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THE HISTORY OF VALIKANDAPURAM, RANJANKUDI FORT AND FRENCH RESETTLEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Tamilnadu is having a great history. Chera, Chola, Pandia had been successfully ruling various parts of Tamil Nadu. The Kings who were ruled Tamil country gave much more important to art, architecture and sculpture. The art and architecture of a country is always representing the life style and costumes of the people. The Kings, noble men and common men contributed much to build the temples in their country. The Kings were careful about building the fort for their defense. The fort in a country gave security to the high class people sometimes to common people. Vallikandapuram village and Ranjan fort were always having the special attention by the King Chola for its richness. The Ranjan fort was attacked by several troops during 1951. The



fort is called as Ranjan kudikottai and it also referred as Nanam kudikottai. The palace has a residence building, underground chamber and passages that link Pettai with Kottai Medu. Valikandapuram is the important city in the Chola Kingdom. Valikandapuram links with Ramayana. The King Vali worshipped the god Shiva here to attain many power. The God Shiva in the temple is known as Valieswarar and Goddess is known as Valambigai.

KEYWORDS: History of Valikandapuram, great history, architecture and sculpture.

INTRODUCTION

The Chola dynasty was one of the longest-ruling dynasties in the Southern India. The inscriptions revealed that the dynasties of three crowned Kings of Tamilagam continued to govern over varying territory until the 13th century CE. The Chola country comprised the greater parts of the Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli and Rock fort. Uraiyur was the capital of sangam –Cholas and it was also called as urandai or Argaru. This is considered to be a correct transliteration of uraiyur. The capital grew up around a fortress built on the summit of the rock of Tiruchirapalli, which is raised a-

bruptly out of the plain to a height of 103.6 meters above the old city which nestles pictures quell at its foot. Udaipur was well known for its prosperity. Just like ranchland Madurai, it had strategic fort and was sound in defense. The inscriptions reveal the truth that reign of Chola was well known for its justice. The festivals were often conducted at uraiyur. A temple was built for Kananga, She is well known for its chastity. The people who were expertise in their birth place were conducted the festivals in the temples. The King, Queen and noble men were the chief men in the festivals. There are pugazhcholer; kochen-gatcholer and Tiruppanalvar. Pearls were sold at the capital of uraiyur. The region of the king Chola is mist with rich gold, silver and precious stones. The Battle of Valikondah was held to

capture Ranjakudi fort during 1751. The British troops were supported by Mohammad Ali won over the French supported by ChandaSahip. The shape of the temple is semicircle bastions; a moat is encircling it and three fortifications at different levels. It was built with cut stone blocks. It has the palace, residence building, underground chamber, an underground passage that links Pettai with KottaiMedu. It maintained and administered by the Archaeological Survey of India. The fort is one of the prominent tourist destinations in Perambalur.

The History of Valikandapuram

The word Perambalur is originated from the word “Perupuliur”. The equal Sanskrit name for Parambalur is “brihadvyaghrapura”. Cooroombalore is consuming the area of 674 miles with greatest length from N. to S. it is bounded N. by Velour which separates it from Salem and South Arcot district; E by Udayarpalliemtaluk; Sibyl Tiruchirapallitaluk; and Webby moosirytaluk and nearly twenty two villages of Ariyalore Zamindarry are living in this taluk. The general aspect is flat, the north-western portion being more rugged and hilly than the rest.

The patchamallai hill is located in Perambalur. It separates Perambalur from moosiry and run for a short distance into the taluk; from the patchamallai along with the banks of the velour and stretching up as far as the udayarpalliyamtaluk. The land contains plain black cotton (regard) soil, in which there are large reacts of stiff block clay (column). The southern portion border of tiruchirappalli is rocky and the soil generally poor. Perambalur is one of the canda urambams (q.v) which are followed by are Aroombavore, Attiyore and poogalore. There is a camping ground at Toorumungalam on the trunk road to madras. Aroombavor, Audootorary, calookkanuttom, ootatoor, perambalore, periyammapolliem, Ranjengooely, Venganore, Vengoolam, Valcondapuram, are the leading places. Thiruchirappalli district was divided into three districts namely perumbidugumutharayar, Chinnamalai and Perambalur Thiruvalluvar. Ariyalur revenue division is consisting of three taluk viz. Ariyalur, Perambalur and Udayarpalayam.

This district is comprised of three taluks and nine community development blocks at present. This district is carved out of erstwhile. Trichi Perumbidugumutharayar district revamped as Tiruchirappalli. Its historical past is one and the same as of its parent district. Valikandapuram is one of the famous villages in Perumbalur District. Valikandapuram temple constructed of stone by Rajendracholal, his followers, and Pandya. It is carved in the inscriptions of Vijayanagar. The temple marks the last phase of the early chola architecture and its zenith.

It is a land locked district with no coastal border. The pachaimalai hill is situated north side of valikandapuram. It is the most important hill in the district. The average height of the hills is 610 meters though a few of its peaks rise to about 1036 meters above sea level. The predominant soil in the district is red sandy with scattered pockets of block soil. The best quality of soil is found in perambalur district.

The French East India Company and French Settlement

The desire for eastern traffic displayed itself at a very early period among the French. They were the last of the European powers to compete for commercial gains in the East with the other European companies. The leading Englishmen and Frenchmen like Henry IV, Richelieu and Colbert realized the importance of Eastern commerce. The “Companies des Indes Orientales” was formed at the instance of cotter in A.D. 1664. It was created and financed by the state. The French company’s first movement was “neither well considered nor fortunate”, because its energies wreathen fritted away in fruitless attempts to colonies Madagascar. It had ready infraclass attempts to colonies Madagascar, which had already been visited by Frenchmen. But in 1667 another expedition started from France under the command of Francois Carom, who was accompanied by Maraca, a nation of Isfahan.

The first French factory in India was defeated by their admiral, De la Haye. It was defeated by a combined force of the sultan of Golconda, the Dutch and it was forced to capitulate. It made San Theme to surrender himself to the Dutch. Meanwhile, François Martin and Bellanger de Lesbian had accompanied Admiral De la Haye and it was obtained a little from the Muslim governor of Valikandapuram in 1673. Thus the foundation of Pandicherry was laid in a modest manner. François Martin, who took charge of this settlement from A.D. 1674,

developed it into an important place, through personal courage, perseverance and tact, “amid the clash of arms and the clamor of falling kingdoms”. Nawabshaista khan granted a site to the French in Bengali in 1674, on which they built the famous French factory of Chandernagore.

The European rivalries between the Dutch (Supported by the English) and the French adversely influenced the position of the French in India. Pondicherry was captured by the French man, Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. Martin, again placed in charge of this settlement, restored its prosperity so that it came to have a population of about 40,000 at the time of the death in 1706 as compared with the 22,000 of Calcutta in the same year. But the French lost their influence in places, factories at Bantam, sutra and masulipatam. They were abandoned in the early eighteenth century.

The resources of the French company were practically exhausted by this time. It was followed the strong and wise policy of Martin. It started to act with the reconstitution of the company as the “Perpetual Company of the Indies”. The prosperity returned to it under the wise administration of Lenoir and Dumas between 1720 and 1742. The French occupied Mauritius in 1721, Malabar Coast in 1725 and Karakul in 1739. The objects of the French were however purely commercial during this period.

There was nothing in the conduct of Lenoir or Dumas which allows us to credit the company with political views and still less ideas of conquest. Its factories were more or less fortified, but for motives of simple security against the Dutch and the English. It used the troops only for defense. The political motives began to overshadow the desire for commercial gain after 1742. Dupleix began to cherish the ambition challenged by the English opened.

A new chapter in Indian History and there were no deceiving operation for some time. Meanwhile, the diversion on Arcot was planned. Muhammad Ali, to whom the credit really went for this suggestion and it, had been of the view that troops from Madras could take possession of several places in the Arco country and thus compel the enemy to desist from marching.

Saunders appreciated the value of the Nawab's proposals after the English reverse at Valikandapuram. They doubted the combined forces of the English and Muhammad Ali, even if they should take Arcot, might be strong enough to keep it and collect the tributes from the polygons without considerably diminishing the enemy. Muhammad Ali strongly urged his plan and Saunders entrusted Clive, who now came into prominence, with the task of the capture of Arco. The capture of Arco by Clive (August 1751) assisted by the Anwar's troops. It did not make any impression on Dupleix who believed that the place could be easily retaken.

The subsequent siege of Arco by Razesahib, assisted while Murar Rao definitely went over the side of the English. On the 24th of November the enemy raised the siege and the event being deemed to be 'the turning point in the eastern career of the English'. Clive won the victory of Kaveripauk. He accompanied Major Lawrence who had assumed the command and reached the place by the end of March 1750. Muhammad Ali's chief reliance was on the help from Nanjaraj of Mysore.

Dupleix anxious was to retain the superiority and had strictly ordered Law. The French commander planned to attack and intercept the advancing forces of Lawrence cleverly at Trichinopoly. They distracted his attention and by-passed him. It was with-in actual cannon-shot and could be cut off from all supplies and communication. Chanda sahib protested against this suicidal course. Dupleix held it the worst piece of the folly that Law could commit and urged him that if he should retreat at all. He should march back on Pondicherry so as to allow rein for cements joining him at a distance from Dupleix reaching Law. He also repulsed a surprise attack made on his position. Law's only hope of safety now lay in his conjunction with D'Auteuil who headed the convoy from Pondicherry. But captain Dalton tricked D'Auteuil into the belief that he forced him to retreat, leaving all his stores and ammunition in English hands.

HISTORY OF RANJANKUDI FORT

Ranjankudi Fort is a 17th century fortress located about 22km (14mi) north in the town of Perambalur, Tamil Nadu India. The fort is located 22km (14mi) north of Perambalur NH 45 in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is located 253 km (157 mi) away from the state capital Chennai and 70 km (43 mi) from Trichy. The fort was constructed by feudatory Nawab of the Carnatic.

The fort is called ranjankudikottai and it also referred as Nanankudikottal. The old premises is believed to have been housing Hindu temples dedicated to Shiva and Hanuman. It is believed that the fort is constructed by jagirdar of the Nawab of Carnatic during the 17th century. The fort was the center point of the Battle of Valikondah during 1751.

There was a power struggle between Hyder Ali and later Tipu Sultan with the British. After the death of the Tipu Sultan, the English took the civil and Military Administration of the Carnatic in 1801. Mohammed Ali annexed the Two Palayams of Ariyalur and Udaiyarpalayam located within the present Parambalur district on grounds of default in payment of Tribute and failure to assist him in quelling of Yusuf Khan. The Poligars troops were defeated and the palayams were occupied by Donald Campbell. The two Poligars fled their town and took refuge in Tharangambad, then a Danish settlement. The annexation of the Palayam gave the Nawab uninterested possession of all his territories extending from Arcot to Thiruchirappalli.

The British troops were supported by Mohammad Ali while the French were supported by Chanda Sahib. Though the battle is called as Valikondah by the nearby village and it was fought in the fort. When the French won the initial battle, the British ended up winning the final battle with the help of local Muslims. The fort was also the scene of surrender of French troops under D'Auteuil in May of 1752, which was posted in station and was fended off by the British troops led by Dalton on May 9th. He retreated to Ranjankudi, where the jagirdar took the side of the British and denied to enter into the French troops to the upper part of the fort. D'Auteuil was surrendered in the fort.

The fort is oblong in shape with semicircular bastions and a moat encircling it. There are three fortifications at different levels. It was built with cut stone blocks. The lower bastion is the main rampart surrounded by mud wall. The open ground known as petal is approached through a flight of steps, which was once a battlefield. The top-tier is called Kottai Madu, used as guarding towers by soldiers and housing cannons. The small water body in the fort is believed to have been used by the Nawab as swimming pool.

The fort has a palace, residence building, underground chamber and an underground passage that links pettai with Kottai Medu. The pit in the centre of the fort was used as a prison for male prisoners while female prisoners were jailed in small blocks inside the fort. The fort is one of the prominent tourist destinations in Perambalur.

The communications of the enemy were now completely cut off; and most of Chanda Sahib's adherents now deserted him. He had frequently urged upon Law the necessity of their making a final effort to break away. But repeated failures had depressed his mind and undermined his health. He attempted to gain over the Tanjore general to his side, in the hope that the latter might aid his escape to Karikal. But when he surrendered, he was promptly imprisoned. Lawrence proposed that Chanda Sahib should be given over to the English for safe custody; but the proposal was unacceptable to all his native allies, especially to Muhammad Ali. Ultimately Chanda Sahib was killed, and it is said, at the instigation of Muhammad Ali (June 1752).

CONCLUSION

Ranjankudi Fort was built with the special features. The Fort was built by a Jagirdar under Nawab of Carnatic. The Fort walls are built with neatly cut stone blocks. There are three fortification walls at different heights and the bottom most is the main rampart. It is oblong on plan with semicircular bastions and encircled by a moat fed by a tank on the southern side. The fort contains a palace, residential buildings, underground chambers, and mosque and flag mast. The fort was the scene of the battle of Valikondah between the English and Mohammad Ali on one side and Chanda Sahib and the French on the other side in 1751 AD. This fort is under protection of the Archaeological Survey of India. Aroombavoor, Audoor, Calookanuttom, Ootatoor, Perambalur, Periyampolliem, Ranjengooely, Venganore, Vengoolam, Valcondapuram, are the leading places of Perambalur. Thus ended the French siege of Trichinopoly. No such below had fallen on the French since they entered the field of Indian politics. Their ally, Chanda Sahib, was no more, and their military prestige was vastly lowered. The triumph of the English was great; their representative, Muhammad Ali, was now the undisputed master of Trichinopoly. The only capable general on the French side was by the side of Inseam for away from Pondicherry. Pondicherry itself had been denuded of its garrison; and Jinni and other places in French

possession were equally unprotected.

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