Gangaikondacholapuram

R. Nagaswamy
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The temple and the city

Gangaikonda Cholapuram, now in the Udayarpalayam taluk of Tiruchi district, in Tamilnadu, was created as the capital of the Chola by Rajendra I, the son and successor of Rajaraja I, the great Chola who conquered a large area in South India at the beginning of the 11th century A.D. It occupies an important place in the history of India. As the capital of the Cholas from about 1025 A.D., for about 250 years, the city controlled the affairs of entire South India, from the Tungabhadra in the north to Ceylon in the south. The great temple of Siva at this place is next only to the great temple of Tanjore in its monumental nature and surpasses it in sculptural quality. The city was founded by the eminent Chola emperor probably to commemorate his victorious march to the Ganges and reflected his personality throughout the days of its eminence and continues to do so because of its great temple, though its role as a capital of the south has been forgotten by its inhabitants. It is now a small village, bounded in the west by the celebrated Gangaikondan lake, one of the biggest lakes in south India, and by the river Vaṭavāra in the east. To the south and the north are fields with a few hamlets bearing names recalling their associations with the greatness of the city. A highway winding its way through this once great city runs north-south leading to the Lower Anicut, while another road cuts across the great lake east-west and connects this village with Jayamkondachola puram, another Chola foundation about six miles to the west. The lofty tower of the great prasāda could be seen from about a distance of six or seven miles. Besides the great temple and other ancient relics, inscriptions on the temple are our primary source of information for reconstructing the history of the city. Copper plate charters issued by Rajendra and his successors also give valuable information. A few Tamil literary works like the Thiruvisaippā of Karuvūrdevar, the Kalingattup-parāṇi of Jayamkondar, the Mūvar Ulā of Ottakkuttar, and the Koil Ojugu furnish some data. The Sanskrit work, the Vikramāṅkadeva Charita of Bilhana on the exploits of Vikramaśītya VI, also throws some light. Records dealing with the Udayarpalaiyam zamin give some valuable information about the temple and the city.
II

Rajendra the Builder

Gangaikonda Chola Rajendra I, was the son of Rajaraja I through his queen, Vanavanmadi, also called Tribhuvanamadévi, evidently a Chera princess. Ardra was the star of Rajendra's nativity.

Rajendra was a boy when Rajaraja ascended the throne in 985 A.D. Under the care and guidance of his father, he grew up as the most powerful general in Tamil history. When once twenty years old, he led a Chola army into the heart of the Western Chalukya kingdom. He was then called Narasimha Chola Rajendra Vidyadhara and the ornament of the Chola race. In this campaign Rajendra is said to have advanced as far north as Bijapur District with an army of 900,000 and as a result, territories up to Ratnapadi were annexed to the Chola empire. He is also identified with Pancavan Maraya, who served as the Mahadandananayaka of the Vengi and Ganga countries.

Between March 27th and July 7th, 1012 A.D., Rajendra was chosen heir apparent by Rajaraja. Rajendra jointly ruled with his father for nearly four years till 1016 A.D., when Rajaraja passed away.

On the state of the empire at the time of Rajendra's accession, Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, the greatest authority on Chola history, writes, "Rajendra inherited from his father an extensive empire comprising the whole of the modern Madras and Andhra and parts of Mysore and the island of Ceylon. The administration had been carefully organised and a fairly powerful bureaucracy brought into existence, which while it scrupulously respected the 'liberties' feudal and corporate, of the various magnates and associations that studded the land, successfully maintained the king's peace and enforced all civil rights. The army was a strong and tried body of men, well able to defend the wide land frontier and to keep down any threatened outbreaks in areas newly subjected to the empire and ready for aggressive warfare abroad. The hold on Ceylon and some other islands like the Maldive islands was securely maintained by a powerful naval force which also served to protect the considerable overseas trade of the empire with the islands of the East Indies and with
China. During the thirty-three years of his reign, Rājendra turned these initial advantages to the best possible use and succeeded in raising the Chōla empire to the position of the most extensive and most respected Hindu state of his time”.

Rājendra fought many battles and won every one of them. For every victory he gained, he assumed a title commemorating his success. He also conferred titles on his victorious generals. The moment he assumed independent sovereignty, he embarked on a “conquest of the quarters”, the digvijaya.

The western Chālukyas, were probably the first target of his attack. Rājendra conquered “Iḍaiturai-nādu, Banavāsi, encircled by a continuos hedge of forest, Kollipākkai whose ramparts were surrounded by sulli trees, and Mannaikkadaṇḍakka whose fortifications were unapproachable, all in a single campaign, directed against Satyāraya the Chālukya ruler. Iḍaiturai-nādu was the country between the rivers Krishna in the north and Tungabhadra in the south comprising a large part of the present Raichur District.” Kollippākkai lies about 45 miles north-east of Hyderabad and is now called Kulpāk. Mannaikkadaṇḍakka is identified with Mānyakhēḍa (modern Malkhed). In this campaign, the Chōla emperor, crossed the Tungabhadra and attacked the capital of the Chālukyas. After completing his successful expedition in the north (north being considered an auspicious direction, expeditions were first taken in that direction for ensuring victories) Rājendra started on a southern campaign in which he defeated the Pāndyas, the Kēraḷa ruler and finally the king of Ceylon. Of Rājendra’s southern campaign the Thiruvāḷangāḍu copper charter gives the following account.

“This famous and heroic king, possessed of a powerful army, and bent upon the performance of meritorious deeds with heaps of money acquired by his own arm, then set his heart upon a digvijaya.

“Accordingly, after arranging for the protection of his own capital, the unrivalled king Uttama-Chōla, first started in the direction marked by Triśanku (the south) desirous of conquering the Pāṇḍya king.

“The commander daṇḍanātha of the ornament of the solar race thereupon struck the Pāṇḍya king who had a great force; and the Pāṇḍya abandoned his home in fright and fled for refuge to the Malaya mountain, the abode of Agastya.
“Rājarāja’s son the master of policy, took possession of the bright spotless pearls, the seeds of the spotless fame of the Pāṇḍya kings.

After establishing there his own son Śrī Chōla Pāṇḍya for the protection of the Pāṇḍya country, the light of the solar race then proceeded to the conquest of the West.

Having heard of the ignominy sustained by kings at the hands of Bhārgava in battle, this proud king, finding him on the face of the earth, developed a desire to conquer the lands created by him.

Who else other than this supreme lord (Paraṃēvara) can entertain the thought in his mind of subjugating the ancient land protected by the glory of the ornament of the Bhṛgukula and free from the inroads of enemies?

The fearless Madhurāntaka crossed the Sahya mountain and forthwith set upon the Kerala in great force and there ensued a fierce battle which brought ruins upon kings.

After having conquered the Kerala kings and harrowed the land guarded by the austerities of the lord of the Bhrigu, the prince returned to his capital, the abode of prosperity”.

Both the Pāṇḍya and Kērāla countries were placed under the voiceroyalty of his son who was crowned at Madurai, with the title Jātāvarman Sundara-Chōla Pāṇḍya. Rājendrā is said to have built a palace at Madurai. The Chēra king, Rājasimha, built a temple to Lord Vishnu at Mannārkōil, naming it Rājendrā Chōla Vinnagar after Rājendrā.

Rājendrā then invaded Ceylon. His father had defeated earlier Mahinda V and annexed a major part of Ceylon to the Chōla empire and named it Mummudi-Chōla Valanādu with many subdivisions called Rājarāja Valanādu, Vikrama-chōla-valanādu etc. Rājendrā’s expedition was thorough and complete. His Karandai plates record that “Rājendrā conquered the king of Ceylon with a fierce army and seized his territory, his queen, and her crown, his daughter, all his wealth, his transport, and the spotless garland of Indra, and crown of the Pāṇḍya left in his charge; after having lost the battle and being shorn of his queen, son and other belongings, the king of Ceylon, out of fear, came and sought the two feet of Rājendrā as shelter”.

The Ceylonese chronicle, Mahāvamśa confirms this account and
states that with Pulattinagara as base the Chōlas held sway over Rāja raṭṭa as far as the locality known as Rakkhapāsānakanta ... king Mahinda dwelt twelve years in the Chōla land and entered into heaven in the forty-eighth year (from his ascent of the throne)".

Probably Rājendra personally headed his army and brought the entire island of Ceylon under Chōla rule. Towards the end of his reign however, there was an uprising in south Ceylon which was dealt with by his able son, Rājadhīrāja I.

Rājendra next sent his celebrated expedition to the Gangetic plain to bring holy waters to purify his own land, after inflicting crushing defeats on all enemy forces uptp Bengal. His Thiruvālāṅgādu copper charter states that "the light of the solar race (Rājendra), mocking Bhagiratha who by the force of his austerities caused the descent of the Ganga, set out to sanctify his own land with the waters of that stream brought by the strength of his arm.

"He seized Sakkarakōttam, whose warriors were brave; Maduramāṇḍalam destroyed in a trice, the prosperous city of Nāmanaikkōnam with its dense groves, Paṅcāpallī whose warriors bore cruel bows, Māsunideśa with its green fields, a large heap of family treasures together with many other treasures which he carried away after capturing the Indraratha of the ancient race of the moon together with his family in a fight which took place at Adinagar; a city whose great fame knew no decline, Odjavisaya which was difficult of approach on account of its dense forest defence; the good Kōsalainādu, where Brahmans assembled; Tāŋdabhuttī, in whose gardens bees abounded, after having destroyed Dhammapāla in a hot battle; Takkānalāṛdam whose fame reached all directions and which he occupied after forcefully attacking Raṇasūra; Vangaladēśa where the rain water never stopped and from which Govindachandra fled, having descended from his male elephant; elephants of rare strength, women and treasure which he seized after having been pleased to put to flight in a hot battlefield the strong Mahipāla by the sound of a conch from the deep sea; Uttaralāṛdam on the shores of the expansive ocean producing pearls and the Ganga whose waters bearing fragrant flowers dashed against the bathing places".

Rājendra's father had integrated the Eastern Chālukya kingdom of Vengi politically and dynastically with the Chōla line. As a result of Rājendra’s expedition all the countries north of Vengi, which included
Kalinga, Odda, Southern Kosala, the lower and upper Lāda, and finally
the Vangaladesa (Bengal) were made to bow before the might of this
Chōla emperor. Rājendra himself went up to the banks of the Gōdāvari,
where he awaited the return of his triumphant army, which brought
Ganges water in golden vessels, carried on the heads of the vanquished
rulers.

Almost a thousand years before Rājendra, a Chēra king of the
Sangam age, Senguttuvan had marched up to the Himalayas with an army
to bring a stone to carve an image of Goddess Pattini, which he enshrin-
ed in a temple erected for the purpose. Two northern kings are said to
have opposed Senguttuvan’s march, but they were vanquished in a trice
and made to carry the stone on their head. This account is recorded in
the Silappadhikāram. Some critics doubt its authenticity. But Rājendrā’s
expedition was an important landmark. According to R.D. Banerjee,
“the invasion of the great southern conqueror, Rājendra Chōla I, seems
to have left a permanent mark in Bengal. Some obscure Karnatā chief
seems to have followed Rājendra and settled in West Bengal. From him
was descended Sāmantasena, who is generally taken to be the founder of
the Sena dynasty”. To commemorate this celebrated victory, Rājendra
assumed the title of GangaiKonda Chōla, a name given not only to his
new capital (GangaiKondaChōlapuram) but also to his temple.

The conquest of the overseas island of Sumatra and the Malay
Peninsula forms the most important event in the life of Rājendra and
perhaps in the annals of South Indian history. This triumphant naval
expedition was directed against the ruler of Srivijaya who also held sway
over Kaḍāram.

Rājarāja had cordial relations with Srimāra Vijayottunga-
varman, the ruler of Srivijaya who visited the Chōla country and erected
a Buddhist vihāra in the name of his father for which Rājarāja gifted
lands and money. After his father’s death Rājendra confirmed the grant
to this Vihāra. But the relationship became strained subsequently. Either
the flourishing overseas trade of Chōlas was obstructed or Rājendra
having conquered the countries in the north, west, and south wished to
conquer the east, to complete his digvijaya. The Nicobar islands, the
upper and lower Sumatran islands known as Ilāmuridesa, Srivijaya,
Singapore, the Malay peninsula and the lower part of Burma were
subjugated. A number of places where he fought are detailed in Rājendra’s
Tamil inscriptions.
Rājendra having despatched many ships in the midst of the rolling sea and having caught Sangrāma Vijayottunga Varman, the king of Kadāram, together with the elephants in his glorious army, took the large heap of treasures which that king had rightfully accumulated, captured with noise, the arch called Vidyādhara torana at the war-gate of his extensive city. Srīvijaya with the jewelled wicked gate adorned with great splendour and the gate of large jewels; Pannāi with water in its bathing ghats; the ancient Mālayyur with the strong mountain for its rampart; Māyiruđingam surrounded by the deep sea as by a moat; Ilangāsūka (Lankāsūka) undaunted in fierce battles; Māppālam having abundant deep water as defence; Māvelimangam having fine walls as defence; Valaippandūru having Valaippandūru; Talāittakkolam praised by great men (versed in) the sciences; Mādamālingam, firm in great and fierce battles; İlāmūrīdesam whose fierce strength rose in war; Mānakkavāram in whose extensive flower gardens honey was collecting; and Kadāram of fierce strength which was protected by the deep sea.

For a detailed account of Rājendra’s conquest of Kadāram and the identification of the various battlefields of the campaign, the reader may refer to Prof. K. A. Nilakanta Sastrī’s ‘The Chōlas’. To commemorate his signal victories Rājendra assumed the title of Kadāramkondachōla. Rājendra thus completed a brilliant dīquijaya “conquest of quarters”, which made him a Chakravarti.

“The closing years of Rājendra’s reign formed the most splendid period of the history of the Chōlas of the Vijayālaya line. The extent of the empire was at its widest and its military and naval prestige stood at its highest. There remained the necessity ever present in military empires of carrying out punitive expeditions to suppress out breaks and keep the conquered territories under control. The emperor was ably assisted by his talented sons and other members of his family and the tasks of imperial administration were thus put in commission”.

Rājendra had many titles like Madhurāntaka, Uttamachōla, Virachōla, Mudikondachōla, Pāṇḍitachōla, Gangaikondachōla, Gangaikyum Pūrvadesamum Kadāramum konda Ayyan. He had many queens of whom Vānavanmādevi, Mūkkōkāḷāṇ, Pāṇcavanmādevi and Vīramādevi deserve mention. The last mentioned entered the funeral pyre with her husband at his death.
III

Later history

The first Chōḷa king to be crowned at Gaṅgaikoneḍachōḷapuram was Rājakēśari Rājadhirāja I, the eldest son of Rājendrā I. He had been installed as crown prince very early in Rājendrā’s reign (1018 A.D.) and till his death in 1054, he led a life of warfare. He is probably identical with Sundara Chōḷa Pāṇḍya, who was installed as the viceroy of the Pāṇḍya country in his father’s reign. He quelled a rebellion in Ceylon, conquered a Pāṇḍya who fomented trouble, and dealt severely with the ruler of Vēṇāṭ. In the north he led three expeditions against the Chāḷukyas, ransacked Kalyāṇapura, their capital, and captured Kollāpura. To commemorate this victory he assumed the title, Kalyāṇapuramum, Kollāpuruṇum kōṇḍa Vijayarājendrā. A few sculptures of exceptional beauty were brought by him as war trophies from Kalyāṇapura. One of the sculptures bears an inscription recording the fact that it was brought by Vijayarājendrā from Kalyāṇapura after its conquest. Evidently, the sculptures of Durga, Ganesa, and the solar pitha now in Gaṅgaikoneḍa chōḷapuram, was also brought home. Rājadhirāja performed the asvamedha, to celebrate his signal victories. In 1054, at an advanced age, he led his army against the Chāḷukyas and fought a battle at Koppam, on the banks of the Tungabhādra. Rājadhirāja was mortally wounded while seated on his elephant. The Chōḷa army fell into disarray and began to retreat in great confusion. The Chāḷukya army pressed forward with great force. Rājadhirāja’s younger brother, Rājendrā II, who was stationed behind, marched forward at great risk. The Chōḷa army regrouped itself and followed its master. Rājendrā was wounded in the thigh and lost some of his close associates. Nothing daunted, Rājendrā moved forward, killing many able Chāḷukya generals. The Chāḷukya army was shattered. Śomēśvara, the Chāḷukya king, fled. Many able Chāḷukya warriors lost their life or were taken prisoners. Thus Rājendrā converted an almost imminent defeat into a brilliant success. As if to commemorate this brilliant success, Rājendrā crowned himself king on the battlefield, while his wounds were still fresh on his body. Thus the second son of Rājendrā I was crowned not at Gaṅgaikoneḍa chōḷapuram, his capital,
but on the battlefield. Rājādhiraṇāja came to be called ‘the elder brother who lost his life on an elephant’.

Rājendra II was succeeded by his younger brother Virarājendra, who also won victories over the Chālukya after winning a decisive battle against the Kalyāṇi Chālukya, Vikramāditya. Virarājendra gave his daughter in marriage to him. The earliest epigraph found on the temple belongs to the reign of Virarājendra. The epigraph records the issue of orders by Virarājendra confirming the gifts made by his father Rājendra I, and elder brother Rājādhiraṇāja I.

After Virarājendra passed away, his son Adhirājendra ascended the throne. He was quite friendly with his brother-in-law. Adhirājendra was a weak ruler, while Vikramāditya was shrewd and able. The trained and seasoned Chōla generals saw a danger to the Chōla empire in this alliance. They refused to accept Adhirājendra. The Chōlas always chose not the eldest son, but the ablest as their successors. The Chōla generals were guided by this principle. But Vikramāditya came to the rescue of Adhirājendra. Marching on Kāṇchi, he punished those who rebelled there and reaching Gangaikondachōlapuram, crowned his brother-in-law as Chōla king. He stayed there for two months to make the position of Adhirājendra secure and then returned to his capital. As soon as Vikramāditya left Gangaikondachōlapuram, the Chōla generals rebelled and in the uprising Adhirājendra lost his life.

Ammangādevi, a daughter of Rājendra I was married to the Eastern Chālukya ruler, Rājarāja Narēndra. Their son was named Rājendra, the future Kulōttunga. From Kalingattupparaṇi, a heroic poem composed on him by Jayamkondār, it is learnt that Kulōttunga was born and brought up in Gangaikondachōlapuram. He had his education, military and other training and was crowned Yuvarāja by Virarājendra at Gangaikondachōlapuram. At the time of the uprising, at Gangaikondachōlapuram Kulōttunga was waging a war in the north. He at once rushed to Gangaikondachōlapuram. The Chōla generals found in him a capable ruler, crowned him Chōla emperor in the name of Kulōttunga. He immediately restored peace in the kingdom. A fragmentary inscription mentioning his mother Ammangādevi is preserved in the Gangaikondachōlapuram temple. One of his inscriptions is also found in the temple. It refers to a gift of land to some other temple. An inscription dated in his 41st regnal year, in the temple gives the prasasti of a Gāhājavāla king of Kanauj. The inscription does not
give the name of the ruler or the nature of gift, as it is left unfinished. But according to K. A. N. Sastrī it should be assigned to either Madana-pāla or his son, Gōvindachandra of Kanaūj. It points to some dynastic connection between the Gāhadāvālas and the imperial Chōḷas. The Kalingattupparāṇi a contemporary poem on Kulōttunga refers to Gangaikondacholapuram as Gangāpuri. Gangaiākkondacholapuram continued to be the capital of the successors of Kulōttunga. Thus Vikrama Chōḷa, Kulōttunga II, Rājārāja II, Rājādhīrarāja II and Kulōttunga III retained it as their capital. There are a few fragmentary records of Kulōttunga III in the temple.

Kulōttunga III was the last of the great Chōḷa emperors. He won signal victories against Ceylon, Madurai, and Karuvūr (the Chōras) and assumed the title of Conqueror of Madurai, Karuvūr and Iḷam. However, towards the close of his reign, the dynamic Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya humiliated him. He invaded the Chōḷa country and razed Tanjore and Uṟandai to the ground and performed the Virābhishēka at Ayirattāḷi and reached as far as Chidambaram. It is not known whether Sundara Pāṇḍya captured Gangaiākkondacholapuram. At any rate, it is not mentioned in his inscriptions. The humiliation marked the beginning of the decline and fall of the Chōḷa empire and with it of the Chōḷa capital.

Kulōttunga III did not live long after this defeat and was succeeded by an inefficient son Rājārāja III. The latter was driven out of his capital by the Pāṇḍya and tried to escape to the north to join the Kuntalas, (the Höysalas of Mysore) but was intercepted by the Pallava chieftain, Köpperuñjinga probably at Tellaṟu where Rājārāja was made a captive. Höysala Narasimha successfully intervened and defeated the Pāṇḍya in the south. Höysala generals captured Köpperuñjinga’s territory and released the Chōḷa. Rājārāja III was recrowned at Gangaiākkondacholapuram. It is not known whether the city suffered on account of these wars. However the contemporary works speak of Muḍikondacholapuram as the Chōḷa capital. Probably Rājārāja III had a preference for that place though Gangaiākkondacholapuram continued to be of importance.

Jaṭāvarman Sundara, who ascended the Pāṇḍya throne in 1251, conquered territories upto Nellore and kept the Chōḷas under subjection. Probably the Chōḷa was paying tribute to him. One of Sundara’s inscriptions is found in the Gangaiākkondacholapuram temple dated in his second regnal year. Evidently, he captured the city in his very first regnal year. Sundara established a special worship named after him in the
temple. Vikrama, who shared the Pándya throne with him, has left an
inscription in the temple.

Sundara was succeeded by Māravarman Kulaśekhara, another able
ruler in 1268 A.D. He defeated and probably killed the last Chōla
Rājendra III, in Kaṇnanur in 1279. Gangaikondačolapuram was
included in his dominion and two inscriptions of him are found in the
temple. After the death of Kulaśekhara, in 1310 the Tamil country
was invaded by Malik Kafur, a Muslim general and there was anarchy and
confusion for a year. The Pándya hold on Gangaikondačolapuram
seems to have been weakened though they continued to hold sway in
a nominal way over this part of the country.

In 1365, Kumāra Kampaṇa, the Vijayanagara viceroy marched as
far as Rāmeśvaram and brought the southern country under his control.
There are no records of any of the Vijayanagara rulers till 1463, nearly a
hundred years after Kampaṇa’s conquest. There is a record of Thiruven-
gadhamudaiyān Ekāmranātha Gāṅgēyan dated 1463, who probably was
a subordinate of the Vijayanagara ruler Mallikārjuna. An inscription of
Praṇḍa Virūpāksha, the son of Mallikārjuna dated in 1483, is in the
temple. This proves that Gangaikondačolapuram was in the Vijaya-
nagara empire. An inscription of Krīṣṇadēva, in Tirthanagari (South
Arecot) dated in 1517, records that the king gifted tax-free lands to
many Siva and Vishnu temples in the Chōlamandalam. Gangaikonda-
čolapuram temple is amongst them.

In the early part of 16th century Gangaikondačolapuram was
brought under the Udaiyarpālaiyam subdivision which became the seat of
Arauskāvalars, also called poligar. They were local chieftains who acted
as the subordinates of the Vijayanagar emperors. They were to keep in
perpetual readiness certain number of elephants, cavalry and foot soldiers to
march against any army when called upon. For this purpose they were
allotted certain revenue from a number of villages, assigned to them.
Gangaikondačolapuram thus became a part of Udaiyarpālaiyam sub-
division.

After the fall of the Vijayanagar empire, the poligar of Udaiyār
pālaiyam continued to hold an important position in the area. In 1756
the French invaded Udaiyarpālaiyam and forced the Poligar to pay
a tribute of 40,000 Rupees. In 1765, the Nawab assisted by a party of
English attacked the forts of Udaiyarpālaiyam. During these battles,
Gangaikondacholapuram temple was probably used as a fort and considerably suffered damage. The bastions now found outside the enclosure walls in the west were probably erected during these wars. The district of Thiruchirappalli was handed over to the British East India Company in 1801 when the poligar of Udaiyarpalaiyam was paid an allowance of Rs. 1000. The estate was brought under the management of an agent of the Nawab. In 1817 the British Government restored a portion of the polliam to the Poligar subject to a nominal Peshkiat and gave him a zamindari sunnad. However Gangaikonda cholapuram was excluded from it.

The greatest damage to the temple was done in 1836, when a dam was erected across the Collidam about seven miles from the temple. For the supply of stones of the construction, some vandal members of the public works department pulled down the enclosure walls, the dilapidated gopura, the front and great mandapa and carried away the stones.

An interesting account published in a local publication of 1855 and reproduced in the Indian Antiquary IV, page 274, states that 'speaking of the noble temple of Gangaikondacholapuram it must not be omitted that when the lower Kolurun anikat was built, the structure was dismantled of a large part of the splendid granite sculptures which adorned it and the enclosing wall was almost wholly destroyed in order to obtain materials for the work. The poor people did their utmost to prevent this destruction and spoilation of a venerated edifice by the servants of a government that could show no title to it; but of course without success; they were only punished for contempt. A promise was made indeed that a wall of brick should be built in place of the stone wall that was pulled down; but unhappily it must be recorded that this promise has never been redeemed.'
The city then and now

There is an interesting reference in the SilappadhiKāram, a post Saṅgam classic, to the foundation of Uraiyūr as a capital of the Chōlas of the Saṅgam age. A cock is said to have attacked and chased away an elephant at Uraiyūr. This inspired the Chōla king to make Uraiyūr his Metropolis, for he believed that the inhabitants of that place would be heroic and valorous as the cock. A similar story of a rabbit chasing away a hound is told of the foundation of Pāncchālamkurichi, the capital of Virapāṇḍiya Kaṭṭabomman, who defied the British in late 18th century A. D.

If these traditions are of any value, they indicate that a place which inspired a ruler to attain phenomenal success, was honoured by being made capital of the ruler, who cherished sentimental attachment to it. Only thus can we explain for the foundation of Gangaikondachālapuram, the capital of the imperial Chōlas from the eleventh century. Gangaikondachālapuram was unheard of even as a village when Rājendra I came to the Chōla throne. Tānjāvūr had been the Chōla capital ever since it had been captured from the Muttaraiya Chieftains by Vijayālaya, who founded the imperial line of the Chōlas in the middle of ninth century A. D.

Tānjāvūr served the interests of the Chōlas well. It was well fortified and adorned with palaces and mansions; it was there that Rājarāja I had built the great temple; it was from there that he had brought for the first time the entire southern India under one parasol. Yet within few years of the erection of the great temple and within few years of his passing, his son, Rājendra shifted his capital to Gangaikondachōlapuram.

Was this because Gangaikondachōlapuram served strategic purposes better than Tānjāvūr (but Tānjāvūr had better claims with its fortifications and natural river barriers)? No answer is possible except for a suggestion that it was probably here that Rājendra resolved to despatch a military expedition to the Gangetic plain.
The city of Gangaikondacholapuram was probably founded by Rājendrā before his 17th regnal year as it is mentioned in one of his inscriptions of that year. Judging from the available literature and the remains we may conclude that it was an extensive city, carefully planned and laid in accordance with the architectural treatises to suit the needs of a capital, rājadhāni. The city seems to have had two fortifications, one inner and the other outer. The outer was probably wider. The villagers point to a mound running all around the palace as the outer fortification. Systematic brick robbing has been going on in this place. It is probable that the outer fortification built of burnt bricks, was about six to eight feet wide. It consisted of two walls, the intervening space (the core) being filled with sand. The bricks are fairly large in size and are made of well burnt clay. A fortification at this place called Rājendrā Chōla Madil (the fort wall named Rājendrā Chōla) evidently after the builder, is mentioned in an inscription. This fortification might be identical with this outer wall. The inner fortification was around the royal palace, probably identical with the Utpadai vittu madil of the inscriptions.

The royal palace also was built of burnt brick. The ceilings were covered with flat tiles of small size, laid in a number of courses, in fine lime mortar. The pillars were probably made of polished wood, supported on granite bases; a few pillar bases have survived to this day. Iron nails and clamps have been recovered from this palace site.

In the reign of Virarājendrā, Rājendrā’s third son, the palace at Gangaikondacholapuram is referred to as Chōla-Kēraḷa Thirumāligai (Chōla Kērāla palace) evidently after one of the titles of Rājendrā I. The same inscription mentions a few parts of the palace as adibhūmi (the ground floor), Kilaisāpana (the eastern portico), and a seat named Māvali vāṇadhi-rajan. Evidently the palace was multistoried. In an inscription dated in the 49th year of Kūḷottunga (1119 A.D.) reference is made to Gangaikondacholamāligai at this place. It is likely that there were more than one royal building each having its own name.

Besides the names of the palace and fort walls, the names of a few roads and streets are preserved in the epigraphs. Two entryways named Thiruvāsaḷ, the eastern gate and the Vēmbuguḍi gate, evidently the south gate leading to the village Vēmbuguḍi situated in that direction are mentioned. Reference is also found to highways named after Rājarāja and Rājendrā as Rājarājan Peruvaḷi and Rājendran Peruvāḷi.
Other streets mentioned in epigraphs are the ten streets (Pattu teru), the gateway lane (Thiruvásal Nārāsam) and the Suddhamali lane.

Probably in the reign of Kulöttunga, the fortifications were renewed and the city underwent some alterations and additions. An epigraph refers to the fort wall of Kulöttunga Chōla (Kulöttunga Chōlan Thirumadiṭ). The inscription also refers to the highways, Kulöttungachōlan Thirumadiṭ peruvāḷi, Vilāṇudaiyān Peruvāḷi and Kūläiyānai pōna Peruvāḷi (the highway through which a short elephant passed by). The strengthening of the fortification and additions to the city in the reign of Kulöttunga I were probably necessitated by the uprising which led to the murder of Chōla king Adirajendra, Kulöttunga’s predecessor.

The epigraphs also refer to the Madhurāntaka Vaḍavāru, now called the Vaḍavāru, running about three miles east of the ruined capital. Madhurāntaka Vaḍavāru evidently named after one of the titles of Rājendra I, was a source of irrigation to a vast stretch of land bordering the capital. An irrigation channel called Ānaiveṭṭuvaṇ (destroyer of elephants) Kūḷ is also mentioned.

There were both wet and dry lands inside the Fort, used for cultivation and other purposes. The present positions of the existing temples throw some light on the lay out of the city. With the palace as the centre to the city, the great temple, and the other temples in the city seem to have been erected. Towards the north-east (Īsānga) of the palace is the great temple of Śiva. The Śiva temple according to Vāstu and Āgamic texts should be in the north-east of the city or village and should face east. Till recent times, the local people say an image of Vishnu with his consorts was in situ to the west of the palace. The temple of Vishnu should be in the west. To the south-east of the palace is a temple dedicated to Aiyanār (Sāsta). Obviously there should have existed other temples as prescribed in traditional treatises.

A few villages lying mostly to the east of the temple bear names that recall their association with the original layout of the city. Thus Virachōlapuram, Kollāpuram, Meykāvalputhur, Vānavanallur, Virabhūgha etc., are of interest.

A number of small tanks and ponds mentioned in inscriptions and retained in tradition, supplied drinking water to the residents, besides
a number of wells. Most of the Chola kings who succeeded Rajendra were crowned here. They retained it as their capital, reoriented and trained the efficient Chola army. This capital of the most powerful empire in Asia at one time is now absolutely desolate only the temple of Gangaikondachola survives. To those who know of the brilliant history of the Chola empire it is a tragedy.

What caused the destruction of this city? The Pandyas who put an end to the Chola empire late in the 13th century, avenging their earlier defeats at the hands of the Cholas, should have razed the city to the ground, a misfortune that befell on capitals in early times. It should have remained a heap of brick debris, the inhabitants of the nearby villages pilfering the bricks for their constructions. The people have also dug systematically deep into the ground and extracted cartloads of ancient bricks, at four annas per cartload. The residents boast that within a radius of five miles, no brick kiln is needed.
(A) Architecture

The temple of Gangaikondacholapura is approached through the northern entrance from the road. The passage passes through the enclosure wall and leads on to the inner court. As one steps in, the great \textit{Vimāna} arrests the visitor's sight. The \textit{Vimāna} with its recessed corners and upward movement presents a striking contrast to the straight-sided pyramidal tower of Taṉjāvūr. As it rises to a height of 160 feet and is shorter than the Taṉjāvūr tower, it is often described as the feminine counterpart of the Taṉjāvūr temple. The \textit{Vimāna} is flanked on either side by small temples; the one in the north now housing the Goddess is fairly well preserved. The small shrine of Chaṇḍikēvara is near the steps in the north. In the north-east are a shrine housing Durga, a well called lion-well (\textit{simhakāni}) with a lion figure guarding its steps and a late \textit{maṇḍapa} housing the office. Nandi is in the east facing the main shrine. In the same direction is the ruined \textit{gopura}, the entrance tower. The main tower surrounded by little shrines truly presents the appearance of a great \textit{Chakravarti} (emperor) surrounded by chieftains and vassals. The Gangaikondacholapura \textit{Vimāna} is undoubtedly a \textit{dēvālaya chakravarti}, an emperor among temples of South India.

The enclosure

Though the temple of Gangaikondacholapura follows the plan of the great temple of Taṉjāvūr in most details it has an individuality of its own. From the remains it may be seen that it had only one enclosure wall and a \textit{gopura} while the Taṉjāvūr temple has two \textit{gopuras} and enclosures. The \textit{prākāra} follows the Taṉjāvūr lay-out in that it had a two storeyed cloister running all around. Only a part of this has survived in the north. The stones from the other portions were utilised to build the Lower Anaicut across the Kollidam. The pillars of cut stone are severely plain throughout as in Taṉjāvūr. They have no inscription unlike at Taṉjāvūr. The courtyard is 566'9" in length and 318'6" width and has a transept at the west in line with the main sanctum. The cloister has a raised platform, 18' in height. At regular intervals, bases for shrines are noticed.
These shrines should have resembled the *prākāra* shrines of Taṅjāvūr and in all probability housed the images of the eight directional deities, in their appropriate quarters as in Taṅjāvūr. However none of the images have survived. Evidently the *prākāra* has been laid out in the traditional Vāstu grid system called *Vāstupadavīnyāsa*.

The *Gōpura*

The entrance tower, the superstructure of which has completely fallen down, is located in the east. It measures about 68' x 46' with a 12' entry way. It followed in pattern the outer *gōpura* of the Taṅjāvūr temple, with no sculptures on its base except for the Dvārapālas. The stones from the ruined *gōpura* were removed to construct the dam mentioned earlier. In the temples of Taṅjāvūr, Dārāsuram and Tribhuvanam, there are two *gōpuras*, the outer being taller than the inner. But in Gangaikondachōḻapuram there is only one *gōpura*, at the east. Besides this eastern entrance an entrance is provided in the northern enclosure, which now serves as the main entry on account of its proximity to the main road.

Dr. James C. Harle in his excellent work the ‘Temple gateways in South India’ states that “the *gōpura* of the great temple at Gangaikonḍa-chōḻapuram (A.D. 1030) belongs as far as one can tell in its present ruined state to the same early phase of development as the Taṅjāvūr *gōpuras*. It was neither as large or as complex, however, as the Taṅjāvūr *gōpuras*. On plan, the whole edifice forms a rectangle approximately 60 feet by 33 feet. Large dvārapālas were placed on the outer facade. One of them now lies on the ground in front of the *gōpura* and measures at least seven feet. The unique *devāra*, as at Taṅjāvūr, is on the outsides of the entryway. The vestibules have two storeys, divided by a crude and massive architrave; in the lower, an exposed stair is built against the back wall; above a doorway in the same wall may have led either to another stairway or to a circumambulatory corridor.”

Dr. Harle further states that an early photograph (photo No. 2452 Indian Museum, Calcutta) shows the three upper storeys of the *gōpura*, in a dilapidated condition.

A fairly large size bull is found on a pedestal inside the court, facing the main sanctum. It is made up of fallen stones and stucco. It is not known whether the original one was monolithic. A *bali pitha* is found east of Nandi.
The building to the north of Nandi, called Alankāra maṇḍapa, and now housing the executive office of the temple was in all probability constructed in the 19th century.

The Simhakēni

To the north of this maṇḍapa is a circular well with steps provided at the western end. The entrance of the steps is adorned with a lion figure which has given the name to the well. According to tradition Rājendrā poured a part of the Ganges water, brought from his famous expedition, into the well, to sanctify it. An inscription on the lion sculpture, in 19th century characters, records that it was constructed by the Zamindar of Uḍayārpaḷaiyam.

The Mahishāsuramardini Shrine

To the west of the lion-well is a shrine dedicated to the Goddess, Mahishāsuramardini. The shrine is a later structure (probably built in 14-15th Century) and did not form part of the original layout. It consists of a sanctum preceded by a maṇḍapa. The Goddess installed in the sanctum is similar to a Durga found at Veerareddi street, in the same village and is in all likelihood, Chālukya in origin.

The Southern Kailāsa

The shrine, south of the main Vimāna and called the southern Kailāsa has a sanctum preceded by a maṇḍapa which in turn is fronted by flights of steps from south and north of which the basement alone remains. The outer walls of the sanctum and the front maṇḍapa carry niches, housing images. The niches of the sanctum carry Dakshiṇāmūrthi in the south and Lingodhbhava in the west, while the niche on the north is empty. The niches on the front maṇḍapa carry in the south Gaṅeśa, Nātaraja, Bhikshāṭaṇa, and Subrahmanya and in the north, Gauriprasāda, Durga, Ardhanāri and Bhirava. The inner sanctum of the shrine is now in ruins.

A little to the north-east of this temple is a granite basement, probably the ruin of a maṇḍapa. It is now called the Alankāra maṇḍapa. To the west of this is a well, probably coeval with the temple.

To the south-west of the main temple, is a small shrine dedicated to Gaṅeśa. It has a sanctum preceded by a maṇḍapa. The structure could be assigned to the 13th century on stylistic grounds.
The temple of Goddess (Northern Kailāsa)

To the north of the main temple is a small shrine now housing the Goddess, Bhannāyaki, the consort of Lord Gangaikondacholiśvara. The temple, as mentioned earlier, resembles the southern Kailāsa in every aspect and is called Uttar Kailāsa. It has a sanctum, preceded by a front maṇḍapa, provided with side-steps. In front of this is a bigger maṇḍapa (mahāmaṇḍapa), which is well preserved, unlike its southern counterpart. The niches on the sanctum and the front maṇḍapa carry the same sculptures as in the southern Kailāsa. Thus Gaṇeśa, Naṭarāja, Bhikshāṭaṇa, Subrahmanya, Dakshiṇamūrti, Lingodhbbhava, Brahma, Bhairava, Ardhanāri, Durga, and Gauriprasāda are noticed in order, from the south, while in the southern Kailāsa, the northern niche of the garbhagrha is empty, a sculpture of bearded Brahma is noticed in this temple. Two gatekeepers flank the entrance. In front of the gatekeepers, in the mahāmaṇḍapa, are images of Saraswati in the north and Gajalakshmi in the south. These two Goddesses, Lakshmi and Saraswati, occupy the same position in the main temple and also in the great temple of Taṅjāvūr. They occupy these positions to suit some ritual needs. It is significant that the mahāmaṇḍapa has steps to it only on the side. In ancient times, steps were always provided on the sides and not in front of the sanctum. The beautiful image of Goddess now enshrined in the sanctum of this temple should be a later instalation. Originally the temple should have enshrined a Śiva Linga, like the southern Kailāsa. Though separate shrines for Goddesses came to be built in the main temples only from the reign of Rājendra I, no Devi-shrine was built originally in this temple, the present one being clearly a later institution.

The Chandikēśvara shrine

The little temple to the north-east of the central shrine enshrining Chandikēśvara, the steward of Śiva temple is of interest. It is an all stone temple built on a raised basement, with a storeyed superstructure. The sanctum is approached by side steps. Inside the sanctum is an image of Chandikēśvara, coeval with the temple. The outer walls of this sanctum have niches on all the three sides, carrying sculptures of Chandikēśvara. He is the principal subsidiary deity in Śiva temples and till about 13th century A.D. all transactions relating to the temple were made in his name. Hence a separate shrine is provided for him in the temple complex. This shrine is coeval in time with the main temple.
The main temple

The main temple consists of a sanctum tower called Sri Vimāna or Sri kōil, a big rectangular maṇḍapa called the mahāmaṇḍapa with an intervening vestibule called mukhamaṇḍapa.

The Sri Vimāna consists of the following parts beginning with the lowest basement.

1. The basement (upa-piṭha)
2. The base (adhisṭāna)
3. The wall (bhitti)
4. The roof cornice (prastara)
5. The garland of miniature shrines (hāra)
6. The storeys (tala or bhūmi)
7. The neck (grīva)
8. The crown (sikharā) and
9. The finial (stūpi).

According to architectural treatises, basements (upa-piṭhās) are introduced in temples to increase the height of the main tower; to add to structural stability and to make the temple tower majestic. That these purposes are magnificently fulfilled by the basements of both the Tānjāvūr temple and Gangaiṅkoṇḍachōḷapuram temple, may be noticed even by a casual visitor not conversant with architectural principles. Besides the purposes mentioned above, the basement also provides, a space to walk around the tower. In this temple, the basement is ornamented with sculptures of lions and leogriﬃs with lifted paws.

The main base adhisṭāna is decorated with well deﬁned courses, consisting of the lotus moulding adaspadma, and the kumuda moulding, topped by a frieze of leogriﬃs and riders. This constitute the main base, the top of which forms the flooring level of the inner sanctum.

That portion of the structure rising above the main base up to the roof cornice is called ‘the wall’ (bhitti or kōl). It is the principal element that encases the main sanctum and carries on it a number of niches housing various deities. The wall in this temple is divided into two horizontal courses by an intervening cornice. The lower and upper courses have an equal number of niches, on all the three sides except the front.
On the vertical axis the wall surfaces are well defined by intervening recesses forming a rectangle in the centre and squares at the corners. Each is made up of a central niche housing a deity, flanked by a group of small sculptures which in turn are flanked by pilasters simulating pillars. Thus each niche housing a deity appears as a miniature shrine. The recessed walls in the lower courses carry a vase and pilaster ornamentation, while on the upper courses, there are small niches housing deities. Thus there are five principal deities in the lower course and nine deities in the upper course on each side. Since the mukhamandapa abutts the eastern wall, only one niche is retained in the lower course. On either side of the eastern wall, the upper course retains the principal niche at the corners and smaller niches at the recessed walls.

The sculptures in the lower courses, of the Śrī Vīmāna depict various aspects of Śiva and also the subsidiary deities who include Gaṇeṣa, Viṣṇu, Subrahmaṇya, Durga, Brahma, and Bhairava, supplemented by Lakṣmi, Saraswati, and Durga in the niches of the great maṇḍapa. The sculptures were made separately and fitted into the niches. They are flanked by a group of small sculptures, carved in situ, illustrating the theme the niche sculpture seeks to represent. The sculptures on the upper courses represent, besides some aspects of Śiva, the guardian deities of the eight quarters.

The roof cornice consists mainly of three parts: (a) the frieze of dwarfs at the bottom, (b) the cornice forming the outer edge of the ceiling roof proper and, (c) the frieze of leogriﬀs on the top. The cornice is decorated with plain spade-like ornamentation topped by the head of a leogriff.

A row of miniature shrines runs around the tower like a garland, and is called a hāra. It consists of square pavilions at the corners, rectangular pavilions in the middle, with a nest (nīḍa) ornamentation in between.

Above this rise the main tower, consisting of nine stories including the ground floor. The upper stories of the main tower carry the same type of ornamentation, consisting of square and oblong pavilions except a change; the central wagon-shaped pavilion is flanked by square ones instead of “the nests”, the whole being projected forward than the rest. This is a change from the Tānjāvūr tower, which presents a pyramidal appearance without the central projection.
The neck is provided with four niches in the cardinal directions and bulls at the corners. The niches are topped by arch-like embellishment called kirtimukhas.

The globular element on the top called Sikhara is according to tradition, made of one stone weighing many tonnes. But, in fact, it is made of many pieces of cut stones dressed for the purpose, as may be seen from the portion where the plaster has fallen down.

The finial, stūpi is a metal vase with a lotus-bud design at the top. It is gilded with gold and is said to carry an inscription named after Nallakkā-tōla-udayār, a Poligar of Uḍayārpālayam. It is not known whether the stūpi is the original one and probably gilded by the Poligar or is a new one gifted by him.

The sanctum enshrining the main deity, is encased by an inner wall. Between the inner wall and the outer, there is an intervening passage-called sāndhāra running all around. The two walls are joined at the top by a series of corbelling. They are provided to support the massive superstructure. In the great temple of Taṅjavūr, the outer walls have openings in the centre leading into the intervening passage. Facing the openings are sculptures of deities. The inner faces of the passage are painted with scenes depicting exploits of Śiva and his devotees. But in the temple of GangaiKoṇḍachauḍapuram, no painting is noticed in the inner passage. The central openings and corresponding sculptures, are also not found here. This inner passage around the sanctum is also found on the first floor. In the Taṅjavūr temple the inner wall of this passage carries 108 poses of dancing Śiva, of which 83 are fully finished and the rest are incomplete. But in GangaiKoṇḍachauḍapuram no such sculptural representation is noticed.

The inner sanctum, houses a very big Śiva Linga, rising to a height of thirteen feet. It is said to be the biggest Śiva Linga enshrined in a sanctum in any South Indian temple. The entrance to the sanctum is guarded by massive doorkeepers, dvārapālas.

The maṇḍapa immediately preceeding the sanctum is approached by steps leading to it from the north and the south sides and also from the great maṇḍapa in the east. The entrances are guarded by big dvārapālas of remarkable beauty. The maṇḍapa is supported by massive plain and square pillars. The eastern walls flanking the opening to the
great maṇḍapa carry groups of small sculptures illustrating Śaivite themes. The following are the themes thus represented.

The episode of Rāvana travelling in his chariot; shaking the Kailāśa mountain; Śiva seated with Umā, pressing the mountain with his toe; Rāvana’s anguish under the weight of the mountain and finally Śiva bestowing boons on Rāvana, are depicted in three panels

The second episode on the same wall depicts Vishṇu, worshipping Śiva with 1008 lotus flowers; finding one short he plucks his own eye and offers it as a flower; Śiva bestows grace on Vishṇu. The panels closer to the entrance depict the marriage of Śiva with Umā. Umā, the daughter Himavān, desirous of marrying Śiva, undertakes austerities and worships Śiva; Śiva, after testing her steadfastness as a beautiful youth, marries her; the celestials witness the marriage; Brahma, the creator offers oblation to the sacrificial fire and Vishṇu gives Umā in marriage to Śiva.

The east wall close to the entrance on the northern side depicts the Kirāṭārjuna scene; Arjuna the Pāṇḍava hero performs austerities to obtain a Pāśupata weapon; Śiva as a hunter accompanied by Umā as a huntress, tests Arjuna’s devotion; picks up a quarrel with Arjuna over a kill; Arjuna not knowing the personality behind the hunter, enters into a duel with him and is ultimately vanquished; Śiva manifesting himself bestows the weapon.

At the extreme north of the same side are portrayed two episodes, one representing Śiva quelling the pride of God of death, in order to protect his devotee and the other representing Saint Chaṇḍikēśvara a great devotee of Śiva, cutting off the leg of his father, who disturbed his faith and Śiva bestowing grace on both father and son.

Though these group sculptures are carefully selected, they are imperfectly finished and lack the beauty and elegance of the sculptures of the main tower.

The Mahāmaṇḍapa

Had the original maṇḍapa been preserved, it would have retained the grandeur of its conception and beauty. But as it is, only the portion upto the main base is original. The side walls, the pillars and the ceilings have been reconstructed, probably in the 18th century A. D. Obviously the superstructure should have crumbled due
to neglect and vegetation. However a part of the original has survived upto the ceiling at the western end. From the surviving portion it may be seen, the roof (prastara) of the mahāmaṇḍapa was in level with the prastara of the ground floor (ādi bhūmi) of the main Vimāna. Like the walls of the main Vimāna, a horizontal cornice divides the outer walls of the mahāmaṇḍapa into two parts. They carry a series of niches both in the upper and lower courses. The sculptures of Vidyēśvaras, Vasus, Ādityas and other subsidiary deities were probably enshrined in them. As mentioned earlier, the ādihūmi of the main Vimāna has two floors inside the sāndhāra passage, the intervening cornice forming the intermediate floor level. The mahāmaṇḍapa should have been a two storeyed pavilion, quite fitting with the mahāprāśāda of the temple. In view of the tall dvārapālas guarding the entrance to the mukhamañḍapa, the central passage should have had only the upper ceiling without the intermediate flooring. Thus the central passage was flanked by two storeyed structures, resembling the storeyed cloister of the enclosure. It is likely that the mahāmaṇḍapa of Taṅjavūr was also originally a two storeyed structure. They would have presented a most spectacular sight when the deities were taken out in procession through the mahāmaṇḍapa.

As it stands today the inner side of the maṇḍapa has a central passage, leading from the front to the sanctum flanked by two raised platforms and a passage running around. Two massive dvārapālas are noticed at the western end guarding the entrance to the mukhamañḍapa. A room at the south western corner houses a beautiful Somāśkanda image and a few other bronzes. A few sculptures and bronzes receiving regular worship are on the northern platform. The north eastern corner houses an interesting Solar altar, now worshipped as navajrāhu (nine planets).

The front entrance to the great maṇḍapa, is again approached by steps from north and south. The entrance to the maṇḍapa is guarded by massive dvārapālas. As the flooring of the maṇḍapa is on a high elevation, the steps rise to a considerable height forming a high platform in the front. It is said that there is a subterranean passage with steps under this platform. Some claim that this passage leads to the royal palace, while others assert that it leads to the river Kollidam. Yet a third tradition says that it leads to an underground treasury wherein invaluable properties belonging to the temple are preserved. None in the living memory has set foot on this passage for fear of darkness, poisonous gas and wasps.
It is not unlikely that the empty underground space below the great mandapa and the space between the steps, were utilised as store houses.

The original steps leading to the front entrance of the great mandapa and the raised platform were probably disturbed and rebuilt as some of the stones built-in haphazardly carry fragmentary inscriptions of the 13th Century A. D.

(B) Sculpture

The sculptures of Gangaikondacholapram are known for their boldness of conception and excellent execution. They present pleasing and charming faces full of life and rhythm. The images of Saraswathi, Chandesanugrahamurti and Nataraja are undoubtedly from the dextrous hands of a master craftsman who has carved a permanent place for his creations in the art history of Tamilnad.

The sculptures on the main Vimaṇa, the great mandapa, and the other small shrines represent the forms prevalent at that period and occupy fixed positions to suit the needs of worship, as enunciated in the Āgamic texts. The images in the northern and southern Kailasa shrines occupy identical positions. The main temple, being a mahāprāśāda, introduces additional images in its niches. An image of either Lingodbhava or Vishnu is placed generally in the niche at the back of the Garbhagṛha in Śiva temples. In the great Vimaṇa of Gangaikondacholapuram both are found at the back. Vishnu with his consorts is seen in the lower niche while Lingodbhava is shown in the upper niche. In some of the temples of the Chola period, Subrahmanya is shown here at the back niche, especially when the temple faces west. An image of Subrahmanya is also shown here at the back of the Garbhagṛha. The image of Chandesanugrahamurti occupying the north eastern niche is also significant. In Pallava temples like Airavatesvara, Muktēśvara and Mātangaśvara, all at Kāñchi, Chandesanugrahamurti figures are noticed occupying an identical position.

The upper row of niches in the main Vimaṇa carry sculptures of dikpālas and eleven Rudras, besides a few well-known forms of Śiva. Of the eight dikpālas the one occupying the northern quarter is clearly Soma, identified by the halo behind his head. Soma facing north is found on the third floor of the monolith, Dharmaraja ratha at Māmallapuram. He is also found in the north on the enclosure wall of the Kailasanātha temple of Kāñchi. Soma distinguished by a halo behind his head, is always shown as the guardian deity of the north in Tamilnad, unlike in the north
where Kubhera is represented on the Vimāna, though both are held identical in architectural treatises.

It may be seen that besides the images identified, there are eleven images with four arms in a standing posture. The dīkṣālas are secondary deities called āvarana dēvatās, receiving daily worship. Besides the dīkṣālas the eleven Rudras (Ekādasa Rudras), the twelve Ādityās, the eight Vasus, the eight Vidyēśvaras, the eight mūrthis (ashtamūrthīs) and some other deities are also daily worshipped. According to Āgamic texts the eleven Rudras should be shown standing with four arms, holding paraśu and mṛga in the upper arms, while the lower ones should be in the abhaya and varada poses. Evidently the eleven images on the Vimāna at Gangaikondachōlapuram represent the eleven Rudras. The names of the eleven Rudras as given in texts are Sadyojāta, Vāmadēva, Aghōra, Tatpurusha, Īsāna, Mrtyunjaya, Vijaya, Kiranāksha, Aghorāstrā, Śrīkānta and Mahādeva.

The great mandapas at Taṅjāvūr and Gangaikondachōlapuram carry a number of niches adorned with sculptures. In the Kailāsanātha temple of Kāṇchi images of Lakshmi, Saraswathi, Durga and Jyeṣtha are found in the mandapa. According to Mayamatha, the well-known South-Indian text on architecture, these four forms of Goddesses are to be placed outside the Brahmasthāna, the place occupied by the main Vimāna. In Taṅjāvūr and Gangaikondachōlapuram Lakshmi, Saraswathi and Durga are found in identical niches on the walls of the great pavilion. Evidently they are enshrined in these niches to fulfil ritual needs. Some of the sculptures in standing posture found on the mahāmandapa have not so far been identified. It is likely they also represent the secondary deities. A series of sculptures at Taṅjāvūr are shown with two arms, holding a sword and a shield. They are probably the eight Vasus, described in Āgamic texts. Unfortunately the great mandapa at the Gangaikondachōlapuram has fallen down and undergone repairs. The majority of the niches are disturbed and are no more in existence. Some of the loose sculptures preserved in the enclosure may belong to this group.

The representation of the guardian deities on the Vimāna, the sculpture placement in the niches of the Vimāna and the presence of Saraswathi, Lakshmi and Durga in the niches of the mahāmandapa show that the builders had architectural treatises before them.
The following is the sculpture placement in the lower niches of the main Vimāna.

EAST-WALL (SOUTH SIDE)

KANKĀLADHARA :- Six armed standing figure in tribhanga pose. The upper right arm holds a snake; the middle one feeds the mṛga and the lower one playing on uḍukkai is broken. The upper left arm holds a trident across the back with a chowri hanging; the middle one is placed on the head of a dwarf standing by the side and the bottom holding the uḍukkai is broken. Pair of sandals adorn the feet. The plaster and painting on the figure belong to a later period.

On the wall to the right of Śiva are shown Sūrya on top; Bhūtagaṇas in the middle and wives of sages at the bottom. The wall to the left of Śiva carries Chandra on top, gaṇas in the middle and wives of sages at the bottom.

The makara torana above this niche carries a bas-relief of Umāmahēśvara in the middle.

SOUTH-WALL

GAṆESA :- Gaṇesa, dancing with four arms; upper right arm holds a parasu; the lower right holds the broken tusk; the upper left arm is lifted up; the lower left arm holds a fruit. The right leg is lifted up in rhythmic stance. Sūrya and Chandra, gaṇas and bhūtas are shown on the sidewalls. Below the feet are shown three gaṇas, playing maddala, cymbals and conch. The Centre of the torana carries a faint carving. It represents a seated tiger, two fish and a bow which was the royal insignia of Rajēndrachōḷa.

ARDHANĀRI :- A standing figure in Tribhanga pose with three arrns; two to the right and one to the left; The upper right holds a parasu, while the lower right rests on the head of a bull standing besides it. The only left carries a full blown flower, probably nīlotpala. A parrot seated on the arm is seen pecking the pollen. The right side of the head is adorned with a jatamakuṭa and the left with a kesabandha. A lion pendant in the right ear and a roll pendant in the left are seen. A parasol above and one fly whisk on either side are shown. The breast is shown pronouncedly on the left emphasizing the feminine aspect. The left leg wears a sari extending upto the knee. The right leg wears bringipāda.
No sculpture is represented on the side walls. The middle of the makara torana carries wavy lines. This figure of Ardhanāri is particularly charming with a captivating smile on its face. The artist has been able to bring forth masculine firmness and feminine tenderness in the same face.

DAKSHIŅĀMŪRTI :- The original figure of Dakshināmūrti that should have adorned this niche seems to have been lost. The present one is a late figure that could be assigned 13th Century A. D. It is disproportionate to the niche and is dwarfish. It is similar to the sculptures of the period seated on a mountain with four arms. The upper right arm holds a rosary of beads. The lower right is in a teaching posture; the upper left holds fire and the lower, a book. The right leg is planted on the back of a lying dwarf; the left is bent and placed on the right knee. One of the image of sage, wearing kundala ear ornaments seems to be original. The side walls have four rows of miniature sculptures. East-wall :- two sages and two ganas; five women in second row; six ganas in third row and four sages in the fourth row. West wall :- first row, Agastya, two devas and Sūrya; second row, devas; third row devas and sages; and two devotees in the fourth row.

HARA'HARI :- Four armed figure standing erect in samabhanga pose. The right of the figure represents Hara and the left Hari. This figure is generally called Harihara, but the Saivite Āgamas designate this figure as Harahari. The upper right arm of the figure holds the axe and the lower right in boon bestowing (abhaya) pose; the upper left arm holds a conch and the lower arm is on the thigh. The dukūla, the lower garment on the left is shown upto the knee while the one on the right represents the skin shown above the knee. No sculptures are shown on the side walls. A lotus is shown above the niche.

ĀDAVALLĀR (Naṭarāja) :- A delightful figure of four armed dancing Śiva, holding kettle drum in the upper right arm and boon bestowing palm on the lower right. The upper left carries fire and the lower left is thrown across the body in gajahasta. The matted locks are flying in rhythm on either side. On the right is shown Gaṅgā. By the left side of the leg is shown an eight armed dancing Kāli, carrying drum, sword, trident, abhaya, damdahasta etc. A three legged figure, probably representing Kūli is seen on the right. Below the feet is shown the woman-saint Kāraikkāl Ammai, who on account of her devotion, was endowed this privileged position of being seated below the seat of the Lord, singing
his Greatness. Three Gaṇas are also shown playing symbols and maddala. On the west side wall is shown Sūrya on top. Subrahmanya seated on peacock is shown flying towards the Lord while Gaṇapati moves equally briskly on his rat. Further down is four armed Nandikeśvara playing maddala. Chandra is shown on the top on the side wall to the east. Two armed Goddess Pārvati is leaning on a majestically looking bull; she holds a lotus in her right arm.

WEST WALL.

GAṆGĀDHARA: Four armed standing figure of Śiva, embracing Pārvati standing by his side. The upper right arm of Śiva receives the falling Ganga in his matted lock; the lower right moves gently around Pārvati. The upper left holds mṛga; the left is placed on the thigh. The right arm of the Dēvi is placed on the thigh while the left is bent. Three rows of miniature sculptures are noticed on the side walls. Sūrya is shown on top of the wall right of Śiva; Dēvas are in the middle and two devotees at the bottom. The left wall carries Chandra at the top, devotees in the middle and Bhagiratha doing penance at the bottom. It is significant that the back wall (west wall) at the Kailāsanātha temple of Kāñchi carries a Gaṅgādhara in a separate cell-shrine.

LINGŪDHĪBHAVA : Four armed standing figure of Lingodbhava emanating from the shaft of fire. The right upper arm holds axe and the lower is in the abhaya pose; the left upper holds antelope and the lower is placed on the thigh. The leg below the ankle is hidden. A garland of flowers is shown around the Linga portion at the top. Vishnu as a boar is shown at the bottom in an outline. Brahma as swan is not represented.

MAHĀVISHṆU : Four armed standing figure of Vishnu holding discus and the abhaya pose in the right arms and conch and hand-on-thigh pose with the left. On his right is shown two armed Śri wearing a breast-band and on the left is Bhūdēvi. The side walls show Sūrya and Chandra at the top, dēvas in the middle, and sages at the bottom.

SUBRAHMANYA : A delightful figure of four armed standing Subrahmanya, carrying Sakti and Vajra in the upper arms while holding the lower right in abhaya, and the left on thigh. A prominent garland of flowers characteristic of Subrahmanya figures is shown at the root of the crown. The Dēva wears channavīra.
VISHNU ANUGRAHAMÜRTI: The God and Goddess seated on a pedestal. Śiva four armed, carrying Parasu and mṛga in the upper arms; the lower left is placed on the thigh while the right is in the pose of holding something, probably Chakra. The figure may be taken to represent Chakrādamūrti or Vishnu anugrahamūrti. The Dēvi seated to the left of the Lord holds a lilly in her right arm. A parasol and a pair of chouries are shown above. Due to weathering, the stone has peeled off from the figure.

The side wall to the left of the Lord carries an image of Chandra on top; two devotees in the middle and at the bottom is shown Vishnu worshipping Śiva. The right wall carries Sūrya at the top and devotees in the middle. The bottom figures have weathered.

NORTH-WALL
KĀLĀNDHAKA: Four armed Śiva, destroying Kāla, right leg placed on Kāla, and with the left pressing him. The upper right arm holding parasu (axe) is about to strike; the lower right holds the trident at ease; the upper left holds a mṛga and the lower left points to Kāla. Kāla a fairly big figure, is shown struggling under the feet of the lord.

Side walls carry Sūrya and Chandra at the top. On one side there are devotees and on another is shown Mārkandeya, the boy-saint worshipping Linga and the God of death dragging him forcibly with a rope.

DURGA: Eight armed standing figure holding discus, arrow, sword and abhaya with the right arms and conch, bow, shield and hand-on-thigh pose with the left. Below her legs is shown a buffalo head, imperfectly carved. Behind her stands a lion.

BRAHMA: Four armed standing, three headed (the fourth head at the back not being visible) and bearded figure of Brahma in erect pose. Holds surpr and sprva in the upper right arm and a rosary of beads in the lower right. Holds a bunch of dharbha grass in the upper left and a kundika in the lower left. He is flanked by two armed Dēvis. The Goddess to the right of Brahma, holds a bundle of palm leaves in her left arm. Evidently she is Sarasvatī. The Goddess to the left is obviously Sāvitrī, as Brahma is called Sāvitripati. The side walls carry Sūrya and Chandra and Dēvas and sages.

BHAIRAVA: Eight armed standing nude figure, wearing a garland of skulls. A big snake coils around the thighs; round ball-like eyes, protrud-
ing teeth, flame like hairs; holding a trident, paraśu, sword and noose in
the right arm; and with left, fire, kapāla, khatvāṅga and bell. Behind
the figure is shown an imperfectly carved hound.

KĀMĀNTAKA: Four armed seated figure; right upper arm holding a
rosary of beads and the lower arm pointing down. The left upper arm
holds a chowri and the lower is placed on thigh. The head dress is
delightfully treated and has a distinctiveness of its own.

The side wall to the right carries a figure doing penance on top; below
are two devotees. On the left side at the top is shown Manmatha aiming
an arrow at Śiva. Two devotees are shown in the middle and at the
bottom are shown Manmatha and Rathi.

EAST-WALL (NORTH SIDE)

CHANDĒŚĀNUGRAHAMŪRTI: Śiva seated on a throne with four
arms carries axe and antelope in his upper arms; with the lower the Lord
is seen crowning Chandēsa with a garland of flowers, a symbol of affection
and stewardship. Chandēsa is seen seated in front and with folded arms
receiving the pride of place bestowed on him by his Lord. Chandēsa is
the embodiment of devotion and piety and the place he attained is con-
dered the highest, a devotee of Śiva is privileged with. It is called the
Chandēsa padam, the abode of deliverance. According to Śaiva Siddhānta
Śiva bestows this grace, in the company of Śakti, His consort. In the
sculpture under reference, Pārvati or Umā Paramēśwari as she is often
described, is seated by the side of Her Lord. The treatment of orna-
ments, the portrayal of limbs and affection with which Śiva is seen tak-
ing the garland around the head of Chandēsa are suggestive and truely
convey the supreme message of Śaiva Siddhānta, the image seeks to
depict. In the figure of Chandēsa, Rājēndra Chōla has carved his own
image. Sri C. Sivaramamurthi in his work 'the Chōla temples' states that
"The most remarkable carving here, the Chandēśānugrahamūrti panel, is
almost a suggestion of the laurels won by Rājēndra through the grace of
Śiva and he humbly presents himself as a devotee of Lord, who blessed
Chandēsa".

On the side walls is shown the story of Chandēsa; Chandēsa
worshipping Śiva as a Linga; the cows standing by the side; his father
watching the happenings hiding himself behind the branches of a tree;
disturbing Chandēsa's worship; purturbed Chandēsa throwing his axe at
his father and Śiva bestowing grace on both.
SARASWATI: Facing the image of Čaṇḍēśānamugrahamurti, on the west wall of the Mahāmaṇḍapa is another delightful figure of Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge. The Dēvi is seen seated on a lotus throne with four arms; holds a rosary of beads and an amṛta kalasa with the upper arms and palm leaves and teaching pose with the lower ones; behind her is shown a prabha, aureole.

LAKSHMI: Correspondingly on the South side of the mahāmaṇḍapa, in the west wall is an image of Goddess Lakshmi, seated on a lotus throne with two arms. The Dēvi holds lotus flowers in her arms; unlike Sarasvati, she is seen wearing a breast-band. Above her are shown two elephants pouring water from golden pots held in their trunks.

Sculptures in the niches of the upper course of the main Vimāna.

**EAST-WALL (SOUTH SIDE)**
1. Sūrya standing.
2. Bearded Agni (guardian of the south-east).

**SOUTH WALL**
3. Kālāntaka Śiva.
4. A four armed deity in standing pose.
5. 
6. Yama (guardian of the south).
7. Dakshināmūrthi.
8. Four armed deity (standing).
9. -do-.
10. -do-.
11. Nṛṣṭi (guardian of the south-west).

**WEST WALL**
13. Three headed figure
14. Four armed deity probably Varuṇa (Guardian of the west).
15. Vishṇu.
16. Lingodbhava.
17. Brahma.
18. Two armed deity probably Vāyu (Guardian of the North West).
19. Four armed deity.
20. Four armed deity.

NORTH WALL
22. Four armed deity.
23. Four armed deity.
24. Sōma (guardian of the north; distinguished by a halo behind)
25. Brahma.
26. Four armed deity.
27. Four armed deity, Īsāna (guardian of the north-east)
29. Subrahmaṇya.

EAST-WALL (NORTH SIDE)
30. Gajasamīhāra.
31. Chandra

DVĀRAPĀLAS (GATE KEEPERS)

There are altogether six pairs of massive, monolithic dvārapālas guarding the various entrances to the main temple, of which four pairs are found in the east. The first pair guard the entrance tower at the east. They are now fallen down and lie upside down. The second pair is to be seen at the eastern entrance to the mahāmaṇḍapa. The entrance from the mahāmaṇḍapa to the mukhamaṇḍapa is guarded by a third pair while the fourth guard the entrance to the sanctum. The side entrances to the mukhamaṇḍapa from the south and the north are also guarded by dvārapālas of exquisite workmanship. These dvārapālas are a class by themselves. The Āgamic texts mention four pairs of dvārapālas, each to guard a cardinal direction. Their names are given as under. East: - Nandi and Mahākāla; South: - Hēraṃbha and Bhṛingi; West: - Durmukha and Pāṇḍura and North: - Sita and Asita. The Vimāna of the Taṅjāvūr temple has four pairs of dvārapālas each guarding a direction. Evidently they represent the images named above. In the temple of Gangaikōṇḍachōḷapura the Vimāna does not carry dvārapālas except in the east. The dvārapālas guarding the entrances to the garbhagṛha are certainly Nandi and Mahākāla. In all likelihood the dvārapālas guarding the south and
north entrances to the Mukhamandapa are Hērambha and Bhringi, Durmukha and Pāṇḍura respectively.

THE SOLAR ALTAR

The solar altar called Saura pīṭha in Āgamic texts is in the form of a full blown lotus on a square pedestal in two tiers. The upper tier carries eight deities portrayed at eight directions. They are considered the eight planets, which, including the central lotus representing Sūrya (sun) constitute the navagrahas, (nine planets) worshipped by the Hindus for the bestowal of good fortune and the removal of obstacles. The lower tier is modelled as a chariot with wheels on either side, drawn by seven horses. Aruṇa, the Charioteer of Sūrya is shown driving the horses. The seven horses are said to represent the seven days of the week. The wheels are ornamented with twelve petals, representing the twelve months of a year. At the corners are seen flying celestials, gandharvas carrying flower garlands.

The Āgamic texts specify the worship of Sūrya in the form of a lotus altar. Evidently this is a representation of Saura pīṭha, solar altar, intended for daily worship. This elegant piece is also decidedly a Chālukyan sculpture, probably brought here as a war trophy. In recent years, it has assumed great significance as a large number of devotees worship it as Navagraha for the fulfilment of their vows. When the planet Saturn changes its position once in 27 months, nearly a million people offer worship to this altar.

OTHER SCULPTURES: Besides the sculptures found on the walls of the shrines, a few loose sculptures are also found in the temple. A few of them have been collected and embedded on a platform by the side of the northern entrance. The following sculptures are found embedded: Bhikṣhāṇa, Lingodbhava, Ganēsa, Subrahmanya, Dēvi, Virabhadra, Brahma, Durga, Chandrasēkhara, Vṛshabhāntika, Vinādhara, Sūrya, Sage, Dvārapāla, three figures of Nāgarāja, two images of Vinādhara and four figures probably representing secondary deities. On the south enclosure wall, near the southern Kailāsa, are found embedded a four armed standing Ardhanārī, a Gajalakshmi and two images of Sūrya. By the side of the Lion-well, is found an image of Vishṇu with Śrīdēvi standing. By the side of the Sōlar pīṭha, in the mahāmandapa there are, an image of eight armed Durga and a Sūrya. These two images are in Chālukyan style and probably were brought as trophies. Sri C. Sivaramamurti in 'the Chōḷa temple' states that the Nandi in the temple of Goddess is Chālukyan in style.
(C) **Bronzes**

There are a few bronzes of remarkable beauty preserved in the temple. They were probably gifted for worship when the temple was erected. Of the classical bronzes in the collection, Sōmāskanda, Subrahmanya, Durga, Bhūgasakti, Adhikāranandi and probably Vṛshabhāntika are to be assigned to the period of Rājendra I.

**Bhogasakti**: A two armed standing image of Pārvati of arresting beauty is now placed near the sanctum.

**Durga**: Four armed standing figure in erect (*samabhanga*) pose; holds discus and conch in the upper arms and boon-bestowing and hand-on-thigh poses in the lower arms. The Goddess is shown wearing a breast-band; buffalo head is not represented below the feet. Appropriate with its role the figure displays firmness with which the Goddess struck the demon. The conch and discus are supported by metal pieces issuing from the back.

**Adhikāranandi**: Four armed figure in *abhaya* pose, standing on a lotus pedestal. The upper pair of arms hold axe and antelope; the lower arms in *anjali* pose hold a garland of flower in between. This image is particularly a good specimen representing the theme.

**Sōmāskanda**: Quite fitting with the great Linga in the sanctum and the mahāprāśāda of the temple, the group of Sōmāskanda in the temple is fairly big in size and exhibits all the classical qualities of the Chōla age. The group consists of Śiva seated majestically on a pedestal with four arms. A two armed Dēvi is shown by the side. The original Skanda image is missing. The figures of Śiva and Dēvi closely resemble the sculptures on the lower niches of the main vimāna. The group could be assigned to the period of Rājendra I and was probably the principal Sōmāskanda image of the temple. It may be mentioned that the bronze image of Sōmāskanda is the main processional deity, representing the Linga in the sanctum. The Sōmāskanda image of Thiruvārūr is called Vidi Viṭāṅkar and the one at Taṅjavūr was called Dakshinamēru Viṭāṅkar. The Vimāna of Taṅjavūr temple was called Dakshinamēru by its builder Rājarāja I. The group of Sōmāskanda in the GangaiKondachōḷapuram temple should have been the main processional deity of the temple. This is the biggest group of Sōmāskanda image of the imperial Chōla period now known to exist.
SUBRAHMANYA: By far the best bronze in the collection of the temple is the Subrahmanya image variously called Kārthikēya, Dēvasēnāpathi and Muruga. The image about 3½' in height is shown with four arms standing on a lotus seat. Unlike the conventional lotus pedestals seen in most of the bronze images, the present one is realistically treated. The protrusion at the bottom was probably to slide the image into a bigger pedestal which is now missing. The right upper arm holds sakti, the top of which is broken; the lower right holds a sword of which only the handle now remains, the blade is lost; the left upper arm holds a cock and the lower left holds a shield. The figure is elegantly proportioned and delightfully adorned with ornaments. The vigourous poise and the charming smiling face are suggestive of youth and beauty. Subrahmanya as Muruga is adored as the embodiment of youth, beauty and knowledge. Muruga is the darling of the Tamil country. His exploits are celebrated in Tamil literature; Subrahmanya is a War God, Dēvasēnāpathi the greatest commander-in-chief of the celestials. Rājendra I was the greatest commander, the Tamil country ever saw. It is of interest to note that this great hero has chosen Subrahmanya as his favourite deity. The sword, sakti, and the shield in the hands of the image symbolise Subrahmanya's martial quality while the cock stands for the final victory.

VRSHAHVĀHANA: Four armed image of Śiva standing cross legged. The lower right arm is bent and placed on the head of a bull which is missing. The tall head dress, a Jaṭāmakuṭa is somewhat disproportionate.
VI

Minor Shrines

DURGA SHRINES: Images of Durga are enshrined in four cardinal directions of the palace. Tradition says that these images guarded the four gates of the fortified city. These are now at Palliödai in the north, at Meykävalputhur in the east, and on Virareddi street in the south. The fourth in the west was originally near the bund of the great lake but has recently been brought nearer to the palace and enshrined.

DURGA ON VIRAREDDI STREET: The Durga on Virareddi street is a remarkable piece. Durga is shown with eight arms, standing; right arms hold arrow from the quiver, chakra and a sword; the lower right is with a trident piercing the demon shown at her feet. The left arms hold sankha, bow, shield and the dying demon, Mahisha. Durga's left leg is planted on the chest of the demon while her right leg steadies her on the ground. Her mount is shown to the right at the bottom. The demon holding a shield and a sword is on his knees slowly sinking. A halo is shown behind the deity. A careful study of the sculpture, the arms, the weapons, the dying demon and the style and the treatment of the figure suggest that this sculpture is Chālukyan in origin and was brought as war trophy.

KANAKKUPILLAIYĀR: A few furlongs to the south west of the big temple is a small shrine, enshrining a seated Gaṇesa of considerable beauty. It is four armed, holding the little axe, rosary of beads, a broken tusk, and a mātulīnga fruit. Around the waist is seen a serpent belt. This image also seems to be Chālukyan in origin.

KURUVĀLAPPAR TEMPLE: The Vishṇu temple about a mile to the west of the great temple is now called Kuruvālappar temple, believed to be a contraction of the term Kurugai Kāvalappar. The temple is intimately associated with the lives of two Vaishnavite saints, Nāthamuni and his grand-son Ālavandār. Nāthamuni spent his last days here. Ālavandār on hearing that Nāthamuni was on his death bed, hurried to this place; but before he could reach, the great Acharya passed away. Sri Ālavandār erected a temple in the place where the Acharya attained salvation.
According to tradition the present temple was the one built by Ālavandār. The main deity called Vīranārāyaṇap Perumāḷ is in standing pose. The temple is preceded by a small entrance tower.

AIYANĀR TEMPLE: To the south east of the palace remains, is a small shrine of Aiyanār. The temple faces south and houses a beautiful image of Aiyanār and his consorts Pūrṇa and Pushkala. The sculpture of Aiyanār is an elegant image and closely resembles the sculptures on the main temple and decidedly a sculpture of Rājendra's period.
Twelve inscriptions and a few fragments have been noticed so far on the temple. An inscription of Virarājendra Chōla, the third son of Rājendra-I is the earliest and lengthiest running to about 216 lines. It relates to gifts of lands in a number of villages in the Chōla empire, the proceeds from which were to be utilised for worship and maintenance of the temple. The accuracy with which the boundaries and measurements of the lands are recorded, the taxes from which the lands were exempted, the crops that were raised in the lands, the total quantity of grains to be measured out to the temple by each village, the names of the officers who drafted the endowment, the names of those who compared the drafting, the names of those who entered them in registers etc., recorded in detail in this epigraph, show the efficiency and thoroughness of Chōla administration.

These gifts were ordered by Virarājendra while he was in the royal palace at Kāñchipuram in his fifth regnal year. Though this is a single record, it relates to more than six orders of the king. The epigraph records that the order would take effect from the regnal years of Rājendra-I and Rājādhirāja-I. The earliest regnal year of Rājendra from which an order was to take effect, is mentioned as the 23rd. Evidently the temple was completed and consecrated before that (1035 A. D.). It is likely that Rājendra, the builder of the temple, himself made these gifts. Probably they had not been recorded and Virarājendra ordered them to be entered in the proper registers. There are two orders, that took effect from the 26th and 30th years respectively of Rājādhirāja I, the son and successor of Rājendra. Evidently, some gifts were made in the reign of Rājādhirāja as well. From the records it is seen that more than one hundred and ten thousand bags of paddy were to be measured out to the temple every year by the villages mentioned in epigraphs.

A careful study of the inscription reveals that most of the lands and proceeds recorded in this inscriptions are also recorded in the Tañjāvūr inscriptions of Rājarāja as gifts to the great temple of Tañjāvūr.
It is strange that most of the lands gifted to Tañjāvūr temple by Rājarāja should have been transferred to the temple of Gangaikondachōlapuram by his son within twenty five years of the original gift.

The inscription is of great value. It mentions the names of the various divisions and sub-divisions of the Chōla empire. It also gives a long list of officers who were in charge of the administration in the reign of Virarājendrā. A certain Pallavaraiyan is mentioned as the Thirumandira Olai (royal secretary) of Virarājendrā. He received orders verbally from the king and drafted them. The orders were scrutinised and approved by three senior secretaries (Thirumandira Olaināyakam) whose names are recorded as Vānādhirājan, Madhurāntaka Brāhmādhirājan and Pallavarayanan. Sixty four other officers are also named; their names are given at the end of this chapter.

The inscription is of interest from another angle. In listing the villages gifted it gives the names of various temples, tanks, colonies, irrigation channels; cremation grounds etc., in each village, thus furnishing details for a study of the contemporary history of these villages. These details are published at the end of this chapter.

The name of the temple according to this inscription is Gangaikonda Chōlisvaram. Rājendrā is referred to as the father, the victor of Purvadesa, Gangai and Kāḷāram (Pūrvadesamum Gangaivum, Kāḷāramum Kōṉḍaruṉa Ayyar). Rājādhirāja is referred to as the elder brother, the victor of Kalyāṇapura and Kollāpura who laid down his life while seated on an elephant (கோல்லாபுரம் கல்யாணபுரம் கோல்லாபரம் கோல்லாபரம் கோல்லாபுரம் கோல்லாபரம் கோல்லாபுரம் கோல்லாபரம் கோல்லாபரம் கோல்லாபரம் கோல்லாபரம் கோல்லாபரம்). The inscription also details the victories gained by Virarājendrā.

Another inscription of interest is a fragment found on the front steps of the great mandapa. It mentions Vānavanmahādēvi and Ammanagādēvi. Vānavanmahādēvi was the name of Rājendrā’s mother (Rāja rāja’s wife). One of Rājendrā’s queens was also named Vānavanmahādēvi. It is not known who is referred to in this inscription; but in all likelihood it refers to Rājendrā’s queen. Ammanagādēvi, the other, was one of the daughters of Rājendrā-I. She was given in marriage to the Eastern Chāḷukya ruler Rājarāja Narēndrā. Their son was the celebrated Kulottunga-I.

The next king represented in the inscription is Kulottunga I (1070-1120). A record of his dated in 49th regnal year does not pertain to this
temple but relates to the gift of a village Sungam thavirtha Chōḷanallur, as a dēvatāna gift, for provisions etc., to the temple of Rājendra Chōḷisvaram in Pottālimaḍa. Probably this temple was built in the reign of Rājendra I and was named after him. The inscription states that worship in the temple was stopped as sufficient provisions were not available. Kulōttunga made the gift tax free and arranged for regular worship. A certain ascetic Āryadēvan is mentioned in this inscription. The epigraph also records that the order of the king was issued when he was seated on a throne, at the eastern porch in the ground floor of Gangaikondachōḷa māḷigai in Gangaikondachōḷapuram.

The last Chōḷa king represented in inscriptions is Kulōttunga III. His inscriptions are in fragments and found by the side of the steps to the eastern entrance to the great maṇḍapa. They record the victories gained by Kulōttunga and the erection of a victory pillar. From the fragmentary nature of these inscriptions it may be surmised that a number of other Chōḷa inscriptions of the temple have been lost. Reference has been made to the presence of an incomplete inscription of a Gāhadaswāla king, probably of Madanapāla.

The earliest Pāṇḍya king to be represented here is Jatāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya, identical with the ruler who uprooted the Chōḷa empire. He ascended the throne in 1251. The sole inscription of his found in this temple is dated in his second regnal year. Evidently the gift was made when the Pāṇḍya emperor captured Gangaikondachōḷapuram and paid a visit to the temple. He established a special worship called Sundara Pāṇḍyan sandhi, after his name to be performed daily. For this purpose Sundara gifted lands etc., in Gangaikondachōḷapuram. The inscription mentions a number of places, in Gangaikondachōḷapuram like the gateway lane, Suḍdhamali lane, Rājendra Chōḷa fort wall and Vēmbugudi gate.

Gangaikondachōḷapuram is said to lie in Ponparappipāṟṟu of Maṇṇaikondha Chōḷa vaḷanāḍu, a subdivision in Vaḍakarai Vikrama Chōḷa vaḷanāḍu.

The next Pāṇḍya to be represented is Vikrama who ably assisted his brother Sundara. His record is dated in his sixth year (1157). Vikrama like his brother established a special worship in the temple after his own name as Rājakkalnāyakan sandhi for which he gifted twenty velis of land. The epigraph names two villages Kulōttungachōḷanallūr, and Rājendrarahcōḷanallūr. It also mentions the boundaries of lands
gifted. The river Madhurântaka Vaḍavāru and irrigation channels called Ānaiveṭṭuvān kāl and Adigai Nāyakan vāykāl. A highway called the Rājendra Chōlaṇ highway is also referred to in this inscription.

Two inscriptions of Pândya Māravarman Kulasekhara who ascended the throne in 1268 A.D. are found engraved on the temple. The first one dated in his fourth year, records the purchase of lands in Devaniputtūr belonging to a certain Kumārmangalam Udayān, Sivatāndan. The other inscription which is incomplete, is dated in Kulasekhara's fifth regnal year. It records the sale of lands belonging to a number of individuals to the temples of Gangaikondachōisvarm. The epigraph mentions highways named the Kuloṭṭunga Chōlaṇ fort wall highway; the Vilānguḍāiyān highway and a highway through which a short elephant passed.

Two inscriptions of a chieftain, Thiruvēngadamudaiyān Ekāmrāṇāṭha Gāngeyan of Vaippur, who was in control of this area are recorded in this temple. One of the inscriptions gives the Saka date 1385 (1463 A.D.). From the inscription it may be seen that this chieftain probably erected a maṇḍapa named after himself, Ekāmrāṇāṭha Maṇḍapa. While the chieftain was seated in a maṭha of Ekāmrāṇāṭha Maṇḍapa the Mudalis, the temple priests, the tānattārs (those who looked after the properties of the temple), the Parikarathār (temple attendants) and a certain Kasmirarāya (probably a person from Kashmir) assembled before him. The chieftain bestowed the right (probably on Kasmirarāja) of duties-over Thirumāḷigaikūr (maintenance of the enclosure and the right to enjoy proceeds apportioned for the purpose) for fifteen days in a month and lordship over the maṭha for the other fifteen days of the month. For this purpose he gifted two house sites in the northern row and two in the southern row of Rājendra Chōla street. A certain Kūhūrudaiyān is mentioned as the temple accountant. The other inscription of the chieftain relates to a similar gift. Mention has been made of the inscriptions of Vijayanagara rulers in the temple.
**Note A**

The quantity of paddy measured or gold paid per annum as due to the temple by various villages mentioned in Virarājendrā’s inscription are given below. As the inscription is damaged at some places, either the name of the village or the quantity measured is lost in certain cases. The total quantity of paddy measured amounted to 1,03,893 *kalams* (bags) per annum. As there are many gaps in the inscriptions, the total measurement should have been many thousand *kalams* more of paddy. The maximum measure received from a single village is 20,585 *kalams*. Unfortunately the name of the village is lost. Vayalur is the next village to measure 16,900 *kalams*. Evidently these villages should have been the most fertile villages during the Chōla period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VILLAGE</th>
<th>PADDY PER ANNUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maruttuvakkudi</td>
<td>2967 kalam, 1 tūni, 1 pathakkku and 2 nāli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karuppūr</td>
<td>49 kalam, 1 kuruni, 4 nāli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pālārruthuraiyūr</td>
<td>2955 kalam, ................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Īngaiyūr</td>
<td>4980 kalam, ................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panamangalam</td>
<td>4219 kalam, 7 kuruni.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kārimangalam</td>
<td>4070 kalam, 1 kuruni, 7 tūni.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāttanpādi</td>
<td>1083 kalam, 5 nāli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parakesari Nallūr</td>
<td>..................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venbaikuḍi</td>
<td>4784 kalam, 2 tūni, 6 nāli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māhānikuḍi</td>
<td>2315 kalam, 1 kuruni, 1 nāli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kīlpadiri</td>
<td>1200 kalam, ................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirusemburai</td>
<td>632 kalam ................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madurāntakamangalam</td>
<td>4500 kalam, ................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāṇchivai Kurungulam</td>
<td>..................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>..................................</td>
<td>2300 kalam, ................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>..................................</td>
<td>7500 kalam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Quantity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāḷanīvāyil</td>
<td>500 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kōḍangudi</td>
<td>4000 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayangondachōjanallūr</td>
<td>5000 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kondal</td>
<td>9000 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Īlayān Maṅgālam</td>
<td>2500 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karuppūr</td>
<td>2040 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>940 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayālūr</td>
<td>20585 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavithra Māṇickkanallūr</td>
<td>16900 kalam, 1 Pathakkū, 7 nāḷi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulakalāndachōjanallūr</td>
<td>800 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kēralānthakanallūr</td>
<td>347 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maṅṇaikondachōjanallūr</td>
<td>983 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manukulakēśarinallūr</td>
<td>519 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irummadichōjanallūr</td>
<td>1231 kalam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold 340 Kāḷañju and 8 Maṅjāḍi.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kalam, Tūni, Pathakkū and Nāḷi are grain measures.
The temples of various villages mentioned in Virarajendra's inscription.

**VILLAGES**

Irumaḍi, Chōjanallūr:
Karuppūr:

Kēralāntakanallūr:
Koṇḍal:
Mākānikudi:
Mannaiṅkoṇḍa Chōjanallūr:
Manukula Kēṣarinallūr:
Ōlaṉnmaṅgalam:

Panamaṅgalam:

Parru:
Pavitra Māṇikka Nallūr:
Sirusempuru:
Turaiyūr:

**TEMPLES**

Sri kōil.
Thiruvagattiavaramudaiya mādevar Sri kōil.
Aiyān Sri kōil.
Kāḍukāḷ Sri kōil.
Śrī kōil.
Piḍārī Sri kōil.
Kāḷāpiḍārī Śrī kōil.
Śrī kōil.
Śrī kōil.
Thiruvanīḷivarattu Dēvar Śrī kōil.

Piḍārī Śrī kōil.
Kēṭṭai Śrī kōil.
Mahādevar Śrī kōil.
Piḍārī Śrī kōil.
Aiyān Śrī kōil.
Dēvar Śrī kōil.
Śrī kōil.
Mādevar Śrī kōil.
Piḍārī Puṇnaicchēri Naṅgai Śrī kōil.
Piḍārī Puṇuvagaiyudaiyāl Śrī kōil.
Kāḍukāḷ Śrī kōil.
Ulagalanda Chola Nallur:

Vayalur:

Venbaikudi:

Aiyen Sri kōil.
Kudhirai vattamudaiyal
Sri kōil.
Durgaiyar Sri kōil.
Kalāpidari Sri kōil.
Sri kōil.
Thirukarrali Mādevar
Sri kōil.

....... Varathu Mādevar
Sri kōil.

Aiyen Sri kōil.
Pidāri Ilampulinaṅgaī Sri kōil.
Paḷḷi Sri kōil.
Sri kōil.
Note C

Divisions, sub-divisions and villages mentioned in Virarajendra's inscription.

Adhiraja Vañanadu ..............

Arunolideva Vañanadu Cheppur Kumram

Mañgala Nadu

Jayagondachola ..............

Vañanadu Thiruvallundur Nadu

Vilainadu

Keralantaka Vañanadu Uraiyur Kumram

Kshatriyasikhamaani ..............Kumram

Vañanadu Panaiyur Nadu

Thirunaraiyur Nadu Vela Nadu

Madhurantaka Vañanadu ..............

Atpuliyur

Kandiyur

Nallambar

Surankudai

Arasur

Kalaniyil

Kuttanur

Kudi

Madhuranikanallur

Te .............ur

Korramangalam

Virarajendra

Charuppeditangalam

Karpur

Vayalur

Cherrur

Majavauchchéri

Sirukudai

eveli

Parakeśarinarullur

Peṟumpannur

Irmaḍi Cholanallur

Keralantakanallur

Manñaiyondha Chola

nallur

Manukulakesharinallur
ముదికోండ చొండ వాలనాడు నిరుదినాడు పలింకుడి

రాధేంద్ర చొండ వాలనాడు చొండ పండియ వాలనాడు తిరుక్కోట్టియురు

నిల్వింటిడా వాలనాడు అరురు కిర్రం విలాతురు
విలాతురు
కిలాన కిర్రం
కిలాన కిర్రం
వాయి

పండ్య కులసని వాలనాడు అరక్కాతుక కిర్రం
అరక్కాతుక కిర్రం

పండ్య కులసని వాలనాడు పురాక్కిళియురు నాడు
పురాక్కిళియురు నాడు

పండ్య కులసని వాలనాడు వేణ్ణియురు నాడు

పండ్య పండి నాడు మిలాలి కిర్రం

పండ్య పండి నాడు కిల్లేవెంగై నాడు

పండ్య పండి నాడు తిరుమునాపాది నాడు

పండ్య పండి నాడు పాట్టంపాక్కా నాడు

మండపురాడి వాలనాడు అమ్బరు నాడు

మండపురాడి వాలనాడు అమ్బరు నాడు

మండపురాడి వాలనాడు పాంబూరు నాడు

మండపురాడి వాలనాడు జయాంగోండ చొండ నాడు

మండపురాడి వాలనాడు పాలియురు

మండపురాడి వాలనాడు విలాతహల్ మంగలాము
.......Vaḷaṇāḍu....... Innambar Nāḍu Maruthuvakkudi
             Tiruvāli Nāḍu Parakōsarpuram

Vijayarājendra
Vaḷaṇāḍu
             Ārvalakkūṟram vānkudi
             Puliyūr Nāḍu
             Pulaiyūr Vāḷkkai

Virarājendra
Vaḷaṇāḍu
             ...........
             ...........
             ...........
             ...........
             ...........
             Pāchehil Kūṟram
             ...........
             ...........
             Penuvalanallūr Kan-
             ...........
             ...........
             ...........
             Sattanpāḍi
             Tiraṁūr
             Thirucchemburai
             Kandam
             ...........
             ...........
             ..........
             Širu Šemburai
             Ūṟruthurai
             Veṇbaikkudi

Jayāṅgondachōla mandalam

Ānmūr Kōṭṭam Kumilī Nāḍu Parattandalam
Puliyūr Kōṭṭam Māngāṭtu Nāḍu........ maṅgalam
Note D

The following are the administrative officers referred to in the inscription of Virarajendra. The posts held by them appear within brackets.

1. Palla Varayan alias Konga Gangaikondacholam.
2. Valla Varajan alias Virabhadran Thillaividangan. (Oppittu puhunda kefvi)
5. Virarajendra Brahmahiraja alias Chandrasekhara Bhusansen Bhattach of Viranarayana Charuppedimangalam a thaniyur in Rajadhiraja Valanadu.
6. Raja Raja Kumaararajan alias Konark Alagiya Pandiyen of Vadatalaisembil Nadu, a subdivision of Madurantaka Valanadu in Raja Raja Pandinadu.
7. Raja Raja Muvendavelan alias Aditthan Solai of Perumallur in Kilyengai Nadu, a subdivision of Raja Raja Valanadu.
8. Gunanidhi Arumoli Chola Muvendavelan alias Parakesarinallur Udayyan of Tirumaraiyur Nadu, a subdivision of Kshatriya Sikhmani Valanadu.
13. Tirunilakantha bhattar of Emaperur in Virarajendra Charuppedimangalam of Puliyur Nadu a subdivision of Vijayarajendra Valanadu. (Naduvirukkai)
14. கொட்டி ஆடிராத்ர ராஜியர் ஓ விராஜஞ்ஜேந்திரசர் சருப்பூட்டி மங்களம் ஓ வில்லாண்டு ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு ஓ என்று ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு
15. காட்டாவராஜா ஓ வியலையாஜகர் (Vidaiyil Adhikāri)
16. விராஜஞ்ஜேந்திரசர் முனையாடையராயார் ஓ கிளவர் காமன் சாந்திரன்
   வெங்காண்டா ஓ பராத்தாண்டாலம் ஓ குமில்லி நாடு ஓ அம்மேன் கொட்டம்
   ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு
17. ராய்பாதிகோண்டா சோழமாண்டலம் ஓ எம்மேட்டுர் குற்றாரியார்
   ஓ பளையாரு ஓ அம்பர் நாடு ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு ஓ உயாக்கோண்டா
   வாலான்து
18. ஜானநாத மண்டலவள் ஓ அத்தானியர் ஓ கொங்கா
   ஓ கூரேக்காந்து
19. மண்டலவள் ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு
20. ஏதின்சுல்லைமன் ஓ மாநாசன் தீர்த்தலக் கண்டன ஓ லுர்
   ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு
21. குதாராங்கோண்டாசோடா மண்டலவள் ஓ மாதோவன் காரையில்
   ஓ நாசைகா
22. மாகனீதா மண்டலவள் ஓ நித்தேவிரின்தா
   ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு
23. ராஜா மண்டலவள் ஓ குமரா அலாவலா
   ஓ ந்கோடு
24. காலோகனாதன்
   ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு
25. காங்கோண்டாசோடா பல்லாவரையார் ஓ எரா சோலிய
   ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு
26. விராசோடா மண்டலவள் ஓ ஆரசுர்
   ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு
27. ராஜராஜா விராயபார ஓ ஆராயன் விநாசகா
   ஓ புதுப்பூர்
28. விக்ரமா நாராயாணம்
   ஓ சுப்பிரின்நாடு
29. வாகியான்
   ஓ மாங்ககா
30. விலுப்பராயன்
   ஓ சொலன்
31. நர்பதவகா மண்டலவள்
   ஓ விலாத்தால்
32. மண்டலவள்
   ஓ விசான்
   ஓ வில்லாண்டு
33. விராஜேந்திர கச்சியூர் நாடால்வன ஆலிய திருநாய்க்குர் நாடு.
34. பார்த்தியேந்திர ப்ரஹ்மாயிராய் ஆலிய மாத்தன் சய்த்தன் ஆலிய அதிராஜா வாலாந்து.
35. விராஜேந்திர முவண்டவேலன் ஆலிய
36. குனத்தன் சுர்ரி ஆலிய மன்னலகுலசோமுவண்டவேலர் ஆலிய பல்லவ குலசுகண்டல் ஆலிய மாத்தனனூ ஆலிய அதிராஜா வாலாந்து, ஆ ஆலிய பாண்டினாது.
37. ராஜாமநிக்க முவண்டவேலன் ஆலிய திருவேந்தாத்தன், ஆலிய மங்கலம் ஆலிய மாநாது நாது, ஆலிய புல்யூர் கோத்தம் ஆ ஆலிய பாண்டினாது ஆலிய ஜயாகூண்டா சோமுலாநாதால்.
38. ஆலிய பாணியா முவண்டவேலன் ஆலிய கண்டியூர் ஆலிய சேர்ருர் குராம், ஆ ஆலிய பாண்டினாது ஆலிய அறுமூலிதா வாலாந்து.
39. விராஜேந்திர மலாயப்பிசோடஜர் ஆலிய விராவை மானிக்கார் ஆலிய கிளார் குராம், ஆ ஆலிய நித்தா விந்தனா வாலாந்து.
40. ஆலிய
41. ராஜவியாத்தர முவண்டவேலன் ஆலிய கொன் அம்பா குனத்தன் ஆலிய பொன்பார்பி ஆலிய கிளார் மிலலை குராம், ஆ ஆலிய ராஜா பாண்டினாது.
42. சோழகுள ஆலிய முவண்டவேலன் ஆலிய புளிகுடை ஆலிய திருவால்குத்து முதுகௌண்டா சோழவாலாந்து, ஆ ஆலிய ராஜா பாண்டிநாது.
43. உடாராவிதாங்க முவண்டவேலன் ஆலிய ஆலிய பொன்பார்பி ஆலிய பாந்யூர் நாது, ஆ ஆலிய கிளார் கிளார் நாது, ஆ ஆலிய கூண்டா சோழவாலாந்து ஆலிய கிளார் கிளார் நாது, ஆ ஆலிய கூண்டா சோழவாலாந்து.
44. முமம்பைசுச் சத்தா விளுப்பார்பிகார் ஆலிய நாக்கன் ஆலிய நெற்றன் ஆலிய கூண்டா சோழவாலாந்து.
45. நாளூர் காளியனா பாண்டர் ஆலிய விராவி கருப்பேயியாலாமா ஆந்தியூர் ஆலிய ராஜா ஹிராஜா வாலாந்து. (நாதுவியுட்காய்)
46. ஆலிய மாத்தன் பாண்டர் ஸாமாய் ஆலிய கருப்பீராம், ஆலிய திருக்கொய்டியூர் ஆலிய சோழ பாண்டிய வாலாந்து, ஆலிய ராஜா சோழ வாலாந்து, ஆ ஆலிய மாத்தன் பாண்டினாது.
47. ஆலிய பாண்டர் ஆலிய வாலாந்து விராஜேந்திர காளியூர் ஆலிய வாலாந்து, ஆ ஆலிய பாண்டினாது.
48. சிவதேவா பாண்டர் ஆலிய ஆர்காடூ குராம், ஆ ஆலிய பாண்டினாது.
49. இருங்காண்டி வய்க்கா பாண்டர் விராஜேந்திர காளியூர் ஆலிய வாலாந்து, ஆ
50. Vilāṉāṉ, a subdivision of Jayankonda Chōḷa Valanāṉu.
51. Viripuram Narasimha Bhaṭṭan of the above village.
52. Dāṉavinōḍa MūṆendavelāṉ alias Namināgan Aragan of Vilathūr in Āṟūr Kūṟram, a subdivision of Nithavinōḍa Valanāṉu. (Puravuvrai thinaikkalathu kaṅkāṇi)
53. Parākramachhōḷa MūṆendavelāṉ alias Kūṭha Raman of ...... Niyaṁam in Puliyūr Kōṭṭam in Māṅgāḍunāḍu a subdivision of Jayankōṇḍa Chōḷa Maṇḍalam. (Puravuvrai thinaikkalam)
54. ...... vēṉdavelāṉ of Chōḷanāḍu a subdivision of ...... Konda Chōḷa Valanāṉu.
55. Villāvān MūṆendavelāṉ alias Angi Aiyāran of Madukkūr in Āṟvala Kūṟram, a subdivision of Vijaya Rājendra Valanāṉu. (varippotthagam)
57. ..........(variyilāṉu)
58. Velāṉ Rāmadūṭan of Singalāntakanallūr of Puliyūr Vaṭkai a subdivision of Rājendra Valanāṉu.
59. Māḍēvān Venkāḍan of Āṭthippuliyūr in Adhirājaraṇā Valanāṉu. (Varippothaka kaṅakkū)
60. ......of Cherrūr in Kṣhatriyasikhamāṇi Valanāṉu. (Paṭṭolai)
61. ......in Maṅgalanāḍu a subdivision of Arumolidēva Valanāṉu.
63. Karunākaraṇ Thiruve ...... of Kalkudai in ......pēr a subdivision of Adhirāṭjarāṭ Valanāṉu. (Paṭṭolai Eluthina Pūṭchippūṭṭan)
64. Kalyāṉapuramkoṇḍa ........... (Puravuvrai thinaikkalam)


VIII

Literature

A number of literary works in both Tamil and Sanskrit, refer to GangaiKondachoolapuram and its temple.

THIRUVIISAIPPA: The sacred hymns (Thiruviisaippa) composed on the presiding deity of GangaiKondachoolisvaram by Karuvurdevar, is the earliest work to refer to this great temple. Karuvurdevar, a Brahmin by birth, hailed from Karuvur the modern Karur in Trichy District. He was a great devotee of Siva and is believed to be a Siddha. He has composed devotional hymns on ten temples among which are included the RajaRajesvara temple of Tanjavur and the temple of GangaiKondachoolapuram. Karuvurdevar was a contemporary of RajaRaja I and his son Rajendra I, the builder of GangaiKondachoolisvaram. Thiru-Isaippa is a particular type of poetic composition in Tamil. The ten hymns of Karuvurdevar and similar hymns of a few other Saivite saints have been included in the ninth book (Thirumurai) of the Saiva canon. Karuvurdevar’s address to the deity of GangaiKondachoolisvaram, is soul-stirring poetry that ought to be read in its original. ‘People in large numbers from far and near throng to the temple of GangaiKondachoolisvara adoring the deity with folded arms’ says Karuvurdevar. Siva as Gangadhara also comes in for special praise.

VIKRAMANKADDEVVACHARITA: The historical work, Vikramanka-devvacharita in Sanskrit on Chalukya Vikramaditya, by Bilhana throws valuable light on the relationship between the Chalukyas of Kalyan and the Cholas and incidentally refers to GangaiKondachoolapuram. Bilhana, the poet, was born of a Brahmin family and hailed from Kashmir. He was born and brought up in Khonamushagrama in jayavana-highland of Kashmir. His father was Jyeshtakalasa and mother Nagadevi. Bilhana attained distinction in Vedic learning, Sanskrit poetry (Kavya) and Patanjali’s mahabhashya (grammar). He left Kashmir in pursuit of fortunes and went to Mathura, Brindhavana, and Kasi. From there he went to Dhara the capital of Bhoja, but before he could reach Dhara, Bhoja the great patron of Sanskrit learning passed away. Disappointed Bilhana went to Gurjaradesa, where he could meet only envious poets. Bilhana left
Gūrjara and went on a pilgrimage to Rāmēśvara in the south and on his way back was fortunate enough to visit the Chāḷukya capital. Vikramāditya the Chāḷukya contemporary of Virarājendrā Chōḷa and Kulōṭṭuṅga immediately appointed Bilhana as his court poet (Vidyāpathi). Vikramāṅkadhēva Charita, describes the exploits of Vikramāditya in eighteen chapters. It is needless to go into the details of the work. According to the work, Virarājendra Chōḷa, the third son of Rājendra I, gave his daughter in marriage to Vikramāditya after effecting a truce with him. Possibly the marriage took place on the banks of Tungabhadra. Virarājendra returned to his capital and soon after passed away. This plunged the Chōḷa country into chaos. Having decided to place Virarājendra’s son, Adhirājendra on the Chōḷa throne, Vikrama swiftly marched to Kānci and spent some days there subduing some opponents. From there he turned his eyes on Gangākunda (Gangaikondacholapuram) which abounded in wealth and learned men. The city was beautiful with lofty towers and resembled the veritable abode of Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth. It truly resembled Amarāvatī the capital of the celestials. Vikramāditya crowned Adhirājendra, the Chōḷa prince after defeating the enemies. He spent about a month there and returned to the banks of Tungabhadra, after subduing the forest archers (probably the Vēṭṭuvars). But within a few days, the Chōḷa prince was killed by his opposing subjects (Prakritivirōḍhahata) and the seat was occupied by Rājiga, the Vēṇgi ruler (Rājendra Kulōṭṭuṅga). The above account of Bilhana gives the state of affairs at Gangaikondachōḷapuram and the visit of Vikramāditya to that city. Scholars differ on the death of Adhirājendra. Sadasiva Pandarathar, who has written an excellent account of Chōḷa history in Tamil, points out an inscription of Adhirājendra wherein he is stated to be seriously ill. Pandarathar believes that Adhirājendra died due to illness and was not killed by his subjects. Probably Adhirājendra’s weakness and the opposition he met from his generals, proved fatal to his life. Vikramāditya, wanted to punish the evil doers. But Kulōṭṭuṅga who by that time was firmly in Chōḷa throne, fomented trouble, by instigating Vikrama’s brother Sōmaśvara to attack him from behind. Though Vikrama was successful in defeating his brother and is credited with a success against Kānci, he never set foot on Gangaikondachōḷapuram again. Kulōṭṭuṅga was strong enough to foil his attempts and was ably assisted by the experienced Chōḷa Generals. Bilhana’s Vikramāṅkadhēvacharita is said to have been composed in 1085 A.D.
KALINGATTUPPARANI: The Kalingattupparani, a most fascinating historical work in Tamil literature, was composed by Jayankondar, to celebrate the conquest of Kalinga by Kulottunga I. Jayankondar adorned the court of Kulottunga I as his court poet and composed the work, Kalingattupparani towards the end of Kulottunga's reign. The work celebrates the exploits of Kulottunga from his childhood and the greatness of his general Karunakara Tongaiman, who headed the victorious Chola army on its Kalinga expedition. From Kalingattupparani, it may be seen that Kulottunga was born and brought up at Gangaikondacholapuram. He was also made a crown prince at that city. The city is referred to as Gangapuri.

No detailed description of the city is however met with in the poem. Jayankondar, the poet hailed from Dipanguji and was recognised as an eminent poet (Kavichanditan) by his contemporaries.

MUVAR ULÅ: Othakkuttar another eminent Tamil poet, adorned the courts of three successive Chola emperors, Vikramachola, Kulottunga II and Rajaraja II. He has composed three quasi-historical works, (Uläs), one on each of the above rulers. These works, Vikramachol I, Kulottungachol I, and Rajaraja I, are popularly called Muvvar Ulä, and are known for their high literary accomplishments. Each poem gives a brief summary of the Chola history beginning with the mythical ancestors and details the exploits of the hero. Gangaikonda Cholapuram is referred to by name in Kulottungachol I. The poet says that all the fourteen worlds were struck by the beauty and wealth of the capital.

The Rajarajachol I describes the palace, entrance towers, palatial buildings, streets, pavilions, (mandapas), temples, chūligas, toranas, beautiful windows, pials (terrīs), mādas, dance halls etc., that adorned the capital.

References are not wanting in later literature which however are not of great interest to the present study.
Gangaikondachohulan Lake

The great lake, lying about two miles to the west of the temple and now called Ponnēri (golden lake) is of historic interest. It is intimately connected with the history of the capital. Its existence prior to the advent of Rājendra-I is not known. According to Thiruvālangadu plates the lake was the liquid pillar of victory that Rājendra established to celebrate his conquest of Gangetic plains. If so, this is the biggest man made lake known to exist in this country. It is about sixteen miles in length and about three miles in breadth. At its extreme ends it has inlet and outlet channels that have gone out of use now. The lake itself has now been divided into two parts by a road running across, connecting Gangaikondachohapuram with Jayai kondachohapuram in the west. The lake supplied water to the moat running around the old fortification.

Rājendra I, cherished the conquest of Gangaikondachōla as the greatest event in his life and rightly assumed the title Gangaikondachōla. His capital was also named Gangaikondachohapuram. According to Thiruvālangadu plates, the generals who headed the Chōla army on its Gangetic expedition brought the holy water of Ganges in golden vessels carried on the heads of vanquished rulers. Rājendra himself went up to the banks of the Gōdāvari river to receive his generals. The holy water was poured into the lake (a small part of it was also poured into the lion-well inside the temple) and the lake itself was named Chōlaganga, a liquid pillar of victory.

विजुः:  

निजानायकाय भूवृजानायकाय ततु, समसनन्ततु सदिद दुष्टानावः ||

चेष्टत्सागरतिह  श्वायः मर्यसिन्धवः ||

थिरुवाळाङ्गदु प说了铜plates.
Chalukya and Kalinga sculptures in Gangaikondacholapuram.

Chalukyan sculptures:

Mention has been made earlier that a few sculptures of Chalukya origin are found in the village of Gangaikondacholapuram. The most outstanding piece is that of Suryapitha, now worshipped as Navartha in the big temple. Images of Surya and Durga, also found by the side of Suryapitha in the same temple, are from the Chalukyan area. Another image of Durga enshrined in the shrine of Durga to the north of the temple, (west of the Simhairtha) is also executed in the Chalukya style, but whether it actually comes from the Chalukya area is not known. An image of Ganesa, now called Kanakkupillaiyar in a temple about three furlongs to the south-west of the great temple, is also Chalukyan in origin. Another Durga, enshrined in a temple in Veerareddi Street, is a fine specimen of Chalukyan art.

The presence of so many Chalukya sculptures at Gangaikondacholapuram need not surprise us, for the Cholas were in perpetual war with the Chalukya's of Kalyan. Rajadhiraja I, the son and successor of Rajendra I, conquered Kalyan and brought as a war trophy an image of Dvarapala from Kalyanapura. The image, now preserved in the Tanjavur Art Gallery, bears an inscription on its pedestal, mentioning that it was a war trophy brought by Udaiyar Vijayarajendra from Kalyanapura. Obviously the Chalukya sculptures found in Gangaikondacholapuram were brought as war trophies by the successors of Rajendra I.

Kalinga sculptures in Gangaikondacholapuram:

Three beautiful images of Kalinga origin have been recently discovered at Gangaikondacholapuram by the Tamilnadu State Department of Archaeology. The sculptures are found lying in a mound called Kilaichengamedu, about one mile east of the great temple. The nearby village is Meykavalputtur, the ancient body-guards' village. Mention has been made that a Durga Image which is said to have guarded the eastern gate of the Palace, is at Meykavalputtur.
In fact, it is an image of Kāli, over seven feet in height. The entire image is covered with ant-hills. Another image of Kāli, decidedly of the period of Rājendra, found here, represents the eight-armed Devi shown seated on a pedestal, holding various weapons. A dying man is shown on the seat. Near this Kāli image are seen the Kalinga sculptures, two representing Śiva as Bhairava and the third representing Bhairavi. All the three sculptures are carved in red sandstone as found at Bhubanēswar and Konarak and are excellent specimens of Kalinga art. The representation and treatment are decidedly Kalinga.

Bhairava:
Śiva as Bhairava is shown standing nude, with four arms, holding sūla and kadga in the right arms and damaru and kapāla in the left arms. A mūndamāla is seen running up to his knees. The kinkini mēkhala, a band of small bells, adorns the waist. The Lord wears the jaṭāmukta with a garland of skulls around the head. To the left of Śiva, is shown an emaciated, nude male figure with protruding eyes. To the right is shown a two armed emaciated female figure, holding a head in the left arm. The emblem on the right is obliterated.

Bhairava:
Another beautiful image of Śiva as Bhairava, with four arms; the upper part of the body only up to the waist is available. The upper right arm is broken; the lower right carries a kadga. The left arm holds damaru and kapāla. The kinkini mēkhala is noticed. The kapālamāla is also found.

Bhairavi:
Devi as Bhairavi standing with eight arms, holds sūla, sword, a small dagger and probably a chouri in the right arms. The left arms hold karaṇa, damaru, kapāla and munda (head). The Devi is also shown nude, and wearing a long mūndamāla extending below the knee. To the right of Devi is shown a standing nude figure of a male, with two arms. To the left is shown a dog.

Probably these Bhairava and Bhairavi images represent Yogēśvara and Yogini deities. Rājendra as a result of his Gangetic expedition,
erected a temple of Yogesvara and Yogini at Kolar and arranged for offering madhyamapāna. Rājendra's generals, who returned after their historic march to the Ganges through Kalinga, should have brought these valuable sculptures as war trophies and erected a temple in the capital. The sculptures may be assigned to 9th Century A.D.

Bhairavi:

Another image of Bhairavi, executed in granite, on the model of Kalinga image is of crude workmanship and is by a local artisan. Its presence shows the impact of Yogini cult on the local population.
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