



MYSTIC ART RETREATS
PRESENTS



The Emergence of Lakṣmī

Awakening the Goddess of Beauty,
Abundance and Sweetness in the Island of Śrī

FEB 12 - FEB 22 2027
SRILANKA

Three serene bases · Five sacred Lakṣmī temples · Minimal travel, maximal immersion

BASE I

Colombo

3 Nights · Days 1-3

BASE II

Nuwara Eliya

4 Nights · Days 4-7

BASE III

Southern Coast

3 Nights · Days 8-10

THE JOURNEY

About This Journey

The word *Śrī* means splendour, beauty or majesty. Though often used as a title of honour it is also the name of the Goddess Lakṣmī – she who represents abundance, reciprocity and sustainability. While frequently invoked for her capacity to shower material wealth, Lakṣmī is also understood to grant the yogic inner qualities of contentment (*saṃtoṣa*) and deep faith or confidence (*śraddhā*). As the goddess who is often portrayed as eternally showered by elephants, Lakṣmī can be said to symbolize the very juice of life. When she is present, life is sweet. When she is absent, we feel depleted.

In this retreat, in the abode of *Śrī*, we will restore the presence of Lakṣmī in our lives through exposure to all things nurturing and beautiful. And what better place to do so than on the island of *Śrī*? The ancient lands of Sri Lanka pulse with her presence through gentle, yet breathtaking beauty and as the location where the stories of the *Rāmāyaṇa* unfold. Here, *Sītā*, Lakṣmī's earthly avatar, endured captivity in Rāvaṇa's realm, her unyielding love transforming suffering into dharma's triumph.

The Emergence of Lakṣmī is an 11-day immersive retreat braiding Lakṣmī-centric philosophy and mythology (drawing from textual sources such as the *Lakṣmī Tantra* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*), sacred geometry teachings, restorative yogic practices, and cultural immersion across Sri Lanka's most revered Lakṣmī temples. Designed around three serene bases with minimal inter-city travel, we journey through coastal sanctuaries, hill-country *Rāmāyaṇa* sites, and syncretic shrines, treating each *darśana* (to see and be seen by the deity) as both meditation and invocation, fostering inner abundance amid Lanka's emerald landscapes.

This retreat invites participants to experience prosperity as something that lives not merely in gold and grain, but most importantly in the heart's capacity for grace, gratitude, and generosity.

This retreat combines:

- Lakṣmī-centred philosophy, mythology and devotional storytelling
- Sacred geometry teachings and Lakṣmī Yantra creation
- Restorative yogic practices including movement, mantra and meditation

- Cultural immersion across Sri Lanka's most revered Lakṣmī and Rāmāyaṇa temples and sacred sites
- Nutritious vegetarian/vegan Sri Lankan and world cuisine
- Comfortable 4-star hotels (offering spa and wellness services for those who wish)

THE SACRED CONNECTION

Lakṣmī in Sri Lanka

The connection between Devī Lakṣmī and Sri Lanka runs deep through mythology, history, and living worship traditions that span both Hindu and Buddhist communities. First and foremost, the island features many sites found within the Vaiṣṇava epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, such as the Seetha Amman Temple in Nuwara Eliya (known as the only temple in the world dedicated exclusively to Sita), the Divurumpola (where Sita is believed to have undergone her *agni parīkṣā*, or trial by fire) and the gardens where Sita is said to have first met her greatest devotee - Hanuman, turning Sri Lanka into a living pilgrimage map of Lakṣmī's earthly form.

Lakṣmī worship in Sri Lanka also reflects profound cultural integration, as its form of Theravada Buddhism incorporates goddess worship, especially of Lakṣmī, through centuries of South Indian influence from the Chola dynasty. Lakṣmī shrines thus coexist with Buddhist temples, sharing rituals like lighting lamps and offering lotus flowers. In many Sinhala Buddhist homes, Lakṣmī images appear alongside the Buddha to assure wealth, health, and auspiciousness.

Temple Traditions

Sri Lanka hosts several significant Lakṣmī temples serving Tamil Hindu and broader devotional communities. Key sites on our itinerary include **Aishwarya Lakshmi Amman Kovil** in Colombo, dedicated to the goddess of wealth and prosperity; **Sri Ponnambalam Vanesar Kovil**, also in Colombo, a stunning white-granite Śaiva temple housing a revered Lakṣmī shrine; the **Seetha Amman Temple** in Nuwara Eliya, believed to be the only temple in the world dedicated exclusively to Sita; **Divurumpola**, where Sita underwent her trial by fire; and **Lakshmi Devalaya** in Kataragama, part of a multi-faith pilgrimage complex where Buddhists and Hindus seek her blessings for material and spiritual abundance. We also visit the **Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic** in Kandy, where Lakṣmī iconography and lotus symbolism are woven beautifully into the Buddhist devotional art.

Cultural and Historical Significance

The Chola Empire's influence on Sri Lanka during the 10th to 13th centuries CE introduced Dravidian architectural styles, temple rituals, and Devī-centric devotion to the island. Lakṣmī, symbolizing royal prosperity and cosmic order, was venerated by both Hindu kings and Buddhist rulers. Ancient coins and inscriptions across the island depict Lakṣmī

iconography, particularly the Gaja Lakṣmī motif of elephants anointing the goddess, testifying to her deep-rooted presence in Sri Lankan civilization.

In this yātrā, we honor these interwoven devotional threads, allowing the island itself to become a teacher in the art of awakening śrī.

THE TEACHERS

Bringing Forth Śrī Through the Teachings of Lakṣmī

The depth of this Śrī Lakṣmī yātrā rests in the expertise of two complementary teachers who bring profound wisdom, practical guidance, and spiritual depth to this sacred journey.



Tova Olsson

Lakṣmī Sādhana and Śakta Tantra

Tova Olsson brings her deep knowledge of the goddess tradition, her decades of experience as a yoga teacher, and her gift for devotional storytelling to the retreat. Her teachings will explore Lakṣmī through multiple lenses, from scriptural studies and mythological stories that inspire awe, recognition and devotion, to yogic practices that awaken an auspicious state of mind and restore vitality in the body.

Tova's teachings will illuminate Lakṣmī's historical development, from the Vedic Śrī, to the lotus goddess of the Purāṇic tradition, to the Tantric kuṇḍalinī śakti; the stories of

Lakṣmī (and her incarnations as the selfless Sītā and the sensual Rādhā); and how we can invoke the presence of Lakṣmī in our lives through *sādhana*. Participants will learn to churn forth śrī through yogic practices of movement, mantra and meditation while allowing the myths and philosophical teachings to remind them that the sacred stories really take place inside each one of us.

Tova is a scholar of religion, author and yoga teacher with over 20 years of experience. She holds an MA in Religious Studies and is the author of *Yoga and Tantra: History, Philosophy and Mythology*, published by Motilal Banarsidass. She is a senior faculty at Mystic Art Retreats and this would be her fourth yātrā in a leadership position.



Mavis Gewant

Lakṣmī Yantra

Mavis Gewant brings her sacred artistry, decades of experience as a painter in the Harish Johari tradition, and her deep understanding of yantras to the retreat. Her offerings will guide participants into the meditative practice of sacred geometry through colour and form, inviting inner stillness, devotion, and harmony.

Through the creation of Yantras and Mandalas, Mavis will illuminate how art becomes a pathway to balance, beauty, and communion with the sacred. For over 30 years, she has shared her gifts as a painter and educator in the Harish Johari Tradition, illuminating the connection between creativity and the divine. A master within the tradition, she layers watercolour and gouache to create luminous images that resonate with devotion and balance. As a senior faculty member with Mystic Art Retreats, Mavis leads the annual Sacred Painting Workshop in India and is a beloved guide for students around the world.



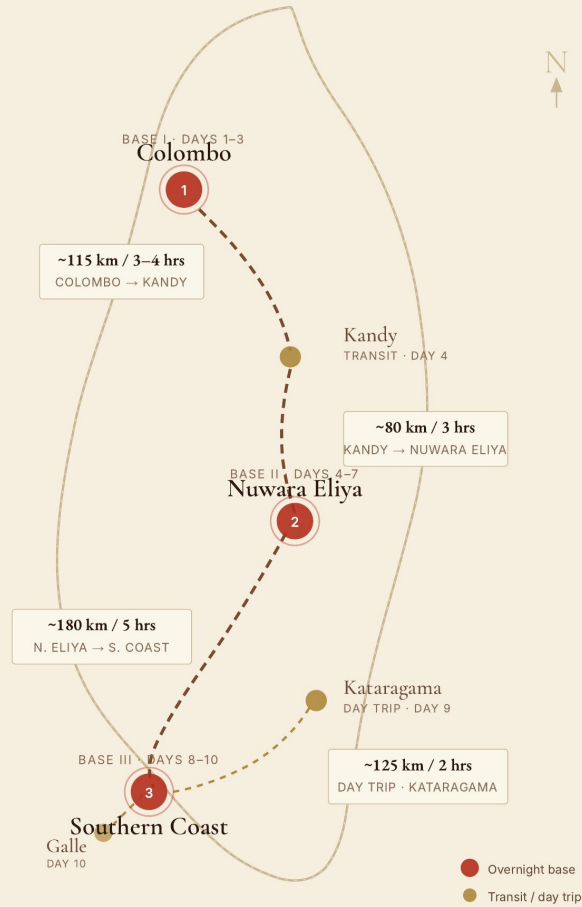
Tova Olsson and Mavis Gewant taught at the Heart of Hanuman retreat together at Kainchi Dham, the abode of Neem Karoli Baba (2024)

DAY BY DAY

Day-by-Day Itinerary

Śrī Lakṣmī Yātrā

REVISED JOURNEY MAP — THREE BASES



Total journey: ~500 km between bases (three settled bases, only two inter-day trips)

BASE I: COLOMBO

Three nights in Sri Lanka's vibrant capital, home to the island's principal Lakṣmī temple and a living tapestry of Hindu-Buddhist devotional culture.

DAY 1 — FEBRUARY 12

Arrival in Colombo

Welcome to the Island of Śrī

Arrive at Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo. You will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. After check-in and time to rest and refresh from your journey, we gather in the evening for a welcome dinner and orientation session.

Tova will introduce the themes and intentions of this Lakṣmī yātrā, sharing the mythological and philosophical framework that will guide our journey. Mavis will present an overview of the Lakṣmī Yantra tradition and the sacred art practices we will explore across the coming days. We shall review the journey ahead through the sacred island of Śrī Laṅkā.

Overnight: Colombo (4-star plus hotel)

Meals: Dinner

DAY 2 — FEBRUARY 13

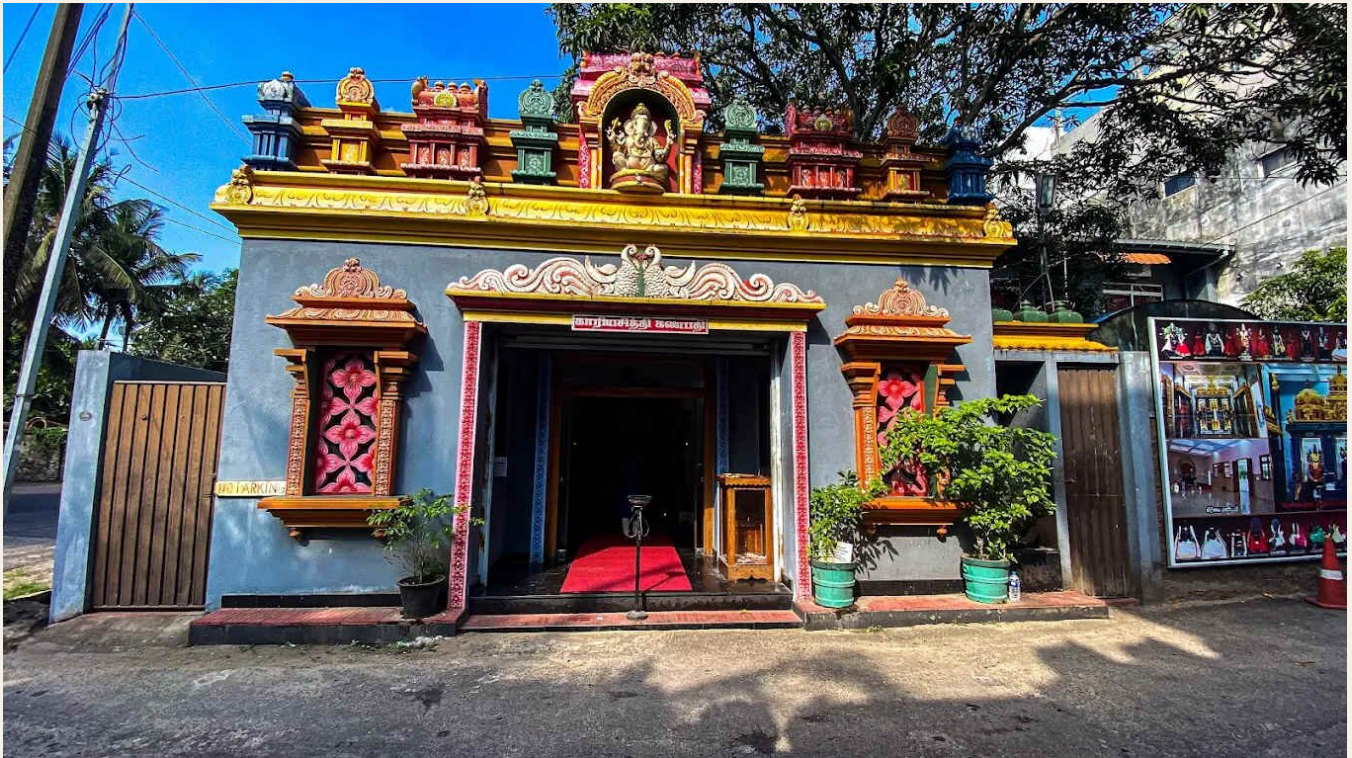
Colombo — Invoking Lakṣmī

The Goddess in the City of Prosperity

Tova will lead a gentle morning yoga session followed by breakfast. After breakfast, Tova will offer a lecture on Lakṣmī's historical development, from the Vedic Śrī, to the lotus goddess of the Purāṇic tradition, to the Tantric kuṇḍalinī śakti. We will also invoke the presence of the Goddess for our journey ahead.

In the afternoon, we visit the **Aishwarya Lakshmi Amman Kovil**, Colombo's principal temple dedicated to the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Here we receive our first *darśana* of the retreat, experiencing the vibrant Tamil Hindu devotional traditions that have thrived in this port city for centuries. We continue to the nearby **Sri Ponnambalam Vanesar Kovil**, a striking white-granite temple whose inner sanctum houses a revered Lakṣmī shrine — a rare opportunity to witness Lakṣmī devotion within a Śaiva temple context.

Evening: Mavis introduces the foundational principles of the structure of the Lakṣmī Yantra. Participants receive their materials and begin preliminary exercises.



Aishwarya Lakshmi Amman Kovil, Colombo

Overnight: Colombo (4-star plus hotel)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 3 — FEBRUARY 14

Colombo — Sacred Art and Lakṣmī in Buddhism

The Lotus Goddess Across Traditions

Tova will lead a morning yoga session followed by breakfast. The morning continues with a lecture on the story of Sita from the *Rāmāyaṇa* — Lakṣmī's earthly avatar and the mythic thread that binds our entire journey through Sri Lanka.

After lunch, we visit **Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara**, one of the most sacred Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka, located just outside Colombo. The temple's magnificent frescoes and carvings include striking Gaja Lakṣmī panels — elephants anointing the goddess — illustrating how deeply Lakṣmī devotion is woven into Sri Lankan Buddhism. This visit sets the stage for the syncretic devotional landscape we will encounter throughout the yātrā.

Evening: Mavis continues the Lakṣmī Yantra instruction. Participants begin their first geometric constructions, learning to prepare surfaces and lay the foundational lines of the yantra.

Overnight: Colombo (4-star plus hotel)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

BASE II: HILL COUNTRY — NUWARA ELIYA

Four nights in Lanka's misty highlands, home to the Rāmāyaṇa trail's most sacred Sītā sites and the breathtaking landscapes of the hill country. We pause in Kandy en route to honour Lakṣmī's presence in the island's foremost Buddhist shrine.

DAY 4 — FEBRUARY 15

Colombo to Nuwara Eliya via Kandy

Into the Heart of the Island

After a gentle morning yoga session and breakfast, we depart Colombo for the hill country. Our journey takes us first to Kandy (approximately 3–4 hours), Sri Lanka's cultural capital nestled in the central highlands.

Upon arrival in Kandy, we visit the **Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic** (Sri Dalada Maligawa), the island's most venerated Buddhist shrine. Here we observe how Lakṣmī iconography and lotus symbolism are woven into Buddhist devotional art — a living testament to the syncretic worship traditions of the island. We also take a brief stroll through the **Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya**, one of the finest tropical gardens in the world, discovering how Lakṣmī's geometric signature appears in the spiral of a fern frond, the radial symmetry of a lotus blossom, and the concentric geometry of a tree's growth rings.

In the late afternoon, we depart Kandy and continue our ascent through spectacular tea plantations and misty mountain passes to Nuwara Eliya (approximately 3 hours), where we settle into our hill country hotel for a four-night stay.



Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic (Sri Dalada Maligawa), Kandy



Royal Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya

Overnight: Nuwara Eliya (hill country hotel)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 5 — FEBRUARY 16

Nuwara Eliya — The Rāmāyaṇa Trail

Where Sītā Walked

After morning yoga practice with Tova followed by breakfast, we visit the **Seetha Amman Temple** — believed to be the only temple in the world dedicated exclusively to Sītā. Situated beside a stream where Sītā is said to have bathed during her captivity, this small but profoundly moving temple marks the location of the *Aśoka Vāṭikā*, the garden where Rāvaṇa held Sītā. Rock formations near the temple are said to bear the footprints of Hanuman.

We spend extended time at this sacred site, allowing for meditation, reflection and an unhurried connection with the energy of the place. Tova shares teachings on Sītā as Lakṣmī’s most beloved earthly incarnation — the embodiment of *śraddhā* (faith), the inner quality of Lakṣmī that sustains us through life’s trials.

Evening: Mavis continues the Lakṣmī Yantra workshop in the cool mountain atmosphere. Building on the foundations established in Colombo, participants begin constructing the geometric core of their yantras.



Seetha Amman Temple, Nuwara Eliya

Overnight: Nuwara Eliya (hill country hotel)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 6 — FEBRUARY 17

Nuwara Eliya — Divurumpola and Sacred Art

The Trial by Fire and the Yantra Deepens

After morning yoga practice with Tova followed by breakfast, we visit **Divurumpola**, the sacred site where Sītā is believed to have undergone her *agni parīkṣā* (trial by fire), proving her purity after her rescue from Rāvaṇa. This is one of the most emotionally powerful sites on the Rāmāyaṇa trail, and Tova will lead us in reflection on the deeper meaning of this episode.

Afternoon: Mavis continues the intensive Lakṣmī Yantra workshop. Building on the geometric foundations, participants begin layering colour in the Harish Johari tradition. Mavis provides individual guidance as each student's yantra begins to take its unique form.

Evening at leisure to explore Nuwara Eliya's colonial hill-station atmosphere, visit a local tea estate, or rest and journal in the cool mountain air.

Overnight: Nuwara Eliya (hill country hotel)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 7 — FEBRUARY 18

Nuwara Eliya — Integration and Restoration

Deepening the Practice

A day of spacious integration in the hill country. The morning begins with Tova's teaching on the Samudra Manthana (the churning of the cosmic ocean), from which Lakṣmī first emerged — a story that mirrors the alchemical process of the retreat itself, churning forth beauty from the depths of practice. This is followed by a restorative yoga session designed to awaken vitality and the sweetness of being.

The afternoon is dedicated to an extended yantra workshop with Mavis. Participants refine their Lakṣmī Yantras, adding detail and deepening colour. Mavis provides one-on-one guidance, helping each participant understand how the yantra serves as a personal tool for meditation and manifestation.

This day of relative stillness allows the teachings and experiences of the journey so far to integrate fully. Optional: a visit to a local tea plantation to learn about Sri Lanka's celebrated Ceylon tea tradition — another expression of the island's śrī.

Overnight: Nuwara Eliya (hill country hotel)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

BASE III: SOUTHERN COAST

Three nights on Lanka's luminous southern shore, with a pilgrimage to the multi-faith Kataragama complex and the Lakshmi Devalaya, and a visit to the historic port of Galle. A place of rest, completion, and celebration.

DAY 8 — FEBRUARY 19

Nuwara Eliya to the Southern Coast

From Mountains to Sea — The Abundance of Lanka

After a gentle yoga practice with Tova and breakfast, we descend from the highlands towards Sri Lanka's lush southern coast (approximately 5 hours). The journey itself becomes a meditation on abundance as we pass through tea estates, spice gardens, and tropical forests teeming with life.

En route, we stop at a traditional **spice garden** to learn about Sri Lanka's legendary spice trade — an expression of the island's śrī (prosperity) that has drawn traders from across the ancient world for millennia.

Arrive at our coastal hotel in the late afternoon. Evening: Tova explores the story of Rādhā — Lakṣmī's incarnation as the embodiment of divine love and sensual devotion — and leads a meditation on invoking the sweetness of being as we arrive at the ocean.



Sri Lanka's Southern Coast

Overnight: Southern Coast (boutique hotel)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 9 — FEBRUARY 20

Kataragama — The Multi-Faith Pilgrimage

Lakshmi Devalaya and the River of Gems

After a gentle morning yoga practice and breakfast, we travel to **Kataragama** (approximately 2 hours), one of Sri Lanka's most sacred multi-faith pilgrimage complexes, revered by Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and the indigenous Vēdda people alike. This extraordinary site embodies the syncretic devotion that characterises Lakṣmī worship on the island.

We visit the **Lakshmi Devalaya** within the Kataragama complex, where pilgrims from all traditions seek the goddess's blessings for material and spiritual abundance. The atmosphere here is electric with devotion — a powerful experience of living worship that transcends sectarian boundaries. We also visit the **Kiri Vehera** (the Milk-White Stūpa) and the **Menik Ganga** (River of Gems), where pilgrims traditionally bathe before entering the sacred precinct.

A special group *pūjā* ceremony at the Lakshmi Devalaya offers gratitude for the blessings of the journey. We return to our coastal hotel in the late afternoon.



Kataragama Sacred Pilgrimage Complex

Overnight: Southern Coast (boutique hotel)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 10 — FEBRUARY 21

Southern Coast — Completion and Celebration

Churning Forth Śrī

The morning begins with a final yantra intensive with Mavis. Participants complete their Lakṣmī Yantras, adding finishing details and learning the consecration process that brings the sacred geometry to luminous life. A **temple blessing ceremony** for the completed yantras honours the artistic and spiritual journey of each participant.

After lunch, we visit the nearby historic **Galle Fort**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site whose ramparts and colonial architecture offer a final vista of Lanka's layered beauty. A leisurely walk through the fort's streets and ramparts provides a contemplative close to our explorations.

We return to our hotel for the final closing circle of reflection and sharing, drawing together the threads of mythology, philosophy, yantra, yoga and temple experience that have woven

through the yātrā. We celebrate our collective journey with a **special farewell dinner**.



Galle Fort, UNESCO World Heritage Site

Overnight: Southern Coast (boutique hotel)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

DAY 11 — FEBRUARY 22

Departure

Until We Meet Again

After breakfast, transfer to Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo (approximately 4 hours) for your onward journey home. For those who wish to extend their time in Sri Lanka, Mystic Art Retreats can assist with arrangements.

We bid farewell with hearts full of śrī — the splendour, beauty, and abundance that Lakṣmī bestows upon those who seek her with sincerity, devotion, and an open heart.

Meals: Breakfast

SACRED SITES

Lakṣmī Temples and Sacred Sites — Summary

DAY	TEMPLE / SACRED SITE	LOCATION	LAKṢMĪ CONNECTION
2	Aishwarya Lakshmi Amman Kovil	Colombo	Principal Lakṣmī temple; goddess of wealth and prosperity
2	Sri Ponnambalam Vanesar Kovil	Colombo	Lakṣmī shrine within Śaiva temple complex
3	Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara	Colombo	Gaja Lakṣmī frescoes; Buddhist-Lakṣmī syncretism
4	Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic	Kandy	Lakṣmī iconography and lotus symbolism in Buddhist art
5	Seetha Amman Temple	Nuwara Eliya	Only temple dedicated to Sitā; Aśoka Vaṭikā site
6	Divurumpola	Nuwara Eliya	Sitā's agni parīkṣā (trial by fire)
9	Lakshmi Devalaya + Kiri Vehera	Kataragama	Multi-faith Lakṣmī worship; River of Gems purification

FEES

Fees and Practical Information

USD 3,200

per person on single occupancy — instalments available

Programme Inclusions

- 10 nights' accommodation in 4-star plus, hill country and boutique hotels (single occupancy)
- All meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 11
- Bottled water provided daily
- Private air-conditioned coach for all group transportation
- Individual Airport Meet and Greet service at Colombo Airport
- All temple entrance fees and ceremony costs

- Daily teachings on Lakṣmī philosophy, mythology and yogic practices with Tova Olsson
- Lakṣmī Yantra instruction with Mavis Gewant
- All art materials for yantra creation
- Signed copies of Tova Olsson's book *Yoga and Tantra: History, Philosophy and Mythology*
- Temple blessing ceremony for completed yantras
- English-speaking local guides for cultural sites and temple protocol assistance
- All airport transfers on designated arrival and departure days

Not Included

- International airfare to/from Colombo
- Travel insurance (strongly recommended)
- Personal expenses (shopping, spa treatments, laundry, etc.)
- Tips for guides, drivers, and hotel staff
- Additional art supplies purchased individually
- Visa fees for Sri Lanka

REGISTRATION

Registration and Contact Information

This retreat is limited to **12 participants** to ensure intimate group dynamics and personalised attention from Tova and Mavis. When you are on a Mystic Art Retreats tour, every detail is taken care of so you can relax and truly experience each moment. Airfare to Sri Lanka is not included in the price of your trip. Please contact your local travel agency or the airline directly to make any arrangements you may need.

Mukul Purohit

Executive Producer and Chief Executive

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Weather and What to Expect

Sri Lanka enjoys a tropical climate with warm temperatures year-round. The island's diverse geography — from coastal plains to central highlands — means conditions vary by region. The hill country around Nuwara Eliya is notably cooler, offering a refreshing contrast to the warm coast. Light, breathable clothing is recommended with a warm layer for evening temple visits in the highlands.

COASTAL AREAS	HILL COUNTRY
27–32°C	15–20°C
80–90°F	59–68°F

EXPERIENCES

What Past Participants Say

"My first trip to India with Mystic Art Retreats was the perfect introduction to a country and culture I'd long wanted to experience. One part spiritual, one part artistic, the retreat had a profound impact on my spiritual path as well as the reclamation of myself as a creative person."

— S.A.

"...Thank you so much... It was an amazing experience and I will cherish our adventure into this mystical and magical country. One of the highlights was the opportunity to be in such amazing company with beautiful like-minded people from around the globe."

— A.F.

"I truly enjoyed my experience at this Retreat and thank you for making it all possible. It has been said one never steps in the same river twice, having made this crossing, I've come away with so much that will resonate for a very long time."

— M.K.

"I just wanted to pass on my deepest gratitude for our time with Maa Kamakhya. It was one of the most truly sacred and divine experiences of my life. The retreat was so beautifully held by you. Every moment was peaceful, blissful and we moved with such ease."

— A.C.

What Are Mystic Art Retreats

Mystic Art Retreats™ is a collective of artists, scholars, and cultural custodians who create immersive experiences at places of extraordinary spiritual and cultural significance.

Each retreat is built around the living arts of a specific tradition — thangka, yantra, Bharatanatyam dance, Indian miniature painting, sacred geometry, pottery, classical music, vedic astrology and adornment — taught by practitioners of the highest calibre, many of whom have devoted their lives to a single discipline. Instruction is set within carefully chosen locations: ancient temples, mountain sanctuaries, historic palaces, and landscapes long regarded as spiritually significant. Place, practice, and presence are understood as inseparable.

We serve the discerning traveller, the pilgrim, the curious seeker with a seriousness to experience the art traditions that bring them closer to their innate divinity. Our retreats are designed to be immersive rather than recreational, substantive rather than merely beautiful — though beauty is present throughout.

Mystic Art Retreats is committed to the highest standards of cultural respect and reciprocity. Every programme is composed in close collaboration with the traditions and communities it engages, and no retreat is offered twice in identical form. Each one is singular, shaped by its host, its setting, and its moment in the living calendar of sacred art.

We are a small organisation. We work with great care, and we stand fully behind everything we offer.