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Category : October/November/December 2012
Published by dharmalingam on Sep. 01, 2012

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India's awesome virtual reality panoramas and temple videos

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Today, more than ever, it is possibleto explore the grand wonders of Indian temples from the comfort of your own home, through the many online virtual tours. For Hindus around the world, these virtual tours allow for the next best thing to a physical darshan of your favorite temple.

Some of the most popular and impressive are found on the Tamil Nadu Tourism website, which has over 100 tours in 46 different locations, covering the state's natural wonders and many temples. Get ready for some breathtaking, immersive, 3D virtual adventures including the "Athens of India:" Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple, and the Thanjavur Brihadeeshwara temple. The Madurai tour alone has 31 interconnected 360-degree panoramas (each white point on the layout diagram is another area.) These panoramas were produced by View360, which has others on their website, including a tour of the Ajanta caves, the Vandalur Zoo and the Guruvayur temple. Spectacular panoramas of the Padmanabhaswamy Temple and other Kerala and Sri Lanka sites can be found at www.p4panorama.com.

How Does it Work?

Panoramas are made of sets of photos taken by a camera with a special tripod mount that puts the lens directly over the center of the tripod. Multiple shots are taken going around in a circle. Special lenses capture the field of vision both overhead and below. Later, panorama software seamlessly stitches the photos them together.