

at the temple contains the signatures of a host of royal personages, and of peers, like Curzon, Kitchener and Connemara (to mention only a few) and well-known personalities like Keir Hardie, Ray and Gandhi. The temple stands within the small fort, commonly called the Sivaganga Fort, ascribed to Sevvappa, the first Nayak; and, the big fort which encircles the city and the palace was built by Vijayaraghava the last. It is possible that these two forts are renovations of the much earlier Chola fortifications.¹

"To have conceived a great temple in that proportion, to have insured by cautious designing that beauty was not sacrificed to size and to have built it altogether of very fine granite from *Upana* to *Stupi* in a city far removed from any good quarry of building stone,² this is the glory of Rajaraja and his architects." It is also noteworthy that unlike other temples of the south, the temple was built with all the necessary adjuncts complete in the life-time of the founder, Rajaraja Chola I (A.D. 985—1014) himself "on a well defined and stately plan which was persevered in till its completion." The construction appears to have begun in the nineteenth year of his reign; and, the only inscriptional evidence on which to rely about the time when it was finished reads as follows:—

"In the twenty-fifth year of Rajaraja (A. D. 1002-10) on the 257th day of the year the king handed over the copper pot for the finial at the top of the *Vimana*"—It weighed about 235 lbs., and was overlaid with gold plate of the weight of 2926½ *kalanju* or nearly 35 lbs. Troy. It is thus seen that the temple was completed within a period of six years when he was not occupied with any great wars. The name 'Sri Rajaraja' occurs first in his own inscriptions of the nineteenth year of his reign, his

(1) "இவ்வாய்வு செய்து பரீட்சி செய்து தந்தவை
இரண்டாம் சேஷரத்த நிவந்தனம்" —சகுந்தலத்தேவன்.

(செருமீதாசப்பன், 10.)

(2) The stones seem to have been brought from the quarries of Mammalai, eight miles south-east of Trichinopoly, over a road of nearly thirty miles.—*Tanjore Gazetteer*, p. 271.