

## HISTORY

### PREMODERN INDIA

#### ANCIENT TAMILAKAM - PART 2 (Video - 12)

#### **POLITY**

- Tamilakam is the land between the hills of Venkatam or Tirupathi hills and Kanyakumari. Including Kerala, Tamil Nādu, certain portion of Andhra Pradesh.
- With forested hills, pastures, arid zones, wet-lands, and long sea coast, the region represented a combination of diverse eco-zones. This diversity influenced the political history of Tamilakam.
- The three principles chiefdoms / kingdoms & political-trade centres of Tamilakam – Chera, Chola, Pandya; had strong holds in interior as well as seacoast.

	Interior	Seacoast
Chera	Karur	Muziris (west coast)
Chola	Uraiyur	Puhar (coromandel coast)
Pandya	Madurai (headquarters)	Korkai

#### **CHIEFDOM TO KINGDOM**

- Absence of state but presence of kingdoms.
- Evolution of political society - chiefdoms of clans. Some were big and others were very small.
- In Sangam Poems – the chiefs of chiefdoms were called as the great son/ Perumakan and chiefly son/ Ko-makan. This shows the relation between chiefs and their clan members as Kinship based.
- Some chiefdoms were grown beyond kinship:
  - The conquests and subjugation of other clans.
  - Marriage alliances with other clans.
- Reason behind enlargement of chiefdoms – wealth, large agricultural areas (most powerful).

#### **DIFFERENT KINDS OF CHIEFDOMS**

- Three kinds:
  - The Kizar – little chiefs
  - The Velir – bigger chiefs
  - The Vedar/Ventar – biggest chiefs

Kizar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>Headman of the villages / Ur</u></li> <li>- Many kizars are mentioned in poems</li> <li>- <u>Prefixed with the name of their villages</u>: Arnkanturkizar / Urnturkizar</li> <li>- Some were subjugated by bigger chiefs &amp; had to serve them in campaigns. (man power was important)</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sangam poems refer the <b>servicing matters</b>: <b>Vidutozil / obligatory services: to bigger chiefs in their campaigns.</b></li> <li>- Bigger chiefs rewarded <b>Kizar gifts</b> which include: <b>control over certain villages.</b></li> <li>- Mutual relationship – beneficial.</li> </ul>
Velir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Hill chieftains</b></li> <li>- Main chiefs: <u>Vetar-Koman, Kuravar-Koma, Nedu vettuvan.</u></li> <li>- <u>Geographical location &amp; main centres: Venkatamalai/ near Tirupati, Nanjilmalai/Travancore, Parampumalai/Pollachchi, Podiyilmalai/Madurai.</u></li> <li>- Sangam Poems – important chieftains - Pari of Parambumalai/ near Pollachchi, Ariyar of Podiyilmalai/Madurai, Andiran of Nanjilmalai/ South of Travancore, Irunko-vel of Kodunbai/Pudukkotai.</li> <li>- Sangam poems eulogize various chieftains – <b>Ay, Andiran, Pari</b> – for their bravery &amp; generosity.</li> <li>- <b>Pari</b>: seems to have held <b>sway in the Pandyan country</b> near the hills known as Kodungunram or Piranmalai. <b>Kapilar wrote many poems in praise of Pari.</b></li> <li>- Kapilar moved to the court of <b>Chera king Shelvakkadungo Vadi Adan</b> only after Pari's death.</li> <li>- <b>Adigaiman / Nedum Anji</b> – ruler of Tagadur, praised in <b>the poems of poetess Auvaiyar.</b> Adigaiman was <b>assisted by Pandya and Chola kings and was defeated by Chera Perunjeral Irumporai.</b> Later had to acknowledge the Chera rulers. <b>Died in a fight on behalf of Chera in an expedition against Pali,</b> the capital of Nannan. Referred in the <b>inscriptions at Jambai, 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.</b></li> <li>- Inscriptions from Pugalur and Kaniman – tamil brahmi script – mention other chieftains.</li> </ul>
Vedar/Ventar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chera, Chola, Pandya: <b>Moovendar/Muvendar</b>: controlled larger areas.</li> <li>-</li> <li>- <b>Chera – dominated western ghats;</b></li> <li>- <b>Chola – controlled Kaveri areas- Tanjore-Trichy;</b></li> <li>- <b>Pandya – Vaigai areas – Madurai-Tirunelveli-Ramnad.</b></li> <li>- Kingdoms emerged in <b>rice-growing regions</b> with rich agricultural production and flourished trade.</li> <li>- Several <b>minor chiefs under their service and paid tributes / Tiarai.</b></li> <li>- <b>No notion of precisely demarcated territory.</b></li> <li>- <b>Voluntary payments.</b> Annual payments.</li> <li>- Features - <b>Plunder raid</b>: <u>all chiefs had to conduct plunder raids due to the insufficiency of local resources. They indulged plundering against one another. Minor one joined hand with bigger ones for plundering and obtain their shared booty.</u></li> <li>- <b>Gift giving / Kodai</b>: <u>an integral part. Chiefs redistribute the booty among – kinsmen, warriors, bards. This was an important responsibility of any chief.</u></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Purananuru</i> (anthologies under Ettuttokai)– most of the poems praise the generosity of chieftains.</li> <li>- <b>Booty</b> – main items: <b>cattle and grain</b>.</li> <li>- The <u>bards of that period sing about the gifts of: elephants, horses, golden lotuses, chariots, gems and muslin.</u></li> </ul>
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**MUVENDARS**

- Mentioned in **Ashokan edicts**.
- Bards praise them as – **crowned kings**
- The title need not necessarily indicate the establishment of the state power.
- No standing army, revenue administrative bodies.
- Cannot be named as a state but as a kingdom.
- Main concern – value of subordinate Velir chiefs.
- **Marriage alliance with Velir chiefs.**
- Frequent **conflict between Chera, chola, Pandya.**
- **Karikala: early chola king** – fought and defeated the combined forces of Pandya, Chera, eleven minor chieftains: **the battle of Venni.**
- Muvendars **participated in the battle of Kurukshetra** – described in Mahabharata (fictional).
- **Nalangilli: Chola king** – frequently **performed Vedic sacrifices.**
- **Kharavela: Kalinga king** – established **trading relation with Pandya** kingdom.
- Emblems of power –
  - Chola: Tiger
  - Chera: Bow
  - Pandya: Fish
- Copper coins issued – emblems are found.

**THE CHERAS**

<b>Udiyanjeral</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Earliest known king</li> </ul>
<b>Nedunjeral Adan</b> – son of Udiyanjeral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Defeated seven crown kings.</b></li> <li>▪ Won the <b>exalted rank of Adhiraja.</b></li> <li>▪ Sangam poets exaggerate that he <b>conquered the Himalayan Mountains and carved Chera emblem</b> on them.</li> <li>▪ He <b>defeated an enemy on Malabar Coast and captured several Yavana / Roman traders</b> and later released them for <b>ransom amount.</b></li> <li>▪ He fought war <b>against: Chola ruler Karikala.</b></li> <li>▪ In which both <b>lost their lives.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Kuttuvan</b> - younger brother of Nedunjeral Adan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Conquered Kongu.</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Extended powers</b> of the Chera.</li> <li>▪ <b>Chera and chola became allies.</b></li> <li>▪ Followed <b>Matrimonial alliances.</b></li> <li>▪ The <b>Chera allied with Pandya against the chola.</b> Cholas defeated the allies.</li> <li>▪ Finally, <b>Chera king committed suicide.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Adiraja</b> - son of Nedunjeral Adan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Achieved <b>success against Anji</b>, a chieftain of Tagadur.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led an <b>expedition against Nannan</b> a ruler who controlled north of Malabar.</li> </ul>
<b>Senguttuvan / Red Chera</b> - another son of Nedunjeral Adan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Won <b>a war against the Mokur Chieftain</b>.</li> <li><i>Silappadikaram</i>, a post Sangam work mentions his <b>attack against Viyalur in the land of Nannan</b> and took the <b>Kodukur fortress in Kongu country</b>.</li> <li>Defeated many chieftains.</li> <li>Ensured the <b>safety of the great port Muziris</b> by <b>ending piracy</b>.</li> <li>The <b>great north Indian expedition</b> mentioned in the <i>Silappadikaram</i> is not mentioned in the Sangam poems.</li> <li>He was said to have <b>crossed Ganges</b>.</li> <li>Said to have ruled <b>for 56 years</b>.</li> <li><b>Patronised the orthodox and heterodox religions</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Kudakko Illanjeral Irumporal</b> – last Chera kings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentioned in the sangam poems.</li> <li><b>Fought against victorious wars against the chola and Pandya</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Mandaranjeral Irumporai</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ruled in the early 300 CE.</li> <li>He was <b>once captured by Pandya</b> but managed to <b>regain his freedom and returned</b>.</li> </ul>

- Two Pugalur inscriptions** near Karur - mention **three generations of Chera princes of the Irumporai line**.
- They recorded the **construction of a rock shelter for a Jaina monk** on the occasion of the succession **Ilankatunko** – grandson of king Adan Chera Irumporai.
- Two sort inscriptions of Edakkal** in Kerala – mention **names of Chera kings**.
- Chera had **trade contact with the Roman**.
- At **Muziris, Romans built a temple of Augustus**.
- The *Patitruppathu* speaks of **eight Chera kings, their territory and fame**.

## COINS

- Chera Irumporai** issued **coins in his name**.
- Some Chera issued **copper coins, lead coins** with **Tamil – Brahmi legends**.
- They tried to **imitate Roman coins**.
- There are many other **Chera coins with their bow and arrow emblem** but without any writings on them.

## INSCRIPTIONS

- Tamil inscriptions are very useful to reconstructing the political history of ancient Tamilakam.
- Tamil – Brahmi** inscriptions are excavated from several parts of South India.
- Kings** are addressed as **'Ko'** and **chieftains** as **'ko'** or **'Kon'**.
- Princes** have the suffixes **'ko'** or **'Kon'** in their names.
- Pugalur inscriptions** – refer to an investiture ceremony for their heir apparent is significant.
- The Mangulam inscriptions** – mention the subordinate ruler or functionary of the Pandya king. The **merchant guilds** are mentioned.

## E ▶ ENTRI

- A **Kalatika - the superintendent of pearls** i.e., an officer who supervised pearl fisheries is mentioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.
- **Inscription from Alagarmalai** – 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE – refers to the **Kanatikan or chief of scribes**.
- Such inscriptions give glimpse into the administrative organization of the Pandya.



CHERA SYMBOL



CHOLA SYMBOL



PANDYAN SYMBOL