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DOI: <http://ijmer.in.doi./2022/11.03.13>

IMPORTANT TEMPLE INSCRIPTIONS OF KAMALAPURAM REGION IN KADAPA DISTRICT: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The Cuddapah District of Andhra Pradesh has several temples belonging to early and medieval periods. Majority of the temples have Inscriptions which throw welcome light on various aspects including cultural history. In the present article deals with the temple inscriptions of the Kamalapuram region of the Cuddapah District. The temples in Animela, Chidipirala, Chilamakuru, Potladurti, Sambaturu are selected for this study. The villages are arranged in alphabetical order. A details summary of each of the inscription is given.

Keywords: Inscriptions, anga-ranga-vaibhavas, Teranatakams, amritapadi, dayadis, pallakiseva, Varahas.

INTRODUCTION

The Cuddapah District of Andhra Pradesh has several temples belonging to early and medieval periods. Majority of the temples have Inscriptions which throw welcome light on various aspects including cultural history. In the present article deals with the temple inscriptions of the Kamalapuram region of the Cuddapah District. The temples in Animela, Chidipirala, Chilamakuru, Potladurti, Sambaturu are selected for this study. The villages are arranged in alphabetical order. A details summary of each of the inscription is given.

Animela (Kamalapuram Taluk)

According to the tradition, the hill ranges near the confluence of Papaghni and Mogameru had thick forests and were famous for elephants. Thus, with the Kannada influence the hills got the name 'Ane-mala' meaning, the "hills of elephants".

The village is chiefly of interest on account of its temples, the principal one of which is the temple of Sangamesvara. This temple is situated to the north of the confluence of Papaghni and Mogameru and on the lower slopes of a hill¹.

The temple of Sangamesvara is an important one in the village Animela. The temple was in existence by the early 16th Century A.D. and grants were made to the temple by merchant guilds and chiefs. In all, there are four inscriptions in it. The first one is on a slab lying near the temple and it is dated Saka 1453, Khara, Vaisakha, ba 10 Monday (1531 A.D., May 11)². On the date quoted above the merchant guild Virabalanja – Ayyavali – mukhyamaina Chalumula-Samasta – Yambhalyarudesala – Setti – Pekkandru gifted the tax called magama to the gods Sangamesvara and Virabhadra and to the letter's consort for maintaining lamp and food offerings to Sangamesvara and food offerings to Viresvara (Virabhadra). The gifted magama was the tolls levied on merchandise, namely, bundles of cotton, betelnuts, pepper, juggery, sesame, rice, millet, etc., carried along the ancient route (adi-margam) passing through the villages Pulivendla kanuma³, Chinta-kanuma, Gandikanuma⁴ and Pendlimarri⁵. The second inscription is engraved on a stone set up at the entrance gate of the same temple⁶. It is dated Saka 1453, Khara, Vaisakha ba 8 (1531 A.D., May 9 Tuesday). This inscription records a similar gift by the same merchant guild to the same god.

The third inscription is also engraved on a slab lying near the same temple⁷. This damaged inscription is dated Saka 1453, Khara, Vaisakha ba, 10, Monday (1531 A.D. May 8). As in the case of the above two inscriptions, this also records the grant of same magama (on the same merchandise of the first inscription) carried through the same route. In view of the closeness of the dates of these three inscriptions it may be surmised that these inscriptions are almost copies of the first inscription.

The fourth inscription was engraved on a slab erected near the entrance of the same temple⁸. It belongs to the Vijayanagara king Sadasivaraya and is dated Saka 1465, Sobhakrit, Bhadrpada su, 2, Monday (1543 A.D., August 31, Friday).

This inscription mentions the sangama-sthala of the rivers and Aghanasini and Pavani. Obviously this sangama-sthala (confluence) gave the god the name Sangamesvara, Aghanasini and Pavani are as the same as modern Papaghni and Mogameru respectively. It records the gift of four villages namely, Animela⁹ in Gandikota-sima¹⁰ Paleru in Pedakanti-sama and Vempalle and



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Nandimangalam in another sima for various services and festivals like anga-ranga-vaibhavas, nitya-nai-mittika-utsavas, and for food offerings twice a day (rendu viniyogalu) of the god Sangamesvara of Animala by mahamandalesvara, Guruvayadeva-Choda-maharaju, son of Mangaraju and grandson of Bommaraju of Kasyapa-gotra, Apastamba-sutra, Yajus-sakha and Surya-vamsa in the presence of his two queens Aubhalamma and Aitamma and his nine sons Peda-samgaraju, Pina-samgaraju, Tammaraju, Rudraraju, Basavaraju, Peda-Chittiraju, Potti-samgaraju and Papa-samgaraju.

It is stated that these villages were obtained by the donor from Sadasivadeva-maharaya through two copper plate charters and that the donors gifted them to the god Sangamesvaradeva as deva-bhoga along with all privileges on the occasion of Sivaratri.

Chidipirala (Kamalapuram taluk)

Chidipirala is an ancient village and was known as Sadupurela or Chadaparevula. It is situated fairly close to the bed of the large Kamalapuram tank. The two important and old temples of this place are of Venugopala and Agastyesvara. Regarding the inscriptions of this village the A.P.District Gazetteers: Cuddapah (revised 1967) mentions thus:

“This village is rich in inscriptions, one of which is of Saka 1501 (1579 A.D) refers to the endowment of the village as sarvamanya for the performance of Teranatakams (screen dramas). Of the others, there are two damaged ones of 10th century and 11th century. One of Saka 1430 (1508 A.D.) pertains to the period of Vira Narasimha, one of Saka 1442 (1520 A.D.) records the gift of land, one of Saka 1446 (1524 A.D.) the grant of land to the local Venugopalala temple, of the Saka 1464 (1542 A.D.) of Achyuta’s period, four of Saka 1471 (1549 A.D.) Saka 1472 (1550 A.D) Saka 1475 (1553 A.D) and Saka 1480 (1558 A.D) of Sadasiva’s period and one of Saka 1501 (1579 A.D) to Srirangaraya’s period¹¹.

However, three inscriptions deserve special note. Of them the first is engraved on the western wall of the Agastyesvara temple¹². It is dated Saka 1448 (1526 A.D.) and records the grant of four puttis of land, two for maintaining the amritapadi and two for akhanda-tiruvalika (akhanda-dipa) to the god Agastyesvaranatha by Chandrasekharayya for the merit of the Vijayanagara emperor Krishnadevaraya. The gift land was situated to the west of the village Gollapalli¹³.

The second inscription is on the northern side of the entrance of the same temple¹⁴. It is dated Saka 1464, Subhakrit, Ashadha su, 11 (1542 A.D. June 23) and belongs to the reign Vijayanagara Achyutadeva-maharaya. It records that three sunkarlu (tax collectors) of Gandikota-sima gifted tax incomes due to them from the villages Chadupirela and Chepili for maintaining akhanda-tiruvalikas (lamps) in the presence of the god Agastyesvara.

The details of the tax incomes gifted to the god are as follows:

1. Gramakantnam of the village Chipili
2. Magga-stavaralu (tax on looms)
3. Ramadi-siddhayam (probably tax on mines)
4. Ganuga – siddhayam (tax on oil press)
5. Sinjini – siddhayam (tax on weaver’s bow)
6. Idigi – siddhayam (tax on toddy tappers)
7. Golla – siddhayam (tax on shepherds)
8. Uppara – siddhayam (tax on stone cutters)

The third inscription dated Saka 1464 (1542 A.D.) is found engraved on the wall of the temple¹⁵. It also belongs to the reign of Vijayanagara Achyutadevaraya. It records the gift of fifty madas by Polireddi and Basuvireddi for maintaining tiruvalika in the presence of the god Agastyesvara during the four jamus of day time and in the night till the temple doors are closed. The gift amount was handedover to some jiyas associated with the temple administration (sthanamvaru) with the stipulation that without disturbing the principal amount of fifty madas i.e., from the interest accrued on this they should either purchase (krayam) the land or take it on lease (bhogyam) and from the produce of it the lamps should be maintained as noted above. It further stipulates that the jiyas have to share the land and gift money among themselves and maintain the lamps and that if any one of them falls to maintain the lamps as per the schedule he should surrender the land as well as the gift money of his share.

The fourth inscription is found engraved on the inner-wall of the same temple¹⁶ and is dated Saka 1471 (Sadharana Sravana 11, (1550 A.D., July 24). It records the gift of the income derived from the viramushti-varttana by Virasiddha-bhiksa vrtti-ayyavaru to maintain a lamp at the time of offering the sacred food to the god. It also mentions Nandyala Virayya as a donor who is probably same as the Bhikshavrtti-ayya.



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Chilamakuru (Kamalapuram taluk)

Chilamakuru is an ancient village in Kamalapuram taluk. The earliest reference to the village belongs to the 6th century A.D.¹⁷. The Agastyesvara temple of this place may be assigned to the 8th century A.D.¹⁸. An inscription¹⁹ found engraved on a pillar in the court-yard of this temple belongs to the reign of Vijayanagara Harihara-II and is dated Saka 1304, Dundubhi, Karttika, su, 5 Sunday (1382 A.D., October 12). It refers to the prince Devaraya as administering Udayagiri.

This record is an interesting sale deed regarding shares in the temple lands between the sthanapati Madajiyya and two other individuals. It records that Madajiyya, the sthanapati of the temple of Agastyesvara of Chirumakuru in Muliknadu who was enjoying half of the share in the lands of two temples of Agastyesvaradeva, Brahmadeva, Siddhanathadeva and Nalla-Janamma of the same village, sold the same to Peda-Tippajiyya and Pina-Tippajiyya as the other sthanapatis who were in the possession of the other half of the above-mentioned temple lands expressed their inability to purchase the lands of Madajiyya. The land which included wet and dry types and belonged to the Tammadi-sima (i.e., the lands belonging into the tammadis) is stated to have been sold by Madajiyya with the permission of his Jnatis and dayadis with all benefits.

The record further specifies that the land which was sold was not mortgaged at the time of the transaction (purvahiledu). A number of individuals were mentioned as witnesses who included the chief of the village Chilamakuru, the sthanapatis who held the other share of the temple lands and probably the sthanapatis of Mallikarjunadeva, Mayilaradeva, Vinayakadeva and Avubhaladeva and the god Agastyanathadeva of Koduru. The sthalakaranam of the Chilamakuru wrote the record with the consent of both the parties.

In Chilamakuru there is a shrine dedicated to Anjaneya. According to an inscription the image of Hanumanta was installed in Saka 1364, Dhurmmati, (1441 A.D.) by an individual who was the son of Jakkayojhala who also granted four tumus of land for the sacred food offerings to the deity²⁰. It further states that the donor made the gift with the consent of his dayadis (jnatis). The stone bearing this inscription is set up behind the image of Anjaneya under reference.

Potladurtti: (Kamalapuram taluk)

There is a temple of Chennakesava in this village which belongs to the Vijayanagara period. An inscription from this temple dated Saka 1468 (1546 A.D.)²¹ records the gift of income derived from the taxes called grama-katnam and the sthavaras (taxes) levied on angadi (shop), maggam (loom), chakram (probably potter), idigi (toddy taper), sinjini (bow used for cleaning cotton), etc., payable by the villagers of Pottadurtti by the tax collectors of that village which was their sunka-magani for conducting the Pallaki-seva (procession of palanquin) and nitya-vaibhava-mahotsava of the god Chennakesavaraya. The gift is stated to have been made on the auspicious occasion of Krishnashatami-jayanti.

Sambaturu: (Kamalapuram taluk)

There are two inscriptions in the Chennakesava temple of this village. The first one, dated Saka 1475 (1551 A.D.)²² is interesting. There arose a dispute between the authority of the temple of Chennakesava and the ayagars with regard to 62 vrttis comprising 15-1/2 forefold shares of house sites, garden and lands. These were originally gifted during the cyclic year Sobhakrit (the date of the inscription is in the cyclic year Virodhikrit). Both the parties approached mahamandalesvara Nandyala Narayadevamaharaja in whose nayankara were the village Chamaturu and its hamlet Ganamayapalle alias Sribhasyapuram, a sarvamanya-agrahara. The nayankara holder, after due enquiry distributed the house sites etc., mentioned above among the disputant parties to the satisfaction of both the parties involved. According to the settlement the god Chennaraya got 20 vrttis measuring in total 16 puttis, 19 tumus and one kuncha of land and the remaining were distributed among the ayagars. In this connection the following are mentioned among the boundaries:

1. Western Somavidhi of the temple.
2. Dasami – Chenu
3. Kamalapuramu
4. Dandu – tova (military route)
5. Pangeru (rivulet)
6. Porigilapadu
7. Erragudipadu (Modern Erragudipadu, Kamalapuram taluk)
8. Kokatam (modern Kokatam, same taluk)
9. Bhojanapalle
10. Gangavaram (same as modern Gangavaram)



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It is further agreed that minor adjustments regarding the measurement will be adjusted among themselves and also do not quarrel about any difficulties that may arise with regard to profit or loss, etc. It is interesting that according to the inscription whoever violates this agreement would incur the sin of committing acharyadroha and gurudroha and that for this commitment the witnesses are stated to be the sun, moon, air, fire, sky, earth, water (i.e., the pancha – bhutas) and one's own self (hrdayam), Yama, the ahas (day), ratri (night), both the sandhyas (morning and evening twilight), Dharma and all the gods.

The next inscription is dated Saka 1479 (1557 A.D.)²³. This is also interesting in that the land (ksetra) gifted to the temple is mentioned in terms of money (probably income) amounting to 50 varahas. The total extent of land gifted was one putti, 13 tumus, one kuncha and two muntas. The distribution of the gift land is as follows:

1. The land of 22 Varahas; for celebrating tirunallu – mahotsavam of the god Kesavaperumal of Sambaturu alias Sribhasypuram during the Asvayuja month every year.
2. The land of 10 Varahas: to celebrate the tirunallu of Sribhashyakarulu (Ramanujacharyulu) during the Chaitra month every year.
3. Three Varahas of Ksetra (for celebrating the tirunallu – mahotsavam of the god Kesavaperumallu during the month of Vaisakha every year.
4. Three Varahas of Ksetra; for sacred food offerings to the god during the festivals and festivities. The gift land was situated in the village Chadipirela and irrigated by the canals Kommala-kaluva and Battuni-kaluva. The land was gifted by Mahamandalesvara Nandela China – Ahobalesvaradeva – maharaja who held the village Chadipirela as nayankara. It is stipulated that the donor's share which is 1/4th of the sacred food offered to the god Kesavaperumallu during the above mentioned three tirunallu, should be made over to Bhojanapalle Krishnacharyulu.

CONCLUSION

The above study reveals much interesting information which is of help for reconstruction of the cultural and economic history of the region of Kamalapuram. The inscriptions indicate that the temples were Vaishnavite and Saivite also. Interestingly some inscriptions mention the tax incomes gifted to the god.

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