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MUNNUR: AN OLD CAPITAL OF THE SAMBUVARAYAS



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Short Profile

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ABSTRACT:

Munnur, the capital of the Sambuvarayars, is situated in Marakkanam union, Tindivanam Taluk in Villupuram district at Tamil Nadu. It is located 62 Km towards the east from district headquarters in Villupuram. Pondichery, Vandavasi and Tindivanam are the nearby cities of Munnur. The place is famous for Sri Adavalleswarar temple and Arulala Perumal temple, have a unique place in the religious history of Tamil Nadu. The Sambuvarayas were the chief feudatories of Munnur. From 1236 A.D. to the 1379 A.D. it remained the headquarters of Sambuvarayas. In the course of political Vicissitudes it played a decisive role as a headquarters.

KEYWORDS

Sambuvarayas, Old capital, Inscriptions, Feudatories, Munnur.

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INTRODUCTION :

The Sambuvarayas were the Cholas feudatories, exercising their sway over portions of the Cuddalore, Villupuram, Tiruvannamalai, Vellore and Kanchipuram districts. Their history like that of the Malaiyamans cannot be analysed on dynastic basis because they are existed in several families and the paucity of the adequate details. The inscriptions states that they contributed much for development of people and also they built numerous temples and also did many for charity. Sambuvarayar was the head of the Minavanai Venkandur 4000 a- force of 4000 bodyguards. It is very clear from the record of Vikrama Chola that the Rajendra Chola Sambuvaraya was a very prominent chieftain. Another Sambuvaraya chief of this period was Ammaiappan Kannudai Perumal Alias Vikrama Chola Sambuvaraya (A.D 1144-1146) vassal of Kulothunga II. He seems to be the successor of Rajendra Chola Sambuvaraya.

Inscriptions

The inscriptions of the Cholas, the Sambuvarayas, the Kadavarayas, the Pandyas, the Vijayanagar rulers and the Nayaks are found on the walls of the Sri Adavalleeswarar and Arulala Perumal temples of Munnur. The inscriptions record, that the Sambuvarayas donated of lands, gardens, lamps and cows given to these temple. Some of the inscriptions found at Munnur speak about the patronisation of Sambuvarayas of Hinduism and learning. The Sambuvarayas followed a liberal religious policy, supporting all caste and creeds. The association of the Cholas, Pandyas and Vijayanagar rulers with the temples of Munnur are attested by their inscriptions found in the temples wonderful examples for the Dravidian type of architecture. The temples are also the store houses of sculpture of rare beauty and workmanship. Daily four pujas conducted in the temples. Apart from these four pujas Palliyarai pujas, and the abhishekam for Nataraja deserve special mention. Throughout the years a large numbers of festivals are celebrated. Among them, Mahasivarathiri, Vaigasi Visagam and Adi Thiru Kalyanam are celebrated in a grand manner. During these festivals people from different parts of Tamil Nadu, participated and receives the blessing of God Adavalleswarar.

Contribution to Religion and Art

Like the other feudatories, the Sambuvarayas followed a liberal religious policy, supporting all caste and creeds. Their records contain their beneficiaries' temple and mathas. But most important of them bearing on religion and arts.

An inscription of Kulothunga Chola II dated 6th year (1139 A.D) described that Sengeni Ammaiappan Nalayiravan founded a siva temple called Tiukkotisvaramudaiyar at Peruvelur is in Villupuram district and endowed 12 veli of the land for worship and offerings and for festivals. An epigraph of Rajadhiraja Chola dated the year 1170 A.D. recorded that the buildings of the gopura of Chandramaulisvara temple at Tiruvakkarai constructed by Ammaiappan Kandar Suriyan Sambuvaraya.

Sambuvaraya Ammaiappan Kandar Suriyan, erected a thousand pillared mandapa called Kandur Suriyan in the Chandramaulisvara temple during the reign of Kulothunga Chola III dated a 1180 A.D. An inscription of Rajadhiraja Chola dated 11th year (1177A.D) mentioned that Sengeni Ammaiappan Siyan Pallavandan Alias Rajanarayana Sambuvarayan gave a gift for repairing the Ediraganayan Tirumaligai and other structures in the Adavallesvarar temple at Munnur.

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A flower garden and other requirements of the temple at Munnur was gifted by Sengeni Ammaiappan Rajaraja Sambuvarayan in the 13th year of the Rajaraja Chola II (1229 A.D). The Ammaiappesvarar temple at Padaavedu was built by Sambuvaraya also gave gift to this temple. In the 44th year of Rajaraja Chola III (1260 A.D) a servant of Pallavandar Alias. Edirilisola Sambuvaraya constructed the Nritamandapa of the siva temple at Virinchipuram situated near Vellore.

An epigraph of Kulothunga Chola III dated 8th year (1186 A.D) refers to the gifts of Rajaraja Sambuvaraya to the Vijayaraghava Perumal temple at Tiruppakuli, Alappirandon Alias Rajaraja Sambuvaraya who was subordinate of Rajaraja III made a gift to the Shrine of Lord Krishna founded at Edirilisola Vinnagar Emperuman at Munnur.

There were a few records about Sambuvaraya patronage of Jainism. An inscription of Rajadhiraja Chola I dated 10th year (A.D.1171) recorded that a gift of land by Pandinadu Kondan Alias Sengini to the Jain temple at Sithamur (Villupuram District). There were some interesting references that the Ajivikas were taxed by the Chola emperor and his Sambuvaraya feudatories.

Learning

We don't have sufficient evidence for Sambuvaraya patronage of learning. According to a record of Kulothunga Chola II, Sengeni Nalayiravar Ammaiappan Alias Rajendra Chola Sambuvaraya made a gift of land for the maintenance in the temple at Peruvelur of ten Bhattas well versed in the Vedas and Sastras.

To sum up the detailed analysis of Chola imperial affairs evidence about the role of Sambuvarayas is highly insufficient. The possibilities of their participation in Kulothunga Chola I was with Pandyas and Eastern Gangas. In these things we lack specific evidence about it. But in the later part of the of the Rajadhira Chola II reign saw the dissensions among Sambuvarayas and also in the reign of Kulothunga Chola II; the Sambuvaraya moved closely with the Kadavarayas, the Chedi rajas and the Yadavarayas. Later they combined with some feudatories against the Kadava and Bana chiefs. But they did not follow any uniform policy in this matter on the other hand. We have definite evidence the he won a victory over them. After that, some Sambuvaraya chief became independent and other was subordinate to the Telungu Chola rulers, Vijaya- Gandagopala. As regard the role of the Sambuvaraya in the cultural progress of the empire it must admitted that their contribution to religion, learning and arts is very much.

CONCLUSION

The Sambuvarayas were the minor feudatory power during the Chola period, ruling around north and south among Munnur, this place was considered as a centre for development of Sambuvarayas and later it became as their capital.

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