

# Kanchi, The City of Moksham

January 20,21- 2024



a RATHAM initiative

(Road Access to Temples, Heritage And Monuments)



With  
Madhusudhanan  
Kalaichelvan

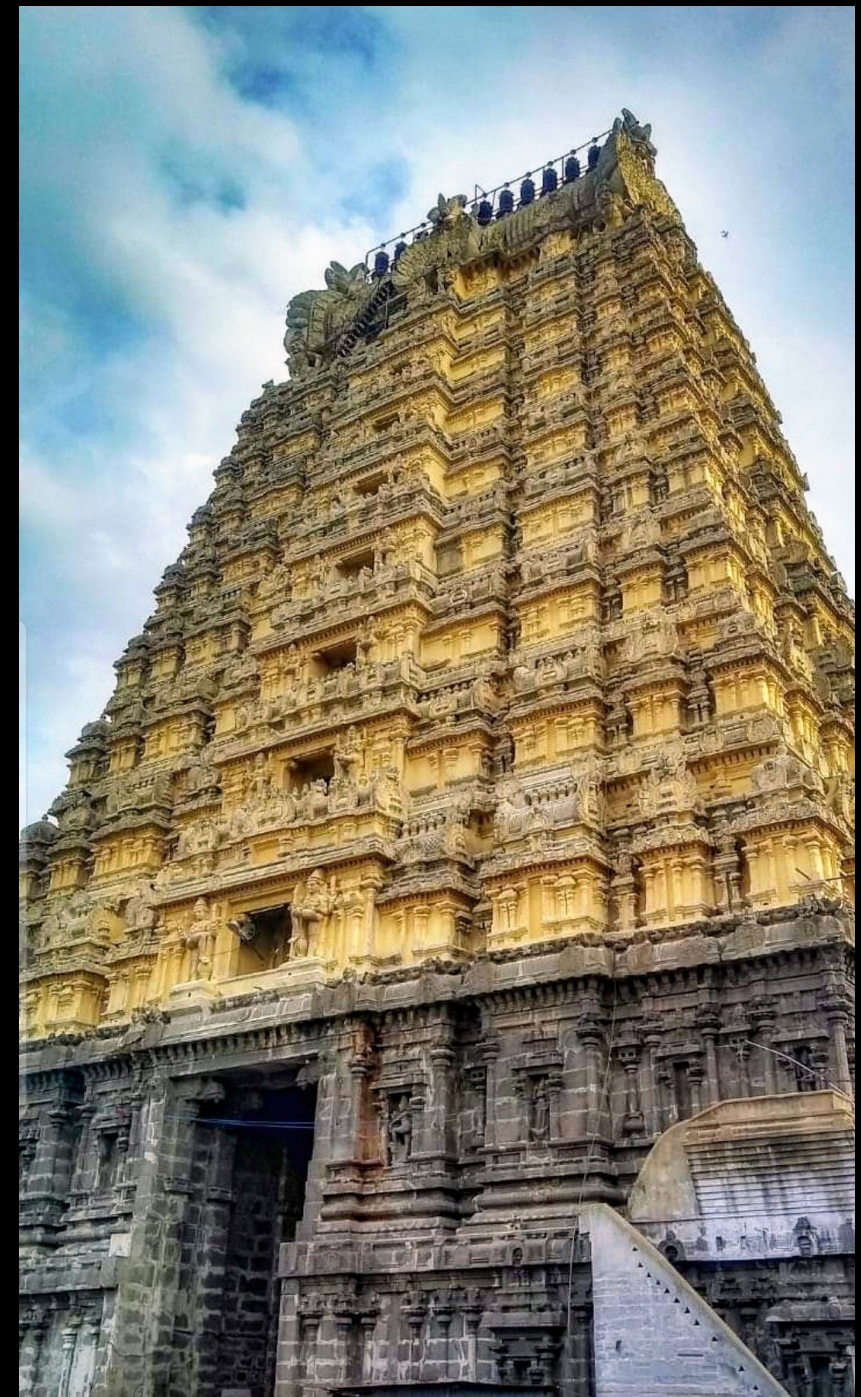
# Introduction

Sapta Moksha Puri are a group of seven sacred pilgrimage sites, located in India. Pilgrimage to these sites is said to bless the pilgrim with moksham.

ayOdhya mathura mAyA kAshi kAnchi avantika |  
pUri dwAravati chaiva saptaitA: mOkshadAyika ||

Roughly translated, Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Mayā (Haridwar), Kaśī, Kañchi, Avantikā (Ujjain), Dwārāvātī (Dwaraka), these seven cities should be known as the givers of liberation. Of these 7, only Kanchipuram is in the south of India. With an unbroken record of civilaization growth in various fields, Kanchipuram can be rightly identified as the cradle of Tamil culture and civilization along with Madurai and Thanjavur.

RATHAM – Road Access to Temples, Heritage And Monuments is happy to organise a heritage experience to this city that is a splendour.



# Kanchipuram



Located on the bank of the Paalaar river, Kanchipuram has an architectural legacy close to 1400 years. Before this period, it was the capital of Sangam Cholas in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. After the rule of the Pallava Dynasty, the Vijayanagara empire (15<sup>th</sup> century CE) and the Nayaka dynasty (17<sup>th</sup> centuries CE) followed, in that order.

Based on the chronicles of the Xuanzang, the Chinese pilgrim who visited Pallavas' court, the city was a very happening center for education and art forms. Universities and centers of higher education were popular. South Indian architecture got a fillip only during the Pallava rule. Towering gopurams and sprawling temple campuses dominate the sacred landscape of this city that is festive around the year.

# Schedule

## Day 1

### Morning

- Ekamreshwarar Temple
- Kamakshi Amman Temple

### Evening

- Varadharajaswamy Temple

## Day 2

### Morning

- Kailasanatha Temple
- Vaikunta Perumal Temple

### Evening

- Tirupparuthikundram Jain Temple
- Sanjeevirayar Hanunam Temple

Apart from these architectural marvels, we will also be engaging with other cultural legacies like Kanchipuram Silk weaving, making of Kolu Dolls and the lip smacking Kanchipuram Idly making in the afternoon times.

# DAY 1 - Morning

## Ekamranatha Temple

The presiding deity of Kanchipuram is Sri EkamranathaSwamy worshipped as “Prithvi LingaMurthy” . Sanctified by the sacred hymns of thevarams, this grand temple has towering gopurams from all cardinal directions and corridors filled with centuries of history.

It is believed that Parvati worshipped Shiva in the form of a Prithivi Lingam (or a Lingam improvised out of sand), under a mango tree. Legend has it that the neighboring Vegavati river overflowed and threatened to engulf the Shiva Lingam and that Parvati embraced the Lingam. Shiva touched by the gesture materialized in person and married her. In this context he is referred to as Tazhuva Kuzhainthaar.

The temple stands as an example of architectural styles that had evolved over a millennium and interesting inscriptions and sculptures.



# DAY 1 - Morning

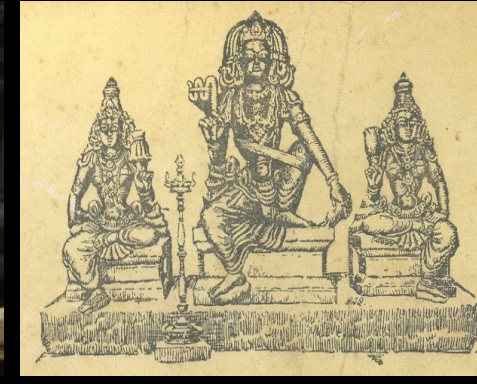
Kamakshi Amman Temple is an ancient shrine dedicated to Devi as tapas Kamakshi, performing penance as ordained by Siva. The temple is glorified in the hymns of 7<sup>th</sup> century. The initial shrine was probably by Pallava kings later extended by imperial Cholas and Vijayanagara kings.

The present temple is also known as Kamakoti Peetha or Kamakoshtam where Devi had settled after killing Bhandasura. Kamakshi is worshipped in the shrine in 5 different forms, one of them was a golden idol, which was transported to Thanjavur due to the Muslim invasions of Kanchipuram.

The Sri Chakram here is worshipped by unique rituals as prescribed by Sage Dhurvasa.



## Kamakshi Temple



# DAY 1 - Evening

## Varadharajaswamy Temple



Described as Hastagiri and Attiyur, It is one of the Divya Desams in Thondai Nadu sanctified by the hymns of the alvars. It is located in a suburb of Kanchipuram known as the Vishnu Kanchi that is a home for many famous Vishnu temples.

The temple was initially in the outskirts of the Kanchi town and only around 15<sup>th</sup> century CE it was aligned with the main city. Vijayanagara kings and Nayaks patronized the shrine so much and the traditions and festivals are conducted the same way till date.

Associated with the life of many popular Vaishnavite acharya, the temple has truck loads of inscriptions telling interesting accounts from the past.

# DAY 2 - Morning

## Kailasanatha Temple

The temple was built around 700 CE with additions in the 8th century and restorations in later centuries. It is the first complete structural temple built in South India by Narasimhavarman II, also known as Rajasimha Pallaveswaram. His son, Mahendravarman III, completed the front façade and the gopuram (tower).

It is believed that Raja Raja Chola I, visited the temple and drew inspiration from this temple to build the Big Temple. The structure has a simple layout with a tower or vimana at the center of the complex.

The calligraphic inscriptions that enlists the various titles of the King and elaborate panels depicting various episodes from puranas and traditional lore.

The shrine as described in inscriptions is truly “atimAnam”, unparalleled.





# DAY 2 - Morning

## Vaikunta Perumal Temple

A divyadesam that was visited by Tirumangaiaazhwar, this 3 storied shrine is another grand sculptural galore commissioned by Nandivarman II.

Vishnu is enshrined in the 3 levels in the seated, reclining and standing poses. The structure is popular for tall relief sculptures depicting various dynamic scenes from puranas, Ramayana and Mahabharata. Some of the themes used here are extremely rare and hardly seen elsewhere.

This temple also has long running panels depicting history of Pallava monarch starting from their puranic origin. It's a delight to walk around these be-jewelled corridors of Parameshwara Vinnagaram aka Vaikunta Perumal Koil.



# DAY 2 - Evening

## Tiruparuttikundram



Kanchi has always been a cosmopolitan settlement with people belonging to various religious denominations occupying demarcated zones within the city. In her ancient past, Kanchi housed very active Jain settlements that had religious scholars training and teaching their students into the religion.

In the recent past due to migration of major factions of the community, Jina Kanchi has restricted itself to a quiet region near Pallar called Tiruparuttikundram. The temple here is an aesthetic amalgamation of structures belonging to different periods and designs. The Ranga Mandapam or the hall with captivating and colorful murals is a must visit to learn some tales from Jain tradition.

# DAY 2 - Morning

## Sanjeevirayar Hanuman Temple

Situated in the calm suburbs of Kanchipuram in a village called Ayyangar Kulam, this temple was constructed by a great scholar and administrator named Kotikanyadanam Ettur Lakshmikumara Tatacharya. He was the royal preceptor (raja-guru) of the Vijayanagar emperor Venkata Raya II in the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century CE.

Tatacharya was then the administrative manager of Sri Varadarajaswami temple, Kanchi and had immense power. Dedicated Hanuman, this campus is a spacious Vijayanagara style edifice with grand ceiling panels and mandapas in many sizes and shapes. The patron has also excavated a grand lake called “Thatha Samudram” with access from the temple. The serenity of the place is best appreciated only when visited in person.



# Culture Components

- Kanchipuram Idli
- Kolu Bommai
- Weaving



# A Few Highlights

- Kanchipuram is one of the most ancient cities that are still alive and active.
- To understand the city for the long running timeline that it has been active, we will have to visit temples belonging to different time periods.
- This heritage experience is scheduled to make sure that we get a rich slice to architectural samples ranging from Pallava, Chola, Later Pandya, Vijayanagara and Nayaka dynasties.
- Kanchipuram is also popular for the cultural icons like silk weaving, doll making and Kanchipuram Idli that has a very unique recipe.
- We will be visiting centers where these heritage emblems are made for a better experience.

# Travel Plans & Contact Details

- The trip starts on 20<sup>th</sup> January, early morning from Chennai and ends on the 21<sup>st</sup> January evening at Chennai.
- We would be staying at Kanchipuram and travelling to the sites in AC Tempo Travelers.
- Please note that we can offer single accommodation at an additional cost.
- For registration and other details please contact

Mr Madhavan Veeraraghavan - +91 98407 43838

# How to Register?

- To register, please send in your Name (as per ID proof), Age (as per ID proof) and the entire tour fare of **INR 11,000** to 9840743838@axl. **(PLEASE DON'T SEND IT TO GOOGLE PAY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS NUMBER)**
- You can also do a bank transfer to the following account  
Name: MADHAVAN VEERARAGHAVAN  
Account No.: 10091026416  
IFSC Code: IDFB0080126  
Bank name: IDFC FIRST BANK  
Branch: Velachery Branch
- When you make the payment, **please make sure that you add your name and phone number and send the screenshot of the payment made.**