

# Important Royal Queen's under the Imperial Cholas

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**Abstract** — The Chola dynasty was among the largest ruling dynasties in Southern India for a period of over two centuries. Royal women's in Chola dynasty has a place of their own. They have contributed more and more to the social development of the tamil society. They have played an important role and completely they are held in high esteem.

**Keywords** — Chola; Queen; Social Activities

## 1. Introduction

There is considerable number of evidence available for a study of royal women in the Chola dynasty. Numerous endowments and granted to temples for various purpose were recorded in epigraphs. The queens had always exposed great interest in the propagation of religion, particularly Saivism and building stone temples throughout Chola region. Some of them had effectively influenced the empire and interfered in the matter of state administration. These actions, though not fully narrated in epigraphs or copper plates it also have not been studied adequately.[1] Royal women has a models for the society, they have been in the shaping of society and culture in the dynasty. It was all the more in the Imperial Chola age. Relating in themselves different royal lines they were Substances in the south. They were well knowledgeable and enlightened in whatever was essential for their status.

## 2. Matrimonial Alliance

The Cholas had contracted matrimonial alliances not only with the other south Indian dynasties, but also with some of the prominent feudatories [2]. In the royal families of the three kingdom like Chola, Chera, Pandya, inner – marriage among the members of these families were common. The Cholas and Cheras seemed to have been more connected to each other the Pandyas. The Vels, the traditional feudatories and the higher class Velalas were enjoying higher state with the royal families and socially there was no difference among them. This was no doubt mainly due to political reasons. But it brought about a cultural synthesis.

Among such princesses from other royal lines," *PonmaligaiththunjiyadevardeviyarCheranmagalarParantakanDeviammanar* [3] was a Chera princess and was the queen of Parantakan II. Veeman Kundavai, queen of Arinjaya must have welcomed from the royal family of the Eastern Chalukyas.[4] Aditya I married a Pallava princess, as is evident from an inscription, which states that his queen was the daughter of Kadupattigal [5]. His senior queen was Ilangopicci, [6] a Rashtrakuta princess, who was

the daughter of Krishna II. This was also a diplomatic marriage intended to bring about peaceful relation between them.

The queen generally known as *Madeviyar* [7] *Deviyar*, [8] *Madevadigal*, [9] *Kokkilanadigal*. [10] The chief queen was known as *Aqramahadevi* [11], *Tribhuvanamadevi* [12] and *Logamadevi* [13] in the early period and later more clearly as *Bhuvanamulududeviyar* *Avanimulududaiyal* [14].

Rajaraja I's queen was known as Logamadevi, while her name was Dandisaktividangi, During the time of Kulotunga I, the queen Bhuvanamulududaiyal. The other were also known as *Elulagamuludadaiyal*, *Ulagamulududaiyal* (or) *Tribhuvanamuludadaiyal*.

The chief queen had the honor and privilege of sharing the throne with the king. This honored place was filled by another when the chief queen died. When Bhuvanamulududaiyal, chief queen as Kulotunga I died, then her place was occupied by Tiyagavalli [16] similarly Thiagapadagalsucceded Mukkokilanadigal as the chief queen of Vikaramachola in 1127 A.D.[17] The privilege of the chief queen is further worried by the *Kulottungacholanula*, which states that on the occasion of the coronation of the king, she had the first place of honors<sup>[18]</sup>. Royal queen occupied a place of honors and dignity, though polygamy appears to be a political necessity for the Cholaroyal family princesses from different royal houses seem to have lived in perfect harmony.

## 3. Important Royal Women's

### 3.1 Sembian Mahadevi

Sembianmadevi, the most respected and appreciated queen of Gandaratiya was the daughter of Malavariyarchieftain ruling the Tirukkoyilurreagion as a subordinated of the Cholas. She was the mother of UttamaChola who ruled from 970 to 985 C.E. the name of the father is variously mentioned to in inscription as

*Malaperumal, Malavaraiyarand Maiaperumanatikal*. This seems to be more a title than a name and most of the kings of this family bore the title “*Malavar*”. Nothing is known about her mother or other member of the family.

She was married to Gandaratiya probably at a very young age. She first figures as the wife of Gandaratiya in two records of Parantaka I, dated to 941 C.E. from Uyyakkontantirumalai near Tiruchirappalli. She survived more than sixty years during which period she build number of stone temples and made large numbers of endowments to various temples.[19] even though she lived for a long period, unluckily she was widowed at a very young age. There is marriage took place sometime around 941 C.E. she should have lived with her husband for about 15 years as Gandaratiya died in 956 A.D.

In her early times, she was known as Parantakan Madevatikal. Sembianmadevatikal occurs in the inscription of Arincaya and after. Later Sembianmadevi may be considered as a title, assumed by her sometime during the region of Gandaratiya. In later years, she was called *Maturantakan Madevatikal* alias Sembianmadevi [20].

### 3.1.1 Religious Activities

Sembianmadevi is credited with the construction the numerous temples. She renewed many brick temples into stone ones. Most of these were rebuilt of stone during the dynamic and peaceful rule of her son Uttamachola. The first temple which receives the attention of Sembianmadevi seems to be the temple at “Tirukkotikkaval” [21]. The reconstruction was probably completed earlier than 981 A.D. the original brick structure of the central shrine was renovated of stone and re-engraved on its walls with several records of endowments originally made in earlier period. Her contribution to temple art is indeed great. *S.R. Balasubramanian*, who has made a thorough study of the Chola temple art, attributes an independent style to the temples initiated to be constructed by the queen and it calls the style as “*Sembian style*” [22].

According to him, she has the special featured of increased number of “*Devagoshtas*” ranging in number between nine and sixteen. Some of the temple built at her instance or renovated are still to be at *Virudachalam*<sup>[23]</sup>, *Tenkurangaduthurai* [24], *Sembianmadevi* [25], *Tiruvaruraranai* [26], *Kuttalam* [27], *Anangur* [28], *Tirumananjeri* [29], *Tiruvakkarai*[30] and *konierirajapuram*. Sembianmadevi did not stop with buildings temples and charitable endowments, she created a new Brahmadeya village and named it” *Sembianmadevi Caturvatimangalam*”, which is situated in Nagapatinam. In

memory of her husband she built a temple at Tirunallam or Konerirajapuram and named it after her husband as Gandaradittam and set up the image of her husband in the act of worshipping Siva, as he was a unlimited devotee of siva [31]. In her honor and memory Rajendra I set up a bronze image and endowed for its worship in 1019 [32].

### 3.2 Kundavai Daughter of Sundarachola

Kundavaipirattiyar, was a princess of the Chola dynasty. She was the daughter of Sundarachola and Vanavanmadevi and considerable authority and prestige over the rest of the members of the family. Rajaraja I, her younger brother esteemed her very much and probably sought her advice in many of his activates.

She was known as *Alvarparantagan Kuntavaipirattiyar* [33] in most of the epigraphs. Her father Sundaracholaprobably died in or around 970 C.E. and his queen Vanavanmadevi, a princess of the *Malaiyamans*, performed Kundavai showed great love and interest in bringing up Rajaraja I. The Rajarajasvaram temple built by Rajaraja I at Tanjore bears witness to the gifts endowed by the members of the royal family to which Kuntavai Pirattitar made many endowments. It must be noted that her donations to this temple were recorded next to the King’s own on the walls of the central shrine while those of the queens and the officers of the state found a place only on the niches and pillars of the enclosures [34]. Kundavai was married to Vallavaraiyar Vantiyadevr, the chieftain of Vallanadu. He was a subordinate of the Chola Kings.

#### 3.2.1 Social Activities

Influenced by queen Sembianmadeviactivites, Kundavai also built a number of temples. She constructed a temple of *IraviKulamanikkisvara* in Dadapuram in 1006 C.E.<sup>[35]</sup>She made a gift of ten lamps to the same temple at Dadapuram in 1010 A.D.[36]

Though she was an Saivite, she showed great interest in popularizing other religious beliefs. she dedicated certain temples to Vishnu and Jaina. The Vishnu temple, Kundavaivinnakar and the Jain temple Kundavai Jinalaya at Dadapuram were important edifices. The Vishnu temple, was completed probably before 1006 C.E. and she granted vessels and ornaments made of gold, silver and pearls. In 1010 C.E. she endowed another gift of sheep for burning perpetual lamps in the temple Kundavai Vinnagar declared above. In 1016 C.E. she again donated sheep for burning ten lamps in the same temple [37]. Kundavai Pirattiyar made a deep impression of chola history. In her father’s name she constructed a hospital at Tanjore. Its called “*Athurasalai*” or hospital assigned

“Maruttuvakkani” to endowment for the physician of surgeon.[38] even though she was married to Vallavariyar Vantiyadevar, she seems to have spent most of her time in the palace at *Palaiyaru*, the secondary capital of the Cholas. She had well-ordered a number of gifts from this palace.

### 3.3 Queen's of Uttama Chola

Panchavanmadevi, the illustrious queen of Uttamachola was known from two inscriptions, one from Sembianmadevi in Nagapatnam district and other from Tirumalpuram in Kanchepuram district. She is seen donating a flywhisk with golden handle weighing 30 kalanju of gold to the Kailasanathaswami temple in the 15<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Uttamachola [39]. Nothing more is known about this queen. However it can be suggested that she was a daughter of Paluvettaraiyar chieftain. Vanavanmadevi was another queen of Uttamachola. She was a daughter of the chieftain Irunkovel [40]. She is known from only one record refers to a grant made by her and other her and other queens of Uttamachola for special donations on the day of *Kettai* in the month of *Cittirai*, the natal star of Sembianmadevi, the mother-in-law of the queen's in the temple of Kailasanat.

### 3.4 Queen's of Rajaraja I

Rajaraja I also had a queen named Vanavanmadevi. She was the mother of Rajendra I and was also known as Tribhuvanamateviyar. She personally visited many temples and granted certain endowments. A record of 6<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Rajaraja I [991 C.E] refers to her visit to the Makalingasavami temple. An undated record of Rajendran I from Tiruvenkadu refers to the endowment of gold by Vanavanmadevi, the mother of Rajendra I [41]. Panchavanmadevi was also known as Cholamadeviyar[42] she made some significant grant to various temple. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> regnal year of Rajaraja I [988 C.E.], she gave some lands to the Manikantesvara temple at Tirumalpuram. She also granted some ornaments to the goddess Umabhataraki in the Makalinkasvami temple at Tiruvitammarur. [43] queen Logamadevi of Rajaraja performed *Hiranyagarbayagam* when he performed *Tulabara* at *Tiruvisalur* [44]. Both Rajaraja I and his queen Panchavanmadevi visited the temple at Tirupukalur in 1006 A.D. and granted lands for conducting special worship to the god every month on the day of their natal star “*Satayam*”. The assembly of *Koratacceri*, a brahmadeya in *Panaiyurnadu* made a remission of taxes on those lands endowed by the Chola king and queen.

### 3.5 Kundavai Daughter of Rajaraja I

Another important lady who was born in the Chola family was Kundavai, the daughter of Rajaraja I. probably

Tantisaktivitanki alias Olokamadevi was her mother. [45] Kundavai had an elder brother Rajendran I who ascended the throne after Rajaraja I. she married with Vimaladitya, the son of Eastern Chalukya king Danarnava. This marriage concentered the way for a series of marriage alliances between the Chalukyas and the Cholas. Kundavai's son Rajarajaendra, married Ammankai, the daughter of Kundavai's brother of Rajendra I. Ammankai's son Rajendran II [Kulottunga I] married Madurantaki, daughter of Rajendradeva II, the brother of Ammankai, these series of marriage alliances gave Kulothunga I a greater claim over the Kingdom of the Cholas. Kundavai is known to have donated some gold ornaments, along with her younger sister madevidigal and her mother Tantisaktivitanti alias Olokamadevi, to the image of *Kshetrapala*, setup by her mother in the temple at Tiruvalanculi in Tanjore district in 1014 C.E.

### 3.6 Queen of Rajendra I

Panchavanmadevi is known from epigraphs as Nakkam Karukkamantal alias Panchavanmadevi, she was the princess of the Paluvettaraiyar chieftain. She is known to have granted an endowment in 1018 C.E. she endowed 333 kasu yielding an interest of 41 5/8 kasur per annum for providing incense etc., to the temple at Tiruvenkadu. Another queen of Rajendra I was Vanavanmadevi, she was known as Tribhuvanamateviyar. She granted some gold, realized by the sale of land for offerings and meeting the expenses of taking out the images in a procession on the festivals. Rajendra I had great care for her and so he founded in 1020 C.E. A village in her name, Vanamankai and settled in it 4000 Brahmins. The village may be identified with the present village Agaram in the Chengalpet district. She grant a gold vessel to the temple at Tirumalavadi. A silver vessel was also endowed there [46].

## 4. Conclusion

The women of the Chola royal family actively participated in activities of the society. Even though, they were holders of Saivism, they were tolerant enough to build temples to other religious sects. The Chola queens had some attraction to the title Panchavanmadevi. It has to be studied whether the marriage alliances with a number of Subordinate Chieftains had feeling effects on the security of the Chola kingdom and whether the practice of compelling sati was widely prevalent or only restricted to some royal families. Under normal situations the ladies of the royal family and noble women were treated with honor.

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