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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SECULAR MONUMENTS AND MEMORIAL BUILDINGS IN PONDICHERRY

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Abstract

A Monument is also defined as a structure expressly created to commemorate an event. Examples of monuments include statue, war memorials, historic buildings, archeological sites and cultural properties. Originating in such monuments is considered one of the most enduring and popular symbols of ancient civilizations. In pre-historic times, the foundations were laid as dolmens and tumulis and in today's environment they have received many new changes and have been constructed in many forms with new tigers. Monuments are often used to enhance the appearance of a city or location. Especially the modern monuments are also located in an admirable manner. Most of the Monuments in Pondicherry are of the French era. Also notable monuments in Pondicherry are the compandence fracaise more paula bettry, Arikamedu Memorial, Louis memorial, French Revolution Memorial, kargil war Memorial and a Magnificent monument dedicated to the soldiers who died in the first world war. Among them the Memorials that commemorate the war period and the monuments that reflect the identity of tamils are highlighted through this article in a very clear manner.

Keywords: Dolmens, tumulis, civilization, monuments, statue

Introduction

Indian culture is basically a religious culture and there are different religious communities in India and each exists with divisions and sub-divisions within themselves. People belonging to different religions have their own places of gathering to perform religious

activities. These places of different religions are called by different names: Alaya Koil and Ambalam in Hinduism, Cathedral and Church in Christianity, Mosque or Masjid in Islam, Chaitya in Buddhism, Gurudhwar in Sikhism, Mandhir in Jainism, Shul in Judaism, and Agiari in Zoroastrianism. However, for

convenience, all these places can commonly be called "shrines".

These shrines are identified by the different religious communities in India. They are the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians, the Sikhs, the Buddhists, the Jains, the Zoroastrians and the Jews. Every religious community has its own divisions and sub-divisions. The Hindu community is divided into three major sects. They are the Saiva, Vaishnava and Saktha sects. The Islamic community is divided into Sunnis, Shin, Sufi, Kharijita, Ahmadiyah, Quaraniyoon and others. The Christian Communities are divided into Roman Catholic, Oriental Orthodox, Church of the East, Oriental Reformed, Protestant, Unitarian and Restorationism. The Sikh community is divided into Jatt, Ramgharia, Ravidassia, Kabirpanthi, Namdev, Taksali, Nihang, Khalistani and Non- Khalistani. The Buddhist community is divided into the Hinayanist and the Mahayanist sects. The Jain community is divided into the Digambara and the Svetambara sects. The sects found in every religion are further divided into sub-sects. No religion is an exception to this division of sects and sub-sects. In spite of all these divisions and differences, there is a unity among Indians. It is the magical word 'Indian', which is the under of binding them together In All these shrines have different values such as architectural values, aesthetic values, cultural values, environmental values, ethical values, historical, Philosophical values, political values, religious values, scientific values, social values, spiritual values, and the like.

Since the discovery of the first sea route to India by Vasco da Gama in 1498, India has been a prime target of the colonists, including the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British, mainly for their marvelous monuments'. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was established in 1861 to initiate legal provision to protect historical structures all over India. The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (VII) was passed in 1904 which provided effective preservation and authority over the monuments, and in 1905, for the first time, 20 historic structures in Delhi were ordered to be protected. At the time of India's independence, 151 historical structures in Delhi were protected by the central ASI. The State Department of Archaeology was set up in 1978 in Delhi. In 1984, the Indian National

Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) was founded to stimulate awareness of the conservation of cultural heritage monuments among the people.

History of Pondicherry

The Union Territory of Pondicherry comprises of the erstwhile French colonies. Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam. The Pondicherry and Karaikal regions are surrounded respectively by the state of Tamil Nadu, Cuddalore, Villupuram and Nagapattinam districts of Tamil Nadu state. Mahe region is an enclave within the confines of the Cannanore District of Kerala. Yanam is a small area encircled by the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Pondicherry is 162 km South of Madras, Karaikal lies 120 km South of Pondicherry, Yanam 840 km North of Pondicherry and Mahe lies almost parallel to Pondicherry 653 km away on the west coast, i.e. Arabian Sea Coast Pondicherry Region Pondicherry is the capital city and the largest city of the Indian union territory of Pondicherry. The Ancient name of Pondicherry was 'Vedapuri' or 'Vedapuram and Atiwaram By the time of French arrival it was known as Puducherry (new element). It is affectionately known as Pondy and short code as "Pdy", and has been officially known by the alternative name Puducherry in Tamil (New Town) since 2006

The bulk of Pondicherry region is an irregular stretch of land consisting of the municipalities of Pondicherry and Ozhukami and the commune panchayats of Ariyankuppam, Bahour, Mannadipet, Villiyanur, and Nettareppam. Pondicherry region is a plain with an average elevation of 15 meters above the sea level, intersected by the rivers of Gingee and Pennaiyar and other streams, lagoons, lakes and tanks. Gingee River is crossing diagonally from northwest to southeast. This river is also called Varahanadi and Sankaraparani. At a distance of about 6 Km from its mouth, the river breaks off into two branches known as Ariyankuppam River in the north and Chunnambar River in south. The Kuduvaayar which branches off from the Pennaiyar, enters the territorial limits of Pondicherry a little north of Kidinganaru and merges with Chunnambar near Thirukanchi. The Malattar which takes off from the Pennaiyar touches the

southern fringe of Nettapakkam and Ariyankuppam communes before it falls into the Bay of Bengal near Pannithittu. The Region has a population of 12.45 lakhs. The density of population of Pondicherry is 2,598 per sq km. That is more than six times of the national average of 384 per sq km".

The Pondicherry region is geographically a part and parcel of ancient Tamilagam. We have a few facts regarding the historic settlement in this region. The Neolithic and implements have been found among the artifacts associated with some ancient sites. Some of such cities are known as Gorimedu, Mangalam, Perambai. Muthariyarpalayam and Bommiyarpalayam". During the Sangam Age, this region was a trade centre. The excavation conducted at Arikamedu is identified with the Poduke of the Periplus of the Erythraean sea and Ptolemy, a coastal village some four Km, south of Pondicherry. Mortimer Wheeler was the first to conduct an excavation at Arikamedu about 7 km to the south of the town. This excavation shows that the Romans came here to trade between second century B.C. and second century AD. The trade included dyed textiles, pottery beads and semi-precious stones. The findings are now displayed in the Pondicherry Museum. It brought out the ancient history of this region to the world During Sangam period this region merged with the Pallavas. The city consist many temples, churches, mosques. Apart from that, the statues, war memorials, Ashram and all the old buildings built with traditional materials All these are based on it's the historic significance, aesthetic values, architectural features, etc

Gori Stupas (War Memorial)

The Interference of the English and the French East India Company politics of the native rulers of Hyderabad and Karnataka for expansion of their power, Which lead to the Carnatic War. In A.D. 1760 the French were defeated by the British and they lost Karaikal. In A.D. 1761, the French lost cities like Pondicherry and Gingee fort. After the signing of the Treaty of Paris on 1763, the French got back some of their cities in India, like Chandranagar, Pondicherry and Karaikal on condition that these would not be fortified. With the verdict of victory in favour of the British, the war memorial was erected by Major

General Sir Hector Munro on 16" October, 1778. It was sacred to the memory of William Stevens, Major in the East India Company and those who were killed in one of the battle for control over the fortified town of Pondicherry stands near the entrance of the town. The area people called it the Stupa Gori, later on that place was called as Gorimmedu. Another Stupa was erected in the entrance of the French Indian border like Kottakuppam, that place is now called as Gori Thoppu

Statue of Dupleix

Monsieur Joseph Francois Dupleix was a far-sighted politician, captain and administrator, who glorified himself to his nation's victories. He was the governor of Pondicherry on 14th January, 1742. He left Pondicherry in 1754. He was the greatest among the French governors of India. The recognition of his contribution came only in 2 July 1870, with the commissioning of two states one in Pondicherry and the other in France. The statue of Duplex was made in France by a sculptor Theodore Gruyere in A.D. 1869 and was installed near the beach facing the sea. It was made of bronze rectal s height was 2.88 meters. Six carved ornamental granite pillars were installed at the base These pillars were eight feet tall and were obtained from a Thirumal temple in Ginger, during the period of Dupleix. The hundred years old, granite pillers at the base were removed and adorned in the different places. In the year 1965 this stator was taken to the French consulate building. In 1979, the statute was again installed on the southern side of the beach road in the children's park. Dupleix is represented as a man of commanding statue. His face is in neo-classical style. In the large nose and massive under the jave, some resemblance may he traced to Oliver Cromwell as commonly represented in his portraits. In the statue, Dupleix wears a curt dress with bag wig and long riding boots. The dress code of this administrator is fashioned on the model of Rococo style architecture"The globe in right hand is waving in position and his left hand holding the knife in his chest are the symbols of his greatest achievements as a commercial traveller and a conqueror. Gunny bags put behind the statue also explained the arrival of the French East India Company for trading activities. The Statue of Dupleix, that stands today on the southern end of the 1500 meter long promenade, is a symbol of

a vanished empire. In fact Pondicherry, saw the zenith of its power and glory under the able administration of this dynamic governor in Pondicherry".

Statue of Joan of Arc

Another notable monument found at Pondicherry is Joan of Arc known to the world as the 'Maid of Orleans'. In the Hundred year's war, French went to the edge of defeat. During that time, an illiterate shepherdess peasant girl Joan of Arc heard as the representative of divinity. She had a duty to save the French crown from the British. She fought in the war along with male soldiers, and finally the French won the war. However she was condemned and burned in 1431 in a market. Twenty years later Charles VII ordered an enquiry into the trial. Finally, on the order of Pope Calixtus III, proceedings were inaugurated which revoked and annulled the sentence of 1431. And on 16th May 1920 Pope Benedict XV canonized Joan. The French Parliament decreed a national festival in her honour on 24 June, 1920. A marble statue was set up in memory of the heroic and Mercurial French damsel Joan of Arc in front of the Church of Our Lady of the Angles, on 14th September 1920 in Pondicherry.

Statue of War Memorial

The elegant and magnificent French war Memorial located in the promenade, along the famous Goubert Avenue was erected in 1937 to honour the soldiers who lost their lives during the First World War. The war memorial is beautifully illuminated during the annual commemoration held on Bastille Day, 14th of July. Four pillars, as if built to kiss the sky, stand sentinel to the wall. In between the pillars stand a well-acquainted soldier holding his rifle upside down, his head looking at the ground, symbolic of the disasters of war.

Arikamedu

Arikamedu, the ancient Roman trade Centre, is located 4 km from the south of Pondicherry on the right bank of the Ariyankuppam River. It has a long history that dates back to the second century B.C. The port town was inhabited by the Romans, the Cholas and the French, who left their mark on this wonderful place. Arikamedu, a fishing colony, was used as a port for

trade with the Romans and Greco-Romans. Jouveau-Dubreuil identified Arikamedu as Poduke in the Periplus Maris Erythraei. Later the site was divided into two sectors, northern and southern, as they were perceived to have been inhabited by different ethnic groups. It is also known as 'Yavanas' in Tamil Literature, wine seems to have been a major import and traces of Amphorae jars suggest. The exports must have included textiles, beads, semi-precious gems, glass and shell bangles as wastage at the manufacturing site suggest. The Amphorae collection, both from the surface and diggings of French and English in are mostly filed in Pondicherry Museum. Totally, about 82 Amphorae fragments are now stored in Pondicherry Museum. Even today, if one looks carefully, after the heavy rains, one can find beads on the bank of the river.

Kargil War Memorial

The kargil was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan that took place between May and July 1999 in the kargil district of Kashmir And elsewhere along the line of control (LOC). The conflict is also referred to as operation vijay (victory in Hindi) which was the name of the Indian operation to clear the kargil sector.

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