

History of Thanjavur upto 1947 C.EUnit: I

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I • Topography

Thanjavur : Location :- lies on the south-east coast of the Madras Presidency between $10^{\circ} 8'$ and $11^{\circ} 25' N$ and $78^{\circ} 47'$ and $79^{\circ} 52' E$ and contain an area of 3,259 square miles

Boundaries :- On the north the river Coleroon separates it from the Trichinopoly and South Arcot dts, on the west it is bounded by the Pudukkottai State and Trichinopoly and on the south by the Zamindar of Ramnad. The sea board consists of two portions, one extending in a long straight line directly southwards from the port of Kodiyam Palai other (itself divided into two at Adhampattam) curving thence west and south for 50 miles along the Palak Straits to the mouth of the Nanninga Cannay river.

Shape :-

The dt is roughly triangular in shape, the three sides being formed by these lines of sea-board and the Coleroon river referred to below

Taluk & Chief Town

Thanjavur is made up of 9 taluks of Tanjavu, Kumbakonam, Mayavaram, Shiyali, Nannam, Nagarpattam, Mannarkudi, Thiruthuraiipoondi and Pudukkottai. It includes within its boundaries the small French Settlement of Karaikal

The capital of the dt is the municipality of Thanjavur and the headquarter of the various taluks are at the towns ~~from~~ from which these areas are named.

Besides these, the dt contains a number of rich and important places, the chief of which are Tiruvadi, Vallam, Arjampettai in the Thanjavur taluk; Tiruvadamanku in Kumbakonam, Tiranguvar in Mayavaram, Vedaranyam and Muliyet in Thiruthuraiipoondi taluk, Tiruvadam in Nagai, Kuddavaram in Mannarkudi, and Arampattam in Pudukkottai.

Etymology of the name

The dt gets its name from its head-quarter town, but the etymology of the word is obscure.

① The original edition of ~~the~~ Tanjore gazetteer derives it from Tanjan, a raksasas or giant who according to the local legend, haunted the neighbourhood and was destroyed by the god Venkateswara. His dying request was that the city might be named after him and this was granted.

② A more probable derivation is perhaps from Tanjam, refuge which would make the name mean city of refuge.

Natural division:-

a) The delta:-

Thanjavur is made up of two clearly marked natural divisions consisting respectively of the delta of the Cauvery and of the upland tracts of the Tanjore, Mannargudi, and Pattadakottai taluks lying south and ~~west~~ west of this.

The delta which occupies rather more than half the total area of the dt, is bounded on the north by the Coleroon and east by the coast line from the mouth of that river to Point Calimere, ~~its~~ its southern limit begins at the extreme north west corner of the dt, passes through the middle of Thanjavur and Mannargudi taluks and comes down to the sea at the western end of Thiruthuraiipoondi.

It embraces the whole of Shiyali, Mayavaram, Umbhalanem, Nannilam, Nagappattinam and except a small area near Point Calimere, Thiruthuraiipoondi taluk, as well as part of Mannargudi and Tanjavur.

It is a large alluvial, even plain of paddy fields, diversified only with groves of coconuts, mangoes and other trees, which slopes gently to the sea.

The upland tract:

The rest of the dt is included in the other Katarav division. Then though more elevated than the delta, is likewise an open plain sloping towards the east, and is similarly destitute of hills except where South and South-west of Thanjavur, the country rises above the surrounding level and forms a small plateau, broken by ridges and guts and sandstones, which is known as the Vallam tableland.

Vedaranyam Salt Swamp.

Besides these two main divisions of the country, there is a tract spreading for over 30 miles from Point Calimere to Jelvampattanam which ^{deserves} special notice. Then the great Vedaranyam Salt-Swamp. It is filled by two periodical high tides, the Chittirai parvam and Varkavellam, which occur at about the full moon in May and June respectively. These floods create the well-known Vedaranyam Spontaneous Salt

Hills

There are no hills whatever in the dt and no height is anywhere recorded of over 160 feet above the sea level. The Vallam tableland is the highest portion of the country.

River:-

The Cauvery and its offshoots are the principal rivers. Rising in the Coorg mountains, this river bifurcates about 9 miles west of Michinopoly into two branches, of which the northern takes the name of Coleroon and the southern retains that of the Cauvery.

About 17 miles below this point the two rivers nearly re-union and thereafter the Coleroon takes a north-easterly direction, striking the district along

along its entire northern boundary, and entering the sea ~~at~~
at its extreme north-easterly direction, comes with the volume
of water but little diminished.

The Cauvery, however, flows to the south,
splits up into numerous branches, and covers the whole of the
delta with a vast network of irrigation channels; One
of these, which retains the name of the Cauvery throughout,
debouches into the sea at Kaveripattinam. The other
surplus water of the delta enters the sea by several of its
branch rivers, all of which are more or less affected by
the tides.

Sea ports: There are eleven ports on the coast of the
Tanjore dt., of which eight are open to foreign trade.
These latter (going from north to south) are Pimulivayal,
Tranganam, Nagai, Velanganni, Toppattinai, Point Calimere,
Muthpet, and Adampattinam; Kodiyampalayam (near the
mouth of the Coleroon), Kattumavedu on the Palakkotan
coast, and Nagore near Nagai.

Soils: Four main classes of soil are found in the dt.,
namely, the alluvial series, the red ferruginous,
the arenaceous and the regar or black series.

Of these the regar preponderates,
occupying 45% of the total area. The alluvial series
covers only 27% while the red ferruginous and
arenaceous series make up the remaining 28%, the
former occupying 21% and the latter 7% of the total
area.

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II Thanjavar Early History of Thanjavar

Thanjavar is an important centre of South Indian religion, art and architecture.

It is the headquarters of Thanjavar district.

Most of the great Chola Temples which are UNESCO Heritage Monuments are located in and around Thanjavar. The foremost among these, the Brahmeswara Temple is located in the centre of the city. Thanjavar is also the home of Tanjore painting a painting style unique to the region.

Thanjavar is an important agriculture centre located in the Cauvery Delta as is known as "the Rice Bowl of Tamilnadu".

The city became prominent during the reign of Imperial Cholas, when it served as a capital of Chola Empire.

After the fall of Cholas, Thanjavur was ruled by various dynasties like Pandya, Vijaya Nagar Emperors, Madurai Nayaks, Tanjore Nayaks, Thanjavur Marathas and the British. It had been a part of Independent India since 1947.

History of Thanjavur

There are no references to Thanjavur in the Sangam period Tamil records, though some scholars believe that the city has existed since that time.

Kovilveeran situated 15 miles to the east of Thanjavur, was the site of the great Battle of Venni between Karikal Chola and a confederacy of the Chera and the Pandya.

The Sangam Cholas seemed to have faced the invasion of the Kalabhas in the 3rd century A.D. after which the kingdom faded into obscurity.

The region around present day Thanjavur was conquered by Mularaiyars during 7th Century and ruled upto 850 AD.

The Cholas came to prominence. Vijayalaya Chola the founder of Imperial Cholas [Later Cholas] conquered Thanjavur from Mularaiyars King Elango Mularaiyasa in 850 and built a temple dedicated to goddess Nisumbasudani.

His son Aditya Chola consolidated the hold over the city.

Gradually Thanjavur became the most important city in the Chola Empire and remained its capital till the emergence of Gangaikonda Cholapuram in 1025 AD.

Rajaraja the Great constructed Brahadiswara temple at Thanjavur. It is considered as the best specimen of Dravidian architecture.

When the Chola Empire began to decline in the 13th century the Pandyas invaded and captured Thanjavur twice.

In 1218-19 and 1230 respectively. During the second invasion the Chola king Rajaraja III [1216-1256] fled from Thanjavur and sought help of the Hoysala king Vira Narayana II to regain Thanjavur.

Thanjavur was annexed with Pandyan Empire by ~~Chola~~ by Maravarma Kulasekhara Pandya in 1279 and the Chola kings were forced to accept the suzerainty of the Pandyas.

The Pandyas ruled Thanjavur from 1279 to 1311 when the kingdom was raided by the forces of Malik Kafur (1296-1306) and later annexed by the Delhi Sultanate.

The Sultanate extended its authority directly over the conquered region from 1311 to 1335 and then through the semi-independent Madhar Sultanate [1335-1348]

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Tanjavar is believed to have been
conquered by Kumara Kampana Udaya
during the invasion of Srirangan between 1365
and 1371.

Devaraya's Inscription dated 1443
Tumala's inscription dated 1455 and
Achuta Devaraya's land grants dated 1532
and 1539 attest Vijayanagar dominion
over Tanjavur.

Sevvappa Nayak [1532-80]
the viceroy of Vijayanagar Emperor established
himself as an independent monarch in 1532 and
founded Tanjavur Nayak Kingdom. Achutappa
Nayak, Raghubatha Nayak and Vijayaraghava
Nayak were some of the important rulers of
Nayak dynasty ruled Tanjavur. Tanjavur
Nayaks were notable for their patronage of
of literature and arts.

The rule of Tanjavur Nayaks
came to end when Tanjavur fell to the
Madurai Nayak King Chobikaratha Nayak in
1678.

Vijayaraghava Nayak was killed in the battle and Alagiri Nayak brother of Chokkeraha Nayak was crowned as the ruler of Thanjavur.

Thanjavur was successfully conquered by Ekoji the Maratha feudatory of the Bijapur Sultan and half brother of Shivaji the Bhonsle dynasty. Ekoji [Venkoji] founded the Thanjavur Maratha Kingdom which ruled Thanjavur till 1855 A.D.

The Ambar Singh the regent of Minor King Serfoji II of Thanjavur, deposed the minor king and captured the throne [1787-1793]. Serfoji II was restored in 1799 with the assistance of the British, who induced him to relinquish the administration of the kingdom and left him in charge of Thanjavur fort and surrounding areas.

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The Kingdom was eventually absorbed into British Empire in 1855 by the Doctrine of Lapse, when Shivaji II (1832-1855) the last Maratha ruler of Thanjavur died without a male heir.

The British referred to the city as "Tanjore" in their records.

Under the British, Thanjavur emerged as an important regional centre. In 1871 India Census recorded the population of 52,171 making Thanjavur the third largest city in the Madras Presidency.

After Independent India, Thanjavur continued as the district headquarters.

III Vallam

It is located 7 miles southwest of Thanjavur. It contains the office of a deputy Tashildar, and Sub-registrar office, a police station, a dispensary, a small taluk board chattr and the residence of collector.

The place was once fortified and is described by Fortman Mill as a fortress of considerable strength and one of the great bulwarks of Tanjore.

The Vallam was given by the Nayaks of Madurai [Vallumalai Nayak] to the Tanjore Nayak [

in exchange for Trichopoly in 1560 AD.

It was captured by the Bijapur troops from Gingee Nayak in 1660, on which occasion, the

Tanjore Nayak had stored his treasures in it.

It was seized and garrisoned ~~by~~ for a short time by Chokkanatha Nayak of Madurai in 1664.

The fort was taken by the English in 1771 when marching towards Tanjore to coerce the Raja.

The collector has long lived in the town. The precise date of his first residence there is little obscure.

As early as 1828, we find ~~him~~ collector office at Vallam and in 1843 the Board allowed him to draw extra centage for 60 days in the year for his stay there.

It is probable that he resided chiefly at or near Tanjore after his appointment as Resident to the Raja in 1842.

In 1860 his headquarters were formally transferred to Tanjore and it is probable that shortly after this he began to reside permanently at Vallam.

2

Since the District Judge who now occupied the Residency ~~off~~ at Tanjore was transferred thither in 1863

The collector house is a very fine building was burnt down about 1870, and the present bungalow dates from 1871.

Little is left of the old fort ~~except~~ except the moat and a portion of the wall on the north-eastern corner.

The fort was oval in shape, its length (from north to south) being about 780 yards and its breadth about 520 yards.

There are two tombs of English officers in the cemetery, both buried in 1773 and two other tombs the inscription on which are only partially legible.

A Frenchman was buried in the Roman Catholic cemetery.

There is a remarkable tank inside the fort the Vajra Tank is held very sacred by Hindus. It is said to have been excavated in penance by Indra after he seduced the Sage Gautama's wife. People have bathed there on Sunday in the month of Kartika and on a certain day (Makar) in Marj. When there is a festival at Kumbhakorn water is believed to flow from the Ganges into this pool.

The Siva temple is old and contains a number of inscriptions.

Vallam Stones.

Near Vallam are found certain quartz products which are known as Vallam Stones.

The principal varieties are the pellucid or rock crystal,

3.

The dark brown or a smoky quartz,
the yellow or Cairngorm and amethyst.

These are cut by lapidaries at
Tanjore into a variety of ornamental and
useful articles.

The white varieties are made
into spectacles which sell throughout the
State. Amber, green, rose coloured and
yellow stones are used for rings and
buttons and are often set in the ornaments
worn by lower classes.

A fine crystal of amethyst
was presented to the Museum of the
Geological Survey of India by the former
collector Mr. Cadell.

Laterite is largely used for
building purposes and for metalling roads.
It is chiefly found at Vallam and Gardavakkotta.

Besides laterite, ~~stone~~ Sandstones are
found near Vallam and Thanjavur.

Kankar or limestone is found
in large quantities both among crystalline and
sedimentary rocks.

IV Kovil Vanni

Kovilvanni is a town near Needamangalam 15 miles east of Thanjavur.

Kovilvanni was under the Chola Kingdom during the ancient period.

Battle of Vanni :-

The ^{great} Battle of Vanni is ~~a~~ battle fought by Karikala the early Sangam Chola dynasty with the Confederacy of Chera, Pandya and 11 Velir Kings.

The battle resulted in absolute Victory for Karikala.

This battle ~~was~~ is referred by many Sangam poems by different authors. In this battle, Karikal fought the Chera King who was supported by the Pandya King and 11 Velirs. Velir Kings lost their drums in the battlefield, the Pandya and Chera Kings lost their glory.

In this battle the Chera King Perum cheral
Adan sustained a wound on his back
and from a sense of profound shame,
he sat facing north, sword in hand and
starved to death.

Venni battle thus marked
a turning point in the career of Varaha.
This victory meant the breaking up of a
widespread confederacy that had been formed
against him.

V Puhar or Kaveripoompattinam.

It was called various names from ancient times.

Champathy and Kakandi as cited in Manimekalai, Cholappattinam, Kaveripattinam, Poomputal, Kaveri Poompattinam, Puhar etc.

It is the same as Camara of the Periplus and Kharberis of Ptolemy.

Puhar in Tamil means the estuary i.e. the place where Cauvery river enter into Bay of Bengal

Ancient Sangam literature such as Athanaruru, Purananuru and Pattinappalai and Tamil epic Silappathikaram and Manimekalai give details about the celebrated town Kaveripoompattinam.

It was once a flourishing international port city and served as the Capital of the early chola kings.

The earliest reference to Kaveripoompattinam is noted in a Prakrit inscription of 2nd century B.C., found in Bharhut Stupa in the Satnaga district of Madhya Pradesh.

The Bharhut stupa is believed to have been first built by Mauryan Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century B.C.

The inscription refers to the gift of a stone slab for an enclosure of a stupa by a Buddhist nun called Soma. Soma hailed from the city Kakandi. Kakandi according to Manimekalai was one of the names of Kaveripoompattinam.

The gift of a slab by the Buddhist nun Soma of Kakandi as early as 2nd century B.C. shows that Kaveripoompattinam was a flourishing town and it served as an important Buddhist centre till 8th century A.D.

2.

Buddhism spread to South India during Emperor Ashoka's reign. His son Mahendra lead a group of Buddhist monks to Sri Lanka in 250BC to spread Buddhism.

Mahendra seems to have travelled by sea and on his way he stayed temporarily in Kaveripoompattinam.

It is evident that seven Buddhist Viharas were erected at Kaveripoompattinam by about 400 A.D.

Manimekalai refers Indira Vihara Ezhai which means Seven Viharas built by Indira. The Tamil Sangam works and Silappathikaram attribute to Indira. Buddhists claim the name Indira could be the contraction of Mahendra.

Buddhadatta Thera a 5th century Theravada Buddhist scholar is said to have written most of his works in Kaveripoompattinam at the instance of the Buddhist Acharya Sumati Buddhasika and Sanghapala. Buddhadatta's patron was Chola king Khabha Acuta Vikranta

The Prakrit text Abhidhanna Vatara and Buddha Vamasatta Katha written at Kaverippattinam by about 400 ~~A.D.~~ A.D. attest to the flourishing nature of the port town.

Milindapana and Buddha Jataka also provide evidence for the prospering Chola port. According to Buddha Jataka one Akithi is said to have been loved in a garden near Kaveripoompattinam.

City layout :-

The general plan of the city of Puhar is described in the 5th book of Silappathikaram.

The town was built up on the northern bank of river Kaveri.

The town had two broad divisions -

- i. Maruvurpaklam
- ii. Pappinappaklam.

Maruvurpaklam was near the sea shore and Pappinappaklam was to its west.

These two divisions were separated by a stretch of gardens and orchards where markets were held under the Shaddy trees.

The daymarket was known as Nalangadi and night market was named as Allangadi.

Pakkam means a place adjacent to the seashore.

Greeks (Yavanas) and other foreign merchants resided in the outskirts of Maruvu Pakkam and carried their business.

The King's palace was located in Pattinappakkam and King's street (Rajaveedu) was the main highway here.

In the centre of the area, there was a temple dedicated to Chathukula Boodhan, the guardian deity of the city.

Vellidai Mandham is the square with open space was used as warehouse. Stored with packages showing the names symbols and the nature of merchandise contained in them and the name of the owners.

Ellanchi Mandram, Nedungal Mandram and Paavai Mandham - important places.

The great port city was the emporia of foreign trade. Big ships entered the Port of Puhar and poured out on the beach, precious merchandise brought from Overseas.

The extensive bazaar of that great city was full of tall mansions of many apartments. ~~each~~ The family life of the rich merchants was carried on in the upper floors while the lower ones were set apart for ~~but~~ business.

Besides the flags waving on the masts of ships in harbour, ~~various~~ various other kinds of flags advertised the different kinds of merchandise.

Around 24 BC the ships from Tamralipati (West Bengal) Puhar (Orissa) anchored in the celebrated Kaveripoompattin ^{an} port before they sailed to Greece, Rome, Arabia and other Asian ports.

Indira Vincha:

Thoongeyil Erinda Toditot
Sembiran - Sangam Chola King was instrumental
in celebrating the Indira Vincha in Kaveripattinam.

Indira Vincha was very popular
festival in ancient Tamil Nadu according to
Tamil epics Silappathikaram & Manimekhalai.
Manimekhalai is a goddess regarded
as a guardian of the Seas.

If the Indira Vincha is not celebrated
by goddess Manimekhalai would mark and the town
Kaveripoompattinam would be swallowed by the Sea.

According to Manimekhalai, the Chola King
had lost his son. In a grip of grief, the
Chola King forgot to celebrate the Indira Vincha.
Hence Kaveripoompattinam was swallowed up
by the sea (destroyed by Kadalkol -
Swallowed by Sea).

Literary works and archaeolo-
- gical evidence suggest that repeated
Tsunami, Sea ~~er~~ incursion, erosion and
floods in Kaveripoompattinam, the sea

Submerged the original city and at present
there is only a small village. Tirusarkadu
or Soyavaram, Pallavanisvaram, Melaperum
- m pallam, Keelaperumpallam, Keelaignu and
Vanagiri are the remains of an ancient Poompuh
that exist today.

VI The Sangam Cholas / The early Cholas.

The Cholas are the first time mentioned in the Asokan inscriptions and they are independent southern neighbours of that emperor's dominions. The Cholas considered themselves a Solar origin.

Among the earliest Cholas Tungeyil, Erinda, Toduthot Sembian, Kakandan, Kaveran, Sibi, Chakravathy, Manu^{kanda} Nithi Cholan, Karrai Adal Kondan [the Cholas who conquered the wind], Samudrajit [the Conqueror of Seas] are clearly mythical.

Sibi and Manu^{kanda} Nithi Cholan - elaborate reference in the opening canto to the Periyapuramam.

Achievements of Karikala

Uruvappahar Thamsel Chenni was the first significant ruler of Sangam Cholas. He was noted for his many 'beautiful ~~and~~ chariots'. He was a brave and hard fighter.

Karikalan was the son of Uruvappahar Namset Chenni. He was the most distinguished among the Sangam Cholas.

Karikalan means "the man with the charred leg" - its Sanskrit meaning either death to Kali or "death to enemy elephants".

Early in his life, he was deposed and imprisoned; the plucky way in which he escaped and re-established himself ~~on~~ the throne is well portrayed by the author of Pattinapalai, a long poem on the Chola capital Kaveripattinam in the Pattuppattu (Ten Idyls)

Battle of Venni: [190 A.D.]

One of the earliest achievements was the victory in a great battle at Venni, modern Kollvanni, 15 miles to the east of Thanjavur. This battle is referred to in many poems by different authors

A confederacy was formed by chera king Perun cheral Adan with Pandya king and 11 Velir kings against Karikala.

Karikala fought the chera king Perun cheral Adan who was supported by Pandya King and eleven Velir kings. Velir kings lost their drums in the battle field, the Pandyas and Cheras lost their glory.

In this battle chera king Perun Cheral Adan sustained a wound on his back and from a sense of profound shame, he sat facing north, sword in hand, and starved to death.

Venni battle thus marked a turning point in the career of Karikala.

This victory breaking up of the widespread confederacy that had been formed against him.

Battle of Vahai parandalai :-

Another important battle Karikala was fought at Vahai parandalai - the field of Vahai trees where nine minor enemy chieftains lost their umbrellas and surrendered.

As a result of his victorious campaigns, says the poet of Pattinappalai, the Oliyars in the South and Aravalar in the north submitted to him, the Northerners lost splendour and Westerners were depressed and the family of Trungovil was reuprooted.

Conquest of Ceylon :-

Karikalan had a powerful navy which he used to conquer Ceylon and having established his rule and reputation there.

3.

He brought from there a large number of prisoners of War whom he used for the beneficial purpose of building a durable embankment for the till then unruly river Kaveri.

Thus he tamed Kaveri and brought stable and orderly prosperity to the delta region.

He made Puhar i.e. Kaveripoompatinam an important international port and an alternative capital of the Chola Kingdom.

He cleared the forest in the north, and brought Tondaimandalam under Chola rule.

The Silappatikaram ascribe to him some more exploits like his successful expedition to the Himalayas and levying tribute from the princes of the north.

The poet Rudrakanna [Kadiyapur Rudran
Kanna] praised ~~him~~ Karikala in the famous
Pattinappabi and the patron [Karikala] gave
16,00,000 gold coins to the poet.

The famous Tamil Scholar Naccinar
Kiniyar says that Karikala married a Velir
girl from Nangur.

Karikala was also called
Tumavalaivan.

VII Mutharaiyar

In the 7th and 8th centuries, Mutharaiyars as chieftains under the Pallavas, controlled the fertile plains of the Cauvery river.

An inscription in the Vaikunda Perumal temple in Kanchipuram tells of a Mutharaiyar king. According to a mutilated inscription found in the Vaikunda Perumal Temple at Kanchi, Suvaran Maran alias Perumpridung Mutharaiyar II is that Mutharaiyar who came to receive Nandi Varma Pallava Malla. This Suvaranmaran is styled himself as Kalavan Kalvan the robber of the robbers. The word Kalavan (Tamil) perhaps became Kalabhra in Sanskrit.

T. A. Gopinatha Rao thinks that Kalabhra might be identified with Mutharaiyar.

Further it is supposed that Mutharaiyar were the people whom

Kadungon the ruler restored the Pandya Kingdom in Madurai in 600 AD. Conquered.

This is deemed to add more weight above the argument of Gopinatha Rao to prove identification of Kalahsthan as Muttaraiyar.

According to historian Mahalingam, Sivarasa Maran along with Udayachandra the army chief of the Pallava king Nandivarman II fought at least 12 battles against the Cheras and Pandya.

The inscription mentions that Thanjavur and Vallam were under his control.

The Northamalai inscription states that Paligiti Siriya Nargal, the daughter of Chandan Paligitiyanavan, the son of Vidulvide - ten Muttaraiyar married Maller Ananthan a fisherman from Tamaladu. Thus it seems that the fisherman Tennavan and Muttaraiyar ruled Pudukkottai areas at the same time.

2
The Kudumiyamalai ^{Temple} Inscription refers to the name Satru Bhayangara Mukharayar.

The Senthalai [Chandrasekhar Chattervedi Mangalam] Inscription states about Kavaran Maran Perumpiduku Mukharayar, grandson of Kavaran Maran Perumpiduku Mukharayar and son of Maran Parameswaran Ilangovali Anayan.

Mukharayar King.

- i. Dharmajaya Mukharayar
- ii. Guavan Maran 655 - 880 AD.
[Perumpiduku Mukharayar]
- iii. Maran Parameswaran 680 - 705 AD.
[Ilangovali raiyar]
- iv. Wall Maran 705 - 745 AD.
(2nd Great Mukharayar)
- v. Videlviduk Satan Maran 745 - 770 AD.
- vi. Paradiarayan of Marpiduku 770 - 791 AD.
- vii. Satan the Great [791 - 826] AD
- viii. Chandan Paliyali 826 - 851 AD

When the Cholas came back to power in ~~851~~⁸⁵¹ A.D., Vijayabaya Chola captured Thanjavur from Muttarayas.

Many Temples were built during the reign of the Muttarayas. Some of them are

i. Vijayalaya Cholavarani Temple.

ii. Thirumayam Salyamurti Perumal Temple

iii. Malayadipatti Vakisvaramudayar Temple.

iv. Lower Thanjavur Uthamachandraswami Temple

The Pudukkottai inscription states that the Pandyan had names like Muttaraya, Maran, Meenavan and Tennavan.

The flag symbol of the Muttarayas is found in the Senthelai inscription as Kayal.

7 Later Cholas OR Imperial Cholas

Political History

Unlike other dynasties of Tamilnadu, the Cholas had the lengthiest reign. Chola history can be divided into three major divisions, based on the capitals they used for administration. The early imperial Cholas (A.D. 850 - A.D. 1014) like Rajaraja I ruled the country with Tanjore as capital. They are called Cholas of Tanjore in history. Rajendra I succeeded Rajaraja I and ruled the empire from Gangaikonda - Cholapuram, the newly built capital. He and his successors were called as Gangaikonda Cholapuram Cholas. As there was no direct successor to the Chola throne after Adhirajendra, Kulottunga I was adopted from their closely related Chalukya territory, to rule the empire. Kulottunga I and his successors ruled Tamilnadu till its decline with the title Chalukya Cholas.

i. Cholas of Tanjore (A.D. 850 - 1014 A.D)

Vijayalaya

Vijayalaya founded the Imperial Chola dynasty. He was the son Kumarangusan, a feudatory of the Pallava monarch. The Chola inscriptions found in Ambil, Tiruvalangadu, Cape-Comorin and Anerimangalam plates and the literary evidences like the "Ulas" of Ottakkuthar, and "Kalingathupparani" of Jeyamkondar confirmed that Vijayalaya was a descendant of the Cholas of the Sangam Age. He conquered Tanjore region from the Muttarayar with the assistance of the Pallavas and ruled it with Tanjore as capital. To commemorate his success, he constructed a temple at Tanjore for the war goddess Nishambasudani (Durga). Vijayalaya was alive, when the Sripurambiyam battle took place near Kumbakonam in the Tanjore District. As he was old, he did not take part in the battle and his place was taken by his son Aditya. Certain villages in Tanjore region like Vijayalaya Chaturvedimangalam and Vijayalayanallur were known by his name. The Vijayalaya-Chekesvaram temple was also erected during his administration.

Aditya I (A.D. 881 - 907 A.D.)

Aditya I was the son and successor of Vijayalaya. He was an ambitious and diplomatic ruler. As a remarkable warrior, Aditya I participated in the Sripurambiyam battle in support of the Pallava ruler Aparajita. The Pallava ruler emerged victorious in the battle. Aparajita was inefficient and inactive. Utilising this opportunity, Aditya defeated Aparajita in 890 A.D. and annexed Tondaimandalam from him.

The Chola ruler Aditya was diplomatic. He captured Kongudesam and western Ganga territory, with the support of the Chera ruler, Stham Ravi. Again to strengthen his relations with the Chera King, Aditya's son Parantaka I married one of his daughters. Aditya maintained cordial relations with Rashtrakutas and Pallavas also through matrimonial alliances. He married Illango Pitchy, the daughter of the Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna II and Tribhuvanamadevi, the Pallavas princess. These marriage relations enabled him to consolidate his position. The Ganga ruler Prithivipati II had acknowledged the suzerainty of the Chola ruler. After the consolidation of the empire, Aditya introduced administrative measures to maintain law and order in the state.

Aditya I was a devotee of Siva. He constructed several stone temples for Lord Siva to spread Saivism. Among them the Adityaesvara temple at Sripurambiyam and Tiruverumbur temples were important. Aditya died in 907 A.D. near Kalahast in the Chitor district. To his memory, Parantaka I, erected the Kothandarameswara temple at the place of his burial.

Parantaka I (907 - 953 A.D.)

Parantaka I succeeded Aditya I. He ascended the throne of Cholamandalam with the title Parakesari. He was the first great ruler of the Chola dynasty. He ruled for 48 years and established a vast Kingdom by conquering the neighbouring states.

Chola - Pandya conflict

With a view to extend the Kingdom, Parantaka I invaded the Pandya country and defeated its ruler, Maravarman Rajasimha II. The Pandya ruler sought the help of the Ceylonese ruler, Kasyapa V to fight against Parantaka. As a talented warrior, Parantaka I defeated the combined forces of Ceylon and Pandya in the battle at Vellore in 915 A.D. and extended the empire upto Kanyakumari in the

south. In this battle, two feudatories from Kodumbalur and Kilapaluvur rendered assistance to Parantaka I. In return, the son of Parantaka I married Kodumbalur Princess, Budhi Adichecha Pidari. Two controversial views existed with regard to this battle. The Ceylonese Mahavamsa says that the Ceylonese general died in the battle and Ceylonese troops withdrew from the battle field due to plague. But the Chola inscription mentioned the complete defeat of the combined forces of Pandyas and Ceylon King. The defeated Rajasimha II fled to Ceylon, where he left his royal ornaments in the court of the King of Ceylon. So Parantaka I could not possess the royal ornaments and hence according to the custom of the day, his victory was not complete. These royal ornaments were later recovered from Ceylon only by Rajendra Chola, son of Rajaraja I. To commemorate his victory over Pandyas and Ceylon, Parantaka I assumed the titles, "Maduraikonda" and "Maduraium Illamumkonda".

Chola Rashtrakuta Conflict

The Chola-Rashtrakuta conflict reached its peak during the reign of Parantaka I. The reason for this conflict was purely domestic. Kannadeva was the half-brother of Parantaka I. He was the grandson of Krishna II, the Rashtrakuta ruler, by his daughter Illango-pichi, the second wife of Aditya I. Krishna II wished to instal his grandson Kannadeva on the Chola throne instead of Parantaka I. When he failed in this attempt, he declared war with the Chola country in 910 A.D. with the support of two chieftains, Bana and Vaidumba. In this battle, Parantaka I defeated Krishna II with the timely help of the Ganga ruler, Pritivipati II. He also punished the Banas and Vaidumbas for giving support to the Rashtrakuta ruler, Krishna II.

But the battle was not the end of the conflict. On the death of Pritivipati II, Butuka II became the ruler of Ganga. Because of his marriage with Rashtrakuta Princess, the alliance between the Gangas and Rashtrakutas became closer while the link between the Gangas and Cholas became closer while the link between the Gangas and Cholas became extinct. The frustrated Banas and Vaidumbas were also waiting for a chance to help any one who might oppose Parantaka I. When Krishna III ascended the Rashtrakuta throne, the struggle with the Cholas continued. He was energetic but very ambitious. Krishna III wanted to punish the Chola king Parantaka I, since the

latter had helped Govinda IV, the son-in-law of Parantaka against Krishna III's father Amogavarsha in the civil strife of the Rashtrakutas. Realising the danger to the northern borders of his kingdom, Parantaka I took precautionary measures to protect his country. Two strategic places, Tirunavalur and Mudiyr were selected and equipped with a strong elephantry, cavalry and infantry under the command of Rajaditya and Arinjaya, the two sons of Parantaka I.

Krishna III attacked the Chola kingdom with the support of the Banas, the Vaidumbas and Butuka II, the Ganga ruler at Takkolam in 949 A.D., six miles to the south east of Arakonam. It was a decisive battle. Krishna III captured Kanchi and Tanjore. Butuka II, the Ganga ruler killed Rajaditya with a well-aimed arrow, when he was on an elephant. The loss of Rajaditya decided the fate of the battle and Krishna III occupied a large portion of the Chola empire. The death of his eldest son was a great loss to Parantaka I. No doubt, the Cholas received a set back the hands of the Rashtrakutas. Though the capital was ruined, the Chola empire escaped from complete devastation.

Like his father, Parantaka I was a devotee of Siva. The famous Hindu saint Manikkavasagar was his contemporary. He built many Siva temples and covered the roof of the Nadaraja temple at Chidambaram with gold plates and earned the title "Ponveynda Paranthakan". He also constructed temples at Tiruvidaimarudur, Tiruvaduthruai and Tiruchandurai in Tanjore district. His encouragement of Hindu religion led to the consolidation of Brahmin influence in Tamilnadu. The Uttaramerur inscriptions of Parantaka I dated 919 A.D. and 921 A.D. highlighted the working of the autonomous village assemblies in the Chola Kingdom. The famous viranam irrigation tank and the town of Kattumannarkudi were excavated and constructed during the time of Parantaka I. The Chola Kingdom suffered an eclipse after Parantaka I.

The Interval from 955 A.D. to 985 A.D.

The death of Parantaka in 955 A.D. created confusion in the country. It continued till the ascendancy of Rajaraja I in 985 A.D. During the interval of 30 years, the country suffered due to palace intrigues and weak administration.

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Gandaraditya

Gandaraditya was the second son of Parantaka I. His administration was noted for the development of religious activities. Sembian Mahadevi, the wife of Gandaraditya was also deeply involved in religion. She had a long life and lived upto the time of Rajaraja I. The religion oriented administration led to the growth of Saivism in Tamil Nadu.

Arinjaya

Arinjaya was the younger brother of Gandaradityan. He had a short reign of about a year. He married an Eastern Chalukya Princess. He died at Arrur. Rajaraja I erected a Siva temple at Melpadi in memory of Arinjaya and named it Arinjayesvaram.

Parantaka II (957 A.D. - 970 A.D.)

Parantaka II was the son of Arinjaya. He was admired as Sundra Chola, due to his handsome personal appearance, Pandyas were his enemies. Vanavan Mahadevi was his wife. Aditya II and Rajaraja I were his sons and Arumoli was his only daughter. Aditya II, the elder son of Parantaka was murdered by his enemies. The death of his son shortened the life of Parantaka II. He died at Kanchi in his golden palace.

Uttama Chola (970 A.D. - 985 A.D.)

Uttama Chola was the son of Gandaraditya I. He was the bad son of a good father and ruled for 15 years. His coins were the earliest of Cholas. The Madras Museum plates revealed his administrative history. His rule ended in 985 A.D. After Uttama Chola, Rajaraja I, the son of Parantaka II ascended the throne of the Chola Kingdom.

Rajaraja I (985 A.D. - 1014 A.D.)

Rajaraja I, was the most powerful ruler of the Chola empire. He was the second son of Parantaka II. His mother was Vanavan Mahadevi a Chera Princess. Thiruvallangadu plates described the joyous occasion of his birth. Conquest and consolation were his policies. This policy induced Rajaraja to concentrate more on wars both in land and in sea. The thirty years of his rule laid the foundation of Chola imperialism in South India. His glory and bravery in war, his tactics in diplomacy, skill in administration, great interest in architecture and art showed that he was a many sided personality.

Conquests of South

The first great conquest of Rajaraja was his invasion of the Chera country. It was a naval battle. The ill-treatment and imprisonment of Chola envoy by the Chera ruler was the immediate provocation for this invasion. In this battle, he defeated and destroyed the Chera fleet at Kandalur Salai near Trivandrum. Gopinatha Rao equated Kandalur Salai with Valiyasalai in Tirivandrum.

The Chola navy defeated the Ceylonese ruler Mahindra V and destroyed Annuradapura his capital, constructed 1000 years ago. The defeated Mahindra V fled to the south eastern part of the island. Rajaraja annexed the northern part of Ceylon and converted it into a Chola province with Polonnaruwa as its capital.

Northern Expeditions

After completing the southern conquests, Rajaraja I turned his attention to the north. He attacked and annexed provinces like Gangapadi, Nolambapadi and Todigaipadi in the southern Mysore region. The frequent interference of the Western Chalukyas in the border provinces of the Cholas caused unrest. The Cholas disliked the attitude of the Chalukyas and decided to punish them. Conquest of Maladevi was the last expedition of Rajaraja I. It consisted of 12,000 islands.

II) Cholas of Gangai Konda Cholapuram

Rajendra I (1012 A.D -1044 AD)

Rajendra who succeeded Rajaraja adopted the same policy of his father in administration and conquest. It is said that, Rajaraja's great and solid work was the rock upon which his son built and achieved unique success. He was the worthy son of the worthy father. He ruled for about 33 years.

Consolidation of the South

The conquest of Ceylon was his first achievement. He prepared a fine navy for this purpose. His mission was a thorough success and he defeated the Sinhalese ruler, Mahindra V and annexed the whole of Ceylon. Mahindra V was captured and brought to Tamil Nadu as a captive and he died after 12 years of imprisonment. Rajendra constructed many Siva and Vishnu temples in Ceylon. The conquest of Pandya kingdom was his next target. With a view to conquer Pandya kingdom, the powerful Chola army attacked it. The defeated Pandyan king fled to Malaya mountain for refuge. Then Rajendra I installed his son as Viceroy of the Pandyan country. After his victory, Rajendra assumed the title "Jeyamkonda Chola" During his Chalukya expedition, the Kalinga ruler supported Jayasimha I against the Cholas.

Conquest of North

After the southern conquest was over, the Chola army marched to Ganges through Kalinga. At this expedition Rajendra I entrusted the charge of the army in the hands of his general Dandanatha. The Chola's important achievement of the Chola army was that it defeated Mahipala I, the Pala king of Bengal. Rajendra I erected a 'liquid pillar of victory' in his capital with the waters of Ganges after this war. He also assumed the title

Gangaikondan, and constructed a new capital Gangaikonda Cholapuram to commemorate this success

Over sea expedition

In 1025 A.D. Rajendra sent a naval expedition to Kadaram and Srivijaya. Srivijaya was a Kingdom in Sumatra. The King of Srivijaya was defeated and the kingdom of Srivijaya and Kadaram were brought under the control of the Cholas. Sangrama Vijayagottungavarman, the ruler of Kadaram acknowledged the overlordship of the Cholas. So he was restored to his kingdom.

Suppression of rebellions

The last days of Rajendra witnessed rebellions in Pandya, Chera, Ceylon and Chalukya territories. Rajendra put down these revolts with the assistance of his son Rajadhiraja I. Rajadhiraja I undertook a campaign against Somesvara I, the Western Chalukya ruler. He adopted barbarous methods to win the battle and caused untold miseries to the people. He assumed titles like Mudikonda Gangaikonda Kadaram Konda and Pandita Chola.

Chalukya Cholas

Kulottunga I (1070 A.D. -1120 A.D)

Kulottunga I was the first ruler of the Chalukya Chola line. His father was Rajaraja I, the Chalukya ruler. To distinguish him from Rajaraja I, the Great, he was called Rajaraja I, the Narrendra. Ammangadevi, the daughter of Rajendra I was his mother.

Condition of the Chola Kingdom in the absence of a ruler

Kulottunga I was anointed on 9 June A.D. 1070)

War with Western Chalukya

The first enemy to be dealt with was the Western Chalukya ruler, Vikramaditya VI. In an encounter Kulottunga I defeated the armies of Vikramaditya in 1076 A.D. at Kollar. The defeated Vikramaditya returned to Tungabhadra.

War with Pandyas

The kingdom was divided into five divisions and were administered by different persons. Realising the importance of consolidating his position in the Pandyan kingdom, Kulottunga I sent an army against it in 1081 A.D. The army defeated the rulers and annexed it to the Chola empire.

War with Chera Kingdom

The Chera army defeated the Chera fleet twice and captured Salai. The Chera army was defeated again at Kottar., near Nagercoil and Vizhijam. Kottar was set on fire. The defeated Chera ruler accepted to pay tribute to Kulottunga I. In 1088 A.D. Kulottunga made truce with Vijayabhaya and gave his daughter Sutamalliyar in marriage to the Ceylon prince Viraperumal.

War with Kalinga

The refusal of Anandavaraman, the northern Kalinga ruler, to pay the tributes was the main reason for the battle. Karunakarathondaiman led the Chola army in this battle. The Chola army started from Kanchi and reached Kalinga after crossing Palar, Pennar and Godavari. Annadavarman ordered his army to fight the Cholas. Both sides fought bravely. The crucial battle in 1112 A. D. determined the fate of Kalingas.

Foreign Connections

The Chola empire under Kulottunga maintained extensive foreign connections in India and outside. However, he maintained cordial relations with the ruler of Kadaram. In 1090 A.D. the ruler of Kadaram sent an emissary to the Chola Court. It demanded to abolish the land tax to a place, donated to the construction of Buddhist monastery at Nagapatnam. Foreign trade flourished during this period. The ruler of Srivijaya sent an emissary to the Chola Kingdom for trade agreements. In 1077 A.D. Kulottunga I also sent an emissary of seventy – two men to China. The religious minded Kulottunga worshipped Siva. He constructed temples for the development of Saivism. He also tolerated other religions.

Central Administration

The kingship was hereditary in nature. Generally, the ruler selected his elder son as heir apparent. The heir apparent was known as Yugaraja. The kings toured the country frequently to understand the requirements of his subjects. Royal camps were fixed in temples and mandapas. The kings also attend the periodical festivals in certain important temples at Chidambaram, Thiruvavur and Kanchipuram.

The Tanjore Palace contained nearly three thousand dancing girls and servants to look after the king. They donated lands to the temples and Brahmins. People used to worship the idols of the kings and queens in the temples. For example, people worshipped the images of Parantaka II, Rajaraja and his queen, Lokamahadevi in the Tanjore temple.

Revenue

Usually $\frac{1}{36}$ of the total produce was collected as land tax. On certain occasions it was enhanced. Rajaraja I assessed $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total revenue as land tax due to heavy expenses on wars. It was remitted in cash or kind. The lands donated to the temples and Brahmins were exempted from taxation. The revenue collected from courts as fines was called Thandapanam. The income from mines, forests and alloms were also added with the state revenue. Sungam was collected from foreign trade.

Justice

Learned Brahmins well versed in law, assisted the king in the court. At the first instance, cases were tried in the village court, if the people were dissatisfied with the verdict of the village court, the case was appealed to the court in Nadu. Fines and imprisonments were the punishments for minor offences. The robbers who stole the idols, ornaments etc. which belonged to the temples, were given severe punishment. The property of such persons was confiscated and sold in public auction. The amount was remitted to the royal treasury. The offenses against the king and his close relatives were dealt with by the king himself and heavy fines were collected from them. In certain cases, the culprits were tied to a wooden frame and given fifty or more blows with a stick.

Army

The Chola army consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephantry and navy. The army was well – drilled and disciplined. Required horses for the cavalry were imported from Arabia. The hereditary army protected the ruler and received regular pay from the treasury.

Village or Local Administration

The Chola rulers were more concerned about the administration in the villages. The two uttaramerur pillar inscriptions of Parantaka I in the Chinglepet district gave a vivid account of the functioning of rural institutions in the villages. The uttaramerur inscriptions gave a detailed account about three types of assemblies namely ur, Sabha and Nagaram in the villages. The village was divided into a number of wards or variyams or kudambu for the effective implementation of schemes.

Qualification

The candidate should be a owner of more than $\frac{1}{4}$ veli of land. He should have a house of his own. This qualification was prescribed to know the attachment of the concerned candidate with the village.

Candidates should possess thorough knowledge of vedic mantras. It was insisted mainly to give a chance to the educated persons, especially the Brahmins. Persons who had been in Variyams for the past three years, were disqualified to stand for the election.

Method of election

The persons required for the assembly were elected by lot through Kudavoli system, for a year in the manner prescribed in the inscription. Usually thirty candidates were elected by this system. Of the thirty elected, twelve were appointed to annually committee, twelve for garden committee and six to tank committee.

In the case of murder, the murderer was fined 16 cows and directed to light a perpetual lamp in nearby village temple. The Dharmavariyams carried out charitable works in the village.

Economic condition

Agriculture, industry, trade and commerce determined the economic condition of the Chola period.

Land System

A typical land system existed in the Chola period. Broadly, the lands were divided into Vellan Vagai, Eleemosynary tenure and service tenure. The land donated to the temples and Brahmins were called Eleemosynary tenure. Probably, the most fertile lands were assigned to them.

The lands assigned to the government servants for the services were called Jivitham lands, Bhogam lands, were given to Brahmins, Vaidyans and artisans for their services.

"Patti" lands were also assigned to the maintenance of tanks. Paruru lands were given to the feudal lords for supplying soldiers to the ruler at the time of wars.

Methods of land tax collection

As land tax was the main source of income to the state, the government paid special attention to its collection. To collect land tax effectively, lands were surveyed accurately and carefully. Patta was given to the peasants to confirm their right on lands. Based on the survey, lands were classified into more than twelve grades or taram. Taxes were assessed based on the fertility of the soil. For instance, during the reign of Rajaraja I, 30 kalams of paddy per veli was collected as tax on fertile lands; Whereas 28 kalams of paddy was collected as tax from ordinary lands. But the Tanjore inscription revealed that the revenue from agricultural lands was periodically reassessed, and the classification of the land was revised from time to time in accordance with changes in cropping, fertility etc. Generally, $\frac{1}{6}$ of the total produce was collected as tax. On certain periods, the rate was increased. Rajaraja I collected $\frac{1}{3}$ as tax due to heavy expenses on wars. He announced a royal award for the regular tax payers. Government appointed officials to collect tax. They even adopted oppressive measures to collect tax. People even sold their lands to remit their land tax. They also migrated to other places due to cruelty of taxes. Even women were also punished. An officer demanded some tax from a woman in the third regional year of Rajaraja II. When she denied her liability, the officer humiliated her. So she committed suicide by taking poison. The officer was punished to endow a lamp of 32 kansas. The corrupt revenue officials were also punished severely.

The history of art in the Tamil country began with the rise of the Pallavas of the Simhavishnu in the seventh century. The Cholas continued and developed the art-tradition of the Pallavas. The Cholas kings loved art and spent a major income of the state for the development of art. They constructed attractive structural temples, palaces and buildings based on the Dravidian style through out their empire. These monuments reflected the attachment of the Cholas towards art and architecture. The artistic tradition of this period was famous for its purity and perfection. These temples were varied in style and structure. They were classified into three major divisions based on their structure, style and date.

The temple of early period

* The temples of early period were constructed between A.D. 850 - A.D. 985. The inscriptions of this period mentioned the construction of a number of temples. These temples were small in size. Most of them were structural temples. The Vijayalaya Cholesvaram temple constructed at Nattamalai was the first temple of this period. This temple belonged to the period of Vijayalaya, the founder of the Chola empire. It was erected in memory of his success over the Muttarayas. The pillars in the front mandapas of the temple were erected on the Pallava style. But the arms of the divarapalaka resembled to that of the Pallava mounments. Now, the temple is in a deteriorating condition due to lak of maintenance and protection. Another important temple of this period, was the Balasubramanya temple constructed at Kannanur. The Negesvara temple constructed at Kumbakonam also belonged to this period. It contained the portraits of contemporary Chola princes and princesses. The Sundaesvara temple at Thirukkattutalai and Mahadeva temple at Tiruccendurai were the most important temples constructed during the reign of Aditya I. The Agastyesvara temple at Panangudi also belonged to this period.

The Koranganatha temple constructed at Srinivasanallur in Trichy district was the most attractive temple of this period. Parantaka I constructed this temple. The length of this medium sized temple was 50 feet. It contained many sculpture statue of Hindu gods and goddesses on the wall surface of the Vimana. Prominent among them were the statues of Sarasvathi and Lekshmi. They were very

attractive. Below the statue of Kali, the statue of Asura was placed. Parantaka I also constructed the Brahmapurisvara temple at Pullamangai in Tanjore district. It resembled to that of Nagesvara temple at Kumbakonam in many ways. The Mahalingaswami temple at Tiruvidaimarudur in Tanjore district was constructed in 910 A.D. This temple was constructed in the fourth regional year of Parantaka I. Again, Muckundesvara temple at Kodumbalur, Bhaktajanesvara temple at Tirunamanallur (S.Arcot), Vatathirthanatha temple at Andanallur (Trichi), the Kdambavanesvara temple at Erumbur (S.Arcot) also reflected the contribution of early Cholas to art and architecture. The Muuvarkoil temple at Kodumbalur was constructed by Bhuli Vikramakesari, a feudatory of Parantaka II, in the later half of the tenth century. The several forms of the sculptures of Siva on the walls of the Vimanas were examples of early Chola temple architecture. The inscriptions also mentioned the names of various other temples of this period.

Temples of middle period

The temples constructed between A.D. 985 - A.D. 1070 belonged to this period. Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, who reigned in this period constructed medium sized and big structural historical temples. The Tiruvalisvaram temple at Brahmadesam in Tirunelvely district was the best example of the medium sized temple. It was square in shape (form). This temple contained figures of animals and gods. The walls of the temple were decorated with some comic features like lion or monkey and scene of dancing or mockery. Music was humorously portrayed in this temple. In the first storey of the Vimana contained a number of beautiful and attractive sculptures. It expressed the sculptural skill of the artists. Rajaraja I also constructed the Uttarakailasa temple at Tanjore district. Vaidyanatha temple at Tirumalavadi, the twin temples of Siva and Vishnu at Dadapuram in South Arcot district and Sivalaya temple at Polunnuva (Ceylon). All these temples were medium-sized.

Tanjore temple

The maturity of the Chola temple architecture was found in two great historical temples constructed at Tanjore and Ganaikonda cholapuram. A new chapter in the history of art and architecture developed during this period. Rajarajesvarar Brihadisvara temple at Tanjore was the tallest of all Indian temples. It was constructed

during the reign of Rajaraja I. The work of this temple was started in 1003 A.D. and completed in 1010 A.D.

It was a symbol of the magnificent achievements of Rajaraja I. It reflected his splendor. He made numerous endowments for this temple. In this magnificence, he was joined by not only the members of his family but high officials and noble-men. Rajaraja I also utilised most of his loots from foreign wars for the construction of this temple. Several large images and bronze and gold were presented to this temple in addition to ornaments and lands. The ornaments donated to the temple were described in detail in the inscriptions. Most of the images and all the jewels were now not found in the temple.

Again, he donated a number of Devadhana village, for the regular functioning of the temple. The annual income from the lands set apart for the temple alone was estimated as one hundred and sixteen thousand Kalams of paddy. Adequate lands were also granted for the maintenance of the dancing women in the temple. Rajaraja I constructed two long streets for the accommodation of four hundred dancing women attached to the temples.

The walls of the temple contained innumerable historical inscriptions. They revealed the personality and achievement of the emperor. The inscriptions also mentioned the cooks, gardeners, flower-gatherers, garland-makers, musicians, drummers, dancer, dance-masters, wood-carvers, sculptors, painters, choir-groups for singing hymns in Sanskrit and Tamil, accountants, watchmen and a host of other officials and servants of the temples. Again around the inner walls of the first floor of the temple contained a fine series of one hundred and eight dance-poses. They form an invaluable document in the history of Indian art.

The temple was constructed of granite. The plinth of the central shrine was 45.72 square metre and the shrine proper was 30.48 square metre. The walls of the temples were covered throughout with inscriptions and deities such as Siva, Vishnu, Durga, Ganesa, Sri-devi, Bhu-devi, Lakshmi, Nadesa, Dvara-palas etc. At the centre of the temple, there was a Kopuram or Mandapam with the height of 216 ft. It contained 14 storeys. At the top of the kopuram, there was a huge stone with the weight of 81.284 tonnes. This stone was dragged on to the top by making elevation from Sarapallam, 6.44 k.m. away from the temple.

In front of the temple, there was an attractive, huge monolithic Nandi. The height of the Nandi was 12 feet. The stone brought from Pachchaimalai was used for this purpose. The temple had three entrances namely Keralathankan entrance, Rajaraja entrance and Thiruvanukkan entrance. The copper Kalasa in the top of this Vimana was dedicated in the name of Rajaraja. The images of Rajaraja and his queen were installed at the entrance of the temple. A compound wall was constructed around the temple for its protection. Kuruvur Devar, the contemporary poet gave clear description of the temple in one of his poems.

Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple

Another important historical and religious monument famous for Chola architectural beauty was the Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple. Within twenty years of the completion of the Great Tanjore temple, the Gangaikondacholapuram temple was built. It was planned on a grand scale than that of the Brihadisvara temple at Tanjore. Rajendra I, donated a huge amount for the construction of his temple. It is rectangular in shape with 340 feet long and 100 feet wide. The mandapas of this temple was 175 feet in length and 95 feet in breadth. It had 40 pillars for its support. The strong compound wall around the temple, produced the temple. This temple was more beautiful than the temple at Tanjore. This fully matured attractive temple was the masterpiece of the Chola art. Ponneri, the water reservoir constructed about 3 K.M. to the west of the temple supplies water to it. The required fire works for the temple festivals were collected from Vanadipattam, a village situated 1.5 K.M. to the south of the temple. Like Tanjore temple, Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple was also a landmark in the history of Indian architecture.

Temples of later Period

The temples of later period were constructed between 1070 A.D. - 1250 A.D. During this period, the Chola rulers constructed numerous temples. Most of the temples of this period were small and resembled one another. In 1113 A.D. Kulottunga I, constructed Amirtaghatesvara temple at Melekkadambur in the shape of a chariot with two wheels on each side. He also constructed a temple to the sun god in Tanjore district. This suriyankoil was named as Koluttungachola Marttandalayattu Suryadevar. Vikrama Chola, who ruled in this period donated a considerable amount to improve and

beautify the Chidambaram temple. This temple was fully remodelled and completed by his successor, Kulottunga II.

Rajaraja II constructed the Siva temple at Tirupandal and Darasuram in Tanjore in the early half of the 12th century. The five storied Vimana in the Dharasuram temple gave more attraction to it. The Tirumandapam of this temple was shaped like a chariot on wheels drawn by elephants. The scenes of Periyapuram were depicted attractively on the walls of the temples. Kulottunga III was the last great builder among the Chola monarchs. He constructed Kamahareswara temple at Tribhuvanam. The figures of Bharata-natya accompanied by drummers and musicians, lions and elephants made this temple more unique. In short, the Dharasuram and Tirubhuvanam temples preserved the characteristics of Chola style of architecture.

The temples constructed during the Chola period acted as a source of religious inspiration for the people. The art developed in this period had great influence of other countries especially on the Hindu states of Indo-China and Far-east. The active trade relation of the Cholas with these countries enabled the migration of this art.

Palaces

The palaces constructed by the Chola rulers highlighted the development of art and architecture of this period. The Chola rulers lived luxuriously in the Palaces. The palace in the capital was given much importance. They also possessed additional palaces at Pazhayarai, Chidambaram and Kanchi for the convenience of administration. The palace of Rajendra I was constructed at Olkottai in Gangaikonda Cholapuram on a grand scale. It was constructed on a mount. The mount was called as Maligaimedu or palace mount. The compound walls around the palaces gave protection to them. The palace were provided with all facilities, including the Chitrakudam, the anthapuram, etc. The walls of the palaces were decorated grandly with sculptures, painting and with pictures of animals and birds. A few of the palaces were in good condition.

Sculpture

The temples and palaces of the Cholas were decorated with sculpture made up of stone, iron, bronze and gold. The sculptures in the temples and the sculptures kept preserved in the museums of London, Paris, Madras and Amsterdam were best examples for the

study of econography of this period. The sculptures moulded the sculptures of gods, goddesses, saints, people, birds, dancing figures, puranic stories and animals in an attractive and typical form by using stones and metals. Most of the sculpture in Pullamangai temple and the Nataraja sculpture in the Chidambaram temple were noteworthy. In the Vasihnavi temple, the sculpture of Dakshinamurti in Korankanatha temple, the Durka sculpture in Pullamangai temple and the Nataraja sculpture in the Chidambaram temple were noteworthy. In the Vasihnavi temple, the sculpture of Thirumal was portrayed in three different styles. Moreover, the sculpture of kings and queens were also placed in the temple. For example, the images of Rajaraja I and his wife were placed in the entrance of Tanjore temple. Numerous sculptures in the Tanjore temple were decorative in nature. Among them, the bronze sculpture was popular. The Tanjore inscription also described the technical details of the bronze sculptures, representing the stories of the lives of 63 Nayanmars. Sculptures on the Darasuram temple depicted stories from Periyapranam. The Siva temple at Thiruvallisvaram in Tirunelveli district contained magnificent sculptures of Siva in his various forms. The Nataraja image in its various forms naturally holds the first place among the Chola bronzes. The bronze sculptures of this type are not only spread over the museums of the world, but are still under worship in the live temples of South India.

Painting

Like all other forms of Chola art, the Chola painting was also a continuation and development of the Pallavas and Pandyas. The artists of this period selected black, yellow, brown, red, blue, green, yellowish and light blue coloured paints to beautify the temples, palaces and other buildings. The temples located at Tanjore, Nattamalai, Malayadippatti, Thirumayam, Mamandur and Chittannavasal were decorated with attractive paintings. Most of the paintings in the temples had religious background. Certain pictures of the scene in Periyapuram, Thiruthondarpurana were portrayed beautifully on the walls of the Tanjore temple. The marriage scene of Sundarar was very attractive. The paintings of dancing girls and Devakanniyar revealed the social life, custom, ornamentation, religion, culture and civilization of the people.

Music

Music is closely associated with song, dance and expression. The sacred hymns were considered as sacred music. The rulers and the high caste people encouraged and enjoyed drama, kuttu (dance) etc. The musicians used drums, flute, fiddle etc., as music instruments. Yal and Veena were also used. In the temples, the songs of the Alvar and Nayanmars were sung systematically. The songs induced bhakti among the people. Almost all the temples possessed beautiful sculptures of musicians with their instruments. Music had great appeal among the people.

Dance

The Chola temples patronised dance. The dancing girls or devadasis appointed in the temple danced before the deities. They also danced in the mandapas of the temples. They performed Tamilkuttu, Aryakkuttu, Sakkakuttu on important occasions. Separate dance theatres were maintained on important temples. The rulers and the ruled patronised them by giving donations and presentations. The dancing figures were also carved out in the temples.

Drama

Drama was another popular art. The dramas were acted in Natakasalai or drama theatre. The Thiruvudimaruthoor inscription mentioned the existence of drama theatre in the Cholas kingdom. The drama theatres possessed all facilities. Rajarajavijayam and Rajareajesvara Natakam were the important dramas acted in big temples during the reign of Rajaraja I. Stories of Nayanmars and Alvars were also staged. The heroic and religious dramas had encouragement among the public. Thus encouragement given to the development of sculpture, painting, music, drama and dance determined the development of art and architecture of the Chola period.

Religion

The temple and the Matha were the two great gifts of mediaeval Hinduism to South India. These two institutions expanded gradually and consolidated their position in Tamilnadu. To a large scale, religion and temple controlled and regularised the activities of the people. The Chola period witnessed the growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism, the two branches of Hinduism and the development of various religious philosophies.

Saivism

The Chola period was the age of South Indian Saivism and Vaishnavism. The Chola rulers patronised Saivism and constructed a number of temples. Most of these temples were dedicated to Siva. The queens of the royal family also showed keen interest towards Hinduism. They even constructed temples and granted endowments. The contribution of Sembiyan Mahadevi, Vanavan Mahadevi etc., to Saivism was noteworthy.

Likewise, the Saiva saints Nayanmars dedicated their life to Saivism. To pay homage to them, their images were installed and worshipped in most of the Siva temples. Festivals were even conducted in their names. Their images were also taken in procession on festival days. In the name of Nayanmars, Mathas were also established at important places like Kanchi, Valivalam and Thiruvalligai. The hymns of the saints were sung in the temples. As the hymns were written in the language of common people it penetrated into their hearts without much strain.

The Saivites of Tamilnadu maintained cordial relation with the saivites of North India. It enabled them to intensify religious activities in the Chola kingdom. The saiva saint Nambiyandar Nambi, the contemporary of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, compiled the twelve Thirumaris of Saivism. Again, Saivasiddhanta philosophies developed on the principles of Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Mainikkavasagar. Saints who belonged to Changarachariyar groups, interpreted the philosophies of this religion for the convenient understanding of the people. Among them Meykandar, Arul Nandi, Maraiganar and Umapathy were important. References were also made to Siva followers like Kapalika and Kalamukar.

Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism and Saivism were the two eyes of Hinduism. But in the Chola period equal treatment was not given to Saivism. It had only limited temples. Still, this religion flourished due to the dedication of certain saints and scholars. Among them, Nadamuni was noteworthy. Vaishnavism faced various vicissitudes of fortune under Cholas.

Nadamuni

The Vaishnavites, who worshipped Thirumal, were known as Achchariyas. They preached the Vaishnava principles by singing

songs in temples madams and even vaishnava houses. The important contribution of Nadamuni to Vaishnavism was that he compiled Nalayira-Divya Prabandam. It was sung in the Vaishnava temples. He stayed in Srirangam and derived Niyayathuva philosophy. His ideas deviated the Vaishnavites from the main stream and had great appeal in the Hindu society. The new branch established by him was known as Srivaishnavism.

Yamunachariyar

His successor was Yamunachariyar. He had a deep involvement in Vaishnavism and defeated a scholar in the court of the Chola king. So the king honoured him with a title Alavanthar. He evolved the famous Visista Advaita philosophy.

Ramanuja

Vaishnavism faced difficulties at the time of Ramanuja. He was born in 1010 A.D. at Sriperumbudur in Chingleput District. While staying at Kanchi, he adopted the Advaita Philosophy of Sankara. It failed to console his mind. He wrote a number of religious works, when he was in Srirangam. Famous among them, were Vethanda Saram, Vethanda Camkirahm and Vethantha Deepam. He, also interpreted Brahmasuddiram and Bhahavathgita. He vehemently adopted the revolutionary Visista Advaita philosophy. He attracted common people through his revolutionary philosophies. He opened the gates of the Hindu temples to the untouchables and made radical religious changes. Adirajendra condemned his activities and punished him severely. Finally, he was persecuted during the reign of Kulottunga I, as he exceeded the limits. Thus, he became a martyr to his faith.

Vadakalai and Tenkalai Sects

After Ramanuja, there arose a schism among the followers of the Visista Advaita philosophy of Vaishnavism. They were known as Vadakalai and Tenkalai based on their differences in language, region and doctrine. The founder of the Vadakalai sect was Vedantadesika. He composed 95 works in sanskrit and 25 in Tamil. It contained the Vadakalai doctrines of Vaishnavism. Kanchipuram became the head-quarters of the Vadakalai sect. The followers of the Vadakalai sect emphasised the caste distinction and the superiority of the Brahmins over other castes. The Vadakalai Vaishnavas adorned their preheads with a particular form of namam and used to ring bells while doing worship.

The leader of the Tenkalai sect was Manavala Mahamuni. He was born in 1370 A.D. He constructed a hall of discussion called Tirumalai Alvar mandapa, mainly to preach Tenkalai doctrine. Srirangam was the head-quarters of the Tenkalai sect. They did not emphasise the caste distinctions too much. They maintained the equality of Bahmins and non/brahmins before god. The namam of the Tenkalaiyar was different from that of Vatakaliyar. They avoided ringing of bells at the time of worship. The followers of both the sects were found throughout South India.

Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy

Meykandar, Arulnandi, Umapati and Manavasagam were prominent in evolving the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy.

Meykandar was the son of one Achyuta Kalappala of Pennadam in South Arcot district. He was the a student of Paranjothi and learnt the essentials of Saiva Siddhanta. He was called as Meykandar. His masterpiece was Sivagnanabodham. He belonged to the period of Rajaraja III.

Arulnandi was a native of Tirutturaiyur near Villupuram. He was a student of Meykandar. He was the author of Unmaivilakkam. The next Saiva Siddhanta philosophers were Manavasagam and Umapathi. The Saiva Siddhanta philosophical system was based on the three essential fundamentals of Pali, Pasu (Soul) and Pasam.

Vira Saivism

Vira Saivism had its origin in the Karnataka region. Then it spread to Andhara and Tamilnadu regions. They worshipped Siva in the form of Linga and rejected the authority of the Vedas. They had no faith in the doctrine of rebirth. They opposed child marriage and recognise the remarriage of windows. It stood against the interest of the Brahmins. This religio-philosophical movement became popular at the expense of Jainism and Buddhism in the Kannada region. It also led to the enrichment of Kannada literature.

Saiva-Vaishnava Conflict

The Saiva and Vaishnava relations were cordial in the early part of Chola history. In certain places, the Saiva and Vaishnava temples were constructed very closely. We can see this at Chidambaram. Again, the habit of installing the Vaishnava image in Siva temples and Siva images in Vaishnava temple was common

tradition in the Chola period. Likewise, the stories of Devarams, Thiruvassagam and Nalayiradivya Prabandam were depicted in all Vaishnava and Siva temples. These instances revealed that religious toleration existed among them.

But later, these religions abused each other acted as enemies. Each religion reacted strongly to the other. During the reign of Vikrama Chola, he removed the idol of Govindaraja for Nadaraja in Chidambaram temple. This was extended even in other temples located at Tirumaiyan, Pudukkottai, etc. The Vaishnava and Siva saints also quarrelled each other in certain places. Due to dispute, the temples in certain places were suspended. Savites were instructed not to mingle with Vaishnavites in certain places. Severe punishments were given to those who violated this instruction. With a view to maintaining discipline in the state, the government adopted severe measures. The revolutionaries were persecuted and others were driven out of the kingdom. Still then, the Cholas rulers never forgot to extend their assistance to the Vaishnava temples.

The Madams

Besides the temples, the Chola rulers erected madams through out the country for religious purposes. Religious meetings and conferences were held in madams. Madams were also used for educational purposes. They taught grammar, medicine and religion. They provided food for the Brahmins and saints. Like temples, madams also possessed landed endowments. On certain occasions, it supplied salt, drinking water and light freely to the travellers. Medical assistance was given to the patients.

Buddhism and Jainism

The revival in Hinduism caused the decline of Jainism and Buddhism in Tamilandu. The Chola rulers paid equal treatment to all religions. The inscription of this period showed the donations of the Chola rulers to the Jain temples. Though Buddhism and Jainism declined, they maintained their control in certain centres in Tamilnadu. The Nagamman temple at Nagercoil was a Jain centre till 11th century. At Tanjore, a Jain shrine was constructed with the assistance of Kulottunga I. Generally, the Chola rulers never adopted negative attitude against the Jains. But in certain places, Jain areas

were converted into Hindu centres. Even at the time of its decline, Jainism rendered meritorious services to the growth of Tamil language. Thiruthakkadevar was a Jain who composed Sivaga Chindamoni. Perumkathai also belonged to this period. Unlike Jainism, Buddhism declined rapidly in this period. Though it declined, its contribution to Tamil literature and society cannot be underestimated.

Ammankoils

Amman worship was not a new innovation of the Chola period. The Tamils were very familiar with Ammai since the sangam period. It was revived in the Chola period and they constructed a number of temples known as Thirukamakottam for this deity. The habit of constructing temples for this deity became popular since Rajaraja I. Separate places were provided for Ammai in Saiva and Vasihna temples in Tamil Nadu. People worshipped this deity to get protection from evils.

Vinayaka Worship

Vinayaka was new to Tamils. It was not found in the list of gods of Dravidians. The Aryans who invaded the Tamils also disliked it. It was introduced into Tamilnadu during the reign of Narasimhavarman I, the Pallava. He brought this deity from Vatapi as a monument of his success in the war against Pulakesin II. Vinayaka was not permitted in any of the temples in Tamilnadu, till the reign of Rajasimha. Since then, it was given due importance in Hindu temples. The temples at Pangkudi, Thruppanthalur and Thirukkattalai gave importance to this deity by providing separate place to it. Now it is a popular deity in Tamilnadu.

Navagraha Worship

Navagraha worship became prominent in Tamilnadu during the Chola period. The Chola rulers had the practice of conducting festivals on their birthdays. In similar manner, the Navagraha worship was also practised in the Chola kingdom. When it became popular, separate temples were constructed for the worship of sun. Kulottunga I provided facilities for the arrangements of a festival of this deity. Provisions were also made to conduct festivals at the time of solar eclipse. This Chola period witnessed the domination of various religions in Tamilnadu.