800-Year-Old Shiva Temple Discovered in Tamil Nadu

Source: TH

An **800-year-old Shiva temple** from the **later Pandya period (1216–1345)** has been **discovered in Tamil Nadu**, offering **significant insights into the region's historical and socio-economic dynamics**.

- **Inscriptions** and ***Shilpa Sastram*** confirm the temple, named **Thennavanisvaram**, was dedicated to **Lord Shiva**.
    - Dated to **1217–1218 CE** during **Maravarman Sundara Pandya's reign**, it is located in the village formerly called **Attur** (now **Udampatti**).
    - **Thennavan** is a **title** used by the **Pandyas**, showing the temple had **royal support.**
- The inscriptions record the **sale of a waterbody named Nagankudi** for **64 kasu (coins)**.
    - The **land tax** was to be paid to the **God of Thennavaniswaram** ensuring **financial independence** of the temple.
- **About Later Pandyas:** The early **Pandyas (4th to 3rd centuries BC)** lost power to the **Kalabhras**, regained it in the **6th century**, were overshadowed by the **Cholas** in the **9th century**, and ruled again in the **12th century** as **Later Pandyas**.
    - They had ties with the **Roman Empire, Greeks, Chinese, and Egyptians**, and were praised by travelers like **Marco Polo** (**Italian traveller** of the 13th century).
    - Their kingdom ended in the **14th century** after the **Delhi Sultanate invasion**, leading to their incorporation in the **Vijayanagar Empire**.

Temples patronized by Pandyas: Meenakshi Temple (Madurai), Aranganathar Temple (Srirangam), Vijayanarayana temple (Nanguneri), Lakshmi Narayana temple (Athur).

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