

Padmanabhaswamy Temple

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Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple is one of the most famous Lord Vishnu Temples in Kerala, South India. Also known as Sree Ananda Padmanabhaswamy Temple, this Mahavishnu Temple is located inside East Fort, in Thiruvananthapuram - the capital city of Kerala, India.

Lord Vishnu is enshrined here in the Ananthatasayanam posture (in eternal sleep of yognidra), lying on Sri Anantha, the hooded snake. According to traditions, Sree Padmanabhaswamy Kshetram is believed to have been worshipped by Chandra (Moon God) and Lord Indra (the head of the Devas).

Significance of Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple

Sree Anantha Padmanabhaswamy Temple is one of the 108 Divya Desams of Lord Vishnu. Divya Desams are the holiest abodes of the Lord Mahavishnu that are mentioned in the works of the Tamil Azhvars (saints).

Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple is also one of the seven Parasurama kshetras in Kerala. The city of Thiruvananthapuram is named after the Lord. The word Thiruvananthapuram literally means "The land of Sree Anantha Padmanabhaswamy".

Importance of the Idol

The idol of Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple is made up of 12008 salagramams that compose the reclining lord. They are special because they are from Nepal, from the banks of river Gandhaki and they were brought to the temple with all pomp and gaiety on elephant top. On top of them "Katusarkara Yogam", Navaratnams, a special Ayurvedic mix, was used to give a plaster. Followers believe that the Lord has personally come in disguise and had saved many times the Travancore Kingdom from the clutches of enemies.

History of Padmanabhaswamy Temple Trivandrum

The history of Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple dates back to 8th Century. References to the temple can be found in the Divya Prabandha canon of literature written by Tamil Alvar. Alvars are the Tamil Saint poets who lived between the sixth and ninth centuries AD. References to Sri Padmanabha Temple is also said to have in the Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Varaha Purana, and Vayu Purana. One of the twelve Alvars, Nammalvar (8th Century) had created four slokas and one phalasaruthi about Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple.

Major Renovation of Temple by Marthanda Varma

It is believed that Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple and its properties were maintained by Ettuveetil Pillamar – the eight powerful Nair feudal lords of ancient Travancore. Later His Royal Highness Sree Marthanda Varma Anizham Thirunal suppressed the Ettuveetil Pillais and his cousins and took over the control of the temple. Marthanda Varma has done a major renovation to the temple and it is said that the current structure of Padmanabhaswamy temple was made by the King.



Murajapam and Bhadra Deepam Introduced in Temple

It was Marthanda Varma who introduced the Murajapam and Bhadra Deepam festival in the temple. Murajapam, which literally means continuous chanting of prayers, is still conducted in the temple once in 6 years. Murajapam is performed when 12 Bhadradeepam joins.

Travancore was dedicated to Sree Padmanabhaswamy in 1750

In 3rd January 1750, Maharajah Marthanda Varma dedicated the kingdom of Travancore to Lord Padmanabha. Marthanda Varma vowed that the royal family will rule the state on behalf of Lord and he and his descendants would "serve" the kingdom as Padmanabha Dasa or the Servant of Lord Padmanabha. Since then the name of every Travancore King was preceded by the title Padmanabha Dasa, while the female were called Padmanabha Sevinis. The donation of the kingdom of Travancore to Padmanabhaswamy was known as "Thripadidanam". After dedicating the kingdom to the Lord, Marthanda Varma was known as Sripadmanabha Vanchipala Marthandavarma Kulasekaraperumal. By giving the Kingdom to Lord Padmanabha, the whole Travancore state became the property of Sree Padmanabhaswamy, and hence it is very appropriate to call Kerala as "God's Own Country" or Sree Padmanabhaswamy's Own Country.

Travancore Kings after Marthanda Varma

After the death of Marthanda Varma in 1758, all the succeeded Kings of Travancore took great care in continuing the daily poojas and ceremonies of Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple intact and also rule the kingdom as Padmanabha Dasa. The successors of Marthanda Varma was Dharma Raja, Balarama Varma, Gowri Lakshmi Bayi, Gowri Parvati Bayi, Swathi Thirunal, Uthram Thirunal, Ayilyam Thirunal, Visakham Thirunal, Moolam Thirunal, Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, and Chithira Thirunal. The present head of the Travancore Royal Family, Sri Uthradom

Thirunal Marthanda Varma also keeps the words of Marthanda Varma and is very loyal to Sree Padmanabhaswamy and maintains the temple rituals and ceremonies intact.



Raja Ravi Varma portrait of a bejewelled Rani Bharani Thirunal Lakshmi Bayi (1848-1901)

In earlier years Padmanabhaswamy Temple and its properties were controlled by eight powerful Nair feudal lords known as Ettuveetil Pillamar (Lords of the Eight Houses) under the guidance of the Council of Eight and a Half. Later, King Marthanda Varma, the founder of Travancore, successfully suppressed the Ettuveetil Pillais and his cousins following the discovery of conspiracies the Lords were involved in against the Royal House of Travancore. The last major renovation of the Padmanabhaswamy temple was also done by Marthanda Varma. He virtually “dedicated” the kingdom of Travancore to Padmanabha, the deity at the temple, and pledged that he and his descendants would “serve” the kingdom as Padmanabha Dasa, meaning “Servant of the Padmanabha”.

The insignia of the Padmanabha, Valampiri Shankhu or Dextral Conch-shell, served as the state emblem of Travancore and it can still be seen on the emblem of Kerala state. Padmanabha is still regarded as regional deity of erstwhile Travancore.

The two annual festivals of the Padmanabhaswamy Temple culminate in a grand procession, in which the three deities (Padmanabha, Narasimha and Krishna) are carried on flower-deck and aesthetically decorated Garuda Vahanas to Shankumugham Beach, for “arattu” (sacramental ablution). The arattu days are declared as local public holidays in Thiruvananthapuram. The Idol is made of Kadusarkkara Yogam, an ayurvedic mixture, with Vishnu sleeping on the serpent Ananta with his head pointing towards south, facing east.

The idol is made up of 12000 salagramams that compose the reclining figure. They are considered extraordinary because they are from Nepal, from the banks of the Gandhaki river, and they were allegedly brought to the temple by elephant in an elaborate ceremony. On top of them, “katusarkara yogam”, navaratnams, a special ayurvedic mix, was used to create plaster. Followers believe that the Lord has personally come in disguise and had saved the Travancore Kingdom from enemy attack on multiple occasions.

In 2011, the Supreme Court of India directed the authorities from the fire services and archeology department to open the secret (sanctum sanctorum) chambers of the temple for inspection of the items kept inside. The inspections at the temple began after the Supreme Court set aside a Kerala High Court order that the state government take over the temple, but asked for the inventory of its assets. The high court order was given after a local lawyer, Sundar Rajan, petitioned it because, he alleged, the trust running the temple did not have the capacity to ensure the security of its assets. On 2 July 2011, approximately Rupees 500 billion (US\$11.15 billion) worth of gold, jewels, and other treasures were unearthed in the vaults of the temple. Several 18th century Napoleonic era coins were found, as well as a three-and-a-half feet tall gold idol of Mahavishnu studded with rubies and emeralds, and ceremonial attire for adorning the deity in the form of 16-part gold anki weighing almost 30 kilograms (66 lb) together with gold coconut shells, one studded with rubies and emeralds. The Kerala High Court recently ordered the temple be managed by the State to ensure the security of the temple and its treasures. This ruling was set aside by the Supreme Court. The Temple remains under the control of a private trust run by the Royal family.

This revelation has solidified the status of the Padmanabhaswamy temple as one of the wealthiest temples in India and with the final estimate of the wealth, it might overtake the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple—hitherto thought to be the wealthiest temple—having some Rupees 320 billion (US\$7.14 billion) in gold, coins and other treasures. It is estimated that the value of the monumental items is close to Rupees 1 trillion (US\$22.3 billion), making it the richest temple in the world. If the antique value is taken into account, this treasure will be worth 10 times the current market price.

The treasure is thought to have been in the temple for more than one hundred years, having been put there by traders, pilgrims and royals such as the maharajahs of Travancore. While some Historians have suggested that a major chunk of the stored riches reached the kings in the form of tax, gift and bribes, as well as looted wealth of conquered states and temples stocked in the temple for safekeeping, there is also clear evidence that the Royal family which has looked after the temple for centuries have lead a very austere and simple life, thus belying claims of hoarding for personal use. A ferry transported traders, pilgrims and chroniclers from the Tenavaram temple, the famously wealthy Vishnu temple town and Tamil emporium to the Chera and Chola kingdoms of Tamilakkam via Puttalam on the western shore of Ceylon (then an extension of Malabar Kerala) and the Gulf of Mannar during the medieval period. This temple was destroyed in 1587 CE, a few years after the Thiruvananthapuram Padmanabhaswamy temple gopuram was constructed. Moroccan traveller Ibn Batuta visited Tenavaram in the 14th century and described the Vishnu idol here

as being made of gold and the size of a man with two large rubies as eyes “that lit up like lanterns during the night.” All people living within the vicinity of the temple and who visited it were fed with monetary endowments that were made to the idol.



Finding from Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple



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Mahavishnu Idol - 32 KG



Vishnu Idol - 5 KG

<http://surat.com>



Treasury 17 kg of gold coins of the East India Company time





<http://surat.com/>





Gold Chains of up to 3 and 10.5 kg and of about 18 ft





<http://survivalpress.com/>



As per the evaluation of the value of treasures found from the underground cellars of the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple there is around 1,00,000 crore rupees (1 Lakh Crore Rupees) There are 6 cellars in the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple that were marked from A to B. Among them the cellars A and B are not opened for past 150 years. Other cellars were containing precious items for festivals, daily poojas .etc. The detailed list of Treasures found in Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple are,

1 Lakh Gold Coins

Rare Priceless Gems

Precious Diamonds like Indraneelam, Belgium Diamonds, Emeralds, Rubies

1200 Sarappoli Gold Chains

Gold Crowns like Kulasekharaperumal Crown which was used by Kings of Travancore

KashuMala (Necklaces)

400 Gold Necklaces with Marathakam stone

More than 2000 Gold ornaments

Gold Plates (Swarna Thalika)

Gold Chains of up to 3 and 10.5 kg and of about 18 ft also

Golden Idol of Padmanabha Swamy

Swarna(Gold) Dhanuss

Swarna(Gold) Pathakams

4 Feet tall Golden statue of Lord Vishnu studded with precious emeralds

Gold Staffs

Golden Utensils

Golden Umbrellas (Thankakuda)

Gold Pots

Gold Varpu, Uruli (Big Utensil)

Gold Kazhuthu Kudam, Kazhuthukootam

KhadikaThadi

Kumbheeyam

Silver Moola Pattika

Gold, Silver Nilavilakku

Gold Kindi

Silver, Gold Dharakidaram

Kudumudi

Narayam

God Shiva Idols made of Gold

Serpents idols in Gold

Golden rings

Gold Thali

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