

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

I M A HISTORY VI SEMESTER

HISTORY OF KONGU NADU UPTO 1800 A.D (18MHI24C)

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Unit II

Western Ganga was an important ruling dynasty of ancient [Karnataka](#) in India which lasted from about 350 to 1000 CE. They are known as "Western Gangas" to distinguish them from the [Eastern Gangas](#) who in late centuries ruled over [Kalinga](#) (modern [Odisha](#)). The general belief is that the Western Gangas began their rule during a time when multiple native clans asserted their freedom due to the weakening of the [Pallava](#) empire in [South India](#), a geo-political event sometimes attributed to the southern conquests of [Samudra Gupta](#). The Western Ganga sovereignty lasted from about 350 to 550 CE, initially ruling from [Kolar](#) and later, moving their capital to [Talakadu](#) on the banks of the [Kaveri River](#) in modern [Mysore district](#).

After the rise of the imperial [Chalukyas of Badami](#), the Gangas accepted Chalukya overlordship and fought for the cause of their overlords against the [Pallavas](#) of [Kanchi](#). The Chalukyas were replaced by the [Rashtrakutas](#) of [Manyakheta](#) in 753 CE as the dominant power in the [Deccan](#). After a century of struggle for autonomy, the Western Gangas finally accepted Rashtrakuta overlordship and successfully fought alongside them against their

foes, the [Chola Dynasty](#) of [Tanjavur](#). In the late 10th century, north of Tungabhadra river, the Rashtrakutas were

replaced by the emerging Western Chalukya Empire and the Chola Dynasty saw renewed power south of the [Kaveri](#) river. The defeat of the Western Gangas by Cholas around 1000 resulted in the end of the Ganga influence over the region.

Though territorially a small kingdom, the Western Ganga contribution to [polity](#), culture and literature of the modern south Karnataka region is considered important. The Western Ganga kings showed benevolent tolerance to all faiths but are most famous for their patronage toward [Jainism](#) resulting in the construction of monuments in places such as [Shravanabelagola](#) and [Kambadahalli](#). The kings of this dynasty encouraged the fine arts due to which literature in [Kannada](#) and [Sanskrit](#) flourished. [Chavundaraya](#)'s writing, *Chavundaraya Purana* of 978 CE, is an important work in Kannada prose. Many classics were written on various subjects ranging from [religion](#) to [elephant](#) management.

Multiple theories have been proposed regarding the ancestry of the founders of the Western Ganga dynasty (prior to the 4th century). Some mythical accounts point to a [northern](#) origin,^{[1][2]} while theories based on [epigraphy](#) suggest a [southern](#) origin. According to some records, the Western Gangas were of the Kanvayana [gotra](#) and traced their lineage to the [Ikshvakus](#) of the [solar dynasty](#).^[3] Historians who propose the southern origin have further debated whether the early petty chieftains of the clan (prior to their rise to power) were natives of the southern districts of modern Karnataka,^{[4][5][6][7]} the [Kongu Nadu](#) region in modern [Tamil Nadu](#)^{[8][9]} or of the southern districts of modern [Andhra Pradesh](#).^{[10][11]} These regions encompass an area of the southern [Deccan](#) where the three modern states merge geographically. It is theorised that the Gangas may have taken advantage of the confusion caused by the invasion of southern India by the [northern](#) king [Samudra Gupta](#) prior to 350, and carved out a kingdom for themselves. The area they controlled was called Gangavadi and included regions of the modern district of [Mysore](#), [Hassan](#), [Chamarajanagar](#), [Tumkur](#), [Kolar](#), [Mandya](#) and [Bangalore](#) in Karnataka state.^[12] At times, they also controlled some areas in modern [Tamil Nadu](#) (Kongu region starting from the 6th century rule of King Avineta) and [Andhra Pradesh](#) (Ananthpur region starting from the middle of the 5th century)^[13] The founding king

of the dynasty was Konganivarma Madhava who made [Kolar](#) his capital around 350 and ruled for about twenty years.^[13]

By the time of Harivarma in 390, the Gangas had consolidated their kingdom with [Talakad](#) as their capital. Their move from the early capital Kolar may have been a strategic one with the intention of containing the growing [Kadamba](#) power.^[13] By 430 they had consolidated their eastern territories comprising modern Bangalore, Kolar and Tumkur districts and by 470 they had gained control over Kongu region in modern Tamil Nadu, Sendraka (modern [Chikkamagaluru](#) and [Belur](#)), Punnata and Pannada regions (comprising modern [Heggadadevanakote](#) and [Nanjangud](#)) in modern Karnataka.^{[14][15]} In 529, King [Durvinita](#) ascended the throne after waging a war with his younger brother who was favoured by his father, King [Avinita](#).^[16] Some accounts suggest that in this power struggle, the Pallavas of Kanchi supported Avinita's choice of heir and the Badami Chalukya King Vijayaditya supported his father-in-law, Durvinita.^[17] From the inscriptions it is known that these battles were fought in Tondaimandalam and Kongu regions (northern Tamil Nadu) prompting historians to suggest that Durvinita fought the Pallavas successfully.^[18] Considered the most successful of the Ganga kings, Durvinita was well versed in arts such as music, dance, [ayurveda](#) and taming wild elephants. Some inscriptions sing paeans to him by comparing him to [Yudhishtira](#) and [Manu](#) – figures from Hindu mythology known for their wisdom and fairness.^{[19][20]}

Politically, the Gangas were feudatories and close allies who also shared matrimonial relations with the Chalukyas. This is attested by inscriptions which describe their joint campaigns against their arch enemy, the Pallavas of Kanchi.^[21] From the year 725 onwards, the Gangavadi territories came to be called as the "Gangavadi-96000" (*Shannavati Sahasra Vishaya*) comprising the eastern and western provinces of modern southern Karnataka.^[22] King [Sripurusha](#) fought the Pallava King Nandivarman Pallavamalla successfully, bringing Penkulikottai in north [Arcot](#) under his control temporarily for which he earned the title *Permanadi*.^{[23][24]} A contest with the Pandyas of [Madurai](#) over control of Kongu region ended in a Ganga defeat, but a matrimony between a Ganga princess and Rajasimha Pandya's son brought peace helping the Gangas retain control over the contested region.^{[25][26]}

In 753, when the Rashtrakutas replaced the Badami Chalukyas as the dominant force in the Deccan, the Ganga offered stiff resistance for about a century.^{[27][28]} King [Shivamara II](#) is mostly known for his wars with the Rashtrakuta [Dhruva Dharavarsha](#), his subsequent defeat and imprisonment, his release from prison and eventually his death on the battle field. The Ganga resistance continued through the reign of Rashtrakuta [Govinda III](#) and by 819, a Ganga resurgence gained them partial control over Gangavadi under King Rachamalla.^[29] Seeing the futility of waging war with the Western Ganga, Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha I gave his daughter Chandrabhalabbe in marriage to Ganga prince Butuga I, son of King Ereganga Neetimarga. The Gangas thereafter became staunch allies of the Rashtrakutas, a position they maintained till the end of the Rashtrakuta dynasty of Manyakheta.^{[30][31][32]}

After an uneventful period, [Butuga II](#) ascended the throne in 938 with the help of Rashtrakuta [Amoghavarsha III](#) (whose daughter he married).^[33] He helped the Rashtrakutas win decisive victories in [Tamilakam](#) in the [battle of Takkolam](#) against the [Chola Dynasty](#). With this victory, the Rashtrakutas took control of modern northern Tamil Nadu.^{[34][35][36]} In return for their valour, the Gangas were awarded extensive territories in the [Tungabhadra](#) river valley.^{[33][37]} King Marasimha II who came to power in 963 aided the Rashtrakutas in victories against the Gurjara [Pratihara](#) King Lalla and the [Paramara](#) kings of [Malwa](#) in [Central India](#).^{[38][39]} [Chavundaraya](#), a minister in the Western Ganga court was a valiant commander, able administrator and an accomplished poet in [Kannada](#) and Sanskrit.^{[40][41]} He served King Marasimha II and his successors ably and helped King Rachamalla IV suppress a civil war in 975. Towards the end of the 10th century, the Rashtrakuta had been supplanted by the [Western Chalukya Empire](#) in [Manyakheta](#). In the south, the [Chola Dynasty](#) who were seeing a resurgence of power under [Rajaraja Chola I](#) conquered Gangavadi around the year 1000, bringing the Western Ganga dynasty to an end. Thereafter, large areas of south Karnataka region came under Chola control for about a century.^[42]

The Western Ganga administration was influenced by principles stated in the ancient text [arthaśāstra](#). The *praje gavundas* mentioned in the Ganga records held responsibilities similar to those of the village elder (*gramavridhdhas*) mentioned by [Kautilya](#). Succession to the throne was hereditary but there were instances when

this was overlooked.^[43] The kingdom was divided into *Rashtra* (district) and further into *Visaya* (consisting of possibly 1000 villages) and *Desa*. From the 8th century, the Sanskrit term *Visaya* was replaced by the Kannada term *Nadu*. Examples of this change are Sindanadu-8000 and Punnadu-6000,^[44] with scholars differing about the significance of the numerical suffix. They opine that it was either the revenue yield of the division computed in cash terms^[45] or the number of fighting men in that division or the number of revenue paying hamlets in that division^[46] or the number of villages included in that territory.^[45]

Inscriptions have revealed several important administrative designations such as prime minister (*sarvadhikari*) treasurer (*shribhandari*), foreign minister (*sandhivirgrahi*) and chief minister (*mahapradhana*). All of these positions came with an additional title of commander (*dandanayaka*). Other designations were royal steward (*manevergade*), master of robes (*mahapasayita*), commander of elephant corps (*gajasahani*), commander of cavalry (*thuragasahani*) etc.^[47] In the royal house, Niyogis oversaw palace administration, royal clothing and jewellery etc. and the *Padiyara* were responsible for court ceremonies including door keeping and protocol.^[48]

Officials at the local level were the *pergade*, *nadabova*, *nalagamiga*, *prabhu* and *gavunda*.^[49] The *pergades* were superintendents from all social classes such as artisans, gold smiths, black smiths etc. The *pergades* dealing with the royal household were called *manepergade* (house superintendent) and those who collected tolls were called *Sunka vergades*.^[50] The *nadabovas* were accountants and tax collectors at the *Nadu* level and sometimes functioned as scribes.^[51] The *nalagamigas* were officers who organized and maintained defence at the *Nadu* level.^[52] The *prabhu* constituted a group of elite people drawn together to witness land grants and demarcation of land boundaries.^[53] The *gavundas* who appear most often in inscriptions were the backbone of medieval polity of the southern Karnataka region. They were landlords and local elite whom the state utilized their services to collect taxes, maintain records of landownership, bear witness to grants and transactions and even raise militia when required.^[54]

Inscriptions that specify land grants, rights and ownership were descriptive of the boundaries of demarcation using natural features such as rivers, streams, water channels, hillocks, large boulders, layout of the village, location of forts (*kote*) if any in the proximity, irrigation canals, temples, tanks and even shrubs and large trees. Also included

was the type of soil, the crops meant to be grown and tanks or wells to be excavated for irrigation.^{[55][56]} Inscriptions mention wet land, cultivable land, forest and waste land.^[57] There are numerous references to hamlets (*palli*) belonging to the hunter communities who resided in them (*bedapalli*).^[58] From the 6th century onwards, the inscriptions refer to feudal lords by the title *arasa*. The *arasas* were either [brahmins](#) or from tribal background who controlled hereditary territories paying periodic tribute to the king.^[59] The *velavali* who were loyal bodyguards of the royalty were fierce warriors under oath (*vele*). They moved with the royal family and were expected to fight for the master and be willing to lay down their lives in the process. If the king died the *velavali* were required to self immolate on the funeral pyre of the master.^[60]

Economy

The famous Begur inscription in old Kannada, dated to c. 908–938 CE, from the rule of Western Ganga dynasty King Ereyappa.

The Gangavadi region consisted of the [malnad](#) region, the plains ([Bayaluseemae](#)) and the semi-malnad with lower elevation and rolling hills. The main crops of the malnad region were paddy, [betel](#) leaves, [cardamom](#) and [pepper](#) and the semi-malnad region with its lower altitude produced [rice](#) millets such as [ragi](#) and [corn](#), pulses, [oilseeds](#) and it was also the base for cattle farming.^[61] The plains to the east were the flat lands fed by [Kaveri](#), [Tungabhadra](#) and [Vedavati](#) rivers where cultivations of [sugarcane](#) paddy, [coconut](#), [areca](#) nut (*adeka totta*), betel leaves, [plantain](#) and flowers (*vara vana*) were common.^{[44][62]} Sources of irrigation were excavated tanks, wells, natural ponds and water bodies in the catchment area of dams (*Katta*).^[63] Inscriptions attesting to irrigation of previously uncultivated lands seem to indicate an expanding agrarian community.^[64]

Soil types mentioned in records are black soil (*Karimaniya*) in the Sinda-8000 territory and to red soil (*Kebbayya mannu*)^{[65][66]} Cultivated land was of three types; wet land, dry land and to a lesser extent garden land with paddy being the dominant crop of the region. Wet lands were called *kalani*, *galde*, *nir mannu* or *nir panya* and was specifically used to denote paddy land requiring standing water.^[67] The fact that pastoral economies were spread

throughout Gangavadi region comes from references to cowherds in many inscriptions. The terms [gosahasra](#) (a

thousand cows), *gasara* (owner of cows), *gosasi* (donor of cows), *goyiti* (cowherdess), *gosasa* (protector of cows) attest to this.^[68] Inscriptions indicate ownership of cows may have been as important as cultivable land and that there may have existed a social hierarchy based on this.^[69] Inscriptions mention cattle raids attesting to the importance of the pastoral economy, destructive raids, assaults on women (*pendir-udeyulcal*), abduction of women by *bedas* (hunter tribes); all of which indicate the existing militarism of the age.^[70]

Lands that were exempt from taxes were called *manya* and sometimes consisted of several villages. They were granted by local chieftains without any reference to the overlord, indicating a de-centralised economy. These lands, often given to heroes who perished in the line of duty were called *bilavritti* or *kalnad*.^[71] When such a grant was made for the maintenance of temples at the time of consecration, it was called *Talavritti*.^[72] Some types of taxes on income were *kara* or *anthakara* (internal taxes), *utkota* (gifts due to the king), *hiranya* (cash payments) and *sulika* (tolls and duties on imported items). Taxes were collected from those who held the right to cultivate land; even if the land was not actually cultivated.^{[73][74]}

Siddhaya was a local tax levied on agriculture and *pottondi* was a tax levied on merchandise by the local feudal ruler. Based on context, *pottondi* also meant 1/10, *aydalavi* meant 1/5 and *elalavi* meant 1/7.^[75] *Mannadare* literally meant land tax and was levied together with shepherds tax (*Kurimbadere*) payable to the chief of shepherds. *Bhaga* meant a portion or share of the produce from land or the land area itself. Minor taxes such as *Kirudere* (due to the landlords) and *samathadere* (raised by the army officers or *samantha*) are mentioned. In addition to taxes for maintenance of the local officer's retinue, villages were obligated to feed armies on the march to and from battles.^[76] *Bittuvatta* or *niravari* taxes comprised usually of a percentage of the produce and was collected for constructing irrigation tanks.^[77]

Culture

The Western Gangas gave patronage to all the major religions of the time; [Jainism](#) and the Hindu sects of [Shaivism](#), [Vedic Brahmanism](#) and [Vaishnavism](#). However scholars have argued that not all Ganga kings may have given equal priority to all the faiths. Some historians believe that the Gangas were ardent Jains.^[78] However

inscriptions contradict this by providing references to *katamukhas* (staunch Shaiva

ascetics), *pasupatas* and *lokayatas* (followers of *Pasupatha* doctrine) who flourished in Gangavadi, indicating that Shaivism was also popular. King Madhava and Harivarman were devoted to cows and brahmins, King Vishnugop was a devout [Vaishnava](#),^[79] Madhava III's and Avinita's inscriptions describe lavish endowments to Jain order and temples^[80] and King Durvinita performed Vedic sacrifices prompting historians to claim he was a [Hindu](#).^[81]

Jainism became popular in the dynasty in the 8th century when the ruler King Shivamara I constructed numerous Jain [basadis](#).^[82] King Butuga II and minister [Chavundaraya](#) were staunch Jains which is evident from the construction of the [Gommateshwara](#) monolith.^[83] Jains worshipped the twenty four [tirthankars](#) (*Jinas*) whose images were consecrated in their temples. The worship of the footprint of spiritual leaders such as those of [Bhadrabahu](#) in [Shravanabelagola](#) from the 10th century is considered a parallel to [Buddhism](#).^[84] Some brahminical influences are seen in the consecration of the Gomateshwara monolith which is the statue of [Bahubali](#) the son of [Tirthankar](#) *Adinatha* (just as Hindus worshipped the sons of Shiva).^[85] The worship of subordinate deities such as *yaksa* and *yaksi*, earlier considered as mere attendants of the *tirthankars* was seen from the 7th century to the 12th century.^[86]

Vedic Brahminism was popular in the 6th and 7th centuries when inscriptions refer to grants made to *Srotriya* Brahmins.^[87] These inscriptions also describe the *gotra* (lineage) affiliation to royal families and their adherence of such Vedic rituals as *asvamedha* (horse sacrifice) and *hiranyagarbha*.^[88] Brahmins and king enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship; rituals performed by the brahmins gave legitimacy to kings and the land grants made by kings to brahmins elevated them in society to the level of wealthy landowners.^[89] Vaishnavism however maintained a low profile and not many inscriptions describe grants toward its cause.^[90] Some Vaishnava temples were built by the Gangas such as the *Narayanaswami* temples at [Nanjangud](#) Sattur and Hangala in modern Mysore district.^[91] The deity [Vishnu](#) was depicted with four arms holding a conch (*sanka*), discus (*cakra*), mace (*gada*) and lotus (*padma*).^[92]

From the beginning of the 8th century, patronage to Shaivism increased in every section of the society; the landed elite, landlords, assemblies (*samaya*), schools of learning (*aghrahas*)^[93] and minor ruling families such as the [Bana](#), [Nolamba](#) and [Chalukya](#) clans.^{[94][95]} The Shaiva temples contained a Shiva *linga* in the [sanctum sanctorum](#) along with images of the mother goddess, [Surya](#) (Sun god)^[96] and [Nandi](#) (a bull and attendant of Shiva) which was normally enshrined in a separate pavilion facing the sanctum.^{[97][98]} The *linga* was man made and in some cases had etchings of [Ganapati](#) (son of Shiva) and [Parvati](#) (consort and wife of Shiva) on it.^[97] Due to the vigorous efforts of priests and ascetics, Shaiva monastic orders flourished in many places such as [Nandi Hills](#), [Avani](#) and Hebbata in modern Kolar district.^[99]

Society

The Western Ganga society in many ways reflected the emerging religious, political and cultural developments of those times. Women became active in local administration because Ganga kings distributed territorial responsibility to their queens such as the feudal queen Parabbaya-arasi of Kundattur^[100] and the queens of King Sripurusha, Butuga II and feudal king Permadi.^[101] Inheritance of fiscal and administrative responsibility by the son-in-law, the wife or by the daughter is evident. The position of prime minister of King Ereganga II and position of *nalgavunda* (local landlord) bestowed upon Jakkiabbe, the wife of a fallen hero are examples. When Jakkiabbe took to asceticism, her daughter inherited the position.^{[102][103]}

The devadasi system (*sule* or courtesan) in temples was prevalent and was modelled after the structures in the royal palace.^[104] Contemporaneous literature such as [Vaddaradhane](#) makes a mention of the chief queen (*Dharan Mahadevi*) accompanied by lower ranking queens (*arasiyargal*) and courtesans of the women's royal quarters (*pendarasada suleyargal*).^[104] Some of the courtesans and concubines employed in the harem of the kings and chieftains were well respected, examples being Nandavva at whose instance a local chief made land grant to a Jain temple.^[105] Education in the royal family was closely supervised and included such subjects as political science, elephant and horse riding, archery, medicine, poetry, grammar, drama, literature, dance, singing and use of musical instruments.^[101] Brahmins enjoyed an influential position in society and were exempt from certain taxes and customs due on land. In turn they managed public affairs such as teaching, local judiciary, functioned as trustees

and bankers, managed schools, temples, irrigation tanks, rest houses, collected taxes due from villages and raised money from public subscriptions.^[106]

By virtue of a Hindu belief that killing of a brahmin (*Bramhatya*) was a sin, capital punishment was not applicable to them.^[107] Upper caste [kshatriyas](#) (*satkshatriya*) were also exempt from capital punishment due to their high position in the caste system. Severe crimes committed were punishable by the severing of a foot or hand.^[108] Contemporary literary sources reveal up to ten castes in the [Hindu caste system](#); three among kshatriya, three among brahmin, two among [vaishya](#) and two among [shudras](#).^[109] Family laws permitted a wife or daughter or surviving relatives of a deceased person to claim properties such as his home, land, grain, money etc. if there were no male heirs. If no claimants to the property existed, the state took possession of these properties as *Dharmadeya* (charitable asset).^[110] Intercaste marriage, child marriage, marriage of a boy to maternal uncle's daughter, *Svayamvara* marriage (where the bride garlands her choice of a groom from among many aspirants) were all in vogue.^[111] Memorials containing [hero stones](#) (*virgal*) were erected for fallen heroes and the concerned family received monetary aid for maintenance of the memorial.^[112]

The presence of numerous *Mahasatikals* (or *Mastikal* – hero stones for a woman who accepted ritual death upon the demise of her husband) indicates the popularity of [Sati](#) among royalty.^[113] Ritual death by [sallekhana](#) and by *jalasamadhi* (drowning in water) were also practiced.^[114] Popular clothing among men was the use of two unrestricted garments, a [Dhoti](#) as a lower garment and a plain cloth as upper garment while women wore [Saris](#) with stitched petticoats. Turbans were popular with men of higher standing and people used umbrellas made with bamboo or reeds.^[115] Ornaments were popular among men and women and even elephants and horses were decorated. Men wore finger rings, necklaces (*honnasara* and *honnagala sara*), bracelets (*Kaduga*) and wristlets (*Kaftkina*). Women wore a nose jewel (*bottu*), nose ring (*mugutti*), bangles (*bale* or *kankana*) and various types of necklaces (*honna gante sara* and *kati sutra*).^[115] During leisure, men amused themselves with horse riding, watching wrestling bouts, [cock fights](#) and ram fights.^[116] There existed a large and well organised network of schools for imparting higher education and these schools were known by various names such

as *agraharas*, *ghatikas*, *brahmapura* or *matha*.^[117] Inscriptions mention schools of higher education at Salotgi, [Balligavi](#), [Talagunda](#), [Aihole](#), [Arasikere](#) and other places.

Literature

The Western Ganga rule was a period of brisk literary activity in Sanskrit and Kannada, though many of the writings are now considered extinct and are known only from references made to them.^{[118][119]} Chavundaraya's writing, *Chavundaraya Purana* (or *Trishashtilakshana mahapurana*) of 978 CE, is an early existing work in prose style in Kannada and contains a summary of the Sanskrit writings, [Adipurana](#) and *Uttarapurana* which were written a century earlier by [Jinasena](#) and Gunabhadra during the rule of Rashtrakuta [Amoghavarsha I](#).^[119] The prose, composed in lucid Kannada, was mainly meant for the common man and avoided any reference to complicated elements of Jain doctrines and philosophy. His writings seem to be influenced by the writings of his predecessor [Adikavi Pampa](#) and contemporary [Ranna](#). The work narrates the legends of a total of 63 Jain proponents including twenty-four Jain *Tirthankar*, twelve *Chakravartis*, nine *Balabhadras*, nine *Narayanans* and nine *Pratinarayanans*.^{[120][121]}

The earliest postulated Kannada writer from this dynasty is King Durvinita of the 6th century. [Kavirajamarga](#) of 850 CE, refers to a Durvinita as an early writer of Kannada [prose](#).^{[16][122][123]} Around 900 CE, Gunavarma authored the Kannada works, *Shudraka* and *Harivamsha*. His writings are considered extinct but references to these writings are found in later years. He is known to have been patronised by King Ereganga Neetimarga II. In *Shudraka*, he has favourably compared his patron to King Shudraka of ancient times.^{[124][125]} The great Kannada poet Ranna was patronised by Chavundaraya in his early literary days.^[126] Ranna's classic *Parashurama charite* is considered a eulogy of his patron who held such titles as *Samara Parashurama*.^[40]

[Nagavarma I](#), a brahmin scholar who came from [Vengi](#) in modern Andhra Pradesh (late 10th century) was also patronised by Chavundaraya. He wrote *Chandombudhi* (ocean of prosody) addressed to his wife. This is considered the earliest available Kannada writing in [prosody](#).^{[120][125]} He also wrote one of the earliest available [romance](#) classics in Kannada called *Karnataka Kadambari* in sweet and flowing *champu* (mixed verse and prose) style. It is based on an earlier romantic work in Sanskrit by poet Bana and is popular among

critics.^{[120][125]} *Gajashtaka* (hundred verses on elephants), a rare Kannada work on elephant management was written by King Shivamara II around 800 CE but this work is now considered extinct.^{[119][124]} Other writers such as Manasiga and Chandrabhatta were known to be popular in the 10th century.^[127]

In an age of classical Sanskrit literature, Madhava II (brother of King Vishnugopa) wrote a treatise *Dattaka Sutravritti* which was based on an earlier work on erotics by a writer called Dattaka. A Sanskrit version of *Vaddakatha*, a commentary on [Pāṇini](#)'s grammar called *Sabdavathara* and a commentary on the 15th chapter of a Sanskrit work called *Kiratarjunneya* by poet Bharavi (who was in Durvinita's court) are ascribed to Durvinita.^[118] King Shivamara II is known to have written *Gajamata Kalpana*.^[118] Hemasena, also known as Vidya Dhananjaya authored *Raghavapandaviya*, a narration of the stories of [Rama](#) and the [Pandavas](#) simultaneously through puns.^[128] *Gayachintamani* and *Kshatrachudamini* which were based on poet Bana's work *Kadambari* were written by Hemasena's pupil Vadeebhasimha in prose style.^[124] and Chavundaraya wrote *Charitarasara*.^[40]

Architecture

The Western Ganga style of architecture was influenced by the Pallava and Badami Chalukya architectural features, in addition to indigenous Jain features.^[129] The Ganga pillars with a conventional lion at the base and a circular shaft of the pillar on its head, the stepped *Vimana* of the shrine with horizontal [mouldings](#) and square pillars were features inherited from the Pallavas. These features are also found in structures built by their subordinates, the Banas and [Nolambas](#).^[124]

The monolith of [Gomateshwara](#) commissioned by Chavundaraya is considered the high point of the Ganga sculptural contribution in ancient Karnataka. Carved from fine-grained white granite, the image stands on a lotus. It has no support up to the thighs and is 60 feet (18 m) tall with the face measuring 6.5 feet (2.0 m). With the serene expression on the face of the image, its curled hair with graceful locks, its proportional anatomy, the monolith size, and the combination of its artistry and craftsmanship have led it to be called the mightiest achievement in sculptural art in medieval Karnataka.^[130] It is the largest monolithic statue in the world.^[131] Their

free standing pillars called *Mahasthambha* or *Rheabmasthambha* are also considered unique examples of which

are the Brahmadeva pillar and [Tyagada Brahmadeva Pillar](#).^{[132][133]} At the top of the pillar whose shaft (cylindrical or octagonal) is decorated with creepers and other floral motifs is the seated *Brahma* and the base of the pillar normally has engravings of important Jain personalities and inscriptions.^[134]

Other important contributions are the Jain basadis' whose towers have gradually receding stories (*talas*) ornamented with small models of temples. These tiny shrines have in them engravings of tirthankars (Jain saints). Semicircular windows connect the shrines and decorative [Kirtimukha](#) (demon faces) are used at the top. The [Chavundaraya basadi](#) built in the 10th or 11th century, Chandragupta basadi built in the 6th century and the monolithic of [Gomateshwara](#) of 982 are the most important monuments at [Shravanabelagola](#).^[135] Some features were added to the Chandragupta basadi by famous Hoysala sculptor Dasoja in the 12th century. The decorative doorjambs and perforated screen windows which depict scenes from the life of King [Chandragupta Maurya](#) are known to be his creation.^[136] The [Panchakuta Basadi at Kambadahalli](#) (five towered Jain temple) of about 900 with a Brahmadeva pillar is an excellent example of [Dravidian](#) art.^{[137][138]} The wall niches here are surmounted by *torana* ([lintel](#)) with carvings of floral motifs, flying divine creatures (*gandharva*) and imaginary monsters (*makara*) ridden by [Yaksas](#) (attendants of saints) while the niches are occupied by images of tirthankars themselves.^[139] Other notable constructions were the [Vallimalai Jain caves](#) and the [Seeyamangalam Jain temple](#) during the reign of [Rachamalla II](#),^{[140][141]} and the 5th or 6th century Parshvanatha temple at the [Kanakagiri Jain tirth](#).^{[142][143]}

The Gangas built many Hindu temples with impressive Dravidian [gopuras](#) containing stucco figures from the Hindu pantheon, decorated pierced screen windows which are featured in the *mantapa* (hall) along with [saptamatrika](#) carvings (seven heavenly mothers).^[144] Some well known examples are the [Arakeshvara Temple](#) at Hole Alur,^[145] Kapileswara temple at Manne, Kolaramma temple at Kolar, [Rameshwara temple at Narasamangala](#),^[146] [Nagakeshwara temple](#) at Begur^[147] and the [Kalleswara temple](#) at Aralaguppe.^[148] At Talakad they built the [Maraleswara temple](#), the [Arakeswara temple](#) and the [Patalaswara temple](#). Unlike the Jain temple

where floral frieze decoration is common, Hindu temples were distinguished by friezes (slab of stone with decorative sculptures) illustrating episodes from the epics and [puranas](#).^[139] Another unique legacy of the Gangas are the number of *virgal* (hero stones) they have left behind; memorials containing sculptural details in relief of war scenes, Hindu deities, *saptamatrikas*, Jain tirthankars and ritual death (such as the [Doddahundi hero stone](#)).^{[134][149]}

Language

The Western Gangas used Kannada and Sanskrit extensively as their language of administration. Some of their inscriptions are also bilingual in these languages. In bilingual inscriptions the formulaic passages stating origin myths, genealogies, titles of Kings and benedictions tended to be in Sanskrit, while the actual terms of the grant such as information on the land or village granted, its boundaries, participation of local authorities, rights and obligations of the grantee, taxes and dues and other local concerns were in the local language.^[150] The usage of these two languages showed important changes over the centuries. During the first phase (350–725), Sanskrit copper plates dominated, indicating the initial ascendancy of the local language as a language of administration and the fact that majority of the records from this phase were *brahmadeya* grants (grants to Brahmin temples).^[151] In the second phase (725–1000), lithic inscriptions in Kannada outnumbered Sanskrit copper plates consistent with the patronage Kannada received from rich and literate Jains who used Kannada as their medium to spread the Jain faith.^{[44][152]} Recent excavations at Tumbula near Mysore have revealed a set of early [copper plate](#) bilingual inscriptions dated 444. The genealogy of the kings of the dynasty is described in Sanskrit while Kannada was used to describe the boundary of the village.^[153] An interesting inscription discovered at Beguru near modern [Bangalore](#) that deserves mention is the epigraph dated 890 that refers to a *Bengaluru* war. This is in *Halakannada* (old Kannada) language and is the earliest mention of the name of [Bangalore](#) city.^[154] The Western Gangas minted coins with Kannada and Nagari legends,^{[155][156]} the most common feature on their coins was the image of an elephant on the obverse and floral petal symbols on the reverse. The Kannada legend *Bhadra*, a royal umbrella or a conch shell appeared on top of the elephant image. The denominations are the *pagoda* (weighing 50 grains), the *fanam* weighting one tenth or one half of the *pagoda* and the quarter *fanams*.

Early Pandyan Kingdom

The **Early Pandyas** of the [Sangam period](#) were one of the three main kingdoms of the [ancient Tamil country](#), the other two being the [Cholas](#), and [Cheras](#) Dynasty. As with many other kingdoms around this period (earlier than 200 BCE), most of the information about the Early Pandyas come to modern historians mainly through literary sources and some epigraphic, archaeological and numismatic evidence. The capital of the Early Pandyan kingdom was initially [Korkai](#), [Thoothukudi](#)^[1] and was later moved to Koodal (now [Madurai](#)) during the reign of [Nedunjelivan I.](#)^[2] The kingdom lay to the south of the [Maurya Empire](#) of India.

The kings of the [Pandyan Dynasty](#) are frequently mentioned in [Sangam literature](#) of the third century BCE and onwards, in literary works such as the [Mathuraikkanci](#) and other early [Tamil literary works](#) such as [Cilapatikaram](#) which have been used by historians to identify their names and, to some extent, their genealogy. [Nedunjelivan II](#) is referred to as the most popular warrior among the Early Pandyas, winning a battle at Talaianganam against a coalition of forces from Cholas and Cheras and five other kingdoms. The early Pandyan kingdom extended between [Travancore](#) in the west, [Vellaru](#) river in the north and all the way to the ocean in the east and the south.^[3]

The Early Pandyas had active maritime trade relationships with the west, a fact testified by western classical writers such as [Pliny the Elder](#) (1st century CE), [Strabo](#), [Ptolemy](#) and the author of the [Periplus](#).^[4] The Pandyan country was well known for pearl fishery, with Korkai being the principal center of the trade. Some of the exports were pearls, spices, ivory and shells, while the imports included horses, gold, glass and wine.^[5]

The origin of the word "Pandya" has been a subject of much speculation.

Historians have used several sources to identify the origins of the Early Pandyan dynasty with the pre-Christian Era and also to piece together the names of the Pandyan kings. Unfortunately, the exact genealogy of these kings has not been authoritatively established yet.

One theory is that the word Pandya is derived from the Tamil word "Pandi" meaning bull. Ancient Tamils considered the bull as a sign of masculinity and valor.^[6] Pandya became the epithet of the first Pandyan king of

Thenmadurai (*lit.* south Mathurai), Kulasekharan Pandya as he was built like a bull. It was used as an epithet of masculinity. His son, the second king of Thenmadurai, the legendary Malayadhwaja Pandya who sided with the Pandavas and took part in the [Kurukshetra](#) battle is described as follows in Karna Parva (verse 20.25):^{[7][8]}^{[non-prima}
^{source needed]}

Malayadhwaja Pandya and his queen Kanchanamala had one daughter Thathagai alias Meenakshi who succeeded her father and ruled the kingdom successfully. The Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple was built after her. The city of Madurai was built around this temple.^[9]

Yet another theory suggests that in [Sangam](#) Tamil lexicon, the word [Pandya](#) means *old country* in contrast with [Chola](#) meaning *new country*, [Chera](#) meaning *hill country* and [Pallava](#) meaning *branch* in [Sanskrit](#). The [Chera](#), [Chola](#) and [Pandya](#) are the traditional [Tamil](#) siblings and together with the [Athiyamaan](#) are the major [Kings](#) that ruled ancient [Tamilakkam](#).

Literary sources in Tamil^[edit]

Several Tamil literary works, such as [Iraiyanar Akapporul](#), mention the legend of three separate Tamil Sangams lasting several centuries before the Christian Era and ascribe their patronage to the Pandyas.^[10] The Sangam poem [Maduraikkanci](#) by Mankudi Maruthanaar contains a full-length description of [Madurai](#) and the Pandyan country under the rule of [Nedunjelियan II](#).^[11] The [Nedunalvadai](#) by Nakkirar contains a description of the king's palace. The [Purananuru](#) and [Agananuru](#) collections of the third century BCE contain poems sung in praise of various Pandyan kings and also poems that were composed by the kings themselves. [Kaliththokai](#) mentions that many Dravidian tribes such as [Maravar](#), Eyinar, Oliar, Oviar, Aruvalur and [Parathavar](#) migrated to the Pandyan kingdom and started living there in the [Third Tamil Sangam](#) period 2000 years ago.^[12]

The Chinese historian [Yu Huan](#) in his 3rd century text, the [Weilüe](#), mentions *The Kingdom of Panyue*:

"...The kingdom of Panyue is also called *Hanyuewang*. It is several thousand [li](#) to the southeast of [Tianzhu](#) (Northern India)...The inhabitants are small; they are the same height as the Chinese..."^[13]

The Roman emperor [Julian](#) received an embassy from a Pandya about 361 CE. A Roman trading centre was located on the Pandyan coast ([Alagankulam](#) - at the mouth of the [Vaigai](#) river, southeast of Madurai). Pandyas also had trade contact with [Ptolemaic Egypt](#) and, through Egypt, with [Rome](#) by the first century, and with [China](#) by the 3rd century. The 1st century Greek historian [Nicolaus of Damascus](#) met, at Damascus, the ambassador sent by an Indian King "named Pandion or, according to others, Porus" to [Caesar Augustus](#) around 13 CE (Strabo XV.1-4, and Strabo XV.1-73).^[14]*[non-primary source needed]*

Epigraphical sources[\[edit\]](#)

The 2nd and 13th rock [edicts of Ashoka](#) (273 - 232 BCE) refers to the Pandyas, Cholas, Cheras and the [Satyaputras](#). According to the edicts, these kingdoms lay outside the southern boundary of the [Mauryan Empire](#). The [Hathigumpha inscriptions](#) of the [Kalinga](#) King [Kharavela](#), (c. 150 BCE), refers to the arrival of a tribute of jewels and elephants from the Pandyan king.^[15] The stone inscription discovered at Mangulam (a.k.a. Meenakshipuram) mentions the name of Nedun Cheliyan III and his contemporary and subordinate, Kadalan Vazhuthi.

Archeological sources[\[edit\]](#)

Excavations in Tamil Nadu in the last fifty years or so have yielded remnants of black-and-red pottery ware, normally assigned to the Tamil speaking areas around 300 BCE. Some all-black and Russet coated ware assigned to the same time period have also been found. Rouletted and Amphorae wares, made in the Roman empire and brought by traders, have been excavated in several parts of Tamil Nadu including the Pandyan country. These imported wares are dated to the early centuries of the Christian Era.^[16]

Numismatic sources[\[edit\]](#)

The excavations at Alagankulam, near Madurai, recovered two copper coins of the early Pandyas along with [Northern Black Polished Ware](#). These coins have been assigned a broad time period ranging from 200 BCE to 200 CE.^[16] Several coins issued by the Pandyan king Mudukudumi Peruvaludhi have been recovered in the Madurai area and have been dated to around 200 BCE.^[17] Many gold and silver coins of the Roman empire have been found around Madurai: these coins bear the names of emperors ranging from Augustus (27 BCE) to Alexander Severus (235 CE).^[18]

History[[edit](#)]

Scholars have attempted to reconstruct the political history of the ancient Pandyan country based on classical works such as the *Purananuru*, the *Pattuppāttu* and the *Padirrupattu*.^{[19][20]}

The first Pandyan king who has been mentioned in the Sangam works recovered so far is [Nedunjeliam I](#), who ruled from the coastal town of Korkai, at the mouth of the river [Tamraparni](#). During this time, the Tamil country consisted of several small kingdoms ruled over by independent chieftains, in addition to the three monarchies of Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas.^[21] In a bid to expand his territory, Nedunj Cheliam I invaded the kingdom of Koodal (later renamed Madurai), which was under the rule of an independent chieftain, Akutai. He defeated Akutai and moved the capital of Pandyan kingdom to Madurai.^[22] This king also defeated an invading army from the [Deccan Plateau](#) and hence was called *Aariyap Padaikadanthe Pandyan* or the king who conquered the Aryan army.^{[12][23]} He was succeeded by his son **Pudappandian**, who expanded the kingdom by conquering Ollaiyur (near modern-day [Pudukkottai](#)) – an act that earned him the name *Ollaiyur Thanthe Pudappandian*. Both Pudappandian and his predecessor, Nedunj Cheliam I, were poets themselves who contributed to the *Purananuru* collection.^[24]

The successor of Pudappandiyān was **Nedunj Cheliyan II** also known as "Pasumpun Pandyan."^[25] Immediately after ascending the throne, he marched with his troops to the north of **Vaigai** and defeated the chieftain Evvi II. He then headed west and captured the Aayi territory controlled by another chieftain, Atiyan. Both Evvi II and Atiyan were made commanders of the Pandyan army for his battle against **Kongu** country that was further west.^[26] From here he expanded the Pandyan kingdom almost to the western coast, which earned him the title *Vidambalamba Ninra Pandyan* (the Pandyan whose kingdom was washed by two seas).^[27] Since he was responsible for expanding the Pandyan kingdom by annexing several kingdoms, he was also called *Pannadu Thantha Pandyan* (the Pandyan who annexed many lands).^[28] His successor, **Mudukudumi Peruvaludhi** was also a great warrior and carried the devastation into enemy territories. He performed yagas with the aid of Brahmin priests, similar to the tradition in northern India at that time.^{[29][30]}

The next king in the hierarchy was **Nedunj Cheliyan III**, who is considered the greatest of all the early Pandyan kings.^[31] Since the Pandyan kingdom was considerably larger than a few generations ago, he had to defend it against many neighbors invading from various fronts. Not only did he succeed in defending his territory, he also seems to have advanced into the enemy territories – the southern province of Cholas and eastern province of the Cheras.^[32] At one point, it is said that a coalition of his neighbors including the Cheras, Cholas and five other kingdoms, met him at a pitched battle in Talaianganam, in present day **Tanjore** district. Nedunj Cheliyan emerged victorious in the battle that ensued and ended up annexing several new territories to his kingdom. He thus came to be known as *Talaianganathu Seruvendra Pandyan*.^[33] The genealogy after this king

is not very clear but there are at least four other kings who are thought to have ruled in the immediate succeeding generations. Notable among them were, **Musiri Mutriya Cheliyan** for the fact that he conquered the town of [Musiri](#) on the coast of the Arabian Sea and **Ukkirap Peruvaludi** for the fact that it was in his court that the famous poet [Tiruvalluvar](#) submitted his much-acclaimed work [Tirukkural](#).^{[34][35]}

The head of the Government was the king, a hereditary monarch. His power was restricted by the *Aimberunguzhu* (Tamil: ஐம்பெருங்குழு) or the Five Great Assemblies, which consisted of the representatives of the people, priests, physicians, astrologers and the ministers. There was another assembly of officials that served the king called the *Enberaayam* (Tamil: எண்பேராயம்) or the Eight Groups of Attendants. While some scholars believe it consisted of attendants on the king's person like the perfumers, dressing valets, etc., others believe it consisted of more important persons like the people of the capital city, the leader of the elephant corps and of the cavalry. The principal officers of State were the high priest, the chief astrologer, the ministers and the commanders of the army. The king divided his territory into a number of administrative units or principalities, each called a *Kootram* (Tamil: கூற்றம்). A *Kootram* was further divided into provinces called *Mandalam*, which in turn was divided into many sub-provinces called *Nadus*, with each *Nadu* consisting of many villages. A locality inside a town or village was called *Ur* and each neighborhood inside an *Ur* was called a *Cheri*. While the king ruled over his entire territory from the capital, he often placed one or more principalities (*Kootram*) under the near-sovereign government of some senior member of the royal family or a feudatory. The village was the most fundamental unit of administration under the Pandya. The affairs of

a village were the responsibility of its elders, who supervised the judicial administrative and financial functions.

Justice was administered free of charge, by special officers appointed as judges and magistrates, but the king was supreme and the final arbiter in all civil and criminal cases. Mortgage, lease, trust property, loans, breach of contract were some common sources of civil litigation, while criminal offences included theft, adultery, forgery and treason. The punishments were very severe and hence crimes were rare: one caught in the act of burglary, adultery or spying was given the death penalty and one giving false testimony would have his tongue cut off. The king was the chief commander of the army and usually led his army in the battlefield. The military was said to be fourfold : the infantry, the cavalry, the elephantry and the chariotry. A wide variety of war weapons filled the military arsenal including shields, swords, spears, tridents, maces, bows and arrows. The main sources of royal revenue were taxes, tributes, customs duties and tolls. Land tax, paid in money or in kind, and income tax, equal to one-sixth of an individual's income were the major types of taxes collected. Other sources of revenue include tribute paid by feudal subordinates, war booty presents by loyal and visiting subjects, treasure troves besides land revenue, cess and forced gifts. The items incurring expenditure for the king include the military, gifts to poets and temples, maintenance of educational and health services, building infrastructure such as roads and irrigation and the palace household expenses.

Society

The Tamil society during the early Pandyan age had several class distinctions among the people, which were different from the Brahminical classification of

Women were exposed to education, a fact testified by the presence of many women poets in the Sangam works – some of them include Avvaiyar, Mudatamakkanniar, Kaakkaippaadiniyaar, Naachchellayaar, Naagaiyaar, Nanmullaiyaar, Ponmudiyaar, Ilaveyiniyaar and Nappasaliyaar.^[37]

A variety of clothing was used by people during this age, including those made of cotton and silk.^[38] People living in hilly and deserted areas wore dresses made of foliage and flowers. Sheaths of grassy weeds (Korai) were used for making dresses by the hill and forest area people. Skins of animals and barks of trees were also used. Men of the poorer classes wore only one piece of cloth around the waist. Women covered their upper body with a kind of dress called, kachchu. Among the higher classes, men wore two pieces: one around the waist and the other, the upper cloth, thrown over the shoulders.^[39] Women of sophisticated society wore half sarees, made of the finest cotton and silk fabrics, with embroidery.^[40] Both men and women sported long tresses of hair. The diet was plain, rice being the staple cereal, with millet, milk, butter and honey being in common use.^[41] Meat eating was common - people ate flesh of rams, deer, hare, fowl, porcupines, pigs and boar, fresh and dried fish.^[42] The kind of housing was determined by the type of geography of the land and the economic status of the occupants. The rich built their houses with tiled roofs and walls made of burnt bricks and mud, while the poor built their huts with mud and thatched it with grass, coconut leaves or palmyra palm leaves. Both in the huts and houses, the flooring was smeared with cowdung. The affluent had houses with porticoes, many storeys, open terraces and furnished their houses well. The inner walls of their houses were decorated with flowers and paintings, with cottages to protect them from the wind. Cots were in common use - the rich had luxurious beds decked with swan's feathers and flowers, while the

common people had beds woven with the straw of maize and the poorest people used beds made of grass or hay.^[39]

The [Sangam period](#) in [Tamilakam](#) (c. 500 BCE to 300 CE) was characterized by the coexistence of many religions: [Shaivism](#), [Vaishnavism](#), [Buddhism](#) and [Jainism](#) alongside the [folk religion](#) of the [Tamil people](#). The monarchs of the time practiced religious tolerance and openly encouraged religious discussions and invited teachers of every sect to the public halls to preach their doctrines.^[1]



Tamil religions[[edit](#)]

Tamil religions denotes the religious traditions and practices of Tamil-speaking people. The Tamils are native to the modern state of India known as [Tamil Nadu](#) and the northern and eastern part of [Sri Lanka](#). Tamils also live outside their native boundaries due to migration such as [Malaysia](#), [Singapore](#), [Indonesia](#), [South Africa](#), [Australia](#), [Great Britain](#), [United States](#), [Canada](#), [Réunion](#), [Myanmar](#), [Mauritius](#) and in countries in [Europe](#). Many emigrant Tamils retain elements of a cultural, linguistic, and religious tradition that predates the Christian era.

Early Tamil religion[[edit](#)]

A Neolithic cattle-herding culture existed in [Tamil](#) several millennia prior to the Christian era. By the fifth century a relatively well-developed civilization had emerged. It is described in some detail in Tamil texts such as the [Tholkappiyam](#) (third BCE) and by the Sankam poets—an "academy" of poets who wrote in the first two centuries of the Common Era.

Ancient Tamil grammatical works [Tholkappiyam](#), the Ten Idylls [Pathuppāṭṭu](#), and the Eight Anthologies [Ettuttokai](#) sheds light on early religion of ancient Tamil people. [Murugan](#) was glorified as, *the red god seated on the blue peacock, who is ever young and resplendent, as the favored god of the Tamils.*^[2] [Shiva](#) was also seen as the supreme God.^[2] Early iconography of [Murugan](#)^[3] and [Shiva](#)^{[4][5][6]} and their association with native

[Flora and fauna goes back to Indus Valley Civilization](#) ^{[7][8]} The [Sangam landscape](#) was classified into five

categories, *thinai*, based on the mood, the season and the land. [Tolkappiyam](#), mentions that each of these *thinai* had an associated deity such [Seyyon](#) in *Kurinji*—the hills, [Maayon](#) in *Mullai*—the forests, [Kotravai](#) in *Pālai*—the deserts, [Ventan](#)/Senon in *Marutham*—the plains and [Varunan](#)/Kadalor in *Neithal*—the coasts and the seas.

The cult of the mother goddess is treated as an indication of a society which venerated femininity. This mother goddess was conceived as a virgin, one who has given birth to all and one.^[9] The temples of the Sangam days mainly of Madurai, seem to have had priestesses to the deity, which also appear predominantly a goddess.^[10] In the Sangam literature, there is an elaborate description of the rites performed by the Kurava priestess in the shrine Palamutircholai.^[11]

Veriyattam[\[edit\]](#)

"Veriyattam" refers to [spirit possession](#) of women, who took part in priestly functions. Under the influence of the god, women sang and danced, but also read the dim past, predicted the future, diagnosed diseases.^[12] Twenty two poets of the Sangam age in as many as 40 poems portray Veriyatal. Velan is a reporter and prophet endowed with supernatural powers. Veriyatal had been performed by men as well as women.^[13]

Nadukkal[\[edit\]](#)

Among the early Tamils the practice of erecting [hero stones](#) (*nadukkal*) had appeared, and it continued for quite a long time after the Sangam age, down to about 11th century.^[14] It was customary for people who sought victory in war to worship these hero stones to bless them with victory.^[15]

Theyyam[\[edit\]](#)

[Theyyam](#) is a ritual shaman dance popular in [Kerala](#) and parts of [Karnataka](#). Theyyam migrates into the artist who has assumed the spirit and it is a belief that the god or goddess comes in the midst of fathering through the medium of possessed dancer. The dancer throws rice on the audience and distributes turmeric powder as symbols of blessing. Theyyam incorporates dance, mime and music and enshrines the rudiments of ancient tribal culture which attached great importance to the worship of heroes and the spirits of ancestors, is a socio-religious

ceremony. There are over 400 Theyyams performed; the most spectacular ones are those of Raktha Chamundi, Kari Chamundi, Muchilottu Bhagavathi, Wayanadu Kulaven, Gulikan and Pottan. These are performed in front of shrines, sans stage or curtains.

The early character of Tamil religion was celebrative. It embodied an aura of sacral immanence, sensing the sacred in the vegetation, fertility, and color of the land. The summum bonum of the religious experience was expressed in terms of possession by the god, or ecstasy. Into this milieu there immigrated a sobering influence—a growing number of Jain and Buddhist communities and an increasing influx of northerners.

The layout of villages can be assumed to be standard across most villages. An Amman (mother goddess) is at the centre of the villages while a male [guardian deity](#) ([Tamil](#): காவல் கடவுள், *kāval kaṭavuḷ* ?) has a shrine at the village borders.

Divinity of kings[\[edit\]](#)

Pre-Sangam and Sangam age[\[edit\]](#)

Throughout Tamil Nadu, a king was considered to be divine by nature and possessed religious significance.^[16] The King was 'the representative of God on earth' and lived in a *koyil*, which means the "residence of God". The Modern Tamil word for temple is [koil](#) ([Tamil](#): கோயில்). Titular worship was also given to Kings.^{[17][18]}

The Kingdom suffered by famine or disorder when the King erred.^[19] These elements were incorporated later into [Hinduism](#) like the legendary marriage of [Shiva](#) to Queen Meenatchi who ruled [Madurai](#) or [Wanji-ko](#), a god who later merged into [Indra](#).^[20] [Tolkappiyar](#) refers to the [Three Crowned Kings](#) as the "Three Glorified by Heaven", ([Tamil](#): வான்புகழ் மூவர், *Vāṇpukaḷ Mūvar* ?).^[21] In the Dravidian-speaking South, the concept of divine kingship led to the assumption of major roles by state and temple.^[22]

Middle ages[\[edit\]](#)

At the birth of [Raja Raja Chola I](#), the Thiruvallangadu inscription states, "Having noticed by the marks (on his body) that Arulmozhi was the very [Thirumal](#), the protector of the three worlds, descended on earth..." During the [Bhakti movement](#), poets often compared gods to kings.^[23]

Hinduism

The brick temple excavated in 2005^[24] dates to the [Sangam period](#) and is speculated to be the oldest temple to be found in Tamil Nadu. The temple faces north, unlike most Hindu temples which face either east or west and is believed to have been constructed even before *shilpa shastras* were written

During the Sangam period, [Shiva](#), [Murugan](#), [Thirumal](#) and Kotravai were some of the popular [deities](#). The poetic division of the landscape into [five regions](#) also associated each region with its own patron deity.^[25] The people of the pastoral lands or the [Mullai](#) regions worshipped [Thirumal](#). The [Marutham](#) people worshipped *Ventan*, while the [Neithal](#) people considered *Katalon* to be their patron deity and the [Palai](#) people worshipped [Korravai](#).

The temples of the Sangam age were built out of perishable materials such as plaster, timber and brick, which is why little trace of them is found today.^[26] The only public structures of any historical importance belonging to this age that have survived to this day are the rock-beds hewn out of natural rock formation, that were made for the ascetics. The [Silappatikaram](#) and the Sangam poems such as [Kaliththokai](#), [Mullaippattu](#) and [Purananuru](#) mention several kinds of temples such as the *Puranilaikkottam* or the temple at the outskirts of a city, the *Netunilaikkottam* or the tall temple, the *Palkunrakkottam* the temple on top of a hill, the *Ilavantikaippalli* or the temple with a garden and bathing ghat, the *Elunilaimatam* or a seven storeyed temple, the *Katavutkatinar* or the temple city.^[27]

Jainism[edit]

Main article: [Tamil Jain](#)

The exact origins of Jainism in Tamil Nadu is unclear. However, Jains flourished in Tamil Nadu at least as early as the [Sangam period](#). Tamil Jain tradition places their origins are much earlier. Some scholars believe that the author of the oldest extant work of literature in Tamil (3rd century BCE), [Tolkāppiyam](#), was a Jain.^[28]

A number of Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions have been found in Tamil Nadu that date from the 2nd century BCE. They are regarded to be associated with Jain monks and lay devotees.^{[29][30]}

Many scholars consider the [Tirukkural](#) by [Valluvar](#) to be the work by a Jain.^{[31][32][33]} It emphatically supports vegetarianism (Chapter 26) and states that giving up animal sacrifice is worth more than a thousand offerings in fire (verse 259).

[Silappatikaram](#), a major work in Tamil literature, was written by a Camaṇa, [Ilango Adigal](#). It describes the historical events of its time and also of the then-prevailing religions, Jainism, Buddhism and [Shaivism](#). The main characters of this work, [Kannagi](#) and [Kovalan](#), who have a divine status among Tamils, were Jains.

According to [George L. Hart](#), the legend of the [Tamil Sangams](#) or "literary assemblies" was based on the Jain *sangham* at [Madurai](#):

There was a permanent Jaina assembly called a Sangha established about 604 CE in Madurai. It seems likely that this assembly was the model upon which tradition fabricated the sangam legend."^[34]

Jainism began to decline around the 8th century, with many Tamil kings embracing Hindu religions especially [Shaivism](#). Still, the [Chalukya](#), [Pallava](#) and [Pandya](#) dynasties embraced Jainism.

Buddhism[[edit](#)]

The [Buddhists](#) worshiped the impressions of [Buddha](#)'s feet engraved on stone and platforms made of stone that represented his seat. The pious Buddhist walked round them, with his right side towards them and bowed his head as a token of reverence.^[35] The [Silappatikaram](#) mentions that the [monks](#) worshipped Buddha by praising him as the wise, holy and virtuous teacher who adhered to his vows strictly, as the one who subdued anger and all evil passions and as the refuge of all mankind. [Manimekalai](#) is a sequel to the Silappatikaram, which tells the story of [Buddhism](#) of the daughter of [Kovalan](#) and [Madhavi](#).

In the Buddhist [Viharas](#) or monasteries, learned monks preached their sermons, seated in a place which was entirely concealed from the view of the audience. The Buddhists did not observe the distinctions of caste and invited all ranks to assemble on a footing of equality. Self-control, wisdom and charity were among the virtues preached and practiced by the monks, who were numerous in the ancient Tamil country.^[1]

Christianity

Christianity was introduced in India by [St. Thomas the Apostle](#) who landed at [Muziris](#) on [Malabar Coast](#) in the year 52 AD. These ancient Christians are today known as [Saint Thomas Christians](#) or Syriac Christians or Nasrani.^{[36][37][38]} They are now divided into different denominations namely, [Syro-Malabar Catholic](#), [Syro-Malankara Catholic](#), [Malankara Orthodox](#), [Jacobite](#) and [Malankara Marthoma](#). Syriac Christians followed the same rules of caste and population as that of Hindus and sometimes they were even considered as population neutralizers.^{[39][40]} They tend to be endogamous, and tend not to [intermarry](#) even with other Christian groupings. Saint Thomas Christians derive status within the caste system from the tradition that they were elites, who were [evangelized](#) by St. Thomas.^{[41][42][43]} Also, internal mobility is allowed among these Saint Thomas Christian sects and the caste status is kept even if the sect allegiance is switched (for example, from [Syriac Orthodox](#) to [Syro-Malabar Catholic](#)).^[44] Despite the sectarian differences, Syriac Christians share a common social status within the [Caste system of Kerala](#) and is considered as [Forward Caste](#).^[43]

Judaism[[edit](#)]

The traditional account is that traders from [Judea](#) arrived in the city of [Cochin](#), Kerala in 562 BCE, and that more Jews came as exiles from Israel in the year 70 CE after the destruction of the [Second Temple](#).^[45] The distinct Jewish community was called [Anjuvannam](#). The still-functioning [synagogue in Mattancherry](#) belongs to the [Paradesi Jews](#), the descendants of [Sephardim](#) that were expelled from Spain in 1492.^[45]

Philosophies of religion[[edit](#)]

Secularism[[edit](#)]

The secular identity^[46] of the [Sangam literature](#) is often celebrated to represent the tolerance among [Tamil people](#)

Es Vaiyāpurip Piḷḷai, concludes in his *History of Tamil language and literature: beginning to 1000 A. D.*:^[47]

Thus the Tamil land became a fertile nursery and the several religions... thrive in friendly rivalry.

— *Es Vaiyāpurip Piḷḷai, History of Tamil language and literature: beginning to 1000 A. D.*

Most scholars agree that the lack of 'god' should not be inferred to be atheistic.^[citation needed] The [Tamil books of Law](#), particularly the [Tirukkural](#), is considered as the [Perennial philosophy](#) of [Tamil culture](#) because of its universalisability.^[citation needed]

Ūzh and Vinai[[edit](#)]

Ūzh meaning 'fate' or 'destiny' and vinai meaning 'works' concerns the ancient [Tamil](#) belief of differentiating what man can do and what is destined.^[48]

Kaṭavuḷ and Iyavuḷ[[edit](#)]

Sangam [Tamil people](#) understood two distinct characteristics of Godhood. [God who is beyond all](#) (Tamil: கடவுள், *Kaṭavuḷ* ?) and the [God who sets things in motion](#) (Tamil: இயவுள், *Iyavuḷ* ?).^[49]

The **economy of the ancient Tamil country** ([Sangam era](#): 500 BCE – 300 CE) describes the ancient economy of a region in [southern India](#) that mostly covers the present-day states of [Tamil Nadu](#) and [Kerala](#). The main economic activities were agriculture, weaving, [pearl fishery](#), manufacturing and construction. [Paddy](#) was the most important crop; it was the staple cereal and served as a medium of exchange for inland trade. [Pepper](#), [millets](#), gram and [sugarcane](#) were other commonly grown crops. [Madurai](#) and [Urayur](#) were important centers for the [textile industry](#); [Korkai](#) was the center of the pearl trade. Industrial activity flourished.

Inland trading was conducted primarily through [barter](#) in busy market places by merchant associations and commercial lending institutions. Merchants formed associations that operated autonomously, without interference from the state. The people of ancient Tamil country engaged in brisk overseas trade with [Rome](#); the trade reached

a peak after the discovery of a direct route for merchant ships between Tamilakam and [Egypt](#), taking advantage of the [monsoon winds](#). Pepper, pearls, ivory, textiles and gold ornaments were exported from Tamilakam, and the main imports were luxury goods such as glass, [coral](#), wine and [topaz](#). Foreign trade brought in a large amount of internationally convertible [Roman currency](#).

The state played an important role in building and maintaining [infrastructure](#) such as roads and ports—funded through taxation—to meet the needs of economic and social activity. Wealth was unequally divided among the people, giving rise to distinct economic classes.

[Agriculture](#) was the main occupation of the ancient [Tamils](#) and the most respected.^{[1][2]} Farmers were aware of different soil types, the best crops to grow and the various irrigation systems suitable for any given region. In the five geographical divisions of the Tamil country in [Sangam literature](#), the [Marutam](#) region was the most fit for cultivation, as it had the most fertile lands. Land was classified, according to its fertility, as *Menpulam* (fertile land), *Pinpulam* (dry land), *Vanpulam* (hardland) and *Kalarnilam* or *Uvarnilam* (salty land). *Menpulam* yielded rich produce on a variety of crops, but *Pinpulam* was cultivated only with dry crops due to limited irrigation facilities. The yield from *Vanpulam* was limited, while *Kalarnilam* was unfit for cultivation. Some of the well-known types of soil were [alluvial soil](#), red soil, [black soil](#), laterite soil and sandy soil.^[3]

The Tamils cultivated [paddy](#), [sugarcane](#), [millets](#), [pepper](#) various [pulses](#), [coconuts](#), [beans](#), [cotton](#), [plantain](#), [tamarind](#) and [sandalwood](#). Paddy was the main crop, with different varieties grown in the wetland of Marutam, such as *Vennel*, *Sennel*, *Pudunel*, *Aivananel* and *Torai*. The peasants lived in groves of trees close to the farmlands and each house had [jack](#), coconut, [palm](#), [areca](#) and plantain trees.^[citation needed] Peasants grew [turmeric](#) plants in front of their houses and laid flower gardens in between the houses. Farmers believed that [ploughing](#), [manuring](#), [weeding](#), [irrigation](#) and the protection of crops must be done according to a specific method in order to obtain a good yield.^[4] A wide range of tools needed for agriculture

from ploughing to harvesting, were manufactured. The basic tool was the plough also known as *meli*, *nanchil* and *kalappai*. *Palliyadutal* referred to the process of removing weeds using a toothed implement attached to a plank and drawn by oxen. Lower-class peasants used [stone sling](#) devices to scare animals and birds away from the standing crops. [Sickles](#) were used for harvesting mature rice paddies.^[5] Since the rivers of the region were not [perennial](#), several irrigation techniques were developed to ensure an adequate and continuous supply of water. Farmers used a bullock-propelled device called *Kapilai* for bailing out water from deep wells and a manual setup called *Erram*, for shallow wells. [Tanks](#), lakes and [dams](#) were used as water storage systems and the water regulated using [sluices](#) and shutters.^[5] [Kallanai](#), a dam built on river [Kaveri](#) during this period, is one of the oldest water-regulation structures in the world.^{[6][7][8]} Surface irrigation, sprinkler mechanism and [drip irrigation](#) methods were followed to prevent wastage of water.^[9]

Most farmers cultivated their own plots of land and were known by different names such as *Mallar*, *Ulutunbar*, *Yerinvalnar*, *Vellalar*, *Karalar* and *Kalamar*.^[10] There were also [absentee landlords](#) who were mostly [brahmins](#) and poets who had received donations of land from the king and who gave these donations to [tenant farmers](#). Sometimes independent farm laborers, known as *Adiyor*, were hired for specific tasks. Landlords and [peasants](#) paid tax on the land and its produce – the [land tax](#) was known as *Irai* or *Karai* and the tax on produce was called *Vari*. One sixth of the produce was collected as tax.^[11] Taxes were collected by revenue officials known as *Variya* and *Kavidi*, who were assisted by accountants called *Ayakanakkar*. For survey and taxation purposes various measurements were used to measure the land and its produce. Small lots of land were known as *Ma* and larger tracts as *Veli*. Produce was measured using cubic-measures such as *Tuni*, *Nali*, *Cher* and *Kalam* and weight measures such as *Tulam* and *Kalanju*.

Industry[[edit](#)]

Main article: [Industry in ancient Tamil country](#)

During the [Sangam age](#), crafts and trade occupations were considered secondary to agriculture. Carpenters crafted wooden wares and blacksmiths worked in simple workshops. Weaving, [pearl fishing](#), smithy and [shipbuilding](#) were prominent industries of ancient [Tamilakam](#). Spinning and weaving was a source of income for

craftsmen; weaving was practised part-time by the farmers in rural areas. [Madurai](#) and [Urayur](#) were important industrial centers, known for their cotton textiles. Muslin cloth was woven with fine floral work of different colors. Silk cloth was manufactured with its threads gathered in small knots at its ends. Clothing was embroidered for the nobles and aristocrats who were the main customers. Material was often dyed; the blue dye for the [loin cloth](#) was a [preferred color](#). In addition to silk and cotton fabrics, cloth made of [wood fibre](#) called *Sira Maravuri* and *Naarmadi* was used by the priestly class.^[12] The cloth manufacturers wove long pieces of cloth and delivered it to the dealers. The textile dealers then scissored off bits of required length, called *aruvai* or *tuni*, at the time of sale. Hence, the dealers were called *aruvai vanigar* and the localities where they lived *aruvai vidi*. Tailors called *tunnagarar* in Madurai and other big towns, stitched garments.^[13]

Pearl fishing flourished during the Sangam age. The Pandyan port city of [Korkai](#) was the center of the pearl trade. Written records from Greek and Egyptian voyagers give details of the pearl fisheries off the Pandyan coast. According to one account, the [fishermen](#) who dove into the sea avoided attacks from sharks by bringing up the right-whorled [conch](#) and blowing on the shell.^[14] Convicts were used as pearl divers in Korkai. The Periplus mentions that "Pearls inferior to the Indian sort are exported in great quantity from the marts of Apologas and Omana".^[15] Pearls were woven together with muslin cloth before being exported and were the most expensive product imported by Rome from India.^[15] The pearls from the [Pandyan kingdom](#) were in demand in the kingdom of [North India](#) as well. Several Vedic mantras refer to the wide use of the pearls, describing poetically that royal chariots and horses were decked with pearls. The use of pearls was so great that the supply of pearls from the [Ganges](#) could not meet the demand.^[16]

The [blacksmith](#), working in the *Panikkalari* (literally: workplace), played an important role in the lives of ancient Tamils. Some of the essential items produced by blacksmiths were weapons of war, tools such as the plough, domestic utensils and iron wheels. They used a blow pipe or a pair of bellows (a *turutti*) to light the fire used for smelting and welding. There were not many blacksmith shops in the rural areas. Blacksmiths were overworked as they had to serve the needs of neighboring villages.^[17] Shipbuilding was a native industry of Tamilakam. Ocean craft of varying sizes, from small catamarans (logs tied together) to big ships, navigated Tamil ports. Among the

smaller crafts were *ambi* and *padagu* used as ferries to cross rivers and the *timil*, a [fishing boat](#). *Pahri*, *Odam*, *Toni*, *Teppam*, and *Navai* were smaller craft. The large ship, called *Kappal*, had mast (*Paaymaram*) and sails (*Paay*).^{[18][19]}

Other industries were carpentry, fishing, salt-manufacture, forestry, pottery, rope making, chank-cutting, [gem cutting](#), the manufacture of leather sheaths for war weapons, the manufacture of jewellery, the production of [jaggery](#), and the construction of temples, and other religion-related items such as procession cars and images. Baskets made of [wicker](#) for containing dried grains and other edible articles were also constructed.^{[20][21]}

Inland trade^[edit]

Ancient IND were active traders in various commodities, both locally and outside Tamil country. The kingdom of [northern India](#) sought pearls, cotton fabrics and conch shells from Tamilakam in exchange for woollen clothing, hides and horses.^[22] Locally most trading was in food products – agricultural produce was supplemented by products from hunters, fishermen and shepherds who traded in meat, fish and dairy products. In addition, people bought other goods such as items for personal hygiene, adornment and transportation. Mercantile transactions took place in busy market places. Traders used various modes of selling: hawking their goods from [door to door](#), setting up shops in busy market places or stationing themselves at royal households. Sellers of fish, salt and grain hawked their goods, the textile merchants sold cloths from their shops in urban markets and the goldsmith, the [lapidary](#) and sellers of sandalwood and ivory patronised the aristocrats' quarters.^[12] Merchants dealt in conches and ivory.

Most trade was by barter. Paddy was the most commonly accepted medium of exchange, followed by purified salt. Honey and roots were exchanged for fish liver oil and arrack, while sugarcane and rice flakes were traded for venison and toddy. Poems in [Purananuru](#) describe the prosperous house in [Pandya](#) land well stocked with paddy that the housewife had exchanged for grams and fish. Artisans and professionals traded their services for goods.^[21] Quantities were measured by weighing balance, called the *Tulakkol* named after *Tulam*, the standard weight. Delicate balances made of ivory were used by the goldsmiths for measures of *Urai*, *Nali* and *Ma*.^[23] A different kind of barter involving deferred exchange was known as *Kuri edirppai* – this involved taking a loan for

a fixed quantity of a commodity to be repaid by the same quantity of the same commodity at a later date. Since barter was prevalent locally, coins were used almost exclusively for foreign trade.

Markets^[edit]

Sangam works such as *Maduraikkanci* and *Pattinappalai* give a detailed description of the markets in big cities.^{[24][25]} The market, or *angadi*, was located at the centre of a city.^[26] It had two adjacent sections: the morning bazaar (*nalangadi*) and the evening bazaar (*allangadi*). The markets of Madurai were cosmopolitan with people of various ethnicities and languages crowding into the shops. Foreign merchants and traders came to Madurai from such northern kingdoms as Kalinga to sell merchandise wholesale.^[27] According to the *Mathuraikkanci*, the great market was held in a large square and the items sold included garlands of flowers, fragrant pastes, coats with metallic belts, leather sandals, weapons, shields, carts, chariots and ornamented chariot steps. Garment shops sold clothing of various colours and patterns made of cotton, silk or wool, with the merchandise neatly arranged in rows. On the grain merchants' street, sacks of pepper and sixteen kinds of grains (including paddy, millet, gram peas and [sesame seeds](#)) were heaped by the side. The jewellers, who conducted business from a separate street sold precious articles such as diamonds, [pearls](#), [emeralds](#), [rubies](#), [sapphires](#), [topaz](#), coral beads and varieties of gold.^[25]

[Vanchi](#), the capital of the [Cheras](#), was a typical fortified city, with two divisions inside the fort - the *Puranakar* and the *Akanakar*. The *Puranakar* was the outer city adjacent to the fort wall and was occupied by the soldiers. The *Akanakar*, the inner city, included the king's palace and the officers' quarters. The city market was located between these two divisions; the artisans and traders lived close to the market.^[28] Kaveripumpattinam the port city of the [Cholas](#), had its market in a central open area close to the two main suburbs of the city - *Maruvurpakkam* and *Pattinapakkam*. *Maruvurpakkam* was adjacent to the sea where the fishermen and the foreign merchants lived. The main streets of the market met at the centre where there was a temple dedicated to the local guardian deity of the city.^[29]

The market of Kaveripumpattinam was similar to the one in Madurai. Large quantities of dyes, scented powder flowers, textiles, salt, fish and sheep were sold. Flowers were in great demand, especially during festivals such

as *Indira vizha*. Near the [bazaar](#) were warehouses with little ventilation located underground.^[citation needed] Since merchants from various places thronged the bazaar, each package for sale had the name and details of its owner written on it. Simple advertisements were used to indicate the goods available at different locations.^[30]

Mercantile organization^[edit]

There were different types of merchants who operated in the ancient Tamil market, which gave rise to a wealth-based class distinction among them. Merchants in the lower levels of the hierarchy were of two varieties: the [itinerant](#) merchants who sold goods that they manufactured themselves and the retailers who sold goods manufactured by others. Itinerant traders were found in both the rural and urban markets, but the retailers were concentrated in the cities. In the rural markets, salt and grain merchants usually produced the goods, transported them and sold them directly to the consumers. Salt merchants, known as *umanar*, travelled with their families in trains of carts.^[12] In the cities, artisans such as the blacksmiths and the oil mongers sold their products directly to the consumers. The bulk of the retailers operated in the textile industry. The textile dealers (*aruvai vanigar*) bought their products from the weavers (*kaarugar*) and resold them to the consumers. Merchants selling agricultural produce in the cities were also retailers. At the upper end of the merchant hierarchy, were the rich merchants who participated in the export trade. There were three classes among them: *ippar*, *kavippar* and *perunkudi* - based on the extent of their wealth; the *perunkudi* made up the wealthiest class. Foreign merchants, mainly Romans, also did business in the Tamil markets – not just in the port cities, but in inland cities such as Madurai, where they exchanged indigenous goods for their offerings.^[clarification needed] Another category of merchants were the intermediaries or the brokers, who acted as information channels and offered their services mainly to the foreign merchants.^[31]

Merchants organized themselves into groups called *Sattu* or *Nikamam*. Stone inscriptions at [Mangulam](#) (c. 200 BCE) and pottery inscriptions found at Kodumanal refer to merchant guilds as *nikamam* and the members of the guilds as *nikamattor*. These findings suggest that merchant guilds were established at several industrial and trade centres of ancient Tamil country.^[32] Many of these merchant associations acted in union in their public activities. They were autonomous, meaning that they enjoyed freedom from state interference but also suffered from the lack

of state backing. Merchants were expected to abide by a code of conduct, which was: "Refuse to take more than your due and never stint giving to others their due".^[citation needed] Therefore, they went about running their business by openly announcing the profit they were aiming at, known as *Utiyam*.^{[12][33]} The mercantile community of Tamilakam was aware of elementary banking operations. Lending through houses specializing in monetary transactions and fixation of rates were common. This was, evidently, necessitated by the extensive overseas trade.^[34] Accountants were in demand in view of monetary transactions and considerable trading activity.^[35] Merchant groups from Madurai and Karur made endowments, or donations, as attested by inscriptions found in Alagarmalai (c. 1st century BCE) and Pugalur (c. 3rd century CE). These inscriptions also mention that the various commodities traded by such merchants included cloth, salt, oil, [plowshares](#), sugar and gold.^[32]

Foreign trade^[edit]

The economic prosperity of the Tamils depended on foreign trade. Literary, archaeological and numismatic sources confirm the trade relationship between Tamilakam and Rome, where spices and pearls from India were in great demand. With the accession of [Augustus](#) in 27 BCE, trade between Tamilakam and Rome received a tremendous boost and culminated at the time of [Nero](#) who died in 68 CE. At that point, trade declined until the death of [Caracalla](#) (217 CE), after which it almost ceased. It was revived again under the [Byzantine](#) emperors. Under the early [Roman emperors](#), there was a great demand for articles of luxury, especially [beryl](#). Most of the articles of luxury mentioned by the Roman writers came from Tamilakam. In the declining period, [cotton](#) and industrial products were still imported by Rome.^[36] The exports from the Tamil country included pepper, [pearls](#), [ivory](#), textiles and gold ornaments, while the imports were luxury goods such as [glass](#), [coral](#), [wine](#) and [topaz](#).^[37] The government provided the essential infrastructure such as good harbours, lighthouses, and warehouses to promote overseas trade.^[38]

Trade route

The [trade route](#) taken by ships from Rome to Tamilakam has been described in detail by the writers, such as [Strabo](#) and [Pliny the Elder](#). Roman and Arab sailors were aware of the existence of the monsoon winds that blew across the [Indian Ocean](#) on a seasonal basis. A Roman captain named [Hippalus](#) first sailed a direct route from

Rome to India, using the monsoon winds. His method was later improved upon by merchants who shortened the voyage by sailing due east from the port of Cana or [Cape Guardafui](#), finding that by this way it was possible to go directly from Rome to Tamilakam. Strabo writes that every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of one hundred and twenty vessels sailed from [Myos Hormos](#), a port of [Egypt](#) on the [Red Sea](#), and headed toward India. With assistance from the monsoons, the voyage took forty days to reach the ports of Tamilakam or Ceylon. Pliny writes that if the monsoons were blowing regularly, it was a forty-day trip to [Muziris](#)^[39] from [Ocelis](#) located at the entrance to the Red Sea from the south. He writes that the passengers preferred to embark at Bacara (Vaikkarai) in Pandya country, rather than [Muziris](#), which was infested with [pirates](#). The ships returned from Tamilakam carrying rich cargo which was transported in [camel trains](#) from the Red Sea to the [Nile](#), then up the river to [Alexandria](#), finally reaching the capital of [the Roman empire](#).^[40] Evidence of Tamil trading presence in Egypt is seen in the form of Tamil inscriptions on pottery in Red Sea ports.^[citation needed]

Imports and exports[\[edit\]](#)

Fine [muslins](#) and jewels, especially beryls (*vaiduriyam*) and [pearls](#) were exported from Tamilakam for personal adornment. Drugs, spices and condiments as well as [crape ginger](#) and other cosmetics fetched high prices. Even greater was the demand for pepper which, according to Pliny, sold at the price of 15 [denarii](#) (silver pieces) per pound. [Sapphire](#), called *kurundham* in Tamil, and a variety of [ruby](#) were also exported. The other articles exported from Tamilakam were [ivory](#), [spikenard](#), [betel](#), diamonds, [amethysts](#) and [tortoiseshell](#). The Greek and Arabic names for rice (*Oryza* and *urz*), ginger (*Gingibar* and *zanjabil*) and cinnamon (*Karpion* and *quarfa*) are almost identical with their Tamil names, *arisi*, *inchiver* and *karuva*.^[41] The imports were mostly luxury items such as glass, gold and wine. Horses were imported from Arabia.^[22]

Foreign exchange

The flourishing trade with the Romans had a substantial impact on the economy of ancient Tamil country and the royal treasury and the export traders accumulated large sums of Roman currency. Pliny writes that India, China and Arabia between them absorbed one hundred million [sesterces](#) per annum from Rome. This sum is calculated

by [Mommsen](#) to represent 1,100,000 pounds, of which nearly half went to India, the preponderance to [South India](#).^[42]

Coins hoarded by the early Roman emperors from [Augustus](#) to [Nero](#) have been found in the vicinity of the South Indian [beryl](#) mines which produced the best and purest beryl in the world. At fifty-five different locations, mostly in [Madurai](#) and [Coimbatore](#) districts, these coins have been unearthed; the number of gold coins discovered has been described as a quantity amounting to five coolly loads. The quantity of silver coins has been variously described as "a great many in a pot", "about 500 in an earthen pot", "a find of 163 coins", "some thousands enough to fill five or six Madras measures".^[citation needed] Coins of all the Roman emperors from Augustus (27 BCE to [Alexander Severus](#) (235 CE]) have been discovered, covering a period of nearly three centuries. By far the greatest number of these Roman coins belong to the reigns of Augustus and [Tiberius](#). After 235 CE, for the next one hundred years, there are no coins that can be dated, suggesting a temporary abeyance of trade between Rome and [South India](#). This could have been due to internal revolts and external attacks suffered by the Roman empire during that period. When order and good government were restored in Rome, trade with Tamilakam revived, as indicated by the finding of an increased number of coins from this period. [Zeno](#)'s coins have been traced to the end of the Roman empire. Scholars believe there was a Roman settlement near Madurai and that little copper coins with the Roman Emperors' heads on them might have been minted locally.^[42]

Role of the state^[edit]

The role of the state in trade related to two aspects: first, to provide an adequate infrastructure necessary to sustain the trade and second, to organise an efficient administrative apparatus for taxation.^[43]

During the Sangam period, the main [trade routes](#), such those going over the [Western Ghats](#), went through thick forests. It was the duty of the state to protect the merchant caravans on these trade routes from robbers and wild life. Main roads, known as *Peruvali*, were built that connected the distant parts of the country. These roads were as important to the army as they were to the merchants. Commodities like salt had to be transported long distances such as from the sea coast to the interior villages. The state also built and expanded the infrastructure for shipping such as ports, [dighnouses](#) and [warehouses](#) near the ports to promote overseas trade. Several ports were constructed

on both the east and the west coasts of Tamilakam. [Kaveripumpattinam](#) (also known as *Puhar*) was the chief port of the [Cholas](#); their other ports were [Nagapattinam](#), [Marakkanam](#) and [Arikamedu](#), all on the east coast. The [Pandyas](#) had developed Korkai, Saliyur, Kayal, Marungurpattinam (present day Alagankulam) and Kumarakudi (present day [Kanyakumari](#)) as their centers of trade along the east coast, while Niranam and Viliyanthi were their west coast ports. [Muchiri](#), [Tondi](#), Marandai, [Naravu](#), [Varkkalai](#) and [Porkad](#) were the principal ports of the [Cheras](#), all of them on the west coast.^[44]

To collect revenue from commerce, the state installed [customs](#) checkpoints (*sungachavadi*) along the highways and at the ports. In the ports, duty was collected on inland goods, before being exported, and on overseas goods meant for the local markets, which were stamped with the official seal before being allowed into the country. The volume of trade in the port cities was high enough to warrant a large workforce to monitor and assess the goods. The state issued licenses to [liquor](#) shops, which were required to fly the license flag outside their premises. Flags were used by foreign merchants too, to indicate the nature of goods they were selling. The state also kept records of the weights and counts of all the goods sold by merchants. One of the significant aspects of the state intervention in commerce was that it reinforced the authority of the ruler.^[43]

Personal wealth^[edit]

How wealth was assessed varied from one community to another. Farmers counted the number of [ploughshares](#) owned and among the pastoral folk it was the number of cows. Wealth was distributed unequally among the people, leading to distinct economic classes - the rich, the poor and the middle class. The nobility, state officers, export traders and court poets formed the wealthy class. Most agriculturists and inland merchants made up the middle class. The lowest class consisted of labourers and wandering [minstrels](#). It was believed that this economic division of people was the result of a divine arrangement; the poor people were made to feel that their miserable condition was due to their past [sins](#), *tivinai*, and was inevitable.^[45] The extreme opulence of some people as well as the abject poverty of some others are clearly portrayed in the contemporary literature. Most of the rich spent a part of their wealth on charity, the king's philanthropy setting an example. It was believed that one needed to accumulate wealth in order to give donations and perform righteous obligations. Sometimes, the man of the

household undertook a long journey to the north of the [Venkata Hill](#) or the northern boundary of Tamilakam, to earn wealth. One possible region that they might have gone to is the [Mysore region](#), where the gold mines were getting famous. [F. R. Allchin](#), who has discussed the antiquity of [gold mining](#) in the Deccan, says that the high period of mining in South India was the last centuries of the pre-Christian era and the first two centuries of the [Christian era](#), which coincides with the Sangam period.^[46]

Sources

The most important source of ancient [Tamil](#) history is the corpus of [Tamil](#) poems, referred to as [Sangam literature](#) dated between the last centuries of the pre-[Christian era](#) and the early centuries of the Christian era.^{[47][48][49]} It consists of 2381 known poems, with a total of over 50000 lines, written by 473 poets.^{[50][51]} Each poem belongs to one of two types: *Akam* (inside) and *Puram* (outside). The *akam* poems deal with inner human emotions such as love, while the *puram* poems deal with outer experiences such as society, culture and warfare. These poems contain descriptions of various aspects of life in the ancient Tamil country. The [Maduraikkanci](#) by Mankud Maruthanaar and the [Netunalvatai](#) by Nakkirar contain a detailed description of the Pandyan capital [Madurai](#), the king's palace and the rule of Nedunj Cheliyan, the victor of the Talaianganai battle.^[52] The [Purananuru](#) and [Agananuru](#) collections contain poems sung in praise of various kings and poems that were composed by the kings themselves. The [Pathirruppaththu](#) provides the genealogy of two collateral lines of the Cheras and describes the Chera country. The [Pattinappaalai](#) talks about the riches of the Chola port city of [Kaveripumpattinam](#) and the economic activities in the city. The historical value of the Sangam poems has been critically analysed by scholars in the 19th and 20th centuries. Historians agree that the descriptions of society, culture and economy in the poems are authentic, for the most part: many eminent scholars including Sivaraja Pillay, Kanakasabhai, K.A.N Sastri and George Hart have used information from these poems to describe the ancient Tamil society.^{[53][54][55][56][57][58][59][60]} Herman Tieken, a Dutch scholar, has expressed his disapproval of doing so, arguing that the poems were composed much later in the 8th-9th centuries CE.^[61] Tieken's methodology and his conclusions about the date of Sangam poems have been criticized by other scholars.^{[62][63][64]}

Among literary sources in other languages, the most informative ones are Greek and Roman accounts of the maritime trade between the Roman empire and the kingdoms of Tamilakam. [Strabo](#) and [Pliny the Elder](#) give the details of the trade route between the Red Sea coast and the western coast of [South India](#). Strabo (c. 1st century BCE) mentions the embassies sent by the Pandyas to the court of Augustus, along with a description of the ambassadors. Pliny (c. 77 CE) talks about the different items imported by the Romans from India and complains about the financial drain caused by them. He also refers to many Tamil ports in his work *The Natural History*. The [Periplus of the Erythraean Sea](#) (c. 60 - 100 CE) an anonymous work, gives an elaborate description of the Tamil country and the riches of a 'Pandian Kingdom'.

[Archaeological](#) excavations at many sites in Tamil Nadu including Arikamedu, Kodumanal, Kaveripumpattinam and Alagankulam, have yielded a variety of artifacts belonging to the Sangam era, such as various types of pottery and other items including black and red ware, rouletted ware, Russet coated ware, brick walls, ring wells, pits, industrial items, and the remains of seeds and shells.^{[65][66][67][68]} Many of the pottery sherds contain Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions on them, which have provided additional evidence for the archaeologist to date them. Archaeologists agree that activities best illustrated in these material records are trade, hunting, agriculture and crafts.^[69] These excavations have provided evidence for the existence of the major economic activities mentioned in Sangam literature. Remnants of irrigation structures like reservoirs and ring wells and charred remains of seeds attest to the cultivation of different varieties of crops and knowledge of various agricultural techniques.^{[70][71][72][73]} Spinning whorls, cotton seeds, remains of a woven cotton cloth and dyeing vats provide evidence for the activities of the textile industry.^{[74][75]} Metallurgy has been supported by the discovery of an ancient blast furnace, along with its base and wall, anvil, slags and crucibles. The remains have indicated that, in addition to iron, the blacksmith may have worked with steel, lead, copper and bronze.^[76] The Kodumanal excavation recovered several jewellery items and semi precious stones at different stages of manufacture, suggesting that they were locally manufactured.^[77] Remains of import and export articles recovered from Arikamedu indicate the important role it played as an Indo-Roman trading station.^[78] Building construction, pearl fishery and painting are other activities that have been supported by findings from these excavations.^{[73][79][80][81]}

Inscriptions are another source of deducing ancient Tamil history: most of them are written in Tamil-Brahmi script and found on rocks or pottery. The inscriptions have been used to corroborate some of the details provided by the Sangam literature. Cave inscriptions found at places such as Mangulam and Alagarmalai near Madurai, Edakal hill in Kerala and Jambai village in Villupuram district record various donations made by the kings and chieftains.^[82] Brief mentions of various aspects of the Sangam society such as agriculture, trade, commodities, occupations and names of cities are found in these inscriptions.^[83] Several coins issued by the Tamil kings of this age have been recovered from river beds and urban centers of their kingdoms. Most of them carry the emblem of the corresponding dynasty, such as the bow and arrow of the Cheras; some of them contain portraits and written legends. Numismatists have used these coins to establish the existence of the Tamil kingdoms during the Sangam age and associate the kings mentioned in the legends to a specific period.^[84] A large number of Roman coins have been found in Coimbatore and Madurai districts, providing more evidence for the brisk maritime trade between Rome and Tamilakam.^[85]

Pallava dynasty

The **Pallava dynasty** was an Indian dynasty that existed from 275 CE to 897 CE, ruling a portion of southern India. They gained prominence after the eclipse of the **Satavahana dynasty**, whom the Pallavas served as **feudatories**.^{[4][5]}

Pallavas became a major power during the reign of **Mahendravarman I** (571–630 CE) and **Narasimhavarmar I** (630–668 CE) and dominated the **Telugu** and northern parts of the **Tamil** region for about 600 years until the end of the 9th century. Throughout their reign they were in constant conflict with both **Chalukyas** of **Badami** in the north and the Tamil kingdoms of **Chola** and **Pandyas** in the south. Pallavas were finally defeated by the **Chola** ruler **Aditya I** in the 9th century CE.^[6]

Pallavas are most noted for their patronage of architecture, the finest example being the **Shore Temple**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in **Mamallapuram**. **Kancheepuram** was capital of the Pallava kingdom. The Pallavas who left behind magnificent sculptures and temples, established the foundations of medieval South Indian architecture

They developed the **Pallava script** from which **Grantha** ultimately descended. The Pallava script gave rise to

several other southeast Asian scripts. Chinese traveller [Xuanzang](#) visited [Kanchipuram](#) during Pallava rule and extolled their benign rule.

Rivalries[\[edit\]](#)

With Cholas[\[edit\]](#)

The Pallavas captured Kanchi from the [Cholas](#) as recorded in the Velurpalaiyam Plates, around the reign of the fifth king of the Pallava line Kumaravishnu I. Thereafter Kanchi figures in inscriptions as the capital of the Pallavas. The Cholas drove the Pallavas away from Kanchi in the mid-4th century, in the reign of Vishugopa, the tenth king of the Pallava line. The Pallavas re-captured Kanchi in the mid-6th century, possibly in the reign of Simhavishnu, the fourteenth king of the Pallava line, whom the Kasakudi plates state as "the lion of the earth". Thereafter the Pallavas held on to [Kanchi](#) until the 9th century, until the reign of their last king, Vijaya Nripatungavarman.^[26]

With Kadambas[\[edit\]](#)

The Pallavas were in conflict with major kingdoms at various periods of time. A contest for political supremacy existed between the early Pallavas and the [Kadambas](#). Numerous Kadamba inscriptions provide details of Pallava-Kadamba hostilities.^[27]

Kadamba dynasty's founder [Mayurasharma](#) first succeeded in establishing himself in the forests of Sriparvatan (possibly modern Srisailem in Andhra Pradesh) by defeating the Antharapalas (guards) of the Pallavas and subduing the Banas of Kolar in 345 CE. The Pallavas under Skandavarman were unable to contain Mayurasharma and recognised him as a sovereign in the regions from the Amara Ocean (Western Ocean) to Prehara (Malaprabha River). Some historians feel that Mayurasharma was initially appointed as a commander (*Dandanayaka*) in the army of the Pallavas, as the inscription uses such terms as Senani and calls Mayurasharma Shadanana (six-faced god of war). After a period of time, due to the confusion caused by the defeat of Pallava Vishnugopa by Samudragupta (Allahabad inscriptions), Mayurasharma formed his kingdom with Banavasi (near Talagunda) as his capital.^[28]

With Kalabhras^[edit]

During the reign of Vishnugopavarman II (approx. 500–525), political convulsion engulfed the Pallavas due to the [Kalabhra](#) invasion of the Tamil country. Towards the close of the 6th century, the Pallava Simhavishnu struck a blow against the Kalabhras. The Pandyas followed suit. Thereafter the Tamil country was divided between the Pallavas in the north with [Kanchipuram](#) as their capital, and Pandyas in the south with [Madurai](#) as their capital.^[29]

Birudas^[edit]

The royal custom of using a series of descriptive honorific titles, *Birudas*, was particularly prevalent among the Pallavas. The birudas of Mahendravarman I are in Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu. The Telugu birudas show Mahendravarman's involvement with the Andhra region continued to be strong at the time he was creating his cave-temples in the Tamil region. The suffix "Malla" was used by the Pallava rulers.^[30] Mahendravarman I used the biruda, *Satrumalla*, "a warrior who overthrows his enemies", and his grandson Paramesvara I was called *Ekamalla* "the sole warrior or wrestler". Pallava kings, presumably exalted ones, were known by the

title *Mahamalla* ("great wrestler"^[31]

Coin of the Pallavas of Coromandel, king Narasimhavarman I. (630-668 AD). **Obv** Lion left **Rev** Name of Narasimhavarman with solar and lunar symbols around.

All early Pallava royal inscriptions were either in Sanskrit or Prakrit, considered the official languages of the dynasty while the official scripts were Pallava and later Grantha. Similarly, inscriptions found in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka State are in Sanskrit and Prakrit.^[32] The phenomenon of using Prakrit as official languages in which rulers left their inscriptions and epigraphies continued till the 6th century. It would have been in the interest of the ruling elite to protect their privileges by perpetuating their hegemony of Prakrit in order to exclude the common

people from sharing power (Mahadevan 1995a: 173–188). The Pallavas in their Tamil country used Tamil and Sanskrit in their inscriptions.^{[33][34]}

Tamil came to be the main language used by the Pallavas in their inscriptions, though a few records continued to be in Sanskrit.^[34] This language was first adopted by Mahendravarman I himself in a few records of his; but from the time of Paramesvaravarman I, the practice came into vogue of inscribing a part of the record in Sanskrit and the rest in Tamil. Almost all the copper plate records, viz., Kasakudi, Tandantottam, Pattattalmangalm Udayendiram and Velurpalaiyam are composed both in Sanskrit and Tamil.^[1]

Invasion by the Imperial Cholas of Tanjavur (900–1250 CE)

Main article: [Medieval Cholas](#)

The medieval Cholas conquered the region in 10th century CE. The northern part of the Kongu country was brought under the Chola rule by [Aditya I.](#)^[19] [Raja Raja I](#) in 990 CE defeated the Cheras at Kandalursalai and then proceeded against the Pandyas to annex Malai Nadu region which refers to the region of modern Coorg, Mysore and Kongu and the hills surrounding them. North Kongu was directly under the control of the Imperial Cholas till 1064 CE.

For almost 300 years from 1004 CE, the Kongu Cholas ruled autonomously. Chola monarch Raja Raja's general named, Kalimurka Vikrama was the founder of the dynasty and bore the title Konattar. The rulers of the 'Konattar' line adopted Chola titles and surnames.^[20] They came from the Konadu region (Pudukkottai) and ruled as a branch of Tanjore Cholas but were named as Kongu Cholas. The Kongu country came under the control of Vikrama Chola and Rajadhiraja, the two Kongu rulers who served as the later contemporaries of the Imperial Chola king Rajendra I and Kulottunga I, who ruled between 1070 CE and 1120 CE. Vikrama Chola III was the last ruler of the Kongu Chola line. During his time major parts of the Kongu region were under the Pandyas.

The ancient Chera country, except central Kerala, gradually passed into the Pandya sphere of influence.^[3] The western portions of the Chera country became, slowly but surely, an independent kingdom, the [Chera Perumal kingdom](#), with its own headquarters at [Makotai \(Kodungallur\)](#).^[3] The branch of Chera family survived in Kongu country, now Pandya vassals, are described in later inscriptions (9th-11th centuries) as members of Chandra-Aditya Kula (the Luni-Solar Race).^[4] This seems to suggest a process of integration with the Pandya royal family (the Lunar Race) via royal marriages.^[3]

The two branches of the Chera family, the Kongu Cheras and the [Chera Perumals](#), supported by the [Pandyas](#) and the [Cholas](#) respectively, were rivals in this period.^[17] Chera Perumal king [Sthanu Ravi](#) was a junior partner in a Chola campaign in the Kongu country.^[18] The Pandyas are known to have made a defensive alliance with the Cheras of Kongu country (who were under their influence) in this period.^[19] Pandya king Parantaka Vira Narayana (c. 880 – 900 AD) is known to have married a Kerala (Kongu Chera) princess "Vanavan Mahadevi".^[20] [Rajasimha II](#), son of this alliance, is described as a member of Chandra-Aditya Kula in the Sinnamanu copper plates.^[20] It was initially assumed by [K. A. N. Sastri](#) and [E. P. N. K. Pillai](#) that the Vira Narayana had married a Chera Perumal princess of Kerala.^[20] Reciprocal marriage alliances between the Chera Perumals and the Cholas are also recorded in several inscriptions (see [Kizhan Adigal](#)).^[20]

The Kongu country was conquered by the Cholas under [Aditya I](#) in the last years of the 9th century AD (this campaign probably involved battles between Aditya I and Parantaka Vira Narayana). The Pandyas were eventually defeated in the "great battle" of Sripurambiyam (c. 885 AD).^[21]

When the Chola king [Parantaka I](#) conquered the Pandyas in 910 AD, the Chera Perumals might have allowed to have rule parts of Kongu country (the fate of the Kongu Chera country, then ruled by Kongu Cheras, upon the fall of Madurai is not known).^[17] Pandya king [Rajasimha II](#), who was defeated by Parantaka I, is known to have found asylum in the Chera country or Kerala (c. 920 AD).^[17] Chola king Sundara (c. 956 – c. 973 AD) had a Chera or Kerala princess among his queens.^[22]

Chola influence in Kongu country[\[edit\]](#)

Kongu Chera country was subsequently conquered by the [Cholas](#) (late 10th-early 11 centuries).^{[4][23]} Amara Bhujanga Deva, one of the princes defeated by Chola king [Rajaraja](#) (Tiruvalangadu Grant), was probably a Pandya or a Kongu Chera prince.^[24] There are records of a king named Vira Kerala Amara Bhujanga Deva from Kongu region.^[24] Chola king [Rajadhiraja](#) is known for defeating certain Vira Kerala, one of the so-called "thennava muvar", and trampling him to death by his war elephant.^[25] This royal was probably a Kongu-Chera of Chandra Aditya Kula or a [Pandya](#) prince (son of a Pandya and a Kongu Chera princess).^[26] Vira Kerala was previously considered as a Chera Perumal king ([K. A. N. Sastri](#) and [E. P. N. K. Pillai](#)).^[27]

A line of independent rulers known as "Kongu Cholas" (with Chola titles) ruled the Kongu country in c. 13th century AD. These were probably members of a collateral branch of the Kongu Cheras (or the descendants of Chola "viceroys" to the Kongu country).^[28]

Kongu Chera dynasty

Kongu Chera dynasty, or **Cheras/Keralas of Kongu or Karur**, or simply as the **Chera/Kerala dynasty**, were a medieval royal lineage in south India, initially ruling over western [Tamil Nadu](#) and central [Kerala](#).^[1] The headquarters of the Kongu Cheras was located at Karur-Vanchi ([Karur](#)) in central Tamil Nadu.^{[1][2]} The Chera rulers of Kongu were subordinate to or conquered by [Chalukya](#), [Pallava](#) and [Pandya](#) kings.^[1] [Rashtrakuta](#) and Chola rulers are also said to have overrun the Kongu Chera country.^{[3][4]}

Present-day central Kerala detached from Kongu Chera kingdom around 8th-9th century AD to form the [Chera Perumal kingdom](#) (*fl.* 9th – 12th century AD).^[1] The exact relationship between the two branches of the Chera family is not known to scholars.^[2] The perumals are identified to descendants of Early [cheras](#)^[5] / Kongu [Cheras](#)

The Kongu Cheras are often described as the members of Chandra-Aditya Kula (the Luni-Solar Race) (around 9th-11th centuries). Kongu Cheras appear to have been absorbed into the Pandya political system by 10th-11th century

AD.^[6] A collateral branch of the Kongu Cheras, known as "Kongu Cholas", later ruled the Kongu country under the Cholas.^[7]

Kongu Cheras/Keralas of Karur initially appear as the rulers of western Tamil Nadu and central Kerala in the medieval period.^[1] The family claimed that they were descended from the [Cheras](#) who flourished in pre-[Pallava](#) (early historic) south India.^[1] It is likely that the Cheras had a system of joint rule with each prince from the family ruling in a different province ([Karuvur-Vanchi](#), [Muchiri-Vanchi](#) or Thondi).^{[8][9]} An inscription of [Kadamba](#) king Vishnu Varma, dated 5th or 6th century, can be found at Edakkal cave in [Wayanad](#).^[10] An early historic Chera graffiti containing the phrase "Kadummi Putra Chera" was also discovered from the cave.^[11]

The earliest [Chalukya](#) king to claim overlordship over Chera/Kerala is [Kirtivarman I](#) (fl. 566 - 598 AD) (this claim is generally considered as a "boastful exaggeration" by historians). A later grant (695 AD) of king [Vinayaditya I](#) [Satyasraya](#), with reference to the vassalage of the Kerala country, is now reckoned as a more dependable record.^[12] Several Chalukya records of the 7th and 8th centuries speak of the conquest and vassalage of the Kerala country.^[12] A number of [Pallava](#) records also mention the vassalage of the Kerala/Chera country.^[12]

By the beginning of early medieval period, [Karur](#) (in interior Tamil Nadu) had acquired much prominence with respect to the other two centers, [Muchiri-Vanchi](#) and Thondi (both in Kerala).^[1] Karur came to be known by the 8th – 9th centuries AD as "Vanchi manakaramana Karur".^{[13][14]} There was a domination of present-day Kerala regions of the old Chera country by the Kongu Cheras of Karur (probably via some form of viceregal rule).^[1]

Cheras as Pandya vassals^[edit]

There are clear attestations of repeated [Pandya](#) conquests of the Kerala country in the 7th and 8th centuries AD.^[12] Pandya king Sendan was known as the "Vanavan", an ancient name for the Chera king.^[12] [Arikesari Maravarman](#), another Pandya ruler, probably defeated the Keralas/Cheras on several occasions.^{[12][4]} His successor [Ko Chadayan Ranadhira](#) also made gains against the Cheras.^[15]

The so-called "renewal of the capital city of Vanchi ([Karur](#)) along with Kudal ([Madurai](#)) and Kozhi ([Uraiyur](#))" by the Pandya king [Rajasimha I](#) (730 – 65 AD), described in the Madras Museum Plates of Jatila Parantaka Nedunjadaiyan Varaguna (765 – 815 AD) , may suggest a Pandya occupation of the Kongu Chera capital Karur.^[3] It is known that when Jatila Parantaka went to war against the Adigaman of Tagadur ([Dharmapuri](#)), the Keralas and the Pallavas went to the aid of the latter though "the Pandyas drove them back to the quarters from which they had emerged" (Madras Museum Plates of Jatila Parantaka, 17th year).^[3] Perhaps the Chera branch from present-day Kerala had crossed the [Ghat Mountains](#) to offer support to the Adigaman and after defeat they were pursued up to the [Palghat Gap](#) by the Pandya forces.^[16]

[Rashtrakuta](#) inscriptions mention "an alliance of Dravida kings including Kerala, Pandya, Chola and Pallava who were defeated" (*E. I.*, XVIII). The Keralas mentioned there might be the Kongu Cheras who had already submitted to the Pandyas (not [Chera Perumals](#) of Kerala).^[3]

Detachment of central Kerala

The ancient Chera country, except central Kerala, gradually passed into the Pandya sphere of influence.^[3] The western portions of the Chera country became, slowly but surely, an independent kingdom, the [Chera Perumal kingdom](#), with its own headquarters at [Makotai \(Kodungallur\)](#).^[3] The branch of Chera family survived in Kongu country, now Pandya vassals, are described in later inscriptions (9th-11th centuries) as members of Chandra-Aditya Kula (the Luni-Solar Race).^[4] This seems to suggest a process of integration with the Pandya royal family (the Lunar Race) via royal marriages.^[3]

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Kongu Chera genealogy[\[edit\]](#)

Several stone and copper inscriptions of the Kongu Cheras, probably [Chola](#) vassals, dated by palaeography to 9th – 11th centuries AD. are found in places like Vellalur. [Namakkal](#). [Pazhani](#). Perur. [Dharmapuram](#). [Erode](#) and

Tirukkannapuram.^[4] They are generally described in inscriptions as members of Chandra-Aditya Kula (the Lunar Solar Race).^[4]

Kongu Chera coins[[edit](#)]

Unlike the [Chera Perumals](#) of the west coast, the Kongu Cheras are known for their signature coins.^[38]

A silver coin with Nagari legend "sri vira keralasya" (11th-12th centuries AD) in British Museum is generally attributed to Kongu Cheras.^[38] Another coin known as "anai achu" (the elephant mould"), with the bow and arrow symbol, can also be a Kongu Chera product.^[38] The anai achu coin was current in western Tamil Nadu and to some extent in Kerala in the 12th-13th centuries AD.^[38]

The **Pandya dynasty**, also known as the **Pandya of Madurai**, was a dynasty of [south India](#), one of the three famous [Tamil lineages](#), the other two being the [Chola](#) and the [Chera](#).^[6] The dynasty passed through two periods of imperial dominance, the 6th to 10th centuries CE, and under the 'Later Pandyas' (13th to 14th centuries CE). The Pandyas ruled extensive territories, at times including the large portions of present-day [south India](#) and northern [Sri Lanka](#) through collateral branches subject to [Madurai](#).^{[7][8]}

The rulers of the three Tamil dynasties were referred to as the "[three crowned rulers \(the mu-ventar\)](#) of the [Tamil country](#)".^{[6][9]} The age and the antiquity of the Pandya dynasty are difficult to establish.^[8] The [early Pandya](#) chieftains ruled their country ([the Pandya nadu](#)) from time immemorial, which included the inland city of [Madurai](#) and the southern port of [Korkai](#).^{[10][11]} The Pandyas are celebrated in the earliest available Tamil poetry ("the [Sangam literature](#)").^[8] [Graeco-Roman](#) accounts (as early as 4th century BCE^[8]), the edict of [Maurya](#) emperor [Asoka](#), coins with legends in [Tamil-Brahmi](#) script, and Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions suggest the continuity of the Pandya dynasty from the 3rd century BCE to the early centuries CE.^{[12][13][10]} The early historical Pandyas faded into obscurity upon the rise of the [Kalabhra dynasty](#) in south India.^[14]

Pandya empire (13th–14th centuries)[[edit](#)]

The Pandya empire included extensive territories, at times including large portions of south India and [Sri Lanka](#)

The rule of the empire was shared among several royals, one of them enjoying primacy over the rest. The Pandya king at Madurai thus controlled these vast regions through the collateral family branches subject to [Madurai](#).^{[8][83]}

An aerial view of [Madurai](#) city from [Meenakshi Temple](#)

Pandya kings (13th - 14th century CE)

Pandya ruler	Reign
Maravarman Sundara I	1216–1238 CE
Sundaravarman Kulasekara II	1238–1240 CE
Maravarman Sundara II	1238–1251 CE
Jatavarman Sundara I	1251–1268 CE
Maravarman Kulasekara I	1268–1310 CE
Sundara Pandya IV	1309–1327 CE
Vira Pandya IV	1309–1345 CE

Maravarman Sundara I[\[edit\]](#)

The foundation for the Pandya supremacy in south India was laid by [Maravarman Sundara I](#) early in the 13th century.^[84] He succeeded his older brother Jatavarman Kulasekhara in 1216.^[85] He invaded the Chola country, sacked [Uraiyur](#) and [Thanjavur](#), and drove the Chola king [Kulothunga III](#) into exile.^{[85][86]} The Chola king subsequently made a formal submission to Maravarman Sundara I and acknowledged his overlordship.^[85] Attempts by the next Chola king [Rajaraja III](#) (1216 – 46 CE^[7]) for self-rule (to stop the Pandya invasion into the Chola country^[7]), with the help of the [Hoysalas](#) king Narasimha II (r. 1220 – 1238 CE), resulted in a battle between the Pandya and Hoysala forces at Mahendramangalam on the [Kaveri Valley](#). Maravarman Sundara I was defeated and Rajaraja III was restored in the Chola country.^[85] Sometime later Chola prince [Rajendra III](#) attacked the Pandyas and defeated two Pandya royals including [Maravarman Sundara II](#).^[85] Hoysala king [Somesvara](#) (r. 1233 – 1267 CE^[7]) then came to the aid of the Pandyas, defeated Rajendra II and then made peace with the Cholas.^{[85][86]}

Jatavarman Sundara I[\[edit\]](#)

[Jatavarman Sundara I](#) ascended the Pandya throne in 1251 CE.^[7] He led his army to the Chola country (even as far as [Nellore](#)), to [Sri Lanka](#) and to south [Kerala](#).^[7] He was also successful in confining the Hoysala control to the Mysore Plateau (the ancient Chola country was now overrun by the Pandyas^[7]).^[85] [Kanchi](#) functioned as the second major city in the kingdom.^[85] In his conquests, Jatavarman Sundara I was assisted by number of Pandya royals such as Jatavarman Vira Pandya.^[85]

Jatavarman Sundara I subdued Rajendra II around 1258–1260 CE and made him pay tribute.^[86] The rule of the Cholas ended c. 1279 with Rajendra III.^[7] The Pandya attacked the Hoysalas in the Kaveri and captured the fort of Kannanur Koppam.^[85] Hoysala king [Somesvara](#) was forced to fall back into the Mysore Plateau.^[85] The Hoysala king, pressed by enemies from north and south, "assigned" the southern half of his kingdom to his younger son Ramanatha (r. 1254–1292^[7]). [Somesvara](#) was eventually killed by the Pandya in 1262 CE.^[85] Ramanatha managed to recover Kannanur and hold against the Pandya power.^{[83][88][89]} Jatavarman Sundara I also came into conflict with the [Kadava](#) ruler [Kopperunjinga II](#).^{[90][85]} It seems that Bana (Magadai) and Kongu countries came under the Pandya rule during the wars against the Hoysalas and the Kadavas.^[85] Jatavarman Sundara I also fought the

Kakatiya ruler Ganapati (1199-1262^[71]).^[83] [Sri Lanka](#) was invaded by Jatavarman Sundara I in 1258^[91] and on his behalf by his younger brother [Jatavarman Vira II](#) between 1262 and 1264 CE.^[92] The island was again invaded and defeated by Jatavarman Vira II in 1270 CE.^[93]

Maravarman Kulasekara I[\[edit\]](#)

Sundara Pandya I (died in 1268) was succeeded by [Maravarman Kulasekara I](#).^[83] Around 1279 the combined forces of Hoysala king Ramanatha and [Rajendra III](#) was defeated by Maravarman Kulasekara I.^[83] Maravarman Kulasekara I, now virtually unchallenged, ruled over the Chola country and southern Tamil speaking portions of Hoysala kingdom. He also invaded Sri Lanka, ruled by Bhuvanaikabahu I, "carried away to the Pandya country the venerable Tooth Relic", and the wealth of the island.^[83] Sri Lanka remained under Pandya control till c. 1308-09 CE.^[83]

Decline of Pandyas[\[edit\]](#)

After the death of [Maravarman Kulasekhara I](#) (1310), his sons Vira Pandya IV and Sundara Pandya IV fought a war of succession for control of the empire. It seems that Maravarman Kulasekhara wanted Vira Pandya to succeed him (who in turn was defeated by Sundara Pandya after a short period of time).^[94] Unfortunately, the Pandya civil war coincided with the [Khalji](#) raids in south India.^[95] Taking advantage of the political situation, the neighbouring [Hoysala](#) king [Ballala III](#) invaded the Pandya territory. However, Ballala had to retreat to his capital when Khalji general [Malik Kafur](#) invaded his kingdom at the same time.^[96] After subjugating Ballala III, the Khalji forces marched to the Pandya territory in March 1311.^[97] The Pandya brothers fled their headquarters, and the Khaljis pursued them unsuccessfully.^{[98][99]} By late April 1311, the Khaljis gave up their plans to pursue the Pandya princes, and returned to Delhi with the plunder.^{[100][101]} By 1312 the Pandya control over south [Kerala](#) was also lost.^[8]

After the departure of the Khaljis, Vira and Sundara Pandya resumed their conflict. Sundara Pandya was defeated and sought help from the Khaljis. With their help, he regained control of the [South Arcot](#) region by 1314.^[101] Subsequently, there were two more expeditions from the sultanate in 1314 led by [Khusro Khan](#) and in 1323 by Ulugh Khan ([Muhammad bin Tughluq](#)) under sultan [Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq](#).^[101]

The family quarrels and the sultanate invasions shattered the Pandya empire beyond revival^[8] and coinage discoveries made imply that the Pandyas were left with the old South Arcot region.^[102] In 1323, the [Jaffna kingdom](#) declared its independence from the crumbling Pandya influence.^{[19][20]}

Legacy^[edit]

While the previous sultanate raids were content with plunder, the [Tughluqs](#) under Ulugh Khan (later [Muhammad bin Tughluq](#)^[2]) annexed the former Pandya dominions to the sultanate as the province of Ma'bar. Most of southern India came under the sultanate rule and was divided into five provinces – Devagiri, Tiling, [Kampili](#), [Dorasamudra](#) and Ma'bar.^[102] [Jalal ud-Din Hasan Khan](#) was appointed governor of the newly created southernmost Ma'bar province.^{[103][104]} In c. 1334, Jalal ud-Din Hasan Khan declared his independence and created [Madurai sultanate](#).^[2] The Pandyas shifted their capital to [Tenkasi](#) and continued to rule a small area until the end of the 16th century.^[2]

[Bukka Raya I](#) of [Vijayanagara empire](#) conquered the city of Madurai in c. 1370,^[2] imprisoned the sultan, released and restored Arcot's prince Sambuva Raya to the throne. Bukka Raya I appointed his son Veera Kumara Kampana as the viceroy of the Tamil region. Meanwhile, Madurai sultanate was replaced by the Nayak governor of [Vijayanagara](#) in 1378.^[105] In 1529 the Nayak governors declared independence and established [Madurai Nayak dynasty](#).^[8]

The Pandya country, located at the extreme south-western tip of [South Asia](#), served as an important meeting point throughout the history of the India. The location was economically and geopolitically significant as a key point connecting the shipping between [Southeast Asia](#) and the [Middle East](#). [Graeco-Roman](#) merchants frequented the [ancient Tamil country](#), present day [south India](#) and [Sri Lanka](#), securing contacts with the [Tamil](#) chiefdoms of

the Pandya, [Chola](#) and [Chera](#) families.^[10] The western sailors also established a number of trading settlements on the harbours of the ancient Tamil region.^[10]

The trade with South Asia by the [Greco-Roman world](#) flourished since the time of the [Ptolemaic dynasty](#)^[106] a few decades before the start of the [Common Era](#) and remained long after the fall of the [Western Roman Empire](#).^{[107][108]} The contacts between south India and the Middle East continued even after the [Byzantium](#)'s loss of the ports of [Egypt](#) and the [Red Sea](#)^[109] in the 7th century CE.

The early historic Pandya country was famous for its supply of pearls. The ancient port of [Korkai](#), in present day [Thoothukudi](#), was the center of pearl trade. Written records from [Graeco-Roman](#) and Egyptian voyagers give details about the pearl fisheries off the [Gulf of Mannar](#). Greek historian [Megasthenes](#) reported about the pearl fisheries, indicating that the Pandyas derived great wealth from the pearl trade.^[110] Convicts were according to the [Periplus of the Erythraean Sea](#) used as pearl divers in [Korkai](#).^[111] The *Periplus* even mentions that "pearls inferior to the Indian sort are exported in great quantity from the parts of Apologas and Omana".^[112] The pearls from the Pandya country were also in demand in the kingdoms of north India.^[113] Literary references of the pearl fishing mention how the fishermen, who dive into the sea, avoid attacks from sharks, bring up the right-whorled chank and blow on the sounding shell.^[114]

Shaivism

Shaivism (/ˈʃaɪvɪzəm/) is one of the major [Hindu traditions](#) that worships [Lord Shiva](#), also called [Rudra](#),^{[1][2][3]} as the [Supreme Being](#).^{[4][5][6]} It is considered to be the oldest living religion in the world.^{[7][8]} One of the largest [Hindu denominations](#),^{[9][10]} It incorporates many sub-traditions ranging from devotional [dualistic theism](#) such as [Shaiva Siddhanta](#) to [yoga-oriented monistic non-theism](#) such as [Kashmir Shaivism](#).^{[11][12][13]} It considers both the [Vedas](#) and the [Agama](#) texts as important sources of theology.^{[14][15][16]}

Shaivism developed as an amalgam of pre-Aryan religions and traditions, which were assimilated in the non-Vedic Shiva-tradition.^[17] In the process of [Sanskritization](#) and [formation of Hinduism](#), starting in the last centuries BCE, these pre-Aryan traditions became aligned with the Vedic deity [Rudra](#) and other Vedic deities, incorporating the

non-vedic Shiva-traditions into the [vedic-Brahmanical fold](#).^{[18][19]}

Both devotional and monistic Shaivism became popular in the 1st millennium CE, rapidly becoming the dominant religious tradition of many Hindu kingdoms.^[2] It arrived in Southeast Asia shortly thereafter, leading to the construction of thousands of Shaiva temples on the islands of Indonesia as well as Cambodia and Vietnam, co-evolving with [Buddhism](#) in these regions.^{[19][20]}

Shaivite theology ranges from Shiva being the creator, preserver, and destroyer to being the same as the [Atman](#) (self, soul) within oneself and every living being. It is closely related to [Shaktism](#), and some Shaiva worship in both Shiva and Shakti temples.^[13] It is the Hindu tradition that most accepts ascetic life and emphasizes [yoga](#), and like other Hindu traditions encourages an individual to discover and be one with Shiva within.^{[11][12][21]} The followers of Shaivism are called "Shaivites" or "Saivas".

Shaivism was likely the predominant tradition in South India, co-existing with Buddhism and Jainism, before the Vaishnava [Alvars](#) launched the [Bhakti movement](#) in the 7th-century, and influential Vedanta scholars such as [Ramanuja](#) developed a philosophical and organizational framework that helped Vaishnava expand. Though both traditions of Hinduism have ancient roots, given their mention in the epics such as the *Mahabharata*, Shaivism flourished in South India much earlier.^[77]

The Mantramarga of Shaivism, according to Alexis Sanderson, provided a template for the later thought independent and highly influential Pancaratrika treatises of Vaishnava. This is evidenced in Hindu texts such as the *Isvarasamhita*, *Padmasamhita* and *Paramesvarasamhita*.^[77]

Along with the Himalayan region stretching from Kashmir through Nepal, the Shaiva tradition in South India has been one of the largest sources of preserved Shaivism-related manuscripts from ancient and medieval India.^[79] The region was also the source of Hindu arts, temple architecture, and merchants who helped spread Shaivism into southeast Asia in early 1st millennium CE.^{[80][81][82]}

There are tens of thousands of Hindu temples where Shiva is either the primary deity or reverentially included in anthropomorphic or aniconic form (lingam, or [svayambhu](#)).^{[83][84]} Numerous historic Shaiva temples have survived in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.^[85] Certain regions have a greater density of Shiva

temples, such as in the [Thanjavur](#) region of [Tamil Nadu](#), where numerous Shaiva temples were built during

the [Chola](#) empire era, between 800 and 1200 CE.^[*citation needed*] [Gudimallam](#) is the oldest known lingam and has been dated to between 3rd to 1st-century BCE. It is a carved five feet high stone lingam with an anthropomorphic image of Shiva on one side. This ancient lingam is in [Chittoor](#) district of Andhra Pradesh.

Beliefs and practices[[edit](#)]

Shaivism centers around Shiva, but it has many sub-traditions whose theological beliefs and practices vary significantly. They range from dualistic devotional theism to monistic meditative discovery of Shiva within oneself. Within each of these theologies, there are two sub-groups. One sub-group is called Vedic-Puranic, who use the terms such as "Shiva, Mahadeva, Maheshvara and others" synonymously, and they use iconography such as the [Linga](#), [Nandi](#), [Trishula](#) (trident), as well as anthropomorphic statues of Shiva in temples to help focus their practices.^[95] Another sub-group is called esoteric, which fuses it with abstract *Sivata* (feminine energy) or *Sivatva* (neuter abstraction), wherein the theology integrates the goddess (Shakti) and the god (Shiva) with Tantra practices and Agama teachings. There is a considerable overlap between these Shaivas and the Shakti Hindus.^[95]

Vedic, Puranic, and esoteric Shaivism[[edit](#)]

Scholars such as Alexis Sanderson discuss Shaivism in three categories: Vedic, Puranic and non-Puranic (esoteric tantric).^{[96][97]} They place Vedic and Puranic together given the significant overlap, while placing Non-Puranic esoteric sub-traditions as a separate category.^[97]

- *Vedic-Puranik*. The majority within Shaivism follow the Vedic-Puranik traditions. They revere the Vedas, the Puranas and have beliefs that span dualistic theism style Shiva [Bhakti](#) (devotionalism) to monistic non-theism dedicated to yoga and meditative lifestyle sometimes with renouncing householder life for monastic pursuit of spirituality.^[98] The Yoga practice is particularly pronounced in nondualistic Shaivism, with the practice refined into a methodology such as four-fold *upaya*: being pathless (anupaya, iccha-less, desire-less), being divine (sambhavopaya, *jnana*, knowledge-full), being energy (saktopaya, *kriya*, action-full) and being individual (anavopaya).^{[99][note 3]}

- *Non-Puranik*. These are esoteric, minority sub-traditions wherein devotees are initiated (*dīkṣa*) into a specific cult they prefer. Their goals vary, ranging from liberation in current life (*mukti*) to seeking pleasures in higher worlds (*bhukti*). Their means also vary, ranging from meditative *atimarga* or "outer higher path" versus those whose means are recitation-driven *mantras*. The *atimarga* sub-traditions include Pashupatas and Lakulas. According to Sanderson, the Pashupatas^[note 4] have the oldest heritage, likely from the 2nd century CE, as evidenced by ancient Hindu texts such as the [Shanti Parva](#) book of the *Mahabharata* epic.^{[100][97]} The tantric sub-tradition in this category is traceable to post-8th to post-11th century depending on the region of Indian subcontinent, paralleling the development of Buddhist and Jain tantra traditions in this period.^[101] Among these are the dualistic Shaiva Siddhanta and Bhairava Shaivas (non-Saiddhantika), based on whether they recognize any value in Vedic orthopraxy.^[102] These sub-traditions cherish secrecy, special symbolic formulae, initiation by a teacher and the pursuit of *siddhi* (special powers). Some of these traditions also incorporate theistic ideas, elaborate geometric yantra with embedded spiritual meaning, mantras and rituals.

The Seven Kongu Saivaite Temples

Temples were built for different purposes based on Agama Sastras. Being a visible emblem of the religion, philosophy and ethics of the people, the temple played a role far more vital than any other institutions. The great builders and artists sought self expression through conformity to tradition rather than originality of the expression. The present paper deals the seven Saivaite temples in the North Kongu region of Tamil Nadu to highlight their Socio-cultural importance.

List of Seven Kongu Saivaite Temples

S.No	Name of the Saivaite Temples	Location	Present District
1.	Ardhanariswarar Temple	Tiruchchengodu	Namakkal

2.	Muruganathiswar Temple	Tirumuruganpundi	Tiruppur
3.	Avinasiswarar Temple	Avinasi	Tiruppur
4.	Pasupatheeswarar Temple	Karur	Karur
5.	Vikrithiswarar Temple	Venjamankudalur	Karur
6.	Sangameswarar Temple	Bhavani	Erode
7.	Magudeeswarar Temple	Kodumudi	Erode