

The Religious Entoments Of The Cholas To Temples In Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT: *The endowments made by the king to the temples, for various purpose like the maintenance of the perpetual lamp, for sacred food offering, for sacred both, donate of land ,donate gold, for playing musical instrument and land grand etc .*

KEYWORDS: *Chola rulers, Land donate, Gold gift*

Date of Submission: 29-09-2018

Date of acceptance: 09-10-2018

I. INTRODUCTION

The Kings were always ready to confer benefactions on empires, granting tax-free lands, remitting taxes providing for its vices etc., royal grants to temples took many forms. But the most monks were the giving of land and sometimes whole villages for the benefit of the temple. Generally they were known as **Devadana**, **tirunamattukkani** and **Tiruvidaiyattam**.¹

Like their predecessors, the Pallavas, the Chola kings were great patron of temples. On all important occasions, the Chola Kings used to visit temples and make gifts, celebration of the coronation of Yuvarajas, celebration of victories of Kings over their enemies, in memory of the failed Warriors in order to gain spiritual solace for them in the other world and during the festival times.² Gilts were made on lavish scale on such occasions. The festivals used to be celebrated with pomp and grandeur and most expenses were met by the king there much pomp and There was also a provision was also a provision in the royal grant for some service in the temple on the day of his natal star.³ The Cholas were great builders of temples. The King supported the temples built by them. They made voluntary grants to the temples and at the request of the queen, officials, residents of the matricular place or the temple authorities, the king announced land grants to temples.⁴

Royal grants raised much dilated question of the state ownership land. The waste and unoccupied land was granted by the king it show that all such waste land belonged to the king but where occupied cultivated land which did not belong to the state was made either of exchange or of purchase.⁵ The grants made by the king consisted of the habitat, the arable land, barren land, pasture land and forest land. An inscription from Tirumalai, Ramnad district dated 1196 A.D. records a gift of land the personal property of the King kulottunga III for the morning service in the temple.⁶

Village Grant

Endowment of village to the temples is an important one which provides permanent financial footing as well as social status. The villages were under the control of the king, so he alone could grant villages for charitable purposes. But sometimes, other persons and corporate bodies granted villages. The villages were granted for specific and general purposes which added to the resources of the temple.⁷ In the Chola period a village donation to temple is of higher frequency, Out of 1300 villages in Chola mandalam. So villages were devadanas, there were only a few pallichchandam and salabhogam villages. In case of kani murruttu and vettapperu types there are references to some lands of this type.⁸

Parantaka I who was a great devotee of Siva built temples for his father and donated a lot to temples. In the 40th year of the reign Parantaka I granted the village Sirupanaiyur as devadana for worship and offerings to god Srigandaradita Adittagarathu deva at Valaiyur. There is an inscription found on a slab set up near Alaganchchiyamman temple, Mangalam, Mangalam taluk and district registers the gift of village of Mangalam as a devadana to the temple of Rajasekhara Isvaramudaiya Mahadeva built by Konigilandar of Jayangondasolapuram in Vallavaraiyar nadu in the 8th regional year Rajendrachola I⁹

Rajadhiraja I in his 34th year issued an order from his seat at Pallavarajan in his palace at Gangaikondacholapuram granting the village Tandurai in Irungurnadu, for daily worship to god Saravathirthamudaiya Mahadeva at Kanchipuram, Kanchipuram taluk and Chingeleput district.¹⁰ Some of the royal grants describe the measurement of land in villages and give a detailed account of the revenue in paddy, gold and money that could be derived from the villages.

The successor of Rajadhiraja in Vengalanadu to the Tiruvanilai temple for necessary expenses stipulating the village shall pay taxes to the temple and he granted the village of Nelvayppalli in Vengalanadu as temple land for necessary expenses, for worship. The village Pakkur was granted to the Pasupatisvara temple in Coimbatore district, the ancient name Tiruvanilai for the expenses of offerings, oblations and for worship by Viramajendral in his 4th year.¹²

At the request of Kiliyur Malaiyaman Chief Periyudaiyannirerran (alias) Rajarajamalaiyakularajan, the king granted 20 velis of land separated from out of 4 hamlets and grouped together as one village under the name Rajaraja mangalam and converted into devadana iraiyili from the original urkil-irayili for the requirements of worship in the temple of Urbagankondarulina Mahadeva.¹³

The bralumadeya lands in Kudalur in Mudikondachola Chaturvedimangalam constituted into a new village namely Edirilisolallur and granted as devadana free of taxes to the temple of Tinulunganaimadamudaiya Mahadeva for the expenses of offerings by Kulottunga I. Another inscription of the same king records the gift of village Avianur after converting into tirunamattukkani under the name Kalikadina-chola-nallur for providing offerings to the god Tirutondisvaramudaiya Mahadeva at Melumnadu. Tirunavalur in Tirumunaippadi.¹⁴ In his 3rd year he clubbed several villages together into one called it as Kalikadindacholan Akshesvara temple, Achcharapakkam. In response to the petition made by Pavalakkunrar Vannadudaiyan, the king granted the village of Pudupakkam in Pusual of Kaliyurkottam as a tax-free devadana to the temple of Tirukkachchalaiudaiyar at Conjeevaram and in his 11th year he granted village of Anapayanallur as devadana for providing offerings to the god at Tiruppainnili.

Another inscription records the gift of the village of Kulakkudi temple of Tiruttantonri Isvaramudaiya Mahadeva at Sunbal (alias) bal (alias) Virarajendrapuram. At the request of his queen bhuvanamudayill, the king Kulottunes land tax-free gift of the village of Sirrichchanbakkam, in Nirvelur nadu after rename it as Kampadevillur after the queen.¹⁵ He ordered that the proceeds from be utilised for certain festivals and offerings to the god pusha and swati of the king and queen respectively.

Kulottunga I patronised Vaishnavism also and an inscription in his 30th year registers the gift of the villages of Sungadavirttacholanallur and Adivarahanallur to the temple of Tirumuttamudaiya Mahadeva and the temple of Sri Varahaalvar respectively at Mudigondacholanallur in Vilandaiyirkurram of Irungolappadi.¹⁶ The village of Andayakkudi renamed as Rajendrathonallur in Nanjilnadu for the expenses of worship. At the request of Kannan Vasudevan Brahmarayan of Kudavumadu the king granted the village of Munnaippundi (alias) Sivapadasekharanallur to god Tippaladisvaramudaiya Mahadeva in Tiruchchukanur in Tiruvengadukkottam in Rajendrachola mandalam.¹⁷ Another inscription of the same king refers to the gift of the village Edirili Cholanallur as devadana iraiyili to the temple of Tiruvanmigai Isvaramudaiyar in Gangaikondanallur

Tiruneettu Chola seems to have been another surname of the king kulottunga I, as a devadana village Murallur changing its name into Tirunerrucholanallur was granted to the new temple at Tirusulam near Palavaram in his 39th year.¹⁸ The brahmadeya village Vannakkudi in Tiraimur nadu with all its lands about a hundred velis in extent was to be endowed as tax-free devadana to the temple under the Tyagasamudra chaturvedimangalam by Vikramachola in 1123-24 A.D.¹⁹ The Konerinmaikondan Vikramachola issued an order to the padai mudaligalile, the heads of the armies at Valiam Tyagasamudranallur to be granted to the temple of Karikala Cholisvaram and 20 velis of land in Kuttakkudi constituted as separate village named Vikramachola nallur and granted to the temple of Vikramchola Vinnagar Alvar. Another inscription registers the grants of the village Senaippadi to god Tiruvagnishvaramudaiyanar of Neruvur, Karur Taluk, in Kilanganadu by the King Vikramachola.²⁰

An inscription of Kulottunga II registers the grant of Anapayanallur by him to the temple of Rudracholaiudaiya Mahadeva at Brahmadesam in Damarainadu in Jayangondachola mandalam., Another inscription of the same king records the gift of the village Adarpadimeyur in Kudal in Rajaraja Valanadu yielding an income of 155 half madaï of money as iraiyili devadana for worship and services to be done by the servants of the deity and the superintendent of the temple affairs to the god Tiruppulippagadevar of Sirringur²¹ The name of the gift village was changed into Sivapadasekharanallur.

Kulottunga III who have conquered Madurai, Ilam and Karuvur and have cut off the head of the Pandya king granted the village of Valuvamangalam in Jayasingakulakala Valanadu as an endowment to provide for the daily offerings, the offerings during festivals and various other items of temple services to the Nayanar who abides Uttamadanisvaram' as the Lord of Kiranur in Kulattur Taluk.²² The same king donated 50 velis of land in Keralapali and village Mannarai in Tataiyurmadu and tax-free gift of the village Viracholanallur to the temple of Tinuvanilaiyudaiya Mahadeva at Karuvur in Karur district for necessary expenses.²³ At the request of a female mendicant namely Tiruvorriyurammai Kulottunga III granted the village Kulapakkam in Puliyurkottam to the god Vyakaranadanaperumal and his consort. Kulottunga III inscription deals with gift of village of Puttambur in Kavinadu and Valanadu the king was donated 14 velis of land to temple.²⁴ there were lot of village grants in the name of Konerinmikondan. The emperor issued tax-free villages of Tatapalli Arasur (alias) Kuladipanallur in Vadaparisaranadu Aludiyar Tirukkapolisavaram and Udaiyar. The king granted the

village of Andanur for the maintenance of temple servants, ascetics, Sivabrahmins, dancing girls, drummers and servants.²⁵

An inscription dated 12th year of Konerinmaikondar registers the royal gift of the village of Kaviri Nallur, free of taxes as Devadana to the temple of Tirukkarrali Mahadeva through the assembly of Tiruvalundurnadu. Portion of the village had been confiscated as Vellanvagai from a certain Nagan Adittapidaran for a certain crime and the rest had been acquired by purchase or changed from several individuals.²⁶ Though the villages were mostly donated by kings, other persons and corporate bodies also sometimes granted villages. An inscriptions of the 37th year of the reign of Parantaka I records the grant of village Sodiymbakkam by the villagers to the Vishnu temple at Ukkal. Another inscription of the reign of Sundarchola speaks of the grant of the hamlet of Palikkunram to the Arinjigal-Iswara temple by the citizens of Melpadi.²⁷

Plots of Land

Both small and large plots of land were donated to the temple. There are so many references about the grant of land made by the Kings. The land grants were made for various purposes like offerings. Sacred lamps, celebration of festivals, feeding of Brahmins, maintenance of temple servants, articles for worship and soon.²⁸ Aditya I, the successor of Vijayalaya the founder of the Chola dynasty built many temples for Siva on both the banks of river Kaveri out of 113 early Cholas temples, 47 temples belonged to AdityaI. He made an endowment in land for the maintenance of 12 servants in the Apatsahayesvara temple, Tiruppalanan, Tanjore Taluk and district with 2 Kankatti and 2 gardeners at the request of the temple authorities.²⁹

Parantaka I who was the great devotee of Siva built temples for his father and donated a lot to temples. He donated land to the Mahadeva of Gokarnam temple at Tiruvetpur (Tiruvappur) in the Kavirpal of Vallanadu for the food offering during the tiruttiram festival as free tenure in 944 A.D.,³⁰ The request of Utama chola muvendavelan, Ulttamachola made an endowment of 3 velis of land with its annual produce of 700 kalams of paddy allotted for the various requirements of worship in the temple of Tirukkarugavur Mahadevar.³¹ Another inscription of the same king registers the kings grant of 15 velis of land at Nailadi village in Tirunaraiyurnadu as tax-free devadana to the temple for the celebration of a special festival every month on the day of visaka which was the kings natal star. An undated inscription of Uttamachola records an endowment of 1 veli of land for the maintenance of a musician namely Elupanandevan and his descendants for their services of singing the devi songs before the deity as part of the services in the temple.³²

Another inscription of the same king registers grant of 2 velis of land for the upkeep of garden and 28 velis of land for the feeding of Brahmins in the temple at Tirunallam in Vennadu. An assignment of 8 velis of land by the king Ustamachola to the temple of Nerkuppai in paruvurkurram for the supply of sandal paste, and incense powder for the daily use of the deity and for the ingredients of sacred bath on the days of sankranti.³³ An inscription dated in the 4th year of Rajaraja I refers to the gift of 7 paduka land to the temple of Tirumakalesvara Madhurantakam taluk Chingleput district and he granted some lands to Siva temple at Melappalur in Trichy district.

A gift of land measuring 363 velis to the temple of Olokamahadevar.³⁴ An inscription found on the south wall of the central shrine in Naltunai Isvara temple, Punjai records the gift of 10 velis of land by the king for the daily offerings of havirbali to god Adavallar in the temple with the condition that the tax on half of the portion was to be paid by the temple. At the request of others also, the king granted lands to the temple. King Rajaraja I made a gift of land for offerings to the temple of Tirumadaipparai Udaiyar at Avur.³⁵ A gift of 10 velis of cultivable land for celebrating the seven days annual festival during the month of chittirai (April) in the temple of Kailasamudaiyar at Cholamadevi chaturvedimangalam in Pandikulasani Valanadu by the Chola King Rajendracholal in 1015AD. Another inscription of the same king registers a grant of 25 and a half veli land Ammai Nachehiyar in the temple of lord Tiruvalangadudaiyar at Palaiyanur in Palayanurnadu of Manavirkottam in 1018 A.D.³⁶ An inscription found on the Stalnsayanaperumal temple Mahabalipuram records of gift of 300 kudlis of land by as iraiyili to god Alvar of Sri Karames vara Malhavaraha Vishnugriha. Another inscription of the same king registers the grant of tax-free land measuring 29 velis and odd in extent for the expenses of worship in the temple of Mahadeva at Uraiurand of those on special festival days of the year like the uttaram, ayana sakranti, karttigai lights.³⁷

In 1090 A.D. Kulottunga I donated some land which was not in use due to the disappearance and death of Perumbakkilanadigalvenkadam, the lands total in extent 1339 kulis and a half ma were gifted to provide for offerings to the temple of Tinivirrololamudaiyar. Another land grant made by the same king named as Rajarajasikhmaninallur the deity Moymambupo Alvar in Ataninallur.³⁸ It was put in possession of the sri vaishnavas of the temple to be utilised for the services and provisions in the temple

An inscription registers the royal order of Kullottunga I making over 10 velis of land as devadana for offerings to god Tirukkolambam Udaiya Mahadeva. A royal order issued by the king Kulottunga I to set apart 10 velis of land under the new name Iramadevinallur to the lord at Tiruvagattisvaram in Kulottungacholanallur

in Milalaikuram.³⁹ The king granted not only land but also the income from the levies antarayam and achchiyabhog from the villages of Tinuvakkarai, Koraikeni, Perungeni and Mattaikal to the deities at Siva temple, Tiruvakkarai. Repairs to the temple were also provided from the above income. Vikramachola, the successor of Kulottunga I also donated lands. He granted 10 velis in 5 different plots as tax free devadana for the requirements of worship and offerings to god Kullottunga Cholivaramudaiya Mahadeva at Mangalakkudi in Manninadu in 1120- 21 A.D. Another inscription registers an endowment of 6 velis of land in 3 separate plots at Vikramacholisvaram Udaiyar newly consecrated by him in the temple.⁴⁰ Taxes on lands were also granted by him. An inscription dated in the 10th year of Vikramachola records the grant of taxes on lands measuring about 35 velis for burning 2 set of lamps ie, 400 lights in the hall Vikramacholan Tirumaligai in the temple.⁴¹

A gift of land made by him to an image set up by him at Tirumanikuli and to a lady named Elunattunangai for performing dance called sandikuttu during the festival to Tiruvengai Vayalandar in the month of Chittirai (April). Another gift of land for bathing with 81 pots full of water to the god Arulalaperumal of Tiruvettiyur in Eyilnadu of Eyilkottam of Jayangondachola mandalam. Kuliottunga II made a gift of 10 velis of land as tax-free devadana in Adarpadi for tiruppadimarru and other services in the temple of the god Tiruppalisvara Mahadevar of Siringur.⁴² Rajaraja II in the 15th made a gift of land to the goddess Aludaiyapirartiyar for procession sacred bath offerings and other expenses connected with worship of the goddess on sundays. Another inscription records a grant of 10 velis of land in puduvur are granted from this 16th Devadana iraiyili to provide for the requirement of the service of the Madevar in tinnalakunram.⁴⁴ At the Request of Rajarajachediyarayan the king Rajathiraja II made a tax free gift of 211 /4 velis of dry land in thirukkoyalur and kiranur to supplement the previous donation made for offering and daily worship to the god thiruvidaikali Alvar. On the supplication made by priest and official of the temple Thiruvanantisvaram Udaiya Nayanar he king donate 10 velis of land, and 50 velis of dry land.⁴⁴ This land along with the taxes donated to order to defray the expenditure of the various item of worship.

Another inscription of Rajathiraja II record the gift of Devadana land measure 10 velis with the remission of tax towards expenditure of the temple including maintenance of the temple servan evakanmigal and kankaniseyvargal in the temple Tiruvalangadudaiyar.⁴⁵ Kulottunga III built the shrine namely Ulagumuludumudaiya Nachchiar (The deity who owns the whole world) within the Rajarajcsvara temple at Tanjavur and he denoted 11 velis of land in the village of Kottagarkkudi. The boundaries of the land were to be marked with stones on which a trident was engraved. Kulottunga III had another title namely gift made by him of land 13 plus 3 1/8 ma in Kallikkudi in Eyilnadu in Pandikulasani Valanadu for daily worship and services in the temple of Tirunedungundra Mahadeva in Kavinadu.⁴⁶ Another inscription records a gift of tax-free land by the king as tirunamattukkani to the temple of Tiruvagattisvaram Udaiyanayanar at Padur, Tirukkoyilur Taluk for worship, offerings, lamps, special festivals for a service called Rajakalnayansandi.

Another grant of 2 pieces of land one at Viracholanallur and the other at Viruda Rajabhayankaranallur measuring together 231 to temple of Tirumaiyanmudaiyar at Tirukkadavur.⁴⁷ A royal order making the gift of land in the villages of phudalur and Ettagirikonda Cholanallur Maruntuvakkudi to the temple of Kulottungacholisvaram Udaiyanayanar erected at Bhudalurin Eyilnadu of Pandya Kulasanivalanadu. A gift of 10 velis of land as archanabhoge he shrine of Udaiyapillaiyar temple belonged to 3 Vishnu temples at Talachchangadu under the name Tirunanasambandanallur.⁴⁸ Annipalli a brahmadeya in Akkurnadu. The land had originally An inscription dated in the 15th year of Kulottunga III records the gift of 50 velis of land in Kandigaimelur a hamlet of Jayangonda Chaturvedimangalam as a tax-free devadana to the god at the temple of Tiruttinainagar.

An inscription found on the west wall of Siva temple, Tiruvetpur, Alangudi taluk records the royal order of the cultivated lands called Kannan Nakkanvayal measuring 11/2 ma and 1/ 20th of a veli held under the fiscal authority of township as urkil-iraiyili should be transferred to the ownership of this god as devadana iraiyili inclusive of antarayam and pattam. He directed the vakkukkuruseyvar to affect this transfer and enter in the register and the urar were relief of the obligations to pay the land dues⁴⁹ a gift of land for maintaining Tribhuvanaviransandi, 100 velis of land situated in Sivapadasekharanallur a village in Kulottungasola Valanadu was granted rent free on the Chitra- vishu day to the Adhipurisvara temple, at Tiruvottiyur.⁵⁰

The kings made extensive land grants to meet the various expenses of the temples. They also used to make land grants to meet the extra expenses likely to be incurred by the temples on special occasions. The land endowments enriched the temples on the one hand and widened the share of their activities on the other. The temple acquired vast landed prosperity so it had assumed the role of landlord.

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International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention(IJHSSI), vol. 07, no. 9, 2018,
pp. 26-30