha and Saneeswara. There are also beautiful bronze statues of Natarajar and Karpooravalli Amman.  

The temple is having inscriptions and copper plates. There are four copper plates mentioned about the Nayak rulers and their endowments. The inscriptions are found in the middle mandapa of the temple.

Kannanur Siva temple
Kannanur is located six miles south of Thuraiyur. It is a part of the Musiri taluk and a head quarter of the old Thuraiyur taluk. Its ancient name was Vikramapuram. The name Kannanur derived from the different verses. In Sanskrit the name Kannanur is called as Bhujabalarajapattana, in which Bhujabalaraja referred as the strong king and Pattana referred to the town. The term Bhujabalaraja Pattana is named after the king Bjujabalarajan, who was the ruler of the Thuraiyur region. He built a famous temple for Kannan. So the

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124 Interview with Anandarama Gurukkal, Chandramouleeswarar Temple on 24th September 2004, Musiri.

125 Copper Plate No. 16 of 1966; Copper Plate No. 17 of 1966; Copper Plate No. 18 of 1966; Copper Plate No. 19 of 1966

126 SII No. 317 of 1966; SII No. 318 of 1966

village is named after the Lord Kannan. Kannanur is situated on the right side of the banks of river Aiyar.

There are two famous temples namely Bhojeswara temple and Sundaravaradharaja Perumal temple. Among the two, there are some inscriptions found on the walls of the temple. An inscription found on the south wall of the central shrine in the Bhojeswara temple, records in Ananda gift of money by certain merchants of Kanchipuram. Another inscription found on the same wall of the temple records the gift of land to the temple of Posalisuramudaiya Nayanar at Kannanur for celebrating a festival called Ranamukharaman. Vira Ramanatha, the son of Someswara is evidently the king referred to.

An inscription found on the gopura of the Bhojeswara temple at the entrance, records remission of certain taxes in favour of a number of temples of Kannanur. The taxes amounted to 10,000 gold pieces and consisted of four items, viz., Jodi, Sulavari, Piravari and Arasuperu.

**Somanatha Eswarar Temple, Alathudaiyanpatty**

The village Alathudaiyanpatty is a small panchayat in Uppiliapram Union in the Musiri Region. It is situated 35 kms away from Musiri and from Thuraiyur to Puliyancholai (Kolli hill) road. The village comes under Valluvappadi Nadu and ruled by the Cholas.

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128 ARE No. 509 of 1905.
129 ARE No. 510 of 1905.
130 ARE No. 511 of 1905.
131 ARE No. 142 of 1935-1936.
that time, this village was called Periyanavalur. The temple is situated on the northern side of the village.

In this village there is a Siva temple called Somanatheswarar. The temple area spreads over 1.5 acres. The sanctum-sanctorum is about 10x10 feet and there is a lingam about 2 feet high. The front mandapa is about 40x30 feet and the mortar mould is supported by 16 stone pillars. At the outside, in the right side of the temple, there is a Mahalakshmi sculpture and Dhakshinamoorthy. In front of the temple, there is a portico supported by two pillars. The stone pillars are carved out with flowers and dancing girls.

In the temple's front mandapa, that is in the north-eastern corner, there is an under ground subway. In front of the temple there is a Nandhi and a well. There is a compound wall around the temple by about 15 feet high. In the western side of the temple, one can see the Kolli hill range by about 9 kms. This temple might have been constructed from the Kolli hill stone. Now the temple is under the control of HR & CE. In the temple there are two inscriptions on left and right side. The inscription belonged to Chola king Rajaraja III (1243 AD) tells about the following information.

During the time of Rajaraja III, the later Chola king, the people of Valluvappadi Nadu Nattars sent a letter to the temple's officials, regarding the expenses incurred for the worship of the Siva temple. It was rightly about 30 Panam (coins). Moreover, it

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133 Unnoticed inscription at Siva Temple, Alathudaiyanpatty.
134 Interview with temple Gurukkal A. Nataraj (Age 60), Somanatha Eswarar Temple, Alathudaiyanpatty on 10th February 2007.
describes the Chola king Rajaraja III. The village name was mentioned as Periyanavallur in Valluvapadi Nadu and Thuraiyur Udaiyan.  

**Vinayakar Temple, Sikkathampur**

Sikkathampur is located about 4 kms away from Thuraiyur, lies on the high way of Thuraiyur and Thammampatti. Once it was a Zamin village on the Thuraiyur Miras. This village is divided into two Sikkathampur North and Sikkathampur South. In the northern part of the Sikkathampur village, there is a beautiful temple for the Lord Ganesha, which was constructed during the rule of Imperial Cholas of Medieval period. There is an inscription, found in the inner wall of the temple, mentioned the name of a Chola king Kulottunga II (1178-1218 AD). The Ganesha temple is sculpted out of the stone. The ceiling of the temple is moulded with the help of stone slabs and plaster of paris. There is a big Ganesha statue located in the temple. In front mandapa of the temple the pillars are erected, which are fully decorated and polished with the marbles.

**Saivite Festivals and Pujas**

Festivals and fairs connected with temples were also useful similarly for religious, national and economic purposes. These were in fact parliaments of Religion and a type of mobile university. The festivals centering round temples were woven into the texture of the life of the people moulding their destiny in the course of their

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135 Unnoticed inscription.
136 Unnoticed Inscription found in the inner wall of the Ganesa Temple Sikkathampur.
137 Ibid.
corporate growth. In fact, temples constituted the bedrock of the synthetic outlook and lofty spiritual idealism. The religious life is contributing to the growth of national and cultural solidarity. While May rituals and festivals are common to all temples there are some which are peculiar to some temples. Here, are the details of a few of the rituals and festivals of Saivite temples in Musiri.

**Daily Pooja Schedule**

At Saivite temples daily pooja is conducted in 5 different times in normal days. There is a variation between the temple to temple.

- **Usha Kalam (Early morning Pooja)** - 6.45 AM to 7.15 AM
- **Kalasandhi (Morning Pooja)** - 8.00 AM to 8.45 AM
- **Uchikalam (Noon Pooja)** - 11.00 AM to 12.00 noon
- **Sayaratchai (Evening Pooja)** - 5.00 PM to 5.45 PM
- **Arthasamam (Night Pooja)** - 9.00 PM

**Rituals and Festivals**

While many rituals and Festivals are common to all temples, there are some which are peculiar to some temple. Here are the details of a few of the rituals and festival of Saivite temples.

**Aadi Theppam**

The float festival is celebrated every year in the month of January in the Rama Theertham.

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Thai Poosam
Thai Poosam is the important festival in Saivite temples. Siva and Devi are taken out as a procession to the ‘Poosa Mandapam’ on bank of the river bank.

Vasantha Urchayam
Vasantha Urchavam (Autumn festival) is celebrated for 10 days in the month of “Vaikasi” (May - June).

Navarathiri
Navarathri is celebrated for 10 days in the month ‘Purattasi’.

Thai Theppam
Theppa Urchavam (Float Festival) is celebrated for 12 days in the month of ‘Thai’ (January – February).

Pidari Amman Festival
Pidari Amman Thiruvizha is celebrated for 7 days in the month of “Maasi” (February - March).

Vaishnava Temples
In the Musiri region there are five Vaishnava temples such as Thirunarayanapuram Vedanarayana Perumal temple, Gunaseelam Prasanna Venkatachala Perumal temple, Kannanur Varadharaja Perumal temple, Thuraiyur Perumalmalai-Alamelu Mangai Sametha Venkatachalapathi Swamy temple and Maradi Perumal temple.

Vedanarayana Perumal Temple, Thirunarayanapuram
Thirunarayanapuram located on the way to Thottiyan in Kattuputhur road with a detour of 2 kms near Arasalur in Tiruchirappalli district
is connected by bus from Tiruchirappalli and Musiri. The Vedanarayana Perumal temple is also called Chathurvedhi Mangalam and Vedapuri.¹³⁹

Long ago, a king namely Mahabali Chakravarthi Vanavarayar was leading his invasion with a view to extend his kingdom upto Mysore. As the day was over and the darkness started prevailing everywhere on the way, he had to relax for some time by sleeping. During the course of his sleep, Lord Perumal appeared in his dream and said that he was taking shelter under the earth. Lord Perumal advised that the king should make arrangements for his installation on that spot and perform all the pujas. Lord Perumal confirmed that the king would be successful in his venture. Lord Perumal assured the king that, on completion of whatever was told in dream, the king would hear the news of demise of the king who was ruling Mysore and Vanavarayar would certainly become the king with the support of the people of that region. King Vanavarayar, believing the words and advice of Lord Perumal, arranged to install the idol of Lord Perumal and perform the religious rituals by 108 Brahmins daily in the name of Panchaparva Utsavam, Thiruathyayana Utsavam, Brahmathsavam (Car festival) and carried on his invasion after donating the present Thirunarayanapuram.¹⁴⁰
Thirunarayanapuram or Vedapuri is the ancient name of the village which is said to have been created by Lord Brahma to worship Lord Vishnu. The place is also known as Adhi Rangam. The figure of the God in the Vishnu temple is in a recumbent position, as in the Srirangam temple, and the place is thus said to be a miniature Srirangam and Prahalatha is seated near his feet. Utsavar, the prime deity Sri Vethanarayanan is in a standing posture. Inscriptions in Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu are found on the walls of this temple. It is said that the emperor of Thirubhuvanam renovated the temple.

The inscription of Vedanarayana Perumal temple of Thirunarayanapuram mentions the endowments made to the temple. An inscription found on the north and west walls of the Vedanayaki-Thayar shrine in the Vedanarayana Perumal temple, records the construction of the temple. Another inscription of the temple found on the southern wall of the same shrine, mentions the Brahmadeya village Mahendramangalam and seems to register a gift of land. Another inscription of the same temple refers to an exchange of land and mentions Mahendramangalam. On the top of the stone there is the concluding portion of another record registering a gift of land as a Devadhana to the temple of Ninraruliya Veykundrattu Perumanadigal. There are also numbers of inscriptions found in the temple about the religious endowment.

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141 ARE No. 241 of 1930-31.
142 ARE No. 243 of 1930-31.
143 ARE No. 245 of 1930-31.
The devotional work, Thiruppanimalai contains 60 stanzas gives detail. This is said to be the same place described as Thirunaraiyur in Manavala Mamuni’s work Srivadanabhushnam (about 500 years old) where Arayar is said to have lived and carried out religious propaganda. The village was a Inam village endowed in the name of the temple in Fasli 1366 when it was taken over by the government recently.

There are separate sannadhis for Lord Perumal, and also there are number of Mandapas inside the temple known as Artha Mandapa, Maha Mandapa, Thirupon Mandapa, three mandapas in Thayarsannadhi Mandapa, Andal Sannadhi Mandapa, Vahana Mandapa, two pillared Mandapas Garuda Mandapa, etc. in this temple. The sthalavriksha is Vilvam tree. The car festival is celebrated in the month of Vaikasi and the Vaikunda Ekadesi and in Margazhi attracts huge crowds from the surrounding villages of the Thirunarayanapuram.

The devasthanam is maintaining a guest house and a marriage hall. Large numbers of marriages are performed in this temple. The main occupation of the people of this village is agriculture and the main crops are paddy, betel vine and plantain. Number of families is engaged in making of thatch as a subsidiary occupation.146

This is a very ancient temple with additions constructed during Nayak period in the 15th century. This temple has two prakaram and has two main shrines for Perumal and Thayar. There is also a

146 S.R. Balasubramanian, op. cit., p. 378.
separate shrine for Goddess Saraswathi. In the Sanctum Sanctorum, Lord Perumal is reclining on Athiseshan and the Four Vedas are used as pillows by the God. Sridevi and Bhoodevi are near to the God. This temple is considered to be an important one as Lord Perumal is advising Brahma. The name of the Theertham is Cauvery and the Sthalavriksha is Vilva tree.

The festivals are Brahmotchavam for eleven days during the Vaikasi Navarathiri Urchavam, for nine days during Purattasi; Vaikunda Ekadesi festival for 21 days during Margazhi; Masi Magam during Masi besides this, there are many festivals also celebrated in this temple.

**Prasanna Venkatachalaperumal Temple, Gunaseelam**

This village is situated at 24 kms from Tiruchirappalli on Salem road on the left bank of the river Cauvery. The village is well known for its temple of Prasanna Venkatachalaperumal in the Southern districts.

This temple is popularly called as ‘Then-Tirupathi’. The name is said to be derived from that of sage Gunaseelam who is supposed to have resided here. This temple is said to have been constructed by the king Dharmavarma of Uraiyur is considered to be a miniature of the famous temple at Tirupathi. Indeed vows made to the deity at the latter place are often fulfilled at this place. Omens are obtained

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147 Ibid.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
before the God by placing packets of Thulasi and flower. It is a good omen if the flower is picked out. There is a belief that persons who bathe in the river and worship the deity for 48 days are cured of all diseases, including persons affected by evil spirits.  

The temple covers an area of 1.45 acres. All the towers in the temple are built of granite. The presiding deity of the temple is Sriprasanna Venkatachalapathy represented by a 5 ½ feet tall stone idol in a standing posture. His consort is Sri Alamelumangai Thayar. The Utsava idols are Sri Srinivasamoorthy and Sri Padmavathi.

Evidently a palm-leaf is in the possession of the archakar of the Prasanna Venkateswarar temple. A damaged record seems to register the gift of the village Gunaseelam as Sarvamanya to God Prasanna Venkateswaraswamy. In that palm-leaf the saka year is written corruptly. The latter part of the record appears to be the concluding portion of the inscription of the Vijayanagara king Krishnadevaraya. Pujas are performed five times a day. The annual festival of this temple is celebrated for a period of 11 days during the month of Purattasi in commemoration of the Lord’s Dharsan to sage Gunaseela Maharishi who was unable to visit Tirupathi.

Prasanna Venkatesaperumal Temple lies 16 kms from Tiruchirappalli at Gunaseelam, on the northern banks of the river Cauvery. During the Uchikala puja (11.30 am to 12.30 pm) and

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152 Ibid, p. 1569.
154 Ibid., pp. 1586-1587.
Arthajama Puja the holy water is sprinkled on the devotees which is said to be expiating all kinds of evil-effects and mental disorders. During the whole Dhanu month December - January Kootaravalli and Vaikunta Ekatasi festivals take place. Apart from that, Saturdays in Purattasi, float festival and Bramotsavam are important festivals celebrated here. Annual festival is celebrated during the month of September-October with the famous car festival. The devotees from various parts of Tamil Nadu are visiting this temple to pray the Lord Prasanna Vekatesaperumal to get rid of the mental depression.  

Sundaravaradharaja Perumal temple, Kannanur

Another temple, Sundaravaradharaja Perumal temple is located in the northern part of the village. Lord Perumal is the prime deity. There are number of inscriptions found at the Muha Mandapa. An inscription found on the south wall of the central shrine in the Sundara Varadaraja Perumal temple states that the Tirumurran of Alagiyasena Vinayagar Emberuman was the work of Gopalan Alagiyan Ulagan alias Valavakon, a resident of Periya Kannanur.

Another inscription, found on the north, west and south walls of the same shrine in the temple seems to record that at the request of Ettakkundaiyan, an Angadich Chetti of the royal house holds, the King repaired the tank of the village and made a gift of six veli of land as tax free Devadhana to the temple of Alaga Perumal at Kannanur.

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156 ARE No. 141 of 1935 - 1936.  
Alamelumangai Sametha Venkatachalapathi Swamy Temple, Perumalmalai (Thuraiyur)

Sri Alamelumangai Sametha Venkatachalapathi Swamy temple is situated on the top of Perumalmalai, 5 kms from Thuraiyur on Perambalur road in Tiruchirappalli district.\[^{158}\] According to ancient scriptures there was a small Perumal temple on the hill.\[^{159}\] The present structure was constructed during the 16\(^{th}\) – 17\(^{th}\) century AD by the Nayak kings. According to mythology, king Prasannaverma, performed penance at the hill top, praying the Lord to give darshan to him with his consort Alamelumangai. The Lord granted his wish and appeared before him as he prayed for.

One can reach this temple at the top of the hill by climbing a flight of 1532 steps from the foot of the hill or by a vehicle. The ghat road for a distance of 5 kms from the foot of hill has been constructed by the devotees from Thattayyangarpettai village in memory of one Veerabhadra Chettiar.\[^{160}\] Power and water supply have been provided at the hill top by the temple administration.

There is a shrine for Bhairavar on the right side of the sanctum sanctorum and he is considered to be the protector of the local area. The other name of the lord is Karuppannaswamy. The unique feature of this shrine is that devotees are given vibuthi (Sacred Ash) and this is an uncommon practice in a Vaishnava temple.

The Dhasavathara Mandapam situated in front of the sanctum sanctorum is the most beautiful part of the temple. This is one of the rarest magnificent granite pieces depicting all the ten avathars of Lord Vishnu, namely Matsya, Koorma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vaamana, Parasurama, Rama, Balarama, Krishna and Kalki. These pieces measure about four feet in height and are carved out of granite with artistic skill. In addition there is a rare set of musical pillars in the temple. There are four ornamental pillars in the Dhasavathara Mandapam and the group of four pillars with delicately carved lion figures at the top of musical mandapam. Each of the four pillars has eight small spherical pillars, and different musical notes, they are gently patted with a metal piece. There are 32 pillars in this temple. During the Tamil month of Purattasi (September-October) thousands of pilgrims throng this hill top to offer prayers to Sri Alamelumangai Sametha Venkatachalapathi.¹⁶¹

**Perumal Temple, Maradi**

Maradi is a small village panchayat in Uppiliapuram union and in Musiri region. It is about 40 kms away from Musiri towards north.¹⁶² The present Maradi village came under the Melvalluvappadi Nadu in the Chola period. The Perumal temple area is about one acre. This temple is built of stone and moulded with stone mortar. In the entrance, there is a small tower and also Vimana on the sanctum sanctorum. Lord Perumal is in a standing posture.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ F.R. Hemingway, op. cit., p. 287.
¹⁶³ Interview with Vasudevan, Kovil Gurukkal, Maradi Perumal Temple on 21st August 2004.
In front of the temple wall at the left side there is an inscription states the installation of Alwar statues by Govindiya Krishnan. There is another inscription which tells about the village name Maradi, which comes under the Melvalluvappadi Nadu rule and the area, was ruled by the Madurai Nayaks (Krishnappa Nayak II) (1575 – 1600 AD). The Eramanchi Thimmaiya Nayak of Thuraiyur mittah was the ruler of Melvalluvappadi Nadu Maradi. He also offered land endowments to Lord Perumal.\textsuperscript{164}

**Vaishnavite Festivals and Pujas**

**Balarama Jayanthi**

This festival is celebrated on Bhadropad Krishna Shuki Shakti. Balaram, the elder brother of lord Krishna was born on this auspicious day. The main weapon of this great soul was a plough or a spigot. Therefore this festival is also called halahashti plough means hal as also called Hard chat or lullaby chant India, being an agricultural country there is a great importance of the plough this festival and the fast are observed all over Indian more over this is the only occasion to remember and remind other of the part played by Balarama in Krishna episode. On this day no food, grown in the field or milk and curd from cows should be consumed the plough and the corn from the field are worshipped along with sticks from berry plasters.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{164} Unnoticed Inscription.

\textsuperscript{165} Abbe J A Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Oxford University, Delhi, p. 22.
Hanuman Jayanthi

Hanuman the ape commander of the forces of Rama in said to love been born on this day Hanuman is known for his valour, courage and the most for his devotion to Rama Hanuman is symbolic of physical strength and is therefore the personified daily of the wrestlers body billed awl physical institute covers images of this deity are usually made of red stone smeared with red (vermilion) and offering of ladoos sweets are made. It is an auspicious day for inauguration of new wrestling rings.

Vaman Jayanthi

This is the day of appearance of God Vishnu in Vamana incarnation. Observing a fast and night watch invoking vaman avatar and offering 52 sweets donations and aims celebrate this.166

Ram Navami

The birthday of Rama Chandra is observed on the 9th of the light of the on the Chittirai (March-April) and is kept by some as a struck fast I was on this day that Vishnu incarnated as Rama through Dasharat’s wife Kaushalya. This day is also important because the celebrated Sanskrit poet Tuldi Dasa started composing his classic Ram Charit Mana. The devotee take a bath in Sarayu river on this day the fast on this day reminds us about the righteousness of Rama his devotion to his teacher removal of casteism shelter to the refugee brotherhood devotion to parents monogamy devotion to the master by Hanuman and Angered dutiful devotion of huge bird Garuda. The

166 Ibid, p. 22.
temples of Rama are illuminated and his image adorned with costly ornaments. The Ramayana is read in the temples and Naches (Natches) are kept up during the night of the 9\textsuperscript{th}. The celebration concludes on the 10\textsuperscript{th}.

**Yehadesi Fasting**

Yehadesi fasting day's is a meaningful and good (or) on that day we should reduce our food items reason is theology people say on that day there is a possibility of the food to get poisoned a little bit. Like that, the, Herbal plants used to as a medicine for that will also become poison on that day for that reason only doctor's, diagnose will not fetch the herbal plant leaves on that day. The next day thuvadasi on that day herbal plant will free from poison and medical engines increases so that only doctor's fetch the herbal leaves on that day.

**Festivals of Thirumal**

The religions of Vishnu, which celebrates the festival of Thirumal. All the Hindu in India celebrate the festival of light Deepavali without any discrimination. This is celebrated to remember the billing of Naragasuran (personification of evil) by Mahavishnu. This festival celebrated every year in the month of Ipasy (Tamil month).

Among the Avatars incarnations of Mahavishnu Ram Avatar and Krishna Avatar is mostly accepted. In Rama Avatar he lived like an Ovdisaryman. In it Rama never revealed that there was an avatar of Brahman. In opposition to this Krishnan has revealed in many places that he was an avatar of Brahman through his Lila. All the
Achariyas and Azhvars talk greatly of these two avatars only the day on which Mahavishnu came into this world in this Avatar Rama is celebrated as Rama Navami. In the same way Krishna avatar two is celebrated and this day is called Jammastami (or) Gogulashtami this festival is celebrated in whole India. The festivals of Ramanavami and Janmashtami are celebrated every year in every month on yagathasi and Thuvasi the Vaishnavas observe a special penance.

Deepavali
At the end of November or the beginning of December the Deepavali (torch of lamps) is celebrated. It occupies several day. Every evening while it last the Hindus place lighted lamps at the door, of their houses the Hindu paper lanterns on long poles in the street. This test appears to be especially dedicated to fire. But as it is held at a time when most of the cereal crops are ready for harvesting the cultivators in many places are than in the habit of going together in procession to other fields and there offering up to their crops prayers and sacrifices of rams or goats in order as it were to give thanks to their crops for having ripened and become fit for the food of man. Every has bandsman also on three days in succession proceeds to the dunged heap which he has collected for managing his fields and prostrates himself before it, presenting to it offering it humbly to fertilize his lands and to procure him abundant harvests. This worship it may be remarked very much resembles that which the Romans used to pay to their god Hercules.  

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167 Chitra Lekha Singh, Hindu Festivals, Fairs and Feasts, Crest publication, New Delhi, 1996, p. 53.
Pongal

On this day they put into a big vessel filled with water some saffron powder, some seeds of the tree called parati, and some leaves of the margosa-tree. After mixing the ingredients well together, they sprinkle the cows and the oxen with the liquid, walking round them three times. All the men of the house (for the women are excluded from this ceremony) then turn successively towards the four points of the compass and perform the sashtanga, or prostration of the six members, four times before the animals.\textsuperscript{168}

The horns of the cows are painted in various colours, and round their necks are hung garlands of green leaves interlaced with flowers. On these garlands are hung cakes, cocoanuts, and fruits, which, as they are shaken off by the animals, are eagerly scrambled for and devoured, as though they were sacred things, by the crowd following.

The cows are then driven together outside the town or village, and are then made to scatter in all directions by the aid of drums and noisy instruments. On this day cattle are allowed to graze everywhere without restraint; and no matter what damage they may do in the fields, they are never driven away.

The idols are afterwards taken from the temples and carried in procession, to the sound of music, to the place where the cattle have again been collected. The temple dancing-girls, who are to be found at all feasts and public ceremonies, are not absent on this occasion;

\textsuperscript{168} As already explained, it is prostration of the eight, not six members.
they march at the head of the large concourse of people, and from time to time pause to delight the spectators with their lascivious dances and obscene songs.

The feast terminates with a performance, which, I believe, has no other object than simple amusement. The crowd forms itself into a big circle, in the middle of which a hare is let loose, which in its efforts to escape runs round and round, from side to side, exciting much laughter amongst the spectators, till at last it is caught. The idols are then carried back to the temples; the cows are led back to the sheds, and thus end the most popular of all Hindu feasts.

The temple is the hub of the society around which the social life of the locality revolved. Many people of different walks of life depended directly on temples for their livelihood. Temples required a large amount of ritual goods and groceries for providing offering and maintaining the temple. Temples provided scope for the development of fine arts such as music, dance, architecture, sculpture and carpentry. In fact a temple was the local theatre which provided recreation to the local population through festivals and cultural performances.