



# Thanjavur

## A Cultural History

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- The book contains the cultural history of Thanjavur. Histories of the various rulers and of the Big Temple are woven into a rich tapestry of cultural heritage that is Thanjavur

**This book** is a fascinating study of the cultural history of Thanjavur – starting from its early days of grandeur during the Chola Empire when the Chola ruler Raja Raja I built the Rajarajeswaram temple, now known as the Brihadeeswara temple, which celebrated its 1000th year of consecration in 2010. It weaves together known and unknown histories of the various rulers – the Cholas, the Nayaks, the Marathas and the British – and of the Big Temple into a rich tapestry of cultural heritage that is Thanjavur. The historical stories presented in *Thanjavur* reveal to the reader the treasure house of the Sarasvati Mahal Library and lead them into the narrow lanes, or sandhus, where the painters who created the now famous Thanjavur style lived beside bangle-sellers, textile merchants, perfumers and the devadasis. The reader is invited on a long trip along the fertile river bank of Kaveri where Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam as we know them today were created and flourished. The temples, the palaces, the bronzes, the paintings, the frescoes, the cuisine, the weapons of war and ivory dolls, the kalamkaris, and literary genres are all brushstrokes that make up this colorful painting, which tells the story of the city of Thanjavur. **Contents:**

Foreword Of Granaries and Palaces: A short history of Thanjavur's rulers The Sacred and the Secular: An unbroken tradition of painting in Thanjavur Manuscripts and Melodies: Thanjavur as the cradle for Carnatic music Rituals as Rhythms: Dance and drama in Thanjavur Zest for the Good Life: Crafts in Thanjavur Thanjan's Wish: Thanjavur today and tomorrow Photographers of Thanjavur in the 19th Century Appendix 1: Treasures of the Sarasvati Mahal Library Appendix 2: A selected list of streets in the Thanjavur fort area (Municipal Wards 3-4) Appendix 3: Maps of the Thanjavur district and Thanjavur fort Appendix 4: Family trees of the kings of Thanjavur Bibliography and Suggested Readings Glossary A Word of Thanks Index