

Veerakkal Hero-Stone: Women History on the Stone Records - A Study

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for Women. Dindigul

Planting Hero-Stones was a popular cultural habit of Tamils. It occupies an important place in the life of Tamil people. Such Stones are called Veerakkal or Hero-Stone not only for the heroes, but also for the common people especially for women. However its beginning is in a great obscurity so far, and may arrive a conclusion, that it may be originates later stone age cultural period.

In those days people installed (planted) much heightened stones around a memorial place. It was known as vertical Stones, heightened Stones or Veerakkal. It was installed on the remembrance of deceased people (on various occasions) and hence known as memorial Stones. In course of time, this habit had undergone some changes i.e. planting stones for the remembrance of a hero, who had done some heroic deeds and activities such memorial Stones become known as veerakkal or Hero-Stones.

After some time during the last decade of later Stone age the people planted Kuthukkal, in remembrance of a person, who had done some Heroic deeds for the betterment of his society. The habit of inscribing heroic deeds of the heroes on the Stones is existed in the Sangam period onwards. These events came to known as through sangam literature and from the findings of Archaeology.

Apart from men women also lost their lives for noble cause. That event called by different names, such as Sati, Sahamanam, Agnipiravesam, Sithai, Theepanchu etc. These events and names were used in different occasions. A woman who was unwilling to die, even after a death of her husband (for a noble cause) was compelled by her relatives and pushed into her husbands funeral fire and made her burnt to death, was known as sati. This evil custom was opposed by RajaramMohanroy and supported William Bent ink to make law against this evil practice.

Women who were willingly jumped in to the funeral fire of her husband and commit death by burnt herself known as Theepaithal. Stones were planted in memory of those women also in those times. Sahagamanam was a kind of Sati. After the death of Paranthaga Chola II (956 A.D. to 937A.D) popularly called as Sundarachola, his wife Vanavanmaadevi committed Sahagamanaram (Burnt to death). This incident inscribed on the Hero-Stones planted more than ten in Thirukovilur circle. Some other kinds of stones installed for different reasons. They are called as Nonbukkal, Paranikal and Tharikal.

Nonbukkal

This kind of stone planted in memory of a woman, who lost his life by observing fast for some noble cause, such a Stone, found opposite to Mariamman temple at Kandachipuram in Thirukovilur circle. On that stones the following words are inscribed

ஸ்வஸ்ரீ பாலுருடையான்

பெருங்காடநமகன் பொக்கி

நொற்ற நோன்பு

From these words, we understand Bokki D/O.Perunkadan at Balur, lost his life by observing fast.

Paranikal

This kind of stones also erected for women who lost his life by burnt. Hence Parani means oven and flame (தீபம்)

Tharikal

Hero – Stone Planted for women for a noble cause (Here thari means cut or make piece) is found in Thirukovilur circle Kulothunga (1178 to 1218 A.D). Veerakkal is a place located 15 Km from Dindigul on the way to palani located. There is a tremor in this town. On that stone is a figure of a woman and a man. The stone is placed in memory of an elderly grandmother named in Veerazinnammal. An old grandmother named veerazinnammal had a goat. At the time of the felling of trees in the forest, the animals

were living in the town of (Veeradevanpatty) the old man of the forest in that town grandma was feeding her cattle.

The animals that came there feared that they would kill themselves and their lives stocked. Fight with those animals as a separate women. He saved his cattle. He was then killed by the animals. Due to the heroism of this woman, Veeradevanpatty is a feminist in veerakkal that is what we know. The people of the town belong be long to the thevar clan. So far we understand that Hero-Stones planted not only for men but also for women for their heroic deeds sacrifices and valuable reasons. These Stones may be installed from 300 BC to 1300 A.D. These are valuable reliable and ever standing source for writing true history of the past.

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