



## Mamallapuram

- **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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup>- and 8<sup>th</sup>-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 8<sup>th</sup> 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.



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