



Mamallapuram

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- **Location:** Mamallapuram, also called **Mahabalipuram** or **Seven Pagodas**, is a town that lies along the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal, **south of Chennai (Tamil Nadu)**.
- **History**
 - It is an important town of the **erstwhile Pallava dynasty** that **ruled in parts of South India** from 275 CE to 897 CE.
 - It was **founded by the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I** in the 7th century AD.
 - The name Mamallapuram derives from **Mamalla**, or **“great warrior”**, a title by which the Pallava King **Narasimhavarman I** was known.
 - The **name Mamallapuram got distorted during the British era** to **Mahabalipuram** and thus it is also known as Mahabalipuram.
- **Architecture**
 - Mamallapuram contains many surviving 7th- and 8th-century Pallava temples and monuments, chief of which are the **sculptured rock relief** popularly known as **“Arjuna’s Penance,”** or **“Descent of the Ganges,”** a series of sculptured **cave temples**, and the **Shore Temple**.
 - The town’s **Five Rathas**, or monolithic temples, are the remnants of seven temples, for which the town was known as Seven Pagodas. The entire assemblage collectively was designated a **UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984**.
- **Significance:**
 - Ancient Chinese, Persian, and Roman coins found at Mamallapuram point that it was a **seaport**.
 - Mamallapuram and the Pallava dynasty are also historically relevant, for the earliest recorded security pact between China and India (in the early 8th century) that involved a Pallava king (Rajasimhan, or **Narasimha Varma II**), from whom the Chinese sought help to counter Tibet.
 - The **second informal summit between India and China** was held here in October 2019.

