



INTACH MADURAI

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

MADURAPURI

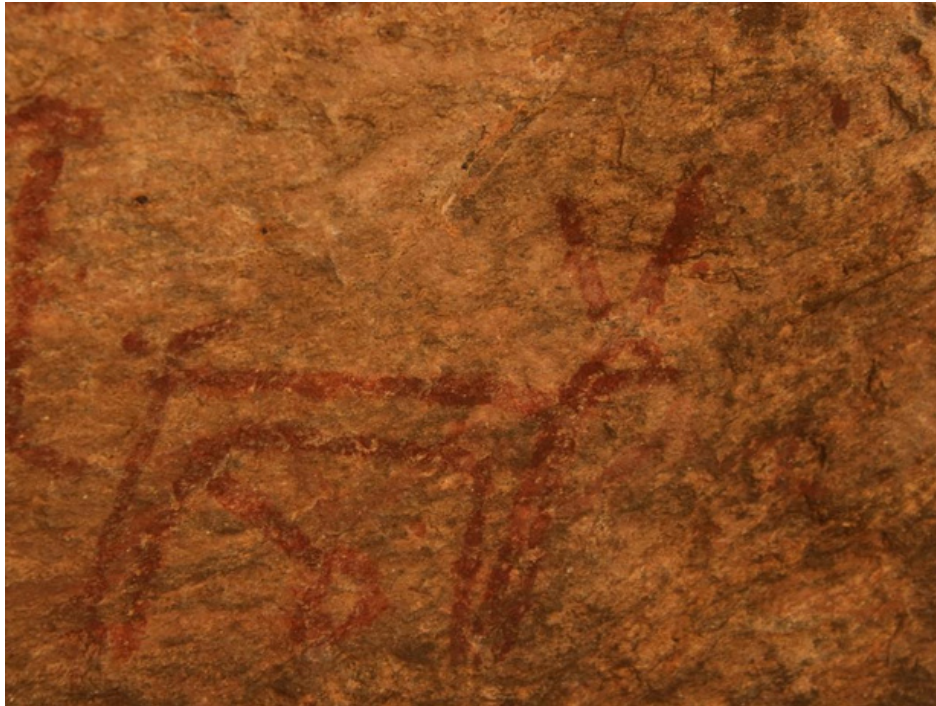
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Trek to Puli Malai Rock Art

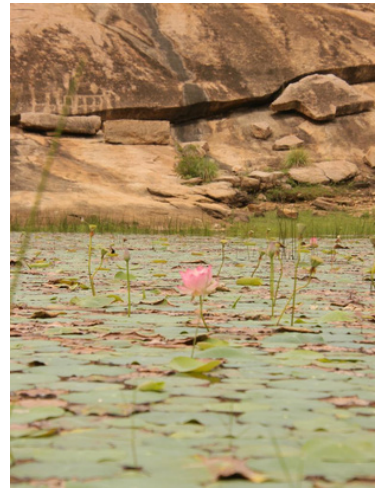
Rock Art is a global phenomenon, found in culturally diverse regions of the world. It reveals the aesthetic qualities inherent in early man. Referred also as parietal art denoting the outcome of processing sensory information from the outside world. The perception context can be many. The preliterate expression continues until that culture develops writing or other methods of record keeping. It was to one such natural cave, once a dwelling of prehistoric men recently discovered by Devi Arivu Selvam belonging to Madurai Natural & Cultural Group our chapter conducted a trek led by her.





The Puli Malai trek on 18th June, 2023 organized by INTACH was quite fun and informative. I was amazed by the millennial old rock art of red and white pigments drawn in one of the caves. It gave us an unique insight on how a man survived, the fauna found in that region and tools or weapons he used at that time. Each one of us had our own theory of what could have made those people to paint the overhead walls of the cave.

- Saro Jayasri B



Puli Malai is a beautiful hillock near Alagarkovil with ancient rock paintings. On 18th of June we ventured on an early morning trek to the hillock. The weather was surprisingly calm on that Sunday morning in the hot summer months.

Wandering through a green path of coconut and other plantations we reached the lotus pond at the base of the hill temple. The climb uphill was tricky at places but the view was mesmerising with greenery all around and numerous other hillocks at a distance.

I was fascinated by the rock paintings which have withstood the forces of nature over so many years. Mrs Devi gave us very interesting insights about them.

As usual I wandered off for birding wherever I am on Sunday mornings. We observed around 50 species, most of them being resident species.

A fruiting ficus tree was a large breakfast ground for a lot of birds including Common Myna, Rufous treepie, Asian Koel, Red vented Bulbul and Coppersmith Barbet. Two Lesser Goldenbacked Woodpecker were chasing each other, pecking and climbing the tall coconut trees.

Some highlights were the presence of Dusky Crag -Martin, one even caught a butterfly, and a large flock of Little swift which literally gave us a show. Watching so many of them so close with their shining white rump was indeed beautiful.

Even though it was cloudy, few raptors soared including the more common Shikra, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Short toed snake Eagle, Black winged kite and Brahminy Kite (which is less common for Madurai). A spotted owlet was peacefully snoozing on the lower branch of a large tree while a Common Hawk Cuckoo the brainfever bird was calling in the distance.

I had a very interesting experience learning about various native plants and birds, discussing with Dr Badrinarayanan. The foothills had many species of butterflies which I could learn to identify with the guidance of Nithan Chandrasekharan.

Just loved the place and the experience. Eagerly waiting to explore more.

- Dr. Haemoglobin, Ophthalmologist, Ornithologist

RISE To The Ceiling



The Secretariat of the eight-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan is located in the diplomatic area of Beijing, China. External Affairs Minister Jaishankar on June 27, 2023 virtually inaugurated an exquisitely designed 'New Delhi Hall' representing India at the Secretariat, which he said depicts a "mini-India" and will foster a better understanding of the country's culture. In his address, Ambassador Pradeep Kumar Rawat said, "Architecturally, the inspiration for this Hall is from the southern part of India. The ceiling, columns, doors, as well as the layered pattern of woodwork, were derived from the architectural motifs of heritage structures in the Southern cities".

The hall is designed by Chennai architect Prabhu Sugumar, who specialises in urban architecture and cultural identity projects. The ceiling motif of the hall was decided from repeated pattern on the ceiling of the processional corridor in Thirumalai Nayakkar Mahal, Madurai. Historian Vani C Chenguttuwan hailing from the renowned old city was consulted to identify the motif and understand its relevance.

The New Delhi Hall stands as a symbol of India's rich cultural tapestry, highlighting the unity and beauty of its diverse traditions. It is a multi-functional space to suit various purposes like meetings, video conferences, movie screenings and classes of yoga, dance and music.



மதுரை பாரம்பரிய
நுட்பப்பயணம்



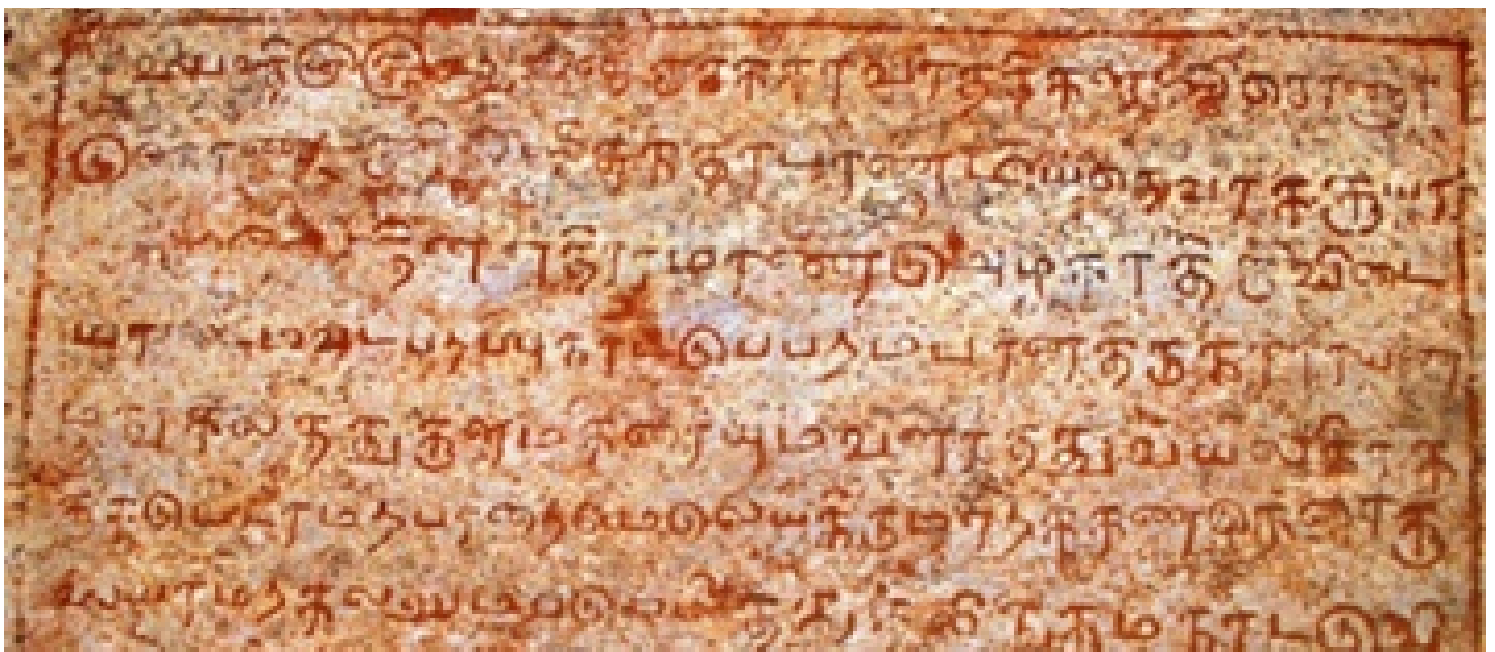
Heritage Walk Historic Melavalavu | Keelavalavu Heritage Circuit, Madurai District Tamilnadu | Saturday, 8th July 2023

DHAN Foundation, one of the Founder member and Institutional Member of **INTACH Madurai Chapter** is organizing Heritage walk every month from 2008 in various Historical and Archaeological sites to promote Heritage Literacy among the various stakeholders in Collaboration with INTACH and various stakeholders.

The Melavalavu and Keelavalavu, are the historic villages of Madurai District, Tamil Nadu. Melavalavu which exists in the traditional trade route and famous for its Somagiri hills and 2000 year old Heritage Tank (namely Parambukanmai) with the stone inscriptions of later Pandia (13th Century) and Vijayanagara (16 the century) Periods. Keelavalavu ,the Archaeological Survey of India Monument with Tamil Brahmi inscription dated back Second Century B.C with Jain Beds.

DHAN Foundation organized the July 2023 Heritage walk in collaboration with INTACH Madurai Chapter , Travel Club Madurai and Melur Vattara Kalanjiam, Marutham Vattara Kalanjiam, Kottampatti Kalanjiam Vayalaga Vattaram which are doing the gross root Development in these Historic Villages with the active Participation of of Local Panchayat Leaders. The resource lecture was delivered by Dr.G.Sethuraman Art Historian and Dr.V.Vedachalam Archaeologist. More than 80 participants participated in this Heritage Walk. The Heritage brochure on Keelavalavu and Melavalavu was released and distributed to the participants and Public.





Member Columnist of the Month by Pr. B. Nalini

The Mythology Behind Ezhukadal Street



Image credits @sundaryadhav

Seven seas in a pond? Seven seas merged into a single pond? Yes. There is one in Madurai. The celestial marriage of Goddess Meenakshi with the Lord Shiva was celebrated with great pomp and pleasure in the mythology. The celebration is being continued till now every year with the same grandeur. This is the great event we are familiar with. There was another episode that happened after the marriage.

After the divine wedding, the mother of Goddess Meenakshi, Devi Kanchanamala, expressed her wish to her son-in-law Lord Shiva that she wanted to have a holy bath in the seven oceans of the earth. Lord Shiva fulfilled her wish by beckoning all the seven seas to merge together in one place as a single pond in Madurai. Kanchanamala had a holy dip in it. Do you know where that place is?

Yes, it is the Ezhukadal street in Madurai referring to the seven seas ஏழு கடல். For a long time this sacred water was used for abishegam for the God and the Goddess in the Meenakshi Temple. We can find a temple for mother Kanchanamala and King Malayathuvasa Pandian, father of Goddess Meenakshi in this street and they are being worshipped even today.

It is also said that Goddess Meenakshi marched through this street for her Thikvijayam - the victory march to celebrate her victory in the battle fields.

The walls and the pillars on either side of the street are adored with beautiful sculptures But they are hidden with dust now. These pillars remain unfinished because at the time of construction a tode was found sitting on one of the sculptures. The sculptor said that such stones were unfit to be used for carving. Till date they stand unfinished

If we walk through Ezhukadal street now we will find it fully commercialized. The public suggests that the Ezhukadal street should be restored as a heritage spot.