

The Lithic Records Open A Window To A Slice Of Patronage Construction And Consecration Of Perumukkal Mukyachalesvara Temple By Kulottunga I Chola

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Vijayalaya Chola (846-881C.E.) vanquished the Chieftain Muttaraiyar and laid the foundation of the later Chola Kingdom at Tanjore.¹ This Chola lineage ruled upto 985 C.E. Rajaraja I Chola ascended the throne in the year 985 C.E and he established Chola dynasty.² Rajendra I Chola, who succeeded Rajaraja I Chola, Rajadhiraja Chola succeeded Rajendra I Chola, Rajadhiraja II Chola succeeded Rajadhiraja I Chola, Virarajendra Chola was also the son of Rajendra I Chola succeeded. Adhirajendra Chola, succeeded Virarajendra Chola, in 1070 A.D. Adhirajendra Chola ruled only for a few weeks. Due to his illness he passed away in the same year. Adhirajendra had no issue for the Chola throne³ and consequently great confusion prevailed in the Chola Mandalam. At this juncture, Eastern Chalukya crown prince Rajaraja Narendra, the offspring of the Chola and Eastern Chalukya matrimonial alliance, ascended the Chola throne.⁴ He also known as Kulottunga I Chola who begin the rule of the Chalukya Chola line.⁵ The accession of Chola throne by Kulottunga I Chola begins the commencement of a new era in the history of Cholas. This paper seeks to trace the Religious endowments, patronage construction and consecration by Chalukyas Chola line Kulottunga I Chola to the Perumukkal Mukyachalesvara Temple.⁶

Kulottunga I Chola avoided unnecessary wars and established an era of peace and prosperity in his subjects during his long reign of 50 years.⁷ There are four inscriptions of Kulottunga Chola I issued in his 39,45,46 and 47 regnal years. For instance an inscription of Kulottunga I issued in his thirty ninth regnal year 1109 C.E., found on the Southern side wall of the *Mahamandapa* of Mukyachalesvara central shrine refers to the gift of a perpetual lamp and sheep. This Inscription states that this epigraph is a later copy of an age old record of Rajakesarivarman Kulottunga Chola I in the regnal year 39 dated 1108-09 C.E.⁸ This record begins with the Prasasti “pugazhmadu vilanga” who is identified with Kulottunga I Chola. The record also registers the gift of a perpetual lamp and sheep by one Madavan, the headman of Mambakkam (Mambakkilan) to the principle deity on the sacred hill. The priests received the gifts and agreed to burn the lamp daily so long the sun and moon endure. Thus the priests received the endowments for doing needful.⁹

Besides another inscription of Kulottunga I issued in his forty fifth regnal year dated 1114-1115 C.E., found on the Southern side wall of the front *mandapa* of Mukyachalesvara central shrine refers to gift of lands. The lands purchased 4050 *kuli* of lands for six *Kasu* and gifted the land to the primal deity. He assumed the title Rajakesarivarman Kulothunga I Chola. This record also begins with *prasasti* “*pugalmadhu vilanga*” etc of Kulottunga I Chola.¹⁰ The record states that a chieftain Kanakarayar alias Araiyan Kakkunayakan, the chieftain of Konur which situated in *Poyyir Kurram* in Raja Raja *Valanadu* purchased 4050 *kuli* of lands for six *Kasu*

and gifted them to the God Tiruvanmigai Isvaramudaiya Mahadevar on the sacred hill. The village Perumukkal is also called Gangaikondanallur in the surname of Rajendra I Chola the maternal, grandfather of Kulothunga I Chola. The Chieftain Kanakarayar alias Araiyan Kakkunayakan, whose name in this record also found in the 3rd regnal year record of the subsequent ruler of the Chola throne Vikrama Chola, son of Kulothunga I Chola. Further this record registers that the chieftain of Konur, the Kanakkarayar alias Araiyan Kanakkunayakan built the central shrine of Perumukkal Mukyachalesvara Temple with stone.¹¹ From this it is surmise that upto the reign of Kulothunga I Chola the central shrine which was in small stone structure restructured and enlarged with stone during the time of Kulottunga I Chola in his fifth regnal year. Incidentally the records of Kulothunga I Chola found on the southern side walls of the *Mandapa* is reveals the fact that the existing structure was rebuild during the time of Kulottunga I Chola.

One more inscription of Kulottunga I Chola issued to his forty fifth regnal year 1115 C.E., found on the Mukyachalesvara central shrine registers a gift of one sacred perpetual lamp and thirty cows. The record begins with the King's *Prasasti Pugazhmadhu Vilanga*, who is identified with Kulottunga I Chola.¹² This epigraph is a consolidated document registering the endowments made by several persons in the 16th, 43rd and 45th regnal years of Kulottunga I Chola. In the 16th year of Kulottunga I Chola one, Rajendra Sola Mummalarayan gifted one sacred perpetual lamp and thirty cows to the primal deity. In the 43rd regnal year of the Kulottunga I Chola, one Kidarangonda Sola Viladarayan alias Velan Tiruchirrambalamudaiyan,

the headman of Vandalancheri in Cholamandalam gifted one sacred perpetual lamp and thirty cows to the primal deity. In the same year 43rd regnal year of Kulottunga I Chola one Velan Tiruvarangamudaiyan, the headman of Araisur in Perumanrur Nadu territorial division of Oymanadu gifted one sacred perpetual lamp and thirty cows to the presiding deity. In the 45th year of the King, Kulottunga I Chola one Anba Nayakan donated a *Sandhi* lamp and twelve sheep to the principal deity. Further one Nulambula Sottai Alwan alias Sevvurnattu Velan of Nulambur in Sevvurnadu territorial division gifted one *sandhi* lamp and twelve sheep to the primal deity. Besides, the *Sivabrahmanas* of the temple agreed to burn the two *sandhi* lamps and the three perpetual lamps to be burnt in this temple.¹³

Another inscription of Kulottunga I issued to his forty seventh regnal year 1117 C.E., found on the Southern and Western side wall of the *Arthamandapa* of Mukyachalesvara central shrine refers to an endowment of land to the God Pillaiyar, who was installed on the hill. This record registers the endowment of land and consecration of Ganesa image in this temple premise. This land was purchased by Vijayalayan Kakkunayakan, the chieftain of Vandalai Velur Kurram, a subdivision of *Chola Mandalam*, from the residents of Perumukkal alias Gangaikonda Nallur.¹⁴ These records testify the patronage of the ruler Kulottunga I Chola to this temple and the consecration of the idol of Ganesa in this same temple prakara of the central shrine.¹⁵

In the concluding part of the paper it is revealed that the present existing structure of Perumukkal Mukyachaleswara temple might have been, enlarged and

restructured the existing temple complex by the Chalukya Chola line Kulottunga I Chola. Several Gift of lands to the Primal deity, the *Sandhi* lamps to the primal deity the endowments were entrusted to the Brahmins particularly the priest to pay prompt attention of the donor and regular spiritual services were meted out in this temple. In addition to these endowments, it is clear that the priest class of this temple agree to burn the *sandhi* lamps to be burnt in this temple daily without fail so long the sun and moon endure.¹⁶ To avoid any irregularity in the spiritual service regarding perpetual lamp and *sandhi* lamp, the land and livestock endowments were entrusted to the Brahmins particularly the priest class to pay prompt attention of the donor and regular spiritual services were meted out in this temple. This is a laudable spiritual feature of Chola administration. This is a laudable patronisation features of medieval temples of Tamilaham. A record also stood as testimonials to the patronage of the King Kulottunga I Chola and installation of the idol Ganesa in a separate *parivara alaya* in the temple premise showed the consecration and enlargement of the existing structure.

References

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