

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

INSCRIPTIONS

On the base of the main tower, the front great hall, the subsidiary shrines and the enclosure are remarkable documents that record several aspects of the temple: its construction, maintenance and management, land grants. The light these records throw on the rituals and festivals conducted in the Brhadīśvara Temple is also significant.

One record mentions Rājarāja Peruntaccan as the chief architect who, assisted by two more artisans, designed and built the temple. The record also furnishes in detail, the transfer of 400 accomplished dancing girls to this temple from well-known temples of Tamil Nadu. The record also mentions the appointment of over two hundred and fifty musicians and the performance of a Dance-drama on the construction of the temple.

There are also records that speak of the bronze images consecrated, about the jewels gifted, the total number of precious gems and quantity of gold used in each one of them. The metal images include some rare images like Dakṣiṇā-mūrti, Liṅgodbhava, Pañca-deha mūrti, besides Naṭarāja, Kalyāṇasundara, Candraśekhara etc. They also tell us that in the sub-shrines in the enclosure are enshrined the images of Dikpālas and secondary deities or the Parivāradevatās.

