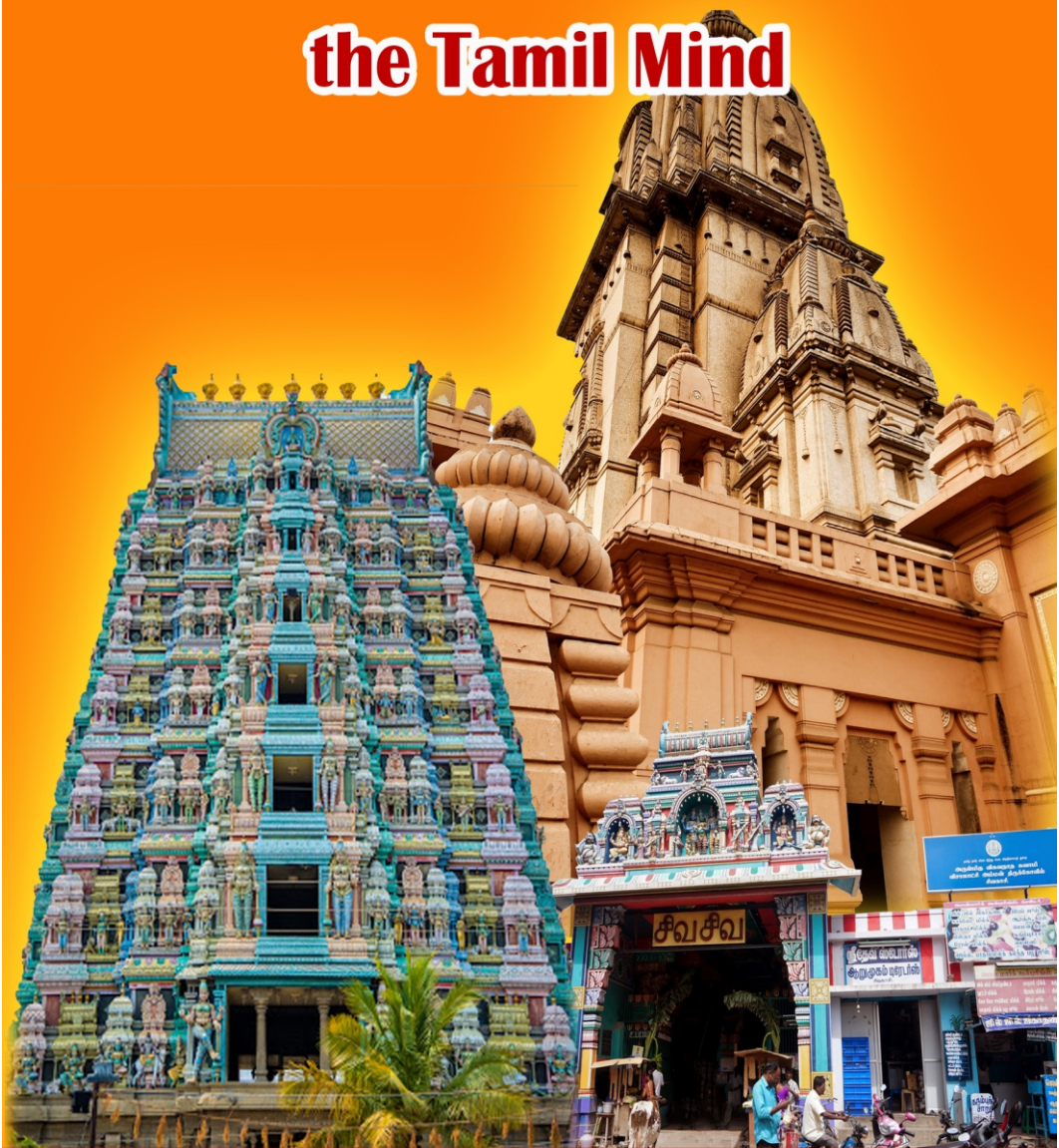


Kashi as Etched on the Tamil Mind



सत्यमेव जयते

Central Institute of Classical Tamil, Chennai - 600 100.

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Central Institute of Classical Tamil
Chemmozhi Salai, Perumbakkam
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Preface

Kashi Tamil Sangamam is an initiative by the Government of India to uphold the spirit of “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat”.

The promotion of the idea of ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’ has been one of the major focus areas of the Government guided by the vision of the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. In his speech on 19th November 2022 at Varanasi in the last month-long event of Kashi Tamil Sangamam-2022. He reiterated that “Our resolutions in ‘Amrit Kaal’ will be fulfilled by the unity and collective efforts of the whole country. India is the nation which has lived a natural culture for thousands of years by respecting the mantra of “sam vo manasi jaanatham” (understanding each other’s mind). In our country, there is a tradition of remembering 12 Jyotirlingas from “Saurashtre Somanatham to ‘Setubande tu Ramesham’ after waking up in the morning. He recalled that we start our day by remembering the spiritual unity of the country. We recite mantras while taking bath and worshipping – ‘Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari and Kaveri reside in our waters!’ That is, we feel like bathing in all the rivers of India. We have to strengthen this tradition and heritage of thousands of years of independence and make it the unity thread of the country. This will make us realise our duties, and being a source of energy, to strengthen national unity. He wished that the nectar that comes out of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam should be taken forward through research by the youth. These seeds should further become a banyan tree of national unity. He said that the mantra ‘nāṭṭu nalaṇē namatu nalaṇ’ (National Interest is our Interest) should become the life mantra of our countrymen and, in reality, it was a celebration

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of India's might and characteristics, that made the Kashi Tamil Sangamam unique.

With this objective, under the guidance of our most revered Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, a grand month-long festival is celebrated in Kashi. Central Institute of Classical Tamil played a major role in its organization. Our most revered Prime Minister of India released thirteen volumes of translations of Tirukkuraḷ into Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Odia, Malayalam, Sourashtri, Vagriboli, Paduga, Nepali, Arabic, Urdu, Persian and Khmer published by CICT.

The academic staff of Central Institute of Classical Tamil as a result of profound research, prepared the booklet including the Tamil, Hindi and English versions of "Kashi as Etched on the Tamil Mind".

We are thankful to the Prime Minister and to the Union Minister for Education and are delighted to have been able to associate ourselves with this historic event.

Sd/-

(R. Chandrasekaran)

Kashi as Etched on the Tamil Mind

There are several historical, social, linguistic, literary and cultural evidences to show that the sacred city of Kashi has been etched on the Tamil mind from time immemorial. Besides being the cultural capital of India, Kashi has been serving as a bridge connecting the North and the South of our Nation. Though there is a long distance between Kashi and Rameswaram, the two shrines are traditionally mentioned together as Kashi-Rameswaram. Rabindranath Tagore pays a glowing tribute to Kashi indicating its prominent place in the Indian Psyche:

Kasi was never part of any particular state rule or under the jurisdiction of any other ruler and is universally recognized to be owned by all the rulers of India. Kashi's specific identity is that it is a central place where the philosophies of various religions converge and also where different strands of Indian education integrate and function in one place.

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Most temples in Tamilnadu have a separate sanctum sanctorum for Kashi Viswanatha. In the deep South of the nation, there are cities such as Tenkasi, Virutta Kasi, Pushpavana Kasi, kaṭampaṇ Kasi and Sivakasi and mutts and choultries like Sri Kumaraswamy mutt and Srikasi Nāṭṭukkōṭṭai Nagara Chatram witnessing to the close connection between Kashi and Tamil Nadu.

Pilgrimage to Kashi continues to be a lifelong desire to every Hindu. Undertaking Kashi yatra (holy journey to Kashi) is a much cherished ritual, a religious service involving a series of actions usually performed in a fixed order. Those who desire to do this should first go to Rameswaram, take a both in the fiery ocean (is the Indian Ocean), dip into it thrice with wet clothes

on. Every time you take a dip, you need to pick up a handful of sand. The sand taken in the first dip should be made into a lingam with a chanting of ‘Sethu Madava’; the sand taken in the second dip should be made into a lingam with a chanting of ‘Bindu Madava’; the sand taken in the third dip should be made into a lingam with a chanting or ‘Venu Madhava’. The three lingams thus formed should be kept on the shore and worshipped with the chanting of the five-syllabled mantra ‘Namasivaya’. After worshipping Ramanatha and Parvatavarttini, one should leave for Kashi. In Kashi, one should first go to Prayagraj, and Place the Sethu Madhava lingam at the Triveni Sangamam (Where three rivers meet). From here, one should take hold water, go to kashi and worship Viswanatha. Then, one is expected to make a trip to Gaya and worship one’s dead ancestors by doing Pitru Kadan and lighting the Moksha lamp. When one returns to Rameswaram, one should offer the holy water brought from Prayagraj` to Ramanatha Swami in Rameswaram. That alone is supposed to complete the Kasirameswara yatra.

Sri Kāciyāttirai Viḷakkam (Description of the Pilgrimage to Kashi), written by Chidambaram Mouna Desikar Adhinam Srimad Sabapati Swami in 1939, serves as travel guide to those who make the pilgrimage to Kashi and lists the important shrines on the way to Kashi. In his **Talayāttiraippotuviti** (General rules to be followed in a pilgrimage), written as early as 1882, Tirukkailasa Parampari Tiruvaṇṇāmalai Ādinattu Arumuga Swami describes the rituals known as yāttirai niyamam, Muṇḍaṇa Vidhi, Snana Vidhi, Tarppaṇa Vidhi, Tīrttacirāṭṭa Vidhi, and Tāṇam. The book includes a section on the glory of Kashi and history of Gaya.

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That the common people of Tamilnadu have been extremely fond of Kashi is evidenced in the names of a large number of things. Most of these words are included in Tamil dictionaries.

Kasikkampu (bajra crop)

Kasikkamalam (a type of diamond)

Kasikkal (a type of iron with magnetic power)

Kasikkuppi (a small vessel filled with Ganges water)

Kasiccāmpā (a variety of paddy)

Kasiccāram (a kind of salt)

Kasiccīram (cumin)

Kasiccempu (a vessel made of copper and brass meant for bringing Ganges water)

Kasittīrttam (Ganges water brought from Kashi)

Kasittumpai (a plant)

Kasippaṭṭu (a type of silk)

Kasiarali (Golden arali)

Kasilavaṇam (a kind of Salt)

Kasippārppan (a type of fish)

Kasikkiruṭṭi (a bird)

There is a long note on Kashi in the well-known reference book in Tamil, **Abitāṇa Cintāmaṇi**:

Kashi in one of the Mokshasthanas, Self-illuminating as the Ganges is nearby. In this, Sivamurthy gives darshan in the form desired by the devotees. This holy place remained

undisturbed on the trisul – wearing head a lord Siva even during the Sarvasamhara time. Pārvati Devi teaches ‘tārka mantra’ to those who die here in order to redeem their souls. In addition to sivalingams worshipped by Sayikaṭaviyaṅ, Iyakkar and Samvarttaṅ, Kōppiyaṛēkam (where the sacred cow worshipped Lord Siva), Kapilākāra, Iruṣupattuvacalingam, Pattiratōya tīrttam, Iraṇiyakarṇēcam, Suvaliṅēccuram, Paralingam, Kantukēccuram, Sayilēccuram, Sangamēccuram, Cuttimēcam, Sukkirēsam, Sambukēsuvaram, Mallikārccuṅam, Īcāṅam, Gaṇēccuram, Akilēccuram, Rāmēccuram and Katampēsa are also to be found here. Since five kurōsa Siva lingams one here, it is known as “Anandagaanam”. It is also known as “Avimuttam” as it restores the life to the dead and as the Sivalinga appeared in the handful of sand collected in the Ganges by a Brahmin. It is called “Mayanam”(Crematorium) because it is the place where demons (Siva Gaṇa) native at the time of Sarvasamhara. As Siva Murti is present in the form of holy light and people seek mukti here, it is known as Kashi. Because it bestows dharma on the ‘jeevan’, it has got the name Dharumavanam. Kashi once assumed the form of a woman, worshipped the idol of Siva and got the boon to confer mukti on those who prayed to her”.

In Abitāṅa Cintāmaṇi, there are three more entries relating to Kashi:

Vāraṇāsi: A name for Kashi. It acquired this name because it lies between the two rivers Varāṅa and Asi. One river is called Varāṅai because the sins of those who go there will be removed; the other river is called ‘Asi’ because those who bathe in it will be absolved of their sins.

Vāraṅavāsi: the city of the king of Ukra clan.

Vāraṅavasi: the city of the king of Ukra clan.

Some medieval Nikaṅṭus (dictionary-like reference books) also have entries on Kashi.

Vāraṅāsi is another name for Kashi. (Divakara Nikaṅṭu)

Vārāṇasi is another name for Kashi (Piṅkala Nikaṇṭu)

Vārāṇasi is another name for Kashi (Cūṭāmaṇi Nikaṇṭu)

From these Nikaṇṭus, it is evident that two different names-
Vāraṇāsi and Vārāṇasi – have been in vogue for a long time.

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Kumaraguruparar, one of the greatest Tamil poets who lived in the 17th century, is reliably reported to have visited Kashi and earned the patronage of the ruling Delhi Badshah. He established a mutt in Kashi and a Purāṇa Shala and delivered lectures on saivism and Tamil classics including Siva Purāṇam and Kamban's **Ramayana**. The story goes that the great Hindi saint-poet Tulsidas listened to his learned discourses on Kamban's immortal epic. There is substantial evidence in the Hindi Ramayana to conclude that it was definitely influenced by the former.

From some Thanjavur Maratha inscriptions we learn about king Serfoji's visit to Kashi. King Serfoji made his journey to Kashi on 23 September 1820 with a large group of 3000 people. He returned to Thanjavur on 24 April 1822 after this long trip. On 10 July 1821 at 8 o'clock in the morning, King Serfoji reached Kashi and stayed at Sri Kumaraswamy Mutt. The next day he took a holy dip in the Ganges flowing at the Maṇikarṇikai Ghat, which he beautified later. In memory of his Kashi visit, a temple called maṇikarṇikeshwarar was built by him at Keezha Raja Veedhi inside Thanjavur Fort. The temple was completed and consecrated in 1827. It is also called Putukkoyil because it was newly built by King Serfoji.

Kashi is mentioned in several stone inscriptions and copper plates of Tamil Nadu.

A seventeenth century inscription beneath the Deepakamba of the Uttamalingeswarar Temple at Perumānallūr, Tiruppur district:

“All those who do daily dharma paripāalanam at this great place will get the benefits of having had darshan at Kashi and Rameswaram”.

A nineteenth century inscription on the Kalasam at the Ciṅṅammaṅ-Periammaṅ temple at Haumanpaḷḷi, Erode district:

“If anyone speaks ill of this dharma, he will be afflicted by the sin of having killed a cow in the Ganges-flowing Kashi.”

On 12th June 1761, Ranganath Timmarayan, Kandācāram, Sēnābāgam and Sēruvaikarar donated four mā of fertile land to Kāvirikkarai Dhargah in Erode to provide food and clothes to Aradesi, Paradesi and Pakiris who come to the Dhargah. An inscription found on a stone planted in front of the Dhargah States,

“If a person does anything against this dharma, he will be afflicted by the sin of one who kills a cow on the banks of the Kashi-Ganga, one who cheats on one’s mother and daughter, and one who kills and eats a pig in Mecca (if the person is a Muslim), and will be left without wealth and progeny”.

In the book **Sengundar Historical Accounts**, S.Iracu writes, under the heading of ‘Settlement of Sengundars in other towns and temple works’.

“Vāraṇavāsi Mudali, son of Samaya Sangati Sōlaiyangiri Mudali, was appointed to audit the accounts relating to the Kashi temple”.

In the copper plate released by king Ekoji on 16 August 1735, it is stated that

“As long as grass, land, Kaveri, Kashi and Rameswaram exist, the Annadhana Choultry may be run; whoever opposes this, will be afflicted by the sin of having killed a milching cow at Kashi-Rameswaram”.

In the Tanjore District Kumbakonam region Swamimalai Varadarasap Perumal Temple, the copper plate released by king Ekoji on 20 January 1679, 23 countries are listed, one of which is ‘Nanda dēsa known Kasidesa’.

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Kasidesam is also referred to as one of the 56 desams in the konganeswarar copper plate released by Pratap Singh on 9 June 1758.

In the copper plate released by Sakaji on 6 January 1695, Kashi is called Vārānasi.

Deepambal puram Vanmeekanathar Koil copperplate released by Deepambal Bhai on 22 July 1713 states,

“Anyone who favours this charity will win the strength of a thousand Sivalinga Pradishta, Vishnu Pradishta, Bahma Pradishta and also the power of performing a crore Kaṇṇikadhana in Kashi.”

The Tirumakkōṭṭai copper plate released by king Serfoji declares,

“Those who take care of this dharma will gain the benefit of performing Asvamedha yāgam in Kashi.”

It is to be noted that all the charities announced in stone inscriptions and copper plates prescribe rewards associated with Kashi.

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That Kashi has been deeply entrenched in the minds of the common people is attested by the numerous proverbs in Tamil.

Kashi consists of only two letters. But how many days will it take to see it?

Tiruvaiyāru is as good as Kashi.

It is like going to Kashi and bringing curds.

The evil Karma has not been annulled even after going to Kashi.

Should you fall at the feet of fake Sanyasins even after going to Kashi?

It is like a bull that has gone to Kashi.

If you go to Kashi, you can shake your legs; after shaking legs, you can shake your shoulders.

Even if you go to Kashi, you can get the ladle for half a paisa.

Even if you go to Kashi, there is no way to mukti for you.

Even if you go to Kashi, your karma will not leave you.

Even while going to Kashi, you have a bundle on your armpit!

Even if he goes to Kashi, his sin will be with himself.

Tirubuvanam measures more than Kashi.

For the eye to be pierced by a person in Kashi, do you want to extend your hands from Kanchi?

If you die in Kashi, you attain mukti; if you are born in Kamalai, you are assured of mukti.

Dhandam (Penance) in Kashi; Mundam (head-showing) in Prayagai; Pindam (Pitru Kāryam) in Gaya.

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Avināsvasi lives in Kashi.

There is no river equal to the Ganges; there is no place equal to Kashi.

Even if you go to Kashi-Rameswaram, the smell of dry fish will not go away.

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There are numerous allusions to the city of Kashi and its temple in ancient, medieval and modern Tamil texts. **Kalittokai**, a great Sangam Classic, glorifies the rare virtue of the people of Vāraṇavāci:

“On seeing the people in the streets agitated unreasonable, you need not behave like those living in Vāraṇavāci who treat others’ grief as their own.” (60:12-13)

Cilappatikāram, one of the five great epics in Tamil, refers to the life of a prince of Vāraṇam.

“In the Central state of Vāraṇam, Dēvakumāran was born as the only son with beauty, wealth and intelligence to the king, Uttara Kauthan; after ruling the country for 32 years as a victorious king and as magnanimous philanthropist, he assumed the shape of a divine being”. (Adaikkalakkātai 178-183)

Maṇimēkalai, a celebrated Buddhist epic, refers to a Brahmin of Vāranāci, well-versed in the Vedas. (Chapter on the greatness of Aputtiram. 3-4)

Neelakēci, a minour epic, mentions Kācinātu together with one Cēṭṭiyanāṭu. (1-44/2)

Cūḷamaṇi, another reputed minor epic, praises a king of Kashi called Kaccan.

“O lord wearing bright jewels, your blameless army of chariots, cavalry, elephants and infantry is as large as the four seas. With a sceptre and a shining crown, Kaccan rules Kashi, which has beautiful groves in which bees swarm honey-filled flowers. Born of one of the five clans of kings created by Arukan, he protects the world as per

the rules of Dharma Sastras. His wife Sutanjanai's waist is covered with a bright silk garment.”

(Tūtuviṭu Carukkam, 536)

Another stanza of the same work describes the magnificent presence of a king of Vāraṇavāci in a swayamvara.

“A matchless prince of the Ukkira clan, the ruler of Vāraṇavāci went in a grand procession when beautiful ladies waved fans and the fair city sang his praise.”

(Suyamvaraccarukkam, 1787)

Peruṅkatai, yet another epic in Tamil, makes repeated references to the king of Kashi, his wife, his fair daughter as well as to the prosperous land of Vāraṇavāci.

(6/173, 6/44, 15/45, 17/13)

Villibharatam, a Tamil recreation of Vyasa's Mahabharata, eulogizes the heroic king of kashi and his three fair daughters in more than one context.

(1-123/1; 1-149/3, 10-34/1, 44-11/2, 44-14/2)

Vāraṇāci finds a prominent mention in the melodious catalogues of sacred cities given by campantar and appar in their **Tēvāram** Songs.

(Campantar Tēvāram: 1890:1, 2; Appar Tēvāram: 2159:2; 2791:2; 2791:1)

Periyapurāṇam, the greatest of saivite epics, praises the bright –haired god of Vāraṇāsi.

(Tiruniṅṅa Carukkam: 1-353/2)

Even reputed Vaishnavite Classics such as **Nālāyirattivviyap Pirabandham** and **iṭu muppattārāyirappaṭi** respectively refer to a king of kashi called Vakkaraṅ Pavuṅṭiraṅ (858:1) and the land Known as Vārānasi (2-10-5)

Tiruppukal, a unique collection of melodious songs on Lord Murukan, calls the god

“Lord, famously residing in Kashi” (662);

“Lord, choosing to live in the Ganges-flowing Kashi together with the fair daughter of hunters” (663)

“Lord, son of the blue-throated husband of Uma, residing in the Ganges-flowing Kashi” (661)

Gurugnana campantar’s **Sivabōgacāram** gives prominence to kashi in the list of places that confer mukti on the bhaktas.

Chidambaram (Thillaivanam), Kashi, Thiruvarur, Mayiladuthurai, Mullaivanam, Koodal, Viruddhachalam (Thirumudhukundram), Nellai, Kanchi, Thirukkazhuk kundram, Vedaranyam (Thirumaraikkaadu), Thiruvanna malai (Arunai) , Kalahasti (Kalatti), Vanchiyam.

It should be noted that excepting Kashi, all the places in the list are of Tamilnadu.

Tiruṣṭilaiyāṭal purāṇam, one of the best puranas in Tamil, known for its smooth-flowing verses, speaks of the sons of the city of Kashi with its cool ghats.

Gnānavarōtayer’s Upadēsakāṇṭam avers that the great city of Kashi wipes away all the life-long sins. (2270)

Kāncippurāṇam calls it the truly great sacred city. (356)

Sivaprakasa swamigal in his **Kalampakam** expresses the widely held belief that those who have seen Chidambaram, those who think of Thiruvannamalai, those who are born in Thiruvarur and those who die in Kashi will all attain extraordinary mukti. (91)

Ramalinga Adigal, in his **Thiruvaruṭpā** describes the pure form of Lord Siva in the city of Kashi which inspires worship.

(Third Tirumurai 2538/1; 1962:658, 659)

A popular ballad on the hero who fought against the British, Kaṭṭabomman, reverentially mentions Kashi together with Rameswaram and Kanyakumari. (p.151)

Subramaniya Bharati, the greatest of modern Tamil poets, lived in Kashi for some time during his younger days in his aunt's house named "Sivamath" and used to recall his experience in his writings including the short story. "Āril Oru Paṅku" (One of Six Shares).

In one of his national songs, Bharati prophesies, long before the wireless came into use, that we will oneday make an instrument by which a speech of the bard of Kashi will be heard in Kanchi.

Kavimani Desika Vinayakam, in his **Malarum Mālaiyum** (Flower and Garland) eulogizes Kashi as that "Magnificent-Kasi".

Aḷa. Valliyappa, known for his songs for Children humorously mentions a common habit of the Tamils in one of his compositions. The elderly people of Tamilnadu, who go to Kashi, would vow to stop eating one of their favourite dishes after their return. An old man in the poem claims to have vowed that he would never be angry with anyone but at the slightest provocation gets wild with his own grandchildren!

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This is not all. If there are simple allusions to Kashi in proverbs, puranas, and minor and major classics, full-fledged Kashi-centred Classics are not wanting. And some of them are by celebrated poets like Kumarakuruparar, Ativeerarama pandiyan, and Mahavidhwan Meenatchi Sundaram Pillai.

1. Kāsikkalampakam: Composed by Sage Kumarakuruparar, this kalampakam making use of many subgenres in Tamil, begins with a hymn of praise to Lord Vinayaka. A crane is sent as a messenger to God by the heroine's confidante in order to seek his favour. In the section called 'puyavakuppu', the might of his shoulders is glorified, with reference to his divine play (leela). In the sections called "Picciyār" and "Korriyār", Picci in Lord Siva's disguise and Korri in Lord Vishnu's disguise are presented and a lot of information is given about their jobs in stanzas full of puns. Korriyar is seen dancing and singing songs about the grandeur of the city of Kashi. In the section called "Ūr", Kashi is praised as the great hero's place. In the section, "Ammāṇai", ladies dance glorifying the hero's deeds in a series of questions and answers. Āruppaṭai is a remarkable subgenre in Tamil. In this guide poem, a bard, having received the blessings of the Lord of Kashi instructs another bard to go to Him and seek salvation. At the end of the work, there is one more section on "Ūr" consisting of 23 songs in praise of Kashi. From Kumarakuruparar's classic, we leave that Kashi was also known as avimuttam and Ānandhavanam, Viswanathar as Akilēsar and Kasinathar and Visalatchi as Anandhavalli and Peruntaṅkaṅṅammai.

2. Kāsit Tuṇḍi Vināyakar Pathikam: Another work by Kumarakuruparar, this consists of ten āciriappas, a blank-verse like metre in Tamil.

3. **kāsikaṇṭam**: Ativeerarama Pandiyar of the 16th century is the author of this book also known as kāsikāṇṭam. ‘Kaṇṭam’ means piece or part. The section dealing with Kashi is called kāsikaṇṭam. When presented as a whole book, its name is kāsikaṇṭam. There are ten Sivapuranas in Sanskrit, one of which, “sankara Samhita”, is divided into twelve sections. Kāsikaṇṭam is the fourth part of that Samhita. Its Tamil translation, Kāsikāṇṭam, consists of two Kāṇṭams called Pūrvakāṇṭam (41 Chapters) and Uttara kāṇṭam (59 Chapters).

In 2526 exquisite stanzas, besides mentioning the greatness of the city of Kashi, it defines celibacy, domesticity, woman’s nature, etiquette, life in this world (immai), and life in the next one (maṛumai). Some of the songs in this book have been compiled separately and presented as independent books. Its fifth chapter contains six verses (21-31) by Agastya in praise of Goddess Lakshmi. In the tenth chapter, eight hymns are collected as Sivāṭṭakam. They are recited by devotees praying for progeny. The seventy-second chapter is called ‘vaccira pañcara kavacam’, the songs of which are reduced to twelve and recited under the title ‘sakti kavasam’.

4. **Kāsi Rahasyam**: This book mentioning the unique features of Kashi was composed by Maha Vidhwan Meenakshi sundaram Pillai, for which a commentary by Tiruchirrapala Gnāniyar is also extant. In this work, consisting of 1012 viruttappas, we come across the following chapters: Payiram (proem), Importance of Guru Bhakti Swaroopam, Kasi Mahatmiyam, Teachings of Maha Vishnu to Goddess Lakshmi, Mukti to Soma Sharma, Mukti to Mahasena, Teachings of Nara-Narayana to Narada, Teachings of Lord Siva to Parvatidevi, Panchakrosa Pradakshina Mahima, Mukti to Mandapan, Nature of Panchkrosa Pradakshina, Life in Kashi, Mukti to Mādēsan, Greatness of Chattapuri, Trinity-worship in Kashi, Mukti to Duccodha, Nitya yatra Vidhi, Boon of Kashidevi, History of Kāmakalai, Mukti to Veerasena, Nature of

Pauranik, Mukti to Punyakeerti, Absolving of sins, Teachings to Devas, Mukti to Sanāthanam, Mukti to Hiranyagarbha, Spiritual Advice to Vishnu Sharma.

5. **Kāsi yāttirai:** Authored by Pāmpaṅ Srimad Kumaragurudasa Swami, this book was published in 1907. Advaita and Paranjothikaṅṅi are its two main parts. There are 608 songs in various metres such as *iṅṅicai veṅṅpā*, *nēricai veṅṅpā* and *kaṭṭalaikkalittuṅṅai*.

6. **Kāsi Mahātmiyam or The story of Simhadvajan:**

This was written and published in 1906 by Chengalvaraya pillai. The author observes that it is a Tamil translation of Ramanuja Eḷuttaccan's Malayalam work called **Siva Puranam** and that he did it because *piramōttara kāṅṅam* of Varatunkarama Pandiyan's Siva Puranam contains no divine story. The Tamil version describes the greatness of Kashi, the grandeur of the Ganges and the grace of Lord Siva.

7. **Kāsi Viswanātha Catakam:** Authored by Kaṅṅakarāca Iyer, this poem consists of 109 stanzas in *āciriya viruttam*, in addition to an invocatory song. All the stanzas are crowned with the tribute to Lord Siva, "Kāsi Viswēsa Siva, in order to give life to the whole world, you have provided a perennial river". Though the hero of the poem is Kashi Viswanatha, the poet has included songs on the temple-towns of Vishnu, the avatars of Vishnu, the temples of Murukan, the devotees of Siva and the abodes of Jains. Without making any distinction between North and South, he has sung the glory of all holy places situated from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas. *Eeḷam's* *Katirkāmam* also finds a prominent place in the poem. It is said that the poet made personal visits to all the sacred places mentioned by him.

8. Sri Kāsi Yāttirā Deepam: A remarkable work in Tamil composed by Sri Kāsivāsi Kanthaiyaswami.

Besides these major works, there must have been several minor poems and prose writings on kashi written during the last 500 years in different parts of Tamil Nadu. But, unfortunately, excepting the following there, others are unknown.

1. Sivagnana Desikar's **Kāsikkatirkāmavēlar Tiruvaruṭpā**
2. Sivanandamurthy's **Names of fifty-six Vinayaka Murthis seated in Cattavaraṇam at Kashi.**
3. Subburaya Iyer's **Patikam in the Name of Kasi Viswanatha Swami.**

In Tamilnadu, male children are given the names: Kāsi, Kāsirājan, Kasirajan, Kāsināthan, and Kāsi Viswanathan. The name Visālātchi is as common as Meenātchi and Kāmātch for female children.

All these are evidences enough to conclude that Kashi has won a unique place in the life of the Hindus in Tamil Nadu as it has done in every other part of Bharat.

Appendix

Kashi Temples of Tamil Nadu



Sivakasi

The temple is located in Virudhunagar district. The temple was built by Arikesari Parakrama Pandian. Arikesari Parakrama Pandian wanted to build a temple for Lord Shiva at Tenkasi. For this, he went to Kashi to fetch a Shivalinga. On his way back after taking the Linga, he rested under the vilva tree suitable for Lord Shiva. When he left the place again, the cow carrying the Linga refused to move from there. Realizing that this was the will of Lord Shiva, the king installed the Linga at the same place where the cow had stopped. The place where the Linga brought from Kashi was installed was called Sivakasi.



Tenkasi

The temple is believed to have been built by Pandyan ruler Parakrama Pandyan during the 13th century. Shiva is worshipped as Kashi Viswanathar. The place was also known as Tenkasi after the name of this temple.



Vridhachalam (Vridhachakashi)

Also known as Thirumudhukundram and Pazhamalai, this place is located in Cuddalore district. It is a holy place equal to Kashi.



Thirupooivanam (Pushpavana Kashi)

The temple is located on the southern bank of vaigai river in Sivagangai district.



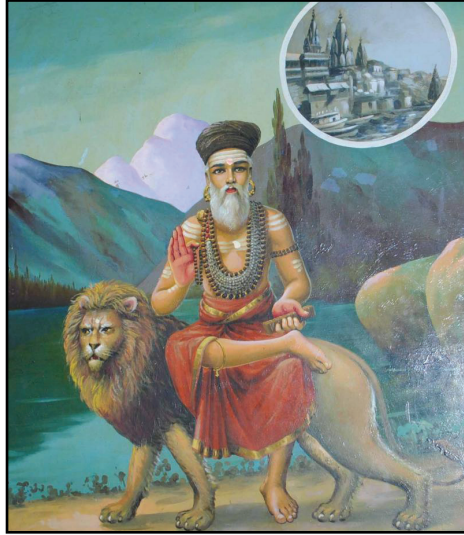
Kadambar Temple (Dakshina Kashi)

The temple is similar to Kashi and located at Kulithalai in Karur district. The temple is facing north.

Sri Kashi Nattukottai Nagara Chatram



Saint Kumaragurubarar



Kedar Ghat



Sri Kumaraswamy Mutt



King Serfoji, Thanjavur



Manikarnikeshwarar Temple, Thanjavur



Bharathiyar



**Shiva Mutt, Varanasi
(where Bharathiyar lived)**



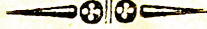
Kashi-centred Classics in Tamil

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சிவமயம்.

காசிக்கலம்பகம்.

மூலபாடம்.



குமரகுருபரசுவாமிகள்

அருளிச்செய்தது.

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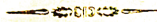
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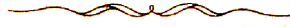
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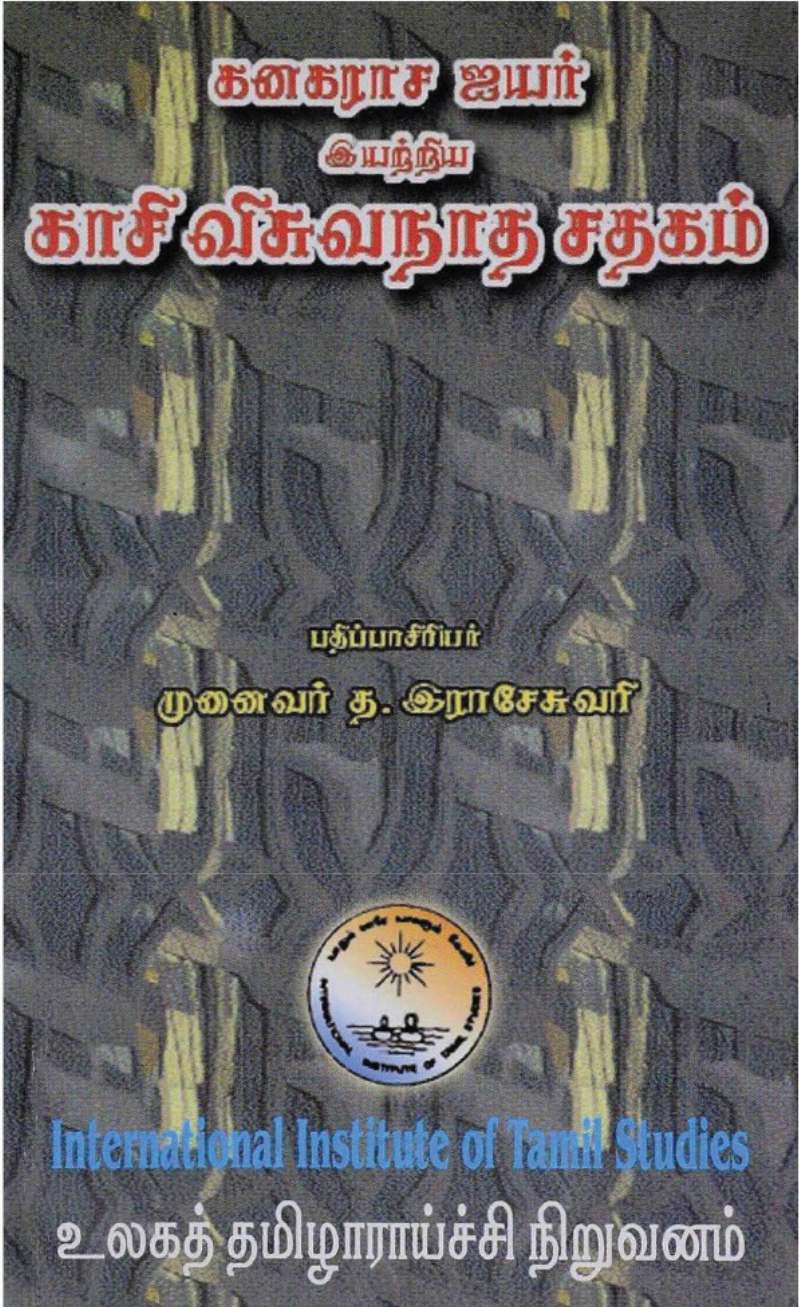
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