

TRIPUDI ART CENTRE'S

CILAPPATIKARAM

The Anklet's Verdict - In Kūṭiyāṭṭam

Cilappatikaram in Kūṭiyāṭṭam

Kūṭiyāṭṭam is believed to have originated during a time when Kerala was a part of Tamilakam, a fact that lends profound significance to this project. Although the story of Kannaki and Kovalan traces their journeys from Puhar to Madurai, many scholars insist, backed by strong historical evidence, that the heart of the Chera kingdom was Thiruvanchikulam near Kodungallur.

Ilango Adigal, the author of Cilappatikaram, even notes that he wrote the text in Thrikunavai, a place closely connected to our own roots at Thrikkannamathilakam. This deep connection to both the landscape and its history forms a rich backdrop for understanding the text and its ongoing dialogue with the past, while Kūṭiyāṭṭam brings its stories to life through classical performance.



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Cultural Significance of *Cilappatikaram*

The *Cilappatikaram*, composed in the 5th-century in Tamil, stands as one of the greatest classical epics of India. It is a text that resonates across time with its profound exploration of love, justice, fate, and transcendence. The epic traverses through the story of Kannaki, a devoted wife whose life is upended by tragedy when her husband Kovalan is unjustly put to death by the orders of the king. Grief drives Kannaki to challenge the king's judgment, destroy the city of Madurai, and ultimately become deified. It holds a transformation that speaks to the power of moral outrage, eternal loyalty, and the ability to redeem suffering.

Cilappatikaram traces a rich geographical landscape from Puhar to Madurai, and it draws together human fate, views of justice, and the intervention of the divine. Its poetry resonates with deep emotions, philosophical reflection, and a sophisticated understanding of the moral order, reflecting the classical Tamil view that justice, fate, and dharma are interlinked.

As a text, *Cilappatikaram* stands at the intersection of literature, performance, and collective memory and it solidifies the epic's significance in South Asia's cultural imagination.

