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Errata:

It is deeply regretted that due to some oversight the footnotes to the article no.59 published in *Avanam*, Vol. 18, pp. 181-195 by Professor N.Karashima, were left out while printing. There are also some mistakes in the diacritical marks. The correct printed version of the article is enclosed herewith.

– Editor

திருத்தம்:

ஆவணம் இதழ் 18, பக்கம் 181-195இல் உள்ள பேராசிரியர் கராஷிமா அவர்கள் கட்டுரையில் இருந்த அடிக்குறிப்புகள் விடுபட்டுவிட்டன. அத்தவறுக்கு மிகவும் வருந்துகிறோம். இத்துடன் திருத்தப்பட்டபடி வைக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

– பதிப்பாசிரியர்

59. *Kāṇi* Right in Tamil Inscriptions and *Mirāsi* Right in British Records: Probing into the Pre-colonial Reproduction System in South India

Noboru Karashima
Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo

காணி உரிமையும் மிராசி உரிமையும் -- காலனி ஆதிக்கத்துக்கு முந்தைய
தென்னிந்தியாவில் சமூகப் பெருக்க முறை பற்றிய சில கேள்விகள்

நொபோரு கராஷிமா, தோக்கியோ

17-18ஆம் நூற்றாண்டுகளில் தமிழ்நாட்டில் நிலவிய நில உடைமை முறையை ஆங்கில அரசு ஆவணங்கள் மிராசி முறை என்று குறிப்பிடும். இம்முறை பற்றி ஆராய்ந்த மிஜுஷிமா என்ற ஜப்பானிய வரலாற்றாசிரியர் அக்காலத்தில் இது ஒரு பரவலான அடிப்படை சமூகப் பெருக்க முறையாக இருந்தது என்பார். மேலும் இம்முறையில் நில உடைமையாளர், குத்தகைக்கு உழுத குடிகள் என்ற இரு அருக்கு உறவுமுறை என்று மட்டுமல்லாமல் கிராம சமூகத்தில் இருந்த இரு சாராரோடு கிராம சமூகத்துக்குப் பல்வேறு வகைகளில் பங்களிப்பு செய்த (தச்சர், கொல்லர், குயவர், வண்ணார், நாவிதர், நீர்கட்டி, மருத்துவர், காவல், வெட்டி போன்ற) கிராம ஊழியர்களும் இணைந்த ஓர் உறவு முறையாக இருந்தது என்றும், இந்த பல்வேறு கிராம ஊழியர்களும் மிராசி உரிமை பெற்றிருந்ததனால் அவ்வூர் நில உற்பத்தியில் பங்கு பெற்றார்கள் என்றும் வற்புறுத்துவார். ஏறக்குறைய இதையொத்து மராட்டி மாநிலத்தில் வதன் என்ற முறை நிலவியது என்றும், அங்கு கிராம ஊழியர் பன்னிரு வகையினர் என்பது மரபு என்றும் கொதானி என்ற இன்னொரு ஜப்பானிய வரலாற்றாசிரியர் குறிப்பிடுவார். இந்த மிராசி முறை ஒரு மாறாத தன்மை கொண்டு நெடுங்காலம் நிலவி வந்தது என்ற கருத்து எவ்வளவு வலுவுடையது, மிராசி முறை எக்காலம் தொடங்கி நிலவியது என்ற கேள்விகளுக்கு விடை காண்பதே இக்கட்டுரையின் நோக்கம்.

அதற்கு ஆசிரியர் பிராமண ஊர்கள் சார்ந்த செப்பேடுகள் குறிப்பிடும் பங்கு முறையை முதலில் ஆராய்கிறார். இச்செப்பேடுகளில் 9ஆம் நூற்றாண்டு தொட்டு பிராமண ஊர்களில் கிராம ஊழியர் ஏதோ ஒருவகையில் இருந்தார்கள் என்று தெரிகிறது. ஆனால் எல்லா ஊர்களிலும் இந்த நிலை இருந்ததா என்று சொல்ல மேலும் சான்றுகள் தேவை. அடுத்து பங்கு முறைக்கும் காணி என்ற சொல் குறிப்பிடும் நில உடைமை முறைக்கும் உள்ள ஒற்றுமை வேற்றுமைகளை ஆய்வுக்கு எடுத்துக்கொள்கிறார். காணி, பங்கு ஆகிய உரிமைகள் எப்படி பரிவர்த்தனை செய்யப்பட்டன, அவற்றின் பரவல் எப்படியிருந்தது என்பதும், இவ்விரு முறைகளிலும் நிலத்தை உழுது பயிர்செய்தவர் யார், விளைச்சல் பங்கீடு எப்படி நடைபெற்றது என்பதும் ஆராயப்படுகின்றன. தனி நில உடைமை பரவலாகி, பெரிய காணியாளர் தோன்றிய காலத்தில் காணி உரிமைகள் பரிவர்த்தனை பெருகியது.

பங்கு முறையைப் போல காணி முறையிலும் சில இடங்களில் கூட்டுடைமை காணப்பட்டது. தனிப்பட்ட காணியாளரும் இருந்தார்கள். இந்த இருவேறுபட்ட உடைமை முறைகளில் வேளாண்மை எப்படி மேற்கொள்ளப்பட்டது, விளைந்த

தானியத்தில் எப்படி உடைமையாளரும், உழுசூடிகளும் பங்கு பிரித்தார்கள் போன்ற கேள்விகளை எழுப்பி அவற்றுக்கான விடை தெளிவாகக் கிட்டவில்லை என்கிறார். இந்த இரு முறைகளிலும் ஊர் ஊழியர் நிலைமை என்ன, அவர்கள் எவ்வாறு விளைவில் பங்கு பெற்றார்கள் என்ற கேள்விக்கும் விடை தெளிவாக இல்லை. இந்தக் கேள்விகளுக்கு முடிவான விடை பெற மேலும் எந்த வகையில் ஆராய்ச்சிகள் செய்யப்பெறவேண்டும் என்பதை இறுதியில் குறிப்பிடுகிறார்.

Introduction

Recently H. Kotani discussed the *watan* system that functioned in the Maratha country during the 17th and 18th centuries,¹ and T. Mizushima examined the *mirāsi* system noticed by British administrators prevalent in the Tamil country in the 18th century.² Though the two systems differed in their historical settings and also to some extent in their function, both can, according to both the scholars, be called reproduction systems based on “share distribution” or “division of labour” in past agrarian society. They want to regard both systems as the basic reproduction system in pre-colonial India, where, they maintain, exclusive possession rights of land as known in the modern period had not yet been established. Kotani casts doubt on the functioning of any reproduction system based only on landholding relationships such as the landlord/tenant relationship in the pre-colonial period. Mizushima wants to see the *mirāsi* system as a system in which relations between the state, communities, and individuals were regulated.

Their ideas are attractive, but more research will be necessary before their proposals can be accepted, particularly their recognition of these two systems as the basic pre-colonial reproduction system. It is obvious that we have to undertake studies of ancient and early medieval practices by examining contemporary inscriptions to generalise about their conclusion, since their studies concern only the late medieval and early colonial periods. The purpose of this brief note is to carry out such an examination, but owing to the limited nature of the information available from inscriptions, it will remain tentative and examine only some restricted aspects of their ideas. As for the inscriptions, I shall restrict my examination mostly to Tamil inscriptions of the 8th to the 14th centuries,³ namely, the period of the Pallava, Chola, and Pandyan states, excluding

¹ Kotani 2002; Kotani 1989.

² Mizushima 2006; Mizushima 1996; Mizushima 1990.

³ In this study I was greatly helped by Prof. Y. Subbarayalu in reading the inscriptions, for which I am grateful.

those of the Vijayanagar period. As the Vijayanagar state and social formation were different from those of the earlier states, some difference in the reproduction system is also to be expected. I shall leave the study of this issue for the Vijayanagar period for some other occasion.

Village-servant system

One of the focal points of the arguments made by Kotani and Mizushima in putting forward their new interpretation is the so-called village-servant system, namely, the relationship that village servants, consisting of carpenters, barbers, astrologers, doctors, etc., had with the whole village or local community. Kotani asserts that the twelve village servants (*bārā balute*) appearing in Maratha administration documents and consisting generally of carpenters, ironsmiths, potters, washermen, barbers, village priests, temple keepers, and some untouchable castes were important *watan*-holders (*watandār*) who were given emoluments by all the *watan*-holding peasants (*kunbī*) in the village.⁴ This relationship between *bārā balutes* and *kunbis*, which once attracted the attention of Max Weber,⁵ represents a division of labour that supported reproduction. Mizushima notices in British revenue records the presence of astrologers, carpenters, washermen, barbers, snake-doctors, potters, shoe-makers, musicians, shroffs, etc., as recipients of emoluments from the village community and the government at harvest time. According to Mizushima, they were also *mirāsī*-holders (*mirāsīdār*) receiving their share through the *mirāsī* system, in which the peasants play an important role as the chief members.

Here we shall first examine this point, namely, whether or not we are able to find the functioning of this village-servant system in the ancient and medieval Tamil country by checking inscriptions, though it seems to me that vertical relations between landholders and cultivators, such as the landlord/tenant relationship, were more important for agrarian reproduction than this horizontal relationship between village servants and peasants.⁶ It is not easy to find this sort of information in Tamil inscriptions, but some conjectures can be made on the basis of inscriptions recording royal orders in relation to the village grant by the king to a large number of Brahmins.

⁴ On this point Kotani depends to some extent on the study made by H. Fukazawa in Fukazawa 1991.

⁵ Weber 1958, p. 81.

⁶ Though the purpose of this note is not to criticise their studies directly, it may not be irrelevant to mention here that their studies are inadequate in their examination of these vertical relations. It seems that Mizushima had some difficulty in clarifying this point because the Barnard report, the main source of his study, does not afford any information on it. In Maharashtra too there seem to be no proper sources revealing actual land management, but according to Kotani, the abundance of land on the vast plateau of the western Deccan did not allow the development of landlord/tenant relationships.

Next we shall examine three such inscriptions.

First, the Tandantottam plates of the Pallavas (*SII*, ii, 99; *TPLCP*) dated to 789 and recording Nandivarama II's grant of reclaimed land to 308 Brahmins conversant with the Vedas state that each Brahmin is given one share (*pangu*) of the land of the newly formed Brahmin village (*brahmadeya*) and that, besides these Brahmins, some professionals and temples were also given *pangus* as follows:

1 Vishnu temple	1
	<i>pangu</i>
1 Siva temple	2
1 reciter (<i>vāsippān</i>) of <i>bhāratam</i>	1
1 drummer (<i>tattalīkottī</i>)	1
1 water supplier (<i>tannīr aṭṭuvār</i>) to a public hall	1
1 physician (<i>vaidyan</i>)	2
4 accountants (<i>madhyastha</i>)	3
3 water distributors (<i>vāyṭṭalai</i>)	3

Though there appear no carpenter, ironsmith, barber, etc., who are included in Maratha documents or British reports as village servants, and though some professionals appearing here are related only to Brahmanic rituals, we may be able to regard the *pangus* of these professionals as perquisites given to them by the Brahmin landholders.

Second, the Karandai plates (*KTSP*) of the Cholas dated to 1020 and recording Rajendra I's grant of 56 villages to 1080 Brahmins to form a huge Brahmin village state that, besides the 1083 *pangus* given to the Brahmins conversant with the Vedas and Sutras, 33 *pangus* and 86 *vēli* of land were given to various temples and professionals. The professionals are as follows:

1 physician (<i>vaidya</i>)	3 <i>pangu</i>
1 astrologer (<i>jōdisha</i>)	1
1 medicine-man (<i>ambashṭan</i>)	1
6 accountants (<i>kanakku</i>)	6
4 lower accountants (<i>kāvidi</i>)	2
11 drummers (<i>uvachchan</i>)	11
4 barbers (<i>nāvisa</i>)	2
<i>Mīmāṃsa-bhaṭṭa</i> -vritti land	5 <i>vēli</i>
<i>Vēdānta-bhaṭṭa</i> -vritti land	5
<i>Viyākaraṇa-bhaṭṭa</i> -vritti land	4
Land for reciting Pavīṭiya	2

Taittiriya	2
Vājasaneyā	2
Chandhōga	2
Atharva	2
Talavakāra	2
Rūpavatāra	2
Smṛiti	2
Bhāratam	2
Cleaning (<i>meḷugi</i>) & water supply (<i>taṇṇīr aṭṭuvāṇ</i>) to a public hall	2
Poison doctor (<i>vishabhogam</i>)	2
Potters (<i>kusavar</i>)	1
Carpenters and blacksmiths (<i>taccar and kollar</i>)	1
2 engravers of copper plates	2

In this long inscription of the 11th century we find mention of musicians, barbers, potters, ironsmiths, snake-doctors, etc., as in Maratha documents and British reports, though the majority still belong to professions related to Brahmanic rituals. Here we may find the idea of a village servant system applied to a *brahmadeya* village. The reason for dividing professionals into two groups, one to be given *pangu* and the other a piece of land (the unit being a *vēli*) is not clear, though one *pangu* consisted basically of one *vēli* of wetland. All the temples were given land and not *pangu*.

Last, there is a 13th-century stone inscription of Vira Pandya (ARE 1958/59, 309) at Chidambaram recording a royal grant of a *brahmadeya* to 120 Brahmins, which states that, besides 120 *pangus* given to Brahmins, there were 10 *pangus* distributed to a temple and several professionals as follows:

Temple	1 <i>pangu</i>
Vēda-teacher <i>vritti</i>	3
Sūtra-teacher <i>vritti</i>	1
Physician (<i>vaidya</i>)	2
Physician (<i>ambattān</i>)	1/4
Accountant (<i>ūr-kanakku</i>)	1/2
Drummer (<i>uvachchan</i>)	1/4
Carpenter (<i>taccan</i>)	1/2
Goldsmith (<i>tattān</i>)	1/4
Washerman (<i>īrangolli</i>)	3/8
Barber (<i>nāvitān</i>)	3/8
Watchman (<i>pādikāppān</i>)	3/8
Public servant (<i>vetṭiyān</i>)	1/8

Here, according to this 13th-century Pandyan inscription, it seems that a village-servant system was functioning in Tamil society of the time.

From the above three royal-grant inscriptions we may be able to say that the village-servant system was known in the Tamil country from the 8th century or at least from the 11th century, but its wide prevalence is difficult to assume from the evidence found only in inscriptions recording royal grants of *brahmadeya*. *Brahmadeyas* were villages granted to Brahmins by the king under the strong influence of Brahmanic and North Indian ideas, and therefore they should be differentiated from ordinary and traditional villages in South India (the Tamil country), where we find the *ūr* assembly of the Vellalas instead of the *sabhā* assembly of Brahmins in *brahmadeyas*.⁷ However, from some of the inscriptions recording the affairs of *ūr*-type villages too we can gather information on this village-servant system.

The Thanjavur inscriptions (*SII*, ii, 4 & 5) recording the revenue grant of more than 40 villages in the Chola country to Brihadisvara temple by Rajaraja I reveal the existence of residential areas in *ūr*-type villages such as *ūrnatamtrukkai* (for *ūr*-members), *talaivāychchēri* (main sluice controllers), *talichchēri* (temple people?), *kudiyirukkai* (Vellala cultivators?), *paraichcheri* (outcaste community), *kammānachchēri* (iron smiths), *vaṇṇārachchēri* (washermen), *ilachcheri* (toddy drawers), and *tīṇḍāchcheri* (untouchables) and also refer to the land of *Kāṇimurūttu* (astrologers) and *maruttuvappēru* (physicians) among the non-taxable lands in villages.⁸ As against the mention of the residential area (*nattam*, *irukkai* or *chēri*) for most of the service groups, only astrologers and physicians are referred to as having "land" assigned to them. As seen above in the Karandai plates too there is a difference among service groups, one group being given *pangu* and the other land (*vēli*), though the reason for this difference too is not clear.⁹ Although what is clear in these inscriptions is the existence of residential areas for most of the so-called village servants, the land held by astrologers and physicians may suggest the practice of the village-servant system in these *ūr*-type villages.

Another piece of information comes from the study of the Allūr inscriptions, which I made a long time ago.¹⁰ Nine inscriptions of the early

⁷ For the activities of the *sabhā* assembly in *brahmadeyas*, see Sastri 1932.

⁸ Karashima 1984, pp. 46-48.

⁹ The difference might have been related to the cultivation practices of their land, namely, one for common cultivation and the other for individual cultivation. This point will be discussed to some extent later.

¹⁰ Karashima 1966, later included in Karashima 1984 (pp. 3-13).

Chola period remaining in Allūr, close to Tiruchirapalli, record eleven transfers of land made by a temple, a temple priest, and two groups of persons. While one of the two groups of persons that transferred land was the Allūr village assembly (ūrār), the other was talaivāchchāṇrār who regulated the water flow in the main sluice (talaivāy). This latter group is found in the Tandantottam plates examined above and also in some British records as recipients of emoluments. If we examine the land adjacent to the land transferred in Allūr, we find 44 boundary lands in these inscriptions. Though most of them are named after just the extent, natural conditions, or deities, 13 pieces have a personal name and/or profession as a component. Among them we find an asirologer, dancer, musician, and accountant. As the connection between land and individual was very weak in Allūr, which was an ūr-type common village, we may assert that the land named after these professions seems to have been given to them by the village community (ūr) as emolument for the performance of their profession.

The above examinations reveal that the idea of a village-servant system studied by Weber and others was already known in the ancient and medieval Tamil country and that it was practised in ūr-type villages also.

Pangu/Kāṇi sharing system

The second point I am going to discuss here is the contents of land transactions recorded in ancient and medieval inscriptions, namely, whether the transacted object was only a particular plot of land or something more than that. This point relates first to the meaning of *watan* and *mirāsi*, both Arabo-Persian terms in origin. According to Kotani, the term *watan* was used for some work like hair-cutting by a barber or for offices such as *deshmuk* (*desa* territory chief), though it is often associated with the possession of land. According to F. W. Ellis, Collector of Madras at the beginning of the 19th century, the term *mirāsi*, synonymous with *kāṇi* or *kāṇiyāṭchi* in Tamil, encompassed also social privileges to which the possessor of *mirāsi* land was entitled, such as receiving some fees (*swāmi-bhōgam* or *tuṇḍuvāram*) from outside cultivators (*paṛakkudis*)¹¹ and taking the lead in village festivals.¹² Kotani and Mizushima are inclined to believe, therefore, that owing to the inclusion of various social rights along with the right to the possession of particular land, both the *watan* and *mirāsi* systems functioned as a reproduction system by regulating social relations among local people in past agrarian society.

Though Kotani gives more importance to the increase in the transfer of

¹¹ For *paṛakkudis* and other cultivators including *uḷkudis*, see Firminger 1918, pp. 141-45, Bayley and Hudleston 1862, pp. 58-60, and Yanagisawa 1996, p. 196.

¹² Bayley and Hudleston 1862, p. 213.

office-*watan* such as the *deshmuki-watan* in the 18th century, we rarely come across the transfer of similar office-rights in pre-Vijayanagar inscriptions,¹³ and therefore this point will not be examined here. Instead, attention will be paid to the content of the *kāni* right by taking up for consideration only the case of land transactions. What was actually transferred in *kāni*-land transactions? In this connection another Tamil word, *pangu*, meaning “share”, is of significance. As already shown, the term *pangu* was employed in royal-grant inscriptions recording the allocation of land to Brahmins and others. It appears already in the Kuram plates (*SII*, i, 151; *TPLCP*) of the Pallavas datable to the beginning of the 8th century, which record the grant of a village to 20 Brahmins. The whole village was divided into 25 *pangus*, which were distributed to the 20 Brahmins and a temple in the village. It is important to note that the *pangu* is an abstract unit which can include more than one thing as a set.¹⁴

In the case of *kāni* (the same as *kāniyāṭchi*) too we can trace its use in a few early Pandya and Pallava inscriptions, starting from the early 9th century,¹⁵ but its appearance in inscriptions increases from the Chola period, particularly from the 11th century onwards. This term is applicable to the hereditary right, as stated earlier, to various things including work and profession, but it was used in inscriptions mostly in relation to the land.¹⁶ Even in the case of land, *kāni* does not necessarily mean only the possession of land, but can also signify some other rights to land, for example, cultivation of land, though the specifying term *ulavu* (cultivation) is prefixed to *kāni* in such a case.¹⁷ Though we do not find such cases in Chola inscriptions, we shall also keep this point in mind in our examination.

On the wall of Tiruvanaikka temple in Jambukesvaram there survive many inscriptions from the time of Rajaraja III and Rajendra III in the 13th century, which record the sale/donation to this islet temple of land in some

¹³ Two late Chola inscriptions refer to the bestowal of office-*kāni* such as temple accountantship and temple guardianship by some chief: ARE 1926, 268; 270 (both Periyakurukkal, AD 1242). Similar Vijayanagar examples are found in ARE 1919, 229; 233; 343 (all Madam) and *SII*, xvi, 294; 295 (both Srimushnam).

¹⁴ The main idea behind the employment of *pangu* must have been to ascertain fairness of distribution, each *pangu* having the same content and thus yielding the same economic value.

¹⁵ *SII*, xiv, 26 (AD 815); *SII*, xii, 63 (AD 876).

¹⁶ This term appears frequently in combination with other terms like *kānikadai*, *kāniyudaiya*, and *kāniyālar*. *Kānikadai* the duty (*kaḍai*) deriving from the possession of land, such as tax or rent. *kāniyudaiya* means “having the *kāni* right”, and *kāniyudaiyār*, therefore, means a person who possesses the *kāni* right. *Kāniyār* is the same as *kaniyudaiyār*, meaning possessor of *kani* right or *kani*-land.

¹⁷ Six Devikapuram inscriptions of the 16th century refer to *ulavu-kani*. See Karashima 1992, p. 162.

eight villages not far from the northern bank of the Kaveri river by people who had *kāni* right to the village land.¹⁸ In the case of Karisattangurai, one of the eight villages, the land sold is referred to in terms of *pangu*. The whole village was divided into twelve *pangus*, and in one of the transactions four *pangus* owned by three people were sold, in another transaction four of the remaining eight by seven people, and in yet another the remaining four *pangus* by six people. Thus, the entire village was sold to Tiruvanaikka temple through these three transactions. The demarcation is given only for the boundaries of the village and not for any land in the *pangu*, indicating that no special importance was attached to any particular field in the *pangu* system.

What is significant here is the following phrase found in one of the transactions (*SII*, viii, 336): “inclusive of dryland, house, house-site, common ground and what relates to them, assembly ground, pastures for cows, trees, and wells that accompany these *pangus*”. In another transaction of the *pangu* of the same village “the river and the land along the river bank” are included. Though the type of the main land in these twelve *pangus* is not described in these inscriptions, it seems to have been the wetland, raising two crops or one crop, judging from the land sold in adjacent villages. It is very clear from these inscriptions that the *pangu* included a set of land and also things that could be enjoyed by *pangu*-holders living in the village.

More interesting, however, is the fact that the *kāni*-land sold in these villages also seems to have included a similar set of land and so on as described in the transaction of Karisattangurai, even though the land is not described in terms of *pangu*. For example, transactions *made in terms of kāni* in another village, Rajarajakurragudi (*ARE* 1937/38, 3236), stipulate the inclusion of “dryland, house-site in the village residential area, land in the Pulaiyas’ residential area,¹⁹ assembly ground, *aḷavu-nīṅgal* (meaning unclear), the river and land along the river, *bhāgam* (meaning unclear) and things belonging to it, in proportion to the wetland transferred”. The main item of the transaction was the wetland consisting of two-crop land and one-crop land, the extent of which is also given, and the expression “in proportion to the wetland” is important. However, the demarcation of neither wetland nor dryland is given.

In yet another village, Valadi (*ARE* 1937/38, 27), it was also stipulated that the sold *kāni* of wetland measuring one and a half *vēli* should be accompanied by dryland, the village residential area, the Pulaiyas’ quarter,

¹⁸ Study of the seven villages can be found on pp. 15-17 and that of the eighth one (Valadi) on p. 25 of Karashima 1984.

¹⁹ Pulaiyas were one of the outcastes in Tamil Nadu during the British period.

and houses, all set in proportion to the extent of the wetland. Though not all the transactions of land in these eight villages provide this type of wording, the holding of wetland in these villages seems to have assured its possessors, by virtue of their being landlords, the privilege of keeping some other categories of land and things. This is quite accordant with the *mirāsi* villages of the British period reported by Ellis and studied by Mizushima. The same situation was noticed also in villages near Uttattūr (some 25 kilometres north of the area of the eight villages examined above) described in some 13th-century inscriptions of Uttattūr temple.²⁰ We may tentatively call this sharing system through *pangu/kāṇi* holding during the Chola and Pandyan periods "the *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system".

However, the problem is the extent of the prevalence of this *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system in the ancient and medieval Tamil country. In Jambukesvaram there remains an inscription (ARE 1937/38, 13) recording a land sale in Valavanallur, a village on the southern bank of the Kaveri river. Though the date of this inscription (24th year of Rajaraja III) is contemporary to that of the inscriptions concerning the eight villages examined above, the situation concerning landholding seems to have been quite different. According to the inscription, two brothers sold to Tiruvanaikka temple one one-hundred and sixtieth-odd *vēli* of wetland and one-twentieth-odd *vēli* of dryland, and significantly these two plots of land are described with their extent, names, and even the four boundaries of each plot. Nothing is stated to accompany these lands. We have to say, therefore, that the transferred item was nothing but the particular plots of land, though very small, identifiable as such by the villagers. Though the elder brother is described as the *kāṇiyūdaiya* of the village, the *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system does not seem to have been practised in this village. There are many more examples of this type of land transaction recorded in Chola and Pandyan inscriptions with the name, extent, and boundary of the transferred land. This casts doubt on the wide prevalence of the *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system in 13th-century Chola villages.

Before proceeding to the historical implications of the existence of the *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system, we shall consider what the relationship between *pangu/kāṇi* landholding and land management or cultivation was. This point relates to relations between landholders (*kāṇiyālar*) and cultivators. *Pangu/kāṇi* landholding, which must have aimed at the fair distribution of land-produce among landholders, entailed common landholding and common management (cultivation) of land, while individual holdings of particular fields (demarcated), which must have aimed at maximum benefit for the individual landholder, entailed

²⁰ Karashima 1984, pp. 23-24.

individual management (cultivation) of the field. Therefore, the relationship between landholders and cultivators would have been different in these two types of landholding. In between these two types, however, there seems to have been yet another type, namely, the periodical redistribution of land, in which a particular unit of land was held by a particular person, but the combination of the person and the land was to be changed periodically. Some Chola inscriptions refer to this practice.²¹

Though no information is available on the cultivation conducted in the eight Chola villages examined above, cultivation must have been done in common, since the land was held by the *kāṇi*-holders in the *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system. As the *kāṇi*-holders changed frequently in these villages, we have to assume that the cultivators were a group of people who probably lived in the village where they cultivated, forming an assembly (*ūr*) for their management of village affairs.²² They must have been the original cultivating landholders of these villages who had lost their right to landholding for some reason. In villages of periodical redistribution too, cultivation must have been carried out by people of this type, though the landholders also must have retained their unity in these villages.

However, in villages where the individual holding of land and its individual management (cultivation) were practised, as in Valavanallur examined above, the relationship between landholders and cultivators would have been different from that in *pangu/kāṇi*-type villages. In these villages the land must have been cultivated by landholders themselves with the help of wage labourers or *aḍiyārs*,²³ or otherwise rented to some tenant family for cultivation. In this way, when considered from the viewpoint of landholder/cultivator relations too, there was a significant difference between the *pangu/kāṇi*-holding type of village and the individual-holding type of village.

What we have examined above, however, is the different ways of sharing produce among landholders and relations between landholders and cultivators, and there is yet another point we need to examine. This is the ways of sharing between landholders and village servants in relation to the three different landholding types. However, if the ratio for sharing was fixed between landholders and village servants, the sharing would have

²¹ Three examples are: *ARE* 1927, 142 (Lalgudi); *SH*, i, 40 (Mamallapuram); and *Avanam*, i, 10, 1 and 3 (Tirukkonam). For land redistribution in the 18th century, see Stoke 1874.

²² They seem to have resembled the *ulkudis* described in British revenue records. See note 11 above.

²³ *Aḍiyārs* were slaves who often engaged in cultivation, being attached to some particular land. Karashima 1992, pp. 123-26.

been realised quite easily irrespective of differences in landholding type,²⁴ though we do not have any evidence on the practice for the Chola period.

Historical implications

We shall now return to the different types of landholding and discuss the historical implications of their existence. As stated earlier, the term *kāṇi* appears in inscriptions more frequently from the 11th century. I have shown previously²⁵ that the title *udaiyān* combined with a village name, which signifies possession of *kāṇi*-land in the village by that titleholder, increases also from the 11th century in the Tiruchirapalli area. These matters should be understood in the broader context of the spread of private landholding in common villages (*ūr*-type villages) in the latter half of the Chola period.

I have argued elsewhere²⁶ that owing to the distribution of wealth to villages in the lower Kaveri valley by the middle-period Chola monarchs and influenced by the creation of prebendal tenure such as *jīvitam* or *janma-kāṇi*²⁷ under their rule, the private landholding, which had been seen only in *brahmadeya* villages in the early period, began to spread to common villages too in the lower Kaveri valley in and after the 11th century. This may explain to some extent the unevenness or irregularity of distribution of the *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system in Chola villages seen above.²⁸ The emergence of village landlords seems to have brought the practice of the *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system, which had already been seen in *brahmadeya* villages, to common villages in some localities.²⁹

Further studies

The above is an examination of earlier-period inscriptions made in relation to the arguments presented by Kotani and Mizushima for ascertaining the

²⁴ According to a personal communication from T. Mizushima, in British-period villages, irrespective of their being a *mirāsi* village or not, actual sharing was easily done on each threshing floor in the village by dividing the heaped produce between landholders and village servants according to the fixed ratio that had been decided on in the locality.

²⁵ Karashima 1984, p. 57

²⁶ Karashima 1984, pp. 27-28.

²⁷ For these prebendal tenures, see Karashima and Subbarayalu 2007

²⁸ *Mirāsi* villages in the British period were also not ubiquitous. Although the same explanation cannot be applied, there were villages where no *mirāsīdār* was found in the 19th-century Tamil country. Bayley and Hudleston 1862, pp. 159, 161 and 162.

²⁹ Though I assume the prevalence of common cultivation in the *ūr*-type village, where common landholding was also prevalent, it must have been different from the common management or cultivation of land associated with the *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system, as the former was practised among landholding cultivators, while the latter was an arrangement made only among landlords, who were separated from cultivators.

pre-colonial reproduction system. As stated at the outset, the examination has been restricted to only two aspects of the issue, namely, the existence of the village-servant system and the nature of the *pangu/kāṇi* landholding. However, an examination of two further aspects may be possible and is necessary to advance the study of this subject. They are:

1) The analysis of vertical relations among people in the so-called reproduction system, namely, relations among people who had different rights to the same land, as in a landlord/tenant relationship. For this, as was briefly noted above, the examination of *brahmedeya* grants, which often specify the rights given to two-tiered people (*perār* or *uḍaiyār* and *kuḍi*) as *mīyāṭchi* and *kārāṇmai* respectively, and *devadana* grants, which often differentiate the status of *kuḍi* (occupant) into *kuḍinikki* and *kuḍinīṅā*,³⁰ is expected to cast some light on this issue. There are also some inscriptions that record conflicts between landlords and cultivators concerning payment of the tax or rent charged to the latter by the former, thus revealing their antagonistic relations.³¹ We need to analyse these inscriptions.

2) Case studies of the management or cultivation of land, namely, whether it was done in common or individually, or through periodical redistribution of land, as mentioned above. For this purpose, the examination of the divisions of village land appearing in inscriptions as *kūru*, *taḍi*, *karai*, *chadiram/chadukkam*,³² etc., is expected to help us by providing a better grasp of the practical meaning of the *pangu/kāṇi* sharing system. Further help may come from the examination of tax payment methods. The two methods of tax payment recorded in inscriptions, namely, fixed rate (*varicai*) and sharecropping (*vāram*), may be related to different forms of land management and provide us with leads on this issue.³³

If we pursue these points in future studies and if the same points are clarified for the 17th- and 18th-century Tamil country too, we will certainly be able to advance our study further by comparing the results of these two studies. Through such comparative research we may be able to define the pre-colonial reproduction system by determining which aspects of the system were susceptible to changes in state and social formation and which

³⁰ The meaning of *kuḍinikki* and *kuḍinīṅā* has not been properly understood by many scholars. So far the best study, though still inadequate, is to be found in Heitzman 1997, pp. 71-74.

³¹ Recently Y. Subbarayalu has presented some such inscriptions of the Chola period to discuss the issue. Subbarayalu 2001.

³² *Chadiram/chadukkam* (square land) defined by numbered branch channels (*kannāru*) and drainage channels (*vati*) seen in many *brahmadeyas* suggests the practice of land redistribution.

³³ References to them are found in many inscriptions, including those presented by Subbarayalu and ARE 1912, 525 (Uttattur); ARE 1913, 8 (Perambalur); ARE 1943/44, 282 (Valikandapuram), which all juxtapose these two methods of imposition.

were not. The picture of the reproduction system in the pre-colonial period may not be so static as imagined by Kotani and Mizushima. However, I shall leave further epigraphical studies of the above points for some other occasion. I hope many other scholars will join in this inquiry.

Abbreviations and References:

- ARE* = *Annual Report on (South) Indian Epigraphy*, by Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1887-
- KTSP* = *Karandai Tamil Sangam Plates of Rajendrachola I*, ed. K. G. Krishnan, New Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India, 1984
- TPLCP* = *Thirty Pallava Copper-plates*, ed. T. N. Subramaniyan, The Tamil Varalatu Kazhagam, Madras, 1966
- SII* = *South Indian Inscriptions*, by Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1890-
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