

The Cholas Royal Women Contribution to the Temples

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ABSTRACT: *The Cholas family's religious endowment to the temples .land grand, village grand, gift of gold and silver, gift of cattle, donate of food grain, gift of vessel, gift of ornaments etc. The members of the royal household followed the Examples set up by the kings. The King's mother, sisters, queens, princes made varied endowments. This happened on the return of the king from war, the consecration of a new temple or a new shrine, the festival of bath of gods, improvement or extension of the temple premises. They showed great interest in the propagation of religion. They are considerable number of evidence available for a study of endowments made by the royal family members.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The chola princesses of royal family generally received good education and well versed in fine arts' the royal women enjoyed to wealthy property and they give valuable donate to temple. The chola royal women were very interested in provided endowments to the worship and erecting monuments for their deities. The temple was a centre of worship it also had wider socio- cultural dimensions in India. Particularly in Tamilnadu it played a remarkable role in the socio-economic life of the people besides serving as the centre of art and architecture. The temple is a public institution. The entire public is collectively and severally interested in its proper functioning. The employment of large number of servants to perform different religious and secular duties in the temple creates a regular institutionalized bureaucracy¹. The cost of maintaining this bureaucracies and containing the services necessitated the settlement of revenue yielding property of the temples. Land can only give the satisfactory revenue settlement so most of the kings and his family, officers, commoners and sabha granted land as a donation to the temples.

The importance of making donation is emphasised often in the dharmasastras and Tamil literature. The one who gives water in danam gets good contentment, he who gives food (Annam) gets perennial pleasure filled life, he who gives lamp gets good eye sight, and he who gives land will get more land. He who gives gold will get long life,² he who gives silver would get good personality, he who gives cloth will attain the world of moon, he who gives bulls would get immeasurable wealth and he who gives cereals would get well beings . The inscriptions of the period also speak about the various occasions of making gifts. There are some gifts which due to their grandeur are known as mahadanas and are found to be performed by the Kings.

Purpose of Endowments

The endowments or grants and gifts made to the temples for various and specific purposes like the maintenance of the perpetual lamp, for sacred food offering, for sacred bath, for remunerating the priest and other temple employees and for playing musical instruments in the temple. The donations also used for feeding the devoties, for the expenses of festivals and other purposes. The land grants belonged to the donor or purchased from the individuals, or from village assemblies. The dharmasastras says that several astronomical days were suitable for donating grants and gifts. The King used to make grants on the day of his coronation, during the time of leading invasions, on the occasion of victory in a battle, on the birth of a child for the prosperity of his son, at the time of temple renovation.' The occasions for making grants by the royal family members, chiefs, officials and other individuals mainly depended upon their time. The items of grants and gifts of the temple include village grants, land grants, money grants, cattle, gold and silver ornaments, utensils and other things necessary for worship, and grants of various dues and taxes³.

Land is the immovable property, appears to be the major wealth of the temple. The king was the royal person and a great patron of all condiments he donated large quantity of lands for the maintenance of the temples." However, there are also references to small land donations by king. During the Pallava period, the land donation made to the Brahmins is comparatively more that to the temple⁴. While giving the endowments of land or villages to the Brahmin, the king in some cases set apart some portion for the maintenance of the temples. For example the village parameswaramangalam was divided into 25 equal parts. Among the total shares 20 shares were given to the Btahmins and 3 were allotted to the temple for the expenses of daily pujas Endowment

of land to the temple provides a permanent financial footing as well as social status. "The granting of land to the temple gradually increased from 700 A.D onwards. Grants to temples considered meritorious. The size of the temple grew with the extent of the kingdom to show the mighty and majesty of the kings. So the king donated large tracts of lands for the maintenance of the temple.¹⁵ the footsteps of the king were followed by different categories of the people

The donation of the gold an important grants to the temples of Tamilnadu while the revenue from the temple land was the income from donation of the donation of gold and silver not dependable due to flood gold and silver were dependable. Therefore, gold and silver deposits of a temple enhanced its economy, prestige and popularity. Several records furnish donation of gold and silver for various purposes. The donation to gold ranges from one **kalanju** to 10,000 **kalanins**" of gold.

Several records register the gift of sheep, cows, bulls and buffaloes, which were considered valuable property like land and gold. They were gifted mostly to burn lamps in temples. Cattle donation for the maintenance of the lamps was very popular as compared to the other charitable purposes. It occupies almost 90% of the total animal donations made over to the temples⁴. Usually the cattle donation was made for one lamp or two lamps. But in some cases, the donations were also made for half a lamp and even a quarter lamps. In majority of cases of animal donations for lamps, the quantity of ghee required for the lamps is clearly mentioned

The donation of paddy and rice to the temple was popular among the people in the early period. They are donated to temple mainly the purpose of sacred food offering, maintenance of perpetual lamps feeding the Brahmins and devotees and other charitable works in many occasions the paddy and rice were donated on the condition that only the interest from these items had to be used for the charity by the donor

Gift of Vessels

The gift of vessels also occupied a unique place among the various gifts made to the temple. The different kinds of vessels which were made up of gold, silver, copper and zinc were referred to in the inscriptions are taliyai, kaicholam, pali-talam, kai vattigi and manavattil. The donation of a silver spouted-jar weighing about 317 Kalanju to the temple at Takkolam is referred to in an inscription."

Gift of Ornaments

Gold and silver ornaments were also found their way in the grants to temple. Many epigraphical evidences reveal that majority of donations of ornaments to temple was made by the Royal members. An inscription of Tiruvelvikkudi records the gift of gold ornaments to the temple. Another instance refers to grant of gold necklace of **rudraksha** beads with a clasp in the centre set with 54 diamonds, 2 rubies and 2 sapphires to the god of Tiruppalanam

Food and other Offerings

A large majority of the land grants were made for making food offerings and other offerings such as garlands, garland paste, kum kum, clothes etc to the God daily. Food offerings referred as prasadam" in temple records was a part of the temple ritual and also in numerable festive occasions. After offering puja the food is distributed to the devotees⁵. It was considered as sacred and its consumption brought religious merit to the devotees. So to meet out the daily expenses on food and other offerings majority land grants were made so many instances were recorded in the inscriptions

Other Gifts

There are number of other items like the sword, fly-whisk, bell, slaves, images of gods and goddesses, musical instruments, and lamp stands were also donated to the temples of Tamilnadu during the medieval period. An inscription from tirumananjeri records the gift of an image used during the sribali ceremony to the local temple. There are many Chola inscriptions reveal the donation of some individuals as slaves to temple⁵. The musical instruments like timilai, segandikai, kalam, dadaram, tadam, Conches and others were also donated to the temple by the devotees.

The members of the royal household followed the Examples set up by the kings. The King's mother, sisters, queens, princes made varied endowments. This happened on the return of the king from war, the consecration of a new temple or a new shrine, the festival of bath of gods, improvement or extension of the temple premises. They showed great interest in the propagation of religion. They are considerable number of evidence available for a study of endowments made by the royal family members.

Contribution of Parantaka I family

Kokkilanadigal, queen of Parantaka I made a gift of land after purchase from the assembly of Tirutturutti to maintain a perpetual lamp before and to provide for offerings to the image of Trailokyasundara setup in the Pushpavanesvara temple in Tiruppundurutti taluk.⁶ Amudan perral (alias) Pallavan Madeviyar of

Kanattur in Umbalanadu the queen of Cholappenimanadigal namely Parantakal land in the 31st year of him for burning a perpetual lamp in the temple of Perumanadigal at Govindapadi.⁷

Another inscription of the same king registers the gift of village tax free by prince Rajadityadevi, the eldest son of Paraniaka I For the expenses of worship in the temple of Sri Arruttali at Mudiur. A record dated in the 12th year of Parantaka II Sundarachola in 966 A.D registers an endowment of 2 plots of land after purchase, one by Aditan Kodaipirattiyar, the queen of Arinjigaipenmar for providing for the sacred bath of the god with 108 pots of water and for offerings on the day of Vishu in Chittirai (April) and the other by Viman Kundavaiyar, another queen towards the supply of 1000 pot full of water for the same purpose.⁸

Vimankuntavai was a queen of Aribiaya son of Paraitka I. She figures in the records of her son Sundarachola. In 968 A. D. she granted a piece of land for providing 1000 pots of water to the god for conducting a ceremony vananthisvarattu Paramasvamin in utayarakadi on the occasion of Sankranti every month.⁹ Arinjigaikeni the daughter of Mutta-Udaiyar, arikulakesari Arinjaya granted 4 mas of land at Tennur in kalaiyamangalam, a brahmadeya and devadana in Kilpilaru, a sub of Poygainadu for maintaining a perpetual lamp in the temple triumaluvadi Mahadeva, Udiyapalayam taluk. Tiruchirappalli district. She purchased it for 20 kalanjus of gold including the cost of tax exemptions.¹⁰

Sundaracholas family service to temple

An inscription issued during the 13th year of Sundarachola records an undertaking given by the sabha and patipadamulam of Tiruneyttanam, a devadana in Poygainadu to burn 2 perpetual lamps in the temple for an endowment of 10sey land purchased with 50 Kalanjus of gold which had been presented by Kattiroriuran and by Varagunaperumanar the queen of Bhuti Vikramakesari of Kodumbalur.¹¹ Another Udayarkudi Inscription of Sundarachola in the of 970 A.D states the donations of lands by viman kuntavaiyar for providing 1000 pots of water on occasion of sankranti.¹² Kuntavai a Princess of the Chola family and daughter of Sundrachola bought land from the mahasabha and presented to the temple, the proceeds of which were to be utilised for burning a lamp before Karuntittaikudi Mahadeva.¹³

Utamachos famiy religious service

An inscription belonging to the reign of Parthivendradhipativarman register that tribhuvana Mahadeviyar purchased from the ryots of Utrameru Claturvedimangalam and gave 2495 Kulis of land for sounding drums at **Sribali** ceremony and at Pallieluchchi in the temple Srivelivishnugraha. We the members have received purvacharam from the ordered the land to be tax free, sound drums during the three sand his of the day (morning, mid day and evening), (ii) during sribali, (iii) during pallieluchchi.¹⁴ An inscription issued during the third regional year of Uttamachola sembiyanmadevi donated 2 velis of land for a flower garden called gardaradittam to the temple.¹⁵ An inscription issued during the 5th year of Uttamachola records an endowment of some pieces of land made of after purchase by orattanan sorabaiyar also called Agra Mahadeviyar, the chief queen of Uttamachola for offerings during the midnight service in the temple of Tirunalar kovil Mahadeva at vilainagar brahmadeya on the southern bank of river Kaveri.¹⁶ Minavan Mahadeviyar another queen of Uttamachola made a gift of land after purchasing it for 25 kalanjus of gold for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp in the svetaranyesvara temple, tiruvenkadu, srigali taluk Tanjure district.¹⁷

Gandaradityas family donate to temple

Sembiyanmadevi the most respected queen of Gandaraditya was the daughter of Malavaraiya chieftain ruling Tirukkivilur area as a subordinate of the chola. She was the mother of uttamachola. Most of her life she spent in erecting religious edifices and granting endowments for its upkeep. On such was the temple of Uktavetism at Kuttalam in Mayavaram taluk. It was reconstructed by the meritorious act of her. A gift of land was made for offering worship music and other expenses and for reciting the sama, taittiriya and chandonga sameveda in the temple.¹⁸

There is a reference from the inscription found on the West wall of the Matsyapurisvaratemple, Koyit Tevarayarpetti records an endowment of land after purchasing by the queen mother of Utamachola for the merit of her son to the temple of Tinuchhin Alwar to provide for the sacred bath of the god with 108 pots of water on all days of sankranti, for offerings and a pair of clothes for the deity and for the remuneration of the Nambi who performed worship in the temple.¹⁹ An inscription issued in the 14th year of Uttamachola records the gift of 'a part of puravu dues from the village Nillipakkam in Ambatturadu, Pularkottam as a devadana for conducting services to god Tirumullaivayilmadevar in Vennaiyumadu, Pular-kottam by Sembiyanmadevi.²⁰ The remaining share of the dues was allotted to god Iruvalidayildeviar in Puliyur-kottam by the same lady.

Viranaraniyar queen of Uttamacho religious service

An inscription registers a gift of 6 velies of land by the mother of the king to the temple of Siadhenvaramudaya Mahadev at Tirunamiyur a brahmadeya in Tirunariyurnadu in kumbakonam taluk to meet the several expenses in the temple.²¹ The maintenance of a perpetual lamp, rice for sacred offerings vegetables, ghee, arecanuts, plantains, sugar, supply of milk, curd fried paddy requirements of prefatory ceremonies on the 12 sankranti days and the days feeding expenses on festival days.²², Viranaraniyar, a queen of Uttamachola

made a gift of land after purchase to temple of Tirukkilkottattuperumal at Tirukkudamukkil for providing flower garlands to the god in 13th year of Uttamachola,²³

Another inscription of the same king in the 15th year records an endowment of land made after purchasing from several individual owners by Orattanansorabbaiyar, the chief queen of Uttamachola to provide (i) for the conduct of sacred bath of the god on the days of Sankranti; (ii) for burning a perpetual lamp, and (ii) for Feeding hundred Brahmins on the days of Uttarayana sankranti in the temple of Kailasamudaiya Mahadeva, Sembianmadevi, Nagapattinam Taluk, Tanjore district.²⁴ A record dated in the 16th year of Parakesarivarman Uttamachola refers to a gift of land as Tiruchehenadaipuram to the goddess Madhurantakan Uma Bhattarakiyar in the temple of Tirukkolambadevar by Arunan Ponnambalattadigal, the queen of Uttamachola after purchasing it from a lady.²⁵

There is a reference from the inscription found on the north wall of the Sarvayoganathavamin temple, Tiruvisalur refers to (i) a gift of land made tax- free after purchase by Siddhavadavan Suttiyar, a queen of Uttamachola daughter of Miladu chief, and (i) gift of land by Pirantakan, Madevadigal, the mother of Uttamachola to provide for 108 pots of water for the sacred bath on the day of sankranti every month to the god at Tiruvisalur in Amaninarayana Chaturvedimangalam.²⁶

Sembian Madevi Religious Service

An inscription dated in the 2nd regional year of Rajaraja I records an order of Sembian Madevi fixing the allotment of paddy for items of daily expense in the temple of Tirukkarral Mahadeva mananjeri near Kadalangudi in Kurukkai nadu. Out of the produce 14 velis of land endowed by her in Mulaigudi in Nallarrur nadu.²⁷ Vanavanmadevi, of Uttamachola was a daughter of the in Irunkovil. She is known from only one record from madevi dated in 982 A.D. refers to a grant, made by her and other queen of Uttamachola for special offerings on the day of kettai in month of Chittirai (April), the natal star of Sembianmadevi, mother in law of the queen in the temple of Kailasanatha.²⁸

Cholamadeviyar (alias) Panchavan madeviyar, queen of Perumal Mummudichola (Rajaraja I) was a daughter of Kandan Maravan who was a subordinate of Rajaraja I. She made some significant grants to various temple.²⁹ In the 3rd regnal year of Rajaraja I in 988 A.D. she gave some after purchasing it from the temple authorities of Tirumalperu to the Manikantesara temple at Tirumalpuram for two perpetual lamps While she paid a visit to the temple of Tiruvidaimarududaiyar to offer worship to the deity, she gave a gift of land to the gardener Sathiyappai for the maintenance of the garden³⁰ Kilanadigal, the daughter of Vilupparaiyar, and the queen tanacholadeva made a gift of land for offerings and for the supply 108 pots full of water for the sacred bath of god in the temple of a in Amaninarayana chaturvedimangalam in the 3rd regional year of Rajaraja I³¹. In 991 A.D. she granted a piece of land at Punkuti to two individuals for singing tiruppadiyam hymns in the temple of Tirunallam Udaiyar in Konerirajapuram in Tanjore District. Parantakan Madevadigal (alias) Sembianmadevi, the mother of Uttamachola granted some land after purchase to the temple of Parasuramesvara at Tirmangalam in Miguru of Kilarkurram for a perpetual lamp and for special sacred bath of the deity on the specified days of the year in the 15th year of Rajaraja I.³²

An inscription dated in the 16th year of Rajaraja I in 1001 refers a grant of the village Manali in Anmurnadu as devadana for god paramasvamigal for worship and offerings by Sembianmadevi. Both Rajaraja I and Pancavan Madeviyar visited the temple at Tiruppukalur in 1006 A.D. granted lands for conducting special worship to the god every month on the day of their natal star satayam.³³ At the request of the queen Panchavan Madeviyar, lands which were surveyed and assessed excepting the devadana lands of Urankuti to the temple at Melappaluvur in Tiruchirappalli District³⁴ king granted in 1012A.D, the additional income of paddy due on some A fragmentary inscription found in the front gopura of Kolundisvarasvani temple Kottur, Mannargudi taluk, Tanjavur district records a grant made by Pancavan Madeviyar

Rajendrachola family service to temple

An inscription found on the wall of Sivalokanathar temple, Kiranur, Nannilam Taluk, Tanjore district register a gift of land to god Mahadeva of Tiruvagnisvaram by Kalyan Mahadevi, the wife of Rajendrachola.³⁵ A record dated in the 3rd regnal year of Rajendra chola Refers to an endowment of land after its purchase from the urar of perumpupakkam for providing food offerings with six nalis of rice 3 sand his to god Tiruvagattisvarattu Mahadevar in ulipakkam by Malaiyankundavaiyar (alias) Sembianmadevi, the during senior queen of the King.³⁶ Queen Arindavan Mahadeviyar set up an image of god Kshettirapalar in the temple of the god Tirunallamudaiya Mahadevar of Tirumallam, a brahmadeyam in Vennadu and she gave a gift of land in the 17th regnal year of Rajendrachola I (1028-1029 A.D.) for worship to the same deity after purchase it from a Brahmin woman named Vannaiyannangaimuttalisani of the same place.³⁷ Vanavan Madeviyar, the mother of Rajendrachola I made a gift of land 1/2 veli and odd in extent for a perpetual lamp to the temple. Parantakan Suttamaliyar (alias) Mukkokkilanadigal granted land for worship and offerings in the temple of Patalisvaramudaiyar for the growth of arms of the king Rajendrachola I. The king was then residing in the temple of Rajarajaisvara Mudaiyar Tyakavalli alias Buvanamuludumudaiyal, the queen of tunga I made a gift of

7 velis of land Siraittandalam as a devadana to god Parasuramesvaramudaiya Nayanar at Puttali, Conjeevaram taluk Chingleput District.³⁸

An inscription of the twelfth regnal year of the Chola King Vikramachola, certain Sembian Madevipirattiyar made a grant of land to the shrine of Vadavayil Mattapidariyar. The donor who is apparently a royal lady could not be identified.³⁹ The royal ladies had the major role than the others in donating lands. It is evident from the above inscriptions that the chola royal family actively participated in the activities of the society. Even though they were staunch adherents of Slavism, they were tolerant enough to construct temples to other religious sects. Logamadevi, queen of Rajaraja I built Sundarasolaperumpalli at Olagapuram and contributed land for its maintenance.⁴⁰

II. CONCLUSION

The chola dynasty was most famous dynasty in south India. They were various contributions to the society and country. The woman also enjoyed religious donate to the temples. The Cholas family's religious endowment to the temples. The land grand, village grand, gift of gold and silver, gift of cattle, donate of food grain, gift of vessel, gift of ornaments etc. The members of the royal household followed the Examples set up by the kings. The King's mother, sisters, queens, princes made varied endowments. This happened on the return of the king from war, the consecration of a new temple or a new shrine, the festival of bath of gods, improvement or extension of the temple premises. They showed great interest in the propagation of religion. They are considerable number of evidence available for a study of endowments made by the royal family members. In generally the chola royal women were treated in good manner

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