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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Tourism emerged as the largest global industry in the twentieth century. Growth of Tourism arrivals from 70 million in 1960 to 700 million in 2000 receipts from \$ 6.9 billion to 476 billion during the same period is awe-inspiring. It is well known that Tourism continues to be the biggest industry of the 21st century.

Tourism has the potential to create a maximum number of jobs. According to an assessment it is said that 3270 Billion dollars has been invested in the Tourism Industry world wide. In India alone, the Tourism Industry will create 700 million additional jobs in the next 25 years, which will also help in earning valuable foreign exchange.

In the present world scenario one of the strongest contributions could be that Tourism helps transfer of resources from the rich to the poor countries and thereby helps equitable distribution of income without conflict.

In a span of 20 years, Tourism has grown almost ten times keeping in tune with the projection of the World Tourism Organization that by 2020 the international arrivals will reach 1.6 billion.

The update highlights the tourist attractions mainly in Tamil Nadu and also focuses on ways and means to give filip to the tourist industry in Tamil Nadu which will definitively contribute to the economic development of the state. This is a collective effort of the students of the history department.....



Dr. Patricia
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ART GALLERIES IN CHENNAI - EMBELISHMENT OF ART FORMS

Chennai offers a rich cultural tradition in the form of several art galleries, cultural centers, and cultural events through out the year to art lovers and visitors to the city. This article highlights some of the popular haunts of tourists. An art gallery of repute is Tanjore Creations established by Revathy Ramakrishnan. Tanjore paintings of Lord Krishna, Mahalakshmi and innovative paintings like animals are decorated with exquisite gold threads and gold ornaments are available. A highlight in the gallery is the collection of stained glass paintings, Woodcarvings and Brassware. You will find beautifully carved jewel boxes, murals and oil paintings vying for attention. Tanjore Creations is located at 15, Norton Street, Mandaveli, Chennai - 600 028.

The National Art Gallery was built in 1907 by T. Namberumal Chetty based on a Henry Irwin design and the building, one of the finest pieces of architecture in the city, is inspired by Mughal architectural motifs. On display in this pink sandstone-faced building are 11th and 12th century Indian handicrafts, 17th century Deccan paintings, 16th to 18th century Mughal and Rajasthani paintings and 10th and 13th century bronzes. The art gallery is located on Pantheon Road, Chennai 600 008.

Art World Gallery is the oldest in South India. Established in 1965, by Soli and Moti Dharuwala, it is the fifth oldest art gallery in India. Initially functioning from various places in the city the gallery is now housed off Cenotaph Road. The gallery has had the privilege of exhibiting the works of some of the doyens of contemporary art including Professor Dheraj Chowdhary and Amithab Sen Gupta. Besides holding exhibitions, the gallery also frequently arranges for Art camps, where art lovers get to interact directly with the artists.

The cultural centers in the city of Chennai are institutions like Mozhi. Mozhi in Tamil meaning language is a public charitable institution for developing resources in language and culture. It is constantly developing conceptual and technological tools for understanding culture. Mozhi focuses on three thrust areas. The Raja Muthiah Research Center is the. Bibliographic division and the Seethuraman

Centre, funds research on language and culture. Mozhi's work and perception of Culture has won international recognition with UNESCO. The Ford Foundation has offered it financial assistance to carry out its activities without interruption. The University of Chicago, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore and the Tamil University of Tanjavur, offers Mozhi research and technical support.

Another well-known cultural center in the city of Chennai is the world headquarters of the Theosophical Society. It was established in 1886 on the banks of the Adyar River. You can see the bas-reliefs of Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Zarathrushttra on the walls of the hall. The symbols of Mahavir and verses of the Koran are also displayed prominently there. The statues of the society founders Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Col. Henry S. Olcott are installed in the hall.

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FESTIVALS OF TAMIL NADU

Pongal, one of the most colourful festivals of Tamil Nadu is essentially a Harvest Festival. Traditionally celebrated at harvest time, it is a celebration of the prosperity associated with the harvest. It is said that the practice has been in existence for over 5,000 years. While Pongal is predominantly a Tamil festival, it is also celebrated in several other provinces with different names. In Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Karnataka, the harvest festival Sankranti is celebrated. In northern India, Pongal is called Makara Sankranti. In Maharashtra and Gujarat, it is celebrated on the date of the annual kite flying day, Uttarayan. It also coincides with the bonfire and harvest festival in Punjab and Haryana, known as Lohri. Pongal is a festival that cuts across all religious barriers and is celebrated by every body with equal fervour. Tamils refer to Pongal as “Tamizhar Thirunal” (meaning “the festival of Tamils”). This festival originated in Tamil Nadu. Usually, the festival takes place between January 12 – 15 (on the Gregorian calendar). The festival is celebrated four days from the last day of the Tamil month Maargazhi (December – January) to the third day of Thai (January – February).

The first day, Bhogi, is celebrated by throwing away and destroying old clothes and materials, by setting them on fire, marking the end of the old Thai and the emergence of the new Thai. The second day, Pongal, is the main day, falling on the first day of the Tamil month Thai (January 14 – 15). Also known as Veetu Pongal, it is celebrated by boiling rice with fresh milk and jaggery in new pots, which are later topped with sugar crystals (kalkand) cashew nuts and raisins early in the morning and allowing it to boil over the vessel. This tradition gives Pongal its name. The third day, Maattu Pongal, is for offering thanks to cattle, as they help farmers in different ways for agriculture. Cattle are bathed and decorated with tassels, buntings, bells and colours. Jallikattu, the “taming the wild bull” contest, is the main event of this day. During the final day, Kaanum Pongal (the word kaanum means “to view”) people visit beaches and theme parks. They also chew sugar cane and decorate their houses with kolam.

Natyanjali Dance Festival:

Festivals have great value in Chidambaram. One festival that brings

in a lot of tourists to Chidambaram is the Natyanjali festival dedicated to the Cosmic Dancer (Lord Shiva). It is celebrated every year during the months of February-March. Natyanjali festival is jointly organised by The Department of Tourism, Government of Tamil Nadu, The Ministry Of Tourism, Government of India and The Natyanjali Trust, Chidambaram. The festival lasts for 5 days. This dance festival at Chidambaram brings together all the prominent dancers of India with an enchantment and elation, which shone in their eyes and evocative Abhinaya as they offered their dance to the great divinity, Lord Nataraja. The Natyanjali Dance Festival is designed to promote a universal message of “Unity in Diversity” conveyed in the universal language of music and dance. Its purpose also is to both educate and entertain the audience.

KAVADI FESTIVAL

The most potent propitiatory rite that a devotee of Lord Muruga undertakes to perform is what is known as the “Kavadi”. The benefits that the devotee gains from offering a Kavadi to the Lord are a million fold greater than the little pain that he inflicts upon himself. Generally, people take a vow to offer the Lord a Kavadi for the sake of tiding over a great calamity. The ‘Kavadi’ varies in shape and size from the simple shape of a street hawker’s storehouse (a wooden stick with two baskets at each end, slung across the shoulder) to the costly palanquin structure, profusely flower- bedecked and decoratively interwoven with peacock feathers. In all cases the Kavadi has a good many brass bells adorning it and announcing it as the Kavadi-bearer draws it along. The Kavadi festival is celebrated at all shrines of Lord Muruga. Dancing in a hypnotic trance to the rhythm of drums, devotees of Muruga carry the Kavadi all the way up the Palani hills to fulfill their vow. Ettukudi Kavadi Festival is a famous festival celebrated during the months of April-May. Devotees from places and villages around this temple come here with Kavadis, milk pots, coconuts, cocks and goats. This is a major crowd pulling festival where one can see the true Tamil culture in its habitat.

Karthigai Deepam

Karthigai Deepam is the oldest festival of South India, which is also the most elaborate and the most important festival. Karthigai Deepam falls in the Tamil month of Karthigai when the star Krithigai is on the

ascendant and usually occurs on a full moon day. This festival is also called as “the Festival of Lights”. Evidence from Tamil literature proves that this festival is one of the oldest in the state. In other ancient Tamil literature of the Sangam period, the Karthigai Deepam festival is described vividly. This festival is considered as the extension of the Deepavali festival.

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KANCHIPURAM -THE LAND OF A THOUSAND TEMPLES

Kanchipuram is one of the holiest cities of India and is famous for its shrines. It is said that Kanchipuram, was once the home of a thousand temples and is therefore called the city of temples. One can clearly see the architectural evolution of the south Indian style of temple architecture (Dravidian style) in the temples of Kanchi (as Kanchipuram is popularly known). The temples of Kanchipuram were built by different dynasties, each enriching and refining the architecture further.

Kanchipuram gained fame after the third century AD, when it became the seat of learning and was also a prominent Buddhist center. It became the imperial capital of the Pallava rulers from the sixth to eighth century AD. The rulers of the Pallava dynasty were great patrons of art, architecture and learning and under their reign, the first South Indian stone temples were built at Mahabalipuram. The Pallavas also built a number of temples in Kanchipuram. Subsequent kingdoms of the Cholas, Chalukyas and Vijaynagar rulers carried forward the temple building activities started by the Pallava dynasty. New temples were built, and old ones were renovated and extended.

The temple city of Kanchipuram is one of the seven holiest cities of India, though out of the original thousand temples only 200 or so remains now. There are 650 stone inscriptions in Kanchipuram belonging to different dynasties and different periods. The important temples of Kanchipuram are the following.

The Kailashnatha temple dedicated to Lord Shiva is the oldest temple of Kanchi. It reflects the freshness and simplicity of the early Dravidian style of temple architecture and was built by the Pallava king Rayasimha. It can also be described as the worthy successor of the rock temples at Mahabalipuram, which were also built by the Pallava rulers. There are a number of small shrines within this temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, Goddess Parvati (Lord Shiva's consort) and their sons Ganesh and Murugan.

Sri Ekambaranathar Temple The Sri Ekambaranathar temple is also dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is one of the largest temples in the city of Kanchipuram, and sprawls in an area of 12 hectares. The origin

of this temple goes back to the time of the Pallavas and the Chola rulers extended it later. The great ruler of the Vijaynagar empire, Krishnadevaraya, built its 59 meter high Gopuram or gateway and massive outer walls in the early 16th century. The highlight of this temple is its thousand-pillared mandapam (hall).

The impressive Kamakshi Amman Temple is dedicated to Goddess Parvati in the form of Kamakshi or the goddess of Love. The sanctum sanctorum of this temple can be reached by passing through a large mandapam (hall) with ornate pillars.

The huge Devarajaswami temple, built by the rulers of the Vijaynagar kingdom is dedicated to Lord Vishnu, one of the principle Hindu Gods. The temple has an exquisitely sculpted pillared hall. It also has a similar marriage hall, commemorating the celestial wedding of Lord Vishnu with Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. One of the interesting features of this temple is that it has a huge chain carved out from a single piece of stone. The large tank of water within the precincts of the temple also contains a 10-meter high, immersed statue of Lord Vishnu. The water of this tank is drained out every 40 years, so that the statue may be viewed.

The Vaikuntha Perumal temple is also dedicated to Lord Vishnu and was built shortly after the construction of the Kailashnatha temple. The covered passages inside the outer walls of this temple are supported by lion pillars, which are representative of the first phase in the architectural evolution of the grand thousand pillared mandaps built later within numerous south Indian temples. The sculptures within the temple depict the history of the temple, with explanatory details in an eighth century script. The main shrine dedicated to Lord Vishnu is on three different levels and contains the images of Lord Vishnu in standing, sitting and reclining postures.

Kanchipuram does not have an airport of its own and the nearest one is in Chennai, which is 71 km from the city. Kanchipuram is well connected by road to the important places in south India. The bus service between Kanchipuram and the important centers within Tamil Nadu is good and the travel time between Chennai and Kanchipuram is about 2 hours. Kanchipuram is connected by rail to Chennai via Chingelpet. Travelers interested in visiting the temples of Kanchipuram can either rent bicycles or use cycle-rickshaws and auto-rickshaws within the city.

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY- AN OASIS IN A DESERT

The theosophical society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or none, who are united by the approval of the society's objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others.

As the theosophical society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and belief of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject.

The theosophical society may be said to have begun when H.P. Blavatsky under "orders" of the masters, returned from India, 1871, to found an organization through which the west and the world in general would be instructed in "true spirituality." Madame Blavatsky's first attempt to form an organization was made in Cairo. It did not succeed. She was directed to meet Col. H.S. Olcott who was investigating mediumistic phenomena at the Eddy's farm, and publishing the results in the newspapers. H.P. Blavatsky demonstrated that she could produce the phenomena herself, and suggested their real explanation. She wrote some strong and brilliant articles to newspapers and journals defending this "true spiritualism" and exposing fraudulent mediums. In replying to an article on "Rosicrucianism" she delivered what she characterizes as her "first occult shot," hinting at the sources of the great secret teachings of all times, guarded from all but the worthy by Wise Men and Sages.

All this gave Madame Blavatsky great publicity, and her ideas on Occultism-a word she made familiar-heightened the interest. Men and Women of note thronged her rooms in New York. A lecture by G.H. Felt, 7th Sept. 1875 on "The Lost Canon of Proportion of the Egyptians" led to the decision to form a society for the study of such subjects. "The Theosophical Society" was the title chosen for it. The society was to be truly "eclectic" and without distinctions.

Several meetings were held to frame and pass Rules, and the present Seal was adopted. On 17th November 1875 Col. Olcott gave his Inaugural Address, and chose this date as the birthday of The Theosophical Society. The theosophical society has truly become a retreat for chennaites who wish to escape the heat and dust of the city. The lush green and calm surroundings are bound to thrill any visitor. Apart from the much extolled banyan tree unfortunately destroyed in a storm, other attractions are the well-kept museum and parchment manuscripts at the library museum. The shrines of all faiths on the campus speak of the universality of all religions. So when one wishes to escape the city madness and not drive too far theosophical society is the apt destination.

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AMUSEMENT PARKS AROUND CHENNAI

Perhaps one of the most loved getaways for the tired city dwellers of Chennai city are the amusement parks situated along the east coast road. So if fun is what you are looking for , thrill and excitement in the company of family and friends, let your hair down and you know in which direction to head towards .

Little Folks:

Located 46 kms from the city towards Mahabalipuram. A great amusement complex for children. It offers a wide range of entertainment such as a Giant-Piano, Toy Train, Rainbow Fountain, Slide-into-pool, Cartoon show & Paddle-Pool. The timings are from 10.00 am to 7.00 pm. On weekends and public holidays the timings are extended till 8 pm.

MGM “Dizee World” Beach Resort:

Situated 24 kms towards Mahabalipuram, (Near Muttukadu). Amusement park with unique water sports. It offers rides such as Karnakasi ranger, water sports, Dashing boat, the arrow loop roller coaster and 110 feet dizee shake. The park is a must see destination for all children.

Dolphin City

Dolphin City is situated on the East Coast (New Mahabalipuram Road) and is 46 km from Chennai. The landmark being 10 km before Mahabalipuram and 4 km after the Crocodile Bank. The speciality of the place is the American Sea Lion performance that is the first of its kind in India. The other exciting activities to keep you and your family busy are Under Water View, Leisure Boating, Slide Swimming pool, Open Air Theatre for variety entertainment, Chuck Wagon, Disco Scooter, Tea Cup, Space Ship, Dragon Ride, Chuck Chuck, and Animal Simulator etc. It is open on Weekdays & Holidays - from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Multi-Cuisine Restaurant caters to a variety of tastes and the eating outlets stock - Popcorn, Ice Creams, Confectioneries & Soft Drinks. The complex houses shops where you can buy batteries, cameras, gift articles, toys, games, sun glasses, caps, swimwear, etc. Coaches are arranged on request at reasonable rates

Dash-N-Splash Spread over 21 acres of land located on the banks of the Telugu Ganga Project Canal, in Mevallur Kuppam Village it became Chennai's first ever exclusive water park. It is spread over three acres of land with beautiful landscape and lots of shaded sitting area. It is another place in Chennai to enjoy a day amidst fun and frolic. Situated 30 kms from Chennai on the Chennai Bangalore highway, just 3 kms before Hyundai Car Factory and 12 kms prior to Rajiv Gandhi Memorial, Sriperambadur, Dash 'N' Splash has some thing to offer to all age groups. The Exciting Wave, Free-Fall and Spiral are a must try for all. The slides park is exclusively for children. It is open from 10 a.m. till dark on all 365 days of the year .As a launch offer free bus services on all Sundays was provided for several months. The other highlights of the resort are well-equipped, pure vegetarian cafeterias. Separate change rooms with deposit lockers. Souvenir shops selling costumes, toiletries and eatables.

VGP Golden Beach Resort

Located on the East Coast Road, VGP Golden Beach Resort is perhaps the only Beach Resort within City limits. A short 20-minute drive from Chennai City, it offers a serene and relaxing atmosphere in today's stress-driven world. A trailblazer in the field of fun, frolic and entertainment, it has a charm of its own with cool breeze and beautiful pathways flanked by shady trees amidst green lawns. Children can have fun at the rides like Super Trooper, Giant Wheel, Aero-ship, Jumping Frog, Children's merry go round, Super Jet, Break-Dance, Dragons Belly and many more. The Spectacular Go-kart, Dashing Car and Water Chute comprise the premium rides. Regular cultural shows, folk and contemporary dances organized add to the special cultural touch. Special additions for sight seeing such as Jurassic Park and Aquarium offer education with fun. The Rain Forest" restaurant, is a Multi-cuisine eatery and "The Golden Bar", is a licensed Permit Room. Room Service facilities are available round the clock for In-Room Dining. It has one of the best traditional meals & Tandoori items. Ecstasy Land is an integrated complex offering Banquet and Conferencing facilities, Dance Floor for Discotheques, Stage with open-air seating, Bar and an almost private beach. The "Pandian" and " Golden Chakra" halls are ideal for Board Meetings, Sales Conferences, Product Launches, Cocktail Parties, Receptions, Lunch and Dinner Meets accommodating 10 to 150. All resident guests can

use the swimming pool, located by the seaside, at no extra cost. Entry into VGP Universal Kingdom: A free pass provides entry into the VGP Universal Kingdom Amusement Complex for all the residents of the resort.

Prime Time:

Located at Annanagar. It is an extravagant indoor amusement park; especially for children packed with bumper car rides, play pens and all sorts of new games.

Kishkintha:

Another theme park popular with Chennaites is Kishkintha, located at Tambaram, which is 30 kms south of Chennai city. Its attractions include HI-tech amusements like Space shuttle, Wave pool, white water, Flume ride, Kiddies Kingdom. The timings are from 11.00 to 7.30 pm on weekdays. The closing time is extended another half an hour on weekends. So next time you plan a weekend excursion with family or friends check out these cool amusement parks and rest assured that you will get your money's worth.

Nirmal Jude
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CHENNAI - THE CULTURAL CAPITAL OF SOUTH INDIA

Popularly called the “Gateway to the South”, Chennai culture is distinctly different from that of any other city in India. Being a cosmopolitan city, the culture of the city reflects its diverse population, which has resulted in a unique blend. Though a modern city, it continues to be traditional and conventional in certain ways. Traditional music, dance and all other art forms of Tamil Nadu are very popular in the city. One can find a unique blend of culture from traditional foods to fast foods, from ancient temple architecture to modern high-rises and from classical music and dance to the growing nightlife in the city.

The city is known for its classical music shows. Every December, Chennai holds a five weeklong Music Season, which has been described as one of the world’s largest cultural events. The Music Season encompasses performances (kutcheries) of traditional Carnatic music by hundreds of artists in and around the city. This happens during the Tamil season of Margazhi and this period is a festive and joyous time in Chennai. The mercury lies in the low twenties and the music rendered by the great musicians is soul stirring and sensational. Carnatic music makes the December season a must-experience for visitors to Chennai. Chennai is also known for the classical Indian dance, the Bharatanatyam, which is also the official dance of Tamil Nadu. An important cultural centre for Bharatanatyam is Kalakshetra (Sanskrit for “place of the arts”), located on the beach in the south of the city.

Chennai has a vibrant theatre scene, with a large number of Tamil plays being performed. In general, Tamil theatre is divided into the sabha-oriented theatre, which is parodies on political issues or trends supported by slapstick comedy, and the non-sabha oriented theatre, which includes serious plays and historical plays. English theatre is also popular.

School and college cultural festivals (locally called culfests) play an important role by providing platforms for the city’s youth to indulge in art and culture. These culfests attract participants from around India. Some of the larger culfests in the city are Saarang (IIT Madras),

Techofes (College of Engineering, Guindy), Deep Woods (Madras Christian College) and Down Sterling (Loyola). Also present is an established and growing culture of bands in western and other styles. Predominantly these are 'student bands', although professional bands exist. While the student bands are most visible in culfests and other competitions, established bands dominate pro-events like the JRO.

Chennai is the base for the large Tamil movie industry, dubbed Kollywood after the locality of Kodambakkam where most of the movie studios are located. The industry makes about 300 Tamil movies a year, and its film soundtracks dominate the music scene in the city. The city is an important centre of Tamil art, crafts and culture. There are a number of art centres that add to the artistic diversity of Chennai. The Krishnamurti Foundation India (KFI) is a religious, charitable and educational institution that preserves and publishes the teachings of the renowned thinker and philosopher - J Krishnamurti. The C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar Foundation conducts research projects, courses, seminars and lectures on Indian culture and society. It also runs a reference library with a substantial collection of books on Indian culture and philosophy. The C. P. Art Centre (established in 1978) is the venue for exhibitions, workshops, festivals, seminars and lecture-demonstrations on art. The Victoria Training Institute is involved in the promotion and revival of arts and crafts of Tamil Nadu and other parts of the country. It provides a platform to the unknown craftsmen and talented artisans to display their skills and market their finished products. The Cholamandal Artist Village is a unique centre of art and craft where artists and sculptors work in their own studios to supplement their income from the sale of paintings or sculptures. A permanent gallery attracts visitors throughout the year. Dakshinachitra preserves the typical village space of traditional Tamil Nadu, with exhibitions and workshops of the arts and crafts and performing artists of South India.

The majority of residents in Chennai are native Tamilians and descendants of settlers from different part of Tamil Nadu. There are also sizeable native Telugu and migrant Malayalee communities in the city. A regional hub since British times, other prominent communities are the Anglo Indian, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati and Marwari communities and people from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Chennai also has a growing expatriate population especially from the United States, Europe and East Asia who work in the industries and

IT centres. Tamil is the city's first language. English is widely spoken, and is used almost exclusively in business, education and other white-collar professions. Tamil spoken in Chennai uses English words liberally, so much so that it is often called Madras bhashai (Tamil for "Madras language"). Other languages spoken in the city include Tamil Nadu Telugu, Malayalam, and Urdu and they contribute to the vocabulary of Madras bhashai as well.

Chennai celebrates a number of festivals. Pongal, celebrated in the month of January, is the most important festival of and is celebrated over a period of five days. Pongal has been designated the "State Festival" for its unique celebration that is typical of Tamil Nadu. Though a harvest festival it is still celebrated widely in the city. Tamil New Year's day signifying the beginning of the Tamil calendar usually falls on April 14 and is celebrated widely. Being a cosmopolitan city; almost all major religious festivals like Deepavali, Eid and Christmas are celebrated here.

By Floria Immaculate
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DAKSHINACHITRA-THE GATEWAY TO SOUTH INDIAN CULTURE

DakshinaChitra is a center for the living traditions of art, folk performing arts, craft and architecture of India with an emphasis on the traditions of South India. A project of the Madras Craft Foundation (MCF), a non-profit organisation. DakshinaChitra opened to the public in December 1996. The center occupies ten undulating acres overlooking the Bay of Bengal, at Muttukadu, twenty-five kilometers south of Chennai, on the East Cost Road to Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, and India.

One of the primary objectives of DakshinaChitra is to increase the awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage of South India through educational programs. The Education Team at DakshinaChitra works with a variety of resource persons to meet these objectives. Dakshinachitra, roughly translated, means 'picture of South India'. This heritage centre is a depiction of the way of life prevalent in South India.

As soon as you reach Dakshinachitra, you are shown an 18-minute orientation video, which gives you an idea as to what the place is all about. The orientation video speaks of the cycle of life as being harmonious with nature. It gives you an insight into the various cultural, socio-economic and climatic factors that influenced the architecture in the olden days. These are real 18th and 19th century houses where people lived at some point of time; they have been dismantled and reconstructed at Dakshinachitra. First on the list is the Karnataka Weaver's House. The weaver community of Karnataka is known for the famous Ilkal saree. One peculiarity of the Ilkal saree being the white silk band. The weaver community of Karnataka is snake worshippers and is also devotees of Lord Shiva. They use copper and brass pots. Jawar rotis form their staple diet.

Another attraction is the Ayyanar Shrine of Tamil Nadu. The Ayyanar shrine has large statues of the village guardian deity, who protects the village from evil and wrongdoing. He protects the village with the help of Karuppuswamy, popularly known as Karuppu, who supposedly roams around on a horse or elephant, protecting the village. The highlight of Ayyanar shrines is the large terracotta horses

and elephants. Each year the traditional Ayyanar shrine has a major village festival where villagers dedicate new terracotta horses and cows to the gods.

Kasuti, which is a unique form of embroidery of north Karnataka, particularly popular in places like Dharwad, Belgaum, Hubli and Mangalore. The secret of this age-old embroidery is that only counting the threads of the warp can do it and weft and the designs can be traced or implanted, as outlines. The earliest known works of Kasuti date back to the 7th century A.D. in Karnataka. It soon spread to the rest of the state and is reasonably well known in the rest of India. Kasuti employs the counted thread method and is basically geometric designs. The stitch is primarily the straight or running stitch with a predetermined length of each stitch. Since the designs are geometric, precision and neatness is a must. Traditionally, it is done on Ilkal sarees and blouse pieces. At DakshinaChitra, Usha Sivashankar will teach this intricate handcrafted embroidery with fine stitches and delicate colours.

Dakshinachitra is a rare museum. Traditional houses of various communities of South India have been transported brick by brick and reconstructed at this 'heritage centre' on the coast off Chennai. Propelled by the energy to save at least a glimpse of South India's rich culture, Deborah Thyagarajan and a few of her associates at the Madras Craft Foundation conceived the idea of a Heritage Centre in 1990. Locating authentic samples of architecture, arts and crafts from the four South Indian states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka proved an uphill task till the day Dakshinachitra opened to the public in late 1996. Designer architect, Lawrie Baker, chose to leave the undulating windswept landscape as it was and then began the process of reconstructing the prototypes of South Indian architecture.

Relaxing at Dakshinachitra's amphitheatre, watching rural folk artistes perform one realizes that these "interactive" programmes are the Centre's pulse. Visitors to the Centre are treated to workshops by crafts persons in basket weaving, pottery, leather puppetry and glass blowing apart from traditional folk theatre performances and festive celebrations like Onam, Navaratri and Diwali. And for the hundreds of children from the nearby urban and rural schools who also attend these workshops in the ambience of 19th century settings.

In south India the ethos of a nation or a people is hard to define. The art and thought of every group of people reveal contradiction of attitudes that lend themselves to different interpretations. Dakshin chitra is a must stop destination for all visitors to South India.

BY Celina Jennifer Joseph
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FORT ST. GEORGE – WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Fort St. George was the British Bastion in the 18th century. Fort St. George on the Coromandel is a seat of Government today as it has been from 1640. The magnificent buildings in the fort are today the home of the Legislative assembly of the state of Tamilnadu the office of the chief minister and other ministers. It still has the tallest flagstaff of the country and is still the place in Madras where administrative changes are introduced.

Some of the interest places in Fort St George are the shady park on reclaimed land, between the park and the Fort is one of the Madras main Arteries. Once this park and road were sandy, surf wracked beach bare to a blazing golden sun.

Clive Corner: - This was built to the honor Robert Clive who joined the East India Company as a 19 year old writer in 1744 on a salary of 5 pounds a year. After two years Clive escaped to find his true vocation on the battlefield around Fort St. David in Cuddalore. When the French captured Fort St. George in 1746 to 1749, he was one of the people taken as prisoner, but he managed to escape and he met Dupleix in the battlefield fort St David.

Wellesley House: Down the road from Clive house the corner building in a state of near collapse was once Wellesley house, where Arthur Wellesley, later to win the renown as Wellington of Waterloo, lived while he quarter mastered the Fourth Mysore war before going on to learn what battlefield experience was all about-built in 1796, dilapidated Wellesley house is one of the 16 protected monuments in Fort St. George.

The Fort Museum: - The Fort Museum in memorial to India's first Monder Bank. The bank of Madras - established in 1683. The Fort exchange and the city's first lighthouse. Bank and warehouse used to occupy the ground floor, and the magnificent 'long road' upstairs, the public exchange hall, where the early Madras businessmen used to sip Maderia and transact business. The Light House on the road and signal station attached to it made doing business easier as signals about their cargoes were exchanged from here between shores based agents and east Indiamen in the roads. This Light House functioned until 1841, by which time commerce flourished and moved out of the Fort.

Staircase leading to the ' Long room' and other floor above is the Cornwallis statue, the statue's base of the Governor -General accepting Tipu Sultan's two young sons as hostage until reparations were paid. The statue peregrinating since 1800, finally found a parking place in an Ionic Cupola erected by the parade ground, but after independence it was moved to the fort museum. The Fort officer's museum had succeeded the public exchange left and right. The Fort Museum has converted the parqueted public exchange hall into a splendid art gallery. Amongst its prized possessions is a painting of King George III and Queen Charlotte. The oldest British painting in the city, the painting of Stringer Lawrence, the Father of Indian Army; with Nawab Wallajah, elsewhere are 18th century weaponry, the Raj in the uniforms of the soldiery and emblems of another age. The royal motto Deice it Mon Droit adorns the staircase.

St. Mary's Church: - The first Church built by the British east of Suez, St. Mary's in the fort is the oldest Church in Asia built by British Protestants earlier protestants churches were Roman Catholic shrines the Dutch had converted and handed over to British. March 25th, 1678 since it was the annunciation day of Mary the mother of Jesus So the Church is called St. Mary's. Streynsham Master, the Governor started construction. The church was completed in 1780. Later on a tower and a steeple were added. The Church has a bombproof roof. It has many marbles statues. It has a pipe organ. It also has a painting of the Last Supper. It has the Tombstones of early British Governors and it was in this church that Elihu Yale married Catherine Hynmers and Robert Clive married Margaret Maskelyne. Later St. Mary's become the garrison church but today it is an ancient monument in which a church has been given a new lease of life by an enthusiastic congregation and the department of archeology.

Secretariat Building: It is the most impressive building in the fort and it dominates the architecture landscapes, it is built in the classical style of architecture. The Assembly hall was added in 1910 and it has 20 brightly polished black granite pillars.

Flag Staff: - The towering teakwood flagstaff is the tallest flag post in India. On this staff Governor Elihu Yale hoisted the union Jack.

Gates: - San Thome Gate, Wallajah Gate, St. George Gate these were the oldest gates to the south and west of east facing Fort St. George. Giant wooden doors with massive iron bolts were used to close up

the Fort at night and bolster its defence in time of trouble which were infrequent though out the 18th century. The gates in the outer walls were duplicated in the inner walls; both gates several feet thick remain to this day, protected by two moats, water in them not uncommon, though not enough to permit fishing, a past time British soldiers in the Fort once enjoyed.

By Kakoli Kalai
| B.A. History

HILL STATIONS IN TAMILNADU

Though probably not as well known as the hill stations of North India, Tamil Nadu as her share of hill stations that are popular getaways for the people of the south. This article focuses on the hill stations of the region.

KODAIKANAL

'The Princess of Hill Stations' is one of the most popular serene hill stations in India. With her wooded slopes, mighty rocks, enhancing waterfalls and a beautiful lake, Kodaikanal will mesmerize any visitor. In a state where scenery and terrain is perhaps more varied than in any other part of the country, where the forested slopes of the majestic hills of the Western Ghats vie with the magnificent beaches of the Coromandel coast, it is indeed difficult to decide which is the best feature of multi-faceted Tamil Nadu.

Located 120 Kms away from Madurai, Kodaikanal is a beautiful hill station and is at an altitude of 2133m on the southern tip of the upper Palani hills in the Western Ghats. Kodaikanal has a bracing climate where temperature does not vary much from summer to winter. Fruits like plums and plantains grow abundantly on the wooded slopes apart from a wide variety of flowers, among which is the famous Kurinji flower, which blooms once in twelve years.

SIGHT SEEING:

Lake View: A magnificent star-shaped lake glitters like a jewel amidst the Emerald Green wooded slopes. 5 Kms long skirt this 24-hectare lake. Blacktopped road is a focal point of Kodai. This lake was created in 1863 by Sir Vere Hentry Levinge(1885), who was the Collector of Madurai, retired and settled in Kodai. He constructed the bund to form a lake and stocked the lake with fish. He brought the first boat from Tuticorin. In 1890, a boat club was formed and the members sailed in the boat.

Bergium Lake: The Lake which supplies drinking water to Periyakulam town is 21 Kms from Kodaikanal (Beyond the Pillar Rocks). It is a fine picnic spot offering beautiful scenery.

Brynt Park: This Park is situated on the eastern side of the lake. It is noted for flowers, hybrids and grafts. Cut flowers are exported

from here. A glass house which shelters over fine varieties of flowers can be seen here. The flower show conducted every year during May, as a part of Summer Festival is to be seen by one and all. The Flora and Fauna Museum is maintained by the Sacred Heart College. A Theological Seminary was founded in 1895. It is devoted to the archaeological remains and the flora and fauna of the hills. One of the best Orchidarium in the country with more than 300 species is also located here. It is about 5.6 Kms from the lake. A Spanish Father Ugarthe, contributed his major collections to the Museum. A wide ranging collection of birds classified into ground birds, water birds, tree birds and large high flying birds such as Black Eagle, Bengal Vulture, Honey Buzzard, Crested Hawk-Eagle.

Coakers Walk: This hill-edge path way was identified by Er. Coakers in 1872. About a Kilometer from the lake, Coakers Walk runs along a steep slope on the southern side of Kodai. It offers some of the best views of the Plains.

Silver Cascade: This is Located on the Ghat road leading to Madurai and is about 8Kms from Kodaikanal. The overflow of Kodai Lake comes down here as 180 feet high falls. If the temperature of water suits, tourists can take bath Kodaikanal is rich in Flora and Fauna. It has a unique plant. The Kurinji, which blossoms once in 12 years, makes the hill slopes a "Blaze of Purple".

Bear Shola Falls: About 1.6 Kms from the lake, Bear Shola Falls can be reached through a picturesque rugged hill path. This is an ideal picnic spot.

COONOR:

The tranquil hill resort of Coonor, standing at the head of the Hulikal ravine, 27 km north of Mettupalayam and 19 kms south of Ooty, at an altitude of 1,858 metres, on the south eastern side of the Dodabetta mountains is the second largest hill station in the Nilgiri hills. The profundity in which different varieties of flowers are found in Coonor fascinates the tourists. Sunflowers, marigolds and rhododendrons are some of the flowers growing wildly here. The vast extending tea bushes are pleasing sights to see. The weather is pleasant and soothing.

Places to visit:

Coonoor's many hillocks and mounds are perfect for trekking. A popular pastime is bird watching, as an extensive variety of birds can be spotted at the Nilgiris. Apart from the varied species of vultures, eagles and owls, song birds like bulbuls, thrushes, babblers, larks cuckoos, robins and several others are a treat to urbanites who are affected by noise pollution. Sim's Park is a well planned park cum botanical garden on the slopes of a ravine with hundreds of rose varieties. A fruit and vegetable show is held every year in May.

The Lamb's Rock (5.5 km) offers a spectacular view of the Coimbatore planes. The cliff sinks hundreds of metres into the heart of dense jungle. Dolphin's Nose (12 Km) has spectacular views onto St. Catherine's Falls on one side and Coonoor and Kotagiri streams, tributaries of the Bhavani, on the other. A Tea and Tourism Festival is held in Coonoor every winter.

YERCAUD:

Is situated in the Shevaray Hills at a height of 1,515 metres from the real level. Coffee plantations and verdant locations shelter the calm hill station of Yercaud. Some people believe that these hills were part of the ancient megalith-builders' domain which stretched from Cornwall through Brittany and Iberia to India. Clearly visitors have been streaming into Yercaud from well before recorded history. Around Yercaud : Enroute to Yercaud, you will come across the textile town of Salem. Ethnic handloom fabrics will be available at half the price, you would pay elsewhere. Brightly colored idols catch the right of the travelers, situated at the left side of the road just before the road begins to climb the mountains. There guardian deities, unique to Tamil Nadu only, are worshipped as protectors of villages and are often known as Aiyansars.

On the way up the winding hill road with its 20 hairpin bends, stop at a thatched wayside stall selling 'Fresh Garden Produce': packets of cloves and pepper. Then comes the coffee plantations before entering cottage-dotted Yercaud. You can amble around leisurely, or do a tandem tour of the lake in a pedal boat, or hire a taxi to 'do' the sights. 3 km away is the rocky escarpment overlooking the plains. It is known as Lady's Seat and someone has named another viewpoint as Gent's Seat.

Pyramid point, 3 km away, has cairns of stones and was once a Stone Age fortress shrine before the new temple was built. 7 km from the lake is the Servaroyan Temple with a modern, striped, facade leading to an old cave temple. Once you get into this soothing, lake-centred, quiet and undisturbed green place, you don't have to do anything but unwind.

Local Attractions

The main attraction of Yercaud is the Big Lake. If you are fond of boating then you can hire pedal boats and rowboats according to your choice. Near the Lake is Anna Park, with a beautiful garden. During the month of May many summer festivals are organized here. Prominent among them are kids fancy flower shows, dog shows, boating races. There is also a small lake fed by seven wells, situated in the close vicinity of town.

There are some fantastic viewing points in Yercaud. Lady's Seat offers you a spectacular view of Salem Town and Mettur Dam on the Cauvery River. Gent's Seat or Pagoda Point is other viewing point that is situated very close to Lady's Seat. Shevaroy temple dedicated to local deity Servaran is situated atop Shevaroy Hills, at the highest point in Yercaud at 5.326 ft above sea level. Local tribes celebrate their annual festival here in May. It's one of the main attractions of tourist visiting Yercaud. On the way to Shevaroy Temple, there is the famous Bear's Cave believed to be an escape route of a long gone raja (king) when he was attacked and fleeing. Other famous tourist destinations here include Killiyur Falls, Botanical Gardens and Montfort School.

Hotels in Yercaud

Most famous hotels and resorts in Yercaud are Hotel Shevaroy's, Sterling Days Inn Resort, Green Fort Inn, Hotel Shoba, Silver holidays Cottages, Hotel Tamil Nadu and The House of Peace. South India Tours Hub offers Yercaud Hills Tours, a memorable journey to your dream paradise. For more information or to book a Yercaud tour please enter your query in the form below.

OOTY - QUEEN OF HILL STATIONS

The Queen of Hill Stations, Ootacamund better known, as Ooty is the most popular hill station in the South. Located in the Western Ghats

at a height of 2240m, Ooty is the headquarters of the Nilgiris district where the two Ghat ranges meet. Nature has been generous with this region, which is by far the most beautiful in the state. Apart from coffee and tea plantations, trees like conifers, Eucalyptus, Pine and Wattle dot the hillside in Ooty and its environs. Summer temperature is rarely higher than 25°C with a minimum of 10°C and winter is distinctly cooler with a high of 21°C and a low 5°C. Curiously enough, this slice of paradise remained unknown to the great southern dynasties and it took the British to discover it in the early 1800s. They were, however, not the first inhabitants of this land as a tribe called Todas had been living there long before the British came, claiming that the Nilgiris had been their home since time immemorial. But the credit for modernizing Ooty and making it accessible goes to the British who constructed the first railway line in the area and made it the summer capital of the Madras Presidency. Ooty with smaller hill stations of Coonoor - 19 km and Kothagiri 31 km from Ooty are the other hill stations of this district. Nilgiri is India's first biosphere. It has been declared as one of the 14 'hotspots' of the world because of its unique bio-diversity. Nilgiri presents a truly breath taking kaleidoscope of visual treats and soul stirring experience.

PLACES OF INTEREST: Botanical Garden: A variety of exotic and ornamental plants adorn this garden, which is the venue for the Flower Show held in May every year. There is a fossil tree trunk 20 million years old in the midst of the garden. The Botanical Garden is maintained by the Horticulture Department of the Government of TamilNadu and has a very wide variety of plants that include different types of roses, imported shrubs, rare flowering plants, Eucalyptus trees, several old trees and even a fossilized tree trunk that is 20 million years old. There is also a beautiful Italian floral garden and for those who simply want to relax, there's always the green carpet of the well-maintained lawns. The "Summer Festivals" is held each year during the month of May in the Botanical Garden and is an added attraction for tourists. The Flower Show is the pride of the festival. Cultural programs are organized for those interested in traditional classical arts. Adventure spots like trekking also form part of the festival.

Lake: This artificial lake was constructed in 1824 by Mr. John Sullivan, the then Collector of Coimbatore. Boating is possible from 08.00 hrs

to 18.00 hrs on all days. The lake garden and toy train rides are other attractions. The artificial Lake, yet another of Sullivan's contributions, has facilities for boating and permission to fish can be obtained from the office of the Assistant Director of Fisheries.

KOTAGIRI: In the serene setting of the Nilgiri Hills and just an hour's drive from Udhagamandalam, Kotagiri is a small resort set among the lush tea estates. Retaining the essence of hill magic and charm, the resort offers year round sylvan charm. Trips to Kodanad View Point, St. Catharine Falls and Rangaswamy Pillar and Peak are worthwhile. Kotagiri is a hiker's paradise, with endless trails and sufficient 'off beat ness'. It is the third largest and the oldest hill station in the Nilgiri's. Like all hill stations in India, this also has had strong presence of the British Raj. The town is fast becoming commercial, with many banks and shopping facilities coming up. It has a Kota temple in the middle of the town, even though the Kota tribes have long moved out, giving it an exotic tribal feel. Kotagiri has one of the best climates in the world. It is more temperate than Ooty, attributed to its altitude of 1984 metres above sea level.

Kodanaad View point: Otherwise called the Terminus Country, because of its location (perched on the eastern most edge of the Nilgiri's.) From here one can see an entire array of natural processes like rivers Moyar and Bhavani, the Mysore Plateau, Valleys, trenches and also paddy fields.

Elk falls: Even though dry for some months of the year, is worth visiting this place; reason being, it has the first European house built in Nilgris here. Now a ruin, but still is a captivating sight. Another reason is the Badaga settlement, on the road to the falls. Quaint and idyllic, this is a beautiful definition of a tribal village. Great place for anthropology.

Rangaswamy Pillar and Rock: The Rangaswamy peak lies 20 km from Kotagiri. This peak is sacred for Irulas (a tribe), adding mysticism to this natural beauty. Nearby is the Rangaswamy rock, a rock-climbers nightmare. Rising abruptly on all sides to about 400 metres, it is unclimbable.

Long Wood Shola: 3 km away from the town, it is a wild life reserve. Perfectly peaceful and untouched forest trails are an invitation to serenity seekers.

YELAGIRI:

Fast Facts About Yelagiri:

When to visit Best season to visit Yelagiri is from November to February. If you are searching for a place engulfed in silence and peace then Yelagiri in Tamil Nadu perfectly suits your choice, providing you cool and calm atmosphere all year round. Yelagiri is actually a cluster of small villages, spread around hills. There are many tourist attractions here like a beautiful and charming lake, Mughal Garden around the lake, Velavan Temple and a children's park. But the real charm of Yelagiri lies in its calmness and uniformly pleasant weather.

Tourist activities and destinations

The main attraction of the tourists in Yelagiri is to enjoy boating in beautiful and smallish artificial lake famous as Punganoor Lake. You can choose between a rowboat and a pedal boat to enjoy the scenic beauty in and around the lake. There is a Mughal Garden around the lake, with many interesting games like sliding for the smaller kids. Velvan Temple is other prime attraction for tourists. This is a temple dedicated to Lord Murugan situated atop a hillock, with a giant statue of Gadothgajan in front. During the months July-August local festivals are organized here that provides a colorful glimpse of the rich culture of the region. Cultural events, adventure sports, boat races, flower shows and fruit shows add to the splendor of the festivals. Yet another lustrous tourist spot in Yelagiri is Swamimalai Hill at 4,338 ft. It would be a great fun to climb on hilltop as it provides you a breathtaking view of the valley from the top. This hill has some of the beautiful trekking routes through dense forests. The best time to enjoy trekking here is in the cool months of November-January.

Jalagamparai Waterfalls

A lovely waterfall about an hour's trek from Yelagiri has been created by the Attaru River, which flows through the Yelagiri hills. It's a very attractive spots for loving couples. The Government Silk Farm is famous for its mulberry plantations. The sericulture tour can provide you immense pleasure as you get a chance to see silk farm from very close.

Hotels in Yelagiri

There are numerous hotels and guesthouses in Yelagiri. Notable among them are Hotel Hills, Taj Garden Resort, Hotel Yelagiri and Hotel Nigress. South India Tours Hub offers Yelagiri Hills Tours, a memorable journey to your dream paradise. For more information or to book a Yelagiri tour please enter your query in the form below.

BY Magdaline liu
II BA History

BEACHES IN TAMIL NADU

A visit to Beaches in Tamil Nadu is a rewarding experience and Tamil Nadu as a travel destination needs to be explored more. A visit to Indian Beach Tours, takes the tourist on a journey across the natural beauty and wealth of Tamil Nadu, which is one of the richly endowed states in South India. Tamil Nadu has a different and more heady concoction going its way which directs our attention towards its beaches which have a clever and architecturally impressive sprinkling of temples and ancient monuments of historical and religious significance attached to them.

Tamil Nadu, located in India, is a cornucopia of life giving and throbbing beaches like Mahabalipuram Beach, Rameshwaram Beach, Covelong Beach and the historic and much commonly visited Kanyakumari beach, located in Tamil Nadu in India. Mahabalipuram, once known as "Mamallapuram" is located on the coastline of Bay of Bengal and it happens to be one of the more imposing and marvelous monuments in the list of monuments built by the Pallava rulers who are known to create carved caves, Monolithic rathas and temples which are done up eloquently through carving and other artistic and decorative embellishments of the age. Kanyakumari, too being the last point of India, is popular for the Vivekananda memorial acting as the center of attraction for the surge of tourists and other interested souls.

List of the beaches in Tamil Nadu

1. Mahabalipuram Beach
2. Rameshwaram Beach
3. Kanyakumari Beach
4. Covelong Beach
5. Pondicherry Beach

Mahabalipuram Beach: A visit to Mahabalipuram Beach coupled with a visit to Indian Beach Tours, offers a valuable insight into Mahabalipuram and its List of historic monuments and temples which lie generously scattered all across the length and breadth of the Mahabalipuram Beach, located in Tamil Nadu, India. Mahabalipuram is an exotic celebration of the imaginative and creative spirit of the Pallava kings with the rathas and the sculpted panels planted all across the historical monuments serving as great tourist attractions for people from all parts of the country.

Rameshwaram Beach

A visit to Indian Beach Tours and a visit to Rameshwaram Beach, located in Tamil Nadu, India would reveal that the Rameshwaram Beach is a cornucopia of immense natural wealth and peaceful solitude, which can be experienced by the tourists who are on tour across this part of South India. Rameshwaram is actually an exotic island, which is located on the tip of the Indian Peninsula with the Rameshwaram temple forming a major attraction point for the tourists, the world over.

Kanyakumari Beach

A visit to Kanyakumari Beach coupled with a visit to Indian Beach Tours, offers a golden opportunity to the so-inclined tourists to explore and discover the Kanyakumari Beach, located in Tamil Nadu, India. Indian Beach Tours, offers information that Kanyakumari Beach, located in Tamil Nadu occupies a beautiful rocky headland site, and a Vivekanand memorial is also located on a promontory in an off shore location.

Covelong Beach

A visit to Indian Beach Tours takes the tourist on a journey across the beautiful and god gifted Covelong Beach, situated in Tamil Nadu, India. Indian Beach Tours, offers a look-in into the natural resplendence of Covelong beach, located in Tamil Nadu, in India. Covelong Beach, is home to a plethora of water sports and other outdoor engagements like wind surfing and swimming. Along with all this, the Covelong coast is one of the more popular beaches on the Coromandel coastline. In the past, it has been the port of the Nawabs of Carnatic, too.

Pondicherry Beach

A visit to Pondicherry Beach and Indian Beach Tours would showcase before the tourist and the traveler alike, that Pondicherry Beach, located in Tamil Nadu, India, is a picturesque and scenic beach nestled in Tamil Nadu, India. Pondicherry Beach is patterned on the French pattern with stylishly uniformed police and the town is constructed on a grid style. In the town, the Aurobindo Ashram and the French institute are commonly visited entities along with the beach.

BY Magdaline Liu
II BA HISTORY

KANCHIPURAM- THE LAND OF ANTIQUITY

Kanchipuram, Kanchi, or Kancheepuram (also sometimes Conjeevaram) is a city and a municipality in Kancheepuram district of Tamil Nadu. It is a temple town and the headquarters of Kanchipuram district. In ancient times it was called Kachi and Kachiampathi. Kanchipuram is located on the Palar River, and known for its temples and silk sarees. There are several big temples, notably Ekambaranatha Temple which is one of the five form of abodes of Lord Siva, (it is the earth abode here, other abodes include Chidambaram (Sky), Sri Kalahasti (air), Thiruvanaikoil (water) and Tiruvannamalai (fire)), Kamakshi Amman Temple, Varadharaja Perumal Temple, Kumara Kottam, Kachapeshwarar Temple, Kailasanathar Temple and many more. Kanchipuram is also famous for its silk sarees, which are woven manually. These saris are considered to be of the highest quality almost every relatively well-off South Indian woman has a Kanjivaram sari in her collection. The Kanjivaram saris woven at Kanchipuram are also prized in North India.

The temple tower at a Kanchi temple Naga-worship next to the Sri Vaigunda Perumal Temple in Kanchipuram. Kanchipuram is one of the oldest cities in South India, and was a city of learning for both Tamil and Sanskrit, and was believed to be visited by Hsuan Tsang. It was during the reign of Pallava dynasty, from the 4th to the 9th centuries that Kanchipuram attained its limelight. The city served as the Pallava capital, and many of the known temples were built during their reign.

The king of Kanchi, Pallava Mahendravarman I was a great scholar and musician, a man of great intelligence and also a great playwright. Yuan Chwang, the great Chinese traveler, visited the city in the 7th century and has stated in his memoirs that its people were famous for bravery and piety as well as for their love of justice and veneration for learning. He further recorded that Buddha had visited the place. As regards learning, Kanchi stood second in glory only to Banaras. The history of Kanchi can be traced back to several centuries before the advent of the Christian era. The place finds its name in Patanjali's Mahabhashya written in the second century BCE Manimekalai, the famous Tamil classic, and Perumpanatru Padai, a great Tamil poetical work, vividly describe the city as it was at the beginning of the Christian era. Pattupattu, one of the sangam literatures records that

the king Thondaiman Ilandirayan ruled this town around 2500 years ago.

From the 3rd to the 9th century Kanchi was the capital of the Pallavas who ruled over the territory extending from the river Krishna in the north to the river Kaveri in the south. The Pallavas fortified the city with ramparts, moats, etc., with wide and well laid out roads and fine temples. They were a great maritime power with contacts with far-off China, Siam, Fiji, etc., through their chief Port Mamallapuram, the modern Mahabalipuram. The Cholas ruled this town from 10th century to 13th century. Kings of Vijayanagara dynasty ruled from 14th century to 17th century. The temple tower, 192 feet height in Ekamabaranadhar temple and 100-pillar mandabam (building) in Varadaraja Perumal temple in this town are famous for the architectural techniques of Vijayanagara dynasty. Robert Clive, of the British East India Company, who played a major role in the establishment of British rule in India, is said to have presented an emerald necklace to this temple (the Clive makarakandi, still used to decorate the Lord on ceremonial occasions). Kanchi was a major seat of Tamil learning as well as an important place of pilgrimage for Buddhists, Jains and Hindus. Once the seat of learning and religious fervour started its climb down from the Mughal invasions followed by three centuries of colonial rule under the British.

Bodhidharma (A.D. 520) went to China from Kanchipuram to spread Buddhism. He stayed at the Shaolin monastery and preached Buddhist ideologies. At that time he trained the local people in the art of Varmakkalai. The art underwent many changes and came to be known as Shaolin boxing or Kung-Fu. In Japan it came to be known as karate and judo. But it is interesting to note that the Chinese school agrees with the southern school of this art in that it has the same 108 varma points.

Kanchipuram is also the seat of the Kanchi matha, a religious institution that became influential and famous under the leadership of Shri Chandrashekarendra Saraswati. This matha says that Âdi Sankara settled in Kanchipuram after establishing four Âmnâya mathas in the four corners of India and that this gave rise to the Kanchi matha. However this claim is disputed by the four original mathas who claim the Kanchi matha is only a branch matha. The followers of Kanchi math however claim that this Matha was temporarily shifted

to Kumbakonam because of which it was known as Kumbakonam Matha for sometime, and that later the Matha shifted back to Kanchipuram.

Today, apart from its temples, this small town is also known for its thriving hand loom industry. Kancheepuram town is also known as Silk City since the main profession of the people living in and around is weaving silk sarees, more than 5,000 families are engaged in this industry. The silk weavers of Kanchi settled more than 400 years ago and have given it an enviable reputation as the producer of the best silk sarees in the country. Woven from pure mulberry silk and have an enviable reputation for texture, lustre, durability and finish. The sarees in dazzling colours are available in every imaginable design and variety, which can make the job of selection quite challenging. Kanchipuram in history was also been known as the ghatikasthanam or place of learning. Even today there are a lot of educational institutions in and around Kanchi .

By Jhansi
I BA History

LUZ CHURCH IN INDIA - A HISTORICAL & SPIRITUAL LANDMARK

The church of Our Lady of light, luz, Mylapore, is a part of living history. This beautiful jewel of a church was built in 1516, which is spanning over 500 yrs and now restored to its original form.

Luz Church - a Fascinating Journey

1500 A.D fired by missionary zeal, 8 Franciscan Friars set a sail for India from Lisbon with the fleet of Pedro Alvares Cabrel on the 9th of March 1500 A.D. They landed bin Calicut, where three of Friars were Slain on the 16th of November 1500. The others reached Cochin and settled down to preach the word of god. A few years later they sailed south to spread their message further and thus began the story of "THE LADY OF LIGHT".

The light From Bethum:

As they traveled angry seas and the Friars in their fright to our mother Mary beset ship. Suddenly their eyes were drawn to a bright light, which led them safely to land on the shores of Mylapore, on the same spot as the ruins of "BETHUMA", the old house of St. Thomas the apostle. This they were to understand only later.

Chosen By The Light

As they moved towards the mysterious guiding light. It moved away leading them inland to a clearing in the forest. Here the light disappeared as suddenly as it had come. Moved and inspired by the experience, Friar Pedro of the observance of St. Francis built this church on the very same spot. The church was dedicated to "OUR LADY OF LIGHT". Our lady of light is the 2nd oldest church in Tamil nadu.

Kattu kovil or Forest Church:

The local people even today sometimes refer to the Luz church as "Kattu Kovil" or "Forest Church". The forest has long disappeared and the area around the church is now a bustling and busy shopping area in the metropolis of chennai. But the historical importance of the church is apparent from the fact that the area is officially called "LUZ", the Portuguese word for luz meaning "LIGHT".

Surviving Troubled Times:

Luz church was damaged during the occupation by Golconda forces between 1662 and 1673. It was also damaged when Hyder Ali ransacked Luz Santhome between 1780 and 1782. Later the East India Company occupied the Luz Parish Residence for some years. The church has however survived these troubled times and today stands proud a testimony to faith and hope for Generations to come. Luz church serves a large growing Christian community in and around Mylapore including parishioners like Stella Maris College & St. Isabel's hospital. The church now planned to help educate poor working children by offering night classes with the support of working & retired teachers as well as professionals who have volunteered to help these children progress towards a better life.

Special schemes for empowering women from the proper section of society are underway. Tailoring and other craft classes will be conducted on the church premises.

The church also intends to help provide career guidance, training and recreational facilities to the youth of the community to direct their energies in a responsible, constructive manner. Luz church annual feast day celebrated in the month of August dated from 9th of August to 15th. On the 15th of aug. the holy flag will be hoisted and followed by the holy mass dedicated to our lady of light or Mother Mary. This feast will be more delightful with a car procession of Mother Mary and Jesus Christ with the Bursting of crackers and pray of the parishioners.

Church in Delightful Celebration:

Parish Priest conducts family day on dec. during family day there will be lot of fun full of games and food item will be sold and the money collected from the family day will go to the children education fund and for Christmas hamper will be given to under privilege family. Luz church also encourage 10th and 12th std student by awarding cash prize for high scores in their board exams.

Luz Church - a Great Architecture:

Church consists of big Arch. The altar is beautiful with the statue of "OUR LADY OF LIGHT" excellent paintings of Portuguese style. The statue of St. Jude, St. Antony, Grotto and an artificial Christmas tree give more beauty to this old and traditional church in Chennai.

Sharmila
II BA History

MUNNAR-THE HILLS BECKON

Munnar Hill station is situated at the confluence of three mountain streams namely Mudrapuzha, Nallathanni and Kundala. Munnar in Malayalam language means three rivers. This hill station, located at an altitude of 1600 m above sea level, was once the summer resort of the erstwhile British government in south India. Sprawling tea plantations, picture book towns, winding lanes and holiday facilities make this a popular resort town.

Munnar has been blessed with Hills, waterfalls, lake, wild life and tea plantation. Munnar pioneer planters opened up the nature lover's paradise out of virgin forests a century ago. It has one of the largest tea plantations in India. The highest peak in south India, Anamudi - which towers over 2695 meters is an ideal place for trekking. The tropical forests beyond have a sizable population of elephants, bisons, langur and macaques.

Important Places to see:

Mattupetti (13km from Munnar): Situated at a height of 1700m, Mattupetti is famous for its highly specialized dairy farm, the Indo - swiss live Stock project. Over 100 varieties of high yielding cattle are reared here. Visitors are allowed into 3 of the 11 cattle sheds at the farm. The Mattupetti Lake and dam, just a short distance from the farm, is a very beautiful picnic spot. The sprawling Kundala tea plantation and the Kundala lake are other attractions in the vicinity. There is boating facility available in the Mattupetti Dam. Speed Launch and slow speed motor boats are available on hire.

Eravikulam National Park (15km from Munnar): The 97 sq. km park is situated in Rajamala of the Devikulam Taluk. A picture perfect scenic beauty can be enjoyed here. Lush greenery, rare flora and fauna make this place intriguingly beautiful. The natural habitat of the Nilgiri Tahr, Rajamala is situated at 2695 m above sea level. Half the world's population of the rare mountain goat or tahr, which is fast becoming extinct, is now found here. The Nilgiri Tahr in Rajamala is now to be found in small herds found in Eravikulam - Rajamala region. Nilgiri Tahrs in Rajamala is estimated to be over 1300. Visitors are not allowed during the monsoon.

Pothamedu (16 km from Munnar):

It offers an excellent view of the tea, Coffee and cardamom plantations in munnar. The rolling hills, the lush mountain and the breathtaking scenery here is ideal for trekking and long mountain walks.

Pallivasal (8 km from Munnar)

This is the venue of the 1st Hydro Electric Project in Kerala and a place of immense scenic beauty.

Kundala (20 km from Munnar):

It is a picturesque town on the way to Top Station. The Golf Course which belongs to Tata Tea Ltd. is located here. The Kundala artificial dam is another attraction. Aruvikkad Waterfall is also near Kundala

Nyayamakad (10 km from Munnar):

Located between Munnar and Rajamala, Nyayambad is a land of breath taking waterfalls. The waters cascade down a hill from a height of about 1600 ms. The enchantings surroundings makes an excellent picnic spot and trekking point.

Echo Point (15 km from Munnar):

This scenic place gets its name from the natural echo phenomenon here. Echo point is on the way to Top Station from Munnar.

Marayoor (40 kms from Munnar):

This is the only place in kerala that has a natural growth of sandalwood trees. The sandalwood factory of the forest dept. the caves (muniyaras) with the murals and relics from the New stone age civilization and the children's park spread across a hectare of land under the canopy of a single banyan tree, are of great interest to tourists. Thoovanam waterfalls and Rajic Gandhi National Park are also nearby.

Neelakurinji Flower in Munnar:

Among the exotic flora found in the forests and grasslands is the 'Neelakurinji'

This flower which bathes the hills in blue every 12yrs. Munnar also has the highest peak in south India, Anamudi, which towers over 2695 m. it's a marvelous scene to see the hills covered fully with Neelakurinjees scientific name is *Camellia sinensis*. Neelakurinjee is known in different names such as nilakurinji, neelakurinjee, nilakuriji.

This flower blooms only once in every 12yrs. Munnar is the only place in Asia where Neelakurinji grows. It is expected to bloom during the months September to October.

By Soumiya
II BA HISTORY

OOTY- THE QUEEN BECKONS

The best thing about Ooty is that it combines the peace and tranquility of a hill station with the comforts of urban life. Ooty's colonial legacy extends to every nook & corner, and nowhere is it more apparent than in the Ooty club that is beyond compare. Ooty is characterized by rolling meadows, gardens and lakes vaguely reminiscent of England. It still retains something of the Raj in its cottages and stone churches. The Botanical gardens, with 2,000 species of plants of a magnificent flower show was landscaped and established in 1847 by the Marquis of Tweepdale. A fossil of a tree trunk is a unique exhibit here for it is believed to be 20 million years old. There is also an artificial lake where facilities for boating are available. Pony rides, minitrains rides, and quiet walks amidst the forest roads are other temptations. The highest peak in the Nilgiri range is Doddabetta, 2,623 mts in height and 10 km from the main town. From here one can have a fine view of Ooty city, Gundalpet, Coonoor, Wellington and Mysore on a clear day. Ooty can be reached by a toy train from Mettupalayam which is connected by main rail and highways from Coimbatore, Bangalore and Mysore.

Location

Udhagamandalam, this Queen of hill stations, otherwise known as Ooty, is in the Nilgiri mountain ranges of Tamil Nadu. At a height of 2,268 meters, Ooty is known for its salubrious climate and scenic beauty. For residents of the south it is a delightful place to escape to from the oppressive summer heat. The nearest airport is in Coimbatore, 100 km away. You can catch a direct flight to Coimbatore from Chennai, Kozhikode, Bangalore and Mumbai. Indian Airlines flies Delhi-Kochi via Mumbai and Coimbatore.

By Train Train Timing at Coimbatore Train Timing at Mettupalayam Nearest broad gauge railway head is Mettupalayam (46 kms). Major broadgauge railway junction is Coimbatore. It is connected with all major cities. Mettupalayam to Ooty, is connected by a Mountain Railway, which is 4 hours journey. Ooty is well connected by good roads. It is 535 km from Chennai (via Salem), 89 km from Coimbatore, 18 km from Coonoor (via Gudalur), 155 km from Mysore, 187 km from Calicut, 290 km from Bangalore, 281 km from Kochi (via Coimbatore and Palakkad), 236 km from Kodaikanal (via Coimbatore

and Palani). There is a regular bus service from Bangalore, Mysore, Coimbatore, Calicut, Kanyakumari, Tanjavur, Tirupati and Cochin. Buses ply regularly to Mudhumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Kotagiri, Coonoor and Doddabeta.

By Marie Younne Franis
I BA History

YERCAUD- FOR HOLIDAYS MADE IN HEAVEN

Yercaud is a quiet little hill station near Salem, Tamil Nadu, India in the Servarayan range (anglicized as Shevaroy) of hills in the Eastern Ghats and is the only one of its kind in northern Tamil Nadu. While the rest of its region is generally dry, Yercaud presents a welcome contrast with its cool climate where temperature never rises above 30°C and dip below 13°C. It is also a less expensive place. It is at an altitude of 1,500metres(4,920ft) from mean sea level. The town gets its name from the lake located at its center - in Tamil - "Yeri" means "Lake" and "Kaadu" means "Forest". Yercaud is known for coffee plantations and orange groves. It also has an Orchidarium run by the Botanical Survey of India. The highest point in Yercaud is the Servarayan temple, which is situated at a height of 5326ft. hence the Yercaud hill areas is called Shevaroy Hills.

The main crop of Yercaud is coffee. Coffee was first cultivated on the "Grange Estate" in the year 1820. Mr. M.D. Cockburn brought coffee plants from Africa to Yercaud.

Jackfruit, orange, guava and spices such as black pepper and cardamom are the other crops raised on the coffee estate. Sandalwood, teak, and silver oak are abundant too. The best time to visit Yercaud is the warmer months between May and October. May and June are the months when tourist activity is high.

Before getting into this coffee-plantation hamlet, you have to drive through the textile town of Salem. If you browse around the shops, you might pick up bright handloom fabrics at half the price you would pay elsewhere. Just before the road begins to climb up the mountains to Yercaud, do look out for an interesting group of brightly coloured idols to the left of the road. These guardian deities, found only in Tamil Nadu, are worshipped as protectors of villages and are often known as Aiyansars.

The Yercaud town is situated at an altitude of 4700 feet. The Taluk headquarters is located in Yercaud. The town has a number of seminaries and convents where brothers and sisters of various religious orders have their training schools. The Monfort School and Sacred Heart Convent are famous in the country. There is a large native Shandy (bazaar) every Sunday and a smaller one on Wednesdays, where vegetables (Chiefly native produce) and fruits are

The first thing one sees as you enter the Yercaud town is this placid lake in a wonderful surrounding of hills and natural shoals. Also a beautifully landscaped garden on one bank. It has boating facility. The Anna Park is an excellent picnic spot. There is also an island park and Japanese garden. It is also known as the Emerald Lake. This lake is the only natural lake among all the hill station lakes in the

This is also known as Small Lake and lies in the heart of the town between the Yercaud Library and Sports Club and the Monfort School. A fort like compound wall has unfortunately obscured this picturesque lake in the heart of town. A bird's eye view of the Big Lake, Yercaud Town and the Shevaroy Peak is available from this vantage point, which is reached by taking the steep road going north from the center point of town 1 km from town.

Lady's Seat, Gents Seat and Children's Seat:

This is a cluster of Rocks on the South West of the Yercaud hills over looking the Ghat road and the town of Salem to the South. There is a natural rock formation in the form of a seat where reportedly a white English Lady of yester years spent her evenings viewing the magnificent panorama before ones eyes. This is one of the oldest buildings in Yercaud, built in the 1820's by M.D. Cockburn, who was the District Collector of Salem District at that time.

Kiliyur Waterfall:

This is 3km from the Yercaud Lake. The best time to visit this place is immediately after the monsoons. The surplus water from the Yercaud Lake and other reaches of the Shevaroy's Hills fall deep into the Kiliyur Valley in the form of a 300ft waterfall.

Pyramid Point:

Pagoda point is also known as Pyramid Point. This is on the eastern side of the Yercaud hills. The name comes from four piles of random stones in a pagoda or pyramid formation, made by the hills tribes. Today there is a Rama temple situated between these pagodas.

The Servarayan Temple:

This temple is situated on top of Servarayan Hill. The temple itself is a narrow and dark cave and seated inside are the God Servarayar

and the Goddess Kaverī representing the Shervaroy Hills and the Cauvery River. The local people believe that the God Servarayan is the guardian angel for the 67 villages in and around Yercaud. It is believed that the temple's cave is so deep it touches the Cauvery River. The local tribes celebrate their annual festival in this temple during May.

Bear's Cave:

This is situated within a private coffee estate owned by a Mettur based businessman. The main part of the cave is situated about 7ft below the ground level and contains a deeper gorge, which is believed by the local people to lead up the cave situated in the Shervaroyan Temple.

Ruchi M Jain
I BA History

THE QUEEN OF HILL STATIONS

Ootacamund or Udagamandalam (the Tamil version of the original name) rightly described as “Queen of Hill Stations” by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, now sprawls over an area of 36 sq km with a number of tall buildings cluttering its hill slopes. It is situated at an altitude of 2,240 meters above sea level. Though the march of brick and mortar has laid waste its thick sholas which one saw in a bygone era, it still woos people from all over India as well as foreign countries right through summer, and sometimes in the winter months too.

An added attraction for the tourists to Udagamandalam is the mountain train journey on a ratchet and pinion track which commences from Kallar, near Mettupalayam and wends its way through many hair-raising curves and fearful tunnels and chugs along beside deep ravines full of verdant vegetation, gurgling streams and tea gardens. The scenery, as it unfolds during the trip, is breathtaking, awe-inspiring and fantastic. One can notice a marvelous change in vegetation, as one goes from Kallar to Coonoor. At Kallar it is tropical and at Burliar-the next bus-stop as one proceeds from Mettupalayam-it is sub-tropical. Near Coonoor, it is humid with pines, blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) and cypress trees. As we go from Ooty to Gudalur, the change in vegetation is striking. What a splendid interaction between climate and vegetation ! It is therefore very appropriate that Mount Stuart called the whole road leading to Ooty from Mettupalayam, “One long botanical debauch.” There are several places of tourist attractions in Ooty. Move around the town and revel in the scenic surroundings. The Botanical Garden is an ideal tourist spot besides being a source of information about the region’s flora. For those who like to enjoy boat rides and fishing, a visit to the Ooty Lake is a must.

Besides these, there are various view points like Lamb’s Rock (8 km away from Coonoor), Kodanadu (16 km from Kotagiri), and Dodabetta Peak that offer fascinating views of the surrounding plains and hills.

Botanical GardenThe Botanical Garden of Ooty was established in 1848. The beautiful gardens maintained by the Horticulture Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu have wide variety of plants and include Italian and Japanese sections. Out here one can

have a look at different types of roses, imported shrubs, rare flowering plants, eucalyptus trees and several old trees. One of the main attractions here is the fossilized tree trunk, which is about 20 million years old. During the month of May every year, a Summer Festival is held here. The major attractions of the festival are flower shows, cultural programmes relating to classical arts, and adventure sports like trekking.

Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary:

One of the most important wildlife sanctuaries in South India, the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary is situated at about 67 km from Ooty. It is a part of the Nilgiri Biosphere reserve along with Bandipur National Park in Karnataka Wynad Sanctuary in Kerala. Wildlife in Mudumalai is very similar to other sanctuaries in Nilgiris. The predominant species in this region are bonnet macaque and common langur. Tigers and leopards also reside here but are a rare sight. Other important species are giant squirrels, flying squirrels, elephants, gaurs, sambhar, chital, barking deer and mouse deer.

The birds in the sanctuary include racket-tailed drongo, black woodpecker, parakeets, barbets, mynas, cuckoos, Malabar trogon, Malabar grey hornbill, crested hawk eagle, and crested serpent eagle. An elephant camp called Theppakkadu is located within the sanctuary where you can find a rest house. You can also find accommodation at Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation's Youth Hostel and rest houses in Masinagudi, Abhayaranayam and Kargudi and the Bamboo Banks Farm.

Coonoor:

Located at a distance of 17 km from Udhagamandalam, Coonoor is the first of the three Nilgiri hill stations. Coonoor has an equable climate that makes this small town a popular hill resort. Thus, there are several places to see and visit near Ooty too. Excursions around Ooty prove to be an equally interesting experience. A visit to the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary gives you an idea of the region's fauna and flora. The trip to hill stations of Kotagiri and Coonoor complement the visit to Ooty. Kalhatty Waterfalls apart from giving breathtaking views also offers rich flora and fauna in its surrounding area. Sim's Park has more than 1,000 plant species; some of them are very rare.

Dolphin's Nose is a famous viewpoint not far from the city of Ooty. Mukurthi gives breathtaking sites of the Mukurthi peak and abounds in flora and fauna. Avalanche with its dam is a nature lover's paradise.

Conclusion:

Ooty, truly a proud possession of India, stands as a green monument attracting a large number of tourists from all over the world. Her beauty catches the eyes of the beholder and carries them to the paradise of enchantment. Her narrow streets oft, pathed by brookling streams and splendid flowers is a feast for the eyes and soul. From entertainment to solemn peaceooty has everything to offer her visitors. To me, nature is best clothed with all possible vibrant and glamorous colours in the hills, in the lakes and in the friendly people of ooty- truly-ooty is "the queen of hills".

BY Martina
I BA History

PILGRIMAGE CENTRES IN TAMIL NADU...

CHURCHES

VAILANKANNI: Vailankanni, one of the most important Marian shrines (dedicated to Mary, Mother of Jesus), in India, is often referred as the 'Lourdes of the East'. (Lourdes, in France, is one of the most famous Marian shrines in the world). The history of Vailankanni, as a place of pilgrimage, can be traced back to the end of the 16th century. The first written reference to Vailankanni is a letter written by Fr. Paulo da Trindade to his superior, in 1630. The chapel that existed here was referred to as 'Ermida' (Portugese for 'sub station' or a 'place of pilgrimage'). Vailankanni was made a parish (local christian community) in 1771. The shrine was granted the 'Special status as a Minor Basilica' in 1962 by Pope John 23rd, the head of the Roman Catholic church. (A Basilica is a consecrated church that is constructed facing the east in one of the classical styles of architecture and should be a celebrated place of pilgrimage).

The church in its present structure has several classical and gothic elements even after several extensions and renovations. The 93 feet high dome and the two 82 feet high Gothic spiral towers are a dominating feature of the topography of Vailankanni and can be seen miles away. Father Sebastiao Xavier de Noronha, a foreign missionary was instrumental in giving the church its present structure.

The annual feast day of the birth of Mother Mary is celebrated on September 8th. The flag-hoisting ceremony on August 29th marks the beginning of the feast celebrations and prayers. A conservative estimate of the crowds on these days would be around a lakh and a half (which is more than ten times the local population). During feast days the flag of Mother Mary is hoisted at noon and the car procession bearing the statue of Mother Mary takes place at 8.00 p.m.

Location: 6 kms from the Inter State Highway, 150 kms from Tiruchi Airport, 12 kms from Nagapattinam Railwaystation.

POONDI MADHA SHRINE:

Poondi is just a tiny village located in the Thiruvaiyaru taluk of Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu. The rivers Cauvery and the Colleroon flank the northern and southern sides of this village. In a district that

is predominantly rural, Poondi Madha Shrine is a celebrated place of pilgrimage for over half a century now. It is a historically recorded fact that Veeramamunivar the Italian Jesuit missionary who was a renowned Tamil scholar, built a church at this very same place and dedicated it to Mother Mary. The present structure of the shrine is constructed in mix of Gothic and French architecture. The highlight of the structure is the row of statues of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, saints like Francis Xavier and also one of Veeramamunivar (Constantine Joseph Beschi) on the facade, above the portico.

There is an interesting story behind how the present structure was erected. Rev. Fr. Lourdes Xavier, Parish Priest of the church in 1955, feared that the main roof, which was in a bad condition, would collapse any moment. When an engineer was consulted, he found that except for the central roof, the rest of the structure was quite strong. He recommended that it was enough to demolish only the roof. A little after this, on a rainy November night, the roof of the church collapsed, leaving everything else intact, thus saving the cost of demolishing. Shortly after this, the number of pilgrims to the Shrine was on the rise and kept increasing as accounts of miracles and cures started to spread.

Apart from the religious significance, Poondi is worth visiting just for the sight of lush greenery and the two rivers which have made Thanjavur the 'granary of Tamil Nadu'. The primary occupation of the villagers residing here being farming, the village is surrounded by coconut groves, paddy and sugar cane fields.

Location: The Poondi village is about 35 kms. from Thanjavur. The nearest town about 3 kms away, is Thirukattupalli.

TEMPLES

NATARAJA TEMPLE

The word Nataraja can be interpreted as dancing king or king of dance. The cosmic dance of Siva, finds no greater tribute in stone than in the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram. Built by the Cholas, the temple is a vast complex, with several smaller temples within. Its most impressive hall - the Kanaka Sabha, is tiled in gold. This hall houses a superbly sculpted Nataraja idol. Another hall of special beauty is the Nritya Sabha, designed like a chariot. The hall of a

thousand pillars (Raja Sabha) and the four towering gopurams (each around 250 feet high) leave the visitor spell-bound with the sheer fertility of creative strength that went into their sculpting. The holiest shrine in the temple is a wooden structure with a hut shaped roof, called the Chitsabha. Pilgrims bathe in the huge temple tank, which is believed to have curative powers.

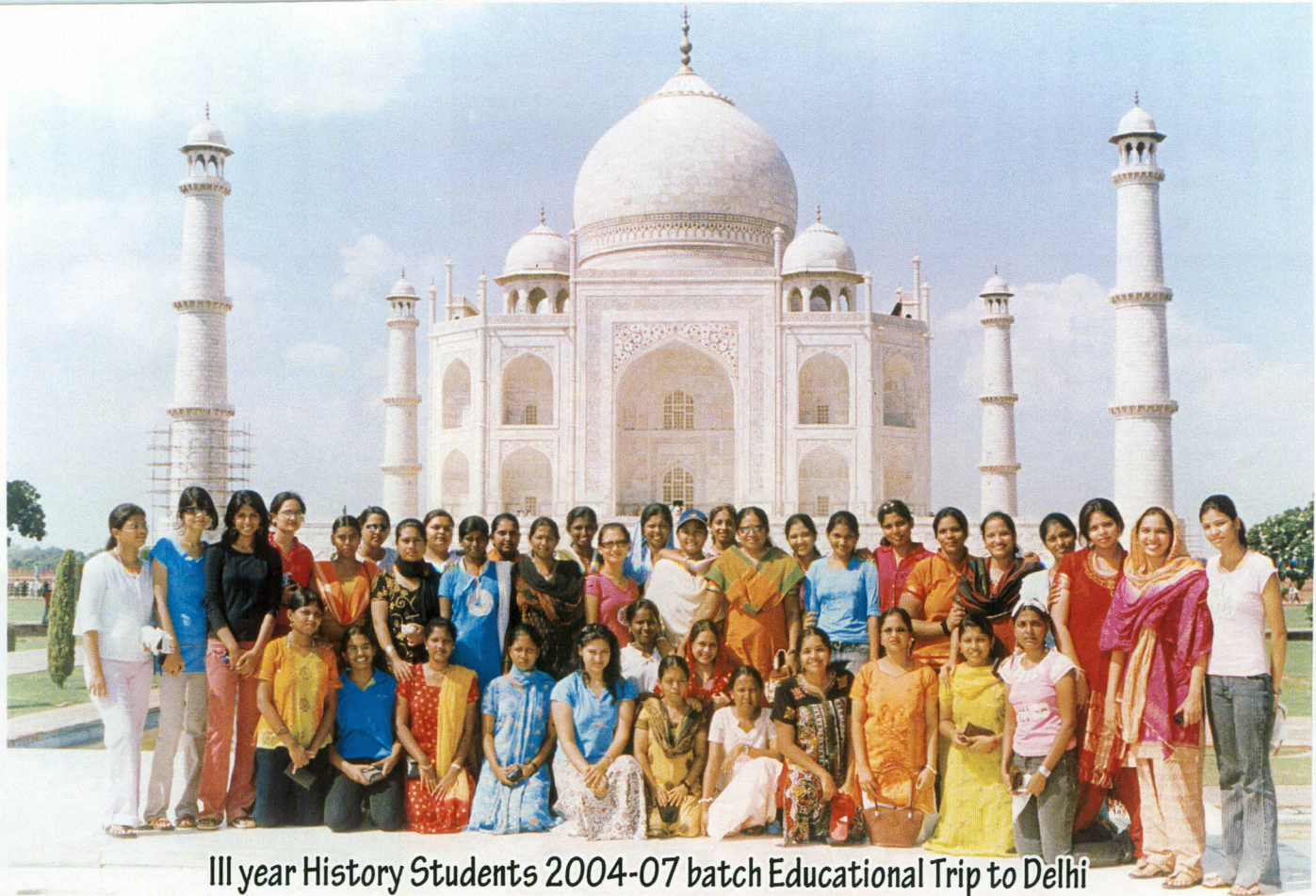
RAMESWARAM

At the southeastern tip of the Indian peninsula is the Hindu pilgrim's final stop. Hindu mythology tells us that Lord Rama sanctified Rameswaram through his worshipping Siva, after the war against Ravana. Adorned with splendid sculpted columns, Rameswaram has the longest temple corridor in the country. Also at Rameswaram are the Kothandaramaswamy temple and the beautiful coral reefs off the Kurusadai islands. Apart from its appeal to the tourist, Rameswaram is also a significant marine centre in South India.

MADURAI MEENAKSHI TEMPLE

One of the most magnificent examples of Dravidian architecture and sculpture, the Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple at Madurai is surely one of the high-points of any tour of the country. Originally built by the Pandyas (who made Madurai their capital as early as 550 AD), the temple as we see it today was given complete shape by the Nayaks (who ruled from the 16th to the 18th century). This twin temple is dedicated to Goddess Meenakshi (Parvathi) and to Lord Sundareswarar (Siva). The layout plan of the temple is rectangular. There are 12 Gopurams (Towers). Among the highlights in the temple complex are the Hall of a Thousand Pillars and the Tank of Golden Lotuses. Actually the number of pillars in the hall count to 985. Each pillar is sculptured and is a monument of the Dravidan sculpture. Housed in this mandapam is the Temple Art Museum, which is an exhibition of drawings, paintings and sculptures depicting 1200 years of history.

The Tank of Golden Lotuses is an ancient tank where devotees take bath. It was the meeting area of the Tamil Sangam-the academy of Tamil poets. Any work of literature was first thrown into this pond and its worth was assessed based on whether it floated or sunk. Only those that did not sink were considered worthy of attention. The city of Madurai has been a seat of Tamil culture and traditions since very



III year History Students 2004-07 batch Educational Trip to Delhi



Inaugural of the Tamil Nadu History Congress. Seen in the picture are
 Dr. S. Ramachandran, Vice Chancellor, University of Madras. Dr. Naganathan, Vice Chairman, State Planning Commission
 Dr. G. Venkataraman, General Secretary TNHC, Dr. S Annamma Philip, Principal SMC

Release of the Souvenir -
 Tamil Nadu History Congress.

By Dr. Naganathan
 Vice Chairman State Planning Commission
 Dr. Sr. Annamma Philip, Principal, SMC and
 Dr. S. Ramachandran, Vice Chancellor University of Madras.



At the valedictory of the Tamil Nadu History Congress SMC. Chief Guest Dr. Ann Mary Fernandez Former Registrar, University of Madras.

Inaugural address -
BC to AD Department
Fest Dr. Mani, Director
of Collegiate
Education, Chief Guest



Stella Maris College (Autonomous), Chennai.
Department of History
Smt. Indira Gandhi Endowment Lecture.

Mr. Sashi Kumar, Director,
Asian School of Journalism,
Chennai, speaker at the
Indira Gandhi Endowment
Lecture.



The Sindhu Memorial
Dance Competition.





Winners at the inter collegiate History fest at Ethiraj college.



Champions at the inter collegiate fest at Loyola college.

ancient times. Great scholars like, Nakkeerar, Appar and Sambandar have celebrated its glorious culture in their songs. The temple complex is like a huge city—one of the largest of its kind in India and undoubtedly one of the oldest. The grandeur of the Meenakshi temple has remained undiminished for the past two thousand years. This sprawling and awe-inspiring temple complex is not only a marvel of architecture but also a symbol of Indian culture and civilization in all its glory.

It is one of the greatest Shiva temples in India, and is known for its sprawling landscape. It is the site of the 64 Tiruvilayadalgal of Shiva (Tiruvilayadal puranam and Halasyamahatmiyam) and is one of the Pancha Sabhais of Nataraja. The other dance halls are Chidambaram, Tiruvalankadu, Tirunelveli and Kutralam.

PERUR TEMPLE

A historically and architecturally significant landmark, built at Perur, King Karikala Cholan built this 1,500-year-old temple on the banks of the holy river Noyyal. The temple is a magnificent piece of architecture that inspires as much awe and admiration for its architecture, as devotion. Many other kings including those of the Hoysala dynasty and the Vijayanagar emperors have made architectural contributions to this temple.

The temple's deity is Lord Shiva and his consort Pachi Nayaki. The temple complex has about seven separate smaller temples inside its compound. There is a holy palm tree Irava Panai (the deathless palm) and a holy Tamarind called Pirava Pule (the unborn Tamarind). The temple is also popularly known as Mel Chidambaram. The temple can be compared to any other great temple of Tamil Nadu, except for its smaller size. It has long pillared corridors with exquisite carvings and huge sculptures. The space inside the compound provides the locals space to relax. There are local buses which plies from Coimbatore bus stand to Perur.

MARUTHAMALAI TEMPLE

Maruthamalai Temple, situated on a hillock, about 12 kms from Coimbatore, is an important temple dedicated to Lord Muruga. The temple gets its name from the Marutha trees in the forests on the hill. The hills also have many medicinal herbs in their forests. The

story behind the temple is that a thirsty Sanyasi was walking through the forest and took refuge under a Marutha tree. To quench his thirst, he prayed to Lord Muruga, who answered his prayers and water sprang from Marutha trees. Hence Lord Muruga has been hailed the Lord of Marutha. This temple was built about 800 years ago. The temple was renovated recently and Kumbabishekam (renovation) performed.

The temple and its surroundings are abuzz with devotees who can be seen trekking the 700-odd steps to the top of the temple, as penance. There are frequent buses from Coimbatore city to Maruthamalai. From the base of the temple local buses ply to the temple.

GANGAIKONDACHOLAPURAM

Like father, like son; the habit of building brilliantly engineered temples seems to run in the royal family of the Cholas. It's an even more laudable achievement, considering the fact that Gangaikondacholapuram was built in an attempt to reproduce a 'larger-than-life' father's achievement. King Rajendra Chozhan built son of Raja Raja Chozhan, who built the Brihadeeswara Temple at Tanjavur it. Judging by the outcome anyone will say that the son is as good as his father, if not better. The temple was built during the golden period of the Cholas, when they were invading the northern territories, and wealth was overflowing as a result of their successful war campaigns. Rajendra Chozhan was much more than a passive king who inherited his father's wealth. He led many successful campaigns and conquered Madurai and Ellam.

During one of his campaigns to the north, he brought back, water from the river 'Ganges' in a golden pot, and sanctified the reservoir 'Ponneri or Chologanga'. Thus he was given the title of 'Gangaikondan' (the one who brought the Ganges). The king wanted to build a temple equivalent in stature to the Brihadeeswara Temple at Tanjavur. And thus came into existence, the Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram came between 1020 - 29 A.D The temple has complex carvings in the Vimanas, and is acknowledged to have some Northern influence; understandable, given the contact with the Northern Chalukya kingdoms. The architecture of this temple is an exhibition of intricate carvings on the hard southern granite stones, discarding the earlier Chola and Pallava style of subtlety and simplicity.

Some of the sculptures found here are as great as any found in any other Chola Temples. But the most striking and unique ones here are, The Nataraja, Coronation of King Rājendra Chozhan by Siva and Parvati, the dancing Ganesha and the most interesting the Ardhanari (the man-woman manifestation of Lord Shiva), one half has masculine characters and the other the more decorative female form, signifying duality of divine energy.

The sanctum sanctorum of the temple is a four meter high Lingam. Two walls, the inner and outer, surround the sanctum providing private worship area for the royal family. A well-crafted image of Goddess Saraswati adorns the royal entrance of the sanctum, which indicates the Chalukyan influence. Also the presence of the 'Suryapita' icon, signifying sun worship and the presence of the 'Navagrahas' (nine planets), is said to be influenced by the Chalukyan connection. Cholas being meticulous record keepers, one can find inscribed texts in copper plates and also in temple walls. The walls tell us stories of many victories of the warrior king, the land donations made during the period, kings ascending to thrones etc.

Gangaikondacholapuram took a longer time to complete and was a favourite place for monarchs to ascending thrones. The temple suffered the misfortune of being in the middle of many wars, it was used as a garrison and fortified cantonment by the Pandyas and later on by the British. The temple has also been looted in many occasions, but the architectural and sculpting treasure can never be looted. This monument built to laud the achievements of a warrior king has stood the test of time and remains a standing accolade to the architects and the artists who have created this stunning monument.

BRIHADEESWARA TEMPLE

One of the most spectacular piece of South Indian architecture, with due respect to the Vijayanagara and Pallava Kingdoms, is the Brihadeeswara Temple in Tanjavur. Looking at it, one has to redefine the normal notions of 'size'. The grandeur of the monument caught me off guard when I first saw it, about a few good kilometers away. The 'Vimana' (the central tower of the temple) is visible from quite a distance away. The temple took 12 years to complete, and King Raja Raja Chola - I, performed the Kumbhabhishekam (consecration ceremony) in 1011 AD. The temple was built in honour of his victorious

reign, during when the Chola kingdom (10th to 14th centuries AD) extended till Ceylon and some parts of the Malaya archipelago.

The Temple, like many others built during this period served many functions; the walls are very high and the entrance is built like a fort, along with a moat. On the inside, there are separate waiting areas for musicians, workers etc and the periphery served as a meeting place for the public. The eastern side of the temple has the yagnasala (place for special prayers), the kitchen, the storeroom and the dining hall. The western and the northern ends have a long corridor with 108 Shiva Lingams arranged along the inner side of the corridor. The walls are decorated with paintings of the 64 divine 'lilas' (plays) of Lord Shiva.

The central attraction is the great Vimana built over the sanctum, which is 216 feet high. It has 14 storeys of intricate sculpting with pilasters and niches, and images of God. This is peculiar, because usually, the Gopurams (towers at the entrance) are generally higher than the Vimana in most temples. This style of high Vimana has a feel of the Orissa Temples in Bhuvaneshwar. The main sanctum of the temple is a Mahalingam, a huge lingam that is 23 feet in circumference and 9 feet high. The Nandhi (the divine vehicle of Lord Shiva) is a monolith measuring 12 feet in height, 19.5 feet in length and 18.25 feet in width, it weighs about 25 tons. The Nandi is seated in an ornately sculpted mandapam called the Nayak Mandapam. According to local legend, the Nandhi was growing in size and people fearing that it might grow out of the mandapam, stuck a nail at its back and since then the growth has ceased. Also it houses many other sub shrines, which are later additions to the great complex. The Shrine of Sri Subramanya is a new addition. Built towards 600AD, the architecture is considered 'modern' in the scale of Dravidian architecture and is believed to have been built in the Nayak period.

Some pillars in this corridor have carvings of Maratha rulers in them. A later Pandya King built the shrine of Goddess Sri Brihannayagi in the 13th century. The shrine of Lord Ganesha is said to belong to the time of King Sarfoji II, the legendary Maratha King. This temple has Ganesha statues in seven poses. The Nataraja shrine, and Saint Karuvurar's Shrine was built in honour of the Saint Karuvar who helped Raja Raja Chola consecrate the Mahalinga. The Sri Chandeeswara Shrine completes the list of sub shrines. These later

additions provide us with a wonderful example of the progression of Dravidian architecture. An interesting note is the central stone of the Vimana, which weighed 235 lbs (plus 35 lbs of gold plating on it) and was carried to the top by a scaffold built especially for this purpose, which was 4 miles long.

Another striking feature about the temple apart from the blown out size of almost anything here, are the colours. The fresco painting can be seen in the ceilings of the corridors and also in the ceilings of the many sub-shrines. They are an invention of the Cholas and the painting, which are about 1000 years old are still brightly colourful. A wonderful lesson in history, it is quite a humbling experience to walk around the huge temple complex, imagining the level of artistry and engineering ingenuity that has achieved such a masterpiece. Makes me wonder if we have 'progressed' in the right direction in the last 1000 years

MOSQUES:

NAGORE

One of the popular pilgrimage centres for Muslims in Tamil Nadu is the Dargah at Nagore. Situated 4 kms north of Nagapattinam, Nagore is home to the famous Dargah of Sufi Saint Hazrath Syed Shahul Hameed Quadir Wali. The tomb is more than 500 years old. It has a golden dome, flanked by five minarets. It also has a tank called Peer Kulam, which is believed to have waters with curative properties. The Kandhoori festival of the Saint, during the Islamic month of Jumad Thani (Jumad Akhir) is an important festival celebrated by people of all religions.

Saint Hazrath Syed Shahul Hameed is known to be the 23rd descendent of Prophet Muhammad (Sal). He was born and educated in Manickapur, near Allahabad. He embarked on a journey to the south and was gifted the land in Nagore by the ruler of Tanjavur, Achuthappa Naicken, since he cured him of his illness. Saint Shahul Hameed lived there for rest of his life serving the people, irrespective of religion, caste or creed. After he passed away at the age of 68, his body was entombed at Nagore. The Nagore shrine is interesting, with strong Hindu influences in both architecture and rituals. Many rituals, like applying sandal wood paste, holy water, prasadam (blessed items collected after worship) and tonsuring the head are borrowed from the Hindu

tradition. This is also apparent in the playing of nadaswaram and shehnai (Indian wind instruments) music.

A short drive from Nagapattinam, Nagore makes for a busy pilgrimage, with busloads of tourists arriving from all over the state. It owes its commercialisation to the tourist presence. It is a fine example of the harmonious co-existence of Hindu - Muslim communities.

SIMONE HARRISON

II BA History

FORT ST. GEORGE – MUSEUM- A TREASURE TROVE OF YESTERYEARS

As young kids we are fond of a lot of things like chocolates, ice creams and toys, or visiting amusement parks, bookshops and the museums. I belonged to the latter category. However, as we grow older, unknowingly, we lose touch with our childhood interests. It happens to all of us and it happened to me too. This time when I came to Chennai and visited my aunt's office in Fort St George I was reminded of my visit to Fort Museum when I was a little girl. I also remembered sitting on a palanquin, with my cousin Saurabh. I felt a great urge to revisit the museum and revitalize my childhood memories. Talking about museums - they are fascinating in their own way. If one displays astonishing pieces of art, the other will recreate history to captivate your imagination. One such museum with both these attributes is the 'Fort Museum' located inside Fort St. George.

Fort St. George occupies a place of pride and prestige in Chennai and unfolds the history dating back to the colonial period. The history of arrival of the British on Indian soil, their occupation of India and the beginning of the Indian struggle against foreign rule are associated with Fort St. George. India, which was known as the 'Golden Sparrow', lured many traders to its shores. The East India Company was perhaps the most powerful of them all. It was launched in the later part of the 17th century with a solemn purpose of trading with India. By the early 1630s the company had started looking for an opportunity to set up a permanent trading station on the Indian coastline. As luck favoured them, a British officer known as 'Francis Day' managed to acquire a strip of land belonging to one Chinnappa Naicker. It was on this strip of land that the Fort was built and completed on 23rd April, 1640. The fort was given the name of St George, the patron saint of England.

The building of the fort is a wonderful example of military architecture of the era. It has thick massive walls and a protective moat surrounding it. The British christened the area as the 'White Town' and did not allow natives to live within the fort. The 'Black Town' inhabited by the indigenous people lay much beyond its thick walls. It served as a protected trading post under the British East India Company and played a very important role in the expansion policies of the British

in India. Many historical personalities like Elihu Yale, Thomas Pitt, Robert Clive, Lord Cornwallis either lived or are said to have frequented the fort in their day. Fort St George went on to become the birthplace of the modern Indian army. The fort still serves as an important base for the Indian army.

In order to mark the advent of their occupation the British constructed the front rampart of the fort in the form of a deck of the ship and erected a genuine pole from a sailing ship as a flagstaff on it. A real anchor was also attached to it. This 150-ft high flagstaff made of teakwood was the tallest in the land and flew the Union Jack till 1947. The original flagstaff gave way recently and has been replaced by a new metal flagstaff, which proudly flutters the Indian tri-colour. Fort St George's towering flagstaff is the tallest in India even today. An old lighthouse erected in 1844 to show the way to the passing boats also stands in its compound. Towards the north of the fort is the famous High Court building, built in Indo-Saracen style.

The fort houses several interesting monuments within its precincts. One of them is the St Mary's church. The church has beautiful stained glass windows, pews of solid teak, ornate marble wall frescos and plaques. It has withstood the ravages of time and has retained its original splendour even today. Interestingly, the church also served as the venue of the marriage of Lord Clive to Margaret Maskelyne in 1753. Elihu Yale, Governor of Madras, (1687-1692) who was responsible for the founding of the Yale University in USA was the first to be married in this church. A huge silver plate inscribed with his name donated by him is among the exhibits.

Fort Museum

Fort St George houses a small quaint museum which is known as the Fort Museum. This building, which was completed in 1795, served originally as the Madras Bank. The long hall upstairs was the Public Exchange Hall, and it provided a place for public meetings, lottery drawings and occasionally for entertainment and dancing. It also served as the Fort Officer's Mess. When India gained independence, the Archaeological Survey of India declared the building as a protected monument. As I entered the royal entrance of the museum, the magnificent 14½-ft-tall statue of Lord Cornwallis standing in front had me enthralled. This masterpiece, created by Charles Banks, was shipped to India from Britain. The pedestal of this statue is intriguing.

It is carved with a poignant scene depicting Tipu Sultan's emissary handing over Tipu Sultan's two sons as hostages in lieu of a ransom he could not pay to the British.

The Fort Museum has ten galleries. The first three galleries are situated on the ground floor. In the first gallery are seen the arms and armour of the East India Company such as the spears, daggers, guns, pistols, swords and battle-axes. It also exhibits the traditional Indian weapons along with foreign artillery. This gives an insight into the vulnerability of our native Indian army. They were using such outdated weapons, which were no-match to the refined foreign artillery. The two main exhibits in a case include a fragment of the shell fired by the German Cruiser 'EDMEN' on Madras city during the First World War and the shell, which was fired in retaliation. Another interesting exhibit is the percussion cap of a bomb dropped on Madras city during the Second World War by a Japanese aircraft.

The second gallery gives a glimpse of the East India Company's ceremonial uniforms. It also reflects the company's penchant for uniformity and discipline through its color and code for different ranks in civil and military service. The uniforms were made generally of wool with silk embroidery and brocaded with a golden thread. Another prominent feature of the uniforms is the metal buttons, which are unique in each case. The uniforms of the Governor's bodyguard and the ceremonial dress of the Under Secretary to the government of Madras are the striking features of this gallery. The Governor's bodyguard was originally known as the 'Governor's native cavalry'. It was raised by the East India Company, at the beginning of their war with Hyder Ali. Actually he was a spy in disguise. His function was to bring information about the enemy and their plans. He was one of the four men of the Governor who attended on him and occasionally took part in the state functions. The post of the Governor's bodyguard was disbanded in 1947 when India became independent and we did not need agents to spy on our own people. This gallery also displays the regiment flags of the Madras European battalions in silk with coat of arms at the centre along with caps and belts worn by the officers and men of these regiments.

The third gallery consists of stamps of George V series and archaeological series of the Republic of India dated 1949 and 26th January 1950. The gallery also contains tableware from the 15th century onwards. It was the officials of the East India Company who

brought the European crockery and cutlery to India. The gallery displays hot plates, curry plates, fruit plates bearing the monogram of the East India Company. The tableware ordered by the Nawab of Arcot and Carnatic from England, coated with bright ornate design in gold and carrying the name of the patron, in Persian language, are also displayed.

The fourth gallery has various kinds of silverware gifted to the Museum by the Danish Church at Pulicat, Zion Church at Tranquebar and St Mary's Church at Chennai. Among the various other exhibits are the medals and the medallions of the East India Company awarded to the Indian soldiers who fought many battles on their behalf. The gallery also contains the model of Fort St George depicting all its historical structures. A wooden palanquin (palki), probably used during the period of Nawabs, to take the noble women from one place to another, carried by four men, can also be seen. This was the one in which I had hidden myself when I was a small naughty kid, when no one watched me doing so.

Moving round the spiral staircase I entered the fifth gallery on the second floor. Being an art lover nothing could have been more delightful for me. I was spell bound by the twenty-four magnificent paintings. These included breath-taking portraits of Sir Arthur Havelock, the Governor of Fort St. George, Susan Marchioness, Viscount and Viscountess of Willington, Lord Robert Clive and Queen Victoria among others. When I entered the hall I was the only one in the gallery - others having dispersed off to the next section. The hall had earlier served as the 'dance floor'. The northern side of the hall has an elevated place for the orchestra. As I closed my eyes I could imagine the music flow and the young men and women on the floor, tapping their feet and dancing, with their arms around their loved ones. For a moment I felt I was also a part of them.

The sixth and the seventh gallery consist of letters and documents handwritten by Lord Robert Clive and Lord Cornwallis. The documents carry their seal and signature. The eighth gallery, located on the third floor, is known as the Indo-French gallery and tells the saga of the French establishment in India. Like the British East India Company, the French also tried to establish commercial relations with India ever since 1529 A.D. Louis XIV and his minister Colbert formed the French East India Company, which started competing with the British East India Company to gain political influence and power in various

Indian states. Some of the French artifacts like the French porcelain lamps, clocks, furniture and coins are kept on display. The sculpture of Marianne - the goddess of the French republic is the most striking feature of this section.

Odeyars of Mysore

The ninth gallery displays the exhibits about the 'Odeyars of Mysore'. The Odeyars claimed to be the descendents of the Yadavs of Dwarka of Mahabharata fame (the community of the 'cowherds' to which 'Lord Krishna' belonged). During the 14th century A.D their authority was established in Mysore. The Odeyars of Mysore were popular and generous kings. They were learned men and had a refined outlook. Under their patronage the Mysore School of Art flourished. These kings also played a very important role in initiating many welfare activities. The annals of the Mysore Family gives a detail list of nineteen rulers till the rise of their Commander Hyder Ali around 1772 A.D. He took reign of Mysore in his own hands reducing the Odeyars to being tutelary heads. He and his son Tipu Sultan were formidable enemies of the British. After the defeat of Tipu in 1799 A.D, the British restored Mysore to the Odeyars under a treaty. The Odeyars ruled Mysore till it merged with independent India in 1950. The erstwhile Maharajas of Mysore are still very popular with the local population. They play a ceremonial role during the famous Dussera celebrations in Mysore. Many of them joined politics. The first Governor of Madras after independence was Shri.Sir Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar Bahadur of Mysore.

Finally we move to the tenth and last gallery of the museum, which deals exclusively with the prints of Madras, notably that of Fort St George through different periods and of the Government House now known as 'Rajaji Hall'. After independence, Fort St George has been the seat of the Government of Tamil Nadu and houses the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly and the State Secretariat. It also houses the office of the Chief Minister, cabinet room and a Governor's room. With this I come to the end of my journey. As I came out, I waved goodbye to the museum with the promise to come again. For me it had been a memorable journey down the colonial lane and a reminder that time and tide wait for none. Next time when you are in Chennai don't forget to visit the Fort Museum.

S. SOOSIAMMAL
I BA History

TAMIL NADU

ADVENTURE TRAILS

Preservation of ecology or the environment is a concept gaining prominence now. Similarly, Eco-friendly Adventure tours are also gaining momentum. Tamil Nadu boasts of several ideal locations to attract the visitors, who have concern on preservation of ecology. The Eco friendly areas of Tamil Nadu are for exploring the Nature at its best and to be part of it. Get into Tamil Nadu. Get acquainted with the nature. A Tropical land with evergreen forests, dry deciduous/thorn forests and scrubs covered hill ranges, Tamil Nadu offers sylvan trails for trekking admirer.

A hill station perched on the Western Ghats, Udhagamandalam, offers several trek routes, which vary in distance, altitudes and terrain. There is a base camp at parsons valley, from where one can start trekking to various points within Western Ghats. The down hills of western Ghats on the North ends up with meeting the extensions of Eastern ghats, where the sprawling Mudumalai Sanctuary lies which opens vistas for Adventure tour.

Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park perched on the Anamalai Hills is a full fledged visitor's centre at Top slip, at an altitude of 740 MSL has all the amenities needed for a naturalist. Some of the places to be visited : Monkey Falls, Aliyar, the Crocodile Breeding Centre at Amaravati, Grass Hills, Attakatti, Mirar, Kullipatti, Manompally, Chinnar, Varagaliar, Manjampatty etc. Topslip is 35 kms from Pollachi for the road and rail head and Coimbatore has the nearest Airport.

Kodaikkanal

Located on the Palani Hills, an off-shoot of the Western Ghat mountain range, Kodaikkanal is a spectacular Summer Resort and Ecological Paradise of Tamil Nadu. A span of 2068 sq kms of hills with varied types of forest cover, Kodaikkanal offers ideal sites for trekking, hang-gliding, angling and golf. Sholas occupy key position. Scrub jungle, deciduous, semi evergreen forests form habitats for Nilgiri Langur, flying Squirrel, Sambhar, Gaur, Panther, Hyena, Chameleon and variety of birds.

Elagiri Hills

It is situated 25 kms off Jolarpet Junction, on Chennai-Coimbatore rail track. The hills have a salubrious climate. It has a beautiful environs and a small lake for boating. The trek from Elagiri Hills to Jalagambarai Water Falls at the down hill, takes a couple of hours and is recommended for starters. Another trek route to Jalagambarai, runs through villages, will take about 4 hours. This trekking trail recommended for normal trekking. A trek through the forests to reach the peak is little tedious.

Elagiri hill is a part of Javvad Hills of eastern ghats. One can reach Alangayam, situated at the foot of the hills. From Vaniyambadi, buses ply to Alangayam, from where a ghat road leads to the top of Javvad Hills surrounded by thick sandal wood forests. This steep road leads to Kavalur, where an Astronomical Observatory is situated. By trekking, one can reach the southern part of the Javvad Hills & reach Polur, a taluk headquarters, which is about 30 kms from Temple Town Thiruvannamalai.

Kolli Hills

Kolli hills is the Ancient Kingdom of the celebrated King Ori, renowned for his generous gifts, charity and donations. It is situated at an altitude of 1160 metres. It has rich medical plants and forests.

Kalakkadu - Mundathurai

This is a "Project Tiger" reserve. Lion-tailed Macaque, Nilgiri Langur, Bonnet Macaque and common langur are a plenty. wild dog, deer, pangoline, varied Avifauna and reptiles could also be seen.

Other Trekking Options in India

Aqua Sports

The seas on Coromandel coast are rough and strong and rolling, suitable for surfing, but in places they are rocky. Backwaters are there to provide you shallow water spreads for wind surfing.

Muttukadu

35 kms south of Chennai lies Muttukadu. It is an ideal location for windsurfing . TTDC and other operator's provide necessary salis and

windsurfing equipments to try surfing on back-waters. Plans to provide, water scooters and other aqua-sports are also on the anvil.

Hang-Gliding

Though Hang-gliding is not popular in this part of the country, the Madras Hang-Gliders Association is keen on popularising this adventure sport. Now, to train those who are interested in this adventures activities, motorised hang-gliders are being provided by the Madras Hang-Gliders Association. The St. Thomas Mount, an out crop of hillock on the outskirts of Chennai, the hills of Kodaikkanal and Udhamandalam are the best locations for Hang-Gliding.

Angling

Angling is an interesting pastime for the tourists. There are several water resources in Tamil Nadu, which are identified for Angling. In the Nilgiri's the waters of Mukkurthi Lake and the river, Gurmund river and reservoir, Avalanchi and Emerald river, Peermund, Chambar, Kalkundi Streams, Upper Bhavani Reservoir, Bilitha dakulla River, Bhavani Puzha, Aradha Puzha, Parsons Valley Stream and Reservoir, Kings Dhar Stream, Western Catchment Reservoir, Thirupanthurai, Emeri Puzha, Silent Valley streams etc are the water for excellent trout fishing.

In Kodaikkanal hills, trout streams are Pulavachiyar and Konalar. Carp fishing is recommended in kodi lake. In addition the state's 900 kms long coastal line provides you for ample marine fishing.

**ARTICLE BY FELICIA
II BA History**

TEMPLES OF TAMILNADU

Thousands of temples with lofty towers dot the skyline of the southernmost state of Tamilnadu in India. These temples are torchbearers of the glorious heritage of the tamil speaking region, and are repositories of the magnificent art forms that evolved over several centuries, several of these temples have been glorified by the ancient tamil hymns of the 1st millennium.

Tamilnadu Temple History and Architecture:

The pallavas, Cholas, Pandyas, Vijayangar rulers and the Nayakas have made immense contributions to temple art in Tamilnadu.

Pillayarpatti:

The familiar image of Karpaka Vinayakar, is from the ancient rock cut temple at Pillaiarpatti near Karaikkudi. Located nearby is the hill temple of Shanmukhanathan at Kunnakkudi.

Tevara paadal petra stalangal:

Regionwise index of 275 ancient Shiva temples glorified by the hymns of the tamil saints of the 1st millennium CE.

Murugan temples of Tamilnadu:

There are 54 ancient Murugan shrines.

Ancient Shiva temples revered by the hymns of Manikkavasakar:

Complete details on shrines associated with the life of Manikkavasakar the saint poet of the 1st millennium.

Srirangam:

The largest among the grandest temples in India and a treasure house of art, srirangam enshrines Vishnu - Ranganatha in a reclining posture and its entrance is crowned with the loftiest tower in India.

Thiruvannamalai:

Among the grandest temples in India, Thiruvannamalai has a hoary tradition of festivals, the most important of which is Kartikai Deepam.

Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple at Madurai:

It is an ancient center of worship as well as an art gallery of vast proportions. Rich in traditions, festivals & art, Madurai is 2nd to none in representing the rich cultural heritage of India.

Chidambaram: Experience the grandeur of the temple and the tradition of festivals at Chidambaram, enshrining Shiva, as Nataraja, the lord of Dance.

The kamakshi Amman temple at Kanchipuram:

The ancient city of temples is one of the leading centers of Shakti worship in Tamilnadu. Also here are the Ekambreswarar temple, the Varada Raja Perumaal temple. Kumarakottam and many more. The southernmost tip of the subcontinent - is home to the ancient shrine of kanyakumari. At Tiruvattaar and Tirupatisaaram in Kanyakumari dist. Worship is offered in the Kerala Tantram protocol.

Srivilliputtur: This vast temple in southern TN is the birthplace of Andal, one of the revered Tiruppavai hymns.

Rajagopala Temple at Mannargudi:

The grandest temple to Krishna in India is located at Mannargudi near Thanjavur in TN.

Azhagar Koyil near Madurai: Known as Tirumaalirumcholai, this shrine has been venerated by the hymns of the Alwars.

The Aaruveedai Veedu Shrines of TN are ancient Murugan shrines referred to in Sangam period Tamil literature. The hill temple of palani enshrining Murugan is one of the most visited temples of TN and is rich in Legend and tradition.

Kumbhakonam is an ancient pilgrimage center in TN housing the Kudandai Kaaronam, Kudamookku, Kudandai kezhkottam, sarangapani and Ramaswamy temples.

Mayiladutturai: the ancient temple town of Mayiladutturai has several temples, the foremost of which are the Mayuranathar and Parimala Ranganathar temples.

Ancient temples of Chennai: the modern city of Chennai has in its midst, 4 ancient temples dating back to the 1st millennium.

Gangaikonda Cholapuram, Daarasuram, Tribhuvanam temples were built by the Chola kings who succeeded Raja Raja Chola. The 1st of these is modeled along the Thanjavur is built in the form of a chariot.

Pancha Boota stalangal:

Thiruvannamalai, kanchipuram, tiruvaanaikaval, kalahasti and chidambaram are 5 grand temples enshrining Shiva as a manifestation of the 5 elements.

The Tyagaraja temple at Thiruvarur is one of the ancient heritage sites of India and is a representation of the religio - socio - cultural history of the Tamil region for a time period spanning a millennium and a half.

Pancha sabha temples:

Chidambaram (gold), Madurai (silver), Tirunelveli (copper), Tiruvalankadu (ruby) and Kuttralam (picture) are revered as the 5 Cosmic Dance halls of Shiva.

In and around Thiruchirapalli are the rock fort temple, Uraiyur, Samayapuram, tiruvaanaikkaval, Srirangam, Uttamar Koyil, Vayalur etc. The Murugan shrine at Marudamalai, the Avinashi Lingeswarar temple are located Coimbatore. Also near coimbatore is the Perur Patteeswarar temple. At Mahabalipuram near Chennai, is the stalasayana Perumaal temple. Nearby are Tiruvidandai and tirukkalunkunram, all 3 temples over 1200yrs old. Also nearby is the Murugan shrine of Tirupporur. The Samayapuram Mariamman temple near tiruchirapalli and the tiruverkadu karumariamman temple near Chennai are centers of Shakti worship

Alwar Nava Tirupati:

9 ancient shrines in Tirunelveli are closely associated with Nammalwar. The 1st of these is Sri Vaikuntham and the last is Alwar Tirunagari. 8 of the 9 Navagraha stalams in TN are temples dedicated to Shiva; 7 of which are associated with the Bhakti movement of the 1st millennium. Sirkazhi near chidambaram is one of the most revered Shivastalams in TN and is home to the Saiva saint Tirugnanasambandar. Also located in Sirkazhi is the Trivikrama temple revered by the Alwars.

MONICA

THEME PARKS ALONG THE ECR

MGM DIZZEE WORLD

The MGM Dizzee World is one of the few best amusement parks in Chennai. The park is located near the Muttukadu on the ECR. The amusement park consists of three sections: MGM Dizzee World, MGM Marry World and MGM Water World. MGM has some beautiful lawns dotted with colorful flowers and a private beach lined with coconut trees. The park has been established to cater to all the age groups, be it children or adults. Dizzee world is about 30 kms from Chennai city on the East Coast Road. From Mahabalipuram, this place is about 24 kms north towards Chennai. The 27- acre theme spot offers a variety of thrill rides, especially for those looking for excitement and fun. MGM Dizzee World offers fun rides like Tornado Coaster, The Nilgiri Express and the Revolution. Located near Muttukadu, this amusement park offers some rides like Karnakasi ranger, Dashing Boat, Arrow Loop Roller Coaster and a Dizzee Shake, which is 110 feet high

VGP GOLDEN BEACH:

There are many fun rides at Universal Kingdom for children like super trooper, jumping frog, children's merry go round, super jet, giant wheel, break-dance, dragons, aero ship...the list is endless. Some of the premium rides include the spectacular Go-kart, Dashing Car and Water Chute. To add a cultural touch, regular cultural shows and folk and contemporary dances are conducted. The Jurassic Park and Aquarium are added attractions. Among the 37 thrill rides, balloon race, dashing cars, bungee jumping and bumping boats enthrall children on the landscaped beachfront. Have fun watching people making futile attempts to make the legendary stone-faced guard laugh! Horse rides, water jets, ToraTora, Island Waterpark, Lover' Boat, Dragon's Belly keep children amused at VGP Golden Beach. There is also a unique Musical Fountain which is fun to watch when it moves to the beat of a computerized orchestra. VGP Golden Beach Resort, a well-planned beach resort entertains its visitors with folk dances and ethnic food. There is an art centre, which sells handicrafts and articles made using seashells. An ideal beach for sunbathing, its nominal rates make VGP a successful theme park on the East Coast road.

MAYAJAAL

Drive down the East Coast Road, some 18 kms from the heart of Chennai is Mayajaal. Inviting in its isolation, this huge multiple Entertainment complex, is unique not only in the sense that it is one of its kind in Chennai, but also in the whole of India. As you walk into the complex, past the ticketing counter on the right, is a pool parlour and a gaming alley with 50 different games, catering to the 5 - 55 age group and beyond. On the left is the shopping area, which sells Mayajaal-themed Merchandise. On offer are themed-books, notebooks, telephone indexes, mugs, t-shirts, fashion jewellery, pens and CDs of animation movies made by PentaMedia, namely Sindbad and Pandavas.

A tour of the first floor takes you to an 8-lane bowling alley, which is the biggest in Chennai and till recently was the biggest in India, before someone started a bigger bowling alley with more lanes in Jaipur. And then you move on to the six theatres, which are all 150-seaters. With their Dolby Digital or Digital Theatre Systems (DTS) and electronic hi-resolution projection, the theatres are a sight for sore eyes. The sheer cleanliness of the place leaves you absolutely amazed! On offer is a good mix of international and domestic movies. And the timings of the shows are such that you do not have to wait for more than half an hour to watch the movies. Some or the other theatre will start a show within a half hour difference. The main area or the centre Atrium as they call it serves as a food court. It is sometimes used for organising events or games. The large screen (Barco - Rear Projection System) placed diagonally opposite to the restaurant also serves as a crowd controller. According to Muralikrishnan, the place is 'jammed', with around 2000 people coming in on Sundays. Invariably there is a huge queue for food, for the games or for the bowling; and when the crowd becomes uncontrollable, they play clippings of the Indian and Australian Cricket team's visit to Mayajaal, on the huge screen, which almost always simmers them down.

During the weekdays, on an average, they have around 400 people coming in. Mayajaal is closed on Mondays for maintenance. And what goes into maintaining such a huge place? " 30 people working round the clock on general maintenance and 18 on technical maintenance", says Muralikrishnan. A mammoth task, considering the fact that you have to keep up six theatres, one huge gaming arcade with 50 games,

one big bowling alley, the food court and the shopping area up and running from 11 a.m. to 11.30 p.m. The food court is run by Stop At Sams, you have a wide variety of cuisine to choose from -North Indian, South Indian, Mughlai, Chinese....etc. On cards are some interesting tie-ups with a few other popular brands to complement the Food Court. Next to the shopping area is the Kid Care Centre, which has two attendants, who take care of children below five years of age.

According to Muralikrishnan, they had allotted more space for shopping, and also they had a beauty parlour and a net café, when they started out. But their feedbacks told them that people did not want to spend money on general shopping, when they come in for entertainment. So the shopping area was reduced to concentrate only on themed merchandise. Also very few people are interested in browsing. The gaming arcade seems to be a huge hit with entertainment starved Chennai, so they are planning to put in more games in the future.

Muttukaadu Boat House

The bridge, which runs across the lake, affords a resplendent view of the backwaters of the Bay of Bengal. A popular halt on the East Coast Road, it is frequented by tourists and fun lovers on their way to Mahabalipuram. The main highlight of Muttukaadu is the boat ride, organised by Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC). There are two and three seater rowboats that can be hired for Rs.45/- for half an hour. And if you don't feel up to rowing, you can enlist the services of a rower who charges Rs.7/- for the same duration. Kayaks and canoes are available at Rs.40/- for half an hour.

If you have come with your family or a large group, there are eight and sixteen seater motor boats available at Rs.160/- and Rs.320/- respectively. The newest entrant to Muttukaadu is the dinky boat popularly known as 'Kaadhalar Padagu', or 'Lover's Boat'. This is available at Rs.100/- for twenty minutes. There is also a restaurant providing snacks

INDHUMATHI

TAMIL NADU

Cuisines

Tamil Nadu provides the visitor with a wide variety of delicious food both for the vegetarians as well as the non-vegetarians, though most food in Tamil Nadu consists of grains, lentils, rice and vegetables. Spices are added to give a distinctive taste.

Breakfast or tiffin includes idly (steamed rice cakes), dosai (a pancake made from a batter of rice) and lentils crisp fried on a pan, vada (deep fried doughnuts made from a batter of lentils), pongal (a mish mash of rice and lentils boiled together and seasoned with ghee, cashew nuts, pepper and cummin seed), uppuma (cooked semolina seasoned in oil with mustard, pepper, cummin seed and dry lentils.)

There are several variations of the dishes mentioned above which are eaten with coconut chutney, sambar (seasoned lentil broth) and mulaga podi (a powdered mix of several dried lentils eaten with oil).

Lunch or meals consists of cooked rice served with an array of vegetable dishes, sambar, chutneys, rasam (a hot broth made with tamarind juice and pepper) and curd (yogurt). For a non-vegetarian lunch, curries or dishes cooked with mutton, chicken or fish is included. The meals is incomplete without crisp papads or appalam.

Chettinad cuisine is a speciality in Tamil Nadu and will be a delight for those who like hot and spicy non-vegetarian food. This type of food has several variations of fish, mutton, and chicken dishes of which the Chettinad Pepper Chicken is a speciality. The Tamil style of Mughali food can be savoured in the biryanis and paya. The later is a kind of spiced trotters broth and is eaten with either parathas or appam: Tamil Nadu, especially Chennai, is famous for its filter coffee as most Tamils have a subtle contempt for instant coffee.

The making of filter coffee is almost a ritual, for the coffee beans have to be first roasted and then ground. The powder is put into a filter set and boiling hot water is added to prepare the decoction and allowed to set for about 15 minutes. The decoction is then added to milk with sugar to taste. The final drink is poured from one container to another in rapid succession to make the ideal frothy cup of filter coffee. The last process makes one wonder whether the brew could be bought by the yard.

ALICE COOPER

THE FUN WORLD

Chennai tourism

Mahabalipuram Shore Temple built between 7th century and 9th century by the Pallavas Chennai's historic landmarks and buildings, long sandy beaches, cultural and art centers and parks constitute the major tourist and recreational attractions of the city. The most important tourist attraction of the city is actually in the neighbouring town of Mahabalipuram with its ancient temples and rock carvings of the 7th century Pallava kingdom.

The other historic tourist spots include the 8th century Kapaleeshwarar temple in Mylapore, characteristic of the ancient Dravidian style of architecture, the Parthasarathy temple in Triplicane, the San Thome Basilica and Fort St George.

Getting Out of Chennai

East Coast Road - Brand New and Big Fun

Even as recently as about ten years ago, the ECR, which was then known as the New Mahabalipuram Road, had nothing much to offer by way of entertainment, except for VGP Golden Beach and Roger Whittaker's crocodile bank. Further down, the road led you to Mahabalipuram, and that was that. The scenario that meets a traveller today is entirely different. The East Coast Road could very well be termed the entertainment highway of Chennai. The road is brand new, flanked by the sea on the left and dotted with amusement spots through the entire stretch. Driving down ECR is an experience. Really!

You can pick and choose from Amusement Parks, Water Sports Centres, Beaches, Eco Conservation, Cultural and Religious Centres, Restaurants or Resorts to spend your day in. The road caters to practically every type of pastime that one could think about.

Amusement Parks, Water Sports Centres, Beaches: Prarthana Drive In Theatre: Approximately 10 Kms out of Adyar, this complex offers both a drive in theatre and a drive in restaurant VGP

Golden Beach: The first amusement park in Chennai, just about 11 Kms away from Adyar. Still a landmark of Chennai, this park offers over 40 odd rides for the fun seeker. The only park with an access to the beach Situated on the East Coast Road, the Tourism and

Entertainment corridor of Tamil Nadu, VGP Golden Beach Resort is perhaps the only Beach Resort within City. A short 20-minute drive from Chennai City, VGP Golden Beach Resort offers a serene and relaxing atmosphere in today's stress-driven world. The VGP Golden Beach Universal Kingdom - Amusement Park has been a trailblazer in the field of fun, frolic and entertainment. It has a charm of its own with cool breeze and beautiful pathways flanked by shady trees amidst green lawns. For fun and entertainment, the younger citizens will be enthralled by the numerous revamped additions (like super trooper, giant wheel, aero-ship, jumping frog, children's merry go round, super jet, break-dance, dragons belly and many more.) The Spectacular Gokart, Dashing Car and Water Chute comprise the premium rides. Regular cultural shows, folk and contemporary dances organised add to the special cultural touch. Special additions for sight seeing such as Jurassic Park and Aquarium offer education with fun.

Ahaa Water Park: A spot for frolicking in water, the Ahaa Water Park offers a variety of water sports and fun activities. It has a wave generator, which can generate waves of upto 3.5ft. Ahaa' Water Park is a recently opened water park that focuses on family entertainment. there is a wave pool that generates waves of up to 3.5 feet and an octagonal slide with an overflowing mushroom in the center. There is 'a lazy river' so to say, where a constant current ensures your cruising along the banks or step under the 30-foot high water fall that spans 20 feet. The kiddies too have a pool. East Coast Road, Uthandi, Chennai Timings: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. all days of the week

Kart Attack: A centre dedicated to fulfilling the speed maniac's desire for thrill in a safe and secure environment. The first go karting centre of Chennai, this has placed Chennai on the go karting map of India, and has been instrumental in creating a few go karting champions also.

Mayajaal: 100,000 sq.ft of air-conditioned space. A multitude of activities and entertainment avenues, including movie theatres, bowling alleys, video games parlours, multicuisine food courts, and much more. This is Mayajaal, a multidimensional entertainment centre, on par with any entertainment zone found abroad. Open from 11 am to 11 pm you can easily spend the entire day here. It offers that much and more.

MGM Dizzy World: Spread over 27 acres, this theme park offers joy rides, food stalls and other games. It features one of the first roller coaster rides of Chennai, and many of the rides offered could make your hair stand on edge. On the softer side, you have the dashing car drives, and the swimming pool with its water slides.

Little Folks & Dolphin City: Specifically aimed at providing entertainment for the children, this park has a longer history than MGM.

Muttukadu Boat House: Located at 23 Kms from Adayar, this backwater area is maintained by the Tamilnadu Tourism Development Corporation, and offers rowing, wind surfing, water skiing, and speedboat riding.

Muttukadu: (36 kms) The backwaters of Muttukadu have been developed by the Tamilnadu Tourism Development Corporation to serve as a scenic picnic spot and a centre for watersports. In February every year, a windsurfing regatta is organised in Muttukadu. Competitions in windsurfing and other watersports are also held. Training and demonstration programmes are held for youth.

Covelong: (48kms) The remains of the Fort have now been converted into a luxury beach resort which offers facilities for windsurfing and swimming. An ancient Catholic Church, a mosque and the ruins of the Fort make interesting viewing from this 5 Star hotel.

Eco Conservation, Cultural and Religious Centres: Marundeswarar Temple is the first temple that one comes across on the route. A Shiva temple having a rich sthala purana or location history.

Sai Baba Temple: Approximately 8.5 kms from Adyar, the temple is peaceful, clean and breezy.

Jagannathan Temple: An exact replica of the Puri Jagannath Temple. Those who have not been to Puri can take a look at this temple.

Cholamandalam Artists Village: Set up by a group of artists to serve as a recluse for artists of all genres. This village offers the ambience needed for creativity to flow and is inhabited only by artists. The village offers guesthouse facilities exclusively for artists from elsewhere so that they could also benefit from the environment provided by the place. A must visit for those who appreciate the finer things of life.

Tiruvidanthai Nithya Kalyana Perumal Koil: As the name denotes, a temple dedicated to Lord Venkateshwara found on East Coast Road.

Crocodile Bank: The brainchild of Romulus Whittaker, the acknowledged specialist on reptiles, this centre has gained fame as an endeavour for the preservation and propagation of endangered species of crocodiles. The centre also houses a large variety of snakes.

Crocodile Bank: (44 kms.) Not far from Mamallapuram, this crocodile breeding and research centre is run by Romulus Whittaker. Here several species of Indian and African crocodiles and alligators are bred in captivity. The reptiles are kept in their natural habitat in open pools and can be viewed from safe proximity. This farm breeds crocodile to augment the crocodile population of the wildlife sanctuaries.

Dakshinachitra: A venture of Deborah Thiagarajan and her associates from the Madras Craft Foundation. Dakshinachitra is an amazing place to visit, as various kinds of traditional houses have been transported to Chennai from interior parts of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala and rebuilt here piece by piece.

Mahabalipuram: The internationally recognized heritage monument of our country, personifying the art and culture of the Pallava kings.

Restaurants: The ECR abounds with restaurants and eating spots, which offer a wide range of cuisines and tasteful ambience. A few of the food outlets are listed below: -Basera -Blue Lagoon -Thanjavur Restaurant -Food Village -Coastal Kitchen -Hot Kitchen Beach Resorts: Another convenience that is found in plenty on the East Coast Road is the presence of several comfortable, pleasing, beach resorts, which enable you to take a break, and enjoy a seaside environment. Take your pick from those mentioned below: -Buena Vista -Blue Lagoon -Green Country Resort -Fisherman's Cove -Casuarina Bay

ANNAI SOLACE

DANCE AND MUSIC FESTIVALS IN THE CITY OF CHENNAI

Madras and many a musician and composer came from distant places to exhibit his skill before them. All these circumstances helped Madras to gradually rise in musical importance and became an importance seat of music. Madras was also a center of sacred music. Numerous Bhajana mandirams have been functioning in the different part of the city from a long time. Every pettah even now has at least two or three Bhajana mandirams from where one hear recitals of sacred music on Friday, Saturday and other festival day. The Dhanur masa bhajanas in Mylapor and Peddunaickenpeta have been an annual feature in the religious life of Madras for many decades. The Mylapore bhajana was inaugurated by Tyagaraja's disciples and is still being carried on.

Music Festivals

The Krishna Jayanti Utsavam conducted by Josyer Nallaubbier, the Arudra Utsavam conducted by Guruvapathan, the Navaratri Utsavam conducted by Tiruvengadachariyor the Ramanavami Utsavam conducted by Jalatarangam Ramaniab Chettiar and Sesha Lyengar are a few of the other important festivals conducted in the past. The Nathamuni band was the first organized band of players of wind instrument Indian music in Madras.

Chennai Dance and Music Festival

Its haughtily refer to as the season since 1927 artists from all over the country have performed in this celebration of South India classical dance are music vocal and instrumental music as well as solo and group dance are performed in heritage hemgalows and on the premises of some of the city bigger temple.

Government to promote Chennai music festival

Chennai music and dance festival is a celebration of classical music and dance of South India held during mid December to mid January in the capital city of Chennai. The festival is held at a number of venues around the city by various 'sabhas' or organizations. Besides the auditoriums, well-known temple premises and heritage bungalows

are being used as venues. The month long dance and music extravaganza will have performances of famous artistes from various parts of India. Chennai- Markazhi music festival is all set to go global thanks to an ambitious partnerships being worked out between the state tourism department and music sabhs to market the December music season.

For the first time ever, the government will be an active partner in the music season from next year extending marketing publicity and infrastructure support and including it in successful Enchanting Tamil Nadu campaign which is now on global platform.

Dance Drama in Chennai City.

Bharata refers to the author of the Natya Shastra and natya is Sanskrit for the sacred dance drama brought to the stage at the beginning of the 20th century. Bharatanatyan is thought to have been created by Bharata Muni a Hindu sage who wrote the Natya Shastra, the most important ancient treatise on classical Indian dance. It is also called the fifth Veda in reference to the foundation of Hindu religion and philosophy, from which sprang the related South Indian musical tradition of Carnatic music. However, there are references if Rishi or Siddhar Agastya teaching his disciples a different form of sacred dance than the one taught by Bharat Muni. Rukmini Devi Arundale was one of those who raised the social status of Bharatanatyam and greatly popularized it she was also instrumental in modifying mainly the pandanallur style of Bharatanatyam and bringing it to the attention of the world after being heavily influenced by Anna Pavlova, a Russian ballet dancer.

The concerts in the memory of the Late Calcutta K.S.Krishnamoorthy featured a vocal recital by Suguna Varadachari on Dec. 5th, at the Mylapore Fine Arts hall. Suguna Varadachari is quite acclaimed an artiste and her recitals are marked by a strict adherence to sampradaya. Beginning with the atana varnam "Sreenivasa", she went on to sing "Sree mooladhara vinayaga" in shree ragam, a composition by Deekshitar. "Mundey deeramudu" a composition of Thyagaraja in harikamboji was very neatly presented with the neraval and swaras at "thamasadhi gunarahithudu". A detailed exposition of the darmavathi was rich with imagination and charm. K.S.K's composition "Kavavey karuna rasa yuvathi" was sung, an apt tribute to the great musician. Thodi was the main raga with the krithi "Nannu brochudaku

thamasamey” by Shyama Sasthri. The other compositions that featured in the concert were Shashi vadana (chandrajyothi), Melatheliyathey (Darbar), Thillaithanam endru sonnal (shyama). The concert was highly inspiring and a very delightful experience. Having studied Bharatanatyam for 3 years in 1936 Rrukmini Devi Arundale founded the school Kalashitra outside the city of Madras to teach it and other studies in Indian music and art. She was one of first teachers to instruct a few to perform the dance.

‘Meghasandesa’ Dancer

Meghasandesa with a cast of 26 dancers. From the age of five upwards presented on anomaly of sorts. At the micro level, the production passages yet the larger picture of the journey itself remained elusive. As these individual segment stood out, so did the individual effort of the dancers. While the main characters of Aadith Narayer, J. Venugopal, E.D Venkatasubramanian and Shalmi, Guruprasad gave mature performances. The group displayed ample skill and coordination. As expected, the little ones the show coming in as the six cute chataka birds in their all white costumers, and as peacocks with their elaborate plumage

The Margazhi festival of dance and music started early back in 1927, to commemorate the anniversary of Madras music Academy every December, was later adopted by various organization which held art festivals in different parts of the city. The Tamil month of the ‘Margazhi ‘ is a sacred month of the Hindu. South Indian classical music which has it roots in devotion to the god has been a tradition from of worship from time immemorial.

USHA

KALAKSHETRA

Shrimathi RUKMANI DEVI ARUNDALEs instituion devoted to fine arts, Kalakshetra was founded in 1936 in the Theosophical societys Besant Gardens , during the tenure of the dancers husband as he societies PRESIDENT. However, in 1936, this”TEMPLE OF ART”, dedicated to Carnatic Music and Bharatanatyam,traditional weaving and tradional design, oved out to the coast of thiruvanmiyur.here its crafts research center,founded by Rukmani devi in 1937, to ensure that only traditional designs are used for the sarees of the dancers, continues to research and weave cottan and silk in ancient designs.

Kalakshetra, together with Besant-Arundale school, founded in 1937 by Dr. Arundale and the G S Arundale Training center for teachers, whose beginnings were in the several schools Ocott started in and around the societies gardens in Thiuvanmiyur. There is also in this ancient village a 10th-11th century Chola temple dedicated to Marundishwarar, where the Ramayanas author, Valmiki, is said to be worshipped.

RUKMANI DEVI

Rukmani Devi Arundale who died a few days short of her 82nd birthday. In her last years she was a stern disciplinarian and as domineering as Annie Besant; in her youth she had been as much as a rebel as the Irish woman who had treated as her daughter. Rukmani Nilakanta Shashtri was a slip of a girl, but a beauty by any standards, when she was 16, and came into the limelight. She belonged to an orthodox Brahmin family, many of the members were Theosophists. Her spiritual preceptors were, therefore, at the time, Annie Besant and George Sydney Arundale, an Australian who had come out of the Besant had founded on the Adayar campus of the Theosophical Society. Rukmani Devi fell in love with Arundale who was 40 yrs. and married him. She was already interested in Indian classical Carnatic and Hindustani. She was also a good singer.

RUKMANI'S INTEREST FOR DANCE:

She used to accompany Arundale for spreading the gospel of the Theosophy. One evening, she had to watch ANNA PAVLOVA's ballet dance and was inspired by her performance. She wanted to learn the art form and was happened so. When she returned back to India, she wanted to learn the classical form of dance of South India. Those days classical dance was called SADIRATTAM, and was supposed to be performed only by the DEVDASIs. Rukmani Devi, in spite of being a pure Brahmin girl, came forward and learnt that art. She studied dance from a few instructors and from herself. At the Theosophical Conference in 1935, she unveiled what she had learnt. This was her first performance at the age of 36. The audience were sat enthralled watching her performance. George Arundale, on the other hand used to meditate in the wings whenever she danced.

KALAKSHETRA

Today Kalakshetra, trains students from all over the world, with the

gurus and shishyas at the same campus, ancient Indian tradition of the gurukulam, where education becomes a spiritual experience. Kalakshetra has its own 100acre campus where Canatic music as well as Bharatanatyam are taught. It also has classes for painting, weaving and other ancient crafts. Apart from the arts and education, it was Theosophy, animal welfare, and vegetarianism- that had in a way, brought the Arundales together- which were Rukmani devis life's interests. Still students and faculties are supposed to wear their uniforms or costumes, that are woven and stitched within the campus.

CONCLUSION

The training at kalkshetra is rigorous. The emphasis is laid on correct movements and total training. The art of Nattuvangam is also taught. Theoretical and practical knowledge both in dance and music, in choreography and compositions set apart a Kalakshetra student from others. The students from abroad also come for learning this art. it has composed more than 30 dance dramas, in all the languages. These productions are highly imaginative. Theyt follow the classical traditions in the best sence of the term and have brought into a vogue a genre of dance dramas. Smt. Rukmani devis is believed as the person who has lived her life mainly for dance. she has done something that will last not only life but time itself. Her contribution has left a permanent indelible imprint on Indian culture.

ASHWATHI

TOURISM IN MANIPUR

nestling deep within a lush green corner of North-East India is the wondrously little Shangrila called Manipur—"a jeweled land". This little corner is a veritable paradise on earth where mother nature has been extra generous in her bounty. Untouched and undiscovered Manipur promises to be the great tourist discovery of the 21st century. An oval shaped valley surrounded by blue green hills, rich in art and tradition has inspired description such as the "Switzerland of the East" with its cascading rapids, tripping rivers, carpets of flowers, exotic blooms and lazy lakes.

THE LOKTAK LAKE

The Loktak Lake is the largest freshwater lake in the North-Eastern India. There are varieties of freshwater fishes in this lake. A beautiful island known as the 'KARANG ISLAND' which is inhabited by more than 1000 people is found there. The floating mass of vegetation known as 'Phumdi' is found on the Loktak Lake.

KEIBUL LAMJAO NATIONAL PARK

This national park is the home of the brow-antlered deer known as 'SANGAI', one of the rarest and endangered species in the world. This unique deer which is also known as dancing deer is found only in Manipur. Their habitat is the KEIBUL LAMJAO NATIONAL PARK which is the only floating national park in the world. The Sangai survive only on the floating mass of vegetation on the Loktak Lake i.e. 'the phumdi'.

DZUKO VALLEY

It is a very beautiful green valley and the most picturesque place in Senapati District bordering Nagaland. It is famous for its rare terrestrial lily called "Dzuko Lily" and the enchanting snow clad valley during January and February. The highest peak of Manipur "Mount Isu" is also located behind this valley.

SIROI HILLS

The Siroi Hills is in Ukhrul District of Manipur. Ukhrul is known for a peculiar type of land-lily, the 'Siroi Lily' grown on the Siroi Hills at

a height of 8500ft. This ordinary looking Siroi Lily, which grow only in this part of world, blooms during May-June.

SADU CHIRU Waterfall

About 20kms from Imphal, capital of Manipur beside the Tiddim Road (NH-150) is a picturesque site famous for its perennial waterfall in a scenic foot hill. There are three waterfall spots. This is a newly open tourist spot.

LOUKOI PAT: This tiny lake located near the Tiddim Road on National Highway-150 at Bishrupur is a hang out place for various visitors from within and outside the state. Boating facilities in this tiny lake and the scenic beauty of the place is sure to mesmerize the visitors.

KANGCHUP

Kangchup 921m above sea level, 16kms from Imphal towards west, is a health resort on the hills over-looking the Manipur Valley. The scenery is picturesque and worth seeing. With the construction of Singda Dam here, the place has become one of the important picnic spots.

MOIRANG

45kms from Imphal, this town has a special place in the history of Indian Freedom Struggle. It was at Moirang that the flag of the Indian National Army was first unfurled on April 14, 1944. The INA Museum containing letters, photographs, badges of ranks and other memorabilia reminds the visitors of the noble sacrifices made by the INA under the charismatic leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

KHONGJOM War Memorial

Khongjom War Memorial, 36kms from Imphal on the Indo-Myanmar road is a major historical place. It was here that Major General Paona Brajabashi, one of the greatest warriors of Manipur proved his valour against the superior force of the invading British Army in 1891. The hillock at the foot of which he laid down his life in defence of his motherland, is a reminiscent of the past heroic deeds of Manipur warriors.

KANGLA FORT

The center of Manipur's power during the reign of earlier rulers, the

Historical embodiment of Manipur rulers and the people of Manipur, Kangla has a significant place in the heart and mind of the people of Manipur. The old Govindajee temple outside and inside moat and other relics are perfect reflections of the rich art and culture of Manipur.

SHAHEED MINAR

The indomitable spirit of the Meitei and tribal martyrs who sacrificed their lives while fighting the British in 1891, is commemorated by this tall Minar at Bir Tikendrajit Park in the heart of Imphal City.

WAR Cemeteries

Commemorating of the memories of the British and Indian soldiers who died during the World War II, these War Cemeteries are managed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Serene and well maintained, the graves carry little stone markers and bronze plaques recording the sacrifice of those gallant soldiers.

KHONGHAMPAT ORCHIDARIUM

12kms from Imphal on National Highway NO.39 is the Central Orchidarium which covers 200 acres and houses over 110 rare varieties of orchids, which include dozens of endemic species. The peak blooming season is March to April.

RAJKUMARI BARBINA

THE BOHRAS

This community forms a small sect of the shia community of the Muslims. Though they are small in numbers they are known for their peaceful, friendly and clean attitude. They are situated in majority in and around areas of Parys, Kilpauk and Adyar. Their center of religious and social activity is their mosque SAIFEE MASJID, located in the heart of George town. The Bohra Muslims are engaged mostly in business profession and are extremely doing well. They believe in giving alms to the poor and help the needy. They lead a very pious life too.

HISTORY

The Bohra Muslims like all other Muslims believe in the teachings of PROPHET MOHAMMAD and the concept of one God - ALLAH. Their holy book is the KORAN and they follow all the rules laid down by the Muslim code of ethics. The only difference being the following of different successors of the Prophet.

THEIR RELIGIOUS HEAD:

The present religious head of the community is DR. SYEDNA. MOHAMMED. BURHANNUDIN (TUS). He is not only a religious but also a spiritual head. He leads and guides the bohra Muslims in the proper path of Islam and shows them the right way to achieve heaven. He teaches them the right way of living and always rescues them from the danger. One of his teachings include that every Bohra Muslim where ever he/she might be put up should always stay loyal to his/her country and also add to the prosperity of it. He is the head of all Bohras in the world and always keeps his affectionate eye on all of them giving them all his love and blessing them tremendously. He has been recognized as one of the best leader of the world. In spite of 95 years of age he is extremely active and works 24/7 for the welfare of his Bohra community.

CUSTOMS:

Being a part of the Muslim culture all its customs are also a part of Islam. They pray five times a day, take the holy pilgrimage of Haj, fast during the time of Ramzan and give regular alms. Their main festivals include ID when they pray Qutbah in the morning and make

the delicious biryani and mouth watering shirkhumma at home. The other time of the year where the Bohras become involved in religious activity is the time of Mohrram where they mourn the death of their martyr IMAM HUSSAIN {grand son of Prophet Mohammad}. They do not believe in caste or class system. They are all very united in their thought, action and deed. Girls are highly encouraged and motivated to pursue education and reach great heights with their knowledge at the same time also establishing a good family life. Their marriage functions are pompous and a fun time. The best part about their marriage is that dowry is strictly prohibited and divorce procedure is not so simple.

Costume and food habits:

The attire of the Bohra ladies include the RIDA which is totally different from the general burkhas or purdahs of the Muslim ladies. They are highly vibrantly coloured and have rich work on it. Their food habits include Mughlai and Indian cuisines.

EDUCATION:

The Bohra people are highly educated in not only worldly wisdom but also in their Muslim culture and codes. The educational institute of JAMIA TUS SAIFIA is in Surat whose foundation was laid some 200 years back and is the hub of Islamic education and knowledge. All in all this community is complete in its self with a high morale and a positive attitude towards life. A fast growing community in terms of number and development, with a lot to give to the world and all it wants in return is the love and friendship of people of all races and culture.

ZAINEB

24 HOURS IN CHENNAI

Fragrant jasmine flowers, hot chips and Marina beach outings with a group of friends in two-wheelers is what my 'Singara' Chennai is all about.. .Caught amidst the rigid roots of a Dravidian cultural orthodoxy and the tantalising tentacles of modernisation, stands the Gateway to South India - Chennai. From St. Thomas Mount, where the great apostle was martyred, to the Parry's Comer, that a couple of centuries ago housed the second largest Judicial Court in the world, stretches the fourth largest metropolis of India that holds surprises at every turn. Right from the moment you alight at the Chennai Central railway station, you notice something in the air... a tremendous linguistic pride to begin with!

24 hours in Chennai will give just a glimpse of what this wonderful city has to offer and bring you back for more, for sure! So come along, let's set the good times rolling...

6 AM - As far as I can remember, it was early morning when my eyes barely opened. It was cold but not scary enough to send a chill down my spine. Surprisingly, there was no rain. My room was filled with little shafts of light through my window; almost the perfect weather to take a jog through the second largest beach in the world—the Marina Beach. I was in Chennai!

6:4-5 AM The morning jog is met by the young athletes looking to warm up, young couples getting cozy, and old men either scowling at today's generation or having a laugh sans reason to relieve stress. Thirty exhausting minutes later, my eye caught sight of a coconut vendor. He offered me one for some mere change. A victim to his marketing, I didn't mind. What a refreshing product it was. Nothing short of heaven! My moment of shut-eyed satisfaction as the water quickly disappeared, as did the fleshy, soft coconut inside that melted in my mouth like ice cream. I couldn't have bargained for anything better after a run. Chennai sure is a refreshing destination and it's time to get a 'taste' of it!

8 AM. - Just an auto drive away from the Marina beach is Saravana - a famous South Indian restaurant. Breakfast here is idlis and a special dish called a 7- taste oothapam. While the idlis are fresh and fluffy, the oothapams are tiny little rice pancakes spread on a plate, each topped with a different chutney-coconut chutney, peanut chutney,

mint chutney, just to name a few; hence the name 7-taste... rarely has a culinary afterthought been so memorable. I finished my breakfast with a glass of hot filter coffee; one can almost taste the freshly-ground coffee till long after.

9.30 AM- Great start to take me through the busy streets of T. Nagar, the central shopping destination and a must-visit for first-timers to Chennai. A few words of caution though, while you're on this path. First, if you have any signs of claustrophobia, stay out. Second, you're better off on foot or in a bus to avoid the trouble with parking and third, if you're not here to shop for saris, leave this place out of your plan. Nalli Silks, the biggest sari shop in Chennai stood amidst all the chaos outside. It is fantastic to watch a shopkeeper unfolding each sari like he is unveiling a masterpiece. I came out hours later with two filled shopping bags to take back home, a sight that'll make every housewife in Chennai proud and every husband hitting his forehead with utmost disdain. Hungry after the shopping spree, my next halt was at Amaravathi, the restaurant with the best Chettinaad food the city has to offer.

2 PM- About half-hour from T. Nagar and situated adjacent to the Music Academy on Cathedral Road is Amaravathi. The Chettiars were known for their skills in trading and for being generous hosts. I felt no less than their guest. Their portions of food are more than generous. The spread is on a banana leaf. Starters were cabbage vadai dipped in onion sambar. Then came the main course. Round one is a crispy dosa with chicken curry. Round two is biryani with chicken korma. Like Shakespeare's plays, your heart is filled with joy but tears soon start to roll towards the end. Your mouth waters, so do your eyes. The dessert, payasam - glazed with cashewnuts was just the thing my tastebuds needed after a peppery affair.

4 P M - Even though the next two hours were spent at Spencer's Plaza at Mount Road, the biggest shopping mall in Chennai, my mind was still at a South Indian lunch table. Which meant I simply had to refrain from going close to the Food Court there. Browsing, though, was quite a pleasure. I passed through Kashmiri handicraft shops - lots of them! A few interesting antique shops and the Landmark Bookstore. Bookstores always interest me for the peace and quietude, especially during late afternoons and of course, the books itself. Time simply passed by...

6 PM joined an old friend of mine in this very unique coffee shop called Amethyst, about fifteen minutes away from Spencer's Plaza. Obvious that the menu was filled with the most exotic coffees, but what intrigued me was the place itself. An old bungalow turned into a coffee shop. A coffee house if you'd like to call it. What a simple and lovely concept! Just the place a young college kid would like to be leaving lectures half way in between for. We gulped down our coffees and were off.

8 P M- An hour and a catnap later I woke up at live exhibits of my most feared predator. At Night! The Crocodile Bank. Home to more than 250 man eating crocodiles and I underline man eating because they have a crunch power second to chomp king the Tyrannosaurus Rex. However, I could not see any. It was pitch dark. I tried to concentrate hard. Any distraction could cause my demise. I could meander into a crocs pit. Luckily I stayed close to the guide. The man then tossed me a torch and asked me to point it towards the pit at eye level. The dark glistening bodies, the shiny tales, the tremendous jaws; I was looking into the shiny eye of a croc! I moved the torch at the same eye level and saw the whole pit. Hundreds of them, some of them on top of another, some of them with their jaws wide open. I was overjoyed. I wanted to take the torch to witness every pit, but was running out of time. The excitement had worked up a hearty appetite!

9.30 PM Shake a leg, let your hair down and have a blast as Chennai has some of the best discotheques and fine dine restaurants! We had a host of options including, Pasha at the Park, Bikes & Barrel at Residency, the ECR beach parties and lots more. But we decided to go to Zaras, which has the yummiest of Mexican food and the best cocktails in the city! Music is great too. I was tired buttons Zaras stirred me up that night. It's all I can remember because it was 6 am the next morning when my eyes barely opened. And I had a flight to catch. Sigh!

REENI. JOSEPH

HOMES OF THE CHETTIYARS

The Chettiyar Heritage

In the southern part of Tamil Nadu, the southern most part of India is Chettinadu, the land of the Nattukottai Chettiyar or the Nagarathar. Karaikudi is its chief town, but Devakottai has the largest chettiyar population. Karaikudi is about 425 KM from Madras, the capital of Tamil Nadu and the gateway to South India. Madurai and Tiruchirapalli are the two major cities near Chettinad each about 80 KM distance. Both have airports with regular flights to and from Madras and are connected by narrow level good roads with most of the villages of Chettinad.

The traditional homes of the Tamils, at least from the records of the last 500 years of so, comprised: A public reception area abutting the street, a feature of it being twin raised platforms (Thinnai- 3 feet off the ground) on either side of the main door.

An enclosed area or built in courtyard immediately behind the reception area surrounded by corridors & small rooms leading off them. This was the living area, with the front corridor sometimes broadened to accommodate to Thinnai (Pattasalai) closer to the ground on either side of the doorway and rear corridor used for dining.

A kitchen and cleaning area with well, again enclosed, but either duplication in broad concept the living area, the personal rooms being replaced by store rooms and kitchens, or the kitchen being a variant of the living area behind the reception area and the courtyard being a multi purpose open garden of sorts with even the family and cattle in residence.

This single storey house of Mud, Lime local stone tile and wood was pretty much the type of houses; the Chettiyars lived in about 250 years ago. You will still find an occasional house or two like this in some villages, more often than non- rented to a non chettiyar. The wood appears to have been rarely polished, traditional lime wash was used to whiten the walls and vegetable dyes were used to paint embellishments and pillars.

The first embellishment of these houses came with the use of carved wooden pillars in the more 'public' areas, greater carving on door

frames and lintels and the raising of decorative elements like masonry balustrally over the reception area which was in time enclosed. The add of balustrades to embellish the façade above roof level led to the building of a second storey across the width of the house, with façade-embellished towers or turrets at both ends. This first floor was usually a long, multi purpose hall with pillared verandahs on either side. More decorative houses with the increasing prosperity of the community and this was also marked by greater use of the famed mirror finish to walls and floors.

It was in the 1860's and 1870's that the first of the great houses of the first of the great houses of the Chettiyars were built, following the basic inputs of the early houses and their improvements in the second stage. Their ornateness in this third stage was based on local skills like wood carving, stone salpting and stucco- moulding. It was the richness of the decoration that distinguished one house from another, for most of them were built to an almost identical plan by master craftsmen with the most rudimentary of home made equipment. An amazing feature of these houses is the evenness or gentle slope achieved where needed, the great slopes of the roofs, the identical nature of decorative features repeated and above all the built to last quality of the homes which even today, 125 and more years later, do not leak, do not reveal cracks, do not show structural weaknesses and which cannot be said to need major repair, That all this was achieved by untutored master craftsmen, who learnt by watching , by experience and by knocks on the heads or raps on the knuckles is the true wonder of these houses.

White mirror finish, later called Madras plaster, for walls and floors and a variant of it in red were an integral part of these gracious homes where the woodwork dominated. The prosperity that favoured the community from the 1880s and that enriched it till the 1920 and was when the greatest no of big houses were built. But the great houses now became mansions, drawing heavily from western influences. The carved wooden pillars of Burma teak and Ceylon stain wood gave way to gleaming black polished charnockite (granite) first used in the tomb of Job charnock, the founder of Calcutta.

Madras finished floors in the public areas gave way for marble from Italy, or atleast, Rajputana. Similarly, finished walls received the benefit of colorful ceramic tiles imported from as far apart as Japan and Britain. Great house had become mansions and though coudness

was still some year away, a more ostentatious display of wealth had begun. In the years that followed, the dark years, there was very little building activity. But from the seventies building began again; the age of great houses and mansions, however, was over. Houses became smaller, not very different from the houses of the middle class and affluent elsewhere in Tamil Nadu, the contemporary architects moved in the "Modern Madras Mélange", drawing heavily from the west past and present, became the vogue. Fortunately, much of the two great era of chettiyar house constructor renicuinis to evolve a sense of pride in the Chettiyars and awe in outsiders. May that heritage be preserved, even if traditional usage patterns as described here are rarely now followed.

With public drainage lacking and flash flooding as well as creepy, crawly 'beasties' a threat, the great houses of the third age were built on earth foundations raised 6 to 10 feet from road level and with steep flights of steps leading up to the gate of the now completely enclosed house. These steps led to the public reception area which was usually fronted by open space in a corner of which could be well. High Thinnai-s or low Pattasalai. Platforms raised to only half the height of the high Thinnai-s, embellished with ornate pillars constituted the reception area on either side of the corridor leading from the front steps to the main door. The towering main door was the most ornate feature of the house and in the extent and intricateness of its wood carving bespoke the status and prosperity of the family.

The passage way between the Thinnai-s in the traditional reception area, the only real public space in a chettiyar house, leads to the main door which opens on to the private spaces of the home. In early 19th century homes, these doors were generally functional; they were around 7 or 8 feet in height and were decorated rather simply with bold carvings on the lintel and the side panels. But as the community prospered in the latter half of the 19th century, the main door became more elaborate and almost regal in appearance, intricately carved, these carved doors are the pride of the Chettiyars. Massive in size 12-15 feet tall, they bring out all that was best in the wood crafts men of chettinad.

The simplicity of the panels of the double doors, embellished with only brass knobs and handles, are a contrast to the intricately carved frames, the panel in the lintel and the canopy which some sported.

Rows of berry, fruit, leaf and flower ornamentation, straight lines and vines were the favored motifs repeated for the frame with elephants, horses, deer and parrots, sometimes mythological figures, providing the bases of the door jambs. How elephants were a favorite base. Massive iron hinges two foot tower bolts and latches and huge locking systems opened and locked with 12-15 inch long key add to the awe these doors.

The portion of the door frame that is a part of the lintel of these giant main doors in chettiyar houses bears the main decorative panel of the door, which is generally in 2 parts, one beneath the other, The main figures featured in the panels are indicative of a house that is blessed, The favorite center piece is Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, seated on a lotus flower, flanked by two elephants. Siva and Parvati, symbolizing family unity and happiness is the other favoured Motif. Other icons that find subsidiary places in panels are Ganesha and Murugan, the sons of Siva, Saraswati and Vishnu on Garuda. The panels also sometimes feature an entire narration, such as incidents from the "Ramayana" featuring Rama and Sita and occasionally, Lakshmi too.

The canopies are equally ornately carved with an array of gods, goddesses and Apsara-s as well as mythical figures all linked with vines or berry motifs. Behind the Muthal door was the valavu, the mudhal (first) kattu or mudhal muttram (courtyard). Low Thinnai-s behind the reception are provided a drawing room of sorts and looked on to the corridor surrounded courtyard off which led the rooms of residence and the pooja room. In more recent times those Thinnai-s were replaced by modern drawing rooms or halls which were then followed by the valavu.

The valavu was used for both residences as well as family functions which were conducted in and in front of the pooja room. This was a particularly, well ornamented and embellished area. Splendid pillars would hold up the wooden ceilinged, decorated roof above the Thinnai-s while less decorated stone pillars would hold up a simple wooden ceiling sloping down from the high walls of the rooms to about of feet above the outer edges of the courtyard. Above Thinnai-s of the reception area and the valavu would now be a first floors, its façade embellished with a wealth of stucco work and its interior often verandah and pillared.

The rear door of the valavu led to a rectangular hall that stretched across the width of the house. This was the dining hall, usually used only to seat the hundreds who would attend functions held in the house. Behind the hall was the erentam (second) kattu, its basic pattern similar to the valavu, but with hardly any decorativeness about it. Reflecting pure functionality, it was here that the women of a family spent much of their time, replenishing the store rooms that surround the muttram, drying or airing foods to be preserved through the year, practicing traditional crafts, like basket-weaving, or receiving guests.

The doors, inside a house especially of the personal rooms, do not have the elaboration of the main door of a chettiyar house. In fact, they are starkly simple, except for an intricately carved panel that is part of the lintel. Around 6 feet tall or less are these doors that surround the interior corridor and of chettinad's mansions. Apart from the carved panel that's part of the lintel, the usual other ornamentations are brass knobs and handles that sometimes embellish their plain panels. In such doors in older homes, the carved panel is often dispensed with and a traditional painting in vegetable based colors, served as the decorative element.

Courtyards are a feature of every chettiyar house, old and new. And they are built with a purpose not only to let the light into inward built houses but to also allow a constant circulation of air in the high sloped ceilinged corridors that surround them and which help make the homes of chettinad much cooler than urban homes ever in the height in summer.

It also serve the purpose of space to dry air paddy, other grain, the various food items, like tamarind, stored in the surrounding rooms and pickles, once stocked for anywhere from 3 months to a year. Such practices of long term storing and the regular making of home made preserved foods have now vanished. Cottage industry and even factory manufacture have taken their place. As courtyards progress from the Valavu or first kattu to the third kattu, their quality diminishes. Traditionally, the first courtyard is where bedding stored in the rooms is dried. In the second courtyard, its food and washed clothing. The third courtyard is for the traditional fuels, such as firewood and cow dung pats, and the help's clothing. On summer nights they are also the best places to sleep in though it's a practice

not advised to those to whom Chettinad is only an occasional halt. The funneled cool of the night can cause chest complaints for those unused to Chettinad's drops in temperature. Rolled screens made of thin bamboo silvers; called thotties are fixed between each set of two pillars around the courtyards and are rolled down, in the event of rain or excessive sun or to reduce the night chill.

Despite Chettinad cuisine being renowned as much and its variety as its subtle flavouring, the kitchen is the least tended part of chettiyar homes, even if it is one of the most frequented parts of the house. Traditional cooking on open hearths using firewood may do much for the flavour of the food, but it does little to keep the kitchen bright and shining.

Walls painted black don't do much to enhance the appearance of the kitchen, but windows almost an after thought do help.

The door leading out of the second courtyard yet another in the series which can be looked through from front gate to rear door- led into the moonam kattu. It may have had one or more kitchens, the grinding stones, the well, the vessel - washing and clothes lanndering areas the vegetables storeroom, the fire wood store room and male servant's quarter's store room and the made servant's quarters. Its rear door led out to the road behind. And to the side of it may have been the cattle shed.

Home is where the heart is. And the heart is still in chettinad for most of them, as they cling to the vestiges of a slowly vanished traditionalism.

Muthu kumari
I BA HISTORY

FEAST OF LAZARUS – AN EXQUISITE TOURIST DESTINATION

Tourism today had evolved from the ancient concept of travel only for pilgrimage to travel for pleasure. Apart from the pleasure motivators of travel there are numerous motivators, which instigates an individual to travel widely. The trend of traveling had transformed into a fashionable concept. Travel and tourism industry is the fast growing industry and today there is much scope for those in the field of travel and tourism. Therefore tourism as such had been and is contributing a solution to the various needs of the people in general and especially the tourists. Chennai the capital of Tamil Nadu is a metropolitan city with also houses the state government head quarters. It is a city where you can find the fastest cars and bikes and also bullock carts and rickshaws. The city of Chennai is a combination of various cultures, traditions, languages and habits. In simple words it can be called a mini India where there is unity in diversity. Chennai has attained the present status after a long evolution. The city being a center of various cultural and ethnic activities also serves an excellent tourist destination for all types of tourists.

In the most busiest part of the city next to Santhome is R.A. Puram, where the offices of the ICICI bank, C.B.I. records Bureau, the historic Quibble island, Touchtel, Airtel, and Southerland technologies are all located along with a historic Church called the Lazarus Church / Our Lady of Guidance church / or The church of Nossa Senhora De Guia. The speciality of this church lies in the fact that it had three names and it is dedicated to two saints. Usually a church is dedicated only to one saint. The other significance is the Feast and the Car festival of Lazarus, which is celebrated every year starting from the one but last Sunday of the month of January every year and lasts for ten days.

The cause for the origin of the feast is very simple. In the early 16th century, in the same locality there had been a leprosy home in the name of Lazarus. The patron saint of the Mercy cordium and the chapel nearby was Lazarus. It was believed by the natives that intercessory prayers to Lazarus would cure all types of skin diseases and even leprosy. They also interceded through him to God. The local headman was a staunch believer in Lazarus. He had a son after many

years of prayer and treatment. One fine day his son was lost. The entire population of the locality was in search for the boy. The headman was very upset and he considered it as a test of his faith. He prayed to Lazarus to get back his son but in vain. At around 4'o clock in the evening he went to the chapel and pleaded, due to his anger he vowed that if he didn't get back his son by 6'o clock in the evening the he would jump into the well in the chapel premises along with the statue of Lazarus tied to his shoulders. Still people were searching for the kid. At the stroke of six the head being disgusted tied the statue of Lazarus to his shoulders and was about to jump into the well while he heard his sons voice. He turned around to find his son with a beggar who was a leper. By the time he could finish caressing his son and turn around to thank the beggar, he had disappeared. Then he realized that it was Lazarus himself who had brought back his son. In the bible Lazarus has been described as a beggar who is a leper.

The Lazarus church grew with the benevolence of the local Nayakars and Maranayakar community and the mercy home for the lepers was converted into a prayer hall and as days rolled by this lepers asylum came to be called as "Lazarus" in Portuguese which means divine succor. Rev. Fr. Reibeiro a Jesuit priest found a similarity in the Lazarus giving divine succor and the Lazar of the parable told by Jesus Christ, which takes place in the Bible. This priest built a chapel for Lazarus in 1528 and it was called the Lazarus church as it was built in the premises of the leper's asylum. The fame of St. Lazarus grew leaps and bounds by word of mouth, of the miraculous cure people attained of skin diseases, leprosy, open wounds, etc. Whoever visited Santhome church made it a point to visit St. Lazarus whose shrine was in close proximity to the church. The faithful found it necessary to celebrate the feast of St. Lazarus, which has a specific reason for its origin. The devotees down the centuries have venerated this poor man Lazarus. Everywhere his wonderful work became so famous that his fame even reached as far as the shores of England. The official church as a private revelation regards the claim that Lazarus the beggar did appear after Christ and helped in the trials and tribulations.

The spectacular feast of St. Lazarus is celebrated on the last Sunday of January every year. As described earlier the feast was started as a thanksgiving feast. The celebrations beings with the flag hoisting

ten days earlier to the feast. The flag has the picture of Mother Mary on one side and the picture of St. Lazarus beautifully painted in it. The main celebrant of the Novena prayer followed by solemn mass hoists it. When the flag is hoisted the band is played. Each and every day till the feast day, Novena prayers are said and special masses are celebrated with significant themes everyday. The feast is celebrated over the centuries with pomp, extravaganza and extreme solemnity. The traditional cars and statues of saints bear eloquent testimony of the antiquity of the feast. Devotees from all over the world, various parts of Tamil Nadu, India and the City dwellers irrespective of caste and creed gather in an unending stream during the festive days to thank and pay homage to their patron. The festival is the major event of the parish the present parishioners and the devotees of St. Lazarus have placed on record their deep sense of gratitude to their forefathers who had solid faith and undiminished piety and enthusiasm and have under taken the grand celebrations of the feast through the past centuries.

The statues are placed in the cars that are extravagantly and beautifully decorated with flowers festoons etc. these cars are on procession once on the eve of the feast and then in the morning and the evening of the feast day. On both the feast days in this spot in hot Chennai the roads are filled with street vendors who sell various items ranging from toys, utensils, women's accessories, plastic items, home needs, different eatables like bajjis, puffed rice, halwa, chips, coconut burfee, aval balls, dates, all types of fries peas, baked peas, etc. The streets surrounding the church for two days transforms into a fair ground or a shandy market. People indiscriminate of their status walk down the streets and purchase the various items available. The colourful display of crackers, the lights, the decorated cars, crowds in the streets, the street vendors, their shops, all depict a typical village scene. The irony is that all this takes place in the heart of Chennai; the city where the latest trends first hits the roof. In spite of the developments in science, technology, trends, culture etc, people still go in for festivities like this owing to its antiquity, its significance.

This feast of Lazarus can be called an international festival and a tourist festival because there are relatives of the parishioners who live abroad especially for the US, Uk and France come in every year to witness the celebrations. Apart from this there are various sects

of the Nayakar community who live in different parts of India and especially in Tamil Nadu all of them make it a point to compulsorily attend the celebrations and when they do so they also bring their neighbours and relatives from the other places which makes the spot a total tourist spot apart from being a place of pilgrimage. All these make the church and the feast of Lazarus an exquisite religious and cultural tourist destination.

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TAMIL NADU – THE LAND OF BEAUTY AND ENCHANTMENT

Known in tourist circles as the land of temple towns, Tamil Nadu also has her share of forts, churches and scapes of extensive natural beauty. While Pilgrimages in this region is as old as the hills Pleasure Tourism in Tamil Nadu is in its infancy. While India as a whole has been a late bloomer in the world of tourism Tamil Nadu in particular has only in the recent decade realized the prosperity and growth the tourism industry can generate and has begun to capitalize on it. Unplanned development and lack of foresight has however led to the premature demise of some areas having great potential to support a full fledged tourism industry. Mercifully administrators have woken up to the limitations of the existing system and have realized the urgency in having a carefully planned growth in tourism. Being a service industry it has not only has great potential for generating employment but unlike many other industries it can employ skilled, semi -skilled as well as unskilled labour , and is now recognized as the biggest employer all over the world.

This article is on the attractions the state of Tamil Nadu has to offer its tourists. While lack of basic infrastructure is one of the reasons India does not figure on the Tourist Itinerary of most foreign tourists the Indian government has avowed to make some its most sought after destinations of international standards in terms of Hotels, transportation , services and amenities , the government of Tamil Nadu as well has set the ball rolling in the process of raising certain attractions in the region to acceptable international standards. While much remains to be done to fully tap the tourist potential of the state the very fact that the process has been initiated is heartening.

Madras , the first port of call for most visitors to the state was a British trading port established in 1639. Even earlier to this was the Portuguese settlement at Santhome(town of St. Thomas)in 1521.Despite the fact that Madras lacked a natural harbour it went on to become the wealthiest port in south India , being overshadowed by Bombay only in the 19TH century.While Chennai to the casual eye looks like any other bustling, busy , crowded cosmopolitan city it still preserves in certain areas remains of its colonial heritage, which adds to the character of the city.

Apart from the monuments and museums that could keep a tourist occupied, Madras has a lively cultural scene with regular performances of music and

dance. For music and dance lovers the best time to visit of course is, the December month when every sabha in the city comes alive with mesmerising performances by the best known talents in the field of classical music and dance.

Madras also makes a convenient base from which to visit historic localities which are approximately within 100 kms of the city. In fact even the temples in and around Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh are more easily approached from Madras than from Hyderabad.

A must see spot around Chennai dating back to antiquity are the rock cut caves of Mamallapuram or Mahabalipuram, the ancient port town of the Pallava kings of Kanchipuram. Its rock cut and monolithic temples are the earliest examples of monumental architecture in Tamil Nadu. The group of five shrines known as the Pancha Pandava rathas as well as the Shore temple is one of the chief attractions. In spite of the overall erosion, the elegant proportions of the sanctuaries are evident.

Another historical town 58 kms south west of Madras is Chengalpattu, which finds a place on the tourist map owing to the fort built in the 17th century by the Qutub Shahi dynasty of Golconda and later occupied by the rulers of Arcot. It was in this fort that Robert Clive secured the surrender of the French garrison in 1752.

For bird lovers a must see place is the Vedantangal bird sanctuary, which is known for the great number of water fowl it attracts. The best time to visit is between November and February and if you are lucky you could have an eye full of night herons, grey pelicans, sandpipers, grey wagtail, egrets, ibis, purple moorhen and many other rare and beautiful species of birds. Another spot bird lovers can plan an excursion to is the Pulicat lake which lies on the border between Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The lake is on the route of migratory birds and harbours a host of Flamingoes, Pelicans, Kingfishers, Darters, Spoonbills and several others. It also is a splendid location for fishing.

If visiting temples is on the itinerary there is no place like Tamil Nadu. A land where piety and devotion are the way of life, no village is livable unless it is blessed by the presence of a holy deity. Kings of yore vied with each other to build grandiose places of worship and thanks to their piety and pride the temples of Tamil Nadu are among the most majestic in the World. The Brihadeswara temple in Tanjavur is poetry in stone. The temple town of Kanchipuram not only has a thousand temples to boast of but is also a vibrant cultural center that has charmed even the ancient travelers like Huien Tsang. And its looms that spin magic in silk is world renowned

or its beauty ,elegance and vibrant colours.Other famous temple towns that attract a fair share of foreign tourists as well are Madurai, Chidambaram, Tiruchirapalli,Tanjavur, Tiruvayur, Kumbakonam, Tirutanni and Tiruvanmalai.

Lovers of history will have ample things that tickle their fancy at the forts of Vellore,Tiruchirapalli, Arcot and Gingee.The fort at Gingee is a spectacular sight. It consists of a trio of formidable mountain citadels.Substantial ramparts with round bastions and a broad moat connecting the citadels create a vast triangular zone, more than 1.5 kms from north to south.

Now officially renamed Puducheri, it was a former French settlement and though the French have left, this quaint little town retains much of its French personality. It is known internationally as the head quarters of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. In Pondicherry, the must see place is the Auroville. Apart from the religious pursuits of the residents of the ashram , the community has revived traditional industries. Its workshops produce fine woven textiles, marble dyed silks, handmade paper, perfume and incense sticks.

The hill stations of Tamil Nadu though probably not as well known as those of North India are still popular get aways for holiday makers from the southern states.Yercaud nestling in the Shevaroy hills is renowned for its schools and coffee estates. Coonoor and Ooty are the most popular of the hill stations founded by the British.Situated in the Nilgiri hills it is the original habitat of the Todas.Another popular hill station is Kodaikanal situated in the Palani hills.

Previously known as Cape Comorin, Kanyakumari marks the point where the waters of the Bay Of Bengal and the Arabian Sea mingle with the Indian Ocean. A popular destination for pilgrims it has many interesting features to keep a visitor occupied.

While this article is far from being an exhaustive study on the tourist attractions of Tamil Nadu it nevertheless provides the reader with numerous reasons to consider a holiday in Tamil Nadu as money well spent for not only will the historicity of the land enchant you, and the beauty of the hills mesmerize you but just treading on its holy ground that has sustained saints and seers will bless you. So the next time you plan a vacation to rejuvenate you body and soul think Tamil Nadu.

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