

Tanjavur
Brhadīśvara temple **The Monument and
the Living Tradition**

The Brhadīśvara temple of Tanjavur is acclaimed as the finest achievement of Cōḷa art. The artistic design of this temple has been compared to a bio-organism where each part is related to the whole. It is not just an architectural monument but a living organism that has served as a centre of social, economic and political life in many succeeding centuries since the time of Rājarāja Cōḷa I (1010 CE). Its artistic excellence lies in the perfect balance of the parts and the whole, in architecture, sculpture, paintings, bronze images, the idols and reliefs. Inscriptions on the walls of the temple provide a corpus of information over a span of many centuries.

The Centre has initiated the study of this temple at several levels to investigate the multi-layered and multi-dimensional personality of the Kshetra; Tanjavur and the Kshetram; the Kovil, the temple as a physical and conceptual presence.

