

Thanjavur - The Hidden Jewel



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Thanjavur-The Landmark

Introduction:

Thanjavur is a historical town with influence from far and wide the people are courteous .The languages differ. The customs of each family varies. Only few cities have been able to survive for centuries .One among them with a recoded history dating back to the year 846AD is the Chola capital Thanjavur .In fact according to the US News Thanjavur was one of the fifteen biggest cities in the world in the 1st Millennium. Marco polo during his travels had visited the city of Thanjavur and writes about the great temple in his notes .It is recorded that there where more physicians in Thanjavur than in any other city. The city, which has seen the rise and fall of different Dynasties, has associated itself in the fields of Politics, Literature and arts.

Thanjavur the name has its origin to a legend .An Asura (Demon) named Tanjan who according to the local folklore devastated the Neighbor hood and was killed by Goddess Anandavalli Amman and Nilamegaperumal (Vishnu) .He requested the Goddess before his death that this town should be named after him, and his wish was granted by the Gods. Hence it was called Thanjavur [Tanjan + Oor. Oor in Tamil means Town]. The original name of Thanjavur was KUBERAPURI. THANJAVUR is also called the Granary of the South and Rice Bowl of Tamilnadu, thanks to the finest irrigation and drainage system introduced by rulers like Karikala Cholan who had built a dam across the Cauvery in the days when it was not heard of. There is yet another version, which argues that the name was derived from “Tanjan” which means refuge because of which, it is called Thanjavur or the city of refuge. Thanjavur is the headquarters for the South Zone Cultural center promoting art & culture comprising the Southern States. They conduct cultural programmes and have a well-maintained center in Thanjavur.

Thanjavur is also known as a city of ART for it produces a lot of Art items. Thanjavur Paintings & Bronzes are the most popular ones while Thanjavur Art Plates, Rolling Dolls, Garlands made from sandal wood paste and spices and paddy are unique. The musical instruments like the veena, mirudangam are world famous. The Silk saris woven here by Saurastras who where migrated to Thanjavur by the Imperial rulers needs to be mentioned for their fine quality. Compared to other cities Thanjavur is a cleaner and well-planned city. This is one of the ancient cities to have a well planned and executed drainage system, which clears the rain water in minutes thus there is no stagnation and naturally the city is cleaner.

History:

The year 846AD was embedded in History for it was in that year that Vijayalaya Chola defeated the Muttaraya king and made Thanjavur the capital of his Dynasty. Vijayalaya Chola was the first Chola king to have built a temple for Goddess Nisumbhasudani (DURGA), which is extinct now, but it is believed that the image was retained and a new temple built for the same. The Dynasty successfully ruled for 176 years with its kingdom spread till Tungabadhra in the North, Orissa in the Northeast, Bay of Bengal in the east, Sri Lanka, Lakshadweep, Male in the South. The city had a fall in the year 1218 when Maravarman Sundara Pandians army who destroyed the whole city including the Chola Palace attacked it. Some of the temple that escaped Sundarapandians Army became the target of Mallikapur [The General of Aladdin Khilji who ruled Delhi] in the year 1311, but the mighty big temple [Brahadeswara temple] escaped his anger. The city which had fallen after such a success was rescued by Pandian General Samantha Narayanan who developed the city, and Thanjavur bounced back to its Glory like a phoenix .He built the Yoga Narasimha temple and also the samanthakulam [Water Tank].

The Nayaks established their Kingdom in 1532 and ruled till 1675.The Maratha's with their ability ruled from 1676 to 1855 and have left their Landmark. Thus Thanjavur has the kaleidoscopic influence of Different customs & Languages, [The Cholas spoke Tamil, while the Nayaks where Telugu speaking and the Marathas spoke Marathi].

The British named Thanjavur as Tanjore and it became a Municipality in 1866 and it has the distinction of having the 2nd Railway line in India between Tanjore and Nagapattinam, which was opened in 1861. The city has well planned ground water. Thanks to the Grand anicut canal, Vadavar canal, Vennar River flowing through the town .The cities municipal limit is within an area of 50Kms.

Information:

Population	: 2,75,000
Area	: 50kms
Telephone STD Code	: 04362
Altitude	: 59metres
Climate	: Summer: Max 36.6 degrees cent Min 32.5 degrees cent
	: Winter: Max 23.5 degrees cent Min 21 degrees cent

Season	: Nov to April July to Sep
Clothing	:Tropical
Languages Spoken	:Tamil, English, Hindi, Marathi & Telugu
Tourist Office	:Hotel Tamil Nadu complex Mahatma Gandhi Road Time: 10AM to 5 PM
Money Changers	:State bank Of India, hospital Road Canara bank, South Main Street
Public Telephones	:Available at every nook and corner
Internet	:Available in every street
Shopping	
Do not miss	: <u>1) Demonstration of Bronze making at</u> The Art Village, 55,Arulanandapuram, Medical College Road : <u>2) See the painters at their studio</u> <u>Creating Tanjore Paintings at</u> The Art village, 55,Arulanandapuram, Medical College Road,

Tourist Attractions:

The Brahadeswara Temple (The Big Temple):

The Brahadeswara temple within the city limits is described in the encyclopedia Britannica as “The Great Pagoda at Tanjore.....by far the grandest temple in India.....”there is no doubt about it. This temple can be viewed from any corner of the town .The lighting of the tower is remarkable. This is one temple one should not miss to visit .It was built in the lifetime of the Builder Raja Raja Chola (AD 985-1012). This temple is one of the monuments in India, which have been declared as **WORLD HERITAGE MONUMENT BY THE UNESCO**. The inscription says that the temple was completed within a period of 6 years. A Moth on the east and west and the Mettur canal on the South and the Sivaganga garden on the North encircle this temple. Marcopolo the great traveler had visited Thanjavur and may have strode in the courtyard of the Brahadeswara temple (the Big temple) that was already three centuries old. He has made reference to the carvings of elephants, lions and other animals.

The entrance is through the gateway on the east, which has two small shrines on either side dedicated to Ganapathy and subramanium. The second Gopuram is 90 feet high which leads into a outer courtyard which was used as arsenal by the French in 1772 and 30 years thereafter by the British .The Granite Pillars are feet high and each side measures 5feet. Just imagine how these pillars would have been brought from far off places when elephants and horses where the only source of transportation. The Artwork on the outer side has some unique sculptures.

A majestic gopuram leads into the main court in which the temple is built. This Gopuram called the Rajarajan Gopuram has 18 feet tall Dwarkapalakas guarding the temple on either side of the entrance. They are monolithic carvings. Below them are found carvings pertaining to Sivapuranam such as story of Tirupuranka, Chandeswar, Markandeya, Marriage of Siva, Siva handing over the weapon to Arjuna, burning of Kama and the story of kannappan .The court is 241m long and 121 m broad and is paved with brick and stone (said to have been laid by Raja Serfoji)

In the northern side of the Gopuram are found some figures, most interesting among them is that of a lady giving birth to a baby by squatting. This was to preach that childbirth by squatting was easier and safer than the other form. Next to this is also found a figure of a lady breastfeeding the child .On the western side are found some interesting though some are delimited. There is Buddha seated below the Bodhi tree (This shows Raja raja's secular outlook. There are also some erotic figures.

The eastern and southern wings have the yagasala, kitchen, store room and feeding halls .In the South east corner is found the beautiful statue of Agni .The western and northern wings have 18feet high and monolithic .The pair at the entrance of the main shrine is beautifully carved .The one next to the Ganesh shrine shows the Dwarakapalaka resting his leg on a mountain and in the mountain is a snake which is swallowing an elephant .Now this is a symbolic sculpture, we know the size of the elephant just imagine the size of the snake, the mountain and the Dwarakapalaka.

The Shivlinga is called as Adavallan and Dakshina Meruvitankan.Rajaraja called it Rajarajeswaramudaiyar (The Lord of Rajarajeswaran) It is 13 feet in height and has a circumference of 11ft. Please note that the entrance to the shrine is smaller than the size of the sivalinga. Hence it is believed that it would have been installed and then the Gopuram was built surrounding it or as the legend says it would have grown to this height.

The Legend:

According to the legend Rajaraja who was suffering from an incurable disease decided to commit suicide .He happened to meet a saint who gave him some holy ash and asked him to built a very big temple on his getting cured .As promised he built this temple and went back to the saint .The saint gave him a small Linga to be installed in the temple. Rajaraja was annoyed that after asking him to build such a big temple the saint has given him such a small linga, but he quietly took it and installed it. When the pooja's were going on and the curtain was put for offering neivedhyam they found that the Linga had become so big. This is only a legend and has been passed from time to time as a bedtime story.

The main vimana is 216ft in height and 14storeys tall. The basement of this structure is 96ft square. The Copula (Dome) is Octagonal in shape and has a kalasam of Brass Gilded with Gold to the height of 12-½ ft on top of it. The copula which rest on a single block of granite which measures 25 ½ ft square and weighs about 80 tons was put in place by constructing an inclined plane commencing from a village called 'Sarapallam' which is about 6kms northeast of Thanjavur.This was the similar method used to built the pyramids. There are eight Nandis measuring 6 ½ ft x 5 ½ ft in each corner below the copula and it is said that the distance between the nandi and the wall of the copula is such that a small car can be driven on that .The size of the nandi is the same as the one found on the southern corridor opposite the Brahannayaki Temple.

According to legend the monolithic slab was lying in the courtyard of a devotee who was a cowherd, who wished to contribute it to the great temple, which was under construction. It is believed that the lord came simultaneously in the dream of the devotee and the king and expressed his acceptance. Hence the king ordered it to be placed on top of the tower and in admiration of the women he built a temple at her place that was called Darasuram.

The outer wall of this temple facing South has the following sculptures of Chola warriors, Ganesha, Lakshmi, Bhikshadana, Suladeva, Dakshinamoorthy, Markandeya and Natraja, while the outer wall facing North has Gangadhara, Kalyanasundarar and Mahisasuramardhini.

On the Northern side of the Gopuram are found four human figures one on top of the other. It has a European face with the hat to indicate the trade connections of the rulers. The other three figures are of the Chola, Nayak and the Maratha. These figures and some of the vaisnavite figures were done in stucco by the Nayak kings.

The inner courtyard of the Ardhamandabam has unique Chola, Nayak and Maratha Paintings. The Chola paintings must have been plastered and repainted by the Nayaks and Marathas. These paintings were discovered in the year 1931. Unfortunately the public is not allowed to view them.

One painting shows Shiva sitting on Mount Kailash with his right Arm resting on the right knee while the other arms are not clearly visible. The Dwarf Shiva Ganas are shown behind him while his vehicle Nandi is lying near Shiva, some saints are shown on the side.

The second panel has saint Sundarar and Cheraman. In the center is shown an elephant and a horse with their riders wading through a river in which are shown some fishes etc. Apsaras and Gandhaavas are shown showering petals on the riders below.

Another painting of saint Sundarar and Shiva as two men standing in a crowd, the old man is holding an umbrella and a leaf on either hand while the young man stands with the hands folded with respect.

On the western wall is also found a painting of Lord Natraja and his Devotees, unfortunately the later rulers have plastered this on top and from what is visible is the Kanakasabha or the Natraja temple at Chidambaram and only parts of Lord Natraja are visible. On the opposite wall is a painting of two voluptuous women and below them is the heads of three lovely women. In the north wall can be seen the figure of Shiva with eight arms wielding different weapons and is kneeling on his left leg while his right leg is firmly planted on the chariot. Here Shiva is shown as facing an Army of Asuras (Demons).

In the First floor of the temple are to be found stone slabs totally 108 inlaid to carve out the 108 different dance poses of Bharatnatyam but only 81 have been carved the remaining stones are left uncarved. It is not known why only 81 have been carved out while the remaining 27 were left uncompleted, may be the King Rajendra Chola asked those artisans to start work in his pet project of building the Gangaikonda Cholapuram. Like in Chidambaram the dancer here is Lord Shiva himself. In this floor can also be seen the interior of the tower which is like an inverted cone.

This corridor is covered by high-corbelled vault. Above the vertical walls the corbelling which constitutes the vault progressively reduces the span. The walls of this temple are built with a thin layer of mortar but the two symmetrical comices; but the joined stone slabs are arranged in a radial plan.

The Great King Raja Raja Chola had made large endowments to the temple in the form of Land and Gold, so that the temple was self dependent, for its requirement. He had formed two long streets for the employees of the temple which included four hundred dancing women, 178 Bramacharias, 143 door keepers, singers, musicians etc. He made sure that all the information was recorded in the stones around the temple.

The Subramanya Shrine:

In the north west corner of the courtyard is this shrine with a Gopuram of 55 feet height. This shrine was built by the Nayaks in the 16th century and has very delicately carved miniature carvings, which is a typical Nayak specialty and a contrast to the Chola style.

While admiring the miniatures around in the western wall on your eye level you can find a line of carvings and if you pass a tiny twig or pin behind it will come through the minute hole provided, this shows to what extent they have taken pains to incorporate the artistic skill. On the northern side, the staircase leading to the temple has some interesting carvings on either side. It shows the Battle scene wherein an irate elephant with its tail up trampling on the soldier on one side and on the other side the same situation shows the elephant has killed the soldier who has become limp and the elephant's tail comes down in happiness. Kindly note the different kinds of knots in the rope of the elephant and the ornamental horse (knots like the reef knot & Sheep knot are clearly visible).

As you climb up the stairs an enchanting pair of Dwarakapalaga cannot miss your eye. This beautifully carved figure's in polished granite is considered as a masterpiece. It is believed that there was an underground passage from this temple to the palace, which has been closed now.

In front of the Subramanya shrine is a pillared hall, which was built by Mallappa Naicker. There is also the statue of the builder. The murugan temple and the hall were joined by the Maratha king Serfoji. In this hall are found paintings belonging to the Maratha period showing the different rulers with their name written below.

Legend:

A story behind the murugan temple is that the Chief sculptor who was so engrossed in his work unwittingly accepted a betel leaf from the hands of the king who had gone there in disguise to watch the progress of the work. To expiate this sin he wanted to do his best in the construction and has left behind this jewel of art.

Corridor:

A view from the northwest corner of the corridor will be very much appreciated by one and all for the symmetrical construction.

Chandikeshwara Shrine:

This is one of the shrines belonging to the original construction of the Cholas. This temple situated between the sprout and the stairway. This is one of the temples exclusively built for Chandikesvara, which is so big.

Brahanayaki Shrine:

This temple built by the pandyas in the 13th century was the first structure to be built in the original layout of the Chola planned temple. Located in the North side of the courtyard between the Nandi mandapam and the main shrine, it faces south. The front hall was built later sometime in the 16th or 17th century. This shrine dedicated to Goddess Brahanayaki is believed that the main Deity, which was originally in the island of the Sivagananga tank was, move here. On the ceiling of the front mandapam are found fine paintings by the Marathas.

Opposite this shrine in the courtyard in front of the nandhi mandapam is found a tall flag staff which is cast in copper, The lower portion is square and has saivite figures embossed in it. The Senior Prince Babajee renovated this in 2003.

The Nandi Mandabam:

Opposite the main entrance is this mandapam with 16 pillars. The Vijayanagar kings built it in the 16th century. The Nandhi which is carved out of a monolithic rock is 12ft in height and 19 1/2 feet in length and 8 3/4ft in breath is the second biggest in India. This beautiful piece of Art weighs approximately 25 tons. On the ceiling of the mandabam are paintings done by the Marathas, which are very attractive.

The Legend:

The legend says that the king had a dream asking him to excavate this Nandhi from a certain place and to install it here, as per the dream he found the Nandhi on excavation and installed it, in course of time the Nandhi was becoming bigger and bigger. It is a belief that the Nandhi should not be bigger than the presiding deity, hence they nailed it in the back and the Nandhi stopped growing after that. This is told as a bedtime story to the children. To this day the local people believe Nandhi makes rain come and crops grow. Once in every 14days pradosam is

celebrated during which Nandi receives his fortnightly bath of Milk, coconut water, vegetable oil, sugarcane juice, Honey and turmeric water.

This temple is one of the best-maintained temples by the Archeological Survey of India who are also maintaining a well-designed lawn and garden. Photography and video (up to 8mm) is allowed in the courtyard. Shivlingas with beautiful paintings on the wall of the sixty-four sacred sports of Shiva. The main shrine of Sri Brahadewara has six divisions namely Garbhagriha (Sanctum Sanctorium) and the corridor around it .The Ardha mandapab, The Mahamandabam and the Vaidya mandabam. Dwarkapalikas or Guardian of the heaven guards the entrance. There are several of these out of which 14 are of monolithic stone.

The Shivaganga Garden:

Inside the little fort adjoining the big temple is the well-laid garden in an area of 38 acres. This was the pleasure resort of the Maratha rulers; it has two walls of fortification with a deep moat. The first wall is a brick parapet wall .The second wall has ramparts with embrasures all over. Between these two walls is a pathway .The Sivaganga tank within the fort is fed by rainwater from the surrounding villages. This tank in turn feeds the other smaller tanks in Thanjavur. In the middle of this tank is an island on which is a shrine dedicated to Sri Lokanatha Ishwaran or Sri Sivalingaswami. It is believed that the shrine might be older than the Big temple. A very old Banyan tree presumed to be 325 years old is centrally located at the entrance of the garden. The garden is well maintained and has a mini zoo, and a toy train which goes round the garden, Boating in the Sivaganga tank is a pleasure while a ride on the ropeway from the garden to the island is thrilling. Water sports are a latest addition in this complex, which also has a swimming pool.

The Schwartz Church:

It was originally called as “The Christ Church” and was built with mud by Major Stevens and Rev.Fr.Schwartz officiated to the English Garrison and other Christians, both Indian and European. The church was renovated by Raja Serfoji as a token of his affection and esteem for Rev, Fr.Schwartz in the year 1779.Its interior contains the marble tablet by flax man representing in basso-relieve the deathbed scene of fr. Schwatz in his bed while the Hindu Prince is by his side holding his hand and receiving the blessing of his dying friend.

St. Peter’s Church:

In Maha-nambu Chavadi is a protestant church built in the first half of the 18th century? The St; Peter’s School at North main street has the distinction of

having taught English First in India. , And also the Interact club of this club was the second to be started in the whole world.

The Rani's Clock Tower:

At the heart of the city this tower in Indo-Scenic architecture was built in 1933 by the municipality for which a part of the expenses were borne by the Queen of Tanjore. Hence it is called Rani's clock tower.

The Man gala Vilas:

This ancient building in South main street was the kings Harem which is converted into a school now and the Legal Court works in a part of this building Note the fine architecture of the balcony in this building.

The Bell Tower:

Constructed to commemorate the world Tamil Conference in Thanjavur in 1995 this tower with a garden is situated at the take off point of Trichy and pudukottai road.

Tamil University:

As you enter Thanjavur from Trichy you cannot miss the huge architectural marvel built recently. This university was started to do research and development of Tamil language and culture.

The Rajagopal Canon:

This Gigantic canon found placed in an elevated fort like structure in the parallel road to the East main street is 20 feet in length and eleven feet in circumference with a bore of two and a half feet, belonged to the Sultan of Bijapur and Golkonda of the 17th century. It was used to fire only once.

The Palace:

This complex can be easily approached from east Main Street or the market road called Manojiappa Street. Located inside the inner fort has large buildings built during the Nayak and Maratha period houses the world famous Bronze Museum (Art Gallery), Saraswathy Mahal Library and the Sangeetha Mahal.

The Art Gallery:

This complex has a tower 190 feet high with eight floors, which was used as an Armoury. This tower is decorated with plaster or stucco work in a mix of Indo-Italian Architecture. The Tower can be climbed through the narrow stairs near the Nayak hall. Each floor has a central chamber with arched pillars, which makes one admire and appreciate the architecture, for the depiction of different style of ornamentation in each floor, which is unique.

The Lakshmi Vilas Durbar Hall:

This was the darbar hall of the Nayak Kings, with their usual trademark of massive columns with a very high ceiling. On the wall one found elaborately decorated stuccowork. A platform made of a single slab of granite measuring 18'x16'x21/2' carved all around was used as the throne, by the Nayaks now supports an intricately carved marble statue of Raja Serfoji. This statue was carved by Flaks man of England in the year 1807 and gifted it to the King. The headgear of this statue can be removed separately. Raja Serfoji in his Royal attire is found with his hands joined in prayer wearing the Maratha turban, which is rectangular.

The best of the Bronzes are displayed here... Statues made of Panchaloga (Five metal) Bronze i.e. an alloy of five metals namely Copper, Brass, Tin, Gold & Silver with their aesthetic excellence collected from nook and corner of the erstwhile Thanjavur District dating back to 7th century are to be seen here. Most of the bronzes were recovered from Treasure troves, which must have been buried during the Mughal invasion.

The difficult work involved in Manufacturing Bronzes. This can be seen in person at THE ART VILLAGE (Phone +91-98433-35202, or +91-98432-35202, A visit to it will be very educational).

The Best of the Thanjavur Art Gallery:

Vrishabavahana Devar: Shiva reclining on his bull though the bull is missing .It is dated to belong to 1011 AD with a height of 106.5 cms and parvathy at a height of 94cms. This was excavated from Tiruvengadu.

Kalyana Sundarar Set: This set of Shiva, Parvathy, and Vishnu & Lakshmi is a wonderful collection found from Tiruvengadu. This collection shows Lord Shiva

holding Parvathy's hand while Vishnu and Lakshmi are on either side. Lakshmi is shown with an extended hand giving confidence to the new Bride.

How Bronzes Are Made:

This Ancient art of casting in the cire Perudu method dates back to the 7th century and has been practiced since then.

Step I: The wax model is made of any required figure with the delicate artistic hands of the artisan.

Step II: The completed wax model is coated with the fine clay and left to dry.

Step III: The dried clay mould is heated so that the wax inside melts and comes out thus forming the empty mould.

Step IV: An alloy of brass, copper, tin, Gold and Silver is molten in a cubicle while the empty mould is kept heated so that the air bubbles are not formed. The molten alloy is poured into the empty mould and let to cool.

Step V: The mould with the hardened metal is broken wherein we find the rough bronze.

Step VI: The rough bronze is chiseled, cleared and all the details are done with the hand. Thus you find the artisan creating new designs in the jewelery and other parts. Thus these bronzes cannot be duplicated for each will have its originality.

Step VII: The natural color of Bronze is Golden; to give it an antique look different kinds of patina are coated.

The above process can be seen live at:

THE ART VILLAGE, Phone No. +91-98433-35202 or +91-98432-35202

Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswathi Mahal Library:

This library started by the Great King is considered to be a treasure trove by the Scholars. It has about 30,433 Sanskrit and other vernacular palm leaf manuscripts and about 6426 printed volumes. The Library has a vast collection of the Nayak & Maratha scripts. It also has a volume of the Ancient Quran, the earliest palm leaf manuscripts of the Mahabharatha. The Chinese way of

torturing the prisoners are illustrated; also find different kind of faces resembling the animals, painted by Libran

Madamaligai (The Tower):

The tower which has six floors is believed to have been built by the Nayak King to have a view of Srirangam (TRICHY), to enable him to start his day by worshipping Sr.Renganatha, infact it is believed to have had more floors but was struck down by lightning and the present tower was repaired. A stage next to this tower was the Grand Dance platform and the performers could be viewed from all corners.

The Sangeetha Mahal:

Built by the Nayaks this music hall was said to have a sunken floor which was filled with water and the artist played music from a canoe (Gondola), the music reverberated the atmosphere with lyndianir, while the Prince and the court seated near by in the covered gallery which ran around the wall above listened to it.

The Royal Museum:

This is a private museum run by the Maratha descendant the Senior Prince and houses the museum inside the palace. It has on display the articles used by his forefathers. A visit will enrich the visitor of the life of the Maratha Kings.

Raja Serfoji II Memorial Hall And Museum:

The junior prince runs this private Museum and has displayed it in the Durbar Hall of the king. It was in this hall that Raja Serfoji had his private audience. It is worth a visit to admire the architecture of the hall and also the Ivory throne, which was used by the Maratha Kings.

A number of Thanjavur Paintings of the 17th century are an added attraction. The Ramar Pattabhisekam (LORD Ramas coronation) and The Navaneethakrishnan painting are a few of the original paintings made by the Kings artist. There is also a large collection of other Tanjore paintings. The palm cut picture of Saraswathy is unique as is the wax painting of Kanchi Sankara. The underground passage can be viewed which is said to have some good wall paintings.

The Maratha Durbar Hall:

This hall built by the Maratha King Shahji has a platform like structure on the eastern end with painted stucco adorning the top of the pillar .It is believed that the throne had arched enclosure with Gold leaf work. On the Northern wall can be seen the windows with screen like finish. This was used by the Queen to witness the day's proceedings at the Durbar hall.

About The Maratha's:

When it comes to the Maratha's rein it is but natural to think of Raja Serfoji II (1798-1833) who ascended the throne at the age of 9 by adoption to succeed Raja Tulaji (1764-87). He had a setback by an illegitimate claimant (Tulaji's half brother). It was Rev.Schwartz, Serfoji's teacher who was able to satisfy the court that the verdict of the pundits, which had announced against adoption was erroneous by law and had been obtained by corrupt means. Serfoji was placed on the throne in place of Amarsingh on 28th June 1798.

Serfoji who was fluent in English had a number of poets and writers in his court. He was instrumental in establishing printing press with Devanagiri type in 1805 AD. Raja Serfoji purified the temple, which was occupied by the British for nearly 20 years and donated lot of jewels and silver vessels.

Serfoji's charities are numerous. The Chat rams for the traveling pilgrims is to be mentioned for in these chat rams the travelers old and young, men and women were provided all the comforts including food, medicine etc' he has not only done charity in his kingdom but also in pilgrim centers like Benaras, etc. Serfoji was instrumental in encouraging Artisans to try out new ideas, which is the reason for Tanjore flourishing in different kinds of Artistic creations.

About The Author :



Prakash Jaising was born and brought up in Tanjore .He did his education in Tanjore and has widely traveled; he has also led the Group Study Exchange team (GSE team) to the US. He is very fond of appreciating art and likes to bring out the hidden beauty of the historical places. An exporter by Profession has earned goodwill all over the world for his Bronzes and Thanjavur Paintings. To popularize this art he has started THE ART VILLAGE in Thanjavur wherein he demonstrates the production of the same.