



Cover Page



TEMPLE INSCRIPTIONS OF PRODDATURU REGION IN KADAPA DISTRICT – A CASE STUDY

Dr. T. Surendra Reddy

Associate Professor

Oriental Research Institute, S. V. University

Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India

Abstract

In the present article, an attempt is made to analyse the temple inscriptions of Proddaturu region of Kadapa District. The temples in Bollavaram, Jillella, Kalluru, Korrapadu, Nandyalampeta, Peddasettipalli, Proddaturu, Rameswaram, Upparapalli, are selected for this study. Among these temple inscriptions, except Rameswaram which contains inscriptions from the 6th Century A.D. all other temples contain inscriptions of the Vijayanagara period.

Keywords: Inscriptions, Repati – naivedyam, dasamimahotsavas, Kainkaryas, Maharacha Prayojanalu.

Introduction

Bollavaram (Proddaturu taluk)

The inscription which is engraved on a slab lying in the Gopalasvami temple and which belongs to the reign of Sadasiva is dated Sobhakrit, Nija-sravana and Krishnastami¹. The other details are lost as the inscription is damaged in the beginning. As this epigraph belongs to Sadasiva, the details of the available date correspond to 1543 A.D., August 23, Wednesday.

It records that mahamandalesvara Papa-Timmayadeva-maharaja, son of Ramaraju-Timmaraju of Soma-vamsa and Atreya-gotra gifted the tax penta-sunkam (tax on market) due from the village Bollavaram in Guddaluri-sima to the god Gopikanathaperumal for providing morning food offering (repati-naivedyam). The gift is stated to have been made on the occasion of Krishnastami. The above mentioned sima was obtained by the chief as a nayankara from the king.

On the basis of this inscription the present-day temple of Gopalasvami can be dated prior to 1543 A.D.

Jillella (Proddaturu taluk)

In this village is found an inscription engraved on a slab kept near the Virabhadra image which is on road side². It belongs to the reign of Vijayanagara Sadasiva and is dated Saka 1471, Saumya, Ashadha, su, 11 corresponding to 1549 A.D., July 5, Friday).

It records that mahamandalesvara China-Timmaraju-Kondayyadeva-maharaju of Atreya-gotra, Apastamba-sutra and Yajus-sakha gifted the money derived out of the taxes kanika and kantam which formed maharacha-prayojanalu collected in the village Jillella, which is stated to have belonged to the god Sri Narasimhadeva of Ahobilam³ for maintaining parapu and paruvanta festivals of the god Virabhadradeva of the same village. The gift was made with the consent of asesham (assembly) of the Ahobila-sthalam.

It is interesting that gift of taxes from a temple village was made to another god. In this instance, it is of further interest that the village Jillella belonged to the Vaishnava-God and the gift was made to a Saivaite deity).

Kalluru (Proddaturu taluk)

An inscription on a pillar near the Chennakesava temple dated Saka 1448 (1526 A.D.) informs that one Timmaraju set up the garuda-kambha obviously in front of the Chennakesava temple. From this inscription it is clear that the present-day temple of Chennakesava can be dated back atleast to the first quarter of the 16th century⁴.

Korrapadu (Proddaturu taluk)

There is an inscription⁵, on a pillar in the courtyard of Chennakesava temple of the village. It is dated Saka 1449 (1527 A.D.) and records that Misaraganda Madhavaraju and Kaki Kesavaraju gifted one varahagadya per year, derived as the tax (tyagam) due to them from the kapus of the twenty-four communities, to the god Chennakesava of Korrapadu.

Nandyalampeta (Proddaturu taluk)

The name of the village Nandyalampeta is according to an inscription derived from Nandyamma a padmasali woman who is said to have founded it⁶. An inscription on a slab in the fields near the Tiruvengalanatha temple in this village, dated Saka 1477 (1555 A.D.), refers to the folk-goddess Nandyamma who is said to be probably the mother of Parasurama (Renuka)⁷. It records the



Cover Page



gift of some land to the goddess. It is probable that Nandyamma referred to above as padmasali woman might have been deified and the shrine dedicated to her was in existence during the 16th century.

Peddasettipalli (Proddaturu taluk)

There is a much-damaged inscription on the door-jamb of the Chennakesava temple⁸. According to it the temple of Kesavaperumallu of Settipalli, which fell into ruins, was renovated in Saka 1440 (1518 A.D.). It seems to record the gift of gardens and wet land and mentions one pinnabhattu who bears the title kavikamkana.

Another inscription engraved on a slab in the courtyard of the same temple records that in Saka 1480 (1558 A.D.)⁹ mahamandalesvara Kodayadeva-maharaju gifted four puttis of land to the same god on the auspicious occasion of Vaisakha su 3 (Aksha-tritiya) for conducting the tirunalla-mahotsavas, kainkaryas and patra-bhoga-vaibhavas of the god.

Proddaturu (Proddaturu taluk)

There is a temple of Ramesvara in this village which belongs to the early Vijayanagara period. An inscription of 1498 A.D.¹⁰ from this temple records that Ganti Kannamanayudu, who held Ramesvaram-Proddaturu as nayankara, gifted a piece of land (varimaidi of 4 ½ puttis and ten tumus, which is equivalent in extent to one gocharma, for providing sacred food offerings during day-time to the god Ramaya-lingamu daily. The sthanamvaru (of the temple of Ramayalingamu) were to draw water from the Ramesvaramu canal for raising paddy in the gift land. The gift was made on the occasion of a solar eclipse. The village Ramesvaram-Proddaturu was in Mulkinadu.

Ramesvaram (Proddaturu taluk)

The Ramalingesvara temple here must have been a popular one over centuries as suggested by as many as six inscriptions found in it.

The earliest inscription is found engraved on a pillar set up in this temple. It is dated in the 5th regnal year of Punyakumara-Prithivivallabha-Chola-maharaja (7th century A.D.)¹¹.

It records the gift of the land of three hundred (marturlu) measured by rachamana situated in the village Viripariti to the god Vasantisvara in the village Tarumunri by the Chola queen Vasantipori during the 5th regnal year of the king noted above.

Obviously, the god Vasantisvara was named after the Chola queen Vasantipori-mahadevi. The present-day temple, where the inscription under reference is found, is known as that of Ramalingesvara. The village Ramesvaram owes its name of this god.

An inscription on another side of the same pillar mentions Vyalachandra. It records the gift of twelve marturs of land by Masiyanka-bhatara to Vanapotula Muchchiya, probably for building kappadambu (meaning not clear). The gift land was situated in Kangaluru. It is stipulated that Vanapotula Muchchiya was to serve the ascetics (tapasulu)¹² who reside in the place.

A much-damaged inscription is found engraved on a slab in the Ramesvara temple¹³. It is in the Telugu characters of the 10th century A.D. It mentions Masiyanka-Dhavala and Bolaraviti-Parbata-rishi. The suffix parbata-rishi suggests his association with Sriparvata (Srisailam). Masiyanka-Dhavala is mentioned in another inscription also in the same place (Cuddapah Vol.I, No.88). The name Bolaraviti-parabata-rishi is found in some inscriptions coming from the temples at Hanumanagutti, Satyavolu (Giddaluru taluk, Prakasam district), Ayyagaripalem near Pondugula (Palanadu taluk, Guntur district) and Endabetta (near Nagar Kurnool, Mahabub Nagar District). The editor of the I.A.P. Cuddapah, Vol.I giving this information opines that all these temples are assignable to the 8-9th century A.D. If this date of the inscriptions coming from these temples is accepted it must be concluded that Bolaraviti-Parbata-rishi-mentioned in the present inscription is different from his name-sake mentioned in the inscriptions noted above.

The third inscription is engraved on a pillar set up in the compound wall of the same temple¹⁴. It is in Sanskrit and Kannada languages and is partly damaged. It belongs to the reign of Rastrakuta Krisna. It begins with the invocation to the god Ramesvara. This is followed by the genealogy of the Rastrakuta kings. It records the gift of wet land situated to the east of the village Nangaduru (modern Nagaruru in Cuddapah district) and probably income from the tax siddhayamu at the rate of one gold gadyana. The gift portion is damaged. It further records the gift of 30 mattar of wet land to one Tippeya-gorava. It also mentions Masiyanka-Dhavala who figures in another inscription (ibid., No.89) from this place. He may be an ascetic.



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.81>

The fourth inscription, which is engraved on a slab in the mandapa of the temple, is dated Saka 1430 (1507 A.D.)¹⁵. It records that Saluva Govindaraja gifted the tax incomes katam, kanike, sunkam, gramakantnam and sthavaras payable by the villagers of Ramesvaram to the palace for conducting the anga-ranga-vaibhavas, dhupa-dipa and naivedya and also for constructing kota (compound wall) and mandapas. The gift was made on the occasion of Utthanadvadasi (Kartika su 12).

The fifth inscription, in Kannada language and dated Saka 1436 (1514 A.D.)¹⁶ records that Vijayanagara Krisnadevaraya granted to the village Payindala for maintaining the worship and food offerings of the god Ramayadeva (same as Ramalingesvara).

The last inscription, which is found engraved on the Nandi pillar in front of the tank inside the Ramesvara temple, is dated Saka 1472 (1551 A.D.)¹⁷. It records the gift of the Viramusti-pannu by Virasaiva-Bhiksa-vrtti-ayyavaru to the god Mukti-Ramesvara on the occasion of Sivaratri. Here it may be noted that the present-day god Ramesvara was also known as Ramayyadeva, Ramalingamu and Mukti-Ramesvara, during the early medieval period.

Upparapalle (Proddaturu taluk)

There is an inscription on a huge pillar lying in front of the Siva temple¹⁸ called Mobbuladevalam in this village. It has two dates:

1. Ved – abdhi – yuga (Saka 1444 current), Vrisha, Madhava (Vaisakha), Purnima corresponding to 1521 A.D., April 21.
2. Saka 1446, Magha, ba 14, Monday, Sivaratri, corresponding to 1525 A.D. February, 20.

This inscription is a bilingual record composed in Sanskrit verse and Telugu prose.

The Sanskrit portion opens with the benediction to the god Vighnesvara, Adi-Varaha, Ardhhanarisvara in that order in three verses¹⁹. Next is given the genealogy of Pedasingama-mahipala (or) Pedasingama-nayaka. The inscription records that Pedasingama-mahipala visited the village Chemuru and noticed the Siva temple which was in ruins and renovated it by building prasada, garbhabhavana, ranga-madhyam, pillared mantapa, prakara and gopura with stone. This is followed by the Telugu portion.

The Telugu portion states that Pedasingama-nayaka, who obtained Chemuri-Potladurtti-simas as nayankara from the king, built garbhagriha, ghanta-vedi, antarala-mantapa, nandi-mantapa prakara and gopura to the god Nagesvaradeva situated to the south of the village Chernuru. He further excavated a big tank to the south of the temple and gifted land of eight puttis, one tumu and one irasa for maintaining akhanda-dipa, trikala-naivedya, amrita-padis, gandha-pushpa and other offerings to the god Nagesvaradeva.

The inscription refers to some pieces of land previously endowed by some individuals to the same god. The chief made the gift of land for the merit of his father. The Chemuri-Potladurtti-sima, noted above was situated in the Mulkinati-sthala of Gandikota-sima included in Udayagiri-rajya.

The inscription mentions Kota-bhaktudu and China-Vira-bhaktudu as the masons who built the sikharam, mantapa, etc., of the temple for which they received a piece of land. It appears that the construction work was started on the first date and was completed on the second date noted above.

Malla-nayaka gifted the copper images of Parvati and Chandrasekhara to the same temple on the occasion of nela-sivaratri (masa-sivaratri) occurring on bahula-chaturdasi of every month, for the merit of his father Rama-nayaka.

Conclusions

The analysis of the temple inscriptions indicates that most of the temples were Vaishnavite. Some temples which were in ruins were renovated and new prasadas, mantapas and gopuras were built. The masons were also endowed with pieces of land. Donations of land were made on auspicious occasions and also conducting festivals like parapu, paruvanta, tirunalla-mahotsavas etc. The kings gifted the tax incomes like katam, kanike, sunkam, gramakantam etc payable by villagers to the temples for conducting puja and also for constructions.



Cover Page



DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2021/10.09.81>

References

1. South Indian Inscriptions Vol.XVI. No.128.
2. *ibid*, No.173
3. Modern Ahobalam, Kurnool District
4. Inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh, Vol.I, No.98
5. *ibid*.No.81
6. A.P. District Gazetteers, Cuddapah (revised 1967) P.776
7. I.A.P. Cuddapah Vol.II, No.240
8. *ibid*, No.79
9. *ibid*, No.254
10. SII, Vol. XVI, No.39
11. I.A.P. Cuddapah, Vol.I, No.14
12. *Ibid*, No.15
13. *Ibid*, No.89
14. *Ibid*, No.88
15. I.A.P. Cuddapah, Vol.II, No.62
16. SII, Vol., IX-2, No.496
17. I.A.P. Cuddapah, Vol.II, No.217
18. SII, Vol. XVI, No.77
19. The First Sanskrit verse has its Telugu parallel in the introductory part of the Telugu Classic the Manucharitra of Allasani Peddana, Canto.1, Verse-4.