CHAPTER XII
Kēthu Sthala at Kilaperumpallam
Kēthu, another Navagrahā has been housed in the Nāganātha Swāmy temple at Kīlaiperumpāḷḷam which is situated to the west of Vāṇangiri, and to the east of Thiruvalampūram temple at Mēlaperumpāḷḷam. The place is locally known as Nāganathānkōil. From Mayilāduthurai, the temple is about 30 kilometers in the east and from Sirkāzhi, about 25 kilometers. These places are well connected by road. As the shrine situated with in the Pōōmpuhār area, there are ancient Saivite temples such as Sāyāvaṇam, Pallavanēswaram and the Puthan Sthala Sri Swēthāreṇyēśwarā temples.

A note worthy aspect worth mentioning here is that, the temple at Nāganāthanēkōil had not been known to the public as the Kēthu Sthala. Hence, only in the recent past, so to say, with in two or three years only, the Sthala got familiar as the Kēthu Sthala and attracts people every day. The Saivite Triōs, Thirugnāsambandar, Thirunavukkārasar and Sūndarar have visited the temple and have sung holy hymnals in praise of the deity. Pōōmpuhār, Pūhar and Kāvēripōōmpatṭīnām are the names of the ancient town, which also have served the capital city of the Chōlas. Most probably, the temple should have been built during the 9th century by the Chōlas.

**Legend:**

Both the Dēvas and Asuṛas wanted to churn the milky sea using Mēru mountain as the pole and the celestial snake Vāsuki as
the rope. As the देवाः and असुराः strained very much to churn the 
milky sea so as to obtain the divine cream called “Amutham”. But the 
snake could not tolerate the strain and as a result of physical agony 
vomited the most dangerous venum called the “Alakālavisham”. Both 
the देवाः and असुराः got shocked over this, that the venum of the 
snake could poison the whole sea. Hence, they appealed to lord Sivā 
to help them. Lord Sivā, undermining the acute nature of the venum, 
took it and gulped it. Goddess Parvaṭhy, the consort of Lord Sivā got 
armed and got hold of Sivā’s throat very firmly so as to avoid the 
venum not to enter into his body. As a result of this, the venum got 
choked at Sivā’s throat and the colour of his turned to be blue, hence, 
Lord Sivā came to be known as “Thirunēḷakandar.”

The देवाः and असुराः got annoyed and disappointed over their 
effort and could not churn out the Amudham. Hence, they pulled out 
the snake Vāsuki, squeeze it as a hay bundle and threw it away. The 
snake was about die, but fortunately there was little life in its tail and 
gradually it spread from the tail to the head. Hence, he snake became 
avlive. But, the snake began to feel bad that Lord Sivā had to eat the 
venum vomited by it. Hence, it wanted to beg the pardon of the Lord, 
and decided to perform a penance towards Lord Sivā. Lord siva got 
pleased over the penance of the snake Vāsuki and appeared before 
the snake and wanted to know the wishes of the snake. The snake 
appealed to the Lord, that he should pardon his sin and expressed its 
desire of installing himself in the bamboo groove and a temple maybe
raised over that area. As the nāgā or the serpent worshipped the Lord for a temple may be raised over that area. As the nāgā or the serpent worshipped the Lord for a temple there, the name of the place and shrine came to be a Kēthu sthala and those got afflicted by the misfortunes of Kēthu should be relieved by the serpent Vāsuki, the Lord installed himself along with his consort as Nāganātha Swāmy and Soundranāyaki. Thus, the Kēthu Sthālā came into existence at this place.

Kēthu was an Asurān by birth, and he was known as Swarbānu in his early years. Kāsiba Munivar was his grand father. His father was Vikprasithu and his mother was Simhihai. Since, he was the son of Simhihai, he was also called Simhikēyan. Once, the Dēvas and Asurās churned the Milky sea and extracted the nector called Amirtham. Lord Thirumāl who was in the guise of Mōhini distributed it to the Dēvas. Swarbānu, the Asurā also wanted to eat the Amirtham. Hence, in the disguise of a Dēva, he sat between the Sun and the Moon and received it and ate it. Knowing the fraud committed by Swarbānu, both the Sun and the Moon informed it to Lord Thirumāl who was in the disguise of Mōhini. Mōhini got annoyed and smote heavily upon the head of Swarbānu with the heavy spoon that she used to distribute the Amirtham. As a result of this heavy blow, Swarbānu’s body split in two as body and head. The head became a black coloured snake and came to be known as Rāgu and the body became red coloured Kēthu with five hōods of a snake.
Having got changed in snake's form, both Rāgu and Kēthu began a penance towards Lord Siva for the remission of their curse. The Lord also got pleased with the penance of both Rāgu and Kēthu and blessed with the status of Grahas. With their inclusion, there came into existence the Navagrahās.

**Architecture:**

The temple faces the east. Just opposite to the temple is located the holy tank called “Nāgathīrtham”. On its western bank, just opposite to the shrine can be seen the Sthalā Viṛṭcaḥas namely Arasu and Nēṃ trees. Around the temple are four compound walls. At the entrance of the temple, there is no gōpura. Entered into the temple, in the Prahāra, in the west are seen Lord Vināyaga, Vālī, Theivayāni and Lord Murugā, Subramaṇiyā, Durgā, Lakṣhmī, Nārayanan, Mahēśhwari, Gajalakṣhmī. In the western Prahārā are seen the shrines of Sanēswarar and Durgā.

In the Thirumaligai pathi of the eastern prahārā, the shrines of Sanēswarā, Bairavā, Sambaṇḍar, Nāgar and Sōōriyan. At the place is located the image of Kēthu Bhagavān in standing position. He is seen with five headed hoods of a snake. He is seen in Anjali Kastha.

Just opposite to the Sannathi, the Nandhi and Paliṇṭita are located. Then it leads to the Mahāmandapā. The Sanctum sanctorum is located near to the Mahāmandapā. And the presiding deity Sri Nāganāthar is seen in Linga form. Siṭṭhi Vināyagā stands at
the entrance of the cellar. In the Arthamaṇḍapa are seen the Uruchi Moorthies and Paṇḍha Moorthies. Moreover, here located both Natarāja and Ketu. The temple belongs to the Mādac kōil form.

Pūjās and Festival:

Pūjās are performed to the deities daily during which, the mantras are chanted, and as per the āgamic rites, archanas and abhisēkas also have been performed. The ōduvars of the temple sing hymns from the Devarām. The temple musicians play music during the Pūjās. The temple’s bells also made to chime. Every day, Pūjās are offered to the deities four times as follow:

1. Kālasaṃdhi Morning - 8.30 – 9.00 Am
2. UচChi Kālam Noon time - 11.30 – 12.00 Noon
3. Sayara čhai Evening - 5.30 – 6.00 P.m
4. Artha sāmam Night - 8.30 – 9.00 P.m

During the festival times special Pūjās. Archanās and Abhisēkas also have been performed. As per the recent orders of the Government of Tamil Nadu, the Pūjās are performed in Tamil also.

The following festival also have been celebrated in the temple. During the month of chiḻhirai, Tamil new Year’s day, full moon day celebrations are performed. Vaikasi Visākam has been celebrated very nicely. In the month of Āni, Ānithirumaṇjanam has been celebrated to Lord Natarāja. During the month of Ādi, every Friday and especially, the last Friday of Ādi has been celebrated. During the
month of Āvaṇi, Vinayagarchaṭṭurṭhi festival has been celebrated grandly. Navarāṭhari celebration are observed on all the nine days. The grand hindu festival Deepavali has been celebrated in the month of Ippasi. In the month of Kārthigai, Thirukarthigai festival has been observed with lifting of oil lamps all over the temple. During the month of, at the Thiruvāṭhirai star, a special festival is observed. Thai Pōṅgal is yet another important festival observed in the month of Thai. During the month of Māsi, Sivan Rāṭhiri festival has been celebrated. Panguni uthiram has been celebrated during the month Paṅguni.

Panguni Ŭthirā festival has been celebrated grandly for ten days with the hoisting of the temple flag to mark the commencement of the festival. Brammorchavam, Ganapathy hōmam, are performed and finally on the tenth day, along with Thīrthavāri, the holy marriage festival also have been celebrated. The Urchavar, adorned beautifully is taken out in procession throughout the streets.

**Administratration:**

Sri Nāgaṇatha Swāmy temple at Keelaperumppallam is the Kēthu Sthalā. This temple should have been built during the time of the Chōlas. Inscriptions are not seen in the temple and as per hearsay, the ancient inscriptions would have been demolished, whenever, renovatory works have been undertaken at time to time. The temple is under the control of the Hindu Religious and Endowment Charitable board with the assistance of the Board of Trustees. The temple has 132 acres of wet land, 20 acres of dry land and 46 temple
plots. Approximately, per year, temple derives an income of 3.5 lakhs. Additional sources of income to the temple have been derived from the hundial collections, sale of archanā tickets etc.,

**Kēthu and Astrological aspects:**

Kēthu is red in colour, hence he has been offered red colour dresses and adorned with red colour flowers. Besides the customary costumes, he also has been offered black colour dresses and flowers of various colours. The grain offered for Kēthu is Kollu. Dharbai grass is his samithu. He likes the taste pullippu or sour. His direction is North west. Both Venus and Saturn are his friends. The Sun, Moon and the Mars are his enemies. He belongs to the Gemini Gōthra. Chiṭrakalā is the wife of Kēthu. He used go round the Mount Mēru from the left. In the Rāsi Mandalā, he used to rotate in the opposite direction.

Kēthu is the ninth of the Navagrahās. Like Rāgu, it is also a shadow graha, and like Rāgu, Kēthu also dwells in a rāsi for one and half years. Kēthu, when transfer from, one house of a Rāsi to another, he will indicate the fortunes of transfer even before three months. Pisces or Mēena Rāsi is under the control of Kēthu. He gets exalted in Aquarist or Kumba rāsi and get declined at Leo or Simma rāsi. Like any other Navagrahās, he also looks at seven that is the Rāsi located at the seventh house. Generally, he used to grant the same fortunes of Mars or Seyyāi. Therefore, like Mars or Seyyāi, Kēthu also looks at the Rāsis housed in 4, 7 and 8.
As the Rāsis are twelve in number in everyone’s horoscope, so also, Kēthu grants both good and bad fortunes as per the number of the house where he gets in. Generally, if Kēthu is present in the house of one’s horoscope, the person will not feel good. He used to get bad health, his efforts will fail and unnecessary enmity may happen. When Kēthu enters into the second house of a Rāsi, he causes worries and unhappiness. He also may cause such a person to spend money on either unwanted things or to make bad things.

When Kēthu enters into the third house of a Rāsi of one’s horoscope, he grants good fortunes. He will get success in all his efforts. He also will get peace of mind and good health. But when he enters into the fourth house of Rāsi, he used to grant misfortunes, gain and loss of money owing to the company of bad persons and as a result of that there will be a free flow of money for transactions. It is the same state when Kēthu enters into the fifth house of a Rāsi. Enmity, disease, sorrow and uneasiness may have influence over that person.

When Kēthu enters into the sixth house of the Rāsi, he grants all graces like good health, happiness and economic prosperity. All sorts of misfortunes will also disappear. When he enters into the seventh house, he causes distress in the family, diseases, sorrows and delay in good activities. When he enters into the eighth house, one has to be very careful and the same will happen when he enters into the ninth place. But when he enters into the tenth house of a Rāsi,
he used to grant good fortunes, especially there will be good improvement kin health. He grants again very good fortunes such as wealth, happiness in family and also the happenings of auspicious events in the family when he is seen in the eleventh house. But, when Kēthu enters into the twelfth house of the Rāsi, there will be loss of money through friends.

**Relieving measures:**

Those who are afflicted with Kēthu thōśha, the following measures are being recommended as per the astrological works. On any day, abhiṣhekā can be performed to Kēthu. He need to be adorned with multi colour dresses, red lilly flowers, and with Kēthu maṇṭras can be chanted, and a fire pit with dhabai grass to be lit and the grain Kollu, Kolḷupowder mixed rice as Neivēthiam can be offered. Dipārathanā can be also performed. It is better to sing Kēthu hymns in Šaṅmugappiriya tune. These measures can relieve a person from the afflictions of Kēthu.

**Kēthu’s Navagrahā prayer:**

![Image]

8
Navagraha sthuthi: (in Sanskrit)

Equivalent to the red light of the Pûram flower, having the stars and the grahas as part of the head, with fiery appearance, and annoyed towards to those who commit sins, I pray the Kēthu Bhagavan who with a awful figure.

Possessions of Kēthu:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gōthiram</td>
<td>Jaimini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Supreme Lord</td>
<td>Chitragukptan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Favourite Lord</td>
<td>Brahmā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Worshipping Lord</td>
<td>Vallaba Ganapathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Authority</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Direction</td>
<td>North West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Language</td>
<td>Alien language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Cast</td>
<td>Sangirāmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dress</td>
<td>Multi colour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>consort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Samithu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Grain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Gem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Dwelling time in a Rāsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Thasaikālam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Fortune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Sthalā</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foot Notes


2. ibid., P.8.

3. ibid., 9.9.


5. ibid., P.114.


7. ibid., P.32.


9. ibid., P.201.

10. ibid., P.201.