Akshardhara Research Journal
Single Blind Peer-Reviewed & Refereed International Research Journal
E ISSN -3048-8095 / SJIF Impact- 5.16 / October 2026/ Special Issue 05 Volume I

23

The Examination of Nagapattinam as a Gateway for the Exchange of Buddhist Thought across the South East Asian Landscape

Malhar Garud
M.A. Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology
St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Mumbai.
DOI. https://doi-ds.org/doilink/10.2026-15833127/ARJ/2026/V1/SI05/101026A023

Abstract
Although we see evidence of Buddhist activity at the ancient port city of Nāgapaṭṭinam in Tamil Nadu, India, its significance in terms of the diffusion and exchange of ideas, philosophy and culture has not been sufficiently explored. We know that it was a strategic location through as big a timeline as the 5th to the 16th centuries CE, with a thriving maritime industry, attracting influx from the West as well as the East - including China and South Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Sumatra, Java and others. This exchange was two-way and it is inevitable that this cosmopolitan nature of the town invited dialogue, interaction and in its wake, scholarly activity that in turn, would have impacted and led to a growth and development of Buddhist thought. The known patronage of Buddhism by local and regional royalty and trading communities was also a key factor that firmly establishes the amount of Buddhist activity that would thus have occurred here. This paper would seek to, through archaeological & literary evidence, look at how this evolution of Nāgapaṭṭinam turned it into a common denominator for the confluence of international thought, exchange of ideas, artistic expression and philosophical discussion in the Buddhist sphere, navigating the intersection of the Mahāyāna and Theravāda schools and becoming a nurturing ground for the sustenance of the vibrant Buddhist ecosystem across cultures in the South and South East Asian landscape.
***Keywords**: Nāgapaṭṭinam, Buddhism Patronage, Buddhist Literature, East Asian trade, Cultural Diffusion, South Asia*

Introduction

The presence of Buddhism in South India is known from evidence such as Aśoka's rock edicts. But a major factor in its increase and spread was the rise of Nāgapaṭṭinam, located on the Coromandel coast of India, in present-day Tamil Nadu. In the 7th century CE Thēvāram poems, Nāgapaṭṭinam is described in great detail, and said to have multi-storied buildings, fortified walls, wide streets;[1] It was a bustling harbor city, and a major port of arrival for Buddhist pilgrims and travellers from China, Sri Lanka, Java, Sumatra, Burma etc, and of departure to these same regions from India. This made it a unique intellectual melting pot of literature, philosophy, art, architecture and cultural dialogue across the East Asian region. The aim of this paper is to look at the progression of Nāgapaṭṭinam into a centre of cosmopolitan interaction during the 5th to 16th centuries CE and how it facilitated the growth of knowledge, both inward and outward, across the literary, artistic, theological and philosophical streams through its nature as a maritime hub.

Literature Review

Primary epigraphical sources include the Larger Leiden Plates of Rājarāja I mentioning grants provided by the Śailendra kings of Śrīvijaya for the Cuḍāmaṇivarman Vihāra[2], the 1090 CE Smaller Leiden Plates of Kulottuṅga I[3], mentioning Kiḍāram (Malaysia), and the Kalyāṇī inscriptions of Dhammaceti[4], found in Pegu, Myanmar, mentioning Nāgapaṭṭinam. Several Bronze statues were found at the site of the Cuḍāmaṇivarman vihāra[5].

Literature - the Sangam text Purāṇanūru[6] contains a mention of the 'Sivi Jātaka' from c. 1st century BCE. The Maṇimekalai[7] and Śilapaddikāram[8] also mention Kāñcipuram, Madurā (Madurai) and Kāveripaṭṭinam. The Guruparamparāprabhāvam Ārāyirappagḍi, written during the 12th centuries, contains a story about a Buddhist temple[9]. The Pāli texts Rūpasiddhi and the Pajjamadhu provide

©Copyright 2025 *ADRJ*. All Rights Reserved

Akshardhara Research Journal
Single Blind Peer-Reviewed & Refereed International Research Journal
E ISSN -3048-8095 / SJIF Impact- 5.16 / October 2026/ Special Issue 05 Volume I

evidence of Dīpankara Buddhāpīya Thera and his travels[10]. Similarly the Pāli text Mohavicchedanī, authored by Coḷa Kassapa Thera references a vihāra at Nāgapaṭṭinam (Kassapa n.d.). The Saddhammasaṃgha, Cūlavaṃsa, Dāthavaṃsa, Gandhavaṃ-sa and Sāsanavaṃsa are also important works.

An account published in the T'oung Pao in 1911 by M. Chavannes[11] mentions a Buddhist temple constructed in Nāgapaṭṭinam. Xuanzang, a Chinese traveller, visited Madurā, the Pāṇḍya capital in 640 CE, and a monastery which he attributes to "Aśoka's brother Mahinda Thera"[12]. The Chinese text *The Two Entrances and Four Acts*, by Bodhidharma, talk about the Buddhist monk Bodhidharma[13]. Tibetan historian Tārānatha's History of Buddhism in India contains a reference to a monk Buddhasanta, and monsoon winds at Nāgapaṭṭinam[14].

Later European accounts include one by François Valentyn, a Dutch minister, in 1725 who published it in his *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* in 1867 [15], and one by Sir Walter Elliott, published in The Indian Antiquary in 1878.[16]

Analysis

The Rise of Nāgapaṭṭinam: A Driving Factor

The earliest reference of Buddhism pertaining to South India is found in Aśoka's rock edicts. Rock Edict XIII (see fig. 1) mentions places in South India[17]. The mission of Mahinda Thera is also well documented in the Sri Lankan chronicles as well as epigraphic evidence through the Rajagala inscription[18]. To establish this presence, we use sources such as the Śilapaddikāram[19] and Maṇimekalai[20], the Ariṭṭapatti inscriptions[21], the Sangam text Purāṇanūru[22], the Pāli text Rasavāhinī [23] (Gandhi 2017, 88), the Chinese traveller Xuanzang's account[24] (Xuanzang 1996, 355).

Looking at the political scenario, the Kalabhras' occupied the region from the 5th to the late 6th century CE, when they were defeated by the Pallavas of Kāñcipuram, who extended their rule over Northern and Central Tamil Nadu and this brought Nāgapaṭṭinam under their control. Under their rule, Nāgapaṭṭinam was just a port city, not the major maritime hub we later see it become. However, there is a turn in fortunes of the main port city, Kāveripaṭṭinam. The Maṇimekalai, written in Kāveripaṭṭinam, mentions the downfall of the city due to destruction by the sea[25]. This led to the emergence of Nāgapaṭṭinam, located south of Kāveripaṭṭinam, as a key port in its aftermath. References to Nāgapaṭṭinam are found in Ptolemy's Geographia, from the 1st century CE, when he mentions the name Nikama[26], debated but widely believed to be the city of Nāgapaṭṭinam. Other early evidence of Nāgapaṭṭinam as such is obscure, and appears again only in the 7th century CE - the name 'Nāgavādana' mentioned by the Chinese traveller I-Tsing[27], and 'Nāgapaṭṭinam' or 'Nāgai' in the Tamil text Thēvāram. This is when Nāgapaṭṭinam becomes a key maritime hub. In the Thēvāram poems, Nāgapaṭṭinam is described in great detail, coming from personal experience of authors visiting the city. There is evidence of the importance of this bustling harbor city as a major port, center of trade, and frequented by travellers of various natures. The Pallavas were in control till the 9th century CE, until the Coḷas came to power and ruled up to the 13th century CE. The Coḷas made Nāgapaṭṭinam a major port city and it remained so until their decline in the 13th century, the Pāṇḍyas brought Nāgapaṭṭinam under their reign. At that time, the main port became Kāyal.[28] Thus, the rise of Nāgapaṭṭinam is linked strongly to the genesis of a cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic centre of activity that gave birth to an interaction in the Buddhist sphere that was enduring, cross-cultural and impactful.

Cultural Synthesis that Transcended Boundaries: Śrīvijaya, China, Sri Lanka, Kiḍāram, Ramaṇṇadeśa, Dvipantara

The Pallava king Narasimhavarman II (695 CE), to honour the China Empire, built a Buddhist temple for the pilgrims and traders travelling to South India. He asked the then Chinese Emperor for an inscription to name this temple, to which the Emperor replied by sending a tablet bearing the inscription '*Koci Hoa Se*'[29]. The construction of this vihāra indicates that Nāgapaṭṭinam was not just a connecting point but a permanent settlement where monks could live, learn and practice their faith. It speaks about the relations between the Pallava kings and the Chinese Empire - indicating the respect Buddhism commanded and how

Akshardhara Research Journal
Single Blind Peer-Reviewed & Refereed International Research Journal
E ISSN -3048-8095 / SJIF Impact- 5.16 / October 2026/ Special Issue 05 Volume I

prolific tourism from China must have been. In terms of architecture - it means that there was a diffusion of styles during its construction signifying a mix of artisans and labourers were involved in its construction.

The Mahāyānist scholar, Ācarya Vajrabodhi, went to Sri Lanka and resided there for 6 months at the Abhayagiri Vihāra. He further travelled to China via Ceylon and Śrīvijaya (Sumatra) with his student Amoghavajra. Vajrabodhi carried the text of the Mahāprajñāpāramitā to China, and is known to have translated Buddhist works into Chinese.[30]

The Chinese text *Anthology of the Patriarchal Hall* by Zutang ji[31], dated 952 CE, tells a fascinating story of a meeting between Emperor Wu of Liang, a devout follower of Buddhism and Bodhidharma, a monk (Daoyuan 2015, 118), also mentioned in *The Record of the Buddhist Monasteries of Luoyang* by Yang Xuanzhi[32], dated 547 CE. *The Two Entrances and Four Acts*[33], attributed to Bodhidharma is a compilation of his teachings after his death. A preface by Tanlin describes Bodhidharma as the son of a South Indian Brahmin King which puts him in the Pallava period, and with their capital being Kāñcipuram, with Nāgapaṭṭinam the port city, it's possible it was the place he sailed from. The *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks*, by Daoxuan mentions that he carried the Lankāvatāra Sutra (a complex philosophical text) with him[34]. These accounts pinpoint the existence of strong political & cultural ties between South India and China. The fact that Vajrabodhi translated Buddhist works into Chinese indicates his proficiency in their language, which could most likely be obtained through living in and learning from the country and its people. That he had disciples indicates an acceptance and reverence of his teachings, showing that knowledge transcended boundaries. Literature and texts were collected by monks during their journey across India and translated, meaning this literature would further be propagated across Southeast Asia; These accounts are also testimony as to the commonality of foreign presence in India, their freedom of travel, the privileges as much as an Indian citizen granted - indicating trust, openness, flexibility; all factors important for the exchange of intellectual thought.

The Guruparamparāprabhāvam Ārāyirappagḍi, written during the 12th centuries, mentions an insightful story[35], the gist of which is that Ālvār Tirumaṅgai stole an idol from a vihāra at Nāgapaṭṭinam through information obtained from its architect residing in Dvipāntara. This tells us about the wealth of the vihāra - an idol of solid gold - an indicator of the patronage of Buddhism by the local kings. It also gives us an insight into Dvipāntara - illustrating that it was built by an architect residing there and that it was not difficult to travel there as Ālvār completes a round trip easily.

This might be due to its likely construction by the Śailendra kings of Sumatra & Java (750-1025 CE) The Larger Leiden Plates of Rājarāja I[36] (see fig. 3) mention two Śailendra kings - Māravijayottuṅgavarman and Saṃgramavijayottuṅgavarman, father-son, who had contacted the then Coḷa rulers Rājarāja I and Rājendra Coḷa I. Māravijayottuṅgavarman built the Cuḍāmaṇivarman Vihāra, named after his father.

It was found by Marco Polo as well, although in ruins, during his visit in the 13th century[37]. In 1725, it was observed by François Valentyn, a Dutch minister[38], and then in 1867, by Sir Walter Elliott[39] (see fig. 4)

More recently, Copper Strip inscriptions have been found in the Batanghari river near the Muara Jambi temple complex in Sumatra specifically mentioning the Cuḍāmaṇivarman Vihāra - an important piece of archaeological evidence of a link between the Śrīvijaya kings and the Vihāra[40].

The Śrīvijaya kings also appear in other important archaeological references: a 10th century Nepalese manuscript[41] and the a 1025 CE inscription of Rājendra Coḷa I from 1025 CE[42]. The 1090 CE Smaller Leiden Plates of Kulottuṅga I, (see fig. 5), mention messengers from Kiḍāram[43].

Thus, a great deal of travel occurred between the two countries, and the Śrīvijaya rulers took efforts to provide amenities for visitors to and from their country. It is clear that these age-old connections had fostered a strong cultural connection. The formation of guilds meant that Buddhist

Akshardhara Research Journal
Single Blind Peer-Reviewed & Refereed International Research Journal
E ISSN -3048-8095 / SJIF Impact- 5.16 / October 2026/ Special Issue 05 Volume I

institutions were ingrained into the economic network and even supported by these affluent merchants who travelled between India and South-east Asia.

Around the site of the Cuḍāmaṇivarman Vihara, about 350 statues Buddhist bronzes have been found, ranging from as small as 9.2 cm to as tall as 41.7 cm.[44]. The most interesting factor is that the styles reflect both indigenous South Indian art traditions as well as Southeast Asian influences (see fig. 6). Many of these statues are comparable to models from Śrīvijaya, some Burma. Peculiar features that allow us to identify these as a blend of styles include - The Uṣṇīṣa, a common feature in Siamese and Indonesian Buddhist figures, The Ūrṇā: A mark on the forehead (see fig. 8) which is seen to appear in a variety of different styles and Āsana & Mudrā: The postures and hand gestures; reflecting the diverse Mahāyāna sect prevalent in Nāgapaṭṭinam. It is evident from these factors that art & artisans were another key import, represented in the presence of craftspeople from both sides, sharing skills and exchanging ideas. Thus, Nāgapaṭṭinam became a nexus where elements of tangible and intangible culture interacted.

The Mahāyāna versus Theravāda Link

The Theravāda tradition propagated through the mission of Mahinda Thera to Sri Lanka, and the establishment of the Mahāvihāra. However, the Buddhist temple built by the Chinese and the Cuḍāmaṇivarman Vihāra both belonged to the Mahāyāna discipline. The discussion here is limited to major sects; while the sub sects within the Mahāyāna and Theravāda also were in play, it is beyond the scope of this paper. The Śailendra kings of Śrīvijaya were patrons of Mahāyāna Buddhism, with the architecture of the China Pagoda similar to Sumatran or Javanese temples, predominantly Mahāyāna in nature. The bronzes found, mentioned earlier, have also been attributed to the Mahāyāna style, evidenced by the Avalokiteśvara forms, and images of Tārā, Jambhala and Vasudhārā (see fig. 9)[45]

The Kalyāṇī inscriptions of Dhammaceti, dated to 1472-1492 CE, comprising ten stone slabs, with inscriptions on both sides, found in Pegu, are evidence of a Theravāda tradition[46]. The second stone speaks about Nāgapaṭṭinam - an account of a mission to Sri Lanka, a congregation of 22 Theras, a shipwreck and how they ended up at Nāgapaṭṭinam, where they visited the Padarikarama monastery (see fig. 11).

Dīpankara Buddhāpīya Thera, a Buddhist monk who lived during the 12th-13th centuries CE, and originally from the Coḷa region, was a stalwart of Buddhist literature. He travelled to Sri Lanka, studied under the teacher Ānanda Vanaratana and authored the Rūpasiddhi & Pajjamadhu[47]. Colophons in both the above books - the Rūpasiddhi as well as the Pajjamadhu mention him as a Dīpankara, talk about his education under Ānanda Vanaratana and about his origins and travels[48]. This indicates the diffusion of scholarly Buddhist knowledge through literature between Sri Lanka and India, with evidence of its spread to Burma (Myanmar) as well.

Another Buddhist scholar and monk, Coḷa Kassapa Thera from the 12th-13th Centuries CE, authored the Mohavicchedanī, Vimativinodanī and Anāgatavaṃsa[49]. The colophon of the Mohavicchedanī mentions him writing it at the Nāganāna vihāra - a monastery identified with Nāgapaṭṭinam. A reference to him can also be found in the Gandhavaṃ-sa and Sāsanavaṃsa - Burmese chronicles.

Dhammakitti Thera, a Coḷian bhikkhu, travelled to Ramaṇṇa (Lower Burma) as an envoy and compiled the Cūlavaṃsa. The Saddhammasaṃgha mentions this[50]. He also wrote the Dāṭhāvaṃsa in the colophon of which he names himself & mentions Sāriputta as his teacher.[51] Buddhasanta, a Buddhist monk and the companion of Buddhaguhya, is mentioned by the Tibetan historian Tārānatha[52] as well as of waiting for ships and wind patterns to sail East, possibly a description of monsoon travel at Nāgapaṭṭinam.

This allows us to infer that the initial years in Nāgapaṭṭinam (7th-10th centuries CE) saw a patronage of Buddhism of the Mahāyāna tradition, while the later centuries (12th-15th CE) see activity of the Theravāda sect as well. It means there was interaction between them, with the possibility of debates, theological discussions, exchange of thoughts and ideas, all facilitated through the one connecting point: Nāgapaṭṭinam.

Akshardhara Research Journal
Single Blind Peer-Reviewed & Refereed International Research Journal
E ISSN -3048-8095 / SJIF Impact- 5.16 / October 2026/ Special Issue 05 Volume I

Conclusion

The evolution of Nāgapaṭṭinam emphasises its role as a common denominator for the confluence of international thought, exchange of ideas, artistic expression and philosophical discussion in the Buddhist sphere, and across countries and kingdoms in the South and South East Asian landscape. It was the focal point where the above exchange of culture gave birth to tangible elements such as texts, sculptures, temples, monuments and others as well as intangible elements such as craftsmanship, theological thought and cultural explorations. It further turned into a gateway for complex, multi-denominational thought, navigating the intersection of the Mahāyāna and Theravāda schools and their sub sects. It became a nurturing ground for the sustenance of the vibrant Buddhist ecosystem with its role as a transit point connecting kingdoms all over South and Southeast Asia and these three things fused together to form a marketplace of ideas that fostered globalization and an enduring multi-cultural synthesis that gave birth to a wealth of knowledge.

Notes

1. Sambandhar, "Thevaram (First Thirumurai)," *Shaivam.org* (n.d.), hymn 1.1
2. K. V. Subrahmanya Aiyer, "No. 34: The Larger Leiden Plates (of Rajaraja I)," *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 22 (1933–34), p. 215.
3. K. V. Subrahmanya Aiyer, "The Smaller Leiden Plates (of Kulottunga I)," *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 22 (1933–34), p. 268.
4. Taw Sein Ko, "A Preliminary Study of the Kalyani Inscriptions of Dhammacheti, 1476 A.D.," *The Indian Antiquary*, vol. 22 (1893), p. 45
5. T. N. Ramachandran, *The Nagapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum* (Superintendent, Government Press, 1954), p.16
6. Vaidehi Herbert, trans., "Ettuthokai – Purananuru 1-200," *Sangam Translations by Vaidehi* (n.d.)
7. Shattan, *Manimekalai*, translated by Prema Nandakumar (Tamil University, 1989)
8. Ilango Adigal, *The Silappadikaram*, translated by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar (Oxford UP, 1939)
9. Pinbazhagiya Perumal Jiyar, *Guruparampara Prabhavam (Arayirappadi)* (Srinivasa Press, n.d.).
10. Phramaha Sriporn Rachiwong, *Rūpasiddhi: A Study of Some Aspects* (PhD diss., University of Pune, 1995), p. 108
11. Édouard Chavannes, "Le T'ai Chan: Essai de monographie d'un culte chinois," *T'oung Pao*, vol. 12 (1911), p. 44
12. Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, translated by Li Rongxi (Numata Center, 1996), p. 355
13. Bodhidharma, *Two Entrances and Four Practices*, translated by Chung Tai Translation Committee (Chung Tai Zen Center, n.d.).
14. Taranatha, *Taranatha's History of Buddhism in India*, translated by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya (Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970), p. 300.
15. François Valentyn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* (Joannes van Braam, 1724–26), p. 5.21.
16. Walter Elliot, "The Edifice Formerly Known as the Chinese or Jaina Pagoda at Negapatam," *The Indian Antiquary*, vol. 7 (1878), p. 225.
17. E. Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, vol. 1 (Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 22.
18. S. Paranavitana, "Rock Inscriptions at Rajagala," *University of Ceylon Review*, vol. 20 (1962), p. 160.
19. Ilango Adigal, *The Silappadikaram*, translated by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar (Oxford UP, 1939), p. 285
20. Shattan, *Manimekalai*, translated by Prema Nandakumar (Tamil University, 1989), p. 148.
21. Iravatham Mahadevan, *Early Tamil Epigraphy: From the Earliest Times to the Sixth Century A.D.* (Cre-A, 2003), p. 355.
22. Vaidehi Herbert, trans., "Ettuthokai – Purananuru 1-200," *Sangam Translations by Vaidehi* (n.d.)
23. Sharada Gandhi, trans., *Rasavāhinī: A Stream of Sentiments* (Sharada Gandhi, 2017), p. 88.

24. Xuanzang, *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*, translated by Li Rongxi (Numata Center, 1996).
25. Shattan, *Manimekalai*, translated by Prema Nandakumar (Tamil University, 1989)
26. Claudius Ptolemy, *The Geography*, translated by Edward Luther Stevenson (New York Public Library, 1932), book 7, ch. 1, sec. 12.
27. I-Tsing, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago*, translated by J. Takakusu (Clarendon Press, 1896)
28. T. Anas Babu, "Maritime Experience of the Muslims under the Pandyas," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 79 (2018), p. 252.
29. Édouard Chavannes, "Le T'ai Chan: Essai de monographie d'un culte chinois," *T'oung Pao*, vol. 12 (1911), p. 44.
30. Hisselle Dhammaratna, *Buddhism in South India* (Buddhist Publication Society, 1964), p. 45.
31. Jing and Yun, *Zutang ji (Anthology of the Patriarchal Hall)*, dated 952. Translated in Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (OUP, 2006), p. 132.
32. Yang Xuanzhi, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang*, translated by Wang Yi-t'ung (Princeton UP, 1984), p. 20.
33. Bodhidharma, *Two Entrances and Four Practices*, translated by Chung Tai Translation Committee (Chung Tai Zen Center, n.d.).
34. Robin Beth Wagner, *Buddhism, Biography and Power: A Study of Daoxuan's 'Continued Lives of Eminent Monks'* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1995), p. 75.
35. Pinbazhagiya Perumal Jiyar, *Guruparampara Prabhavam (Arayirappadi)* (Srinivasa Press, n.d.).
36. K. V. Subrahmanya Aiyer, "No. 34: The Larger Leiden Plates (of Rajaraja I)," *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 22 (1933–34), p. 215.
37. Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, translated by Ronald Latham (Penguin Classics, 1958), p. 647.
38. François Valentyn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën* (Joannes van Braam, 1724–26), p. 5.21
39. Walter Elliot, "The Edifice Formerly Known as the Chinese or Jaina Pagoda at Negapatam," *The Indian Antiquary*, vol. 7 (1878), p. 225.
40. Wahyu Rizky Andhifani et al., "Maritime Links Between China, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and Buddhist Monasteries in India," *Religions*, vol. 16, no. 6 (2025), p. 664.
41. Jinah Kim, "An Ambitious Itinerary: Journey Across the Medieval Buddhist World in a Book," *Religions*, vol. 16, no. 7 (2016).
42. Hermann Kulke et al., eds., *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia* (ISEAS, 2009), p.70.
43. K. V. Subrahmanya Aiyer, "The Smaller Leiden Plates (of Kulottunga I)," *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 22 (1933–34), p. 268.
44. T. N. Ramachandran, *The Nagapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum* (Superintendent, Government Press, 1954), p. 28.
45. T. N. Ramachandran, *The Nagapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum* (Superintendent, Government Press, 1954), p. 32.
46. Taw Sein Ko, "A Preliminary Study of the Kalyani Inscriptions of Dhammacheti, 1476 A.D.," *The Indian Antiquary*, vol. 22 (1893), p. iii.
47. Buddhappiya Dīpaṅkara, *Pajjamadhu (The Nectar of Verses)*, translated by D. G. Koparkar (Ahmednagar College, 1953).
48. Phramaha Sriporn Rachiwong, *Rūpasiddhi: A Study of Some Aspects* (PhD diss., University of Pune, 1995), p. 108.
49. Kassapa, *Mohavicchedanī* (Burmese Manuscript, Royal Asiatic Society MS 31, n.d.).
50. Bimala Churn Law, trans., *A Manual of Buddhist Historical Traditions (Saddhamma-sangaha)* (University of Calcutta, 1941), p. 85.
51. Dhammakitti, *The Dathávansa, or, The History of the Tooth-Relic of Gotama Buddha*, translated by Mutu Coomaraswamy (Trübner & Co.,1874), p. 30.
52. Taranatha, *Taranatha's History of Buddhism in India*, translated by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya (Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970), p. 290.

References

Anas Babu, T. "Maritime Experience of the Muslims under the Pandyas: Kayal during the 13th and 14th Centuries." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 79, 2018, pp. 251–58.

Andhifani, Wahyu Rizky, et al. "Maritime Links Between China, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and Buddhist Monasteries in India (c. 11th–12th Centuries) in the Light of Two Fragmentary Inscribed Strips of Copper from Muara Jambi." *Religions*, vol. 16, no. 6, 2025, p. 664.

Bodhidharma. *Two Entrances and Four Practices*. Translated by the Chung Tai Translation Committee, Chung Tai Zen Center of Sunnyvale, n.d.

Buddhappiya Dīpaṅkara. *Pajjamadhu (The Nectar of Verses)*. Translated by D. G. Koparkar, Ahmednagar College, 1953.

Chavannes, Édouard. "Le T'ai Chan: Essai de monographie d'un culte chinois." *T'oung Pao*, vol. 12, 1911, pp. [Page Range].

Daoyuan. *Records of the Transmission of the Lamp*. Vol. 1, translated by Randolph S. Whitfield, Books on Demand, 2015.

Dhammakitti. *The Dathávansa, or, The History of the Tooth-Relic of Gotama Buddha*. Translated by Mutu Coomaraswamy, Trübner & Co., 1874.

Dhammaratna, Hisselle. *Buddhism in South India*. Buddhist Publication Society, 1964.

Elliot, Walter. "The Edifice Formerly Known as the Chinese or Jaina Pagoda at Negapatam." *The Indian Antiquary*, vol. 7, 1878, pp. 224–27.

Gandhi, Sharada, translator. *Rasavāhinī: A Stream of Sentiments*. Sharada Gandhi, 2017.

Gaur, Aniruddh Singh, and Sundaresh. "Underwater Exploration off Poompuhar and Possible Causes of Its Submergence." *Puratattva*, vol. 28, 1998, pp. 84–90.

Guy, John. "The Lost Temples of Nagapattinam and Quanzhou: A Study in Sino-Indian Relations." *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, vol. 3, 1993, pp. 291–310.

Herbert, Vaidehi, translator. "Ettuthokai – Purananuru 1-200." *Sangam Translations by Vaidehi*, n.d., sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/ettuthokai-purananuru-1-200. Accessed 2 Dec. 2025.

Hultzsch, E. *Inscriptions of Asoka*. Vol. 1, Clarendon Press, 1925. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.

Ilango Adigal. *The Silappadikaram*. Translated by V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, Oxford UP, 1939.

I-Tsing. *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671–695)*. Translated by J. Takakusu, Clarendon Press, 1896.

Jing and Yun. *Zutang ji (Anthology of the Patriarchal Hall)*. 952. Translated in *Monks, Rulers, and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism*, by Albert Welter, Oxford UP, 2006.

Jiyar, Pinbazhagiya Perumal. *Guruparampara Prabhavam (Arayirappadi)*. Srinivasa Press, n.d. *Digital Library of India*, archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.384478.

Karashima, Noboru. "South Indian Merchant Guilds in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia." *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*, edited by Hermann Kulke et al., Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009, pp. 135–61.

Kassapa. *Mohavicchedanī*. Burmese Manuscript. Royal Asiatic Society Burmese MS 31. Royal Asiatic Society, London. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/rasburmese31.

Kim, Jinah. "An Ambitious Itinerary: Journey Across the Medieval Buddhist World in a Book, CUL Add.1643 (1015 CE)." *Religions*, vol. 16, no. 7, 2016.

Kulke, Hermann, et al., editors. *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009.

Law, Bimala Churn, translator. *A Manual of Buddhist Historical Traditions (Saddhamma-sangaha)*. University of Calcutta, 1941.

Mahadevan, Iravatham. *Early Tamil Epigraphy: From the Earliest Times to the Sixth Century A.D.* Cre-A, 2003.

Mahānāma. *The Mahāvaṃsa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon*. Translated by Wilhelm Geiger, Oxford UP, 1912.

Malalasekera, G. P. *The Pali Literature of Ceylon*. Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1928.

Nandapañña. "Gandhavaṃsa." *The Glimpses of Pali Literature*, translated by Asha Das, Punthi Pustak, 2000.

Paññasāmi. *Sāsanavaṃsa*. Edited by Mabel Haynes Bode, Pali Text Society, 1897.

Paranavitana, S. "Rock Inscriptions at Rajagala." *University of Ceylon Review*, vol. 20, 1962, pp. 159–62.

Polo, Marco. *The Travels of Marco Polo*. Translated by Ronald Latham, Penguin Classics, 1958.

Ptolemy, Claudius. *The Geography*. Translated by Edward Luther Stevenson, New York Public Library, 1932.

Akshardhara Research Journal
Single Blind Peer-Reviewed & Refereed International Research Journal
E ISSN -3048-8095 / SJIF Impact- 5.16 / October 2026/ Special Issue 05 Volume I

Rachiwong, Phramaha Sriporn. *Rūpasiddhi: A Study of Some Aspects*. Dissertation, University of Pune, 1995.
Ramachandran, T. N. *The Nagapattinam and Other Buddhist Bronzes in the Madras Museum*. Superintendent, Government Press, 1954.
Sambandhar. "Thevaram (First Thirumurai)." *Shaivam.org*, n.d., shaivam.org/scripture/Tamil/sambandhar-thevaram-first-thirumurai-english-translation-tamil-explanation-part-1/. Accessed 5 Dec. 2025.
Seshadri, Gokul. "New Perspectives on Nagapattinam: The Medieval Port City in the Context of Political, Religious, and Commercial Exchanges between South India, Southeast Asia and China." *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa*, edited by Hermann Kulke et al., Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009, pp. [Page Range].
Shattan. *Manimekalai*. Translated by Prema Nandakumar, Tamil University, 1989.
Subbarayalu, Y. "A Note on the Navy of the Chola State." *Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa*, edited by Hermann Kulke et al., Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009, pp. 91–95.
Subrahmanya Aiyer, K. V. "No. 34: The Larger Leiden Plates (of Rajaraja I)." *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 22, 1933–34, pp. 213–66.
Subrahmanya Aiyer, K. V. "The Smaller Leiden Plates (of Kulottunga I)." *Epigraphia Indica*, vol. 22, 1933–34, pp. 267–81.
Taranatha. *Taranatha's History of Buddhism in India*. Translated by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970.
Taw Sein Ko. "A Preliminary Study of the Kalyani Inscriptions of Dhammacheti, 1476 A.D." *The Indian Antiquary*, vol. 22, 1893, pp. 11–17, 29–53, 274–75.
Valentyn, François. *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*. Joannes van Braam, 1724–26.
Wagner, Robin Beth. *Buddhism, Biography and Power: A Study of Daoxuan's 'Continued Lives of Eminent Monks'*. Dissertation, Harvard U, 1995.
Xuanzang. *The Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions*. Translated by Li Rongxi, Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1996.
Yang Xuanzhi. *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang*. Translated by Wang Yi-t'ung, Princeton UP, 1984.

Figures



Fig. 1. Rock Edict XIII of Asoka (Girnar). Source: Hultzsch 1925, page 26

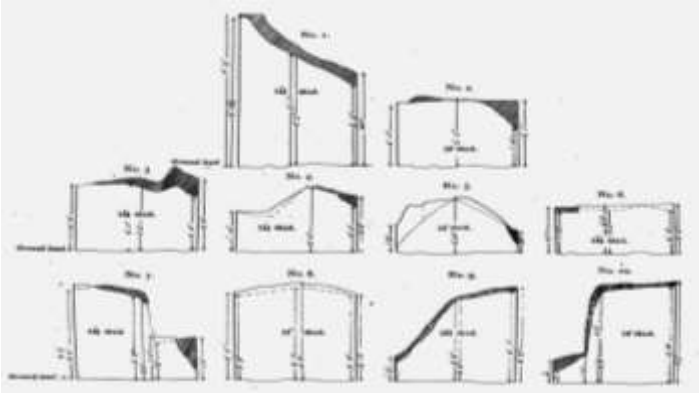


Fig. 2. Kalyani inscriptions of Dhammaceti. Source: Taw Sein Ko 1893, page 274





©Copyright 2025 *ADRJ*. All Rights Reserved

Akshardhara Research Journal
Single Blind Peer-Reviewed & Refereed International Research Journal
E ISSN -3048-8095 / SJIF Impact- 5.16 / October 2026/ Special Issue 05 Volume I

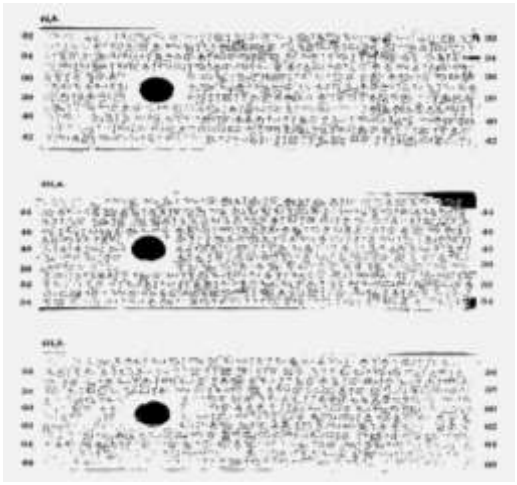


Fig. 3. The Larger Leiden Plates of Rajaraja I. Source: Subrahmanya Aiyer 1933–34, between pages 238 and 239

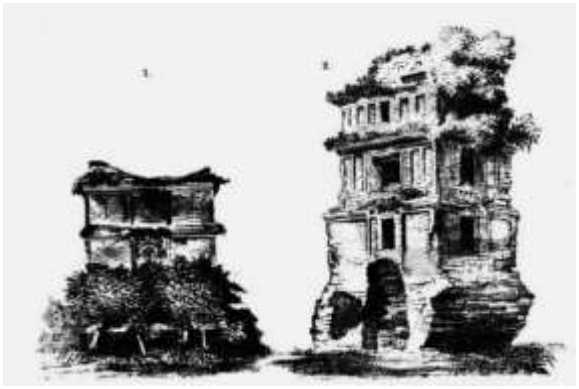


Fig. 4. Tower at Nagapattinam as in 1846. Source: Elliot 1878, 224



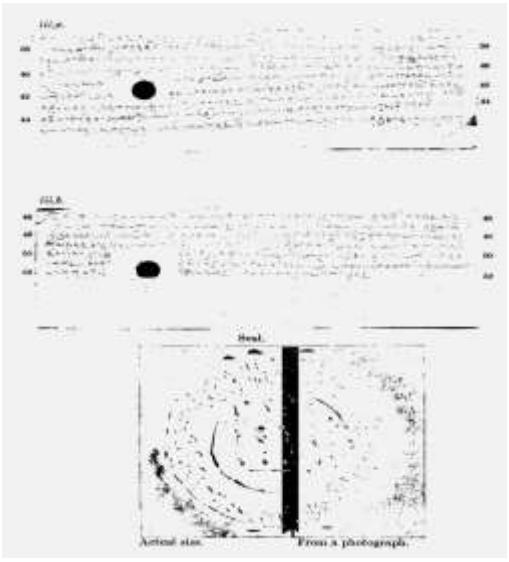


Fig. 5. The Smaller Leiden Plates of Kulottunga I. Source: Subrahmanya Aiyer 1933–34, between pages 276 and 277



Fig. 6. No. 54 from Nagapattinam. *Padmāsana*. Possibly identifiable as Maitreya. Influences of late Śailendra style. Source: Ramachandran 1954, cat. no. 54



Fig. 7. Buddhist bronze no. 25 from Nāgapaṭṭinam. Seated on *padmāsana*. *Bhumisparśa mudrā*, *dhyāna mudrā*. *Uśnīśa* on the head, *Ūrṇā* on forehead. Source: Ramachandran 1954, cat. no. 25

Akshardhara Research Journal
Single Blind Peer-Reviewed & Refereed International Research Journal
E ISSN -3048-8095 / SJIF Impact- 5.16 / October 2026/ Special Issue 05 Volume I



Fig. 8. The different forms of the *Ūrṇā* mark. Source: Ramachandran 1954, plate IX



Fig. 9. No. 61 from Nāgapaṭṭinam. Image of Tārā, *padmāsana*. Early Coḷa style with Nepalese influence. Source: Ramachandran 1954, cat. no. 61



Fig. 10. Kalyani Inscription of Dhammaceti, Stone 2 (Obverse). Source: Taw Sein Ko 1893, page 274

©Copyright 2025 *ADRJ*. All Rights Reserved