

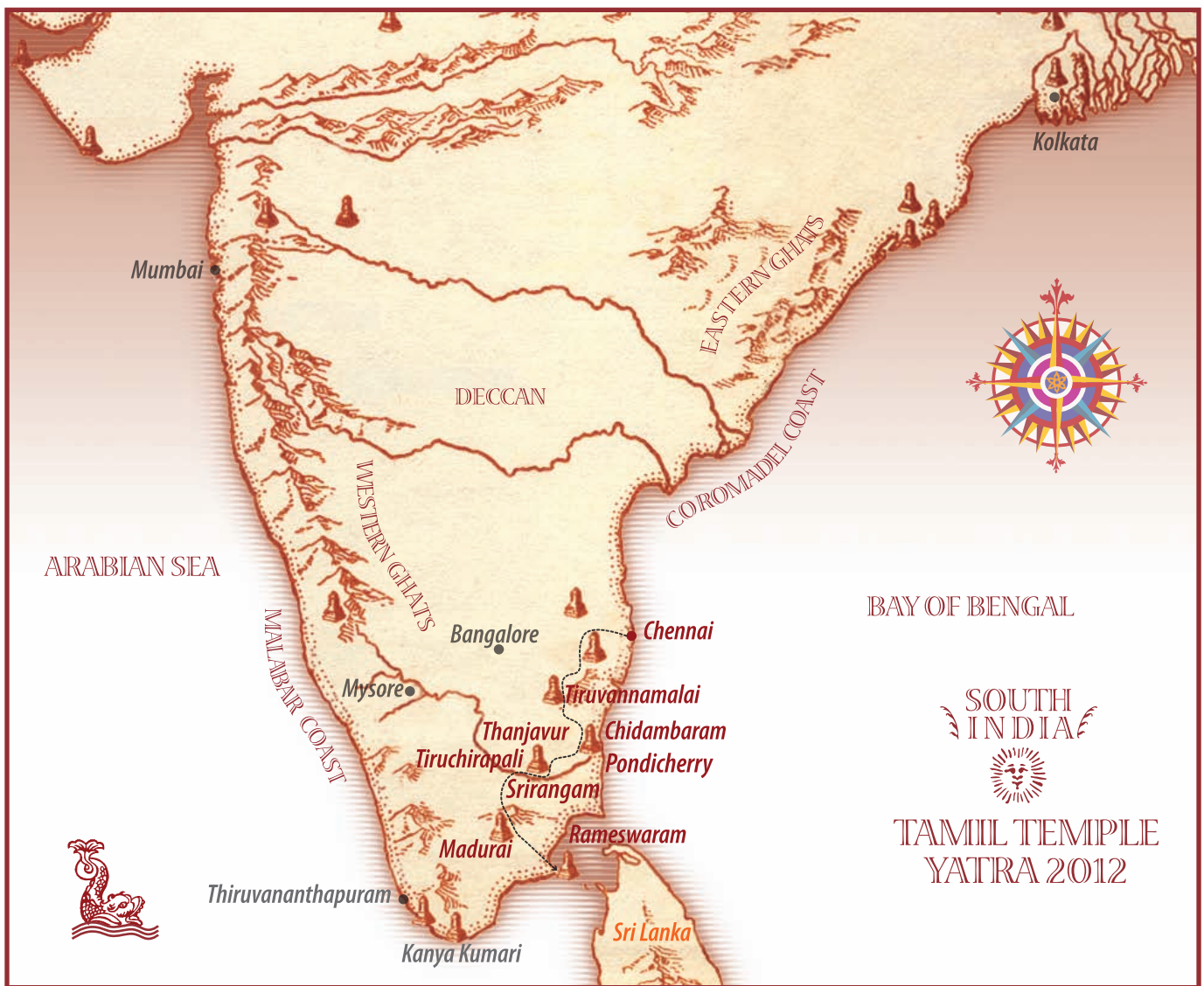
TAMIL TEMPLE YATRA

nāmarūpa
CATEGORIES OF INDIAN THOUGHT

JOIN NĀMARŪPA & FRIENDS ON A PILGRIMAGE
TO GREAT TEMPLES OF TAMIL NADU IN SOUTH INDIA

JANUARY 3 ~ 17, 2012

CHENNAI~TIRUVANNAMALAI~CHIDAMBARAM~PONDICHERRY
AUROVILLE~TANJAVUR~SRIRANGAM~RAMESWARAM~MADURAI



Tuesday January 3 ~ Chennai

Arrive in Chennai no later than the night of January 3. Check into hotel to rest. Big adventure ahead!

Wednesday January 4 ~ Chennai

Meet the group & discuss the Yatra, daily programs, & local customs. Shop for South Indian clothing to wear for temple visits.

Thursday January 5 ~ Tiruvannamalai 185 Km 3 Hrs

Morning practice. Temple visit to pray to Lord Ganesha for a safe yatra with many wonderful inner and outer experiences. Travel by bus through the beautiful South Indian rice fields and ancient rock hills.

Friday January 6 ~ Tiruvannamalai

Arunachaleswara Temple is the magnificent home of Lord Siva as the fire element and is situated at the base of Arunachala mountain. We will visit the temple, climb or circumambulate the mountain and visit the ashram where Ramana Maharishi lived.

Saturday January 7 ~ Auroville / Pondicherry 170 Km 3.5 Hrs

After morning practice we head further south to the seaside enclave of Pondicherry where Sri Aurobindo's ashram is located, and the nearby international community of Auroville.

Sunday January 8 ~ Auroville / Pondicherry

Day devoted to more intense morning practice and then relaxing by the ocean and handicraft shopping.

Monday January 9 ~ Chidambaram 66 Km 1 Hr

After practice we take a short bus ride to Chidambaram and the unique temple of Siva as Nataraj, Lord of the Cosmic Dance.

Tuesday January 10 ~ Chidambaram

We will be guided in worship within the temple by Dikshitar brahmins, whose community has served Siva as ether element for eons.

Wednesday January 11 ~ Thanjavur & Srirangam 147 Km 3 Hrs

We head inland now to the architectural wonder of the Brihadeshwara temple and then to Tiruchirappali to rest.

Thursday January 12 ~ Srirangam

Ranganathaswamy Temple, covering 190 acres is a town in itself with 21 gopurams and countless shrines. The nearby Jambukeswaram Temple is home of Siva as the water element.

Friday January 13 ~ Karaikukudi & Rameswaram 234 Km 5 Hrs

We will break our longest ride of the yatra with a famous Chettinad lunch and then reach the island of Rameswaram by evening.

Saturday January 14 ~ Rameswaram

Ramanathaswamy Temple is one of twelve Jyoti Lingams. Here the custom is to take a sunrise sea bath, worship a sand lingam on the beach and then proceed to the temple to be doused with water from each of 22 wells until finally reaching the sanctum for Siva's darshan.

Sunday January 15 ~ Madurai 170 Km 3.5 Hrs

Inland again to the temple town of Madurai, home of the fabulous goddess Meenakshi. An evening visit to the temple and then rest.

Monday January 16 ~ Madurai

After practice most of the day will be spent exploring the great temple as well as some final shopping in the bazaars that surround the complex. In the evening we will celebrate with a grand South Indian farwell feast.

Tuesday January 17 ~ Fly to Chennai ~ Fly home or onward.

Flights should be arranged for the night of January 17. If you are staying on we can help with accommodation at your expense. 🏠

Note This itinerary is a basic outline. Travelling in India often leads to the unexpected and things may change. Please be prepared.

Yatra, Tirtha and Darshan

The ancient Puranas of India are huge volumes containing stories of the makings of the universe as well as thrilling tales of innumerable gods and goddesses. The geography of the Puranas coincides with that of the entire Indian sub-continent. Their stories are honored in many ways, not least of which is the recognition of place. Countless places mentioned in these ancient texts are fully alive today and are important places of yatra (pilgrimage) where vast temple complexes have arisen. Within their sanctums worship is performed daily to the resident gods and goddesses in a tradition that reaches back many hundreds of years.

These places where the sacred stories unfolded are sometimes called tirthas. A tirtha is a place of crossing over and most literally refers to fords of rivers. It also refers to a spiritual crossing place, where the divine is more easily intuited, recognized or experienced.

The magnificently constructed temples of South India, planned according to strict rules of vastu (laws governing spatial awareness), are often dominated by huge towering gateways called gopurams. Daily, vast numbers of Hindu yatrīs (pilgrims) pass through the gopurams to have darshan of their favorite gods or goddesses, enshrined in the murtis (images) in the temples' inner sanctums. Darshan is both seeing and being seen by the deity.

Tamil Temple Yatra

The intention of the **Tamil Temple Yatra** will be to go as much as possible as pilgrims to the sacred temples and, where permitted, to have darshan of the gods and goddesses. This will not be tourism. We will travel simply, lodge in Indian-style accommodations, eat vegetarian meals and dress and behave appropriately according to local custom.

Where possible we will also have time for practices such as yoga asanas and meditation, as well as discussions and explanations regarding our experiences. Arrangements will also be made with local priests for the proper performance of any rituals that we may wish to perform.

At some places we will have ample time for the usual sightseeing, shopping and exploring that travellers enjoy. The pace will be relaxed, but this being India, one can expect the unexpected.

At the outset we will all meet in Chennai and spend some time in preparation: purchasing the proper clothes for visiting temples and explaining the various customs, rules and attitudes which will be helpful for a successful yatra.

Included in the Land Cost of \$2100:

The complete yatra will be 15 days with the first and last days being for arrival and departure. We want to keep your expenses reasonable but your stay comfortable. Lodging will be Indian-style, comfortable but not luxurious. Meals will be South Indian vegetarian, nutritious but hot and spicy. Attempts can be made to have less spicy fare. Travel will be in a comfortable bus. There are entry fees for temples.

Not included in the Land Cost.

International air-fare to and from India (contact us for a recommended travel agent if required), visa costs, airport taxes, tips and temple offerings (additional collections will be made for tipping the bus driver and his assistant, and to engage local priests or guides), as well as all personal requirements during the yatra, are not included in the cost of the yatra.

Important Travelling in India requires patience, flexibility and humor.

Visas

Visas are required for US citizens traveling to India. Citizens of other countries should check if they require visas. Visas are obtainable online through www.travisa.com

Immunizations

No immunizations are required but several are recommended by the Atlanta Center for Disease Control.

Tamil Temple Yatra guides.

Radhakunda das, our indispensable guide from Mumbai, arranges "everything." Yatra facilitator is **Robert Moses** (co-publisher of Namarupa), veteran of multiple yatras through North and South India, who will also give talks on Indian philosophies. **Kate O'Donnell**, who teaches yoga in Boston, will be our yoga asana instructor and Ayurvedic advisor.

NAMARUPA, Categories of Indian Thought.

Another very important aspect of this yatra will be to gather audio-visual and literary material that may appear in future issues of Namarupa.

Reservations

To secure a place on the **Tamil Temple Yatra** we will require a non-refundable deposit of \$108 per person by August 1, 2011. Full payment will be due by November 15, 2011. Once you have made a reservation we will assist you with further information regarding international flights, visas, immunizations, suggestions for on-going travel should you stay for a longer period, personal clothing and other travel requirements.

Please fill in this form and send it to us with your deposit. Or use the online form at www.namarupa.org/yatra/yatra12.php or simply e-mail to robert@namarupa.org

Refunds

Full refund, excluding deposit, will be made by November 1, 2011. A fifty-percent refund, excluding deposit, will be made up to December 15, 2011. No refunds thereafter. Since the cost is based on group participation, no refunds can be made for any features not taken. If cancellation occurs while the yatra is in progress there will be no refund for any unused portion.

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State or Province: _____

Zip or Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

E-mail: _____

Telephone: _____

Best time to call _____

How did you hear about us? _____

Have you travelled to India before? _____

If so, when and where? _____

Previous experience with Indian philosophy (none required): _____

15 Days: US \$2,100

Deposit only: US \$108

Balance: US \$ _____

I have read and understand the notes on this page:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Payment:

Check or Money Order payable to Namarupa Events

Mail to: Namarupa Events c/o Robert Moses

P.O. Box 271, Dublin, NH 03444 USA

Deposits only: via PayPal at www.namarupa.org/yatra/yatra12.php

Balance payments by check please. We can accept credit card payments via PayPal which takes a large percentage for the convenience of using their services. We will be obliged to add their fees to your payment if you pay via Paypal with a credit card. All banks charge wire fees which will also be added to your payment if you pay by wire transfer.