

# THE CHOLAS (PART-3)

B.A , PART-2, PAPER-3

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# RISE OF IMPERIAL CHOLAS

- ***Rajendra I (1014 – 1044 CE)***

The process of Chola territorial expansion continued under Rajaraja's son and successor Rajendra I. The policy of expansion continued with the annexation of southern provinces of the Chalukyas, the rich Raichur doab and Vengi, campaigns against Srilanka and Kerala were also renewed.

In 1017 CE he invaded and completed the conquest of Ceylon by defeating and imprisoning Mahindra V. The next year he reasserted the Chola supremacy over the kings of Kerala and the Pandyan country and made

# RISE OF IMPERIAL CHOLAS

one of his sons the viceroy of both, with Madurai as capital. He defeated the western Chalukyas who were trying to meddle in the succession dispute of Vengi. He offered his daughter Ammangi in marriage to Rajarajanarendra, the Vengi ruler.

His most military enterprise was his expedition to North India. Rajendra I directed his arms towards the North and his armies marched triumphantly as far as the Ganga and the dominions of the Pala king Mahipala. It is said that the waters of the sacred

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Ganga were brought to the Chola capital Tanjore. This implies that Rajendra defeated the Palas. He also assumed the title "Gangaikonda". He founded a new capital called after him – Gangaikonda Cholapuram, identified with modern Gangakundapuram in Tiruchirapalli district of Tamilnadu. The most ambitious campaign of Rajendra was his overseas campaign involving both his Navy and army against the kingdom of Srivijaya in South-East Asia.

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In this connection the capital of Srivijaya, Kadaram, was sacked and the king Sangrama Vijayottungavarman was taken captive. The campaign apparently ended with the restoration of the kingdom to its ruler subject to his acknowledging Chola suzerainty.

It is believed that Rajendra undertook this overseas naval expedition to protect the

- commercial interests of the Indian merchants and guilds.

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Rajendra I had put down all rebellions and kept his empire intact. Thus, the reign of Rajendra may be considered as one of the most brilliant epochs in the history of South India. Under him the extent of the empire was larger than ever and the imperial splendor was at its best. The Pandya, Kerala and Mysore regions and also Srilanka formed part of the empire. He was a devout Saiva, built a temple at new capital Gangaikonda Cholapuram and made liberal endowments. He was also tolerant towards the Vaishnavism and Buddhist sects. (To be continued)