

The Achievements of Cholas in the Field of Art and Literature

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INTRODUCTION

The Chola Empire which arose in the ninth century brought under its control a large part of the peninsula. The Cholas developed a powerful Navy which enabled them to develop India's sea trade in the Indian Ocean and to conquer Sri Lanka and the Maldives Islands. Their influence was felt even in the countries of Southeast Asia. The Chola Empire may be said to mark a climax in South Indian History. The founder of the Chola Empire was Vijayalaya, who was at first a feudatory of the Pallavas. He captured Tanjore in 550 A.D. by the end of the 9th century; the Cholas had defeated both the Pallavas of Kanchi and weakened the Pandians bringing the Southern Tamil Country (Tondamandala) under their control. But the Cholas were hard put to defend their position against the Rastrakutas. Krishna III defeated the Chola King and annexed the northern part of the Chola Empire. This was a serious setback to the Cholas but they rapidly recovered particularly after the death of Krishna III in 965 A.D and the downfall of Rashtrakuta Empire.

Age of Rajaraya and Reje :

The greatest Chola roles were rejaraya 985- 1014 and his son Rajendra I (1014-1044) Rajaraya had been appointed they're appointed in thayfathers lifetime and had extensive experience of Administration and warfare before his accession to the throne. Rajaraya destroyed the cheranavy at Trivandrum and Quilon He then conquered Madurai and captured the Pandying. He also invaded Srilanka and annexed its northern part of his empire. In the north, Rajaraya annexed the

northwestern parts of the Ganga region in northwest – Karnataka and overran vengi

Rajarajannd Rajendra I Market their victories y erecting a number of Siva and Vishnu temples at various places. The most famous of these was the rajarajes ware temple at Tanjore which was completed in 1010. The Chola rules adopted the practice of having a long inscription written on the walls of these temples giving a historical narrative of their victories

Chola Government:

The king was the most important – person in the Chola administration, all authority rested in thay hands but he had a council of ministers to advise him .the kings often went on tours in order to keep better touch with the administration. The Cholas maintained a large army consisting of elephants cavalry and infantry. Which were called the three limbs of the army, the Chola army, the Chola empire was divided into mandalas or provinces and these interns were divided into valanadu and Nadu, some time princes of the royal family were appointed governors of provinces. Officials were generally paid by giving them the assignment of revenue-bearing lands

The Chola rules built a network of royal roads which were useful for trade as well as for the movement of the army. Trade and commerce flourished in the Chola empire, and there were some gigantic trade guilds which trade with java and Sumatra the violas also paid attention toirrigation. The river Kaveri and other rivers were seel for the purpose. Many thanks for irrigation were built some of the Chola rulers carried out an elaborate survey of land in order to fix the governments share of the land

revenue. In addition of land tax the Chola rulers drew their income from tolls on trade, taxes on professions, and also from the plunder of the neighboring territories. The Cholas rulers were wealthy and could afford to build a number of towns and magnificent monuments.

Cultural life:

The Chola period witnessed the growth of activism a Vaishnavism, the two branches of Hinduism and the development of various religious philosophies. The Chola rulers patronized Saivism and constructed to Siva. The queens of the royal family also showed a keen interest in Hinduism. The even constructed temples and granted endowments. The series of Tamilnadu maintained cordial relation with the services of north India. It enabled them to intensify religious

Activities in the Choa kingdom, the Saivasaint nambiyandar nimbi the contemporary of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, compiled the twelve of Saivism.

Vaishnavism:

Vaishnavism and Saivism were the two eyes of Hinduism but in the cholo period, equal treatment was not given to Saivism it had only limited temples. Still, this religion flourished the to the dedication of certain saints and scholar. Among them nadamuni was noteworthy Vaishnavism faced various vicissitudes of the feature under cholas. The extent and resources of the cholo empire enable the Chola Puram, Kanchi, etc. The rulers maintained large households and large places, this we learn of seven or five-storeyed house for the period have survived. The Chola capital gangaikonda Chola Puram is now juttet a small village near Tanjore, However, descriptions of the magnificent places of the rulers and their ministers, and of equally. Magnification house in which the merchant lived and to be found in the literature of the period.

Temple Architecture:

Temple architecture in the south attired its climax under the Cholas. The style of architecture which come into vogue during this period is called Dravida because it was confined largely to south India. The main feature of this style was the building of the story upon story above the chief deity room (garbhagriha) the number of stores yes varied from five to seven and they had typical style which came to be called the vimana. A pillaged hall and a flat roof was generally placed in front of the sanctum ,

an early example of the Dravida style of temple architect is the eighth century temple of kailasanatha at Kanchipuram one of the finest and most elaborate examples of the style s however, provided by the Brihadeswara temple at Tanjore built by Rajara Raja I this is also called the Rajaraja temple because the Cholas were in the habit of costing images of king and queen in the temple in addition to the deity the temple at gangaikonda cholapuram, though in dilapidated condition , is another five example of temple architecture under the Cholas a large number of temples were also built at activities were obtained from the procedure for the population of the neighboring areas by the Chola rulers. After the fall of the Cholas, temple building activity continued under the Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Hoysala the district of Dharwar and Hoysalas the district Dharwar and Hoysalas , the district of Dharwar and Hoysalas, capital, Halebid had a large member of temples .the most magnificent of these if Hoysalevara temple it is the best example of that is called

The art of sculpture attained a high standard in south India during this period. One example of this was the giant statue of gomateswar at Saravana belgola. Another aspect was image-making with reached its climax in the dancing figure of the shiva called Nataraja. The Nataraja figure of this period. Particularly those in bronze, are considered masterpieces. Many fine samples of this are to be found in museums in India and outside.

The rules of the various dynasties also patronized arts and letters during this period. While sanscrit was regarded as kings as well as scholars and court poets wrote, in it. A remarkable feature of the period was the growth of literature feature in the language of the areas. A number of popular saints called nayanars and altars who were the devotees of shiva and Vishnu flourished in the Tamil area between the sixth and the ninth centuries. They composed their works in Tamil and other languages of the area. The writings of these saints, which were collected into eleven volumes under the name tirumorais in the early part of the twelfth century are considered sacred and looked upon as a golden age in Tamil literature, Gambari's Ramayana is considered a classic in Tamil literature. Kamban is believed to have lived. At the court of a Chola king. Many others took their themes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, thus bringing these classic nearer to the people.

Though younger than Tamil, Kannada also became a literary language during this period. Therashtrakuta,

the Chalukyas and the Hoysala roles patronized Kannada as well as Telugu. The rashtrakuta king, amoghavarsha, wrote a book on poetics in Canara. Many Jain scholars also contributed to the growth of Canara. Pampa, ponna and ranna are regarded. As the three gems of Kannada poetry although they were under the influence of Jainism, they also wrote on themes taken from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Hannah, who lived at the court of a chalukyan king began the Telugu version of the Mahabharata, The work begun by him was completed in the thirteenth century by Tikkanna. Like the Tamil Ramayana. The Telugu Mahabharata is a classic which inspired many subsequent writers. Many folk or popular themes are also to be found in this literature. Popular themes which were not derived from Sanskrit and which reflect popular sentiments and emotions are called desi or rural in Telugu.

We can thus see that the period. From the eighth to the twelfth century was not only remarkable for political integration in south India but also for cultural development. Fairtrade and commerce also flourished during this period making one of the great periods in the history of south India.

Art and Literature:

The ancient Indian masons and craftsmen produced beautiful works of art. The monolithic pillars erected by Asoka are famous for their shining polish, which matches with the polish on northern black polished ware. It is still my story how the craftsmen could achieve this kind of polish on pillars and pottery. The mauryan polished pillars were mounted by statues of animals, especially lions. The lion capital has been adopted as the national emblem of the government of India. We may also refer to the cave temples of Ajanta as well as the famous Ajanta paintings, which go back to the beginning of the Christian era. In a way Ajanta is the birthplace of Asian art. It contains as many as 30 cave temples, constructed between the second century B.C. and the seventh century A.D. the paintings appeared in the second century A.D. and most of them belong to Gupta times. Their themes were borrowed from stories about previous incarnations of the Buddha and from ancient literature.

The achievement of India painters at Ajanta has been lauded by all art connoisseurs. The lines and colors used at Ajanta display a proficiency which is not found in the world. Before the renaissance in Europe. Indian art, moreover, was not limited to India. It spread to central

Asia and China at one end to southeast Asia on the other. The focal point for the spread of Indian art into Afghanistan and the neighboring part of central Asia was Gandhara. Elements of Indian art were fused with those of central Asian and Hellenistic art giving rise to a new art style called the Gandhara style. The first statue of the Buddha was fashioned in this style. Although its features are Indian the size and the presentation of the head and the drapery show Greek influence similarly the temples constructed in south India served in some ways as models for the construction of temples in Southeast Asia. We have already referred to the temple at Borobudur in Kampuchea and the temple at Borobudur in Java.

In the field of education we may refer to the huge monastic establishment of Nalanda. It attracted students not only from different parts of India. But also from Tibet and China, The standards of examination were stiff, and only those who could pass the test prescribed by the dvarapantifa or the scholar at the gate could be admitted to this university Nalanda is one of the earliest examples of a residential teaching institution which housed thousands of monks devoted to learning philosophy and meditation.

In the field of literature the Indians produced the Rig Veda which is the earliest specimen of Indo Aryan literature. And on the basis of which an attempt has been made to define the nature of the Aryan culture. In Gupta times we have the works of Kalidasa, whose play *Abhijnanasakuntalam* has been translated into all the important languages of the world.

Structural Art (a) Temples:

The Chola age marks the continuation and growth of the structural part of the Pallava period yet it was distinctive in style from the structural part of the period of Rajasimha of Aparchifha. The Cholas excelled their predecessors Fergusson. The art reached a new height in the Chola temples a colossal size with the artistic perfection like the works of goldsmiths through chiseled on stone.

The Chola kings used granite as a building material. The early vijayala and poranthaka built small temples, the specimens of which are seen around Tiruchi, Pudukkottai and Tanjavoorvijayalachaeswaram at Narthamalai is a typical example of the early Chola temple. The Cholas the Kaveribasin with beautiful temples, The temples for Durgai at Thanjaroor make the end of the growth of the early Chola.

The chola sculptor demonstrated his skill through the medium of stone and metal. Religion had formulated the rules for sculpture and these rules were strictly followed. Hence the sculptural works were intended for something more than mere beauty.

Unlike the Pallava temples, there are plain spaces on the walls. What was aimed there was not more ornamental decking but realistic of divine figures. To attract and lead the bhaktars to deep duration.

The bronze images of the Chola age one noted for their realism and exquisite beauty. The representation of siva in nataraja form is unsurpassed. In the Vaishnava temples Vishnu is represented in the three forms. A spiritual calmness is depicted in sculptural representation of altars. The female figures of human and divine and represented without the upper cloth. The sculptor skillfully veiled eroticism in them.

Paintings:

The art of paintings has a long history. Literary evidence show that this art flourished under the great cave of the Cholas. The Cholas monarchs should greatly interest. The large extent of morals and temples enable as to estimate the extent of proficiency of the Chola painter., The Chola works are shadowed by the later additions made during the Nayak age.

The Chola painter was not inferior to the sculptor. He too created a serenity. The figures engraved are so realistic that they have seen alive. The marriages seems of stSundaramoorthy is the best example of it. They of the Chola painter ranged from Rustie life to court scenes. They help us to know the prevailing customs. Mannars and costumes. The figures of the celestial dancing girls have the likeness of the Ajanta painting. Music and dancing grew as hand maids to religion ,the temples and mutts imparted training in vocal and instrumental music , Books on musicology were known , according to tradition Nampiyandar Nampi and Apayakulasekara visited the birth place of thiruneelakandar in their quest for setting up ragas. Devotional literature supplied materials and trained musicians outpoured touching songs in harmonious voice and attracted the eager audiences

Sculptural representations show that all types of music were popular. At the completion of the

Brihadiswarar temple Raja I employed several musicians to accompany the dancing girls in performance. The music party consisted of ganapadis Drummer and udukkai player. Veena was in use conch blowers and flute players accompanied the group of musicians. Endowments were honoured with birudas like vadyamanayanvinaidittan and saharabahu there were two of music. The northern music was a known as aryam. The native music was called desi. The existence of such a distinction is borne out by the inscription of raja I in the year 1014 A.D. The mandapas acted as platforms of religious propaganda Dance performance in the stages on festive occasions attracted the people. The king was punctilious in appointing dancing girls in large numbers. The sculptural representation of dancers in temples show the extent of growth of this art.

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