



# Consecration at the Brihadisvara Temple

## Why in News

Recently, the consecration (Kumbhabhishekam) ceremony was held at the Brihadisvara Temple after 23 years in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

- The ceremony was held after the Madras High Court settled an old argument over the ritual.
- The ceremony got embroiled in the struggle for supremacy between the Sanskrit and Tamil traditions.
- The court **allowed** the consecration to be performed in **both Tamil and Sanskrit**.
- It argued that there is nothing either in the **Agamas (canonical texts)** or in any other religious script to prohibit the chanting of Tamil mantras in the temples.

## Brihadisvara Temple

- Brihadeshwara Temple, also known as Raja Rajeswara Temple, is dedicated to Shiva and is located in Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu).
  - Thanjavur lies in the delta of the Cauvery River.
- It is one of the best examples of the [Dravidian style](#) of temple architecture built by Chola emperor **Raja Raja Chola I** ( 985-1014 AD) between 1003 AD and 1010 AD.
  - The Dravidian style of temple architecture flourished roughly from the **8<sup>th</sup> century to about the 13-14 century AD**.
- The temple consists of a **pyramidal spire** and is adorned with sculptures and paintings inside as well as outside.
- The temple entered the [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) list in **1987** and is also a part of "**Great Living Chola Temples**" along with the **Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram** and the **Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram**.
  - **Brihadisvara Temple (Gangaikondacholapuram, Tamil Nadu)**.
    - It was built for Shiva by **Rajendra I** (1014-1044 CE).
    - The temple has sculptures of exceptional quality.
    - The **bronze sculptures of Bhogasakti and Subrahmanya** are masterpieces of Chola metal icons.
  - **Airavatesvara Temple (Darasuram)**
    - It was built by the **Chola king Rajaraja II** (1144-1173 CE);
    - It is much smaller in size as compared to the Brihadisvara temple at Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram.
    - The temple consists of a sanctum **without a circumambulatory path** and axial mandapas.
    - The front mandapa is **unique** as it was conceptualized as a chariot with wheels.
- **Special Features:**
  - The temple, which is one of the tallest temples in India, still remains an engineering

mystery as it is **completely made of granite** and archaeologists still don't know how the builders got such huge pieces of granite for construction at this height.

- The apex structure on **top of the temple** is believed to be carved out of a **single stone carving**.
  - It is so designed that the **Vimana does not cast a shadow at noon during any part of the year**.
- **Vimana:** Vimana is the structure over the garbhagriha or inner sanctum in the Hindu temples of South India and Odisha.
  - It is like a stepped pyramid that rises up geometrically rather than the curving **Shikhara** of North India.



**Source: IE**

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