

## Twitter Thread by Vibhu Vashisth ■■



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### ■Rajaraja Chola:The Mighty Chola King.■

Rajaraja Chola I was the one of the greatest ruler of the Imperial Chola dynasty who ruled in the period between 985 CE to 1014 CE. His real name was Arulmozhi Varman.



Through his extensive military campaigns, Rajaraja Chola transformed the Chola kingdom into a mighty empire that covered almost entire South India, parts of northern India, Northern parts of Srilanka, the islands of Maldives, and South East Asia.



Rajaraja was a great military general. He established a large standing army and a powerful navy. With the help of this army he waged unending campaigns against his neighbours - the Cheras and Pandyas and crushed their power.







To commemorate these victories, Rajaraja assumed the title of "Mummudi Chola" i.e the one who wears three crowns of Cholas, Pandyas and Cheras.

His most important military campaign was his invasion of modern day Srilanka.



Chola navy & army under his command crossed the ocean & destroyed ancient Singhla capital of Anuradhapura. Destruction of Anuradhapur was so great that it was turned into ruins & abandoned. City of Polanaruwa was made new capital & Shiva temple was built to commemorate the victory.



Rajaraja then annexed the northern regions of Srilanka as a new province of his empire.

Later he established his superiority over the native kingdoms of Kalyani Chalukyas, Hoysalas and the Rastrakutas.

He also defeated the Eastern Chalukya ruler Jata Choda Bhima and appointed his nominee Shaktivarman as the viceroy, thus establishing his control over Vengi. Raja Raja later gave his daughter Kundavai in marriage to the next viceroy of

Vengi Vimaladitya which brought about union of the Cholas & Eastern Chalukyas & which also ensured that the descendants of Rajaraja Chola would rule the Eastern Chalukya kingdom in the future. One of the last conquests of Rajaraja was the naval conquest of the islands of Maldives.

Rajaraja brought about a complete overhaul of the Chola administration. He was the first Chola ruler to initiate the massive project of land survey and assessment in 1000 CE which led to the reorganization of the empire into units known as valanadus.

Rajaraja strengthened the local self-government and installed a system of audit and control by which the village assemblies and other public bodies were held to account while retaining their autonomy. To promote trade, he sent the first Chola mission to China.

Rajaraja was an ardent follower of Bhagwan Shiv. Once after hearing the small excerpts of Thevaram - Shaiva devotional poetry, he decided to recover all the lost hymns. He sought the help of Saint Nambi Andar Nambi.

It is believed that by divine intervention Nambi found the presence of scripts, in the form of cadijam leaves in the Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram. Nambi arranged the hymns of three saint poets Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar as the first seven books known as Thevaram.

Rajaraja thus became to be known as Tirumurai Kanda Cholan meaning one who saved the Tirumurai. Thus far Shiva temples only had images of god forms, but after the advent of Rajaraja, the images of the Nayanar saints were also placed inside the temple.

Rajaraja had great interest in art and architecture. In 1010 CE, he built the massive Brihadeswara Temple in Thanjavur dedicated to Shiva which is a masterpiece of Chola architecture. The vimana (temple tower) is 216 ft (66 m) high and is the tallest in the world.





The Kumbam (the apex or the bulbous structure on the top) of the temple is carved out of a single rock and weighs around 80 tons. There is a big statue of Nandi (sacred bull), carved out of a single rock measuring about 16 feet long and 13 feet high at the entrance.

The entire temple structure is made out of granite, the nearest sources of which are about 60 km to the west of temple.