



RELIGIOUS CONDITION AS GLEANED FROM THE INSCRIPTIONS OF MAYILADUTHURAI REGION

V. Rajendran

Assistant Professor of History, A.V.C College (Autonomous), Mannampandal,
Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam, Tamilnadu

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Abstract:

The article explains an important religious activity of the Mayiladuthurai region. The CholasKings, queens and chieftainsconstructed and presented gifts to Siva and Vaishnu temple in Mayiladuthurai region. The duck and others also gave the stonesfor the construction of the temple in Mayiladuthurai. Particularly they presented the part of temple in Mayiladuthurai region stone vimana, Stupi, images of some deities, compound wall and gate (Tiruvasal), arachchalai (feedings house),land for a flower-garden,gold,ornaments, silver vessels, and alsoa dish, a trumpet, a hanging lamp, a bell and etc.

Key Words: Constructed Temple, Gopuras, Praharas, Mandapas, Kings, Queens, Chieftains, Gift of Land & Lamp Stands

Introduction:

Mayiladuthurai region was ruled by Cholas, Pandyas, Vijayanagara, Nayakas, and others. And because of that, the medieval period of Mayiladuthurai regime was flourished more rapidly. They gave importance to the religions called Saivism and Vaishnavism in this region. The kings constructed many Siva temples in this region and particularly many ducks of the Cholas concentrated in constructing in a grand scale the gopuras, mandapas and praharasin Hindu temples. These temples had functioned as social network of the society. Many feeding centers (arachalai) were constructed for Brahmins, tapasvins and the destitute by the Cholas kings, queens, Chieftains and other prominent persons in the villages. They were responsible for the foundation and construction of many temples. Pandyas, Vijayanagar kingdom, Maratha and Nayakas also made some land grants to the Siva and Vishnu temples. One of the Valanjiyar and the Tisai-Ayirattainnuruvar communities were also contributed for the development of these temples in Mayiladuhturai region.

Pallavarayanpettai Sundaesvarar Temple:

Pallavarayanpettai is situated 3k.m from the North of Mayiladuthurai, 14k.m from the South-West of Manalmedu. A record of Rajaraja II refers to the temple of Rajarajesvaram Udaiyar which was constructed at Kulattur by Kulattulan Tiruchchirrambalam Udaiyan Perumal Nambiyar alias Pallavarayan, a native of Karigai Kulattur.¹This temple inscription expresses the specialties of Pallavarayan. This Pallavarayan had dedicated himself in practicing morality and spiritual in his life. Even he prevailed and got victories by war. For the remembrance of his victories, he built a temple in Pallavarayanpettai in the year A.D.1155.This Pallavarayan was called by many titles in the period of Cholas. Peruman Nambi Pallavarayan known as Thiruchchitrambalamudaiyan was called Arankavallan, Aruludaiyanayagan in the period of Rajaraja II (A.D.1146-1163). This Pallavarayanpettai was called Vanavan Kulattur,² Rajaraja-Kulattur³ during the period of Rajaraja II. In the 16th year of the same king land was granted to dig a tank for the temple.

Nidur Somanathesvarar Temple:

Nidur is situated at a distance of 5 k.m from the Northern side of Mayiladuthurai, 10k.m from the North-East of Vaithesvarankoil. It is located in the place of northern bank of Cauvery in Cholanadu. A record of Kulottungachola I (A.D.1118) mentioned that KandanMadhavan of Kulattur was constructed of a stone vimana of the temple in Nidur. He was the chief of Milalai nadu.⁴In the 14thregnal year inscription of Rajadhiraja II (A.D.1177) states that that place was situated in Rajasikhamani-chaturvedimangalam, a brahmadeya in Tiruvindalur-nadu, a sub division of Rajadhiraja-valanadu.⁵

Talainayar Kurramperuttesvarar Temple:

It is situated 14 k.m to the North of Mayiladuthurai, 6k.m West from Vaithesvarankoil, 5 k.m East from Manalmedu. This temple Stupi was constructed by the wife of a certain CholakularayanMangaladhirajan in the reign of Kulottugachola III.⁶ The present structure of the Parvathibhagar shrine in this temple was constructed by the same king.⁷

Tiruvalagadu Vadavaranyesvarar Temple:

Tiruvalagadu is situated at a distance of about 15k.m West from Mayiladuthurai. It is located in the place of Southern bank of Cauvery in Cholanadu. This temple came into existence in the days of Kulottungachola III. A record of Kulottungachola III states that the image of Visvesvaradeva was set up by Monnai Andar alias Rajaraja-Tanjanattu-Muvendavelan in the temple.⁸Another one record of Kulottungachola III (A.D.1189) mentioned that the grant of land for a flower-garden to the temple by Kongarayan. In the 11th year inscription of Kulottungachola states that the grant of land for a flower-garden to the temple by the royal secretary Rajanarayana-Muvendavelan.⁹

Thiruvavaduthurai Gomuktisvarar Temple:

Thiruvavaduthurai is located 15k.m West from Mayiladuthurai, 2k.m South-West from Narasinganpet railway station. It is noted in the 36th place of Southern bank of Cauvery in Cholanadu. Tirukkarralippichchan who is started to have built the temple, during the 25th regnal year of Parantaka I (A.D932).¹⁰ The king Parantaka himself contributed 500 kalanju of gold towards the construction of this structure above the Kudappadai. Sankaradevan of Ilangarikudi built the mandapa of this temple.¹¹ In the 31st regnal year of the Kulottungachola I (A.D1101) gift of 10 ma of land to the temple by a number of persons, for the maintenance of a arachchalai (feedings house) attached to the temple.¹² Another one inscription of the temple speaks off about Kluvan Sandiradittan of Varampusal who constructed a tier (Padai) of the temple and the other, of NakkanVannattadigal a maid servant of the palace. This place is called 'periyavelam'.¹³ These temple inscriptions address the presiding deity as Thiruvavaduthurai Devar, Thiruvavaduthurai Udaiyar, Thiruvavaduthurai Alvar. In the 24th regnal year inscription of Rajaraja I states that gold, silver vessels, ornaments and also images of some deities presented to the temple by Iraman Abhimanatongiyar, the mother of Trailokya-Madeviyar the mother of Rajendra-choaladeva.¹⁴ The two inscriptions of Vikramachola mentioned that land presented by the Senapati Sankaran Ilankarikudaiyan Ambalankoyilkondan alias Anantapalan of Peravur-nadufur feeding Brahmins, tapasvins and the destitute. This feeding hall called 'Munnurirupattunalvan', Sankaradevan-Tirumandapa, also constructed inside of the temple by the same Senapathi.^{15, 16}

Konerirajapuram Umamahesvarar Temple:

Konerirajapuram is situated at a distance of 26 k.m South-West of Mayiladuthurai and 21k.m South-East of Kumbakonam. Aduthurai is the nearest railway station of the temple. This temple village was called Thirunallam during the Cholas period. Sembiyan Madevi alias Madevadigalar, the queen of the Chola king, Gandaraditya, and the mother of Uttamachola, and the converted the existing temple of Thirunallam into a stone temple (Karrali).¹⁷

A record of Uttamachola states that it was one Sattan Gunabattan alias Haracharana Sekharan of Alattur who was the actual architect or State official of the temple under the orders of Udaiyapirattiyar. It is further evident from the record that the supervisor of the work was set up graded as Rajakesari Muvendavelan in recognition of his services.¹⁸ In the 12th regnal year of Rajaraja I (A.D997) state that gift of a silver image of the god and a copper image of Chandesvara by Nakkan Nallattadigal to the temple. He was the Kaikolar community.¹⁹ Tittai-Vilumiyan alias Pillai-adiyar also constructed stone temple for Chandesvara. It was found in the 15th regnal year temple inscription of Kulottungachola I (A.D1085).²⁰ Another one record of Rajendra I (A.D1024) refers to the setting up of an image of Kshetrapala by his queen Arindavan Mahadevi.²¹ Arindavan Mahadevi was one of the queens of Rajendra I.²² Another undated record states that Mudalipillai of Vangipuram was constructed temple gopura.²³ Tirunadaimaligai and Varandaha was constructed by Arulmolideva alias Vayanattaraiyan of Adanur.²⁴

Thiruvelvikudi Manavalesvarar Temple:

Thiruvelvikudi is located in Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam district. It is noted in the 23rd place of Northern bank of Cauvery in Cholanadu. This Siva temple is located 12k.m West from Mayiladuthurai, 10k.m East from Aduthurai, 2k.m North from Kuttalam and 5km South from Thirumananjeri. It expresses that in Vadakarai Nallur Nadu, Brahmadeyam Videl Viduku Chaturvedimangalam, in Vadakarai Korukkai Nadu, Brahmadeyam Videl Viduku Devi Chaturvedimangalam.²⁵ In the construction of this temple, one part is constructed by Valanjiyar and another by Nanadesi Tisaiyayirattu Ainnurruvar. It is noticed that the construction works could be done by Nambiyana Thiruvaiyaru Yogi, Thiruvelvikudi and his son Srikarralippichchan.²⁶

The name of the native village of Thiruvelvikudi, Thiruvaigaiyarru Yogi and his son Thirukarralippichchan, Thiruvelvikudi are also inscribed in the rock inscription. This message is shown in the damaged rock inscription of Koparakesarivarman.²⁷ Kaadarai Singam donated the God image for this temple. He is a Valanjiyar society. The lines of the inscription as follows, "....Itthevarai Seivithan Valanjiyar Panichei Magan Kaadarai Singam".²⁸

Thenkarainattu Aayiramudaiyan Karikala Kannan Muvendavelan donated the statue of the Lord Duvarapalagar. This message is shown in the temple rock inscription located in the northern side of Duvarapalaga.²⁹ Periya Keezhavan Bhattadevan donated the entrance to this temple. He was a document writer in Thinaikalathu Saathu (revenue department).³⁰ Raayeri prepared to make two floors in Manavalesvarar temple. This message is being witnessed in the southern Jagati inscription of the temple.³¹

Maran Chalukki offered four stones.³² Chevakakandan, Otrikandar Devan and Kanjaran Annavan of Kaikolar (merchant family) society offered three stones. These people are known as Kandaradittan Terinjakkai kolarkal. It is also found from the rock inscription.³³ Kachuvan Kaadanchetti alias Thiruvaiyaru Yogi, Nalloor Nadu donated Valagathadi (compound wall), Thaadipadai (ground portion of wall) to the Manavalesvarar temple at Thiruvelvikudi. It is noted that he himself also constructed the temple at Nagareeshwaram in Kanjaru city.³⁴

Then, Samithan Velaancholai donated one stone³⁵ and Soolabani Vellore Kizhavan and Arumpakkamudaiyan donated two stones.³⁶ Nalloor Yogi donated fourteen stones.³⁷ Korukkai Nilakkizhaalar Amarnethi, Annaiyoor Nakkan each one stone.³⁸ These message are shown in the rock inscriptions of Velvikkudi temple.

Tirumananjeri Udvahanathasvami Temple:

Tirumananjeri is situated at a distance of 21k.m North-West from the town of Mayiladuthurai and about 5k.m South-East from Kuttalam. It is noted in the 24th place of Northern bank of Cauvery in Cholanadu. A record of Rajaraja I states that Sembian Mahadeviyar order to the officers Kandadai-Nambi and Pichchan for constructed the stone temple in Tirumananjeri.³⁹ In the 4th regnal year inscription of Parakesarivarmans states that a dish, a trumpet, a hanging lamp, a bell and an image present to the same temple by Mundan Arangan alias Narppattennayira Panmahesvara Mayilatti.⁴⁰ Another two undated inscriptions states that the gopura was built by Nallama-Nayakkar of Nedungunram. Another record reveals that a new compound wall and gate (Tiruvasal) of the temple were constructed by Manavan Manran alias Virasetti.⁴¹ Arangan Sandiradittan also presented stone to the temple.

The inscriptions address the presiding deity as Tirukarralimahadevar, Tiruverudupadi-udaiyama Mahadeva, Tirumananjeri Udaiyamahadevar, Tirumananjeri Alvar and Udavahanatha. A record of Rajaraja I (A.D991) states that Aruran Kamban alias Tirukkarrali-Pichchan of Tirumananjeri gave 16 kalanju of gold for sandal paste, offerings, cloth and oil for lamps to the god Mahadeva at Tirumananjeri.⁴² Another one record of the same king states that gift of 96 sheep for a lamp to the temple by the Manavalapperumal at the native of Velvikkudi.⁴³ A record of Rajadhiraja I (A.D1046) speak off land granted for feeding annually one thousand devotees including Sivayogins and Tapasvins, in the temple at Tirumananjeri.⁴⁴

Kuttalam Alias Tirutturutti Uktavedisvar Temple:

Kuttalam is at a distance of about 10k.m West from Mayiladuthurai. It is noted in the 37th place of Southern bank of Cauvery in Cholanadu. A record of Rajakesarivarma 7th year inscription states that this temple was constructed by Sembian Mahadeviyar, the mother of Uttama-chola.⁴⁵ An undated inscription speaks about the outer and inner walls of the goddess shrine, the gopura and the street Chidambara-Dikshitapuram were presented the Pippali Chidambara-Dikshitan.⁴⁶ In the 25th regnal year inscription of Kulottungachola III (A.D1203) mentioned that Omkaresvarar temple was built by Jayadara Pallavarayar at Kuttalam.⁴⁷ In the 29th year inscription of Koneriramaikondan states that Kulottunga-Solan-Kurralam in Virudarajabhayankharavalanadu.⁴⁸ The inscriptions of Rajaraja I (A.D1002), Rajendra I (A.D1035), and Rajendra II (A.D1056) addresses the presiding deity as Sonnavarivar, Tirukkarrali-udaiya-mahadeva⁴⁹ and Sonnavariyum-Mahadeva.⁵⁰ In the 17 year inscription of Rajaraja I (A.D1002) states a gift of 90 sheep for burning a perpetual lamp before the image of Porpalagai-Vitankarand a grant of 360 kalanju of gold by Viranarayana Kuttattali a Valangai Velaikkaran residing at Kavirinalur in the temple at Vingunirttirutturutti.⁵¹ A record of Rajendra I (A.D1035) mentioned that a gift of land for feeding Sivayogins at the mid-day service in the temple.⁵²

Vazhuvir Virattanesvar Temple:

This temple is situated 3k.m South from Mayiladuthurai. In the 5th regnal year inscription of Kulottungachola III states that a shrine for the goddess was constructed in the north-west corner varandaha of the temple by Vanakovaraiyar, the chief of Tundanadu in Mudikondasola-valanadu.⁵³ Another one undated record mentioned that Alagapperumal Pillai, son of Gangeyar Ganapatinayinar-Pillai constructed the main gopuram and the prakara wall⁵⁴ and set up an image of Bhikshatanamurti in the same region.⁵⁵ A record of Vijayanagar king Pratapadevaraya, refers a tank and an irrigation channel constructed for the temple.⁵⁶

Another two Brahmapurisvara temple inscriptions of Vijayanagar mentioned that this place was called as Valugur alias Kalikadinda-solanallur.⁵⁷ In the 27th year record of Kulottungachola states that gift of money for 6 lamps to the temple.⁵⁸ A record of Rajaraja mentioned that gift of 32 cows and one bull for a lamp by Sengenir Virapperumal alias Kulottungachola Sambuvaraya.⁵⁹ Another one record of the same king states that a gift of money, for two lamps and two lamps stands which was given by a native of Sirkarkadu in Arkattu-kurram of Pandyakulasani-valanadu.⁶⁰

Vaishnavism:

Apart from these Siva temples, there are many Vishnu temples in Mayiladuthurai regime. Sri Parimala Renganathasvami temple in Tiruvindalur is the famous Vishnu temple. It is situated one kilometer from the north of Mayiladuthurai. It is one of the Divya Desams the 108 temples of Vishnu revered in Nalayira Divya Prabandam by the 12 Alvars. This temple is along Kaveri and is one of the Pancharanga Kshetrams. The present temple is said to have been built in the chola days. The temple is praised by Sri Thirumangai Alvar in 10 hymns. An undated record from this temple refers to a royal gift of 4 veli of land to the temple of Ponmenda-Pandyachaturvedimangalam founded in the name of the king round the temple of Alagapperumal at Kanjanagaram.⁶¹ Another one undated inscription states that this place Tiruvindalur, in Tiruvindalur-nadu, a subdivision of Vadagarai Rajadhiraja-valanadu.⁶²

The other Vishnu temples are Sri Ramar Koil in Thirumanjana Vedhi, Venugopalasvami in Mahadana street, another temple of the same name in the Pattamangala street and the Anjaneya temple on the southern banks of the river cauvery near Thulaghat. An undated inscription of the Kripakupesvar temple at Komal states

that a certain Kalappalarayar fed 20 brahmanas daily in a salai (feeding house) attached to the temple of Tiruvaippadi-Alvar (Krishna), at Gangaikondasola chaturvedimangalam.⁶³

Conclusion:

It is clearly shown that the temples were not constructed by kings and Queens only but also by Chieftains and even public of the society. One part of the Manavalesvar temple was built by the Kaikolar family. This temple inscription also illustrates that Thenkarainadu Moothavelan, a farmer installed a statue of Mahakaalan alias duvarapalaga. Chelukki, Annavan of Kaikolar society donated stones to the temple. The main part of the Virattanesvarar temple was constructed by Vanakovaraiyar, the chief of Tundanadu in Mudikondasola-valanadu, gopuram and pirahara of the same temple was constructed by Alagapperumal Pillai, Thiruthurithi Omkaresvarar temple was built by Jayadara Pallavarayar, Kandan Madhavan constructed stone vimana of the Somanathesvarar temple at Nidur, Sundaresvarar temple constructed by Pallavarayan.

Kings lineage women constructed and donated lands and other things to the temple of Mayiladuthurai region. It also expresses the deeds and donation of other lineage women. The image of Kshetrapala presented to Konerirajapuram temple by Arindavan Mahadevi was one of the queens of Rajendra I, Narppattennayira Panmahesvara Mayilatti, Raayeri, also constructed part of the temple in this region. But Sembiyan Mahadevi occupied a prominent place by character among those women in the period. We may quote the temple built by her, Konerirajapuram, Tirumananjeri, Thirukodika, Thiruthurithi, Thiruvakkarai, Thenkurangaduthurai, Aanankur, and Mayiladuthurai. She donated land and many things to the temple for burning lamps, foods and other things.

It could be seen that the recent women also donated coins, presenting the lamp stands, vessels, bell, etc. Sometimes they donated paddy, foods, money and gold to the gods and goddess. Then they donated those things for the fruitfulness of their family life. This kind of charitable act continuously in the tradition as a mark of dedication towards the infinite and still it is followed by the people.

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