

Vol II Issue V Nov 2012

Impact Factor : 0.1870

ISSN No :2231-5063

Monthly Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Golden Research Thoughts

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RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595

ISSN No.2230-7850

Indian Streams Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

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GLEANINGS FROM COPPER PLATES OF GOMUKTISWARAR TEMPLE AT THIRUVAVADUTURAI

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Abstract:

Thiruvavaduturai is located on the main road from Mayiladuthurai and 15 miles from Kumbakonam in the Tanjore District, Tamilnadu. The village is famous because of the Gomuktheswara Temple and the Tiruvavaduturai Mutt. It comprises 1,348 acres of land the lies on the northern latitude 10°02' and Eastern longitude 79°34', and it lies on the southern bank of the sacred river, Cauvery near Narasinganpet Railway station.¹

KEY WORDS:

Copper Plates, Temple.

INTRODUCTION

The Pandya, Maratha and Nayak rulers, Tondaimans Setupathis and Sivaganga Chieftains, leave alone the liberal minded laity, contributed landed properties and established enough endowments for the proper administration of the temples attached to this Adheenam and for the regular conduct of religious festivals and also poor feeding. All these transactions are engraved in copper plates and vested with the heads of this Adheenam.

Copper plate inscriptions are very important for writing the history of Tamil Nadu. About seventy copper plate documents are kept in the Thiruvavaduturai mutt. Dr. Rasu of Erode copied Tamil copper plates but published nearly 25 with texts. Archaeological survey of India epigraphy section also took copies of Tamil copper plates and published nearly 25 with texts. Archaeological survey of the India epigraphy of section also taken the copies of Tamil copper plates and done the research on them. The author published the book. "Thiruvavaduthurai Adheena Cheppedugal" with full texts. This book was been released in 2001 A.D at Thiruvavaduturai Adheenam on Mahara Thalai Festival (Gurupooja day). Nearly 67 copper plates are inscribed in Tamil. Eighty six plates are written in Telugu script and language. There is only one Sanskrit plate in Nandinagari letters. Four copper plates, which are related to Thiruvavaduturai Mutt, are preserved in the Kutralam temple and some other temples.²

There are two types of copper plates namely original and reengaged plates in the mutt. Some plates have palm leaf types. Exactly 12 copper plate inscriptions are of abnormal size. The remaining plates are rectangular. The earliest document belongs to 14th century A.D, while the latest copper plate is dated 31.01.1950. Most of the plates are written on both sides. Some of the plates have line drawings or pictures of temple legends.

Ramanathapuram Sethupathis, Aranthangi Thondaimans, Pudukkottai Thondaimans, Madurai Nayaks, Thanjavur Mahrattas, Kattapomma Nayak, number of chieftains, some communities and many

individuals issued the above copper plates.³

Most of the plates relate to temple pujas and renovation works. Some of the plates express Guru pujas, Mahesvara pujas and mutt festivals.

Endowments have been created for the temples or Thuasai mutt. Some of the Thambiran names are identified from the above documents. Thambirans or Karuparu receive copper plates from royal donors on behalf of Thiruvavaduturai Adheenakarur.

Annual report on epigraphy 1986-87 (Mysore), Thanjavaur Mahrattiyar Kalvettugal, Seyhupathi Cheppedugal and Kongu Samudaya Avanangal (all are university publications) are very useful to write this article.⁴

Aavadaiyar Koil copper plates:

Thirupperundururai alias Aavadaiyar Koil Sri Aathmanatha Swamy temple is an important pilgrim center in Pudukkottai district of Tamilnadu. It is full of architectural, Iconographic and inscriptional interests. This sacred place is considered most holy by all savites as it is associated with Manickavasagar, the author of the famous Thiruvachagam. It is believed that the Aathmanatha Swami temple of this place was the one that was by Manickavasagar with the state revenues entrusted to him by the Pandiya King Varagunan II of Madurai.

The management of this temple is vested with the Adheenakartha of the Thiruvavaduturai Adheenam, who is the hereditary trustee of the temple. Nearly forty copper plates relate to either Aathmanatha Swami Koil or Thiruvavaduturai branch mutts. These plates are well preserved in the Adheenam.

The plates are not bound together by a ring. Plates counting ten are scribed continuously on both sides. Though ten plates are numbered, charters or documents exactly are fifteen at the end of each document the following symbol is carved.

These plates are on rectangular shape like palm leaf manuscripts. All the ten plates are equal in size but lines vary. Some have 15 and a few have 16 lines. Most of the plates have bold letters and a few of them contain small letters. Tamil and Grantha scripts are used on the above plates. Originally these documents belong to the period from 14th century to 17th century A.D.

But all the 15 endowments or charters were rerecorded or recopied in the 18th century A.D. without any break in the 10 leaves. So they copied the old plates. A word Thulliyam (old document attested) is written in the corner of some plates. Later Pandiyas Vanadhirayas, Aranthagi Thondaimanars, Thanjavaur Nayaka, Pudukkottai Thondaimans, Krishnadevauya and some individuals are referred to in the above plates.⁵

Perunavalur copper plate:

This documents contain 32 lines and begins with the charity as Subamasthu and ends as Sathyam. (True) dated 26th October 1526 in the reign of Krishnadevaraya who was the powerful king of Vijayanaghra dynasty. Arasu Egaperumal Thondaimanars alias Ponnambalanatha Thondaimanars decided to buy some lands. Its worth was 3000 Chakram (gold coins). Then he donated them to Aludaiya Paramaswamingal temple at Thirupperundururai. The gifted lands were fully tax-free on sarvamanya. Those lands were situated in Perunavalur, Araiarkumam, Vengur, Ezhuvaneri and Srikandamangalam. Pazhantaramangalam Puravai was also donated as kudineenga devadanam (with householder temple settlement). Thondaiman arranged to inscribe the donations both on copper plate and stone. But stone inscription is not to be seen. Village boundaries are referred to clearly.

Keezhai Vijayapuram copper plate.

This charter is dated 8th November 1518 A.D. in the region of Ponnambalanatha Nathan Thondaiman. He was the son of Egaperumal Thondaimanars. He denoted Keezhai Vijayapuram village at Sirukalai Sandi (Early morning worship endowment) on his birth star Thiruvonam to Aludaiya paramasawamingal at Thirupperundururai alias Bavidra Manicka Chathuvedi mangalam.

Padaiyeravittan Nallur copper plate :

The coper plate was issued by the vanadhiraya in 1457 A.D. He gifted Padaiyeravittan Nallur and Vellatril Ventran Nallur to Thirupperundururai temple. Vanadhirayar Sandi (endowment) was created in his birth star. The donation should be utilized for Amudhupadi Saathupadi, Tiruparivattam. Thirumaalai,

Thirumelpoochu and Thiruvilakku. This document has been inscribed both on copper plate and stone. Alagar Thiruvullam is the last word of the copper plate. Alagar (Lord Vishnu) was the family deity of the Vanadhirayar.^{5A}

Paruvru, Vilanur Kurichi copper plate:

This copper plate contains 25 lines, belonging to 1526 A.D. During the reign of Krishnadevaraya, Nattumudaligal of Thirupperundururai decided to sell some villages. These villages are Paruvru, Vilanur and Kurichi. They were offered to Aludaiya Parama Swamigal temple. Its worth was 6000 Chakkaram (gold coins). Boundaries of the above villages are noted neatly and water sources are also reflected in the document. Irangalmittar, Sonnavannam Cheythar, Ayyapillai and Koil Mudaliyar attested this document. Okkur copper plate:

This small document contains 15 lines only. The later Pandiya king namely Parackrama Pandiyan created an endowment during his fifth year of reign. He donated Okkur alias Uttamasolanallur, Pidagai, Okkurkudi and Maravanri for this charity. The endowment was called Parackramapandiya Sandi. He might have been ruling during 1506-1536 A.D. Okkur was known as Kulasekarapuram in those days.

Eyurmangalam copper plate :

This record is dated 2nd February 1327 in the reign of Kulasekara Pandiya. During the period of kulasekaradevar, one Uyyavandan Thirunokkalagiyar Thondaiman alias Manjakudi Udaiyar of kilkutru donated Eyurmangalam to Thirupperunthurai temple. On his birthday star Swati every month, saint Thiruvadavurar idol should be taken in procession singing the Thiruvachagam hymns. The donated lands got tax remission. The above document was inscribed both on stone and copper plate. Thirunokku Azhagiyarana Thondaiman himself signed the document. He was the chidftain of Aranthagi region.⁶Kollanvayal copper plate :

This recorded is dated 8th February 1439 in the reign of Sivandaperumalana Devarayar alias Malavayar of Kudali Kottai. He donated Kollanvayal village to Thirupperunthurai temple for conducting pujas as sarvamanya. The god is called Aludaiya Parama Swami gal in the plate. Donor himself prepared this document and signed it.

Parackrama Pandiya Malavarayanallur copper Plate :

This copper plate contains 18 lines only and is dated 11th April 1505 in the reign of Parackrama Pandiya Malavarayar. The village authorities transferred Nallur lands to Thirupperunthurai temple as Thirunamathu kanni. Kodi Kavalan alias Venadikku Mindan, Navervelti Pandiyan, Mudi Kathan and Arasu Anda Pillaiyar were the village authorities. The lands were to be utilized for Mahesvara and renovation work.⁷

Ponnambala Nallur copper Plate :

This record is dated 10th August 1516 in the reign of Ponnambalanatha Thondaiman of Aranthangi. He decided to donate his village Ponnambala Nallur to Lord Aludaya Parama swamigal. When he was ill, he decided to make an endowment. The endowment was called Ponnambalanatha Sandi. Again he donated Nulambur village to Paramandur temple on 18.08.1537. That day was his birthday as well as Avani Thiruvona day.

Saathakudi copper Plate :

This is a later Pandiya copper plate. A record of 4th year of Sri Virapandiya Devar states about a gift of Pazhandevadana lands for the Thirupperunthurai temple renovation. The endowment was made by the Viraqdhara Muditha Perumal alias Amman Munaiyathariyan. He donated Saathakudi village without any tax. Some of the officers signed the document. This copper plate was written by Buvanegaveerasari Aavudaiyan. The original copper plate might be of the century A.D.⁸

Puthukizhkudi copper Plate :

During the period of Krishnadevaraya, Nattumudaligal of Vadavellaru alias Sundara Pandiya Valanadu purchased two villages and handed them over to Thirupperunthurai temple as "Thirunamathu

Kaani". The worth of the villages was 1200 chakkaram (gold coins). Seven members of Mudaligal signed the charter. The boundaries are mentioned clearly. The document was written both on copper plate and stone

CONCLUSION

Since these copper plates throw a flood of light on the social cultural and religious life of the Tamils since the 15th century A.D. The book is highly useful for the historical researchers.

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