

## Remnants of Chola Art from Sri Lanka

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The Polonnaruwa period witnessed an invasion of Cholas in Sri Lanka that brought about the cultural wave of Hinduism in the country. This is evident from the art of that period. Being the need of the hour when invaders set up colony at Polonnaruwa, they employed the local Sinhalese to construct shrines for the daily worship of masses and images of devtas for individual worship which gradually emerged in to a Sri Lankan school of art. A shiva shrine known as the vanavanmadevishvaram was built at Polonnaruwa is still preserved as an example of Hindu architecture. After the demise of Cholas from the region, Hindu influence was still in existence in the form of royal patronage given by the Sinhalese kings to the Hindu shrines. They also constructed new shrines and some of them even adapted Hindu faith which is proved from the inscriptions of the rulers. Most of the gods and goddesses respected in Hinduism influenced the Sri Lankans. They also started worshipping gods like Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesh and Murugan & goddesses like Laxmi, Durga and Pattini. A sculpture found from Polonnaruwa shows Shiva and Parvati standing together and bestowing benevolence on mankind. Today many such images can be found in the museums in Colombo and Polonnaruwa. The ancient ruins of Polonnaruwa have been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO.

### Introduction

The polity of South India and Sri Lanka was not only a meddling battle of the two regions but also to a certain economic gains Chola rulers wanted to control the sea lanes of Indian ocean. Since the island was the main boarding station and Polonnaruwa was the ideal place on the south east of Anuradhapura on one end whereas at other, the southern part of the island could also be tackled effectively in case of any occurring threat from Sri Lankan ruler so the Cholas decided to make Polonnaruwa as their capital. The Cholas appointed their officials in the territory they won and these officials played an active role in the construction of Hindu shrines and the Indian people who migrated there from time to time were the transmitters of Indian culture in the region. Even the Sri Lankan rulers promoted Hinduism in the aftermath of Chola rule. The remains of this culture still survives in the form of Tamil people still residing in Sri Lanka, the artifacts which remain are well protected in various museums of the island. The objective of the present study is to determine the role played by Chola rulers in the promotion of Chola art in Sri Lanka.

Chola king Raja Raja I attacked the island in 990 A.D. and captured the northern half of Sri Lanka and named it as Mumudi cholamndalm after his title (<http://ceylontamils.com/history/history3.php>). The present Polonnaruwa which formed a part of the province Nigarili Cholavalanadu was made the new capital of his island territorial possession. An invasion by Rajendra I in 1017 A.D. brought a large part of country under the control of Chola Empire (Wijesooriya 2006). The country was under Chola

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