

## THAGADUR IN SANGAM AGE

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During the Sangam period Tamil country was ruled by the Cheras, Cholas and Pandiya rulers. The Adhiyaman rulers were also ruled in Thagadur nadu as chieftains. They called themselves as descendants of the Chera rulers. Some medieval inscriptions mention about this relationship. From Chera lineage who ruled from Kavery was the original lineage of the Adhiyamans. Sangam literature “Thagadur Yathirai” mentions this relationship. Thanjavur was the capital city of the Cholas. Karuvur was the capital city of the Cheras and Madurai was the capital city of the Pandiyas. This is attested by literatures and inscriptions. Thagadur was the capital city of the Adhiyamans. In this Dissertation chiefdom of Adhiyamans and their capital city Dharmapuri are to be analysed.

**Key Words:** Adhiyaman, Sangam, Thagadur Yathirai, Kuthiraimalai, Modur, Vanciyar, Nulambas

### **Introduction :**

Sangam age was the early historic period in Tamil history. There was no writing system in pre Sangam age. Only graffiti marks were in practice. In Harappa civilization graffiti symbols were used. This graffiti system was used by pre Sangam period. Pre Sangam age was called as Iron age culture by the historians.

There were no written documents in the Sangam period. So historians fixed the date of the Sangam age on the basis of Sangam literature. In same time chronology was also fixed with the help of literature data. Sangam literature was copied from the palm leafs. When coping the literature new ideas were introduced by the copier. Hence literature mixed with many fictions. In

this situation differ opinions between scholars are persisting. After the ancient texts were copied many texts were destroyed. Soone must be careful in using literature data. Some historians were very happy with phrase “கல்தொள்ளரிமண்தோன்றாக்காலத்தமுன்தோன்றிமுத்தகுடி” which purely imagination. In dating Sangam period differences of opinions are existing till date. Few historians fixed the age of the Sangam period between 1000 B.C. to 300 B.C. Another one date was also introduced by the scholars i.e. between 300 B.C. to 300 A.D. On the basic of anthropological and archaeological views this opinion is accepted by the scholars.

### **URBAN CENTERS OF SANGAM AGE**

Sangam literature is a collection of songs and it praise the kings like Chers, Cholas, Pandiyas and other small chieftains in Tamil Nadu. Each kingdom had its own kingdom and capital city. Some of the kings called their name with the name of the city. Korkaikoman (king of Korkai), GunapulamKoman (king of Eastern region) and Kadalvaluthi, Koliyuran, Kavirinadan, Ponnainadan and Thanrikon are few examples. Tamil country had their own urban centers.<sup>1</sup> Sangam literature mentions seven chieftains and their capitals. Thagadur is one of the important city among them. It is difficult to locate Sangam period Thagadur.

The archaeological evidences belong to early medieval period. Hence some historian had their own doubt about the location of the Thagadur. To locate the exact place of Thagadur is the main theme of this chapter<sup>2</sup>

### **EXCAVATION IN DHARMAPURI REGION**

The literature and archaeology data are main sources to identify the location of the Thagadur. Literary data gives the location and natural boundaries of the city. Archaeological data give the picture of the people life. In the same time archaeological data conform the location of the city. Natural boundaries were mentioned in Sangam literature included with this. To locate the city of Thagdur many archeological explorations conducted by some archaeologists. In the exploration many data were collected from Mayiladumpari, Adhiyamankottai, Guddur and Modur. Excavation at Mayiladumpari yield archaeological data for conforming the human life before 5000 years. But no data available for Sangam period. This place is surrounded by the hills.<sup>3</sup> Excavation in Guntturield artifacts which belong to Neolithic and Iron age periods.

Sangam period antiquities were not collected. This site is also located between the hills.<sup>4</sup> Adhiyamankottai situated near Dharmapuri. This place may be the ancient Thagadue. So excavation was conducted by the Archaeological Department. Antiquities collected in this site is discussed in the third chapter. Sangam period antiquities were not collected in this site also. So this site is not the ancient Sangam period place.<sup>5</sup>

Modur a small village situated in the Western direction of Dharmapuri. Here also one excavation was conducted. Excavation details were discussed in the previous chapter. Modur was surrounded by the hills on three sides. The settlement area is about 40 acres. The hills are looks like a security walls around the place. It is mentioned in the Sangam literature.<sup>6</sup> Athiyaman were mentioned as the chiefs of the Kuthirai hills. One of these hills might have been the *Kuthirai* hill. The people discarded this place for unknown reason. Hence the name *Kuthiraimalai* is forgotten.

### **EXCAVATION IN MODUR**

Modur was a ancient city. Neolithic people were settled in this place before 2000 B.C. In the excavation many verities of antiquities were collected.<sup>7</sup> Neolithic and Megalithic period potsherds were unearthed. Potsherds like black and red wear, red wear, black wear and russet coted wear were collected.

In addition to this brown slipped wear were also collected. They were collected in the surface as well as in the excavation. Large quantity of these wear were noticed in this site alone. No wear except Sangam period was collected in this site. Sangam period antiquities like terracotta earlobe, counc bangles, glass bangles and terracotta figurines were unearthed in this site. The ancient name of this area is called as Mandu. Mandu means ancient settlement area. Today also the local people called this area as Mandu. It is a ancient mound. The height of the mound is two meters. The excavation reveals that there was an urban center in the Sangam period.

In Sangam period many monuments like cairn circle, cist, dolmen and urn were erected in the memory of heroes who died in the battle. At Modur many megalithic burials were located. Among them two were excavated by the archaeologists. Many carnelian beads, iron objects, black wear, black and red wear pots and sarcophagus were unearthed in these burials. These

antiquities are dated to the Sangam period. Two hero stones of Pallava period were also identified in this village. Two Sanniyasi stones are also standing this the entrance of the village. Every year rituals were performed to this stones for the health of the cattle. In those days' cattle is the main wealth of Sangam period. So these stones are erected in this village.<sup>8</sup>

Two inscriptions were copied from this village. The first inscription was vatteluthu script.<sup>9</sup> It mentions about the construction of a tank near this village and it is now also in use. The date of the inscription is 8-9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It is located in the Northern side of the Modur village.

Second inscription was engraved on the boulder which is near the village. It was engraved during the Chola king Rajaraja III. It mentions Nigarilichola mandalam, Thagadur nadu and Modur. Modur was donated as Dhavadana village to Singaperumal temple at Modur.<sup>10</sup> This inscription mentions this village as Moodur i.e. ancient city. It must be the correction form of the ancient Moodur. So one can conclude that Modur was the corrupt form of Moodur.

Modur excavation conform that there was a continuous settlement from Neolithic to Sangam period. From post Sangam period onwards it lost its importance. During the medieval period Nulambas captured Modur. After some time Thagadur might have been relocated to present Dharmapuri. There is no Sangam period antiquities and temples in present Dharmapuri. So with the help of above evidences Modur was the ancient Thagadur.

Prof. P.Shanmugam had studied the excavated Sangam age urban centers in Tamil nadu. He discussed about the location and area of the settlement in those days. Boundaries of the ancient site is also included in this discussion. Most of the settlements have the space between 40 to 50 acres. They had natural boundaries. For Kodumanal is also a Sangam period city. In this place there are two settlement areas. City and burial place were excavated. The settlement are is about 50 acres. This is one of the impotent trade cities in Tamil nadu. Here also there was no early medieval period settlements. Like this Modur is also one of the important cities in Sangam period.

## ADHIYAMANS

A continuous settlement was found in Modur from Neolithic to Sangam period. After Sangam period there was no activation up to seventh century A.D. Nulambas controlled this region. On that time Nuambas might have been shifted the Thagadur to modern Dharmapiri. After shifting the capital to Dharmapuri they constructed new temples in Nulamba style. Before this there was no temple in Dharmapuri.<sup>11</sup>

Adhiyamans, during the Chola period ruled Dharmapuri upto Thirumali in Tiruvannamali district. Their inscriptions were also found Laddigam which is in Chittur in Andhra Pradesh. It shows that they ruled up to Andhra Pradesh. Two inscriptions were copied in Thirumali. Adhiyaman ruler renovated the Jain sculpture and reconstructed the Jain temple in Thirumali is mentioned in that inscription. Tamil inscription from the same place mentions Elini as the clan of the Vanciyar. (Chera)<sup>12</sup>

Sanskrit songs eulogized Adhiyaman as warrer of victories battle with Magadhas and Kadavas. It mentions about South Thagadur. (தென்தகடூர்) South Thagadur is mentioned in that inscription. So there must have been North Thagadur. (வடதகடூர்) Since Modur is in the northern direction of present Dharmapuri and it might have been the ancient Thagadur.<sup>13</sup>

Medival period Adhiyamans rule extened up to Tiruchangodu. One important message was found in the song and the song was given below.

“சேரன் அதிகன்திருநெடுமால் தென்தகடை

வீரன்விடுகாதழகியான் நேரவிருஞ்

சேங்கோடுபோலச்சிலையைவடதிக்களவுங்

கங்கோடவெட்டினான்கல்“

Adhiyaman the Chera descendent who was in comparison with Thirumali. It also mentioned he was the ruler of the South Thagadur. (தென்தகடூர்) According to this song there was a city which was named as Then Thagadur. During Sangam period Thagdur was created which is attested by Sangam literature. In course of time another Thagadur was also created.

Modur was the city of Sangam age. In medieval period present Dharmapuri was created as second Thagadur. During the Vijayanar period it was again changed a Dharmapuri.<sup>14</sup>

Before the Modur exaction period many historians and Tamil scholars identified that modern Dharmapuri was the Sangam period Thagadur. But after the excavation was conducted in Modur archaeologist and scholars opine that Modur was the Thagadur of Sangam period, up to the end of the eighth century. After that the Modern capital was continued as Thagdur up to the thirteenth century. But there was no archaeological evidences in Dharmapuri

### Conclusion:

During the 8-9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Nulambas from Kolar region conquered the Thagadur region and annexed it with their country. After that it was named as Nulambapadi. After the Nulambas the Imperial Cholas from Thanjvur controlled this region and named as Nulambadi alias Nigarichola mandalam up to fourteenth century A.D. It is mentioned in the Chola inscriptions. After the Cholas Pandiyas, Hoysalas and Vijayanara rulers were ruled this region. But there was no change in this region. People engaged in cattle breeding and cattle raiding. Hero stones were erected for the heroes who lost their life in the time of cattle raiding and Hero stone worship was popular in this area.

Modur is located in the northern direction of the present Dharmapuri. It is confirmed that modern Dharmapuri was the Then Thagadur. (South Thagadur) Some medieval inscriptions were also conforming this conclusion. So Modur village was the ancient Thagadur. In the latter period it was shifted to the present Dharmapuri.

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