CHAPTER - V

DEVADĀNA LANDS
AND DONATIONS
Religion plays an important role in each and every society. In order to encourage the growth of religion, the society seems to have donated lands and other articles to the temples. The kings, the queens, royal officers, the middle class people and even the common people liberally made donations to the temples. Lands donated to the temples free of taxes are known as devadāna lands. The lands donated as devadāna were often marked off by means of boundary stones which bear the emblems of the deity to whom they belonged. The devadāna lands were exempted from taxation. Such lands were looked after by the authorities of the temple and such authorities were supervised and controlled by the village assembly on the one side and the central government on the other.\(^1\)

The inscriptions of this temple play an important role in giving much information about the gift of devadāna lands and other donations made to this temple.

The practice of donating devadāna lands were started from the period of the Chōlas and continued in the periods of the Pāṇḍyas, the Vijayanagar, the Nāyaks and the Mahrāṭṭas of Thanjavur. There are ample epigraphical evidences in this temple to bring-forth the devadāna lands donated to the temple for various purposes. But mostly such lands were used for the religious performances of the temple.

DEVADĀNA LANDS UNDER THE CHŌLAS:

During the reign of Parantaka I (A.D.907-953), a land was granted for maintaining a flower garden, inside the premises of the temple. The gardeners were paid by the temple authorities themselves. On some occasions the devadāna lands were sold to private individuals and the money received from them were invested with the temple itself. An inscription of this temple mentions such a sale of land to one Adigal Paluvēttaraiya Nambi Kandan through Thiruvilimilalai Thondan by receiving 15 Ceylonese coins
by the members of the mahāsaba of the temple.\textsuperscript{1} This inscription also confirmed the fact that the mahāsaba of the people played a notable as well as a significant role on such devadāna lands.

During the period of Rajaraja I (A.D.985-1014 A.D.) provision was made for the purpose of lighting nanda lamp from the income of the devadāna lands.\textsuperscript{2} Another interesting fact gleaned from the same epigraph is that Thiruvilimilalai itself was treated as a devadāna village. The same assembly made another gift of land to a servant of the temple namely Thiruttāntōnri Bhattārār who did religious service in the temple. The inscription clearly mentions the location of such gifted land with boundaries.\textsuperscript{3} The mahāsaba of the temple, made a gift of another land to an individual and the income from such land was only meant for the religious service of the temple.\textsuperscript{4} The same period of Rajaraja I, also witnessed the sale of land for 96 kalam of paddy by the members of the Saba to an individual called Ukkal Vidanka Brahmādirāyan. The income of that land was utilised by the temple authorities

\textsuperscript{1} A.R.E., No.437 of 1908.  
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., No.423 of 1908.  
\textsuperscript{3} A.R.E., No.424 of 1908; T.N.A.D.I., No.538 of 1977.  
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., No.445 of 1908; T.N.A.D.I., No.550 of 1977.
for the performance of the religious services. This sale deed was carried out according to the orders of the government officer namely Arulmolidēva Pallavarāyan. This order was brought through an officer called Rajarajatherinda Kaikōla.¹ A gift land had been made by an individual called Silla Mudaya Udaya Mārthandam during the period of the same King Rajajia I.²

During the period of Rajendra I, a land was gifted for 16 kasus only and the boundaries were correctly marked for such land.³ The period of Rajadhiraja I (A.D.1018-1054); witnessed a gift of land as devadana to the temple.⁴ Such land was also renamed as Jayankonda Chōlanallur in order to avoid the ownership of such land by private individuals. This endowment had been directly carried out as per the orders of the king. For the confirmation of the endowment, the order was signed by the government officers like Thiruōlai, Thiruōlaināyakam and others. The inscription clearly describes the names of the officers with their respective native places. An inscription dated in the 31st regnal (C.A.D.1049) year of the king clearly describes the

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² Ibid., No.603 of 1977.
³ Ibid., No.564 of 1977.
boundaries of Jayankonda Chōlanallur, the devadāna village of the temple at Thiruviljimilalai.¹

During the period of the King Rajendra II, (A.D.1051-1063), a land was endowed as devadāna to the temple in order to celebrate the birthday of the king every year on the occasion of his austerism Thiruvāthirai.

During the reign of Kulottunga I (A.D.1070-1120), an agreement was made by the members of the mahāsābā of Vilimilalai in selling a land to an individual in receipt of Kāsus.² The money obtained from such selling was used to settle the financial crisis faced by the temple. Another gift of land was made and such land was used for growing agricultural products mainly paddy.³ An undated inscription mentions that an individual by name Gowthaman purchased a land by paying 700 kāsus to the people.⁴ On palaeographical ground, the inscription could be ascribed to the King Kulottunga-I. Sometimes, gifts of lands were made even to the neighbouring temples. An inscription of Kulottunga-I states one such incident of the

¹ A.R.E., No.393 of 1908.
gift of land to the neighbouring temple called Aravattisvararar mudaliyar in Kottakam alias Jayankonda Chōla nallur. The nāṭṭars of Thiruvilimilalai made a gift of land to this temple for the proper conduct of pūjas and festivals. Due to such gifts, the religious activities of the temple could be performed to a satisfactory level.

In the period of Vikrama Chōla also, (A.D.1118-1136), the temple had received a number of gifts in the form of lands. The earliest inscription mentioning the gift of land was dated in the 4th year of the King Vikrama Chōla (C.A.D.1122). In the fifth regnal year of the King (C.A.D.1123), a gift of land was made mainly for the religious offerings of the temple by an individual called Velan Senthamarai Kannan Kankayarayan. In the year A.D.1124, another gift of land was made for conducting the festivals of the temple of Thiruvilimudaiyar. The income from such land was also utilised for the performance of the festivals in connection with the shrine dedicated to the goddess Pidari. In the same year a sale of land was made

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2 Ibid., No.524 of 1977.
to the temple by the nagarattars of Viśnuvardanapuram. In the year A.D.1126, another gift of land was made for maintaining the lands of the temple. Further the inscription states that this gift was made in the presence of the King as well as his minister called Muṅkōkilanadigal. The boundaries of the land were also clearly marked. Lastly, a gift of land as madapuram was made by two individuals namely Sirrambalamudaiyar and Rishabavahana Thondan. The income from such lands was used to feed the devotees of the muṭṭ. The land donated to the muṭṭ also was properly maintained by the temple authorities. Even now the muṭṭ is in a good condition and a number of devotees are being fed at the time of the important religious occasions of the temple. Such land was named as vadakku kōttakam in order to differentiate it with the other gifted lands. The boundaries of the land was also clearly stated in the inscription.

During the period of the King Kulottunga II, (A.D.1133-1150 A.D.), in the year A.D.1133, a gift of land was made as madapuram to an individual called

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2 Ibid., No.385 of 1908; Ibid., No.516 of 1977.  
Kōtpuliyan
dar, who looked after the religious affairs of the
Thiruvir
ama

During the period of Kulottun
ga III (A.D.1178-1218)
number of gifts were made to the temple for various causes.
In order to perform religious offerings to the shrine of the
goddess, a gift of land was made. Another gift of land
was made to the nearby Thiruchchuv
cam Udayar temple

Based on the astronomical data, the date of the
inscription could be ascribed to A.D.1195. Yet another
gift was made to the same temple in the year A.D.1195.
Here also the boundaries of the land was clearly fixed. An
inscription of the King mentions devadāna land called
Korramangalam. Another inscription dated in the year
A.D.1193, mentions an arrangement was made to irrigate
the devadāna lands of the Thiruvir

\begin{footnotes}

2 Ibid., No.405 of 1908; Ibid., No.578 of 1977.
3 Ibid., No.416 of 1908; Ibid., No.568 of 1977.
6 Ibid., No.425 of 1908.
7 Ibid., No.434 of 1908, T.N.A.D.I., No.600 of 1977.
\end{footnotes}
made by the King and attested to by Thirumandira ‘olai by name Rajendra Singa Moovenda Velan and other government officers. The irrigation of such lands was done through a canal named after by one Anukki Pallavan Pattali Nangai. Even now the canal goes with the name Pattalivathi. Another inscription mentions the purchase of the temple land by paying 1000 kaśus.¹ Yet another purchase was made for 202 Kaśus.² The same epigraph mentions a sale of land to this temple for 330 kaśus. A gift of 3 mā of land was made to the temple as per the orders of one Vānādirāya Pērrairaiyan, who might be a feudal lord of the King, Kulottunga III.³ Another gift was made for 200 kaśus only.⁴ In the year A.D.1204, the temple received some lands as gift and the income from such lands were mainly meant for conducting the special pujas and festivals of the temple.⁵ A gift of land was made for the maintenance of the muṭṭ attached with the temple.⁶ The māhēśwaras of the muṭṭ performed the religious services of the temple and they were looked after by the muṭṭ itself.

² Ibid., No.575 of 1977.
³ Ibid., No.575 of 1977.
⁴ Ibid., No.576 of 1977.
⁵ Ibid., No.577 of 1977.
⁶ Ibid., No.601 of 1977.
The mutt was named as Thirunāvukkarasu Kugai. A gift of makani of land was made during the period of the King Rajaraja III, (A.D.1216-1256). An individual by name Swamideva gifted a devadāna land to this temple in accordance with the orders of the King. Another individual by name Sānthanimārban made one more gift of land. Two Brahmins made a gift of land to the Thanithanēsvara mudaiyar shrine, which is located inside the premises of the temple-complex. The names of the donors were Brahmanivachiyan and Thiruvānaika Nambi. The gift of land was made especially to a carpenter who undertook repairing works in the shrines of Ninraluyiyanāyanar and Nayanmars located inside the premises of the temple. Such land has been referred to as "Thathachari Kāni".

During the period of the King Rajendra III (A.D.1216-1256), an individual called Adankal Vīlikondan Bhattan made a gift of 20 Kuli of land for the maintenance of the

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2 Ibid., No.573 of 1977.
3 A.R.E., No.410 of 1908.
5 A.R.E., No.400 of 1908.
6 Ibid., No.410 of 1908.
mutt named after Thirunavukkarasu. Yet another mutt called Thiruchchirrampala- mudaiyar was also maintained by the temple authorities. A gift of land was made to the same mutt by an individual called Īnasiva. The measurement of the land has been referred to as 156.25 kuli.

The foregoing inscriptions clearly bring to light both the royal as well as individual gifts of land made to the temple during the period of Imperial Chōlas. Due to such gifts the religious services of the temple could be maintained properly.

**DEVADĀNA LANDS UNDER THE PĀNDYAS**

Gift of devadāna lands had its continuation during the period of the Pāndyas also. An epigraph of the King Jatavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya III, (A.D.1268-1271), records one such gift of 200 kuli of land. A group of persons made a gift to the temple and their names had been referred to in the inscription and for such gift they had been given some kasus from the temple treasury. A gift of land was made

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2. A.R.E., No.392 of 1908.
3. Ibid., No.395 of 1908.
for the recital of Thirumarai hymns in the mandapa called “Thirukkaikotti”. Both the mutts and minor shrines of the temple received gift of lands for their maintenance. An individual made an endowment of land to the temple and the income from the land was allotted to perform the pūja ceremonies of the temple. During the reign of Jatavarman Vira Pāṇḍya, a gift of land was made for carrying out the religious works of the temple.

DEVADĀNA LANDS UNDER VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

A gift of land about 500 kuli was made during the period of King Viruppanna Udayar II (Viruppara-I). In the year A.D.1388 one more gift of land was made. The nagarattars of Thiruvilīmīlalai also donated lands to the temple for regularising the pūjas and the other ceremonies of the temples.

DEVADĀNA LANDS UNDER MAHĀRĀTTAS OF THANJAVUR:

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2. Ibid., No. 411 of 1908.
5. Ibid., No. 396 of 1908.
6. Ibid., No. 428 of 1908.
The village assembly of Sevanthināthapuram made a gift of land for the evening religious services of the temple. The land was utilised for planting coconut and Iluppai trees which were grown mainly for the purpose of extracting oil for lighting the lamps of the temple. Here also the boundaries of the land were clearly stated in the epigraph.

The continuation of the gift of devadāna lands from the Chōlas to the Mahrāttas of Thanjavur Undoubtedly speaks the religious importance of the temple. Due to such gifts the temple could maintain, its economic prosperity to a standard level. Such gifts also helped the temple to perform the religious services without an interruption.

DONATIONS

Apart from the gift of lands, donations were made to the temple in various categories. Here also inscriptions form the basic source in giving the details of such donations.

During the period of the Chōla King Vijayalaya (A.D.846-841), a gift of 96 sheep was made for burning a
lamp in the temple. Another gift of gold coins of 120 kalanju was made for the purpose of feeding four Brahmins daily in the temple. The donor was one Amarpujangan Muppuli alias Kandarul Kanda Pallavarayan, who might be one of the feudal Chiefrains of Vijayala Chōla. One Udaiyar Thānthōnri Thanisēvaka made a gift of silver dish and its weight measures 240 kalanju. In the year A.D.941, during the period of the King Parantaka I, a gift of 90 sheeps was made for burning a lamp. Again during the period of the same king in the year A.D.945, a gift of kāsus was made for burning lamps. An inscription registers a gift of a sword by one Vañiyan Pādan alias Arikula Keśari Villuparaiyan to the temple. The sword is called as “Sri Kālakālan” whose significance is not known through the epigraph. Anyhow, the inscription has its own significance because this is the only one mention a different type of gift like the sword. The sword might be donated in memory of a political victory whose details are not known. A gift of 90 sheep was made to light up a lamp in the year A.D.941.

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2 Ibid., NO.436 of 1908.
3 Ibid., No.439 of 1908; S.I.L., Vol.1, No.46.
4 Ibid., No.440 of 1908.
5 Ibid., No.441 of 1908; T.N.A.D.I., No.553 of 1977.
6 Ibid., No.438 of 1908.
7 Ibid., No.440 of 1908.
The assembly of Thiruvilimilalai donated 20 kalams of paddy as gift to the temple during the rule of Rajaraja I (A.D.985-1014). This gift was utilised for the maintenance of the devotees who visited the temple in the time of the important festivals occurred in the month of May of every year.¹ Again the same assembly in the year A.D.1007 made provision for burning lamps at the time of the pūjas of the temple.² Another interesting information is gleaned from an inscription which mentions a gift of a pillar by one, Bharadvāja Devarāgilāyan.³ A gift of gold and precious stones was made for manufacturing ornaments for the deities like Rishabavahanadeva and the goddess of the temple.⁴

During the period of King Rajendra I (A.D.1012-1044), gold was donated for making ornaments for the gods and goddessess.⁵ In the year A.D.1017, a gift of lamp was made to the temple.⁶ Another interesting gift of bronze image of the goddess Alagiyaa Manavāla Amman was made by a lady called Sri Devi who might in all probability the

¹ A.R.E., No.422 of 1908.
² Ibid., No.423 of 1908.
⁴ Ibid., No.449 of 1908; Ibid., No.550 of 1977.
⁶ Ibid., No.422 of 1908.
mother of the King Rajendra I.\textsuperscript{1} Another gift of a bronze image of Sri Krishna was also made to the temple.\textsuperscript{2} The donor of this gift was one Kāli, Adichen Sembian. The income accrued from such gift has utilised for performing puja\textsuperscript{s} every year during the birth day of the donor on his austerism known as Revati, in the month of Puratasi (October). An individual called Thirumāligaidēvar made yet another gift of lamp to the temple.\textsuperscript{3} An individual by name Selvan Moovāyirapattan made a gift of a silver image of Lord Chandrasēkara.\textsuperscript{4}

During the period of the King Rajathiraja-I (A.D.1018-1054) number of gold ornaments were donated to the gods like Rishabavahanaēva, Subramaniya and Chadēsvaradeva.\textsuperscript{5} Another gift of gold weighing 128 kalanju and 4 manjadi was given to the main deity itself.\textsuperscript{6} One more gift of gold ornament was made to the temple in the year A.D.1018.\textsuperscript{7} A gift of 60 kalams of paddy was made for the offerings of food to the Lord during the important

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} A.R.E., No.444 of 1908.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., No.443 of 1908.
\item \textsuperscript{3} T.N.A.D.I., No.563 of 1977.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Ibid., No.563 of 1977.
\item \textsuperscript{5} A.R.E., No.384 of 1908.
\item \textsuperscript{6} T.N.A.D.I., No.515 of 1977.
\item \textsuperscript{7} A.R.E., No.391 of 1908.
\end{itemize}
festival which falls in the Tamil month of Chittirai (April-May).

In the year A.D. 1054, during the period of the King Rajendra II (A.D. 1051-1063), a lady by name Anikuyar Pallavan Pāttalinangaiyar made a gift of gold for burning a perpetual lamp in the temple. In the year 1074, during the rule of the King Kulottunga-I (A.D. 1070-1500) an individual made a gift of ornament called Thirukkolkai.

In the year A.D. 1094, an individual by name Adavallan Gamiākondan alias Irukolam made a gift of same kāsus to the temple. In the year A.D. 1120, during the period of the king Vikrama Chola, (A.D. 118-1136), a gift of money was made for burning two lamps in the temple. Another gift of money was also made for the same purpose in the year A.D. 1124.

In the year A.D. 1140, during the period of the King Kulottunga-II (A.D. 1135-1150), an individual called

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1 T.N.A.D.L., No. 529 of 1908.
3 Ibid., No. 430 of 1908; Tijitvii, No. 539 of 1977.
5 A.R.E., No. 387 of 1908.
6 Ibid., No. 426 of 1908.
Ponnambala-Kūthan-Ulagavēlan of Thiruvaiyaru made a gift of lamp to the temple. A provision was also made for getting oil also. The Siva Brahmanas of the temple made a gift of lamp to the temple, during the period of Rajaraja-II, (A.D.1146-1166). The custom of gifting lamp-stand with the lamp was continued in the period of Kulottunga-III (A.D.1178-1218). During the period of the King Rajaraja III (A.D.1216-1256), a gift of money was made to an ascetic of the nearby temple or Sivalōgamudaiya Nāyan at Jayankonda Cholānallur. Another gift of lamp was made also to the temple at Thiruvilīmilalai, during the period of the same king.

From the above inscriptional evidences, it is known, the contribution of the Chōlas for the religious services of the temple is a praise-worthy one. Their liberal donations in various forms as described above led to the economic prosperity of the temple.

3 Ibid., No.386 of 1908.
4 Ibid., No.429 of 1908.
In the succeeding periods also gifts were made in the forms of lands. Even now individuals make donations in the form of ornaments and money. Due to the religious significance of the temple, the donations are being made to a greater extent.