

Raja Raja Chola I

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Rajaraja I

Mummudi Cholan

[ராஜ ராஜ சோழன்](#)



Extent of the Chola Empire under Rajaraja the
Great c. 1014 [CE](#)

Reign 985–1014 CE

Title *Rajakesari*

Capital [Thanjavur](#)

Queen Lokamahadevi
Cholamahadevi
Trailokyamahadevi
Panchavanmahadevi
Abhimanavalli

Iladamadeviyar
Prithivimahadevi

Children [Rajendra Chola I](#)

Kundavai
Madevadigal

Predecessor [Uttama Chola](#)

Successor Rajendra Chola I

Father [Sundara Chola](#)

Born Unknown

Died 1015 CE

List of [Chola](#) kings

[Early Cholas](#)

[Elara Chola](#) • 235 BC – 161 BC

[Ilamcetcenni](#) • [Karikala Chola](#)

[Nedunkilli](#) •

[Killivalavan](#) •
[Kopperuncholan](#)

[Kocengannan](#) • [Perunarkilli](#)

Interregnum ([c.](#)200–848)

[Medieval Cholas](#)

Vijayalaya Chola	848–871(?)
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Aditya I	871–907
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Parantaka Chola I	907–950
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Gandaraditya	950–957
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Arinjaya Chola	956–957
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Sundara Chola	957–970
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Uttama Chola	970–985
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Rajaraja Chola I	985–1014
Rajendra Chola I	1012–1044
Rajadhiraja Chola	1018–1054
Rajendra Chola II	1051–1063
Virarajendra Chola	1063–1070
Athirajendra Chola	1067–1070
Later Cholas	
Kulothunga Chola I	1070–1120
Vikrama Chola	1118–1135
Kulothunga Chola II	1133–1150
Rajaraja Chola II	1146–1173
Rajadhiraja Chola II	1166–1178
Kulothunga Chola III	1178–1218
Rajaraja Chola III	1216–1256
Rajendra Chola III	1246–1279
Chola society	
Chola government	
Chola military • Chola Navy	
Chola art • Chola literature	
Solesvara Temples	
Poompuhar • Uraiyyur	
Melakadambur	
Gangaikonda Cholapuram	
Thanjavur • Telugu Cholas	
edit	

Raja Raja Chozhan I ([Tamil: ராஜ ராஜ சோழன்](#)) born **Arunmozhi Varmar**(also called as **Raja Kesari Varman** ^[1] and respectfully as **Peruudaiyar**), popularly known as **Raja Raja the Great**, is one of the greatest emperors of the [Tamil Chola Empire](#) of [India](#) who ruled between 985 and 1014 [CE](#). By conquering numerous kingdoms in South India, he expanded the Chola Empire as far as [Sri Lanka](#) in the south, and [Kalinga \(Orissa\)](#) in the northeast. He fought many battles with the [Chalukyas](#) to the north and the [Pandyas](#) to the south. By conquering [Vengi](#), Rajaraja laid the foundation for the [Later Chola](#) dynasty. He invaded Sri Lanka and started a century-long Chola occupation of the island. He streamlined the administrative system by dividing the country into various districts and by standardising revenue collection through systematic land surveys. Being an ardent devotee of [Lord Shiva](#), he built the magnificent [Peruvudaiyar Temple](#) (also known as the [Brihadeeswarar Temple](#)) in [Thanjavur](#) and through it enabled the distribution of wealth amongst his subjects. His successes enabled his son [Rajendra Chola I](#) to extend the empire even further.

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[\[edit\]](#) Dates

The key dates of Raja Raja's rule are difficult to come by. Scholar N.Sethuraman concludes that he was born in circa 947 ACE, was crowned on 18 July 985 and died in 1014 in the Tamil month of Maka.^[2]

[\[edit\]](#) Popular Prince

Raja Raja Chola was born in Thirukoilur (head quarters of Nadu Naadu) as Arulmozhivarman, the third child of [Parantaka Sundara Chola](#) (Aditya Karikala was the elder son and Kundhavai the elder sister) and Vanavan Maha Devi of the [Velir Malayaman](#) dynasty. Aditya karikala was declared as the crown prince. During the lifetime of his father Sundara Chola, Arulmozhivarman had carved a name for himself through his exploits in the battles against the Sinhala and [Pandyan](#) armies. Sundara Chola's eldest son and heir apparent [Aditya II](#) was assassinated under unclear circumstances.^[3] Madhuranthaga, as the only child of [Gandaraditya](#) (the brother of Arinjaya Chola), wanted the Chola throne as he felt it was his birthright. After the death of [Aditya II](#), Madhuranthaga was declared by Sundara Chola as the heir apparent ahead of Arulmozhivarman.^[3] Arulmozhivarman ascended the throne after the death of Madhuranthaga (Uttama Chola).^[3] The Thiruvalangadu [copper-plate inscriptions](#) say:

"...Though his subjects...entreated Arulmozhi Varman, he...did not desire the kingdom for himself even inwardly ".

This was to say that Raja Raja was legally elected through the kind of democratic process followed by Cholas as seen in their Uttiramerur inscription. This is widely accepted as the correct interpretation. Another example of such a process is the selection of Sri Nandi Varman II to the Pallava throne . It could very much be possible that the king rejected the offer in order to continue to devote time and energy to build the resources to realize the Chola military objectives. Madhuranthaga made a compromise with Sundara Chola that Madhuranthaga will be succeeded by Arulmozhi and not his own son. The Thiruvalangadu inscription again states:

"Having noticed by the marks (on his body) that Arulmozhi was the very [Vishnu](#), the protector of the three worlds, descended on earth, [Madhuranthaga] installed him in the position of Yuvaraja (heir apparent) and himself bore the burden of ruling the earth..."

[\[edit\]](#) Military conquests

[\[edit\]](#) Southern wars

The southern kingdoms of Pandyas, [Cheras](#) and the [Sinhalas](#) were often allied against the Cholas.^[4] It was the case when Rajaraja came to the throne. Rajaraja's initial campaigns were against the combined Pandya and Chera armies. There is no evidence of any military campaign undertaken by Rajaraja until the eighth year of his reign. During this period he was engaged in organising and augmenting his army and in preparing for military expeditions.^[5]

[\[edit\]](#) Kandalur Salai

The first military achievement of Rajaraja's reign was the campaign in [Kerala](#) c. 994 CE.

Rajaraja's early inscriptions use the descriptive 'Kandalur salai kalamarutta' (காந்தூர்

சாலைக் களமறுத்த). [In this campaign](#) Rajaraja is said to have destroyed a fleet in the port of Kandalur, which appears to have been situated in the dominions of the Chera King Bhaskara Ravi Varman Thiruvadi (c. 978–1036 CE).^{[5][6]} Inscriptions found around Thanjavur show that frequent references are made to the conquest of the Chera king and the Pandyas in Malai-nadu (the west coast of [South India](#)). Kandalur-Salai, which later inscriptions claim to have belonged to the Chera king, was probably held by the Pandyas when it was conquered by Rajaraja. Some years' fighting apparently was necessary before the conquest could be completed and the conquered country could be sufficiently settled for its administration could be properly organised.^[7] In the war against the Pandyas, Rajaraja seized the Pandya king Amarabhujanga and the Chola general captured the port of Virinam. To commemorate these conquests Rajaraja assumed the title **Mummudi-Chola**, (the Chola king who wears three crowns – the Chera, Chola and Pandya) and according to tradition the title Raja Raja was conferred on him by serving members of Chidambaram temple of ancient who had also the duty of conducting the swearing in ceremony of chola and pallava princes.

[\[edit\]](#) Malai Nadu

In a battle against the Cheras sometime before 1008 CE, Rajaraja captured [Udagai](#) in the western hill country. *Kalingattuparani*, a war poem written during the reign of [Kulothunga Chola I](#) hints at a slight on the Chola ambassador to the Chera court as the reason for this sacking of Udagai. Rajaraja's son Rajendra was the Chola general leading the army in this battle.^[5] A place named Udagai is mentioned in connection with the conquest of the Pandyas. The Kalingattu-Parani refers to the “storming of Udagai” in the verse, which alludes to the reign of Rajaraja. The Kulottunga-Cholan-ula also mentions the burning of Udagai. This was probably an important stronghold in the Pandya country, which the Chola king captured. The Tamil poem *Vikkirama Cholan ula* mentions the conquest of Malai Nadu and the killing of 18 princes in retaliation of the insult offered to an envoy.^[8]

[\[edit\]](#) Invasion of Lanka

See also: [Chola occupation of Sri Lanka \(993-1077\)](#)


To eliminate the remaining actor in the triumvirate, Rajaraja invaded Sri Lanka in 993 CE. The copper-plate inscription mention that Rajaraja's powerful army crossed the ocean by ships and burnt up the kingdom of Lanka. [Mahinda V](#) was the king of Sinhalas. In 991 CE, Mahinda's army mutinied with help from mercenaries from Kerala. Mahinda had to seek refuge in the southern region of Rohana. Rajaraja utilised this opportunity and invaded the island. Chola armies occupied the northern half of Lanka and named the dominion 'Mummudi Chola Mandalam'. [Anuradhapura](#), the 1400-year-old capital of Sinhala kings was destroyed. The destruction was so extensive the city was abandoned. Cholas made the city of [Polonnaruwa](#) as their capital and renamed it [Jananathamangalam](#). The choice of this city demonstrates the desire

of Rajaraja to conquer the entire island. Rajaraja also built a Temple for [Siva](#) in Pollonaruwa.^[8] RajaRajan's desire to bring the whole Lankan island under Cholan empire was never fulfilled and the southern part of the island ([Ruhuna](#)) remained independent. Later, king [Vijayabahu I](#) successfully drove the Chola out of Sri Lanka in 1070, reuniting the country for the first time in over a century.^{[9][10]}

[\[edit\]](#) Northern Wars

Rajaraja also expanded his conquests in the north and northwest. The regions of Gangapadi (Gangawadi), Nolambapadi (Nolambawadi), Tadigaipadi came into Chola possession during Rajaraja.



 Mural found in the Brihadeesvara temple, Tamil Nadu, 11th century. The belief that this represents Rajaraja Chola (in the background) and his guru Karuvurar is contested.^[11]

[\[edit\]](#) Ganga Wars

Before his 14th year c. 998–999 CE, Rajaraja conquered Gangapadi (Gangawadi) and Nurambapadi (Nolambawadi), which formed part of the present [Karnataka](#) State. This conquest was facilitated by the fact the Cholas never lost their hold of the Ganga country from the efforts

of Sundara Chola. [Nolambas](#) who were the feudatories of Ganga could have turned against their overlords and aided the Cholas to conquer the Gangas, who were the chief bulwark against the Chola armies in the northwest.

The invasion of the Ganga country was a success and the entire Ganga country was under the Chola rule for the next century. The easy success against the Gangas was also due to the disappearance of [Rashtrakutas](#) c. 973 CE as they were conquered by the western [Chalukyas](#). From this time, the Chalukyas became the main antagonists of Cholas in the northwest.

[\[edit\]](#) Western Chalukya Wars

During the reign of Rajaraja Chola, there were continuous wars with the [Western Chalukyas](#) to assert supremacy and there are multiple epigraphic evidences that show that the Cholas were constantly fighting with the Chalukyas or against the vassals of the latter. It is unclear as to why Rajaraja mounted an invasion against Satyasraya. According to historian Eugen Hultzsch the circumstances that led to the war are not mentioned in any of Rajaraja's inscriptions. But we do know that the rulers of these two conquered provinces were originally feudatories of the Rashtrakutas.^[12] An inscription of Irivabedanga Satyasraya from Dharwar describes him as a vassal of the Western Chalukya Ahvamalla for he describes himself as a bee at the lotus feet of Ahavamalldeva in 1002 A.D. An inscription of Rajaraja asserts that he captured Rattapadi by force. Rajendra led the Chola armies against the Western Chalukyas and would turn [Manyakheta](#), the Chalukyan capital into his own playground. Raja Raja I claims damages worth "seven and a half lakshas from Irattapadi which was evidently the site of war with Satyashraya resulting in victory for Raja Raja I and payment of damages by the Chalukya king. Chalukya kingdom Satyashraya would renege on his promise of agreeing to Chola suzerainty, but would be defeated by Rajendra Chola I when he became king. [Irivabedanga Satyasraya](#) partially acknowledges this Chola onslaught in his Hottur (Dharwad) inscription as he screams in pain. In his own words he calls himself the ornament of Chalukya race and the slayer of the Tamil. He identifies his opponent as Rajaraja Nittavinodha Rajendra Vidyadhara, the ornament of the Chola kula Nūrmadi Chola(one hundred times more powerful).^[13] In the same inscription, he accuses Rajendra of having arrived with a force of 900,000 and of having gone on rampage in Donuwara thereby blurring the moralities of war as laid out in the Dharmasastras.^[14] He says that his opponent destroyed the caste (*jāti nāsa*) of his people. Historians like James Heitzman, Wolfgang Schenkluhn conclude that this confrontation displayed the degree of animosity on a personal level between the rulers of the Chola and the Chalukya kingdoms, the feeling of *otherness* and their inability to identify with the other side that degenerated to a level of violence that overthrew the established social order(*destruction of caste*). They also draw a parallel between this relationship and the enmity between the Chalukyas of Badami and the Pallavas of Kanchi.^[15] There is also epigraphic evidence of earlier encounters between the Cholas and the [Hoysalas](#) who were vassals of the Western Chalukyas during the reign of Rajaraja Chola. An inscription from the roof of the Gopalakrishna temple at Kaleyur in the [Tirumukudalu Narasipur](#) taluk dated in Saka 929 being current, Parabhava, corresponding to 1006 A.D, records that Rajaraja's viceroy Aprameya displayed his valor by slaying the [Hoysala](#) minister Naganna and multiple other generals of the [Hoysalas](#) like Manjaga, Kalega(or Kali Ganga), Nagavarman, etc.^[16] There is also a similar inscription in the [Channapatna](#) taluk that shows Rajaraja crushing the [Hoysalas](#).^[17] Rajaraja evidently attached much importance to his victory over Satyasraya, as he is said to have

presented gold flowers to the Rajarajesvara temple on his return from the expedition. At the end of this war, the southern banks of the Tungabhadra river became the frontier between these two empires.

[\[edit\]](#) War against Vengi

The cholas in pursuit of their objective of annihilating to ground evil kingdoms" and hence destroy the excessive wickedness of age of Kali had clashed with many kingdoms and one of which was Vengi. Parantaka Chola I who had made extensive conquests had in fact subdued the Deccan kingdom that flourished in this region in 913.C.E. Even in Inscriptions of Sundarachola we find a Chola regiment in Eastern Deccan preparing to invade Orissa. Thus there is no truth in the proposition of "Chola Throne" ties with "Vengi".

Some of Chola Inscriptions of Raja Raja note how during a war against Vengi, the king himself took initiative and killed a certain ruler called Bheema ruling that area because " he felled one of his commanders". Thus even if Cholas had reigned supreme in Eastern Deccan it was certainly a military vision and the small province of Vengi most probably served as a military base for Cholas who frequently sent in expeditions to Orissa and Western Deccan. We know about such base building activities down south in Pandyan country and also near Suchindram and Colombo in Lanka where the Cholas are known to have built naval bases and also " some temples for Lord Vishnu ".

[\[edit\]](#) Kalinga conquest

The invasion of the kingdom of Kalinga must have occurred subsequent to the conquest of Vengi.^[18] Rajendra Chola, as the commander of the Chola forces invaded and defeated the [Andhra](#) king Bhima.

[\[edit\]](#) Naval Conquests



Detail of the main gopura (tower) of the Thanjavur Temple

One of the last conquests of Rajaraja was the naval conquest of the 'old islands of the sea numbering 12,000', the [Maldives](#).^[19]

We have no further details regarding this expedition, however this is a sufficient indication of the abilities of the Chola Navy, which was utilised effectively under Rajendra I. Chola Navy also had played a major role in the invasion of [Lanka](#).^[20]

The increasing realization of the importance of a good Navy and the desire to neutralize the emerging Chera Naval power were probably the reasons for the Kandalur campaign in the early days of Rajaraja's reign.^[21]

[Nagapattinam](#) on the Bay of Bengal was the main port of the Cholas and could have been the navy headquarters. Bay of Bengal called as Chola lake Hope the Tamil King - RAJA RAJA CHOLAN was the First Indian Ruler to establish the First Indian Naval Fleet some 1200 years back. He had established his rule extending from India up to South East Asia with his Naval Fleet. His rule extended beyond the Bay of Bengal Sea. He even ruled the Java, Sumatra Islands in S.E. Asia, parts of \leq Malaysia \geq , Myanmar, Brunei islands and even some territory Islands that belongs to Australia & even Tasmania, New Zealand.

The TAMIL KING - RAJENDRA CHOLA - son of Raja Raja Chola also has the Honour of establishing the FIRST INDIAN MERCHANT NAVAL FLEET. He transformed the Naval Fleet of his Father in to Merchant Naval Fleet and thereby established Trade from India to the S.E. Asia and even the China. There are also evidence that they had Trade through Sea with the Romans.....

[\[edit\]](#) Thanjavur Temple

Main article: [Brihadisvara Temple](#)

Rajaraja's reign is commemorated by the Siva temple in Thanjavur, called Raajarajeswaram. The Peruvudaiyar Koyil (Tamil: பெருவுடையார் கோயில், peruvuḍaiyār kōyil ?), also known as Brihadeeswarar Temple, Rajarajeswaram and 'Big Temple', turned 1000 years old in 2010. The temple is now recognised as a UNESCO [World Heritage Site](#), forming part of the [Great Living Chola Temples](#) site.

The construction of the temple is said to have been completed on the 275th day of the 25th year of his reign.^[22] After its commemoration the temple and the capital had close business relations with the rest of the country and acted as a centre of both religious and economic activity. Year after year villages from all over the country had to supply men and material for the temple maintenance.^[23]

[\[edit\]](#) Administration



 [Rajaraja Chola's](#) statue at [Brihadisvara Temple](#), [Thanjavur](#).

From the 23rd to the 29th year of Rajaraja's rule his dominions enjoyed peace and the king apparently devoted his energies to the task of internal administration. The building of the Rajarajesvara temple in Thanjavur and the various endowments and gifts to it must have occupied a prominent place in the king's mind during these years.

Rajaraja carried out a revenue and settlement during the final years of his reign. Inscriptions found in the Thanjavur temple bear testimony to the accuracy of this operation. Land as small in extent as 1/52,428,800,000 of a 'veli' (a land measure) was measured and assessed to revenue. The revenue survey enabled for the confiscation of lands of the defaulting landlords.^[24]

Rajaraja also perfected the administrative organisation by creating a strong and centralised machinery and by appointing local government authorities. He installed a system of audit and control by which the village assemblies and other public bodies were held to account while not curtailing their autonomy.

[\[edit\]](#) Military Organisation

Rajaraja created a powerful standing army and a considerable navy which achieved even greater success under his son Rajendra. The prominence given to the army from the conquest of the Pandyas down to the last year of the king's reign is significant, and shows the spirit with which he treated his soldiers. A number of regiments are mentioned in the Tanjore inscriptions and it is evident that Rajaraja gave his army its due share in the glory derived from his extensive conquests.

In most of the foregoing names the first portion appears to be the surnames or titles of the king himself or of his son. That these regiments should have been called after the king or his son is indicative of the attachment the Chola king bore towards his army.

It is possible that these royal names were pre-fixed to the designations of these regiments after they had distinguished themselves in some engagement or other. It is worthy of note that there are elephant troops, cavalry and foot soldiers among these regiments. To some of these regiments, the management of certain minor shrines of the temple was entrusted and they were expected to provide for the requirements of the shrine. Others among them took money from the temple on interest, which they agreed to pay in cash. We are not, however, told to what productive purpose they applied this money. At any rate all these transactions show that the king created in them an interest in the temple he built.

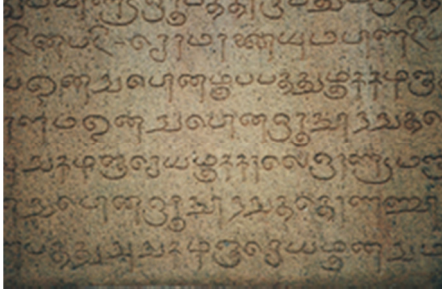
[\[edit\]](#) Officials and Feudatories


Rajendra Chola was made co-regent during the last years of Rajaraja's rule. He was also the Mahadandanayaka Panchavan Maharaya – supreme commander- of the northern and northwestern dominions. Uttarangudaiyan Kon Vidividangan alias Villavan Muvendavelan was one of the top officers (*Perundaram*) of Rajaraja. He figures in many of his inscriptions most notably when he and other top officers take a vow to light lamps and make other donations if they escaped from being disgraced during the military operations towards the *end* of Rajaraja's reign.

[Paluvettaraiyars](#) from the region of Thiruchirapalli were closely associated with the Cholas from the time of Parantaka I when he married a Paluvettaraiyar princess, were occupying a high position in the Chola administration. They were apparently enjoying full responsibility and administration of the region of Paluvur. One of the names of these feudal chieftains found in inscriptions were Adigal Paluvettaraiyar Kandan. He built a massive temple in Gangai konda cholapuram a mile stone of chola architecture. Madurantakan Gandaradityan who served in Rajaraja's court as an important official in the department of temple affairs. He conducted enquiries into temple affairs in various parts of the country, punishing defaulters.

The other names of officials found in the inscriptions are the [Bana](#) prince Narasimhavarman, a general Senapathi Sri [Krishnan Raman](#), the Samantha chief [Vallavarayan Vandiyadevan](#), the revenue official Irayiravan Pallavarayan and Kuruvan Ulagalandan who organised the country-wide land surveys.

[\[edit\]](#) Standardised Inscriptions



 Example of a typical lithic inscription of the Chola period

Due to Rajaraja's desire to record his military achievements in every one of his inscriptions he handed down to posterity some of the important events of his life. As far as we know at present, Rajaraja was the first king of South India to introduce this innovation into his inscriptions. Before his time powerful kings of the Pallava, Pandya and Chola dynasties had reigned in the South, and some of them had made extensive conquests. But none of them seems to have considered leaving a record on stone of his military achievements.

The idea of Rajaraja to add a short account of his military achievements at the beginning of every one of his inscriptions was entirely his own. His action in this respect is all the more laudable because his successors evidently followed his example and have left us more or less complete records of their conquests. But for the historical introductions, which are often found at the beginning of the Tamil inscriptions of Chola, kings the lithic records of the Tamil country would be of very little value, and consequently even the little advance that has been made in elucidating the history of Southern India would be difficult.

An inscription by Rajaraja in [Tamil](#), found in the [Mulbagal](#) district of Karnataka, shows his accomplishments as early as the 19th year. An excerpt from such a [Meikeerthi](#), an inscription recording great accomplishments, follows:^[25]

ஸ்வஸ்திஸ் திருமகள் போல பெருநிலச் செல்வியுந் தனக்கேயுரிமை
பூண்டமை மனக்கொளக் காந்தஞர்ச் சாலைக் களமறுத்தருளி வேங்கை
நாடும் கங்கைபாடியும் நுளம்பபாடியும் தடிகை பாடியும் குடமலை நாடும்
கொல்லமும் கலிங்கமும் எண்டிசை புகழ்தர ஈழ மண்டலமும் இரட்டபாடி
ஏழரை இலக்கமும் திண்டிவேலி வென்றி தண்டால் கொண்டதன் பொழில்
வளர் ஊழியுள் எல்லா யாண்டிலும் தொழுதகை விளங்கும் யாண்டே

செழிஞ்சை தேசக்கொள் ஸ்ரீகோவிராஜராஜகேசரி பந்மரான ஸ்ரீராஜராஜ தேவர்

“ *In the 19th year of the reign of sri-Kōv-IRājarāja-IRājakēsari panmar who, - while his heart rejoiced that like the goddess of fortune, the goddess of great earth had also become his great wife- during his long life of growing gracefulness, was pleased to destroy the ships at Kāndalūr Sālai; conquered with his heroic and victorious army Vēngai-nādu, Gangapadi, Nulambapadi, Tadigai-vali, Kollam, Kalingam, Kudumalai-nādu and after having crossed the deep sea, the impregnable N..njiram, and deprived the Sēlinār(the Pandyas) of their splendour at the very time when their greatness, which was adored everywhere on earth, became conspicuous;-* ^[26] ”

The historical side of Rajaraja's intellectual nature is further manifested in the order he issued to have all the grants made to the Thanjavur temple engraved on stone. Rajaraja not only was particular about recording his achievements, but also was equally diligent in preserving the records of his predecessors. For instance, an inscription of his reign found at Tirumalavadi near Thrichi records an order of the king to the effect that the central shrine of the Vaidyanatha temple at the place should be rebuilt and that, before pulling down the walls, the inscriptions engraved on them should be copied in a book. The records were subsequently re-engraved on the walls from the book after the rebuilding was finished.

[[edit](#)] Religious Policy

An ardent follower of Saivism (one of the 4 major streams of Hinduism), Rajaraja was nevertheless tolerant towards other faiths and creeds. He also had several temples for Vishnu constructed. He also encouraged the construction of the Buddhist [Chudamani Vihara](#) at the request of the [Srivijaya](#) king Sri Maravijayatungavarman. Rajaraja dedicated the proceeds of the revenue from the village of Anaimangalam towards the upkeep of this Vihara.

[[edit](#)] Tirumurai Compilation

Raja Raja Chola embarked on a mission to recover the hymns after hearing short excerpts of *Tevaram* in his court.^[27] He sought the help of Nambi Andar Nambi, who was a priest in a temple.^[28] It is believed that by divine intervention Nambi found the presence of scripts, in the form of cadijam leaves half eaten by white ants in a chamber inside the second precinct in [Thillai Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram](#).^{[27][28]} The *brahmanas* ([Dikshitaras](#)) in the temple opposed the mission, but Rajaraja intervened by consecrating the images of the saint-poets through the streets of Chidambaram.^{[27][29]} Rajaraja thus became to be known as *Tirumurai Kanda Cholan* meaning one who saved the *Tirumurai*.^[29] Thus far Shiva temples only had images of god forms, but after the advent of Rajaraja, the images of the Nayanar saints were also placed inside the temple.^[29] Nambi arranged the hymns of three saint poets [Sambandar](#), [Appar](#) and [Sundarar](#) as the first seven books, [Manickavasagar's](#) *Tirukovayar* and [Tiruvacakam](#) as the 8th book, the 28 hymns of nine other saints as the 9th book, the [Tirumandiram](#) of [Tirumular](#) as the 10th book, 40 hymns by 12

other poets as the 10th book, *Tirutotanar Tiruvanthathi* - the sacred *anthathi* of the labours of the 63 nayanar saints and added his own hymns as the 11th book.^[30] The first seven books were later called as *Tevaram*, and the whole Saiva canon, to which was added, as the 12th book, [Sekkizhar's Periya Puranam](#) (1135 CE) is wholly known as *Tirumurai*, the holy book. Thus Saiva literature which covers about 600 years of religious, philosophical and literary development.^[30]

[\[edit\]](#) Personal Life and Family

Rajaraja was born Arulmozhivarman and was the third child of Parantaka Sundara Chola.

Rajaraja Chola's mother, Vaanavan Maadevi, was the daughter of Thirukkivilur king, Malayamaan Thirumudi Kaari.

His elder brother Aditya II was assassinated c. 969 CE. He had great respect for his elder sister [Ālvār Sri Parāntakan Sri Kundavai Pirāṭṭiyār](#) or more popularly referred to as *Kundavai Pirāṭṭiyār*. We also know of at least one daughter of Rajaraja called *Rajaraja Kundavai Alvar* who he named after his sister.^{[31][32]} Rajaraja had a number of wives. According to inscriptions, at least 15 names are mentioned as his wives - *Ulagamaga Deviyari*, *Thidaipiran magal Chola Madeviyar*, *Abhimanavaliyar*, *Thirailokiya Madeviyar*, *Panchavan Madeviyar*, *Piruthivi Madeviyar*, *Elada Madeviyar*, *Meenavan Madeviyar*, *Nakkan Thillai Alzagiyaar*, *Kaadan Thongiyar*, *Koothan Veeraniyar*, *Elangon Pichiyar*.^[33] Also *Elangon Pichiyar* was the daughter of *Vallavaraiyan Vandhiyathevan* and *Kundavai Nachiyar*. The mother of Rajendra I, the only known son of Rajaraja, was Vaanathi (otherwise called as *Thiripuvana Madeviyar*), Princess of Kodumbaalur. Rajaraja must have had at least three daughters. One of the daughter was named after Rajaraja Cholan's sister - *Kundavai* who was married to the Chalukya Prince *Vimaladithan*. Another daughter was called as *Mathevalzagal* and was mentioned as the *Naduvit Penn* (meaning middle daughter) in one of the Thiruvilachuzhi inscriptions.^[33] The name of the third daughter is not known.

Rajaraja was succeeded by Rajendra Chola I. His natal star was Sadhayam. It was celebrated as Sadhaya-nal vizha, a 7 day festival culminating on his star birthday during the king and his son's reign.^[34] Rajaraja also bore the title *Telungana Kula Kala*.^{[35][36][37]} He was also known as *Rajaraja Sivapada Sekhara* (he who had the feet of [Lord Shiva](#) as his crown).^[38]