

VOW TAKEN BY BODYGUARDS IN LATER CHOLA PERIOD WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ARAKANDANALLUR ARAIYANINATHESHWARA TEMPLE INSCRIPTIONS

Ms. A. Manjula¹, Dr. D. Ramesh², Dr. G. Indirajith³, Dr. R. Maheshwari⁴

¹PhD. Research Scholar, Department of History, Full Time, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar.

²Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of History, Arignar Anna Govt. Arts College, Villuppuram.

³Assistant Professor, Department of History, Govt. Arts and Science College, Kovilpatti

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of History, Rani Anna Govt. College for Women, Tirunelveli.

DOI: 10.47750/pnr.2022.13.S06.519

Abstract

During the Chola period women were treated as a valuable object and a precious metal. In times of war instead of giving them safe and security they were annexed as war booty along with other spoils of war and were transported to the home of the victorious party and then used for their filthy purposes. This practice was prevalent in the Tamil country even from the Sangam age. Araiyaninatheshwara Temple is the 44th Devara Paadal Petra Siva *Sthalam* on the north bank of Thempennai River and 12th Sthalam Nadunadu. This place was called as Araiyaninallur during Devara times, has got corrupted to the present name of Arakandanallur. Chiefs also bore the title of Vanniyanayan (the Chief of the Vanniyas). Sarrukkudadan was a biruda one of these chiefs mentioned earlier bore, meaning 'he who does not yield'. He would appear to have had very loyal and devoted servants and subordinates; this is borne out by the large number of brief records found in the temples containing vows made by them to the effect that they would die if their master died and not survive him.

Key Words: Vows, Loyalty, *Velaikkaris* and *Velaikkaran*

Methodology

Inscriptions are the major and authentic source material for writing the history of the temple when the literary sources are scanty and silent. It is considered to be the life, blood, history and forms the most authentic and contemporary evidence. Without epigraphical sources, the proper history of the temple, particularly the history of the medieval Tamil country, could not have been written. The Methodology adopted in this study is descriptive and analytical.

Fundamentally, social history is concerned with past normal routine folks, family personalities, and family life. It includes the social definition and gathering of profession, specialisation and exchange, the status of the work, and relaxation. It also includes the human along with the financial connection of distinct classes to one another. Personal ambitions and longings for habits, conventions, convictions, and unusual ideas seem to have historical precedent with them. No one can deny the social history's importance and societal value, despite the fact that it is more challenging to duplicate than other aspects of an individual's historical background. In reality, the formation of society depends on the entire set of social traditions, starting with birth rituals, continuing through marriage, and finally consummating with death, in addition to the auxiliary scope of social establishment that

binds many gatherings together. History is, in all likelihood, a record of the existence of human social systems, the changes those orders have undergone, the ideas that have guided their actions, and the material circumstances that have either aided or hindered the course of events.¹

Politics and social issues per se cannot be isolated in history, although they may be the driving force for change in many historical eras. In the absence of a foundation to explain their demonstrable development, daily life in the past, with all of its rituals and traditions, social structure, with all of its laws and peculiarities, religion, with all of its inquiries and challenges, and education, with all of its concepts and implications, would simply be unimportant social relics. Similar to legislative concerns, the general public has always served as the stage for all political productions, both serious and lighthearted.² During the Chola era, women were regarded as important objects and precious metals. Instead of providing them with safety and protection during combat, they were brought to the winning party's house as war spoils along with other war loot and then used for their repulsive purposes. Even in the Sangam era, this instruction was widespread throughout the Tamil country.³

The Araiyaninatheshwara Temple is the 12th Sthalam *Nadunadu* and the 44th Devara Paadal Petra Siva Sthalam on the north bank of the Thenpennai River. During the *Devara* period, this location was known as Araiyaninallur, which has now been replaced by the name Arakandanallur. There are other variations on the name of this location, Arayaninallur. This particular variation is Arai+Ani+Nallur, which stands for Rock + Decorative, Magnificence, Wear + Nallur. As a result, Lord Shiva is also known as "Arayani Nathar."⁴

A succession of competent and obedient feudatories of the Cholas and later of the Pandyas, ruling from their base camp at Kiliyur, were in charge of the area including the modern-day Tirukkoyilur taluk of the South Arcot region and the connecting regions during the Chola and the Later Pandya periods.⁵

There isn't really a sanctuary in this area that hasn't had their donations engraved; in fact, there are so many engravings communicating their honours and gifts that a truly accurate picture of their work in many sectors may be inferred from them. In any case, we shall briefly discuss this issue about the Later Cholas in this essay.⁶ The Malaiyaman chiefs of Kiliyur maintained sway in this area as subordinates of the Chola sovereigns from the reigns of Kulottunga I Chola to that of Kulottunga III Chola and Rajaraja III Chola; in the periods of Kulottunga II Chola. The pseudonyms of Malaiyaman Malaiyan (Kulottungasola Chediyarayan) and his kid Attimallan (Edirilisola) Vanakkovaraiyan made a number of commitments to sanctuaries in the Nadu district, and during the reigns of Rajaraja II Chola and Rajadhiraja II Chola, they continued to have a functional impact on the political and strict existence of this region. One such Chief of this era is Attimallan Sökkaperumal, also known by the pseudonym Rajagambhira Chediyarayan, who appears to have been⁷ These Chiefs were also known as *Vanniyayanans* (the Chief of the Vanniyas). Before bore, one of these bosses referred to Sarukkudadan, a biruda that means "one who doesn't give." The overwhelming number of brief documents found in the sanctuaries that contain promises made by his workers and subordinates that they would pass on the off chance that their lord kicked the bucket and not endure him support the idea that he had extremely devoted and faithful workers and subordinates.⁸

Three such vows are recorded on the temple walls here. One interpretation is that the Chief was very well liked by his followers, but this explanation doesn't seem very plausible. Instead, it's more likely that those were unusual and challenging times, and the male and female servants were so devoted to the master that they didn't want to survive the master.⁹

The female attendants (*velaikkari*), who served as the chieftains' personal body guards, are believed to have made a vow to die with them in the event of their deaths. This vow is less clear as to why they made it. *Velaikkarars* were very brave and devoted personal body guards of the chieftains and they banded together to protect their masters, both in battle and elsewhere. Another significant location in the same taluk is the temple at Elavanasur, where similar vows are also recorded.¹⁰ During the conflict, the king's female bodyguards camped out. There were the "Velaikkari" in addition to these female attendants.¹¹ The precise purpose of the *Velaikkaris* was unknown. However, one of the inscriptions makes it clear that the *Velaikkaris* would perish if the master were killed in combat.¹² It appears that the *Velaikkaris* served as the king's primary personal bodyguards and that they were so devoted to him that they would give their lives at a moment's notice if he were dead. It may be claimed that these *Velaikkaris* made it their mission to guard the king from any potential damage, and that if the

enemy did manage to hurt the monarch at all, it might only be feasible after murdering the *Velaikkaris*. An unidentified 13th-century inscription discovered on the Second *Prakara*, left to the entrance of the Araiyaninatheshwara temple relates to a loyalty promise made by three *Velaikkaris* of Vanniyanayan—Nathandal, Ariyanachi, and one Kedarkettan—not to live after the death of their lord.¹³ Another unidentified 13th-century inscription that was discovered on the Second *Prakara*, next to the entrance of the Araiyaninatheshwara temple, relates to a similar loyalty promise made by Sarrukudatan and Ariyavellatalan, two *Velaikarars* of Vanniyanayan, not to live on after the death of their master.¹⁴ Another unidentified 13th-century inscription was discovered on the Second *Prakara*, next to the temple's entrance, and it speaks of the loyalty vows made by 10 *Velaikkaris* of Vanniyanayan, who promised not to live after the death of their lord.¹⁵

Reference

1. V. Balambal, *Great Women of Chola dynasty*, Journal of Tamil studies, Vol.X, 1976, pp 71-88.
2. R. Nagaswamy, *The position of women in Medieval Tamil Nadu-A study*, Journal of Asian studies, Vol.I, No.2, March 1984,pp 95-110.
3. K.Sadasivan, *Rajarajeswaram and its Talicherimmendugal*, The Bulletin of the institute of the traditional cultures of South and South East Asia, Madras, 1986 January to December 1988.
4. K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cholas*, University of Madras, 1975, pp 291-292.
5. *Ibid.*,
6. Dr.K. Sadasivan, *Devadasi system in Medieval Tamil Nadu* (Unpublished Ph.D thesis) Madurai Kamaraj University, 1987, pp 117-125,
7. K.M. Venkataramaya, *Administration and social life under the Maratha rulers of Thanjavur*, Thanjavur, 1984, p. 78.
8. *Ibid.*,
9. A.V. Krishnamoorthy, *Social and Economic Conditions in Eastern Deccan*, p. 59.
10. Leslie, C. Orr, *Donors, Devotees and Daughters of God*, Temple Women in Medieval Tamil Nadu, p. 147.
11. *Ibid.*,
12. S. Chandni Bi, *Female Functionaries of Medieval South Indian Temple*, p. 53.
13. *A.R.E.* 140,141,142/1935
14. *A.R.E.* 154/1934-35
15. *A.R.E.* 147, 148/1934-35