

Royal Women's Contribution to Temples During the Imperial Chola Period

OPEN ACCESS

Dr.N.Asha Devi, M.A.,M.Phil.,Ph.D.,

Assistant Professor in History

E.M.G. Yadava Women's College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

Volume: 6

Issue: 2

Month: October

Year: 2018

ISSN: 2321-788X

Received: 10.10.2018

Accepted: 27.10.2018

Published: 29.10.2018

Citation:

Asha Devi, N. "Royal Women's Contribution to Temples During the Imperial Chola Period." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2018, pp. 58–62.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1472686>

Abstract

During the period of imperial Chola. Women enjoyed a high status in society. There were no restraints in their social life and activities. They showed a keen interest in various social activities and patronized various kinds of art 1. These works express the bakthi of women of those periods. They involved in the promotion of religion, particularly Saivism Religion and demonstrated their rights and mighty position in exercising their sacred and charitable activities in temples. This paper "Royal Women's Contribution to Temples during the imperial Chola Period" deals the sacred activities carried on by the Queen's of imperial Chola.

Keywords: Cholas, contribution, royal women, patronage, donate

Introduction

During the period of imperial Chola. Women enjoyed a high status in society. There were no restraints in their social life and activities. They showed a keen interest in various social activities and patronized various kinds of art 1. These works express the bakthi of women of those periods. They involved in the promotion of religion, particularly Saivism Religion and demonstrated their rights and mighty position in exercising their sacred and charitable activities in temples. This paper "Royal Women's Contribution to Temples during the imperial Chola" deals the sacred activities carried on by the Queen's of imperial Chola.

Sembiyan Madevi

Since Sembiyan and Madevi, the mother of Uthama Chola had donated a pot of 190 Kalanju weight and 39 golden flowers weighing 190 Kalanju weight²; it was a model for her daughter in laws to adhere to such practices subsequently without any difficulty. Thus the queens served as models for other women due to their devotions and charitable qualities. Sembiyan Madevi wife of Parantaka I (907-955 A.D) purchased a house site and donated it as Salabhogam to be used by the physicians for the capital city.

The members of the Mahasabha of that place had granted tax remission to that after receiving a sum. This Vaidhyabhagam is a grant assigned to the Savarman Arayan Madurantakan and his family members as a regular hereditary grant. The queen had the privilege to announce grants for specific purposes such as the works of the physicians³.

The same queen Sembiyan Madevi, the mother of Uthama Chola (973-985), for the sake of her own son's welfare, had announced many grants to be carried out during every first day of every Tamil month she had purchased a lot of lands and granted them to have the sacred bath of the idol at Tiruchelur, to offer food for neivedyam. To purchase new clothes for the priests and also to purchase 108 vessels etc 4. Further, the same queen for the sake of her son had donated a silver plate and a copper base to the Mandhapurewara temple at Koildevaroyan pettai. She had even donated a golden kalasam to the same temple⁵.

Kundavai

The most notable princes of the Chola period was Kundavai, daughter of Sundara Chola and the elder sister of Rajaraja, who was married to Vallavaraiyar Vandiyattevar. Her endowments were recorded next to those of king mutts, tanks, Nadus, Chaturvedimangalam, etc. Out of his love and respect for her Rajaraja, I named one of his daughter's ad Kundavai. Though an ardent follower of Siva, She built a Vishnu temple at Rajarajapuram and donated liberally for its maintenance.

Similarly, a Jain temple known as Kundavai Jinalaya was built by her at Thirumalai. Kundavai made certain public endowments which testify her keen interest in the welfare of the people. She founded a hospital at Tanjore and named it as Sundara Chola Vinnagar Aturasalai after her father, Sundara Chola. She donated land for that free dispensary and established another hospital at Tiruvatuturai. Thus as princess of the Chola dynasty, Kundavai rose to a position equal to that of munificent monarchs. Well known for her religions toleration, she resided in Palaiyarai and commended respect to the period of Rajendra -I 6.

Viranarayani

Uthama Cholas wife and daughter of Ilanrukkarayar called Viranaarayani contributed case and land grants to carry out the activities of the Tirupati of the Nageswarasamy temple. This also exposed by the 6 th regnal year (979 A.D) record of Uthamchola⁷. It is also worth to note that Tribhuvana Madeviar the crown queen of Uthama Chola made a

lot of donations to celebrate the first day of the Tamil month in the temples in a grand manner for the bathing of the deity, to provide food to the deity and to feed 200 Brahmins on those days, etc. She donated for providing paddy, sweet-smelling materials, grams, gingelly, saree, kalam, rice, dhal and ghee etc 8. As such it is obvious that the queens were keen on observing and maintaining the religious rituals, ceremonies and activities without any interruption. All the above religious activities were arranged to be distributed by a specific individual administrative official called Parisargar. The same queen Uthama Chola's wife Viranaryani had even assigned the grant of 20 kasu to use turmeric for bathing the idol Nageswarasamy in the temple at Kumbakonam. This grant also reveals the custom that the water to bath the primary deity (abhishegam) was brought from the river Kaveri and for that purpose lands were granted by the Queen to the water carrier. The details based on almanac in fixing the period are worth to note⁹. This proves the wide wisdom and knowledge and also the customary practices adopted by the queens of the period in astronomy.

Kannapperasi

Kannapperasi, wife of Uthama Chola had ordered the Dhana Perumakkal i.e., the devotees of the Sembiyan Madevi Chaturvedi Mangalam to celebrate the birthday of Madevi. She had donated 507.5 Kalanju Pon to be used for providing food to different sets of people from the interest accrued from the said amount 10. This too expenses the involvement of queens in philanthropic activities associated with economic considerations. Another queen of Uthama Chola called Dhattam Dhana Tongiyar, especially to venerate her mother-in-law Sembiyan Madevi had donated to the temple, an ornament called Bhattam, a precious stone studded gold ornament¹¹.

In the same way, another queen of Uthama Chola called Panchavan Madevi had ordered the issue of 30 Kalanju weighing gold ornament called golden handled Venjamaram¹² (a golden whisk) to the deity of the place mentioned above. As all the queens were united and co-operative with each other, the five queens of Uthama Chola called Bhattam Dhana tongi, Malabadi Tennavan Madeviyar,

Vanavan Madevi the daughter of Irregular, daughter of Paluvettarayar and daughter of Vilayarayar respectively have offered a joint donation of 905 Kalanju Pon to feed the Brahmins during the birthday of Sambiyar Madevi, their mother in law 13. Thus the prevalence of polygamy was not a hurdle to the successful functioning of the religious services of the family. Further, as a joint venture, they had the custom of offering donations jointly in veneration of the mother-in-law. This could be attested even by the donation of 108 Kalanju Pon for offering food during the Kettai asterism of the Tamil month Chittirai. The amount collected as interest for the amount was to be utilized for that as customary practices 14. The amount of 143 and 145 Kalanju Pons were donated by the other queens for the same propose will testify to that. Thus making donations to temples by the queens indicate their donation and dedication to deities and elders of the family. This was also a customary practice.

Since the Tamil society was customary society the powdering of turmeric was usually done by women as household occupation. This is attested by the 15th regnal year (988A.D) inscription of Uthama Chola (973 to 985 A.D). While offering grants to various sets of people, Tribhuvana Madevi, the Crowned queen Tribhuvana Chakravarthy had announced grants even to a woman who was used for powdering turmeric to be used for bathing the idol of Kailasamudayar at the Sembiyan Madevi Chaturvedi Mangalam 15. The amount needed for such other expenditures are also donated. Tribhuvan Madevi, wife of Uthama Chola (973-985 A.D), donated 100 Kasus and arranged for the conduct of special rituals from the interest amount accrued 16.

Period of Raja Raja

It is obvious that the women of the royal blood were placed in a higher position. This could be attested by the third regnal year (988A.D) inscription of Raja Raja Kilanadigal, wife of Uthama Chola and daughter of Malavarayan had donated lands yield to bathe the deity of Vedapureswarar of Tirukkalithittai with the used water by 108 pots and also to feed the deity 17. So the queens had the privilege of involving themselves in noble charitable deeds and philanthropic activities. Here it is worth

to note the purpose for which different varieties of grants are announced, or donations are offered. They offered donations with specifications. An equal status along with the ruler assigned to the queens is highlighted by the 4 th regnal year inscription of Raja Raja II (1150 A.D)18.

Further, it is evident that the Queens were able to learn the administration of philanthropic activities from their husband's Ulagamadevi alias that Thathi Sakthi Vidangi the crowned queen of Raja Raja, the great (985-1014 A.D). She too was a pious lady and conducted the Hiranyagarbha sacrifice. She had donated a lot to that temple for the successful conduct of rituals without any interruption 19. The Tirukkayilayamudayar temple inscription available as Cholamadevi dated 983 A.D. the chieftain Vira Chola Elangovarayar of Tenkari Cholamadevi Chaturvedi Mangalam. It is also pointed out that interest accrued should be used for executing the rituals during the Avittam festival day. It is also mentioned that the balance should be granted to the Bhattars (priests) of the temple20.

Such facts indicated that the women of that age were capable of extracting financial transactions with the support of the administrators of the state including the temple. Raja Raja's queen Mukkokilanadigal is hailed for her noble qualities and personal traits which were comparable to the renowned nature of her husband, the Chola monarch. The queen was by the side of the ruler who was engaged in a specific administrative act of taxing the excess lands which are donated as Brahmmedayam, Devadanam, Pallichandam, Salabogam and Rajakulam Kanipparru.

Period of Kulottunga

The Royal women enjoyed many privileges. The queens of Kulottunga I (1071-1122 A.D) called Adittan Kambamadeviyar alias Tirubhuvanamuludayar and Adittan Anda Kuttiiyar alias Arukkan Cholakulavalliyar donated the lands purchased from the Nagarathars of Tundukukkacheri on 1084 A.D21. The same is inscription announced by Kulottunga I during his 14th regnal year, i.e., on 1084 A.D. contains another unique fact. The king during his visit to the Ulagalantha Perumal Temple of Kanchipuram announced the above said grant

at the request of his wife. Thus the queens were influencing the rulers and administration and were also in the high esteem of the rulers who executed the requests of the rulers without any opposition. The royal orders had to be obeyed Chetties, Malayalam and women of Ahamudayar community and they were compelled to execute the rituals in the Senai Mudaliyar Shrine of Srirangam 22.

Kulothunga I's (1071-1122 A.D.) 40th regnal year inscription mentions that Kambadevi, a queen of him was also a devotee of Ulaga Perumal of Kanchipuram. She had even donated the wealth for the conduct of rituals on the day of the asterism Pusam and the Duvadasi during the waxing moon. It is obvious that the queens of the Chola rulers were known for their charity and devotion. In that respect, they were not only pioneers for the successors of the royal family and but also for the other common women folk to be pious and dedicated at all times 23. It is also worth to note that the transactions were all executed with the approval of the monarch. So there prevailed cordial relationship between the charitable activities of women and the administration. The above facts indicate that the royal women who had economic independence were regarded and respected for their religious pursuits and philanthropic activities. Sembiyan Madevi, the wife of Gandaraditta and the mother of Uthama Chola, was respected. Kundavai, the wife of Vallavarayan Vanthiyadevan and elder sister of Raja Raja I along with the former were few queens who carried out pious deeds.

Donation of God's Idols by Royal Women

Rajendra I's General Rajendra Chola Anukka Pallavaayan's mother Sreedevi was responsible for the installation of the copper idol of Alagiya Mnavalar²⁴. The women. Due to their pious nature took part in making grants to temples to execute the rituals conduct of regular ceremonies and festivals. The third regnal year (1054 A.D) of Rajendra II's (1052-1064 A.D) available at the Thiruvilinalinatha temple of Thiruvilimilai. Informs that one Sridevi, mother of Rajendra I (1012-1044 A.D) due to her devotion had donated a copper image of Alagiyammanvalar and announced other donations for the execution of rituals to that deity. The inscription available at the place called

Valikondapuram, belonging to the 31st regnal year of (938 A.D) Parantaka I (907-955 A.D) attests the above fact. Arujanral and her brother Soran Thanthi had gifted 32 kalanju pon for purchasing ornaments and lamps to the Thirumalai Kadambar temple of Narthamalai²⁵. This reveals the nature of women and their families. Due to their attachment to deities they had announced above such donations and maintained their social prestige and status. The 12th regnal year (1228 A.D) inscription of Raja Raja III (1216-1260 A.D) states that a donation of land and house site for the offerings to the God Vellai Pillayar by a lady called Kuraval Parrudaiyar, wife of Vallankilayar of Rayunur²⁶. This gift was made by the lady for her welfare. So she had gifted land and houses to feed the deity of that place. So it is evident that the women, in general, were known for their philanthropic activities.

Conclusion

Not only the rulers, their queens too very much interested in religious activities. They donated money, materials and land to temples. Images made of gold, silver, copper and bronze were donated by the royal family. Chola feudatories too constructed many temples and donated to the temples. Not only the royal women but also women officials, women servant of palaces, other women of society and Devaraiyars also donated to the temples during the imperial Chola period king's and queen's were patronage the Saivism through their various contributions to the temples.

References

- Dr. C. Manoranjitha Mani, History of Tamil Nadu up to 1565 A.D Dave-Beryl Publications, Thirunelveli 2012. P.403.
- Annual report of Epigraphy 479 of 1925.
- S.I.I. Vol XIX No.235
- S.I.I. Vol XIX No.235
- Annual Report of Epigraphy 263 of 1923
- Manorajithamani P-406.
- S.I.I. Vol.III No.137 and 240 of 1911
- Annual Report of Epigraphy 488 of 1925
- S.I.I. Vol XIX No.131 and 234A of 1911
- Annual of Epigraphy 492 of 1925
- ARE 490 of 1925

ARE 491 of 1925

ARE 494 of 1925

ARE 494 of 1925

South Indian Inscriptions XI 01.XIX No.380

ARE 480 of 1925

ARE 298 of 1908

ARE 103 of 1931-32

K.K.Pillay, Chola Varalaru, Tamil Nadu Text Book Society, Madras 1977, P-204

T.S.Sridhar, Tamil Nadu Inscriptions, Tamil Nadu Government Department of Archaeology, Chennai-2004

ARE 45 of 1921

SII Vol. XXIV, Nos.203 and 257; 51 and 89 of 1938-39

ARE 45 of 1921

ARE 444 of 1908

Pudukottai State Inscription Pg-503.

Ibid, 1978

Web Sources

<https://www.coursehero.com/file/p561fa/It-is-also-worth-to-note-that-the-notion-of-ontological-commitment-as-found-in/>