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A Study on
The Cultural Developments in the Chola Period

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(P.M.G., KERALA CIRCLE.)

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PREFACE

I had always been fascinated by History as a subject of study, especially the History of India. At School and College I used to be enthralled, reading about the doings of the great figures in our History and I often visualised some of them, in all their ancient glory, in a 20th century setting. I had been particularly struck by the achievements of the great Pallava, Chola and Pandya Dynasties and of the later Vijayanagar Rulers. There was a compelling admiration and attraction when I visited places like Tanjore, Chidambaram and Trichinopoly and saw the magnificence of the temples and the artistic excellence of the sculptures. It had been one of my dreams to go deeper into the History of these times and to assess how much posterity is indebted to them in the field of cultural developments.

Service in Government left little or no time and the question of doing research as a resident student in a University could not be thought of. But, fortunately I was privileged to avail of the concession afforded by the Annamalai University where provision existed for research work being done under the guidance of a Professor of the University without insistence on the residential qualification. It was owing entirely to the kindness and consideration of Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar who was then Vice Chancellor that I enrolled myself as a student for research. That I was enabled to carry on a work which was very near to my heart to such good purpose and with such satisfaction to myself is due entirely to him. As one who has known me from my infancy, the revered Vice Chancellor has always given me of his affection and appreciation. I consider it a matter of great significance to me personally that he was Vice Chancellor both when I registered myself for research and when, at the end of my work, I received
the Doctorate at his hands. In addition to all this, he has also written the Foreword to this Thesis. I am deeply beholden to him for his continued kindness and generosity.

It is a difficult task to supervise the work of research even when the student carries on the task under the direct supervision of the teacher. In my case, however, I had to do the work at different places like Madras, Bombay and Delhi. But with never-failing courtesy and enthusiasm Professor R. Sathianathier who was the Head of the Department of History in the Annamalai University continued to give me the right lead and proper guidance not only in the selection and sifting of material but in assessing their comparative worth and in putting down the Thesis as a co-ordinated whole. I would like to express my sense of deep gratitude to him for the wonderful assistance he gave me and for having been the preceptor of the right type.

I am equally indebted to Professor R. Ramanuja-chariar for having given me timely help in several matters not only pertaining to the actual research work and the writing of the Thesis but in several other administrative matters in the course of my research.

I must also express my gratitude to the Registrar and the Officers of the Annamalai University for all the help they rendered in making available the various books of reference in their library.

I am very grateful to the University for publishing this Thesis.

27-12-1965

S. R. KRISHNAMURTHI
FOREWORD

Dr. S. R. Krishnamurthi presented his Thesis to the Annamalai University on "Cultural Developments in the Chola Period" and was awarded the Degree of Ph.D. He is a senior officer in the Department of Posts and Telegraphs and is discharging responsible duties as Postmaster-General; but he has found time to write a series of articles on diversified subjects and also to concentrate on fruitful historical studies.

He has laid under contribution most of the available temple inscriptions in Southern India relating to such varied subjects as the provision of music during periods of worship, the encouragement of dance and drama, the public exposition of the Vedas and other spiritual topics and adverting also to charities conducted including the feeding of scholars in the precincts of temples. He has also included some inscriptions concerning astronomical data. As the Bibliography appended to this Thesis proves, he has utilised most of the available literature on the subject of the Chola period.

After narrating the achievements of the Chola dynasty and emphasising the pervasive Indian influence extending as far afield as Indonesia and Malaya, the author deplores the neglect of the study of Indian Art which has, until recently, led to a lopsided survey of Indian history. Defining Culture as the art of living an enlightened life, he has dealt with what he has rightly summarised as the knowledge of power and the knowledge of beauty. Architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance and the drama — all alike flourished under the comprehensive patronage of the Cholas who, in the main, created an atmosphere of prosperity and peace. Their schemes of irrigation and their creation of self-
governing village communities are parts of a great contribution to India’s development. The construction of the wonderful temples of Tanjore and of Gangai-konda Cholapuram and the Chola contacts not only with North India but with foreign lands were part of their cultural and commercial activities and deserve more attention in the world than has been given to them. As the author truly remarks, the Chola period was representative of Hindu culture largely because of the stability of Government and the discerning patronage of the Rulers. The Age of the Cholas was also the Golden Age of Tamil culture. The Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and the Hymns of the Alwars and Nayanmars were products of that period. At the same time, it was a period when Sanskrit literature and philosophy were freely encouraged and utilised. The Cholas maintained close touch with Cambodia and Java and the music, dress and ornaments of South India were copied all over East Asia. The Chola rule lasted for four centuries and the Pandyas who were their successors in supremacy continued their system of life and thought.

Founded by Parakesari Vijayalaya about 846 A.D., the successive Rulers of the Chola dynasty led invasions to Ceylon; and during the days of Raja Raja Chola, Kerala, Coorg, parts of Mysore and Kalinga (Orissa) were subjugated and his successor, Rajendra, organised a North Indian campaign which led him up to the Ganges. Most of these conquests were lost to the Cholas in the subsequent reigns but it is noticeable that these campaigns and conquests were responsible for the long continued stability and prosperity of the kingdom and for the resultant encouragement and development of cultural pursuits.

Temple architecture formed one of the climaxes of the Chola achievement and it may be noticed that the Cholas concentrated on religious rather than on secular architecture which began to be improved only during
the Vijayanagar and the succeeding Eras. Our architectural heritage was enriched right through the Pallava, Chola and Pandya periods and it may be noticed with legitimate pride that their constructions are still fairly solid and weather-proof notwithstanding culpable neglect in recent times.

A very loving account is furnished in this Thesis of Temple architecture and sculpture which, in their days, were differentiated from the Pallava style. The extant specimens were regarded, in the language of Benjamin Rowland, as signals along the way of the pilgrim’s progress. The Thesis contains a very interesting description of the Dakshinamoorthy image which is interpreted as the embodiment of the supreme world-consciousness. Although perhaps the Nataraja image did not originate with the Cholas, yet the best specimens may be ascribed to this epoch.

Chola paintings in the great Tanjore temple were brought to light by S. K. Govindaswamy of the Annamalai University and the beauty of these paintings has been appreciated only recently. The author does full justice to the special qualities of the Chola paintings. Music, during the Chola days, preceded the present pattern of Carnatic music and loving attention is given in the chapter devoted to Music, to the devotional Hymns which were codified as the Eleven Tirumurais, research into which was undertaken by the great scholar, Vellaivaranar of the Annamalai University. The author has studied the patterns of vocal and instrumental music and has sought to equate many of the old Panns with the present-day Ragas. The Cholas also endowed lands to encourage the art of dancing; and although information regarding drama is sparse, yet it may be noticed that many temple inscriptions deal with dramatic groups enacting sacred themes.

Dr. Krishnamurthi devotes considerable space to the theatres and he points out that women also took an
active part in the staging of dramas. Allied to the drama is what the author calls Puranapatanam, the predecessor of the present-day Harikatha. It flourished during this period but decayed later on to be revived only by the beginning of the 19th century.

Free dispensaries and hospitals were in vogue at that time as is evidenced by several inscriptions. As in the case of North India, so at this period also, most of the domestic architecture consisted of big wooden structures or insubstantial brick dwellings which have not survived the lapse of time. As has been stated already, the main concentration was in the region of temple construction and the creation of irrigation bunds and anicuts. The author points out that ideas of town planning were conspicuously in evidence in planning streets and quarters in cities.

In his account of philosophical literature, Dr. Krishnamurthi deals at length with the process of assimilation and later differentiation which resulted in the present-day Saivite and Vaishnavite systems. The Cholas were devout worshippers of Siva though, in the main, they followed a policy of general tolerance of other systems. A careful account of literary progress commencing with the work of Ottakuttan and Kamban as well as of the Periapuranam, refers to special endowments to encourage literary production in Sanskrit and Tamil. Schools and colleges were also endowed and one of the best known examples of such benefactions was the Ennayiram college in South Arcot and Tribhuvan near Pondicherry. Various Mutts were active during the Chola period and played a great part in the spread of education and religious doctrine.

During the whole of this period temples took great interest in the dissemination of culture and, in the language of the author, they were the nerve centres of social and civic life. He points out that the women of this period had the right to inherit property. At the
same time, he states that there were several cases where women were sold into slavery or sold themselves for economic reasons. The village community, as is evident from numerous inscriptions, organised different groups on the basis of occupation and there was an efficient system of Guilds, Assemblies and Committees to look after various items of public and communal service. Their independence of initiative and their general work is dealt with in detail. It is also pointed out that public service was rewarded by titles which were awarded not only to Government officials but to private benefactors and artists.

It has been the aim of this Thesis to emphasise that the Chola period was one which saw the growth of national solidarity and was characterised not merely by conquests and defeats and political successes and failures. This Thesis, in short, embodies a succinct record of four centuries constituting a significant part of the totality of Indian culture which has created for us ideals and examples in relation to many Arts and Sciences as well as Philosophy. Great credit is due to the author for the wide scope of his researches and his accurate summation of tendencies and results. He has specially succeeded in combining fervently patriotic enthusiasm with a balanced outlook.

19-10-1965

C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR
1. SCOPE OF RESEARCH AND THEME OF THESIS

The proper appraisal and scientific evaluation of the significance of the cultural developments in the Chola period, a memorable golden age in the history of the south of India, are tasks that call for a comprehensiveness of outlook and concentration on details which are both essential if this study is to be purposeful. There are many problems that have to be faced and solved before the results of the study and research can be co-ordinated and presented in the proper form. These difficulties are not ordinary. The canvas is so vast, the span of time so great and the material available so varied that it is difficult, in the words of the Marquess of Zetland, to wield a brush which could prove capable of painting a picture in the true perspective without unduly sacrificing details. The survey of such cultural developments, embracing as they do diverse phases of the life of the people of that age, has to be descriptive, albeit repetitive, rather than disputatious, popular rather than learned. Another difficulty arises out of the usual misconception about the term culture itself and what it stands for and signifies. In spite of Mathew Arnold’s description of culture as the art of acquainting ourselves with the past that has been known and said in the world and thus, in a way, with the human spirit, there is occasionally a tendency to associate culture with something highbrow or affected, to regard it as something distinct from the daily life, its struggles and its
limitations. It is also at times mistakenly connected with a special mode of dress or certain forms of speech or some habits of thought, distinguishing the possessors of such characteristics from the rest of humanity. This is certainly not the case. On the other hand true culture is, in a way the consciousness of humility. Culture is as comprehensive as it is catholic and is no more and no less than the art of living an enlightened life and the actual and joyous fulfilment of the daily responsibilities to oneself, one's family and country, in the right spirit and the correct perspective.

The cultural developments in the Chola Period have therefore been reviewed in the light of this interpretation of culture. In tracing the growth of these developments, two aspects of such cultural phases have been kept in view, one based on eternal verities, on ideals which are for all time and for all races and the other which adopts and adjusts itself to the changing requirements of time and environments, conditioned by extraneous forces, resulting from the impact of current scheme of affairs, political, religious, economic and social. The true and abiding cultural developments have been sought for in a balanced synthesis of these two aspects on the presumption that while they should have their foundations in such eternal verities, they should not be frigid and unresponsive to the requirements of the times.

Yet another aspect which has been kept in view in this study is the extent to which the Chola rulers and patrons of culture sought to acquire knowledge, both knowledge of power and knowledge of beauty. It is proved by a study of the sources that they were ever ready to receive and assimilate new impressions and ideas, to think, act and live on the basis of these impressions and ideas. Adaptability and flexibility were characteristics of this age. They were not impervious to fresh experience. They did not cling to the old on the score of conservatism; neither did they hug the new because of novelty. In the several fields of cultural
activity which are reviewed in this study, it is evident that the great rulers had an open mind, a clear idea of what they wanted and a discerning power to discriminate between the real and the unreal, between the substance and the shadow. They helped in a process of effective synthesis, taking all that was good in the heritage handed over to them and not apprehensive about trying and launching forth into new lines of experiment and development. As will be apparent when the individual aspects are discussed in detail, the Cholas were refreshingly conscious of the fundamental basis of culture, namely, a healthy and harmonious blend of the influences of nature, art and literature as well as of life. They realised that the root of culture consisted in an attitude of the heart which then gave a direction to the mind. Their contributions in the field of culture demonstrate their awareness of the meaning of life, a proper understanding and appreciation of the problems of humanity and the deliberate choice of things that count. The picture that is presented in this thesis is an attempt to elucidate these cardinal factors and explain how far the Chola kings were able to translate into practical life these noble conceptions of culture and cultured living.

Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyyar is fond of describing culture as a wonderful synthesis of Art, Science, Philosophy and Religion. His favourite saying is that Art is wonder at life, Science is curiosity about life, Philosophy is an attitude to life while Religion is reverence for life. It is possible to include in these four concepts the entire range of a full and rich life, as a judicious combination of all these constitutes true culture. The cultural developments in the Chola period have been considered broadly under this fourfold division, relating it to life, a living, forceful and effective life, and not merely to the inanimate.

Taking first the Art part of this synthesis, an endeavour has been made to present the growth of several of
the fine arts during the period under study. Arts like Architecture, Sculpture and Painting, Music, Dance and Drama, as they flourished under the discerning patronage of the Cholas have been examined and the worth of their contribution has been assessed. The list of subjects has been deliberately kept small so as to enable more detailed and concentrated scrutiny which would be difficult if the field of review is widened. It would be obvious from the study that the Cholas like their predecessors and successors recognised that true Art was an unerring expression of the mind and that national art, as they conceived of it, was a true reflex of national character. The evidence of greatness is revealed in the several works of art of that period. They have grace, refinement, technical skill and patient industry of a very high order. They also constitute an eloquent index of the wonderful resources in men and material that they possessed. Above all the arts of the Chola age demonstrate the religious spirit of the times which tended to subordinate physical beauty and material comfort to ethical conceptions and spiritual bliss. Another conclusion that is forced on us is the fact that real and true and abiding art can flourish only on an economy of pleasure and contentment, not on pain and privation. General prosperity and peace, contentment and freedom from want, only these can release energies and faculties latent in man for creative and higher and nobler endeavours. These have been demonstrably proved by the cultural developments of this period.

As for the scientific aspect of the cultural developments, it has to be realised that the science known to the Cholas was entirely different from the science of today. The progress in scientific and technological fields in the last few decades has been terrific and the impact of this progress on the life of man has been momentous. On the one side the splitting of the atom, the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the threat posed by the piling up of destructive nuclear weapons like the hydrogen and neutron bombs have brought the
world almost to the brink of disaster when even a slight
tilt in the balance might plunge civilization into the
abyss of destruction. On the other hand, we have the
brighter side also when we see the scientific advance of
science for peaceful ends. The gigantic strides made
in space travel as evidenced by Gagarins, Sheppards,
Titovs and Coopers who have been in orbit round the
earth and the possibilities of keeping a date in space
demonstrate the scope of such advance if geared to
peaceful objectives. But the Cholas never dreamed of
such matters. They were still in the bullock cart age
and the nearest approach they had to knowledge of air
and space travel was when they read in the Ramayana
about Sri Rama’s return to Ayodhya in the Pushpaka
Vimana. But, while it is true that their scientific
labours were not concerned with space travels or
transistorised train services, they were great scientists
in their own rights. In the science of structural and
constructional engineering, in the science of agriculture,
involving schemes of irrigation through dams, bunds,
canals and such systems, in the sciences of medicine,
astronomy and mathematics, their contributions have
been significant as the study will show. They were
experts too in the science of politics and administration
and even today the Chola administrative structure is
pointed out as an excellent example of an efficient and
effective machinery that was able to weld into a cor-
porate whole far flung areas lying about practically the
whole of the peninsula. Being concerned with the cul-
tural aspects alone, the political achievements will be
mentioned only in passing and in so far as they have a
direct bearing on the cultural developments.

The third part of the review relates to the philo-
sophical developments and would describe the many
types of philosophy that were preached and practised,
the varying interpretations on life and problems of life.
A review of the literature of the period and the pattern
of education is also included under this head. The
growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism, the place of
Buddhism and Jainism and the general popularity of these systems of philosophy have been reviewed under this broad division.

The last part of the review, the religious, is of deep significance for the period. It has been held that the true basis for expression of life in any aspect in India is the religious and we see this very markedly emphasised during the age of the Cholas. Religion forms an integral part of culture, always helping to keep in the background the idea of a Universal Power ensouling all humanity and shaping its destiny. This is a constant and instructed self-analysis helping man to develop a sense of tolerance and goodwill and a correct evaluation of all the forces around him. Under this head the review covers the institution of the Temples and Maths, Buddhist Viharas and Jain Pallis, the growth and development of different sectarian beliefs and the general attitude towards other religious beliefs prevalent during the period. The general tendency has been to consider the Chola rulers as, by and large, tolerant but a study of the sources indicate that perhaps this is far too generous a view and with a few exceptions, the spirit of tolerance of other faiths and beliefs was not very much in evidence. There are incidents indicated in the sources which show that persecution and fanaticism were not unknown. These will be explained in greater detail in the course of the study.

Before going on to describe the sources on the basis of which the study is presented and before describing the manner in which the source materials have been examined, analysed and evaluated, I would like to indicate the general background on the basis of which this study has been undertaken. As Professor Sathianathier observes in his article on History and Metahistory, the task of the historian is rooted in the conception of history prevailing in his age. According to the Professor, critical misgiving should be his first virtue while not pushing agnosticism to the extreme. He has right-
ly emphasised that history is not mere past politics. Neither does it consist in mere rhapsody over the social and cultural history. These vital factors cannot be dissociated, for, cultural and social progress depends fundamentally on political advance according to Kautilya's Arthasastra. Only political freedom can nurture freedom of thought and cultural progress. There can be no culture in an emergency. It is a matter of singular good fortune that the Cholas were able to provide that degree of stable government which could enable real cultural progress. In estimating the significance of the cultural developments of the Chola period I have tried to heed the warning of Prof. Sathianathier that we should not exalt the past at the expense of the present. The less we know of the past, says he, the more are we prone to draw on our imagination, being too critical of contemporaries and under-critical of the distant past. It is a moot point as to how far the past is to be read in the light of the present and how correct it is to project the present into the past. My effort has been directed towards considering the several aspects detailed above in the light of the source material and to interpret them in terms of their importance to the period in question and their significance to the present times.

A list of books studied is appended to this study. Much of the material for my conclusions has been drawn from an examination of several inscriptions. In the course of my thesis I have acknowledged the sources wherever possible and I have cited the authorities for quotations in almost all the cases. One important point that has to be made clear in this context is that many of the statements I have made are based on inferences drawn from the available materials and not on any direct evidence through records, inscriptions or earlier authorities. This, in fact, is the handicap of the historian. It is not often that the material he requires is handed over to him ready-made, on a salver. His conclusions have inevitably to be based on surmises,
inferences, deductions and valid conclusions drawn from available data. What I intend to convey is that some of the views expressed cannot perhaps be proved like geometrical theorems or algebraic equations. All that I can say is that I have tried to interpret the available sources in the light of the past and of the present, with reference to circumstances known to exist prior to the period of review and afterwards.

I might quote two examples, namely, my views on the developments in the field of Music and Drama during the period. There are several inscriptions of the Chola period which refer to music in its various aspects. Some refer to the singing of Tiruppadiyams in temples at different times. Some others mention musicians, accompanyists and types of musical instruments. These lead to the positive presumption that music was a highly developed and live art in those times. There is, however, no direct evidence about the actual manner in which the science of music was practised or the types of music in vogue then. These have to be inferred from what is known of the art during the pre-Chola and post-Chola periods. Considerable research has been done in this field by scholars like Vellaivaranar and their conclusions have assisted me in postulating certain statements about the state of music during those times. Similarly numerous inscriptions refer to the art of Drama, Nataka. There is reference to Natakasalai, and the existence of dramatic troupes. In this field also my views on the state of this art during the Chola era are based on the accepted standards in the art which had been formulated earlier and which were presumably accepted at that time. In this, as in many other matters, it is not necessary, nor is it possible, to get direct evidence. The possibilities have to be envisaged in the context of the times and on the basis of materials available.

In other matters like architecture and sculpture and painting, however, the cultural contributions of the
Cholas have survived to this day though in many cases in a regrettably poor state of preservation. An examination of these weather-beaten remnants, shorn of their ancient glory, shows vividly the high degree of skill and the advanced state of progress in these arts. The majesty of Rajarajeswaram at Tanjore, the latent beauty of the dilapidated structure at Gangai-Kondacholapuram, the sculptural excellence of Srinivasa-nallur, these throw much light on the artistic excellence attained by the artists of those centuries. So too in Science, Philosophy and Religion. Where such tangible material is available, the excellence of the contribution is there for all to perceive. It is only in a few cases like Music and Drama and Dance that one has to fall back on inferences.

The Cholas occupy tremendous space in the history of our country. They were powerful rulers in the epic past being referred to as contemporaries of the Pandavas. As far as one can see there appears to have been Chola rulers for as long as history can reach. It has not been possible to trace their original source. The grammarian Katyayana of the 4th century B.C. refers to Cholas. So do Kautilya and Baudhyan in his Dharmasutras. They were potent rulers in the time of Asoka and are mentioned in his inscriptions. They are referred to by Ptolemy and by the author of the Periplus. The rich and fertile basin of the Kaveri and the Chola rulers of the Solar race with their Tiger flag were well known to foreign travellers. There were leaders of phenomenal greatness, rearing their heads amongst them now and then like tall peaks, till the end of the 13th century. The Cholas of the Sangam Age flourished before the 3rd century A.D. with their capitals at Uraiyur and Kaveripumpattinam. Tamil was the common language of the Pandyas, Cheras and Cholas. Karikala Chola founded one of the earliest ports in South India and constructed embankments on the Cauvery river. This dynasty disappeared and we have no information till the rise of Vijayalaya who captured
Tanjore in 846 A.D. and founded the dynasty of the Imperial Cholas who held sway in the area till 1279 when their rule came to an end with the death of Rajendra III. The review of the cultural developments relate only to this period of a little over four centuries, a golden page in the history of South India, a period of effective and efficient administration over a large portion of the peninsula which saw the efflorescence of culture and artistic ripening which, in turn, set the pattern for the subsequent progress and developments under the Pandyas.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Sathianathier of the Annamalai University but for whose constant guidance and affectionate lead, it would have been impossible to complete this work. It was generous of him to have so readily undertaken to supervise my research work despite the fact that I was away from the University campus. He has been always ready to direct me along the right lines, indicating the sources I should examine and pointing out the way of approach. I am very much beholden to him for the fatherly interest he has taken in my work.

I should be failing in my duty if I did not acknowledge my sense of deep gratitude to Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Vice-Chancellor of the Annamalai University, who gave me special permission to continue the research without insisting on the residential qualification. The fact that this research has been completed and this study prepared is due entirely to his generous and affectionate encouragement and the inspiration he gave me.
II. GENERAL CULTURAL STANDARDS OF THE PERIOD.

The cultural standards and attainments of any epoch cannot be measured in terms of any arithmetical formula. The test is not as much quantitative as qualitative. Unless, therefore, the review is critical and analytical, it will fail to depict the correct state of affairs or represent the extent and standard of the cultural developments. The common misconceptions that generally gather round the concept of culture have already been enumerated. The point to consider is how far during the Chola period the best in man blossomed forth into fragrant flowers. How did the group and the state develop? How did the individual conduct himself and discharge his responsibilities as a man? Ultimately the cultural standards are set by the individual for the strength of the chain is the strength of the weakest link. Human beings, it is said, are only tolerable as individuals and it is in their individual capacity that they contribute most to the cultural evolution of the group to which they belong and through that to the country. This, however, is not to minimise the importance or worth of group activity and the value of corporate results and achievements of a group can never be underestimated. It is in this background that the general cultural standards of the period have to be viewed.

The Cholas and their subjects were people with an organised society who flourished in a state of full grown civilization. They have left an indelible mark on the life of the country, then and now. Leading an essentially corporate life on the banks of the Kaveri, they created an industrial and commercial civilization based on high ethical standards. It is clear that the older civilization passed on by their predecessors, especially the Pallavas, had not died in spite of the Kalabhra interregnum. On the other hand that civilization was not only continued
but was moulded anew to suit the needs, hopes and aspirations of the rulers of the Vijayalaya dynasty. The monuments of the period represented by the several temples, their sculptures and other works of art tell us how the people under the Cholas lived and talked, ate and slept, worked and played.

There was a kind of insular development under these enlightened rulers, a development helped by geographical factors. The Vindhyas constituted a national barrier and the troubles and tribulations to which the northern portion was subjected did not seriously affect the even tenor of progress in the south. The Chola period was one of true representative Hindu culture, largely because of the stability of government and the protection afforded by the strong kings. Society was predominantly orthodox in religious practices and Hindu traditions were apparent in politics and art alike. The literature of the age was also highly religious. Saivism and Vaishnavism overcame the influence of Buddhism and Jainism and the concept of Bhakti received a tremendous fillip through the devotional hymns of the Alwars and Nayanmars. Mainly owing to the general peace and the unity of administration there was great fertilization of art and literature. This was considerably helped by the kings who were themselves learned and encouraged learning. They were patrons of music, dance and drama. We see several temples which are storehouses of dance poses or which have musical pillars. Through the execution of works of art like the temples with their finely designed architectural and sculptural embellishments, the Cholas endowed the country with a rich legacy. Religious zeal was the force that drove the kings to gain punya by creating works of art. The basic factors beneath this force, involving the prevalence of the theory of Karma, Rebirth etc., will be examined in detail at the appropriate place.

The Chola monarchs realised that though arts are many, Art itself is fundamentally one and so the best
Art should be universal. Their theory of art was different from the modern western theory where, according to Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, the artist gets his intuition by a suggestion from an appearance in life and nature and relates it to an external support. His appeal is not to the deepest self and spirit within but to the outward soul. The purpose of the Chola artist, as indeed of the ancient Indian artist, was to disclose something of the self, the infinite, the divine. Consequently the art of this age is identical in its spiritual aim and principle with the best of Indian culture.

In the Laxman Mahadev Chitale lectures delivered in 1962 Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar has described Art as a form of Yoga, being essentially universal and spiritual, being the presentation of the divine or the ideal in artistic terms. There has been no change in this basic motive through the centuries though there is considerable variety in outer expression. We can perceive this continuity from the Vedic times to the great temples the Cholas built, “from the mysterious dancing figure and the Yogi of Mohenjadaro to the Chola bronze Nataraja.”

In Chola Art there was no repetitive monotony. Its dedicated mission was to direct man to union with the spiritual as revealed in tangible form. This type of art steeped in religious conception and with an essentially ethical and spiritual bias was not understood or appreciated for long by westerners. Scholars like Sir George Birdwood, Prof. Westmacott, Dr. Anderson and Sir C. Purdon Clarke were not able correctly to evaluate the art of ancient India. William Archer, the great dramatist, held the view that Indian art in all forms was repulsive. It was the pioneering work of people like E. B. Havell, Percy Brown, Vincent A. Smith and Ananda Coomaraswamy that made Indians conscious of their magnificent heritage in the realm of art. Though the impersonal, religious and spiritual basis was the motive force, the Indian artist was not unaware that he was producing a work of art and was not unconcerned about his production. As Karl Khandalawala quotes in his
introductory study to Indian sculpture and Painting—
"Was not the graving of a thing in brass or stone, was
not the painting of a reindeer in the depths of a palaeo-
lithic cave a practical method of saying to the moment
—stay longer, thou art so beautiful." The guiding motive
behind all art in the Chola period, behind architecture,
sculpture and painting, was to connect life with the
spirit. Everything was suppressed that would not serve
the purpose or might distract the mind. This is the reason
why it is held that we cannot see in these arts much of
the abounding vitality and physical power and force of
character so much in evidence in Leonardo da Vinci,
Titian, Michael Angelo, Rubens Valasquez or Rodin. The
Indian effort was towards revelation of the grace and
beauty of the soul, aspects denoted by the concept of
Lavanya.

The Age of the Cholas was also the golden age of
Tamil culture. The practice and patronage of literature
was widespread. There was a marked development and
growth of literature on Saiva Sidhanta. The devotional
hymns of the Alwars and Nayanmars came to be codified.
The Periyapuranam of Sekkizhar, many works on
Vaishnava, Jaina and Buddhist canons, came into promi-
nence during this age. The Jeevakachintamani of the
Jain ascetic and poet Tirutakkatevar of the early 10th
century was a work of genius. It is said that this provided
the model for Kamban. A more detailed examination
of the literature of the time will be made at a later stage
in this study. It is, however, well to emphasise at this
stage that the influence of Sanskrit on Tamil works of
the age was very great. Upanishadic and Puranic themes
were fully used. Words and concepts in ethics, religion
and philosophy were freely borrowed and assimilated.
Sanskrit works were freely translated into Tamil. There
was intimate knowledge of Manu, Kautilya, Vatsya-
yana, etc.

Chola culture was a cooperative enterprise. The
history of culture in general is a history of constant
interchange of ideas and techniques with other and often contrasting cultures. As has been correctly emphasised cultural internationalism is as essential as political or economic internationalism. The worth of the cultural standards of the Cholas can be seen by the influence they have exercised on countries outside, notably in Java. In his note on the Dances of the Javanese Theatre, Th. B. Van Lelyveld has held that the Javanese had always been accessible and susceptible to outside influences. Not only the architecture and sculpture but Javanese theatrical performances and dances, according to him, bear unmistakable traces of Indian influence. The temples of Borobudur, Prambanan, and Panataram contain many panels of dance poses and the hasta-mudras have a close similarity to the mudras of the Bharatanatyam. The temples at Angkor-vat, Bayon, and Iswarapura in Cambodia also bear traces of the influence of the south and the dress, ornaments and musical instruments are all Hindu in conception. The Cholas contributed a lot to this spread of culture from the south of India by their effective and sustained contacts with the kingdoms in these parts.

To sum up the general process of cultural development during the Chola period was one of assimilation and adjustment. It was not characterised by a rise and fall and disappearance as happened in Greece, Rome, Babylon or Sumeria. Culture had a wide and comprehensive significance for the Cholas, covering, as it should, the entire field of human activity, intellectual, aesthetic, spiritual, moral, social, economic and political. They would appear to have realised and appreciated the dictum that the seat of culture is the mind of man. It was this understanding that enabled them to leave such a wonderful heritage to posterity. The spiritual motive that characterised all artistic endeavour stemmed from this basic concept of culture and so, to cite but one example, their great temples became architectural self expressions of their spiritual and religious culture.
From ancient times Art in our country has always been considered a path of realisation of the ultimate Reality. It has been spiritual in outlook, idealistic in expression and sublime in interpretation. It was never a matter of sensuous enjoyment or a luxury confined to a few privileged classes. It had a deeper basis and an exalted aim. It was as vital to human progress as any other concept like Devotion or Love. God was regarded as the fountain head of all Beauty. Plato described the Divine as the Trinity of the Good, the True and the Beautiful. So it was that Rukmini referred to Sri Krishna as Bhuvanasundara, the most beautiful in the universe. The artists therefore sought to bring Godhead nearer to man by working along the Beauty aspect of the Divine. It was a form of Yoga, Soundarya Yoga. In their contribution in the field of Art, the Cholas followed these general, basic, characteristics. Their art was idealistic and symbolic rather than realistic. They were not imitators or reproducers but interpreters. This is seen in the power and strength of their architecture, the balance and beauty of poise of their sculpture, the delicacy and idealism of their paintings, the subtlety and spiritual appeal of their music and the grace and rhythm of their dance. In all these facets of culture, their contribution was distinctive and significant. Some of them were modelled on ideals and basis universal to Indian culture from ancient times while some were developed out of the play of circumstances then existing. It is perhaps not possible to evaluate their worth in terms of present day standards. To the modern eye used to pill-box-type of buildings constructed on utilitarian and commercial considerations, the rich and decorative architecture of the Chola Temples may appear archaic and complicated. In the field of painting we are now in an age of breaking with the past, seeking out new subjects and experimenting with new techniques called Abstract Expressionism etc. The style seeks to catch the speed and vitality of today's life. Social protests are voiced through symbolism and caricature
and the artist is inclined to assume responsibility to speak out on the great issues of the day. Then there is the concept of Romantic Realism involving the use of lyrical quality by the use of rhythmic lines and evocative colours. These are the modern trends but surely the Chola Paintings cannot be assessed or evaluated with reference to these. The essential basis is different. So too in Music, Dance and Drama. The difference is so great but this cannot take away from the greatness of the Chola art or the abiding and enduring quality of the forces that brought it into being and fashioned the pattern of its development during the four centuries of their rule.

The great empire of the Imperial Cholas, founded by Vijayalaya, consolidated by Parantaka I, developed and expanded by Rajaraja I came to an end with the reign of Rajendra III, after four centuries of existence. But despite the dynastic downfall, the literature that developed under their discerning patronage, the innumerable temples built by them, the canals, tanks and dams put up by them are all permanent testimony to their solicitude for the welfare and happiness of the people committed to their charge and their anxiety to help in their spiritual, moral and economic growth. The cultural standards attained by them stood as beacon lights to dynasties like the Pandyas who succeeded them and reveal today the breadth of their outlook, the depth of their learning and their intense, purposive endeavours which had, as their motivating and energising force, the concept of a welfare state, an ideal very much at the heart of the rulers of this great motherland of ours today.

The developments under the several detailed heads, can now be examined, considering to the extent possible their origin, growth, progress and development under these enlightened rulers. As has been emphasised more than once earlier the facets of these cultural developments are many and variegated but only the more important of these phases have been taken up for detailed
examination. The research has involved the study of not only many inscriptions but of several authoritative works on individual subjects. In some fields like those relating to architecture, sculpture and painting, the Chola heritages have been examined at site and the conclusions have been based on such objective study. A certain amount of repetition is unavoidable in an examination of this type mainly because of the fact that conclusions and inferences have had to be drawn from a limited field of source materials. It has, however, been my endeavour to present the results of my research and study in a connected form, avoiding the monotony of repetition as much as possible.

After a very brief account of the political history of the Cholas, it is proposed to survey the cultural developments of the age under the following four broad divisions, each division comprising several important items. This four-fold division has been adopted as it is felt that real culture comprises all these and a review of the progress under these would verily constitute a review of the general cultural attainments and developments as a whole.

1. **Art**

   (a) Architecture  
   (b) Sculpture — stone & bronze  
   (c) Painting  
   (d) Music  
   (e) Dance  
   (f) Drama

2. **Science**

   (a) Astronomy  
   (b) Mathematics  
   (c) Medicine  
   (d) Chemical Science  
   (e) Civil Engineering.
3. Philosophy

(a) Systems of Philosophy
(b) Philosophical literature
(c) General literature
(d) Education

4. Religion

(a) Basis and outlook
(b) Hinduism
(c) Concept of Bhakti
(d) Tolerance
(e) Hindu Pantheon
(f) Ascetic orders
(g) Role of Temples.

After an examination of the items listed above, there is a general review about other minor items like social life, the system of caste, the village economy and the individual’s contribution to the general development. These are perhaps not important in themselves but it is in considering such topics that we get a real insight into the place occupied by the individual in the entire set-up.

As will be evident in the course of this study, the contribution towards enriching the life of the people and the lofty and spiritual ideals that inspired the rulers did not come exclusively from the latter. The Tamil country is full of inscriptions recording the close association of individuals in their own capacity in the general life of the community. Whether it was a question of endowing some sheep for burning a perpetual lamp in a shrine or the setting apart of a piece of land to provide the income for services to the Temple, whether it was constructing a tank or arranging for the conduct of Puja and festivals, the common man took as much pride as the highest in the land in associating himself in such endeavours for the common good. It was this corporate
and cooperative spirit that enabled the kings to realise their dreams and helped them labour and labour successfully in evolving and maintaining such a remarkably advanced state of cultural progress.

There are five annexures containing particulars of some of the important inscriptions dealing with particular aspects and a Bibliography.
III. THE RULE OF THE IMPERIAL CHOLAS
A BRIEF POLITICAL SURVEY.

To understand and appreciate the significance of the cultural contributions of the Cholas, it is essential to have a basic knowledge of their political background and see how far their rule provided that stability and peace that could create the proper climate for the growth of culture. It would be sufficient to give a very brief survey of the political fortunes of this dynasty which ruled over vast areas of the southern peninsula for well over four centuries.

Parakesari Vijayalaya (C846 to 881 A.D.) founded the new dynasty after his victory over the Muttaraiyars from whom he captured Tanjore. His reign of 35 years was spent in consolidating his conquests. In 880 his son Aditya got the Chola Nadu in return for the help rendered by him to the Pallavas against Varaguna Pandya in the battle of Tirupurambiyam. Aditya I (871-907) was friendly with the Chera king and the Ganga ruler Pritivipati II. He was responsible for the construction of several temples. Parantaka I (907-953) was a warrior and during the 46 years of his rule he extended the boundaries of the empire. He led an invasion into Ceylon. His kingdom extended from Kanyakumari in the south to the present Nellore District in the north. There was a set back in the closing years of his reign when the Rashtrakutas wrested Tondaman-dalam and Tirumunaipadi after the battle of Takkolam (949 A.D.) in which Parantaka’s son Rajaditya was killed.

Parantaka I was succeeded by his second son Gandaraditya (950-957). He ruled over a very much reduced area. Arinjaya who followed him ruled for just a little over a year.
The fortunes of the Cholas looked up a little again with the accession of Parantaka II (Sundara Chola) who ruled from 957 to 970 A.D. He was successful in his campaigns against the Pandyas but the Pandya country was not brought under Chola control. Parantaka II organised on unsuccessful invasion of Ceylon also. His son Aditya Karikala lost his life through trechery and Parantaka II himself died of a broken heart. He was followed by Uttama Chola, the son of Gandaraditya, who ruled from 970 to 985. There was no reduction in the extent of the empire.

By far the greatest of the Chola kings was Rajaraja I who ruled from 985 to 1014. Early in his reign he defeated the Cheras and Pandyas and styled himself as Mummudi Chola. The empire reached the zenith of its prosperity under his rule. Brave, warlike and learned, Rajaraja I laid the foundation for the expansion under his son Rajendra. He was the first Chola king to record his achievements in inscriptions in the preamble. After the conquest of Kandalurchalai (Trivandrum), Kollam and Kodungallur, he captured Coorg, Gangapadi (South of Mysore) and Nulampadi (North of Salem) and South Bellary. His conquests were over by 991 in which year he invaded Ceylon. He turned his attention to Vengi Nadu in the north and made it a Chola protectorate. He invaded Kalinga and then the Laccadive and Maldives islands. He ordered a revenue survey of the whole kingdom.

Rajendra I (1012-1044) was a worthy son of the worthy father. At the time of his accession he had under him the whole area covered by the old Madras Presidency and part of Mysore and Ceylon. The Tungabhadra river was the northern limit. His further conquests were all completed by 1025 after which there was peace in the kingdom. Before the third year of his reign he brought the Raichur Doab under his control along with N.W. Mysore, N.E. Hyderabad and Malkhed. In 1017 he invaded Ceylon again. He turned to the Chera country
in 1018 and he secured Harpanahalli in Bellary in 1020 from the Western Calukyas. Between 1021 and 1023 he organised his north Indian campaign which covered areas north of Vizagapatam, Midnapore, Burdwan, land to the south of the ganges in Bihar and Bengal. He also organised a naval expedition against west Malaya, Kheda, Sumatra and the Nicobar islands. One of his daughters married the East Chalukyan prince Rajanarendra and their son was the future Kulottunga I.

Rajadhiraja I who followed had been associated with his father as Yuvaraja from 1018 itself. He was killed in the battle of Koppam in 1054, fighting against West Chalukyans. His reign was one of protracted warfare. His brother crowned himself as Rajendra II on the battle field itself. He ruled upto 1063. He had defeated the Western Chalukyans at Koppam and then led a successful campaign against the turbulent and disruptive forces in Ceylon. Veerarajendra who followed ruled from 1063 to 1070. He fought thrice with the Western Chalukyas, the last being the battle of Kudal Sangamam in 1064. He subsequently concluded a marriage alliance with them. His son Adirajendra ruled only for a few months. He was the last of the Cholas in the direct line of Vijayalaya.

Kulottunga I who came next ruled from 1070 to 1120. He united in himself the Chola and East Chalu-
ykan lines but he always regarded himself as a Chola, having been born and bred up at the court of his maternal grandfather. He was more interested in the welfare of his people than in the expansion of the kingdom. His was a peaceful reign and during this period he sowed the seeds for the increasing prosperity during the three succeeding reigns. He conquered Sakkarakkottai, modern Bastar in M.P., defeated the Western Chalukyas in 1076, reestablished Chola sway over Mysore and conducted a successful campaign against the Pandyas. He led similar campaigns against the Cheras in 1081 and South Kalinga, once in 1096 and again in 1112. Perhaps
this was his last campaign. Ceylon was lost to the Cholas early in his reign. He sent a delegation to China in 1077. Malaya also appears to have been under his control. He maintained friendly relations with Cambodia and the ruler of Kanauj. He abolished customs and octroi duties throughout the Chola empire. He also ordered a revenue survey of the whole kingdom.

The reigns of Vikrama Chola (1118-1136) Kulottunga II (1133-1150) and Rajaraja II (1146-1163) were all uneventful. Rajadhiraja II (1163-1178) interfered in Pandyan affairs on the side of Kulasekhara Pandya against Veera Pandya but this alliance was short lived and he switched over to Veera Pandya. It was during his reign that the feudatories started asserting themselves and gradually worked up to a state when they could shake off the Chola yoke.

Kulottunga III (1178-1218) was the son of Rajaraja II. His reign saw continued war with Pandyas, with Ceylon, with Kongunadu, with Kanchi and the northern Chodas. Rajaraja III (1216-1256) was a weak ruler who had to face troubles within and without the empire. The Hoysalas in the north west and the Pandyas in the south were becoming powerful but the Cholas continued because of the growing rivalry between the two. The Pandyans under Maravarman Sundara I invaded Chola territory in 1219 and sacked the cities of Tanjore and Uraiyyur. Rajaraja III capitulated and became his vassal. There was an internal revolt in 1221 and Maravarman Sundara led a second invasion in 1231 and routed Rajaraja III. He was imprisoned by the Kadava ruler Kopperunjinga but was subsequently released to remain as king in name.

Rajendra III (1246-1279) was the last of the Imperial Cholas. He made attempts to resuscitate the fallen fortunes of his house. But his endeavours did not succeed. In 1287 the Pandyas invaded again under Sadayavarman Sundara I and the Chola empire ceased
to exist and passed under the control of the Pandyans who held sway over the entire territory from Kanyakumari to the river Krishna. Rajendra III continued as a petty vassal under them till he passed away in 1279, leaving no heir. The Chola empire was assimilated into the Pandya kingdom.

From this rapid survey it is apparent that the fortunes of the house of Vijayalaya depended largely on the personality of the ruling monarch, his diplomatic alliances, the split among his opponents and the resultant groupings amongst them. Kings like Rajaraja I and Rajendra I and Kulottunga I towered above all the rest and through their vigorous campaigns and conquests consolidated the empire and helped in its stability, ensuring peace and prosperity in the kingdom which enabled the people and ruler alike to release their energies, intelligence and application in the active development of cultural pursuits. It is these developments in the several cultural phases of the life of the people of the Chola empire that this thesis sets out to describe and evaluate.
IV. ART

(A) ARCHITECTURE.

Architecture is one of the most important forms in which the culture of any people has found expression. The Cholas were great builders. As Fergusson says, they conceived like giants and finished like jewellers. This is evidenced by the innumerable temples constructed by them all over the kingdom under their sway. Vija-yalaya started the rule of the Imperial Cholas by constructing a temple for Durga at Tanjore. The Anbil plate of Sundara Chola mentions that Aditya I, the second ruler of the dynasty, constructed several temples on both banks of the Kaveri, from the Sahyadri hill in the West to the sea in the east. 48 such temples of Aditya I have been identified. It is in the line of these two pioneers that we have the builders of the great temple at Tanjavoor, called Devalaya Chakravarti, its twin at Gangai-kondacholapuram, the beautiful structures at Darasuram etc. It is, therefore, possible to assess the architectural standards and progress of the Chola era mainly from a study of these temples.

It has been rightly held by scholars that the motive behind these magnificent edifices was purely religious. It is of utmost significance to realise that the Cholas did not build for the sake of glorification. We do not come across any secular architecture, so characteristic of succeeding centuries. The Cholas did not expend their energy or waste their men and material power in putting up private residences, gardens or parks. There was no effort to recapitulate political events in any of their wonderful architectural edifices. They confined their enterprise to purely constructions inspired by their religious fervour and intense faith.
Indian architecture is held to represent the cosmic. We perceive a certain unity in the conception, in the mass of design and immensity of detail. But it was not till recently that the architecture of the east drew the appreciation of the critics in the west. Indian architecture was regarded as as strange and alien as the myths it enshrined. But this was because the art of architecture like other arts was theological, hieratic and traditional. As mentioned already secular architecture developed only much later than the sacred. The secular buildings of the Vijayanagar period, the Tanjore and Madurai palaces, the Red Fort and Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri came long after the Temples.

Some of the great temples built by the Cholas have a beauty and majesty that are arresting. Rising from the ground “these man-hewn stone products of architectural skill symbolise the earthbound but celestial spirit of man.” These were often large in conception, design and execution. The Garbha-griha (Sanctum Sanctorum) the Antarala (vestibule), the Mantapa (pillared hall), the Sikhara (Tower), the cloisters and the Gopurams, all these conformed to the emotional needs of the people. When we think of the persons who worked patiently to create these works of art, we can visualise how hundreds of them should have worked ceaselessly with the precision of goldsmiths, with only their simple tools of chisel and hammer, rigidly following the rules enjoined in their treatises of art, the Silpa Sastras. It is a tribute alike to the Chola genius and greatness making it clear how an insight into ancient lore was considered to be the sine qua non to this magnificent translation of that lore into rock and temple.

A close examination of the temples of the period before the Cholas, especially those for which the Pallavas were responsible and those that came later with the rise of the Pandyas proves that the remarkable characteristic of Chola architecture was its continuity from the past and a progressive and gradual evolution through a
process of assimilation. The architectural standards of the Cholas have, therefore, to be viewed in the backdrop of this larger and more comprehensive perspective. Representing the springtime efflorescence in all spheres of life, the Chola architecture responded to the creative urge of the times and contributed character and richness to progress in the art. A proper understanding would not be possible by a mere recording of what had been done but it is necessary to assess the nature and direction of the progress of the art during that period in order to appreciate the fulfilment that they sought.

S. K. Saraswati describes the pre-Chola age as one of the parting of the ways in regard to architecture. He calls it an age of culmination and ultimate exhaustion of the earlier tendencies and movements in architectural types and forms and the ushering in of a new age, particularly connected with the growth of the temple. It was a creative and formative age with immense possibilities for the future. It is of utmost importance to appreciate this in order to assess the developments during the Chola age. Cave architecture as represented by the remains at Ajanta, Ellora and Bagh silently passed away. Temples began to be constructed in brick and dressed stone. There was a prolific output. The evolution of the Nagara and Dravida styles could be seen even now. In fact the basic foundation for subsequent temple architecture was laid by the Pallavas.

This rich Pallava heritage was passed on to the Cholas under whom Temple architecture entered a brilliant and distinctive phase. There is a difference of opinion amongst scholars as to the stages of the development of this art under the Cholas. Jouveau Dubreuil considers the type of architecture between 850 and 1100 A.D. as the Chola type and postulates a Pandya phase covering the period between 1100 and 1300 A.D. According to him the Pandyan phase began when the Chola style had not cleared the stage. This view is supported by Percy Brown and Louis Frederic. F. A. Gravely and
Sivaramamurti are inclined to consider the whole process as the Early and Later Chola styles. Nilakanta Sastri postulates a threefold division, the early one from 850 to 985 A.D., the middle period from 985 to 1070 A.D. and the late period between 1070 and 1300. These views have been stated and examined by S. R. Balasubramanyam in his publication on Four Chola Temples. He holds the view that considering the development of architecture during the Chola period in two or three divisions might be convenient for study but there can be no Pandya phase in this period. I am in full agreement with him. There was at no time any superimposition of one style on another but the whole process was one of gradual, continuous evolution, the best of one period being absorbed into, assimilated and improved upon by the succeeding period. This is the genius of the Chola architect whose skill seen in the erection of some of the grandest Dravidian monuments represented the high water-mark of Dravidian art and architecture.

It is, however, true that the Cholas built on the solid and splendid foundation laid by the Pallavas who had already evolved and established the component parts of the temple like Garbhagriha, Ardhamandapa, Vimana, Sikhara, Devakoshta, Nandimandapa and Dvajastamba. The characteristic features of Chola temples are their graceful animation, the consummate skill in execution, ingenuity of the technique employed and the excellent building materials employed. It speaks volumes for the skill and intelligence of the architects when we find that today, centuries after they came into being, the big temples are still solid and weatherproof, having withstood the ravages of nature. Where they have fallen into bad state of repairs, the cause can almost always be traced to deliberate vandalism or unthinking attempts at renovation. Modern constructions which spring a leak at the first rainfall or which develop cracks at the slightest provocation provide a good touchstone for the excellence of construction of these old giants of stone.
Manasara is the standard work on Hindu Architecture and it may be presumed that the rules laid down in this Sastra whose origin is placed between 500 and 700 A.D. were well known to the Chola architects. The seer Manasara is said to have incorporated in his work the conclusions of 32 authorities who had flourished earlier. In fact scholars seek to trace similarities between Manasara with 70 chapters and the Roman treatise of architect Vitruvius. That the Chola architect followed the stipulations of works like Manasara is seen from the wonderful proportions in construction of temples where length was related to breadth and height and these, in turn, were dependent on the shape of the structure, whether it was square, rectangular, circular, octagonal or oval. Five types of pillars were also mentioned, the square (Brahmakunta), octagonal (Vishnukunta), circular (Rudrakunta), pentagonal (Sivakunta) and hexagonal (Skandakunta).

Percy Brown considers architecture as the principal visible and material record through the ages of man’s intellectual evolution. Each cultural movement, according to him, has a special contribution to the art of building, revealing in a substantial form the aspirations and way of life of the people. While the Greeks preferred refined perfection and the Romans chose scientific construction, while the French choice was passionate energy and the Italian renaissance elected scholarship, the basis of Indian architecture was the spiritual content, the fundamental purpose being to represent in concrete form the prevailing religious consciousness of the people. It was, to quote Percy Brown again, mind materialised in terms of rock, brick or stone. In all temple architecture of the Cholas, therefore, the religious, philosophical and metaphysical qualities of production came first and the artistic only thereafter. It was the spiritual dominating the material.

Till the end of the 10th century A.D. there were only small constructions, possibly because the new
dynasty was just finding its feet and resources were limited. The early types of temples had the typical circular cella within a square prakara with the vimana, sikhara and kalasa and the mantapa in front. The pillars were moulded in the Pallava style, being square at the base and top and octagonal in the middle. Dwarapalakas were common. The Nartamalai monuments, the Balasubramania temple at Kannanur and the Nageswara temple at Kumbakonam come under this category. The Koranganatha temple at Srinivasanallur of the reign of Parantaka I and the Muvarkoil at Kodumbalur of the reign of Parantaka II also come under this early group. These were constructed of well dressed granite blocks, accurately coursed and bonded.

Of these, the Koranganatha temple which was defiled by a monkey and was therefore not consecrated is a little distinctive in type. There is less of ornamental details. It is a temple of modest proportions, simple in the design of its parts and showing a growing and welcome appreciation of the value of plain spaces. One can certainly agree with Percy Brown that this represents the endeavour of the Cholas to evolve their own architectural culture by treasuring traditions but exercising discretion in the use of such traditions handed over to them.

Maturity of experience and high degree of excellence and perfection were reached in the Great Temple of Thanjavoor and the temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram. Percy Brown describes the Rajarajeswaram at Tanjore as apparently the largest, highest and most ambitious production of its kind hitherto undertaken by Indian builders, a landmark in the evolution of the building art. His description of this temple is worth quoting. The Temple, says he, is composed of several structures combined axially, all of them aligned in the centre of a spacious walled enclosure. The magnificent, majestic vimana, built for durability alone has, according to him, a powerfully adjusted volume and a sense of graceful
balance and it is the finest single creation of the Dravidian craftsman, a touchstone of Indian architecture. It stands today as a symbol of the might and majesty of Rajaraja I and his deep devotion to Siva. This gigantic and marvellous work was perhaps completed in about seven years. The provision of adequate foundation, the evidence of engineering skill to avoid the downward thrust of the superstructure, the grand conception on a lavish scale, the harmony of its parts, the gradual, graceful upward sweep of the pyramidal Vimana, the calligraphy of the inscriptions—these, according to Balasubrahmanyam make this Devalaya Chakravarti a peerless gem of Indian architecture.

The Temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram constructed by Rajendra I to signalise his victorious campaign which took his troops upto the Gangetic basin was completed by about 1023 or 1025 A.D. This temple was supposed to be an emulation of the Tanjore temple and was even intended to excel it in richness and grandeur. It is significant to notice the appearance of increased architectural elaboration in this temple. But today unlike the earlier construction, it stands, in the words of Percy Brown, in soliarly state, a lovely grey-green pile slumbering amidst the tangled verdure of a wide neglected garden. It is half-hidden by the mud huts of a desolate village, a mere stranded shell of its former prosperity.

Scholars hold that though many more temples were built by the successors of Rajendra I, the architecture of the Cholas attained its culmination with the construction of these two masterpieces. The Cholas let it rest there. Their artistic excellenc did not decline or die but manifestly it had spent its force. There was no remarkable construction after these. The subsequent decades saw the emphasis shifting from the Vimana to the supplementary, outlying portions of the temple scheme and the Gopurams came to occupy the prominent place.

The state of architectural skill is seen in many other Temples also. In his book on Four Chola
Bṛhadīśvara Temple: General View
Gangaikōndacholapuram

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India
Vijayāla-Choleśvara Temple
Narttamalai

*Courtesy*: Archaeological Survey of India
Koraṅganātha Temple, Srinivasanallur

*Courtesy*: Archaeological Survey of India
Temples, Balasubrahmanyam has given elaborate descriptions of some of them. He has specially mentioned the Avani-Kandarpa Iswaram at Kilaiyur, about 30 miles from Trichinopoly, built about 884 A.D., containing the twin shrines of Agastreswaram in the South and Choliswaram in the North. This is described as the most fully evolved and best preserved of the early Chola temples. While one has the square Sikhara, the other is bulbous. The sculptural decoration is of a very high quality. Another temple referred to is the one dedicated to Sundareswara at Melappaluvur. Rajendra I was responsible for constructing temples at Tiruvallam and Sengunram in North Arcot and Kavantandalam in Chingleput. He also rebuilt a Pidari templt in Kolar. Rajadhiraja I is associated with the Tripurantakeswara temple at Kuvam (Chingleput) while the name of Rajendra II is linked with the temple at Tirukkoilur in South Arcot.

Of the later temples, mention has to be made of the Amrita Ghateswara temple at Melakkadambur in the South Arcot district, built by Kulottunga I by about 1113 A.D. This has been called a veritable picture gallery of early 12th century. The temple itself has been constructed in the shape of a chariot with two wheels on each side. In the 44th year of Kulottunga I the Sun temple at Suryanarkoil came to be built. This is regarded as the only independent Sun temple in South India which is much earlier than the one at Konarak. The Kampahareswara temple at Tribhuvanam is dated in the reign of Kulottunga III.

The temples of the Cholas, dotted all over the south, "stand out against the flat, yellow expanse of the plains, dominating and by the force of their size overpowering the lives of the people whose ancestors went to such fantastic lengths in scorching heat to erect the symbols of their faith. Starting with the heritage of the immediate past, the Cholas led the style on to richer elaboration and maturity. There was no break in continuity or
tradition. The freshness of style and the revivification of that style from the dormant state were the keynotes of transition. Their architectural achievements constitute lithic testimonies to their religious devotion and dignified majesty”.

From these works of art inspired by religious fervour to the present day trends in architecture is a far cry indeed. Today buildings go up into the sky and are rightly called sky-scrapers. They are of the utilitarian, commercial, pill-box type, secular in conception, design and execution. This trend appears to be universal. The L.I.C. Building in Madras, the several multi-storey buildings of Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi are on a par with such architectural trends in the West, notably America. For example the Rockfeller Centre in New York, a skyscraper group, has 16 buildings in an area of 14.5 acres. The centre houses 1100 firms with 40,000 workers and on an average there are 1,60,000 daily visitors. There are 25 restaurants, 800 garages, an ice skating rink, music hall, a theatre for 6,200 persons with a $400,000 stage. It is a city by itself, a muscular, lunging, rollicking giant, straining towards new heights. Yet another such edifice is Marina City, the architectural design for Chicago, planned by William L. Mc Fetridge. This consists of two 60 storey circular apartment towers, each 555 feet high. It would be the tallest residential structure in the world and is estimated to cost 36 million dollars. These, it is true, appeal to the mind by their gigantic size and all-purpose objective. But the Chola architectural monuments impress more by their direct appeal to the heart, bringing home to the observer the high and noble ideals that inspired their builders, the intense faith and sense of dedication that motivated them and the refreshing absence of any idea of self-advertisement or attempt to perpetuate their own names. It is not easy today to even conceive of such an impersonal outlook and it is the glory of Chola architecture that the best of the art sprung out of ethical and spiritual conviction rather than from other considerations.
(b) SCULPTURE.

(i) Stone

Sculptural art is admittedly more difficult of execution and perfection than the pictorial art, primarily because it involves greater manual labour and higher knowledge of anatomy. But in its creative excellence and uniqueness it is very much superior to painting. The ideal has first to be set before the mind. In this connection Sukracharya says, "Let the imager establish images in temples by meditations on deities who are the objects of his devotion. In no other way, not even by direct and immediate vision of an actual object is it possible to be so absorbed in contemplation as this in the making of images." The Chola sculptor is seen to have understood the significance of this injunction. The lack of mortal models did not result in flaws in figure or defect in proportion in his creations. He was able to evolve his own type of beauty in divine personality and so suited the poise and expression of every figure to varying shades of emotion which had each such figure in its grip. He has left for posterity a rare wealth of divine and human forms, pulsating with life, moving in a pageant of unending variety and presenting themes of inexhaustible interest. His has been a quest for self-expression. In his graceful productions he has been able to convey a message and embody a revelation.

In this as in the case of architecture, the Cholas inherited a flourishing and highly developed tradition from the Pallavas. The pivot of the art for the Pallavas was the human figure and we see the stately elegance of this art at Mahabalipuram. Nihar Ranjan Ray holds that the Gangavatara, carved in epic style and epic breadth is a classic example of the simplicity and directness of the Pallava sculptor, a visible indication of the consciousness of his power with his chisel.

The Cholas, however, did not attempt to emulate the Pallava style. They preferred sculpture in high relief.
There was a wide variety in the execution of this art. What is called narrative sculpture is seen in small panels in the Nageswara temple at Kumbakonam and the Kampahareswara temple at Tribhuvanam. The Cholas were appreciative of blank spaces on walls and did not, therefore, crowd them with sculptures. In the field of icons there are several Saiva figures though Vaishnava and Jaina figures are also not unknown. In the field of decorative sculpture, the architectural motifs were floral patterns, friezes of animals, birds etc. There are very few portrait sculptures. This was largely due to the tendency to merge the individual in type.

While the Pallava figures were comparatively more attenuated with reference to Ellora and Elephanta, the Chola figures were delicate in outline with what has been called a subtle rhythmic quality. They were also characterised by simplicity, almost bordering on austerity in the matter of costumes and ornaments.

One of the characteristics of Indian sculpture is that the images of Divinities were never intended to stand for any conscious production of beauty as such. They were created for the purpose of realising certain spiritual and religious ends but in almost all cases they turned out to be works of Art, mainly because they were the products of spontaneity rather than conscious effort. This universal spirit behind Indian sculpture was exemplified in the Chola phase very clearly. Sculpture was one of the devices by which gods were brought nearer to the hearts of men. The figure carved in stone or the image cut in metal was intended to be an instrument of sadhana, a diagrammatic help designed to assist the Sadhaka or worshipper. This was the aim the Chola sculptor set before himself and his work which has endured down the centuries shows how effectively he worked and how much of this ideal he had been able to translate into material, visual aids. "His chisel sang well, on stone and on metal, and this music, inspired by lofty ideals, mounted up to the heavens like the curling
smoke of the worshipper's incense and fetched down the gods and goddesses."

These imaginative forms of gods and goddesses were not the result of caprice or individual fancy of the sculptor or the imager. The forms had been visualised by gifted persons, seers or Rishies who had set down the plastic conception in appropriate verbal pictures called Dhyanamantras or contemplative verses by which the forms could be conceived or invoked. The imager and the sculptor had to translate, accurately, in terms of a plastic form the idea so conveyed. The integrity of the original conception had to be strictly adhered to and no deviation was permitted. The Dhyanamantras were accompanied by interpretative patterns called Lakshanas on which were based the rules of proportions, setting out the dispositions of the various limbs or gestures of each image. The individual artist could not introduce any innovation or original ideas as he was only an illustrator or interpreter in stone or metal of a form visualised by a seer. This is the view expressed by N. R. Ray also. According to him, the sculpture was intended to serve as an object of devotion helping the devotee in concentrating his mind on the realisation of an ultimate object outside the image itself. Consequently there was no inherent relationship between the sculpture and the devotee or the artist. It existed apart and was identical neither with his inner experience nor with his ultimate object. Ray therefore concludes that that was valuable only as an instrument and did not call for the transfusion of the artist's creative or spiritual experience into the object of his creation. While there is considerable force in this view, it does not appear correct to make the Chola sculptor a mere machine, carrying on with the art merely mechanically and without real interest. A close study of many of the sculptures of this period reveals how much of the artistic spirit has been infused into them. These sculptures were dominated by the religious motive but in India Art has always been a handmaid of religion and because of that Art
has not ceased to be expressive. Indian art, to repeat, was not made primarily for aesthetic reasons. One has to seek the real meaning hidden in the art which stems from the sources of the inner life of a people. To quote Benjamin Rowland these symbols of art voice the same truths as Philosophy and they are the signals along the way of the pilgrim’s progress directing human energies to the same goal of transmutation. It is obvious, therefore, that the Chola sculptures are expressive of a great spirit and it is difficult to regard them as mere mechanical productions.

That the sculptures throb with life can be seen if we look at some of the figures that still adorn the temples. The figure of Lakshmi, seen in many temples, is one such. It is a perfect figure, graceful, lively, vivacious yet modest, radiating the divine personality. The posture is fine. It has sensuousness and beauty and incorporates the wiles and vanities, passions, tenderness and love of womanhood. With the perfect, long nose, the slim waist, broad hip, full breasts, long artistic fingers, long lashes, expressive eyes, the figure almost comes alive. Such a piece of sculpture could never have been produced mechanically. Unless the sculptor had searched for the elements of form, colour, design, mass and volume beyond the mere visual exterior of his subject matter, he could not have achieved this result. The Chola sculptor was a stone carver not a modeller. He had to work in close cooperation with the stone, its configuration, its degree of hardness and with a constant and vigilant eye to the latent form within its formless mass. He could obtain a vision only through profound contemplation combining the static concept of a yogi, the rhythmic concept of Nataraja and the dynamic concept of Bhairava.

Another characteristic feature of Chola sculpture is the absence of erotic sculpture in temples as is seen in the Chandela works at Kajuraho. The Chola works are
conspicuous for their serenity and love was considered as a sacrament.

For the image of the feminine form, the idea of beauty was conceived in a satisfactory way. In the West the study of womanhood has invariably centred round the representation of the nude female form, far removed from the concept of Jaganmata, so prevalent in India. The Chola sculptors followed the universal Indian principle and were concerned with Woman as Mother or Woman as Sakti or Woman as Spouse of the Divine. As has been mentioned earlier the upper part of the body of such figures is unclothed and yet there is not a shadow of suggestion other than that of a lofty and sublime spirituality which elevates us to a higher plane of thought. In the West, as in the case of the Venus of Milo, it is the worship of the physical passion, hardly calculated to be an uplifting or elevating force. The face of some of the Chola sculptured goddesses is hardly less captivating in the beauty and serenity of the type. But these figures attract by a quality of beauty which is very remote from the western conception. They are embodiments of great spiritual energy, incarnating not physical charm but spiritual power. In the static pose, many of the figures embody a type of beauty that can only have a spiritual significance. This, however, is not to imply that the Chola sculptors had entirely neglected the charm of women understood in a physical sense, with its inevitable sex-attraction. This has also received adequate sculptural representation but principally as decorative devices on the facades of temples in the forms of alluring apsaras. But even in such secular treatment of the various phases of the mithuna or the sex-motif, it is resorted to only to indicate philosophic and religious doctrines. As in religious thought, so in sculpture, this is a mere symbol on which hang great spiritual truths.

Another feature, closely allied to this aspect, which is a feature of Indian and hence Chola sculpture, is that
Divinity had been pictured in terms of a superhuman type. It was never confused with the average type of human anatomy. The subjective conceptions of Indian images could hardly be represented in terms of a physically perfect human body. It could only be symbolised in an ideal type and by forms not strictly in accordance with known physiological laws but rather by forms which transcend the limits of ordinary human anatomy. The Chola sculptures, by and large, have been constructed on this principle. The great artists carved out typical, synthetic figures. They took whatever was ideally beautiful in nature and made a synthesis of it in such figures. These perhaps do not conform to the ordinary concept of beauty but the rhythm and suggestiveness are really impressive. This is yet another reason why this art and artistic creations have not been so correctly appreciated. If the idea underlying these sculptures and the symbolism of the figures are understood, the appreciation will be instinctive. Without such an understanding, their true significance is very often missed.

A study of some of the Chola sculptures which are found in many of the temples will be very revealing. One of the very good sculptures is that of Dakshinamurti in the Kiliavur temple. It is very expressive and vibrant. With a Jatamakuta and wearing the Makara and Patra Kundala, this majestic figure has three necklaces, the sacred thread (Yajnopavita) with two strands knotted near the left breast and an udarabanda. The Antariya has fine curls. The Uttariya has a central loop resting on the thighs with knots and loops on both sides of the waist. Of the four hands, the front right is in the Abhaya pose while the front left is in the Katyavalambida pose. The upper right hand has the Dasu while the upper left holds the Mriga. On the western side of the same temple there is the figure of a Vina-dhara Dakshinamurti which is a fine specimen of early Chola art.

The figure of Dakshinamurti is not uncommon. In this context it is useful to point out that the concept of
Dakshinamurti was very significant then as it is even today. This is the ideal of the Deity in His function of a Teacher, as the Jagat Guru. Dakshinamurti is really not the "South Facing Form." This term has nothing to do with the points of the compass. Dakshina stands for Buddhi, that spiritual faculty in man which enables him to perceive truth directly without the instrumentality of the intellect. Dakshinamurti is therefore the embodiment of Buddhi, the symbolic representation of that function of Divine consciousness within oneself enabling him to realise and become aware of spiritual truths within the depths of his own consciousness. The fact that this sculpture represents such basic truths is testimony to the erudition of those responsible for its production.

Another sculptural figure of the period seen in many temples is that of Bikshatana. Balasubrahmanyam has referred to one such excellent sculpture obviously forming part of the Sundareswara temple of Melappaluvur but lying today on the bund of a tank on the roadside. What a tragic commentary! This figure has naturally been carved in the nude. It has a small, round waist. A snake is wound round the right arm which also holds the Sula. The sacred thread has three strands. It has, to quote Balasubrahmanyam, a smiling face, graceful flexion, beautiful adornment, plastic perfection, fine finish and harmony of parts, a marvellous creation of the period.

The Melakkadambur temple for Amrita Ghateswara is also rich in sculptures. The figures of Ganapati and Agastya are very fine. There are also several figures of Devas and Rishies besides those of Jnana Dakshinamurti, Durga, Ardhanari, Alinganamurthi and Ganga-dhara.

The sculptures at Gangaikondacholapuram and Srinivasanallur are also classic examples of Chola art. They have what has been called a tough vitality and
exhibit a vigorous modelling. The figures have an appearance of disciplined strength, inner composure and all the smooth tenderness of live flesh. In the felicitous language of N.R. Ray, these sculptures are the eloquent expression of the natural dynamism of life, the aim of Indian sculpture. They exhibit, according to him, an organic relationship of body and jewelleries and maintain an artistic integrity and creative vision, resulting in a noble conception of form, happy and yet supple, powerful in build yet soft in linear movement.

The Cholas, it has been argued, based their sculpture on regulated and canonised structure of forms. It is said that 256 measurements were given for a body of which 9 were for the nose itself. There was a uniformity of production all over and no major deviation was permitted as the artists had to move within the limits of established practice and canonical injunctions. Whenever secular themes were used, these were only intended to serve the needs of a life, religious in aim and inspiration. This view has given rise to two unfortunate interpretations. One is that being so bound by stipulations, Chola sculpture was nothing but an endless monotony of forms. The second is that they were uninformned by inner experience and without registration of individual creative genius and the sculpture reflected only the experience of the past and of contemporary life. It was not the experience of the individual but the integrated experience of the cults and the communities.

It is difficult to agree with these interpretations. If the varied types of sculptures are examined, it will be obvious that each has an originality despite their having been patterned on strict standards. Uniformity does not mean monotony. The canonical injunctions were broad indications and left enough scope for the play of individual artistry and powers of creation as is evidenced by the sculptures. The charge of monotony is belied by the existence of variety.
As for the second interpretation, one aspect has already been considered earlier. When the sculptor set his chisel to stone, he had to bring in his own individual effort into the work. He had to conceive of the image in his mind and start with the Dhyana sloka, as it were. Mere copybook execution would never have produced a work of art. If it was merely following the rules laid down, anyone could have been a sculptor. That this was not so leads to the inevitable conclusion that it required inspiration, individuality and creative urge to carve a figure of vitality and force. The Chola sculptors utilised canonical injunctions but in the process they brought to bear their own genius without which these would never have been the brilliant products they are. It was certainly not a case of either mass or mechanical production.

(ii) Bronze

It is in the art of Bronze that we have the highest and most varied achievements of this period. The Chola Bronzes are world famous. They are mainly Saivite but there are also figures of Krishna, Rama, Sri Devi etc. These figures have a rhythmic quality about them, a delicacy of movement which is too subtle to be captured in stone. The feminine figures possess a characteristic grace, a subtle curvilinear grace suggestive of beauty rather than sensuousness. Figures of males are characterised by uprightness and dignity of form and a supple strength in an atmosphere of serene spirituality.

Iconometry was a perfected science and a live art. The bronze makers had strictly to adhere to the standards laid down in the sastras. The measurements and form for each Deity were laid down. Siva and Vishnu had different standards. Goddesses were to be slightly shorter and more slender than gods. The unit was the Tala, the dimensions of the face. The central line of the body was called the Brahma sutra while the side line
was the Pakshasutra. The poses of the body were also regulated. Standing straight was Riju. Slight curving was Abhanga, double curve was Dvibhanga while a triple or S curve was Tribhanga. Excessive curve was Adibhanga. The position of the hastas, hands, was regulated according to Natya mudras.

Of all these bronzes the most famous is the Nataraja. There are different types of this figure. It has been held by Karl Khandalavala that this was not of Chola origin. Dancing Siva has been found in Badami, Aihole and Ellora but there is no gainsaying the fact that the theme gave the Chola imager scope for the highest expression of his genius. People have gone into ecstacies in considering this figure of the Lord of Dance. Apart from the artistic excellence of the bronze, the concept it typifies is of greater importance. The importance of the concept of Dakshinamurthi has been examined while considering the sculptural contribution of the Cholas.

Nataraja symbolises a cosmic fact. He is represented as an actor and actress at the same time. The dance starts with the union of both and is to conclude at the end of Time! This is a marvellous conception and the execution itself is superb. The figure has four arms, the hair is braided and jewelled with the stray locks from the lower masses whirling in mad abandon. Ganga peeps out and there is the hooded cobra, the skull, the crescent moon and a wreath of cassia leaves. The right car wears the masculine type of ring while the left has the feminine. The Divine Dancer has the traditional necklaces, armlets, bracelets, finger and toe rings and jewelled belt. One right hand bears the drum while the other is lifted in Abhaya mudra, the sign of goodwill and peace and assurance to all mortals. In one of the left hands burns the sacred fire while the other points to the demon, crushed to the earth with just the tip of the right toe. The left leg is poised gracefully in the air. The poise of the limbs, the ornaments, the dress
— all these have symbolic significance. The two types of ear rings, masculine and feminine, are suggestive of God's dual nature, Man and Woman in one. The Dance itself represents the five cardinal activities, the Panchakritya of Shrishti (creation), Sthithi (Protection), Samhara (Destruction), Tirodbhava (Illusion, Veiling) and Anugraha (Salvation, grace). Coomaraswami associates the Drum with creation, the Abhaya Mudra with protection, the Fire with destruction and the foot held aloft in the air with Salvation. In short this Bronze of Nataraja symbolises the various aspects or phases of cosmic mysteries, personifying the forces and powers of the cosmic system in operation. In other words this has been described as the “unity of human consciousness and ineffable pose existing side by side with dynamic movements.”

Apart from being the wonderful work of artistic creation, the Nataraja also represents the Hindu conception of Life and Death in eternal dance. It is in a way, the basis and support for the whole universe in eternal consciousness. The Dance itself exemplifies the process of creation and destruction, with the human and animal world enveloped within the vegetable and inanimate kingdom and through them all this process runs on. The left foot dances over death and the powers of evil. The face has a benevolent smile. There is perfect harmony of limbs in graceful motion, emblematic of the rhythm of the universe, the rhythm of light and shade, of life and death, of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow which have all mingled together in the swing of life. This wonderful contribution in bronze which was perfected by the Cholas has to be regarded not merely as an image or work of art, for its artistic or aesthetic excellence but should be evaluated for what it symbolises and stands for. Grousset calls this an epitome of a sea of teaching, a symbol of stability, poise, equilibrium, balance and immortality of substance. It is a classical example of Art serving as a faithful interpreter of a great philosophical concept.
There are several other Bronzes of this period which have been found and which throw remarkable light on the high standard of skill and efficiency attained by the artists of this age. There is the image of Sri Devi in the National Museum in New Delhi which is estimated to be of the 12th century, with full busts and with 9 pairs of bangles, anklets and necklace. The figure has an ornamental girdle. It is a finely chiselled figure, with the long and pointed nose and eyes with long lashes. The upper portion has no garment. This is the characteristic feature of all figures, masculine and feminine alike. It has been mentioned somewhere—I am not able to lay my hands on the authority—that people in those days did not cover the upper part of their bodies. This is quite conceivable. This is the practice followed even today in several parts of Kerala where women go about with just the white cloth around the waist.

Another Chola bronze is that of Somaskanda belonging to the early 10th century. The figure is in the sitting posture, the left leg being folded and the right leg hanging down from the pedestal. The figures of the Deer and the Cutlass are also attached. Uma and Skanda form part of the piece.

The Alingana Chandrasekhara Murthi bronze belongs to the 13th century. The two figures of Chandrasekhara and Uma are well proportioned.

The bronze image of Manickavasagar belongs to the 12th century. The saint wears just a loin cloth with a necklace of beads and the sacred thread. The right hand has the thumb and forefinger pressed together while the left hand holds a palm leaf scroll. The face is very serene.

As in the case of architecture the spiritual content was the most vitalising feature of Chola sculpture. Spirituality was inherent in every one of their creations and in every phase of their activity. The sculptor of the period was not very much concerned with naturalistic
representations, narrative, descriptive or picturesque anecdotes. He was absorbed in the symbolic representation of philosophical truths, religious dogmas or subjective experiences. His great contribution lay in depicting not any particular or transient aspect of nature but deified principles of the essence of nature and to record in imaginative form the dreams of his period and the ideals of his contemporaries. He used forms as convenient symbols of the ideals, deriving the images and types from the great storehouse of his own imagination.

What is the state of this wonderful art today? It has to be regretfully admitted that it has decayed very much owing mainly to lack of patronage. That the stapathis have lost none of their precision or skill has been proved by the fine work done by them in carving the figure of Siva in the new temple constructed in the Benares Hindu University compound. The idol is as perfect and beautiful as any of the Chola period. But despite a few such calls for the utilisation of their skill and in spite of the encouragement given by Government for the promotion of arts and handicrafts in general, this sculptural art does not seem to be progressing. It has been estimated that there are only about 200 families at present engaged in this art and these are found all over in Tamil Nadu and in Badrachalam in Andhra Pradesh. Even amongst them only a few are experts, able to use the chisel and bring out the figure of any idol. They too are not flourishing for want of encouragement and patronage. Recently the sculptural art received an impetus when the Acharya of Kamakoti Pitham commissioned the carving of slabs for depicting scenes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata and other Puranas for installation in the newly constructed Sankara Math at Rameswaram. Some of the stapathis are also engaged in the renovation of the Sri Rama temple at Badrachalam. A few families of Stapathis in the Trichy District still continue to make Vigrahams (idols) of Ganesa, Subrahmanya, Siva, Vishnu, Mariamman etc. They live in and around Woriyur, Sriran-
gam and Tiruvanaikoil. They are not finding the profession a profitable one. There is, in the first place, not much demand. Secondly the raw materials have to be brought from the rocks in Nagalapuram near Perambalur, Okkarai near Turaiyur and Namakkal in the Salem district. Transport is costly and the poverty of the Sthapati does not admit of his being able to invest requisite amount before he could derive benefit. The special implements required have to be made by himself.

The Sthapathis themselves are not hopeful about the future of this fine art. This is a hazardous and exacting one and has to be learnt from a very young age since the hand and the eye have to be trained from a tender age for sticking to the formulae and measurements laid down in the ancient sastras on sculpture. When temples were built of stones as in the time of the Cholas, there was scope for sculptural activity. But with the increasing use of cement there does not appear to be much of a future for this art unless help and patronage are extended generously.

It is, however, heartening to find that recently training institutions have been started under Government auspices at several centres in the South. It is only appropriate that this should be so, seeing that it is the homeland of the Pallavas, Cholas and Pandyas.

So, over a thousand years after the passing away of the great Pallavas, the chisel of the sculptor is once again ringing at Mahabalipuram but with this difference that instead of hewing cave temples out of the living rock, the workers today are the instructors and pupils at the Training Centre for Sculpture run under the auspices of the Industries Department of the Madras Government. This centre was set up in 1957. The Tirumalai—Tirupati Devasthanam has established another centre at Tirupati and Mysore State has its own unit. The course of training at Mahabalipuram extends over four years. The students are taught Praasaadi Lakshanam (temple construction), Rupa Dhyana Lakshanam (iconography)
and Pratima Lakshanam (iconometry or the science of measurement). The students have the advantage of the use of T-squares, set-squares, compasses etc. In fact, the basic elements of civil engineering are also taught to the students. The syllabus is quite an exacting one. The text books include as many as 32 works on Sastras like Manasaram, Maya Madham, Viswakarammeeyam, Kasyapam, Aindramatham and Silparatnam. These works are in Sanskrit and so this language is also taught at the centre. Starting in the first year with pencil drawings of Hindu gods in strict conformity with the rules of iconography, the students use soapstone (Maakkal) for practical work. During the second year they use greenstone while they work on hard granite in the 3rd and 4th years. The trainees learn the art the hard way. It calls for a deep knowledge of the sastras and power of concentration. Even today the student has to bring before the mind’s eye through Dhyana, contemplation of the characteristic features of the object, the picture of the God or the Goddess whom he is going to depict and after due meditation proceed to chisel out the figure. The Stapathi makes it clear that without devotion and meditation, nothing much can be done.

In the present decade when man has to his hand the immense advantage of scientific and technological progress, when he is in the machine age, we see how much of erudition, application, precision and concentration is necessary to achieve some skill in this art. If we look back to the sculptural achievements of the Chola period with this background, we can easily judge the high standard of excellence and the perfection of technical skill which the Chola sculptor must have possessed to have been able to create such noble and enduring works of art.

It is sad to reflect that an art so sedulously nurtured and so carefully nursed by the Cholas should have come down to this stage but it is to be hoped that the revival of patronage will help in its revitalisation and resuscitation.
(c) Painting.

According to Sir Joshua Reynolds as quoted by C. Sivaramamurthi, if we were forbidden to make use of the advantages which our predecessors afford us, art would always have to begin and consequently remain always in its infant state; and it is a common observation that no art was ever invented and carried to perfection at the same time. The Cholas were perfectly aware of this view given expression to centuries later and this is very clear when Chola painting is examined. It is safe to postulate that the frescoes at Ajanta, Bagh, Sigiria, Sittannavasal, Ellora and Kanchipuram constituted an art gallery which provided the inspiration for Tanjore and Tirumalaipuram.

It is unfortunate that unlike in the case of architecture and sculpture, there is not much of a legacy left by the Cholas of their contribution to the art of Painting. It is, however, not correct to conclude that this was not a flourishing art. The examples that we have today prove that the Chola artist could wield his brush as effectively and artistically as he could handle the chisel. From what is available we see that Chola painting followed the already established standards which had been perfected by earlier Dravidian and Aryan genius. This had coalesced into a distinct type of painting. It was based on a welding together of the symbolic and representative, of the abstract and the explicit. This fusion influenced not only the technique of the art but the artist himself. Chola frescoes are seen on the flat walls inside temples.

Between 300 and 1200 A.D. painting was a well known art. Four different types were known and these were termed Satya (True), Vanika (lyrical), Nagara (Secular) and Misra (Mixed). These also represented the Realistic, Idealistic, Social and Mixed types. Rasa and Bhava were brought out deftly. The common criticism that Indian painting did not understand perspective
Painted *danseuse*

Brñhadiśvara Temple, Thanjavur

*Courtesy*: Archaeological Survey of India
Painted *danseuse*

Bṛhadiśvara Temple, Thanjavur

*Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India*
is not correct. There was fidelity to the type portrayed. Manhood was represented by suppleness, softness and slenderness. It was not an exhibition of mere massive musculinity.

It was the pioneering work of S. K. Govindaswami of the Annamalai University that brought to light the magnificent Chola paintings in the Great Temple at Tanjore. These are on the walls on both sides of the Pradakshina Patha round the Garbhagriha. The original Chola frescoes had been overlaid for over 900 years by subsequent frescoes. These latter belong to the time of the Nayak rulers of Tanjore of the 17th century. It was when the latter peeled off that the paintings beneath came to be revealed. This area is very dark and even during the brightest day the place is but dimly lit. It is a matter for marvel as to why this locale was chosen and how the painter carried on his work to such good purpose. Scholars have held that these frescoes represent the high standard of Chola painting. Only a few of the original paintings are now visible. The rest still lie beneath the thin coating on which we have the paintings of the Nayak's age.

These Chola frescoes are attractive and magnificent and have colours that arrest attention. Besides demonstrating the skill of the Cholas in this particular art, they are also indicative of the intense Saivite faith of the rulers. The 10th and 11th centuries A. D. when these came to be painted was the heyday of Saivism. It was in the 9th century that Saint Sundaramurti gave his immortal hymns and revitalised Saivism. This is of special significance as parts of these frescoes depict scenes from the life of this great saint.

One of these paintings is a portrait of the marriage of the Saint Sundarar. Many persons have gathered together to witness the function. Siva is represented as an old man, come to claim Sundarar as his slave on the basis of a document which he holds in one of his hands. He seeks to stop the wedding. His real aim is
to save Sundarar from his contemplated step of matrimony. Sundarar's face expresses surprise. The faces of the people gathered together also express surprise mingled with apprehension. It is on the whole a lively scene, capturing the electric atmosphere of the situation. One can almost feel the tension in the air.

Another adjacent panel depicts a domestic scene around an agriculturist's home. A few women are busy cooking in earthen pots while in one portion a man is taking food from the hands of a girl.

Above this is the scene of Mount Kailasa. Siva is seated on a seat of tiger skin. The Nandi is in front. The Rishis and Ganas stand all around. Some apsaras are dancing. A little to one side Saint Sundaramurti and Cheraman Perumal are painted. The former is mounted on a white elephant and is surrounded by Gandharvas, chanting divine hymns. He is on his way to Kailasa. The bejewelled elephant almost appears to move. The artist has given that lively touch to the whole scene. Sundara's friend Cheraman is astride a charging white horse which is impatient and anxious to keep ahead of the elephant. These two mounted personages are represented as crossing a river for we see fish swimming about in the water. The clouds above are half-hidden and the Gandharvas are showering flower petals on the two travellers. Several Rishis also accompany them. These represent two well known incidents in the life of the Saint. The whole painting has been conceived in a grand style and the attention paid to even minute details is remarkable. A person who is shown as playing on cymbals has a moustache and his hair is tied up in a bun with a garland of flowers. He wears ear pendants, necklaces and bracelets. The devotees are grouped together with folded hands. The figures are sensitive in form and vibrate with religious fervour, grandeur and dignity. The women are painted with long, drooping expressive eyes, with the curves and eyebrows.
Royalty is depicted as cultured and refined aristocracy. The feminine type of the Tanjore frescoes is characterised by the almond shaped languishing eye, luscious lips, full breasts and swaying hips. But the painter took care to ensure that even the most sensuous, languorous form of feminine beauty was effectively draped. It is very likely that, he set before himself Kalidasa’s ideal type of female beauty as described in Meghaduta:

तन्नीःश्यामा शिखरिदंशना पव्व विवादरोही
मध्येश्यामा च कितहरिणी प्रेक्षणा निम्ननामि: ।
श्रोणी भारदल सगमना लोकनाश लताभ्यामः
या तत्रस्वाभुविति विषये सहिराचेन धातुः ॥

The painter devoted much attention to styles of hair dressing. Some have been portrayed friezed and fronted with coquettish ringlets while others are tied up with a coronel of flowers. The strange withdrawn expression of languorous women, the smooth elliptical smile of stone-eyed gods, the supple linear contours of figures, the graceful lambent eyed apsaras with their soft, round flesh subtly moulded and tinted represent the attempt of the painter to evolve a high degree of skill. The women also wear long, tapering bracelets with a straight band across the rings. These finer aspects in this fresco are said to represent the Buddhistic influence on the art and the close similarity to Ajanta. In fact the colours employed are the deep brown and copper shade of the Ajanta frescoes along with the golden yellow. The types of figures are also seen in Sanchi and Bharhut and Mathura.

On the western wall is the fine painting of Nataraja, in the pose of the Divine Dancer, holding a tongue of flame in one hand. The figure of a devotee with folded hands—a Royal devotee to judge from the type—stands in front and near him stand three ladies. Nila-
kanta Sastri opines that this is Rajaraja I himself and his queens. A little away from this group stand two courtiers holding silver maces. Below them are painted many nobles and common folk, men and women. These represent a cross section of the society of that age. Their dress and the ornaments they wear are very clearly brought out. The types of hair styles painted has already been described. These are wonderful.

The next panel has a puranic theme, the story of Siva burning Tripura. Th Lord is painted with eight hands and is surrounded by Ganesa, Subrahmanya and the Deva Ganas. Sitting poised for action on the chariot, Siva is represented as opening his third eye and blazing forth destruction to his opponents. Men and women run about helter skelter. Some women are pictured as hanging round their husbands necks. As representing the rasas of anger, valour, mercy and determination, this painting is hard to excel.

The technique employed was the tempera, the painting being executed on the surface of soft lime plaster composed of powdered conch shell and mother of pearl. The outlines were made in light red and brown. Yellow ochre, red ochre, terre-verk, brown and lapis lazuli blue were the colours used.

Despite the paucity of the heritage left to us from the Chola period, it is obvious that then and during the earlier centuries, Painting as an art was more in general practice and popular demand than sculpture. It was regarded as an essential social accomplishment. Vatsayana in his Kamasutra refers to this as one of the sixty-four kalas. It was practised by many people in different walks of life and by guilds, by professionals and by amateurs. They were guided in their labours by the rules and details laid down in the Vishnu Dharmottaram, a treatise of the Gupta age. Vatsayayana himself had laid down six principles for painting. According to him these were the following:—
(1) Rupa Bheda — distinction of form and appearances.
(2) Pramanam — measurement, scale and proportion.
(3) Bhava — sentiment or expression.
(4) Lavanya — realization of grace and beauty.
(5) Sadrisyam — likeness or resemblance.
(6) Varnikhabanga — use of materials and instruments.

But there arose a tendency to neglect this art and the sculptor took precedence over the painter. Yet both these were considered to be sister arts, working as the hand maids of architecture. Painting involved a process of severe mental discipline. The painter like the sculptor had to see with his mental eye before taking up his brush. Beneath this conception there is an undertone of intense realism involving a careful study of nature in movement of figures, expressive drawing of hands, the hang of jewelled ornaments on body, the modelling of the contours of the main form with boldness and breadth, firmness and decision. There could be no halting rhythm.

There is no doubt whatever that the art as practised in the Chola and pre-Chola periods followed these injunctions. Although Vatsyayana’s Kamasutra and Vishnu-dharmottaram were essentially products of the north, the Sittannavasal and other cognate paintings of the Pallava period show the extent of their penetration in the south. At Sittannavasal the theme and symbology of the painting are essentially Jain. The name itself signifies the abode (Vasal) of the Jain Sidhas. There are two panels of Dancing apsaras and the painting of Mahendravarman I and his wife. Precarious traces of painting are seen in the Kailasanatha Temple of Kanchi and the rock cut Vishnu Temple at Malayadipatti which can be placed about the end of the 7th century.
The remains of the paintings at Tirumalaipuram are, however, fragmentary.

The Chola painting was essentially a continuation of these earlier traditions exemplified at Ajanta, Bagh and Badami.

The Narttamalai Vijayalaya Choliswara temple (C 1100 A.D.) contains some faintly visible paintings on the walls of the Ardhamantapa. The figures of Mahakala, Devi, Siva and Nataraja are still visible. Sometimes the paintings came long after the temples were constructed and often when they were repaired or renovated. These disprove the oft quoted view that after Ajanta all wall painting was decadent. The art has passed through several stages since the time when the Cholas portrayed Saivite themes on the walls of their temples. The earliest examples belong to the Pala dynasty, between the 10th and 12th century and these were on palm leaves. The accent was Buddhist. The Gujerat school specialised in Jaina themes. Paper began to be used in the 14th century. The Persian style was introduced from Shiraz with the formation of the Turkish Sultanates. The Mughal Painting depicted court scenes while the Rajasthani painting dealt with subjects from the epics, seasons, Raga and Ragini. The Pahari miniature painting was popular in Basohli, Guber, Kangra, Garhwal etc. After passing the Rajasthani and Pahari miniature painting phase and the Mughal school, a Bengal school was started by Abinindranath Tagore which tried to absorb Chinese, Japanese and Persian influences and became eclectic in nature. The Gujerat and Bombay schools came later. The modern trend is to turn from superficial surface finish towards simplification and significant forms. An example is Amita Sher Gill’s vitalising force, stressing the importance of design, mass and volume. The future lies in the close cooperation of eyes and mind for we have reached a stage when merely to behold is not enough. The efforts of Abinindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Surendranath
Ganguly, Gaganendranath Tagore, A. K. Haldar, Samarendra Nath Gupta and others have made modern art of painting a synthesis of the aesthetic tendencies of the people. The unfortunate tendency for the extravagant and indiscriminate imitation of the west is, however, having deleterious effects. Concepts like Realism, Surrealism, Symbolism, Suggestivism and so many isms bid fair to stifle the growth, along right lines, of this noble art. But perhaps we are in a transitional age and the time will soon come when we might look back with pride and start once more to follow the noble ideals and high standards set by the Painters of the Chola period whose creative genius has left us specimens which for all their limited quantity are certainly high in quality. My own feeling is that this art, as indeed any other art, is bound to suffer if its practice is divorced from the inspiring motives of the earlier centuries, when art was considered a sacred vocation, as a path to the realization of Reality and as expressing the best in man's innermost nature. This was a sublimating and uplifting motive but the danger arises when this is forgotten in the craze for the hasty adoption of untested basis and art tends to become commercialised. The greatness of the Chola painter lies in the fact that he dedicated his art as an offering in the cause of the Divine and not in a bid to attain personal name or fame.

(D) Music.

That music was one of the fine arts that flourished under the generous and discerning patronage of the Cholas is well proved by the data provided by several inscriptions of this period. Musicians were greatly encouraged and Music itself was given a very important place in the life of the people, especially in the field of religion. A list of the more important of the inscriptions which throw light on the prevalence and practice of music is attached to this thesis. The list is by no means exhaustive and is only intended to indicate how
the patronage of music and its encouragement were uniform throughout the period of Chola rule. The rulers themselves were patrons and were able to enjoy and appreciate good music. It is also apparent that they often listened to musical expositions and concerts. There is an inscription of the 19th year of Rajaraja III from Tiruvottiyur which refers to the king listening to the music recital on the 8th day of the Avani Tirunal festival.

The music of those days was, however, different from the music as we know it today. The Melakarta scheme formulated by Venkatamakhi in his Chaturdandiprakasa-rika came later than the Cholas who were not conversant with the present Raga patterns so characteristic of Carnatic Music today. But Music has evolved continuously from the Sangam age down to the present and this progressive evolution was definitely encouraged by the Cholas.

Music is claimed to be the easiest and pleasantest path leading souls directly to God and naturally the source of music has been traced to God. Siva's association with music and Dance is well known. The Rudra Vina and the Dance of Nataraja bear testimony to this. The Flute is associated with Vishnu, the Veena with Saraswati, the music of the Vedas with Brahma. Lakshmi herself is described as holding a beautiful Veena in her delicate hands—'Vara Vina mridu pani.' Rishis like Narada, Tumburu and Viswawasu are closely connected with this art. Its importance can be realised from the fact that it was regarded both as a Vidya (Science) and a Kala (Art), being known as Gandharva Vidya and Sangeeta Kala.

As human society evolves its ideas and reactions to outside circumstances also evolve. Along with this, its concepts of right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, justice and injustice also evolve. This is the case with Music also. As pointed out already the music of the Chola age evolved out of the ancient basic pattern as subsequent developments have been evolved out of the preceding
patterns. During the Chola period it is obvious that music must have been a harmonious synthesis and interrelation of song, dance and expression. It is clear also that there was a large body of literature on music, theoretical and applied, with which patrons were familiar in those times. The Silappadikaram contains several directions on this art. It lays down for example, very distinctly and even severely the mutual relations of music, dance and drama. Music held a very important place in the inner and outer life of the Tamil People. Some of the literature are known to us only by name while a few extracts from them have been quoted by later authorities. Thus, for example, we know of some sutras of Agastya on music mentioned subsequently. Indra Kakaliyam was another musical work by Yamalendra and this has been referred to by Adiyarkku Nallar in his commentary on Silappadikaram. Gunanul, Kuthanul, Panchabhharatiya and Bharata are other works mentioned but we have no trace of these. It is evident therefore that the real beginnings of music can be traced only in the fanciful legends of gods and goddesses.

There is reference to music in Panini when he comments on the root Nrit, to dance. Ramayana compares the humming of the bees to the music of stringed instruments and the thunder of clouds to the beating of the mridanga. Lakshmana hears the strains of classical vocal and Veena music in the harem of Sugriva. Thus, by the time of the Cholas, music had passed through different strata of evolution in different periods. The seven svaras had come to be established as the vital elements, the prana of music. Ragas had evolved out of the permutations and combinations of these svaras. In so far as the music of the Chola period is concerned, there were about 1200 such combinations derived from a base of 112 which itself has been described by Keertanacharya C. R. Srinivasa Iyengar as the 7 headed off-spring of the sixteen primary Perumpann. He also holds the view that the 72 melakarta scheme which was standardised later was also envisaged by the musicologists of this period in their
Palais and Alaku. The Kudumiyalalai inscription gives details of vowel changes designating the varieties of notes. It is clear that quarter-tones were not mere theoretical postulates but a live feature of practical music. There is also reference to Adhara Shadja. Specific times were prescribed for particular ragas (Panns). In the words of the Keertanacharya there were congenial and effective seasons of the year for the ragas, dark and bright fortnights, divisions of morning, evening, noon, night and twilight. These will be examined in detail a little later.

Till the end of the Chola period a single system of music is found to have been followed in the whole country with local variations. It was only after this that the division into Karnatic and Hindustani types came into vogue. One of the earliest treatises in which this is mentioned is Haripala's Sangita Sudhakara. The heritage that the Cholas got was valuable. The music that they had had already evolved the solfa system. The notes Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni had been mentioned in the Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad and according to Professor Sambamurthy India was the first country to evolve the solfa system. Murchanas (modulations) Gramas (scales), Varnas (syllables) and Alankharas (rhetoric) must all have been known to the musicians of the Chola period. In Tamil music, as was practised then, the Sudotha Mela was the Madhyama murchana of the Sa Gramma. The Panns of the Thevaram were either derivations of the fundamental mela Harikhamboji or of its madhyama murchana (Sankarabharanam) and Panchama murchana (Kararaharapiya) or Shadja Grama. These panns also had arohana and avarohana, varjya-varja krama, graha svaras, nyasa svaras, amsa svaras, rakti and datu prayogas and characteristic Srutis and gamakas. They were all jiva ragas.

A review of the music of this period has necessarily to be an account of the great devotional hymns of the Nayanmars which came to be codified as the Eleven
Tirumurais by Nambi Andar Nambi under the guidance, inspiration and patronage of the Chola monarchs. On this score alone the worth of music as practised under them would be clear. The Chola kings really placed posterity under a deep debt of gratitude by their efforts in this direction which have left us a priceless treasure of scintillating and uplifting music, set in a language understood by the masses, containing high philosophic truths in easily assimilable form and in hymns going directly to their heart in their emotional effect and devotional appeal. The Tevaram hymns are the cream of sacred music. As Professor Sambamoorthy has put it they emerged from the mouth of the composers as a combined Dhatu-Matu stream, being the finest example of Desi Sangita. Each hymn was set to Raga and Tala and the resultant rhythm enabled its easy transmission from the Guru to the Sishya.

These sacred hymns which constituted the music of the Chola period came out of the depths of emotional Bhakti. The wonderful research into the Eleven Tirumurais undertaken by Vellaivaranar of the Annamalai University has yielded very detailed information and I have based most of my views on the basis of a study of his monumental work.

The devotional hymns came at a time when they were most required by the Saivites. Though the force of Buddhism had spent itself, Jainism was still a force to be reckoned with and there had to be a revivification of Hinduism. The revitalising factors were provided by the hymns of the Nayanmars and of the Alwars. They contained the essence of ancient teachings and these were given in simple language set to catchy tunes. Their purpose was to indicate the easy way to permanent bliss. They proved to be significant because of their spontaneity. Apart from the deeply religious aspects, these hymns provide a rare insight into the times and conditions of life, the trend of cultural developments and about the men and women of the age and their conceptions of relative values.
Truths hidden in the Vedas and similar sacred literature were popularised through the vehicle of music. As will be obvious from the inscriptions listed, rulers, nobles and common-folk, made several endowments for the regular recitation of these Tiruppadiyams in Temples and public places. In several cases music was prescribed during the Puja time. Rajaraja I endowed land for fifty persons called Pidarar, forty-eight of whom were to sing and one to accompany on Udukkai and one on Maddalam daily in the Big Temple at Tanjore (S11 Vol. II—No. 65). An inscription of Rajaraja I from Tindiyanam refers to an endowment of land for the musician playing on the Vina and singing in the Tindisvara Temple at Kidangil. Another inscription of Parantaka I from Laligudi mentions the endowment of land for 2 Brahmins singing Tiruppadiyam daily in the Tiruttavaturai Mahadeva Temple. According to an inscription on the north wall of the Tyagarajaswami Temple at Tiruvarur, ascribed to Rajaraja I, music was to be provided during the time of Sribali service by seven persons, three of them for Maddali, one for Patakam and one for Sekandigai. There is an inscription on the south wall of the Pipilikeswara temple of Tiruverumbur which refers to an endowment of land for four persons who were to sing the Tiruppadiyam daily in the temple to the accompaniment of Udukkai and Talam. The list of such inscriptions can be multiplied. They show how much care and interest the rulers and patrons took to popularise music, by making it part of temple ritual, by endowing munificently so that the artists may be above want. It is in the wake of this lofty tradition established by the Chola rulers that in many temples in the Tamil country we still have today a body of men whose main responsibility is to conduct the musical service there.

The collection and codification of these hymns was the work of Nambi Andar Nambi. But it has to be admitted that if he had not had royal patronage and encouragement it is doubtful if he would have succeeded.
One school of thought ascribes this inspiration to Raja-
raja I but by his research and through inscriptive
evidence, Vellaivararanar has shown that this could not
have been Rajaraja. Referring to the inscriptions at
Erumbiyur, Pazhuvur, Tiruvavaduthurai, Allur, Tirutta-
vatturai and Konerirajapuram, Vellaivararanar shows that
these Tiruppadiyams were being sung in these temples
even in the reigns of Aditya I, Parantaka I and Uttama
Chola. From the internal evidence also he concludes
that Nambi Andar Nambi lived during the closing years
of Aditya I and the early part of Parantaka I’s rule and
both were his patrons.

The hymns were set to music by a divinely gifted
lady of the family of Tiruneelakanta Perumbanar. This
pattern is followed even now and the tendency to intro-
duce innovations has been effectively discouraged. The
term Tevaram comprises the first seven Tirumurais, the
first three consisting of 384 numbers and being the
contribution of Tirugnanasambandar, the fourth, fifth
and sixth with 310 pieces of Tirunavukkarasar and the
7th consisting of 100 pieces of Sundarar. Nambi Andar
Nambi perhaps collated only these seven and the other
four were added later. The 8th Tirumurai is the Tiru-
vasagam of Manikkavasagar. The 9th consists of Tiru-
visaippadiyams of nine saints including Tirumaligai
Tevar, Gandaraditya and Venattadigal. The tenth is the
Tirumandirappadal of Tirumula Nayanar while the
eleventh is the Tirumugappasuram of Tiruvalavayu-
daiyar.

As has been observed earlier, the pattern of music
in which these have been set has endured down the
centuries. The Tevaram, in particular, lent itself to
mellifluous music because of the easy flow of words.
These ragas have been referred to as Devaravardini in
Sarangadeva’s Sangita Ratnakara of the 13th century.

It is interesting to learn from Vellaivararanar’s work
that the Tevaram songs of the first three Nayanmars
were inscribed on copper through the instrumentality
of Kalingarayan, a Commander-in-Chief of Kulottunga I. An inscription from the Shiyali TirugnanaSambandar Kovil refers to the preservation of such copper plates containing Tevarams in places called Tirukkaikoti. One might in this connection refer to the work that is being done at Tiruvaiyaru, at the Samadhi of Thyagaraja-swami. The saint’s compositions have been inscribed on marble slabs which have been fixed on the walls surrounding the samadhi. The wall space having been completely taken up, a new hall, called the Valmiki Mantapam is being constructed and marble slabs with the Kritis inscribed are being fixed on the walls there. It is an excellent way to preserve the composition.

The music of the period had a tremendous emotional appeal. By the simplicity of language it went direct to the hearts of the listeners and produced great effect on them. Today we hear so much about the concept of Musical Therapy and the effect of music on plant growth. In fact a department of the Annamalai University is conducting successful experiments on the latter aspect. From very ancient times extraordinary powers have been claimed for music and several stories of miracles wrought by music have come down to us. This claim is partly due to the fact that music in its origin and growth has been intimately connected with Divinity. The Music of the Chola period had also this claim. There is the story of Sambandar curing the daughter of Kolli-mazhavan of Tiruppachilasramam by a song. Sambandar is reputed to have brought back to life a person who had died through snake bite poison. The great Jaina Pandya was cured with the song.

When Poombavai, the daughter of Sivanesan of Mylapore, who had been intended to be given as bride to Sambandar, died of snake bite, her ashes after cremation were kept in an urn and placed before the saint when he visited Mylapore. He brought her back to life with a song but did not accept her as bride as he stood in the relationship of a father to her. She became a nun.
We have such stories in the post Chola age also. Muthuswami Dikshitar brought rain down to a parched area with the singing of Amritavarshini raga. The effects of ragas like Megharanjani and Punnagavararali are also described in similar incidents. In the north we have stories of the disastrous effects of the raga Deepak.

In the light of the knowledge we have today, it would be incorrect to dismiss these incidents as baseless myths, originating in the devotion to the Saints and not based on any firm facts. According to science every phenomenon is traced ultimately to vibrations. We are, however, able to perceive only a limited range of such vibrations in a limited number of media. There are various ranges of vibrations below and above the possibilities of our physical experiences. In music, particularly of the most appealing type, the vibrations have an effect on some deeper aspects of our nature like the mind, emotion, intuition etc. By its very sublime nature, music has a relation to the aesthetic and supra-intellectual aspects of life. We see even today in daily life how the lullaby lulls the child to sleep and how the music of the snake charmer holds the hooded, hissing cobra at bay. It is the same principle that prescribes the music of the band in march pasts. Music can raise individuals to great heights of love and pathos, anger, valour and determination. It is therefore not inconceivable that music of a very high order, charged with spiritual and ethical emotion and pouring out from the affectionate heart of great savants like Sambandar was able to achieve these wonderful results ascribed to them. This is an aspect which is already receiving attention and is not one which can be brushed aside with a sceptical shrug. Any illness is in essence an abnormality and the treatment only seeks to restore normal conditions. Music is of potent value and its history in the Chola age and the years preceding it certainly indicates such a possibility. Musical therapy has come to stay. From this point of view the inspiring music of the Tevaram has
many lessons for the future research student in this particular field.

The Panns of Tevaram have come down to us more or less in their old shapS. In spite of the endeavours of the Oduvans to try their skill at new improvisation, the old pattern has survived. It has been held by Vellai- varanur that about 23 kinds of panns were used in the music of this period. Their names are listed below with the name of the corresponding raga in Carnatic music. These are not equivalents but only the most suitable corresponding raga:

1. Panchamam — Ahiri
2. Sikamaram — Nadanamakriya
3. Puranirnam — Bhupalam
4. Vyazhakurinchi — Saurashtram
5. Kausikam — Bhairavi
6. Senturutti — Madhyamavati
7. Gandharapanchamam — Kedaragowla
8. Andalikurinchi — Sama
9. Takkesi — Khamboji
10. Sevvazhi — Yadukulakambhoji
11. Pazhampanjuram — Sankarabharanam
12. Kolli — Navaroj
13. Megharagakurinchi — Nilambari
14. Nattapadi — Nattai
15. Sadari — Pantuvarali
16. Pazhantakkaragam — Suda Saveri
17. Indalam — Lalitapanchamam
18. Takkaragam — Kannada Kambodi
19. Tiruttandakam — Harikhamboji
20. Kuranji — Malahari
21. Kollikauvanam — Sindu Kannada
22. Piyandaigandharam
23. Gandharam.

While vocal music was generally more common, the singer also depended on instrumental accompaniments. These instruments helped music greatly. When the
saints poured forth their music, they were accompanied on the Yal by a divinely inspired musician, Neelakanta Yazhpanar. The importance of laya (rhythm) was also realised as is instanced by Sambandar being presented with a pair of divine golden cymbals to enable him keep time. As has been mentioned already, the music for these hymns was set by a lady who belonged to the family of Neelakanta.

During the Chola period several types of musical instruments were in use. They have all been mentioned in inscriptions. These could be broadly divided into the following types:

- மரளை (Percussion)
- தக்கை (Wind)
- பருப்பை (Stringed)
- கரை (Metal)

The first type of percussion instruments in which skin was stretched over a hollow wooden material was used for keeping time, Tala. The fact that Laya, rhythm was the father of music was recognised. Inscriptions contain the names of about 30 different varieties of such instruments. The most common ones were Berigai, Patakam, Idukkai, Udukkai, Maddalam, Challigai, Karadigai, Timilai, Kudamazha, Mondai and Murasu. These instruments were used for music as well as for Dance.

The only wind instrument in use was the flute. Wasps and beetles made holes in bamboo shoots and when the wind passed through these holes musical notes were produced. This was the origin of the flute. This instrument was mostly used during this period for Dances and Dramas. It is held by some that the Nagaswaram was also known to the Cholas but there is no direct evidence. I feel this was evolved later on.

Of the stringed instruments the Yal and the Veena were very much in use. It is said that the efficacy of
a bow was tested by the vibrational note produced by the bow string. This was the principle adopted in such stringed instruments. A series of bows strung together became the Vil Yal. There were four other types viz. Beriyal with 21 strings, Makarayal with 19, Sakotayal with 14 and Sengotiyal with 7 strings. Each swara had a separate string.

When the swarasthanas were fixed with the aid of frets, it became the Veena. The Yal and the Veena were different instruments and this is borne out by references in Tirunavukkarasar, Tiruvadavooradigal and Sekkizhar.

The chief metal instruments were those made of bell-metal and were used, like percussion instruments, to keep time.

There is sufficient evidence in inscriptions to justify the presumption that music recitals were solo vocal, instrumental and with accompaniments. Group singing was also common. The fortyeight Pidarars of the Big Temple referred to by Rajaraja I could not have sung individually. It must have been in group.

It is also probable that the rulers had musicians attached to the palaces and these gave recitals for the delectation of the kings. This theory is mentioned by J. M. Somasundaram. He bases his view on the reference to Rajendra as "Devara Nayakam" in an inscription from Manambadi in Kumbakonam. He presumes that this title signifies that there were singers of Tevaram at his court and being a discerning patron he was given this title. This view is quite tenable. Seeing that the Cholas were generous patrons of the fine arts, it is not beyond bounds of possibility that they had their court poets, Asthana Vidwans, an institution well known in preceeding and succeeding periods in history.

The Chola period was an age of renaissance in more ways than one. The rulers of the dynasty founded by Vijayalaya were all ardent saivites. They flourished at
a time when Saivism had received a tremendous fillip through the soul stirring hymns of the Nayanmars. One of the most effective expressions of the soul of a nation is through its music and this was how the art evolved under the Cholas. They patronised music and musicians and thereby helped the art and the artist alike to fulfil their real mission, that of inspiring their hearers to noble endeavours, uplifting them to thoughts of lofty ideals and providing the proper climate in which the art could grow into the full stature of its latent possibilities. They popularised music. They did not condone compromise with ideals or standards. They made music part and parcel of the daily life of their people and so emphasised not only the spiritual and emotional but the educative aspect of this fine art. We can never be sufficiently grateful to these patrons for the lasting contribution made by them to this Divine art.

(e) Dance.

Through the centuries the continuous jingle of ankle bells and the sound of classical music have been heard in every Temple and home in South India. While the volume of material of an informative type relating to music as was prevalent and practised during the Chola period is considerable, details pertaining to the art of Dance are, however, comparatively scantier. There are several inscriptions which refer to this art and to the various kinds of endowments made with a view to provide for the material needs of the dancers. Inscriptions also give details of the types of dance in vogue, the places and times at which dance performances were given and implied data about the standard of the art, the qualifications of the teachers, the type of instructions imparted and the responsibilities of the artists themselves. It is also possible to presume that the Cholas were conversant with the Sastra on the subject and must have been aware of the many treatises dealing with this art which have been dated earlier than the Chola
period. It has, however, to be realised that there is nothing like a recorded history of the growth and development of the art of dance during this period nor have we any positive information about the degree of patronage extended to and the standard of perfection attained by the danseuse of the Tamil country in these centuries. The points presented below and the conclusions drawn have therefore necessarily been based on the interpretation of the texts of inscriptions, on inferences arising out of such statements and on facts which are known on the basis of the literature on the subject belonging to the slightly earlier period. They have also been based on the materials available relating to the art as it was practised in other parts of India about this time or earlier and later.

Another very fruitful source of information is found in many temples of this age. The art of dance was then mainly confined to Temples. It was an act of dedication to the deity and was one of the traditional, prescribed items in the ritual of worship. Constituting one of the Shodasa Upacharas, Dance was an integral part of temples and so, appropriately enough, we find dance poses in several sculptures in Temples. These give an insight into the type of poses or mudras then in use.

As in the case of architecture and sculpture, painting and music, the art of Dance in the Chola age was essentially regarded as a sacred vocation as indeed any type of art in India is. It is not, therefore, possible to view the development of this art separately from the spiritual outlook. Unfortunately this had had its ups and downs and its progress has been chequered. But to judge from the materials available it is obvious that it was then a composite, complete and comprehensive art, enfolded in its range several other arts. Music was and is part and parcel of it. It had in it elements of sculpture and painting. We see Dance immortalised by the Cholas in stone and in paint. Such comprehensiveness is understandable as Dancing is imminent in life in that
whenever there is an emotional upsurge in a sentient being, it expresses itself in some outer movement of the limbs. The nimble antelope leaps in joy; the bird expresses its pleasure by movements of the wings and its head; the baby runs about in joy; God himself dances in Ananda. It is in such movements, expressive of feelings that we have the beginnings of Dance.

Apart from the inspiration of love or the enthusiasm of war, the religious force was a great formative factor in the development of this art and it was this which was prominent during the Chola period. It is true that this has subsequently evolved into a social pastime but the primary objective was to employ the art to interpret the universal and the idealistic ideas and sublimate them by the elimination of the individual personality. There were well-defined codes, conventions, mudras and techniques. The Cholas had a rich heritage to guide them in the art. The Silappadikaram, contains many passages having an important and direct bearing on this art. Bharata’s Natya Sastra was the treasure-house of the principles to be followed in the art. Nandikeswara’s Bharatarnava was even much earlier. The Tolkappiyam contains references to treatises on Dance as also on music and drama. At the beginning of the Chola age, Dance was a vast, ready-made, comprehensive system, highly developed in theory and practice alike, elaborately analysed, codified and systematised.

During the period covered by this study and in fact up to the time of Sarangadeva, the term Natya included Natak also—it was dance-drama. Actually the Natya Sastra was a treatise on Drama of which music, dance and abhinaya were parts. The principles governing the art evolved out of a study of the relationship between the inner experience and the outer expression of that experience. This was of great importance during this period as Dance to the Cholas was of deep religious significance and to them it was impossible to conceive of it in any other light. So it was that music and dance
were regular items in the daily routine of worship. This is brought out very clearly by many inscriptions the more important of which are indicated below.

The most important inscription on this art is that of Rajaraja I listed as No. 66 in SII Vol. II Part III. This is on the wall on the outside of the north enclosure of the Big Temple at Tanjore. It refers to the endowment of land for 400 dancing girls who had been transferred to the Big Temple from other temples. The names of the girls have been detailed. These are after sacred places and royal personages. Rajaraji, Rajakesari, Arulmoli and Kundavai are some of the names found. This inscription mentions the temples from which these dancing girls were transferred and the house and street numbers near the Big Temple where they were settled. There is also reference to a master who was required to supervise and direct the dancing. Perhaps it was his responsibility to look after these dancing girls, draw up their programmes, allocate duties and timings and see to it that they discharged the responsibilities that devolved on them. It is obvious this would have been no easy task at all.

An inscription from Dadapuram, dated in the 23rd year of Rajaraja I mentions that Dancing girls were to accompany the Deity in procession, singing and dancing along the route. The temples mentioned are those for Iravikulamanikka Iswara and Kundavai Vinnagar. There is a similar inscription dated in the 18th year of Kanna-radeva, found in Sidhalingamadom (South Arcot) which refers to an endowment of land to a dancing girl and her descendents for dancing before the deity during procession. This perhaps was a type of a floating pageant, the dancers demonstrating their skill while forming part of a procession. Singing must have been easy but this type of demonstration while on the move must have been strenuous. It is significant to remember in this connection that we have such "mobile dances" even today. The Folk Dances of India are demonstrated
by the representatives from the different areas in the Country and they do this while on the move, forming part of the Republic Day Parades in New Delhi on the 26th of January every year.

An inscription from Nutakkai (Guntur) in the 4th year of Kulottunga II refers to dancing women attached to the Saktiswara Temple. Another inscription of Tiruvengaiyasal in the 5th year of Rajaraja II mentions endowment of land for a dancing girl for her dance in the Vaikasi Tiruvadirai festival of the local temple. (254 of 1914). The Kalattur inscription in the 30th year of Kulottunga III fixes the timings for the performance of each of the Dancing girls (383 of 1914) in the temple of Sundara Choliswara Udayiar.

It is evident that when dancing girls were attached to temples, the fact was registered in inscriptions. The girls also bore distinct marks, depending on whether they were attached to Saiva or Vaishnava temples. There is an inscription of Kulottunga I from Kalahasti. Some dancing girls were taken into his household by mistake and were branded with his personal insignia. When the mistake was discovered the King promptly ordered their restoration to the temple and the Sula was branded after the other mark was erased. According to another inscription from Tiruvallam, one Azhagia Pandia Pallavaraiyan sold five women of his family one of them being his daughter and two his grand-daughters as Devaradiyars after branding them with the Sula, trident, the mark of Siva.

These two inscriptions raise several important issues. The dancing girls attached to temples were called Devaradiyar, the servant of the God. From the fact that they were branded, this would appear to savour of a system of slavery. Perhaps it was with a view to prevent some of them running away from what should have been a rigorous and disciplined life. Perhaps it was to mark them out as a special class of people, entitled to some privileges. This latter interpretation is not very likely.
From the fact that certain persons sold their womenfolk as Devaradiyars as mentioned by the Tiruvallam inscription referred to, the play of economic forces rendered this necessary. Slavery was common in this period and this system of attaching girls to temples and consecrating them to the service of the deity was a subtle and perhaps slightly refined type of slavery. It is doubtful if this type of service encouraged volunteers. The income could not have been high. The conditions of service must have been hard. So, to keep them in bondage the system of branding was perhaps adopted. This system, nevertheless, bore within it the seeds of future degradation and debasement of these women which in turn led to the art itself being considered a voluptuous and sensuous one. It could be retrieved and re-established only after much effort.

The whole concept of this system of Devadasis or Devaradiyars could be looked at from another angle also. In the beginning it was quite possible that a spirit of dedication characterised these artists in their service to Godhead and it was considered a privilege to be attached to temples and to serve the deity through dance. There is no doubt whatever that some at least of the Devadasis were held in high honour and reverence. Most of them led single lives and were called Talicheri Pendugal. Some of them married also. An inscription from Acyutamangalam (Tanjore) dated in the 11th year of Kulottunga III refers to the marriage of a dancing girl attached to the temple. Some of them acquired property. Some were highly cultured and proficient in fine arts like music and painting and their society was sought after by the nobles and the learned alike in court. The most efficient amongst them were singled out for the award of titles like Talaikoli. They had a pertinent part to play in the development of Culture and were the prototype of the Apsaras, the heavenly nymphs, dancing for the entertainment of the Gods. They were, to a large extent, the custodians of the art of music and dance and had, as a consequence much wider latitude in society
than other women as the Temple was the nucleus of the best in all the arts of civil life.

This idea of dedicating such qualified women for Temple service and ritual was not peculiar to India. The practice appears to have been followed in Egypt and Greece. The system was, to a large extent, necessary also. It is a fact that not all can be creative artists and a certain amount of inborn aptitude, vasana, is essential. For the dancer, it is essential to ensure handsome, expressive features, an alert mind, an agile body and well-proportioned limbs. She should have eyes which should be expressive living pools of glowing emotional fire. The traditional qualifications prescribed are:

"Handsome, sweet in speech, steady, sprightly, skilful in conversation, born of good family, learned in Sastras, sweet-voiced, expert in song, instruments and dance by long practice, quick in understanding and confident."

Apart from these qualifications, a lot of training and discipline was also necessary. It is perhaps likely that these women took about three years to master the rhythmic technique, two years to learn the intricacies of Angasudha and two to three years to know all about Abhinayana. According to the Silappadhikaram the training started at the age of five and the danseuse came out at the age of 12 or 13. Special exercises and massages have been prescribed in the Natya Sastra. After all this training, the Dancer could practise the art only for about 15 years or so normally. Naturally they could not undertake the normal responsibilities of life like marriage, bringing up a family and looking after household chores. And so they had to live a life different from that of the ordinary householder, a life in which domestic responsibilities were reduced to a minimum, enabling them to devote their whole time to the art. The system of dancing women being attached to the temples was apparently intended to serve these purposes.
Unfortunately, however, the Cholas like their predecessors and successors did not provide for the working of human nature. The artist fell from the high pedestal on which she had been placed. It may not be correct to lay the blame entirely at the door of the dancer but society tempted her away from her high calling. The degradation went very low and set in motion an anti-nautch movement which gained momentum with the passing years. It was considered an exhibition in bad taste to attend a dance performance and association with professional dancers was tantamount to a social stigma. It is only in the very recent past that there has been a revival of interest and a welcome change of attitude. It is to be hoped that this Divine Art will once more be re-established in its pristine purity and will contribute to the spiritual upliftment of man very much like what the dancers in the temples of the Cholas did centuries ago.

Except that Dance was one of the most practised arts of the Chola age, it is not possible to determine the pattern of the dance or the manner in which a recital was planned. It could be presumed, however, that the general stipulations contained in the treatises of Nandikeswara and Bharata and the injunctions in Silappadhi-karam were carefully adhered to by the dancers of the Chola era. They would appear to have been conversant with the 108 Karanas referred to in Natya Sastra, two Karanas making a Matrika and two or more matrikas making up a Angahara. 32 such Angaharas have been referred to, each consisting of many Karanas or Adavus. These basic dance units have been sculptured in the Chidambaram temple. There are some dance poses in the temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram also.

It is also possible that very young girls were also brought on to the stage to dance. Today we are inclined to lament the tendency which is unfortunately growing to put up tiny tots for Arangetral before an invited audience and the utterance of conventional platitudes.
The Tiruvallam inscription mentioned earlier referring to the sale of two of the grand-daughters of Azhagia Pandia Pallavaraiyan to the temple can be interpreted to signify that then, as now, immature dancers also got on to the stage. There could have been no artistry in their presentation as this art is necessarily only for girls who have grown into womanhood. But with all that, there can be no doubting the fact that the Cholas by their patronage and encouragement greatly helped in the evolution of this art and its future development to the status it occupies today. The Bharata Natya of today with "the invocatory and exploratory Alarippu, the pure nritta of Jathiswara, the gestural expression or Abhinaya of the Sabda, the scholarly and technically suffused Varna with its complicated Angaharas and Theerma-nams and the smooth sailing and leisurely Padams topped by the vivacious Tillana" has, to a large extent, evolved from the early forms which were carefully nurtured and generously patronised by the knowledgeable Cholas who also helped thereby in the preservation of the purity of the ancient dances.

(F) **Drama.**

It is rather unfortunate that we do not have much data on which we could reconstruct the state of the Dramatic Art under the Cholas. If information about the music and dance of their times is scanty enough, one might almost say that information on Drama in that age is almost non-existent. This is, however, not to conclude that the art was unknown or that it was not practised. There is sufficient material in inscriptions to prove very definitely that this was one of the flourishing arts and the Chola Kings patronised and encouraged it as much as they did the other fine arts.

We find, for example, the Natakasalai referred to in an inscription of Tiruvidaimarudur listed as No. 124 of SII Vol. III. Another inscription from the same place (No. 202) of the reign of Aditya II mentions the Ariya-
kuttu (Dance Drama) and the Chakkaikuttu, another variety, held in the theatre within the temple. The greatness of the Great Temple at Thanjavoor was portrayed in Drama form by Santikuttan and his troupe in the Big Temple itself. This is mentioned in an inscription of Rajendra I. An inscription from Cuddalore refers to a Mahanatya by Kamalalaya Bhatta through Poompuliyur Nataka. A dancer called Alayancakkai Kuttacakkayan was given a grant for enacting three scenes of Sakkaiikuttu at Tiruvalamdurainallur. Kumaran Srikantan and Kittimaraikadan were engaged to give seven acts of Ariyakuttu in the temples at Tiruvavaduturai and Tiruvidaimarudur. Another inscription refers to Marayan Vikrama Cholan enacting a drama at Kamarasavalli during Vaisaka festival. An inscription of the 4th year of Rajendra I refers to a grant of paddy to a troupe of actors who enacted the Rajarajeswara nataka during Vaikasi Festival in the Big Temple. The theme of the drama was the founding of the Temple itself. The paddy was to be given to Santikuttan Tiruvalam Tirumudugunran, Vijayarajendra Acharyan and the members of his troupe. Another inscription of the 6th year of a Parakesari from Kilappaluvur refers to grant of 1½ kalanju gold and 3 kalam of paddy to Alaiyurchakkai for staging three scenes of Chakkaikuttu on Asvati day of the Arpasi festival in the temple at Tiruvalandurainallur. An inscription of the 14th year of Vikrama Chola from Tiruvengaivasal mentions endowment of land to Elunattunangai who was to give nine performances of Santikuttu during Chittraiti festival of the local temple. An inscription from Manambadi, Tanjore, refers to staging of dramas five times during the Chitrai festival of the temple of Kailasamudaya Mahadeva at Viranarayanapuram. Another inscription from Tiruvavaduturai refers to the maintenance of the Nanavidha Natakasalai, theatre of various types. The more important inscriptions having a bearing on this art are listed in Annexure II.

These are only a few of the inscriptions which mention the art of Drama as it was practised under the
Cholas. Certain basic factors emerge from a study of these records. In the first place, it is obvious that the practice and profession of the art was closely and even exclusively linked to the Temples. Secondly they were staged normally during festivals celebrated in these temples. Thirdly there were different types of dramas, most of them of the dance-drama variety and the important types were Ariyakuttu, Chakkaikuttu and Santikuttu. Fourthly, the material needs of these actors for their living were assured by permanent endowments. Fifthly, these actors practised the art in groups. There could have been no question of any individual performance. Mono acting would appear to have been not in vogue. Lastly the themes of these dramas should have been exclusively religious. It is also safe to conclude that the art was widely practised all over the Chola Empire.

Before these different aspects are examined in closer detail, it would be useful to consider the evolution of the art itself up to the stage at which the Cholas inherited it. The origin of the drama as indeed that of Music and Dance is wrapped in obscurity. It is seen that in the Rig Veda itself some of the hymns are in the form of dialogues. There is, however, a big gap between this and the age of the first dramas which has been fixed round about 200 A.D. by scholars like A.A. Macdonnel. The art is traced to the dance and the term Nataka is itself derived from the root Nrit, to dance. Panini refers to Natas (dancers) and nata sutras dealing with singing, music, dancing and the use of different dialects. Later the term Nata came to denote an actor and the term Nataka denoted the play itself. By the beginning of the Chola period 10 different kinds of dramas had been recognised. There is reference to these in the Dasa Rupa of Dhanamjaya in the 10th century in the Rasarnava Sudhakaram and Santyadarpuna. Some are inclined to trace the origin of the drama to Greek sources but there does not seem to be much basis for this view. The question, however, is beyond the purview of this study.
Drama as it developed at that time was concerned with the delineation of character, with the representation of types rather than with individuals. The earliest presentations on the stage appear to have been associated with religious observances of the people and this is reflected in the inscription of Rajendra I regarding the Rajarajeshwara Nataka in the Big Temple at Tanjore. The Vedic texts would seem to imply that the art which was a combination of dance and music was originally employed at sacrifices and religious festivals, having its origin in the coalescence of recited epic legend with ancient pantomimic art. It developed gradually into a type of Yoga. The similarity between the art of drama and yoga is self-evident. To the true dramatist a particular character or event represents thoughts in the Cosmic Mind and in trying to portray such characters and events he is in a way contacting the Divine Mind which, is essence, is the aim of a true Yogi who looks for things and events not as they seem to be down here but as they are really in the mind of God. It was in this light that Drama was evidently practised under the Cholas and that also explains its close link with temples, emphasising the importance, nay the dominance of the religious aspect. The fact that Drama enabled the artist to overcome the limitations of Time just as the art of painting helps the artist to overcome the limitation of space, lifted this to the realms of a higher and sacred plane.

The art of Drama, including music and dance, was known as Natya Veda and this embodied principles taken from the Four Vedas each of which gave the elements of speech, song, mime and sentiment. It was Bharata’s great contribution that he consolidated and codified the principles.

According to Bharata’s Natya Sastra, the purpose of a drama is to reflect the life of the world as in a mirror so that all arts and sciences could be met with here. It was intended to inspire various Rasas or emotions.
According to the Abhinayadarpana Natya and Nritta were to be witnessed at the time of festivals and annual fairs in temples and before learned assemblies. It was also intended for the amusement of the commonfolk. This is the basis for the second feature of the Chola dramatic art which is evident from their inscriptions. There were strict rules in the Natya Sastra of Bharata governing the practice of the art including the preliminaries and the timings for the presentation of plays. An elaborate ritual was provided as a preliminary act and as many as 20 pre-play ceremonies, Purva Ranga, of music and dance had been prescribed. Of these 9 were to be behind the curtain and included the worship of the presiding deities of the Theatre. This practice is in vogue even today when dramatic performances begin usually with an invocatory song, sung in chorus.

As for the timings, plays that were pleasing to the ear and emphasising the devotional aspect were to be enacted in the mornings. Magnificent plays and those with Satvic Bhava were prescribed for the afternoon. Erotic plays with vocal and instrumental music were earmarked for the first part of the night while dramas describing important events, pathetic scenes etc. were relegated to the fourth part of the night. There were to be no dramatic performances at midday, midnight or during time for meals. From the fact that the dramas during the Chola period were mostly enacted during festivals, it is quite clear that these sastraic injunctions were carefully followed by them.

It is quite possible that the theatres for the staging of dramas were erected on the standards prescribed in the Natya Sastra. The Tiruvavuduturai inscription mentioned earlier refers to the maintenance of Nanavidha Natakasalai, implying the existence of different types of theatres. Obviously these standards were employed in the construction of theatres. It is also possible that for the theatres in Temples and in Temple courtyards the principles laid down in Manasara were followed. The
whole design was intended to ensure perfect acoustics and elimination of hindrances to vision and hearing to the audience. It is possible to presume that the Cholas were conversant with all the types of theatres mentioned in Natya Sastra, namely, the Vikrsta (Rectangular), the Chaturasra (square) and the Tryasra (equilateral triangle) and the three variants of each of these types, namely, Jyeshta, Madhya and Avara. There was also a sub-division into two of these 9 possible types according as whether the measurements were based on Hastas or Dandas. The auditorium was called the Rangamandala and the stage was termed Ranghabhumi. The latter was divided into the Nepathy Griha or Green room, Rangasirsa, the back deep stage where the actors took rest after making up and before entering the regular stage which was the Ranga Pitha supported on either sides by the Mattavarani, where the actual enactment of the drama took place. It is not relevant to refer here to the difference of opinion between Dr. Manomohan Ghosh on one side and Dr. V. Raghavan and D. R. Mankad on the other as to whether these two, the Rangasirsa and the Ranga Pitha were two distinct parts or were only two names for a single portion. Evidence appears to point to these two being two distinct parts of the prescribed stage.

Painted scenery and ornate sets were obviously alien to the Chola theatre as these were found to dwarf the personality of the actor. There were no drop curtains as we know them today but there was certainly a curtain hung between the Rangasirsa and Ranga Pitha and the actors entered the stage by Apatikshepa, the toss of the curtain. It is also obvious that a certain amount of make up was used or else there would have been no purpose behind the provision of the Nepathy Griha and the Rangasirsa. Special dresses and ornaments were also worn. The dramas of those times consisted of music and dance also besides acting. We have already seen how much the Cholas encouraged the twin arts of music and dance and it is no wonder that they extended the
same degree of patronage to the drama also which was
delicious mixture of all the three.

Apart from hazarding the view that the themes of
the plays were almost exclusively religious, thereby
keeping in line with the religious origin of the dramatic
art, there is no evidence to enable us formulate any
thesis about the types of dramas that were staged. The
Nataka is held to have represented heroic themes and
the Prakarana is supposed to have indicated social
themes. I have already pointed out that perhaps mono-
acting was not known. At any rate it could not have
been very popular or prevalent seeing that often the
actors are mentioned in groups. Dr. Manomohan Ghosh
feels that there were one act plays with one or two or
more characters, some of them dealing with different
subjects in the same play. He also holds the view that
there were plays with three or four acts loosely knit and
plays with five or more acts well-knit into a whole. We
can at best only guess with reference to earlier and later
practice noticed elsewhere. The Cholas must certainly
have inherited the glorious heritage of Aswaghoshā's
Sasiputra Prakarana, the thirteen plays of Bhasa like
Swapna Vasavadatta, Sudraka's Mrichakatika, and the
great dramas of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti. These were
masters of the dramatic technique. There were others
like Visakadatta who gave Mudrarakshasa, Sri Harsha
who gave Ratnavali, Bhatta Narayana whose Veni
Samhara was a great play and persons like Murari and
Rajasekhara. Being patrons of learning and the learned,
the Cholas must assuredly have been aware of these
priceless treasures as their rule was not an insular one
but was characterised by effective and effectual contacts
with the several parts of India and even lands outside.

The actual staging of the dramas must have followed
the rules laid down in the Natya Sastra. They must
certainly have employed the four-fold dramatic action of
Angika (gesture), Vacika (speech), Aharya (make-up)
and Sattvika (emotion) through which the Actor was
expected to project and communicate the meaning of the plays. In Angika, for example, the movement of the eyes and hands was most important. The Sastras mention 13 types of movements of the head, 7 of the eyebrows, 6 of the nose, 6 of the cheek, 7 of the chin, 9 of the neck, 5 of the breasts, 36 of the eyes, 32 of the feet besides 16 of movement on ground and 16 on air. There were also 24 basic single-hand hastas or mudras, each with the possibility of meaning more than 30 different things. In Vacika, the comic and erotic required the middle and bass tones while the heroic was symbolised by a higher pitch. As in the modern times the actors had entrance and exit songs.

In the matter of Aharya, orange represented Gods and nymphs, Gold stood for Sun and Brahma, white for the Himalayas and Ganga, Red for Brahmins and Kshatriyas, Lotus Pink for Kings and deep blue for Sudras.

It is possible that special dramas like the Rajarajeswara Nataka were enacted in Tamil but there is no mention of this in any record. Perhaps there were more of sanskrit dramas than Tamil. Scholars like Jagirdar feel that there was not much of dramatic literature in any Indian language except Sanskrit in those early centuries. The reasons advanced are quite weighty. The religious-minded people did not take kindly to dramas. Sanskrit could not be used for the exposition of secular ideas which would appeal to the common man and when the stage came for such use Sanskrit had ceased to be the language of the common man. Drama was patronised by Kings and the rich and Sanskrit was their language. In the words of Kalidasa.

\[Natyam binnarucer janasya bahuda\]
\[api ekam samarodanam.\]

It was common entertainment to various people and not the entertainment of common people.

Apart from these factors, drama and actors were not very much high up in the social scale. Even according
to the old texts, many were against Bharata and his Natya Sastra. They did not relish the idea of song and dance to please the crowds even though the Natya Sastra held that the gods were much pleased with dramas and those who witnessed dramatic performances were bound to attain bliss. The Arthasastra held that singing and dancing and acting were the functions of the Sudra. According to Manu talking to another's wife was a crime meriting punishment but there was no offence in talking to an actor's wife! They were presumed to be so immoral that the question of their moral sentiments being offended did not arise! Manu also prohibited Brahmins from being actors. This was not characteristic of these times alone. In the west in the sixteenth century when Shakespeare was living actors were classed as vagabonds. This prejudice against Drama and actors persisted till very recently in our own country. The profession of acting was considered to be somewhat low down in the social scale and people were chary about being associated with professionals of this art. There was much prejudice against respectable persons taking part in the practice of this art. It would not be out of place to mention in this connection that as in the case of the Dance, there has been a welcome change in the recent past and the Dramatic Art has come into its own. The excellence of production of many professional troupes, the character and integrity of the organisers and participants and above all the close association of amateurs in the field of drama in the development of the standard and technique alike of the art have lifted the fine art from the morass of unpopularity and prejudice and it has today become a respected and respectable vocation.

The general view held is that in the period of the Cholas and earlier tragedies were not enacted in dramas. There was to be no sad ending and no depiction of death or any such tragic event. There does not appear to be much basis for this view. The Natya Sastra contains a quotation of Brahma who in the course of a description
of the nature of dramas mentions कृतिक वदा: sometimes slaughter, along with aspects like laughter, battle, sensual etc. It is certainly not as if tragedies were unknown but it is very likely that such themes were not popular mainly because the plays were enacted in temples and had for their subject matter elevating and spiritual ideas. Tragic themes would have been definitely out of place in such a context and were therefore avoided or eliminated altogether.

There is no doubt whatever that women also took active part in the staging of dramas during the Chola times. Considerable importance was paid, in accordance with the stipulation in the Natya Sastria, in the matter of the selection of the various characters for a dramatic performance. Apart from the theme of the play determining the types of actors and actresses required, the selection was also based on gait, speech, gestures and dispositions. From the fact this selective principle had been enunciated and apparently followed, it is permissible to infer that there was no dearth of talents. Bharata had laid down that only women should play the role of women. Apparently the practice of males doing the part of women was not followed in those days. This is an issue on which there is wide difference of views even today. Perhaps Bharata felt that none but a woman could portray the feminine feelings and characteristics and that any attempt on the part of a man trying to act a women's role would not only be not true-to-life or satisfactory but might amount to a parody of the fine are. This view is held even today. Newer and more weighty considerations have arisen now, some of them commercial and some mercenary. Man in woman's garb, it is said, would naturally lack glamour and the play would cease to appeal to the audience and would not be a box-office success.

But then as now there must have been artists who should have been convinced that a man could play a woman with as much conviction and effect as a woman
herself. Drama is essentially make-believe, acting all the time and this can certainly be done by a talented actor, whatever be the role assigned to him. In the South Indian stage today there are several male actors who are top class in their representation of the feminine role. I can testify from personal knowledge that there is a sense of success and fulfilment when a man is able to portray a lady’s role well. We shall, however, never know what the Chola rulers and the patrons of the drama of those centuries felt like on this issue.

The actors played then to an appreciative, learned and critical audience. Though there is no direct evidence on this covering the Chola period, the criticism of Parivrajaka of Malavika’s dance, given in Kalidasa’s Malavikagnimitra can be taken as a typical sample of the standard of performances and the nature and qualifications of the critic. The critic had to be a person of education and knowledge, knowing the intricacies of the art he was reviewing and not the mere wielder of a facile pen as most unfortunately happens to be the case today.

One of the arts closely allied to Drama which was very popular during the Chola period was the practice of Religious Discourses, called Purana Patanam. This was what later developed into the Harikatha Kalakshepam of today, an art which owes much of its modern form to the pioneering work of Sankirtanakars of Maharashtra. There are several inscriptions of the Chola kings which refer to endowments for the purpose of expounding Bharatam, Ramayananam and such Puranas and Epics. Provisions were also made on a liberal scale for the exposition of different types of Philosophies, of the Vedas and such allied religious texts. The rulers were anxious to utilise such artistic and consequently effective modes for propagating eternal truths. The use of music and the pattern of Purana Patana enabled the expositor to explain in very simple terms, understandable by the common man, some of the vital, fundamental
concepts of religious lore. Obviously they must have mixed this with humour and anecdotes of a topical nature not only to make the exposition interesting but to enable it leave a distinct beneficent impression on the listeners.

Such Purana Patanams were regular features in most of the temples. The object of such discourses was to impart religious instruction. Like drama it was and is a didactic art. It was a type of monodrama, containing many of the elements which go to make a good drama. The addition of music, which however was not very necessary nor common then, made the result really artistic. The exponent had to depend on himself and on his resourcefulness. He had to work out the central theme of his exposition carefully in different stages as in a drama. He had to employ certain gestures in the course of his exposition. He had to curb the tendency to sermonise. In such discourses there arise several situations when the artist can let go and start talking at length on abstract ethical principles. This would have taken away from the effect of the whole scheme.

On the whole this was a fine institution and method of propagating religious doctrines and the Cholas lost no time in availing themselves of this wonderful opportunity. It is unfortunate that this art of Hari Katha Kalakshepam went into a shadow but there is a welcome revival of enthusiasm now and several institutions have started imparting instructions on the fundamentals of this great art. During the Chola period this institution was a powerful factor in their cultural life and this was due in no small measure to the foresight of the rulers who saw in it a popular and effective propaganda machinery to suit their ardent religious zeal and fervour.
V. SCIENCE

(a) GENERAL.

It has already been made clear in the introductory part of this thesis that during the Chola period the terms Science and Scientific Development did not connote the significance they have in this atomic and jet age. The conception of the Cholas was set in a different context. Yet, in the real sense, they were in a very advanced state of progress in several scientific fields, notably in the sciences of astronomy, mathematics, medicine and engineering. Their inscriptions contain several statements bearing on these aspects though there is no direct or explicit statement concerning the basic factors characterising any of them. But as Professor Ogden has said, in the history of any Science or Art facts are meaningless until they are interpreted. From the information contained in the inscriptions it is not difficult to picture the state of development and the practice of these most vital sciences.

The sources for these three sciences, of astronomy, mathematics and medicine, can almost certainly be traced to the Vedas. One of the common practices of the Cholas was the arrangements made for the exposition of the Vedas and other sacred texts in Temples and other such public places. Schools were also established by them to impart the sublime teachings contained in the Vedas to deserving students and inscriptions detail the munificent endowments and the organisations for the running of such schools. Obviously, therefore, the teachers should have touched on these scientific aspects also and it is quite safe to presume that the general standard of knowledge about these sciences was of a fairly high order and the theories and concepts contained in the various learned sanskritic treatises were well known to those
who preached and practised these sciences. The most important developments in the different sciences can now be examined in a little more critical manner.

(b) ASTRONOMY.

Quite a number of Chola inscriptions give precise data about dates, referring to the year, season, asterism, month, day, etc. A list containing some of the important inscriptions of this type is given in Annexure V. It needs no argument to prove that they were well conversant with the system of a regulated calender with the twelve months clearly defined. There are some inscriptions which refer to the occurrence of eclipses. Scholars like Kielhorn have been able to verify the accuracy of these dates with reference to other chronological data available. Quite apart from this aid to history in fixing dates, the important point to realise is that the Cholas were fully aware of the scientific basis of this astronomical subject. They knew about Amavasya. The rulers celebrated their birthdays and detailed information was given about the dates. This would not have been possible if they did not have the scientific data.

It is clear to us now that from the time of the Vedas it was recognised that the earth was spherical in shape and that its axial rotation and orbital motion was caused by the Sun which was also responsible for the facts of Night following Day, for twilight, for the seasons, for winds and rain. The twenty seven Nakshatras were known. It was recognised that the Moon shone by light borrowed from the Sun. Solar eclipses were recognised as the occultation of the Sun by the Moon. Lunar eclipses were also known. They were aware of the seven planets and the two nodes, Raghu and Ketu. This astronomical knowledge was used in casting the horoscopes of individuals and there are several indications about such horoscopes in Chola inscriptions.

The Cholas followed the ancient principle of six seasons, each of two months, in a year. They appear to
have used the same terminology as in the Vedas, namely, Vasanta, Grishma, Varsha, Sarat, Hemanta and Sisira. They were quite aware of the precession of the equinox. They must have based their knowledge on works of great men like Aryabhata I (C 499 AD), Varahamihira (C 550 AD) and Brahmagupta (598 AD). This awareness is itself a testimony to the high standards to which they had evolved in the matter of this science of the heavens.

(c) Mathematics.

The science of mathematics was a highly developed one in the centuries preceding the time of the Cholas as is evidenced by the wealth of literature available and through mention made by foreign travellers. Some birch bark manuscripts were discovered in 1881 at Baksali in the Peshawar District. These are found to belong to the 8th century AD and are obviously copies of an earlier work, probably of the 3rd century AD. They refer to computation of gold, quadratic equation, square root approximations, etc. Much contribution was made by Aryabhata and Brahmagupta and the Ganita-sara-sangraha of Mahavira (9th century) and Lilavati of Bhaskara (12th century) took the science much ahead. The latter work gives various solutions of a right-angled triangle, area of the sphere, volume of the sphere, sines, cosines, of compound angles, and the theory of surds.

It is obvious that the period under review also knew about the construction of rectilineal figures and mensuration of areas and volumes. It has been held that what is known as the theorem of Pythagoras (540 BC) had been enunciated much earlier by Baudhayana in about 800 B.C. According to Baudhayana "the diagonal of a rectangle produces both (areas) which its length and breadth produce separately." In other words the square described on the diagonal of a rectangle has an area equal to the sum of the areas of the squares described on its two sides. It is felt that such basic data was of utmost use to the Cholas in their great work of building
several magnificent temples. The learned in this period also presumably knew the solution of the complete quadratic equation $ax^2 + bx = c$.

There were also great achievements in indeterminate analysis.

The science of Arithmetic should also have been well known. The Cholas continued to use the decimal scale of enumeration used by the ancients and had separate names for the notational places corresponding to 1, 10, 100, 1000, etc. To express a number greater than $10^3$ (Sahasra) they usually followed the centesimal scale. 60000 was, accordingly, Shastim Sahasram and 50000 was Panchasat Sahasram.

(d) Medicine.

Though direct information on the state of astronomy and mathematics is not exhaustive, being confined to what may be described as mere asides, there is much more valuable data on the science of medicine as it was practised under the Cholas. Disease and sickness are as old as man and so, naturally, man must certainly have sought to cure if not rid humanity of such pestilence. The science of medicine is a very ancient one in our country and the Atharva Veda is a vast treasure of information on this. Several medical charms are listed though the treatment prescribed is often primitive and magical in character. It, nevertheless, provides an insight into the remarkable intelligence of the ancient seers. The information available in this was considerably augmented by Charaka in his Charaka Samhita, Susruta in his Samhita and Vaghbata II in his Ashtanga Samgriha and Ashtangahridaya Samhita. Charaka dealt with eight principal diseases and their cure, with pathology, anatomy, diagnosis and general and special therapy and diet. Susruta’s work refers to as many as 125 surgical instruments. Vaghbhata deals with surgery. A birch bark manuscript whose period is fixed at about 450 AD
has been discovered by Bower at Kashgar which mentions the medicinal properties of garlic and contains recipes for eye diseases. This is found to be a veritable pharmacopoeia of ancient Indian medicine.

The science of medicine was, therefore, in a highly developed state at the time Vijayalaya laid the foundation for the rule of the Imperial Cholas. It was considered both from the philosophical and biological angles and comprised preventive and curative medicine and surgery. Midwifery, treatment of ear, nose and throat trouble, psychotherapy, pediatrics and toxicology were all well known. Perhaps the treatment was based on a diagnosis which was conditioned by the concepts of Vayu, Pitta, and Kapa. Vayu was not mere wind disorder but took note of the functions of the central and sympathetic nervous systems. Pitta was not bile but was concerned with the function of metabolism and thermogenesis and covered digestion, coloration of blood, formation of secretions etc. Kapa was not phlegm but the process of cooling and preservation, production of preservative fluids etc. Diagnosis was also based on observation through the five senses supplemented by interrogation. The method of direct auscultation (hearing of breath sounds) was also known.

They were aware of the bacterial origin and the infective nature of some diseases. Although no precise case is known or is referred to in the inscriptions, we can infer on the basis of the knowledge which must have been available to the medicine men of the Cholas, that there were several cases of surgical operations also. Susruta and Vaghbhata refer to amputation, laparotomy (opening of the abdomen for removing intestinal obstruction or other troubles), lithotomy (extraction of stone) and trephining of the skull. It is quite conceivable that these arduous tasks calling for skilful hands and agile brains were undertaken by the physicians and surgeons of the Cholas when occasion demanded.
There were also Veterinary doctors as we know them today. The Hastayurveda dealt with diseases of elephants while the Asvasastra dealt with the sickness of horses.

The basic objective was to carry free medical aid to suffering humanity. This is evident from many inscriptions. The healers led a life of austerity and sacrifice and maintained high ethical standards of behaviour. An inscription from Pandaravadai in the 3rd year of Rajendra I refers to a free dispensary. There is reference to a hospital called Sundara Chola Vinnagar Atula Salai at Tanjore in another inscription from the same place (No. 249 of 1923).

Among other inscriptions referring to the practice of medicine three may be referred to specially because of their great significance. According to an inscription of the reign of Veera Rajendra he made endowments for a Vishnu temple to which a college, a hostel and a hospital were attached. The hospital had provision for eighteen beds. It must have been a carefully planned scheme and a building to suit the requirements should have been put up. There was a surgeon in charge of the hospital. The fact that a surgeon has been specifically named is very important as this bears out the presumptions made above. It is very likely that he carried out a large number of operations but we have, unfortunately, no details. Two persons were specially attached to the hospital to bring different kinds of herbs for medicinal purposes, proving that the practice of medicine was based on the science of Ayurveda. There were two nurses to look after the inpatients. There should have been an outpatient ward also where minor ailments not requiring hospitalisation were dealt with.

The second inscription is from Uttaramallur and refers to the grant of land as Vishaharaboga to a physician who removed poison. The science of toxicology and treatment for poison must have been quite well known. This grant was applicable only to experts in this field.
The third inscription is dated 1121 AD from Tiruvavaduturai in the third year of Vikramachola. This makes it very clear that there was a medical school at that place where students of medicine studied the Ashtangahridaya of Vagbhatta and the Charakasamhita.

These inscriptions testify to the standards attained by the medical profession during the Chola period. One point to be stressed in this connection is that by a curious combination of circumstances, the medical science advanced mainly owing to the pioneering work of Buddhists. With the rise of Saivism and Vaishnavism, Buddhism suffered a decline and it is remarkable that towards the end of the Chola epoch, there was a lull in the progress of the science and there were no remarkable discoveries or contributions to it for many centuries thereafter.

(e) Chemical Science.

From the writings of Alberuni, edited by Dr. Edward C. Sachau, it is clear that the people of this period knew quite a lot about the preparation of medicines of several kinds. In fact N. R. Dhar claims that the greatest achievements of these early centuries was the introduction of metallic preparations in medicine, especially those of mercury and iron, and in this our country was centuries ahead of the West. Susruta in his treatise has discussed the preparation and use of alkalis and alkaline caustics. Learned men like him had made large contributions to the fund of chemical knowledge and there is every reason to believe that the Cholas were well aware of this. They had knowledge about metals and their extraction from ore. The Cholas wore many types of jewels. There was lavish use of gold and precious stones, especially rubies and emeralds. Pearls were also quite common. Ear rings, bracelets, necklaces and anklets of silver with pearls inside, called Cilambu, were the general types of jewels in use.
The Cholas, it is clear, had geared up their organisation sufficiently well to enable them keep the people in a reasonably good state of health. It is true they did not have all or any of the aids we have today and did not think in terms of plastic surgery, operation of the heart or transplantation of the kidney or the putting in of a transistorised unit in the body to keep the heart going. But within the scope of the knowledge they possessed, they had organised a very good system of medical aid which, apparently, served its purpose most efficiently. It was a system which was designed to bring relief to the suffering and which did not have the mercenary or commercial motive behind. This was in keeping with the general idea kept in mind by the rulers in the governance of their charge. The welfare of their subjects was the main objective and they spared no efforts to achieve this, utilising to good purpose the vast storehouse of knowledge in these sciences handed over to them from earlier times.

(f) Civil Engineering.

It is obvious that the Chola civil engineers had attained a very high degree of efficiency and skill in their profession as evidenced by the hundreds of monuments which today bear eloquent testimony to this fact. The term civil engineering, a modern coinage, covers construction work of structures like temples, palaces, roads, dams and irrigation canals. That there were many such items of work to which the civil engineer of the Chola times set his hands is quite evident. The Science of building construction, for example, is found to have been quite ancient. We have traces of a well planned town with many structures and roads in the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. This science had been gradually developing and in the Chola period it reached a high state of efficiency.

This has been proved by the recent excavations which are being carried out at Kaveripattinam, eight
miles to the east of Mayuram, the once flourishing centre of the Chola age. At Kilaiyur, about half a mile from the sea, an impressive brick structure has been unearthed. The size of the bricks used is very big, each measuring 2 feet by 1\frac{1}{2} feet by four inches. Wooden poles have also been found along with this structure. At another place nearby called Vellaiyan Iruppu, the remains of the brick walls of a house have been found. The discovery of some earthen figures which belong to the Chola period definitely fixes the period of this structure also. It is presumed that the general construction was of wood and bricks and lime only and that explains why most of them have disappeared but what is now being discovered proves that this science was in a well developed state then. The Pallavas started stone constructions and this was continued by the Cholas. It is to this we owe the survival of the monuments all over the Tamil country. The Cholas, as has been observed before, were great builders. Their temples constitute the largest contribution in this sphere. There are not many secular buildings like Palaces and allied structures though there are several references to them in the inscriptions. It is obvious that there must have been a palace at Tanjore. There was one at Gangaikonda Cholapuram, which was the capital of the later kings. In a small hamlet called Solan Maligai near Palaiyam there are the remnants of a structure which obviously was also a palace. Palaiyaru was a kind of a subsidiary capital of the Cholas. Uttaramerur had also a Palace. Nilakanta Sastri refers to a palace constructed by Rajendra at Madurai.

The construction of temples involved also the construction of several other appurtenances like Mantapas, Natasalas, shrines for Parivaradevatas etc. But whether it was a temple or a residential structure, the construction was planned most scientifically and executed with a keen eye to precision and perfection. These constructions are the visible symbols of their glorious rule.

From the time of evolving an idea to construct a temple to the time of its completion and consecration,
several aspects are involved and each of these had to be carefully considered. One of these related to the selection of the site. There were elaborate rules framed for this purpose and the Cholas would certainly appear to have followed them very carefully. For example a site was considered most suitable, Uttama, if it had cows, trees with flowers, fruits and juice, was even and sloping towards the east, was soft and had water vein flowing from left to right and was never scarce in water and was moderate in heat and cold. There were Madhyama and Adama sites as well. Similarly there were rules for testing the suitability of the site for construction. The prescribed method was to dig a square hole and fill it with water. If it dried up in 24 hours it was no good. For loose soil, the hole was to be filled up with the earth dug out. If this was insufficient, then also the site was no good. If it was just enough it was fair while if it overflowed it was very good.

The amount of planning involved in such constructional activities can well be imagined and when the number of such magnificent monuments is realised, one is able to appreciate the high standard of efficiency of the planners and executors of those times.

One is staggered at the labour which must have been expended in these constructions, not to mention the materials involved. Recently we had the Kumbhabhishekam of the Sri Meenakshi Sundareswara temple at Madurai. The work of mere renovation, repainting and repairs took over three years and cost over Rs. 20 lakhs. It was estimated that casuarina poles valued at Rs. 40,000/- had to be bought for the scaffolding round the temple towers. How much more labour would have been involved in the original construction of edifices like the Big Temple at Tanjore, the temple at Darasuram, Gangaikondacholapuram, etc. For example, it is estimated that the Tanjore Temple took perhaps about six or seven years to be completed (1003 to 1009 AD). It stands on a rectangular paved area measuring about
800 feet by 400 feet. If one considers each part of the temple, he will be struck by the extraordinary skill of the engineer who was responsible for raising this majestic work of art. The Vimana is over 215 feet in height and has a copper stupi weighing over 100 kilograms. The slab on top of the Vimana is a single granite square piece of 25\(\frac{1}{2}\) feet and is estimated to weigh nearly 80 tons. Surely it should have been no mean engineering feat to have had this huge stone hoisted up so high into its place. It is believed that the scaffolding for this on an inclined plane was stated from a place called Sarappallam, about four miles away from Tanjore.

The walls of the temple at Gangaikondacholapuram constructed during the time of Rajendra, measure about 600 feet in length and 450 feet in breadth. They are about four feet thick. Only parts of the walls remain. They appear to have been broken up and removed for use in the grand anicut over the river Kaveri. The temple itself was 340 feet by 110 feet. The Mahamandapam has 150 pillars, beautifully and symmetrically arranged in eight rows. The Vimana over the sanctum sanctorum is about 186 feet high.

Yet another earlier temple which must have taxed the resources of the Chola engineer is the Temple of Three, Muvarkoil at Kodumbalur, built in the reign of Sundara Chola by one Bhuti Vikramakesari. Only two of the three shrines have survived. Each of these shrines was 21 feet square, standing ten feet from one another with ardamandapa 18 feet square. There was a common Mahamandapa, 91 feet by 41 feet, in front of these three shrines. The walls enclosing the shrines were 3' 4" thick. Obviously the Cholas believed in thick walls and wide verandahs which were suited to the climate unlike the modern flats which are veritable furnaces in summer and floodgates in rain.

These figures are mentioned to indicate the massive scale in which these constructions were conceived, the
scientific manner in which they were planned and executed and the artistic excellence achieved in the finished edifice. The mere fact that most of these have endured through centuries speaks volumes for the engineering skill of the Cholas and the standard of efficiency and perfection attained by them in this aspect of scientific development.

The science of town planning was also in an advanced state. Again Tanjore provides an excellent example. There were obviously a large number of streets and quarters in the city. The big street of Virasola is mentioned. There was an inner and outer city, a type of an extension. There were two streets running from east to west, named the Northern and Southern Talicheries where the houses were allotted to the 400 dancing girls whom Rajaraja I transferred to Tanjore from other places for service in the Big Temple. Vikrama Chola was responsible for the Vikrama Chola Tiruvidi in Chidambaram. The Chola town planning scheme must assuredly have been scientific but simple.

Another field in which we see the scientific application of engineering skill during the Chola age was that of irrigation. If an analysis of the numerous inscriptions of the period is undertaken, it will be seen that a considerable percentage refers to the endowments in the shape of grants of lands or paddy, showing that then as now agriculture was the mainstay of the people. Enriched by the waters of the Kaveri, the Chola kingdom had many parts where water had to be taken and the need for an elaborate and scientific system of tanks and canals and dams was absolutely essential. The pioneering work done by Karikala Chola of the Sangam Age in raising bunds on either side of the Kaveri river has been praised in the Silappadikaram. According to the Mahavasma this work was carried out by the prisoners who had been captured in the Ceylon campaign and brought over to the mainland. This work of Karikala has been mentioned, among others, in the Melpadi copper
plate of Punyakumara of the 7th century AD, in the Tiruvalangadu copper plates and the Kanyakumari inscription of Vira Rajendra. It is also possible that Karikala Chola was responsible for diverting the waters of the Kaveri along distributory streams like Manni, Coleroon, Venni, Kaduvai, etc. There is, however, no direct evidence except the reference to the banks of the Kaveri being described as Karikalakkarai.

This work was followed most systematically and scientifically by many of the rulers of the Vijayalaya line. The works executed under their direction and guidance or during their period of rule were associated with their names. Inscriptions refer to Veerachola Vadavar, running to the north of Tanjore and to Madurantaka Vadavar, branching off from the Grand Anicut on Coleroon north of Tiruppanandal. These must have been during the reign of Parantaka I who was also known as Veerachola and Madurantaka Chola. He must also have been responsible for diverting the Kaveri waters along the Manni river which was called Kunjaramallan, after Parantaka I. Similarly Rajaraja I, Rajendra I and Vira Rajendra were also responsible for the construction of several canals for purposes of irrigation.

In certain localities, however, it was not possible to divert the waters of the main river by this system of canals and the Cholas solved the problem by the construction of huge tanks. The Cholavardhi near Sholinghur in North Arcot and the Viranarayanam, 12 miles to the west of Chidambaram were constructed by Parantaka I. The Kaliyaneri in Narasimhamangalam near Anamalai in Madurai District was constructed by one of the officers of Parantaka I called Arulnidhikaliyam. Gandaraditya’s reign saw the tanks at Ulagapuram and the Sembianmadevi at Tirumazhappadi. The big tank at Madurantakam and the one at Tirubhuvani near Pondicherry were constructed by Uttama Chola. The two tanks called Sundarachola Pērēri and Kundavai Pērēri were constructed by Sundara Chola Parantaka II.
The most famous of these, however, was the Chola-gangam, constructed by Rajendra I to the west of his newly founded capital Gangaikondacholapuram. This has been described by the Tiruvalangadu copper plates as the Liquid Pillar of Victory, signalising the victorious campaign of Rajendra I in which his troops reached the banks of the Ganges. Tradition has it that water was brought from the Ganges and poured into this new tank. It is unfortunate that like the beautiful temple alongside, this tank is also in ruins now but it still continues to represent the skill of the Chola engineer and the solicitude of the ruler for the welfare of the subjects. The self-glorification aspect was only a very minor part of the whole scheme.

Kulottunga I constructed the Rajendra Chola Periyeri in Punganur in the Chittoor district and the Kulottunga Chola Perēri at Muniyur in the Papanasam taluq.

The instances cited are sufficient proof to indicate how well the Cholas strove to meet the needs of particular areas and utilised scientific ability most efficiently and effectively. Besides these they constructed dams across rivers and diverted the waters and constructed strong embankments of granite on either bank. The Koviladi bund, 10 miles to the east of Srirangam which hit the headlines a few years back when it was breached owing to the unprecedented floods in the river, was constructed by Vira Rajendra, who ruled between 1063 and 1070 A.D. What the British government did years later was only to build on the strong basis laid by this farsighted Chola monarch.

The Cholas did not stop with merely constructing these canals, tanks and dams. They organised an extremely efficient system of local supervision which ensured that these works were kept in a state of good repairs always. The periodical deepening of the tanks and removal of silt, the strengthening of the bunds to prevent breaches during rainy seasons which would have had
serious consequences and other items connected with the proper maintenance of these tanks were the responsibilities of local Committees of the Úr or Sabha, called Erivariyam. Special tax free endowments of land and money were also created to provide the requisite financial resources for these items of work. It is to the lasting glory of the Cholas that they not only built well but they made all possible arrangements to see that what was constructed really served its purpose and the facilities required were provided in adequate measure.
VI. PHILOSOPHY

(A) SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHICAL LITERATURE:

The four centuries of Chola rule saw the play of different systems of philosophy, some of them working towards the same goal and some of them coming into conflict with one another. In the ultimate analysis, this period with the one just preceding it was the age of the rise of a type of Brahminical philosophy against the Buddhist and Jain philosophies. As a result of the emergence of new teachings, Buddhism lost its hold and almost disappeared while Jainism survived in parts and continued to enjoy a kind of limited patronage and popularity. Saivites and Vaishnavites had joined hands in their common effort to turn back the rising tide of Buddhistic and Jain influence but when this common danger disappeared, the friendship also died and the two sects came to be ranged against each other, neither yielding any quarter to the other.

This drifting apart of the Saivites and Vaishnavites was accelerated by other unfortunate influences which besides hastening the rate of growing discord, resulted in the degradation of the ideas of decency and morality. It was in this situation that Brahminical religion had to face the disastrous effects of the destructive inroads of Islam. But this is to anticipate. It is more relevant to consider the development of each of these systems of philosophy during the Chola period.

As observed already, Buddhism was not much of a force during the period. It suffered a steady decline but lingered in some form throughout the period. The donors and patrons on whose munificence the philosophy depended were not Buddhists and do not appear to have even claimed to be such. Buddha came to be
regarded as an Avatara of Vishnu. The process of assimilation with Hinduism gained force and there are very few traces of this philosophy as a distinct religious cult in India after the 13th century.

Jainism had a more fortunate history in the Chola period. Several records of the period show that many Jain temples were built, images were installed and endowments made for perpetual worship. These shrines and images spread all over the south testify to the fact that during this period the Jain religion was popular and constituted a living faith to many people, from Royalty to peasantry, inspiring them to deeds of piety and philanthropy. Jain ascetics made rich contributions to the literary output of the period.

But by far the most important of the systems which found high favour in the Chola period were the Saivite and Vaishnavite philosophies, the former associated with the names of Sankara and the Nayanmars and the latter with the hymns of the Alwars and the great Acharyas.

The Chola kings were ardent saivites. Their numerous benefactions to the Siva temples all over their empire testify to this intense devotion. One school of Saivite philosophy which flourished during this period was Saiva Siddhanta. Manickavasagar, Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar, the chief of the Nayanmars, were the four great teachers of this philosophy. They were the Samayacharyas. The main objective of their philosophy was to create a fervour in the hearts of the people and turn them towards Siva, relinquishing faith in all other faiths. The metaphysics of this philosophy came to be developed further by later teachers known as Santanacharyas. The most important of these were Meykanda, Arulnandi, Maraignana Sambandhar and Umapati. These, however, came only towards the end of the Chola period, Meykanda’s Sivagnanabodam itself being ascribed to the first half of the 13th century and Arulnandi’s Sivagnana Sidhiyar a little later. The
Stotras of the Samayacharyas changed into the sastras of the Santanacharyas.

This philosophy has been called a system of pluralistic realism, recognising the reality of the world and the ultimate plurality of the souls. The supreme reality is Siva, the Pati or Lord of all beings with his eight qualities of independence, purity, self-knowledge, omniscience, freedom from mala, benevolence, omnipotence and bliss. Then there are the concepts of the Pasu, the individual soul and the Pāsa, matter. In other words this was a variety of a restricted type of Advaita philosophy. This philosophy played a very influential part in the life of the people during the Chola period. Though the concepts as we know them today came to be embodied in literature only late in the period, the essence of the teachings was known much earlier in the lyrical outpourings contained in the Thevaram and Tiruvasagam. It was owing mainly to the zeal and enthusiasm of the Chola king that Nambi Andar Nambi was enabled to collect and arrange the canon in the form, originally, of eleven books to which Sekkizhar's Periyapurānam was added as the twelfth. These collections constitute an important landmark in the Chola period in the development of philosophy and philosophical literature.

Saivism also gave rise during this period to a few other systems of philosophy if, indeed, the term philosophy could be applied to them. The Kāpalikas and Kālāmukhas represent two extremely horrid and repulsive forms of Saivism. A reference will be made to these cults when dealing with religion and the different orders of ascetic groups. These two sects worshipped Bhairava and attributed great virtues and powers to drinking wine and eating disgusting types of food. They would even appear to have performed human sacrifice. They believed in eating food in a human skull and eating and besmearing their bodies with the ashes of the dead. Their origin is traceable to
the terrible form and conception of Rudra. The significant feature, however, is that these cults were popular alongside the highly devotional and philosophical aspects of Saivism but this popularity must have been due to their bewitching influence over some sections of the people rather than to any conceivable lofty ideal in their system of philosophy.

An elevated form of Vaishnava philosophy was founded by Nathamuni, the first of the great Acharyas who was also responsible for rendering the same service to Vaishnava lyrics of the Alwars that Nambi Andar Nambi did for the hymns of the Nayanmars. One of the great Acharyas that came in the line of Nathamuni was Yamunacharya who won the title “Alavandar” from the Chola queen for vanquishing in a disputation a pandit at the court of the ruling king. He is claimed to be the real founder of the Visishtadvaita philosophy. His works include the Siddhiraya, Agamaprāmāṇya, Gitarthasamgraha, Mahapurushanirnaya and Stotraratna. The Siddhiraya with the three sections of Atmasiddhi, Isvarsiddhi and Samvit Siddhi refutes the doctrine of Avidya.

Ramanuja succeeded Yamunacharya. He was not satisfied with the teachings of spiritual monism and took to the study of the Alwars. It is in his case that the Cholas demonstrated their intolerance and impatience with other philosophies that did not accord with their Saivite doctrines. Ramanuja, it is clear, was harassed and persecuted and had to flee the country and seek asylum at the court of Vishnuvardhana, the Hoysala prince. Ramanuja’s works include Vedantasara, Vedarthasamgraha, Vedandadipika and commentaries on the Brahma Sutras and Bhagavad Gita.

It is beyond the purview of this survey to examine the essentials of the two systems of philosophies expounded by Sankara and Ramanuja but the bare fundamentals could be mentioned. Sankara held there was only one spirit and that the attributes of the animal spirit such as the feelings of individuality as well as
the variety of the inanimate world were due to Māya or illusion and therefore unreal. He based this theory of spiritual monism on the Brahma Sutra and Upanishads. Ramanuja’s system of philosophy was qualified monism or Visishtadvaita and according to this there were three eternal principles, the Chit (individual soul), Achit (the insensate world) and Isvara (the Supreme Soul). The first two were the attributes of the third who was the creator, preserver and destroyer of the world and was thus a composite personality.

Ramanuja passed away in A.D. 1137 and his followers gradually split up into Vadakalais and Tenkalais. Both these schools had Acharyas who traced their parampara from Ramanuja himself. The most important of his successors in the Vadakalai school in the Chola period was Vedantadesika.

It is clear that under the rulers of the house of Vijayalaya, the philosophy of Saivism was the predominant one, dominating the life of the people and drawing its strength and vitality from the intense faith and devotion and zeal of the rulers themselves. But there were other schools of philosophy also with a fair share of popularity and backing. These were allowed to exist, sometimes with a refreshing degree of freedom, sometimes under grave disabilities and not infrequently in the face of positive persecution. But, by and large, rulers and ruled appear to have followed a policy of general tolerance and while extending all support to the philosophy favoured by them, they did not fail to extend sympathy in certain cases though perhaps such generous impulses were dictated more often by political rather than religious or philosophical considerations.

(B) GENERAL LITERATURE

As in other arts and sciences, so in literature, the period of the Imperial Cholas was marked by a wealth of literature of a very high standard, both in Tamil and
in Sanskrit. The Cholas had the positive advantage of a great and rich heritage. There can be no development out of a mere vacuum. But in this field the Cholas could raise a fine harvest from the fertile soil symbolised by the literary traditions of the preceding centuries and by the pattern set by giants in the matter of the written word. Valuable works had been produced in all the branches of literature before them, including poetry and drama, grammar and philosophy, mathematics and astronomy. Besides the treasure-house of the Sangam Age, the Cholas must have been well aware of the works of poets and dramatists like Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Bharavi and Māgha, prose writers like Dandin, Subhandu and Bāna, grammarians like Vāmana and Bhartrihari, lexicographers like Amara, philosophers like Gandapada, Kumārila and Prabhākra and astronomers like Aryabata, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta. It was verily a golden age.

The creative literary activity under the Cholas was greatly facilitated by the stability of Government and peace and prosperity ensured by emperors of the calibre of Rajaraja I, Rajendra I and Kulottunga I. The literature of the age was rich in expression, ornate in style and scintillating in imagery. The general standard was very high. This is evident in the preamble to the several inscriptions, particularly from the reign of Rajaraja I onwards. These describe, in chaste and expressive language, the achievements of the rulers. Apart from being merely a narrative of the political and military victories of the rulers, these prasasties are remarkable for their literary flair. We need consider only two examples. The first is the language employed in the Tiruvalangādu copper plates of Rajendra I. The thirty-one sheets weigh nearly 100 kilograms. The language is Sanskrit and Tamil. The inscription is wonderful not only for the remarkable manner in which it epitomises ancient lore but for the poetry and imagery of the language it employs. For example, the first verse describing Siva as Sri Kantha says "the gem
on the hood of the serpent round Siva's neck reflects Uma who grows jealous". Another verse says "the footstool of Vijayalaya was battered by the diadems of kings who rushed for precedence in their desire to prostrate before the king". Yet another description is of the Naga women who according to the Copper plate "danced for joy at the birth of Rajaraja as they expected him to relieve their husband, Adisesha, of the weight of the earth over his head". In another connection a verse explains that Vanavan-Mahadevi committed sati with Sundara Chola because she felt that when her husband went to Heaven "the nymphs of Heaven would make eyes at him". Similarly, the Kanya Kumari inscription of Vira Rajendra which has been rightly called the Chola Vamsa Prasasti demonstrates the intimate knowledge that the author of the inscription had of puranic lore. The description of Rama is beautiful. Verse 3 refers to the prevalent beliefs in concepts like Samsara, Karma, Maya, Divinity of Man etc. These are positive proofs of the very high standard of literary attainment during the Chola period.

Other inscriptions of the period mention the names of several kāvyas and nātakas which have, however, not survived. It is obvious, therefore, that there must have been considerable literary activity and it enjoyed the enlightened and generous patronage of the rulers and the nobles alike. Of the extant works, however, one of the earliest relating to the period is the Jeevaka Chintamani of the Jain poet Tiruttakkadevar. This was an erotic work, believed to have been composed for a specific purpose and enjoyed considerable popularity. It has been mentioned that this work furnished the model for the great poet Kamban. There is another story which traces the genisis of the Periyapuranam to this work. Sekkizhar, it is said, was not happy at the king deriving pleasure from reading Jeevaka Chintamani and offered to produce a more valuable work with a nobler theme. The result was his great classic production.
The next landmark in the literary progress is the Kallādam of Kallādanar. This work, however, was not very popular as it was composed in a cramped and forced style with what has been termed a curious mixture of pedantry and unnatural idioms. Another great work of that age was the Kalingattupparani of Jayankondar which is dated towards the close of the reign of Kulottunga I. It has been called a splendid little masterpiece and deals in elaborate fashion with the Kalinga campaign of the Chola monarch.

One of the great poets of the period was Ottakkuttan. He produced three Ulas on the three successive rulers Vikrama Chola, Kulottunga II and Rajaraja II, besides his Pillaittamil on Kulottunga II. He also wrote the Takkayagapparani and the Saraswati Andadi. His works reveal that he was a great master of literature rather than a supreme creative writer and he has been considered more as a personality than as a poet.

The next great figure in the literary firmament was Kamban, undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in Tamil poetry. Brought up under the protective wings of the generous Sadayappa Vallal, his innate abilities marked him out as an outstanding figure. He attracted the notice of Kulottunga and went to his court. He had to hold his own against Ottakkuttan and was able to outplay him. His greatest work is the Ramayana. Comparisons are invidious but there are not wanting persons who cry up Kamban at the expense of Valmiki. It has, however, to be admitted that his poem is a great Tamil classic and though it is an adaptation from the Sanskrit original it is none the less a masterpiece. Well versed in classical Tamil and Sanskrit, Kamban cast his poem on a heroic mould and gave it the flavour and finish of a typical literary epic. It has been remarked that while Valmiki is diffused and simple Kamban abridges and elaborates and while Valmiki’s poem is akin to a vast elemental forest, Kamban’s is more akin to a limited but luxurient garden. The place given to Kamba Ramayananam in the literary world is sufficient
testimony to its high standard. The work done by P Sri and Chidambaranatha Mudaliar to popularise Kamban has been commendable. Even today annual festivals are held at Kamban’s place of birth to commemorate his great service to Tamil literature. The other works attributed to Kamban are the Sadagoparandadi and Erelupathu and Mummanikkovai.

Another literary figure of the Chola age was Pugalendi whose most notable work was the Nalavenba, a Tamil version of the story of Nala and Damayanti written in the flowing Venba meter. The poem is one of the most melodious in Tamil poetry. The metrical and verbal felicity are the characteristics of the author and the vivacity and exuberance of his poetic genius are seen in the various stanzas of this poem. He also composed a number of narrative poems dealing with several Mahabharata episodes where the verses have a gay and easy swing with simple and chaste language and “poetry comes to the market place without vulgarity itself in the least”. Of other works of this period, mention should be made of the Kulottunga Kovai and the Tanjaivānan Kovai but little information is available about the author. Sekkizhar’s great work has come to occupy a very high place amongst the sacred literature of the period. The legendary belief is that he started composing this work with Divine inspiration. It has been equated with the Vedas and has influenced the lives of Tamil Saivites for centuries. It takes pride of place amongst the masterpieces of Tamil literature and worthily commemorates the glory of the Chola age and their abiding and continued service to the cause of Saivism.

There were great productions in the field of grammar, rhetoric and lexicography. Mention may be made of the Yapparungalam and Yapparungalakarigai of Amitasagara, a Jain ascetic. The former deals with several aspects of meters in Tamil. The latter is regarded as an abridgement of the original. The Virasoliyam of Buddhamitra written in the Kalitturai
meter, deals with matters concerning grammatical theory. We have no data about the author of another important work Dandiyalangaram, which deals with the types of Alankaras, one of the aspects of Tamil grammar. Neminadam of Gunavirapandita, which consists of verses in the Venba metre deals with the orthographs and parts of speech of the Tamil language. The Nannul of Pavanandi, a Jain author, was composed in the reign of Kulottunga III. It is regarded as an excellent handbook of Tamil Grammar for beginners. Two lexicons that are assigned to this period are Pingalandai and the Chudamani.

As has been already pointed out Sanskrit learning and literary activity were equally well patronised by the Chola kings. Elsewhere in this thesis I have referred to several institutions set up by them for disseminating knowledge contained in the Vedas and other systems of philosophy. Special endowments were also made to encourage the spread of this knowledge. Among the important literary productions should be mentioned the Sanskrit lexicon, Nanartharnava Samkshepa, dated in the reign of Rajaraja II. A Bhashya on the Rig Veda was produced by Venkata Madhava, most probably in the reign of Parantaka I. To this period can also be assigned the great work on rhetoric, Bhavaprapaka written by Saradatanaya.

(C) Education

One of the most important factors in assessing the cultural attainments of any community is the ideals, standards and pattern of its educational system. To revert to what I have said in the introductory portion, an educated man is not necessarily a cultured man but education does have a great moulding influence and from this point of view it is very necessary to examine the state of education and learning under the Cholas.

It is quite clear from the data available to us that the ideals and patterns then adopted were very much
different from the present day standards. The Cholas did not think in terms of compulsory primary education though they provided free education. They were not troubled by problems of regionalism, linguism, science versus humanities, technical bias in education and allied concepts which have assumed great importance today. They do not appear to have trifled with educational systems nor did they try out experiments. Their policy was consistent and their ideals were lofty. The whole system of imparting learning was based on the accepted, traditional pattern of the Guru-Sishya scheme. It was a well organised pattern without any of the flourishes of the modern age. The capacity and aptitude of the student and his responsiveness were the guiding factors and it was, as Sastri puts it, each according to his capacity. The teachers of the Chola age believed in the precepts of the Vedic seers. They taught through actual practical life rather than through lectures and notes.

The state of general literacy must have been quite high. The hundreds of inscriptions, copper plates and other such records belonging to this period prove that, by and large, the common man was well educated. After all in such matters literacy and learning cannot always be measured in terms of mere knowledge of the alphabets or the capacity to make white paper black. It is obvious that the average citizen under the Cholas was fairly well informed, had robust common sense, intelligence, application, enterprise, discrimination and other such characteristics which go to make up an educated person.

No positive information is available about the methods of primary education. Perhaps they had small schools in every village, holding classes under the shade of trees or in a portion of the temple. The school teacher, called Vātti, was paid from the income from the common land. He must have taught his pupils the rudiments of the alphabet. It has to be remembered that the Chola administrative system was a highly cen-
tralised one with a bureaucracy managing the affairs and many of the citizens should have been attracted to the schools which alone could help them get employment under the government. They must have had a civil administrative service and there are frequent references to different grades of officials. Perhaps they did not have any organisation comparable to the Service Commissions of today and there is no reference to any competitive test for recruitment. But education must obviously have been one of the doors for entry into the service of the State.

Popular education was provided for through public discourses on ancient sacred literature like the Vedas and the reading of Mahabharata, Ramayana and other puranas and the exposition of different types of philosophies. A list of some of the important inscriptions which refer to this practice will be found in Annexure III.

There was no organised attempt to impart technical education as such. This was mostly done within the group and the efficiency and skill was passed on from father to son and from one member to another of the family practising the art.

Higher education was usually denominational in character. This was generally imparted in special schools and colleges attached to Temples, Maths, Jain Pallis and Buddha Viharas. These were richly endowed in order to enable them to do full justice to their work. They had well filled libraries called Saraswathi Bhandaram. Apart from general endowments, amounts were set apart for the teaching of special subjects and the training of students in specialised fields of learning. The students did not have to pay any fees but were selected on the basis of their capacity and merit and were given stipends throughout the course of their training. In this most laudable enterprise, the munificence and generosity of the rulers were emulated by the richer classes in Society who were always sympathetic and appreciative of such schemes.
The classic example of such benefactions in the cause of higher learning is seen in Ennāyiram in South Arcot. King Rajendra I himself took active interest in the school which was established here. The inscription indicates that there was provision for as many as 340 students amongst whom 70 were regarded as seniors. There were fourteen members on the teaching staff. The junior students were all Brahmacharirs. 40 of them studied grammar according to Rupavatara, 75 studied Rig Veda, 75 the Yajur Veda, three groups of twenty students each studied the Vajasaneya, Chandoga and Talavakāra Samas, ten studied the Atharva Veda and the remaining ten studied Baudayana’s Grihya, Kalpa and Gana sutras. Amongst the senior students, 25 studied Vyakarana, 35 learnt the Prabhakara Mimamsa and 10 devoted themselves to Vedanta.

Payments to the teaching staff were made on a graded scale. The professor of Vedanta received the highest allowance. Those who taught Vyakarana and Mimamsa came next. The other teachers were paid on a uniform scale. These payments were made in kind, in paddy. Allowances in gold were also made to all the teachers except the one who taught Vedanta. The students also received stipendiary allowances, the seniors getting paddy and some gold while the juniors got only paddy. The rate mentioned in the inscriptions was six nalis of paddy a day for the juniors and ten nalis for the seniors. The payment in gold was made in terms of the actual work done. It was laid down at one Kālanju for each Adhyaya (Chapter) taught in the case of Vyakarana and Mimamsa and half a Kālanju each for a year for the others. This must be considered quite an ingenious arrangement and would prove extremely effective in some institutions today where, sometimes, only a limited portion of the prescribed syllabus is covered by the teachers.

According to another inscription, there was a similar school functioning at Tribhuvani, near Pondicherry. This had 260 students and 12 teachers. Besides
the main subjects taught in the Ennayiram school, the Tribhuvani institution taught the Satyashada Sutras, Manu Sastra and Vaikhanasa Sastra, the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Obviously the teachers and students who were in receipt of allowances from the common fund were expected to devote their full attention to their studies. For example, they were relieved of their responsibility to serve on the various committees of the village assembly. It is clear they must have taken the work quite seriously and justified their selection both as students and as teachers.

The Tirumukkudal inscription of Virarajendra of the year 1067 A.D. mentions another school attached to the local Vishnu temple. The Rig and Yajur Vedas and Vyakarana and Rupavatara were taught in this school. This was a small school with 40 students and 3 teachers.

It is evident that the pattern of education under the Cholas was based on the recognition of the need to relate it to the genius of the student. It provided for all the four aspects of man, the physical, the emotional, the intellectual and the spiritual. It allowed free scope for the display of his special capacities, enabling him to make his distinctive contribution to society. It is quite clear from the inscriptions mentioned above that higher education was mostly residential. The students and the teachers lived together. The location of the schools near temples or in shaded sylvan surroundings created the proper environment. The students were apparently kept quite active and in accordance with the traditional practice they must have attended to the comforts of their Gurus also. The teachers must have been very much respected for their learning and must have had remarkable personalities. Their contacts with the pupils should have evoked the highest emotions in them. Living together in close contact, it must have been easy for them to develop a spirit of comradeship and service. The standard of discipline must have been very high.
We have no data as to the actual method of teaching employed but memory must have played a large part. Religion was the basis for the educational system. They proceeded on the basic assumption that all activity was Divine and Knowledge was, in essence, Divine Knowledge. This veneration for learning, taking it up as a sacred vocation, the leading of a simple and pure life as a student, the sense of loyalty to the teacher and the recognition of Dharma, these were obviously the fundamental characteristics of the Chola educational system as they largely followed, in essential, the ideals of the Vedic times.

Though no direct evidence is available, we can presume that the various Mathas established and flourishing in different parts of the Chola Empire played no mean part in the spread of education on the classics and promoting learning in the secular field. The general prevalence of the system of singing Tiruppadiyams in temples must have been due in no small measure to the great interest taken by these Mathas. Being enlightened rulers themselves with the innate ability to appreciate worth, the Chola rulers laid the foundation for the cultural stability of their empire truly and firmly when they either took personal initiative or indirectly encouraged the generous minded members of the public in starting training centres like the one at Ennayiram. In giving this pride of place to Education, they showed their foresight and realisation that the true foundation for any abiding cultural progress can only be sound education of the proper type, imparted by proper people to students of the right type and by instilling into them the noble ideals contained in the sacred heritage, they enabled them to rise from the region of mere abstraction and schematic theorisation to the field of analytical and synthetic thinking.
VII. RELIGION

(A) BASIS AND OUTLOOK

Religion has been the basis of Indian Thought and Life and the guiding principle of her civilization throughout the ages. Constituting the pivot of life and culture in general, its eternal message has centred round the themes of the Freedom of the Soul, the Divinity of Man and the Oneness of Existence. With the information laid bare at Harappa and Mohenjodaro, the story of religion has been pushed well back into history testifying to its antiquity as well as continuity. This progressive development, particularly underlining the concept of unity is perceptible in spite of apparent conflicts and divisions and the vast and variegated conglomeration of races, castes and creeds. This factor is apt to be missed by the mere superficial observer. This idea of a basic unity has not been the result of any unification of administration or uniformity of education which were the characteristics of the nineteenth century but it goes into the dim distant Puranic past and is in fact, emphasised by the very name of Bharata Varsha mentioned in the Vishnu Purana.

Throughout the ages religion has been a vast experimentation with ultimate problems and this has been evidenced from Kashmir to Kumari and from Gandhara to Kamaroopa. It has been an endeavour to discover Truth and as such no part of the country and no particular Faith could claim any monopoly. The Trika philosophy in association with Saivism of Kashmir, the Vedic hymns of Punjab, the ritualistic literature of the Upanishads, Epics and Puranas of the heart of Aryavarta, the philosophy of Janaka and Yagnavalkya of Mithila, the teachings of Mahavira and Buddha of
Magadha and of Chaitanya of Bengal, and the foremost commentaries on the Brahma Sutras in the land of the most lyrical of religious singers in the Dravidian area which was a vast Cathedral City of gorgeous temples demonstrate this thread of unity running through these different philosophies and faiths. Man everywhere believed in the law of Karma and in an immanent working of a Divine Spirit in the Universe, especially in the maintenance of the social order. These were considered as universal, unchanging, impersonal, immutable and inviolable. It was held that if the King ruled justly and the proper social relations were maintained, rains fell in season, there was no premature death, no calamity and there was peace and plenty.

In interpreting these basic principles, there were naturally differences and various religious beliefs came into being leading to separate groupings, each with its distinct individuality. Normally, these faiths realized the need for a policy of live and let live and understood that mutual tolerance was very vital. So it was that in the Chola period Hinduism flourished alongside of Jainism and Buddhism. In different areas of India each faith rose to prominence according to what the main body of society professed and in that profession they enjoyed considerable freedom. In the words of Dr. S. Krishnaswami Iyengar the rulers played the part of a garden-watch, letting all garden-produce grow in it unmolested by external destructive agents but regulating, as far as possible, that one part of it or one group did not grow up to be a disturbing factor to the others. Religion was reverence for life and was regarded as setting the pattern which would help in the realization of Ultimate Reality. The method of approach varied. While one set tried to reach salvation through an exacting life of ritualistic performances and self-mortification, another set laid emphasis on good life, on a life of devotion and service making rituals superfluous. It was out of the latter concept that the cult of Bhakti arose. This was characteristic of the Chola period.
(B) HINDUISM

The rulers of the house of Vijayalaya were all ardent Saivites. The period of their rule was characterized by a revival of Hinduism, a revivification and revitalization of the faith and a closing of the ranks against the challenge posed by Buddhism and Jainism. The religious trends during this period led Hinduism to adopt a comprehensive and all absorbing outlook resulting in religious syncretism which led to its shedding much of its hide bound rigidity. The pioneering work in this direction was done by the Nayanmars and the Alvars who laid emphasis on emotional theism. This was the contribution of thinkers like Kumārila and Sankara followed by Ramanuja and Madhva. The poetical outpourings of the Nayanmars were collected together and codified by Nambi Āndar Nambi and those of the Alvars by Nathamuni, the first of the great Acharyas. It is obvious that this codification and the setting of these hymns to music helped very much in the propagation of lofty ideas amongst the people. Arrangements were made in several temples for the singing of both the Saiva and Vaishnava hymns as testified by several inscriptions some of which are listed in Annexure I to this study.

(C) CONCEPT OF BHAKTI

This was the new concept of Bhakti, a fervid and emotional surrender to the supreme. Starting with devotion to Siva and Vishnu, it spread later to other deities. This aspect will be examined a little later. The Nayanmars and the Alvars led the religious revival and worked against Buddhism and Jainism. It was these revivalist movements that led to the growth of temples. The main objective of the lyrical hymns of these saints was to appeal to the heart of the common man in the language of the people. The significance of the Tamil hymns is borne out by the popular legend relating to Appar and Sambandar at the temple at Vedaranyam. It was believed that the front doors of the temple had
been closed under the orders of the Four Vedas who had worshipped Siva and could be opened only by all four of them coming together. The worshippers used to go into the temple through the side doors. When the two saints happened to visit the temple and found the main doors closed, Appar at the request of Sambandar sang a decad of forty four lines. It is said that the doors flew open then. It is not the basis for this legend that counts but the symbolism which underlines this story. The noble and spiritual ideals embodied in the Vedas were not understood by the common people who did not know Sanskrit. This closed door was figuratively opened to them through the instrumentality of the Tamil hymns which contained the quintessence of the Vedas.

The concept of Bhakti is as old as the Indus Valley civilization, where we have the figure of Siva in meditation. What happened in the Chola period and the age just preceding it was only a reemphasis of the concept hidden in the Vedas and Upanishads. The superiority of the path of devotion over ritualistic sacrifices or mere book knowledge was made clear. It was also demonstrated that caste and sex were no bar to an aspirant treading the Bhakti Marga, path of devotion. Nammalvar and Tirunavukkarasu were Vellalas. Tirumangai Alvar was a Kallar. Kulasekhara was a royal personage. Nandanar belonged to the untouchable caste. Sundaramurthi was a Brahmin and Andal was a woman. What was necessary was devotion to God, absolute self-surrender, irrepressible yearning to attain Grace and unbounded love for God’s creation.

The ultimate result of all these trends in the period was the emergence of Hinduism as a dominant faith. The menace of Islam was only round the corner, just a small speck of a cloud in the horizon and its repercussions on the life of the country could not be visualised just as yet.

Normally religion in the Chola period exemplified the noble ideals of universal love. But even then a ten-
dency was seen in which these were inclined to yield to gross superstition and immoral practices. The belief in the efficacy of mantras and other esoteric practices as the easiest means of salvation affected the growth of spiritual ideas. The conception of ultimate Reality as a duality of male and female, of Siva and Sakti of Hinduism or Upaya and Prajna of Buddhism, led to the dominance of erotic and sensual practice undermining moral values. Ethical standards came to be perverted and fundamental principles conceived with the best of intentions gave way to malpractices. There was a general fall towards the later years of this period in intellectual and moral standards and this continued through subsequent centuries till the tendency was arrested by the ardent zeal of reformists like Raja Rammohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore with his Brahma Samaj, Dayananda Saraswati with his Arya Samaj. Blavatsky and Olcott with Theosophy, the message of the Ramakrishna Mission and the teachings of Aurobindo.

(D) TOLERANCE

One of the most important points that deserves consideration in regard to religion in this period is the attitude of the rulers and their subjects towards faiths other than those they professed. Historians claim that tolerance was the rule and persecution the exception. A reading of the inscriptions and materials available appears to me to suggest that this view may perhaps not represent the true state of affairs and is a generous interpretation of the situation. The case of the grant made for the Buddhist Vihara of Chudamani Varmadeva at Nagapatnam mentioned in the Leyden Grant, the inclusion of Buddhist themes in the sculptural aspects in the Big Temple at Tanjore and the provision made by the Perunganattar (Merchant community) of Kumaramartandapuram for the renovation of a Jain Palli are cited as examples of the spirit of tolerance and accommodation. As against this there are several other incidents embodied in legends and inscriptions which would
indicate that some at least of the rulers were fanatic Saivites and went all out to persecute the believers of other faiths. The story of the Pandya ruler of Madurai who ordered the execution of hundreds of Jains who were not able to cure him of his sickness might not be all legend. Even if one provides for poetic exaggeration it is impossible to deny a substratum of truth in such description. Earlier the Saivites and Vaishnavites had joined together in their common cause against Jainism and Buddhism but this bond was broken subsequently and they became strangers. We have the recorded incident of the action of Kulottunga II who had the Vaishnava idol removed from the temple at Chidambaram. We have also the Tirukkadalaiyur inscription according to which Saivites who mixed freely with Vaishnavites had their property forfeited to the temple. Ramanuja was hounded out of the Chola country and had to seek refuge in Mysore. It is therefore difficult to hazard the view that tolerance was the rule. In the normal course there was no interference. If there was any spirit of accommodation, it was largely dictated by political and diplomatic considerations. Much depended on the personality of individual rulers also. A magnanimous and generous Rajaraja or Rajendra could not obviously conceive of intolerance of other faiths but rulers like Kulottunga II had no such fine feelings. All that could be said is that in this matter it was almost like a case of armed neutrality.

(E) Hindu Pantheon

The Chola rulers and their subjects worshipped many deities and the Hindu Pantheon was very large in number. Siva, as the most important of them all, was revered in many different forms. The most common aspects were Kiratamurti, Bikshatana, Kalyanasundara, Panchadeha, Lingapuranadeva, Umasahita, Nataraja, Veenadhara Dakshinamurti, Sri Kantha, Ardhanari, Gajari, Antkasurasamharamurti, Gangadhara, Harihara and Chandrasekhara. Besides these
Śiva as Chandraśekhara
Bṛhadīśvara Temple, Thanjavur

*Courtesy*: Archaeological Survey of India
Śiva as Bhikshatana-mūrti
Bṛhadiśvara Temple, Thanjavur

Courtesy: Archaeological Survey of India
aspects of Siva, Vishnu was also worshipped and towards
the close of the period there was a trend towards regard-
ing even Buddha as an Avatara of Vishnu. Temples
were constructed for Ganapati, Subrahmanya and Surya.
There are some inscriptions which refer to the worship
of Mahasastha, also known as Ayyanar. An inscription
from Ukkal mentions this. Another inscription from
Uttiramerur also mentions Ayyan-Mahasastha. The
worship of Sastha, Sri Aiyappan, is very much pre-
valent today and devotees trek the forest path on foot
to the sacred shrine at Sabarimalai which is about 75
miles away from Kottayam, in the high ranges of
Kerala. One of the groups of the local assembly in the
Chola period was known as Sattaganattar and this group
was responsible for managing the affairs of the temple
dedicated to Sastha. An inscription from Tiruvellarai
refers to the worship of Krishna and Rukmini also.

Rama, Sita and Hanuman were also worshipped.
So were the 63 Saiva Saints at Tiruvotriyur. Among
goddesses there is frequent mention of Durga-Parames-
wari and Kala Pidari. The Sapta Matargal are also
referred to.

Of all these, the worship of Subrahmanya as
Skanda appears to have been very old in the Chola
country. As Vēlan, Skanda was the deity of the hilly
regions and the god of the tribe of hunters. He was
regarded as the commander of the forces of Heaven.
With his six faces, in his aspect of Shanmuga, he was
held to discharge sixfold boons. One of the faces was
held to remove darkness and ignorance in the world
and bathe it in light. The second face granted boons.
The third protected Yajnas. The fourth discoursed on
the knowledge of self. While the fifth destroyed evil,
the sixth glanced lovingly at the devotee. Of the
numerous shrines for parivara devatas in Chola Siva
temples, one for Subrahmanya was very common. In
fact one of the earliest Chola temples constructed by
Aditya I was at Kannanur for Balasubrahmanya. The
Somaskanda bronze is one of the finest examples of Chola art, the figures of Siva and Uma with that of Baby Skanda in between.

In installing the shrines of these subsidiary deities, the Cholas followed the rigid rules laid down in ancient sastras. Usually a temple had 81 squares. The central square was the Brahma Garbha. The eight squares around this constituted the Devagarbha. The sixteen around the second were Manushyagarbha while the twenty four outside this were called Paichacha garbha. The outermost enclosure of 32 squares formed the Rakshasagarbha. The main idol was installed in the Brahma Garbha. If the idol was installed, the place was called Grihagarbha while if it was already there before construction it was called Garbhagriha. The idols of Vishnu and other Saktidevatas were installed in the Devagarbha while those of Ganesa, Kumara, Brahma etc. came in the Manushyagarbha. Kāli and other Pramataganas came in the fourth and the Dwara-palas in the fifth enclosure. The whole pattern was likened to a human body. The Garbhagriha was the head, the Sukhanasi was the face, Antarala the neck, Ardaman-tapa the arms, Navaranga the breasts, Mantapa the palms, Nrittaman-tapa the heart, Asthanaman-tapa the belly, Balipitha the naval, Mahaman-tapa the central part, Aisles the knees and Gopura the feet.

The disposition of the gods of the Pantheon also strictly followed the rules laid down. Sun (Surya) was placed in the East, Veerabadra in the South East, Dakshinamurti in the South, Ganesa in the South West, Shanmuga in the West, Sakti in the North West and Vishnu in the North.

It is evident that besides these deities of the higher order, there were other minor powers which were also propitiated by some of the common folk. We have the graphic description of the pattern of worship of the villagers of Adanur where Nandan lived. Sekkizhar's
description can be taken as a typical example of the practices of the people who belonged to the lower social divisions. They believed in offering animal sacrifices and toddy to the deities. The practice of sacrificing a goat regularly every Tuesday to goddess Mundesvari by the Kurava women of the nadu is referred to in a Mysore inscription of the time of Rajendra I according to Nilakanta Sastri. These, however, were not quite common and it can be presumed that generally worship was carried on in an atmosphere free from such crude and bizarre conceptions of divinity. The excitement and intoxication that such practices produced tended to blind the participants to the real state of affairs and perhaps after each such exhibition of faith in such powers, they felt sadder and wiser. The practice, however, never disappeared and even today we come across such violent demonstration in some villages which are apt to be revolting to the senses of the average, evolved individual.

(F) Ascetic Orders

One of the characteristic features of the Religious life of the Chola period was the increasing popularity of the ascetic system of life. Many inscriptions refer to endowments made for the feeding of such sanyasins in temples and attached institutions. Both Saivism and Vaishnavism recognised ascetics but while there were different grades in the former ranging from the simple yogi to the crudest example of such dedicated life, the Vaishnava ascetics were comparatively more sober and moderate in their approach. We have an example of such a Vaishnava Matha and Ascetics at Uttiramerur. The Sivayogis spent a quiet and simple life, given to meditation and seeking liberation from the coils of this mundane world. The other sects were the Pāsupatas, the Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas. They appear to have indulged in abhorrent practices in the name of religion and to that extent were not very far removed from the ignorant, superstition-ridden villagers who
propitiated powers of a low order. Their influence was felt throughout the Chola period but fortunately no serious damage appears to have been caused by them to the cause of the general progress of the community.

This review of the religious aspect of the cultural development may conclude with a consideration of the state of Jainism and Buddhism under the Cholas. Jainism had a limited following and contributed in a significant measure to the wealth of Tamil literature. It is even believed that it was the Jain work Jeevaka Chintamani, a secular Kavya, that led to the Peria Puranam of Sekkizhar who did not relish Kulottunga II enjoying the lines of the earlier work. There were Jain monastries in many parts of the Chola country. One such at Vedal is mentioned in an inscription. A portion of Kanchipuram was occupied by Jains and this was known as Jina-Kanchi. Tirumalai in North Arcot and Tirumalavadi in Trichinopoly are other Jain centres referred to in inscriptions. Princess Kundavai built a Jain temple at the latter place.

Buddhism is not mentioned as much as Jainism and presumably it did not grow roots in the Chola empire. There are isolated references as, for example, the Leyden grant relating to the Buddhist Vihara at Nagapattinam.

One cannot close this aspect of the study better than by quoting Nilakanta Sastri, who in summing up the subject refers to the mixing together of these different creeds and the resultant process of assimilation through which the Hindu Temple, Jain Palli and Buddha Vihara came to have several similarities in worship, organisation and festivities. On the whole, he says, the religious differences of the time did not tend to produce social discord and there was a general attitude of mutual tolerance, if not respect, which was sustained throughout the period.
(G) Role of the Temple

When we come to consider the role played by the Temple as an institution during the Chola period we move from the historical plane into the realm of speculation, speculation as to what possible significance the temple could have had for the common man, in what way it fulfilled his requirements and aspirations and how far it reacted on the cultural and social life of the community at large. From what we know of the large number of Chola temples and from the evidence we have of the energy, labour and material wealth expended by the rulers in their constructions, we can certainly postulate the statement that the Temple dominated and moulded the pattern of the life of the people in all its different aspects. It is not without significance that Vijayalaya, the founder of this line of Imperial Cholas, started the dynasty on its course by founding a temple for Durga at Tanjore. Under the rulers who followed him Temples and Mathas established themselves as an integral part of the life of the people, drawing unto themselves the devotion and allegiance of all, from the King to the common man and munificent endowments from the rich and the generous amongst them. In those centuries, they also constituted the bulwark against the rising tide of rival faiths like Buddhism and Jainism which had challenged some of the fundamental concepts of the Hindu faith.

The origin of the temple as a religious institution is lost in the dim mists of antiquity. It is not necessary to go into this question for the purpose of this study. Chola inscriptions refer to the seven famous Siva temples erected by one of their epic ancestors, Muchukunda. These temples built of wood, lime and brick have not endured and it was the Pallavas who started the construction of rock hewn and stone temples. This was followed by the Cholas who led the way in the construction of a large number of stone temples, all over their sphere of influence. The pattern of construction of these
temples has already been considered with reference to the architectural and sculptural aspects. We have now to consider here what might be called the spiritual and emotional aspect of this institution.

Nilakanta Sastri has mentioned that in the long period of Chola rule, the Hindu temple attained the zenith of its influence on the social life of the country. Citing the case of the Big Temple in Tanjore, he observes that not only did its stately plan ensure for it an abiding place as a masterpiece of South Indian architecture, but the elaborate arrangements made for the management of the temple as carefully recorded in the inscriptions on its walls, summed up the best practices of the time in this regard and set a model for the future. The temple in this age was brought into intimate contact with several aspects of the life of the common man, each one of whom had some part or other to play in its management.

Speaking generally, the temples during the Chola period played a very influential part in the general progress of the community. They constituted, in almost every place, the nerve centre of civic and social life. Large or small towns grew around them. They drew generous and liberal donations from the rulers and the nobles alike and consequently grew rich and gave employment to many persons. The daily rituals enjoined resulted in the employment of many persons, including the learned for the exposition of the scriptures, musicians, dancers, teachers and functionaries of various kinds. Debates and discourses, poor feeding and Pathasalas were other activities which gave employment to many persons. One of the great features of the temple therefore was its employment potentiality and its capacity to provide the material comforts for hundreds of persons.

Being rich in mystic symbolism, the temples were constructed with an amazing wealth of ornamentation,
perfect in plan, proportion and finish. Obviously the
artists and architects were anxious to build more firmly
and finely the house of God than that of man. We see
that the Chola temples occupied the choicest of beauty
spots and were lavishly decorated resulting in their
being artistic creations. Thus, in the secondary aspect,
the temples called forth the best of the creative talents
in those responsible for their construction.

But, by far the most important role played by the
temple was its spiritual content which was and is the
most vitalising feature of Indian culture. It has been
held that India is unsurpassed in her spiritual attain-
ment in the background of the world’s civilization.
Spirituality is inherent in her soil and is rooted in the
soul of her people and is expressed in every conceivable
pursuit and every creative activity. Temples, therefore,
enabled the ordinary man to go beyond and behind the
outward manifestation of life. There can be no other
explanation as without this spiritual urge, so much
labour and intelligence would not have been spent by
the Cholas on the temples.

It has been often held that the Temple, as an insti-
tution, is not necessary for the spiritual advancement
of any person. This is a debatable statement and it is
easy to be dogmatic. It is perhaps true that the tem-
ple is not necessary for those who are highly evolved
and spiritually much advanced. The Nirgunopasaka
naturally does not need outward forms. But to the
ordinary man, with all his responsibilities and handi-
caps, a place of worship is certainly a great help and
this the Chola temples provided in adequate measure.

Though theoretically one could worship anywhere
at any time, temples provide certain convenience and
atmosphere which have great value. Congregational
and community worship creates an effect which is out
of all proportion to the number of persons taking part.
The feeling of devotion surging forth from the hearts
of those assembled produces tremendous results. If thought is a reality, several minds and hearts tuned to a particular attitude of aspiration and devotion cannot fail to produce tangible results.

We have next to consider the Temple as a cultural centre. In the first place, these temples helped in inculcating a sense of physical and mental discipline through the congregations gathered under them. Physical and mental cleanliness came in the wake of this discipline. These temples also provided scope for the education of the common man. These were centres of learning where the cultured and the well-versed Pandits and Bhattas came to give their learning to others. Several Chola inscriptions refer to this aspect. For example, we have the Ennayiram inscription of Rajendra I which refers to the organisation of a Vedic college and the Tirumukkudal inscription of Virarajendra referring to another school for the propagation of the Vedas. The temples were centres of Fine Arts like Music, Dance and Drama. This aspect of the temple has been mentioned in the portion relating to the state of education in the Chola period.

Another significant contribution of the temples in those times was the widely practised system of pilgrimages and festivals. To the average Hindu, pilgrimage is an item of spiritual discipline. There are some places which he feels he has to visit, which are perennial sources of inspiration and consolation. These centres, which are dominated by the local temples, draw large crowds leading to beneficial contacts and mutual understanding of one another. It has been held that the catholicity of Hinduism is the result of such free mixing and the consequent understanding and appreciation of the values of other creeds and faiths. Very often a temple drew people of different faiths who mingled freely and thereby helped in the growth of a type of emotional integration, a term very much in use at the present time. The educative value of such pil-
grimages has also to be emphasised. If, as happened frequently, the pilgrimage was made on foot, it afforded greater opportunity to see the wider world. The pilgrimage in India has been compared to the continental tours undertaken by the average student in the West which was considered to be a type of finishing course for his education. Temple cities became centres of learning and sources of commercial enterprise. Fine Arts received encouragement. National solidarity was forged. In the mind, at least, sacred rivers, mountains and cities were brought together and conceived of as a single unity. The invocatory slokas used for certain items of daily worship helped in such a conception of the wide area as a unit in space. Through a Dhyāna sloka the worshipper was able to conceive of the sacred waters of the Ganga, Jamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri as converging in the water kept in the small vessel for use in the worship. Like these seven sacred rivers, there were seven sacred mountains (Vindya, Sahya, Kumara, Malaya, Sri Parvata and Pāriyatra) and seven sacred towns [Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya (Hardwar), Kāsi, Kānchi, Avantika (Ujjain) and Dvaravati (Dwaraka)]. There were twelve Jyotirlingas and 51 Saktipithas distributed all over the country. There were four Sankara Mathas at Badri, Puri, Sringeri and Dwaraka. The concentration of all these in one place in thought did certainly make for a vision of a united India. People from different parts met in the embrace of a spiritual life transcending narrow boundaries of place, sect or creed and fostering a sense of solidarity. Viewed from this standpoint the importance of the temples for the cultural evolution can hardly be overestimated.

Festivals and fairs connected with temples were also useful similarly for religious, national and economic purposes. These were in fact Parliaments of Religion and a type of mobile university. The festivals centering round temples were woven into the texture of the
life of the people, moulding their destiny in the course of their corporate growth. In fact, temples constituted the bedrock of the synthetic outlook and lofty spiritual idealism of the age of the Cholas and provided a rich incentive to religious life thereby contributing to the growth of national and cultural solidarity.

A study of the literature relating to the Temples shows that under the Cholas they were regarded as great occult laboratories and magnetic centres. The rituals and ceremonies obviously helped in establishing contacts at higher levels. It is, however, not possible to explain the significance in terms of historical data. Obviously the foundation for these temples was based on faith which has been called unlearned wisdom. It is well to realise that the temple then as now was only a means to an end and not an end in itself. It functioned as a rung in the ladder, a reservoir of energy from which one could draw inspiration, a tap for those who are thirsty, a positive convenience. Above all it provided great psychological satisfaction. In the words of Nilakanta Sastri the Chola Temple was landholder, employer and consumer of goods and services, bank, school and museum, hospital and theatre. It was a nucleus which gathered round itself all that was best in the arts of civilised existence and regulated them with the humaneness born of the spirit of Dharma.

As I observed at the beginning, it is not possible strictly to estimate in any measurable terms the significance of the role played by the temples but this much can be said that to the Cholas they were live centres, radiating powerful, beneficent forces which they felt could be caught and canalised in the proper direction provided there was the correct approach and the appropriate attunement. They represented philosophy in brick and stone. In whatever way we look at those institutions, whether in the background of the historicity of the numerous temples constructed by Aditya, or the sculptural elegance of Dārāsūram or Srinivasa-
nallur or the towering majesty of the Big Temple at Tanjore, or the all absorbing charm and beauty of the now derelict structure at Gangaikondacholapuram, there can be no gainsaying the fact that the inspiration that the Chola rulers and their people derived from these great centres was in the nature of a mystic experience that can never be effectively or adequately measured by the footrule of the mere intellect.
VIII. OTHER ASPECTS

(A) GENERAL CONDITIONS

Having surveyed in detail the progress in individual fields of cultural developments, it is necessary to undertake a rapid survey of the general conditions of the life of the people under the Cholas which, it has to be remembered, must have largely shaped and influenced the standard of the civilization of the times. It is an acknowledged fact that the cultural development of any community is, in the ultimate analysis, the sum total of the feelings and aspirations, the achievements and successes of the individuals comprising the community. Society, as a whole, progresses onwards only if the people are contented and happy and live under a peaceful regime, without undue regimentation and with the assurance of freedom from unnecessary interference with certain basic rights. The wealth of informative material available regarding the general conditions prevalent in those times is large but for a brief survey it is necessary to sift the data available in these sources and pinpoint attention only on certain salient elements which could be regarded as of special importance to the subject under review. Naturally, therefore, this survey will be very brief and cover only certain main phases of the life of the common citizen of the Chola empire.

We might start with the position enjoyed by women in the society of those days. They had an honoured place and had a liberal education. It has to be remembered, however, that this education that they had was not of the academic or collegiate type that their counterparts have today but was more in the nature of studying how to live an enlightened life and the art of learning to understand matters that really counted. Some of the women of that age exercised great influence on the members of their families. The classic example is that
of Sembiyam-mahadevi, queen of Gandaraditya and mother of Uttama Chola. Persons like her were patrons of learning and the fine arts. It has been mentioned that Princess Kundavai learnt the art of Bharata Natya from one of the masters of the art at Vazhuvur who is claimed to be an ancestor of today's master-director Ramiah Pillai. The women of that age were as anxious as men to make endowments and to gift lands and jewels to temples and other such charitable purposes. We still read today in the inscriptions in the Big Temple at Tanjore of the generous and liberal donations made by the queens. They took great interest in the spread of education and learning and presumably were efficient in the fine arts themselves. They came in the line of great epic figures like Sita, Kaikayee, Kausalya, Mando-dari and Draupadi. It has been often remarked that in India woman has never been the equal of man. This is probably true according to western standards where this equality is usually correlated to the claim for equal rights. In India, however, life was valued for the opportunities it afforded for the spiritual uplift of the individuals through the discharge of their duties and responsibilities and not for claiming material comforts through rights. The women of India always had equality in the right to aspire for the ultimate result, namely, spiritual emancipation. She had the right of winning salvation by her efforts alone and for this she was not dependent on any other man. When this is realized, it is easy to understand the position of women in those ancient times.

Polygamy was a common feature. Most of the Chola monarchs had many wives but this was necessitated owing to diplomatic considerations for the rulers had to contract marriages for securing allies and for furthering their political ambitions. It is, however, obvious that the happiest state of married bliss was enjoyed by those who had only one wife and polygamy often led to intrigues and troubles. It might be men-
tioned that the nobles and the well-to-do emulated the kings in this practice. The women of the Chola period had the right to inherit property and what belonged to husbands came to the widows and we have several inscriptions which indicate that property so inherited had been gifted to temples and for other such public beneficent purposes. Slavery was common and we have several instances where women were either sold into bondage or let themselves in for that condition mainly owing to the play of economic forces. Such slaves were utilised mostly in Temples and Royal households, particularly in the kitchens.

The practice of Sati was not very common although there are several cases recorded in inscriptions describing such instances of self-immolation of widows. It is possible that this system was not looked upon with favour and there are very few cases of widows being compulsorily cremated with their deceased husbands.

Monarchy was the established system of Government and the royalty of rulers like Rajaraja I has been called Byzantine in character. It is possible that they lived in palaces but not much evidence has come down about such palaces. The kings maintained a large retinue of officials, bodyguards etc. and believed in pageantry and ceremonial and what is called the majestic display of the concentrated resources of their extensive empire. The concept of the divine origin of the rulers, exemplified in the term Devaraja, was quite popular. At one stage they had the practice of constructing sepulchral temples over the remains of kings and princes. Parantaka I constructed one such Pallipadai for his father Aditya. Rajaraja I constructed a similar temple at Melpadi in honour of Arinjaya. Obviously this idea did not find favour in subsequent years and was given up.

The common man had to endure the usual levy of taxation but he bore the burden cheerfully unlike in
later centuries. The main reason was that the bulk of
the collections went back to the people in the shape of
endowments and other expenditure on public causes.
One such endowment was known as Udirapatti. This
was intended to make payments to the families and
dependents of soldiers who lost their lives in war. In
the national emergency in the country today we are
providing several facilities in the field of education,
legal affairs etc. to dependents of jawans who have lost
their lives in NEFA and Ladakh. The far sighted Chola
rulers had thought of this centuries back. The rulers
themselves set the example which was followed by the
nobles and the well-to-do amongst the subjects. As has
been aptly pointed out the Cholas preferred Dana
(charity) to Yajna (sacrifice). There was not much of
unsocial expenditure of an extravagant or wasteful
nature. The people co-operated in works like building
of temples, tanks, and roads which helped to bring
about social harmony based not on equality of classes
or individuals but on a policy of give and take, of adjust-
ment, understanding and mutual goodwill.

It is not quite relevant to the subject of this study
to describe in detail the administrative machinery and
the Government of the Cholas. It is, however, neces-
sary to mention that it was an extremely well-organised
one, highly centralised and effectively run by an effi-
cient bureaucracy. The personal touch of the rulers
contributed a lot towards achieving efficiency and insp-
iring confidence in the certainty of justice and fair play
which are so essential if people are to be happy and
contented.

The dispensation of justice was fairly efficient
although delays were also common. There was not much
of a distinction between civil and criminal cases. Punish-
ment was generally on the lenient side, usually taking
the form of a fine or the ordering of an endowment for
burning lamps in temples. Most of the inscriptions of
the time record only such endowments. Proceedings in
judicial assemblies were decided on the basis of usage, documentary evidence or the testimony of eye witnesses. Theft, adultery and forgery were considered serious crimes, debarring the persons concerned from eligibility for election to the various groups of the assemblies. Public punishments were also inflicted like riding a donkey or public whipping. Collective fines were also imposed.

There is no evidence of any organised attempt at recreational activities. Hunting, however, seems to have been quite common. There are a few inscriptions which refer to accidents occurring in the course of such hunts. The rulers and the people alike were enthusiastic patrons of arts like Music, Dance and Drama. These aspects have already been examined earlier.

Then, as now, the life of the average man centred round villages. Agriculture was his main occupation and peasant proprietorship was the common feature. We can get an insight into the type of life led by villagers from the description of such places given by the poets of these times. It is obvious that the villages were generally prosperous and normally grew up on the banks of rivers or canals. Irrigation was quite popular and water was used to good purposes. Sekkizhar has mentioned that "the rivers poured out gems of fertility". Villages had flower gardens, not perhaps on the type of present-day public parks but intended more for growing the flowers required for the worship in the temples. Poultry keeping was common. Dogs were the usual pets. Coconut trees and mango groves were plentiful. They do not appear to have thought of the concept of prohibition as strong drink was offered even to minor Gods! But according to a Chinese historian who travelled in the Chola kingdom "the kings did not take any drink but were not vegetarians". Intemperance was, however, not unknown.

Although coins were in use, the exchange of articles was effected on barter basis and the chief exchange
commodity was paddy. It is significant that even today in some of the villages in the interior this practice is followed.

There was no large scale industrialisation but they had a highly developed state of commerce and trade. The Chola Navy made it possible for merchants to maintain contacts with countries like Arabia on the west and Sumatra, Java, Cambodia and China in the east. Foreign trade was carried on mainly through the ports at Nagapattinam, Karaikal, Mahabalipuram, Kovalam and Mylapore. Inscriptions testify to the existence of a large number of Guilds and Chambers of Commerce which functioned under Government patronage and looked after both internal and external trade. They helped in the grant of credit facilities. Normally the rate of interest was about 12½% but sometimes it went up to even 15%. Internal transport of commodities was mainly through the aid of animal drawn carriages on trunk roads where the merchants travelled in convoys. The State made elaborate arrangements for the protection of these convoys and for ridding the highways of troublesome elements.

The character of the people was marked by an innate sense of honesty, of a realization of their responsibilities and duties. They gave due respect and esteem for persons placed above them in life by virtue of their ability and culture. The purity and the simplicity of life led by the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas inspired confidence and respect. Their love of charity and benevolence proved by their generous endowments made other people realize how solicitous they were about their welfare. The common man had a love of fine arts, of gardening, painting and dancing, and in whatever he did, simplicity, delicacy, refinement and elegance were the main watchwords.

From this review it must be obvious that despite difficulties caused by the wars on which the Chola rulers
embarked, the period normally was characterised by general peace and contentment. There was a certain type of grace and leisure which are unfortunately not found today. Being more insular, the scientific and technological developments of the later centuries which led to the shrinking of the world and the inevitable interdependence of units, had not affected the Cholas. The people engaged themselves with their rulers in a co-operative endeavour for mutual understanding and goodwill. They faced the pressing problems of social and intellectual life squarely and solved them in this background. In the words of Nilakanta Sastri greater things were accomplished by this corporate and voluntary effort, greater sense of social harmony prevailed and the consciousness of active citizenship was more widespread during the period of the Imperial Cholas than during any other subsequent century in the history of this great country.

(B) Social Divisions

One of the formative factors in the cultural development of any country is the pattern of the social divisions of the people constituting the community. This is of utmost importance in considering the developments in the Chola period. In ancient India society was founded upon Varna and Asrama, four-fold classification of the entire people into Varnas or castes and a four-fold division of the life of each individual into Asramas or stages. Originally there appeared to have been only three classes, namely, the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, and the Vaisyas. The first group devoted themselves to the conservation of ancient ideals, maintaining and developing ancient rituals and consequently they were characterised by tranquillity, self-restraint, penance, purity, knowledge, faith, etc. The second class was charged with the task of protecting the people and had therefore the characteristics of prowess, fortitude, dignity, skill, liberality and lordliness. The third class formed the general mass. In course of time a fourth
class, the Sudras, was added whose normal function was service. This classification was based on differences in occupation and implied no inherent deficiency or incompetence for any one of them in regard to the realization of the supreme goal which could be reached by every individual if he adhered to the dharma of his Varna.

The Asramas, on the other hand, were four life stages with graduated course of duties, calculated to lead an individual, stage by stage, to the realization of the supreme ideal. These were the stages of Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa. Of these, the last stage was reserved for Brahmans alone while Kshatriyas could go up to the third stage and Vaishyas up to the second stage.

This system of social division which is now known as the Caste System had a great and important role to play in those earlier centuries. It provided certain social privileges to some individuals from their birth and helped in canalising their various activities. It inculcated a spirit of fellowship and sympathy and assistance amongst the members of the group. It functioned as a type of trade union or benefit society and was eminently suited for the preservation and transmission of the pattern of skill, knowledge and behaviour constituting the culture of a particular group. In short, the system was nothing more and nothing less than a corporate life on occupational basis. It presumed the inheritance of a particular type of skill and its development and the resultant elimination of waste due to wrong choice of professions. The grading of classes by occupation produced a society similar to that recommended by Plato in his "Republic" and embodying the essence of his definition of justice, in that members of each occupation knew and attended to their business and did not aspire to perform the functions of members of different classes.

These different groups were, however, firmly and effectively integrated in society. Members of different
castes living in different parts developed a feeling of unity and fellowship. The whole scheme was conceived as an organic whole as is exemplified by the Purusha Sukta which equated the different castes with different parts of the body. It stressed the need for harmonious working for the common ideal and the healthy progress of society as a whole.

From the numerous inscriptions which are available it is very clear that during the Chola period these different groups organised on the basis of occupation functioned in an orderly and disciplined manner, discharging their responsibilities as ordained. There is no doubt whatever that there were some groups which were considered more superior than other groups. But it is a matter of considerable significance that despite the existence of such grades in these groups there were neither mutual rivalries nor jealousy nor intense group or caste feeling leading to the rupture of social and cultural life. On the other hand the people belonging to the different groups worked together, not minding the social differentiation and not permitting them to make inroads into the overall sense of solidarity and the lofty aim of working for the common good. Neither did one group interfere with the rights or responsibilities of another group, being concerned more with the discharge of their own functions. Because of this also there was no scope for any feeling of mutual acrimony or jealousy whether it was in the matter of functioning together in local assemblies or committees or being chosen to fill posts of responsibility under Government. Certain standards and qualifications were prescribed and it did not occur to any one to question either the standards or the persons selected on the presumption of the possession of such qualifications. Being concerned with their hereditary occupations, they organised their own independent regulations to safeguard the activities of such organisations and seeking to guarantee their interests without detriment to the common good. By and large, the common good was the background in which
these groups functioned. Hereditary occupation, however, was not a rigid ban against changing of professions. We have several instances in which Brahmanas became warriors or took to trade. For example, we have an inscription which refers to Brahmanas along with a group of Valanjiya merchants. Similarly there were Vaishyas who took to arms and became warriors.

The Brahmanas, however, occupied a position of honour all round. This is evident by the multiplicity of endowments in several temples for the feeding of Brahmanas learned in the Vedas. Annexure IV contains a list of some of the important inscriptions referring to this aspect. Even in villages the Brahmanas kept to themselves, in some cases owned all the lands and kept in view their high ideals and spent their time in really spiritual and ethical occupations. They were in demand in all places where culture and learning were required to resolve difficulties. They arbitrated when there were differences of opinion between the members of the local assemblies. Their word was given much weight and normally their judgement was never questioned. In the case of several endowments made for the provision of material comforts of Brahmanas the entire village shared the responsibility, thus testifying to the esteem in which this particular group was always held.

The Brahmanas also engaged themselves in temples and other such allied mantapams in expounding the tenets of Hindu Philosophy with explanations from the great epics and other puranas. This was of great effect and enabled the common people to understand the great principles underlying the epic stories. This service rendered by Brahmanas was recognised by way of several grants called Vedavritti, Bhattavritti, Bharatavritti, Puranavritti etc. I have already referred to the endowments for the feedings of learned Brahmanas in many temples. The system of free feeding of Brahmanas is in vogue in some of the temples in Kerala even today, notably, Guruvayur. Till recently the Oottuppura was
a regular feature of most of the temples in the old Travancore State. Brahmanas without any restriction in number used to be fed sumptuously with a variegated menu including Pāyasam in temples like those of Padmanabhaswami in Trivandrum. Even now in the Siva temple at Vaikom, Brahmanas are fed free on Ashtami day in the month of Dhanu, corresponding to Margazhi. This scheme of free feeding has been discontinued for a variety of reasons chief amongst which are the social and economic grounds. It is supposed to have encouraged laziness and irresponsibility and resultant social evils and on the economic side, the system was tending to become very costly. In the Chola days, however, the scheme worked very well because it was restricted in scope and was confined to the really deserving Brahmanas on the score of their learning and there was no misuse of the system. It might be mentioned in this connection, that certain other types of persons like Siva Yogins, pilgrims and Sanyasins were also fed at certain temples on certain special dates. This was a fine gesture on the part of the kings and the well-to-do as this type of charity went to those who deserved well by the society.

The privileges and functions of members belonging to different groups were also very clearly defined although positive information is not available about these responsibilities. There are several inscriptions which refer to particular castes and the privileges that the rulers gave them. For example, an inscription of the reign of Rajaraja I refers to the exemptions from certain local dues granted to the Vellalas of Kunravattanakkottam. Certain artisans of Kanchi had the exclusive privilege of engraving copper plates in the reign of Rajendra. The weavers of the same place were the makers of royal robes for Uttama Chola.

Inscriptions also refer to the existence of Right and Left hand castes known as Valangai and Idangai. It has, however, not been possible to trace the origin of these
castes but it is obvious that they came into conflict quite often.

The main point that emerges from a consideration of the caste system as it prevailed under the Cholas is that by the sense of goodwill and anxiety to get together and work for the common good, these different groups helped in the growth of healthy social and cultural traditions, thereby improving the lot of the common man. The drift into mutual antagonism and the growth in the number of castes are of recent origin. Restrictions and prohibitions have become more rigid. There is pronounced evidence of group-mindedness and social unity has been broken. The emphasis now is on differences and inequalities and while the upper classes are intoxicated with a feeling of superiority and arrogance the lower classes are drowned in a sense of inferiority and servility. This, of course, was not the pattern during the Chola time when individuals belonging to different groups, functioning in their own sphere, according to their inherited and instinctive aptitude, worked harmoniously, not insisting on equality but rather on corporate and co-operative endeavour making for the growth of a healthy polity in which alone real cultural development was made possible.

(C) The Individual's Contribution

It has to be admitted that an individual or group normally gives of his or its best in general service and contribution to the enrichment of life in all its various aspects when that individual or group is made to feel and realise that he or it has a real role to play, a role which is important, formative and not mechanical. When responsibility is given to an individual, under normal circumstances he endeavours to justify the trust and discharge the responsibility and he brings to bear on his work all his active energy, intelligence and skill. When we have a group of such individuals, each one contributing his share to the general pool, the effect on
the ultimate outcome is tremendous. It is the co-ordination and co-operation of such individual effort that produced the proper climate in which cultural developments could evolve along proper patterns during the Chola period. The Cholas realised the importance and worth of the individual and the expediency and practical wisdom of yoking him in all useful activities, by making him feel responsible for specific items of work and by that process calling forth the best in him. They adopted several methods for achieving this result.

The most effective method was the extremely efficient system of local, primary assemblies and the several small committees constituted with a view to look after specified items of work. The Sabhas and Urs as the former were called and several Variams, the name by which the committees were known, played a great role not only in running the machinery of government smoothly but in inspiring the individual as such to noble efforts in the discharge of his obligations as a citizen and thereby enriching the social and cultural life of the community. It is not within the purview of this study to go into the details of the working of these units of local governmental machinery. On the other hand, it is of greater importance to examine the types of work entrusted to these units which would indicate how their development was ensured.

Chola inscriptions are replete with details of the functions allotted to the Variams and the responsibilities undertaken by the Urs and Sabhas. They were quite independent in their working and though often times a representative of the king was present during deliberations, it is clear they did not surrender their sturdy independence or power to take decisions. We have no details of how these units exactly functioned and what rules of procedure governed their deliberations. But the assemblies consisted of everyone, including the old and young. The meetings were held in public places after being duly notified by the tradi-
tional beat of the drum. There is no reference anywhere to the concept of quorum. It is quite evident that this was never a problem for these Chola "legislatures". It is also not known if the system of deciding matters on the basis of votes was known or followed. The discussions were always full and frank and agreements were generally reached on the basis of mutual understanding and in terms of the common good. In cases of irreconcilable views, learned Brahmanas were asked to arbitrate and their judgment was not questioned. Once a decision was taken, everyone was zealous about its correct implementation.

Mutual jealousy and acrimonious controversy were refreshingly absent in such meetings. There was no attempt to impose the will of the majority on the minority. The members of the groups were elected by the system of lot and on the basis of well thought out and precisely formulated principles as laid down, for example, in the Uttaramerur inscriptions of Parantaka I. These are indicative of the deep thought and care bestowed in the matter and the anxiety to ensure the return of qualified and cultured people of the right type and the elimination of nepotism and other corrupt practices in the selection. In fact the first of the inscriptions relates to the year 919 A.D. In the light of the experience gained by working on the regulations contained in the first inscription, certain modifications were introduced in the second one in the year 921 A.D. and these set the standard which was adopted elsewhere also as is seen by inscriptions at Tiruninravur, Talainair, Ayyampettai, Irappatiswaram, Kamarasavalli and Sembiyangadu.

The field of activity of the groups was comprehensive and here lies the secret of the beneficent influence they exercised in the growth and development of social, religious, cultural and economic life of the community. They had political, industrial and commercial functions also. The dispensation of justice, the proper adminis-
tration of endowments, the management of the affairs of Temples and institutions like Maths, the upkeep and maintenance of canals and irrigation tanks and roads, the supervision of the gardens attached to temples — these were some of the items of work managed by them. Of these their significant contribution was in looking after the endowments and the management of temples and their affairs which, naturally, included the supervision of many phases like the provision of music and dance, the organisation of Purana Patanam — religious discourses etc. This pattern of administration really reflected the spirit of the people and represented their religious and cultural aspirations. The individual’s standard and assessment of values was of a relatively high order and the close and active association in the management of affairs that touched life at several vital points, helped him realise his worth and spurred him on to greater endeavour in the service of his fellow men. This was the general rule that motivated and guided the average man of the period.

Another method employed by the Cholas to get the best out of individuals was the system of public recognition of meritorious service rendered by members of the public. Although the concept of Nishkamya Karma taught by the Lord in the Gita was known to that age, it was equally well realised that nothing gave as much encouragement as appreciation of worth and the rewarding of services. The practice of honouring public spirited individuals is a very ancient one. There is reference to this in the Tolkappiyam. The Cholas were only following the tradition. The common forms of titular awards were Mārayan, Peraraiyan, Araiyan, Moovendavelan, Tondaiman, Pallavarayan, Kālingarayan, Kādavarayan, Bramadhirajan, Bramamārayan, Mazhavarayan etc. Sadasiva Pandarathār gives a more exhaustive list. When these titles were awarded, the Chola kings associated their own names or one of their birudas. We come across titles like Rajaraṇa Marayan,
Rajendra Chola Moovendavelan, Virachola Pallavarayan etc.

Normally these awards were made to government officials but titles like Marayan and Peraraiyan were awarded to persons in public life also. We come across titles like Nātaka Peraraiyan, obviously given to an exponent of the art of drama and Nritta Peraraiyan for services to dance. The wife of a Marayan was called Māraji. Titles like Bramamarayan and Bramadhiraian were awarded only to Brahmans. This public recognition of laudable services in any active branch of the social, cultural and political life of the community is accorded even today. The annual Republic Day Awards of Bharat Ratna, Padmavibushan, Padmabushan and Padmasri have come in the wake of the practice followed by the Cholas and other rulers here and elsewhere. Generally these titles were standardised but in the Travancore State when the practice was started, titles were evolved to suit the recipient and to indicate the purpose. Titles like Sachivottama (the best among Ministers), Niti Sastra Nipuna, Vaidya Sastra Kusala, Vastu Vidya Kusala, Raja Bhakta etc. were specially coined for particular persons chosen for the distinction. This was also, in a way, the practice of the Cholas. The fundamental basis of this system is to recognise meritorious service, to set a value on such dedicated contributions to the enrichment of life in any branch and to inspire and enthuse individuals to serve more loyally and effectively.

As pointed out by Nilakanta Sastri public recognition was also accorded to the services rendered by benefactors. He cites the Tirūppēr inscription of 1129 A.D. according to which the local sabha expressed their gratitude to a certain Bhatta whose prayers and benefactions were believed to have been of great use to the village when its fortunes had sunk low and people were deserting it. Similarly the Sabha of Uttiramerur conferred some hereditary privileges on a cour-
tesan who carried out extensive repairs and additions to the local Vishnu temple.

The methods were based essentially on a perfect understanding of human nature and were employed to get the maximum benefit from the individual for the development of the community in its various fields of activity.
IX. CONCLUSION

It has been my endeavour to examine the most salient characteristics of the cultural developments in the Chola period, one of the most colourful epochs in the history of our country. In considering the events of the past, scholars are generally agreed on a fundamental feature of the evolution of India’s culture, especially Hindu culture and that is its continuity and stability. As I have pointed out in the thesis, at no stage is there a complete break with the past or a fresh start from out of a vacuum. This outstanding unity of spirit and continuity of effort have contributed to the growth of a rich and complex civilization of unrivalled values. The different types of culture which developed inside the country or came in the wake of the invading hordes never uprooted the existing culture but with the march of time merged in it. The mixing of the different cultures led to the emergence of a new stream at every stage, the resultant product being richer in content, wider in scope and more varied in colour. This power of assimilation and synthesis not only in religious thought and social institutions but in the fine arts and literature and the persistent efforts towards the reconciliation of conflicting tendencies have been the basis for the vitality of our culture. This unity in diversity, this harmony in variation, has been as much the strong point of the past as it definitely is the hope for the future.

It is in this backdrop that the Chola culture has to be viewed. At no time has there been so much need as at present to explain to the world at large the glorious chapters of our past history and the achievements in the domain of art and science, of religion and philosophy. It would be positive injustice to belittle or ignore a culture which has given us the magnificent
Temple at Tanjore, the codified lyrical poems of the Nayanmars and Alvars, the beautiful bronzes of Nataraja, the inspiring Ramayana of Kamban and the Periyapuram of Sekkizhar and the uplifting philosophy of Saiva Siddanta. It is a culture, which as described in the thesis, included in its broadest sense all those movements which contributed to build up the civilization of the age through religious and social ideas, manners and morals, literature and economics and art and industry. It is also important to realise that the culture developed in that part of our country which has been considered as geologically older than North India. The progress made by the great Chola empire under its enlightened rulers in the different fields of human endeavour and activity certainly justifies the view that "the scientific historian of India ought to begin his study with the basin of the Kaveri, of the Vaigai and of the Krishna, rather than with the Gangetic plain as has been now long, too long, the fashion". There has rightly been a welcome change in the concept of history and developments in the fields of culture, of art and religion, literature and philosophy, claim as much attention as matters purely political.

In considering cultural developments in India, there has been an unfortunate tendency to take a narrow view of that culture which identifies it merely with the working of metaphysical intellect or speculative genius. In my review I have tried to avoid this tendency by considering the practical aspects of culture, relating them to the phenomena and processes of the world without rather than the world within. I have examined the developments both from the subjective and objective points of view. I have touched on practical subjects like medicine, surgery, applied chemistry and pharmacy besides the arts of civilized life, commerce and social conditions. I have attempted to demonstrate that the Chola period was not one of mere wars, conquests and victories, defeats and failures. It was more a period which saw the growth of a type of national solidarity
when the rulers took pointed note of the hopes and aspirations of the common people who formed the backbone of the society. It can be said that during this period there was a fair degree of apotheosis of culture. Arts were developed to make life beautiful, refined and happy as well as ethically dignified and noble. There was no development in isolation just for the personal gratification of either the artist or the patron. The basic motivating factor was the anxiety to help society evolve aesthetic tastes so that its personality could be uplifted to the sublime regions of spiritual bliss.

The question may be asked as to how the intrinsic worth of the contribution of the Cholas to cultural progress should be assessed. It certainly cannot be measured in terms of the standards of the twentieth century as we would miss the point completely especially in the light of the constant shift in the standards and changes in the emphasis of values due to the rapid advance of science and technology and the fundamental differences in political, social and economic ideologies that characterise international relationship today. The significance of the cultural developments has to be considered with reference to the standards and values and the background of that age. The Cholas did not have the advantages and the adventitious aids that science has given us today. Their outlook was circumscribed. They had not split the atom. If we judge their achievements in this context, we can readily perceive their remarkable acumen and ingenuity, their high standard of efficiency and their innate intelligence which helped them create and leave to posterity abiding monuments exemplifying their high cultural attainments.

The period of the Imperial Cholas, extending over four centuries, constitutes a remarkable chapter in the evolution of Indian culture. The towering majesty of their magnificent temples which reflect the intense force of their religious fervour, the artistic excellence of their sculpture that speak for their understanding of
Beauty, the soul-stirring hymns of the Saivite Saints which were set to mellifluous and divine music, the rhythmic eloquence of the dance poses carved in stone indicative of their appreciation of the finer points of this graceful art, the rich content of the philosophical systems that flourished during that age, the religious zeal that inspired every aspect of life and above all their sustained solicitude for and sedulous nursing of the welfare of the people — these stand out in bold relief and single out the rulers of the house of Vijayalaya for their individuality, distinction, greatness and farsightedness. Well can it be said of kings like Raja- raja I and Rajendra I and Kulottunga I that like George Washington, centuries later, they were first in war, first in peace and, what is most significant, first in the hearts of their subjects. The secret of their success lay in their ability to carry their subjects with them by providing the proper climate which facilitated their growing to their full stature.

Historians have traditionally been concerned mainly with the activities of Rulers, their generals and statesmen. But the history of the Cholas and that of the period during which they held sway have to be viewed in a different way if their real contribution to culture is to be correctly understood. This thesis has, therefore, concentrated on the way of life, the achievements and the aspirations and fulfilment of the average individual as that is the best way to understand the growth and development of the empire in the fields that count. There were, naturally, outstanding personalities during this period but the developments reviewed in the thesis were due primarily to the spontaneous enterprise and energy of countless individuals in all walks of life, inspired and guided and led by the great Chola monarchs. These far-sighted rulers had all the essential characteristics of leadership. By their example and inspiration they were able to lift the individual’s vision to higher sights, raise his performance to higher stan-
dards and build his personality beyond its normal limitations.

The Chola record was, however, by no means devoid of errors and misdeeds but it demonstrated on the whole the capacity of the average man to make profitable use of political freedom and stability of government and to evolve a rich culture replete with wonderful creations of artistic excellence in all the fields of enlightened life, in Art and in Science, in Philosophy and in Religion.
ANNEXURE I

A FEW INSCRIPTIONS RELATING TO THE SINGING OF TIRUPPADIYAMS AND PROVISION OF MUSIC IN TEMPLES

(1) An inscription of a Rajakesari from Tiruverumbur mentions the grant of land by the local assembly for singing Tiruppadiyams in the temple with the UdukkaI and Tālam as accompaniments. (No. 129 of 1914)

(2) Tiruvilakkudi inscription mentions an endowment of land for maintaining three musicians during Sribali to Mangala Nakkar in the Mahadeva temple. (No. 116 of 1926)

(3) An inscription of the time of Parantaka I from Sidhalingemadam refers to land for the provision of music thrice a day during the time of worship in the temple. (No. 387 of 1909)

(4) Another inscription of the reign of Parantaka I from Tiruvavaduturai refers to the maintenance of pipers in the temple. It is, however, not clear whether the pipers used the Nathaswaram as we know it today. Professor Sambamoorthy holds that this instrument was evolved much later. It must have been some type of wind instrument. (No. 126 of 1925)

(5) A Lalgudi inscription of the 37th year of Madiraikonda Parantaka I refers to land given to two Brahmans for chanting the Tiruppadiyam thrice every day in the temple of Mahadeva at Tiruttavaturai. (99 of 1929)

(6) An Uttaramerur inscription records grant of land for provision of music during Sribali at the temple. (S11 III of 194)

(7) An inscription from Tindivanam in the 10th year of Rajaraja I refers to reclamation of 2,910 Kuli of land for a musician who was to play on the Veena and a vocalist who was to accompany him in the Kidangil Tindiswara temple. (S11 VII No. 154)
(8) Konerirajapuram record of the 11th year of Rajaraja refers to a gift for the singing of Tiruppadiyams.  
(No. 631 of 1909)

(9) A Brahmathesam inscription of the 16th year of Rajaraja I refers to land for recitation of Tiruppadiyam in the temple.  (No. 199 of 1915)

(10) An inscription from Vridhachalam dated in the 18th year of Rajaraja I mentions gift of land by residents of Nerkuppi for the recitation of Tiruppadiyam in the local temple.  (No. 40 of 1918)

(11) Tiruvizhimgizhalai inscription of the 22nd year of Rajaraja records provision for the singing of Tiruppadiyam hymns twice a day in the temple.  (No. 423 of 1908)

(12) A Konserirajapuram inscription of the 26th year of Rajaraja I records grant of land for 2 persons for singing Tiruppadiyam in the temple of Tirunallam Udaiyar.  It is interesting to note that the date of this inscription is fixed as Wednesday 12th July, 1010 A.D.  
(No. 624 of 1909)

(13) A pillar inscription from Kilaiyur in the 11th year of Rajendra I records endowment of land for 2 persons singing Tiruppadiyam during the three services at the temple.  (No. 96 of 1925)

(14) An inscription from Uttaramerur in the 26th year of Rajendra I records gift for three persons reciting the Tiruvoimozhi in the temple.  (No. 194 of 1923)

(15) An Ârpaâkkam inscription of the 27th year of Rajendra I refers to land given by local residents for the maintenance of seven musicians in the temple of Tiruvil-Vinnagar Alvar.  (No. 145 of 1923)

(16) The Kilur inscription of the 5th year of Rajendra II mentions provision made for the recitation of Tiruvembavai on Margali Tiruvadirai days.  
(No. 12 of 1905)

(17) An inscription of the 13th year of an unidentified Parakesari from Tirukkuruguvuvur refers to grant of land for 9 persons for beating drums in the temple of Tiruvelladai Mahadeva at that place.  (No. 434 of 1918)
(18) An inscription of the 6th year of Vikrama Chola from Vēppattur refers to grant of land as Veeaikkanni to a Saiva Brahmana for playing on the Vina in the temple.  
(No. 47 of 1910)

(19) An inscription from Tiruvāmāttur of the 2nd year of Kulottunga II refers to grant of land to a troupe of Tiruppadiyam singers in the temple of Abhiramesvara.  
(S11 VIII No. 749)

(20) An inscription of the 5th year of Rajadhiraja II from Vazhuvur refers to endowment of 30 kasu for recitation of Tiruvembavai on Margali Tiruvadirai days in the temple.  
(No. 421 of 1912)

(21) An inscription in the inner Gopura of the Big Temple at Tanjore mentions the deposit by a musician of 40 kasu with interest at $\frac{1}{6}$ kasu per year. The interest amount of 5 kasus was to be distributed amongst five musicians who beat the Tiruppārāi at the flag hoisting and five drummers who announced the procession of Adavallar.  
(S11 II No. 25)

(22) Another inscription in the Big Temple at Tanjore refers to the daily allowance of paddy to 48 persons appointed for reciting Tiruppadiyams in the temple and for two persons who were to accompany them on drums, one on Udukkai and one on Kottimaddalam.  
(S11 II No. 65)
ANNEXURE II

A FEW INSCRIPTIONS BEARING REFERENCE TO THE PRACTICE OF DANCE AND DRAMA

(1) An inscription of Kannaradeva in his 18th year from Sidhalingamadom in South Arcot mentions the grant of land in Kodiur by the assembly of Sirringur to Tirupputippagavan, Nirutha Vitanki, a dancing woman, and the descendents for dancing before the deity during processions. (No. 370 of 1909)

(2) An inscription from Tiruvidaimarudur in the 4th year of Aditya II refers to the Natakasalai, the arrangements made for the performance of Aryakuttu in the temple and the setting apart of one veli of land for one who had to dance on seven specified occasions in the year and receive as kōṭrū 14 kalam of paddy from the temple treasury.

(3) An inscription from Tiruyadi in South Arcot of the 14th year of Uttama Chola refers to Natakasalai Mandapam. (No. 398 of 1921)

(4) An inscription of the 9th year of Rajaraja I from Tiruvavaduturai mentions grant of land as Nrittya bhoga to one Kumaran Sri Kandan for acting in the seven ankas of the Ariyakuttu on the festival days in Purattasi in the temple. (No. 120 of 1925)

(5) An inscription of the 23rd year of Rajaraja I from Dādāpuram requires the dancing girls attached to the temples of Iravikulamanikka Isvara and Kundavai Vinnagar to accompany the deity in the procession and sing and dance during the hunting festival. (No. 14 of 1919)

(6) An inscription from Kuḷambandal of the 22nd year of Rajendra I refers to gift of land and gold to 24 dancing girls attached to the temple of Gangaikonda Choliswara. (S11 VII No. 1047)

(7) A Tiruvorriyur inscription of the 26th year of Rajendra I refers to sale of land for maintaining 12 Devaradiyar in the Gauri temple. (No. 153 of 1912)
(8) An inscription from Kamarasavalli dated in the 29th year of Rajendra I (fixed as 6th May 1041) records gift of land to Sākkai Mārāyan Vikramasolan for performing the Sākkai Kuttu thrice during either of the Tiruvadīraippu festivals in Margali and Vaikasi.

(No. 65 of 1914)

(9) An inscription from Kandiyur of the time of Rajendra I refers to the appointment of a dancing master on a hereditary basis. (S11 V No. 579)

(10) A Melappaluvur inscription of the 5th year of Rajendra II refers to grant of land as Nattuvakkani to a dancing master. (No. 361 of 1924)

(11) A Tanjore inscription of the 6th year of Rajendra II refers to grant of paddy to a troupe of actors for playing the Rajarajeswara Nātaka in the Big Temple during the Vaikasi festival. (S11 II No. 67)

(12) An inscription from Kilappaluvur mentions the grant of 1½ kalanji gold and three kalsams of paddy to Alayur Chakkai for performing the Sākkai Kuttu on the Aswati day of Airpasi at Tiruvalandurai-Nallur.

(No. 250 of 1926)

(13) The Kalahasti inscription of the 18th year of Kulottunga I refers to the restoration to the temple of some dancing girls who had been taken into his household and branded with his own lānchna by mistake. This was to be erased and replaced by the mark of the Sūla.

(No. 141 of 1922)

(14) An inscription from Mānambadi of the 18th year of Kulottunga mentions the grant of land for enacting Tamilakkutti at Viranarayanapuram. (No. 90 of 1932)

(15) A Tiruvavaduraiturai inscription of the 46th year of Kulottunga refers to grants to those who sang the isai, to the dancers and for the maintenance of the Nānāvida Nātaka Salai. (No. 152 of 1925)

(16) Tiruvengaivasal inscription of the 14th year of Vikramachola refers to grants made for a dancing girl who was to give nine performances of Santikuttu in the Chitirai Festival. (No. 253 of 1914)

(17) Yet another inscription from Tiruvengaivasal of the 5th year of Rajadhiraja II mentions grant of land to two women required to enact Santikuttu during Tiruvadīraippu festival in Vaikasi. (No. 254 of 1914)
ANNEXURE III

SOME INSCRIPTIONS RELATING TO PUBLIC
EXPOSITION OF VEDAS AND EPICS AND
SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHIES

(1) An inscription in the third year of the reign of Aditya II from Kumbakonam refers to the making over of the sale proceeds of a piece of land as Bhattavritti to those who expounded the Prabhākaram.

(2) An inscription from Uttiramerur mentions grant of land as Vyakhyavritti to a person teaching Vyākarana Sastra in the town. (S11 III No. 161)

(3) An inscription dated in the 11th year of Rajaraja I from Tirukkoshtiyur in Ramnad registers endowment of land for a Brahman for explaining the Prabhakaram. (No. 333 of 1923)

(4) A Pullamangai inscription of the 12th year of Rajaraja I mentions gifts to Brahmans learned in Sama Veda and Rig Veda. (No. 553 of 1921)

(5) Kāmarasavalli inscription of Rajaraja I mentions gifts to those reciting Talavakāra Samaveda on Margali Tiruvadhirai day. (No. 76 of 1914)

(6) An endowment of 50 kasu yielding 75 kalam paddy per year is recorded in an inscription from Tiruppugalur in the 5th year of Rajendra I to be used, among other things, for recitation of Vedas. (No. 52 of 1928)

(7) An inscription of the reign of Rajendra I from Ennayarim refers to the maintenance of an educational institution in which Vedas, Vyakaranas and Mimamsa were taught. (No. 333 of 1917)

(8) An inscription from Tribhuwanai in the 30th year of Rajadhiraja I refers to an elaborately organised college of higher learning. (No. 176 of 1919)

(9) The Tirunagesvaram inscription of the 2nd year of Rajendra II refers to grant for expounding Sivadharma in the assembly hall of the local temple. (ARE 1912 II 24)

(10) An inscription from Pulallur in the 9th year of Rajendra II refers to the grant of land, tax free, as
Bhārata-vṛitti for the exposition of the Bhāratam, Ramayananam and other puranas in the temple of Tiruvayoddhi. (No. 48 of 1923)

(11) An inscription from Sendalai mentions the grant of land, tax free, to Singinandil Swarupa Bhatta of the Atreya Gotra and Vakhhanasa Sutra who was to read the Bhāratam every day in the Ambalam built in the Brahmasthana of the village. (S11 VI No. 12)

(12) A Pandāravādai inscription of the 14th year of a Rajaśari refers to payment of three kasu, being interest on 20 Karungasu to the best reciter of certain prescribed portions of the Jaiminiya Sāma Veda on the night of the Ardra festival in Margali. It was stipulated that no prize-winner was to compete a second time.

(No. 266 of 1923)

(13) The existence of a Vedic school, Chandoga-Kidaippuram, endowed by a member of the village executive of Kamappullur is referred to by two inscriptions of the reigns of Parantaka I and Sundara Chola.

(No. 268 and 270 of 1938-39)

(14) Vedas, grammar and other subjects were taught by a Bhatta who was learned and who, it was laid down, should be able to teach Panini Vyakarana, the Alankara and twenty chapters of the Mimamsa.

(No. 76 of 1932-33)

(15) An inscription from Tiruvilakkudhi of the 5th year of Vikrama Chola refers to the maintenance of persons reciting the Vedas and Sastras in the temple.

(No. 146 of 1926)

(16) An inscription from Tiruvenkadu dated in the 8th year of the reign of Rajadhiraja II refers to payment for recitation of Vedas during the procession of the deity.

(No. 502 of 1918)

(17) An inscription from Tiruvidaikkali refers to a gift of five velis of land for the maintenance of Brahman students. This is dated in the 13th year of the reign of Rajaraja III. (No. 276 of 1925)

(18) An inscription, perhaps of Kulottunga III, mentions the creation of a Bashyavritti at Kanchipuram for the Ramanuja Bhashya being regularly expounded by a competent person. (No. 493 of 1919)
ANNEXURE IV

SOME INSCRIPTIONS RELATING TO PROVISION FOR FEEDING OF BRAHAMANS

(1) A Rajakesari inscription from Udaiyargudi refers to the endowment for the feeding of 15 Brahmans in the Temple at Kattumannarkoil. (No. 577 of 1920)

(2) A merchant of the Kodumbalur manigrāmam gave five Kalanji of gold for feeding Brahmans in the temple. This is a Rajakesari inscription from Salem. (S11 Vol. IV No. 147)

(3) Udaiyarkudi has another inscription according to which three persons made a gift of 19 veli of land to enable 56 Brahmans being fed. (No. 614 of 1920)

(4) An inscription in the 29th year of Parantaka I from Tiruvorriyur mentions the gift made by a person belonging to Ettiya kuriichi for feeding a learned Brahman. (No. 182 of 1912)

(5) The Tondamanad inscription of Parantaka I mentions endowment of gold for feeding 1000 Brahmans on certain festival days. (No. 230 of 1903)

(6) Tiruwellarai inscription of the time of Parantaka I mentions a gift of gold for feeding a Brahman versed in the Veda.

(7) Tiruvaīyyaru inscription of Parantaka I mentions gift made by queen Arinjigai for feeding a Brahman sumptuously daily in the local temple. (No. 144 of 1918)

(8) An inscription in the 2nd year of Sundara Chola from Tiruvisalur mentions land earmarked for feeding a Vedabrahmana. The gift was in the hands of the Mahasabha of Avani Narayana Chaturvedimangalam. (S11 III No. 119)

(9) An inscription from Brahmadesam records gift of land for feeding a Brahman versed in the Veda. (No. 208 of 1915)
(10) An inscription of the 12th year of Uttama Chola from Udayargudi in South Arcot registers grant of land for feeding five Brahmans every day. (No. 592 of 1920)

(11) The Tirumalipuram (North Arcot) inscription of the 3rd year of Rajaraja I mentions gift of gold for feeding Brahmans. (No. 306 of 1906)

(12) An inscription from Tiruvissalur in the 5th year of Rajaraja records gift of gold by one of the queens for feeding five Brahmans. (No. 19 of 1907)

(13) Tiruverumbur inscription of the 7th year of Rajaraja refers to grant for feeding six Brahmans versed in the Vedas. (No. 116 of 1914)

(14) An inscription from Tiruvadandai of the 19th year of Rajaraja I registers a gift of 16½ kalanji of gold by a merchant for feeding twelve Brahmans in the Varaha Deva temple during the thirty days of the month of Kumbha. (No. 273 of 1910)

(15) The Nagarattar of Ulagamadevipuram endowed land for the feeding of 25 Brahmans in a sālai attached to the temple according to an inscription from Olagapuram dated in the 24th year of Rajaraja I. (No. 134 of 1916)

(16) An inscription from Allur in Trichinopoly of the 4th year of Rajendra I refers to provision for feeding of five Brahmans on New Moon Days. (No. 365 of 1903)

(17) An inscription from Tribhuvani of the 29th year of Rajendra I mentions the arrangements made for the feeding of the Sri Vaishnavas of the 18 districts of Rajendrasolan-madom. (No. 187 of 1919)

(18) An inscription from Salem in the 6th year of an unidentified Rajakesari refers to a gift of 40 pon for feeding Brahmans on specific occasions at the rate of 25 Brahmans per Kalanji with three curries, ¾ pidi ghee, curd and betel. (S11 IV No. 149)

(19) An inscription of the 15th year of Vikrama Chola from Tirukoyilur refers to grant for the feeding of Srivaishnavas attached to a local madom. (No. 349 of 1921)
ANNEXURE V

SOME INSCRIPTIONS CONTAINING ASTRONOMICAL DATA

(1) An inscription from Tiruccendurai refers to grant of land on the day of a solar eclipse. This eclipse occurred in 972 A.D. according to H. Krishna Sastri. (No. 310 of 1903)

(2) An inscription in the 40th year of Parantaka I from Kiram gives astronomical data which fixes the date as Saturday, 25th July, 946 A.D. according to Kielhorn. (S11 Vol. VII No. 35)

(3) Pandaravadai inscription in the 5th year of Aditya II mentions offerings to Mahaganapati on Ardra day in the month of Margali. (No. 275 of 1923)

(4) An inscription from Tayanur in South Arcot records grant of land made during a solar eclipse to five persons who provided music at the time of worship in the local temple. (S11 III No. 178)

(5) A Sembiyanmahadevi inscription of the 15th year of Uttama Chola mentions offerings in the temple on the occasion of the birthday of the founder of the temple which fell on Kettai in the month of Chittirai.

(6) An inscription from Somur in Trichinopoly of the 19th year of Rajaraja I refers to the levy of a fine on the temple authorities for their failure to bring out the image of the goddess on the day of a solar eclipse. (S11 IV No. 391)

(7) An inscription from Tiruvadandai in the 35th year of Rajadhiraja I refers to the celebration of the monthly birthday of the ruler on Pūrva Phalguni, the King's asterism. (No. 258 of 1910)

(8) Special services were prescribed in the temple at Tiruvorriyur on the day of Asleṣa, the star of the King's nativity, according to an inscription of the 2nd year of the king Virarajendra. (No. 136 of 1912)
(9) An inscription of the 10th year of Vikramachola from Sivankūdal refers to celebrations for seven days beginning with Ani Uttirattadi, the asterism of the King’s birth.

(10) An inscription of the 13th year of Rajadhiraja II from Alambakkam contains the information that a year was reckoned at 365 days. (No. 731 of 1909)

(11) An inscription from Palur dated in the 5th year of Gandaraditya refers to a lunar eclipse in the month of Kanya. This is fixed as either 954 or 955 A.D. as there were lunar eclipses in both the years, on 15th September, 954 and 4th September, 955 A.D.

(S11 XIII No. 117)
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