

Rajaraja Chola's "Sava Muva Peradu" And The Pandya Country Donation

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Abstract:

Rajaraja Chola I, the greatest ruler of the Chola dynasty, is known for his generous services, which contributed to the welfare of the people. Inscriptions from his period, discovered at Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, and Virudhunagar, prove the charitable activities of Rajaraja I. With a view to lighting the eternal lamp in temples, he introduced a new scheme, namely Sava Muva Peradu. According to this scheme, temples received oil to light the lamps. "Sava Muva Peradu" means that donated items will not be reduced in any way. The Prominent objective of the scheme is that the donated livestock should not be reduced due to death or age, and if they occur naturally, they should be compensated. This article highlights the essence of the Sava Muva Peradu endowment of Rajaraja-I

Keywords: livestock, Temples, Chola, Donated, Scheme.

Introduction

Rajaraja Chola I, who ruled Tamil Nadu with distinction in the latter part of the tenth century AD, established his rule not only over the "Chola country" but also over the neighboring countries like Eelam, Sri Vijayam, Pandya Nadu, Thondai Nadu, Chera Nadu and the nearby small kingdoms. Rajaraja I performed incomparable charitable works during his reign. The Thanjavur Brihadeeswarar Temple is considered the most outstanding work among them, which is still admired by the world. He ordered that the names of everyone who participated in that temple, including the servants, be recorded in the inscriptions. Similarly, there is ample evidence of his performing charitable works and giving large donations wherever his rule was exercised. Based on these, the "Sava Muva Peradu" project is one of the most outstanding charitable activities undertaken by Rajaraja Chola I to carry out temple procedures. This article examines, based on historical evidence, whether these differ between the Chola and Pandya dynasties.

Rajaraja Chola I

The first king to rise to prominence in the Chola kingdom after Uttama Chola was Rajaraja Chola. He was the son of Sundarachola. His parents gave him the name "Arunmozhi varman". Arunmozhi varman came to power in 985 A.D. It is noteworthy that he is mentioned in inscriptions with the name Rajaraja from 988 A.D onwards. In addition, inscriptions with the name Rajaraja are found in places like Thiruchengattangudi, Thirumalpuram, Thiruvenkadu, Thiruvadhikudi, Thiruvialur, Thiruchottruthurai and others with the name

Rajarajana. This makes it clear that Arunmozhivarman (Rajaraja) was called Rajaraja due to his victories and gifts.

Rajaraja Chola's First Invasion

Historians have two different views regarding Rajaraja's first invasion. According to Rajaraja Chola's original account, Kanthalur Salai (Valiyasalai) was a part of present-day Thiruvananthapuram. It is said that he first attacked this region and achieved great success, so he first included "Kanthalursalai Kalamartharuli" in his inscription. Another theory is that Rajaraja Chola attacked Kandalursalai by sea, but no evidence has been found so far.

Therefore, before the "Kanthalursalai War", he went through the Pandya country and defeated Amaraphujanga, the Pandya king, and then conquered Kerala. In confirmation of this, the Thiruvallangattu copper plates indicate that Rajaraja started his invasion towards the south. We have found a large number of inscriptions of Rajaraja in districts like Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, and Virudhunagar as evidence that he carried out charitable works there after the victory over the Pandya country.

Sava Muva Peradu

This scheme was started by Rajaraja Chola I during the reign of the Cholas. The "Sava Muva Peradu" scheme was a scheme established to regulate donations to solve problems related to charity. "Sava Muva Peradu" means that the donated items should not be reduced in any way. That is, the objective of this scheme is that the donated livestock should not be reduced due to death or age and if they occur naturally, they should be compensated through their reproduction. In this scheme, a complete "Sava Muva Peradu" means 96 goats. "Half Sava Muva Peradu" is also provided in this scheme. 48 goats will be provided in this scheme. After the expiry of the scheme, the donated livestock should be returned to the government without reducing the number. People who violate this are not given a chance to return under this scheme. Furthermore, if a situation arises where it is impossible to return the donated items, government employees took steps to increase the donation from the recipient.

This "Sava Muva Peradu's" scheme was implemented in the Chola Dynasty to help the landless people develop economically and to obtain oil for lighting lamps, one of the temple rituals. According to this scheme, the Thanjai Peruvudaiyar Temple received the projectile through this "Sava Muva Peradu's" scheme to obtain the oil required for lighting lamps. According to this scheme, it was considered one of the main duties of the person who received the donation to provide ghee to the temple to light lamps every day, day and night.

Charitable donations of Rajaraja Chola in the Pandya country

There is evidence that Rajaraja carried out charitable activities in the Chola country as well as in the Pandya country he conquered. Among them, an inscription that has not been recorded in any document so far was discovered near Thiruchuzhi by Sridhar, a researcher at the Pandya Culture Center.

Inscription lines,

"Rajaraja Mandalathu

Parithikudi Nattu Devathana

Koil sri Moolathu natha

Alvarku Venbu Nattu Nap

Rathu Araiyan Maranana

Rajarajap Perraraiyathan Manavatti

Kangu Ippirattiyai sathi

Vaitha Thirunontha Vilakku

Ondrukku Aadu

Muppathu Elavaiyudai

Ith thevar vettikudi kelunthu

Nisatham Attu

I Alakku”

The above inscription was found near Tiruchuzhi in Virudhunagar district. The inscription is written in circular script. It mentions that the Rajaraja region of Paruthikudi is a temple of gods and that a man named Arayan from Venpu donated 37 1/2 goats to a temple to light the “Thirunontha lamp” daily.

According to these inscriptions, it is clear that Rajaraja Chola I conquered the Pandya kingdom and established it as one of the Chola Mandals and carried out charitable works effectively. The beginning of this inscription is not found, the year of Rajaraja Chola’s reign is not mentioned, and there is no information about which temple the Devadanam was given to. Paruthikudi Nadu is one of the divisions of the Pandya nation.

Rajaraja I also classified his mandals including these regions and declared them as “Vala Nadu”. Another inscription from the time of Rajaraja has also been found in this area.

The inscription lines are as follows,

“Raja Kesari

Vanmarkku yandu

Raja valanattu Parithikudi

Ihiyal than Thontri

Parama Swamiga

Iruppaikudi that chan Sathan

Pai kudithonmai

Perun thanntan Senta

Sethanai Sathi vacha

Vilakku

Pigudi Karumapa”

The inscription begins with the name of the king as “Rajakesari”. It is also mentioned as “Raja Valanadu Paruthikudi Nadu”. Rajakesari is one of the titles of Rajaraja I. During his reign, the country divisions were called Valanadu.

The above inscription narrates the news that “Sathan Baikudi Thonmai Perungudi Thattan” from Vadhaikudi gave ghee to Parama Swami (Lord Shiva) to light the Nontha lamp. Also, in the twenty-second reign of Rajaraja Chola I, a Shiva temple is found in the village of Edirikottai, which falls under the Sivakasi taluk of Virudhunagar district. Two inscriptions beginning with the glory of Rajaraja Chola are found here. In one of these, there is a message about donating land to the people of Kootangudi town as a gift (without tax).

Devadanam

Rajaraja Chola I implemented the method of donating land to temples in a special way. While acquiring the donated land, the king or his relatives first bought the land and then gave the land as a gift. To confirm this, it is known from the evidence that he first purchased the land belonging to his sister ‘Kundavai’ Rajakesari Sathurvedhi Mangalam and then gave it as a land grant. The land given to temples was mostly without any transfer of land ownership. The status of tax on devathan lands was maintained and it was not necessary to pay it to the government, but it was allowed to pay the tax to the temple.

Brahmatheyam

Brahmatheyam is a land grant given to Brahmins. Like the above Devathanam, it was allowed that taxes on the Brahmatheyam lands given to Brahmins would be sufficient if they were paid to the temple.

Iraiylil Lands (Tax –Free Land)

During the reign of Rajaraja Chola, he gave some more concessions to the lands given as land grants such as Devadanam and Brahmatheyam. “Iraiylil” is a tax exemption for the land that can be called a donation. These seem to have been given rarely. However, taxes were not completely exempted from the lands given as Iraiylil. They ensured the continuity of their ownership by taking a certain amount. That Rajaraja excelled in giving donations can be seen from the fact that he donated the entire village of Anaimangalam near Nagapattinam and from the evidence related to Rajaraja’s donations available throughout Tamil Nadu.

Based on the above evidence, Rajaraja Chola I carried out various charitable activities during his reign. Among them, practical donations such as the “Sava Muva Peradu’s” scheme, Devadanam and Brahmatheyam are worth mentioning. It must be said that Rajaraja Chola I did not follow the “Sava Muva Peradu’s” scheme that he had followed in his own country in the Thondai Nadu, Chera Nadu, Sinhala Nadu, Pandya Nadu, etc. He excelled in other activities such as giving donations to devas and Bramadeyam

Conclusion

The Chola Emperor Rajaraja I, who excelled in various fields, supported Saivism without any discrimination and gave donations to people of different religions to build temples for their respective gods. He promoted religious harmony and implemented it with religious tolerance in all the regions where he ruled. Among them, the abundance of inscriptions about the donations made by Rajaraja I in districts like Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar and Tirunelveli in the Pandya kingdom shows how much he excelled in charitable works.

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