

## Cattle Donation In Illuppur Taluk Temples In Pudukkottai District

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### Abstract

Temples are the most important centers of the society. They are functioning with liberal donations of the devotees. Cattles of the main sources of income to the temples. For lighting perpetual lamp, the necessary ghee is got from the cattle. The shepherds mostly depending upon the cattle rearing. The inscriptions from Illuppur Taluk number of evidences were collected which denote cattle donations. In this paper the impact of cattle donations and their social background are discuss the elaborately.

Key words: Gosalas-Irattapadi konda cholavalanadu-  
Kunrusulnadu -Perpetual lamp-Prasasthi-Santhi pujas -Savamuva  
Peradu-Shepherd-Sivabrahmanas-Thirumerrali Mahadeva-  
Thondainadu Puvina Rajakesari-Thulaippon-Ulakku measure-  
Upasaka

### Introduction

Temples are the important cultural and religious centre of Tamilnadu. Various functions were assigned with temples besides local administration. It served as a religious centre, educational institution, feeding centre for saints and devotees employment source, served as **banks** by giving **loans** in the time of flood and famine and also treasure house of arts. For these social welfare functions large amount of funds are needed and they were collected by the donations of devotees. These donations might be cash, kind and cattle's such as cows, sheep, goat, gold and lands. Thus collected cattle were given to the local shepherd (manradis)

and against them they have to supply ghee for lighting perpetual lamps at night in the temples. The goats and sheep's given to the shepherds were named as "Savamuva Peradu" <sup>1</sup>(ic everliving and ever young sheep)

This term imply, at least 48 or 96 sheep were given to one shepherd for supplying certain quantity (measure) of ghee every day. Whenever the temple authorities check the sheep the member should be constant, notless then 48 or 96 sheep or goat. During the period of rearing the sheep will reproduce their calves and the number might be increased. Because of old age some sheep would die. At any rate when the time of inspection the number would be constant either 48 or 96. The excess, sheep might be sold and the gains might be used for the livelihood of the shepherd. This arrangement was useful for the continuous lighting of lamp without fail and the life of the shepherd's were ascertained. In this way, the donations of cows and sheep made by various people to the temples of Illuppur taluk and their economic benefactions are discussed in this chapter.

In the early period only cows and sheep were donated to the temples. But when the value of the sheep and cow increased and the number of cattle became reduced. These donations were minimized. When the circulation of gold coins was in vogue and plenty. The donors donated coins made of Gold. They were mentioned as "Thulaippon" (Punched coins). But in the temples of Illuppur Taluk no donation of gold coins were known only cattle are donated.

#### **Inscriptions of cattle donations**

In the temples of Illuppaiyur taluk totally 10 inscriptions are available. Which mention cattle donations. Among them at Kudimiyamalai Siva temple six inscriptions ranging from Aditya chola I to Kulothunga III period are known. The other four inscriptions are seen at Parambur, Chittur, Thirukkattalai and Madathukovil temples.

Among these four records three belong Kulothunga Chola period found at Parambur, Thirukkattalai and Madathukovil. Only one record from Chittur temple belongs to Rajaraja chola I period. These records will be discussed one by one and the full details of these records will come to light.

### **Inscriptions of early Chola period**

Aditya I who ruled Chola country during 871 to 907 CE is known with the title 'Thondainadu Pavina Rajakesari' An inscription dated to his 3<sup>rd</sup> regnal year (873CE) is found on the wall of a cave temple (Melaikovil) excavated at Kudumiyanmalai in Iluppur Taluk<sup>3</sup> Mahimalaya Irukkuvel a chieftain from Kodumbalur Velir chief family has endowed 31 cows to the Kudimiyanmalai temples.

From this record one came to know the actual name of present Kudimiyanmalai was Thirunalakkunram. The god is named as Paramesvarar. With this donated 31 cows, the milk got by them arranged to use sacred bath (ablation) of God in the early morning worship. And the excess milk will be used for making milk rice (milk food) offered for 3 Santhi pujas in this temple. This endowment was controlled and protected by the Sri Mahesvaras (administrators) of this temple.

Aditya son Parantaka I who ruled chola nadu during 907-953 CE also had the title of Madurai Konda Parakesari. One of his stone record found on the same wall found the previous inscription. This record belongs to the sixth regnal year (912 CE) of Parantaka. It provides interesting information and the conditions of the donated cattle in this temple.

At this temple the donated cows were stolen by the vandals and the protection of these cows were not possible that was why the temple administrators stole the remaining cows and got gold against them. With these Gold daily supply of ghee was ensured. Since the record is damaged largely and so the full details and how many lamps were lighted, what amount of gold was spent is not traceable.

### **Inscriptions of Rajaraja chola**

An inscription of Rajaraja Chola I is noticed on the walls of Thiru Agnisvara temple at Chittur.<sup>5</sup> It begins with his Prasasthi but highly damaged. the regnal year is assumed as 16 by the editor of the inscription. To this temple one Puliyur Kilavan an individual has endowed 25 cows for lighting one perpetual lamp. The shepherd who got these cows for rearing had to supply daily one ulakku measure of ghee and in total for one month he had to supply 7 (Nali) measure and one uri (Uri) a smaller unit equal to two Ulakku.

This arrangement was supervised by the Sivabrahmanas of the temple and it has to be protected by Mahesvaras of this temple.

### **Donations of cattle's during Kulothunga Chola I**

Three inscription of Kulothunga Chola I period deal about the cattle donations to the temples in Sunderesvara temple, Thirukkattalai, Madathukovil temple and Cholisvara temple at Parambur. During the ninth regnal year of Kulothunga Chola I, half lamp to be lighted by the gift of 25 sheep. The record begins with the prasasti of Kulothunga Chola I, this lamp donation was given to be Mahadeva temple of Thirukkattalai. The lamp was lighted for the memory of one dead hero in a quarrel held at Milattur. The name of the dead hero was Rajendra Singapperayan. This lamp was donated by the brother of the dead hero. Anukkan and one Palamendalapperaraiyan of Milattur. The endowment was handed over to the upasaka of the temple (staunch devotees) and was protected by Mahesvaras.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Kulothunga Chola I, 51 sheep were donated one perpetual lamp in the Rajendra cholisvara temple at Parambur.<sup>7</sup> Then Parambur was included in Kunrusulnadu a subdivision in Irattapadi konda cholavalanadu, the larger division. This gift was given by Thiruvadika Vikkirama Cholan alias vikkirama chola Pallavatharaiyan hailed from Pakkaththuppakkam in Vesalippadi area may be identified with the present day Vellore district. By the proceeds from these cows daily ulakku measure of ghee should be supplied.

The gifted 51 sheep were handed over to three Sivabrahmanas 1. Kunran Singa pattan who belong to Gowthama gotra 2. Ambalathadi Soran and Devan Paramesvara of the same gotra. The donated sheep are named as ever living sheep (Sava Moova Peradu)

One more inscription of Kulothunga Chola I, engraved on the wall of Madaththukovil Siva temple belongs to the 20<sup>th</sup> regnal year of the king. In this record it is stated one hundred sheep were donated for lighting one perpetual lamp to the God Perumandar of Madaththukovil. The donar is named as Thannan Ethirapperumal alias Kulothunga Chola Kadamparayan who was a subordinate chief of Vadakonadu. This endowment was handed over with the Sivabrahmanas of the temple who had agreed to light the lamp without fail.

### **Inscriptions of Rajaraja Chola II**

Rajaraja Cholall ruled cholanadu during 1163-1176 CE. During his 11 regnal year (1173 CE) one chief Rajendran alias Kulothungma chola Kadambaraiyan had instituted two perpetual lamp in the temple of Thirumerrali Mahadeva at Kudumiyan Malai. for these two lamps one Uri measure of ghee to be supplied daily. The measure was named as Keralanthakan, a title of Rajaraja I.

The donor had endowed 20 pon (gold coins) Kalanju and with this gold coin was used to buy 12 buffaloes for supplying milk. These 20 pon was received by selling certain lands already given by Vikrama Chola (king ruled 1117-1133 CE) to the Urar of Punnankudi. These lands were sold by the donor to the four Sivabrahmanas viz, Maran Kunran, Surrikunran, Ambalakkuthan, Thirumani Thiruvaiyarudaiyan etc.

Again to the same temple and for the same god the same donor and an Agambadimuthali chief Narran Periyar alias Viram Alagiya Pallavaraiyan installed one perpetual lamp. To light this lamp one Ulakku ghee had to be supplied by Keralanthakan measure. The endowment was handed over to the Sivabrahmanas who belong to Bharatvaji gotra. Their names are, Marankunran, Narppaththannayiravan Mudivilamuthal, Surrikunran Karumani Thiru Vaiyarudaiyan. For this supply of ghee 96 sheep and 13 cows were donated. And also 53 thara weight of one lamp was also given by Narran Periyar alias Viram aghakiya Pallavarayan.

### **Inscriptions of Kulothunga Chola III**

At Kudumiyanmalai temple two inscriptions of Kulothunga Cholall are found which dealt about the cattle donation. During the 14<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Kulothunga Chola III, for Thirunalakkunram (Kuudumiyanmalai) Siva temple. Three eternal lamps were installed by an individual, Thiruvelan Sathan. He donated 42 sheep for supplying ghee for these lamps.

These three lamps were installed one for the merit of Arayar alias Mupperudaiyan. Who died as a fight with of Velan Saththan Thanippinakku Muththam. This is the first and rare instance, a perpetual lamp being donated for a man who was slayed down in a private quarrel.

Another record in the same temple belong to the 45<sup>th</sup> regnal year of same Kulothuna Chola III. An individual Ponnar Sembian Goattu Velan hailed from Karaiyur had installed one lamp to light night and day. For lighting this lamp the endowed 96 goat with some Siva Brahmanas of this temple, who agreed to light the lamp

without fail. By the proceeds of milk from these goats, they have to supply ulakku measure of ghee to this temple.

### **Conclusion**

Cattles are the main source of income in the temples. These cattle were handed over to the Yadava community people (shepherds) for rearing. They were named as 'Savamuvaperadu" (everliving sheep). By this donations, the livelihood of certain community people is assured. Still this practice of cattle donations prevails in certain temples such as Alagarkovil, Naynar Koil and Srirangam etc. For the protection of these cows, separate Gosalas are also functioning in the places like Srirangam and Alagarkoil. Further study on this topic may shed fresh light on the society and temple.

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