

Lakshmi Narayana Perumal Kovil: Dedicated To The Supreme Preserver



The massive structure of the Lakshmi Narayana Perumal Kovil in blue and sparkling gold

A million golden rays of the sharp afternoon sun showered the land that shone with a sublime gaiety. Looming high against the sharp blue heavens stood a unique temple structure visible from far across the plains. The Lakshmi Narayana Perumal Kovil in Nilaveli, Trincomalee was a massive edifice mingling sky blue and sparkling gold, embellished with intricate carvings and colourful sculptures that unfailingly awed the approaching devotees.

Words Kamalika Jayathilake **Photographs** Menaka Aravinda

Taking the turn from the town of Trincomalee towards the popular Nilaveli beach we found ourselves speeding through a stretch of road that ran straight amidst grassy patches, a few scattered houses and dust coated shrubbery that lined either side. The Kovil was a few kilometres ahead strikingly noticeable in its vast structure on one side of the road.

We parked on the road side and entered the sacred premises walking the distance from the gate engulfed in the quietude and unworldly bliss that often surround such places of divinity. Just before the large wooden doors stood the bronze coloured Dhwaja Stambha or the flag hoisting mast of the temple. Inside, the main shrine stood centred at the far back housing the supreme lord Vishnu and Lakshmi. Outside this stood the statue of the Garuda eagle, the king of the birds, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. The vast corridor or walkway ran all around the shrine along which stood the statues of the deity Vishnu.

[Lord Vishnu, The Peace-Loving Deity Of The Hindu Tradition, Is Believed To Be The 'Preserver' Or 'Sustainer' Of Life With His Unwavering Principles Of Truth, Righteousness And Order.](#)

Lord Vishnu, the peace-loving deity of the Hindu tradition, is believed to be the 'Preserver' or 'Sustainer' of life with his unwavering principles of truth, righteousness and order. It is said that when these values are under threat, Lord Vishnu emerges out of his transcendence to reinstate peace and order on earth. Lord Vishnu is either worshipped directly or in the form of his ten avatara, - in other words incarnations or appearances - most famous of whom are Rama and Krishna and in his commonest form, is portrayed as having a dark complexion with four hands.

The deity holds a white conch shell in one hand, which is said to spread the sound of Om; on the other a discus, a reminder of the cycle of time, which is also a weapon that he uses against blasphemy. The other hands hold a lotus, symbolising a glorious existence, and a mace that represents punishment against indiscipline.

The consort of god Vishnu, Lakshmi, also called Maha Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth, prosperity, and fortune and is the embodiment of beauty. She is said to bring good luck and is believed to protect her devotees from all kinds of misery and money-related difficulties.

The main shrine or inner chamber of the temple called the garbhagriha or 'womb-chamber' housed the image or idol of the deity. Outside, beautifully painted and sculptured were paintings of gods and goddesses. Closest to the shrine stood a statue of Lord Vishnu depicted as reclining on the coiled and multiple-headed snake symbolising calm and patience in the face of fear and apprehensions that

the poisonous snake represents. We soon learned that the message is that you should not let fear override you and disrupt your peace.

The Lakshmi Narayana Perumal Kovil is purely dedicated to the supreme deity Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi and has been constructed by R Radhakrishnan and his family as recent as 2011. The Kovil is an exact replica of a South Indian temple and has been made with the workmanship of craftsmen brought down especially from India.

We stood still within the massive structure admiring the intricate carvings on the many golden pillars that held the high dome. A constant chirping of a few tiny birds echoed within, against the pervading silence as we ambled about. As the temple was gradually illuminated against the fading light of the purple dusk, the priests - from South India - began to prepare for the evening pooja, the last of the six daily poojas dedicated to the supreme deity Vishnu. Incense and lamps were lit, the musical clinking of bells rose in the air capturing the concentration of all devotees present.

As the rituals began to enliven the solitude of the late evening with the sacred pooja, marked by the steady beating of traditional drums and nadaswaram, we reluctantly retraced our steps back through the main entrance and into the darkness, thoughts settled and minds appeased by an all-encompassing serenity attained at this great Vishnu Temple.

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