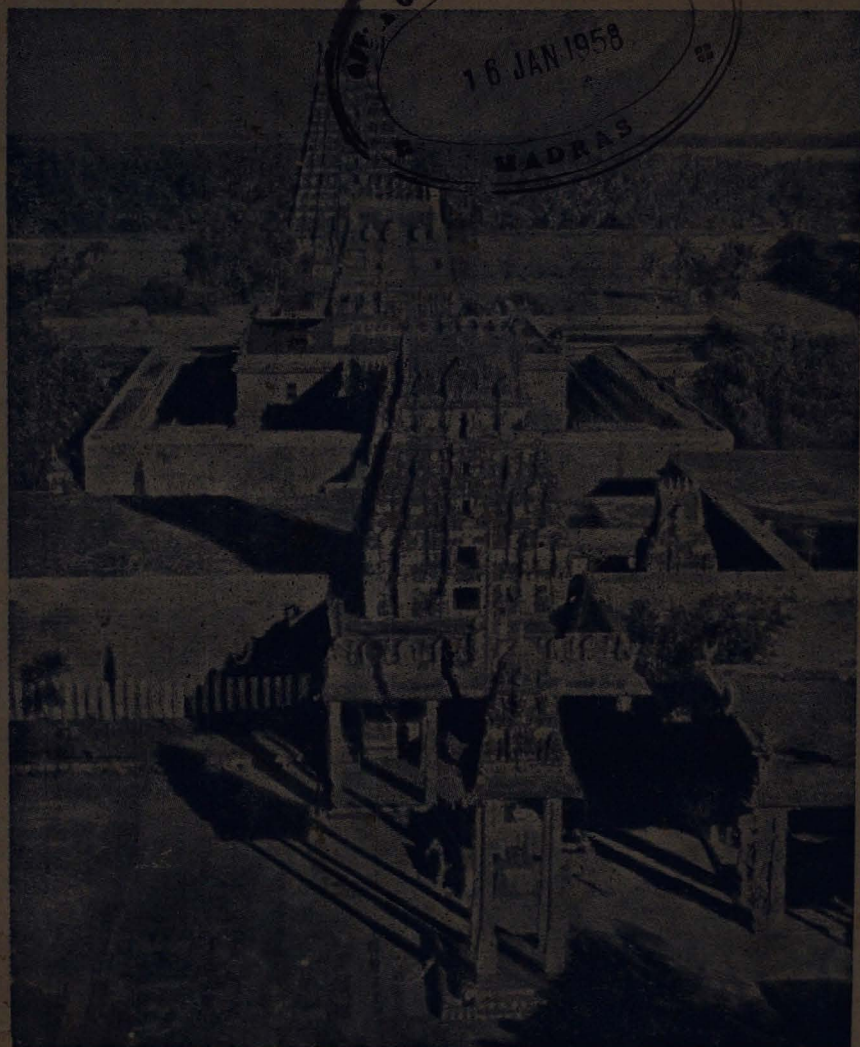


Kanchee Sri Devarajaswamy Devasthanam Guide



An ariel view of the superb and imposing towers of the temple of Sri Varadarajaswami, L. Kancheepuram.

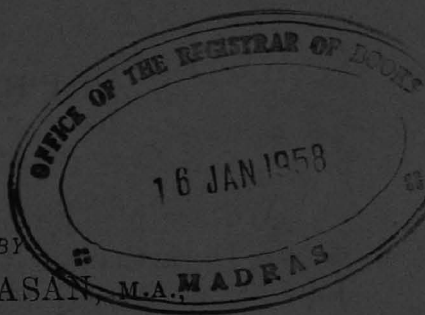
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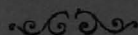
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SRI.
PILGRIM GUIDE
TO
Sri Devarajaswamy Devasthanam,
KANCHEEPURAM.



COMPILED BY
Sri. T. N. SRINIVASAN, M.A.



SECOND EDITION.
(Completely Revised and Enlarged)



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Kancheepuram.

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1957

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SRI DEVARAJASWAMI DEVASTHANAM.

KANCHEEPURAM.

Karthigai Anusham Day,

(22—11—'57)

P R E F A C E.

We are glad to bring forward this IIInd edition of our Devasthanam Guide in a short time after our Ist edition. Nearly 1000 copies of it were sold and as we are having more and more pressing demands we had this IIInd edition printed again with some more interesting points which we left out in the first. Sri. T. N. Srinivasan's contribution to this is greater than his to the first edition. We acknowledge it with much gratitude.

Even now there is the chance of several errors, though we took all precautions, to avoid them. We request the readers' inidulgence in overlooking them.

We hope this, like the previous edition will serve to satisfy the needs of those worshipping public who would like to have a rough idea of the religious, sacred, Historical and Cultural aspects of this great centre of pilgrimage.

R. VARADA THATHACHARI,

P. SUDARSANA THATHACHARI,

Honorary Trustees.

V. R. VISWANATHAN,

Executive Trustee.

FOREWORD.

Kanchee or Kancheepuram is a city of temples. Its renown as the premier city among cities goes back to the days of Kalidasa (1st century B. C.) historically, and in to the hoary past according to tradition and mythology. If Kalidasa referred to it as the city *par excellence* (நயனெஷ-கூஸ்). in very recent times Prof. Geddes the great Town Planning expert has certified it to be the perfectly planned city. It has been the capital of Kingdoms and for a long time the seat of Universities. Even to day it is a place noted for its Vedic knowledge and Vedantic learning. On the spiritual side Kanchee has always been Known as Satyavratha Kshetra, and reckoned as one of the Seven specially Sacred cities in this sacred land of Bharata Varsha. Out of those seven it is the only one in South India. Vedanta Desika refers to this city as the foremost among the seven salvation-bestowing cities. (முத்தி தரும் நகரேழில் முக்கியமாம் கச்சி.)

This book deals with the most important temple for Lord Sri Maha Vishnu in this most important of cities in India Situate at the eastern end of the city this temple with its lofty gopurams and sky-high *madils* (மதில் = compound wall) presents an imposing sight. The presiding Deity, — Lord Devadiraja, standing as He does on a hillock known as the Elephant Hill (Hasthi-Giri) within the temple Blesses the entire town with His beaming and benign Kataksha (gracious looks). The majestic grandeur of the Moola Virat (static Deity) and the sublimely sweet beauty of the Utsava Murthy (processional Deity) once worshipped can never be forgotten but will linger in the mind for all time, gladdening and refreshing the senses and elevating and ennobling the soul. The Lord is known by several names such as Devaraja, Devadiraja, Varadaraja, Perarulala and so on. His paratva or gracious easiness of access and approach have both full play here. He is above all, and so He is

Devadiraja. He is easily accessible to the lowliest of the low and so He is Perarulala (The God of immense Arul or mercy). His Consort is known as Mahadevi (Perundevi in Tamil), the name by which the Upanishadic mantra refers to Mahalakshmi.

The temple is known for its festivals. Kanchi Garudotsavam is almost a national festival. It occurs in the month of May—June every year and is attended by lakhs of devotees from near and far.

A short guide book of information in regard to this temple and its chief features worthy of note has been a desideratum for long. My good friend Sri T. N. Srinivasan, M. A., has brought his intimate knowledge of temples and temple worship and his great devotion to the Archa forms of the Lord to bear upon the preparation of this booklet, which is as informing as it is instructive. He has also in a large measure enabled the trustees to enrich this publication by several nice photographs taken by him of the shrine and of the Deities.

The pilgrims who come for worship at this temple are drawn from all places in India. In fact it will be no exaggeration to say that this is the one South Indian Sri Vaishnavite temple which can justly be regarded as an all-India temple. I am therefore glad to find that the trustees who have brought out this second edition are also arranging to have similar descriptive booklets published in Tamil, Hindi, Telugu and Kannada languages. May God bless their efforts in this direction at an early date.

(Camp) Kanchi
22nd Nov. 1957. }
(Karthigai Anusham Day.) }

D. RAMASWAMY.

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SRI



Sri Perundevinayaka Samedha Sri Devadiraja Parabrahmanae Namah:



GUIDE TO
SRI DEVARAJASWAMY DEVASTHANAM,
KANCHEEPURAM.

[Known also as SRI VARADARAJA PERUMAL KOIL.]

Ayodhya madhura maya Kasi KANCHI avantika
Puri dwaravathischaiva saptaite moksha dayakah.

Out of the *Sapthapuris* or seven sacred Cities of India, that can bestow *moksha*—salvation, Kanchee—the present Kancheepuram—the “Golden City” is important equally both to Vishnu and Siva. To the Vaishnavities, Kanchee is one of the foremost important *Diviya Desam*. Every devout Vaishnavite,

while chanting the famous sloka of Sri Ramanuja, in their daily *sandiyavandanam*, which reads as under:—

“Sri Ranga Mangala Nidhim Karunanivasam,
Sri Venkatadri Sikharalaya Kala Megham '
Sri Hasthisaila Sikharojwala Parijatham,
Srisan Namami Sirasa Yadhusaila Deepam ” ”

pays obeisance to the Deities of Srirangam, Thirumalai, Kanchi and Thirunarayanapuram, of which the former three are better known to the Tamilians as “*Koil, Thirumalai, and Perumal Koil.*”

Kanchi—more popularly known as Kancheepuram is a big town about 45 miles, west—south west of Madras, which can easily be reached by train and bus. It is a station on the branch line connecting Chingleput and Arkonam and can be reached in about two hours. It is also easily accessible by bus and a fine metal road—the Madras—Bangalore trunk road which runs almost on the fringes of this town. There are innumerable temples in Kanchi.

The bus stand and the railway station are situated in Siva Kanchi, but there are many local city buses that will take the pilgrims to the temple of Sri Varadaraja, situated about two miles away from the station. The city is a big one, with all modern amenities and laid out on a well thought of scheme of town-planning—which experts like Prof. Geddes admired.—There are several places to stay comfortably at Kancheepnam. It is considered that it contains 18 Vishnu temples and 108 Siva temples and it has also a famous shrine dedicated to Sakthi—known locally as Sri Kamakshi Amman Temple. Among the Vishnu temples, the temple of Sri Deva-

rajaswami, more popularly known as Sri Varadarajaswamy Koil, is the most important and popular temple. This great shrine is dedicated to Lord Sri Devarajaswamy, who is also known by several other names, the more popular of them being SRI VARADARAJA, SRI PERARULALAR SRIPRANATHARTIHARAR, SRI ATHIGIRI ARULALAR, SRI DEVADIRAJAN and THEVAPPERUMAL.

THE STHALAPURANAM OF THE TEMPLE.

It was Brahma the creator, that first adored the Lord of Hastigiri. Since the word "ka" indicates the name of Brahma, the place acquired the name Kancheepuram. The genesis of this temple is narrated in the *Brahmandapuranam* and is known as "Sri Hasthigiri Mahathmyam." which is in the form of a dialogue between Sages Brighu and Narada. According to this, it is said that the Brahma had some pollution of mind and on account of this the whole creation was stopped. He made Thapas on the banks of the river GANGA, when an 'Asareeri' or a voice from above bade him perform 1000 Yagas to purify his mind. As he could not perform 1,000 Yagas in his life time, he was asked by the same voice to perform at least one at this place called "*Sathya Vrata Kshethram*", where it will be counted equivalent to a thousand yagas. Hence Brahma selected this most sacred spot known as Sathiyavartha kshethram for celebrating his grand Aswamedha. The present site of the temple of Sri Devarajaswamy was the *Uthiravedi* or the Grand Altar of the sacrifice, which he had asked Viswakarma, the divine architect to construct.

It is said that just about the time the *yagna* was to be concluded, Saraswathi the consort of

Brahma, out of some misunderstanding with her husband, came in the shape of a flooded rivulet, (locally given the name of Vegavathi — the speedy river) threatening to completely wash away the sacred sacrificial area.

Answering to the fervent prayers of Brahma and the other Gods, Vishnu who is at present enshrined in the temple of "Thirvehka (திருவேஃகா) in the Archa form of YATHOKTHAKARI PERUMAL laid himself flat and nude in the course of the fast coming rivulet on the coils of Adiseha forming a sort of bund. At the same time Brahma concluded his great Yagna and Vishnu emerged out of the Utharavedi, resplendent as thousand suns, in the form of *Sri Devarajaswamy* — The King of Gods—enshrined in a golden *Punyakoti Vimanam*. He blessed the Devas and asked Brahma what he needed. On his request, Sriman Narayana agreed to remain in that same sacred spot, to bless His devotees for all the Yugas to come. Thus *Sri Varadaraja*, the Boon giving king of kings, is enshrined in the *Punyakoti Vimanam* on the banks of the sacred tank known as *Ananthasaras* in the *Sathiya Vrata Kshethram*, ever since that time.

ஆதிபுகத்தயன் கண்டிட நின்றவருள்வரதர்
காதலுயர்த்தகளிற்றைத் திரேதையிற்காத்தளித்து
வாதுயர் தேவகுருவுக்கிறங்கித் துவாபரத்தில்,
சோதியநந்தன் கலியிற்றொழுதெழு நின்றனரே.

[Sri Vedanta Desikan.]

This occurred in the Satya yuga. In the Treta yuga, This Lord came to the rescue of Gajendra, the king of elephants, when he was caught by a Crocodile, when he was sporting himself with his consorts in a tank, on a full moon night. The piteous cries of this elephant as 'Adimoolameh !' made the Lord rush to

his aid and save him by killing the crocodile with his Chakra. This incident is celebrated every year in the month of Adi, when God Devaraja comes out on Garuda vahanam, on the pournami day.

In the Dwaparayuga, the Lord blessed Brihaspati the preceptor of the 'Devas' who was cursed to come down to the earth and live among mortals.

In this Kaliyuga—Adisesha the Divine Serpent was blessed by this Lord. 'It is hence that the temple tank is named after him as '*Anantha Saras.*' It is also considered that Adisesha performs the daily worship of the Lord in this Yuga, as Gajendra in Treata Yuga and Brihaspathi in Dwapara Yuga.

THE STRUCTURE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE.

The shrine of Sri Devarajaswamy is on a small hillock called "*Hasthigiri*" (*Athigiri* in Tamil), which is said to represent the petrified form of the divine elephant, — Airavadha. Different from the usual feature of most of the temples, we see here that Sri Devarajaswamy stands facing westward, while His Consort, Sri Perundevi Thayar is seated facing eastward. It may be that as Brahma was seated facing eastward while he was performing the great Yagna, Sri Devaraja appeared before him from out of the altar facing west. Further it will be a matter of aesthetic feast to see the Lord and His divine Consort installed like this, the One facing the Other always.

Even from a distance, pilgrims approaching Kancheepuram will have darshan of the two gopurams of this temple, with the top portion of the Punyakoti Vimanam springing lotus like in between the tall towering gopurams.

The temple is a very grand and imposing edifice having the main entrance on the western side, which is crowned by a high gopuram. On the eastern side also is a gopuram, a bigger one, both having been built during the days of the Vijayanagar Rulers, of the Aravedu dynasty Venkata I and Venatapathy Raja II (1575 to 1642) who were the devout disciples of Sri Koti Kanyakadanam Lakshmikumara Thatha-Desika. This Lakshmikumara Thatha Desika was responsible for the gilding of the Puniyakoti Vimanam and the building of the famous architectural 100 pillared mantapam. He has been styled in the temple's inscriptions as "*Sri Karya Durandara* of the temple, which means the Manager-general of the temple affairs.

Inscriptions in stone all round the prakaram of the chief Deity in Sri Devarajaswamy and the shrine of Sri Perundevi Thayar the chief Goddess, and near the main western entrance of the Gopuram or tower contain numerous slokas both in sanskrit (in grantham script) and Tamil in praise of this Thathadesika and describing the various Kainkaryams or services of this 'Sri Karya' Sri Thathadesika towards the improvement and uplift of this temple. These slokas are in turn taken from the "Vimsathi" of Sri Thathadesika. It is in recognition of his meritorious services and devotion to Sri Varada that Sri Thathadesika and His consort Sri Ammangar have both been deified and worshipped in this temple, and Sri Varadaraja and Sri Perundevi Thayar are taken to his shrine on His Sathumurai or annual Thirunakshathiram day in the month of Karthigai Anuratha or Anusham day.

The temple consists of five prakarams, the innermost being the one round the Garbagraha of Sri Devarajaswamy. The outermost or the fifth prakaram is

formed by the *four madaveethees* and sannathi street. Entering through the western gopuram, the fourth or the *Alwar pradakshinam* also known as "*Alwar tiruveedhi*" is reached. This enclosure contains amidst several shrines dedicated to the various Alwars and Acharyas, the following important shrines and structures:—

1. The Hundred pillared mantapam., erected during the Vijayanagar period, containing exquisite carvings and images—a marvel of monolithic sculpture for which the artisans of the Vijayanagar period were famous.
2. "*Ananthasaras*" — the sacred tank.
3. The shrine of *Sri Varahaswamy* on the western bank of the above tank.
4. The remarkable shrine of *Sri Chakrathalwar* or *Sudarsana*. On the front side of the image is a fine carving of Sri Sudarsana with sixteen hands, while the backside bears a fine image of Sri Yoga Narasimha, — four hands each carrying a Sudarsana.
5. A Nandavanam called Dorai Thottam with a mantapam (Thayar's Friday mantapam), where the Davanotsavam of the Lord is celebrated, and the shrines of Perialwar and Sri Thondaradippodi and Thiruppani Alwars located (now in a dilapidated condition)
6. The shrine of Sri Nammalwar.
7. The shrine of Thirumangai Mannan.
8. The Shrine of Sri Manavalamamunigal.

9. The shrine of Thirumazhisai and Sri Kulasakaran.
10. The shrine of Sri Ramanuja. As the separate shrines that once existed for several Alvars have become dilapidated, they are now installed in the shrine of Sri Ramanuja.
11. The shrine of the 3 Muadalazhvars.
12. The *Vahana mantapam* which contains at its southern portion the shrine of Sri Vedantha Desika. Sri Lakshmikumara Thatha Desika and his consort Sri Ammangar, are also deified in this shrine.
13. 2 Thulabara Mantapams.
14. The *Vasantha Utsava* mantapam.
15. Two tall four pillared Mantapams.
16. The golden *Dwajasthambam* and *Balipetam*.

Passing through a gopuram - crowned entrance, called Thondaradippodi the third prakaram known as the "*Madapalli prakaram*" or "*Yamunai thuraivar tirumutram*" is reached. Just in front, there is an exquisitely carved mantapam known as the Abisheka mantapam in which on one side is situated the "*Kannadi Arai*"—the glass room in which the Uthsavar Deity stays during festival days. On the other side is the safe vault of the temple.

Adjacent to this, there is the "*Kili mantapam*" in which Pavithrothsavam and Rappathu festival take place. The vahanams of the temple are kept behind it and the shrine of Sri Raman is to its north on an elevated mantapam. The kitchen and the store room of the temple are in this enclosure.



Sri Hasthigiri Varadan otherwise called Adi Atti-Varadan (Moolavar) who is placed under the Anantasaras Tank.
He is taken out once in a generation for worship and then replaced underneath the Tank.

Further east are the shrines of *Adisesha* (*Tiruvandazhwar*) and *Karumanikka Perumal*. Beyond this there is a mandapam called the *Ayirakalmandapam*, built in two tiers or stories, a notable feature of chola architecture.

To the southwestern side of this prakaram, is located the shrine of Sri Perudevi Thayar, the Consort of Sri Devarajaswamy. It is customary to go up to this shrine first and worship here the Divine Consort before going to the shrine of Sri Perumal. This shrine of Thayar is situated on an elevated platform reached by a flight of about ten steps. The shrine of the Goddess faces eastwards and in front of the Mukamantapam is a big Mahamantapam, with a very beautifully carved four-pillared mantapam on the eastern side. Here is celebrated the famous *Mahanavami Uthsavam*, on which day Sri Devaraja and Sri Perundevi are seated in the same asanam side by side, the only day in the whole year when this occurs. There is a separate inner pradikshanam round the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Thayar. It is here that we find the above said inscriptions regarding Sri Thathadesika's various services both in Tamil and Sanskrit on the walls of the Sanctum Sanctorum. Paintings regarding some anecdotes of Sri Vedantha Desika's life are also to be found in Sri Thayar shrine.

Coming down and passing in front of the Garudalwar shrine, the second prakaram or the *Malai Pradakshanam*, also Known as "*Senaiyarkone tirumutram*" is reached. This contains the shrines of Sri Narasimha, Sri Andal, Sri Vishvaksenar or Senai Mudanmayar, on one side, and Sri Dhanvantri, Sri Malayala Nachiyar and Gajananan on the other side.

On the south-eastern side of this prakaram, the steps to Hasthigiri start.

Ascending them, there is first a high pedestalled mantapam projecting out of the Hill and after that there are the twenty four steps.

The entrance to these steps is called the 'Olimugavasal' (ஒலிமுகவாசல்) where the usual loud instruments of music are stopped and only soft instruments of music like flute, veena, or mugaveena is played. The learned believe that the 24 steps leading to this prakaram represent the 24 aksharas of the sacred *Gayathri* and the 24 '*tatvas*' and passing this, we reach the *Varagiri*, the Hill that can bestow all that one needs. On the top of those steps is the first prakaram.

At the south western side of this prakaram is a small doorway which leads to the mukhamandapam of the main shrine of Lord Sri Devarajaswamy. At the entrance of the garbhagriham—the Sanctom Sanctorum of the main shrine, stand two copper images of the *Dwarapalas*, the Gate keepers of the Lord's place.

Going up the six steps that leads one to the innermost shrine of the Lord of the Worlds, one beholds the majestic form of Sri Varadaraja the Bestower of all boons standing higher above, as though touching the ethereal regions of the universe.

Even the most unlearned will be thrilled with ecstasy when he beholds the captivating image of the Moolavar and the most entrancing and lovely images of the Uthsavar with his two Nachimars on both the sides. It may be said without exaggeration and with a great amount of truth that the Uthsava Image of Sri Devaraja is perhaps one of the most bewitching images

that we have now in South India, the place noted for icons. The august face of this Deity beams with a bewitching and captivating smile,—an uplifted face bearing a few little dark spots and dents signifying amidst other things the age and antiquity of the image. The slender, slightly backward bent body, with well shaped Sudarsana and Panchajanya in the upper hands, the right hand in a graceful *Abhaya hastha* pose and the left hand lightly resting on the Gadha, all these go to make up the cream of the beauty of this lovely image. It was in fact, this same lovely face that, silenced, so to say, the Alwars from pouring out their ecstatic laudatory verses in His praise, while they unhesitatingly sung at length about all the other shrines. All the later acharyas from Sri Bhashyakara have revelled in His beauty and grace which made them burst into song to their heart's content in immortal lyrics and slokas both in Sanskrit and Tamil.

It will not be out of place to mention here, that the Guruparampara of the Sri Vaishnava line of Alwars and Acharyas state that Sri Devaraja used to speak with his devotees and the Lord answered the six questions put to Him by the saint Thirukachinambigal on behalf of the saint Sri Ramanuja.

Adjacent to these insatiable ocular feasts, are the images of other deities like the Nityotsavar—Sri Pranatharthiharan, Sri Kannabiran and others.

Coming out of the main shrine and going round the pradikshanam on the Hill temple, there is a "Bangaru Palli" a golden lizard, on the north eastern corner. There is an allusion regarding this "Bangaru palli." It is said that two Gandharvas by name Nandhagopan and Manigrivan were subjected to the

curse of a Rishi under whom they were learning in gurukulavasam. They used to bring holy water every day for the sage's daily rituals. One day a lizard fell into the holy water-pot. Without noticing it these two disciples placed it before their guru and when he was proceeding with his daily rites he observed a dead lizard in the pot. At once the sage in his ire cursed them to take the form of lizards for their carelessness. The innocent youths trembled at this unexpected turn of events, prostrated before their guru and craved for his forgiveness. Since even the sage could not stop the effect of the curse once it is given, he could only put a time limit for the course of the curse and told them that they would be restored to their original forms if they went and waited at the foot of Hastagiri.

Accordingly the two lizards went and waited on a tree at the foot of Hastagiri in great anguish and expectation. Indra the chief of the Devadas who was the object of a curse by the renowned sage Dhurvasa came to this same spot one day. His curse was also to end at this same time and place. As soon as he was relieved of his curse he went inside, worshipped the Lord on the Hasatgiri and was returning. Just at that time he observed two beautiful Gandharvas coming from the opposite direction. He enquired them as to how they happened to come there at that time. The two gandharvas then narrated their story and how they were told by their guru that they would get their original form on that day and at that place where Indra would be also relieved of his curse. As soon as they recognised that the enquirer was none other than the great Indra they paid their obeisance to him. Indra then took them to the Lord of Hastagiri

and after worshipping Him affixed two lizard forms at the north-eastern portion of the pradakshanam saying that whosoever in future touched, looked or thought of these two lizards (Vaiya-maligai palli) would become free from all the bad effects of lizards. (This is called vaiya maligai since Lord Vishnu has made this place his abode on earth. Vaiyam means earth or world, Maligai means mansion or abode)

Inside this great shrine are two important theerthams. The great tank 'Anantasaras' in the Alwar Pradakshanam has already been referred to. In addition to the usual Neerali Mandapam in the centre of the tank, this has another smaller mandapam standing on four huge pillars and crowned with a small vimanam. It is here that the old but mutilated image of "Sri Adhi Athigiri Varadan" is made to rest. He was the original Mulavar of the temple, who was desecrated by the Muslims. He was then removed and placed in the tank. Once in about forty years or so, He is taken out and a Mandala Aradanam is celebrated for Him.

Inside the Malaipradakshanam is a small well known as 'Brahmatheertham'. The water required for daily Puja and Abhisekam is taken out from this well.

HISTORY OF THE PLACE.

The antiquity of Kancheepuram goes back to pre-historic days. It was a famous town in ancient India, even in the pre-christain days. There is an unconfirmed legend that Gauthama Buddha the Great, had visited this place. There are strong pieces of evidence to show that Kanchi was one of the strongholds of Buddhism and that Asoka the

Great had several stupas constructed here and in the neighbourhood of this ancient City. The earliest historical record reveals that Pulikesin II of the Chalukyan dynasty, who stemmed the progress of the great Harshavardhana in the north had almost conquered this city and ravaged the entire empire of the Pallava Ruler under Mahendra Varman I about the beginning of the 7th century A. D. Later Narasimha Varman, who was given the title of Mahamalla, defeated and killed Pulikesin II in the battle of Palloor near Kanchi, and established his suzerainty again by driving the Chalukyans up to the borders of their kingdom. The famous Chinese devotee and pilgrim Hieun-Tsang visited Kanchi by about 640 A. D. and he records his impressions about this great City in his famous travel memoirs. Kalidas the renowned sanskrit poet describing the most important and famous things in the world, mentions Kanchi as the most lovely of cities "*Nagareshu Kanchi.*"

Narasimha Varman beautified this place with lasting monuments of which a few are still in existence. Of these Mamallapuram or Mahabalipuram is a striking example. The temples of Kailasanathaswamy and Sri Vaikunta Perumal at Kanchi are other pieces of great architectural importance and bear the stamp of the Pallavas.

Later, Kanchi became one of the sub-capitals of the Cholas for the Thondamandalam area, till the 13th century. Then it passed on to the hands of the Vijayanagar rulers who held sway over this place till the 16th century. A. D. Under the guidance and inspiration of Sri Thatha Desika and his ancestors, they had enriched the beauty of this place

by adding monuments which bear their individuality of style and decoration, the chief of them being the 100 pillared mantapam at Sri Varadarajaswamy temple. The emblem of Vijayanagar rulers—the boar and the sword, the sun and the moon, are to be seen in many of the existing fabrics of the temple.

After the fall of the Vijayanagar empire and of the Arvedu dynasty in the middle of the 17th century, the temple continued to enjoy the benefits of the manyams etc., got through Sri Thathadesika from the Vijayanagar rulers, the descendants of Sri Thathadesika managed the affairs of the Devasthanam. In or about 1690 the Lord was segregated and kept in Udayarpalayam by His faithful adherents, fearing some Mohammadan invasion. Later when the scare subsided, one Thirumalaithathachar contrived to get the help of one Thodarmal through one Athan Jeer in getting the idol back to the temple from Udayarpalayam in or about 1710. It is said that in lieu of this help that Sri Thirumalaithathachar entered into an agreement with that Athan Jeer allowing the latter to have the right to recite the Divya prabandam commencing the same with his Guru's or Acharya's Thaniyan. The images of this Thodarmal and his two wives are installed near the Thondaradipoddi entrance to signify the gratitude of the people to this chieftain. From there onwards the defacto management of the temple itself was in the hands of the Athan Jeer's descendants till 1792. For a short period between 1792 to 1796 one Brinivasaraghavachariar representing the Thathachariars was appointed to look after the affairs of the temple by the Collector since one Rama Rao who was managing till 1792 misbehaved. Even this man was found to be unfit. The

East India Company then took over the administration in 1796 through the Collector. This state of affairs continued till 1842, when the Government wanted to restore back the temple to its original "Church-wardens". After enquiring in detail as to the right of Dharmakarthaship the Government ultimately decided to place the administration in the hands of the Thathachar family who were the descendants of Sri Thathadesika since they were alone in management of the temple originally. Accordingly one Kumarathathachariar was entrusted with the administration in 1842 and from that day till the present—even after the introduction of the present scheme in 1941, the Thathachariars alone are recognised to be the hereditary trustees of the temple. Due to some misunderstandings among the several members of this family the Madras High Court framed a scheme in 1909, whereby they directed the election of five trustees among the Thathachariars with a Board of Supervision, nominated by the District Judge of Chingleput. In 1941, the High Court of Madras revised the scheme, and provided for the election of two trustees from the Thathachar family and a non-vaishnavite designated as Executive Trustee to be appointed by the H. R. E. Board, to be incharge of the administration. It is under this scheme that the temple is being now administered.

CULTURAL ASPECT.

Famous historically, Kanchi has been equally famous in regard to its cultural history. It was a seat of learning from early days. It would be interesting to mention here that the famous Chanakya, the reputed author of the "*Arthasasthra*" and a minister in the Court of Chandrakupta Mayurya, was born in this



Sri Varadaraja & the Ubayanachimars
adorned with the beautiful Venkatadri Konda.

place. Equally interesting will be the fact that this was the birth place of the famous Bhuddhist metaphysician, Dhanapala Bhodhisatva, who was the Head of the ancient University of Nalanda (in Bihar) started by Harsha. Kanchi was made more famous in latter centuries by the famous religious reformers, Sri Sankara and Sri Ramanuja. Sri Sankara made this place one of the most important centres of His far-flung peetams (cultural and spiritual centres) by creating the Kamakoti peetam, having for its spiritual vortex, the abode of Sri Kamakshi. Sri Ramanuja lived here during his period of learning, family life, and early sanyasa days. It is said that it is here that Sri Bashiyakar (Sri Ramanuja) started his Sri Bashiya pravachanam (teaching his Visishtadvaita philosophy) to his disciples. He served Sri Devaraja with great zeal and unbounded piety, by carrying holy water for Thirumanjanam daily from the well called "*Salai Kinar*" which is situated, about two miles from this temple towards the south-west. Even after Ramanuja went to Srirangam, Kanchi continued to be the seat of Sanskrit culture for Vaishnavaites just as Srirangam developed later into a seat of Tamil culture. Here were born Poigai Alwar and Sri Vedanta Desika and many other scholars of repute. Sri Thirukkachinambi, Sri Nadathur Ammal, Sri Kurathalwar, and many others lived here for considerable time, propagating the tenets of Sri Vaishnavism. Kanchi was also the birth place of reputed composers in music, like Sri Syama Sasthri. Musicians like Sri Thiyaagaraja and Sri Deekshathar have sung several songs in praise of Lord Sri Devarajaswamy.

This sacred and hallowed shrine of Sri Devarajaswamy is one of the nutrettu (108) *Thirupathis*,

sung by the Alwars. There are about seven pasurams sung in praise of the Lord of Kanchi, by some of the Alwars such as Sri Boothathalwar, Sri Peyalwar, and Sri Thirumangaialwar. The first centurium (1st 100 pasurams—*Muthalpathu* of the famous Thiruvoimozhi of Sri Nammalwar is said to be in reference to Lord Varadaraja. In the later years, Acharyas have praised Sri Varadaraja by several noteworthy pieces, the more important among them being:—

Sri Thirukkachinambi's "Sri Devarajashtakam"

Sri Koorathalwar's "Sri Varadarajasthavam"

Sri Vedantha Desikar's "Sri Varadaraj panchasat"

and Nyasa Dasakam" in sanskrit, and "Hasthagiri

Mahathmyam" in Manipravalam "Thiruchinnamalai"

"Sri Vaishnava Dinachari" "Arthapanchakam"

"Adaikalapathu" "Panniru namam" etc., in Tamil.

Kancheepuram was a seat of learning from pre-historic days when students from far and near came to this place for study. The structural features of the thousand pillared mandapam and the other one in the Malai pradakshinam clearly indicate that these places served as class rooms to the students during their stay with their acharyas. These institutions were maintained by the rulers of Thondaimandalam, who were great patrons of art and culture.

INSCRIPTIONS.

The temple of Sri Devarajswamy contains innumerable epigraphical records. The walls of the Gopurams and the entire walls of the central shrines of Sri Devaraja and Sri Perundevi contain numerous inscriptions in sanskrit, pali, Grandha, Tamil and Telugu, dating back to the Pallava period. Many of

them have been copied by the Government Epigraphical department and are listed and translated for reference. Yet there are many more to be deciphered and a complete record of these inscriptions if suitably fitted together, will throw much light, on the forgotten history of this temple,—nay, of the country itself.

One of the Tamil inscriptions on the eastern wall of the 'malai' of Arulala Perumal indicates the gift of land for the worship of Arulala Perumal at Tiruvattiyur in Kancheepuram in Eyir-kottam a district of Jayangondasolamandalam by Gandagopalan in the 18th year of Rajaraja chola of Tanjore. There are many inscriptions of this kind and of earlier periods of importance. Besides historical significance of these records, some of the inscriptions are highclass pieces of literary work like Sanskrit & Tamil verses in praise of the rulers of this realm. Later epigraphical records reveal that the Kings of Vijaynagar Dynasty celebrated '*Mukta Tulabhara*' ceremonies of the rulers and their queens at Kanchi and gave away the valuable Jewels and Gold to Sri Arulalaperumal (511 of 1919)

FINANCES OF THE TEMPLE.

The Revenue of the temple is derived mainly from the following heads of income :—

1.	Lands,—tope leases	...	...	1,000
2.	Tastic	...	...	9,330
3.	Shro. and Inam villages	...	...	7,690
4.	Rent from buildings	...	...	2,000
5.	Interest on investments	...	...	1,250
6.	Pannai cultivation etc.	...	...	5,000
7.	Hundial and Miscellaneous	...	...	2,000
	Totalling to about			
	Rs. 28,000	per year	...	28,270

The ubayakars for the several festivals contribute about Rs. 12,000, of which the main portion is for the celebration of the Vaisaka Brahmotsavam which costs about Rs. 9,000.

Against this total income of about Rs. 40,000 the temple has to incur an equal amount as expenses, the main items being:—

1.	Establishment, Taxes, T. A. and other expenses about	...	...	10,000
2.	Electric light charges	...	...	1,000
3.	Maintenance of elephant, horse and cattle	...	...	1,000
4.	Farm cultivation	...	...	2,000
5.	Nithiyapadi rice and provisions	...	...	8,000
				22,000

Conduct of festivals:—

(a)	Panchaparuvam	...	...	1,000
(b)	Alwar Acharyar Uthsavams	...	...	1,000
(c)	Periodical Uthsavams	...	...	6,000
(d)	Brahmothsavam	...	...	9,000
(e)	Pandal etc.	...	...	1,000

Total about Rs. ...

 40,000

As such, the temple administration has to be carried on on very frugal and economic lines, at the same time, observing all the essential religious observances and obligations.

This temple conducts about 240 festivals in a year, of which there are about 100 panchaparvams processions. Out of these festivals, only about 90 are by ubayakars. Every endeavour is made to see

that all the ritualistic festivals are performed without any break or departure from customary usages.

Be it, an ordinary Ekadasi procession or the great Garudothsavam, each festival has a charm of its own. The enthusiasm of the goshtis and the grand bearing of the deity coupled with the fervour of those in charge of the several kainkaryams to the Lord, go so harmoniously that it thrills one to witness even a simple procession of Lord Sri Varadarajaswamy. They run before him imbibing the beauteous sight of the God of Gods unmindful of the physical strains and feel elated by such feasts to the eye and the mind as well.

JEWELS.

The Lord of Hasthigiri is the proud possessor of several costly and ancient jewels set with rare gems of outstanding value.

The more important among them are the head ornaments, such as the "Thoppaharam" used exclusively for the Garudothsavam in Vaikasi, and the "*Venkatadri kondai*". Lord Clive presented a gem-set "*Makarakanti*" for the Deity and in it there are several padakams of rare workmanship. Another ancient jewel of importance is "*Ananthachar Makarakanti*" a present made by the acharyapurusha of that name from out of the royal coffers of the then Nizam of Hyderabad. Among the later acquisitions, the more charming ones are the diamond Thirumarbunachiar and the latest diamond *abhaya* hastham of the Uthsavar, the diamond addigais of Thayar and Perumal, Shanka & Chakra studded with stones, one pair of dazzling ear rings of the Uthsavamurthi and the diamond Vadagalai Thirumankappu of the Moolavar. A Collector by name Place presented a set of beautiful

jewels to be used as head ornaments when he was incharge of the administration in the begining of the 19th century. In all, the approximate cost of all the jewels. including the gold kavachams is estimated to be about Rs. Nine lakhs of rupees according to the recent Government departmental estimates.

Important festivals of the temple.

There are as already said as many as 240 festivals or so in a year; practically two days in every three days are festival days. Some of the most important and almost unique festivals of Sri Devarajaswamy are described hereunder, beginning with the Tamil month of Chithrai.

The most outstanding festival in Chithrai is the "*Thiru Avathara Uthsavam*", which celebrates the Birth day of Sri Devarajaswamy, and fall on the Hasthanakshathram, the star in which the Lord appeared at the Yagnakunda of Brahma. On the Chithrapournami day, which comes off immediately, Sri Devarajaswamy goes to the Palar for the famous "*Nadabavi*;" uthsavam. He goes to Ayyangar kulam a village named after Sri Thathadesika who was familiarly & respectfully called as Aiyengar. (Even to-day his descendants) are called as Aiyengars by the local people as a mark of respect.) This village and the beautiful tank and Nadabavi (well) were built by Aiyengar. God is taken in all grandeur to this place on this day and then He is taken to the River Palar for Brahma Aradhanam, when thousands come to worship Him.

Thotta uthasavam is another big and beautiful festival during the month when God is taken along with Sri Vishvaksenar to a garden very near the temple on the banks of Vegavati river.

VAISAKA UTSAVAM.

In the month of Vaikasi, the most celebrated annual Brahmothsavam is conducted on a very grand scale for ten days. This festival is a most spectacular one. The Lord is taken in procession on several vahanams both in the morning and evening to the Gangai-kondan mantapam (in Big Kancheepuram) which is about 3 miles from the Temple, accompanied by Veda goshti throughout and Prabanda goshti at certain particular places. Garudothsavam takes place on the 3rd day morning, the grand Car festival on the 7th day morning and Theerthavari. on the 9th day morning i. e. on the Vaikasi Sravana nakshathiram day.

The Brahmotsavam of Sri Devarajaswamy has some peculiarities and singular features of significance. The first Brahmotsavam was conducted by Lord Brahmadeva Himself, as a token of his gratitude to this Great Lord for His blessings.

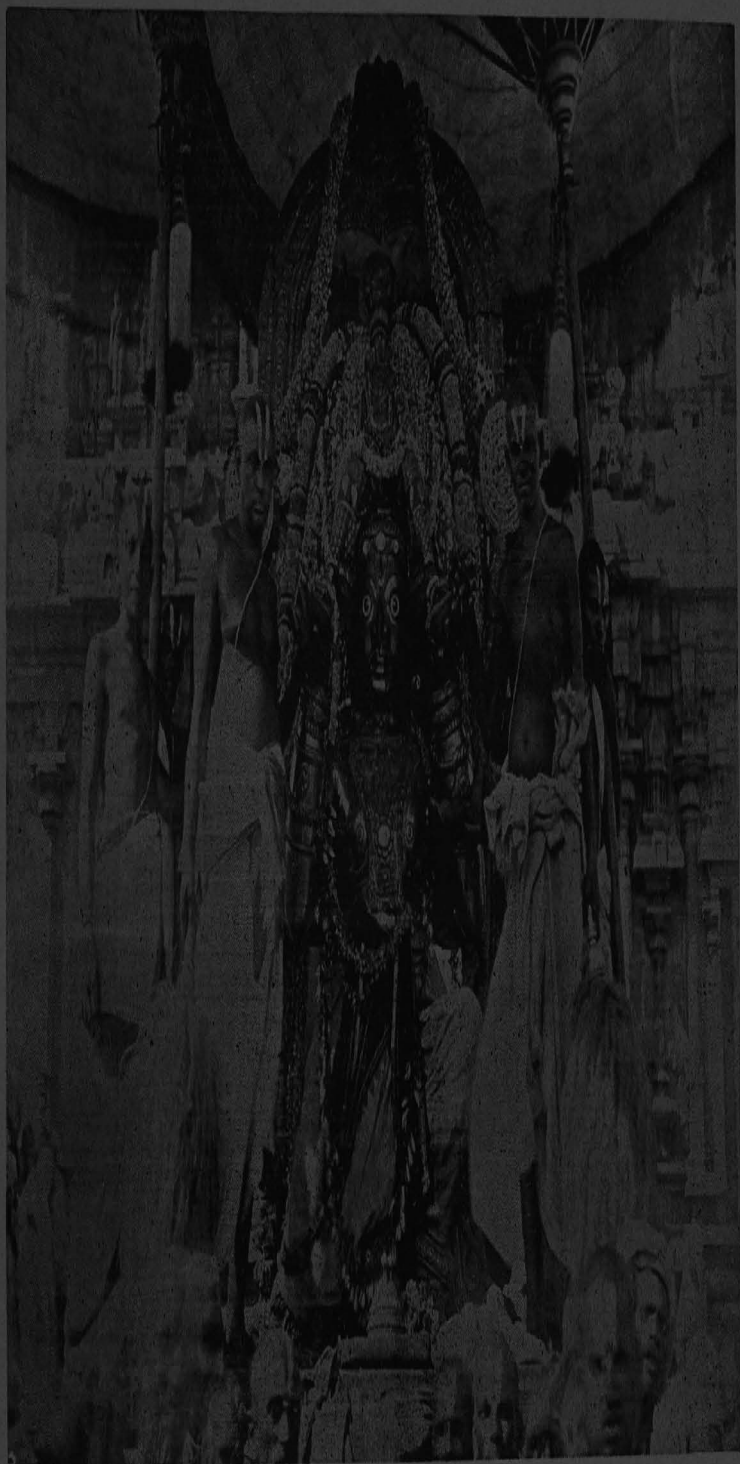
The actual festival commences a day before the usual scheduled first day of the Utsavam and this day is known as "*Sennai Mudanmiyar's Utsavam*" or "*Azhwar Thirunal*." In the evening of that day, Sri Vishwaksena, the Commandant of the Forces of Vishnu, is invoked and he goes out in procession to collect the sacred *mirtigai* or sacred mud for the construction of the altar for the festival, for *homa* is done both in the morning and evening of the ten days of this festival.

FIRST DAY: At the early auspicious hours of this day, the *utsavar* with His *devis* are brought down from Hastigiri, gorgeously adorned with costly jewels and the famous Venkatadri kondai to the Vahana-

mandapam, when the sacred *dwajam* called the "*Garudadwajam*" is hoisted on the *dwajasthambam* to the accompaniment of ritualistic observances as ordained in the 'Pancharatra agamas'. After this (*Dwajaroohanam*) is over, the eight cardinal deities-the *ashtadigbalakas* are invoked and after that the deity goes out in procession in a golden Chapparam to the Gangai-kondan mandapam and comes back to the temple by about 10 A. M.

After the evening procession of the utsavar alone on *Simha* or lion vahanam, there is a peculiar practice obtaining in this temple called the "*Dwetheeya raksha bandanam*" known in Tamil as "Errandam kappu" (இரண்டாம் காப்பு). This festival is very solemn but very imposing to witness, as only few selected devotees will be there to worship the Lord then. For this festival Sri Devaraja is taken back to Hastigiri (In no temple the Utsavars are allowed to go to the *sanctum-sanctorum* once the *dwajaroohanam* is done till it is drawn down after the festival), passing through the *Madapalli* and *Malai pradakshinams* and then up the sacred steps of Hastigiri. After the ritualistic completion, He comes down again to the *Vahana mandapam*, after passing through the *Sannidhi* of *Sri Perundevi Thayar*. It is said that this is prescribed in the Pancharatra agamas but there is also a local historical traditional background to this second *rakshabandanam*.

During the iconoclastic raids of the Muslims in this part of the country then known as *Thondamandalam*, Sri Devaraja was removed to the village of Udayarpalayam (now in Tiruchirapalli district) for safe custody under the care of the local Hindu Chieftain. During His brief sojourn there, the temple



The
famous
Garudasevai
of Lord
Varadaraja.



authorities had consecrated a duplicate image of Sri Devaraja for their daily worship and festivals. After peace was restored, the local people went to the chieftain of Udayarpalayam and requested him to allow them to take back their beloved Varadan back to Kanchee. The Chieftain was not only smitten with the charming beauty of the vigraha of Sri Varadan but also was favoured with prosperity; for his barren tract of land had periodic showers and became fertile consequently. He was not willing to part with his Boon-giving God. Just then the annual Vaisaka utsavam had commenced in Kanchee and not receiving back the original Deity, the festival had started with a duplicate murthy. But after continued efforts, the Image of Sri Devaraja was got back and the devotees hastened with it to Kanchee reaching the temple on the evening of the first day's festival. Rejoiced at this happy event, a fresh *rakshabandanam* was done for that deity and the festival continued on with the original Sri Varadaraja. This is said to account for this *Errandam kappu* festival.

THE SCHEME OF THE
VAISAKA FESTIVAL
IS AS UNDER:—

MORNING.	EVENING.
1st day Golden Chapram	Simha Vahanam
2nd day Hamsa Vahanam	Soorya Prabai
3rd day GARUDA VAHANAM	Hanumantha Vahanam
4th day Sesha Vahanam	Chandra Prabai



5th day	Mohana Avatharam (in golden pallakku)	Yali vahanam
6th day	Chapram (Venu- gopalan thiruk- kolam)	Elephant vahanam
7th day	Rathothsavam	
8th day	No procession— only Thotti Thirumanjanam	Horse vahanam
9th day	Almel pallakku	Punniyakoti vimanam
10th day	No procession— only Dwadasaradanam	Vattiver chapram (round Mada Streets only)

The Garudothsavam on the Vaikasi Visakam day is the grandest festival and records show that this festival had been attracting people far and near from very remote times. The Alwars have referred to this, and in later years beautiful keerthanas came to be composed on this festival—like Sri Thiyyagaraja's Kriti "Vinatha sutha" in Harikamboji & Dikshather's "Sri Varadaraja" in "Saranga". Equally attractive (and profitable from the commercial aspect, to merchants) is the grand Rathothsavam, which attracts very many thousands of people from the neighbouring places. In this same month the "Vasantha Uthsavam" is celebrated for seven days, when Sri Devaraja comes to the Mantapam near the main entrance of the temple.

In the month of Ani Kodai Uthsavam is celebrated for seven days. And on the eighth day is the Ani Garudan or the Parathathva Nirnayam festival which coincides with the birth day of Sri Perialwar. It is during this month that the Jeyshabishekam of both the uthsava images of Sri Perumal and Sri Thayar is conducted on Sravana Nakshathiram, when the gold kavachams are removed and after making the

necessary adjustments & repairs needed, are again fitted to Perumal's & Thayar's Tirumenis (sacred bodies).

In the month of Adi, the Thiruvadipooram festival, celebrating the birthday of Sri Andal is conducted on a grand scale, ending with the Thirukkaliyanam or marriage of Sri Andal with Sri Devaraja on the Thiruvadipooram day.

On the Adi Pournami day Adi Garudan or Gajendra Moksham festival takes place.

The Annual Pavithrôthsavam, the most religious of all the festivals is celebrated for seven days in the month of Avani. Sri Devarajaswamy is decorated with Pavithra malais or garlands made of silk thread and yarn and Homa is done with Vedic recitations on all the days. ending with the Poorna—Ahuthi on the last day.

In the month of Purattasi, the Navarathri festival is done for ten days, when both Sri Devarajaswamy and Sri Perundevi Thayar Grace the Koluvu or darbar in the finely—sculptured hundred pillared mantapam. On the Mahanavami day, there is a grand abishekam for both the Deities in the Mantapam in front of the Thayar sannathi when both of them are seated on the same simhasanam: a feature which occurs only once a year.

Sri Vedantha Desikar's Sathumurai is conducted in all its grandeur on the Sravana nakshathiram of this month when Sri Vedantha Desikar of Vilakkolikoil in Thooppil, a suburb of Kanchi where he is born is brought to this temple for Mangalasasanam or worship. This is in addition to a festival for Sri Desika



Sri Devaraja Appearing as Sri Venugopalan

enshrined in the temple itself (in the Vahana Mantapam) later in the night.

In Arpasi month the sathumurai of Mudal Alwars, Sri Manavala mamunigal and Deepavali festivals take place.

In the month of Karthigai apart from the Karthigai festival & the Sathumarai festival of Sri Kaliyan, there is a grand festival in honour of Sri Thathadesika, when both Sri Perumal and Thayar are taken in a grand procession to the shrine of Sri Thathadesikar to honour him on the Anusham or Anoratha day which is his birthday. The festival continues for full one day. In Margali we have the Adyayana Uthsavam for 0 days, comprising of Pagalpathu and Erapathu festivals, for ten days preceding and succeeding the Vaikunta Ekadasi in Margali. (There is no procession during Pagalpathu) On the Bogi festival day, there is the Thirukkaliyana uthsavam for Sri Perumal and Sri Andal.

On the day after the Iyarpa sattumarai of Adyanam Uthsavam the Anushtanakulam festival is performed to commemorate an incident in Sri Ramanuja's life, when Perumal along with Sri Udayavar or Ramanuja goes to a small temple of Ramanuja near the Salai Kinar already referred to.

On the 2nd of the month of Thai, the famous Parvettai festival at Seevaram, a place about 10 miles East of Kanchee takes place. Sri Devaraja goes in the early hours of the morning, to the Hill there, enjoys a grand festival in the Palar river in the evening and returns to the temple the next day morning. In the same month, on the Thai pournami day there is floating festival for Sri Perumal and Sri Thayar in

the Anantasaras (tank) inside the temple for three days Sri Koorathalwar Sathumarai takes place in Hasthanakshatram of Thai.

In the month of Masi Sri Devaraja is taken to Rajakulam (Royjee Tank) a place about 6 miles from Kanchi, for floating festival in the tank on the Masi pournami day. It is followed immediately by Davana Uthsavam for three days within the temple in the garden called Dorai Thottam. This is a festival for Perūmal and Thayar.

In the month of Panguni Pallava Uthsavam is conducted for seven days when the "Hasthigiri Mahathmyam" or Sthalapuranam is read, in the famous 100 pillared mantapam in the presence of Lord Varada (the Uthsavar Deity and Sri Pranatharthi HaraVarada (who is the Snanabera) the silver Deity, by one of the descendants of Sri Thathadesikar. In the above month of Panguni the Thirukkaliyana uthsavam for Malayala Nachiyar is celebrated for a week ending with the marriage festival on the Uthiram day. There are also the Udayarpalayam festival and the Samvatsaradi festival (Telugu New Year) in this month.

From the year 1944 under an order of the then H. R. E. Board the sathumurai of all alwars and Acharyars are celebrated on their respective birthdays with processions for Perumal if there are ubayakars.

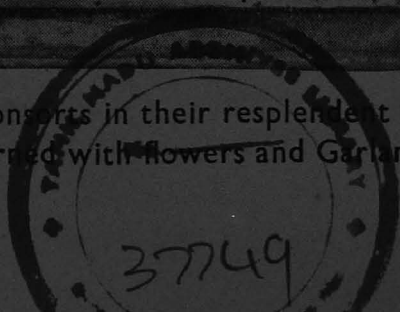




Lord Sri Varadan & His Consorts in their resplendent Sevai
with Sikkathadu and adorned with flowers and Garlands.

Q 2213 8.21126

NSI



The
gopuram and the Samy street approach to Sri Devarajiswamy Temple, Kanchipuram.

