

South India Tour 2012 : Day 3 – Kanchipuram

Day 3 – May 25, 2012

Location – Kanchipuram (Tamilnadu, India)

Venue – Varadharaja Temple

The places which we are visiting in Kanchipuram, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also visited. Whether it is Shiva Kanchi or Vishnu Kanchi, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would visit both the temples. Lord Shiva also likes the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra. Parvati came here from Varanasi in search of Lord Shiva, who at that time was meditating beneath a mango tree. It was a huge and special tree whose branches reached out of the city limits. Thus one name of Lord Shiva is Ekambeshvar.

✘ Few days ago in Mayapur we installed a deity of Simantidevi – a deity of Parvati holding beads in her hand and chanting. One time when both Lord Shiva and Parvati were in Mount Kailasha, Lord Shiva started his Tandava dance and simultaneously chanting Gaura, Gaura, Gaura! At that time Parvati inquired, who is this Gaura? Shiva said let me take you to Gaura Dham. Both of them reached Navadvipa. Particularly they came to Simantdvipa (Before this pastime this island was known by some other name). Here they did kirtana and Gauranga Mahaprabhu appeared. Parvati took the dust of Lord Gaurangas' lotus feet and decorated her hair parting. Therefore this place is called Simantadvipa.

In Vrindavan and Navadvipa, all over you will get darshan of Lord Shiva as Kshetrapal or Digpal. Srimad Bhagvatam also describes Lord Shiva as the topmost Vaishnava- Vaishnavanam Yatha Shambho. When Lord Gauranga's arati is performed, Lord Shiva also appears along with Bramha and other demigods.

During Navadvipa Mandala Parikrama we also visit Hari Hara Kshetra. The deity with half Vishnu form and half Shiva. From

one perspective both Hari and Hara are same tattva, but still they are not the same. Shiva is not jiva tattva. There is jiva tattva – the living entities and then there is Vishnu tattva – the incarnations of the Lord. Shiva is neither Jiva tattva nor Vishnu tattva. Kshiram yatha dadhi vikara vishesh yogat. Milk is transformed into curd, but curd cannot be transformed into milk. The Lord becomes Shiva tattva. Sometimes there is fight between Vaishnavas and Shaivas. But there is no such competition between Vishnu and Shiva.

Kanchipuram is moksha puri. Shiva tells Parvati that Lord Vishnu is the giver of liberation, there is no doubt about it. He also says aradhananam sarvesham Vishnu aradyate param. Here in Kanchi both Shiva and Vishnu are worshipped. From sastras we understand who the Supreme is.

In Vrindavan there is temple of Gopishvara Mahadeva. Lord Shiva is such an exalted devotee that he gets entry in the Raasa Dance pastime. In Krishna's Rasa Lila, entry is very rarely achieved. One time Shiva wanted to enter Raasa Krida. He was entering with garland of skulls around his neck and snakes & scorpions all over him. Thus he was denied entry and was asked to take a dip in Manasarovar lake. Then he appeared in Gopi form and was allowed to enter the Raasa dance arena.

In Nanda gram, Nandishwar Mahadeva resides eternally and he is the first personality to honour Prasadam which was offered to Krishna. We all know the pastime, when lord Shiva came to see Kanhaiya and seeing his scary form, mother Yasoda did not let him see Krishna. As soon as Lord Shiva left with great reluctance, Krishna started crying and would just not stop. He was inconsolable. Lord Shiva was sitting with a strong hope that he will get the darshan of Krishna one day. There is a temple in this place where Shiva was hopefully waiting. This deity is called Aleshvar mahadev. There in Nandabhavan no one could understand why Krishna was crying so much. Everyone started asking mother Yasoda if something happened, someone came. Then she told them about a Baba who desired to see Krishna and she denied him darshan. Kanhaiyaa was crying since

the Baba left. SO they all went in search of Lord Shiva and he was brought back to Nandabhavan. Krishna saw Shiva and Shiva saw Krishna and Krishna immediately stopped crying. These are very confidential pastimes that display the Bhava and Bhakti of Lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva is also Ashutosh – he fulfils the desires of his devotees. You must have seen picture of Lord Shiva holding chanting beads in his hands. Bramha bole chatur mukhe Krishna Krishna hare hare Mahadeva Pancha mukhe Rama Rama hare hare. This is the glory of the holy name. Bramha with his four heads and Shiva with his five heads chant Hare Krishna Maha Mantra. Lord Shiva's followers are very rich. He himself is Avadhoot-very detached. He is personification of detachment. On the contrary the devotees of Lord Vishnu are sometimes poverty stricken although Lord Vishnu is always very opulent. His lifestyle, his dressing, and his house – everything is very opulent and lavish. But Krishna's devotees like Sudama are very poor. Shiva's devotees like Ravan are very opulent. Sometimes it is discussed why is it so. Reason is clear – for material opulence people go to Shiva and other demigods. They give them the desired benedictions so that they may spare them to chant and meditate on the lord.

Varadharaja Swami –

This is the first deity of the universe installed by Lord Brahma. With a desire to get darshan of Lord Vishnu, Lord Bramha did yajna in Pushkar but was not successful. Then he did yajna in naimisharanya and still remained unsuccessful. Then he was asked to perform 100 horse sacrifices, but because he was too eager to see the Lord, he did not want to wait for the time that will be spent in 100 sacrifices. So he was told to go to Kanchipuram and perform one horse sacrifice and he would get the benefit of 100 sacrifices. Then from the agnikunda Lord Varadraja's utsav deity appeared and is still being worshipped here. A thousand years ago, Ramanujacharya worshipped Varadaraja Bhagvan. Varadaraja is giver of benedictions to all devotees. There is also Nrsimhadeva deity

in this temple.

The shrine of lizards in Varadharaja temple –

One time the King of this place was visited by a Shamik Muni. The king and his wife offered him a pot of water with two lizards in it. This was very offensive on their part and the Muni did get offended. He cursed them to become lizards. The King became a golden lizard and the queen became a silver lizard. They became very anxious and asked how would they get liberated? The Muni said, the devotees of Vradaraj swami who will come to see the Lord will touch your forms as well and by their touch you will become purified and get liberated. Offences against Vaishnavas, criticism of Sadhus are very severe offences. One must be very careful.

Vedantadeshika Acharya-

Vedantadeshika, who is also a very famous and prominent acharya in the line of Ramanujacharya, was born in this kshetra. The parents of Vedantadeshika had one time gone to Tirupati and after darshan of Balaji they spent night in Tirumala. His mother dreamt of the Bell used in the service of Balaji. She saw the bell and she swallowed it in her dream. It entered her stomach and she conceived. This bell of Balaji appeared in the form of Vedantadeshika. Even now in balaji temple they do not use a bell during deity worship. Vedantadeshika was a great Acharya and wrote many literatures and commentaries.

Kanchipuram is one of the seven moksha puris or places that award liberation. The other six being Ayodhya, Naimisharanya, Mathura, Haridwar, Dwarka and Ujjain. The number seven has some prominence. The number of sages, the holy rivers, the swaras in music, the colours in rainbow, days in week, the horses of sun god, the coverings of universe, number of gates in Vaikuntha and Srirangam, etc. are all seven in number!

Ramanujacharya-

Between Kanchipuram and Chennai, there is a place where

Ramanujacharya was born. He got married at the age of 15 and took sannyasa at 30 years of age. His mother had expired and wife was little unpleasant. Sastra says, such a person should renounce. *Yasya mata grihe nasty bharya ca apriya vadini.*

There was one Kanchipurna acharya under whom Ramanujacharya studied many sastras and considered him his shikhsa guru. One time he wanted to invite him for lunch and he wished to honour his remnants. He asked his wife to cook for Kanchipurna Acharya while he went out briefly for some service. Kanchipurna Acharya somehow came earlier than the expected time and insisted her to serve him as he was in a hurry. When Ramanujacharya returned he saw that Kanchipurna had already left and his wife fed his remnants to the shudras considering them to be unfit to be honoured by Ramanujacharya. She did not understand the exalted glories of Kanchipurna Acharya. This angered Ramanujacharya very much.

In yet another incidence one brahmana came to beg alms but Ramahujacharya's wife refused to offer him anything and he was returning empty handed. Ramanujacharya was returning from the temple and saw the Brahmana on the way. He found out that he was denied any offering from his house and this was enough for him to tolerate. Ramanujacharya asked the Brahman to visit his house again, but this time disguised as a messenger of Ramanuja's father in law. Ramanujacharya wrote the letter himself, addressed to himself inviting him and his wife to the marriage of his sister in law. He also wrote that if Ramanujacharya cannot come, he must at least send his wife. When the brahmana reached with the letter and introduced him, he was received with great kindness. He handed over the letter, accepted the offerings and left. After sometime Ramanujacharya came home and when he came to know that a letter has come from his father in law he showed great eagerness to read it. He was happy to read but apologised to his wife that he will not be able to accompany her to the marriage, but he would arrange for her to go. Once his wife left, Ramanujacharya took sannyasa and thus he got liberated

from the bonds of samsara in Kanchipuram.