

PATTINI THE CREATED CREATOR

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Pattini was not a goddess in the sense that we may take for granted Uma, Laksmi or Sarasvati. She was created a Goddess "Creator" by folk of the hill country, the kunrakkuravar and accorded Goddess-status by the Ceran- Cenuttuvan at the persuasion of his Matevi. At one point of climax we find her eminence vouchsafed by the Devi- Trimurtis in the Hindu pantheon of the time of Ilanko, author of the epic Cilappatikaram. 22, Venpa). Ilanko adds:

Mamakalum Namakalum mamayitar cerrukanta
Komakalum tampataitta korattal nama
Mutira mulai kuraittal...

"The maiden Goddess that cut short her immature breast (orramulacci) was the creator of Uma, Vakdevi/Sarasvati and Laksmi that admonished the buffalo- demon."¹

Kannaki to begin with was a passive homely maid as she appears in the "Pukarkkantam" of the Cilappatikaram. Due to the force of destiny (ulvinai), she had to migrate to Maturai with her husband Kovalan. The injustice meted out to Kovalan rouses the dormant divine spirit in Kannaki as she is viewed a Goddess in the Maturaikkantam', particularly the 'Valakkuraikatai'. The deification is partly complete when the Kunrakkuravar accept the 'Orumulaimaid' as their Goddess , and full- fledged when Cenkuttuvan brings a stone to make her image, builds a temple and institutes worship in the 'Vancikkantam' (Rajarajan 2015). The cult of Pattini seems to have spread far and wide in the

East and the west, including the yavana lands so that Cenkuttuvan could claim to be the Universal Sovereign, Ulakamannavan' (Cilampu. 28.7).

The cult of Pattini was popular during the ancient phase of Indian culture and seems to have gone out of popularity in the Indian mainland. However, it continued to persist in Sri Lanka, and accepted in the Buddhist pantheon of the island (obeyesekere 1987). Few Cola remnants of Ardhanari images with breast on the right side are pointers of the conversion of a goddess into a form of Siva by about 9th-10th century (Kalidos 1993).

The aim of the present study is to trace the roots of Pattini – kannaki cult in the Cilappatikaram and earlier in Narrinai and examine few images of Kannaki in South India and Sri Lanka. it is reported that a number of iconographic specimens relating to the epic are

forthcoming from Mullattivu (Rajarajan 2015). The paper consists of two parts. 1. Goddess-making process and 2. Art Historical Vestiges.

Hypothetically it is added Pattini is not a dead cult. The Goddess is living in Kottunkallur and in hearts of the lovers of llanko. Indian Goddesses are neither amazons nor feminists (cf Goldberg 2001). They protect the righteous and annihilate evil-terrorists.

Goddess -making Process

The three kantams of the epic do purport to demonstrate triple stages in the creation of the Goddess Pattini. Kannaki is an innocent home-bound maid in the Pukar-kantam. She is on the way toward Goddesshood in the Maturaikantam. She is Pattini, the Orramulacci in the Vancik – kantam.

Stage I

Kannaki is viewed a domestic maid in the first part of the epic, the 'Vancik-kantam', Kannaki was the daughter of a rich merchant in the city of Pukar. She was of the age of twelve when given in marriage to Kovalan who was eighteen the son of another rich merchant. it seems the families were engaged in overseas trade and the kulateyvam of Kovalan was Manimekalai²

Kannaki is compared to 'Tiru³ in the prime of her marriageable age, and was Aruntati (Vatamin) in chastity. They were married according to the prevailing customs of the age with the rituals conducted by an old brahmana proficient in the Vedas. The young couple were housed in a palatial edifice that is supposed to have been designed by Maya⁴. They lead a happy life for few years. At this stage Kannaki is compared with the following best properties:

Immaculate gold, right-warped pearl, sugarcane juice, honey, rare maid, panacea of life, gem not born in hill, ambrosia not born in ocean, music not born in lyre and so on (Maniyarampatuttakatai 'II. 73-79)

These are pointers of the fact that Kannaki was a beloved domestic maid of her husband.

A turning point comes when Kovalan a juvenile youth happened to attend the dance recital of a vestal called Matavi. She presented her maiden performance in the court of the vestals a bid a price for them and Kovalan offers the highest price for the maid. He goes with Matavi, deserting his wife. They live like Rati and Manmatha. At that time the Festival of Indra was celebrated in the city. Kovalan and Matavi enjoy the celebrations with music and dance. Misunderstanding the meaning of a song by Matavi, Kovalan gets away to his home. Finding nothing left behind, kovalan decides to quit the city and migrate to Maturai to earn a new living. On the way they meet a Jain nun called Kavunti-atikal. She joins the team and the three walk all along. Crossing the Kaviri, they reach the southern bank at Vanaram. All the way they come across several Jain and Buddhist temples and monks busy with their religious avocations. The festivals celebrated by the monks are described.

They come across a talkative and troublesome couple who make fun of Kovalan and Kannaki. Kannaki is a frail maid afraid of the nomadic words of the alien couple. They were cursed to be jackals by the nun. They move through the rugged land. Kannaki all the way was suffering unable to bear the hardship of travel. Kannaki is comparable to Sita who went to the forest with Rama.

Stage II

The trio (kavunti, kovalan and kannaki) reach a place in the wilderness, called kotumpai (present day Kotumpalur, close to Viralimalai). A temple for Aiyai was located on the site and the local people celebrating a folk festival. The residents of the region called eyinar undertake a festival in honour of their deity, Korravai they offer the due honours to the guests on the occasion. Kannaik in this context is addressed.

.. konkac celvi kutamalai yatti
 Tenramilp pavai ceyta tavakkoluntu
 Oru mamani

The folk read the qualities of a Goddess on looking at the face of kannaki and address her the pet (Goddess) of the Konku land, and the Goddess of the western Hills, the breeze of the Tamil and the gift of a rare gem”.

Moving further south, the trio reach the outskirts of the city of Maturai and are left in charge of Matari a milk maid kavunti was moving to a Jain monastery where monks and nuns alone could stay. Matari takes care of the young couple. Kannaki in this place is viewed the “sprout of chastity and maid of best qualities”, karpin koluntu porpin celvi (cilmampu 16.91). the next day Kovalan visits the city with a view to sell the anklet. He falls in the treacherous trap of a goldsmith and killed a thief. The news spread all over the city. Matari observes some bad omens in the kovalar- irukkailaypati (settlement of the kovalarlyadavas). They undertake a festival in honour of Kannan / krsna so that the impending evils are removed.

Matari resorts to the Vaikai for a dip in the river and comes to know about the tragedy of kovalan. The matter is informed to Kannaki. She moves into the city and asks everyone whether her husband was a thief. “The sun God says “Kovalan is not a thief”⁵. Kannaki moves to the palace of the king to prove her husband was innocent. She was furious and informs the gatekeeper to announce “a maid has come holding an anklet in hand seeking justice” cilampon rentiya kaiyal kanavanai yilantal (Valakkuraikatai 27-28).

The guardian of the city, Maturapati appears behind Kannaki / Kali (yarai ni en pin varuvoy ‘Katturaikkatai’) to appease the wrath of Kannaki. She is afraid because the terrific “Orumulai-kuraitta-tiruma- Pattini” (Pattini that cut short a breast) may reduce the “protectoress Goddess” to dust. Maturapati is the Dharmadevata who apprises the results of ulvinai (karma of the past, destiny written on head) that was responsible for all the tragic occurrences. Kannaki leaves the city by its western gate.

Kannaki came to Maturai with invaluable anklets to earn a new living but lost everything and nothing was left for her. She came to Maturai a “domestic maid” and left the

city the created Goddess ". Had not the Pandya erred in justice, kannaki would not have been made a Goddess. Under certain compelling circumstances "adharma" is also "dharma" as the Indian nitisastaras would advocate. Valluvar adds (kural 292)

Poymmaiyum vaymai itatta puraitirtta
 Nanmai payakkum enil
 Falsehood may play the role of justice if it is free from malice"

Justice to all and malice toward none is the eternal law. Pantiyan Netunceliyan had no malice toward either Kovalan or Kannaki, which the "Goddess-made-maid "realizes later and says Tennavan titilan, "The pandya was not at falut" (29 Valttukkatai 13)

Stage III

The' vancikkantam' is reserved for the Goddess-making process of Kannake-Pattini. These may be pinpointed step by step.

1. The kunrak-kurava⁶ adopt kannaki as their Goddess; teyvan - kollumin (24 Kunrakkurvai)
2. The matter is reported to Cenkuttuvan when he was presenting an audience with llanko-Venmal in the Vellimatam (25 Katcikkatai)

Tantamilacan- cattan retells the story of Kannaki in an intelligible language of what the hill- tribes spoke in their crude dialect (kotun-tamil)⁷

The Ceran Queen persuades the King to institute a temple and festival for the Goddess of Chastity.

The Ulakamannavan "Universal Emperor" (26 'Kalkotkatai I.83) invades the north, defeats the Arya kings and brings a stone from the Himalayas for making an image of the Pattini Goddess.

The stone is bathed in the Ganga to sanctify it and brought to Vanci (cf.the modern name Kotunkallur "city of the Harsh stone")

1. The temple for Kannaki was built according to the sastras: Nuneri makkal/Palper vakutta Pattinik kottam⁸

It could not have been a natukal in the sense that archaeologists employ today but a temple in which the image of the Goddess was consecrated: kaivini murriya teyvap patimattu/ vittakar iyarriya vilanku kolam.

Rituals were instated such as puppali (puspanjali) kappukkatai (dvajastambha or talipaman), velvi (yjna) vila (utsava) , natorum (nityapuja), katavun-mankalam (mangald-sasana).

With the singing of mangalam the goddess - making process of Kannaki is complete. In the 'Varamtarumkatai' Kannaki appears as a lightening figure in the sky adn offers boons; Tanten varam (30 'Varantaramkatai', 1.84)

Temples of Kannaki

Several centuries have gone since Ceran Cenkuttuvan built a temple for Pattini and consecrated her ritual image. Coming to the modern times we do not find any temple or worship for Kannake anywhere in Tamilnadu. Scholars say Pattini merged with Bhagavati ,

Kali and the village goddesses. However it is a living cult in Sri Lanka. Several images of the epic have been reported in recent studies. The present author has worked on the village.

Temple of Kannaki on the hill close to the Kampam valley are few examples. Historical evidences have gone behind the curtain. If archaeologists and historians work more diligently such forgotten memoirs/relics could be brought to the limelight.

Gods and goddesses in the Madurai region. Few of these goddesses pertain to the cult of Pattini. These finds may be briefly noted as follows:

- A temple for Tataka- nacciyaar is found in the Nakamalai- Putukkottai village to the west of Madurai. Tataka – nacciyaar seems to be a philological corruption of Tatatakai –nacciyaar.⁹ Originally the temple must have been dedicated to Pattini or Tatatakai, the tutelary Goddess of Madurai. Kannaki was orramulaicci and Tatatakai had three breasts. The mythic setting may be that if the Goddess lost one breast at one point of time, she was provided with an additional breast in another point of time.
- A temple for Kannaki exists in the eastern part of the city of Madurai at a palace called Cimmakkal.
- No Goddess in the Hindu higher tradition is provided with three breasts. On the other hand, the Lord Siva fitted with one left-breast is known as Ardhanarisvara. In few early Chola temples (e.g. Karantai, Velukkuti) Ardhanari appears with a breast on the right side. Prof. Rajju Kaildoss says these are remnants of the Kannaki cult who originally had a breast on the right side. The ‘Orramulaicci’ of Kotunkallur must have originally housed an Ardhanari image with breast on the right side.
- Temple for Kannaki with cult images are found in Sri Lanka in which case the Devi is endowed with two breasts (Rajarajan 2015: plates).
- Episodes relating to the epic are illustrated in the sculptural art of Ilankai (Idem).
- A kalaikkutam for the Silappatikaram was built in Pimpukar few years ago in which the entire epic has been cast in stone by Vai. Ganapati Sthapati who is no more with
- The statue of Kannaki in the Marina Beach was instituted during the period of C.N. Annadurai.

We have an ancient Tamil epic the date of which disputed by historians running from the 5th century BCE to the 5th century CE. We have no evidence of the Kannaki cult or temples. Attukkal Bhagavati and the ruined.

Notes and References

1. Manaykan was the father of Kannaki and Macattuvan was the father of Kovalan. They were doubly rich irunitikkilavan (Mankalavaltup-patal 1.34). After the tragedy of Kovalan and Kannaki they gave up their wealth in charity and embraced the Buddhist order of monks.
2. This name is later given to the daughter of Kovalan born to Matavi. She was a Goddess of the Sea protecting vessels on voyage.
3. Tiru (auspicious) is a honorific prefix to a dignified person. In Vaishnavism, it denotes Sri/Sridevi.

4. Maya was the architect of asuras and supposed to be the author of ancient Indian architectural manual, called Mayamata.
5. This event may be compared with the myth of the chaste maid Savitri who stopped movement of the sun on hearing the death of her husband; Satyavan was imminent the next day (Mahabharata, Vanaparva', chaps 293-99). See *vetani mani puranic Enclopaedia* [Motilal Banarsidass: New Delhi 1996], p.79.
6. Cilappatikaram, R.S.Pillsi transl. (The Tamil University: Thanjavur 1989), p.79.
7. Kuravars were dwellers of the kurinci tract of land. The divinity of their land is Ceyon /Murukan.
8. It is opposed to' Tantamil'spoken in the plains. A modern example is "Madras-Tamil', in those times it was spoken in the hilly regions and Kerala (cf. Cilappatikaram, 'Nurkatturai' 3).
9. This is a clear reference to architectural experts. The epic (2.12) notes Maya, author of the architectural treatise, Mayamata.