

Particulars of some temples of Kerala

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Introduction

Kerala is truly the gift of Gods to India. With his perennial green beauty and it's very educated masses who truly believe in cleanliness, it stands out from other states of India.

There are two views on how it got its name. One view is that , it got its name from the Chera kings who ruled it long time ago and another is that , Keralam simply means "garden of coconuts", which it truly is. Kerala is the land between the mighty Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, starting from near Trivandrum in the south to slightly north of Kasargode. No where in Kerala either the sea or the mountain, would be more than 60-70 kilometers. This ribbon of a land is divided into the sandy beach, the hills and valleys and the mountainous regions. People professing Hinduism, Islam and Christianity occupy this land. Most of them are very religions. They all have another religion too-the religion of cleanliness. It would be extremely difficult to locate a Keralite who does not take bath in the early morning.

Most of the Hindus visit the local temple after bath wearing wet cloths. Except for one or two temples in the entire Kerala, most of these temples are simple constructions without much architecture. But any one entering these temples would be instantly transported to the highly charged spiritual atmosphere there. . Most of these temples are very divine and have epic stories associated with them. But nothing much about them is known outside Kerala, except about Guruvayur temple, Sabarimala Temple and Ananthapadmanabha Swami temple I Got hold of very good compilation about these lesser known temples written in Tamil by Smt Uma Hariharan, a resident of Aleppy. Based on the detailed information, I am trying to jot some notes about these temples in this web site. Being busy with many activities, I may possibly be able to write only about 2-3 temples in a month. Please bear with me

Temples of Kerala

By

P.R.Ramchander

The so called God's own country at present is the ribbon like green stretch of land which stretches from Trivandrum to the small town of Kasargode. Legend says that Parasurama gave as gift all the land he conquered from kings , as per the instruction of Lord Rama. Then he found that he did not have any place to live. So he came to place called Gokarna on Western Ghats and threw his axe in to the sea. The land recovered by him from the sea is Kerala. The straight translation of the name is "Garden of coconuts" but some people believe that the name came from

Cherala (the garden of Cheras-the first kings of Kerala). People believe that when Parasurama started living there he could not find any Brahmins among them. So he brought Namboodiris (who are the real Kerala Brahmins), and also consecrated 108 Shiva temples, 108 Bhagawathi temples and 18 Ayyappa temples. The list of such temples as founded by Parasurama is available in few songs.

The first known rulers of Kerala were Cheras and the first known language was Tamil. The first inscriptions were written in archaic scripts called Kolezhuthu and Vettezhthu. One of the greatest among the Chera kings was Cheran Chenguttuvan. His brother Elango wrote a great Tamil book called Silappadikaram. Kannagi was the heroine of the book (She has many temples in Kerala). After the Cheras, Kerala split in to several small principalities constantly at war with each other, for more and more land.

Of course this is a very brief introduction about Kerala. The first temples of Kerala were called Kavu (places of security/protection). Most of them were temples under some forest tree with no buildings and no roof. Similar temples exist all throughout Tamil Nadu. There are a very high percentage of cases; the gods consecrated were Guardian deity of the village (In some cases a hero who defended the village) or Mariamma (the goddess of Pox) and Lord Ganesa. But some how in Kerala most of these Kavus housed the temple of Goddess Parvathi or Kali .Slowly these Kavus became small temples. Side by side large number of Temples mushroomed up for Lord Shiva, and Lord Vishnu and his Avatharas. Unlike Tamil Nadu, though it was a mountainous country, temples devoted to Lord Subrahmanya were extremely few. There are large number of temples for Lord Ayyappa who was a prince of a small princely

state called Pandalam and he was considered as an incarnation of Dharma Sastha (The son of Lord Shiva and Vishnu) whose temples were popular in the Thirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.

Unlike temples in Tamil Nadu, most of the temples were not granite structures nor were they gigantic. In fact brick and cut laterite stones were used in building these temples. They were very small. The sanctum sanctorum called the "Sree Kovil" was either square or round. Mostly the roofs were of copper sheets or unbaked clay tiles. They were of the shape of pyramid in case of square temples and cone in case of round temples. Some temples have Kalasam at the end of the roof. A very high majority of temples did not have entrance gopurams or Vimanams over the deity like Tamil Nadu. Such temples are also found in the coastal Karnataka districts. Our building experts are of the opinion that these structures closely resemble the Himalayan temples. The Sree kovil was surrounded by a Prakaram (an enclosed space, sometimes with a small corridor). Just outside the Sree Kovil was the Namaskara Mandapam, which was used by the learned Brahmin males for reciting slokas and Vedas. In most of the cases, there was only one outlet from this enclosed space. On the south western corner normally a kitchen was housed, some temples have sub temples in this first Prakaram itself. Inside the prakaram there are several Bali peedams which represent deities like the Nava Grahas. Outside this Prakaram, there normally is a Dwaja Sthambham (flag pole) and a big Bali peetam (stone for sacrifice), and big temples will have several small sub temples outside the Prakaram. Some temples have a Koothambalam, where religious dramas used to be enacted. The outside walls of the Prakaram are normally fitted with

several lamps called Vilakku Madam. The structure with the prakaram and the Sree kovil is called Nalambalam in Kerala. Very few temples have any sculptures. Some temples do have murals and small sculptures carved in wood.

The temple idol is normally made either of stone or wood, though in a very few cases idols are made of Panch aloha also. Unlike Tamil Nadu temples, there is no Uthsava Vighrams which are taken out of the temples during festivals. Instead of that a Thidambu is taken out. Chariots or floats etc are rarely seen in Kerala. In most of the Kerala temples only One God is there inside the sanctum. For example it is either a Krishna Temple, or Parvathi temple or a Shiva temple.

Abhishekams (anointment) are performed only to the stone or metal statue. In case of wooden statues, the preferred wood was jack tree wood. Abhishekam is not performed for such statues but the statue is coated with saffron mixed in oil, (Chandattam). This ensures a very long life for the wooden statues. The preferred form of worship in Kerala temples is based on Thanthra. The priests who do worship are either Namboodiris (Kerala Brahmins) OR Embranthiris (Kannada Brahmins belonging to coastal Karnataka. They are also called Pothis). Since the worship is centered round Thanthra, and is very much different from the Agama of Tamil Nadu. A thanthri if he comes out of the sanctum has to take bath if he is to re enter it. Tamil iyers are not recruited as priests in Kerala temples. Ofcourse Tamil Iyers have built their own temples in Agraharams where they worship and live. In such temples Tamil iyers are priests. Uthralikkavu near Wadakkancheri is the only Kerala temple where Tamil Iyer is a Thanthri. Most of the temple were owned by kings or noble families. With the coming of democracy, most of them are under the

management of autonomous organizations called Devaswams which are part of the government. Most of these temples had huge landed property but with the enactment of Land Reforms act, most of them became very poor. It is strange but true that only a very, very small percentage of temples are dilapidated or neglected. This is because every temple is visited by the local populace in the morning after bath. The local people consider it their temple and wherever they are, they make it a point to attend the festivals of the temple and contribute to its upkeep. This fact is little strange because the major politicians of Kerala are a party which professedly does not believe in God.

Unlike other states of India, while the worship in the sanctum is done by Namboodiris and Embrandiris, the management is done by a rich land lord assisted by few Hindu castes called Ambalavasis. (People who live in the temples). They are normally strict vegetarians and have different roles to play in the upkeep of a temple. For example, the poduval is in charge of management, The Warriar in charge of looking after the garden of the temple and providing garlands for worship in the temple, the kurukkal in charge of supply of milk to the temple, the Marar is in charge of playing instruments in the temple, the Poduval and Nambeesan in charge of singing in front of the deity and Chakyar in charge of propagating the ancient stories about the temple. Castes with such delineation of responsibilities in temple affairs are not found outside Kerala. Apart from Agama differences based on the thanthra several aspects of the temple activities are very much different in Kerala. In most of the temples Sribali (Seeveli) is the customary taking out of the Lord round the temple. In poor temples this is done on the head of the priest but in rich temples, this is done

on the top of the elephant. Chariots are almost not present in Kerala temples except in those managed by Tamil Brahmins. However the God is taken out of the temple on the top of the elephant to the nearest river. There the deity has the ritual bath (called Arattu in Malayalam). Apart from this, most of the temples have festivals called Poorams and Vela. Both these are festivals held in honour of the deity by the local people. The population is normally divided on the basis of the locality they live and each locality takes a pooram or Vela to the temple. There is virtual competition of each locality to excel other localities. Most of them have seeveli on the top of elephants accompanied by an instrumental group called Pancha Vadhyam. It is not to be noted that the long pipe like Nadaswaram of Tamil Nadu or the Shenai of the other parts are absent from Kerala. In many temples in the night there is a huge festival of bursting the crackers is one of the rituals done to please the God. In most of the temples of the Goddess, An oracle called Velichappadu exist. During festivals they get occupied by the Goddess and tell prophecy to people. Another strange practice in Kerala temples is that all males are allowed entry in to the temple only if they do not wear a shirt or a vest. Most of them enter bare chested but those who want are allowed to cover the upper part of the body by a towel. Women have to wear sari, Mundu or Pavadai (petticoat). They are not allowed in side the temple with Chudidhar or jeans. Most of the temples do not allow non Hindus and photography of the idol in the sanctum is strictly prohibited. Apart from the regular Hindu Gods there are very strange temples in Kerala. For example, there is temple for Snakes, Para Brahmam , the individual brothers of Lord Rama. There is a temple near Kottayam where the Goddess is considered to

have periods. In Kodungallor , people believe that the Goddess would only be pleased by singing of very vulgar sexually explicit songs during the Kodungallore Bharani (a major festival).

Yet another interesting aspect of Kerala temple is the Ashta Mangalya Prasnam. This is done whenever the people want to find out the opinion of the God. For example suppose the temple wants to find out whether a new idol can be consecrated or have one more elephant than the usual or want to find out why there was a calamity in the temple, they call a group of very capable astrologers and Ashta Mangalya Prasnam is carried out. Both the people as well as the Devaswoms strictly follow the recommendation of the astrologers.

The temples of Kerala are different and I might have missed many important points. You may find the write up about nearly 64 temples in Kerala by me and my friends in my web site <http://stotraratna.awardspace.com/sruthi.html> as well as in www.hindupedia.com under temples

I once again request all of you to contribute a write up about the temple of your village so that others outside Kerala would know about this diversity of spiritual approach of Hindus of Kerala.

P.R.Ramachander

Temples of Kerala- an over view

By

P.R.Ramachander

Present day Kerala, "God's own country", is the ribbon-like green stretch of land placed between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats - a chain of high hills which begins from south of Thiruvananthapuram (also colloquially referred as Trivandrum) to the small town of Kasargode on the border with Karnataka state. Legend says that Parasurama, an incarnation of Maha Vishnu, gifted all the land he conquered from Kshatriya kings, as per instruction of Lord Rama. When he found that he did not have any place to live, he came to a place called Gokarna near the Western Ghats mountains and threw his marble axe into the sea. The land reclaimed by him from the sea is the present day Kerala, although Gokarna and a large stretch of land, said to have been reclaimed by Parasurama, are now in the state of Karnataka. The transliteration of the name 'Keralam' is "Garden of coconuts", but some people believe that the name came from Cherala (the garden of Cheras-the first kings of Kerala).Keralas or Udra Keralas were also mentioned in the Mahabharata Epic as a kingdom which took part in the Kurukshetra War on the side of the Pandavas.

Legends say that when Parasurama started living there he could not find any Brahmins among them. Hence, he seems to have brought in Namboodiri Brahmins, who remain the original Kerala Brahmins, and also consecrated 108 Shiva temples, 108 Bhagawathi (Shaktam) temples and 18 Ayyappa temples. The list of such temples, founded by Parasurama, are available in a few folk songs.

The first known rulers of Kerala were the Cheras and the first known language was Tamil. The first inscriptions were written in archaic scripts called Kolezhuthu and Vattezhthu. One of the greatest among the Chera kings was Cheran Chenguttuvan. His brother Elango wrote a great Tamil book called 'Silappadikaram'. Kannagi was the heroine of the book and has many temples in Kerala dedicated to her. After the Cheras,

Kerala split in to several smaller principalities constantly at war with each other.

The first temples of Kerala were called Kavu (places of security or protection). Most of them were temples under a tree in the forest, with no buildings or roof. Similar temples exist all over Tamil Nadu as well. In a majority of such places of worship, the gods consecrated were the guardian deities of the village, who were supplicated to guard the village from enemies, both natural and supernatural. In some cases, a hero who defended the village, or Mariamma (the goddess of Pox) and Lord Ganesa were revered as the deity of the village. In the case of Kerala, most of these 'Kavus' housed the temple of Goddess Parvathi or Kali. Slowly these Kavus became transformed into temples. Side-by-side, large numbers of temples mushroomed up for Lord Shiva, and Lord Vishnu and his Avatharas. Unlike Tamil Nadu however, temples dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya were very few. There are a large number of temples for Lord Ayyappa, who was a prince of a small princely state called Pandalam, and he was considered an incarnation of Dharma Sastha (the son of Lord Shiva and Vishnu), whose temples are still popular in the Thirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.

Unlike temples in Tamil Nadu, most of the temples were neither of granite structures nor were they gigantic. In fact, brick and laterite stones were used in building these temples and they were comparatively small. The sanctum called the "Sree Kovil" was either square or round. The roofs were mostly clad with copper sheets or unbaked clay tiles. They were in the shape of a pyramid in the case of square temples and conical in the case of round temples. Some temples have 'Kalasam', which is an ornamental piece made of either brass, or in a few cases gold, embroidered near the edge of the roof. A very large majority of temples did not have entrance gopurams or Vimanams over the deity, like those in Tamil Nadu. Temple architectures similar to those in Kerala are also found in the coastal Karnataka districts. Many archaeologists are of the

opinion that these structures closely resemble the Himalayan temples. The Sree Kovil was surrounded by a Prakaram (an enclosed space, sometimes with a small corridor). Just outside the Sree Kovil was the Namaskara Mandapam, which was used by the learned Brahmin males for reciting slokas and Vedas. In most cases, there was only one outlet from this enclosed space. On the south western corner, a kitchen was normally constructed, and some temples have sub-temples in this first Prakaram itself. Inside the prakaram there are several 'Bali peedams', which represent deities like the Nava Grahas. Outside this Prakaram, there normally is a Dwaja Sthambham (flag pole) and a big Bali peetam (stone for sacrifice). Big temples often have several small sub-temples outside the Prakaram. Some temples have a Koothambalam, where religious dramas are enacted. The outside walls of the 'Prakaram' are normally fitted with several oil lamps called Vilakku Madam. The structure with the prakaram and the Sree Kovil is called 'Nalambalam'. Very few temples have any sculptures. Some temples also have murals and small sculptures carved in wood.

The idols in these temples are normally made either of stone or wood, though in a very few cases they are made of Panchaloha, an alloy of copper, gold, silver, brass, and iron, with copper as the major constituent (thus making Panchaloha generically a cast brass or bronze). Unlike Tamil Nadu's temples, there is no 'Uthsava-Vigrahams' which are taken out of the temples during festivals. Instead, a 'Thidambu', or an elaborate artistically created arch-shaped mount with gilded frontage, having the image of the deity, is taken out and mounted on caparisoned elephants. 'Ratha' or Chariots, or floats etc are rarely seen in Kerala. In most of the Kerala temples, only one God is consecrated inside the sanctum although multi-deity temples are also present in some places. For example, it is either a Krishna Temple, or Parvathi temple or a Shivatemple. Of course, the idol of Ganesa can be seen in

most temples, since he is regarded as the common factor for any worship.

Abhishekams (anointment) are performed only to stone or metal idols. In the case of wooden idols, the preferred wood was that of the jack fruit tree. Abhishekam is not performed for such statues but the statue is coated with saffron mixed in oil (Chandattam). This ensures a very long life for the wooden statues. The preferred form of worship in Kerala temples is based on 'Thanthra'. The priests who do worship are either Namboodiris (Kerala Brahmins) or Embranthiris (Kannada Brahmins) belonging to coastal Karnataka. Some of them are also called Potthis. Since the worship form is centered round Thanthra, it is very much different from the Agama form of worship practiced in Tamil Nadu temples. As an example, were a thanthri to come out of the sanctum even for a moment, he has to take a dip at the temple tank -- that is fully immerse himself and remain in the wet dress right through his time inside the sanctum. Tamil Iyer priests are not recruited in Kerala temples, since they follow the agama type of worship. Rather, Tamil Iyers have built their own temples in Aghraharams where they live, and follow their own way of worship. Uthralikkavu near Wadakkancheri is perhaps the only Kerala temple where a Tamil Iyer is a Thanthri.

Most of the temples were owned by kings or noble families. With the coming of democracy, most of them are under the management of autonomous organizations called Devaswams, which are part of the government. Most of these temples had huge lands as property, but with the enactment of Land Reforms Act by the communist government, most of them became very poor. Nevertheless, today only a very small percentage of temples are dilapidated or neglected. This is because every temple is visited by the local population in the mornings after a bath as a part of their culture and tradition, as also they consider the temple as their own. This community awareness is so great that wherever they are in India or abroad, they make it a point to attend the festivals of the

temple and contribute to its upkeep. This fact is a little strange, since the major politicians of Kerala are atheists.

Unlike other states of India, while the worship in the sanctum is performed by Namboodiris or Embrandiris, the management of these temples is done by the rich landlords, assisted by a few Hindu castes called Ambalavasis. (People who live or are dependent on the temples). They are normally strict vegetarians and have different roles to play in the upkeep of a temple. For example, the 'Poduval' caste is in charge of management, the 'Warrier' caste is in charge of looking after the garden of the temple and providing flower garlands for worship in the temple, the 'kurukkals' are in charge of supplying milk to the temple, the 'Marars' are in charge of playing of musical instruments for the temple, the 'Poduval' and 'Nambeesan' are in charge of singing in front of the deity and the 'Chakyars' are in charge of propagating the ancient stories about the temple. Castes with such delineation of responsibilities in temple affairs are not found outside Kerala. Apart from the 'Agama' practice in contrast to the 'thanthra' practice, several aspects of temple activities are very much different in Kerala. In most of the temples, the custom of Sribali (Seeveli) is carried out, which involves taking the Lord around the temple. In poor temples, this is done on the head of the priest, but in rich temples, this is done on the top of elephants. Chariots are almost never present in Kerala temples, except in those managed by Tamil Brahmins. However, the deity is taken out of the temple on the top of elephants to the nearest river. There the deity is given the ritual bath (called Arattu in Malayalam). Apart from this, most of the temples have festivals called Poorams and Vela. Both these festivals are held in honour of the deity by the local people. The population is normally divided on the basis of the locality they live in and each locality takes a pooram or Vela to the temple. There is virtually a competition among each locality to excel the others. Most of them have seeveli on the top of elephants accompanied by an instrumental ensemble called Pancha Vadhyam with its

own typical instruments. Musical instruments like Nadaswaram of Tamil Nadu are not popular in Kerala temples, though it is widely used in family functions. In many temples, as a grand finale, in festivals like Pooram or Vela, a display of a huge quantities of fireworks is done for entertainment. In fact, some temple festivals like the Thrissur Pooram have attracted large numbers of visitors, from both within and outside the country. The fireworks are an offering to please the God inside the temple. In most of the temples where the presiding deity is a Goddess, an oracle called 'Velichappadu' is present. These Velichapadus go into trances and perform activities which are paranormal. They are especially active during festivals and many devotees consult them as representative of the deity to mitigate their personal problems.

Another practice in Kerala temples is that males are allowed entry into the temple only if they do not wear a shirt or a vest - that is, they are uncovered above the waist. Most of them enter bare chested but some drape a towel. Women devotees have to wear Kerala-centric dresses like Saree, Mundu or Pavadai (petticoat). They are not allowed inside the temple without these typical Kerala-type dresses. Most of the temples do not allow non-Hindus, and photography inside the temple is strictly prohibited.

As a reminder of the nature of worship practiced in this region in the past, there are temples dedicated to snake Gods, Para Brahmam, the individual Pandavas, and to Brahma, who normally is not worshiped. There is a temple near Kottayam, where the Goddess is considered to have menstrual periods. In Kodungallor, people believe that the Goddess would only be pleased by singing of very vulgar sexually explicit songs during the Kodungallore Bharani (a major festival).

Yet another interesting aspect of Kerala temple is the 'Ashta Mangalya Prasnam'. This is an astrological investigation to ascertain whether a particular decision by the temple management has divine approval or to seek specific remedy for calamitous happenings around the temple. For example, if the

temple wants to find out whether a new idol can be consecrated or acquire one more elephant etc, an ashta mangalya prasnam is resorted to. A group of very capable astrologers carry out the Ashta Mangalya Prasnam, where there is a sustained debate as to what the position of each star means. The majority opinion is taken as the divine interpretation and the decision is finalized and carried out. Both the people as well as the Devaswoms strictly follow the recommendations of the astrologers.

Achan Koil Dharma Sastha

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Achan koil is a place which is 30 km from Shenkotta and 40 km from Punalur and is one most important five important temples of Lord Ayyappa , consecrated by sage Parasurama himself in Kerala. The place is also in the junction between Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The Dharma Sastha here is with his two wives Poorna and Pushkala. The God is addressed as SATsha or Arshan or Andavan. Here women are given free entry in to the temple unlike Sabari Mala.

Along with the Dharma Sastha , the temple also has other gods. The most important is the Achan koil karuppan who is the security guard of Ayyappa. There are two important festivals in this temple. One is two days prior to the Mandalabhishegam day , when a car festival is held at the temple. There is a story of a golden sword which was sent by Lord Ayyappa of Kantha Malai to this temple. That golden sword is exhibited during the car festival. The other festival is to honour Swami Krishnaji who has done great service to the temple. There is also a ten day festival in the month of Dhanu. This is celebrated on the Revathi star in the month of Thai. The temple is in the middle of the forest and is not easily

approachable to the Kerala Pilgrims but relatively better approachable from Tamil Nadu.

The water in the temple well as well as the sandal paste from the left hand of Sastha idol are supposed to be very powerful antidotes for snake poison.

Alathiyur Perumthiri(Hanuman) koil

Pray Lords Hanuman ready to jump to Lanka for mental peace

Alathiyur Perumthiri(Hanuman) koil

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Alathiyur is a small village near Tirur of Malappuram district. Here there is a famous Hanuman temple called as Sree Alathiyur Perumthrikovil

.Devotees believe that this Hanuman was consecrated 3000 years back by sage Vasishta himself.

The most interesting fact of the temple is it is a Rama temple where Hanuman is only an Upa devatha. Rama is without Sita and Hanuman appears to be taking orders from Rama. Devotees believe that Lord Rama is sending Hanuman to search for Sita and is telling him the “Abijnana Vakyam(words for identification) that would help him to identify himself to Sita when he locates her. So the face of Hanuman shows concentration and attention. It is interesting to see that Lord Lakshmana also is not with him because Lord Rama wants the secret words not to be heard by any one except his emissary. Possibly this is the story of Indra’s son attacking

Sita as a crow. Sri Lakshmana is separately positioned to the west within the temple complex a but a few meters away from Sri Rama, Outside the periphery of Naalambalam. It is believed that Sri Lakshmana was keeping himself at a small distance away deliberately..

In the temple there is also a long granite platform , with sea being indicated at one end, possibly symbolic of the great mountain platform from which Hanuman jumped to cross the sea.

This Hanuman is considered as guardian of children .He is also suppose remove mental agonies of people just like he removed the mental agony of Lord Rama.Most of the Malayali families around the temple pray before going to bed “Oh dear Hanuman of Alathiyur, Kindly keep bad dreams away from us And if we were to be haunted by bad dreams do please wake us up by gently taping us with your tail.” It is believed that those who recites the verse before going to bed will not have bad dreams”

The devotees coming to the temple are encouraged to run, jump and cross the granite platform so that their children would become more healthy

The Alathiyoor perumthrikkovil temple is special to its devotees for very many reasons. Sri Rama is the presiding deity here. The daily pooja, rituals, offerings by devotees and spectacular annual temple festival – all are held in honour of the presiding deity, Sri Rama. However, the devotees popularly prefer to the temple, the “Hanumankavu” temple. And in a way, it symbolizes the triumph of the supreme strength of bhakthi of Sri Hanuman as an ideal, which overshadows Sri Rama. maryada purushothaman – he is separated from his beloved consort, Seetha, by the mighty Ravana who has abducted her to Lanka. Sri Rama is seen entrusting Hanuman the impossible task of locating the whereabouts of Seetha. Sri Rama confides

to Hanuman about how to look for Seetha in the Lanka. Hanuman, now, only has to cross the vast and formidable sea that separates the Lanka from the main land. 33 crore Gods gathered to witness this significant act. It is an act in which the avathar purush Sri Rama seeks the assistance of his Bhaktha, Hanuman. All the Gods bestow Hanuman with their enormous strength, so that he succeeds in his mission. For Hanuman, this is a very significant moment. And hence, his pre-eminence, at Alathiyoor.

The favorite offering of Sri. Hanuman is “wet avil (Pothi avil)” and another important offering is “kadali” plantain.

The temple became famous because of Smt Jayalalitha’s visit on the advice of an astrologer .After that very large number of devotees visit this temple every day.

The temple is 6 km away from Tirur Railway station and 39 km away from Calicut international air port

EVENTS	TIME
Morning Pooja	06:15 AM - 07:00 AM
Hanumanu Nivedyam	07:00 AM - 09:00 AM
Hanumanu Kuzhacha Avil Nivedyam	09:00 AM - 09:30 AM
Hanumanu	10:00

EVENTS	TIME
Nivedyam	AM - 11:00 AM
Nada Closing	11:00 AM

You can see the temple and hear about the temple in Malayalam in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KraYkwHszXg>

Randu Moorthi temple of Alathur

By

P.R.Ramachander

Alathur is a big village near Palakkad town, There is very peculiar temple in this village called Randu moorthi temple.(Temple with two gods) . In this temple there are two goddesses both facing the west. One is Annapurni and the other is Mahishasura mardhini. It is believed that this temple was established by Sureshwaracharyar, one of the chief disciples of Adhi Shankara. This is managed even today by Naduvil madam, established by him. It seems for a long time that the building around the Bhagwathi was incomplete in spite of great efforts and people used to call it "pani theeratha kovil."(the incomplete temple.). It seems then suddenly , some Bhoothas constructed the entire temple in 14 days. The entire construction was done by granite stones.

The two Bhagawathis are in two different heights. The Annapurneswari is at a lower height and Mahishasura Mardhini in the higher plane. While the Annapurneswari is a swayambu statute that of Mahishasura Mardhini is made of jack wood. She has eight hands and holds all her weapons in those hands. Unlike other temples with idols made of jack wood, here Chandhattam (painting the statue with kumkum) is not done. In spite of this the statue is not even slightly damaged. There is uthasava idol for this statue, for which abisheka is done. This idol is surrounded the seven Durgas viz Brahmani, Maheswari, Koumari, Vaishnavi, Vaarahi, Indrani and Chamundi..

The entire Ramayana has been painted in the roof of the mandapam of this temple in six parts. In spite of no maintenance, these pictures look as if they were just painted.

Another peculiarity of this temple is that unlike all other temples in Kerala, in this temple Brahmins are not allowed to sit in the Mandapam opposite the sanctum sanctorum.

In the month of Karthigai, there is a ten day long festival in this temple. In the Meda masam (April-May) the foundation day is observed. On this day all the 4000 lamps surrounding the temple are lit. It seems the oil for this used to come from the income

from the fields of a neighboring village called “enna Padam(oil fields).”.The temple is open from 5.30 Am up to 10 Am and 5Pm to 8 Pm.

Ambalappuzha Krishnan temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Ambalappuzha , literally means Temple River. This village is very near Aleppy town and is 75 km from the city of Cochin. There is very famous temple of Krishna in this village.

Once when the Vilwamangalam Swamiyar (a very famous sage of Kerala) and the king of Chempagassery were travelling in a boat, they heard the flute being played on the shores of the back waters . Vilwamangalam could see Lord Krishna sitting on a branch of a banyan tree and playing flute. This tree was in the middle of water. They bought the land from the owner, filled up that area and built a temple there. (This Banyan tree still exists in the back of the temple and is called Ganapathi Banyan tree). The king wanted to consecrate Lord Krishna as the cowherd in the temple. But once the idol was made, it was found to be defective , by a famous Namboodiri. He showed it by tapping the hand of the idol which broke. They then bought an already available idol from Kurichi. Since the king of Kurichi was the enemy of the Chempagassery king, this idol was smuggled from there with a help of a Panikkar. This Panikkar’s family has the

post of Chief of the temple (koyma). While bringing it from Kurichi, during the day time, the idol was hidden in the house of a Christian called "Itty thoman." for a day. Even to day the room in which the idol was kept is considered as a holy place and a lamp lit there. While consecrating the idol, it was shaking in its position and was not stable. Then a sage came and asked them to keep the idol on a betel leaf. Then it stood firm. Because of this the place was called Thamboola Puzhai.. This name later got corrupted and became the present day Ambala puzhai. It is believed that this idol was one of the three idols given by Lord Krishna to Arjuna. Once when sage Vilwamangalam visited this temple, the king expressed a desire to see Lord Krishna in person. When he was shown Lord Krishna in person by sage Vilwamangalam, the king dedicated his country to the temple and took the name of Deva Narayanan. Even today the eldest member of the king's family is called Deva Narayanan, The Pala payasam (about 100 liters) prepared daily in this temple is very famous. It is believed that Lord Guruvayurappan and the Thiruvarpu Krishna daily come here to eat this Payasam. It is divinely tasty and no one will ever forget its taste, if he is lucky to taste this, Payasam. The required milk with four times water is boiled for five hours.

Then the required quantity of rice is added and boiled for another 45 minutes. During the six hours, the payasam has to be constantly stirred. After six hours Khandasari sugar is added and boiled till it dissolves. Before putting the sugar, the cook shouts, "Vasudeva".

The idol of the temple is really in the form of a driver of a chariot but, he is worshipped in the form of a cowherd. It is believed that during the conquest of Tippu Sultan, the idol of Guruvayurappan was brought to this temple and worshipped here.

Krishna's birth day (ashtami Rohini) is celebrated here in a gala way. There are many other festivals in this temple. The temple is open from 3 Am to 12.30 PM and then from 5 to 8,30 Pm.

Amedha Saptha Mathruka Temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

(This is mainly based on the write up in the web site of the temple (<http://www.amedatemple.org/>) and consultation with devotees)

It is well known that Snake worship is an important part of the Hindu religion of Kerala. Most of the villages have Sarpa Kavu, where idols of snakes are consecrated below Banyan trees of villages. One of the very important temples dedicated to Naga

Raja and Naga Yakshi is located in Ameda temple , which is 10 km from Thirupunithura in the Ernakulam-Vaikom road. The temple is located in a sprawling 10 acres of land on the shores of Vembanad kayal(Back waters) . The main temple is dedicated to Saphmathrukkals (Brahmi, Maheswari , Kaumari , Vaishnavi , Varahi , Indrani and Chamundi) along with Ganapathi and Veerabadra. Temples dedicated to Nagaraja and Nagayakshi are in the north-west and North –east of this temple. Towards the North there is a temple dedicated to Maha Vishnu

It is believed that Sage Parsurama who came to this place once was doing Sandhyavandana in the back waters near the temple. Suddenly he saw a very bright light in the middle of the water. When he went and investigated he found that it was the Saptha Mathukkal(The seven incarnations of Kali termed as the seven mothers) were travelling across the waters on a tortoise. Due to the path taken by Sage Parasurama, the Tortoise was not able to move. (the place came to be known as Aama ninnayidam-place where tortoise stopped) . Sage Parasurama built a huge temples dedicated the seven mothers at this place and gave the responsibility of looking after it to A Namboodiri family, who settled down there. Later over years the name Aama ninna idam came to be known as Ameda. I could not find any information about the origin of the Nagaraja and Nagayakshi temples .

The important offerings of the temple are:-

1.Bhagwat Seva

This is mainly offered to Goddess Vaishnavi on the first twelve days of The Malayalam month of Karkidagam (July-august).

2.Guruthi Pooja

This is again an offering to Goddess mainly to Chamundi .Guruthi (A red coloured fluid) in one vessel is offered to her to win over one's enemies after the last worship of the day(Athazha pooja-Worship during supper time) . After Guruthi is offered the temple is closed for the day and no one is allowed inside the temple. However during the 41 days of the Mandalam (November-December) Guruthi prepared in 12 big vessels and are offered .) On the last day of the mandalam the Guruthi is offered to Naga Yakshi also.

3.Karthika pooja and Payasam

On all months on the days when there is Karthiga star a special pooja is conducted in the temple . This includes the Thanthric Dwadasakshai pooja also. This pooja is again conducted in a special way on the Karthiga star of the Karthiga month (Vruschigam-October-November).

On these days couple wanting child birth come together and offer to the Payasam(Kheer) to the goddess Vaishnavi continuously for one year(Twelve times)

4.Sarpa Bali and Ashtanga Pooja

This is conducted to ward off the evil effects due to planet Rahu between 6Pm and 8 PM on chosen days. However this has to be booked in the morning itself.

5.KIndi eriyal(Throwing of the vessel called Kindi) , Povatta kamizhthal (Placing Povatta in the opposite way)

These are very important rituals offered to the seven mothers(Saptha Mathrukkal) , which are aimed at getting children.

6.Mura Japam

This consists of chanting of Vedas in side the sanctum sanctorum by Nambhoodiri Vedic Scholars for the betterment of the temple and its devotees. This is conducted 2-3 times in a year

7. Pulluvan Pattu

Pulluvans are folk singers of Kerala who sing devotional songs to the accompaniment of a one stringed violin. You have to tell the name of the person and his birth star to the Pulluvan (Who will be standing outside the temple) and he would pray to the Goddess as well as Naga Yakshi for your betterment in mellifluous Malayam. It takes about 3-5 minutes per person.

8. Ayilya Darsanam

Going to the temple and praying to the Naga Raja and Naga Yakshi temples are considered specially beneficial on the Days of Ayilyam star in the Malayalam months of Kani(September-october) , Thulam(October-November) , Vruschigam (November-December)and Meenam(March-April) . Huge crowd of devotees come to this temple on those days.

The temple has a pooram festival in the Meenam month(March-April) . The flag for festival is hoisted on the Makeeram (Mriga seersham) day. The important festival days are on Ayilyam(Ayilya Darsanam) , Uthsava (festival) Bali on Makam , Valiya Vilakku(Big lamp) or Palli vetta(Royal hunt) on Pooram and Arattu (ceremonial bath of the deity) on Uthram days. The arattu would be only performed by the member of The Amedu Mangalam family (Namboodiris in charge of the worship of the temple) or the Vadakkan Puliyannor Namboodiri who is the Thanthri of the temple. This would be

performed every day during the festival after the first worship of the temple(Usha Pooja) in the temple tank and in the evening on the main Arattu day (Uthram) , On this special day all the three doors (instead of two) of the sanctum sanctorum are opened and there would be five times worship in the temple instead of the usual three times worship. The only other day when this door opened is on the Mandala Guruthi pooja performed on the 41st day of the Mandalam.

Ananteswar temple of Manjeswar

By

P.R.Ramachander

Manjeswar is a small town on the sea shore in the northern extremity of Kerala . It houses one of the most important temples of the gowda Saraswath Brahmins who migrated from Goa to various places in the west coast.. The temple houses three Gods, Anantha(Or Adhi Sesha) , Iswara(Shiva) and Narasimha. It is believed that the siva temple was existing there for thousands of years and was consecrated there by sage Virupaksha. Over years due to natural happenings the building of the temple got completely broken down. At that time a Gowda Saraswath Brahmin called Ranga Sarma was travelling south from Goa along with a statue of Anantha. He accidentally came across this temple , and stayed there and rebuilt it. He also consecrated the statue of Adhi sesha along with Lord Shiva , making it an Anantheswara temple. It is believed that Lord Shiva himself consecrated the idol of Narasimha in the temple. Lord Mukhyaprana, Lord Rudra, Devi Laxmi, Lord MahaGanapathy and Lord Garuda are the other

deities in the Temple.

An image of Lord Subrahmanya also has been installed in the temple in a place in a slightly lower elevation but with lot of serpent holes.

Just behind the idols in the sanctum sanctorum, there is an ant hill made of white mud. Mud from this hill is taken and distributed as Prasada in the temple. This is supposed to have curative properties and in spite of centuries of distribution , the mud does not seem to get exhausted.

There is a small pond in the temple called Sesha Theertham. Devotees believe that by taking bath in its waters skin diseases would be completely cured. The descendents of Ranga Sarma used to act as oracles of the temple and used to give predictions and answer the queries of the devotees. This practice has been discontinued after 1935. It is also believed that Shiva Ganas surround the temple. The chief of them called Jogi Gana is consecrated on the North eastern corner of the temple. People offer Coconuts to Jogi Gana. When things are misplaced or lost , they come to the temple of Jogi Gana and promise to make offerings of coconuts once the property is recovered.

On the sixth phase of moon(Sashti) in the waxing phase a chariot festival is held in the temple. This coincides with Skanda Sashti.

Anchumana temple , Padivattam, Edapalli

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated near edapally town of kerala which is near Ernakulam city near the Cochin bypass road. This temple has temples for three goddesses Bhvanesawri, Annapoorna and Bhadrakali .Goddess .While Goddess BHvaneswari grants prosperity and mental peace , Goddess

Annapurna blesses with long and happy married life and BHadrakali removes all problems caused by evil spirits. There are also several other Gods consecrated in this temple. They are Lord Ganapathi , Lord Ayyappa , Lord Subrahmanya , Nagadevathas, Lord Guru ,Hidimba swamy , Lord Hanuman , Brahma Rakshas , Kandakarna swamy and Arukola, the last three being folk gods. This temple was initially managed by A nambuydiri family but since they found it difficult , it is now managed by Viswakarma Dharmosharana samajam.(Viswakarmas are skilled artisans like carpenter, goldsmith, mason, black smith etc)

Every Monday Vivaha sooktha pushpanjali is offered to Goddess Annapurna. iT is believed that those who participate would get married quickly.Guruthi Pushpanjali (also called Raktha Pushpanjali) is offered to the Goddess on Sundays, tuedays and Wednesdays, which is expected to solve all the day to day problem of the devotees.Nirapara with dasapushpam (ten flowers) and Samrudha vriksha leaves are offered on the first of Chingam month for getting prosperity ,Mass prayer is offered to Goddess BHuveneswari on all Friday evenings.After Usha pooja(morning pooja) on Tuesdays and Fridays , devotees chant Lalitha Sahasranama. The chief thanththri of the temple performs a Thanthri pooja at the temple on the last Tuesday of every Malayalam month.During Navarathri Goddess BHuveneswari is dressed up like Goddess Saraswathi and Visdhyarambham for tiny tots is conducted ,From first of Vruscigam there is a long festival at the temple for 41 days.On the first five days there is THalapoli and on all days the Goddess BHuveneswari visits all villages round her accompanied by five elephants. On the last 7 days of this festival the temple is closed. The worship afterwards is resumed with the worship of Kandakarna swamy . During the month of Kumbham “Anguruthy” festival to Goddess Bhuvaneswari is celebrated .Thai poosam festival is celebrated in the Subramanya swami temple .Special pooja for the Guru

Swamy is conducted by the chief Thanthri on the last day of Thulam month .The temple is open from 5 Am to 8 PM,This temple is situated 22 km from Amritha hospitals in Cochin.

Aranmula Parthasarathy Temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Aranmula Parthasarathy temple is one of the great Krishna temples of Kerala. It is one of the divya sthalams of Sri vaishnavites , as some of the Azhwars(Ministels of God) have sung about this temple. It is a suburb of Kozenchery in Pathanamthitta district. Nearby important towns are Pathanamthitta (10 km), Pandalam (14 km) Chengannur (10 km). The nearest railway station is at Chengannur. There are few stories about the origin of the temple.

It seems that after Parikshit the son of Abhimanyu who was made the king after the Mahabharatha war, it seemd the Pandavas visited Pamba river of Kerala with a view to propitiate their manes. It seems each of them consecrated a temple .While Yudhishtira consecrated the temple of Chengannur , Bheema consecrated Thirupuliyur temple, Arjuna Aranmula temple , Nakula Thiruvamundur temple and Nakula Thirukadithanam temple.

It seems that the temple consecrated by Lord Arjuna fell in disuse and was covered with forest. At that time a man belonging to caste called Chaakans who were rowing down the Pamba river saw a very young Brahmachari Brahmin boy stranded in a forest shore of the Pamba river. When he wanted to go downstream, the boatmen built a raft using six Bamboos

(Six-Aaru, Bamboo-mula) and reached the present place of the temple. Seeing the boy with a shining form, the local people received him with hospitality and made arrangements for him to stay in the shore of the river. It seems the boy was Lord Krishna himself and he raised the bank in to a small hill and consecrated the statue of Lord Krishna . which was consecrated earlier by Arjuna. Next day when people came he had vanished and they started worshipping the God there , Since the Boy came in a raft made of Bamboo or possibly because the Bamboo raft came floating in the aaru(river) , the place was called Aaranmula..

There is a belief that the Idol that has been consecrated in Aranmula is that of God as the driver of Arjuna(Partha Sarathy), though like the other usual parthasarathy statues , the idol does not hold a horse whip. There is a belief that , here the idol is of that Krishna who jumped out of his driver's seat to kill Bheeshma with a discus in his hand. The idol is almost 6 feet tall. While some people say that the idol is made of blue granite yet others feel that it is made of a compound of concentrated jaggery. The idol has four hands. In the hand pointing above there is Sudarsana Chakra, one hand holds the conch and the other hands hold the mace and the lotus flower .In the year 1880 there was a big fire in the temple. Though it destroyed the entire temple , the idol was not affected. In 1883, the Karthika thirunal king rebuilt the entire temple in the way that it is seen now.

The God is facing the east in this temple. He faces the Pambha river from whose shore you have to climb several steps. The temple also houses the temples of that of Dharma Sastha, Bhagwathi, Lord Bala Badhra and the Naga devathas. There are several important festivals in the temple. The main festival

starts on the Hastha star in the month of Makaram (January-February) and lasts for ten days and on the tenth day, there is an Arattu(Ceremonial dipping of I uthsava idol in the river), The most important day of the festival is on the sixth day , when God is supposed to come out riding on Garuda. People believe that girls worshipping God on that day would have a very long wedded life.

Another great festival takes place in the month of Vruschigam (November-December) for 12 days is the festival of Kalabham and Vilakku. This is also called “Panthrandu Kalabham(12 Kalabham) “. It is believed that this was started by the great Marthanda Vema king of Travancore. On these days, the Idol of God Parthasarathy is anointed by sandal paste(Kalabham) In the evening each day the idol is dressed as one of the Dasavatharas.

However the biggest festival of the temple is Aranmula Vallam. Vallam means boat and there is a boat race in the river on the Uthrattathi day(after the Thiruonam day) in the month of Chingam (August-September) Several very long snake boats (more than 100 feet , manned by more than one hundred people participate in this festival. This is the day when the temple was consecrated as well as the birthday of Arjuna. This is not a sports but a religious festival.

In a place called Kattur , which is 9 km away from Aranmula there was a great devotee of the Lord called Mangattu Bhattathiri. He used to wash the feet of Brahmins and feed them on all on Thiruonam day .He used to take meals only after a Brahmin takes food. On a particular Thiruonam day, he could not find any Brahmin to feed. He prayed God and a very pleasant looking great Brahmin came that day and took meals given by him. Charmed by his mein Bhattathiri requested him

to come again on next Thiruonam day. Then that Brahmin replied , “It would be difficult but if you come to Aranmula temple on that day, it could be managed., Later the God of Aranumla came to him in his dream and told him that it was he himself who had come as a Brahmin. So on the next Uthrattathi day, Bhattathiri went to Aranmula temple with all the food items that are needed to feed a multitude of people . The boat was a very huge one. His men accompanied him to protect him on two snake boats. With the articles , a great feast was arranged in Aranmula called Valla Sadhya. This continued for a long time. The Bhattathiri family left the place to Kumaranallur entrusting sufficient wealth to continue the custom unbroken. The Coming of the snake boats and a grand feast on that Uthrattahi day continued. One of the very special preparations to that feast is the “Aranmula Varutha erisseri”. This is prepared using Plantains and elephant foot yam , with generous portion of grated coconut fried in coconut oil added to it. There are many stories about the taste of this Varatha Erisseri which is prepared in Aranmula.

Another festival celebrated here is the Gandava Dahanam celebrated in the month of Dhanu (December-January) For this festival, a model of a forest is created in front of the temple with dried plants, leaves and twigs. Then a huge bonfire is lit, symbolic of Gandava forest fire of the Mahabharata.

Arathil Bhagawathi temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

(You may find lot more information about this temple in the web site of the temple viz. www.arathilkavu.com)

Arathil Bhagawathi temple is a very famous located in Kayalod near Pinarai which is near the KoothuParamba town of Malabar. Apart from Arathil Bhagawathi the temple the temple also has separate temples of Pazhassi devi, Kakkara Bhagawathi , Kelan kulangara Bhagawathi, Sasthappan (Another name for Ayyappan) , Gulikan (Son of Saturn) and Vishnu Moorthi.

There are some interesting stories about its origin. It seems as per the wishes of Lord Parasurama, a Brahmin family in Syamanthaka Panchakam(which is in present Haryana) migrated to Gokarnm along with the Deity of the Goddess they used to worship. At that time The king of Kolathu Nadu in Kerala had quarreled with the Namboothiris who had settled down in his place and they were not cooperating with him. The ministers of the king advised him to bring a noble Brahmin family from outside the king dom. The king himself went to Gokarnam and invited the Brahmins from Syamanthaka Panchakam to settle down in his place. They wanted the king to build a suitable temple for their Goddess. The king agreed and gave them the villages of 1) Arathil 2) Cheruthazham, 3) Kannur, 4)Kulappuram and 5)Vara ruchi mangalam. The 235 families of those Brahmins settled down in these villages. The king also built a temple for their Goddess in the Arathil village. From then on the Kolathu Nadu became prosperous along with the Brahmins who settled down there. Thinking that they were the cause of the prosperity , the Brahmins started quarrelling with the king and slowly started neglecting the temple. Then their prosperity diminished and for a period of 16 years the temple was even closed. The local population who had benefitted from the Goddess , again repaired the temple and started performing the usual worships and they again got back

their prosperity.

Pazhassi Bhagwathi , is presumed to be the Daughter of Yasoda who was brought to Mathura by Vasudeva , the father of Lord Krishna. She is fiery by nature and after having her temples in various places has also settled down in the Arathil Bhagwathi temple and is considered as the protector of the Goddess Bhagwathi. The other Gods also joined in the temple. The pooja for these temples are conducted as of now by the Namboodiris of Keezhara illam.

The most important festival of the temple is the Thira festival, where the theyyams of all the Gods perform the ceremonial dance. The Thira festival will be held in the Malayalam month of Meenam on 13th ,14th and 15th (March 27th, 28th and 29th) This has been ongoing without any interruption ever since very smoothly. The same team who conducts the thira festival of Arathil Sree Bhadrapuram Temple also is conducting this Thira festival of these four Bhagavathis and Sree Bhootham.

On All 32 days if KARKIDAKAM (July-August) month GANAPATHI HOMAM and Neyppayasam offerings can be made by Devotees on payment .On Vrishchikam (November-December) 1st and 40th day of Mandalam , CHUTTUVILAKKU will be conducted at the temple. This again can be done as offerings to Arathil Bhagavathi by devotees on payment of 1200/- (One thousand and two hundred only) per chuttuvilakku.

Aroor Sri Karthyayani temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Aroor is a big village in the border of the kingdom of Travancore and Cocin of the olden days situated near NH 47. It is about 22 km away from Alappuzha town. There is a belief its earlier name was Athiroor(The village near the border). It is believed that Vilavangalthu Samiyar was returning from Trivandrum to Guruvayur and happened to take rest below a huge tree. Suddenly he could see the presence of Goddess there .By his wisdom he understood that it was Karthyayani devi and built a temple for her. It seems he stayed there for some time worshipping the Goddess and later entrusted the management of that temple to various Nambudiri families. There is also a mention that it was one of the 108 devi temples which was consecrated by Parasurama all over Kerala and this place was called "Kattil Pisharam"

During the march of Tippu Sultan through Kerala people believe that he broke the statue of Goddess Karthyayani ,Later the temple fell in to disuse for several years. It is believed that seven Nayar families settled here ,They are believed to have repaired the temple and got made a new idol of Karthyayani and consecrated her here. In those families there was a very great man called Kannam kulangara kaimal . A thought occurred to him that the power of this great temple was getting reduced and he felt because of the prosperity of the families of the families who have settled in the village also would diminish.One day he happened to see the goddess in person looking very famished and tired .Kaimal realized that it was the Goddess. He told her to take rest and promised her , he would bring a tender coconut for her. He requested her to wait till then . He then went to his home and committed suicide by hanging. The goddess remembering his words waited for him for some time and later went in to the sanctorum. The Soul of Kaimal who committed became a spirit and started wandering here and there and at that time the prosperity of the temple further reduced. The Soul of Kaimal stated living in a Palmyra tree to the south of the Aroor temple.People started liking this spirit and started

calling him “Aru kola Ammavan (Uncle who faced bad death).” As they found the spirit was helping them a lot. Later this temple management was taken over by the Travancore kings. Thorough repair was done to the temple by Ayilyam Thirunal king who lived between 1860-1880. And today it is one of the important temple under Travancore DEvaswam board.. The temple is a small one and faces east..The idol of the Goddess is made using black stone and has four hands. Statutes of Lord Shiva, Lord Ganapathi, Naga devathas and Arukola (the spirit of the Kaimal who committed suicide) are found inside this small temple. Below a Branyan tree a Brahma Rakshas and Yakshi have also been consecrated, . The temple does not have any carvings or paintings .

The temple has a grand festival for eight days in the month of Meenam ending in Uthram star. The last three days of the Mandala time is celebrated as Thalapoli. Several devotees have felt the greatness of the Goddess as she used to solve their problems without fail.. Let her also bless all those who read this compilation.

Arpuda Narayana temple, Thirukodithaanam

Thirukodithanam

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is one of the few temples in Kerala which is a divya desam of Vaishnavas. This means that it has been sung by one of the 12 Azhwars, the minstrels of Vaishnavism of Tamil Nadu. In fact Nammazhwar one of the greatest saints in this pantheon has sung about this temple.

This temple is about 3 km from Changanaseery town, which is near Kottayam. The

God in this temple is called Arpuda Narayana (Narayana of

wonder) or amrutha Narayana(Narayana who is nectar)).It is believed that the God in this temple is consecrated by Sahadeva, the youngest of the Pandavas. It seems Sahadeva wanted to build a temple for Lord Vishnu here. Since he was not able to get a proper idol he decided to die by entering the fire. But then in the fire , he got the present idol of Lord Vishnu. Since it was a great surprise he preferred to call it Arpuda Narayana. It is believed that every 60 years this idol gets extra power and at the beginning of the deluge, this idol will convert itself in to light and merge with heaven. The God in this temple is in a standing pose and has four hands. The goddess is called Karpaga Valli. There is also a temple for Lord Narasimha, which is possibly a later addition. On the southern part of the temple there are two temples , one for Lord Dakshinamurthy and the other for Lord Ganapathi. Both these temples do not have doors. Normally Pal Payasam (milk Kheer) is daily offered to Lord Narasimha. It is believed that this being done to reduce his fierceness. This temple also has sub temples for Lord Subrahmanya,, Nagar (snake), Lord Ayyappa and Goddess Kali. The Dasavathars are carved in this temple. It is believed that King Rukmangadha used to rule over this place. It seems he used to maintain a great flower garden. It seems Devas used to steal the flowers and take it to heaven. The king's soldiers caught them. Because of this the devas, lost their power to go back to heaven,, They then requested King Rukmangada to

give the effect of observation of Ekadasi by him. When he gave it to them, they were able to go back to heaven.

There is grand ten day festival in the month of Vruschigam(November-December)

.During this time 1008 lamps are lit in this temple. Once lit , these lamps burn all night.

The reason why Karthigai festival is celebrated in a Vishnu temple is as follows. It

seems once Lord Shiva appeared before Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma as a ball of fire.

Unable to bear the heat , they prayed Lord Shiva. Then on Karthigai day, Lord Shiva

transformed himself in to a small lamp.. There are Tamil inscriptions in this temple

indicating the fact that once upon a time, this place was ruled by Tamil kings. This place

in these inscriptions as “Nandru Uzhaitha Nadu(The country which worked hard).”

It is also believed that Kunti the mother of Pandavas died in this place.. There is a

custom of lighting lamps in the corner where this happened.

Records indicate that this place was a Gadiga Sthana where Vedas were taught to

people. The present name must have derived out of Gadika.

The walls surrounding this temple are famous and are supposed to be built by Ghosts.

They are an arrangement of stones not pasted by any material.

Even today , no harm has come to these walls.

Aryankavu Dharma Sastha

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Aryan Kavu is 31 km from Punalur.. The temple is built 35 feet below the road level. The God is supposed to have married Pushkala at this temple and has this consort on his left side. Pushkala is supposed to belong to the Saurashtran community who have occupied parts of Madurai. They are supposed to have migrated from SAurashtra, The devotees of this temple believe that The God Ayyappa was brought up by the king of Madurai and Pushkala who was a SAurashtran girl fell in love with him. Another story says that Pushkala who was only ten years old at that time, accompanied her father to Trivandrum and on the way they happened to stay in Aryankavu temple. The girl fell in love with the God. And on the way back, she merged with the God. Lord Sastha informed this to the priest of the temple and requested him to honor Pushkala's father.

The two main festivals in this village are the Madala pooja and the Thirukalyanam festival both celebrated in the month of DEcember. Invitation to the marriage is sent every year by the Travancore Devasvam board to the Saurashtran community in Madurai Every year the marriage is celebrated following the rituals of the Saurashtran community in a grand way . Large number of Saurashtra community members attend this festival bringing with them gift to the bride.

Nearby this Sastha temple is the Mampazhathurai BHagwathy temple . The Goddess is in a fierce form at this temple . There are various theories about this temple. Some people believe that the marriage of Pushkala and Sastha did not take place and with great anger Pushkala and went to Mampazhathurai and sat there. Another view is that Mampazhathurai is only an Yakshi temple . This appears as more plausible because the people in Tamil Nadu believe that Pushkala is married to Dharma Sastha.

Athingal Bhairavi temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Athingal is a small town about 34 km away from Trivandrum. This was earlier a small independent principality . A lady called Avani amma thamburatti who was the last member of the royal family there. She adopted the king of Travancore at the time and requested him to take over the rule of this kingdom and also adopt a girl child who would look after the kingdom under his direction. After her death, the then king adopted two girls belonging to the Chirakkal Royal family of Northern Malabar and made them in charge of the principality. He also made them independent and gave lot of land to them . These princesses brought with them an idol of Goddess from their native place . There is a story about this Goddess. It seems in the THaliparambu Rajarajeswara temple there was a fierce goddess. One day the Velichapadu (oracle) said that he would throw a burning fire wood. The temple of the Goddess was to be built in that place where the fire wood falls. . The fire wood fell in a forest little away from there and a part of forest was burnt. The temple of Goddess was built there. . This new temple was called THiru virago Kattiya Kavu or Madayi Bhagawathi temple . The princesses along with them the Uthsava idol of this temple and also large number of people including priests to worship this goddess .

Initially the idol was worshipped in the palace itself and so it was called as "Palliyara Bhagawathi." And later it was consecrated in a new temple built near the Palace on the top of a small hill. This new temple was called as "Thiru virago kattiya Kavu" as well as :Puthan Kavu." You have to climb several steps to reach the temple..It was initially maintained by the king of Travancore and later on handed over to the Travancore Devaswam board. On the entrance to the sanctum sanctorum there are two lady gaurds called Sumukhi and Sundari. To the south of the sanctum , Vera Bhadra , Ganesa and the Saptha mathas have been consecrated. People believe

that the Goddess is in the sanctum is powerful and is in an angry mood.. The statue has been made using the alloy of five metals(Pancha loha) . There are also small temples for KIratha, Sastha and Ganesa in this temple. There is also a temple for Naga Yakshi and a Shiva Linga with reddish tinge., On the northern side there is a temple for Brahma Raksas.

The worship is done by the priests who have been brought from Malabar. The annual festival is in the month of Vruschigam..There are festivals in the month of Makara as well as an nine day festival in the month of Meenam . Ariyittu Vazcha which is very peculiar ritual which was brought from the original Malabar is observed on the 9th day Makaram month. It is normally attended by the royal family members of the Travancore family. If the king is not able to attend for some reason, he is supposed to give the temple an elephant as fine. The Sword of the temple is worshipped using red rice before the king .Later this rice is taken inside the temple and used to anoint the Bhagawathy idol, by taking the rice with a conch. The goddess is referred to as Bhairavi and keeps on blessing the people all around Athingal.

Attukkal BHagawathy Kshethram, Trivandrum

(From the web site of the temple : www.attukal.org/)

Mythological Background

The story goes that the Goddess Bhagavathy revealed herself to a fervent devotee of a notable family viz. Mulluveettil family. It is said that one evening a young girl appeared before the head of the family while he was performing his oblations in the Killi river and requested him to help her cross the river. Impressed by her charismatic demeanor, the old man bent before her with awe

and reverence and not only helped her cross the river but took her to his house nearby. Strangely enough, while the household members were amidst preparations for intending a warm welcome to the young girl, she vanished. That very night the Goddess Bhagavathy appeared as an icon before the old man in his dream and demanded that he should establish an abode for her in the nearby sacred ground of shrubs and herbs (kavu), at a consecrated spot marked by three lines. The next morning the old man went to the spot revealed to him in the dream and to his great surprise he did find three marks indented on the ground. He lost no time in erecting a temple on this consecrated spot to house the Goddess. Many years later, the building was renovated by the local devotees. They also installed a beautiful and majestic icon of the Deity with four arms, bearing weapons of destruction in each, like spear, sword, skull, shield etc. The consecration ceremony of this Exalted Being was performed by no less a person than the high priest of the Badarinath Temple. The Attukal Bhagavathy Temple, one of the ancient temples of South India, is popularly described as Sabarimala of the Women, as women form the major portion of devotees. The Goddess in the temple of Attukal is worshipped as the Supreme Mother, creator of all living beings and the mighty preserver as well as destroyer of them all. The pilgrims from all over the

country, who visit Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple and worship the Lord, do not consider their visits complete without the visit to the shrine of the supreme Mother Attukalamma. Vishnumaya took the incarnation of Bhagavathy to annihilate the evil and protect the good in the world in the present Era namely Kaliyuga.

According to mythology, Attukal Bhagavathy is supposed to be the divinised form of Kannaki, the famous heroine of Chilapathikaram, written by Elenkovadikal, the Tamil Poet. The story goes that after the destruction of ancient city of Madurai, Kannaki left the city and reached Kerala via Kanyakumari and on the way to Kodungalloor took a sojourn at Attukal. Kannaki is supposed to be the incarnation of Parvathy, the consort of Paramasiva. The all powerful and benign Attukal Bhagavathy reigns eternally supreme at Attukal and nurses devotees as a mother does her children. Thousands of devotees from far and near flock to the Temple to bend before the Goddess with awe and reverence to prostrate and redress their affliction and agony.

The Pongala Mahotsavam is the most important festival of Attukal Bhagavathy Temple. The offering of Pongala is a special temple practice prevalent in the southern part of Kerala and some parts of Tamilnadu. It is a ten-day programme commencing on the Karthika star of the Malayalam month of Makaram-Kumbham (February-March) and closing with the sacrificial offering known as

Kuruthitharpanam at night. On the ninth day of the festival the world famous Attukal Pongala Mahotsavam takes place. The entire area of about 5 kilometre radius around temple with premises of houses of people of all caste, creed and religion, open fields, roads, commercial institutions, premises of Government offices etc. emerges as a consecrated ground for observing Pongala rituals for lakhs of women devotees assembling from different parts of Kerala and outside. The ceremony is exclusively confined to women folk and the enormous crowd, which gathers in Thiruvananthapuram on this auspicious day is reminiscent of the Kumbhamela Festival of North India.

The other festivals in this temple are:

1. Mandala Vratham - Festival in connection with the annual Utsavam of Sabarimala
2. Vinayaka Chaturthi - Pooja to the Lord Ganapathy
3. Pooja Vaypu - Identical to Dussera festival (Saraswathy Pooja and Vidyarambham)
4. Sivarathri - Siva Pooja
5. Karthika - Karthika Deepa
6. Ayilya Pooja - Milk, flowers etc. offered to serpent God and special rites
7. Aiswarya Pooja - On all full moon (Pournami) days
8. Nirayum Puthariyum (Ramayana Parayanam) - During the month of Karkadakam
9. Akhandanama Japam - 4th Sunday of every month
Incarnation of Goddess

India has ever been the holy land of gods and goddesses. Since ages past, men and women kings and emperors, saints and sages here were worshipping the Lord not only as the omnipotent and absolute 'one' but also as the 'one' whose manifestations are varied and manifold and who possesses different names, forms and divine attributes. Thus Almighty the Eternal God was worshipped in different forms such as Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, and their consorts; representing specific divine attributes of the Lord. Ancient puranas have described that Siva and Sakthi were simultaneously worshipped from the period of Aryans and Dravidians. Vishnumaya took the incarnation of Bhagavathy to annihilate evil and protect the good in this world. She grants every wish of Her devotees and resides in their hearts in multifarious forms.

Story of Kannaki

According to mythology, Attukal Bhagavathy is supposed to be the divinised form of "Kannaki", the famous heroine of Chilappatikaram, the sangham work of Tamil Literature written by ilamkovadikal. After the destruction of the ancient city of Madurai, Kannaki left that city and reached Kerala via Kanyakumari and on her way to Kodungalloor took a sojourn at Attukal. The hymns of the "Thottampattu) sung during the annual temple festival, are based on the story of Kannaki. Moreover, architectural depictions of Goddess Kannaki seen on the Gopuram temple

substantiate this mythology. Small wonder then. that, Sri. Vidyadhiraja Chattambi Swamy, the well known saint of Kerala, found this temple premises ideal for his meditations. And there are so many stories which prove the greatness of the Goddess and which attract thousands of devotees to the temple.

Aesthetics of Architecture

Anyone visiting the Attukal temple is first struck by the beauty and charm of the temple architecture. The temple structure is a harmonious conglomeration of both Kerala and Tamil styles of architecture. The beautifully carved figures of Mahishasuramardini, Goddess Kali, Rajarajeswari, Sree Parvathy with Lord Paramasiva and various other depictions of the Goddess in and around the temple are undoubtedly the work of a gifted artist. Equally well presented around the corridors surrounding the temple, are the depiction of various other Gods and the epic stories of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu viz., the "Desavathara". On either side of the elegant front gopura - are the icons based on the story of Goddess Kannaki. On the southern Gopura, the puranic story of "Dakshayaga" is depicted in sculptures. The decorated gate at the entrance of the temple is by itself an excellent example of architectural beauty.

There are two idols of the Goddess in the sanctum sanctorum. The original idol is preserved in all its pristine beauty covered in ornamental gold embedded with

installed stones.

The second idol of the Goddess is installed besides the original one. Within the temple corridors are also installed carvings and sculptures of Lord Ganesan, the serpent God and Lord Shiva. At the centre of the Sanctum within the Sreekovil, at a consecrated spot is installed the idol of the Goddess Attukal Bhagavathy emanating light and lustre to all.

Ayilur Akhileswaran (Shiva) and Sri Krishna temples

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Ayilur also called as Ayalur or ayiloor by some people is a village in Palakkad district of Kerala . It is referred as Nemmara Ayilur , because, the nearest small town is Nemmara and the high way passes only through Nemmara .Before 1947 it was in Cochin state .It is 30 km from Palakkad town and is 4 km from Nemmara and is on the shores of Ayilur Puzha. There is a very big Shiva temple in this village and the God is called Akhileswaran (The God of all people) . Many people claim it is very old , some say even thousand years old. There is a theory that this area was thickly populated by Akhil (cup-calyxed white cedar) trees and so the God was called Akhileswaran and that the original name of the village was Akhileswara puram, which got modified in to Akhiloor and later to ayilur or ayalur

There is a legend prevailing that the prathishta was done by Kharasura, who at the same time did prathishta of Thrippalur and Pallavur temples also (He is also supposed to have made Prathishta of Vaikom , Kaduthuruthy, Ethumannor).

It seems this temple was owned by Kodakara Nair and his commander Kulangaattu nair was managing the temple. Later it seems the temple came under control of some Nambudiri families and at present it has been taken over by Cochin devaswam board.

There are upadevathas of Ganapathi , Subrahmanyam and ayyappan in side the temple on the south west Also there is a Chandikeswara prathishta .There is a nandikeswara which is not in the front of Lord Shiva but to the south of the sreekoil(Sanctum) facing east On the right side of Nandikeswaran along the pradakshina path are located the saptha mathrukas

There is a belief that that our worship is accepted by Lord Shiva doing thapas and he is accompanied by Goddess Parvathi . On the southern wall facing east there is a prathishta of Lord Shiva with Goddess Parvathi .and a lamp is lit before her. Near Nandikeswara there are carving of Saptha mathrukas as well as Dakshinamurthy.

Like most of the Shiva temples there is only half pradakshinam in this temple also .Pradosham is celebrated with pooja and abishekam to the Nandi , possibly it might have been started by Tamil speaking Brahmins of the village

There is a Ratham(Theru) on Thiruvathira day (dhanu masam) . This is was possibly arranged by the tamil Brahmins who have settled there because kerala the custom is to have a sriveli

The aarattu Grama Chaitanya Ratholsavam is conducted on Karuthavaau(new moon day) in the Malayalam month of thulaam. The festival is conducted by Kulangattu Nair and aarattu is conducted in the Ayiloor river. Near the river side wher Aarattu festival is conducted (aarattu kadavu) thers is a banyan tree , a temple and a pratishta of lord Ganesha.

Ayiloor ratholsavam or car festival is conducted in Malayalam month of Dhanu (Thiruvathira star-on arudra darsanam day).

Ratholsavam is celebrated for three days. First day Udayasthamana Pooja is performed to Lord Parthasarathy, second day Udayasthamana Pooja to Lord Akhileswara followed by in the night Makeera Vilakku and third day is Ratholsavam (Thiruvathira) day. Most of the people who have left Ayalur assemble to have dharshan of their Gods (Grama Devathai) and also to meet their old friends.

Procession by five caparisoned elephants with Panchari Melam,Pandi Melam,Panchavadhyam, Thayambaka and special programs like Kathakali, Music etc. are held on this important on this day apart from Radham Ezhunnallippu. On Thiruvathira day, Arudhra Dharisanam is an important one.

Poornabhishekam to Lord Akhileswara starts early morning at 3.00 am and concludes at 7.00 am with japam viz.

Mahanyasam, Rudram, Chamakam, Suktham etc. Arudhra Dharisanam (Jothi Dharisanam-Maha Deeparadhana) will be around 5.30 a.m. Since the chariot is very big they take the help of elephants to push it . Some experts help to turn the chariot in corners by keeping Chenni (A huge piece of wood

with handle) At present this festival is conducting by Ayalur Grama Janam. This festival shows tamil-malayalam culture

The Krishnan (Partha Sarathy) temple, which was built by the Iyers , more than 100 years back, was built in the same compound as the Siva Temple , to its left . There is an interesting story of exchange of idols that is told even today. It seems the idols for the Nemmara Krishnan temple (Parthasarathy) and Ayalore Krishnan(navaneetha Krishnan) temple were made by the same Sculpture. But there was a mix up while delivering and the Parthasarathy reached Ayalore instead of Navaneetha Krishnan and they decided to install it in their temple. The Pooja for the Krishnan temple is by Kerala Iyers. Navarathri is celebrated in this temple. With great pomp The Lamp around the temple will be lit by iyers from a particular street every day of the Navarathri and the streets also got the name from this practice. Onnam Vilakku Theru (First lamp street) and so on till Eighth Lamp Street. Unlike distributing Prasadam at the temple , People with prasadam go to each street . It is called as Panku ie share by them

There was a custom of consecrating bulls to the Siva Temple earlier. These bulls used to majestically roam round the village. But this has now been discontinued.

The timings

A,,Shiva Temple

Open. Morning. 5.30am

Close 9.00am

Open Evening. 5.30 pm

Close. 7.15pm.

B.Parthasarathy Temple

Open Morning. 5am

Close. 9am

Open Evening. 5pm

Close. 7.15pm

Buses run from Palghat and Trichur to Ayilur .

Sri APS Mani who is from Ayilur has commented

Good narration. Suva temple is more than 1000 years and Parthasarathy temple 500 years old. Earlier the roof of the temple was with palm leaf instead tiles. After a fire incident, roof was replaced with Thrissivaperur tiles along with the construction of reading room in thalavattampara. Ganapathy Ranaswzmy Iyer was the representative of Cochin Maharaja at that time when the roof was replaced. After namboodiris, the temple was under the control of Cichin Maharaja.Sanscrit scholars also occupied in zmaharaja's Veda Sadas. My Great Great grandfather Subramania Vadyar was titled as Tharka Siromani by Maharaja of Cochin after winning the Sancrit comprtiyion. Maharaja appointed hin as Grana Vadhyar of

Ayalur and in charge of all vaideeka rituals during ratholsavam in Akhileswara temple. Those days were golden period. Ayalur Parameswaran Subramanian.

Azhimala Mahadeva temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Azhimala means , the mountain near the ocean .The original name of the temple is Azhi mala pulinkudi Mahadeva kshethram and it is about 25 km from Trivandrum town,It is believed that once upon a time Pandavas were hiding there.It seems one day Panchali felt thirsty and Bheemasena broke a rock and created a stream there.This is called Kanneerkuzhy(pit of tears)

Pulinkudi is near Vizhinjam harbor. It seems a great Vedic pundit named Neelaniyeru was living there ,Impressed by his knowledge, the king had presented him large area of land there. It seems he fell in love with grand daughter of the wrestler of the king and was expelled by his family,.He got married to girl and started doing pooja to this pulinkudi Mahadeva temple.Later he attained Samadhi there, Swami Narayana guru later visited that place and felt the vibrations of God in that place and he consecrated a shiva statue there .Later the present temple was built by the people living in this area. The temple has been maintained well , with frequent ashta bandha kumbabhishekams

Recently a 58 feet tall gangadhareswara concrete statue was sculpted there by Sri P.S.Devanathan .He took 6 years to complete this difficult task.It was made in such a way that it does not affect the beauty of the sea .

The temple is open fro 5 am to 9 Am and 5pm to 8 pm

The address of the temple is

Aazhimala Siva Temple
Pulinkudi, Mulloor PO,
Thiruvananthapuram
Kerala – 695521

Phone +91 4712268422

aazhimalamahadevatemple@gmail.com

Azhimala Shiva Temple is roughly at about a distance of 20 km from Trivandrum on the way to Balaramapuram through Kovalam. You can avail local modes of transport to reach here from any corner of the city.

Balussery kotta Vettakorumagan

By

P.R.Ramachander

Balussery is a slightly bigger village near Calicut (about 20 km) and Vettakkorumagan temple was established there , Possibly once there was a fort there belonging to Kurumbranad kings and this temple was situated near it.

Vettakkorumaan is the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi

born when they assumed the form of hunters so that they can give Pasupathasthra to Arjuna who was doing penance for it . The boy grew up in to a mischievous lad who not only hunted with a bow and arrow for animals and bad people but became irksome to the sages who were doing penance in the forest. It seems they went and complained to God Brahma, who expressed his helplessness as the lad was the son of Lord Shiva. But when they represented the fact to Lord Vishnu, he agreed to solve the problem through diplomacy. He himself went to the forest carrying golden churika (a sword having spear like end and a sword like blade) The lad was very much attracted by it and wanted it to be given to him. Lord Vishnu agreed to give him provided he will always hold the Churika in his hand. The lad agreed but soon realized that if he were to hold the churika , he cannot use the bow and arrow. Lord Vishnu revealed himself to him and requested to go Kerala (Parasurama Kshethra , where he would be honoured by honour , proper food and also breaking of coconuts. Vettakorumagan with the permission of his parents chose to stay in Balussery and ever since have been blessing the people of Kerala. Most of the royal families of Malabar adopted him as their God who would protect them in war. While there are several temples for Vettakorumagan in Northern Malabar , the one at Balussery Kotta is considered s the most important, The most important rituals that are performed at the temple are , the performance of Vettakkorumagan pattu and Panthrantayiram Thengayeru. In the former, a very pretty design of the God are drawn on the ground and accompanied by soothing music praising the God , a Namboodiri decorated and painted ,dances over the drawing and removes it completely. It is believed that God comes to him at that time.

The other one is the breaking of 12000 coconuts on the stone meant for the purpose in the temple .The temple is decorated with flowers and leaves , coconut and arecanut flowers and banana plants on that day. The Karakara nayar who is authorized to break the coconuts starts the ritual after the final pooja of the temple at night. Drums and Gongs make huge sound during that time Also the place is well lit with live torches, Thekarakarathu nair takes bath , wears new cloths and then meditates on Vettakorumagan. Then initially he will take one coconut with both hands and breaks it on the stone . This is followed by continuous throwing of coconuts on the stone with each hand alternatively . The beat of the drum will then intensify .People believe that the Nair then enters in to trance and breaks and breaks all coconuts before midnight The people offer sandal paste and rose scented water to the God Vettakorumagan . Some people also offer Panakam (Jaggery water) and thamboolam. In some cases there would be a feast after the ritual/.

Other important Vettakorumagan temples in Kerala are

Nilamboor Kovilakom Vettakkorumakan Kavu

Thiruvananthapuram Kottaykkakam Vettakkorumakan Temple

Kayamkulam Krishnapuram Vettakkorumakan Temple

Padinjareppattu Mana Vettakkorumakan Temple

(Padinjareppattu Mana Vettakkorumakan Temple)

Eruvattikkavu Vettakkorumakan Temple

Alappadamba Vettakkorumakan Temple

Neeleswaram Vettakkorumakan Temple

Kottakkal Vettakkorumakan Temple

Kozha Kottakkal Vettakkorumakan Kavu

Kozha Vettakkorumakan Kavu is located near to Kuravilangadu bus stand in M.C Road.

Olassa Vettakkorumakan Kavu near Kottayam

Chandanakkavu Ganapathi

By

P.R.Ramachander

This unique temple managed by Shaiva Vellalars of Tamil Nadu is situated in a place called Chandakkavu which is about 16 km from the town of Aleppy. It seems that a large number of Shaiva Vellalars migrated to places near Aleppy in search of job. One of them brought a Ganapathi statue from Shanrkarayaninr koil in Tirunelveli district of TamilNadu. Initially a small temple was built in a place called Purakkadu , which was in the shores of the sea. Once this temple was destroyed by the sea waves. Then they requested the king of Champagaserry to allot them land to build a temple of their own.

The king gave them 3 acres in Chandanakkavu initially they only built a Ganapathi temple. Later they added a Durga of Ujjaini with 18 hands. She is called as

Mutharamman in this temple and is the family deity of the Vellalars. Slowly they added

Lord Shiva, Brahma rakshas, Yogini devi, Madasamy, Bhairavaswamy, Nagaraja and

Naga Yakshi, Madasamy and Bhairavasamy are the guardian Gods of some of these families.

The most important festival of the Ganapathi temple is Vinayaga Chathurthi. That day a

maha Ganapathi Homam is held there. Besides this every Friday a Ganapathi homam is also conducted.

The shiva temple which is in the north east is considered as very important.

Mruthyunjaya Homam leading to long life is conducted here on request. Shivarathri is

celebrated in a grand scale. On that day little children will bring all the necessities of

Pooja on a Kavadi from the nearby Saraswathi Temple.

There are special poojas for Mutharamman during the Mandala period. On the tenth

day of Chithirai (Meda masam), Pongal is offered by ladies to Mutharamman.

Chelamattom Sri Krishna swamy temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This is a famous temple dedicated to Lord Krishna on the road connecting Kalady and Perumbavoor, through the main central road. This temple has the distinction of having Lord Krishna, Lord Narasimha and Lord Vamana and Durga Devi in another adjacent temple, Lord Krishna and Lord Narasimha are in the meditation pose. The Periyar river here flows from west to east near the temple and so it is called Dakshina Kasi and is considered sacrosanct for worship of our manes (Pithrus). On the new moon days (amavasya) a very large number of people gather for doing pithru karmas. A Thila Havanam (Thila homam) to please the Pithrus is performed in this temple on the day by the chief priest himself.

Chengannur Mahadeva and Bhagawathy Temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Chengannur is a village which is 40 km away from the town of Kottayam in Kerala. Lord

Maha Deva is consecrated facing east and the Goddess is facing west in this temple.

What is very unique about this temple is that people believe that the Goddess undergoes

periods once in a while at this temple. There is a temple of Vishnu also in Chengannur.

Nammazhavar has visited this temple and sung about the Lord Vishnu there. People

believe that Yudhishtira built the first temple of Lord Vishnu to get rid of his sin of telling

a lie in the battle field,

Outside the main temple of Shiva and Bhagawathy, there are temples for Sastha,

Neelagreeva (blue necked Lord Shiva) and Sthaleesa.

People believe that in the southern part of the temple, several great Manthra books to

get rid of poison are buried. If the devotee stands on the rock cover and sees the tip of the

Sree Kovil, for that entire day, people believe, that he would not be affected by poison

There is also a belief that, if some one puts his hand in the hole in the western wall and

takes a false oath, he would be bitten by a divine snake. It seems a local boy of the poison

doctor family was challenged by a great Azhwar. That night the boy cried to the Goddess.

She told him that in a pipe in her granary a snake was living.

The boy took out the pipe

and challenged the Azhwar to make the snake come out of the pipe. Though the Azhwar

tried his best he could not. The boy then commanded the snake to come out. The snake in

the pipe came out and started chasing the Azhwar. He pleaded with the boy to control the

snake and then the boy then requested the snake to go back to the pipe and put the pipe

out through the hole in the western wall. People believe that this divine snake is still there

and would bite the one who takes a false oath.

There are several stories about this temple.

One belief is that when Lord Shiva cut the body of his consort Sathi Devi in to pieces

and threw them all over India, the middle part of her body fell in the place where this

temple is located. (Kamkahya temple in Guahathi believes that this part fell in that place). Because of this they believe that the Goddess in this temple has monthly periods. People also believe that because of this the Shiva Linga in this temple is consecrated on a triangular pedestal. There is also a belief that the Goddess consecrated here is not Parvathy at all but that of Kannagi, the Tamil heroine who burnt the city of Madurai for avenging the injustice done to her husband. It seems she crossed over to Kerala and stood below a Vengai tree. One huntress saw her and made her statue in mud. Later Cheran Chenguttuvan made an exactly similar statue and consecrated it here. Yet another story is there. It seems when Shiva got married to Goddess Parvathi, since the entire world went to attend the marriage, the earth became unstable. Lord Shiva then sent Sage Agasthya to go to the south. The sage made, Lord Shiva promise that he would once more celebrate the marriage in front of the sage in the south. When Lord Shiva came along with Goddess Parvathi to Chengannur, she came to age. The devas celebrated this event at Chengannur. Later this place was completely forgotten. This place was called Sonadhri (Red Mountain) and sage Parasurama established an Agraharam here. At that time one tribal woman sharpened her sword on a stone

and blood started oozing from the stone. The Brahmins were called and they found that this was a statue of Lord Shiva. They decided to build a temple. The astrologers also found the presence of Goddess there. So it was decided to build a temple for the Goddess also. At that time the famous Perunthachan visited the temple. The people requested him to make a statue of the Goddess. But he showed them a spot in the north-west of the temple and asked them to dig there. They did and the present statue was recovered from there. Then they consecrated both the gods after performing Kumbhabhishekam. One the mesanthi (the chief priest) opened the temple of the Goddess in the morning to change the flowers. He was astounded to find that the cloth which the Goddess was wearing had a stain. This cloth was shown to the ladies of Vanchi Puzhathu Madam as well as the land lady of the house of Thazhaman pothy. Both of them confirmed that Goddess was undergoing periods. Thazhaman pothy advised the Mesanthi to remove the statue to a separate temple and close the door. The pooja for the next three days was performed in the north eastern corner of the temple He also asked his wife and the chief lady of Vanchi Puzhathu Madam to keep company to the Goddess during night. For

several generations the ladies of these houses keep company to the Goddess during the time of her periods. It was regularly occurring every month for some time but nowadays, it happens three to four times a year. The cloth which the goddess wears during this time (Thiru poothu) is considered as a prized possession and is worshipped in many homes.

On the fourth day , the goddess is taken on a she elephant for her ritual bath , accompanied with musical instruments to the near by Mithra River. The namboodiri women give the Goddess an oil bath and bring her back. The statue of the Goddess is secretly taken out and mounted on the top of the elephant and the temple closed. Ladies raise Mangala Dwani with their throat (called Kuruvai) . The elephant on which the goddess rides is received with Nira Para. After the ritual bath given by the ladies , the priest does ceremonies like Oil Abhishekam, Milk Abhishekam etc and after worshipping her , the goddess is brought back to the temple.

There is another story which is popular. It seems after consecration of the Goddess, Perunthachan once again came to the temple along with a Pancha loha idol of the Goddess. He predicted that the temple will catch fire and then the Devi idol will be destroyed. He said at that time this new Pancha loha idol

should be consecrated.

It happened the same way. During the fire the Shiva Linga was saved by coating it with mud but the idol of the goddess could not be saved. When they were searching for a suitable replacement one Neelakandan of Thazaman Pothi's house saw a dream and was told about the above story. He was also told that the idol brought by Perumthachan was preserved below a stone in the river.

Though they tried several times to locate the idol, they were unsuccessful. At that time some fisher men from Karunagapally came to this place and they were able to locate the idol. They brought the idol to the temple and handed it over the temple priest. That day coincided with the festival of Shiva Rathri. Even now on every Shiva Rathri day , the fisher folk of Karunagapally are honoured at the temple. This temple was under the control of Travancore kings,. One British resident called Munro laughed at the belief of the periods to the Goddess and stopped all grants for observing it, it seems then onwards his wife started to bleed without stop. Though he tried with several doctors, the bleeding could not be stopped. One well wisher of Munro told him that it may be due to his action in stopping the grants to Chengannur temple. Then Munro said that if his wife is cured , he will create a trust whose interest would be

sufficient to observe the celebration of the Thirupoothu (periods) of the Goddess. His wife was cured .Apart from a creating the trust , Munro also presented two n golden bangles to the Goddess. The temple opens at 3.30 Am and remains open with several functions till 11.30 Am. It again opens at 5 Pm and remains open up to 8 Pm. The major festival of the temple is in the month of Dhanu (December-January) and the Arattu (ritual dip in the river) is on Thiruvadira day.

Cherunatturi Bhagawathi of Chithilamcheri

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Chithalancheri is a small village in Melarcode Panchayath and is located on the way to Pollachi from Trichur . This village is about 20 km from Palghat town and is 4 km from the small town called Nemmara.. It is believed that the name of the village is derived from the word Chuthu illam cheri (Village surrounded by Namboodiri houses) The goddess presiding in the temple here is called Cherunatturi Bhagawathi. Apart from the Bhagwathi , the temple also has sub temples for Shiva, Ganesa as well as NavaKanyas. Apart from this is also a statute of a five headed serpent. Worship is also offered to this Naga devatha,This main statue is kept over statues of other serpents. Devotees believe that if we worship

Cherunatturi Bhagawathi by doing Pushpanjali (Ashtothara which is common in temples of other states in South India is uncommon in Kerala. The Priest worships the Goddess with flowers, mainly red hibiscus using thanthric methods. A special pooja is called Rakthapushpanjali) then the fear for snakes or dreams involving snakes would get cured. Another peculiarity of this temple is the freely roaming cats in the temple.

The major festival of the temple is Chithilancheri Arattu, which is celebrated in the month of Makaram (January 15th to February 15th). The Chithilamcheri vela is celebrated in the month of Medam.

Cherpulassery Ayyappan Kavu

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Cherpulassery is an important town of Valluvanadu, and is between Pattambi and Perinthalmanna. It has one very famous Ayyappan temple. Here Swamy Ayyappan is with his wife Prabha devi and son Sathyaka. This temple is called as Sabarimala of Malabar as well as Sabarimala of women. This is one of the 108 Ayyappa temples consecrated by Lord Parsaurama, It seems Dharma Sastha ascended the throne of this temple after gaining mastery in Vedas and so many people bring their children for Vidhatambham at this temple

There is an interesting story about its origin, It seems ten Nambhudiri families were living near this temple. One of them started praying the Dharma Sastha at Thiruvullakavu sastha temple at Peruvanam for the birth of a child to them. On the day he completed his penance when he had decided to return back, he saw a black stone near him, which was not there before. As he was a scholar he could find out that it was Dharma Sastha himself. So with the rice and Jaggery that he had, he prepared Ada and offered it to the idol. He indeed got a son who became a mendicant and passed away. Since there was no one in his family, his manager converted their residence into the present temple, The Gaeden of Jasmine maintained by the Nambudiri became the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. Nava Grahas, Ganapathy, Brahma Rakshas and Nagaraja are the upra devathas of this temple.

This is one of the few temples of Lord ayyappa where marriages can be solemnized in front of Ayyappa. A large number of pregnant women also visit this temple during the 7th month of their pregnancy. It is customary for expectant mothers to visit temples and seek the blessings of the deity. They typically start with the temples in their neighborhood and end this season of temple visits at the Cherpulassery Ayyappan Kavu. Ada is the favourite offering to Lord Sastha here. There is a famous ten day pooram festival in this temple. In this temple Theyyattu which consists of fire and singing of stories is offered to the God as a special offering. This is performed THiyyadi Nambiars

“The all-male art centres around the mythological story of the birth of Lord Ayyappa from the relationship of Lord Vishnu in his ephemeral impersonation as Mohini and Lord Shiva. The most common version of Thiyyattu involves four phases of presentation: a) Kalamezhuthu (sketching the kalam—picture—of Ayyappa using natural pigments), b) Kottum Pattum (rendition of invocatory songs of Ayyappa and a stylised narration of the story of his birth), c) Koothu gesture-laden dance enacting the build-up story to the delivery of the

lord) and d) Velichchappaadu (the slow-paced to frenzied dance of the oracle who eventually erases the kalam—the image of the lord sketched on the sanctified floor). It takes roughly a couple of hours for the kalam (image) of the lord to be completed, after which the rest of the three rituals would consume nearly three hours altogether.

The picture of Ayyappa is sketched and embellished in five natural colours—white (rice powder), yellow (turmeric powder), green (ground semi-dry leaves of the 'vaaka' or manchadi' tree, red (a mix of turmeric powder and slaked lime) and black (powdered charred rice husk). The lord invariably holds his weapons like the sword and the bow-and-arrow, and, in more elaborate versions is sketched mounted on the tiger or the horse.

The songs—accompanied by the beats of 'para', a smaller version of the chenda , and the cymbals called ilathalam —praising the lord bear a mix of quaint old Malayalam and Tamil with a streak of endemic tunes, some of which can be traced to classical ragas of the Sopanam style of Kerala music besides that belonging to the **Carnatic** idiom. The stylised rendition of the birth of Ayyappa, called Thottam, also sticks to the same mix of languages, but is devoid of music.

The Koothu is enacted with no make-up but a defined set of costumes. Facial emotions are nil, dance movements are minimal and hand gestures would look the less refined versions of Koodiyattam and Kathakali . The Koothu is usually performed to the accompaniment of chenda, ilathalam and 'para'.

The Velichchappaadu (oracle), wielding a small sword, is bare-chested but for the garland and, canonically, with a flowy hair; the face either bearded or clean-shaven. Around the waist, he is draped in cloth pieces of white and red colours. The oracle begins with slow steps while circumambulating around the 'kalam', but the tempo gains with the circles he make—around 9 or 11 of them, overall. Then he leaps onto the image in a frenzy, but is calm when he later erases the image with both

legs. The face of the lord alone is erased with the (right) hand. Out from the 'kalam', the oracle utters 'revelatory' sentences in (presumed) trance -- 'kalpana' as they are called. The devotees are distributed with the prasadam which is the mixed powder used in the 'kalam'.

The art is sometimes staged in bigger forms that last from dawn to late night when it is called Udayasthamaya Thiyyattu. In such cases, the Koothu would deal with twelve stories ahead of the birth of Ayyappa. Such performances usually feature the challenging 'Pantheeraayiram', which is when the oracle would take a (three- to four-hour-long) break from the circumambulations to break (dehusked and sufficiently polished) coconuts totalling 12,000 to the rhythmic beats of chenda-and-ilathalam concert that would gain speed towards the climax.

The Thiyyadi Nambiar families, despite their existence in central Kerala, enjoy the popularity of their art more in the upstate Malabar belt. “ (Quoted from Wikipedia)

The temple opens daily at 5 Am and is open up to 11.30 Am and again opens in 5pm and is kept open till 8 pm

The nearest Bus stand is Ottha palam from where the temple is 17 km away .Buses are also available from Pattambi and Perinthalmanna. and the temple address is

Cherpulassery Ayyappankavu Sree

Cherpulassery (po) Palakkad
Pin:679503 Ph: 0466 2282304

Cherthala Karthyayani Temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Cherthala is a town near Aleppey. There is A Karthyaytani

temple there. There is a story about this temple. It seems Vilwamangalam Sawmiyar was returning after consecrating Ananthapadmanabha in Trivandrum to Guruvayur. He reached the present Cherthalai and was taking rest below a Thambaka tree. He noticed several swans swimming in the several ponds in that place. Suddenly he saw a divine lady swinging in a swing, tied to the Thambaka tree. . He recognized her as goddess Karthyayani and went near her. Then she jumped in a nearby pond. Though Vilwamangalathu swamiyar searched for her in the pond, he could not find her. The next day also he saw her in the same place and this time she jumped in to a second pond. This happened for six days. On the seventh day, the swamiyar caught hold of the hair of the Goddess and pulled her. He could only pull her head (thalai) up to her neck. Also several hairs which he was holding got uprooted. The seventh tank was full of slushy mud called Cher in Malayalam. Because of this incident the place was called Cherthalai. (This being a great centre for coir manufacture was also called Shertalai by the British).The present statue has only the head visible. You can see these holes from which hairs have been pulled out. So after Abhisheka, this part is the water is mopped out by using a cloth. Also while doing flower offering to the Goddess, these parts are covered with cloth. It seems the swamiyar got angry with her because he was not able to catch her. So, commemorating the event in the month of Edavam (May-June), the people playfully abuse the goddess in a pooram

festival.

The Goddess in the sanctum sanctorum is below the surface level. Outside the temple,

there are separate temples for Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.

The devotees hand over cock

as an offering to the goddess Karthyayani .So you can find several cocks at this temple.

Near the sanctum sanctorum of the goddess, there are separate temples for Ganapathy and

Lord Dharma Sastha also. Just outside the temple is the place where Vilwamangalam

Swamiyar found her in a swing.

It seems a gandharva was giving lot of trouble to the people around this temple. So the

goddess requested Shastha to teach the gandharva a lesson.

Lord Sastha went out side and

killed the Gandharva. When he was returning to the temple, the Goddess asked him to

stay outside itself so that he can protect the people. A separate temple was built there.

The Sastha in this temple is called Kavu udayon(he who has job of security or He who

has a Kavu) . He holds a mace in his hand. People who are in fear or are attacked by evil

spirits make a mace of wood, colour it and give it as offering to Kavu udayon.

The arattu (bath in tank) festival is celebrated in the month of Edavam (May-June) for

eight days. Each day Goddess is dipped in a different pond and on the eighth day she is

brought back to the temple along with Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.

There are two very special and peculiar offerings at this temple. They are called Iratti

and Thadi. Iratti is nothing but the Ghee Payasam with the double the quantity of jaggery

.Thadi is made by the following method:-

Mix rice flour, Jaggery, and coconut along with powdered dry ginger and other spices.

This is made in to a paste form tied in the sheath of areca nut and tied at both ends. Then

the sand is heated by burning sticks. A small depression is made. The above bundle is put

inside and covered with hot sand. Again fuels such as coconut shells are burnt over it.

This offering is made only if devotees desire for it.

Rammohan Bala , my face book friend has given this additional information about this temple.(Thanks to him)

Excellent write up sir. Some opine that the real owner of the grove is Shasta and hence He is called KAVU(GROVE) UDAYON (ONE WHO OWNS). It is also believed that before Vilwamangalam consecrated KARTHIYAYINI DEVI, SHASTA was the Lord of the whole grove . Moreover inside the shrine dedicated to Shasta at the far end of the temple, there are two idols. One of the chinmudrangita yoga Samadhi roopam as at Sabarimala, and another of a persona , two armed with bow and arrow. The temple authorities do not know whose divine form that idol signifies. Though they say that it is Shasta the hunter, the presence of wooden mace as an offering signifies Bhootanathaswamy an amsa of Shasta, though not Shasta technically, who is more familiar in southern Tamil Nadu especially at Shasta Preethis than in Kerala.

Cherukunnu Annapurneswari temple

By

This is one of the very famous devi temples of Malabar near the village of Chirakkal which is near the town of Kannur. It is believed that Goddess Annapurneswari of Benares wanted to visit South India. When Lord Shiva was apprehensive that she may settle down there, it seems she assured him that she would appear before him as soon as he wants her. So she was sent in a golden boat accompanied by Kalarivathukkal Amma and Madayi Kavil amma. When they reached Chirakkal , Goddess Annapurneswari liked the place so much that she decided to stay there. She bid farewell to the boatman who also stayed back there. People believe that the famous Olingara Jama Masjid was built by him.

Cherukunnu means small hill but the temple is on the plane surrounded by five small hills. Another interpretation is that it was originally “Choru kunnu” meaning hill of cooked rice. When the Goddess decided to settle down in Cherukunnu she decided to choose to have her temple in the same compound as that of a Krishna temple which was built by Parasurama. People believe that the temple is made of bricks which are joined by a paste of Jaggery and beaten rice. The temple was rebuilt in 1994 a Chirakkal king called Avittam thirunal Rama Varma Raja. Next to the temple is a very big temple pond (Ambala kulam) .

Once we enter the temple we first see the temple of Lord Krishna and the famous Annapurneswari temple is behind this temple. One possible reason is possibly due to the ancient Namboodiri belief that their women should not be seen directly. However there is a small hole in the outside wall

through which the Goddess can be seen clearly , by even people who do not choose to enter the temple. Another peculiarity of this temple is the existence of a mirror idol (Kannadi Bimbam) of the Goddess in her sanctum sanctorum.

Annadanam (Giving free meals) is the most important aspect of this temple. It is believed that nobody who enters the temple should return hungry. Every day before the temple is closed at night, the high priest asks , all the people there , whether they are hungry three times and in olden times, it seems three packets of food is tied on the tree outside so that even the late comers can also eat something. But with the implementation of the Land reform bill, the temple is not in a position to supply food to al the visitors. So the visitors either take Trimadhuram or Payasam in side the temple before leaving it.

Vishu Vilakku (the first of meda masam(April- may) is the major festival in this temple. It is celebrated for a period of one week with bursting of crackers and the procession of the goddess on an elephant. The Goddess takes three rounds of the temple and then visits the village . And there is a dance by a Brahmin carrying the idol of the Goddess. This dance is enacted in front of the temple. People believe that Goddess descends on the Brahmin and makes him dance prettily to the tunes. At this time the temple would be shining with lighted lamps.

The Puna prathishta(the second consecration) day of the temple is celebrated in the month of Kumbam (February march) on Pooyam day. Shiva Rathri and Mahga Navami are also celebrated in this temple.

Chettikulangara Bhagawathy

By

P.R.Ramachander

(I have used the write up on this temple in the Wikipedia in many places verbatim. My acknowledgements are due to that great work.)

Chettikulangara, Bhagawathy temple is one of the very renowned temples of Kerala. It is about 5 km from Mavelikkara and 6 km from Kayangulam. In this temple the Goddess appears like Goddess Saraswathy in the morning, Goddess Lakshmi in the noon and Goddess Durga at night. The temple is believed to be 1200 years old and is in the middle of 13 Karas (Residential areas of Nairs). It is one of the temples with very high income running to several crores in Kerala. Nairs and Ezhavas play a major role in the worship and conduct of festivals in this temple.

The idol of the temple is made using Jack wood. It seems once the idol got slightly dilapidated and the people decided to have a new idol. They after arduous search located a suitable Jack wood tree in a private compound in Aranmula. But the owner of the tree refused to give the tree for making of the idol. That day it seems the owner of the tree dreamt that he was being beaten by The Bhadrakali. When he woke up next day all over his body were the mark of the beating. Immediately he offered the tree and the present idol was made from that tree.

There are several stories about the origin of this temple. It seems the people of this

area used to attend the festival in the Koypallikarazhma Bhagavathi temple before this temple was built. That chieftain of that village humiliated the people of this area. Because of this they prayed Goddess Bhagawathi to come to their country. In the dream of one of them, the Goddess appeared and told that she will come to their country. After a few days an old woman was seen walking towards the temple. She needed to cross a river to reach this place. A Christian boat man helped her to cross the river and also started helping her to reach her destination. On the way that old lady became very tired and sat down below a tree. The boatman went to a nearby house, where some work was going on and brought some Kanji (rice gruel) and chutney made using horse gram. The old lady took them and went to a near by tank to wash her hands. There was a Brahmin lady in steps of the tank. She saw the old lady getting in to the tank and vanishing there. She also saw a very bright light there. The people of the village called the astrologers who found out that that lady was Bhagawathy herself. So they built a temple for her there. The family of the Christian boatman were entrusted the job of the Fire cracker worship in the temple. They also offer daily to the Goddess the rice gruel and Horse Gram Chutney. Below the tree where the goddess took rest, they also built a

temple for her called

Puducherry temple.

According to another version, this temple was consecrated by

Padmapadacharyar (a

leading disciple of Adi Shankara) on the Uthrittathi day of

Makara month in A.D. 823.

There is a firm argument that the goddess here was a family deity, and later emerged as

the village and regional deity. Local historians oppose the argument that the temple is not

as ancient as the nearby Kandiyoor Mahadeva temple or Mavelikara Krishna Swamy

temple as it had not been mentioned in Unnuneeli Sandesam written in the 14th century.

According to late Kandiyoor Mahadeva Shasthri, Samudra Bandhan—a leading courtier

of Ravi Varman, an ancient King of Venad had visited this temple and wrote poems on

Bhagavathi. Similarly Aadithya Kulasekharan, the King of Venad (1374 A.D. to 1389

A.D.) also had visited the Chettkulangara temple, argues them.

However, it is to be said

that the present Sreekovil of the temple is only 450-480 years old, and the Chuttambalam

is not more than two centuries old. Local historians say that the temple infrastructure and

the surroundings were developed by various local chieftains from time to time. The

present Sreekoil was revamped during A.D.1540. Because of a small fire at this temple,

the Chuttambalam was slightly modified during the Malayalam

year 1002.

It is also believed that Chettikulangara Amma (the main deity) is the daughter of Kodungallur Amma, brought to that place for the well being of all people at Onattukara(Mavelikara).

In front of the temple there is a huge lamp in which you can put thousand wicks. One of the major offering at the temple is lighting the lamp. Since the statue of the Goddess is made of Jack tree wood, it is coated with red paste of Kumkum(called Chandadal often.

Besides the main deity there are also temples for Yakshi, mukoorthi, Rakthakshi,

Thevara Murthy, Kannampalli Bhagawathy, Ganapathy , Naga raja, Naga Yakshi,

Brahma Rakshas, Valia Achan and Balakan in this temple.

Festivals of the temple

The Temple has a number of festivals. The important ones are Parayeduppu

In the numerous temples of Onattukara, the "Parayeduppu" period is the festival season.

It all begins when the deity ("Devi") of Chettikulangara temple is taken out in procession

for Parayeduppu on the Makayriam star of the Malayalam month Makaram(January-

February). The festivals continue to the end of Medam(April-May). The main part of

Parayeduppu is the Jeevatha constructed in the model of the temple structure itself. This

box-like carriage for the deity rests on two teakwood poles

about two meters long, and is in the form of a palanquin . The front resembles "Thidambu" behind which is a kind of pettakam (small chest) built as per Thachusaasthra calculations. Up front is a woollen cloth embroidered with shining, colourful pictures and gold trinkets. Behind that is kept the deity's holy dress, starched and pleated, and decorated with small mirror pieces. More than 100 families form the entourage of Parayeduppu Bhagavathy's - five month long visit to the homes of people who lives in her Karas The rhythms used during Jeevatha Ezunnallathu (procession) are quite noteworthy.

Starting with very slow beats, it builds up a crescendo and ends in fast beats. The ensemble consists of Veekkan chenda, Uruttu chenda (both drums), Elathaalam (cymbals), Kombu and Kuzhal (both, wind instruments). Although Jeevatha Ezunnallathu and Parayeduppu are centuries old customs, the "Chuvaduvu Kali" (a peculiar dance with unique steps) is relatively recent.

Kumbha Bharani

The major festival at Chettikulangara is Kumbha Bharani Festival. This is in the month of march or April. The date is determined according to the Malayalam Calendar KollaVarsham. In that this day comes in the month of Kumbha and the day which has the star Bharani and hence the name Kumbha Bharani. The

highlight of the festival is
[Kuthiyottam] and [Kettukazha].

The preparation for Kumbha Bharani starts 7 days before the actual day and incidentally that day will be the Shivarathi. People who had pledged for Kuthiyottam will start training their children for the offering on that day. All these 7 days these people will host public get-togethers and arrange food for them. The children will be taught a special dance steps called Kuthiyoota chuvadukal etc. Meanwhile the people from 13 karas of chettikulangara will arrange for the construction of [Kettukazhcha] to the temple.

The Kuthiyottam processions starts early morning on that day and will last until afternoon. Those who had offered Kuthiyottam to Devi will bring their children to the temple as a procession and will offer the children before Devi as sacrifice. The boys will be playing the Kuthiyootam dance before the Devi. During the evening hours it will be turn of the Kettukazhcha. People from each area will pull the Kettukazhcha from the construction sites (usually in their respective karas itself) to the temple to preset them before the Devi and after having darshan the parties take up their respective position in the paddy fields lying east of the temple. During the night, the image of Devi will be carried in procession to the Kettukazhcha

stationed in the paddy fields. On the next day these structures will be taken back. A big

bazaar is also held at Chetikulangara as part of this festival.

Ethirelpu Ulasvam

This is the annual temple festival. On the tenth day following the Kumbha Bharani the

annual festival is celebrated in the temple for 13 days. Each day of the festival is

organized by residents of each Kara numbering 13. special rituals are held in the temple

premises. Every afternoon, cultural processions start from each Kara to the temple

premises, with the accompaniment of drums, ornamented umbrellas, kuthiyottam songs,

display of events from the Mahabharatha and the Ramayana, classical art forms, folk art

form, different type of music, decorated structures and caparisoned elephants.

During the rituals at the temple Thottampattu is sung.

Thottampattu is a devotional song

sung by a certain section of the community residing in the far off Trivandrum. This song

is sung in the temple only during the Etheralpu festival.

Performance of classical arts and other temple arts are conducted in the evening in the

temple premises

Aswathy Ulasvam

The unique rituals during the Aswathy festival clearly convey the firm bondage and

human pathos at the time of separation between the people and their beloved Bhagavathy.

Held in the Aswathy day in the month of Meenom (March-April), this festival is attracting a large number of visitors. This festival is imagined as a send off to the deity on her journey to visit her mother at Kodungallur. In the evening, 100 odd decorated [Kettukazhcha] and different effigies are brought to the temple mainly made by the children. Though the size of these Kettukazhcha are comparatively smaller than the ones made for Bharani festival, the number of Kettukazhcha provide a visual impact even challenging the aesthetic effect of Bharani. During the day, Bhagavathy visits the four karas surrounding the temple for Parayeduppu and official Anpolis are given by Kara leaders at Kuthirachevudu, the place where Kuthiras are made. After that she visits and blesses the offerings displayed at the temple premises. By dawn, she decides to leave, and seeks their permission to leave for Kodungallur. The people of the first four karas make Polavilakku (a large structure drawn on wheels decorated with tender banana stem and lighted with numerous traditional lamps) during her farewell procession. They offer her a grand farewell procession with Aappindi [a unique slow paced dance carrying a pyramid shape box on head). Aappindi will be embellished with crackers, pookkula (cluster of coconut flowers - inflorescence), and

will be covered with tender banana stems and Thalappoli (traditional sacred lamps carried by ladies).

People from Kaitha North and Kaitha South participate in the function with

Thiruvantham. It is said that Thiruvantham, a palanquin type structure with fireballs and

carried by four people, is the light of Darika, which incenses the Bhagavathy. She scares

them away. After the procession, she again visits the Upaprathishtas and asks the people

and other gods to let her visit her mother at Kodungallur.

By dawn, she proceeds with lightning speed towards west.

Normally, within the 100

meters, the Poojaris carrying the Jeevatha will fall down

unconsciously, and the Jeevatha

will be taken back to the temple.

The temple will remain closed for the day, and will be opened only the day after. The

Aswathy festival concludes the five month long festivities at this temple.

Kettukazhcha

Kettukazhcha is an offering of the people of Chettikulangara to their beloved deity

known for her spontaneous blessings on true devotees as a mark of gratitude, devotion,

unflinching faith, and for showering prosperity and protection to their lives. Kettukazhcha

displays deftly sculpted and decorated forms of six temple cars known as 'Kuthiras', five

Therus' (Chariots) and icons of Bhima and Hanuman. All the

temple cars, chariots and the icons are all incredibly gigantic in size and are many times larger than any other similar Kuthiras and Therus built during the festivities at other temples in the Central Travancore region. On the move, these out of the world sky scrapping colourful decorations are electrifying, and will create an unforgettable artistic impression in union, especially during the night in the back drop of illuminated lights. Chettikulangara Kettukazhcha heralds the architectural and aesthetic acumen of the ancient people of Chettikulangara, who could convert an improbable out of the world concept to an enormous artistic reality, achieved by collective hardships and will power.

Lineage according to historians

Historians attribute the concept of 'Kettukazhchas' - similar to the architecture of the 'Buddha tradition in square, rectangular and pyramid shapes, to the remnants of the Buddha culture which was widely prevalent in the Central Travancore region a few centuries ago.

Many historians cite that the famous Chettikulangara Kettukazhcha in the present form is not more than 180 to 200 years old, and was started during the early part of the 19th century.

According to a popular legend, a group of village chieftains and

their workers went for civil works to construct the Kollam–Chavara Thodu (canal), about 50 km away from Chettikulangara, in accordance to the decision from the then ruler of the region. But they could not return to their native place due to the unforeseen inordinate delay in completion of the canal. They pleaded with the authorities, but their request was turned down. During the period, they got an opportunity to visit the temple festivities at Kollam Mulankagakam temple, and were attracted by the Kettukazhcha there. They vowed to their local deity Chettikulangara Bhagavathy, that they would construct Kettukazhchas for her every year, if they were allowed to leave for Chettikulangara immediately. To their surprise, they were allowed to return to Chettikulangara the very next day, and as promised, they made huge Kettukazhchas and took them to their Bhagavathy's premises.

Kuthiras

Kuthiras have a height of about 70 to 75 feets, and are a union of four parts– Adikkoottu, Kathirakal, Edakkodaram, Prabhada and Melkkoodaram, one above the other respectively.

Adikkottu the basic structure also known as Vandikkoottu, form the basic foundation which consists of four big wooden wheels interconnected with four other beams above it.

Kuthiras have Thandu, two long huge wooden poles helpful to control the direction while on the move. Thandu and the basic structure are interconnected and have reinforced wooden bearings similar to the modern shock absorbers. Kathirukal with about 35 feet height, consists of four long poles interconnected with Arecanut poles known as 'Alaku' and reinforced with coir and Panavalli knots. These are again strengthened with 'Kuthukathrika' or criss cross formation of Alakus. Kathirakal is again bifurcated to two parts—the lower portion consisting of four to five extended layers of Thattu and Charippu (slanting pyramid shaped boxes, made of interconnected Alakus and coir formation, then decorated with white cloth known as Vella, colourful glittering clothes and embellishments called 'Thookku'. Prabhada consists of exquisite wooden carved sculptors narrating stories from the Puranas, elephant caparisons called Nettipattoms, Thalekkettu and Aalavattom displayed in the backdrop of colourful clothes and sculptors. Many of the Prabhadas have stories like Gajendramoksham, Vasthrapaharanam, Krishnavatharm. Edakkoodaram almost half the size of Kathirakal with four to five Charippu made as in the lower portion, comes above the Kathirakal. It also has glittering different clothes and Vella, interlaced with colourful Thookku embellishments. Melkkoodaram the top structure is exactly having a pyramid

shape, and pivotal to it is an extended long sculpted wooden pole in white colour known as 'Nambu'. All the separate units are pulled up and placed one above the other with the help of wooden pulleys, giant coir ropes called Vadams with a length of over 100 fts. and with huge iron structures, drawn by hundreds of people.

Theru

Theru does not have the Prabhadas and Edakkoodarams. Their illithattu and charippu

are larger than that of the Kuthiras and diminishes in size upwards. Therus are also

relatively smaller in comparison to the Kuthiras height

Bhima and Hanuman The wooden icons of Bhima made by Mattom North and

Hanuman brought by Mattom south are probably the largest of its kind in the world, and

are sure to be the largest in Kerala. Bhima's icon is postured as the Pandava en route to

kill Baka on Pothu Vandu (vehicle drawn by buffalos) with food for the Rakshasa King.

Mattom south kara also brings the icon of Panjali along with Hanuman

Preparations for constructing the Kettukazhchas start from Shivarathri, about six to ten

days prior to Kumbhabharani. On the evening of

Kumbhabharani, the Kettukazhchas are

dragged to the temple by hundreds of people, and are paraded at the paddy field in front

of the temple. After Bhagavathi's Ezhunnellippu to bless the

Kettukazhchas and people, the Kettukazhchas are taken back to the respective Karas by next morning. The dismantled parts of Kettukazhchas are kept at the 'Kuthirappura' of each Karas.

Kuthiyottam

Kuthiyottam is performed as an important offering to the deity.

Some people believe that

this is the modified form of Nara Bali in which men were killed and their blood was

allowed to fall on the Goddess. This is a ritual dance practiced and perfected through

several centuries. It used to be done only in houses in the 13 Karas of the Chettikulangara

Temple but after a recent Deva Prashnam it was allowed to conduct Kuthiyottam in the

houses outside of the 13 Karas . The houses are decorated, and the portrait of the deity is

installed in temporary structures. Kuthiyottam starts a week before Bharani day. It is a

type of folk dance performed by youths with the accompaniment of folk music and other

musical instruments. Young boys between 8 to 14 years are taught this ritual dance in the

house amidst a big social gathering before the portrait of the deity. Feasts are also

provided for all the people.

Early in the morning on Bharani, after the feast and other rituals, the boys whose bodies

are coiled with silver wires, one end of which is tied around his neck and an arecanut

fixed on the tip of a knife held high over his head are taken in procession to the temple with the accompaniment of beating of drums, music, ornamental umbrellas, and other classical folk art forms, and richly caparisoned elephants. All through the way to the temple tender coconut water will be continually poured on his body. After the circumambulation the boys stands at a position facing the Sreekovil (Sanctum Sanctorum) and begins to dance. This ceremony ends with dragging the coil pierced to the skin whereby a few drop of blood comes out.

Chirayinkeezh Sarkara Devi temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This very famous temple of Goddess BHadrakali is located near Chiyankeezh railway station and is near both Athingal and Varkala and is 34 km from Trivandrum. Sarkara is the name for Jaggery in Malayalam. It seems once upon a time some merchants from Ambalapuzha who were selling Jaggery reached this place at night fall. They kept all their pots of jiggery in a place and slept. Next day when they wanted to go, they were not able to move one pot of jaggery. They left it there and went away. Next day an old woman of the place, located it and splitting open the pot saw the form of Goddess Bhadrakali in it. The villagers then constructed a temple around the idol there. They also consecrated Ganapathi and Nagaraja idols in subtemples within this temple.

There is another story about the origin of the temple. It seems the Vilwamangalath Samiyar who was responsible in finding Lord Padmanabha in Ananthankad in Trivandrum, it seems saw Lord Vishnu sitting on a branch of a tree and

Goddess Kali in the form of a girl was playing in the tree shade. On seeing the SAmiyar the girl ran away and joined the Pulaya settlement nearby in a place called Chakkiamma ground. On the ground it seems some Jaggery merchants had camped and kept their jars of jiggery there. The goddess entered one of those jars and hid there. When the merchants were not able to lift one jar, sage Vilwamangalam recognized that jar had Bhadrakali in it. He persuaded the goddess to stay there and built a temple for there.

In this temple there is a very peculiar worship ritual called Kaliyootu. It seems started by The king Marthanda verma who was going on a mission to conquer the nearby Kaymkulam kingdom. Though the king had several times tried to conquer this kingdom, he was not able to do so. Once on his journey of conquest he struck camp near the Sarkara devi temple. The priests of this temple who had come and settled there from Malabar suggested to the king to perform a Kaliyootu to Bhagwathi. The king agreed and he was able to annex the Kayamkulam kingdom that time. From that time the Kaliyootu festival was being celebrated annually in this temple. Kaliyootu festival is celebrated in the month of February-march for 9 days at the temple. The first seven days there are dramas, dances and narration of the story of Kali and Dharika. On 8th day the Bhadrakali from the temple goes in search of Daruka. But returns back at the end of the day without finding that dreaded Asura. On the ninth day a ceremony called Nilathil Poru(War on earth) takes place and Kali exterminates Dharika. The members of Kannara families put on the costumes of Dharika and Kali and the war is enacted. There is one more important festival at this temple celebrated in the month of Meenam called Menathu Bharani. This is celebrated on the birth day of the Goddess. The festival starts with flag hoisting and ends with Arattu(Anointing of the goddess in the nearby river.)

The Goddess is so popular that people call her “Sarkara Ponnamachi “ (The golden Sarkara mother.) Recently they

have also started a pongala festival in this temple. It would be held on the first day of Kumbam month.

Temple of Chithur Amma Thiruvadi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Chithur is small town 13 km away from Palakkad town, This town was in Malabar for some time but at the time of state reorganization it was under the Cochin state. By the side of this town there is a rivulet called Chithur Puzha. The town has considerable population of Tamil speaking people. It also houses the Samadhi Of Thunchathu Ezhuthachan, who can be considered as the father of the modern Malayalam language. Children are taught their first alphabets on the Vijaya Dasami day in front of this Samadhi.

The Chithur Bhagathy temple has two temples inside it, one called Pazhayannur temple and the other called Chithur Amma Thiruvadi temple. Both these temples are that of Bhadra Kali. She is supposed to be the daughter of Lord Shiva. It seems in olden times there was an asura called Dharuka (called Kongan) , who due to the several boons he got was troubling every one. One of these boons was that no male member can kill him. He also had a great weapon called Brahma Dandu given to him by Brahma. Further , every drop of blood falling from his body could become 1000 Darukas like him. The Shakthi portion which emanated from Brahma (Brahmi) , Vishnu(Vaishnavi) , Shiva(Parvathi) , Skanda (kaumari) , Indra (Indarani) and

Yama waged a war against him and failed to kill him. At that time Bhadra Kali came out of the third eye Of Lord Shiva along with fire. She was anger personified.. She went to the north of Kailasa mountain and rode on the top of a gruesome Vetala and fought with Daruka. But even she was not able to fight with the Brahma Dandu. She then took the form of a poor Brahmin lady , went and begged with the wife of Daruka and learnt the manthras to defeat the Brahma Dandu. Then she along with the Shakthi from all other Gods fought with Daruka. They drank each drop of blood that fell from him. When he was not able to oppose them Daruka tried to run away to Patala but Bhadra Kali caught and killed him. It seems she returned back to Kailasa with the head of Daruka on her spear. Shiva realizing that she was very ferocious and angry , made Lord Ganapathi and Nandi in to small babies and put them on her way. Seeing them her anger vanished.

The Pazhayannur Kavu(temple) also called the moola Kshethram houses the Swayambu idol of the Goddess. Worship in this temple in the olden days was carried out by Nayars. Later Brahmins took over the worship of this temple. The Chithur Amma Thiruvadi temple also called as Chithur Kavu , has a very black idol of Bhadra Kali in her very ferocious form, with eight hands holding sword, spear mace, the head of Kongan dripping with blood , conch , two hands showing blessing and support. And sitting with crossed legs .It is believed that this idol is made of a peculiar type of locally available mud. Due to the daily Chandattam(Pouring of a thick red liquid, we would not be in a position to clearly see the form of the original idol. Several lamps are kept burning inside and outside the temple. A sense of fear comes in to all devotees seeing her. This temple is open for worship only on Tuesdays

and Fridays. But during Mandalam and on festival days , two times daily worship takes place in this temple. The worship in this temple is done by Nayars. Along with the baser form of worship involving offering meat and toddy to the Goddess , Udayasthamana Pooja , Trikala Pooja and Madhura Chatti(Sweet pot-Payasam with jaggery) are also offered in this temple. Chandattam (Abhisheka with specially formulated red liquid) is the main offering in this temple. The liquid which falls on the ground is collected in the pots and given as Prasada.

The main festival in this temple is the Kongan pada. The parts of Coimbatore were ruled by the kongu kings and people of that area are referred to as Kongan to this day. It seems they under the leadership of Rajadhirajan(Kongan) attacked Chithur so that they can merge Chithur in their kingdom. When the people appealed to the Goddess she ordered them to fight. Slowly the people were losing the battle. At that time The Goddess from Amma Thiruvadi temple came out and fought with the Kongan pada(Army of Kongu people) and decimated all of them. Chudalai Madan or Kongan (The folk God guarding burial grounds) fought with her riding on a buffalo. Seeing Bhadra Kali he said that he never fought with ladies but challenged her for a competition to jump over a banyan tree there with her feet not touching it. Bhadra Kali jumped but willfully made her toe dash against the tree and bleed.Kongan then jumped much above the banyan tree.. Bhadra Kali caught him before he touched the ground and beheaded him as he had a boon that he can never be killed on earth. While returning back the Goddess Bhadra Kali washed her blood drenched sword in a river (The river is called Valayar-river of the sword) . She then took rest sitting on a big stone. Two Dalit

men(chakkaliyar) offered her toddy and meat . She then vanished in the present place of Pazhayannur temple.. A temple was consecrated there. It seems at the time of consecration , one lady sage came there and carried out the consecration there and later this sage disappeared. People believe that it was the Goddess herself who came in the form of a saint. This story of Kongan Pada is enacted every year in a festival called “Kongan Pada” which lasts for 24 days. This starts on the Monday after the new moon in the month of Kumbam(February-march). It starts with a ritual called “chilambum malayum”, in which people of that area go to the Moola Sthanam . along with the letter of war and pray Goddess to protect them.

Chottanikkara Bhagawathi

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is the most famous temple of Kerala where mentally disturbed people, come in thousands and get cured. This temple is 8 KM away from Thripoonithura a suburb of Cochin. There are two main temples here. One as soon as we enter is the temple of Rajarajeswari and the one behind it in a slightly lower elevation called Keezhekavu has Bhadra Kali consecrated there. The Rajarajeswari is worshipped as Goddess Saraswathi in the morning, worshipped as Bhadra kali in the noon and Durga in the night. This temple opens every day at 4 AM. People believe that Goddess Mookambika of Kollur attends the first worship here before going to her

temple. Another peculiarity of this temple is that the Goddess is not fixed to the ground but rests on sand. Nearby her is the statue of Lord Vishnu. So the devotees always pray her together with her brother Lord Narayana and say Amme Narayana.

It seems once the place this temple is located was a dense forest. There lived a tribal man called Kannappan, whose wife had died. Kannappan was a great devotee of Goddess Parvathy. He used to daily sacrifice an animal to his favourite Goddess. He had a cute daughter who was very fond of her pet, which was a cow. Since her father used to sacrifice cows, she kept her pet cow very near her and looked after well. One day Kannappan could not get any animal to sacrifice to her Goddess. So he ordered his daughter to give her pet cow, for that days sacrifice. His daughter requested Kannappan to sacrifice her instead. The heart of Kannappan changed and he realized that he was doing a wrong thing by practicing animal sacrifice. He and the pet cow stayed near the temples Bali stone the entire night. In the morning, the cow herself had turned in to a stone. That place is called Pavazha malli thara (Place of the coral jasmine flower). People believe that pet cow of daughter of Kannappan was indeed Goddess Mahalakshmi. That day Lord Vishnu appeared before Kannappan and pardoned his sins and decided to be present in the temple along with the Goddess. That is how the concept of Lakshmi Narayana came in to this temple. The place where Kannappan used to sacrifice his cows is the location of the Keezhe kavil Bhagawathi.

It seems this temple location was rediscovered accidentally by a low caste grass cutter, who found that blood was flowing out of a stone which she accidentally cut. That day the Brahmin of the Yedattu house came along with the puffed rice in a coconut

shell and this was offered to the Goddess for the first time. Even today this system of offering puffed rice in a coconut shell continues. The Brahmins of Yedattu house became priests at this temple. It was Adhi Shankara who visited the temple, who brought in to the Statue the presence of Mookambika. It seems when Vilwamangalam Swamiyar visited this temple he saw a powerful halo of light over the temple pond. He instituted a search and the present statue of Keezhe kavu was found in the tank. There is also a story of certain Gupthan Namboodiri who was pursued by a Yakshi. It seems the Yakshi took a form of a pretty maiden and tried to entice the Namboodiri. Since Namboodiri was carrying a Devi Mahatmyam book, she was not able to do anything. But being attracted by her Gupthan Namboodiri wanted to leave the book, with his magician friend Kosapilli Namboodiri. The magician found out that the lady was a Yakshi. He gave Gupthan Namboodiri an enchanted towel. With the enchanted towel Gupthan ran up to the Chottanikkara temple. There he threw the towel outside and jumped in to the temple. The Yakshi who was pursuing him could catch hold of his feet. When Gupthan cried for help from the mother, she came out and cut the Yakshi in to pieces and threw her in to the temple tank. That tank is known today as Yakshikkulam or Rakthakulam. It is to Keezhe Kavu Bhagawathi that the mentally disturbed people turn to for a cure. They are brought tied to the temple. As soon as they see the goddess, especially during the Guruthi (anointing with red saffron liquid), they start jumping uncontrollably. At night after 8.30 Pm, there is a valiya Guruthi in which Guruthi from 12 huge vessels is poured over the Goddess. It seems if the mentally disturbed people see this Guruthi daily, the spirit which is affecting them will run away. There is also a pala tree,

in which these people drive huge nails by knocking the nails with their foreheads. People who are having a weak mind and are easily scared are requested not to go to the Keezhekkavu temple. There are also temples of Lord Shiva, Ganapathi and Nagar in this temple.

The major festival of this temple is in the month of Kumbham (February –march). The goddess comes out of the temple blesses all and after ritual bath (aarattu) goes back to the temple.

In the same month on the Makha star day between 2 :Pm to 5 Pm, there is a observance of Makham thozhal People believe that if unmarried people do that , they will get married and if married people do that the understanding between husband and wife would increase.

Dharmi Kulangara temple for Balarama

By

Ravi Kumar Ambadi

Balarama, the elder brother of Sri Krishna is regarded as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Out of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, only the Sri Krishna incarnation is the complete one, while the rests are partial ones (Amsha Avatharas). Some others believe him to be the manifestation of Serpentine Anantha (Anatha Naga) who is quite identified with Lord Vishnu. However, there are a few temples dedicated to him and there are very few devotees worship him. One such temple is there in the Kannur District of Kerala which is located about eight kilometers from Thrichambaram Sri Krishna Temple. (Near Thaliparamba town) This temple is also called Dharmi Kulangara Balarama temple .Three more temples

dedicated to Balarama are there in Kerala located in Aluva ,Nenmini and Aranmula.

Balarama is the first peasant king in our world. He was a king who was very particular about the prosperous of his country and its subjects. At a time, when Vrindavan hit with severe draught, he requested River Kalindi to change her path and provide water to the farmers of Vrindavan, but she did not listen to his words. Furious Balarama, digged the sides of the river with his mighty plough and took the river water to the Vrindavan. Although he has been depicted as a savior of peasants in the epics, it is quite astonishing that there are very few devotees for him in a country which mainly depends on agriculture for revenue.

Anyway, now let us talk about Mazhoor Sri Balarama Temple. You might have read legend behind Thrichambaram Sri Krishna Temple, which has been published in this blog. We have mentioned there that Sage Narada presented two idols, one of Sri Krishna and other is of Balarama for that temple. That idol of Balarama has been brought here and consecrated in this temple.

Puthukkudi Perumthatta Illam was one of the prominent families in that area who had several rights on Thrichambaram Sri Krishna Temple. Once, a person was there in that family who was an ardent devotee of Lord Sri Krishna. He used to visit Thrichambaram Temple daily to worship god. As the time passed he became old and weak. He could not go such a long distance by walk. The fact that he had to stop his temple visit made him sad and depressed. He prayed to god for a solution.

One night in his dream, Lord Sri Krishna came and told him that the next day morning he could see the calf with the name Dharmi near his house. The place where she put cow dung should be dug and there he will get a Salagramam (a holy stone which is believed to have divine powers). Further, Sri Krishna insisted him to dig a pond at that place and keep the

salagramam inside it. He asked the devotee to consecrate an idol of his elder brother near the pond and start worshipping. The very next day, the man saw the calf Dharmi near his house and followed the instructions of Lord Krishna. He took out the Salagrama first and then dug a pond there and kept the holy rock inside it. Then he brought the idol of Balarama from Thrichambaram Temple, which has been presented by Sage Narada and consecrated near the pond after constructing a temple.

In the beginning we told you the story of Balarama, changing the route of Kalindi. That is told in Maha Bhagavatham. Almost similar incident happened at Mazhoor also. Once, Mazhoor experienced severe draught as experienced by the people at Vrindavan. There was no rain and the crops have been destroyed due to the lack of proper watering. Entire village suffered a lot due to this. Then head of the Puthukudi Perumthitta Illam family got touched with the miseries of his fellow villagers. He went to the Balarama Temple and shouted at the deity.

Can't you see people suffering from drought? Why are you holding the plough in your hands? That is a weapon for farming and not a decorative piece. If you cannot help us, then what is the point in calling you the Peasant King?

Once the shouting is over, the man got repented. He thought that he did a wrong thing by calling the lord with such words. Then he consoled himself that the lord can understand his agony and will forgive him. Yes, the Lord Balarama not only forgave the devotee, but blessed him too with lot of showers. The very same night Mazhoor experienced heavy rain.

Balarama of this temple visits Thrichammaresan temple near by and the brothers have a walk together and this is called Pookothu Nada during an annual festival held in month of march,..A very unique dance called THidambu nrutham is held at that time (see write up of Trichamaresan temple) , The address and telephone number of the temple is

Sri dharmikulangara balabhadra swami seva samithi
Mazoor, Taliparamba-Kannur
Ph: 94950 04205, 0460 2203057, 0460 2203236

Temple for Duryodhana in malanada , Kerala

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

The temple of Duryodhana(the only temple in South india) is located in Peruviruthy Malanada or Malanada This place The is located equidistant from Adoor(M C Road) on the Northeast and Sasthamcottah on the Southeast. It is also reachable from Kayamkulam and Karunagappally on the N H 47 and Kottarakkara (via Puthoor or Enathu) on the M C road (approximately 25 KMs. From each centre)

Duryodhana is not represented by an idol here, It is a mandapam(stage below an Althara(the bottom of a banyan tree) and devotees mentally worship the spiritual power which is located there .People believe that the power there is the power of Duryodhana(the eldest of the Kauravas) who was killed by Bhima in Mahabharatha war. It seems when Pandavas were in Ajatha Vasa Duryodhana came to this place in search of them.(a temple for him is there in OSla in Garhwal, where again he reached searching for Pandavas) By the time he reached Malanada he was greatly tired ." and went to a nearby house on the north west of Malanada and asked for drinking water. It was Kaduthamsserry Kottaram, where Malanada Appoppan, the priest and ruler of the land was staying. An elderly woman gave him toddy which was customary at that time as a mark of respect. The king enjoyed the drink, but realized after seeing the 'Kurathali' worn by the woman that she belonged to an untouchable lower cast by

name 'Kurava'. The king consoled himself and appreciated the divinity of the place and its people who possessed supernatural powers (Siddha). Thereafter, in furtherance of his 'Rajadharmā', the king sat on the hill and worshipped Lord Siva, praying for the welfare of his people (the prajas). As an act of charity he gave away 100s of acres of agricultural land and paddy fields as freehold to the 'Devasthanam'. Even now the land tax of the above property is being levied in the name of 'Duryodhanan'.

The king also ensured that Gandhari, the Royal Mother, Dussala, his sister, Karnan, his close associate and 'Angarajan', Dronar, his 'Guru' and the other members of his family were properly and adequately aboded and worshipped in the nearby places and members of the 'Kurava' caste are poojaris in all such places.

The temple administration at Malanada is vested in a committee elected by members of 7 'Karas', supposed having Malanada Appoopan's territorial jurisdiction. Kunnathoor Taluk N S S Union and S N D P Union have their representatives in the committee by having 2 members each. 'Kaduthamserry Kudumbayogam' among Kurava caste and 'Kettungal Kudumabayogam' among Ezhava caste enjoying special status in the administration of the temple."

IN this there is an important festival called Malakkuda. meaning umbrella of the mountains. It is celebrated every year in the second half of the month of march. The arrival of the festival is proclaimed by "Kodiyettu" (the temple flag hoisting ceremony by Oorali after due observance) on the first Friday of Meenam. Presently, although there is festivity for 8 days from Kodiyettu to Malakkuda, there is no change in the rituals connected therewith.

On the festival day afternoon Oorali accompanied by his aids visits "Gurukkalserry Bhagavathy Temple" and invites Devi to Malanada. Bhagavathy arrives Malanada in a procession and occupies her reserved seat (Mandapam in front of Malanada Temple). Thereafter Oorali goes to his abode at

Kaduthamsserry Kottaram and gets ready with "Kachakettu" (wearing his priestly attire) with the help of his aids, viz. "Thalikkaran" & Kalassakkaran" and "Naluveedar". The team led by Oorali first worships at Malanada and thereafter proceed to "Muravukandam" via "Adaipad" to witness and bless the most spectacular and colourful event of the day known as the "Kettukazhcha".

Kettukazhcha is a pageantry. It is the most splendid part of the Maha Malakkuda Maholsavam. It involves a spectacular display of craftsmanship in the form of "Edupu kala" and "Edupu kuthira". The orderly display of hundreds of such pieces, big and small, either as offering by believers for favours received or to be received or as customary by the 7 Karakal (7 divisions of Malanada Appooppan's territorial jurisdiction) in the vast stretch of the dry paddy fields surrounded by thousands of spectators viewing from far and near in the descending sun, renders a panoramic view. This is the essence of the festival. Oorali after having an overall view of the scene from his designated spot, visits and blesses each and every such display item. By around sunset the "Kettukazhcha" one by one moves up the Malanada hill, rounds the temple 3 times and thereafter returns or parks on the hill for the night. There will be cultural programmes during night. Kathakali based on the story "Nizhalkuthu" is customary. Poruvazhy Peruviruthy Malanada Devaswom very proudly keeps under lock & key a Gold Flag(Swarnakkodi). It is the status symbol of Malanada Appooppan, the symbol of power and authority. It is the privilege of the Mannan – The Ruler, The King to own such a flag! Made in pure gold, it is a precious show piece of excellent workmanship.

Public 'Darshan' of Swarnakkodi is permitted only on auspicious days like 'Kodiyettu Day', 'Malakkuda Maholsavam Day', etc. It is believed that the 'Darshan' of the Swarnakkodi brings home goodness and prosperity.

Then a ritual called Pallipana is performed once in 12 years. There is a story behind this . It is believed that Lord

Mahavishnu with the help of Lord Subramanian found that he was afflicted by 'Asura Dosha'. People belonging to 'Velan' community are the right ones to perform the corrective rituals to get rid of the 'Dosha' which was inflicted by practicing witchcraft against the Lord. 'Velan' community could not be found anywhere in the three worlds. At last Shri Parameswaran, who knows everything, appeared as 'Velan', Shri Parvathy as 'Velathy', Shri Mahaganapathy and Shri Subramanian as 'Bhoothaganangal'. They came over to Palazhy and performed the 'Mahakarma' which is known as 'Pallippana' and relieved Bhagavan of his evil afflictions. It was the first 'Pallippana' ever heard in the history of mankind.

'Pallippana' is thus believed as a ritual capable of eliminating the evil spirits afflicting a deity and its land and people. At Malanada this ritual is performed without fail once in 12 years. It is believed that this observance elates the divine power of 'Malanada Appoppan' and makes the people of the seven 'Karas' rich and prosperous.

About 50 members of the 'Velan' Community as performers and an equal number of "Purangadi" community members as antiperformers take part in this function. It lasts for 11 days to complete 18 'Mahathkarmangal'. The conduct of the function is very costly. The main 'Karmas' performed are Kappukettu, Idupanabali, Kuzhibali, Pattadabali, Ninabali, Panchabhoothabali, Aazhibali, Kidangubali, Marukubali, Peed'abali, Dikbali, and Koombubali.

There are several small temples attached to this temple
1.Kadujthamassery Kottaram- Valiya appoppan is the spiritual force here

2.Kizhakke Bagathu Appoppan kshetram. .This Appoppan is the nephew of Malanada Appoppan

3.Menaka ssery kottaram .Is the place of Menakassery Appoppan who first ruled over Malanada ,It is believed 101 Swaroopangal(forms) are living there

4. Thekke purathu kshethram .It seems one Pandi Nattan Thampuran lived here and jhewas an expert in treating stomach disorders.Devotees with this problems come here.
- 5,Vadakkepurathu Kshethram .Here it seems one Thampuran specialised in treating eye problems used to live. People with eye problems come here.
- 6.Chempitta kottaram(Palace with copper roof) . The moorthy is a Sidha specialised in treating mental disorders
- 7.Guru kalaserriyil kottaram - Martial arts used to be taught here.
- 8.Vallyathu kottaram the administrator of the temple is the sankalpa moorthy here
- 9.Puliserryil kottaram . Pooliseriyil Ammomma used to live here .It is considered as a prayer home for fertility
- 10, Manankaravila kshethram . Here the SAnkalpa murthy is a tamilian Sidh doing meditation
- 11.Muthuruthy Kavu .Two days in a year the murthy is worshipped
12. Kettungal devi temple This is a temple of Gddess Durga
- 13.Ummasery Kavu . Ummaserry Kavilamma is the sankalpa murthy
- 14.Deva Kunnu mala .Here pooja is done by Pulaya community. It is believed that Duryodhana came here first.From there he saw light in Malanada hill and went there

Interesting facts

- 1.There is a temple built in Puliur by BHeema and so the people of that village are banned from visiting this temple.
- 2.Two groups of people from Sakuni temple at Pavithreswaram called OOralis and Piniyalis hava a special role in the Malakkuda festival here. It is believed that before Mahabharatha war the Kauravas came here and divided their weapons.

<https://www.malanada.com/malakkuda>

Elakunnampuzha Subrahmanya temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This subrahmanya temple is located 22 km from Parur(BVadakkan Parur) , a village near Alwaye town. Devotees believe that The Lord Subrahmanya of Thiruchendur has been consecrated here ,

It seems long time ago the idol of Thiruchenduyr was damaged. As per the custom, the idol which had four hands was put in the sea and a new idsol was consecrated there. It seems this idol washed by the ocean reached an island near Elakunnam puzha. A wood cutter lady who went there started sharpening her knife on this idol. It seems blood started oozing out and she lost her conscience When she woke up it seems, she ordered the people , under influence of the God, to shoot four arrows in the four directions of the idol.. They were also told that land enclosed by the points where these arrows strike would belong to the temple. Finally she told them to shoot the fifth arrow to find out where the temple has to be consecrated. But when those versed in Agamas examined the statue ,m, they found that itt was damaged below the hip. On appealing to God they were told to retain the stone idol till the hip and build the portion below the hip with Pancha lohas. Initially small temple was built which was expanded the Cochin kings and the rich people of that area.

The people of Kerala believe that this is Thiruchendur temple itself. Here in this temple Skanda Sashti , Thaiposam, and Vaikasi Vishakam are celebrated in a grands fashion.

Ernakulathappan temple of Cochin

By

P.R.Ramachander

Ernakulam is the largest town of Kerala and is at present part of Cochin town which was the capital of Cochin kings before 1947. In the middle of the town is the Durbar hall ground and in its middle is the great temple of Ernakulathappan (The Lord of Ernakulam) . It is one of the very important temples of the former Cochin state dedicated to Lord Shiva.

The legend of this temple is also connected with Arjuna of Mahabaratha. Needing Pasupathasthra to win over Kauravas, Arjuna went to the forest to pray lord Shiva. He made a Shiva Linga with mud and started worshipping it . At the culmination of his great penance , Lords Shiva and Goddess Parvathi appeared before him and granted him his wish.

Ernakulathappan is supposed to be that Linga which was worshipped by Arjuna. Forest completely surrounded the Linga and centauries later it was found by a sage called Devala , who due to a curse has been turned in to a snake. While moving about in the forest he happened to find this Linga and started worshipping it and regained his normal form. Devala was called as Rishi Nagam (Sage serpent) and had made a pond for use in worshipping the lord. This pond is called Rishi Naga Kulam. This temple has found place in the ancient Tamil literature as one of the temple maintained by Cheras.

In the year 1842 , Diwan Edukunni Sankara Warriar got the dilapidated temple rebuilt in the present form and was opened for worship in the year 1846. The presiding deity of the temple is Gauri Shankara in the form of a Lingam. This is supposed to Swayambu which means self made and not by man. On the northern side of the sanctum sanctorum is the temple of

Kiratha Murthy (Which was worshipped by Arjuna) and on the southern side is a small Ganesa temple. A small area behind the sanctum sanctorum is considered as the place where Goddess Parvathi lives and the eastern gate is known as Devi gate. Outside the Inner temple circle, shrines for Lord Ayyappa and Nagaraja also exist.

Erumeli Dharma Sastha temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Erumeli is 65 km from Kottayam town. The way to trek to the Sabari Mala starts there in a place called Kottapadi. In this temple Dharma Sastha is in the hunter (kiratha form). This seems to be appropriate since in the olden times the way to Sabari malai was filled with wild animals and the help and blessing of a hunter is needed to reach there. In Erumeli there is also a Mosque dedicated to Vavar the muslim friend of Lord Ayyappan and a Ganapathi temple in Kottapadi. Pilgrims offer worship at the Maha Ganapathi temple at Kottapadi, dress and paint themselves as hunters, Worship at the mosque of Vavar and reach the Erumeli temple. There they dance before the deity. This dance is called Petta Thullal. The devotees believe that Lord Ayyappa also would be along with them when they do Petta Thullal.

On or around January 12th every year two teams one from Ambalapuzha and another from Alangad reach Erumeli to do Petta Thullal. This would be preceded by carrying of Chandana Kudam (sandal pot) to Vavar's mosque. The team of Ambalapuzha would start their Petta thullal from the Kiratha Sastha temple lead by their leader (Periyon) and they would reach the Muslim mosque dancing. There they would be honoured by the priests of the Mosque. There is a tradition that they would start dancing only after seeing the Krishna

Parunthu (Brahamani eagle) flying in the sky. The Alangad team would arrive in the afternoon and would start their dance only after sighting the star in the after noon sky. From there both teams would proceed to Pamba and participate in a grand feast there.

Ethumanur Mahadeva Temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated in Ethumanur(12km north of Kottayam and 61 km from Cochin) , a small town near Vaikom. The name it seems means the town where the deer was lifted . It is considered as one of the oldest temple of Kerala . One belief is that the 'Maniman Tirtham' mentioned in the ancient Vedic texts Vamana Purana and the Padma Purana is Ettumanur

There are many stories about the temple

The great saint Khara Prakasha worshiped God Siva in Ettumanur to alleviate his sins. He wanted to install a Sivalinga for the benefit of his people. Lord Shiva appeared and presented his own icon to the saint who installed the Sivalinga in the sanctum facing the unusual direction of west. This two-foot-high Sivalinga is the main deity in the temple today. Another story relates an occasion when Khara Maharshi disguised himself as a deer and persuaded Siva to carry him around. This gives Ettumanur its name as in Malayalam it translates to 'the place where the deer was carried'. In Malayalam 'Ettu' means eight, 'Mana' means house and 'Oor' in Tamil means village. This area was under the control of

Brahmins who lived in eight separate houses and so it was called Ettumanoor.

It is believed that an Asura called Khara got three Shivalingas from Lord Shiva himself. He brought them to Kerala, holding one by his teeth and one each in his left and right hand. While the Lingam held by his teeth was consecrated in Kaduthurthi (Kadichu iruthi), the one held in his right hand was consecrated in Vaikom and the one held in his left hand was consecrated in Ethumanur. After consecrating all these three temples in the same day, Khara is believed to have become a deer and was doing service to the Gods. It is believed that the God in Ethumanur took the deer in his hand and held it there, because of that this place was called Udhruthaina Puram, which translated in to Malayalam became Ethumanur (The place where the deer was lifted).

Devotees believe that sage Vyasa and Pandavas have come and worshipped at this temple and that Adhi Sankara composed his great work, Saundarya Lahari is here. It is also believed the Pandyan king called Chanda Bhaskara got rid of evil spirits which have entered him and he built the present temple.

Chempakassery King Devanarayan of the mid-17th century the temple to offer prayers to cure his chronic stomach problems. He gifted a huge, 500-lb bronze Nandi (bull vehicle of Shiva) filled with chennullu (red rice paddy) in gratitude for the Lord's grace. It is believed by many that eating a few blessed rice grains taken from the belly of the giant bronze bull will give immediate relief for any stomach diseases

The Ezharapponnana (7 ½ elephants made of gold) are an important part of the Ettumanoor Siva Temple. The images of

seven large elephants and a baby elephant in solid gold along with a Pazhukka Kula(bunch of arecanuts) made of gold were gifted by the Mahaharaja Karthika Thirunal in ME 964 (MalayaIam Era). These beautiful and heavy Golden Elephant figurines are unique to Ettumanoor Temple. These figurines are brought out for public exhibition on the 8th and 10th day of the Annual Festival (Utsavam) celebrated in February/March every year. Each of the seven elephants weighs about 210 lbs and the small one, half of it and each figurine is carried by four people. During the Mahotsavam (Annual festival) these animals being carried in the natural and brilliant light of Theevaties (Big Oil Torches) is an unforgettable experience

The major worship in this temple is lighting of lamp(valiya vilakku) using gingelly oil. The soot that accumulates on the under surface of the shade over the lamp is believed to cure many eye diseases Valiya vilakku is an ever glowing, very big lamp is kept as soon as you enter the temple. The devotees pour oil in to this lamp. Recently a vessel is also kept near by so that, if the lamp is full, devotees can pour the oil they brought in to this vessel. There is a story behind this. It seems a brass mason once made a huge lamp and brought it to this temple. He pleaded with the management of the temple to buy the lamp from him. They simply laughed at him. They told him that the temple need not buy a lamp paying money. That brass mason pleaded with the God for buying the lamp and saluted him. Then suddenly a big storm started around the temple. The temple management realized the God was angry at their behaviour and bought the lamp and installed it there. From that time the lamp has been

constantly burning in front of the temple.

The uthsava idol of Shiva is an eight handed figure which appears very angry. But the devotees only see mercy in that form.

The temple is very artistic and has a copper roof. Several wooden sculptures can be found around the temple. There are also statues of two bulls in this temple. There are also temples for Dakshinamrthy and Nataraja (very rare in Kerala), Ganapathi and Sastha in this temple.

There is an engraving in the temple which indicates that it was constructed about 400 years back. There is also a separate temple for Anthimahakalan who is Lord Shiva in a hunter form., There is also a temple for Lord Krishna.

The Arattu festival in this temple is celebrated in the month of Kumbham (February-March), which lasts for ten days. On the eighth day of the festival, the processional image of the deity is taken to a specially decorated site in the north east corner of the temple, where thousands throng to visit the shrine. Then a unique procession happens where the golden elephant figures are carried out. You should hear the oohs and the aahs when these elephants are brought out in a procession. These seven two foot tall figures and a one foot tall baby elephant figures are called Ezhara Ponnana (seven-and-a-half golden elephants) and represent the gods of the eight directions, Ashtadigpalakas. The statues were an offering to the deity by Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma, an ancient ruler of the Travancore kingdom.

The Thiruvadira festival and Shivarathri are also celebrated in this temple. The eighteen part worship for Shivarathri is famous.

People refer the God in this temple as “Ethumanur Appan”. A procession of Ezhara Ponnana or seven and a half gold elephants is the highlight of the annual festival of Ettumanoor Mahadeva Temple.

All Year Round

Operating Hours:

Mon-Sun : 04:00 AM - 11:30 AM, 05:00 PM - 08:00 PM

You can see a video about the temple <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhMVRoellJg>

Evloor Sri Krishna Swamy temple

By

Sri Krishna Dasa Rajeev.

Evloor is a sacred Hindu religious place in the Onattukara area next to Kayamkulam municipality in district Alappuzha of the Indian state of Kerala .

Evloor is 40 Kilometers

south of Alappuzha in the Onattukara area and next to

Cheppad railway station. It is

famous for the ancient Sri Krishnaswamy temple which

originated in the presence of

Bhagavan Sri Krishna Himself..

Evloor Sri Krishnaswamy Temple, (Onattukara's Guruvayoor)

Evloor Major Srikrishnaswamy temple is one of the most important 26 Mahavishnu

shrines. It is linked to ‘Khandava-dahanam’ (burning of Khandava forest), described in

Mahabharata . The remains of burnt trees being widely found here, confirm this. Further evidence are, nearby 'Mannarasala ' and 'Pandavarkavu' temples in this part of Onattukara .

The great Kanva Maharishi (one of the Saptarshis) , had been living in this area.

'Kannamangalam' (Kanva-mangalam) is nearby. His ' Ashrama ' (hermitage) later became a temple. Evoor Krishnaswamy's yearly 'Araattu' (ceremonial bath) is held in this temple's tank.

Origin of Evoor Temple

Agni-deva (Fire God) had been suffering from a severe stomach ailment. As a remedy,

Lord Brahma advised him to consume the herb-rich Khandava forest. Unfortunately,

Takshaka the Serpent-king and a close friend of Lord Indra , was residing there.

Whenever Agni tried to consume the forest, Lord Indra's thundershowers dutifully extinguished the fire.

Once, Sri Krishna and Arjuna were visiting this place .

Appearing in the form of a

Brahmana Agni-dev sought their help and they agreed .

Then Kanva Maharshi arrived there to save his 'Arca Murty' (a four armed image of

Mahavishnu). Bhagavan Krishna granted a boon that the 'Murty ' will not be harmed by fire.

Soon, Agni started consuming Khandava forest. Lord [Indra]

used thundershowers

promptly . But listening to Sri Krishna's advice, Arjuna constructed a "Sharakoodam"

(shelter of arrows) to complete 'Khandava dahanam'.

Thus Agni's ailment was cured. An immensely grateful Agni-deva sought Bhagavan

Krishna's permission to install that "Murthy" in a new temple there to facilitate permanent worship.

As instructed by Sri Krishna, Arjuna fired an arrow to determine the location . A new

temple was soon consecrated where the arrow had landed.

(Evoor is the shortened form

of 'Eytha ooru', meaning the place from where the arrows were showered to make the

'sharakoodam').

Bhagavan Krishna Himself infused His divine power into the 'Murty'. And Arjuna

performed the first pooja after the *Prana-Prathishta*.

A 'Murty' of 'Bhoothanathaswamy' ('Kiratha Murthy' form of Lord Siva) together with

'Yakshi Amma' (Devi Parvathy) were consecrated as the Sub - Deities. The ancient trees

roofing them are the survivors of Khandava-forest .

Fire and Re-construction

About 125 years back, this temple was destroyed in a fire .

When the 'Sreekovil' (

Sanctum sanctorum) was caught fire, so many people tried to remove the Deity, but

failed . At last, an old Brahmana-devotee of the adjacent house , after taking a dip in the

temple tank, entered the raging flames and brought out the Deity, safely.

Sri Moolam Thirunal then king of Travancore , was in "Kasi" at that time. Appearing as a

Brahmana-boy in his dream, Sri Krishna asked the king to re-construct the Evoor temple.

Immediately , the king returned home and constructed a huge temple complex. It

contained royal facilities such as security trenches atop the roof all around and

underground drainage network to discharge the 'abhisheka water' from 'Sreekovil' to

adjacent temple tank.

The renowned 'Tharananalloor Tantri' (whose ancestor had been brought to Kerala by

Sri Parashurama was appointed as the traditional 'Tantri' .

Immense wealth (including

lands and other assets) was arranged to ensure self reliance.

Also, extensive

neighborhood facilities and all necessary infrastructure were put in place for the temple.

"Prayoga Chakra Prathishta"

Evoor Bhagavan's Deity is the unique "Prayoga Chakra Prathishta" :

'∞Panchjanya Sankha' in rear Live '∞left hand ; Sudarshana Chakra ∞' in rear right

hand ; Butter in the frontal∞Frontal left hand is held on the hip as 'mani-bandham' ;

right hand.

Bhagavan is in a combative mood ready to release ' Sudarshana Chakra ' . He is the 72

year old Sri Krishna at His peak glory and power.

Vedic experts have confirmed the extremely rare presence of Srichakra on this Deity.

Consequently, "Raktha-pushpanjali" is a special offering here which is unavailable in

Vishnu temples elsewhere.

Evoor temple is popularly known as the "Guruvayoor of Onattukara".

"UTSAVAM" (Annual Festival)

The intensity of the "living aura " (Jeeva Chaithanyam) in and around the Deity is of

prime importance in a vedic temple. It is natural for the " aura " to overflow or radiate

when the Deity is consecrated by great Yogis and Rishis. At Evoor, Bhagavan Sri

Krishna Himself breathed into life into the Deity. So, the "living aura " here overflows and

floods all around the entire surroundings. Also, Tantri's meditation, chanting of Vedas,

'Pushpaanjali' and 'Abhishekam' with vedam, the Poojari's discipline ; and earnest

performance of rites and rituals, special festivals like "Utsavam " (annual festival), and

distribution of food, have further enhanced the power of the Deity.

"Utsavam" is for the restoration of divine "Chaithanyam" of Deity, by performing

necessary purification and energization rituals. Culturally, it consists of various

processions, illumination, fireworks, art-forms, etc.

Evoor "Utsavam" lasts for ten days. Beginning the first day of

'Makaram' (January) . It ends after the "Aaraattu" (Holy Bath). All ten days, the place wears a festive look, streets dressed up with arches, festoons, etc. Every building is tastefully decorated with lights, plantain trunks, bunches of coconut and arecanuts. The Gopuram and courtyards are decorated with illuminations. Many lamps, "deepasthambams" and "vilakku" are all lighted.

The "Utsavam" rituals include "Prasaada Sudhhi" (purification of Murthy), " Rakshoghna Vaasthu Homam", "Prasaada Raksha", " Chathassudhhi ", "Dhaara", "Navakam", "Panchakam", "Panchagavya Kalasam", etc. (theses are "Abhishekams"), "Kotiyettu" (Flag hoisting) , "Pallivetta" (Holy Hunting) , "Aaraattu" (Holy bath) , "Kotiyirakku", "Pallikkuruppu" etc., and in between "Sreebhootha Bali" and "Utsava Bali ".

"Kotiyettam " (Flag Hoisting)

The Tantri first invokes the Deity by tantric rituals such as ' Kalasam ' and other poojas ; and then infuses 'aura' on to the Flag bearing 'Garuda' emblem. After further poojas , the consecrated Flag is hoisted on the golden Flagstaff. Amid loud cries of "Narayana, Narayana" , the divine Flag plays around a little and then flies up resembling a bird taking off to the sky. A supplementary Flag is hoisted atop the wooden Flagstaff ,

manually erected in front of “Bhutanathaswamy’ (Upa-deva). A large crowd of Devotees happily witnesses , the auspicious completion of “Kotiyettam”. “Utsavam” (Days 1 to 8)

The events of first five days are sponsored jointly by Travancore Devaswom board and specific groups of devotees. Three ‘Karas’ (villages) namely Evoor South, Evoor North and Evoor North-West conduct the events of days 7 , 8 and 9 respectively. Each ‘Kara’ competes with others to make own “ Utsavam” the best. After the poojas , tantric rituals and day-time cultural programs such as “Ottanthullal” etc, thousands of oil lamps are lit all around temple in the evening. Upon completion of “ Deeparadhana” , two hour long ‘Seva” starts at 7.15 PM. The Poojari carries atop the male elephant , Bhagavan’s “Thidambu” (direct manifestation of the Deity). Renowned musicians play “Nadaswaram” (a wind instrument) supported by percussion instruments, to sing devotional songs in praise of Bhagavan . It is a beautiful devotional feast for the eye, ear and heart. And is followed by popular cultural programs like ‘Kathakali’,velakali etc.

9th Day “Utsavam”

On this day, in addition to the regular items , “Kala-kali ” (decorated effigies of Bulls) is a special event .

“ Kala-kettu “ is a thanksgiving offering to the lord by farmers.

Small 'Kala-effigies' are hand carried whereas the big ones are mounted on wheels. The colourful "Kala-kali" completes 3 rounds around the temple , wildly swinging in the air amid thunderous cheers of "Arppoooo ... Irrooooo". After "Deeparadhana" and "SEVA" , the "Paliivetta" is performed at midnight. " Pallivetta " (Holy Hunting) "Pallivetta" is the traditional yearly event , wherein Evoor Bhagavan proceeds to the distant banyan tree (300 m away at the entry point) to hunt down evil forces. According to the tradition , "Jeevatha Ezunnallathus " of two nearby Bhagavathy temples (Kannamballil and Kalloorath) arrives together. They are Bhagavan's sisters. When they arrive in front of the 'Sreekovil ' (sanctum sanctorum), they are accorded a traditional welcome. Evoor Bhagavan's "Thidambu " is mounted atop the gold caparisoned elephant. Accompanied by servants and devotees , He starts for the 'Pallivetta'. Upon reaching the spot beneath the banyan tree , a bow and arrows are used for 'Pallivetta'. When the victorious Bhagavan turns around to return , the "Jeevatha Ezunnallathus " of His jubilant Bhagavathy-sisters welcome Him. The priestly Brahmana dancers, clad in the traditional style holding the heavy "Jeevatha

"on shoulders , perform the divine dance. The dance begins with "Kotti Urayikkal" (drumming to make the dancers possessed). The drumming in different rhythms accompanied by scintillating music coaxes the performers to dance to each rhythm, creating a holy atmosphere. Each circumlocution is regulated by a different "Thaalam" (beat). This is very touching with thousands of devotees watching with tearful joy, Evoor Sri Krishna's both Bhagavathy-sisters play about ecstatically in front of Him who lovingly appreciates them by swaying atop His elephant. The "Jeevathas " dance just in front of Bhagavan , then running back to dance at a distance , holding hands to dance in unison , etc. Each "Ezhunnallathukaaran" (Lead dancer) directs his group according to Bhagavathi's revelation to him. (It is a wonder of wonders how such fragile Brahmanas could dance wildly like this bearing weight. No mortal human being can do this. One could see red lumps of flesh building up on the dancers' shoulders ; but they don't show any signs of pain or fatigue at all. In reality, it is Bhagavathy who is dancing , in the form of Her Priests). Upon reaching the temple , Evoor Bhagavan stands on the eastern courtyard facing west. Both His Bhagavathy-sistes dance wildly raising the tempo to supreme ecstasy.

Finally , after bidding farewell to brother Sri Krishna , they quickly complete 'pradakshina' around temple , bow down once again in front of the 'Sreekovil' and run outside.

Being sad at the separation , a silent Bhagavan returns to His Sreekovil.

“ Aaraattu ” (Holy Bath)

The 10 days long “Utsavam” culminates with a grand

“Aaraattu” procession, with the

“Utsava Deity ” being carried to the “ Aaraattu palace tank “ at “ Muttam ” which is 3

Kilometers away. (This was where Kanva-Maharshi used to worship the Deity before it

moved to Evoor temple). “Aaraattu” refers to the sacramental ablution of the Deity in the

sacred tank.

In the morning , Devotees take a dip in the temple tank and perform the traditional

'urulal' (“sayana-pradakshinam ” beneath the Flagstaff and entrances).

Some devotees take the traditional fasting to take part in the, “Aaraattu ” to be held at

midnight .

In the afternoon, the “Kettukazhcha” procession is held with participation from 3 “ Karas “

around the temple and from several communities. Decorated effigies of bulls, and epic

figures complete 3 rounds around the temple. The marvelous as well as magical effect of

the combination of numerous percussion and wind instruments is most thunderous,

spectacular and dazzling. The enthusiasm and dedication all around reveal supreme Bhakthy to their Ishta-Devan, Evoor Bhagavan. After the “Kettukazhacha” procession , thousands of oil lamps are lit all around the temple. Devotees wait in anticipation for Bhagavan’s arrival. The Tantri ritually transfers the “living aura” from principal Deity to the “Utsava Deity” to be boarded on the “Thidambu “.

Among ecstatic cheers “ Arppooo.... Irroooo “ from thousands of Bhakthas , Melsanti (lead Pujari) comes out carrying the “Thidambu “. The huge mail elephant bows low for the Melsanti and other three brahmanas to sit on his top. When the majestic elephant stands up , it is a sight for Gods to behold ! Bhagavan Sri Krishnaswamy in all His glory !!! Many “Theevettis” (oil lit multi-fires) being held aloft by men on the floor illuminate Him ; “Muthukkuta” (ornamental silk umbrella) covers Him ; “Alavattam” (couple of circular hand-fans made of peacock feathers) and “Venchamaram” (couple of white feather-sticks) fanning from His back ! Amid huge cheers from devotees, Bhagavan’s elephant escorted by two other elephants (Poojaris carrying “Muthukkutas” atop them) , proceeds to the main gate and stands there facing thousands of devotees on the east . Then comes the magnificent display of thunderous fireworks.

It is indeed grand and extremely colourful .

Bhagavan's elephant starts moving gracefully for "Aaraattu" procession. Then comes the

traditional "Kuchelavruthm-Vanchippattu" in front of Bhagavan. Fragile elders sing the

"vanchippattu " melodiously and youngsters repeat loudly.

Beautiful "Vanchippattu" and

ecstatic dancing to its tune together with the music of percussion and wind instruments

enliven the procession. Bhagavan's Deity atop the elephant gently sways in

appreciation ; and this divine sight motivate the singers infinitely. Bhaktas welcome the

"Aaarattu procession" at various points by dazzling fireworks and other offerings.

When the procession reaches the paddy field ahead of the "Aaarattu palace", Bhagavan

is ceremoniously welcomed by the "twin-Bull" effigies and associated rituals belonging to

His traditional labourers .

Upon reaching the "Aaarattu palace" , the "Thidambu " is seated at the designated place.

Singers complete the last lines of "Kuchela-vrutham" and then seek Bhagavan's

permission to leave , singing " Adiyangal vidakollan Bhagavan anuvadikkane!!" (Please

permit us to leave , O Bhagavan !!).

After conducting the poojas by 1 AM, the Tantri and Melsanti bring the "Utsava Deity" to

the tank platform and perform further poojas. Finally, carrying

the Deity in their hands, they take three dips in the water and complete the ritualistic "Aaraattu". Afterwards, the "Utsava Deity" is seated at the palace for Darshan. Immediately, all Bhakthas jump into the tank and after taking (3) dips, performed "Urulal" (Sayana-pradakshinam) around the palace to submit themselves entirely to Bhagavan .

"Kotiyirakkam" (Lowering of Flag)
After the "Aaraattu", the procession returns to Evoor temple. The rituals of "Kotiyirakkam" start around 5.00 AM. The Tantri performs tantric-rituals to restore "aura" from Flag to the "Utsava Deity". After this, he lowers the Flag to complete "Kotiyirakkam". Later, the "Utsava Deity" is shifted to the "Ardhamandap" inside temple for "Pallikkuruppu" (sleep).

"Pallikkuruppu" (Holy Sleep)
After returning from "Aaraattu", Bhagavan sleeps nicely on the "Ardhamandap" in front of Sanctum Sanctorum. A small calf (young cow) is tied to the pillar and the main temple is closed. Bhagavan would wake up only after hearing the cry of the calf. Tantri, Poojaris, staff and devotees wait outside in anticipation. When the calf cries, Tantri and Melsanti entered the temple to transfer Bhagavan's 'living aura' (chaithanyam) from the "Utsava Deity" to the principal "Deity". Then the

temple door is opened , to allow 'darshan' to the devotees.

“Other Festivals Associated with Evoor Temple ”

Aiyalyam Makam, Shankaranthi Vallam Kali, Tiruonam

Ulsavam, Ashtami Rohini,

Kuchela dinam, etc .

How to reach Evoor

Evoor temple is situated near the Cheppad Railway station (

Between Kayamkulam and

Harippad . It is the coastal railway route. It is more easy to reach there by bus . Cheppad

is about 7 km north of Kayamkulam Bus stand . From both Harippad and Mavelikara Bus

stands Evoor is about 5 km south . You can get down at Cheppad Junction and go by an

auto-rikshaw to Evoor temple . Alternatively , you can get down at the bus stop (south of

Cheppad and north of Ramapuram Devi temple) on NH-47 and walk up to the temple

which is about 1 km east of NH-47 .

Om Namo Bhagavathe Vasudevaya !!!

Guruvayoor Temple

By

SriKrishnaDasa Rajeev

Om Shree Gurupavanapuradheesaya ShreeKrishnaya

Parabrahmane Namah !

Guruvayoor Temple is famous as *Bhooloka Vaikuntam* (Vaikuntam on earth) .

Srimad Narayaneeyam (which has the stamp of approval by Bhagavan Krishna Himself) begins with the statement :

“ It is the greatest fortune of mankind in this *Kali Yuga* that

the *ParaBrahman* manifests itself as Bhagavan Krishna Deity in Guruvayoor temple to bless the Bhaktas . He is incomparable , eternal , free of Maya (illusion) , all-pervading and the root cause of entire Universe. Even the Vedas cannot fully understand Him. But, just by Krishna-bhakti alone , devotees easily attain Guruvayoor Bhagavan . Although such a very easy Krishna-realization is readily available at Guruvayoor temple, foolish people fail to worship Him . But , we Krishna-Bhaktas , with a firm mind take refuge in Guruvayoor-Bhagavan , the very embodiment of *ParaBrahman* . ”

Yes ! Mankind is fortunate indeed for having been blessed with Guruvayoor Temple . Shree Guruvayoorappan is ever willing to grant the glorious vision of

His charming form and shower His blessings on the Bhaktas who come to Guruvayoor temple . Many Bhaktas are thanking Him for favours already granted,

and some praying for desires to be fulfilled, and some just to offer their humble prostrations . Guruvayoorappan has been presented to the devotees , as

decreed by Bhagavan Himself for the benefit of mankind in the Kali-yuga . Is not the mankind fortunate ?.

Many MahAtmAs like Sankaracharya and Vilwamangalam had the divine vision of Bhagavan Shree Krishna in Guruvayoor temple . Guruvayoorappan is

Pratyaksa-deva (visible God) to the living legend Bhagavata-hamsam Malliyoor Sankararan Namboodiri .

Guruvayoor temple’s unique *Acharams* (traditions) including daily rituals and Poojas were formulated by Adi Sankaracharya under Bhagavan’s guidance .

These *Kshetra-Acharams* are being strictly followed without any compromise . The Temple Tantris are available full time at the Temple to ensure this . The

Melsanti (Chief Priest) enters the *Sri Kovil* ((sanctum sanctorum)) at 2:30 AM and he does not drink even a glass of water up to the completion of noon

poojas at 12:30 PM . This absolute purity of vedic tradition is the hallmark of Guruvayoor temple .

EARLY HISTORY

The *Narada Purana* in its chapter *Gurupavanapura Mahatmya* states : " King Janamejaya, in order to avenge the death of his father Pareekshit, (who was killed by Serpent Chief Takshaka) , performed the *Sarpayajna* (snake sacrifice) in which thousands of innocent serpents were burnt alive . As a result of their curse , Janamejaya was afflicted with terrible leprosy, which left him in utter despair. Sensing this, Sage Dattatreya appeared before him with a remedy – Seek the mercy of Bhagavan Krishna, at Guruvayoor temple ”.

The Sage recounted that , Bhagavan Maha Vishu Himself was the first to worship this *Moorty* . At the beginning of the Padma Kalpa, He gave the image to Brahma . At the beginning of the *Varaha Kalpa*, the childless couple, Sutepa & Prisna prayed to Brahma for a son. Brahma gave them this Moorty ,assuring them of their wish if they worshipped the Moorty with sincere devotion. This they did with excellence, so much so that the Lord MahaVishnu Himself appeared before them. As a boon, they prayed Him three times, for a son. He blessed them that, He would be born to them as son in three successive births. And,they would also have the good

fortune of worshipping the divine Moorty in all the three births.

Accordingly, in the first birth, Suteja and Prishna had Prishgarbha as son . In their second birth , as Kasyapa & Aditi , the couple worshipped the same Moorty and got their son Vamana. In their third and the most auspicious birth as Vasudeva and Devaki, Sree Krishna was born to them.

After killing Kamsa , Shree Krishna moved to Dwaraka where He built a temple, installed this Moorty and worshipped it . When the time came for His return (to Vaikunta), Bhagavan Krishna entrusted this image to Uddhava, (when the latter expressed, his fears regarding the fate that would befall mankind in *Kaliyuga* during Bhagavan's absence) . Bhagavan assured Udhava that , He would manifest in this Moorty , to shield His devotees from the illeffects of Kaliyuga and to bless the mankind . He appraised Udhava that, soon after His departure Dwaraka would submerge in the ocean ; as such, he should install the Moorty in an equally sacred spot in consultation with Brihaspati (Guru of Gods) . Accordingly, Guru along with Vayu (Wind-God) set forth to Dwaraka where they found, the image being tossed about in the sea by the surging waves. Vayu carried the image and both started searching for a sacred place for its installation . They were later joined by Sage Parasurama , and they came upon a lake of lotuses (Rudratheertha) where Lord Siva and Parvathi were waiting to receive them. Siva told them that that spot was

etched out for Narayana long ago ;
hence He and Parvathi-devi would move to the opposite bank .
Guru and Vayu installed the image in the temple built by
Viswakarma, the divine architect of
Gods. As Guru and Vayu together founded the temple, the place
came to be known as Guruvayoorpura which was later
shortened to Guruvayoor.

Moved by this story, Janamejaya proceeded to Guruvayoor
temple where he worshipped Sree Krishna with great faith , for
four months. One night while
asleep, he felt Bhagavan Krishna's healing touch over his body
and his illness (leprosy) was no more! . King Janamejaya
returned to his kingdom elated
singing praises for Bhagavan Krishna .

MODERN HISTORY

in 1789 AD, the muslim tyrant Tippu Sultan , with the intention
of converting Hindus to Muslims, invaded the kingdom of
Calicut where Guruvayoor is located .

Apprehending the destruction, the image was hidden
underground and the *Utsava Moorthy* was shifted to another
place . Tippu set fire to the Temple, but it
was saved by a celestial voice followed by timely rain. Terribly
frightened at this divine intervention, Tippu and his mighty
army fled from Guruvayoor .

Later, Tippu was defeated and killed by the combined army of
Calicut and the English .

On November 30, 1970, an uncontrollable mammoth fire broke
out in Guruvayoor temple. It raged all around for five hours,
but the Sri Kovil (Sanctum
Sanctorum) , flag-staff and all the support - deities remained
unaffected. The fire gutted the entire surroundings. The *Sri

Kovil* was only 3 yards off, but still the fierce fire did not touch even the dry flower garlands, which hung on the corner of the *Sri Kovil* ! .

Guruvayoor Temple Architecture

Guruvayur temple is an epitome of Kerala's temple Vastuvidya . It is faced towards the East with two *Gopurams* , one at East (*Kizhakkenada*) and other at West (*Padinjarenada*).

The entire area between these *Gopurams* is roofed with tiles and known as *Anapanthal* . At the centre of this is a square shaped pillared hall called *Nalambalam* , the outer wall of which is fixed with a gallery of oil lamps. At the south side of the *Nalambalam* , there is a sub shrine of Sasta or Lord Ayyappan .

At the north-east side of this shrine is the *Koothambalam* , where, in olden times, dance performances were held. In the front and the east side of *Nalambalam* , the *Belikkal* and *Deepastambas* - Pillar of lights are located. There are a number of such light pillars in the Temple. The *Deepastambas* ,at each Gopurams ,are of special interest.

The eastern side *Deepastambam* is 24 feet in height and has thirteen circular receptacles to hold the wicks. Of the other two at West Gopuram, one is in the shape of a tree. Dwijasthamba - It is a flag-staff ,around 70 feet height, fully covered with gold.

The square shaped *Sri Kovil* has two stairs and three rooms inside. The inner most room is known as *Garbhagriha* (The Moorty of Bhagavan Krishna is placed here). Here, the two doors and the roof are covered

by Gold. All the articles inside the *Garbhagriha* are in Gold. The outer room is called *Mukhamandapam* . The wall of Sree Kovil is decorated with ancient (17th century) murals. In front of the Sree Kovil is the *Namaskara Mandapam*, square in shape and with a pyramidal roof. Surrounding this is a pillared square hall called *Nalambalam* or *Chuttambalam* . A gallery of oil lamps is fixed on the wall of *Nalambalam* . In the north-eastern side of the Sree Kovil is the temple well called *Manikinar* . In the North side of the temple, a sub shrine of Devi, *Edathirithi Kavu* is situated. The *Oottupura*, the place for *prasadauttu* is also located in the north side Here, the daily lunch is arranged for the devotees .Next to it is the temple tank *Rudratheertha* which is located near the north side of the temple.

POOJAS

The presiding Deity in the *Garbhagraha* (central shrine) is Maha Vishnu, worshipped and served according to the specific pooja routines laid down by Adi Sankaracharya . Bhaktas at large, however, invoke the Bhagavan as Unnikrishna or Balakrishna . The *Moorty* is carved out of *Pathalanjana Sila*, which is supremely sacred .

- NIRMALYA DARSHAN (3 A.M to 3.20 A.M) . This is the first darshan of the day. Bhagavan is still adorned with the flowers and garlands of the previous night . After the night Pooja (worship), when the doors are closed, the Devas (Gods) come and worship the Moorty. A darshan of Bhagavan who has just been worshipped by the Devas themselves is considered highly

auspicious. Amidst the lit lamps, the chiming bells and the conch, the spontaneous loud chanting of the devotees "Narayana", "Guruvayurappa", "Govinda", etc., your mind will be lifted to the higher levels of devotion.

- THAILABHISHEKAM, VAKACHARTH & SANKABHISHEKAM (3.20 A.M to 3.30 A.M) . The rite of bathing the Moorty with gingerly oil takes place, after removing the adornments of the previous day. Then comes 'Vakacharth' i.e. sprinkling the Moorty with the 'Vaka' powder. The kark of a tree called 'vaka' is powdered and used. After this is performed, the 'abhishekam' (rite of bathing the Moorty), with water sanctified in a 'sankhu' (conch).

- ALANKARAM & MALAR NIVEDYAM (3.30 A.M to 4.15 A.M) . After the bath, the Moorty is wiped with a thin cloth, then adorned with garlands, ear ornaments, Kasthuri tilaka and a red loincloth . Butter in hand and playing the flute, Bhagavan here appears as Unnikrishna (child Krishna), reminiscent of His playful days at Gokulam. After the 'alankaram' (adornment or decoration), the 'malar' (puffed rice) 'naivedyam', plantain and jaggery are offered to Bhagavan

- USHA NAIVEDYAM & USHA POOJA (4.15 AM to 4.30 AM) . Offerings of cooked rice and 'naipayasam' (rice cooked in jaggery) constitute the 'usha naivedyam' (morning offering). The 'Usha Pooja' (morning worship) is also conducted at this time.

- ETHIRETTU POOJA (4.30 AM to 6.15 AM) . Now Bhagavan and the Sun are facing each other and Pooja is performed by offering 'vella naivadyam'

(white offering i.e. of cooked rice) ; simultaneously, the sub-deities in the temple are attended by associate priests.

`Ganapathy homa' is performed in the temple kitchen.

- SIVELI (6.15 AM to 7.00AM) . The Sreekovil (Sanctum sanctorum) opens allowing the devotees to have their darshan . The MOORTY then proceeds for

the Siveli (procession). The `utsavaMoorty' (processional Moorty) is mounted on an elephant and taken round the temple thrice. Bhagavan wants this exercise to be done, so that He himself can ascertain, if all His celestial attendants and devotees in place are keeping well .

- PALABHISHEKAM, NAVABHISHEKAM, PANTIRADINAIVEDYAM & POOJA (7 AM to 9 AM). What follows is a series of `abhishekams', first in the series being `Palabhishekam' or `Kshirabhishekam' (bathing in milk) . Then the `Navabhishekam' is done with, water filled in nine silver pots and sanctified with a course of Poojas. `Pantiradi Pooja' is done when the shadow measures 12 feet .

- DARSHAN (9AM to 11.30 AM). Time is given to devotees for darshan.

- UCHA POOJA (Noon Pooja -11.30 AM to 12.30 PM) .

Conducted at around 12 noon, it is the most important and elaborate Pooja of the day. The

`naivedyam' (Offering) consists of cooked rice and

`palpayasam' (rice cooked in milk and sugar). Simultaneously, a Brahmin is seated in the temple kitchen and fed well. This custom is mandatory at this ritual.

- THE TEMPLE REMAINS CLOSED FROM 12.30 PM to 4.30 PM . Bhagavan rests during this period.

- SIVELI (4.30 PM to 5 PM) .The second procession of Bhagavan takes place at this time.
- DARSHAN (5 PM to 6.15 PM). The time is given to the devotee for darshan.
- DEEPARADHANA (6.15 PM to 6.45 PM) . All the lamps in the temple are lighted and Bhagavan is worshipped with oil lamps and camphor flames. Conch shells are blown , drums beaten, bells chimed and pipes played . The view of Bhagavan in full glory is visible from a very long distance itself . Bhagavan looks so marvelous amidst the lamps and that even a non-believer will have second thoughts.
- DARSHAN (6.45 PM to 7.30 PM) . Devotees allowed for darshan .
- ATHAZHA POOJA & ATHAZHA NAIVEDYAM (7.30 PM to 8.15PM) . The night worship is `Athazha Pooja' and the offering made at that time is `athazhanaivedyam' . `Appam' and `Ada' (sweetened rice preparation), betel leaf and areca nut are offered at this time.
- ATHAZHA SIVELI (8.45 PM to 9.00 PM) . The night procession, the third and last procession of the day takes place .
- TRIPUKA & OLAVAYANA (9.PM to 9.15 PM) . Fumigation of the central shrine and temple with nine odoriferous gums in a silver tray is known as `tripuka' . `Ola vayana' is the customary function of reading out day's income and expenditure before Bhagavan.
- The Sri Kovil closes at 9.15 p.m .

FESTIVALS

Ulsavam (Annual Festival) :

This is conducted in the month of *Kumbha* (Feb-March) and

lasts for 10 days. The hoisting of the temple flag atop the flagstaff (Dwajastambham) about 70 feet high heralds the festival. On the 1st day, an elephant race is held. On the next 6 days, there are elephant processions in the morning, afternoon and night . In the morning, there is the Sribhuta Bali (Offering of oblation to Bhagavan's celestial attendants). There are various cultural programs like dance, music, religious discusses are held at Melpathur Auditorium (outside the temple) on all these days. On the 8th day, 'Utsavabali' (from 10 am to 4 pm) or oblations are offered to Bhagavan's lieutenants . A sumptuous feast then awaits the devotees. Pallivetta or the hunting expedition of Bhagavan takes place on the 9th day. This hunt is symbolic of the destruction of Kama (desire), Krodha (anger) and other such evils that plague us in our life. After that Bhagavan's Thidambu is taken to the Rudratheertham (temple pond) for Aarattu, amidst the chanting of mantras . Thousands of devotees also take the dip, chanting Bhagavan's name to purge them of their sins. Then Ucha Pooja (i.e, noon worship –this takes place at night only on this day) is held at the Bhagavati shrine. Finally, Bhagavan returns to the sanctum sanctorum after 11 circumambulations. The Temple flag is then lowered signifying the end of the festival.

Vishu :

The Malayali New Year day, Vishu, falls on the 1st of *Medam* month (mid-April). One's fortunes for the year depends on the auspiciousness of the objects that one sees first at dawn on this day. Accordingly a

kani (omen) consisting of *konna* flowers , raw rice, gold, betel leaves and nuts, yellow cucumber and coins, are so arranged in front of the *Ishta-Deva* in the previous night itself, so that one sees them at first glimpse on waking up in the morning. Seeing the *kani* at Guruvayur is very auspicious and hence millions of devotees stay overnight, blindfold themselves and set their eyes on the *Kani* and the glorious Bhagavan as the doors are as usual opened for the dharshan at 3 a.m .

Vaishka:

The lunar month from the day following the new moon of *Medam* (April-May) to the following new moon. The observance of austerities or 'Vratha' during this month is especially sacred to Vishnu.

Ashtami Rohini :

In the month of *Chingam* (July-Aug), under the *Rohini Nakshatra*, on the 8th day of the waning moon of Sravana is the day of Bhagavan Krishna's birth i.e. Janmashtami. A very special day in all Sri Krishna temples, Guruvayur Devaswom itself offer a niramala (full of garlands and vilakku), devotees flock in with *Appam* (Cakes of rice paste and jaggery) considered the most favourite food of Bhagavan on that day.

Kuchela's Day :

This is observed on the first Wednesday of *Dhanu* (December-January). Kuchela was a poverty-stricken Brahmin , a childhood friend and a great devotee of Bhagavan Krishna. One day, he went to seek Krishna's help, at the insistence of his wife . He carried with him a small gift of parched rice to offer

his friend. On reaching Dwaraka, he was not only welcomed warmly by Krishna, and made to feel at home, but was also asked what he had brought for him.

Bhagavan blessed him with great prosperity !

Other important festivals: Mandalam, Ekadasi, Chembai music festival & Narayaneeyam day.

Guruvayoor MahAtmAs

The famous MahAtmAs who received the vision of Bhagavan Krishna at Guruvayoor are , Sankaracharya, Melpattur Narayana Bhattathiri, Poonthanam

Namboodiri, Vilvamangalam Swamiyar, Kururamma , Prince Manadevan and Kudallur Kunjikkavu Namboodiri .

1. SANKARACHARYA

Once Sankaracharya was on an aerial journey to Shringeri .

While above Guruvayoor temple he smiled at the procession of *Sreebhootha Bali* (feeding

celestial attendants) and tried to pass the temple ignoring

Bhagavan . Suddenly he came crashing down and the

procession stopped there at the northwest

corner. He soon recovered and saw Bhagavan Krishna in all His royalty. Realizing the cause of his fall, Sankaracharya

prostrated before Bhagavan and

eulogized Him by chanting eight slokas in praise of Govinda,

known as Govinda Ashtakam. The small opening in the roof

over the North- West courtyard is in

commemoration of this event .

As advised by Bhagavan Krishna , Sankaracharya had done 41 days *Bhajanam* at Guruvayoor temple . During this period ,

He established the specific code

of *Guruvayoor Kshetra-Acharas* (temple traditions) . The

tradition of *Mandala Vilakku* (lighting of lamps for 41days)

was initiated by Him .

2. MELPATHUR NARAYANA BHATTATHIRI .

He was born in Melpathur Brahmin-house near Tirunavaya .

He was affected with paralysis and searched for a remedy.

Ezhuthachan, the famous

Malayalam poet and Sanskrit scholar told him - "Start with fish)" .

Bhattathiri took it in the proper sense decided to present the various incarnations of Bhagavan MahaVishnu starting with the fish, as narrated in the

Bhagavatham in a series of *Dasakas* (Groups of ten slokas) .

He reached Guruvayoor temple and started composing one

Dasaka a day in front of the Moorty . The refrain in last

Sloka of every *Dasaka* is a prayer to

Bhagavan to remove the ailments and sufferings. He composed

his work in one hundred *Dasakas* on the *Kali* day. This

work is known as

NARAYANEYAM after which he recovered fully and

regained happiness. *Narayaneeyam* is in praise of

Guruvayoor Bhagavan . *Narayaneeyam* is the

condensation of *Maha Bhagavatham* and its parayana

(reading) confers definite benefits ; it is an effective faith

therapy. It makes one pure Krishna-bhakt ,

it concerns mainly about our present life - Aarogyam (health

and freedom from diseases) and saukhyam (happiness).

At Guruvayur temple , *Narayaneeyam* is of utmost

importance. No work of this magnitude has ever been

dedicated and addressed to the Deity of any other

temple. It provides the Bhakta an opportunity to visualise and

worship Bhagavan Krishna by reading it or listening to its

rendition. It will shine and conjure up

at Guruvayur in the heart of posterity. The *Narayaneeyam* Day is celebrated every year in Guruvayoor temple.

3. POONTHANAM NAMBOODIRI .

Poonthanam and Melpathur were contemporaries.

Poonthanam was the family name . He married a heiress at 20, but for a long time, they had no children.

Poonthanam began to propitiate the Lord of Guruvayoor ; and a son was born to him in 1586. He called for a celebration and everybody known was invited ,

but the child died an hour before the ceremony. Grief-stricken Poonthanam sought refuge at Guruvayur and started praying with the puranic story of

Kumaraharanam . Gradually Poonthanam became enlightened and realized " While little Krishna is dancing in our hearts, why do we need little ones of our own?" . On several occasions he was blessed with the divine vision of Sree Krishna .

Jnanappana and the song *Anjana Sreedara...* were written by Poonthanam with the help of Bhagavan .

Poonthanam spent the rest of his life of 90 odd years reading the Bhagavatham and singing the Lord's glories in simple Malayalam. He composed many devotional hymns in praise of Bhagavan .

4. VILLWAMANGALAM SWAMIYAR .

Villwamangalam is the family name . He was a wandering saint . He was blessed him with the miraculous gift of seeing

Bhagavan in person as distinguished from the Moorty . He spotted Sree Krishna many times inside Guruvayoor shrine .

5. KUROORAMMA .

Kurooramma was a childless widow and settled in Guruvayoor

as a devotee. Thanks to Vilwamangalam's guidance , she adopted Unnikrishna of Guruvayur as her son ; and Bhagavan arrived at her house as a small Brahmin kid. Kuruooramma treated the kid as her own son , fondling him, playing with him, chiding him when he became naughty and weeping at his childish freaks. The devotional song of *Kani kanum neram* was composed by her.

6. MANAVEDAN .

Prince Manavedan of Calicut was born in 1595 and had early education in Sanskrit. Later he became the disciple of Villwamangalam . With his devotion to Bhagavan and guidance of Villwamangalam, he saw the Bhagavan as Unnikrishna , standing under the Elajhi tree on the way from the Palace to Guruvayoor temple. The present koothambalam is located at this spot . The Prince wrote a series of eight dramas for Krishnanattam. The Krishnanattam began to be staged in the temple regularly as an offering to Guruvayoorappan . Thus the dance-drama, Krishnanattam , became yet another medium to spread the fame of Guruvayoor all over Kerala.

7. KUDALLUR KUNJHIKKAVU NAMBOODIRI .

Kunjhikkavu was known as Raman in his childhood. He learnt Puranas through his mother's daily parayana (recitation) of Bhagavatham and Ramayanam and learnt Sanskrit on his own . He formerly began his *purana-parayana* in his home and slowly become famous as a mystic-devotee . Very often he forgot this real world, he looked at every women he met as a Gopi of Vrindavanam . He started circumambulating and prostrating

before everyone including animals.

He used to take whatever he wanted from *Sri kovil* . The particular place in Guruvayoor temple where he used to sit for *purana-parayana* is still known as *Kunjhikkavu's corner* .

8. MALLIYOOR SANKARAN NAMBOODIRI

Bhagavata-Hamsam Brahmasri Malliyoor Shankaran Namboodiri is a living Legend of Krishna-bhakti . He was born on 02 February 1921 as the eldest son of Parameswaran Namboodiri and Arya Antarjanam , in the Vedic brahmin family, Malliyoor .

He was sick by birth . Severe illnesses and extreme poverty made his childhood miserable . In spite of all these miseries , he grew up as a loyal Krishnabhakta

.The poor parents some how managed to provide him Vedic education . The traditional *Brahmana-upanayanam* (initiation) was performed at the age of (8) followed by “Samavartanam” before he was (14) .

Brahmasri Malliyoor started working as a temple-Pujari . Being a scholar in Srimad Bhagavatam , he later dedicated own life to *Bhagavata katha-kathanam* (

ritual narration of Bhagavatam-stories). Bhagavan Himself presented a book of Bhagavatam to Sankaran Namboodiri .

His “Bhagavatam-nectar” quickly gained immense popularity among Krishna-bhaktas . Later, Malliyoor initiated “Bhagavata-SaptAham” movement in Vedic

temples, which practically “Bhagavatised” Kerala .

Bhagavatam is the essence of the Vedas ; and it is called “adhyAthmadeepa” , the light of the self. It is beneficial to the whole humanity, and removes the three kinds of miseries , namely, “Adhidaivika” (calamities due

to karma or fate) , “Adhibouthika” , (obstacles due to other beings) , and “adhyAthma” (troubles that come from one's own nature) . It is a fact that , when one wishes to read or hear Bhagavathm, Bhagavan Sri Krishna appears in his heart .

Sage Suka narrated Bhagavatam to king Parikshit in seven days . On the first day, it was till “varahavathara” , on second day till “ jatabharatha” episode, on the third till “amrthamathanam” , on the fourth till “krishnavathara” , on the fifth till “Rukminikalyanam” , on the sixth day it was till “uddhavasamvAdha” and the last day Bhagavatam was finished. This practice to read Bhagavatham in the same order for seven days is known as

BhagavatasapthAham .

Brahmasri Malliyoor and disciples have successfully completed several thousands of *BhagavatasapthAhams* feeding the nectar of Krishna-Bhakti to millions of devotees . The numerous titles bestowed on Brahmasree Malliyoor include *Bhagavata-Hamsam* (By Guruvayoor Bhagavata Vijanana Samiti) and *Bhagavataseva-Ratnam* (Guruvayoor temple’s Janamashtami-award .The Head of Kanchi Matha personally came to present this) .

Malliyoor’s family-deity is *Beeja-Ganapati* in the very ancient stone-carved temple . Since more than (50) years Brahmasree Malliyoor has been reciting

Bhagavatam keeping a salagramam in front of temple’s Presiding Deity Ganapati . It is a very rare practice to worship one’s *Ishta-Devata* in front of another Deity. However , Malliyoor did this to fulfill His obligations

towards His “family-deity Ganapati” and His own *Ishta-Devata, Sri Krishna* .

The result of the above ‘atmic-sadhana’ was a miracle . Vedic Brahmanas and Vedic-Jyotishis have found in this Ganapati-Deity an extremely rare

superimposition of *Krishna –Chaitanyam* . Hence this Deity has become a unique *Vaishnava-Ganapati* .

In spite of His exalted status as the top Vaishnava-Acharya in Kerala , Brahmasri Malliyoor Malliyoor is a picture of humility and compassion. The ever smiling

Acharya feeds everyone who visits Him is absolutely free from materialism. In the true Vaishnava tradition , He imbibed in both of His sons (Paramseswaran Namboodiri and Divakaran Namboodiri) “Bhagavata-dharma” ; and both of them are assisting Him in *BhagavatasaphAhams* .

HOW TO REACH GURUVAYOOR ?

By Air : Guruvayoor is situated at a distance of 80 km from the Kochi international airport (Nedumbassery) and 100 km from Calicut (Kozhikode) airport. All major international flight services operate from these airports.

By Rail : The Guruvayoor Railway Station is connected to the Madras-Mangalore main line at Thrissur. Those coming from the Madras/Thiruvananthapuram side can get down at Thrissur. From

Thrissur Railway Station, there are regular bus services to Guruvayoor.

By Road : Guruvayoor is well connected with the other parts of the country by road. Both the

KSRTC bus stand and Private Bus stand are about 500metres from the temple.

Om Namō Narayanaya !!!

Harippad subrahmanya swami temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Harippad is a small town , which is about 15-20 km from

Alleppy in Kerala, A great

temple dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya is situated there. It is

believed that when Lord

Subrahmanya victoriously vanquished Tharakasura and Soora

Padma and was returning

back he was received in this place with Music by Lord Vishnu.

So this place was called

Hari Geetha Puram and possibly(in the river near

Pathiramanal Island and) was called Hari

pattu (song of Lord Vishnu) in Malayalam or it may have got its

name from the “Vishnu

Pada “ in the eastern gate of the temple (Hari Padu-Vishnu’s

marks) . Some people are of

the opinion that it has nothing to do with God but Harippad

may have taken its name

from” too much of rice”

It is believed that this temple is 3500 years old and was

consecrated by Lord

Parasurama Himself. There are several inscriptions in this

temple in Tamil. The temple

got fire and was reconsecrated about one hundred years back.

There is a story that after building the temple the Namboodiris

were in search of a

proper idol to consecrate here. One of them was ordered in the dream to go to Kayamkulam and visit a pond (there,. He was told that a garland would be floating at one spot and if he makes a search there, he would get the suitable idol. The Namboodiris went there and got an Idol of the present God with four arms, one arm holding a Vel, another Vajrayudha, one showing the sign of blessing and one hand touching its thigh, This idol was brought and consecrated on the Pushya(poosam) star of Makara Masa(Thai maasam-January-february). This day is celebrated as the founding day of the temple every year.

Apart from Subrahmanya, the temple also has the idols of Maha Ganapathi and Dakshinamurthy. People believe that that the Subrahmanya idol has the Sannidhya (presence) of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma. Several peacocks wander in this temple

The major offerings in this temple in called Thula Payasam in which rice, green gram dhal, jaggery coconuts, ghee, banana fruits(kadali) , black grapes, sugar candy , cardamom etc are added. Apart from this Kadum Payasam (strong Payasam) , neyyappam , Paal payasam , Vellai Neivedhyam , Payasam made of coconut milk Panchamrutham , Ilai adai etc are also offered to the God. People offer a garland made of lime fruits to Lord Subrahmanya,

There is a story that a rich Brahmin who was a great devotee of Lord Subrahmanya

was not blessed with any children. He transferred all his properties to the temple and

went outside the temple by the western gate and committed suicide .From that day , the

western gate is kept locked. To atone this , a temple has been built in Karu Nattu Illam

and every year the God's procession passes by its front. But as soon as the procession

comes near the house, all music is stopped and only the sound of conch accompanies the

procession.

Out side the main temple , there is a original temple . Here the God is Velayudha with

two hands. This temple is called The Temple which is below (keezh thiru koil).

Getting there:

The temple is located just a kilometer away from Harippad town in Alappuzha

district.

Nearest railway station: Harippad, about 5 km away.

Nearest airport: Cochin International Airport, about 85 km away from Alappuzha.

Koodal Manikkam Temple, Irinjalkkuda

By

P.R.Ramachander

Irinjalkkuda is a small town which is about 25 Km from Trichur. It is believed that two

streams were flowing through this place and it was called Iru

chala kkuda, which later became Irinjalakkuda. This is the only temple which is dedicated to Bharatha, the younger brother of Lord Sri Rama, in India. The God is also called Sangameshwara. It is believed that a saint called Kuleepathi was doing yagas at the spot where the temple is built. There is a temple tank inside the temple which is called Kuleepathi tank. People believe it as the spot where the above saint was doing Yagnas. Today the water of this tank is only used to the worship of the God Bharatha in the temple. This temple tank does not have any other aquatic life except fishes. People believe that the fishes in this tank were the sages who used to do Yaga there. There is a custom of feeding these fish to please the God, because of this. People believe that there was a very ancient temple at this spot but the power of the deity started diminishing. Astrologers were consulted and they told that a new Prathishta should be done. At that time some fishermen fished out four statues of Gods from the sea. Then it was decided based on a divine voice, that one of those statues would be consecrated in this place .The statue chosen was that of Bharatha. The Rama Statue was consecrated in Triprayar, the Lakshmana statue in Muzhikkulam and the Shattrugna statue in Payamel. All these places are not very far off. After the

consecration, the power of the temple increased. The idol of Bharatha is five feet tall with four hands holding bow, conch, wheel and Abhaya mudra. Offering Lotus to this Lord is considered as very propitious.

During that time, the priest noticed a very red glow being the statue. The people wanted to measure the strength of the glow, which was like the glow of Manikkam (a costly gem). The only rich man in possession of such a gem was the king Of Kayankulam. He willfully gave his very costly Manikkam. But when it was taken near the glow behind the statue, the manikkam of the king got merged with the statue. From that time this temple was known as Koodal Manikkam Kshethram (The temple of added Manikkam)., Since the gem belonged to king of Kayankulam, this temple was given under his control After some time the King of Travancore conquered Kayankulam and then the temple belonged to him Thus a temple in the middle of Cochin Kingdom was owned by the king of Travancore. After independence the temple came under the control of the government.

Another peculiarity of this temple is the offering of 101 Brinjals to the Lord. This is followed because of a story. There was a devotee of the temple who suffered due to severe stomach ache. The Lord came in his dream and ordered

him to offer 101 Brinjals

to the Lord. His ache disappeared. Ever since this incident people offer 101 Brinjals to get cured of diseases.

The punartham (Punarvasu) star of the Makara (January – February) is celebrated as the foundation day of the temple. In the Thiruonam (Sravana) star of the month of Thulam

(October-November) Puthari (new rice) festival is celebrated in this temple. People bring

new rice, vegetables, Banana etc to the temple from all villages around the temple. Next

day they are offered to God and grand feast for every one is arranged with the new

produce brought by them. Next day a medicine called Mukkudi is offered to the Lord and distributed to the devotees.

The temple has Poojas in the morning, noon and in the evening. For the night Pooja

women are not allowed to participate .Another peculiar practice in this temple is that

bells are not rung, camphor not lighted and incense not offered during worship. People

believe that Lord Bharatha is doing meditation here and doing all these things would disturb him.

Kachankurichi temple, Kollengode

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is a temple situated in Kollengode, a small town near

Palakkad town of Kerala.

Though this is considered as a temple of Lord Shiva, more importance is given to Lord Vishnu's temple within the temple complex.

The Vishnu's idol is made of Jack tree wood and is about 6 feet tall and faces the east.

He is sitting on Anantha (Snake) and holds in his hand Conch, wheel, and mace and

lotus flower. On both his side are his consorts, Bhoodevi and Sridevi. Since it is difficult

to see his consorts, mirrors are kept on both sides so that the devotee can see all the three

statues together. But in spite of this the God is worshipped as Rama.

It is believed that these idols were consecrated by Sage

Kasyapa. This temple has been

named after this sage as "Kasaypam kurichi" , which over decades has become

Kachankurichi. Very near the temple are two sacred rivers Ikshu and Gayathri. There is

also a mountain near by called the Govinda Mountain. People believe there is a cave in

the mountain called Sitharakundam. In this cave it is believed that Lord Rama and Sita

stayed for some time. There is a stone there by the side of a stream nearby, which is

yellow. People believe that Sita used to apply turmeric from this stone.. Since this temple

was also known as Venkata desam and the God here is also referred to as Venkatesan.

Since the idol is made of wood, there is no regular Abishekam.

The idol is anointed with oil once in a year. In these parts people who are not regular in their bathing habits are teasingly referred as Kachankurichi Perumal. It seems Sage Kasyapa did an Aswamedha sacrifice here along with Sages Athri, Agasthya and Markandeya. The Yaga kunda (the pit where the sacrifice is done) is the present day Temple tank. It is called as Yagna theertham. The waters are considered as very sacred and supposed to remove all sins. The steps to this temple tank goes very deep. Very near the main (north side) temple tank, there is another small tank, which is referred to as "Kuthira Kulam. (Horse tank)". It is believed that the sages tied the horse of Aswamedha sacrifice at this spot. In the southern side also there is a tank. It seems a king got leprosy due to his insulting Lord Shiva. According to the advice of Sage Agasthya, he got cured of this disease, by performing Abishekams to Lord Shiva using this water. It seems during the invasion of Tippu sultan he wanted to plunder this temple. But once he was told about the immense power of this lord, instead he gave many properties to this temple. It is interesting to note that, wherever a Yaga is performed in Kerala, The soma Latha, the Karungali wood and the deer's skin which are to be used in

the Yaga are brought first

to this temple, kept before Perumal (Lord Vishnu) statue and pooja performed. Then only

it becomes fit to be used in the Yaga.

Inside this temple there are temples for Ayyappa, Lord Shiva and Lord Naga

Subrahmanya. Outside the temple is a Naga Prathishta

The arattu festival takes place in this temple in the month of Medam. The festival starts

in the Hastha Nakshathram and the festival goes up to the Thiruonam star.

All amavasya days are important to this temple, especially The Deepavali amavasya.

Thaipooosam also is a gala festival at this temple. On that day , devotees go to the

Govinda Mountain, bring water from a stream there . (It seems there are marks of Conch

and Vishnu Pada in the stream) and use the water to do Abhisheka to Lord Vishnu.

During all Thiruonam days, Paal payasam is offered to the God.

The temple opens at 5 Am and remains opened till 11 Am. In between several types of

worship including Seeveli and Pandheeradi Pooja are performed. It again opens at 5 Pm

and remains open till 8Pm..

Kadampuzha Bhagawathy temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kadampuzha (meaning Forest River) is a famous temple of the mother goddess. This

place is in the road between Shoranur and Calicut. The nearest railway station is Kuttipuram. You can reach the temple from Guruvayur also. The goddess in this temple is in the form of a huntress. She took this form when Shiva took the form of a hunter to test the discipline of Arjuna, before giving him the Pasupathasthra. At that time, one boar sent by Duryodhana was trying to kill Arjuna. Both Arjuna as well as Lord Shiva in the form of hunter shot arrows at the boar. Both of them claimed that the boar was killed by them. A fight ensued. Arjuna shot many arrows at the boar. But all arrows turned in to flowers. Goddess and Lord later blessed Arjuna, There is a belief that when Adhishankara was passing through this place he saw a very bright light emanating from a hole. Understanding the presence of Goddess in this hole, he consecrated the Goddess near by . The Ashta Mangalya Prasna conducted at the temple indicates that this temple is 1900 years old . It seems when Adhi Shankara was passing through this way, he saw a fierce light in this place. Through his divine intellect he could see that Goddess was here in a very furious form. He decided to consecrate her there. He was helped in this job by a Varrier family. Even today this Varrier family lives in near the temple and manages it. Every Friday night, the idol of the Goddess is covered and

completely hidden by

Thechi flowers (red small flowers which is liked by the Goddess) . This is called "Poo

moodal(covering with flowers),. The expense for this is normally given by the devotees.

It seems this has been booked up to the year 2020.

Another interesting prayer here is Muttu Neekal(Removing of road blocks). This is

done by the priest breaking a coconut telling our name and our problem. If it breaks

properly the devotee believes that his problem is solved. If not he breaks another

coconut. It is believed that the tender water of the coconut we break goes in to the hole ,

where Bhagawathy is there and being pleased she blesses for the removal of the obstacle.

Muttu Neekal is done for getting knowledge, children , getting freedom from disease ,

getting married, owning a trouble free vehicle and so on. This temple is open from 6 Am

to 12 Noon and in the evening between 5 PM to 6 PM. No body goes o the temple after 6

PM.

Kadunthuruthi Mahadeva Thali Kshethram

The temple where the priest saved the Linga when there was a fire (300 years back) by embracing it and giving away his life

Kaduthuruthi Mahadeva Thali Kshethram

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kaduthuruthy-Thaliyil Mahadeva Kshetram (temple) is lesser known to pilgrims than the other two temples Vaikom and Ethumanur . It is believed visiting these triad of temples before Ucha (Noon) pooja is considered to be auspicious. This temple is situated on a small hillock and compared to the other temples and it is smaller in size. The Sivalingam here is only 3" in size and faces east.

The temple is situated mid-way between Vaikom and Ettumanoor. Kaduthuruthy is a small town, the northern and western parts of which are spread over by Vembanattu backwaters. During the tenth century this place was under the administration of Pandya Kings. However, it was divided into Vadakkumkoor and Thekkumkoor. Kaduthuruthy became the headquarters of Vadakkumkoor dynasty. The rulers were the supporters of Zamorins. When Marthanda Varma conquered Vadakkumkoor, he showed respect to the rulers by giving them pensions. Gradually this dynasty was declined and was removed from the pages of Kerala history

The name might have derived from "Kadal thuruthi (intrusion from sea). But it is believed that as asura called Khara got three holy Lingas from Lord Shiva.

He took one each in his hand and the third one by biting by his mouth. He consecrated all these three Lingas in Kerala. The Linga which carried in mouth by biting is supposed to be consecrated in this temple .Kadichu iruthi (he consecrated them after biting) must have been the original name. The present temple is on a hill top and faces east. The temple is under the administration of Travancore Devaswam board. The other two lingams which are smaller are believed to be consecrated by Khara in Vaikom

and Ethumanur.

It seems once this temple caught fire about 300 years back . The priest simply embraced the idol and died in the fire rather than allow it to be spoiled. His statue is also consecrated in the temple.

Apart from his statue, the idols of Yakshi, Durga and Ganapathi are also found inside the temple.

As mentioned above since there is belief that if one can prostrate in the three idols at Kaduthurthi, Ethumanur and Vaikom on the same day, it would lead to fulfillment of all our wishes, One

Vadakkum koor King who was a devotee used to do that till he became very old. Later

when he was not able to do that , he consecrated God of Ethumanur is the southern gate

and Lord of Vaikom in the northern gate. It is believed that if we visit Kaduthuruthi we

will get the benefit of visiting all the three shrines.

There is a festival of ten days in this temple. It does not have the grandeur of the

festivals of Vaikom and Ethumanur. Since several Namboodiri villages were surrounding

this temple, this temple was classified as a Thali temple.

Kaikkakom Chamundi temple , Trivandrum

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

(many of you go to Trivandrum. Please do not miss this great temple .Acknowledgment to Wikipedia about the temple and a tamil post in face book by Sri vasu Iyengar)

This is a temple dedicated to the fierce form Of Goddess Bhagawathi called Chamundi in Trivandrum and is about 7 km away Padmanabhaswamy temple in the north western direction The place is called Karikkakom and the goddess “ Karikakathu Amma” .This temple it seems was built by a later chera king called “anusham, Thirunal Rama Varma Raja”

Story of the temple

One Vedic pundit had a disciple called Yogeeswara who like his Guru was worshipping the Goddess CHamundi. One day the goddess appeared before him as a little girl .Yogeeswara and his Guru brought the girl to this place , built a leaf thatched shed and made her stay there, Then the girl appeared before them as Goddess and told them she will be forever staying there . Yogeeswara got a statue made and consecrated it there ,

The temple

In this temple the Goddess appears in three forms viz Raktha Chamundi devi ,Bala CHamundi devi and Maha Chamundi and in the temples of Raktha Chamundi and Bala Chamundi there are no statues consecrated but there are pictures v of Goddess drawn on the wall .

Maha Chamundi temple

It seems in the temple of Maha Chamundi devi , there was a statue made of silver and consecrated on a deer horn stage .Later the devotees got a pancha loha Idol made and got it consecrated here .,
(21st march 1997)

There are temples for Sastha , Ganapathi , Yakshiyamma , BHuvaneswari Ayiravalli and Yogeswara in the same compound besides a Nagar Kavu .There is also an old house called Guru Mandiram, the house of Yogeswara's Guru al rituals

Worship in the temple

In the morning after nirmalya darsanam there is a panchamritha Abhisherkam to the goddess and after wards she would be offered Kadum Payasam (Very concentrated Jaggery Payasam) .The offerings Of pal payasam and Panchamritham are also made. There are also the following special rituals

Bali Sadhya

This ritual takes place in the month of Karkatakam on the Karthika day. On this day inside the temple special poojas are performed for the Guru and Mantramoothi. Brahmins are given food and dress. After this ceremony devotees are given Bali Sadhya. This is a very old custom of the temple, which is followed even today.

Nirayum Puthiriyum

The paddy taken from the land belonging to the temple is first offered to the Devi.

Uthrada Taneerkuda

This is another important festival conducted during the month of Chingam on Uthradam day. This is a very ancient and important pooja.

Kodi Charthu

This is a ritual conducted in the month of Chingam on Thiruvonam day after the Nirmalya Darshanam. The devotees offer the Devi yellow dress during the festival.

Ayilyam Ootu

The temple performs poojs for the Nagas on the ayilyam day in the month of Makaram. This is known as Vallya Ayilyam. From ancient times this pooja is performed for propitiating the Nagas and removing Naga Dosha.

Raktha Chamundi and Bala Chamundi

IN the Raktha Chamundi temple (where Goddess is in the form of a drawing) People accused of anything , if they deny it ,are asked to take an oath before the goddess .People are scared and tell the truth

It seems once upon a time the queen lost her costly ear rings ,They suspected a security guard and imprisoned him .The lover of the guard came and told the king that she has stolen it.Hearing that the guard told that it was not true and he was the thief.Both of them were taken to the temple of the Raktha Chamundi ,Both of them took bath in the temple pond and brought to the temple ,Then the washer woman of queen cloths rushed there with the ear rings and told every one, that she found them in the queen's cloths .The gurad and his lover were set free .The Queen presented the ear rings to the goddess

Bala Chamundi temple

Here the Chamundi is drawn in a vey peaceful form

Festivals

- 1.poNGALA IN Meenam month for seven days
- 2.Mandala Vratham - Festival in connection with the annual Utsavam of Sabarimala
- 3.Vinayaka Chathurthi - Pooja to the Lord Ganapathy

- 4.Pooja Vaypu - Identical to Dussera festival (Saraswathy Pooja and Vidyarambham)
- 5.Sivarathri - Siva Pooja
- 6.Karthika - Karthika Deepam
- 7.Ayilya Pooja - Milk, flowers etc. offered to serpent God and special rites
- 8.Aiswarya Pooja - On all full moon (Pournami) days
- 9.Shasta Pratishta Dinam - Every year in the month of Makaram on the Rohini day Shasta Pratishta Dinam is celebrated in the temple.
- 10.Vishu Kani - On the first day of the month of Medam people come here for the Vishukani Darshanam.

The temple would be open from 5 Am to 12 noon and 4.30 Pm to 8.30 PM

The contact particulars of the temple
Karikkakom Sree Chamundi Temple,
Karikkakom, Beach PO,
Thiruvananthapuram,Kerala,Postal Code - 695007 India
Phone
0471 2500989 (Temple) 2507671 (Office)
E mail
karikkakomdevitemple@gmail.com

Transportation

Karikkakom is just 7 km from Thiruvananthapuram city. The nearest airport is TRivandrim air port.The nearest railway station is Trivandrum Central Railway Station and the nearest bus station is Thiruvananthapuram Central Bus Station. Those who travel via Kollam on reaching Kazhakoottam junction should take the straight road via World Market junction and from there take the right turn via Vazhavila to the temple. Those who take the M.C. Road should come through Kesavadasapuram via Palayam, Peta, Chakka bypass. Those coming from Neyyattinkara, via East Fort, Enchakkal junction

can reach the temple using the bypass road. The temple can also be reached via Chakka Attuvarambu road.

Thaanikkudathamma temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

There is a temple of Bhagawathy near Trichur, where every year, the waters of the nearby rivers enters the temple to give Ceremonial Dip(Aarattu) to the Goddess.The devotees also enter the temple and take a dip in water along this Bhagawathy. This goddess is called Thaanikudam Bhagawathy . There is an interesting story about this temple

It seems in Chunakathoor there was temple with two Goddesses (iratta prathishta) one was parvathi and another a Vana Durga referred to as Devi,The temple was under management of Nairs and Brahmins were doing the pooja .Once there was a clash between Nairs and Brahmins. The Nairs took away the idol of the dEvi but the Brahmins refused to give the Val(sword) of the velichapadu to them. The Nairs took away the Goddess and consecrated her below a Thaani maram (Terminalia bellirica) .This temple was from that time referred to as Thaani kudam Bhagawathy .It is a practice that The velichapadu(Oracles) of the temple even today do not touch the sword,The temple is surrounded on all the three sides by river, one of which is Thaanikudam river .

14 km travel from thrissur. Easily accessible by road transport. Private buses are there to thanikkudam temple stop from "vadakke bus stand" thrissur in every 5 minutes. Kerala police academy is the nearest known place. Private bus fare almost 7 rupees.

Address : Thanikudam Baghavathy Temple
Thanikudam, Mannuthy
Phone : +7(111)123456789
E-mail : thanikkudamtemple@gmail.com

Kaladi Trikaladiyappan(Krishna) temple and Sankara temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Kaladi previously known as Sasalam is the birthplace of Adhi Sankara. It is 7 km from Angamali, 22 km from Aluva and 7 km from Cochin airport and is on the shore of river Poorna called as Periyar in Malayalam. There is an ancient Krishna temple there as well as a modern temple of Adhi Sankara.

Adhi Sankara was born to Aryamba and Shivaguru as a result of their prayers at Vadakkunathan temple at Trichur. Adhi Sankara's father dies even when he was in the womb of his mother. This Krishna temple was the deity of his clan. This fact has been mentioned by Adhi Sankara in verse 243 of his work Prabodha Sudhalkaram. It seems when he was a little child, on the way to the Periyar river to take bath, Aryamba fainted. The child Sankara not knowing anything to do prayer Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna told him to draw a line in the earth with his feet and assured that the river would change its course. The child Sankara drew a line in front of the Krishna temple with his feet and the river came to that place, which was very near to home of Sankara. Kaladi in Malayalam means "feet" and it got its name because the Lord asked Sankara to draw a line with his feet. From then on the Krishna at the temple was being called as TRikaladiyappan (The god of holy feet.). It is also believed that Adhi Sankara as a boy composed the "kanakadhara sthavam" addressed to Goddess Lakshmi, to help a poor woman, indirectly trying to influence his Kula deivam-Trikaladoyappan. This ancient temple is being

maintained with the help of Sringeri Sarada peetam as well as the thekke Madam of TRichur , both of which were established by Adhi Sankara. The temple is open from 5,30 Am to 11 Am and 5.30 PM to 7.30 PM

Apart from all regular poojas and Homas like all temples in Kerala , Kanakadhara sthava Yagnam as well as Sri Vidhya Rajagopala Yagnam are performed at this temple. Apart from Akshaya Tritheeya which is celebrated in the temple , The arattu of Lord Krishna , in which The uthsava idol is dipped in the river is held during January first week.

Nearby by in the river there are two Ghats which are connected with the history of Adhi Sankara. The “Mudala Kadavu”(crocodile Ghat) , is supposed to be the place where the crocodile caught the feet of Adhi Sankara and his mother gave him permission to undertake SAnyana and another Ghat where the funeral rites of his mother were performed by Adhi Sankara,.

Near to this Krishna temple the Jagadguru of SARada peetam Sringeri has built a temple for Adhi Sankara, Goddess Sarada and Lord Ganapathi near to the Krishna temple on the banks of Poorna river in the year 2010. The Samadhi of ARyambhga, the mother of Adhi Sankara is located at this temple. There is also a Sankara Sthamba Mandapam (in octagonal shape/built by Kanchi Kmakoti mutt) And Veda Patasala along with a guest house attached to this temple. Sankara Jayanthi and Sarada Navathri festivals are observed at this temple.

Apart from these two temples there are several temples in Kaladi and nearby areas. Two km away from Kaladi is the Vellaman thulli Shiva temple , which was supposed to be consecrated by Adhi Sankara; s father Shivaguru , The Nayathodu Sankara Narayana temple where Adhi Sankara is supposed to have worshipped Lord Shiva as Lord Vishnu . Karpilly Kavu where Shivaguru , the father of Adhi Sankara was the priest . There is also a Ramakrishna temple in Kalady maintained by Ramakshna mutt.

Kallekulangara Hemambika temple

(Emoor Bhagawathy temple/Kaipathi kavu)

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is about 8 kilometers from Palakkad town.. The temple also is called Emoor

Bhagawathy temple or kaipathi (hand) temple or Hemambika temple. In this temple the hands of the Bhagawathy are consecrated. There are several different stories about the origin of this temple.

1. "On their regular trek through the dense Vadamala forest to worship at the valley shrine of Durga, one day Kurur and Kaimukku Nambudiris were granted a vision. The golden Goddess stood beside an elephant under a tree. When the aged Kurur was disheartened by his inability to undertake hazardous pilgrimages, the Goddess assured him in a dream that he would find her in the neighborhood. The next day witnessed the emergence of her hands in the middle of a lake close by. When Kurur swam through to clasp them, the divine hands turned into stone.

The lake was filled and a shrine erected by the local ruler, whose descendent remains in charge of temple administration" (Hindu , June 14, 2002)

.2. The goddess had once agreed to appear before a devotee on the condition that he will not disclose it to anyone. The excitement led the devotee to disclose the fact to others.

When the goddess appeared before the devotee, she noticed many people along with him.

The displeased goddess vanished suddenly. By that time The devotees had seen only her

upraised hand and in the temple her upraised hand is worshipped

It is believed, the deity takes three forms a day – in the morning as Saraswathi, in the

noon as Laxmi and in the evening as Durga. The rituals vary according to the form of the deity at the time of worship.

(gansripar.blogspot.com/2008/07/emoorbhagavathygoddess-hemambika.html)

3.Emur Bhagavathy (Hemambika), the bestower of prosperity, boons and auspiciousness

raised her divine hands in the middle of the blessed pond Kallekulam. In a paroxysm of

devotion, her impatient priest jumped in to the pond and caught hold of those hands

before she fully manifested. The Devi stopped appearing. The priest got only the Devi's

emerging hands. This is the great legend of the famous Hemambika Temple where the

Devi's hands are enshrined in the sanctum sanctorum.

4.The temple with unique idol of only " two hands ".It is widely believed that the

"DEVI" the goddess emerged from the midst of pond to bless an ailing devotee, who out

of excitement caught hold of two hands before it could come out .Then a temple was

consecrated with those two hands as goddess. This beautiful

temple surrounded by 5

ponds and paddy fields. a nature kissed

environment.wikimapia.org/1616355/Hemambika-Temple-Kallekulangara

5.The story or the belief, behind this unique deity of two raised

The Hands was that a girl

(incarnation of the Goddess Parvathy), who escaped from

molestation jumped into the

river, holding her hands for help. And the story or belief goes

that she was helped by the

Lord Shiva, on seeing the hands floating above the river.

[http://blogs.ibibo.com/jgopikrishnan/story-behind-the-](http://blogs.ibibo.com/jgopikrishnan/story-behind-the-congress-party-s-election-sy)

[congress-party-s-election-sy](http://blogs.ibibo.com/jgopikrishnan/story-behind-the-congress-party-s-election-sy)

Daily pooja timings are 0500 hrs to 1130 in the morning and

1700 hrs to 2030 in the

evening

This temple is the family deity of Palakkad kings. In fact the

ariyittu Vazcha of the

king (coronation) used to be conducted here. Main attraction is

the nine day festival of

shivratri. Thousands of devotees attend the festival with pomp

and fanfare. The

celebration ends at the Kalpathy River. Apart from this in the

month of may every year a

Laksharchana is conducted. The Navarathri festival also is

celebrated in this temple. A

kalam ezhuthu pattau mahothsavam is celebrated every year

in the months of Vrichigam-

Dhanu (From November 16th to December 25th).

There is the snippet about this temple. It seems the former

Prime Minister of India ,

Indira Gandhi visited this temple after the Congress split along with Sri Karunakaran. She was impressed by the goddess and made the palm of the goddess as her election symbol.

Kallil Bhagawathi temple , Methala, Perumbavur

Compiled By
P.R.Ramachander

One of the oldest temples in Kerala is the Kallil Bhagawathi temple near Methala village which is near Perumbavur .It is believed that it is 5000 years old. The temple is in the middle of 28 acres of forest (once belonging to Kallil Pisharam) on a top of the rock .We have to climb 120 steps to reach there .You would see only stones every where in the temple.It seems once upon a time a very Goddess was playing with stone balls(throwing up and catching them) ,When people neared her, along with the stones she was playing , it seems , she ran inside a cave and vanished..The ball that she threw to the top , according to belief became the roof of the temple(It stands there without any support) and the ball which came down became the floor of the temple. People believe that even if 15 elephants pull to gather the roof does not move at all.According to people the huge rock standing without any support is a real wonder of the world.

There are two major offerings to the goddess

1. A broom stick(chool nercha) for hair to grow to ladies.The broom it seems should be made with Broom sticks which have not been touched by steel(ie you should not tear of palm leaves by a steel knife)

2. The other offering is stones(kal nercha) from half built houses we are building. This is for quick completion of the buildings. People believe that the home will be completed within a year

Once we achieve the results of the prayer, we are supposed to return to the temple and thank the Goddess.

Since the temple is in a cave and the goddess is consecrated at the end of the cave we cannot do Pradakshina for her. So the goddess as well as the stone is saluted. She is also called "Kallil arulunna devi(Goddess who is pleased with stone) .There are small temples for Ganesa, Vishnu, Shiva Yakshi and Kari Naga Yakshi around the temple.>in the temple there is Bali Kallu and Namaskara mandapam also ,In the roof hanging stone you can see the form of Brahma also

There is a belief that this was a jain temple and the Goddess is a Jain Goddess called Padmavathi. People also believe that the jain statues of Paraswanatha and Maha veera slowly became Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.

The festival of the temple is on Ksarthika star of Vruschiga month. The festival is for 8 days. It is interesting to know the Devi travels on a female elephant

Previously the temple used to be closed after noon pooja but nowadays, there is a deeparadhana and pooja in the evening also.

There is a place called Odakkali between Peruimpavur and Kothamangalam. This temple is 4 km from Odakkali(ten km from Perumbavor)

The idol being worshipped as Goddess Durga used to be that of Sree Padmavati during the Jain period and the idol of Vardhamana Mahavira is being worshipped now as Lord Siva. Idols of Lord Vishnu, Ganapati and Ayyappa were installed in the same cave later on. The fascinating feature about the temple is the mystery on how the boulder of size 50ft x 25 t x 15 ft stays atop the temple without any damage for so long. Idol of Lord Brhama can be seen carved at the huge rock. The

three trinity i.e Brhama, Shiva and Vishnu are also worshiped here.

Palliunarthal at 5.30 AM, After that opening the Sanctorum(Sree Kovil), Nirmalya Darsanam, Abhishekam,Malar Nivedyam, Ethruthu Pooja at 7 AM., Ucha Pooja at 10.15 AM. Opening Sanctorum evening at 5 PM., Deeparadhana at 6.30 PM, Athazha Pooja at 7.15 PM and after that the temple closes.

The address of the temple is
Shri Kallil Bhagavathi Temple
Kallil Pishaarathu Devaswam
Methala P.O. Methala
Ernakulam Kerala , India
Pin: 683545
Phone is +91 99477983023

Kallil Bhagavathi Temple is a cave temple which is just 10 km away from Perumbavoor. Angamaly Railway Station is just 5 km way and Ernakulam Junction, the major rail-head, is located about 45 km from here and Aluva Station is about 25 km from here. Cochin International Airport is located about 25 km form here. Cochin Airport is one of the major Airports in India and Kerala State and is attended by many airlines at regular interval.

Kalpathi Kundambalam for Viswanatha Swamy and Goddess Visalakshi

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Palakkad city is supposed to have 18 agraharams .There is a belief that these agraharams were gifted to the tamil

Brahmins by one king Sekari Varman of Kollengode . There is also a belief that Kalpathy Agraharam was the first settlement while some people believe that it was Sekari puram. There is a temple in the centre of the Kalpathi village dedicated to Viswanatha Swami and Visalakshi which is at a place lower level than the agraharam on the river bank and is called Kundambalam. On both sides of this temple 150 Tamil Brahmin houses were established. This great agraharam was recently recognised as a heritage village by Archeological survey of India.

A stone inscription of the temple (In Vattezhthu which precedes the present alphabets of Malayalam) records some endowments , witnessed by Itikombi Achan, a member of the Palakkad Royal family in Malayalam Era 600 (1424-25 AD). Evidently this temple was consecrated earlier, The existence of the temple is also mentioned in Logan's Malabar Manual where it is mentioned that the temple was consecrated in the year 1464.

The general belief is that one Lakshmi Ammal along with her husband Venkitanarayana iyer of kollengode , who had settled there from Mayiladu Thurai of Tamil Nadu went by foot to Benares(Kasi) during those days and brought Siva Lingas from there . They wanted a temple to Lord Shiva to be built resembling the Mayurnatha swamy temple of Mayavaram on the banks of Cauvery(some say Kasi Viswanatha SWamy temple of Benares) and it seems she gave 1320 gold coins to Prince Sekari Varman of Palakkad royal family to build a temple and consecrate the Shiva lingam which she has brought. She also entrusted the management of the temple with that king. It seems she desired that the temple should be on the banks of river Neela BHagirathy. Tamil Brahmins of Kerala say that "Kasiyil Pathi Kalpathi" i.e Kalpathy is half of Kasi.

According to depositions by Sri Somasundara Kurukkal, it is believed that the Prince who Lakshmi Ammal approached was Ittilkombi Achan. Sri Somasundara Kurukkal has also

confirmed that the Prince had entrusted the management of the temple to his descendants belonging to the Valia Konikkal Madom. The Prince had also donated land for the upkeep and maintenance of the temple. The lands set apart for this temple came to be made inam or revenue-free by him and this was allowed to be continued as revenue free by the subsequent rulers, Tipu Sultan and later by the British Government. Even today the management of the temple continues to be in the hands of the Trustee, a descendent of the erstwhile princely family. Lakshmi Ammal also constructed three other temples in nearby Kollengode, Koduvayur and Pokkunni. Naturally she installed lingams brought from Varanasi . They are Brahmin (in kollengode) Ksahtriya (Koduvayur) Sudra (Pokkunni in Kollengode).

The temple

The temple is situated at the bottom of eighteen steps leading from the eastern Gopuram. In the south-west direction of the temple is situated the temple of Sri Lakshminarayana Perumal of Old Kalpathy Village and Prasanna Maha Ganapathy of Chathapuram village, in the east the Kshipraprasada Maha Ganapathi Temple of Pandhrandaam Teruvu and the Manthakara Maha Ganapathi Temple of New Kalpathy village and in the east-west direction Sri Varadaraja Perumal of Govindarajapuram village. In the eastern direction at a distance of a kilometer is located the Chokkanathar temple of Chokkanathapuram village. On the right side while entering the temple, there are two banyan trees. The Serpent Gods [nagaprathishta] are consecrated beneath the first banyan tree, which is also the "sthala Vriksham". Pooja is performed for this tree and naga prathishta, treating it as "Vishnu Amsom".

The flag staff (Kodimaram) is erected in front of the temple.

The stone slab describing the land given to the temple etc. is installed behind the flag mast. Close to the stone slab is the Bhadralingam and in front of it the Gnana Nandikeswarar, facing Sri Viswanathaswamy. The eight sides of the prakaram(closed precincts of a temple) inside the Temple

belongs to Indra, Agni, Yama, Niruruthi, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera, and Eesanan. The idol of Sri Viswanathaswamy is situated in the direction of Kubera facing east and close to this Sri Visalakshi facing south. In front of Sri Viswanathaswamy, Nandikeswarar appears in three forms. The three forms symbolise Aathmathathwam, Vidyathathwam and Sivathathwam. The moolavar in this temple is Sri Viswanathaswami and he faces the east and mother Visalakshi faces the south. The palli arai is on the west of mother's shrine. Opposite the Palli Arai are Nava Grahas along with their consorts. Lord Gangadhara shrine is on south, Muruga along with Valli and DEvayanai on the east and there are also temples for CHandikeswara and Bhairava, facing south

Since mother Visalakshi faces south devotees believe that by praying to her their longevity can be increased. They perform Kumkumarchana to her and perform Mruthyunjaya Japa in front of her.

Pooja Vidhi

The idols of Sri Viswanathaswamy and Sri Visalakshi are attached to the pedestals by Ashtabandhanam, a mixture of eight elements that help fix the idol to the peetham or base. The Viswanathaswamy idol is a Bana Lingam. The Bana lingam extends four carpenter's angul (inch) higher than the pedestal. The circumference at the level of the pedestal may be about eight angul (inches). The Vishalakshi idol stands twenty four inches above the pedestal up to the top of the crown.

Pooja in temples are of two

types: aathmartham and parartham. The two differ in the sankalpam. In the former, the sankalpam will be in the name of yajamana of the temple i.e. udamasthan or owner. In the latter the sankalpam will be in the name of all people. In the Sri Viswanathaswamy temple, the pooja performed is aathmartham. The pooja in the temple is conducted on the pattern of the pooja held in the Mayuranathar Temple at Mayavaram. Sri Subramania Kurukkal of Mayavaram was the first poojakaran (priest). The pooja is conducted according

to the Tamil Agama. There are 28 types of Agamas. The pooja in this temple is being followed according to Kamikagamam. Pooja is conducted four times a day: 5:45AM Usha Pooja, 9:45 AM Uchikala Pooja, 5:45 PM Deeparadhana, and 7:45 PM Ardhajama Pooja. The Ardhajama pooja is most important. It includes dhara and Abhishekam by milk daily. Performing Umamaheswara Pooja is said to be of great value because both Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathy are said to be pleased by the Pooja if properly performed.

Chariot festival

Chariot Festivals are not normally carried out in Kerala but Kalpathy temple has a very famous chariot festival. The annual ten-day chariot festival conducted here during the month of November is one of the most remarkable festivals of Kerala. The festival is conducted over a period of 10 days, usually November 7 to 15. During this time, 4+chariots (rathas) from 4 temples of Kalpathy come together and circumvent streets of the villages in a grand procession. The 4+2 as follows: main chariot carrying Lord Shiva and additional 2 small chariots for his sons, Ganapathy and Murugan; chariots from the other 3 villages namely New Kalpathy with Lord Ganapathy, Old Kalpathy with Lord Krishna and Chathapuram with Lord Ganapathy. This is known as 'devarathasamgamam' Vedic recitals and cultural programmes are held in the temple during the first four days of the festival. On the last three days, thousands of devotees gather together to draw decorated temple chariots through the streets. The temple is open from 5.30 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. and from 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Address

Sri Viswanathar Temple, Kalpathi, Palakkadu, Kerala. Contact number

+91 94478 39279, 0491 257 7955

Reaching Kalpathy by Bus / Road

Kalpathy Temple is just 3 km from the town of Palakkad. Palakkad Central Bus Station operates bus services which connects Palakkad with all nearby towns and cities in Kerala including Guruvayoor, Thrissur, Ernakulam (Kochi), and Thiruvananthapuram. Palakkad Bus Station also operates interstate bus services to many cities including Bangalore, Coimbatore and Chennai.

Reaching Kalpathy by Air / Flight

Coimbatore Airport in Tamil Nadu is the nearest airport to reach Kalpathy, just 55 km away. Other nearest airports to reach Kalapathi are the Karipur Airport or Calicut International Airport (130 km), and Cochin International Airport (140 km) at Nedumbassery, Kochi.

Reaching Kalpathy by Train / Railway Station

Palakkad Junction Railway Station, one of the major railheads managed by the Southern Railways, is the nearest railway station to reach Kalpathy Viswanatha Swamy Temple. Located at Olavakkode, the station is also known as Olavakkode Railway Station. Palakkad Town Railway Station is another nearest railway station situated inside the town limits.

Nearby Temples in Kalpathy

The temple of Sri Lakshminarayana Perumal of Old Kalpathy Village is in the south-west direction of Kalpathy Temple. Other temples situated nearby include Varadaraja Perumal Temple at Govindarajapuram, Manthakara Maha Ganapathy Temple at New Kalpathy, Maha Ganapathy Temple at Chathapuram, Chokkanathar Temple at Chokkanathapuram, Kshipraprasada Maha Ganapathi Temple at Pandhrandaam Teruvu, and Jain Temple of Jainmedu.

Kanjirankattu Vaidyanatha Kshetram

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple of God Vaidyanatha (the Lord of doctors) is situated on a hill top near The Thaliparamba town(20 km from Kannur of Malabar) . It is believed that a king called Sathasaoman established this temple There is a belief that in ancient days a sage got affected by leprosy and as per the advice of Lord Garuda , he came to this temple and did penance to the god and got rid of the disease.

The most important ritual of the temple is Dhara (ceremonial pouring of water on the Shiva Lingam). Since this temple is supposed to have the power of Sun God instilled in it, Sunday is the most important day of worship in this temple .Most of the devotees of the temple either do not take any food on Sunday (Upavasa) or take only one main meals (Orikkal) . There are several stories of people getting cured of incurable diseases by praying at this temple.

Many people afflicted by skin diseases regularly come to this temple and by performing Dhara get cured of their diseases.

Karamana Sathya Vageeswarar temple, Trivandrum

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

The Karamana Temple is situated in the middle of Karamana Agraharam of Trivandrum. It is believed that sage Khara consecrated the Shiva idol on the Karamana river bank(once called Vanamala river) facing south and worshipped it, he called it SATHYA Vagheeswaran (God who protects truth) .Since it was place where Khara lived , it was called “khara mana” and later it became kara mana

Over years the place attracted lot of Vedic Scholars who started living around the temple . They were once attacked by epidemics and “deva prasna(questioning god) “ revealed that they have to consecrate a goddess also in this temple. One of them got a dream that the statue of the Goddess is available in the Madhura temple pond. The villagers went to Madhura Temple and searched in the pond and got a devi statute.It seems it was a rejected statute of Madurai temple and they called it “aavudai amman” . That Devi Idol was brought in palanquin on the shoulders of devout bhakthas (the palanquin bamboo is still kept at the temple).This goddess was consecrated in the same room as Lord Shiva., towards his left side This is extremely rare phenomena .In most of the Shiva temples , if Amman is there she is consecrated in a separate temple

.Though the goddess is referred to as Avudayamma , she is also called Madhura Meenakshi as well as Gomathi Amman and the temple is known as Sri Gomathyamba SAMedha Sathya Vagheeswara temple.

After the consecration of the Goddess , the village became prosperous and the Travancore king of these days presented land around the temple to Tamil speaking Brahmins

The temple also has huge Nandi made of one stone as well as sub temples for Lord subrahmanya , Lord Ganesa and Lord

Ayyappa. There is a strange practice of ringing bells before opening the temple

The most important festival in the Temple is Thai posam (12 days) During which there is procession of Amman and Theethavari), Nava Rathri , Akshaya trithiya, Skanda sashti , Vinaya chaturthi etc. There is puspabhishekam to the God Shiva in month of Makaram

The temple is open from 5.15 Am to 11.30 Am, and 5.30 Pm to 8.45 Pm

The temple can be contacted by telephone 0471-2345667

Kariyam devi temple of Sri Karyam, Trivandrum

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This temple of Goddess Durga is situated near the Sri Karyam junction in the Trivandrum city, the capital of Kerala state . Her devotees consider as SARvabheeshta Pradhayini . There is a story about the origin of this temple.

People believe that the Goddess came here from KODungallore through a back water canal in a boat. Her security called Madan c also came along with her sitting on the top most crest of the boat. He is called Vallathala Madan and was given a position in the neighboring paddy field belonging to the Panchal family. Along with her Nagaraja (serpant god) also came in the boat and he was worshipped in Kariyathu Kavu and the Goddess was worshipped in Keezhe Karuam.

Another legend says that there was a devotee of Goddess Durga who had a g house at this place. It seems, one day he received three guests , one lady and two men, who wanted to stay in his house for one night. He was very hospitable and gave them sumptuous food. It seems that night all the three of them vanished and there

was a great divine luster in his house. A mysterious voice informed him that his guests were Goddess Durga, Madan and Nagaraja and they wanted to stay at that place. The voice also ordered him to build an Ambatheeradi Elankam (A huge divine building). It seems though he consecrated them, he was not able to build a temple as ordered. The task of building a temple was completed by his family later. In the main temple Durga and Ganesa idols were installed. From the day the installation day used to be celebrated every three years for seven days. But due to quarrel in the family this festival was discontinued and the temple became dilapidated. Again after forty years the devotees consecrated Vana Durga, Shanthi Durga and Kali in that temple. In the eighties the temple was rebuilt again and regular festival in the Bharani star of the Khumbam month.

The temple is open from 5 Am to 9 AM and 5.30 PM to 7.30 PM

Kaviyur Shiva and Hanuman temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This small village is near is about 5-6 km from Thiruvalla. The Shiva temple here is

about 100 years old. The architecture of the temple is really great. The Shiva in this temple is not a swayambhu.

There is a story about its consecration. It seems Lord Rama on his way back to

Ayodhya from Sri Lanka, wanted to build a Shiva temple here.

So he entrusted the job of

getting a good Shiva Linga to Hanuman. Hanuman who was proud of his capabilities was

late in arriving with a shiva Linga. But by that time the holy time (muhurtha) was passing away. So Lord Rama took a stone from the neighboring mountain and shaped a Shiva Linga out of it and consecrated it here. When Hanuman came back, the consecration was already over. Hanuman was terribly disappointed and realized that his power was granted to him by Lord Rama. Then Lord Rama requested Hanuman to do Thapas here for some time. Obeying his words, after the pattabhisheka of Lord Rama, Hanuman spent some time here. Then it was called Kapiyoor (The village of the monkey). Later over time the name became Kaviyoor.(the village of poets).(an exactly similar story is told about the Shiva Linga of Rameswaram temple, except , it is told that Sita fashioned the Linga out of sand and after coming with a Linga from Kasi, Hanuman tried to break it.)

The hanuman temple inside the Shiva temple is considered as very important by devotees. Hanuman idol made of Panchaloha has the Hanuman who told the story of Ramayana to Goddess Sita in the Asoka Vana. People believe that by doing Pandhirunazhi in this temple and by offering beaten rice to Lord Hanuman, their wishes can be completely fulfilled.

There is a ten day festival starting with thiruvadira in the Shiva temple and Hanuman

Jayanthi(Moolam of Dhanu month-November-december)) is celebrated in the Hanuman temple.

TEMPLE OF KIRATHAMOORTHY, PALLASSANA

by
RADHAKRISHNAN PALLASSANA

Probably many people knows only MEEN KULATHTHI KAVU(TEMPLE) of Pallassana because of it is made famous by Tamilians and others who goes to the temple especially to ward off enemies, frequently. However there are many more temples in the small and less famous place of PALLASSANA in Palghat District of KERALA STATE For example there is one temple called PUTHIYA KAVU mostly frequented by NAIR CASTE people, LORD SHIVA TEMPLE of KIZHAKKE GRAMAM (EAST VILLAGE) , LORD SANTHANA GOPALA KRISHNA SWAMY TEMPLE OF PATINHERE GHRAMAM (West Village) , both manned by Tamil Brahmins where NATTI AMMAN is also placed. As far as NAATTI AMMAN is concerned, I do not know about the origin. I feel it was worshipped by original inhabitants of PALLASSANA who worshipped this deity which brahmins also worshipped due to fear or they brought this deity after proper AAVAAHANA of their family deity (KULA DAIVAM) who must be MOOKAAMBIKA or some other deity. I leave it to experts on the subject. There is also a famous temple called KIRATHA MURTHY TEMPLE which is mostly frequented by NAIRS of the locality on whom I am writing this essay. KIRATHA MURTHY IS BLACK IN colour which form is only black of LORD SHIVA. The story can be seen IN KIRAATHAARJUNEEYAM in MAHABHARATHA. In this one will find LORD SHIVA taking the AVATHAARA of a hunter and blessing Lord ARJUNA with PAASUPATHA who became the

devotee of SHIVA . The Idol is facing towards east and thrikala Pooja (3 times Pooja) is conducted. At this temple. There is a common belief that if we are successful in getting a work done 1200 coconuts are broken to KIRATHA MURTHY, The UPADEVATHAS are VIGNESWARA and KAATTIL BHAGAVATHI i.e. NANDA DURGHA There is peculiar custom in this temple. The children who attain 5 years old on THIRUONAM day are brought to the temple and made to stand before the deity and made to beat each other ones which will be witnessed by the MOOSAD who is the PALLASSANA'S HEAD at 2 O'clock in the afternoon. The festival of the temple starts on the month of MESA months 10th day. The PALAKKADs famous KNYAR KALI is performed. On first 4 days it is performed in the house of PATHYYATTIL MOOSAD' S ILLAM (HOUSE). This temple was once owned by eight caste people. They are CHERUMAN, ANDI , KURAVAN, MANNAN, POOSHAARI, CHAKKILIAN, VALLON (MALAYAN), and PARAYAN . Now there are 99 Nair families and Moosad's house around the temple which is nearby PUTHTHJEN KAVU which is owned by the NAIRS. This BHAGAVATHI is said to be related to KOTUNGALLUR BHAGAVATHY.

Regards to one and all,

Kodumbu Kalyana Subramanya temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated 5 km from Palakkad town. On the Chithur Palghat road on the banks of Sokanasini river. It has the second tallest Raja Gopura among all temples in Kerala. The temple has an interesting story behind it, A group of Tamil merchants belonging to the SEngutha mudaliyar caste , it seems were regularly coming to do business in Kerala and settled down in Kodumbu. They used to go to Avinasi town to

sell cloths, Once when they were going, they heard a voice from the bush near Kozhi mampatti village telling them, "I also will come". I also will come." Though they tried their best to locate the source of that voice, they were not able to. During the next trip same thing happened. They searched thoroughly, they found a Subramanya statue along with Valli and Devayanai inditch. That Statue told them, "I want to come with you and I would protect all of you." They took the idol with reverence and kept it on the cloth bundle on the back of a bullock. Suddenly the bullock disappeared. Though they searched they could not find it but when they reached their homes. They found the bullock carrying the statue.. They started worshipping the god. After several years they wanted to build a temple for that god., The local administrator at that time was one Kurror Mana Nambuthiripad. He allotted them a place inside the shiva temple to build their temple. The temple was built. The poojari of shiva temple during those days was one Achuthan Namboodiri. He insisted that the pooja should be performed according to the Agama followed in Kerala and the Mudaliars were not prepared for it. The kurror Mana Nambudiripad asked the Malayali side as well as Tamil side to keep a Kumbha at the northern gate of the temple and asked the Nambudiris to lift the pot kept by the Tamil side. They were not able to. Manikka Vachakar the great Saivite saint who represented the Mudaliars easily lifted the pot kept by Nambudiris. So it was decided that the pooja in Subramanya temple would be according to Tamil Agama and that of the Shiva temple following the Kerala Agama. This is being followed to day. In Thirupugazh Arunagiri nadhar says that "KODumbu" is half of Pazhani.. Devotees believe that if a devotee takes bath in the Soka Nasini river, all his sorrows would fly away. The Sthala Vruksha of the temple is a Champaka tree, The temple is open from 5,30 Am to 12 noon and from 4.30 Pm to 8Pm. There are special poojas conducted at the temple during Pradosham, Karthika, Sashti and

Thiruonam. The Brahothsavam of the temple is conducted during Thai Pooam.

Kodungallore Bhagawathy Temple

By P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated about 40 km from the town of Thrissur. The presiding deity here is Kodungallore Amma, who is regarded as the Universal Mother.

It is believed that Kannagi, the heroine of the Tamil work "Silappadikaram" composed by Ilanko Adigal, has been consecrated here as the Goddess, by Cheran Chenguttuvan, who was the brother of Ilanko Adigal. Belonging to a rich merchant family, Kannagi, after her marriage was abandoned by her husband Kovalan who was infatuated with a courtesan and lost all his wealth. A repentant Kovalan and she migrated to Madurai. There they were constrained on account of poverty, to sell off her precious anklets. Thus it was that Kovalan went off to sell her anklets and was arrested by the king's soldiers. Apparently, the anklets which he tried to sell was of a similar pattern to the one belonging to the queen and which was missing from the palace. The Pandyan king of Madurai in a wrong judgment charged him with theft and had him executed. Later, in the Pandyan king's court, Kannagi proved that the anklet was not the one belonging to the queen, and that an innocent Kovalan was wrongly punished. The king realized his grievous error, and out of remorse, died instantly. In her wrath, and on the strength of her inner purity, Kannagi burnt the town of Madurai. Thereafter, she renounced her

country and migrated to Chera Nadu, which is the present Kerala. Historical records in Srilanka, show that this temple was in existence since 1800 years and the deity here is referred to as "Pathini Daivam" (The divine virtuous wife). However over time, this temple is being referred to as a temple for [Bhadra Kali](#). Among the list of 108 Bhagawathi [temples of Kerala](#), we do not find the name of this most famous temple. Also, most of the Kerala Brahmins did not recognize this temple as a temple for Bhagawathi. There is a record that Mezhattoor Agnihothri (who lived in the seventh century) in consultation with [Adi Sankara](#) brought this temple under Brahmin [worship](#) and systematized the procedures. It is believed that animal sacrifice and offering of Toddy to the Goddess was prevalent before that time. It seems [Adi Sankara](#) established the Sri [Chakra](#) in this temple and also constructed a [shiva](#) temple. However, the entire responsibility of [worship](#) in this temple is not borne by Brahmins alone but is also shared by the three matams viz. Matathi matam, Kunnath matam and Neelathu matam.

The principal deity of the temple is [Bhadra Kali](#). The goddess sits facing north. The idol is made of Jack fruit tree wood. The goddess is in a 'roudra [bhava](#)' (fierce aspect) and is six feet tall. Her appearance is as when she returned after killing the [asura](#) Dharuka. There is a secret room called "rahasya ara" near this sanctum. It is also called 'Sri Moola Stanam'. It is believed that the original Kannagi statue is in this secret room. There are also [temples](#) for [Lord Shiva](#) and Ganapathi within the temple. In the northern entrance there is an idol of 'Kshethra Palan' (Guardian of the temple). 'Pulinjamrutham', which is curd mixed with Jaggery payasam is offered to him. Another Goddess is Vasuri [Mala](#) (Pox goddess). Guruthi, which is of

blood red in colour and is made by mixing lime and turmeric in water is offered to her.

The most famous festival of this temple is Kodungallore **Bharani** (In the star **Bharani** in the Meena month (March-April)). The **worship** during this period, is in almost pure Dravidian style. Large number of commoners flock to the temple from around Malabar region. They sing bawdy songs in a particular style, on their way and also inside the temple. The first four days of the month of Makaram (January-February) is celebrated as Thalapoli where Virgin girls make offering of fruits in a plate to the Goddess. Navarathri is also celebrated in the temple.

Kothankulangara Temple, Chavara , kollam

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This is a very unique temple in Kerala because during the festival here Boys dressed as girls prepare and offer the offering to the Goddess

It seems once upon a time in this area was covered with a forest and on one corner of the forest there was a pond called , Bootham kulam. One day some cowherds who came here got an unhusked coconut and they try to break it open on a stone near the pond .To their surprise they saw blood oozing out of the stone . They went and informed their elders , who consulted astrologers. The Prasnam revealed that it was a goddess Vana durga .They immediately built a thatched shed for the Goddess. Since they had to make a garland for the goddess and no girls were available there, the

cowherds dressed like girls, made garlands and offered it to the Goddess, They boiled the coconut flesh and extracted a solid substance called "Kottan" from it. This was offered to the Goddess. So they started calling Bhootham Kulam as Kottam kulam and the Goddess as Kottam kulangara Amma.

FESTIVAL

The Kottankulangara Festival is an annual Hindu festival in Kerala, India in which thousands of men dress as women. This is done normally as a thanks given by devotees to the goddess who fulfills all their wants.

The festival is called Chamaya vilakku (make up lamp) and is celebrated in the month of March. In this unique ritual called 'Chamayavilakku', the men dressed as 'Damsels' come to the temple at night in a long procession with lighted lamp in their hands. The men dress up in the female attire of their choice. Some wear Set saari, Pattu saari, half saari or even dance costumes. The two day festival attracts thousands of devotees throughout the State. Believers from other States are also participating in this famous festival. Recently several foreigners are also attending this famous traditional festival. On the festival days thousand of Devotees visit the Temple to seek the blessings of the Goddess Bhagavathy.

. HOW TO REACH

Kottankulangara temple, where the Chamayavilakku is held, is besides NH-4. It's relatively easy to get there. The best way to reach here is by bus, as almost all of the bus to Kollam & Trivandrum, pass in front of the temple. Kottankulangara is situated in between two cities Kollam & Karunagappally. From Karunagappally, There are throughout buses from Karunagappally to Kollam. So if you are staying at Karunagappally, catch a bus to Kollam and get down at the point "Kottankulangara". Catching "Fast Passenger" Buses, which is frequently available, will be the best option to travel.

From Kollam, Same like from Karunagappally, there are through out buses from Kollam to Karunagappally. So if you are staying at Kollam, catch a bus to Karunagappally and get down at the point “Kottankulangara”. From here also, Catching “Fast Passenger” Buses, which is frequently available, will be the best option to travel.

By Train: Nearest station is Kaunagapally. But most of the train don't have stop here. So better to reach Kollam.

Figures:

Nearest Railway station – Kollam (Station Code: QLN) – 13Kms

Nearest Bus Station(District HQ) – Kollam – 12Kms

Nearest Airport – Trivandrum – 80 Kms.

[Iranikulam Sree Mahadeva Temple - Wikipedia](#)

Sree Kottankulangara Devi Temple,

Kottankulangara, Chavara

Kollam, Kerala – 691 583.

Email:

Contact Person: The Secretary, Temple Committee.

Thirunakkara Temple , Kottayam

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kottayam is a town in the plantation belt of Kerala and is about 60 Km from Cochin.

This great temple is situated in the middle of the city in a huge open ground called

Thirunakkara Maidanam. Though the local people claim that this idol was consecrated by

Lord Parasurama himself, the present temple is only about 500 years old.

This area was once upon a time ruled by Thekkumkoor kings. One king of this dynasty used to visit the Vadakkunathan temple at Trichur every month. When he became old he told the God that since he cannot undertake this journey due to old age, he cannot see Vadakkunatha and he would prefer death. God told him in his dream that he would accompany him to Kottayam. On his way back the king happened to meet a very learned Brahmin priest in Vaikom belonging to the Pereparambu family. On the king's request the Brahmin accompanied the king to Kottayam. Accidentally in a place called Samiyar Madam, this Brahmin was able to recover a Shiva Linga deep within the earth.. The Linga was rough all over. According to the advice of the Brahmin, the king built a temple for this Linga. Along with the Linga(which is normally kept covered by a gold cover), there is a Pancha Loha statue of the Goddess, Lord Subramanya, Lord Ganesa and Lord Ayyappa idols are there. Besides these there is separate temple for Vadakkunathan , Subrahmanya, Durga and Brahma Rakshas. There is an intersting story about the Brahma Rakshas. It seems one Moos was a great friend of the king. The king was not known for his beauty but his friend was very handsome. The queen fell in love with the friend of the king. On knowing this the king

ordered his servants to kill the Moos. But instead of him the King's servants killed the junior priest of the temple (keezh Santhi). The wife of the priest became a Brahma Rakshas and started troubling every body. So the king built a temple for her. For a long time afterwards women do not prefer to enter this temple. Another interesting fact about the temple is that Nandi, the steed of Lord Shiva is given lot of importance here. It seems long ago one night some people saw a bull eating their crops. They threw a stone at it and it was injured. Then the Bull ran away. That day that bull which was actually Nandi came in the dream of the king and told him, "You consecrated me here. But you are not giving me any food. What alternative do I have except eating what is available. I am now injured because your people threw stones at me. " Next day the king called the owner of the field from which Nandi has eaten and ordered that the produce from the field should go towards Naivedyam for Nandi. It seems in some years a boil appears on the stone statue of Nandi in this temple. Then the Ayurvedic doctors treat the boil. During the years when the boil appears, it seems some calamity will happen to the people or country. The last time it appeared was in the year 1932. There are three major festivals in this temple in the month of

Thulam(October-
November), Meenam(March-April) and Mithunam.(June-July)
Out of these the festival
in the month of Meenam is the most important.

Kulathoopuzha Dharma Sastha temple

Compiled by
P.R.RAmachander

Kulathoopuzha is situated in the Trivandrum- Chankottai road . The temple is built on a river island. The deity is temple is called Manikandan. People believe the original temple was built by the Pandya king who was the foster father of Ayyappan. The peculiarity of this temple is that seven stones enclosed in a metal jacket is worshipped as God here.

It seems one Brahmin devotee was returning from Rameswaram Pilgrimage and happen to take rest near the river bank here. It seems he ordered his servants to prepare food for him,. With an intention of making a make shift stow , those servants first spotted a big stone and collected two stones to make a Stow. But the fixed stone was taller than their gathered stones. So they kept those two stones on two other stones. But to their surprise, the fixed stone grew further tall. Then thinking of fixing it, They hit the fixed stone with one of those gathered stone. It seems immediately blood started flowing from the big stone. They summoned their master .That Brahmin sprinkled the sacred waters collected from Rameswaram on that stone and the bleeding stopped. It seems then Lord Ayyappa appeared before the Brahmin in the form of a child and requested him to build a temple for him there. The king of Kottarajara under whose jurisdiction , that spot fell arranged to build a temple there .The devotees worship the God as the boy Manikandan.

Feeding the fishes in the river is the most important form of worship at this temple. It seems a girl lost her golden ring in

the river. The fishermen could recover the ring from the fish in the river surrounding the temple and so fish feeding became a popular form of worship. There is a Nagaraja consecrated at this temple. Couples with children come and worship this Nagaraja and pray for child birth.

The festival of Vishnu in the medam month and the following four days are celebrated as a festival in this temple.

Kumaranallur Karthyayani temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kumarnallur is a small village which is 4 km from the town of Kottayam .The goddess in this place is considered as very kind, merciful and soft. She is Karthyayani.

It seems long long ago, once the nose stud of goddess Meenakshi of Madurai was stolen. The king suspected the innocent priest and told that if he does not return the stolen nose stud by the next day, he would be killed. That night, Goddess Meenakshi appeared in the dream of the priest and told him, "You are in great danger. I would be leading you out of the country in the form of light. So follow me." The priest did what he was told and followed the light and reached Kumaranallur. There was a vacant temple in the village ready for consecration of the God. When the priest came near the temple, the leading light vanished from his vision. When he went inside the

temple he saw Goddess Karthyatani sitting in side the sanctum sanctorum. Though he could see it, nobody else could. They all simply laughed at the priest. At the time Kula Shekhara the king at that place happened to visit this temple. He had decided to install Lord Subrahmaanya inside this temple. But the priest from Madurai told him that since Goddess was already inside the temple, only goddess Karthyatani should be installed there. But the king could not see anything in side the temple. So he told the priest, if there is a goddess inside let her construct a temple for herself and left that place. But when he came outside he was not able to move out as the entire place was completely covered with fog. He realized his mistake and went and approached the priest. The priest then requested to touch him and then see inside the temple. When the king did that, he was able to see the Goddess. At that time the king was also constructing a temple at Udayanapuram for the Goddess. So he decided to shift the Subrahmanya temple to Udayanapuram and shift the Bhagawathi temple to this place. So he sent people to bring the idol of the Goddess from Udaayanapuram. Some how at the appointed time the idol of the Goddess did not reach Kumaranallur. The goddess came in the dream of the king and told him, "In a well in the

forest nearby there is the idol of the Goddess which was personally worshipped by Lord Parasurama. You can bring the idol and consecrate it here.” The king did exactly that.

The main idol at the temple is made of black stone. It is extremely pretty, with four hands and is in a standing posture. She likes to be showered with turmeric powder and that is the major worship in this temple. Unlike other temples, the worship by lights (Deeparadhana) of this temple is not done at dusk but at night. There is a huge stone lamp in front of the temple, which was gifted by the king of Chembakassery. At a time 24 wicks can burn from this lamp. Lighting this lamp is also one of the important methods of worship. Since the original priest came from Madurai, even today the priest’s family is called Madurai Namboodiri.

Just outside the temple there is a temple of Vana Durga. There is no roof for this temple. She is called Aalingal Bhagwathi (The goddess of the Banyan tree), possibly because it was originally consecrated below a Banyan tree. There is also a Temple of ayyappa on the west side of the temple. He is called Manibhooshanan in this temple.

There is a small temple for Lord Shiva in the southern side. The major festival in this temple is the Karthiga Festival in the month of Vruschiga (October-November) in this festival there is a usual

parade of the elephants but in this temple only the elephants can participate. People believe that all the Gods are present with Karthyayani on the Karthiga day. There is a story that on that day Vilwamangalam Samiyar happened to visit Vadakkunathan temple but found that the God was not there in the temple. He saw him in a particular spot of the temple watching the festival at Kumaranallur. After the morning worship they make the Goddess wear her golden dress. This is removed only on the next day. People believe that by Worshipping Karthyayani, your marriage would be settled quickly, the children would become intelligent etc.

Kumbala Santhana Gopala Swami temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kumbala is a small town in the northern most extremity of Kerala . The santhana Gopala Swami temple there has been built and maintained by the Bhaktha family , who are Gauda Saraswath Brahmins and who had migrated there from Goa about 500 years back. The main temple of this community in Northern Kerala is the Anantheswar temple in Manjeswar . When many of the Bhaktha family members did not have children, they approached the Velichapad(Oracle) of

Anantheswar temple and he told them to consecrate a Santhana Gopala Swami in their premises in Kumbala. As per the orders of the oracle , they got made the idol of Santhana Gopala Swami, in the form of him handing over a small baby to his devotees. The sanctum sanctorum has a throne in it and on its first step is the Veera Vittala or the Santhana Gopala Sawmi , On the second step are the idols of Sri Rama, Lakshmana and Sita and on the third step the uthsava murthies of his consorts Sree Devi and Bhoo devi . The temple was consecrated again on 19th February 1997, Large number of devotees who are praying for children come and pray in this temple. The seven day festival of this temple starts on the first of Makara(January-February). The other important festivals are Puna Prathishta divas, Magha Shudha Thrayodasi , Gokulashtami, Bahula Ashtami and Gita Jayanthi (November-december)

Kuzhal mannam Lakshmi Narayana Temple

Lakshmi Narayana Temple of Kuzhalmannam Gramam

From : <http://www.kuzhalmannamagraharam.info>

Situated in the heart of the agraharam, this ancient temple is considered

as the jewel for its beautiful workmanship. The entrance to the temple

is through a Mukha Mantapam. The carving of GajaLakshmi, the

pillars and various scroll work on the ceiling give an elegant look.

When we enter the temple, the non-stop Nama Japa "OM NAMO

NARAYANAYA" emanating from the temple is welcoming the devotees and it gives solace and peace to all.

The main Prathishta is Lord Narayana along with Lakshmi, the

goddess

of plenty and prosperity. Here Lakshmi is sitting on Lord Narayana's

left thigh. Lakshmi Narayana Swami the presiding deity of the agraharam has been showering on his devotees with beautiful blessings.

He is reputed for the blessings for Santhanabhagyam.

The floors of the Namaskara Mantapam are built in white marble. The

temple SreeKovil wears a decorated look with Granite flooring.

The

front side of the SreeKovil, Sopanam and Sreekovil doors is covered

with beautifully designed brass sheets. Sreekovil doors are covered

with Ashtalakshmi figures.

Important festival days - LakshmiNarayana Temple

Navarathri, Uriyadi Ratholsavam, Vaikunta Ekadasi, Makara Sankranthi, Sasthapreethi, SriRama Navami, and Prathishta Dinam

Main Offerings - Lakshmi Narayana Temple

Performing Navarathri Vilakku, Abhishekam, Kalabham Charthu, Pal

payasa Nivedyam.

Now this temple has become a dynamic centre of spirituality and

attracting more and more devotees. Many are coming forward to

perform Upanayam and marriage at this temple.

Lokanar Kavu Bhagawathi

By

This is famous temple of the Goddess Durga situated in a place called Meemunda which is about 5 km from Badagara town (87 km from Calicut airport) . The name is derived from loka malayar Kavuvu (Indicating that it is situated near a mountain and river and is one of this earth). The temple is specially famous for it being the temple where the Very famous Hero of Kerala, Sri Thacholi Othenan worshipped. Due to this the temple is mentioned in most of the Vadakkan Pattu verses(Ballad of heroism of the northern part) . Even today those people who get trained in “Kalari Payithu”(Martial art form of Kerala) come to this temple after the completion of their training to worship here. Most of the devotees believe that the temple is about 1500 years old. There are several stories relating to its origin.

One of them is that it was found by a group of 500 Aryan Brahmins who migrated to this place .These Brahmins were traders and slowly adapted the customs of Nayars of this place. It is believed that the goddess followed these Aryans from the previous place of stay. Slowly this community got in to marital ties with the local nairs and became one of them.

The other story is that there was a quarrel among the family members of the Zamorin royal family about a thousand years back and one part of the family crossed the river and settled in Badagara(northern shore) . They brought along with them an idol of the Goddess and established a temple for her . They chose a place which was near the already existing temples of Shiva and Vishnu.

Yet another story is that a group of merchants of Kollam , belonging to caste of Ravari Nayars (see the write up on

Pisharikkavu) migrated to Malabar and brought with them the idol of this Goddess. It seems they wanted to settle in a place , where people are truthful. Wherever they went they gave a pot of Sugar for safe keeping in a house. Inside the sugar , they hid a bar of gold. Wherever they gave this, the people stole the gold bar and returned the vessel to them. But in Badagara , a family called “Puthu panathu”, returned the gold along with the sugar. It seems these Ravari nayars settled down in that place and built a temple for their goddess in Lokanar Kovil. It seems later this group of people had a quarrel with the local population and shifted to a place called Nada Puram. It is also believed that this entire community was converted in to Islam after the conquest by Tipu Sultan.

There is one yearly pooram festival in the month of Meenam (March-April) and It is celebrated for a period of eight days On the fifth and sixth day there is a dance by Theyyambadi kurup which attracts a large crowd. On the eighth day there is arattu(Ceremonial bath of the deity in the river). On this day the Goddess is taken to the nearby Shiva temple and the story of the Goddess is sung there (Poora Pattu).There is also performance of a dance form resembling Kalari Payithu called “Poora Kali”

The month of Vruschigam (October-Novamner) is celebrated as “Mandala Vilakku” . The Three thousand oil lamps which are there in the outer walls of the temple are lit during this time.

Madapalli Kavu Bhagwathi

By
P.R.Ramachander

(Please see the

temple <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dhjqq3cYGYw>)

Madapalli kavu (also called as Manapalli kavu) is a famous Bhagavathy temple situated very near Palakkad town. Though the temple was owned by a private family now it is managed by the devaswom board.

The presiding Goddess is supposed to fulfil all the wishes of her true devotees. It is believed that there was a village on the shores of the Soka nasini river (Bharatha puzha) where several fire sacrifices were held. It was in ancient times called Yagakkara and now it is called Yakkara, It seems the original founder of the temple used to worship this BHagwathi in the kitchen (Madapalli) and originally the temple was in west Yakkara. (Moola sthanam still exists there) Later the temple was built in east Yakkara and it was called Madapalli (Kitchen) temple. Over time this name got changed in to Manapalli or Manapulli.

There is an interesting story about this temple. It seems there was a Rakshasa called Neelan who was troubling people who were settled here. When approached by the people, it seems Lord Parasurama approached Lord Shiva and he sent Bhadrakali to kill that asura. She was black in colour with three eyes armed with Soolam (trident), Gadam (sword) and kedakam (the protective shield) and in her fourth hand she was holding a skull. She had two protruding teeth called Dhamshtam and was dressed in silk. After she defeated and killed Neela, she preferred to stay here." It is believed that the sword used by Mother Bhagavathi to defeat and destroy the demons is still the float tank.

And as such Mother Manapulli Bhagavathi is with Her dark complexion is facing north. She is holding trident, skull, sword and armour in Her four hands. She is in her best attire wearing jewels. She has the third eye on the forehead as Lord Shiva and four sharp long teeth. Those subjected to injustice pray to Her for relief. It is said that Her long teeth represent four Vedas. The temple is situated in a calm and serene place, has a

beautiful pond on the south side. Separate sannadhies are there for Lord Ayyappa, Kala Bairavar on the out side of the main shrine. Inside the shrine there are sannadhies for Lord Ganesha, Lord Muruga etc.

There is another story. It seems BHadra Kali was born out of the matted hair(Jada) of the angry Lord Shiva during the daksha yaga and because of this she is very fierce more so when “Chandattam” is done in the temple but once the Very sweet Nei Payasam(Kadu madhura payasam) is offered to her she becomes very peaceful.

All the farmers around the temple believe that Goddess protects their paddy crop . In the third Friday of the Malayalam month Vruschigam , the farmers carrying their freshly harvested produce reach the Muniyappan temple which is situated in the southern side of the temple. From there a big procession is taken out to the temple. This procession is called the Kathir festival as they carry Paddy bunches made in to a ball. After this the important festival call Manapalli Kavuvela starts,.

“The Vela is celebrated between last week of February and first week of March based on the Malayalam Calendar year. ‘Kanyar’ is conducted on the Ist Friday of the Malayalam month ‘Kumbham’ and the Vela is invariably conducted on the 14th day after ‘Kanyar’ (Kodiyettam). A Vela Committee is constituted for the proper conduct of the Vela Festival. The entire expenditure for the festival is met from donations received from the devotees. After the Kodiyettam, many cultural events are organised in the evenings for 14 days culminating on the day of Vela, by renowned folk/cultural artists of the state which attract huge crowds. Lot of devotees from various places come and worship Bhagavathy on Vela day. The Vela day starts early with special poojas and in the afternoon, Bhagavathy starts her vela procession. It is considered that on the invitation extended by the ‘Desakkar’ (locals) with ‘Upacharam Chollal’, Bhagavathy comes out of the ‘Sanctum Sanctorum’ for

the 'Vela Procession', mixing up with her devotees for uniting her 'Thattakam' and eliminating all the evils. It is noted that on Vela day, neither the usual 'Deeparadhana' nor the 'Athazhapuja' is performed, as Bhagavathy is celebrating Vela with the 'Desakkar'. The 'Deeparadhana and 'Athazhapuja' of Vela day will be performed on the next day after 'Sudhi' (cleansing ceremony). The 'Chaandh Abishekam', one of the important pooja during the Vela day, attracts flocks of devotees. 'Vedikettu' (Fireworks) is also an important attractive element of the festival which takes place in the late evening when the Vela procession reaches back to the temple from Fort Maidan and also in the early morning. Bhagavathy is very fond of fire works as she is considered to be born from the Jada of Paramasiva with fire and thunder. On the Vela day the 'nada' is opened only after Karimarunnu (fireworks) is lit in front of Bhagavathy'. Annadanam' (offering of food) is conducted in which thousands of devotees take part. The day of Vela is declared as a local holiday by the government which shows the importance of the festival.

Other significant features of the Vela is the other Velas from other desams (areas) such as West Yakkara, Vadakkanthara, Vennakkara, and Koppam which also congregate at the Fort Maidan. While the East Yakkara Manappullikavu Vela remains separate at the fort entrance gate when the 'Panchavadyam' is in full swing. The East Yakkara Manappulli Bhaghavathy Vela consisting of the famous caparisoned Elephants, folk arts, Panchavadyam etc., reach back to the temple. Plenty of chariots (Bullock carts and other motorised vehicles) also form part of the Vela procession. When the Vela return to the temple, the 'Panchavadyam' reaches its mesmerising peak making the people literally dance and jump. After this, the spectacular fireworks starts, leaving the huge crowd spellbound. A vast sea of humanity assembles at the temple premises to witness this spectacular show.

During the Vela festival, an event of Mother Bhagavathi taking out the sword from the Tank called Velichapadu is

celebrated. A devotee possessed with the influence of Mother Bhagavathi dives into the tank, bring the sword and place it in the shrine of Mother for pujas. Feeding of the devotees also takes place on this day called Vela Oottu. During this festival, 15 elephants stand in a line with playing of Pancha Vadyam, Pandi and Panjari Melas

After the Fireworks, the renowned 'Pandimelam' performed by hundreds of eminent artists begins. At midnight stage programmes will be performed. Early morning, the 'Raavela' starts. The highlight of 'Raavela' is lighting of 'Kambam'.

'Kambam' is considered as 'Paramasivas' Jada and lighting it with 'Karimarunnu' makes symbolic representation of Bhadrakalis' ulpathi. After this, Bhagavathy enters the Temple. The 'Kanyar' pole is plucked by Elephant to mark the end of the festival. Sudhi is performed as Bhagavathy was outside the shrine with the devotees to celebrate her Vela. 'Eeduvedi' announces the conclusion of Vela.

It is believed that after the evening Aarthi Bhagawathy goes to the Moolasthanam which is behind the present main temple (2 km) and returns to the Main Temple in the Morning."(From Wiki pedia)

Manappalli Bhagawathy is the family deity of very many families and all her followers perform the Pooja and do an offering before starting any function in their homesa such as marriage; after the marriage the newlyweds go to the temple and take the blessings of the Goddess without fail

The telephone number of the temple is 0491-678013

Manapullikavu Temple Morning Pooja Timings

5:30 AM to 12:00 PM

Manappully Bhagavathy Temple Evening Darshan Timings

5:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Deeparadhana will be between 6:30 PM and 7:00 PM

Madayi Kavu Bhagawathi

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is one of the most important Bhadra Kali Temples of Malabar . It is situated near Payyannur railway station of Kannur district. The Goddess is also called “Thiruvar kadu Bhagawathi”. People mainly worship her to get the effects of black magic removed. Unlike other Bhagawathi temples , Meat is offered as Naivedyam at this temple. Marco Polo the Italian traveler has mentioned about this temple in his memoirs. Historians believe that this temple is very ancient and at least one thousand years old. There is a belief that this Goddess was created by Lord Shiva to kill an asura called Dharuka and after killing the asura along with the Saptha Mathrukas , this Goddess wanted to stay in that place . Shiva granted her wish and even today she is considered as a daughter of Lord Shiva. Another story tells that this Goddess was initially consecrated in Thaliparamba Raja Rajeswara temple . But since the Goddess wanted Meat to be offered to her during worship, a separate temple was built in Madayi and the idol shifted there. The idol of the goddess is made of Concentrated Jaggery (Kadu Sarkara) and so the Abhisheka(Ritual bath) is given to a metal idol , sanctified in the temple. The Goddess has an extremely fierce look with four hands and face resembling the fire at deluge. The priests worshipping the metal idol are the Namboodiri Brahmins. The priests of the Statute of Madayi Bhagawathi are called Moosads or Moothad or Pidara . They are Brahmins who are non vegetarian by nature. They offer

Thantric worship to the Goddess. It seems one upon a time the priests were not Brahmins but over years when people were not able to bear the fierce nature of the Goddess , the Brahmin worship was introduced. Nowadays The goddess is offered Ash Gourd instead of meat and fish and Tender coconut water instead of toddy.

As soon as you enter the temple you would see a Shiva temple , There over a Peeta covered with silk , a sword called Nandakam representing the Bhagawathi is kept.. The main temple of Bhagawathi which is a few yards south of the Shiva temple faces the west. Towards the left of her temple the idols of the Saptha Mathrukas(The seven mothers) who accompanied her in the war with Dharuka can be seen. In the front in a an enclosure the metal idol is consecrated .

Though initially there were four annual festivals in the temple, as of now the major festivals which are celebrated are Pooram in the month of Meenam(March-April) and kalasam in the month of Medam. The pooram festival is celebrated for seven days and the Kalasam festival only lasts for a few hours. It is believed that all annual festivals of Northern Kerala end for the year with the celebration of Kalasam at this temple.

The Kalasa Uthsavam was so being called as Perum Kaliyattam(Big play of Kali) or Kalioyattam is observed in the festival . The main rituals are in the afternoon when eight people who dress up as the forms of Goddesses like Kalariyil Bhagawathi, Chuzhali Bhagawathi , Someswari, Padi Kutthi along with the main form of goddess "Veera Chamundi". These Goddess forms go round the Kalasa(Sacred pot) and offer worship three times to it . Then there is a sport called Kalasa Thallu(The physical fight of the Kalasa , done with bare hands.)

Another important ritual in this temple is a fishing in a near by river which is called “Kavu Pidi”(catch of the temple). The first of month of Edavam (May-june) and the previous day of the Kalasam are considered more propitious for Kavu Pidi. People believe that fishes caught are the Prasada (ritual gifts) of the Goddess and buy them at huge cost..

The article in Wikipedia about the temple says in conclusion “The temple was spared from destruction by Tipu Sultan (whose followers destroyed the nearby Vadukunnu Temple). The Madayi Kavu temple was saved from destruction by a Nair warrior, Vengayil Chathukutty Nayanar, who received the title of Nayanar from the temple authorities for his bravery (Sthanaperu). Till this day members of the Vengayil Nayanar family are held in high esteem at the temple.”

Madhur Anatheswara Ganapathi temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is located 7 km away from the northern most important town of Kerala called Kasargode. The main temple in this complex is that of Lord Shiva. It seems in ancient times , a lady belonging to Madura caste (Dalit) saw a place around which fire was burning. She informed the Meppadsi king about it and he found that there was a Shiva idol there and he called The God as Anatheswara and built a temple for him. But the present temple is a well built modern structure. It seems that once the people of that area wanted to perform a Yaga at the temple but they were not able to do it. So they consulted the astrologer who told them that they were not able to do it

because they have not done Pooja to Lord Ganapathy. So they installed a separate Ganapathy statue and built an enclosure for it. Later it seems they found the idol was growing in size. One old Woman devotee was worried that the statue will grow so big that it will break the roof. So she kept her hand on the head of the Ganapathy statue and requested the God to grow side ways and not in height. Anyway the result is a very huge statue of Ganapathi. Though the temple is that of Shiva, great importance is given to this Ganapathi. (Another story says that the son of a temple priest , once drew a picture of Lord Ganapathi on the temple wall and this started growing and is the present statue.)

The most important offering to Lord Ganapathrihu is Udayasthamana Appam (a sweet dish made of rice and jaggery fried in oil) . Offering 1000 appams is one very important form of worship. The other offering is to cover the huge Ganapathi statue with appam called Appam moodal. This is only conducted in a community scale that too not regularly , in view of the huge cost involved.

Vishnu Jathre and Darasana Bali are important festivals of the temple. During the rainy season , a river adjoining the temple overflows and spills in to the temple and so it is not the most suitable time to visit the temple. The temple is busier on Sundays . Poojas are performed daily at 8 AM , 12.30 Noon and at 8 PM

Maha Sastha temple of Chamravattom

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is a famous temple of Sastha which is about 12-15 km from Thirur , in Malabar on the shores of Bharatha Puzha(Nila river) The name Chamravattom originates from Sambaravattom. It seems there was a saint called Sambara Maharshi who used to meditate near the river Nila(BHaratha puzha) After years when the tapasya was over, he advised a brahmin that this is lord Ayyapa and advised on the method of Pooja .

The temple dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, is situated 100 meters inward to the river Nila. Innumerable pilgrims visit the temple during Mandalakalam.

. The temple can also be reached by a country boat from Ponnani village , The temple is that of Sastha and is believed to be built by the legendary Perum Thachan. Sastha was the son of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu and has two wives. These wives are called Poorna and Pushkala in some parts and Prabha and Sathyaka in other parts. Lord Ayyappa who is an incarnation of Sastha was the prince of Pandalam and remained Unmarried. Apart from Kerala there are many Sastha temples in Thirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. Except sastha,The presence of lord Vishnu, lord ganapathy, lord siva, goddess prabha, goddess durga, lord sathyaka is there in the main sanctum sanatorium. Besides lord ganapathy, lord sathyakan, goddess durga, goddess bhadrakali and lord siva are installed outside on the south western side of the shrine. poojas for there deities are done along with the ushapooja of sastha everyday.

Unlike other Hindu temples; the Sanctum sanctorum of the temple, where “murti ” of “lord Ayyappa” is installed, is below the ground level and the murti is installed in sand; as if the temple was built around the idol which was already there. The reason for this is believed to be that the idol was not installed by anyone but as a miracle emerged from the ground by itself and is still growing. This phenomena is names as “Swayambhu”, meaning Self-manifested or that which is created by its own accord. The method of worship also differs

here slightly as, unlike other temples, bell is not used here for pooja During rainy season , the flood water enters the temple and sub merges the idol. There are several stories which describe the power of this God. People believe that worshipping God Sastha in Chamravattom on Saturdays would help them get rid of the evil effects of the bad times caused by the planet Saturn.

The main festivals of the temple is during the season of mandalam. Especially the last 11 days. (1st to 11th of Malayalam month dhanu). There will be a chuttuvilakku during the ezhunnallippu but elephants are not used here. Other important day is PRATHISHADINAM. It is celebrated on ANIZHAM of the malayam month MAKARAM. On that day, there will be navakam

People believe that the Thamarakulangara Sastha temple near Tripunithura is an extension of this temple. There is also a belief that it was a jain temple based on archeological studies conducted there. Studies also suggest that Aryabhata , the great mathematician-astronomer from the classical age of Indian mathematics and Indian astronomy is from Chamravattam, which also may mean that Chamravattam was a part of old Jain kingdom. You can see a video of the temple in

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k91bczgorys>

Malamakkavu Ayyappan temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This Ayyappan temple is called as Mala mel Kavuvu or Malayil Kavuvu in the Anakkara Panchayath in Palakkad district . Though the name indicates that it is on the mountain, it is only situated in the plains. One of the specialties of the temple is

that a rare flower called Chenkzhuneer poovu is found in the temple tank.

It is believed that that hundreds of years earlier one low caste woman went to the forest around here for grazing cattle. When she was sharpening her knife on a rock, it started bleeding. They immediately the nearby village, who through Prasnam found that rock was Lord Ayyappa. They immediately built a sanctum and sanctified that rock as Lord Ayyappa. This happened about 300 years ago. Along with the Ayyappan temple there are also idols of Goddess Bhagawathi and Lord Shiva in the temple. There are also Rudiramaha Kali, Vettakorumugan and Nagas consecrated in the temple. It has been recognized as one of the 108 temples of Dharma Sastha in Kerala and it is managed by the Padinjarepat nambiar family. Adas is the main offering at the temple. The Ayyappan idol faces the east. The main festival of the temple is a Thalappoli celebrated on the last Saturday of the month of Dhanu. The pond of the temple is situated in the temple premises itself. It is believed that if a devotee offers a Chenkzhuneer flower at the feet of Dharma Sastha with great devotion, a blue lotus (Neela Thamara) would bloom in the next day in the temple pond. A film based on this legend called "Neelathamara" has been produced in Malayalam. This temple can be reached from Guruvayur within an hour by driving,

Malayalappuzha Bhagwathi temple of Pathanamthitta

By

P.R.Ramachander

Malayalappuzha Bhagawathi temple is just outside the Pathanamthitta town. The Goddess here is in the fierce form of

the Goddess known as Bhadrakali. She is called Malayalapuzha Amma. The temple attracts devotees from all major religions of Kerala. The popular belief is that the Goddess is noted for getting the unmarried girls married, protecting the devotee from enemies, helping businesses flourish, getting employment and in general extending prosperity to all the devotees. There is a popular story about the temple.

Long , long time ago one Namboodiri Brahmin went by walk to the Mookambika temple at Kollur. He spent a lot of time there unable to part with the Goddess Mookambika. When he decided to go back to his native place near Maruthwa Mala, the Goddess appeared in his dream and told him that she will come along with him to his place and entered the Saligramam that he was worshipping. Since this happened at night , she came in the form of Bhadra kali with eight arms and a very fierce looks. The Namboodiri reached along with a Saligramam and an Palm leaf umbrella a palatial home called Thombil Kottaram. He stayed and took rest for the few days. But when he wanted to take the Saligramam and Umbrella , they did not move from that place. That night in his dream, the Goddess came and told him that she likes the place and would like to stay there. She also told the Namboodiri, that he will not live very long and would merge with her soon. He died soon and due to that her worship was affected. Bad omens came in large number in that place and the Goddess entered in to a member of the Thombil family and asked them to build a temple for her at that spot. This temple was about 5 km from the present temple . That Goddess was consecrated facing east and nearby a Shiva Linga also has been consecrated . This was in a plateau which is in between five hills. Later according to the wish of the idapally king , the chief of Thombil clan shifted the Goddess to the

present location. One story is that the Chief of the clan became very old and was not able to climb the hills and reach the temple. He consecrated the Goddess in a spot on the shores of the south Malayala puzha , and below the Idathattil mountain. It seems that there was a temple of serpents in that place and this was destroyed to accommodate the temple of the Goddess. Even today there is worship in the original temple of the Goddess and lot of devotees gather there on the first of every Malayalam month.

There is another story about the origin of this temple “ This temple was originally situated in a small village called Edathitta ,in Pathanamthitta Dist.This was a full fledged village , ruled by Raja Shaktibhadran, the only Sanskrit south Indian writer.One day a tantrik from Malayalapuzha visited this place ,as he heard a lot about this temple. Malayalpuzha was in drought for many years. So the TANTRIK with his power ,migrated the shakti's of the devi to malayalapuzha.And the place progressed like anything.As the shakti's were taken away from edathitta, the place faced many destructions.And gradually there were no signs of the temple.Then according to the prashnakundali people found out as in when it was migrated and when will it come back,as the power cannot be transferred completely ,it mentioned that it will take 3000 yrs for this shakti to come back. And in 1992,somebody from that village saw a dream that the vigraham,and the pooja utensils were beneath the ground,and people started digging that place , where they found everything mentioned by the person.And the villagers then contributed towards temple. .”

The idol in the present location below the idathattil mountain is very fierce looking . It is made of concentrated Jaggery and is

about 5 feet tall and has eight hands, with one leg moved to the front and kept on the Vetala and another stepped back. In spite of the fierce appearance, the devotees only see mercy in her eyes. Since the idol is made of Jaggery, only flower worship is done to it. It seems there was a custom to remove the idol every twelve years and replace it with a new idol got made in Tamilnadu. But once the people were not able to remove the idol from its seat. The Thombil Namboodiri that night saw a dream in which the Goddess told him that she does not want her idol to be removed. And asked him to continue the worship for that idol forever.

Just before entry to the sanctum, there is a small idol of Veera Bhadra and another peculiarity of the temple is the statue of Parvathi, on whose lap is the baby Ganapathi suckling her.

For recovering stolen goods people offer Thoniyari Payasam (Payasam made of 36 ¼ para (Para is approximately 14 kg) of rice

People believe that offer of Payasam made of with 101 Nazhi(120 ml) of rice, coconut milk, jaggery and 101 banana fruits offered to the goddess leads to fulfillment of our desires and success in business.

Ladies offer Manjadi seeds (*Adenantha pavonina* Linn.) to the Goddess for increase of breast milk. This same seed, after taking it round their hair is offered by ladies near the flag post for luxurious hair growth.

Offer of arecanut, betel leaves, tobacco and camphor to the Goddess at the sanctum is believe help us fulfill our desires.

The sacred ash that you get back from the temple after this offer should be kept in the prayer room. People believe that within a year their desires would be fulfilled. People believe that when we make requests to the Goddess, if a honey bee

from outside enters the Sanctum sanctorum and returns back in our presence then our desire would definitely be fulfilled. There is another very peculiar belief in the temple. It is believed that the soul of the devotees of the Goddess , after death comes and stays in the temple. So their sons/daughters come to the temple along with a piece of sandalwood packed in a red silk, make the soul enter that and take it out . This is called Chavirakkal (removal of death)

Farmers pray that they will give a part of the harvest of their field and take a cloth from the temple, write on it that the produce belongs to the Goddess. People believe that if this is done then theft of the produce from their field is prevented .

This is called “Malayalappuzha Thoopu”

People also worship the Brahma Rakshas which is on the east of the temple for getting rid of ghosts , devils and evil magic affecting them. Offering of Mangalya to the Goddess to get married quickly is also done.

Just outside the temple The Naga Raja also is consecrated. Near it is an Konna tree which flowers daily all the year long. Below it a Shiva Linga which Is Swayambu (self made) is there .

People believe that this Shiva linga keeps on growing. People believe that if this Shiva linga is bathed with tender coconut water , immediate rain will result.

There is a temple (half a km away) for the Yogeewara grand father who brought the Goddess to this place , This is called Sri Kandeswari Moorthi Kavu. There are also Pancha moorthi idols in this temple. Here toddy , meat, Agar Bhathi, tobacco etc are offered to the grand father statute. People believe that the Goddess would be happy only if we visit this temple first before visiting her.

Unlike other Bhagwathi temples , there is no practice (asked to

be discontinued by the Goddess) of drawing her figure using rice powder, turmeric , saffron etc but the usual singing of her story is done there without it.

Another peculiar custom of the temple is that the procession carrying the deity turns left (ie clockwise) and because of this people called this Goddess Idathattil Bhagwathi(Bhagawathi of the left).

Malliyur Maha Ganapathi temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Malliyur is a small village 23 km for Kottayam .The nearest railway station is Kuruppanthra in the ERnakulam –Kottayam route.

The form of Ganapathi consecrated here is known as Bheer Ganapathi , trunk carrying a lemon twisted towards right and holding in his arms Axe, Horn, rope and Laddu and keeping baby Sri Krishna on his lap. Because of this he is also termed as Vaishnava Ganapathi.

Centuries back a saintly Namboodiri is supposed to have brought this idol from North India and consecrated here. Initially the temple had only a thatched roof. A Yyaksi and Anthimahakalan (Hunter form of Lord Shiva) also have been consecrated at this temple, as they were the family deities of this Namboodiri. The temple was administered by two Namboodiri families-Aryappally and Vadekkadam. Though these families flourished initially they became poor and unable to manage this great temple. Once more some other family tried to rebuild the temple but their effort to maintain the temple ended up in a failure. Again about 50 years back another Nambudirui family tried to rebuild it. Again failure was peeping at them . Then Deva Prasanam was done and they found that The Goddess Durga also wanted to be consecrated in the same temple. Brahmasri SANKARAN Namboodiri who

was trying to rebuild the temple at that stage. Started reading Bhagawatham in front of the deity. When this was done they realized that sacredness was getting infused at the temple. Apart from the already existing Gods, he also consecrated a Brahma Rakshas and Sastha in that temple.

The temple remains open from 5 Am to 11,30 Am and then from 5.30 P.M to 8 PM. Vinayaka CHathurthy, Makara Vilakku Chirappu(festival) and a ten day uthsavam in the Meena masam ending on Vishu are celebrated at the temple. On second Sundays of Malayalam month there is a Bhagavatha Parayanam. The temple also conducts a two month long music festival, starting on first of Vruschigam every year.

Mangombu Bhagawathy

By

P.R.Ramachander

Mangombu is a very prosperous island about 15 km away from Aleppy town. Most of

people in this village cultivate high rise paddy. You can go to this island only by boat.

Nowadays there is arrangement to carry the vehicles in floats.

Dr.M.S. Swaminathan, the

father of modern Indian Agriculture is from this place.

There is a great Bhagawathy temple in Mongombu. There is a very interesting story

about its origin. During the reign of king Veera Marthanda Verma of Travancore, it

seems one official called Pavvathil Kaimal. He requested the king to allot him some

forest wood so that he can build his own house. The king asked Kaimal to cut trees from

Mangombu hills near Palai. Kaimal cut the required logs and when he was trying to transport the logs by the river, three very pretty women approached Kaimal and requested for a lift. Kaimal told them , he would allow them to travel with him provided they became ugly. They then transformed themselves to ugly women and travelled along with the logs. When the boat reached the present location of Mangombu , it stopped there and refused to move. Then the pretty women told Kaimal that they were goddesses and wanted temples to be built there. They then transformed themselves to idols. For the first Goddess a temple was built in Koyikkal , the second in a place called Vadaiattu. When they were thinking where to consecrate the third goddess, Goddess entered one of the people assembled there. That man threw a branch of a mango tree and requested them to build a temple where it falls. They did it as per the wish of the Goddess. Since it was the place where the branch of mango fell, it was called Mankombu , meaning “Branch of a mango tree”. Till this day the descendents of the man who threw the mango branch have a say in the affairs of the temple. The temple was consecrated in the month of Meenam (March april) in the star of Bharani. The founders day is celebrated during this occasion. The goddess faces west. A big lamp is lit all the time without

stop in front of the

Goddess , as it is believed she likes light. Lighting lamps is one of the very important worship form in this temple. In the south eastern corner of the temple of the Goddess is the temple of Lord Shiva. So it is a practice in this temple to come round the sanctum sanctorum four times. The idol of the Goddess is made of Jack wood and has a fierce form of Mahishasura Mardini. But a golden face and coat is given to the goddess so that she looks very peaceful. This idol has a crown with 15 serpents, has a symbol of elephant in the right ear and symbol of lion in the left ear. She also wears an Yerukku Malai.

Raktha Pushpanjali for fulfilling all desires and Swayamvara Pushpanjali for early marriage are performed at this temple. Pregnant women observe 12 day Bhajanam in this temple for safe delivery. Several types of Payasams are also offered to the Goddess.

The first eight days of Mredam (april-may) is celebrated as Mangombu Mala ketham (Moncombu mountain climbing) . Irumudi which is similar to the Sabarimala Irumudi is taken and people go round the temple with chanting of “saranam”., Then the night pooja is performed in the south east of the temple in a place called Malai Nadai Most of the important Hindu festivals Like Navarathri , Krishna Jayanthi , Deepavali etc are observed

in this temple. In the Dhanu month (December-January) a ten day Chirappu is also observed. During this festival the Goddess would be covered with sandal paste.

In the month of Meenam, the foundation of the temple is celebrated. A kavadi pooja is performed during this occasion

Mangottu kavu BHagawathi temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated in a place called Athipotha, which is 24 km from Palakkad. From Palakkad you have to go via Alathur. The goddess in this temple is supposed to be in her very fierce form. She is also considered as the younger sister of Parakkattu Bhagwathi who has a temple in Kavasseri. Mangottu Bhagawathi is supposed to have come to this place to fulfill the desire of a weaver. This weaver was a great devotee of the Goddess. His name was Kuttan. He and his people used to weave cloths and sell it in places where festivals are held. It seems in one place, he was so enchanted by the Devi there that he mentally requested her to come along with him. At that time, there was a whirl wind which removed the cloths of the idol of the Goddess which was being brought in procession, Kuttan immediately threw, the cloth that he has brought to sell on the goddess. This cloth

fell on the Goddess and got attached there. Next day Kuttan returned to his village. He was carrying an Umbrella. At a particular point he got so tired that he kept the Umbrella on floor and slept near by. When he woke up, he was not able to remove the umbrella from the ground. An astrologer was summoned who told Kuttan that the Goddess has occupied the Umbrella and she wants to live in this place. Then the astrologer threw the stick in his hand and told that a temple should be built where it falls. This place is the present Athipotha. In the month of Medam (April-May) there will be a festival in this temple for seven days, after the first Sunday of that month. Apart from that after the Pooram festival of Parakkattu Bhagawathi temple, that Bhagawathi shuts her temple and comes and stays in Athipotha for seven days in the month of Meenam (March-April) . This is a very important temple and various types of worship are offered at this temple. Some of them are Pana Patasam, Ney Payasam, Tri kala pooja, Chandattam, Sahasranama pooja etc. There are also special poojas along with chanting of Eika mathya Sooktham , Sri Sooktham and Bhagya Suktham. There is a separate temple for Ganesa in side the temple. Just outside is the temple of Mookan Chathan.

Manjapra Ambadathu Iyappan temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Manjapra is a village in Ernakulam district of Kerala. It has got a peculiar Ayyappan temple called Ambadathu Ayyappan temple. It is peculiar because instead of the idol of Ayyappan in this temple there is a stick with silver top, a bag of sacred ash and a stone,

Ambadath royal family is very dear to Lord Ayyappan. Along with Ambalapuzha royal family this family helped Lord Ayyappan to fight with a dacoit called Udayanan. They also helped Lord Ayyappa in repairing the way (Periya patha) to Sabari mala. Every year along with the ornament box from Pandalam a member of Ambadathu family goes to Sabari mala.

It seems one Kesava Pilla belonging to Ambadathu family used to go every year on pilgrimage to Sabari mala. It seems once at a very old age he was climbing Sabari Mala with great difficulty, one Brahmin came and gave a stick with silver Mudra, one bag of sacred ash and stone to him. The Brahmin then vanished. When Kesava Pilla was returning from Sabari Mala, it seems the Brahmin came again and told him to keep these things in his place and worship them. It is believed by devotees that Ayyappa came in the form of a Brahmin and these are symbols of Lord Ayyappa.

So these are kept in Ambadathu temple and worshipped. A small temple for "Malika purathu Amman" is also built there. This Ambadathu temple is opened only on the days when Sabari Mala Ayyappan temple is opened. All festivals of Sabari mala are also celebrated here.

This temple is open between

5 am 1 pm,

And 5 PM to 8 PM

On the days when Sabarimala temple is open.

The temple is 6 km from Kaladi and 10 km from Angamali
Angamali is the nearest railway station and
Cochin airport is 12 km from here.

Phone 9447433039

0484 2284167

Mannar Kurathikadu Pattambalam

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

(Most of the material is from the web site of the temple -
<http://www.pattambalam.org/> . My grateful acknowledgement
to them.)

The goddess Pattamalathilamma has a temple in
Kurattikadu Pattambalam is situated in mannar which is near
Kayamkulam and is 11 km from Mavelikkara Railway station
.This place is 130 km from Cochin air port.Here the Hoddess
BHavaneswari one of the Dasa Maha Vidhyas is consecrated
,She is generally referred as “Valia Amma” (great mother)
.Along with her , there are temples for BHadra, Ganapathi and
Krishna in the temple Her devotees take permission from her
to buy property, build a house , celebrate the first rice food for
the baby etc. They wear new cloths or first attend school or
join in their first job. .They start a journey after lighting a
lamp before her .Her devotees believe that she is the daughter
of Panayannarkavu Bhagawathi whose temple can be reached
only after crossing river Pampa. Once in a year the festival
called Anpoli areepara Mahothsavam which is celebrated
from Medam 10th to 27th .Daily the Valia Amma visits the

homes of her devotees in different villages. She is received by them with great fan fare .The procession everyday returns to the temple at 12 noon. On Medam 13th the Goddess starts her journey to her mothers house. .All her devotees including the members and president of her temple line up on the shore of the Pampa river not allowing the Goddess to cross the Pampa river. This is done because they are afraid that once she goes to her mother's house she may not return.On Medam 15th Amma goes to the CHangayil house and collects , One Para(14 litres) of paddy from that house and goes to other houses. But she again returns to Changayil house to collect and colled five more measures of paddy , as promised by one of the lady ancestors of the family .Then only she gives blessings to the family and go back to the temple .This is called Changayil ottam.On 24th Medam the Ama receives the offerings from Harijans in the form of harvested paddy.A para is not insisted because , they were considered poor .Now many of them offer the Para to the goddess
I am quoting in extensor from the web site of the temple about this great festival called "Anpoli areepara Mahothsavam

Anpoli Areepara is the most important event of our temple. It is the annual temple festival of 18 days from Medam 10th to 27th. On these days our mother visited her people at their doorsteps to receive their offerings as Paras and to bless them in person. Early in the morning Her Highness is brought out from the sanctum sanctorum with royal gaiety and drums in the Holy Jeevatha embedded with the Moolabimbam and is royally placed on the peetha. To receive two Anpoli Paras everyday. A customary rhythmic dance of the priest shouldering the Jeevatha is followed along with the special Poojas in the Seva Panthal. Then the Holy procession sets off.

Every household , cleaned and decorated await eagerly for the farbound sounds of Her procession reaching their door. Amma is welcomed with fireworks and vaikuravas and

offerings of flowers, paddy, fruits, aval, malar in the form of para are offered. The accompanying crowd is treated everywhere with fruits, feast and pleasantries. The process goes on uninterrupted until late night and at about 12'o clock the procession returns to the temple and then the daily ritualistic 'poojas' and 'nivedyams' are offered in the presence of a huge crowd. After this, Amma is once again ritually brought out accompanied by royal drum beats and 'vaikuravas' to perform the Anpoli at the zero hours and in most cases in the early hours.

'Anpoli panthal' which is considered as a temporary temple is already erected to the north of 'Elanjithara' and an 'Anpoli Kalam' decorated with divine ritual drawings and fragrant flowers is kept in purity and lighted with Nilavilakku is there in front of the Anpoli Panthal. The rhythmic ritual dance of the shouldering priest in tune to the royal drum beats, come out of the Mathilkettu after 3 rounds around the temple, slowly approaches the Anpoli kalam in ritual steps. Large crowds follow and vaikuravas and fire crackers resounds through out the night. Amma mount in the Jeevatha on the shoulders of the priest ritually dancing on their steps, slowly awakened in this high concentration of dance, music, vaikuravas and the fire crackers. All of a sudden enters the Anpoli Kalam in the dense forest of light and oil lamps, and performs her own divine dance revelation. The priest becomes unconscious, faints and falls. Great fire works follows. Offerings there are distributed as prasadam to crowds of devotees thronging there and dakshinas are given. Amma is brought back to the SreeKovil. The process is to begin early morning next day The temple is also running a school in the village called Bhuvaneswari Higher secondary school..

Mannarsala Snake temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Mannarsala Is the famous temple of snakes in Kerala. This also is situated near Aleppy town of Kerala and is near Harippad. This temple is supposed to be 6000 years old and is believed to be built by Sage Parasurama. This place was supposed to be the Gandeeva forest of Mahabharatha, which was burnt by Arjuna. The people living in this village had saved several snakes of the forest by constantly pouring water and drenching the earth.

Since this is a place where “mud became cold”, it was initially called “Man aariya Salai” and later this became Mannarasalai.

Lord Parasurama who built a temple in this place brought several Brahmins and made them live in this place. But due to very large number of snakes and the water being saline, those Brahmins went away. Lord Parasurama did Thapas to Lord Shiva. Who told him, that if Parasurama requests Vasuki, the king of snakes , everything would be set right. Parasurama did accordingly. Vasuki was pleased and told him, “Lord, these snakes will remain here only but would not hurt anybody in this village .All the people in this village have to build a snake temple in their house and daily lit a lamp in front of it at dusk. I would myself take out the salt from this village and mix it in the sea, “ Parasurama gladly agreed and again brought the Brahmins.

They were all Namboodiri Brahmins. They built their houses here and lived happily. Parasurama built a temple of Naga Raja and Naga Yakshi in that place. He made one family called Irinada palli to have their home in the temple compound . The first residents of this house were Vasudevan Namboodiri and his wife Sridevi andarjanam. Their family continued to look after the temple, after some time, the only living couple of the family did not have children. They prayed at the temple and as a result got two sons. One of them was a snake. This snake was born in Aslesha(Ayilyam) star of the Kumbha month (February-March).. As soon the snake son was born, it told , “mother, we the snakes are very happy with your family. We want the eldest female member of this family to conduct the ceremonial worship in our temple. Since you are the eldest , now I will teach you all the rituals that have to be followed in our worship. “ He taught his mother the rituals and since that that time, the worship in that temple is offered by the eldest lady of the family (She is called Mannarsala Amma(mother)). .That son then entered the dark store room of that house. He had also warned that no body should enter the room. But it is opened once a day for worship by the Amma of the temple. She normally keeps a cup of milk and then closes the door. Next

day , the cup is found empty.

This snake in the store is called “Grand father” by all people and all of them revere that

snake. The other son born with the snake established two temples in Mannarsala , one

dedicated to Naga Raja and another to Naga Yakshi.. One of the snakes there was given

as a dowry for a girl who got married a Brahmin family in Kayankulam. That snake

entered the store room of that house and a similar temple like Mannarsalai was built

there. This temple is called Mey Palli. And is near Kayamkulam.

The most important offering in the temple is “noorum palaum.”. This is the mixture of

rice powder, turmeric powder and milk. These would be kept outside the temple at night.

In the morning the contents of the vessel are poured in the mud. The Noorum palum is

also given to the grand father in the store house. But the contents of the vessel disappear

next day , when the store is opened.

It is well known that snakes of the temple do not bite anybody.

Even if it bites nothing

happens to the person. It is also well known that nothing is stolen from the temple. It is

believed that the snakes of the temple guard the property of the temple. On the aslesha

(Ayilyam) star of the Thula month(October-November) is celebrated as a great festival

in this temple.

People wanting children as well as those affected by Naga

Dosha come to this temple
and it is believed that all their problems are solved.

Manthakkara Maha Ganapathi temple

NEW KALPATHY MANTHAKKARA MAHA GANAPATHY
TEMPLE:

(From <http://kbspalakkad.org/activities/activities.htm>)
On the Eastern side of Sree Viswanatha Swamy Temple lays the New Kalpathy Village, which consisted of homes mostly built of thatched roofing. It belonged perhaps to the last batch of Tamil Brahmin migrants. Harassed by frequent fires, loss of life and property, the villagers consecrated a temple dedicated to Lord Maha Ganapathy to ward off “Sivadrishti”. The idol of Mahaganapathy resting under a Banyan tree near a tank lying on the eastern side of this village (Manthakkara) was installed facing Lord Siva. The residents of this village were well known scholars of Vedas & purohiths well versed in their profession. Most of the surrounding villages of Palakkad town used to depend on them for the conduct of Vedic rituals. Any doubt on observation of rituals and interpretation of sastras used to be debated and decided here. This village is also the birth place of many professionals, musicians, scientists and men of letters. New Kalpathy village was used to be a citadel of Vedic culture and Sanathana dharma and it has produced numerous scholars of Vedas and Vedangas. They are still being remembered by villagers with reverence and devotion. Their scholarship used to be

recognized by both Shringeri & Kanchi Sankaracharya Mutts. This village sent the largest contingent of Vedic Scholars to attend the All India Sanathana Conference held at Kasi during 1932-33. These men of learning never cared for riches or material comforts. For this reason the Mandhakkara Lord Maha Ganapathy Temple had no properties worth mentioning. The poojas and Festivals used to be conducted on adhoc basis. When once the poojari deserted the temple in disgust the great vedic scholar Brahmashri Sangameswara Ganapadikal (father of eminent Sanskrit scholar Shri K.S. Ganapathy Sastri) used to offer Nivediyam to Lord Maha Ganapathy from his house. Later on Shri M.K. Venkateswara Iyer, K.D. Subramanua Iyer and Magistrate Swaminatha Iyer raised funds and bought some agricultural lands and created a trust for Nitya Nivedyam for this temple. Shri M.N.Ramaswamy Iyer also created a Trust for the conducting of Car Festival. The present Dwajasthampam was consecrated on 8th of Mithunam 1109 (ME) by Magistrate Swaminatha Iyer incurring the entire expenditure. The next year on 2nd of Kumbham 1110 (ME) a maha Kumbhabhishekam was performed after extensive repairs and covering the roof of Garbhagriham with copper plates. The expenses for this were fully met by Annakutty Vamsom Late Subramania Pattar (father of Late S.Chidambara Iyer also made arrangements to have Ganapathy Homam performed every day and started the big event of conducting Maha Ganapathy Homam on

Vinayaka Chaturthi Day using 1024 coconuts and proportionate other Ashtadravyams. This form of ritual is known to be

conducted only at this temple and it continues even today.

IMPORTANT FESTIVALS AT MANTHAKKARA SREE MAHA GANAPATHY

TEMPLE

Ratholsavam (Car Festival)

The festival centres round the Viswanathaswamy Temple (Kundampalam in local

parlance) on the banks of the Bharathapuzha at Kalpathy, an ancient shrine.

According to mythology, the deity was brought from the holy Ganga at Varanasi and the

great Bana had worshipped in the temple.

An inscription on a stone at the east of the Siva temple

proclaims that it was built in the

Malayalam year 600 (1425 AD) by Itti Kombi Achan, the then Raja of Palakkad.

The Car Festival is celebrated in the last week of the Tamil month of Aippasi. The

festival starts on the 22nd day of Aippasi and concludes on the last day of the month.

This synchronises with the festival celebrated at Mayiladuthurai in Thanjavur district.

The main centre of the festival is Kalpathy Sree Viswanathaswamy Temple.

The three satellite temples in the village of New Kalpathy, Old Kalpathy and

Chathapuram also celebrate the festival during this time.

The Dhwaja Arohanam takes place on the 2nd day in all the four temples. On the

fifth day of the festival, the famous Rishabha Vahana

procession is taken out in the

night, with the deities from all the temples taken out in decorated cars. They

converge at the western end of the New Kalpathy village ground around midnight.

They disperse after two hours. Competitions are regularly held for percussionists.

This attracts thousands of people from villages around Kalpathy and other parts of the district and outside.

On the fifth day, the 28th day of Aippasi, the deity from Viswanathaswamy Temple is taken out and installed in three cars, one for the main deity Sree Viswanathaswamy and his consort Goddess Parvathy, the second for Vigneswara and the third for Lord Subramaniaswamy.

The chariots set out on village tour around 10 a.m. After going around all the villages the three chariots return to the base on the 30th day around sunset.

The deities of Old Kalpathy Temple and Chathapuram Temple mount the cars and go on village tour the same day. By sunset, all the cars return to their bases. 'Abhishekams' are performed and the deities redecorated and taken out on procession in floral palanquins around midnight.

The palanquins return to the temple at dawn on the first day of the Tamil month of Karthigai, coinciding with the Kadamukham festival at Mayiladuthurai and the curtain falls on the car festival.

The Kalpathy Car Festival is based on the Vedic Tamil Brahmin culture. The Tamil Brahmins who migrated to Palakkad in the 14th century established as many as 96 Agraharams in the district and 18 within the town.

The most colorful and important festival of this temple is the

Ratholsavam (car festival)

held during the middle of November every year. The commencement and termination of the festival synchronizes with that of Sree Viswanatha Swamy Temple, which coincides with the conduct of this festival at Mayavaram Temple in Tamil Nadu. But the actual Rath Yathra at New Kalpathy is held only for two days. This temple car being massive and large cannot be taken in procession through all the Kalpathy streets and hence it is drawn only through the main street in two laps. The festival is held for 10 days in all and the Ratha Yatra is only on the two last days. On the remaining days, the temple deity is taken in procession through all the Kalpathy streets in small Goratham accompanied by Nadaswaram and fireworks. During the main Ratha Yatra days the Chenda Melam is accompanied, which is unique in Kerala. The “Kuthirayottam” procession held on the seventh day of the festival is very famous and the Youngsters’ Association conducts the same and this attracts huge crowd during night. The 5th day festival and the pallack procession at night on the 9th day are also important and colorful like the two-day’s Rath Yatra. On all the ten days, highly qualified Vedic scholars chant Yajurveda complete text in the temple.

Vinayaka Chathurthi

This is held normally during August – September every year. On the morning of Vinayaka Chathurthi day Ganapathi Homam with 1024 coconuts and proportionate other 8 items is performed early morning. Simultaneously a special

Rudrabhishekam is also performed. In the evening, the deity is taken in procession through the village with Nadaswaram.

Navarathri

Navarathri festival is also celebrated in our temple.

Rudrabhishekam in the morning and

Kramarchana in the evening are performed on all the 9 days.

On the Vihayadashami day,

the deity is taken in procession through the village with

Nadaswaram and Asura

Nigrahom (Vazha Vettal) is conducted.

Daily routine poojas

The temple open at 5.45 a.m. and closes at 9 a.m. in the

morning and between 5.45 p.m.

and 7.30 p.m. in the evening. Ganapathy Homam is performed

on all the days between

5.45 a.m. and 6.15 a.m. The morning Abhishekam and

Nivedayam is conducted between

7.30 and 8.30 a.m.

The temple belongs to the New Kalpathy Grama Jana

Samootham and the same is

administrated by the Brahmins residing within the traditional

boundaries (Vasthu) of

New Kalpathy that consists of almost 150 households.

The private nature of the temple is established by the fact that

the temple remains closed

whenever a member dies (within Vastu) as a mark of respect

till the dead body is taken

out for cremation.

Maruthoor vattam Dhanvanthari temple

Maruthor Vattom

By

P.R.Ramachander

Maruthor vattom is a village in between Aleppey and Cherthala Towns of Kerala.

Dhanwanthari who is believed to be an avataram(incarnation) of Lord Vishu, who

came out of the ocean of milk, when Gods and Asuras churned the ocean is consecrated

here. It is believed that this temple is at least 500 years old.

There is also one more

Dhanwanthari temple in Kerala in Ellijay , a village near Gruver

It seems there was a Thampan in this village who was suffering from a very severe

stomach ache. He went to the temple at Viacom and as soon as he entered the temple his

stomach ache was cured. But as soon as he came out, it started again. Thampan prayed

Vaikathappan. That day in hid dream Vaikathappan came and told him,"Your stomach

ache will not be there as long as you are in my temple. It would reappear as soon as you

leave this temple. To get it cured permanently, we have to go to the pond called Kelam

near Cherthalai. If you go inside the pond you will get three statues .Please leave the first

statue there it self and take the second statue , which would be that of God Dhanwanthari

to a Brahmin. You will again get another statue of Mahavishnu. Take it home and do

pooja."

The Thampan did as told by God. He gave the Dhanwanthari statue to a Brahmin

belonging to Velladu Mana. He consecrated the third statue in Adhithya puram near his

house .The Velladu Namboodiri was worshipping the Dhanwanthari statue in his house

itself. Later with the help of Cheerataaman Moosu, he built a

temple for Dhanwanthari at Maruthor vattom. Unfortunately the Vellattu Namboodiri and the Moosu had a fight. In the fight the hand of the Dhanwanthari statue broke. Moosu took the broken arm and consecrated it in Olacha in Kottayam. In Maruthor Vattom, the Namboodiri made a hand in silver and attached to the God. Even today this God is worshipped in Maruthor Vattom. The God faces west. The God has a golden pot in his right hand .All medicines of the temple are first kept in this pot and then given to the devotee .In his left hand made of silver he keeps an Attai (blood sucking leech) In the month of Thulam (October November) on the Krishna Paksha dwadasi day, the birth day of Dhanwanthari is celebrated in this temple. Many people come to worship their Pithrus (manes) on that day to this temple. On that day Thaal Kari (a vegetable preparation involving Colacasia stem-which normally causes itching) is given as Prasadam .But the Prasadam does not cause itching. This is also prepared on the Amavasya of the same month. This is considered as a great medicine and people from far and near flock the temple to get this medicine. In the month of Mesha (April-May) on Uthra Nakashtram, the foundation day of this temple is celebrated. The thiruonam of the same month is celebrated as Arattu. They have a ceremony called "kayethal Vanam" on this day, which is supposed to be a cure for Asthma. To get children, people arrange for "Santhana Gopalam" Kathakali in this temple. For rheumatic disorders the temple distributes a

medicine called "attayum Kuzhambum". Similarly they also prepare a medicine called Mukkudi which is a mixture of 24 drugs for curing stomach ache. These two medicines are given only in the first thursday of every malayalam month. You have register early at this temple to get these medicines. It is also believed that covering the idol fully with butter or sandalwood paste and eating the butter cures all diseases. Several peculiar worships like Adima, Thazhichu Koda ,Nagaraja Pooja etc are offered at this temple.

Posted by [Raja](#)

Mavelikkara Kandiur Madeva temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

One of the very famous temples of Lord Shiva is the Kandiur Mahadeva temple which is near Mavelikkara. It is considered as one of the great 108 temples of Shiva in the world and is called Dakshina kasi (the Benares of the south.) There are two old stories about the temple. One of them is about Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu trying to find the head and feet of Lord Shiva respectively. Lord Vishnu agreed that he had failed but Lord Brahma told a lie that he had found out the head of Lord Shiva and the Thazham poo (pandanus flower) stood false witness this. The enraged Lord Shiva cut off one of the five heads of Lord Brahma. It seems this head struck to his hand. It seems as per the advice of Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva created a sacred water and take bath in it. It seems the head of Brahma got detached from hands of Lord Shiva. Because of

this Lord Shiva got the name Sri Kanta and this temple was named after him. Kandiyyur has the pond where Lord Shiva made and got rid of his problem..There is yet another story. It seems that once when sage Mrukandu the father of Markandeya was taking bath oin Ganges, he got an idol of Lord Shiva.It seems he was worshipping it for a long timr and that Idol consecrated in Kandiyyur .It is believed that two years before the start of Kollamandu(AD 823) , a new year system called Kandiyyur Abdham was started in Kandiyyur as it was a capital of a dynasty in Travancore.and later it fell in to disuse because Kollamandu became more popular. It is believed that the temple was built in 823 AD by Cheraman Perumal Nayanar also called as Rajaseskara Varman who was ruling from Tiruvanchikulam as capital. The worship of the temple was being done by Tarananallor Namboodiri at that time.They are still continuing as priests of the temple. It seems that area after a long time was ruled by the Kayamkulam kings .It seems once the Kayamkulamn king was defeated by Venattu kings and at that time the Ruling Kayamkulam king escaped through the western door cloing it after him and till to date that western gate of the temple has never been opened..There are several carvings in Tamil vattezhuthu in the temple..iN that there is a reference that the temple was renovated in 1217-1218 Ad.

The temple is in a six acre compound which is surrounded by a huge compound wall..People believe that the entire compound was built within a night by Bhootha Ganas of Lord Shiva. Apart from the main temple the compound has eleven other sub temples as well as a Naga(serpent) prathishta,.These temples are the temple of Lord Vishnu, Pradosha Shiva, Sastha, Gosala Krishna, Annapurneswari , SANikaranSubrahmanyam, Brahma Rakshas Vadakum nadha and so on . The following Poojas are daily performed at the temple, Usha pooja 05:45 to 07:00 Am Sree Bali 07:30 Am Panthiradi Pooja 08:30 Am Mrithyunjaya Homam 09:30 Am Navakam Kalasha Pooja 10:00

Am Ucha Pooja 10:30 Am Nada Adakunna Samayam 11:00 Am Vaaikittu Nada Thurakunna Samayam 05:00 Pm Deeparadhana 06:30 to 07:00 Pm Athazha Pooja 07:30 Pm Sree Bali(Nada Adaykkunu) 07:45 Pm. The temple has a ten day festival in the Dhanu month and Aarattu during Thiruvadira.

Meen Kolathi Kavu BHagawathy temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Meen Kolathi means “She who has a tank of fish”. This is a temple of Meenakshi and is situated in the Pallasena village of Palakkad District on the road connecting Palakkad and Kollengode.

This temple was established by the family of Mandradiyars.

This family originally

belonged to Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu. After loosing all their business assets, they

decided to migrate to Kerala. They went to the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai, which was

their family deity, before coming to Kerala. The eldest member of the family took a stone

from Madurai while coming further. He was daily offering worship to the stone. In earlier

years he used to visit Madurai temple every year. Once when he became very old, he kept

his umbrella and the divine stone on the shore and got in to the pond to take bath. While

bathing he cried because he would not be able to go to Madurai

again due to his old age,
When he finished his bath, he came out. He could not lift both
the Umbrella and the stone
from there. They had got fixed to the land. When they called
astrologers and conducted
Deva Prasnam (asking questions to God), they found out that
the stone which was fixed
to the shore was Goddess Meenakshi of Madurai herself. After
400 years, the
Mandradiyar family built a temple for Goddess Meenakshi at
the same spot. They
consecrated the ashta Durgas (Brahmini, Kaumari, Maheswari,
Indri Vaishnavi,
Narasimhi and Varahi around the sanctum sanctorum. Because
of this no body is
permitted to go round the sanctum sanctorum. The main
festivals of the temple are
navarathri, Karthiga, Mandala vilakku , foundation day , and
palli vettai and vaira poojai.
On festival days, the sword and lamp is taken in procession.
People believe that all
sickness will vanish , if people bath in the pond opposite the
temple.
The temple would be open from 5.30 Am to 12.30 Am on
Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays
and during the other days between 5.30 Am to 10.30 Am. In the
evening it would be open
between 5.30 Pm to 8 Pm.
In the temple there are separate sub temples for Ganapathi ,
Nagar (snake god) and
Bhairava.

Chandattam to remove problems from enemies is performed during the first Tuesdays of certain months in this temple .Seperate pooja reciting Bhagya suktham and Eikamathya suktham are also done in this temple. In the may-june month (Vaikasi-Edavam) month, the thol pavai Koothu (shadow play using dolls made of leather) is conducted for ten days. They sing and enact the story of Ramayana during this time. On the last day, the arrow of Lord Rama is kept in front of the Goddess and is worshipped. Once in 12 years during the full moon day of the same month , a festival called Palli pana is celebrated. Fire walking is one of the high light of this festival which is celebrated for four days. On the fourth day, the demon called Daruka is killed by the Goddess. In the eastern and western part of the temple there are two agraharas (villages where Brahmins reside) . In the east side village there is a shiva temple and the west side village there is a Vishnu temple. Effect of pilgrimage to Meen Kolathi is considered enhanced , if we can visit these two temples also.

Mithrananda Puram Temple, Trivandrum

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is actually a collection of temples and is situated very Near Padmanabha

Swamy temple, Trivandrum. In side this compound there are temples for Lord Shiva, Lord Krishna and Lord Brahma. Though initially these temples were under the control of Sri Padmanabha Swamy Temple, later this temple complex became independent. It is believed that the Trimurthys conducted a great fire sacrifice here addressed to the Sun God. Another name of Sun is Mithra. Since this fire sacrifice gave lot of happiness to the Sun god, this temple complex is called Mithrananda Puram (The town which gave happiness to the Sun) It is very interesting to note that the priests of Anantha Padmanabha Swamy temple stay in Mithrananda Puram. It is also known that the Vedic pundits, who assemble in Trivandrum, once in 12 years for Murajapam, stay in this compound. From the very beginning, the administration of this temple was jointly done by the Travancore and the Cochin kings. The path in to the temple leads to the three temples. First there is A Vishnu temple with a Garuda Statue just outside. Some people are of the opinion that this is in fact a Sri Krishna temple. The idol is in a standing posture and carries Conch, wheel, mace and lotus flower in his four hands. Ashtami Rohini, the birth day of Lord Krishna is celebrated in this temple. Next to the Vishnu temple is the temple of Lord Shiva. In the south western corner of this temple there is a Ganapathy temple also. Shiva rathri is celebrated as a great festival in this temple. Chanting of Rudram is supposed to be very dear to this God. Next to the

temple is a temple of snake, which is becoming increasingly popular.

Slightly behind the Vishnu temple is the Brahma temple.

Temples for Brahma are very

rare in India. Possibly this is the only Brahma temple in India where pooja is being done

like any other temple. The Brahma statue is made of stone and has only one head. And

four hands. Inside the Brahma temple, there is a small Ganesa temple along with his

wives. The main form of worship of this Ganesa is to cover it with appam. The head of

Naduvil Madam, Trichur also has an ashram to stay here. There is a belief that this

temple for Brahma was consecrated here to ward of a Yakshi who was troubling

everybody. In the initial days, women were not allowed in this temple. Nowadays with

certain rules, they are allowed to enter this temple.

There is also A Krishna temple in the complex where it is believed Sage

Vilwamangalam has his Samadhi. This is contested because the Krishna devotees of

North believe that his Samadhi is in Mathura, near Brindavan.

This temple is under the

control of Naduvil Madam, Trichur. In front of the main granite statue is a small metallic

statue, which is believed to be the one that was worshipped by Sage Vilwamangalam. It

is also believed that The Samadhi of the sage is below the Krishna statue. Here again

there is a Ganapathy temple attached to the temple.

Mrudanga Saileswari temple at Muzhakunnu

Mrudanga Saileswari temple
at Muzhakunnu ,Thillangeri Kerala- The goddess who
made her thieves helpless

(She is the only Goddess originating from Drum in India)

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Lord Parasurama is supposed to have
consecrated 108 BHagawathy temples in Kerala .Mrudanga
Saileswari also called as Muzhakunnu BHagawai and
also as POrkali Bhagawathi is one of them. The temple
is equidistant from THalasery and kannur towns of
Kerala(both places have railway tations) , though appeach
from Kannur is easier

Mrudangam the accompanying drum of the carnatic music
is supposed to be the musical instrument of devas. It seems
once it fell down from deva loka in this spot called Mrudanga
Saila (The hill of Mrudanga) Legend has it that when the
mridangam descended on earth from heaven, it was caught by
Goddess Bhagavathi Saileshwari – the Aroopi, or the One
without form, while she was in meditation, thus creating a pit
in the sand, which remains to this day. The dropping of the
mridangam onto the Goddess's hand created echoes in the
mountain. Hence, it came to be known as Mizha kkunnu, which
means a mountain of drums . When one views the mountain
from a distance, it appearslike a mridangam..Later the local

king made a pancha loha idol and consecrated it there .Devotees say that the Pancha loha idol shines like gold

Since Mrudanga is called Mizhavu in Malayalam, the place was called as “Mizhavu kunnu” (hill of Mizhavu) initially which got corrupted later to become Muzhakunnu..

This Goddess became the clan goddess of Purali Rajas who had their kingdom there .It seems before they went for a war they worshipped in this temple and at that time , A person representing goddess would do a war dance .War dance translated in to malayalam becomes “Por Kali” and the goddess was also called as “Porkali Bhagwathi”

It is believed the Kerala dance form of Kathakali originated here and when KODungallore thampuran was finalising it here , he was baffled as to how the female characters should be dressed up.It seems the BHagwathi rose up from the temple tank and showed him the present dress of the female characters.

This a well maintained temple and people for all parts of kerala and elsewhere visit this temple for the blessings of DEVI. There is a well constructed pond with water all the time. Food(Prasad) is given to all the devotees who visit this temple , right through the day. There is a ground adjacent to the temple allocated for car parking conveniently. You can feel the divinely vibration while visiting this temple. Men are permitted inside the temple,without shirt only. Mundu(Dhoti) is not compulsory. You can go with the pant also.

The mrudange Chakravarthy Karaikudi Mani Bhagwathar has visited this temple and has written about it.He has written “When I stepped into the temple I felt like

Columbus — discovering a temple dedicated to mridangam! I offered my prayers by playing the mridangam in the sannidhi and felt truly blessed. More and more mridangam artists should make a trip to this temple and experience the divine vibrations.”

Some thieves tried to steal the Pancha loha idol of the goddess thrice but every time they abandoned the goddess and informed the police the ; location where they have left it says Sri Alexander Jacob retired DGP who was working as ACP in Kannur at that time. Later when one group of temple thieves were caught they confessed that they tried to steal the idol of the goddess , they told that immediately they lost all sense of direction and lost their power to control their calls of nature and so they ran away from that place baffled and scared

The temple tree is a strange white banyan tree ,The darshan and Puja timings are

DARSHAN TIMINGS

Morning hours: 05:00 Am to 01:00 Pm

Evening hours: 05:00 Pm to 08:00 Pm

PUJA TIMINGS

Usha Pooja @ 08:00 Am [Dawn Prayer]

Uchha Pooja @ 10:30 Am [Noon Prayer]

Atthazha Pooja @: 07:15 Pm [Evening Prayer]

Deeparadhana: Time aligned with Sunset

You can get in touch with the temple

Muzhakkunnu Mridanga Saileswari Devi Temple
P.O. Muzhakkunnu, Peravoor (via)
Kannur (Dt), Kerala – 670673
OFFICE
04902406408
Mob : 9400208034, 9400286777
STAY CONNECTED
mridangasaileswari@gmail.com

Mukkuthala Bhagawathi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Mukkuthala previously known as “Mukthi Sthala (Place of Salvation) , also known as

Mukkolayakkal is in the Malappuram district of Kerala and is three kilometers from

Changaram kulam kara. Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri, the author of Narayaneeyam

became afflicted with a serious stomach ache. In his dream, the goddess came and told

him, that if he comes to her temple, he would be cured of his problem. Bhattathiri wrote a

very great poetic work called “Sripada Sapthathi” in praise of the Bhagawathi here.

This temple has been also referred in “Mukthi Sthala Devi Stotram” which dates back

to the 8th century and referred by Ulloor Paramaeshwara Iyer in his magnum opus

“Kerala Sahithya Charithram.” He quotes a couplet praying the Goddess to cure his

diabetes from that book.

This temple is situated in the meeting point of three desams viz Thekkum muri,

Vadakkum muri and Kaniyur. Possibly it was initially called Mukkavala (Joining point of three roads).

It is believed that Adhi Shankara happened to pass through this place. At that time a

grass cutter lady's sickle fell on a rock and blood started oozing out of the stone. Adhi

Shankara could see a great luminous power, which he identified as the mother Goddess at

that place. He also had the vision of Lord Shiva and Lord Narasimha Murthy. He

requested people to construct a temple for the Goddess as well the other Gods there. The

temple for Goddess is the temple referred to as Melekkavu (the upper temple) in

Mukkuthala. Lord Shiva's temple nearby is known as Keezhe Kavu and the temple of

Narasimhamurthy is in Kolancherry. They also consecrated a temple for Bhadrakali in

Kannenkavu, nearby. The place where Adhishankara meditated is preserved in the

northern side of the Melekkavu temple and is known there as "Punya Bhoomi". There a

statue of Adhi Shankara has been consecrated.

There is no usual pooja with ringing of bells in this temple.

Only Naivedya (offering)

is offered to the Goddess. During the Karthiga star of Vruschiga masa, The Animangalam

Thanthri once does the pooja with ringing of bells , only once in a year.

The offering of Malar (Pori or puffed rice) is very important in this temple. Everyday

fresh puffed rice is prepared for making the offering. This offering is done after Abisheka

in the noon as well as after the pooja at night. In no other temple in Kerala, Malar is

offered to the Goddess at night. Quarter kilometer from the Melekkavu is the temple of

Bhadra Kali in Kannenkavu. She sits facing the Melekkavu. Whatever offering is made

to Melekkavu, it is offered at the gate of the sanctum sanctorum of Mele Kkavu to the

Bhadra Kali also (That is it is offered in Melekkavu temple facing the Bhadrakali

temple).

Some stones which become available below the idol of Melekkavu Bhagawathi, known

as "Mukkola Kallu" is collected by the priest and given to the devotees. It is believed that

this stone can drive out all the evil spirits and cure all diseases. This can be worn by men

as well as woman.

There is a plant called "Vazha" grown in the compound of this temple. People believe

that the leaf of this tree has the power to drive away evil spirits. They collect the leaves

and use it to adorn the hair of their children.

The major prayer for Melekkavu Bhagwathi is "Varam" (Reading of Vedas). The feast

(vara Sadhya) is given only in the Keezhekkavu. It is also believed that if we present a hear gear made of flowers to the Goddess, marriages would be settled soon.

Among the great devotees of the temple were Kakkasari Bhatathiri, Poonthanam, Meppathur Narayana Bhatathiri , Koodalloor Namboothiri etc.

Mullakkal Bhagawathy Temple, Aleppy

By

P.R.Ramachander

Mullakkal Bhagawathy temple is situated in the town of Aleppy, called Alappuzha in Malayalam. By road it is about 60 km from Ernakulam. (This town is called the Venice of the east, because like Venice, all parts of this town are connected by canals.) This temple which is about 500 years old has a tumultuous history. There are two different stories regarding the origin of this temple. One story says that this idol was brought by the banished soldiers of The Thekkum kur king. They are supposed to have brought this idol and kept it in a jasmine Garden. The idol got permanently fixed here and a temple was constructed by the king Devanarayana of Chembagasery. . The other story says that once that great king went to Kodungallore for prayer and wanted to have the temple of Kodungallore Bhagawathy in his town. That day the goddess came in his dream and told him that she will

follow him. When he reached Aleppy, the king kept his Umbrella in the jasmine garden before taking rest. The umbrella got fixed there. Later the astrologers found that the Goddess wanted to stay there. The king built a temple for her. Another story tells that, some Namboodiri Brahmins came from Malabar along with the Annapurneswari idol they were worshipping, during the invasion of Kerala by Tippu Sultan and they consecrated the idol at this spot.

The idol prior to m1961 in this temple was indeed that of Annapurneswari with ladle in one hand and a pot in the other hand. Since the temple was built in a jasmine garden, she was called Mullakkal Bhagawthy. She was consecrated in the standing pose facing the west.

In 1961 when they were consecrating the golden flag staff for the Goddess, one mad man went inside the sanctum sanctorum and embraced the idol. Later it was found that cracks have developed in the idol. Again Deva prasnam (getting opinion of Goddess through astrology) was done and she wanted a new idol to be consecrated there. So on 16th July 1962 in the same place a Rajarajeswari of four feet height was consecrated in the temple. Apart from the main Goddess there are also small temples for Hanuman,

Subramanya and serpents in the temple. An idol of Lord Krishna and Lord Ayyappa has also been consecrated.

Payasam , Vadai , Appam are normally offered to the Goddess as Naivedyam.. It

seems on the first day when the Annapurneswari idol was consecrated , they were forced

to make Vada using full Black gram with black skin from the near by Brahmin's family..

So even today at the night pooja, this type of Vada is offered to the Goddess.

From first of Vruschiga month (October-November) a festival is celebrated for forty

one days. The last eleven days is called as Chirappu festival and is a famous festival in

these parts and is referred as Alappuzha Chirappu.

The first Sunday of December is celebrated in this temple as a ladies festival. On that

Day all functions of the temple are carried out by ladies only.

Thousands of lamps are lit

on that day evening by ladies coming from far and near.

Navarathri (Dussera) is also celebrated in the temple. On Maha navami day 150 girl

children are given new cloths and are worshipped as Kumaris

.Theyattu is celebrated that

day night. In this function a huge drawing of the Goddess is made in the floor and this is

slowly removed by dancing over it.

The temple timings are % Am to 10.30 Am and between 5 to 8 PM.

Neyathinkara Navaneetha Krishnan

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated about 20 km from Trivandrum in the middle of Neyathinkara

town. The god consecrated here is Lord Krishna as a child holding in his hand a ball of

butter, Daily the priest keeps a fresh ball of butter in Lord Krishna's hands.

It is believed that the ghee which was collected in the ashrama of Aghasthya (in the top

of the mountain) over flowed and became a river of ghee.

Neyyar in Malayalam means

“river of Ghee”. Neyathin Kara means “On the banks of Neyyar”.

The temple of Lord

Krishna is situated in the banks of Neyyar. There is a ghat (steps) in to the river from the

temple. This temple was constructed by Sri Marthanda Verma, the famous king of

Travancore. This king in his youth was hunted by several of his enemies and reached near

a jack fruit tree in Neyathinkara. When his enemies were chasing him, a young boy

appeared from no where and showed him a cave below the jack fruit tree. (Ammachi

Plavu-mother jack tree). The king escaped. Later Lord Krishna appeared in his dream

and told that it was he who has saved the king. The king immediately ordered the

building of a temple. The king ordered a statue made of black

stone. But the boat carrying the black stone idol somehow stuck to a point. The king consulted the astrologers who told that God wanted an idol made of Pancha Loha and not black stone. The black stone idol was consecrated in a village called Krishna Puram and a new Panchaloha idol was made. The idol of Krishna faces the west. The roof of the sanctum sanctorum is made of copper. There is a ten day long festival in the month of Meeanam (March-April)

The temple of Parabrahma, Ochira

By

P.R.Ramachander

Parabrahma is the conceptual form of God which pervades everywhere and in everything. It is the basis of the philosophical religion of the Vedas. There can never be a temple for this concept. But in Kerala 32 Km away from the town of Kollam, in Ochira, there is a temple for this concept. As can be expected, there is no deity there. It is a 36 acres of open land covered by trees. The pooja (worship) is offered to two banyan trees in this land. Some old Kavus (temples) structures are also there in this land. Normally nothing is offered to this God who himself is nothing. Some earth is offered as Prasada. It seems the Travancore and Kayamkulam kings tried to build a temple here but all their

attempts failed. It is believed that Pakkanar (also called Akavoor Chathan) one of the great philosopher son of Vararuchi who was brought up by a low caste Hindu was connected with this temple.

The festival in this temple is celebrated for 12 days in the month of Vrushigam .

People of all castes and religion come and camp in the grounds of the temple.

Erupethettam onam is celebrated every year in ochira on the 28th day of the Onam

festival with procession generally known as "Kaala kettu".

Normally the day falls in

September or October.Erupethettam onam is a procession of these Ochirakkala dummies

made and brought to the Padanilam by different groups of people from all the sides of

Ochira. Many bulls are looked after by this temple.

More information about this temple can be had from

<http://www.ochira.com/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ochira?id=45>

Pachalloor Bhadra Kali temple, Trivandrum

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This is a famous BHadrakali temple situated 7 km from Trivandrum on the Trivandrum-0Kovalam route. It is also

referred to as Pachalloor CHudukadu (cremation ground) Bhadrakali. It is supposed to be a very ancient temple and is included in the list of 64 Shaiva holy places in Vizhinjam. But there is an interesting story about it. There was a learned Acharya, who was the head of the famous Valiya Vila family which was located in this area. One day when he was returning home he saw two old and tired ladies sitting in the shade of the banyan tree. When the gentleman enquired with them, they told him that they are from Kodungallore. Seeing that they are very worn out he offered them Tender coconut, Puffed rice and banana fruit. When he reached his home he saw one of those old ladies sitting in the pooja room of his house. But next day morning she had disappeared but in the place where she was sitting, there was a glowing lamp filled with ghee. The Goddess from then on used to give Darsan to the head of that family once in a while from then on. And that house was later made in to the temple of Pachalloor. There is also a story that after Bhadra Kali killed Dharikan, she was greatly angry and no one could pacify her. Lord Shiva who was her creator pacified her and made her to stay in Pachalloor so that she could take care of her devotees. There is also a belief that the old lady from Kodungallore who became goddess there is Kannagi herself. During festivals the story of Kannagi is sung at this temple.

In the temple the Goddess has a peaceful form and faces north., There are temples of Ganesa, Sastha and Nagar (serpents) in the temple compound. There is also a temple for Kanda karnan below the banyan tree in the temple. He is believed to be the brother of the Goddess. There is daily worship in the evening. Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays are more important. Tender coconuts, Puffed rice and fruits are generally offered to the Goddess. Kadum Payasam (Very sweet jiggery kheer) is another important offering. The temple opens at 12 noon, closes at 2 P.M and again opens at 5,30 Pm and is open upto 8.30 PM. There is Deeparadhana at

1.30 PM, &.30 PM and 8 Pm. On every first day of the Malayalam month the temple is open from 5.30 Am in the morning .

One of the important forms of worship of the Goddess is Nercha thookkam. This consists of Devi Dasans hanging on a bow carrying a child and doing a round of the temple. There are no restrictions of caste , religion or creed for this form of worship. The web site of the temple says, "There are many unique features about the customs and pooja rites followed in this temple for years. The poojari (priest) is from the 'Kolla' community. The heavy rope for the 'Nercha Thookka Villu' comes from a family from the Ezhava community and the 'Katcha' comes from the 'Mannar' community. Carpenters from the 'Aasari' community make the 'Thookka villu'. The 'Chanam' is brought by a family from the 'Araya' community. The 'Parikarmi' are people from the 'Thattaar' community before whom 'Panam' (cash) is offered on the 'Pallippalaka' on the first day of festival. The drums (Chenda) accompanying Devi are played by people from 'Paanar' community and people mainly from the 'Thandaar' community are the Devidaasas. When the human race distances itself by building boundaries in the name of caste and religion, people become members of one family in front of the 'Boon-giver' Pachallooramma. They are devotees, children of Pachallooramma."

This ritual is on the seventh day of the festival of the temple which starts on the Makeeram day of the month of Kumbha. The people who offer themselves to the ritual starts penance from the first day of festival itself. The devotee is hung by the bow , while he would be carrying a child and villu would take one round of the temple .Several children would be waiting for their turn and would continue till the next day morning as people believe that once their baby undergoes nercha

thookkal, their future is secure On the eight day the ladies around the temple offer Pongala to the Goddess The festival comes to an end with Kuruthi Tharppanam on the ninth day when Thatta nevedhyam is offered to the Goddess. There is a you tube video on the temple festival –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M75ex2uubYg>

You can see large number of photos of the temple in

<https://www.facebook.com/pachallooramma/photos>

The temple can be contacted in e mail

id pachallooramma@gmail.com . The administration of the temple is looked after by Nair Service Society , Pachalloor, Trivandrum -27.

Padmanabha swamy Temple, Trivandrum

By

P.R.Ramachander

This great temple is situated in the middle of the capital city of Kerala-Trivandrum. It

is also possibly one of the very few temples in Kerala with a Raja Gopuram of 7 tiers. It

is believed that the great Saint Vilwa Mangalathu Swamiyar, with whom Lord Krishna

was always there, once irritated Lord Krishna due to his pride.

Lord Krishna disappeared

from there. When the Swamiyar prayed, Lord Krishna told him in his dream to find him

in Anathan Kadu. After many days of arduous search,

Swamiyar reached a place called

Ananthan Kadu. There he sat near a big stone and later realized that it was the Lord

himself. There was nothing with him to offer to the Lord. So he approached a poor family near by and took from them tender mango pickled in salt and offered it to the Lord. This tradition of offering tender pickled mango is being continued till this time. It is also believed that this is a one of the temples established by Lord Parasurama. It became dilapidated by non use and was later found by Vilwamangalathu Swamiyar. The God in this temple is Lord Padmanabha reclining on his serpent bed Anantha. It is believed that this statue was made by using 10008 salagramas (holy stones taken from the Gandaki river of Nepal) . King Marthanda Verma of the Travancore dynasty [resented the entire Kingdom of Travancore to this lord and took the title of Padmanabha dasa, (servant of Padmanabha) The temple opens at 3,30 Am the timings when devotees can see the Lord are (before noon) 3.30-4.45, 6.30-7.00, 8.30-10.00, 10.30-11.00, 11.45-12.00; (after noon) 5.00-6.15 and 6.45-7.20. Only Hindus are permitted inside the temple. There are several festivals in the temple. Ganesh Chaturthi , Ashtami Rohini and the festival in thula and Meena masa are famous. Once in 12 years there is A laksha(hundred thousand) deepa(lamps) observed in this temple. This is accompanied by recitation of Vedas by Namboothiri

Brahmins called Mura Japam.

Apart from the tender mango mentioned earlier, Milk kheer is offered as offering in a coconut shell daily .Other naivedyams are Unni appam, aval etc.

More information on this temple can be read at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmanabhaswamy_temple

Gargeswara Swamy Temple, East Village, Pallassana.

By

P.S.Krishnan

As is the normal practice, when our Tamil Brahmins moved to East Pallassana,

they started looking for a place of worship – temple. Thus the Siva

temple came to existence. The Siva Lingam of the present temple

was originally consecrated and worshipped by a Rishi, known by the

name, Gargamuniswar and hence the name for our Swamy – Gargeswara

Swamy. The original temple was very much below ground level – in a pit.

Later on they raised the level to high and reconstructed the temple

to the current level. The Ambal of the temple is Kalyana Parvathy. The

original stone idol was approximately 5 feet high and with all lakshanams.

Later the idol was changed as the original one developed deformity in

stomach region (challa vizharathu). This was predicted in prasnam and the present idol was consecrated in the place of old one, some hundred year ago. The original idol was put in Grama kulam (Sivan Kulam) and remained there till 1957-58. Before the ashtabandha kalasa kumbhabhishekam in 1957 – 58 ashtamangalya prasnam was conducted and they recommended to remove the idol from the village tank as it had some bad effects. In 1957-58 the entire water was pumped out of the Sivan kulam and the idol was retrieved from the tank. It was then taken to Gayathri river and buried there. Till this Kumbhabhishekam in 1958 a snake shaped idol as Subramaniaswamy was also being worshipped. During 1957-58 Kumbhabhishekam new Subramaniaswamy idol was consecrated and old idol became Nagar(snake). Apart from Gargeswarar and Kalyana Parvathi there are other prathishtas like Nandikeswarar, Vigeswarar, Subranmania swami, Nagar, Sastha, Chandikeswarar, navagrahangal (small lingam shaped nine stone prathishtas in inverted “U” Shape near Chandikeswarar) etc are there in the temple. The temple is constructed in the typical style (Agama vidhi)

found in any other Tamil Brahmin agraharam temples. In all Tamil Brahmin Siva temple, if Ambal prathishta is there and when Sivan faces East direction, then Ambal's prathishta is done facing South direction. In this temple Goddess also is facing South direction. In East at Kovil vaasal, 5 layer stone Deepasthambham is there. After that when we climb the steps, Kodimaram (Flag post) and Balikallu are there. On entering the inner prakaram Nandi mandapam is there. To the left at the South-West corner Ganapathy prathishta is done. After worshipping Vigneswarar we have to go back to Gargeswara Swamy darshan which is in the center. Then we have to go clockwise to the back of Lord Siva. There in the North-West corner there is prathishta of Subramania swamy, Nagar and Sastha. After that we have to come upto the outlet for abhisheka jalam for prokshanam. There we have to see the Chandikeswarar and Navagrahangal placed in inverted "U" shape (Typical of Kerala temples). From there without completing the pradhakshinam we have to go back to worship Kalyana Parvathi at the North-East corner at Lord Siva's left side. Here we also worship the Siva-Parvathy

uthsava

moorthies. In the inner prakaram we should not complete pradhakshinam

as is the practice in Siva temples. In the outer prakaram we make three

pradhakshinams. In the front side of the Temple we have Arayal thara

and Sivan kulam.

Festivals :

Annabhishekam : On Thulam Masam pornami day

Annabhishekam

is celebrated in a grand way. Early morning the day starts with Ganapathi

Homam. In the morning Thirumanjanam ezhunthalathu (jalam is brought)

from Gayathri river with elephant procession and vadhya melangal like chenda,

nadaswaram etc. and the abhishekam is done with

Vedaparayanam.

At about 2.30 -3.00 PM Annam (cooked rice) is poured on Gargeswarar.

This is very important and if one views this annam choriya he is

devoid of all sickness. Steps are made and decorated with flowers,

fruits, cheeru items like Murukku, Neyyappam, athirasam and many

other items. At 4 PM Panchavadhyam and Grama seeveli (elephant

procession) are there. Lot of devotees pour in to have Annappadi Darshan.

In the evening Thayambaka is attraction. Veda parayanam and Kramarchana are chanted. Then the annapadi (Sirasu portion) is deposited in Sivan Kulam.

The celebration ends with the night pallacku Kacheri . Vaikkaththashtami & Thiruvathira: Vaikkaththashtami and Thiruvathira

are celebrated and Samaradhana on both days.

Sivarathri : Every year Mahasivarathri is celebrated in Kumbhamasam.

In the morning rudrabhishekam and Deeparadhana are done.

On this day Poornabhishekam is done to Gargeswara swamy in the night

with chanting of Rudram eleven times with Chamakam.

Kramarchana,

Vedaparayanam etc are conducted. Afterwards Pallacku Kacheri and

Grama urvalam are done.

Sasthapreethi: In Kizhakke Gramam Sastha preethi is celebrated on

the Saturday following Sivarathri every year in Kumbha masam.

In Palakkad region the first Sasthapreethi is conducted in Nurani

and the last Sasthapreethi at Pallassana Kizhekke Gramam. On this

day, after special poojas and laksharchana samaradhana and annadhanam

are conducted.

Pradhosham : Pradhosham is celebrated regularly with Rudrabhishekam

And Vedaparayanam.

Income : The temple had good agricultural income – 15 Vandi (A cart load-1050 paras)

of Paddy was the agricultural income per year. This dried up to nil in 1969

when the Communist ministry headed by Achutha Menon passed the land act.

Now the temple mainly depends on the contribution from devotees.

Timings : Temple is open in the morning and in the evening.

How to reach : Pallassana is 20KMs from Palakkad and buses are available.

Temples of Pallipuram Agraharam , Palakkad

By

Rajeswari Ranganathan

(My heart felt thanks to Smt Rajeswari for permitting this great write up to be put in my blog.God bless her)

Pallipuram Agraharam (my native agraharam) in the heart of Palakkad town is a settlement of Vaishnavites.. The Lakshmi Narayana Swamy temple in the agraharam is one, believed to be constructed by the immigrants who came here presumably 700 years ago. Inside the prakaram of Lakshminarayana Swamy temple, Poorna-Pushakalamba sameta shri Hariharaputra (Ayyappa) sannidhi was also built years ago.The natives of pallipuram are followers of Sri Ahobila Mutt and Vaikanasa panchangam.

The temple is unique in its construction because the rising sun's rays on the mEsha Sankramam Day, falls on the lotus feet

of the Deity. The unique "jala Pradhishtha" of the murthy might have been done realising the difficulty in providing a sea bed to lord Narayana. The Deity is in a sitting posture with Mahalakshmi seated on the left lap". Kodiyettam for (flag hoisting in Dwajasthambam) begins on the first day of mEsha sankramam ie on Vishu. And Rathotsavam is celebrated on the 9th day.

"Legend says that centuries ago when the village houses had thatched roofs, there were frequent fires and the villagers were put to lot of hardships. They did not know what to do and decided to perform Sahasrannama japam for a mandalam period at Brahma Muhoortham after taking holy bath in the temple tank.

During the course of the parayana, one of the villagers suddenly got inspired and said " to remedy this fire havoc, go to kurichimalai (2 kms away from Pallipuram) and bring the idol of Lord Ayyapa which is visible on the foot steps of the hill and install the idol on the right side of Lakshminarayana Swamy inside the prakaram." The villagers immediately rushed to the spot and found the idol and installed it".

Here Ayyappa is worshiped as Hariharaputra along with Purna and Pushkala. Every year in the month of Dec/Jan, the agraharam celebrates ShAshtaprIti (Ayyappa Festival) At the time of main DeepAradhana, the entire Payasam (2 different types of Kheer/pudding) is offered as naivedyam.

Until 3 decades ago, majority of the settlers were in business, banking in particular.As a result, the agraharam is known for it's hospitality and the Rathotsavam in the month of April and Ayyappan festival feast of the Pallipuram agraharam is quite popular. Majority of the natives lost their land holdings after the Land Tribunal Act.Slowly they began moving out in search of better opportunities.

The annual Shastapriti festival (Ayyappan festival) falls today. Lord Ayyappa is offered the two payasams (pudding) as Naivedyam. Thereafter the payasams are served during Anna-dAnam.

PS: The picture was snapped during last year's festival.

Panachikkadu Bhagawathi

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated near Singavanam, which is a place in between Kottayam and Changanassery. It is the only temple of Goddess Saraswathi in Kerala. People also call it

Dakshina Mookambika (Mookambika of the south).

There were three Namboodiri families near this temple. One of them was

Kizhuppuram Namboodiri. Since he did not have children, he decided to undertake a

pilgrimage to Kasi. On the way he visited the Temple of Mookambika. That night

Goddess came in his dream and told him, "You do not have the luck to have children in

this birth. One lady of Karunattu house in your place will give birth to twins. If you

request them, they will give one of them for adoption by you.

Once this boy grows up he

will have 10 children and your family would grow in leaps and bounds.

The Namboodiri returned home and kept his umbrella in the shores of the temple tank

and went to take bath. But after bath he was not able to move the umbrella. A sage who

came there at that time told him that Goddess Mookambika wants to have a temple there

and he can get her statue, near the forest of the local Vishnu temple. He was told that a Yakshi was guarding that statue, so before taking possession of the statue, he should please the Yakshi by offering her Tender coconut water, fried rice powder and Jaggery. He recovered that statue and consecrated it facing the east. According to the words of the sage he also consecrated in the same place another statue facing west. Only the statue facing the west is worshipped. This statue does not have any form. But the statue facing east which has a form is not worshipped. Mountain and water falls surround this temple. Water would be falling on the statue always. This water is removed constantly and is used for the pooja at this temple. Opposite the statue, a stone lamp will always kept burning. Near by rough sand is spread on the wall. After saluting the Goddess people write "Hari sree Ganapathaye Nama" on the sand. People believe that by doing this their knowledge would increase and they would become very intelligent. Plants called "Panathi Kuthu Chedi" completely surround the Goddess facing east. It is not permitted to cut or remove these plants. People say that this plant has never ever wilted. Some times due to wind or rain, the plant is disturbed and we may be able to see the Goddess. But this is very rare.

Just above the Saraswathi idol, the Rakshasas, Nagar (snake) and Yakshi are consecrated. For any important pooja or change in the Saraswathi temple, it is a custom to seek the permission of Yakshi and then only do it. It is the custom in this temple to offer Trimadhuram in the morning, milk and sugar in the noon and Jaggery payasam made of rice at night. The Navarathri festival is celebrated in a grand manner in this temple. On Vijaya Dasami day, all children who are going to start learning are brought here, placed in the lap of Guru. He writes "Hari sree" on the tongue of the child using silver or gold coin. Later they are made to write "Hari sree" on the sand. Saraswatha Ghruthm - Saraswatha ghrutham purified and enriched with saraswathasooktham thousand times repeated is given to the devotees from the temple which is a medicine for boosting memory power by the grace of Devi. The temple is open between 5.30 Am to 11.30 am and between 5Pm and 7.30 Pm.

Panayannar Kavu Bhagawathi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Among the great Bhagawathi temples of Kerala , three are considered most important. They are Kodungalloor, Thirmandhankunnu And Panayannar kavu. While the first two are very ancient, there are some controversies as to when the great temple of Panayannar Kavu was established. Panayannar

Kavu is definitely very old and is situated near Parumala and is surrounded a tributary of Pampa river . It is very near Mannar village which is 1 km from Parumala junction of Thiruvalla-Mavelikkara road. The temple houses a Shiva temple also and is one of the listed 108 temples of Lord Shiva in Kerala , supposed to be consecrated by Lord Parasurama. The temple has the prathishta of the Saptha Mathas , the most prominent among being Chamundi and though it is a Shiva temple , lot more importance is given to Bhagawathi. It seems a prince of Chirvayil dynasty went and prayed in a “Panayannur temple” , situated some where else. When the Goddess asked him what he wanted, he told her that she has to come with him and live in a near by temple. The Goddess agreed and asked him to perform “Bhagawathi Seva” for 12 days in the Panayannur Kavu Shiva temple. On the twelfth day the prince as well his people saw a luminous ball descending inside the temple. The assembled people assumed it was the Bhagawathi and consecrated on the southern side of the Shiva temple. bUt after this the people felt that ghosts and devils were surrounding the temple . They saw that many people were dying without any reason. Then the king changed the position of the goddess and made her face the north. He also consecrated the Saptha Mathas, Veera Bhadran and Ganapathi. With constant and systematic worship the power of the Goddess increased. Festivals in her temple was started and lot of wealth was given to the temple. But then the problems around the temple increased further and people were finding it difficult even to stir out of their homes at night. When they consulted the oracle , the Goddess told them that long with her , ner army had also come and they are hungry. When the people asked what they can do , she told them that during the Mandala period daily many animals should be sacrificed on the eastern gate on the temple and on the last day of the mandalam, a unmarried girl should be sacrificed. People agreed and this was going on for several years . The unmarried girl was chosen from the families around the temple. During one year , it was the poor girl who

was a great devotees of the mother. When her head was about to be cut that girl told the Goddess that she was only happy to give her life to the mother. Suddenly from the temple the mother told, discontinue all these sacrifices and close the eastern door for ever. The family of the devout girl whom the Goddess spared (called Adissas) became the main priests of the temple. The area prospered but as of these priestly are quarrelling within themselves, they were removed from their chieftainship by the great king Marthanda Verma of Travancore. But still they continued the duties of the priests and got the complete income of the temple. Some time back due to civil suits filed over each other they have been removed even from these duties

In order to reduce the power of the Goddess Kali of the main central sanctum, a meru (srichakra - meru) pratishta was also done and now all the rituals to goddess kali of the central sanctum are performed in front of the meru. Now nobody has the courage even to go near the main sanctum and even the poojaris or brahmins of the temple go only to the meru and come back.

The king had given the ownership of the temple to the girl who was behind all these, and now her family is called as 'adissans'; who are the present owners of the temple. Their family building is near to the temple and ther is also another diety (which is the moolasthanam); where the karanavar (most aged man of the family) daily perform a secret puja (ritual) to the goddess in Kaula saktheya sampradaya. (rurujith vidhanam). They were experts and famous in astrology and also mantra vada and tantra.

Mandalam is observed in this temple also. There is Guruthi everyday. People believe that during Mandalam, if we daily take bath and worship at the temple is considered as extremely good. Very few people also observe Bhajanam. (Worshipping at the temple and only eating the Naivedyam there.) On the 41st day with Niramala and Nila Vilakku the temple loks great.. That

evening the priest walks round the temple carrying along the golden idol of the Goddess. The day of Vishu is celebrated in a great way in this temple. In the olden days, the sacrifice of human beings used to be done on this day. In memory of that a man who has done penance walks round the temple with a hook driven in to his back, with a background music of songs and drums.. This is called kuthiyottam. The Ayilyam stat of the month of Thulam (October-november) is also celebrated. Near the temple there is a consecration of Parumala Yakshi, She sits on raised platform in an orchard with several trees. What is consecrated is a one foot tall bronze sculpture of the form of a hand held mirror. Some astrologers are of the opinion that it is the vana Durga who is sitting there. The expenses of worship and lamp is borne by the Panayannur kavu temple. People believe that this Yakshi by taking a bewitching form used to attract men and kill them. The famous Christian priest and Magician who was walking this way is supposed to have overpowered her by his magical powers and consecrated her here. It is believed that she still haunts and dwells in this kavu (forest), invisible to the human eye ,but at times she has been cited by many people on several occasions, especially " Karuthavavu" and on Fridays .These sightings are described by the local people as an extremely beautiful woman or as a flying pillar of fire

There are several stories describing the great magical powers of the Goddess of the Panayannurkavu.

Posted by [Raja Thatha](#)

Pandalam Valia Koikkal Dharma Sastha temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Pandalam is a small town about 13 km from Chengannur town of Kerala. Lord Ayyappa was brought up by the king Raja Sekara who was at that time ruling over Pandalam. King Raja Sekara wanted to crown Lord Ayyappa as the junior king of Pandalam but his queen was reluctant, she feigned a headache and the doctor deputed by a cunning minister said that she needed Tiger to get cured. Lord Ayyappa went to the forest and brought a huge flock of tigers to the Palace. The queen realized her mistake and requested Lord Ayyappa to accept the post of Yuva Raja. Then Lord Ayyappa told his parents but who he is and requested them to build a temple in Sabari Mala. They agreed but were sad. Then Lord Ayyappa told them that the ornaments that he was wearing would be kept in Pandalam palace and every year before the Sighting of Makara Jyothi, the king or his representative should bring them to Sabari Mala for him to wear. He also told that the next day he would give a Private Darsan to the king of Pandalam.

After the departure of Lord Ayyappa to Sabari mala, the Pandalam royal family built a private hall of worship for the members of the Pandalam Royal family. This temple located in the big palace (.. Valia Koyikkal) of Pandalam was later opened to the public also. This small prayer hall in the compound of the palace faces east and has only two rooms. One of them is where Lord Dharma Sastha is consecrated and the other is the place for devotees to sit. There are no decorations to this very ancient prayer room, except a few paintings on its walls. There is no idol of Ayyappa in this temple but a Salagrama stone representing Lord Ayyappa. Whenever any member of the Pandalam royal family dies, since Lord Ayyappa belongs to the family, the temple is closed for sixteen days and there is no worship here in this prayer room at that time. Since it is only a prayer room of the palace there are no festivals associated with this temple. On the last day of Mandala period, (1st day of Dhanu month) there are some special worship practices in this temple.

Durind Mandala Pooja The Ayyappa is taken out on a elephant to a Banyan tree called Manikandalan. There is a small temple of Lord Ayyappa below that banyan tree ,At that time a celebration called” Nayattu vili(hunter’s call)” is celebrated in that temple ..Hunter songs , people miming the animal sounds etc are a part of this small festival.Another important day in the temple is the twenty eighth day of the month of Dhanu when the huge group of People go as a profession from this temple to Sabari mala carrying Lord yypaan’s ornaments . The king(eldest member of the royal family of Pandalam gives his sword to his representative and tells him, “Safely go and see our son and return.” Lord Ayyappa’s birthday is on Uthram star of Kumbham month . That day the Salagrama is decorated .. On the Vishu day , the Ornament box is brought out of the temple for the devotees to see. The temple would be a sea of devotees during the Mandala kalam of Ayyappa.

Panniyur Maha Varaha Temple

The great Varaha temple of Kerala famous for its Abeeshta Sidhi pooja(Desire fulfilling worship)

Panniyur Maha Varaha Temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This is the very famous Varaha temple in Kerala (There is a Lakshmi Varaha temple in Trivandrum) and it is believed that it was the first temple to be consecrated by Lord Parasurama after recovering the land of Kerala from the

sea. It is situated in a place called Kumbidi in Palakkad district, near a place called Kuttipuram

There is an interesting story about this temple. Lord Parsurama, to get rid of the sin of killing several kshatriyas, had to donate all the land he had won to sage Kashyapa. After that he became a person who is landless. As per instruction of Lord Vishnu, he stood up on the Gokarna mountains and threw his axe in to the sea and recovered some land from the sea. The new land had lots of problems and Lord Vishnu instructed him to build a Varaha temple so that the land gets stabilised. This is the temple of Mahavaraha in Panniyur, Kumbidi. Some how attempted to build a temple but building there did not succeed. Once when some carpenters were trying to build it, an old man who was sad came in to the temple. The carpenters neglected him and even refused to give him food. He was Perumthachan the great carpenter who was son of sage Vararuchi. He then inspected the wood that they were going to use to build the temple and marked several defects in them and left. But that night the carpenters were woken up by the sound of chisel of Perumthachan, who completed the work of that temple. He then told that carpenters that he would never touch the chisel and this would be the last temple built by him. His chisel and rod are still preserved in this great temple.

Later many families of Nambudiris settled in Kerala. The family called Azhvanchery Thambakkal settled down in Panniyur and Kalpanchery Thampakkal settled down in the neighbouring Suka puram. There was rivalry between these villages and in this rivalry where black magic was involved the original idol of Maha Varaha was broken and burnt. A great scholar called Appath Adeeri six hundred years ago predicted that the temple would regain its glory. He had also predicted that if a devotee says, "Varahamurthy Rakshikkane (Oh Lord Varaha please protect me)" thrice, he would get freed of all his problems. He also had said that any one doing "Abeeshta

Karya Sidhi pooja”(Worship for fulfilment of desires) in this temple would get his desires fulfilled.

A recent Deva Prashna conducted in 1983 had indicated that in two revolutions of Saturn(60 years) the temple would become as prominent as Guruvayur and SAbari Mala. This temple is the only one in Kerala to worship the ‘Varaha’ avatar of Shri Vishnu. This temple also houses and worships Updevtas like Sri Shiva (‘Vadakovil’), Sri Ayyappa, Sri Durgabhagavathy, Sri Ganapathy, Sri Subramanya and Sri Lakshmi Narayan. This temple is also said to have the blessings of Chitragupta and Yakshi. This temple also has a stage and a huge ground to accommodate spectators. The legendary ‘Panniyur thura’ is located just to the North of the Mahakshetra. It is believed that the fishpond constructed by Parashuram used to be located just a little south of the temple. Among the different pujas conducted here the most important one happens to be the ‘Abhishta Sidhdhi Puja’. This puja costs Rs.101/- and is believed to pave way for ‘Abhishta Karya Sidhdhi’.

The Temple is situated in Kumbdi, a village in Palakkad district on the border of Malappuram district is just 4 km from the Keltron Junction, in between Kuttippuram and Edappal on SH-69 (Kuttippuram-Thrissur Highway). The famous Guruvayur temple is only 33 km away.

By Road

There are KSRTC and private buses available to Kumbidi from nearby towns.

Routes by Road

Thrissur/Guruvayur side take Kunnamkulam-Edappal route(SH-69) and before reaching Kuttippuram take right at Keltron Jn. to Kumbidi.

Kozhikode side take Valanchery-Kuttippuram route (NH-17), after Kuttippuram bridge take left at Keltron Jn. to Kumbidi. Palakkad side take Ottappalam-Pattambi-Thrithala route to Kumbidi.

By Rail

Nearest railway station is at Kuttippuram is only 7 km away

By Air

The nearest airport is Calicut International Airport (distance 70 km) and the Cochin International/Nedumbassery Airport (distance 100 km) away. All major International flight services are operated from these airports.

Panniyur Sri Varahamurthy Temple is open from 6 AM to 10 AM and from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM

'Sandhya Deeparadhana'(Pooja during evening time) is considered as the most auspicious time to seek the blessings of Sri Varahamurthy when idol would be covered in sandal paste and adorned in Jewellery

Location and Contact

Panniyur Sri Varahamurthy Temple, Aanakkara, Palakkad, Kerala - 679 551

+91 466 202 2125

Parakkatu Kavu Bhagawathi

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated in Kavaseeri which is five kilometers from Alathur, which is twenty kilometers from Palakkad. The holy Gayathri River flows by the side of this temple.

It seems while Goddess Durga was trying to kill Mookasura, from every drop of his

blood one Asura arose. Goddess killed all of them. One of that asuras was Para. It is believed that Para was killed in this forest and the name of the temple is derived from this. It seems initially the Goddess took her place in a place called Paracheri and later migrated to the place which is called Koottala .She was dissatisfied being there and requested for a fire torch (Pandam) from an old lady belonging to Unnikumarathu family .That lady made a bundle of paddy straw tied it in a cloth and dipped it in oil and lighted it and gave it to her. Then the goddess took that torch and arrived in Kavasseri. This temple is believed to be at least 300 years old. In the month of meena (March-April) , the village plants 18 pillar posts((aria Kodi maram) and the goddess is brought from the temple to this place in a procession., The people of Unnikumarathu family hold the torch before this procession., Later a festival for seven days is celebrated. There would be song called “Bhagawathi Pattu” during these seven days. People of all castes join in the worship at this temple. There are special rights for many of the castes of this area during the festival. It is believed that once upon a time People were sacrificed to propitiate the Goddess. Once when a young boy was about to be sacrificed he cried and entreated the Goddess to help him.

The goddess threw the sword and shield in a near by well. After that the custom of sacrifice was stopped at this temple.

It is believed that this goddess is the sister of Mangottu Kavu Bhagwathi of Athi Petta.

Every year she goes shutting down her own temple for seven days to be with her sister.

This also is in the month of Meena (March-April) .

If any male child is born in any of the houses in the surrounding village , they would

come and make a musical throaty sound(Kurava) facing the temple of the Goddess.

Puttingal Devi Temple, Paravur,Kollam,Kerala

By

Biju Gopinath, Paravur

Paravur puttingal Devi Temple is one of the oldest temples in Kollam district. People in

and out Kollam district come to this temple. ' Puttu' in

Malayam means ant hill. A small

temple was constructed when the presence of Goddess herself was experience on an ant

hill. Later on, the temple was reconstructed a couple of centuries back.

This is the picture of the temple which existed till 2006. This temple was reconstructed

on 2006 and now it looks one of the biggest temples in the state of Kerala. The

renovation work is still going on and on completion of it would make Puttingal temple

one of the biggest temple complexes in Kerala. The massive renovation project is carried out by a set of people who have vast experience in handling similar huge projects. The renovation work has already been started with the 'thodupani puja. The elaborate estimate and plan of sreekovil (sanctum sanctorum), Upadevalayas, nalambalam, kambapuram, kalithattu, dwajam (the flag post), kshetrakulam (temple pond), gopurams (towers), koothambalam and chuttumathil (compound walls) are already done. At the extreme end of the front compound, there is the prathishta of Lord shiva which face with puttungal Devi. The entire project is estimated at Rs. 5 crore. But most people respond very positively and the fund is getting without any delay. The structure of the new sreekovil is as pictured below: The full furniture frame work is on Teak and each part of the sreekovil looking fully devotional. Aval (beaten rice) and malar (the puffed rice) are the main offerings for the Puttungal Goddess along with tender coconut and flowers. The annual temple festival which is also the birth day of the Goddess is celebrated on the day of the Bharani in the Malayalam month of Meenam (March-April). Aswathy vilakku, Kampadikali, Kathakali, Marameduppu and other cultural events are associated with

the festival. The festival lasts for seven days each year. On each days, the temple and the surroundings crowd with lot of pilgrims. There is a very big compound around the temple especially on the front side. There is a It can include more than lakh of people without any problem. Malsara Kambam (fire works) is one of the main items in connection with meenabharani maholtsavam. It starts around 10' o clock in the last day till the next morning.. Kathakali is also an inevitable item of the festival. The festivals attract thousands of visitors and foreigners. After the festival the temple close for seven days. In these days there wont be any pooja or other things. Thottam paattu is also a main offering of the puttingal temple. It begins on the 21st day of Vrischikam (November - December) and lasts till the principal festival of the Goddess. Three persons tell the story of Devi in three parts on each day and two times in a day first in the evening and later on after Deeparadhana. After the Thottam paattu season also the temple close for seven days. The picture of thottam pattu is given below: There are lot of temples in and around paravur. On the day of the festival of each temple, the evening procession come to Puttingal temple before it ends. People believe that if we pray Puttingal Devi deeply, their sufferings will be solved by

the Amma. Lots of people witness this.

GETTING THE TEMPLE:

By train : Paravur is the first main railway station from Kollam to Trivandrum. Get down at Paravur Railway station and go the west side. It will take 15 mnts to walk and on auto it is a minimum charge trip.

By bus: From Kollam in KSRTC Fast Passenger: get down at Chathannoor and catch another bus from there. It takes 15 minutes to reach Paravur Bus stand

From Trivandrum, by bus: get down at Paripally (1 hr from Trivandrum) and catch

Paravur Bus. It is around 10Kms from Paripally to Paravur bus stand.

From Paravur Busstand , it is only 10 minutes walking distance to the Temple.

Paramekkavu Bhagawathy temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Parmekkavu temple is one of the biggest Bhagwathy temple of Kerala and is situated in Trichur town.

There is an interesting story about its origin. It seems once the head of The Kuruppal family of Trichur town, who was a great devotee of Thirumandhakunnu Bhagawathy became so old that he was not able to visit her temple. Once he returned from Mandhankunnu after his sincere prayers and in Trichur in a teak wood forest, he kept his Palmyrah umbrella (ola kuda) under a Bakula tree called IJanji tree in Malayalam. After some time when he wanted to leave, he was not able to lift his umbrella from the floor. As per the custom of Kerala when an astrologer examined, it was found that it was the Mother of Thirumandhankunnu temple. After the Vadakkunathan temple was consecrated the power of the Goddess shifted below a Paro tree..A temple was built was there and it was called Paro mel kavu.

The Goddess consecrated here was made of wood. Statues of Ganesa, Veera Bhadra and other deities are also there in the temple. The Goddess is supposed to give her devotees arts and intelligence,

This temple is a two temple complex Parmekkavu and Melekavu. IN the present Melekavu once Guruthi (animal sacrifice) was being done, when the Animal sacrifice was prohibited a temple was built at that spot and it was called Mele Kavuvu where a statue of the Goddess got from the temple pond was consecrated,.

A peculiar worship practice at this temple is that when lamp is lit in the temple it would be shown in the direction of the IJanji tree where the Goddess was first consecrated.

Trichur Pooram

This is perhaps the greatest festival of Trichur (Tri siva perur) town. Parmekkavu temple is one of the most important participants of this great festival. It will be a treat to the eye and ears to watch 15 bedecked elephants standing to

the tunes of "pancha vadyam " (Traditional musical galore) inside the Vadakkunathan temple complex later move on to face 15 bedecked elephants of the Parmekkavu temple complex, in a nearby ground exchanging colorful Umbrellas during the annual Pooram Festival which comes in April -May every year.More

The famous ILanji Thara melam(beating of drums) starts from here

Dress code

This temple of Bhagavathi which is considered a sacred place with a dress code (sari for women and Dhoti and upper garment for men). Men without a dhoti can go up to ,a certain place and get glimpse of the presiding deity. this is considered one of the very important and spiritual places of Thrissur which is the cultural capital of Kerala.

Location and contact

PARAMEKKAVU DEVASWOM
GEETHANJALI BUILDING
ROUND EAST, THRISSUR - 680 001
KERALA - INDIA.

Office : +91 487 2331273, 2322334. Temple : +91 487 2331373

E-mail

: paramekkavu_tcr@bsnl.in, info@paramekkavudevaswom.com

Timings of the temple

4.30 am to 11.30 Am

Pattazhy Durga Bhagawathi temple (Kottarakkara)

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Pattazhy is a small village in O Pathanapuram Taluq near Kottarakkara , The very famous Pattazhy Devi temple is located there, There are few stories about that temple . It seems there was an Asura called Daruka who was troubling all the three worlds . All the devas requested Lord Shiva to help them. Then fire came out of his eyes and from that fire A very black and ferocious Kali arose. And fought with Daruka for twenty days and killed him. She had become so ferocious that several tricks were tried to pacify her. Sage Narada drew a picture of Kali using several colour powders and this pacified her. This procedure is called Kalamezhuthu . Lord Shiva asked her to go and live in any sacred temple of her choice. Kali came to this world and decided to stay in Pattazhi,

There is one more story. The still angry Kali ran towards Pattazhy . The nine planets were scared and followed her in the form of children. Seeing those children Kali got pity and when she decided to live in Pattazhy, she decided to give a place for them. But these are only spiritually present there and there are no idols for them in that temple.

There is a story about how the temple was built there, .Once the head of the Kadiyam thuruthiyil Keezhe Veedu a noble family in those parts , One day when he was walking in their fields, he saw a very pretty lady apparition wearing white cloths..When he went near the lady , that form disappeared. That noble man did not get scared but devotion came to his mind. Suddenly a well appeared before him..A stone slab had closed the half part of the well, and over that the well was

closed with a red silk cloth(Pattu in Malayalam) .When he saw in side the well through the silk cloth, he found waves , IN consultations with great [people and astrologers he decided to build a temple for the goddess there.Since the well used to becalled Azhi and it was covered by silk(Pattu), that temple was called Pattazhi, Seeing the very powerful presence of Goddess there , they made a plank of jack wood tree and covered it with silver and that was consecrated in the temple. Though these indicate that it is an ancient temple , it appears to be only one thousand years old. There are several copper plate records about this temple which are kept inside the temple., The family of the person who gave the land and the Namboodiri family who formalized the worship procedures have a right in administration of the temple, apart from that there are elected representatives of Two Karas(Nair villages) had also a role in the administration. After a long time a Man with divine strength and power arose from these Karais.He was very powerful and took over the administration of the temple on himself. Various stories of this great Kambithan are prevalent in Pattazhi and Kottarakkara.. It was this time the great Marthanda Verma was fighting with kings of the northern sides to expand his kingdom. He had lot of problems in the fight with the Kayamkulam king. At that time Kambithan advised Marthanda verma to make offerings to Pattazhi Amma and start the war. Marthandaverma was able to win over Kayamkulam.After the death of Marthanda verma his son is supposed gave a huge area of land to the temple,Kambithan received the land on behalf of the temple., THirumala Naikan the king who was ruling the Pandya country wanted to present two gold anklets to the goddess and announced that it would be handed over only to the representative of the gOdess. When Kambithan reached there he refused to give the anklets., ,It seems he had a severe small pox attack and after entrusting the ornament to Kambithan he got cured. One queen from Kottarakkara has presented the temple with golden hairs. This is invaluable and is taken out

and worn to the Goddess only once in a year. The prayer room of Kamithan, has an idol of the Goddess and is now sub temple of the main temple

The Pattazhy Durga Bhagwathy faces the north.. There is a temple tank which is considered very sacred by the devotees.. there are also many small temples for different gods in the temple compound.. The temple compound also has Samadhis of two Kambithans who played a major role in the history of the temple.. When you see in the sanctum, you can only see, two hairs of the BHagwathy on a wooden plank. This wooden plank is kept over a well. But for this there is no idol there.. There is a practice of going nine times round the sanctum with the belief that the nine planets would get pleased by that.

The first of every month, Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays are important days for the temple. On the Ayilyam day of the Month of Kanni there is a special worship to The Naga Raja, On Maha Navami day the Goddess is made to wear a golden apparel and is taken out of the temple. The Kalamezhuthu, songs and festival (Called Chirappu in these parts) start from the first of Vruschigam and extends up to the eleventh day of Dhanu., The powder from the Kalam is distributed as Prasada during these days and it is believed that it has medicinal properties, On the last Sunday of the Makara month, the ladies assemble in the temple and prepare Pongala. The five day festival of the temple starts on the Thiruvadira day of Kumbha masam (which is the birthday of the Goddess, There is also a festival of Malakkuda when the eighteen mountains around the temple are worshipped on the fourth day of the festival, A hill called Puli Kunnu is worshipped as a representative of all the 18 hills. Lot of tribal people participate in this festival., On the fifth day of the festival there is a war between the Goddess and Darukan, The Shivarathri day and the the THiruvadira of Meena month which happens to be the birth star of Kambithan are also celebrated. The festival is known for Kambam (fire works), Aalpindi Vilakku Ezhunnallathu (Procession of small structure made out of plantain kernel and

germinating leaves of coconut tree with numerous lamps on it), Ponnin Thirumudi (Devi's idol carved out of pure gold and rare precious stones) Ezhunnallathu

The temple can be contacted at

Pattazhy Devi Kshethram,

Pattazhy P.O,

Pattazhy, Kollam

kerala

Pincode:691522

Phone:0475 2398421, 0475 2399421

Email: info@pattazhydevitemple.org

Pavithreswaram Temple of Shakuni

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

The only temple of Shakuni the uncle of Duryodhana is situated in Pavithreswaram which is near the temple of Duryodhana at POUvazhi in Kerala ,In side this temple is a very artistic stone throne of Shakuni. The temple has a story of its own. It seems before the Mahabharatha war , all the Kauravas came here and divided the weapons among themselves. Because they shared the weapons , this place was called Pakutheeswaram which over time came to be called Pavithreswaram.It seems, and after the battle Shakuni returned here and did penance to Lord Shiva and attained Moksha. There are no idols of Shakuni in this temple nor are poojas or worship or thanthric rituals are offered to Shakuni.Tender coconut , silk asnd toddy are offered by devotees to please the God Shakuni here. There are other upa devathas at this temple which include Bhuvaneswari devi , Kiratha Murthi and Nagaraja There are two groups of

functionaries of the temple called OOralis and Piniyalis .They have a main role in the famous Malakkuda Mahotsavam conducted at this temple which starts on the 28th day of Makaram month

Payyalore Gopala Krishna Swami Temple, Kollengode

By

Mrs. Subbalakshmi Subbaraman

General Information

Location-19 Km from Palghat

Deity-Lord Gopalakrishna Swamy

Origin-17th century

This temple of Gopalakrishna (the cow herd) is situated in Payyalore

(village of cows) which is showered with natural bounty of the Aanamalai

range of Kerala and is on the way to Kachankurichi temple from

Kollengode., This temple is about 19 km from Palghat. It is situated in the

Agraharam and the worship is done by a Tamil Iyer priest who is a

Vaishnavite.(Azhwar)

The Itihyam(ancient story) is that a migrant Brahmin had a dream

in which Lord Krishna commanded him to look for an idol lying immersed in the village tank. The next morning the Brahmin to his

delight got the Idol from the tank. The Brahmin with his other community members constructed a small shelter for this God-

given

idol. There is a story that this temple was constructed by one Sanku

pattar who was the son of Ganga pattar later. It seems that , a stranger visited Sanku pattar and gave him a sealed jar and requested him to keep it in safe custody for a short period.

After a

year of waiting for the stranger, out of simple curiosity Sanku pattar

opened the jar. To his surprise , he found valuable gold coins. He with

his villagers thought that it was a God given gift. Sanku pattar in

consultation with the villagers spent the entire gold for the construction of the Krishna temple. Sanku's family who are known as

Kolathuran Pattar Family are still contributing liberally for the maintenance of the temple.

Even today they have special privileges as a mark of respect for the

contribution of their forefathers who constructed the present Sree

Krishna Temple.

The Upadevathas are Maha Ganapathy and Naagar (serpent).

There is

also a shrine of Aanjaneyar.

Payyalore village is now a destination to all devotees seeking the

divine grace of the Lord Gopalakrishna Swamy.

Temple timings-The temple is kept open from 5am to 9am and 5pm to 7.30pm

Festivals-Ratholsavam famous festival celebrated in the month of Jan, Feb Nerchas-Pazzam, paanakam and payar.

Pazhavangadi Maha Ganapathi Temple

BY

Abhilash MS

Pazhavangadi Maha Ganapathi Temple is one of the most famous Lord Ganesh temples in Kerala, situated at East Fort, Thiruvananthapuram. Located in the heart of Trivandrum city, the original idol of the Pazhavangadi Ganapathy Temple is a small idol of Lord Ganesh, with the right leg is in folded posture. Other deities worshipped at Pazhavangadi Maha Ganapathi Temple are Lord Ayyappa, Goddess Durga, Nagaraja, and Brahmarakshas. Devotees can also see beautiful paintings of the 32 forms of Lord Ganesh inside the temple complex.

Short History of Pazhavangadi Ganapathi Temple

The original Ganesha idol installed in the temple was worshipped by a soldier of Travancore Army stationed at Padmanabhapuram. In 1795 A.D, when the capital of Travancore was changed to Thiruvananthapuram, the garrison was also shifted and the idol was installed at its present place at Pazhavangati.

Offerings to Lord Ganesh

The main vazhipadu (offering) of Pazhavangadi Maha Ganapathi is the breaking of

coconut for removing obstacles and fulfillment of any desire.

Ganapathi Homam, Appam,

and Modakam are other main offerings to Lord Ganesh.

Temple Festivals

Vinayaka Chaturthi (Ganesh Chaturthi), Ganesh Jayanthi, Varad Chaturti, and Sankashti

Chaturti are the main festivals in Pazhavangadi Maha

Ganapathy Temple. Special poojas

(pujas) are performed for other festival including Thiruvonam,

Vijaya Dasami, Ayilyam,

Sahasra Kalasam, Thirkkarththika, Thirvathira, Makara

Vilakku, Maha Shivaratri, Vishu,

Thriveeda Laksharcchana, and Nira Puththari.

Temple Dress Code

To enter inside the main complex male devotees need to wear

Mundu (Veshti or Dothi or

Laacha). Any traditional dress code like Saree, Churidar, Salwar

Kameez, or Pavadai

Chattai is fine for ladies.

How to Reach

Sree Maha Ganapathy Temple is just 1.5 kms from Trivandrum

Central Railway Station

and Bus Stand. The nearest City Bus Stand is East Fort

(Kizhakkekottah).

Thiruvananthapuram International Airport is about 8 km from the Temple.

Temple Address

Sree Maha Ganapathy Temple,

Pazhavangati,

East Fort

Thiruvananthapuram,

Kerala, India Pin- 695 023

Phone - 0471 2461929

Nearby Temples

Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Attukal Bhagavathy Temple, Sreekanteswara Shiva

Temple and Sreevaraham Temple are located nearby.

Perumkulam south village Sri Krishna temple

Compiled by

P.R,Ramachander

Perumkulam is an aghraharam of Tamil Brahmins 23 km away from Palakkad in the Palakkad-Guruvayur route. The Sri Krishna temple there is being maintained by the Tamil Brahmins.

There is interesting story about this temple. It seems there was a Namboodidir family called Varikkasery Mana near by. Their family deity was Lord Krishna. Once one hand of the deity was broken. The chief of the family thought he should replace the broken idol and arranged a new idol to be prepared. But once he was ready for consecration, he had a dream in which Lord Krishna asked him, whether he would throw away his son if his hand is broken. Then it seems The Namboodiri asked the God what to do with a new idol It seems God told him that some people would approach him and request for the new idol. At that time a prominent person in Perumkulam had a dream in which the Lord instructed him to approach the Varikkaserry Mana for getting the new idol for the temple they were planning. The present idol is the one they got From that Mana. There is als a Ganapathi shrine in the village in the same temple. The temples re open from 5.30 Am to 9 Am and 5PM to 9 PM.

The temple celebrates a Brahmotsavam from 15th February to 15th march , every year.

Perungottukavu Bhagavathi Temple

By

P.S.Krishnan

Sthala Puranam:

Once a king (Some say the king was Samoothiri Raja who was ruling Malabar in the olden days) wanted to have darshan of his favourite Goddess and did severe Thapas.

After worshipping for many years, the Bhagavathi, pleased with his devotion, decided to fulfill his wishes and asked the king to follow her by the sound of her anklets. The

Bhagavathi told him that the moment he utters a word she would freeze at the place and

the king would get only a partial darshan of Goddess. He followed her for quite a long

time and got the partial darshans of the Goddess in the different forms of sound, hands,

above breast and legs. Not satisfied with these partial darshan he followed her further to

get a full darshan. After a long time he got poorna darshan of Bhagavathy at the slopes

of Thenmala (part of Western Ghats)at Perungottukavu. After that the king attained moksham.

Present Form:

Here the Bhagavathi is in a sitting position with left leg folded and right leg kept on the

peetam. Till 2002 the idol was of stone and was 2 feet high. In

2002 puna: prathishta was done and the present Dharu silpam was placed. This idol is approximately 4 feet in height and the Goddess holds a Thrisoolam in right upper hand, sword in right lower hand, the severed head of the asura in left upper hand and plate in left lower hand.

Inside the garbhagriha to the right side of the main deity is Ganapathy. Ganesha is visible only if the devotees view from the side. Then we can see the oil lamp inside and this is worshipped as Ganapathy. In the inner prakaram in the South West corner Ayyappa's prathishta is there. When we do outer pradakshinam, in the North-West corner, Nagas are also there.

Festivals :

In the Karitakamasam, Laksharchana is conducted in a big way for two days. Ganapathi homam, Kalasa pooja, Laksharchana, Sandya Deepam, elephant procession and kalasabhishekam are done on the first day. On the second day also Ganapathi homam, Kalasa pooja and Laksharchana, are done followed by Kalasam procession on elephant alongwith Panchvadyam , Nadaswaram etc and this ends with kalasabhishekam. Later annadhanam is organised. On the first 12 days in Karkitakamasam special poojas are done every year. Also Bhagavathisevas are done in this masam. On the first Friday of all

Malayala masams (Mupattu velliyazhcha) Devi namajapam and annadhanam are conducted.

Management: The temple affairs are looked after by Eralpadu Raja and his manager, Karyasthan etc. The present executive officer is Sri Jayadevan Raja.

Important vazhipadu:

Ganapathy Homam, Trikala Pooja, Kadumadhura Payasam, Bhavathiseva, Annadhanam, Neyyappam (evening only), Nei Vilakku, Thechimala Rakthapushpanjali, Kadhana vedi etc.

Timings :

Sunday, Tuesday & Friday - 5.30 AM to 12 Noon & 5.30 PM to 7.30 PM.

Other days : 6.00 AM to 9.00AM & 5.30 PM to 7.30 PM.

Address :

Trustee / Manager,
Perugottu kavu Dewaswom,
Kizhakkumuri P.O.,
Via Nemmara, Dist.Palakkad, Kerala.
Tel : 04923 – 266399 / 266431.

How to reach:

The temple is situated at Kizhakkumuri , near Elavancherry.

The Perungottukavu Bus

Stop is on the Pollachi – Thrissur main Road. It is in between Kollengode(7 Kms)and

Nemmara. Buses from Palakkad – (20 Kms from Palakkad)- to Nemmara, Pothundi

Dam (Via Kollengode) are going through this place. Also

Pollachi-Thrissur, Kollengode-

Nemmara, Govindapuram- Thrissur buses are available from Kollengode Ayyappan

Kavu Bus stop. After getting down on the main road, you need to walk one Km towards

south through the panchayat road to reach the temple. The temple is accessible by taxi or auto-riksha from Kollengode.

Siva temple :

One KM from the Bhagavathy temple, ancient Siva temple is there in Elavanchery

belonging to the same management. This temple is under renovation.

Perunna Murugan temple

The temple of ferocious Muruga visited by Mahathma Gandhi

Perunna Murugan temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Perunna murugan temple is located in the small town of Kerala called Changanaserry which is 23 km from Kottayam town. Shri Perunna Subrahmanya Swami temple is a pilgrim center which has its own glory and greatness, mainly because of the divinity enshrined in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple and the unique charm of the idol installed in it. Shri Subrahmanya Swami temple is one of the most famous Muruga temples in the state, and is a classic example of the Kerala style of architecture, having many decorative murals and pieces of art. This is the venue of the world famous Thaipooya

Kavadiyattam (Kavadi) festival celebrated annually from January to February.

The Form of Subrahmanaya is that of furious Deva SENathipathi with the Vel placed in downward direction . The idol looks furious and holds his spear pointing downwards . People believe that this form was assumed immediately after the Lord Subrhamana killed Tharakasura. The idol is five feet tall and is consecrated on a lotus platform. .It is made in black stone.

There is a story behind this temple. It seems in a village called Uppizhi in Kerala there was a great Subrahmanya devotee called Kumaran Namboosdiri. Like all other Keralaites he was a great devotee of Pazaani Murugan. Once when he went to the Palalni temple, it seems he felt home sick. It seems Lord Muruga came in his dream and told him that "You can find my statue in the river Kodumthurai. You recover that and consecrate it in Perunna". Kumar Namudiri obeyed the order of God and the Perunna temple was established. The idiol was consecrated in the year 753 AD in the tenth day of Meenam month. It seems that as soon as the idol was consecrated, it was completely covered in Sun light. Every year this day is celebrated as the Consecration day . Every year the same miracle of Sun covering the statue happens. There is yet another story of the temple:-

Around 500 years back, there was a village called Umbizhi, near Perunna. (This is the place where Changanacherry railway station is now seen). This village, like Perunna, was a Brahman settlement. Although both the villages were Brahman settlements, Perunna Brahman settlements were 'Satwiks' (those who perform only good karmas and nothing negative), but Umbishis were more ugra tantrics who also performed some black magic related works.

Perunna Brahman settlements were Shiva devotees at that time and they had a small but powerful Shiva temple for their worship. As

their prosperity increased, because of the blessings of this Shiva, Umbizhi Brahmans became jealous and they have started performing some tantric rituals against Perunna. They also attacked their shiva temple and destroyed the temple complex. But fortunately, Perunna Brahmans were able to save the idol or vigraha. (This is the same Vigraha present in the Keezhkulanagara temple).

Perunna Brahmans and other Hindus were shocked by the incident and a person from Idamana Illam, (A nampoothiri from Perunna Padinjattumbhagam) started a pilgrimage seeking remedy for their problems. He travelled all the way to "Pazhani Muruga temple" in Tamil nadu, stayed there in the temple and started a special bhajan, seeking for a solution. After some weeks, he had a vision of Lord Muruga of Palani. Lord Muruga advised the Nampoothiri, to go to Kodunthura river in the Pathanamathitta district and take the idol (Vigraham) from the river. This idol was built in time immemorial and was originally worshipped by the munis and rishis of various yugas. Immediatly Idaman nampoothiri went to Kodunthura and found the idol in the river.

On the day of prathishta (consecration) itself, villagers of Umbizhi sensed their defeat. They did a very rare and secret tantric ritual and sent a very powerful moorthy (diety) to destroy the Perunna temple. When Edamana nampoothiri heard about this incident, he started to walk towards east (towards Umbishi illam) and on the way found a very bright ball of fire coming toward their direction. His companion, a Nair Karanavar offered himself as 'bali' (sacrificed his life) to the moorthy and Edamana nampoothiri suddenly performed some rituals and was able to control the moorthy (diety). He made some avahanas and made a moorthi pratishta of the Maranam(Goddess Kali). After all these events Umbizhi villagers were totaly destroyed and the place where the village was situated, became a dense forest. Almost 55 years back, Lord Muruga's(

Perunna Subrahmanay Swami) Arattu was performed at that place, at the time of temple festival.

There is huge tank in this temple which is believed to contain large number of Saligrama stones. Five Edangazhi (A measure of Kerala-one edangazhi slightly more than one kg) rice is cooked every day and is offered to the God. Tuesday is considered as a special day to worship God here. The God is worshipped five times a day. Karthika I festival, Thai poosam (thai poosam Kavadiyattam of this temple is very famous) , Skanda SAshti , Soora SAMharam etc are celebrated in this temple. During Kartiga festival which is celebrated for thirteen days. The God is anointed with milk every day.

Aravanai Payasam is offered to the God.

I am reproducing a write up about Thai pOoya Kavadiyattam of the temple

from <http://perunnasubrahmanyaswamitemple.blogspot.in/>

“ThypooyamA festival occurring in the Malayalam month Makaram (January-February), the day of the star Pooyam around Pournami (Full Moon) is celebrated as Thypooyam. There was a demon named Tharakasuran who was troubling the Rishis and Saints. Lord Muruga was called by his parents Lord Shiva and Parvati and given the job of destroying the asuran. Lord Muruga set off with the blessings of his parents, to destroy the demon. He carried twelve weapons, eleven of which were given by his father Lord Shiva and the 'Vel' given by his mother Parvati. Lord Muruga destroyed Tharakasuran on the Pooyam Nakshatram day in the Tamil month of Thai and hence Thypooyam is celebrated in all Murugan temples. Generally, people take a vow to offer the Lord a Kavadi for the sake of tiding over a great calamity. No doubt, the worldly object is achieved for the devotee who takes the Kavadi. After the ceremony he feels that his inner spiritual being gets awakened. This is also a method that ultimately leads to the supreme state of devotion.

The Kavadi has various shapes and sizes, from the simple

shape of a hawker's storehouse (a wooden stick with two baskets at each end, slung across the shoulder) to the costly palanquin structure, profusely flower-bedecked and decoratively interwoven with peacock feathers.

The two baskets hanging at each end of the Kavadi contain milk, rose water, chandanam, tender coconut water, bhasmam, Sesame oil(Enna)etc that the devotee has vowed to offer the Lord. The more devout among them, and especially those who do it as a Sadhana, collect these articles by begging (bhiksha). They travel on foot from village to village, and beg from door to door. The devotees conduct pooja for Idumban before starting the bhiksha.

Some keen devotees undertake to walk barefoot from home to one of the shrines of Lord Subramanya, bearing the Kavadi all the way and collecting materials for the offering.

The Kavadi-bearer is required to observe various rules between the time he takes up the Kavadi, and the day of the offering. He has to perform elaborate ceremonies at the time of assuming the Kavadi, and at the time of offering it to the Lord. He wears saffron-coloured cloth and carry a conical scarlet cap and a cane silver-capped at both ends. The Kavadi-bearer very often observes silence. He observes strict celibacy. Only pure, vegetarian food is taken; he abstains from all sorts of intoxicating drinks and drugs. He thinks of God all the time.

Many of the Kavadi-bearers, especially those who do it as a spiritual Sadhana, impose various forms of self-torture. Some pass a sharp little spear ("vels") through their tongue, which is made to protrude out of the mouth. Others may pass a spear through the cheek. This sort of piercing is done in other parts of the body also. The vels represent the spear of Lord Muruga that killed Idumban. Lemons are pierced and hanged from the "vels". The acid juice of lemons and bhasma spread over the

pierced flesh cures bleeding.

The Kavadi-bearer enjoys a high state of religious fervour. His very appearance is awe-inspiring; there is divine radiance on his face. Devotees often experience the state of feeling united with the Lord.

Miracles at the time of Kavadi yattam.

From the time immemorial, the thaipooya kavadi of perunna temple has become the place for miracles. As the kavadi festival has competitive spirit (two areas namely padinjattum bhagam and kishakku- west and east) both groups are trying their very best to make their kavadi better. The major competitive events in this kavadi festivals are elephants " thalapokka malsaram" (which is there from the time immemorial- but not so famous in medias); and chenda melam.

The thaipooya kavadi festival of this temple is a world famous one and both padinjattum bhagama and kishakkum bhagam will bring the best elephants in kerala for them. Both the groups usually has 7 to 11 or 15 elephants. Almost all the famous elephant owners know the elephant competition in this temple and some of them have actually become afraid to participate. The major reason for this is that as the " elephant from padinjattum bhagam" has the special right to have the original thidambu of Lord Velayudha, the other elephants of kishakkum bhagam; even if it is "big" couldn't be able to raise his head above the head of padinjattum bahagam's elephant.

People have witnessed this miracle for centuries and still it is happening here. Examples are many... and it still happens.... For example in year 1998/99, the main elephant for kishakkum bhagam was famous Athira Rajasekharan and for padinjatum bhagam it was shajis puthenkulam rajendran (now trissur sri raman). Athira rajasekharan was the best for

thalayeduppu at that time and he was able to stand his head raised for hours. But for the first time in his life; on the day of thaipooya kavadiyattam suddenly he became unable even to move his head and lost the competition. witnessing this; the owner of the other elephant (Sri Puthenkulam Shaji) donated a part of his elephants rent to the padinjattumbahagam as an offering.

In year 2001 even the biggest elephant of all times kandambulli balanarayanan(who was 10 feet 8 inch in height) has failed to raise his head above the then padinjattum bhagamas Puthenkulam Anatha padmanabhan.....(this was anatha padmanabhans first festival in kerala and at that time he was less than 10 feet.)”

In the year 1936, for the first time in Kerala , this temple was opened for all the devotees by the Travancore king. Hearing this , it seems Mahathma Gandhi visited this temple and offered worship here.

Peruvanam Shiva Temple.

BY

Sri Ganapathi Iyer

(I am reproducing a remarkable and very informative account Of Peruvanam Shiva temple as found in http://www.ola.in/articles/peruvanam/article_tcr_peruvanam.html.. My acknowledgements to that web site.

P.R.Ramachander)

Profile

The Peruvanam temple is at Cherpu comprised in Oorakam village of Thrissur taluk in Thrissur District. It is located about 10km south of Thrissur town on the Thrprayar route, near

Thayamkulangara bus stop, at a distance of 100 meters south.

Temple Layout, Structure and Architecture

The temple stands on a sprawling 7 acre ground surrounded by a tall and hefty compound wall. The mathilakam (the bounding enclosure) is very extensive and has two dvarasalas, at west and east, the latter in ruins. Some 10-15 Aswatha trees punctuate the temple grounds with their wide spreading canopies.

As one enters the western dvarasala, the make-shift Koothambalam on an old foundation is seen in front of the Naalambalam. There are two Balikkals (of 2 mt height) in front of the naalambalam coinciding with the axis of the two shrikovils, that of Erattayappan on the north and that of Maadathilappan on the south. Of these the Erattayappan shrine is raised on a circular base (14.33 mt diameter). It is an ekatala vimana built on a granite adhishtana. The superstructure (bhithi) is made of laterite blocks, duly plastered and decorated with Kudya stambhas, niches etc. A recessed mukhamandapa exists, at the top of the flight of steps in the Sopana, with a free-standing pillar facade and shrine door proper at the rear wall. The Sopana is having lateral steps meeting at a common landing, screened by a carved phalaka in front of the western entrance to the Shrikovil.

There are two dvarapalakas on either side of the Shrikovil entry, standing on the coils of a snake. One of the legs entwines the club and the other rests on the hood of the snake. The coil of the snake in turn is placed on a lotus seat. The garbha-grha is square in shape enclosed by the circular shrikovil. Two rows of pillars - the inner row having twelve and the outer row sixteen - have been arranged around the square sanctum. The idol consists of two lingas, contributing to the concept of

Erattayappan, the lord in the double, signifying Ardhanareeswara to some and Shankaranarayana to others. The pratista is also considered as that of Shiva in the role of Thripuradahanan as per some early references.

There are three functional openings and a ghanadvāra (dummy door) in the circular ground plan. Apart from the Shrikovil entry on the west, those in the south and east accommodate Dakshinamoorthy and Parvathy respectively. The ghanadvāra is on the north, just above the pranala, which is supported on a bhuta-gana figure in the pose of drinking lustral water from a bowl.

There is a spacious namaskara mandapa in front of the circular Shrikovil, built on a square plan. As in all traditional swastika mandapas, there are twelve pillars along the periphery with four numbers larger ornamented pillars inside the mandapa. Its pyramidal roof, like the conical roof of the main shrine, is covered with copper sheets. Beautiful wood carvings adorn the mandapa ceiling as well as the pillars.

The southern side of the shrikovil has Kiratham katha engraved in wood, starting from Parvathi's shrine. Another woodwork which is worth mentioning is that of Garuda swallowing Jeemoothavahana and that of Dakshinamoorthy. To the south of the Erattayappan shrine is the Maadathilappan shrine, facing west. It is a tri-tala-vimana (one of the earliest in Kerala, the others being the ruined one at Uliyannur and the one at Parambu Tali) built on a high podium and approached by long flight of steps. Two lateral flights of nine steps (one each in the north and south direction) meet at a common mid landing from where ascends the middle flight of fifteen steps in an easterly direction towards the shrikovil. The ground tala (floor) constitutes the plinth with the shrine on the upper tala

(first floor). The ground as well as the upper tala are plastered over with pilasters and panjaras. Wall decorations include ghanadvaras in the centre, kudyastambhas (ornamental pilasters) and false niches with panjaras. Pilasters are tetragonal in the lower half and octogonal in the upper with potikas or bevelled projections on top. The pranala at the first floor level is a plain one without any ornamentation and issues out on the northern side.

Axially, the plan of the first tala consists of a square shrine integrated with a narrow, pillared mukhamandapa in front. The garbha-grha, which is circular inside has a domical roof. Above the first story of the shrikovil, rise in succession the dvitala and tri-tala parts of the vimana. But for the octagonal shikhara with copper roofing, all the floors are made of tiles; in the upper talas, wood has been used profusely with shukanasa projections. There is no namaskara mandapa in front of the maadathilappan shrine. A small Nandi is seen placed on the midlanding.

These two main shrines apart, there exists a flat roofed stone vault like structure, in between the shrine of Erattayappan and Maadathilappan, comparable to the Ganapathy shrine of the Vadakkunnathan temple complex; it used to serve as the treasure chest of the temple, according to local people. The temple complex is surrounded by a nalambalam which houses the shrines of Rakesvari and Manikantan in the north, Ganapathy and Pooru Maharshi both facing east on the north-west and south-west portions of the Valiambalam. There is a separate shrine of Vishnu on the northern side of the naalambalam

Traditions

According to legends, of the 64 gramams which Parasurama

created, Peruvanam remained the greatest for centuries. Four Shasthas - Akamala in North (beyond Wadakkancherry), Kutiran in East (midway between Thrissur and Palakkad), Edathuruthy in the West (2 kms east of Edamuttom Junction in Kodungallur-Thrprayar route) and Uzhatu Kavu in south (near Kodungallur) guarded the boundaries of its domain, roughly that part of central Kerala between Bharathapuzha in the north and Periyar in the south.

In a Brahmanippattu current in the locality, Peruvanathappan (Lord of Peruvanam) is described as the annihilator of the Thripuras. In a shloka attributed to Vilvamangalathu swamiyar, the pratishta is supposed to be of Ardhanareeswara.

"ardhanareeswaram devam
poorunancha pratishtitham
mateswaram mahadevam
parvatheencha ganeswaram"

Certain others claim that the two swayambhulingas represent Shankara and Narayana, a pointer to the amalgamation of Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Like in the Vadakkunnatha temple here also a certain order is followed in worshipping the deities (pradakshina krama), which is Erattayappan, Shri Parvathy, Dakshinamoorthy, Erattayappan, Maadathilappan, Pooru maharshi, Ganapathy and Erattayappan.

Historicity

Peruvanam does have some historic references. Peruvanam Kottam, the abode of the Lord of Peruvanam, figures along with nearby Oorakam in the Thrkkakkara inscription of Ko Indu Kothai Varman (No. 37, TAS - Vol III, Part II, p 173) of tenth century A.D.

The earliest historical reference to Peruvanam occurs in A.D. 583 ("Ayathu Shivalokam Nah" - kalivakyam denoting the

starting of Peruvanam pooram as per Peruvanam Granthavari) which is also the first record of the oldest pooram festival. 108 temples coming under the Peruvanam Kshetra sanketham, which extended from Bharathapuzha in the north to Periyar in the south, used to assemble at Arattupuzha Shastha temple which was the venue of the gala pooram gathering. This was known as Peruvanam pooram or Peruvanam Pallivetta. Due to the detachment of the various temple participants later for various reasons, the pooram festival faltered some five hundred years back. Later, the now famous Thrissur pooram was started by Shakthan Thampuran of Cochin, in eighteenth century overshadowing the Peruvanam pooram which is now a tame affair comprising of only 23 temples.

The temple administration was vested in local Namboodiri chieftains with an elected Yogiyathiri from among them who had his Avarodha as the representative of the Lord in the presence of the ruler of the state (Cochin). The King of Cochin had only nominal control over the temple. One pooja in a day used to be conducted by the Yogiyathiri himself. The general administration were looked after by a council of 21 brahmins of Peruvanam village and 21 brahmins from 21 other villages. Administration of the temple affairs under a Yogiyathiri was the order in the nearby Vadakkunnathan temple also.

The temple suffered extensive damage during the invasions of Tippu Sultan. For about 6 years from AD 1756, the temple property came under the overlordship of the zamorin of Calicut when he annexed these lands from Cochin. The Zamorin's representative renovated the Maadathilappan shrine as per an inscription seen on its basement. The Cochin ruler defeated Zamorin later with the help of the King of Travancore and consequently Travancore King got some

control (of Uchcha pooja) over the administration of the temple. Later due to prolonged disputes with Cochin, Travancore state renounced its rights. The temple is controlled at present by the Cochin Devaswom Board.

Rituals and Festivals

Five pujas constitute the daily ritual in this mahakshetra. Special pujas such as Navakom, Niraputhari, Vishukkani, Pradosha pooja etc. were being conducted in the by-gone days. Vaaram (veda parayana) and Oottu (meals) were a regularly feature. The temple had lands yielding 4 lakh paras of paddy annually and a 29 day festival used to be celebrated with its culminating Arat in Arattupuzha - the mother of all poorams, with an array of about 108 caparisoned elephants carrying Bhagavathies and Shasthas of all the temples falling within the extensive Peruvanam gramom of yore. Ardra asterism in Dhanu and Shivarathri in Kumbham are the other important days in this temple. The tantries of the temple are Kunnathur Patinjaredathu Bhattathiri and Kizhakkedathu.

Highlights

The maadathilappan shrine is one of the most outstanding temple structures of Kerala. This type of tri-tala-vimana is known as Meru Mandhara Prasaada which uses the whole bhumi of the ground floor for plinth and placing the shrine proper in the upper bhumi or second tala. The octagonal griva and the shikhara resting on it with beautiful shukanasas on all the eight sides constitutes the most ornate and unique pinnacle found in Kerala temple vimanas.

The temple is also monumental by the presence of exquisite pieces of plastic arts. The bracket figures associated with each tala of the temple are examples of fine artistic tradition. These elegantly executed pieces represent various deities in

interesting iconographic forms. Scenes from Kiratarjuneeyam form the core material for the figures around the Erattayappan shrine. On the three sides of the sanctum of Maadathilappan, above the ghanadvara portion, the upper tala displays wooden images of Shiva and Parvathy on the south side, Brahma on the east and Vishnu on Anantha on the north side.

The temple had been one of the sheet anchors for the growth of performing arts. In the old days, Koothu was one of the religious offerings to God with the involvement of the presiding lord in every aspect of the pantomime; right from the lighting of the lamp in Kootharangu aniyara with the lamp provided from within the shrikovil, blessing the dress etc. and even reserving one seat for the lord or his representative (Moothathu) in the Koothambalam.

Forty one days' Koothu from Karkitaka sankramam (mid July) was the routine. Manthrankom koothu was traditionally played at Peruvanam. Two chakyar families Mekkattu and Kuttancherri had the right of conducting koothu at Peruvanam temple. Later Mani chakyar family of Kolathunadu got this right after repeated dissents from a section of the Uraymas. Subsequently the earlier sthani families became extinct and Mani chakyar family is now the sole sthani.

Photographs

Peruvanam - Photo Gallery

Peruvanam - View from north-east corner

Peruvanam - View from west and Koothambalam

Peruvanam - View from east

Naalamabalam - Peruvanam (view 1)

Naalamabalam - Peruvanam (view 2)

Dvarapaalaka - Erattayappan Temple

Erattayapan Temple - Sopanam (view 1)

Erattayapan Temple - Sopanam (view 2)

Pranala - Erattayappan Temple

Maadathilappan Temple Entrance

Maadathilappan Temple - Side view

Maadathilappan Temple Entrance - another view

Pranala - Maadathilappan Temple

Maadathilappan Temple - Shikhara

Maadathilappan Temple - Mid range view

Kiratarjuneeyam 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Woodwork 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

History of the Temple

Legend has it that the Saint Parashurama established 64 Gramams or sections after reclaiming Keralam from sea and

Peruvanam Gramam is the 1st and most important among

them. It is said that the temple was created by 'Pooru

Maharshi', the son of the Hasthinapura King Yayathy after

propitiating the Lord Shiva with rigorous penance and the

name of the place derived from the word "POORU VANAM".

Further it is believed that while transporting a beautiful, big Shivalinga received from a lake near Badarinath to this place, it

happened to stuck in the branch of a tree and the present

Madathilappan Temple has been constructed at this place.

Shiva in dual linga form is the main feature of the temple and

Lord is called "IRATTAYAPPAN" which denote the duality. The

Sricovil of Madathilappan is considered to be the tallest

Sricovil in South India. Four Sastha temples at Akmala,

Kuthiran, Edathiruthy and Oozath are located on the

boundaries of Peruvanam Gramam and Thiruvullakkavu

Sastha Temple is located at the centre of the Gramam.

Irattayappan is the 'Gramadhipathi' and Thiruvullakkavu

Sastha is considered the 'Gramaraskhakan'.

Now the temple is under the joint administration of Cochin Devaswom Board and Travancore Devaswom Board. There is a vast area of land and an office called 'Cherikalamb' are existed near the south 'Gopuram' of this temple. It is important and rare that the Maharaja of Travancore had interest in this temple and therefore, the expenses for 'Utcha Pooja', 'Prodhosha Nivedhyam', 'Nira Puthiri', 'Koothu' are borne by him. It still continues.

Darshana Kramam

There are two approaches to the inner courtyard (Chuttampalam) of the Peruvanamb temple, from the west and east sides. The main entrance is from the east.

As you enter from the east you are facing Sreeparvathy, the Goddess who is the consort of Irattayappan. You may start the Darshanam there, but, have to come back later. There you are in front of a large circular sanctum sanctorum (Sreekovil) of Irattayappan facing west. It is the custom to start the worship with Irattayappan.

Next, you go behind in an anticlockwise direction (Apradakshinam) and pray to Sreeparvathy facing east. There is a taboo all over Kerala in crossing the imaginary ray (Soma Rekha) emanating from Siva and going north. Hence, one does not make a complete perambulation in the inner courtyard of Siva temples.

Most devotees at the Peruvanamb temple go round the Bilva tree to the north and return clockwise to the south side where there is a shrine of Ganapathy and Dakshinamoorthy. You, then, go back to the west and worship Irattayappan once again. There is an independent, large, Sreekovil of another Siva, the Matatthilappan, on the south. It is a three storeyed structure

and you reach the shrine of Matatthilappan after ascending a flight of over twenty steps. You will find a huge Sivalinga at the back of a large Mukhamandapam (hall). It is believed that the Sivalingam worshipped by sage Puru for long years is beneath that.

The sage, himself, has been enshrined to the south west corner of the inner courtyard (Chuttampalam). After getting down the stairs of Matatthilappan you pay obeisance to the sage.

If you keep to the western border of the courtyard and walk to the north you reach the shrine of another Ganapathy, with his trunk twisted right. You pray to him for the ultimate goal in human life, for salvation and turn to the north side. There you get to the front of the last of the shrines inside the inner courtyard. Two deities are housed there, Raktheswary and Manikantha. The former is a form of Bhadrakali and the latter a form of Lord Siva.

You must worship Irattayappan once again before coming out of the inner courtyard, through the same entrance you got in. There is a shrine, of Gosalakrishna, outside the main structure (Chuttampalam) of Irattayappan on the north side. This is Lord Krishna in the company of his dear cattle. You go in a clockwise fashion to worship Him. That ends the Darshana Kramam at the Peruvanam temple.

There is a verse (Sloka) describing this order of worship, as follows:

“Poorvan Pooruvane janais savinayam dwithwaasrayas
sankaro

Vandyah, caatha gireendrajaa, punaratas sanyaasayogee
kramaal

Yugmesasca, mahalayoparivasan maateswaro anantaram

Yogeendrasca, gajaanah, punarato yugmeswarasca kramaal.”

Meaning:

First, at Peruvanam, Siva in dual form is to be worshipped humbly by the devotees.

Then, Sreeparvathy and then the Lord in meditation (to be worshipped).

Then, Ganapathy and then the Lord occupying a high abode (to be worshipped).

Next the sage, Ganapathy and finally Irattayappan (are to be worshipped)

We note here that the order of Ganapathy and Dakshinamoorthy is reversed and praying to Irattayappan after this is omitted. The omission of Raktheswary, Manikanthan and Gosalakrishnan must be as they have been enshrined in a later period.

Pishari Kavu of Kollam near Koyilandy in Malabar

By
P.R.Ramachander

Pisharikkavu is a temple near Koilandy .

In Pisharikkavu temple the sword called Nandakam is worshipped here as the Goddess. There is an interesting story behind it.

It seems a group of Nair diamond merchants belonging to ettu veetil family who were from Kollam of Southern Kerala were great devotees of the Goddess Bhadrakali (porkali) When they meditated on the Goddess it seems the Goddess gave them her sword called Nandakam and asked them to worship the sword instead of her.

Since they were opposed to the very powerful king Marthanda Verma, they were forced to run away from their native place. They migrated to the northern part of Kerala and settled down near Koilandy. They decided to call the place of their new settlement as "Kollam" in memory of their native place. They also built a temple for the sword Nandakam and called it Pisharikkavu. The local population used to call them as Vyapari Nayars and this later changed over time in to "Ravari Nayars". Apart from the devi temple , the temple also houses a siva temple.

Valia vattala guruthi is the main offering and booked for several years. Udayasthama pooja, Niramala, Rakthapushpanjali, Palpayasom are a few of the other offerings.

The main festival of the temple is celebrated in the Malayalam month Meenam (March-April) for eight days and with innumerable processions in the presence of thousands of devotees. The 7th day is celebrated as "Valiya Vilaku", and the 8th day is celebrated as "Kaliyattom", The divine Nandhakam sword is brought in procession around the temple on 7th and 8th day on a fully decorated female elephant, and traditional art forms of Kerala is also staged in the temple. Thayambaka, pachavadyam, padhakom, ottanthullal, chakyarkoothu are also performed well on these days.

Navarathri festival is also celebrated in this temple.

The temple is open for devotees from 5.30 AM to 12 PM and from 5.30 PM to 8 PM.

Important poojas performed in the temple are Ucha pooja at 12 pm Athazha pooja at 8.00 pm. Here, Ucha Pooja is also considered as the saktheya type pooja.

Pisharikavu Temple Contact Number : +(91)-496-2620568

Pisharikavu Temple By Road

Koyilandy is 17 kms from Peruvayal. Buses, auto-rickshaws and taxis are available almost all the time to reach the temple.

Pisharikavu Temple By Rail

The nearest rail head is the Koyilandy Railway station at a distance of 3 kms from the temple.

Pisharikavu Temple By Air

The nearest airport is the Calicut International Airport at a distance of 32 kms from the temple.

Poonjar Dharma Sastha temple or Kattunel Kavu

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Poonjar is a slightly big village in the Meechil Taluq of Kottayam district of Kerala. It seems this was being troubled greatly by a dacoit called Udayanan. Ayyappan was the prince of Pandalam at that time. At that time a Pandya king called Mana Vikrama Raja arrived there from Madurai. He decided to put down Udayanan. At that time an old divine man met Mana Vikraman and gave him an elephant a goad and a hook to control the elephants and also told him how to suppress Udayana. As per the instruction Mana Vikrama Raja fought with Udayana and suppressed him. Later that Pandya king purchased that area and wanted to build a temple to Ayyappan as he could easily understand that the old man who helped him was Lord Ayyappan himself. One day when the king went to take bath in the river, he kept his umbrella made of palm leaf and went to take bath, but when he came back he was not able to move that umbrella at all. Understanding that the God wanted to have temple there itself he started building the temple (History says that the temple was built in 1165

ad). Employing architects and artists from Madurai and Kerala. The temple though small is very artistic, The entire Kirtharjuneeyam story has been sculpted on the outer walls of the temple. This temple is also known as “ Kattunel Kavu”

The Saastha statue of the temple is made of black stone. Lord Ayyappa is made in such a way that it appears to be teaching the third Pada of Gayathri Manthra with open book of Veda in his hand, which is resting on his knee.

In the month of Makaram there is a Kodiyettu festival for eight days.. The procession of the God on the elephant daily goes out at night with lots of burning light .On the first six days the goes round five times . Before the God takes bath on the eighth day , the God visits the Poonjar palace. There takes rest in the Lord Krishna temple in the palace and later he would go round the Madhuai Meenakshi which is on the way to the river and he goes take a dip in Meenachil river and goes back to his temple , On the Mahanavami day there is a festival called Varam when all visitors are fed by the palace .During the Mandala time in Sabari Malai , very large number of pilgrims going to Sabari Malai visit this temple on their way. On those days daily there is a function called Kalamezhuthu and Pattu . It is interesting to know that the priests of this temple from Thazhaman family which also does worship in Sabari Mala temple..This temple is still the control of Poonjar royal family, The temple can be reached from Kottayam via Pala , Erattupetta and Panachipara ,

Puducode Bhagawathy Temple

By Ammu Patti

Puthucode is a picturesque small village lying on the western most border of Palghat District and bordering Thrissur District. It is approximately 40kms away from both Palghat and

Thrissur towns. The nearest railway stations are Palghat and Thrissur. The nearest airports are Coimbatore and Kochi. The village is located 6 km west of Vadakkencherry on the Palakkad-Thrissur stretch of the National Highway 47. There are regular bus services from Thrissur and Palghat to Puthucode.

Puthucode agraharam with four streets with row houses was exclusively inhabited by Brahmins until a few decades back. Where the four streets meet is the famous Annapoorneswari temple. It would be apt to say the 4 agraharams are radiating from the central Annapoorneswari temple.

It is said that Sage Parasurama installed 108 Durga temples in many parts of India and this is one of them. Currently this comes under Naduvil Madom Devaswam. The daily poojas are performed by Tamil Brahmins except during the Navarathri festival when they are performed by Thantris affiliated to Naduvil Madom Devaswam.

There is a belief among Brahmins of this village that this idol (4 feet tall) was got made in Truthala near Kuttanad and was brought by Brahmins of the village belonging to three Vedas by head load, with chanting the Vedas all the way without stopping any where on the way. It is believed at some stage in the life of the temple, the Tamil Brahmins gave the temple to the Naduvil Madam. According to a stone inscription, Sri Godavarma Raja gifted lots of rice fields for the maintenance of the temple. Also, several families had bequeathed land to the Devaswom in the olden days for the Annadhanam during Navarathri. These properties however, were abolished due to the Land reform act of Kerala. But the Tamil Brahmins of the village joined together and formed a trust called SAPCO (Sree

Annapurneshwari Pooja Coordinators trust) which is managing the temple at present. Though the Goddess is called Annapurneshwari, she holds in her hands Shanku and Chakra (Not ladle and vessel like the Annapurneshwari of Benares).

The temple occupies a vast area with a large outer Prakaaram and an inner Prakaaram. The main entrance to the temple faces east and as you enter the temple there is a Deepastambham beyond which is the entrance to the inner Prakaaram of the temple. The inner Prakaaram is also very large with wide corridors known as Vathil maadams along the four sides, where discourses and concerts used to take place. The madapalli or the cook house is also situated here. As one gets inside the Mahaganapathy Sannidhi facing east can be seen. Going around the Mahaganapathy Sannidhi, you reach the main temple of Annapurneshwari. The Deity faces west. The Deity is also known as Santha Durga and is a very powerful Devi bestowing Her benevolent blessings to all Her devotees. The four handed idol of Devi is almost 4 feet tall. She is always dressed in a Pattu Pavadai. To see the Devi in her full Chandana kappu after the Deeparadhana in the evening is at once electrifying. It gives one such a joy and peace and real happiness. One just cannot take the eyes off Devi when She is adorned in full Chandana kappu.

In front of the Garba Griham or Sanctum is the Namaskara Mandapam, where Veda Parayanams and other daily recitals of Devi Mahatmyam and Shyamala Dandakam are done by devotees.

When you come around the Namaskara Mandapam, there is the Prathishta for Naga devata, Dharmasastha and Palliyarkkal

Bhagavathy on the north-west corner of the main temple. A unique offering (vazhipadu) of Azhil is conducted in front of this Sannidhi. A new cloth (a set of 4 thorthus) dipped in Gingelly oil is hung on the poll in between two stone pillars. After doing a special pooja the archaka lights the cloth dipped in oil and allows it to burn down to ashes. This ash is used as prasadam and smeared on the forehead. It is believed that this offering will relieve one of all types of obstacles and misfortunes in life.

The other important offerings (vazhipadu) in the temple are Kalabhabhishekam, Niramala, Chuttuvilakku, Archanas, etc.

On the outer prakaaram, is the west nada, which is also known as Aanapandhi which has the gold plated dwajasthambam. This is where the Thayambaka and Keli take place during Navarathri celebrations.

Along the northern compound wall of the temple is the Agrisala, where cooking and dining take place during the Annadhanam of Navarathri.

The Sarat Navarathri during the months of September and October is the biggest festival in Puthucode Bhagavathy temple. All Her subjects who are far from home assemble at Puthucode during these nine days. The Dwजारohanam for the festival is on the Prathama thithi after Mahalaya [Amavasya](#) and the Aarattu on Vijayadashami day or the 10th day from the Dwजारohanam. There are daily processions with caparisoned elephants twice a day for the first 4 days inside the temple on the outer Praakaram and on the following 4 days the procession of caparisoned elephants with accompanying Panchavadyam and Chendamelam is taken to the 4 villages on

successive days, starting with the South village on the 6th day. The Utsavamoorthy of the deity is taken atop the caparisoned elephant to all the villages for Her to see Her subjects. There is a Pallivetta on the 9th night followed by Aarattu on the 10th day. During Navarathri the Utsavamoorthy is taken atop the elephant to the nearby stream every morning where the deity is given a bath and after due alankarams taken back to the temple.

Measures of paddy and rice and other items like puffed rice, flowers, etc known as Parayeduppu are offered to Bhagavathy during the procession of elephants to the respective villages. The Parayeduppu for the south village is on the Aarattu day when the deity returns to the temple after her holy bath in the stream.

After Aarattu the elephant has to touch the Dwajasthambham which will mark the end of the festival for that year.

In 2003, devotees installed a new Dwajasthambham fully covered with gold.

True to Her name there is Annadhanam on all the 9 days of Navarathri for all devotees. Puthucode Pulinkari which is served with Rice and Olan is unique to this Navarathri Sadhya. The Sadasadaya Payasam (Idichujpizhinja payasam) offered to Bhagavathy during these days is also very famous. There is a saying in tamil Puthucoda vitta gramamum illai, Pulinkariye vitta kootanum illai which can be translated as, Puthucode is the ultimate among agraarams and Pulinkari is the ultimate among curries.

The Devi has blessed all Her children with wealth, health and positions and they in turn pay their respects to Her by donating to the temple funds.

The temple is open from 5.30am to 10.00am and 4.30pm to 9.00pm for worship. The Deeparadhana in the evening is at 6.30pm.

At the end of North Village is a Siva temple. The temple is situated at a lower level than the surrounding village. There is a large tank known as ayyankulam in front of the Siva temple. The presiding deity is facing east. There are also sannidhis for Mahaganapathy and Dharmasastha inside the temple. The annual festival in this Siva temple starts on the Thiruvathira day of the Malayalam month Dhanu and the Arattu is on the 8th day. Mahasivarathri is also celebrated in a grand manner with Maharudram, Abhishekam etc. Annabhishekam on the Pournami day of the Malayalam month Thulam is also very famous.

The temple opens for worship at 5.30am to 10.30 am and again at 4.30pm to 9.00pm.

Just outside the Siva temple there is a newly constructed Sivamahal in the north village, which can be used for functions like Marriage, Upanayanam etc.

PUTHEN SABARIMALA

By

Ram Mohan Bala

Puthen Sabarimala literally means new Sabarimala. The temple Puthen Sabarimala is situated in Thadiyoor under Ayroor Panchayath in Pathanamthitta Dist. Thadiyoor is around 9kms away from the temple town of Thiruvalla and 5kms away from Ranni.

When one hears the name of the temple one will initially come under the impression that it is the newer carbon copy of Sabarimala temple, but it is far from that. Since it was last renovated in 1999, it was called Puthen Sabarimala, and there ends the newness of the word associated with the temple. Puthen Sabarimala shrine is a carbon copy of Sabarimala temple in nearly all respects. Its rituals, rules and regulations, particularly the opening and closing dates are similar to Sabarimala Temple. The temple has a granite pathinettampadi finished in 'Krishna Shila' which can be ascended only with 41 days vritham and irumudi. Although it bears a striking similarity to Sabarimala temple in most aspects, it is strikingly different from Sabarimala in one aspect. Ladies of all ages are allowed entry especially through the northern gates if they cannot observe the mandatory 41 days vritham and ascend the pathinettampadi. All those devotees who have observed vritham for a lower number of days than the mandatory 41, are allowed Ayyappa darshan via the northern gates. During Makaravilakku, the symbolic makara jyoti is lit here also. Neiabhishekam is the most important offering and Aravana and Appam are the most important prasadam.

The temple is shrouded in antiquity. It is atleast 900 odd years old dating back to the time of Manikanda Muthayyan who lived sometime in the 12th century AD. Manikanda Muthayyan is none other than Sree Manikandan, and, a distinction is to be made between Sree Manikandan and Sree Ariyan Keralan, whom we refer to as Ayyappan. To the discerning leader it is reminded that Manikandan is considered as the first avatharam of Shasta and Ariyan Keralan who lived during the 17th century is considered as the last avatharam of

Dharmashasta.

The legend behind the temple is even more interesting.

At one point of time, the area where the present temple stands was part of dense forests, where hermitages of rishis existed.

The story of Manikandan going in search of tigress' milk is legendary. During the course of His trek into the forests, Manikandan happened to reach the place where the present temple stands. Since it was already dusk, and the Lord was tired He opted to stay in one of the hermitages. Soon after the Lord got darshan of Lord Shiva, who advised Him as to what was to be done. Later due to the grace and blessings of Lord Shiva Manikandan was able to successfully execute the almost impossible task undertaken by Him. The Rishis of the place realising the greatness of Manikanda Perumal built a temple at the spot where Lord Shiva gave darshanam to Manikandan, and this is the temple which we call Puthen Sabarimala. Initially padukas of Manikandan were consecrated inside the sanctum for worship. Years later this temple was gutted in a devastating fire, and another one was built in its place. Later with not many

going for worship this temple too fell into disuse and was later reduced to ruins. However this temple gained prominence in the 1940's with worshippers slowly making their way into the dilapidated temple. Finally the temple which came under the Travancore Devaswom Board was renovated with full participation of the bhaktas and cooperation from the Board, and in 1999 punapratishta to this age old shrine was done. The tantris of the temple are from Thazhamon Madom.

PUZAKKARA KAVU DEVASWOM, MOOVATTUPUZHA KERALA,

Compiled by
Sri.N.Ramdas Iyer

Beauty and holiness flows to a point where three rivers (Kaliyar, Kothayar and Thodupuzhayar) confluence naming the land Muvattupuzha (means joining of three rivers). Shining at this Thriveni's holy bank situates the shrine of Puzhakkara kavu Devi blessing the worshippers benevolently. As per legends this temple is 2000 years old and the Devi here is 'Swayambhoo' (self originated). Half kilometer away from the busy noises of Muvattupuzha town, enchanting all people irrespective of caste and creed establishing the Devi expressing in three styles. At dawn Devi is Sree Bhuvaneswary, afternoon she is Sree Vana Durga, and evening Sree Bhadra.

In olden days the wild tribe worshipped this temple and gradually developed to the present situation. For years Thengode Mana was controlling the day to day affairs of the temple and in 1976 administration was vested to a local trust selected from the devotees. Shrine is constructed with granite and thatched with copper plate. Upper portion of the shrine is open for getting sunshine and rain. Devi takes ceremonial bath (Arattu) more than once in a year, is a peculiarity of this temple. This is due to the flood which happens more than once in a year enters the temple for Devi's arattu. Here Devi never goes to the river; river comes to her for her spectacular ceremonial bath. Holy ground of the shrine is covered with single granite blocks and the circumambulating path also is made with same.

Installed left side of the temple outside the sanctum sanctorum is the deities Ganapathy and Sastha, outside the pathway is the Serpent. Special poojas are conducted here during the auspicious day of aayillyam. Another important offer is "Chathusatham". This is by submitting 101 naazhy (a measure) rice to Devi by the devotee and believed she grants the desire fulfilled. "Swayamvara Parvathy Pooja" also is done here for getting desired marriage. Devi celebrates her birthday in the Malayalam month of Meenam, her birth star is pooram and special poojas 'Ponkala, Annadana (feast for devotees) are

conducted. Pooram star of every month such poojas and annadana are done. Tuesday and Friday are special days of devi.

During the 41 days of Mandala period celebrates the festival and seven days specially celebrated. Irrespective of any religion all the people co-operate for the well being of the temple and pray before the Devi for their needs. A Muslim family blessed by Devi many years back has been given the right for 'Vedivazhipadu' (fire cracking) even now. A devotee from Tamilnadu donated the giant elephant barn during 1092 of Malayalam era

Raghavapuram Hanuman temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is possibly the most important temple of Hanuman in the Malabar area of Kerala. It is situated in the Cheruthazham village of Payyannur opposite the hills called Ezhimala. It can be approached from Kannur through Pazhavangadi. Though the main deity of the temple is Sri Rama , Hanuman is consecrated on the Vayu kon(North west corner) . It seems the form of Sri Rama is in the form after his killing Ravana. So since the temple is facing the east , the people who were having homes on the eastern side began to suffer. So after a prasnam(astrological query) to find out why it was happening, the eastern door was completely closed and a new door opened on the western side and apart from the Lord in the same pedestal , the idol of the Goddess and that of his younger brother Lord Lakshmana was also installed. From the western

door we can see the Ezhimala which is supposed to be the mrutha Sanjeevini mountain that Lord Hanuman brought to wake up Lord Lakshmana killed in the war by Indrajit. Though the main temple is of Rama, it is believed that Hanuman temple is more important and it is generally believed that Praying and worshipping Hanuman would only please Lord Rama, Due to this the temple is called “Hanumarambalam(Temple of Hanuman) . Just outside the temple of Lord Rama, there are separate temples for Lord Shiva and Lord Durga, It is believed that these temples were built by Kings of Mooshika dynasty long, long ago. In the eighth century the temple was renovated by a king called Sri Udayavarma Kolathiri. It is also believed that this king brought 237 families of Brahmin scholars, from a place north of Gokarnam and settled them around the temple. Most of them left that place during the conquest of Malabar by Tippu Sultan to a place near Thiruvalla ,

The temple festival is celebrated in the month of Makaram(January-February). During the festivals , the idols of Sri Rama, Sita , Hanuman. Lord Shiva and Duga are carried by Brahmins on their head and they perform a very special dance called “Thidambu Nrutham”.

Offering of Avil (Beaten rice) to Lord Hanuman between 4Pm and the evening Pooja is believed to make Lord Hanuman hear our prayers during that time and inform about them to Lord Rama. The temple is open between 5.30 Am and 10 Am and between 5.30 PM and 7 PM.

Rajadhi Raja Temple Of Thaliparambu

By

P.R.Ramachander

(I have used the material given in Wikipedia in writing about the temple with modifications in several places)

The Rajarajeswara temple is a Shiva temple located at Thaliparumba of Kannur district of Kerala. This temple is also called Thiruchellur and god as Chellur nadhan. The deity is also called Rajadhi Rajan.

The temple is regarded as one of the existing 108 ancient Shiva Temples of Kerala. It also has a prominent place amongst the numerous Shiva temples in South India. It is as famous as the Shiva temples at Vaikom, Ettumanur and Vadakkunnathan temple at Trichur.. It had the tallest shikhara amongst the temples of its time. The Rajadhi Raja temple has a top stone of about 90 tonnes. If any problem is encountered in any other temples of Kerala, the devotees seek a solution in this Temple through a prasna, a traditional method of astrological decision making. The prasna is conducted on a peedha (a raised platform) situated outside the temple.

It is believed that when Goddess Sati devi self immolated herself in the sacrificial fire of her father Daksha Prajapathi. The furious Shiva took her body and started dancing as if it was deluge. Understanding that things will go out of hand, Lord Vishnu cut her body into pieces and it is believed that her head fell in Thaliparambu, and this temple was supposed to commemorate that event.

Origin of the three Shiva lingas

The story of the temple

A major legend about this temple begins with the visit of the Puranic sage Parashurama, one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Seeing there an ancient shrine of vibrant spiritual power in a dilapidated condition, the sage was grief-stricken and wanted to know its history. Thereupon, sage Narada appeared there and related to him the story of the temple.

According to it, sage Sanaka and others, the sons of the creator Lord Brahma, churned the disk of the Sun to lessen its fierce heat. They mixed the dust, which was formed while churning, with the divine nectar of immortality, Amrita, and out of it gave shape to three spiritually to Lord Brahma presented them to Goddess Parvathi, the consort of Lord Shiva. And these were the ones that were given by Lord Shiva to the three kings. And so the temple was built by Sage Parashurama long before the Kali yuga commenced., the architect being Viswa Karma, the architect of the devas. It is believed that sage Agasthya was the one who consecrated this temple. . It was renovated in the eleventh century and was renovated later by the the Kolathiri Dynasty Kings. The quadrangular sanctum has a two tiered pyramidal roof, in front of the sanctum is the namaskara mandapam but the temple has no kodi maram (flagstaff), unlike other temples in Kerala.

Consecrations of the three Shiva linga by king Mandatha King Muchukunda and king Shatasoma

There are also other stories about the origin of the temple.

It seems king Mandatha did great penance to please Lord Shiva and when Lord Shiva came in front of him, he presented the lking with a great Shiva Linga and ordered him to consecrate it in a place where there was no cremation ground. After great search, king Mandatha located Thaliparambu and consecrated there and after his death that Shiva Linga was covered by earth. Later King Muchukunda did penance to please Lord Shiva and at the end Lord Shiva gave him a Shiva linga with the same condition that was imposed on Mandatha. He also consecrated it in Thaliparamba and after his salvation that Shiva Linga also vanished. Later a king(sage) called Sathasoma also pleased Lord Shiva by penance , and Lord Shiva blessed him saying that the Shiva Linga with the same instructions. As per the earlier practice when this idol was also sinking in earth, Sathasoman lit a lap of Ghee and then the God

stood firm. Due to this the most important offering to God in this temple is a pot of Ghee. This pot could be earthen or made of silver or gold. The ghee has to be left on the steps of the sanctum sanctorum and is used to keep burning the ghee lamp before the Lord..This was the idol which is being worshipped in Rajadhi Raja Temple of Thaliparamba.

Another story is that after this has taken place naturally Shatasoma also came to the same spot where Maandhatha had installed the first Shivalingam. He installed his Shivalingam at the same spot. This Shivalingam was also eventually dissolved into the earth again reinforcing the spot spiritually. While installing, this Lingam also began sinking into the earth. King Shathasoman there upon prayed for Sage Agasthya's help. The sage appeared and after lighting a ghee lamp prostrated before the Shivalingam twelve times and when he begun the thirteenth prostration, the Lingam got firmly fixed on the earth therefore the number of prostration the Sage Agasthya performed for his purpose came to be known as twelve and a half. Thus with the installation of the third Shivalingam has sacred spot became spiritually vibrant threefold.

Lord Rama's visit to the temple

It is believed that when Sri Rama after killing Ravana was returning back to Ayodhya in the Pushpaka Vimana, his plane stopped just above the Thaliparamba temple , Relising the presence of a divine power Sri Rama got down and did Sashtanga Namaskaram to Lord Shiva in the Namaskara Mandapam of the temple. So no one including Brahmins are permitted to climb up this Namaskara Mandapam.,
Visit of the great scholar Udhanda Sastrigal

Another interesesting story of the temple is that about the visit of Udhanda Sastrigal(a great scholar from Tamil Nadu) to this temple. This learned man from Tamil Nadu did not fold his hands in salute before any God because he was a strict follower

of Advaita. But when he visited the Raja raja temple, seeing the great power oozing out of the God, involuntarily, his hands folded in salute.

Here Lord Shiva worshipped in this sacred temple is known as Rajadhi Raja or Sree Rajarajeswara, which means the Emperor of Emperors or the Lord Supreme. The name signifies the supreme transcendental power in the background of mysterious drama of the boundless universe. That power is invoked here as Lord Rajarajeshwara. Devotees address the lord with such royal appellations as Perumthrikovilappan, Perum-chelloorappan and Thampuraan Perumthrikkovilappan.

Another great practice of this temple is recognizing great writers and scholars and presenting them with a gold armlet

Traditional way of visiting the temple

According to the traditional system of visiting this temple the devotee first worships Lord Krishna at the shrine of Vasudevapuram located at the southern bank of the vast temple tank known as Aashraamath-chira, where there is a beautiful idol of Krishna playing the flute. The sweet melody from Krishna's flute symbolizes the supreme spiritual harmony that prevails in the background of the universe of diversities, which one can experience by spiritually elevating oneself.

Worship of lord Krishna before entering the great temple of lord Shiva symbolizes the essential unity of lord Vishnu and lord Shiva as two aspects of the supreme reality. There are other special features also in this temple that highlight this unity. It is believed that there was an Ashram of sage Agasthya on the bank of this temple tank. The tank was reconstructed in the present stage, it is said about 460 years ago by a devotee, Chittoor Namboodiripad.

Then, proceeding towards Sree Rajarajeswara temple one worships at the shrine of Sree Bhoothanatha (Kumbhodhara), who is the chief lieutenant of lord Shiva. Kumbhodhara is also

known as Aravathappan. The two deities mentioned above, Sri Krishna and Sri Bhoothanatha, are considered as the accompanying deities of lord Rajarajeswara.

Sree Rajarajeswara temple is located in the centre of very spacious compound of about six acres surrounded by a compound wall with two Gopurams, located on the eastern and western sides. The ancient compound wall itself is a wondrous architectural marvel built of huge cut stones just placed one above the other without any cementing mortar, board at the base and tapering towards the top.

The main gate is on the east before one enters the temple one turns eastwards and offers prayers to lord Vaidyanatha (kanhirangaatt-appan), an aspect of lord Shiva worshipped as the lord of physicians, enshrined in temple about 6 km from Rajarajeswara temple.

On entering the eastern gate the devotee makes a circumambulation of the whole central shrine before stepping inside the shrine. Towards the northern side there is a small shrine of a guardian deity called Yakshi. Usually a Yakshi is considered to be a female spirit with malevolent propensities, but the Yakshi installed here represents a prosperity-giving and benevolent spiritual power. The figure is a life size wooden sculpture of unique charm. The Yakshi is represented as one who is intently into a mirror.

After worshipping this guardian deity the devotee, proceeds towards the front of the central shrine and worships the Rishabha, the bull "mount of lord Shiva out side the central shrine facing the lord. Near Rishabha is the Balikkallu of huge proportions, made of granite with many figurines and intricate carvings. Because of its great antiquity it calls for replacing it with a new one, maintaining its exact proportions and carving. While circumambulating the Naalambalam (the outer structure around Sree Kovil, the sanctum sanctorum), one walk towards the left side and from the Nirarithikonam (south-west corner) worships Goddess Annapoorneshwari of the famous shrine in Cherukunnu, a few kilometer away, and standing on the west

one worships Goddess Bhadrakaali enshrined in another renowned shrine of divine mother in Maadaayikkavu.

Originally, it is said, that goddess Bhadrakaali was worshipped in the western Gopuram of Sri Rajarajeswara temple and later the idol was taken and installed in the shrine at Maadaayikkavu.

After making the circumambulation outside the Naalambalam the devotee enters the inner space around the sanctum sanctorum to worship lord Rajarajeswara's Jyothirlingam. As usual in the temples of lord Shiva, the circumambulation is performed only up to the theertha-channel and it is completed with a reverse circumambulation up to the channel.

As the custom, only men enter the Naalambalam during the day time, while women standing outside. Women can enter the Naalambalam all days after the Athazha pooja is over in the evening. It is assumed that after Athazha pooja the lord is in an aspect of a very pleased and gracious disposition accompanied by his consort goddess Parvathi and this is considered to be the most auspicious time for women to enter the Naalambalam as they get the occasion to worship the divine couple.

Inside the Naalambalam

The sanctum sanctorum with its majestic proportions is a fine example of the temple architectural style of Kerala. The two-tiered sanctum sanctorum is rectangular in shape with copper sheets laid on the roof. The roof tapers to culminate in a beautiful gold Kalasham.

The sanctum sanctorum has four doors, one on each side. The doors on the east and south only are opened. The eastern doors opens to the presence of lord Rajarajeshwara, represented by the majestic Jyothirlingam. An array of ghee lamps dangle on both sides of the Jyothirlingam. The Bhadradeepam, a ghee lamp lighted by sage Agasthya, the most auspicious lamp with a conspicuous flame is seen on the left side of the Jyothirlingam. On the floor there are rows of silver nilavilakku the ghee lamps, on both sides of the Jyothirlingam. Most of the time the Jyothirlingam is decorated with the

insignia of lord Shiva – the thrinethrams – the three eyes, the crescent moon and the Nagaphanam. In the background is a golden Prabha and above is a Vyaalimukham, the face of a mythical being. A Balibimbam or Uthsavamoorthi, which represents the Jyothirlingam, and taken out for worship during special ceremonies, is placed in front. Both these are jointly decorated with an embossed golden sheet, ornaments and with a Navarathna pendant of precious stones.

Only on two occasions every day one can have the direct sight of the Jyothirlingam. In the early morning, at 5.30, during Nirmalyam, when the decorations of the previous day are removed for the first abhishekam, the devotee can have the direct darshanam of the Jyothirlingam which is covered on the top with a golden cup called Golaka. The base of the Jyothirlingam is also covered with a gold sheet. This Nirmalya darshanam is known as Kani, which is very auspicious. One can also directly see the Jyothirlingam again at 9.30 AM when the decorations are removed again after the third pooja of the day for the Navakaabhishekam, also known as kalashaabhishekam. The door on the southern side of the sanctum sanctorum is also opened. At this seat is lord Shiva is worshipped as Sri Dakshinamoorthi, the first preceptor. There is no idol here, but only a mural painting of Sri Dakshinamoorthi.

On the west of the sanctum sanctorum is the seat of divine mother Pravathi, the consort of lord Shiva. The door here is permanently closed. There is a symbolic legend regarding the permanent closure of this door. This legend is related to the active presence of both Shiva and Vishnu aspects of reality in this shrine.

Other legends about the temple

Like many a temple legend this aspect is also symbolized by a very personalized legend relating to lord Shiva and lord Vishnu through an interesting story. According to it, once Goddess Mahalakshmi, consort of lord Vishnu, came to the shrine to pay obeisance to lord Rajarajeshwara. On seeing the arrival of

Mahalakshmi, the lord decided that there should be her prosperity-bestowing presence also in the shrine. Therefore, the lord immediately assumed the form of Mahavishnu and goddess Mahalakshmi entered the sanctum sanctorum presuming that it was her lord and seated beside him. And only when lord Shiva assumed his original form did Mahalakshmi realize the mistake. After paying her respects to the lord, she was about to make a hurried exit through the back door when lord Shiva ordered his attendants, the Bhoothaganas, to permanently close the door on western side at the seat of goddess Parvathi so that the aspect of material prosperity which goddess Mahalakshmi represented should also be vibrant in the shrine for the benefit of the worshippers. Later, when lord Vishnu arrived at the temple in search of his consort, lord Shiva's attendants prayed to him to allow the presence of goddess Lakshmi also in the temple for the benefit of the devotees, which lord Vishnu gladly conceded to before taking his consort along with him.

The legend thus signifies in a way interesting to the common people the special message that the spiritual presence in the shrine benefits the devotees for their material and spiritual well being. Signifying this combination of the Shaiva and Vaishnava aspects in the shrine, twice a year, during Shivaratri and Vishnu, the Uthsavamoorthi of the nearby renowned Srikrishna temple of Trichambaram is ceremoniously brought to Sri Rajarajeshwara temple.

The place Taliparamba is also known as Lakshmiपुरam and it is believed that the name is related to this legend. In some hymns to lord Rajarajeshwara the lord is also addressed as the Aishwarya prabhu, the lord of prosperity and Lakshmi Puraadheeshwaran the lord of Lakshmiपुरam.

The Uniqueness

According to Hindu philosophy, Lord Vishnu symbolizes the aspect of maintenance of the universe and lord Shiva its dissolution. Both these aspects are represented in the Jyothirlingam in this shrine and therefore the lord is called

Rajarajeshwara, the lord supreme.

Because of the combination of these aspects there are deviations in the mode of worship of lord Shiva here. Here the lord is worshipped in the most transcendental aspect of Shiva known as Sadaashiva. Unlike in other Shiva temple where the Bilwa leaf is an important item for worship, it is not used here for the poojas, instead the Tulsi leaf is used. The Rudrabhishekam, which is common in most of the Shiva temples is not performed here. Instead of Monday, Wednesday is the important day of worship here. Unlike in other Shiva temples pradosham is not observed with special significance here. There is no dhaara, the constant pouring of holy water, for the lingam here in other Shiva temple. Some of the other distinctive features of this shrine are there is no Dwajasthambha here and there is no annual festival or ritualistic annual bath. The deity is never taken outside of the precincts of the temple.

Worship at the temple

On the northern side of the sanctum sanctorum is the sea of sage Parashurama. The door here also remains always closed. Daily five poojas are performed in this temple as in all Mahaakshetras. Early morning at 5.30 the floral decorations of the previous day are removed and Abhishekam takes place with the sacred water ceremoniously brought from a well-guarded sacred temple tank considered to be the Ganga theertham, specially maintained for this purpose. After the Abhishekam around 6 am the deity is adorned with flower garlands. This is locally known as the poocharthal. The first pooja called natravat is around 7.30 am. The next pooja called pantheeradi pooja is around 9 am. After this, the decorations are removed and the Kalashaabhishekam with sanctified water is performed before the next pooja called Navaka pooja. The Navaka pooja is performed at the Mandapam, in front of the Srikovil. In most of the major temples this second Abhishekam and Navaka pooja are performed only on special auspicious

days. In this temple these rituals are conducted every day. The next pooja, the Uchha pooja is performed at 10am and the Mahaa Naivedyam is offered.

Devotees offer Nai-amrithu and Nai-vilakku and pattrom all these poojas. Ponnumkudam and Vellikkudam, filled with ghee are offered from Natravat pooja onwards. Special prostrations known as Yaamanamaskaaram and Ashwamedha namaskaaram with appropriate manthras from Rigveda are very important offering for the lord. However, prostrations to the lord are not made at the namaskara mandapam. According to a legend, Sri Rama on his return from Lanka to Ayodhya prayed at this temple and offered prostrations to the lord at this namaskara mandapam and to commemorate this great event thereafter no one made prostrations in the mandapam. Devotee receive Thulasi and Vibudhi as the prasaadam. Thaali, the wedding pendant, is an important offering for goddess Pravathi. Turmeric powder is the prasaadam of the goddess. With Uchha pooja, the morning poojas are over and the temple will be closed at 12 AM The temple opens again at 5 PM. The Deepaaraadhana is performed at 6.30 PM the last pooja, the Athazha pooja takes place at 8 PM.

There are four Thantris belonging to four Illams such as Poonthottathil Pudayoor Mana, Eruvesi Pudayoor Mana Edavalath Pudayoor Mana and Naduvath Pudayoor Mana. The present Thatris are Brahmasri P.P.Vasudevan Namboodiri, Brahmasri P.P.Pandurangan Namboodiri, Brahmasri E.P.Harijayandan Namboodiri, Brahmasri E.P.Kuberan Namboodiripad and Brahmasri N.P.Narayanan Namboodiri Shivarathri is the important and auspicious day celebrated with festivities. Several special poojas are performed on this occasion and the Balibimbam is carried on a caparisoned elephant and taken around the temple premises with the accompaniment of instrumental music and the recital of hymns. The Uthsava Bimbam of lord Krishna of the Trichambaram Sri Krishna temple will also be brought here and the Sankaranaarayana pooja, the worship of a combined

from of lord Shiva and lord Vishnu will be performed. Vishnu, the auspicious day, which is considered to be the beginning of the original Malayalam year, will be, celebrated from the previous evening, and at the night the presence of lord Krishna of Thrichabaram temple will also be there for a few hours. Seeing the Vishnukani is very auspicious, which will have a protective influence for the whole year.

Puthari, a festival of the harvesting season, Karkadaka Sankramam (July) and Nira are other important days are specially celebrated in the temple.

The Rajas of Chirakkal in Kannur and the Zamorins of Kozhikode have been pious devotee of Sri Rajarajeshwara and some touching incidents are told relating to the intensity of their devotion. The Maharajas of Travancore used to make an offering of an elephant to the temple before ascending the throne.

A revealing incident is told about the celebrated logician of the 15 century, Uddhanda, Shastrikal, who considering himself as the worshipper of the attributeless reality, Nirguna Brahman only, never used to fold his hands in salutations to any deity, a personalized representation of reality. When he happened to come to this temple and stood before the sanctum sanctorum, unknowingly as if by magic his arms folded and the palms closed together in obeisance to the lord, which in his own words "like a lotus flower closes itself on seeing the moon."

The temple has a tradition of bestowing honours by giving a golden wrist-band and title by the chief priest to outstanding people in their respective fields of work. Many persons in various fields have been awarded such honours.

Today, to this great shrine of lord Rajarajeshwara arrive many people the world over to worship the lord and to seek his blessings in their endeavours and professions and for the spiritual fulfillment of life.

The place is considered as most sacred for performing koodiyattam and Chakyar Koothu Whenever a new Koodiyattam is being directed, it is first performed at this

temple. Only the "Mani (Māni)" family of Chakyars solely possess the right of performing Koodiyattam here. Legendary Koodiyattam & Chakyar koothu maestro, One of the greatest appreciation or award that an artist/scholar can get is the "Veerashringhala" (Vīrasringhala)- Golden Bracelet, from the temple, given by the unanimous approval of the scholar body of the temple. Guru Mani Madava Chakyar is the youngest and last person to get the Vīrasringhala from here. Ghee in small pots are offered to the presiding deity Shiva and are placed on steps leading to the sanctum. These are called Neyyamrithu in Malayalam language. Men are allowed to enter the shrine at any time, but woman are allowed only after 8 PM.

Though it is not practised as widely as it was in the earlier days, it is still a religious custom among many local Hindu women to visit three prominent temples in Taliparamba when they are pregnant. Apart from Rajarajeshwara temple, the other two temples are Sri Krishna at Trichambaram and another temple of Vaidyanastha in Kanjirakka WHICH IS about 6 km from Taliparamba. It is believed that Shiva at Rajarajeshwara temple assures the child a high status, Sri Krishna of Trichambaram bestows it with good nature and mental qualities and the deity at Kanjirangad temple gives the child long life.

The Temple also had an ancient and large seven storey Gopuram (tower) that was destroyed by Tipu Sultan in the late Eighteenth Century.[4] The relics of this Gopuram is seen today lying all around the Eastern Entrance in the form of debris. Astrologers in nearby town of payyanur like Shri.Chithrabhanu k Poduval always finds this demolition in the horoscopes/rashi charts of the people living in surrounding areas of this temple. It is believed that a snake bit the commander of the army who was about to destroy the temple, and following this, the temple was spared from destruction. However, several namboodiri families left Taliparamba and settled in Travancore.

Controversy

In July 2006, Malayalam actress Meera Jasmine was found to

have visited the temple despite the fact that non-Hindus are banned from entry. She was made to pay Rs.10,000 to cover the costs of the resulting purification pujas.

Randu Moorthi temple of Alathur

By

P.R.Ramachander

Alathur is a big village near Palakkad town, There is very peculiar temple in this village called Randu moorthi temple.(Temple with two gods) . In this temple there are two goddesses both facing the west. One is Annapurni and the other is Mahishasura mardhini.

It is believed that this temple was established by Sureshwaracharyar, one of the chief disciples of Adhi Shankara. This is managed even today by Naduvil madam, established by him. It seems for a long time that the building around the Bhagwathi was incomplete in spite of great efforts and people used to call it "pani theeratha kovil."(the incomplete temple.). It seems then suddenly , some Bhoothas constructed the entire temple in 14 days. The entire construction was done by granite stones. The two Bhagawathis are in two different heights. The Annapurneswari is at a lower height and Mahishasura Mardhini in the higher plane. While the Annapurneswari is a swayumbu statute that of Mahishasura Mardhini is made of jack wood. She has eight

hands and holds all her weapons in those hands. Unlike other temples with idols made of jack wood, here Chandhattam (painting the statue with kumkum) is not done. In spite of this the statue is not even slightly damaged. There is uthasava idol for this statue, for which abisheka is done. This idol is surrounded by the seven Durgas viz Brahmani, Maheswari, Koumari, Vaishnavi, Vaarahi, Indrani and Chamundi..

The entire Ramayana has been painted in the roof of the mandapam of this temple in six parts. In spite of no maintenance, these pictures look as if they were just painted.

Another peculiarity of this temple is that unlike all other temples in Kerala, in this temple Brahmins are not allowed to sit in the Mandapam opposite the sanctum sanctorum.

In the month of Karthigai, there is a ten day long festival in this temple. In the Meda masam (April-May) the foundation day is observed. On this day all the 4000 lamps surrounding the temple are lit. It seems the oil for this used to come from the income from the fields of a neighboring village called "enna Padam (oil fields)". The temple is open from 5.30 Am up to 10 Am and 5Pm to 8 Pm.

Sasthakotta Dharma Sastha

Compiled By
P.R.Ramachander

It is another very famous ancient Sastha temples of Kerala. The temple is surrounded by fresh water (sasthamkotta lake) lake on all three sides(The biggest fresh water lake of Kerala) and hill with dense forest on the other side .A small town called Sasthamkotta has come up near these forests. Shri Dharma Sastha temple is built in Kerala style of architecture and was built by the Pandalam family .Sasthamcotta is a well historic place where the Second World Religion Conference was held in 1971, in which the Global Religious Celebrities participated. Sasthamcotta is well connected with the other parts of Kerala by road and rail. The National Highway (NH 47) passes through Karunagapally and Chavara. Both these towns are just 12 km from Sasthamcotta. Two other important places on MC Road (SH 1) that connect to Sasthamcotta are Adoor and Kottarakara; both approximately 18 km away.

Kerala Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) plies regular bus services to this place from Kollam, Karunagapally, Kottarakara, Adoor and Pathanamthitta. KSRTC also runs regular services to Pampa via Sasthamcotta during the Sabarimala season.

Sasthamcotta has a small railway station about 4 km from Sasthamcotta town. Karunagappally railway station is about 12 km from Sasthamcotta. Kollam Junction and Kayamkulam Junction are the two major railway stations close to Sasthamcotta.

Folklore has that the idol consecrated at Sasthamcotta temple is none other than the swayambhu idol worshipped by Lord Ram during his trip to Lanka (Sri Lanka) in search of his consort, Sita. It seems Lord Rama when he was going from Sri

Lanka to Ayodhya visited this place , It is believed that, Lord Rama offered 'pithru tharpan' on the banks of the Sasthamcotta Lake and he deputed the chief architect of his vanara (monkey) team, 'Neelan' to serve his host. Neelan is believed to be the predecessor of the monkey clan in this temple. It is also believed that Lord Hanuman when he was searching for Sita has visited this place , There is also a prathishta of Ganesa in this temple.

This temple has very large number of monkeys roaming all round it. The monkeys that once colonised the surrounding woods were believed to be followers of the prime diety, Dharmasastha, and hence, are revered by devotees. Thousands of devotees visiting the temple feed these monkeys with nuts and fruits.

A few years ago, the monkeys began to face shortage of food and they began to snatch food from visitors to the temple and children going to nearby schools and colleges. The Courts then ordered the Devaswom (Temple) Board to make arrangements to feed the monkeys of the temple adequately. The Board, being short of funds, sought support from well-wishers of the temple but adequate funds were not forthcoming. Mr Gopala B. Pillai, founder and president of Wild Republic, and a native of Sasthamkotta, heard about this dilemma and offered to set up a Trust Fund jointly with the Devaswom Board to ensure perpetual feeding of the monkeys. This was achieved in 1996 and since then the monkeys of the temple have never been in want of food. On local festival days, when people feast at home, the Trust arranges a similar feast for the monkeys of the temple also.

The presiding deity of the temple is , Shri Dharma Sastha who is accompanied by his consort 'Prabha' and son 'Sathyaka'. The highlight of this temple is the 10 day annual festival the month of Kumbham (February-March). The festival includes the colourful Kettukazhcha procession of various bullocks,

horses, decorated chariots, folk art performances etc. Various folk arts such as Mayilattam, Kaala (bull motif), Kuthira (horse motif), Ammankudam are performed. The festival concludes with the Arattu ceremony, five caparisoned elephants take part in a procession held at midnight. Another important festival is Shiva Prathishta Vaarshikom which is held in Atham in the Malayalam month of Edavam (May-June).

Entry is restricted to Hindus.

Sasthamcotta

Neelakandan

Sasthamcotta Neelakandan is the elephant at Sasthamcotta Temple (Sasthamcotta Manikandan was the first elephant at the temple. Sasthamcotta Manikandan passed away in the year 1999). Neelakandan is the vital part of Sasthamcotta temple. He carries the deity of the Lord Dharmasastha during annual festival processions and ceremonial circumambulations in the temple. Neelakandan is donated by Sri. Ajith Kumar, who is a well known business man in the UAE, as his offering.

Sasthamcotta Sree Dharma Sastha Temple is open from 4:30 AM to 11:30 AM and from 5 PM to 7:45 PM

Sri Narayana puram , thrukayil Maha Vishnu temple, Ezhuppana

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is that of Baby Krishna , holding SANKhu , CHakram, Gadha Padmam in his hands .It is believed it is from of Lord Vishnu when he was born to Devaki

It is situated in a place called Ezhuppana, near Chengannoor. It is 1.5 Km from NH 47 between Eramalloor and Chandiroor

It is believed that Deity in the temple is at least 1500 years old. God Vishnu's statue is facing east. . Other deities here are Ganapathi, Subrahmanya, Shiva, Sasta, Bhadrakali, Nagayakshi and Sarppam. Within the Nalambalam lies the shrine of Ganapathi at the south-west corner. Nagayakshi, Sarppadivangal shrines are in NE corner. The Sasta and Shiva shrines are at the SW corner outside the Nalambalam. Bhadrakali shrine is on the left side. The Srikovil is round-shaped so the roof is conical and the roof of Nalambalam is copper plated. The other Kerala temple features Balikkalpara, Chembu dhvajam (flag pole) and Anappanthal are very much here.

The annual festival is held in Makaram month(January-February) and lasts for 8 days. The God is taken in a procession to the river for immersion(aaattu) and return.Ashtami Rohini,Navarathri , thirunam, Deepavali aaannnd Vishu are also celebrated in the temple.

There is a laksharchana and deepa Kazhcha festival , which is held once in 12 years in this temple. The last Deepa Kaazhcha was in 2012 . The next such festival is in 2024

Eroor Pulayannoor Mana has the supreme authority over this temple. The Trust is formed in 1979 it has the right to select 9 members who serve as Devaswam members for the temple. functionalities.

Address

Sri Narayana puram temple

Ezhupunna-688537

Kerala

+91 476 2875991

Timings up to 8 pm (detail timings not known to me)

THakazhy Dharma Sastha Temple

Temple where you can get a medicinal oil called Valiyenna , which is a medicine for diseases affecting manhood.

THakazhy Dharma Sastha Temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

(You can see a video about this great temple

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4czPyzq2LkA>)

THakazhy the native place of the famous Malayalam writer THakazhy Siva Sankara Pillai also houses a famous Dharma Sastha temple. Thakazhi is a Village in Champakulam Taluk in Alappuzha District of Kerala State, India. It belongs to South Kerala Division . It is located 19 KM towards South from District head quarters Alappuzha. 7 KM from Champakkulam. 134 KM from State capital Thiruvananthapuram, The temple is only 6 km from Ambalapuzha temple and is managed by

Travancore DEvaswaon board, This is one of the 108 temples consecrated by Lord Parasurama,.

This temple was originally on a hill called Otharmala . It seems there was a huge rain and the Idol of Dharma Sastha got removed floated in rain water and reached THakazhy, Once the famous Vilwamangalam SWamiyar was passing this way and saw a huge divine light and he found out the idol of Dharma Sastha in a pit (Called POTHakuzhy in Malayalam) with the help of a local magician called Odiyan and consecrated it there itself . Initially the temple was called Pothakuzhiyil Dharma Sasthavu or otharodiyam Dharma Sasthu. Due to the brilliant luster of the idol it was also called Udayarkkan (Sun of dawn) SASThavu, and over time its name changed in To Thakazhy Dharma Sasthavu, Later the king of CHampakaserry built a temple there.

Later the area was captured by Travancore King and Champakasseri Raja left the place. As a result, functioning of the temple deteriorated. During that period, a native Nair used to teach young children alphabets in Kudippallikoodam. He, who was called as "Asan", was a strong devotee of Sastha and the always prayed to Lord Ayyappa of renovating the temple. But he was financially very weak.

Once in his dream, Lord Ayyappa appeared and instructed him to prepare a medicinal oil out of medicinal herbs and various other oils and to sell it at a low rate and use the money gained through this for temple renovation and for performing daily rites.Asan followed the Lord's instructions and Valyaenna became quite famous. Thus the temple was renovated and Asan was referred to as "Enna Valyachan". After the death of Enna Valyachan, his idol was made and was also installed in the temple. In 1979, Ashtabandhakalasangam and Sathakodiyarchana were conducted in the temple.Previously this was done 40 years before.

'Valiyenna'(a special type of medicinal oil meaning great oil) became a speciality of this temple. Its believed that this oil has magical powers in taking away all the diseases from manhood.

But there are some rules and regulations for feeding the medicine. These medicines are collected from 'Othar' hill. This oil is prepared only by members of the 'Aasan family ', who belongs to a Nair family.

Important Festivals Important Festivals

The main festival is in the month 'Kumbham'. Its an eight-day festival which ends with 'Arattu'. Also 'Kalamezhuthupattu' is celebrated in 41 days. 'Kalabhabhishekam' is celebrated from 1st Dhanu and ends after 11 days

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The God there faces the east and is with his wife and son. There are five poojas in the temple following the Manayathattu **thanic** rites.. The temple does not have any other deities.

Important Festivals

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Thenari Madhyaranya shiva temple

Compiled by

This is one of very important Shiva temples of Kerala ,It is believed that Once Lord Parsurama did great penance addressing Lord Shiva and when he came before him, Lord Parasurama wanted the God to come to Kerala , the land he reclaimed from the sea. The very pleased Lord Shiva gave him 108 Shiva Lingas and requested him to consecrate them all over Kerala .This temple is believed to be one of those temples. Another legend about this temple is interesting. It seems once Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma quarreled with each other claiming superiority over each other,. At that time Lord Shiva appeared before them in a luminous form and wanted them to find out his head and feet. Lord Vishnu took the form of a boar and went on digging but could not find the feet of Lord Shiva and came back and accepted defeat. But Lord Brahma came back and told a lie that he has been able to see the head of Lord Shiva. The infuriated Lord Shiva cursed him and Lord Brahma lost his power of creation. When all the world of devas went and appealed to Lord Shiva, He directed Lord Brahma to this temple . He told Lord Brahma that whosoever worships him in this temple will be purified of sins committed by him in several births .Lord Brahma along with Indra, Goddess Saraswathi and the eight guardians of directions went to this temple , did penance and got back his power of creation.,The Eight guardians of directions were asked to consecrate a shiva Linga in their name in eight directions of this temple.These are called Indresan, Yamesan , Nirutheesan , Varunesan ,Maruthesan ,Thanathesan and Eesanesan.All these lingas are within one of half km from this main temple of Mahayarayeswara. There is a small well inside the temple called Agnikundam

There is another story connecting this temple with Lord Sri Rama ,It seems from Rameswaram on their way back to Ayodhya , Sri Rama, Lakshmana and Siita took rest at Theneri .They took rested in a rocky area which is now called

Shangu chakra para. On these rocks even today big and small pits on the rock .People believe that these are the places where the huge monkeys took rest and the depressions are created by their buttocks. While here it seems Goddess Sita felt thirsty .When Lakshmana sent an arrow on the land only mud water came out and when Rama send an arrow pure dinkable water came out. Devotees believe that Ganges river came like a spring there. There is a stone in the Madhyaranya temple on which Gayathri manthra is inscribed ,Devotees believe that Rama sat on this stone to worship Lord Shiva. There is also a well preserved Rama Temple in Theneri village where the spring created by Rama called Sri Ganga Theertha is preserved,

It seems during the conquest of Tipu Sultan , this temple was destroyed and this linga was cut by his sword. Even today the cut mark could be seen on the main Linga. The local people of Thenari repaired and rebuilt the temple and the consecration was done again in 2005.Apart from the main Linga, the temple also has sub temples dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya, Thirukumuzhi ammanand Saptha Mathas., Kasi Viswanatha, Ganesa, Lord Ayyappa with Porna and Pushkala and Lord Maha Vishnu.The door of the Saptha Mathas temple is opened only once in a year on the deepavali day and poojas performed. Out side the temple there is a SARpa Kavu(serpent temple) and a temple tank called Brahma Kundam . Arudra Darsanam and Maha Shivarathri are celebrated in this temple besides special poojas on Pradosham day.

The temple is 15 km from Palakkad town and is near Elapulli on the palakkad –Pollachi road. The buses from Palghat to Kozhinjampara touches this temple . The temple is open from 6 Am to 12 non and 5 Pm to 7.30 Pm . the temple phone number is 0491-2584321

Thrichammaresan temple of Thaliparamba

By

P.R.Ramachander

Thali Parambu loosely translated would mean, a ground of temples. One of these is the temple dedicated to Lord Krishna , called Thrichammaresan. He is also referred as Thrichambaresan. This temple is one of the most important Krishna temples of Kerala. Here Krishna is portrayed in his form immediately after killing the elephant Kuvalayapeetam and rearing to kill Kamsa. This temple is not very far from the Thaliparambu Junction which is about 20 km from Kannur.town. We have to cross a small stream (which is usually dry or having very little water) to reach this temple. It is believed that this temple was established by a sage called Sambaran, The temple maintains a Gosala where large now of cattle are fed and maintained. These cows and bullocks are normally seen around the temple. The temple faces the east. Slightly west to it there is a pond and a temple of Durga.in the middle of it. People believe that she is the sister of Lord Krishna who was born to Yasoda. Slightly south of the temple there is an ilanji tree with a raised platform around it. It seems in ancient days one gentleman with wounds all over his body was lying underneath the tree praying Trichambaresan. It seems the fruits of the tree fell on him causing grievous hurt. Then he prayed Lord to help him by preventing the fruit fall. It seems the falling of fruits immediately stopped and from then on this tree has not borne any fruit. The devotees buy a ring from the temple and deposit it under the tree with a belief that all their desires would be fulfilled.(Mothiram vechu Thozheel). There are lot of technically superior murals all round the temple , which is large considering the temple type of Kerala.

The idol of the temple is about four feet high and has a merciful look instead of the expected ferocious angry look.

Another peculiarity of this temple is that elephants are not allowed to come anywhere near the temple , So the usual procession of God on the elephant is not there in this temple. People believe that since Lord Krishna had just killed Kuvalayapeeta the four tusked elephant sent by Kamsa , all elephants would be scared on seeing the lord. It seems once an Islamic merchant rode on an elephant in spite of warnings around the temple. As soon as the elephant came before the gate , it fell down dead.

The annual festival of the temple (Uthsavam) is held in the month of Kumbham (February-march) on 22nd of that month (approximately march 6th) and continues for 14 days. Lord Balarama who has a temple nearby (Dharmakkulam) visits this temple and every day there is a ceremonial dance (two people carrying Thidambu of Gods Krishna and Balarama) on the nights of important festival days (27, 28 th of Kumbham and 1,2, 6 of Meenam) during the festival. Initially the priests go round the temple carrying the Thidambu on their heads and later there is a dance with Gods acting through them. On the last day they move outside the temple and do the dance in the public road in a place called “Pookothunada” to the accompaniment of several drums played by their greatest exponents.. Since the brother gods are going to part after this (Koodi piriyaal) and would be able to see only after a year , there is a frenzy of separation in this dance. This dance is extremely famous in the northern part of Kerala.

“Ayiram appam of Trichambaram Temple, a special kind of sweet offering made in thousands, is quite famous. This is the

only temple in Kerala where women from Namboothiri families prepare the offering.”

Thirmandhan Kunnu BHagawathi

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is one of the most important temples of Malabar. The temple is situated on a small hill in Angadippuram which is near Perunthalamanna, which is about 60 kilometers from

Shoranur. . Angadippuram is also a railway station in the Shoranur-Nilambur route. .

People who do not get married come to this temple for performing special pooja to get married.

It is believed that this temple is associated with king Mandhatha, who was an ancestor of Lord Rama., The story goes like this. Yuvanasha was a great king in the Ikshvaku

dynasty. He did not have children. He happened to go to the ashram of Bhrugu

Maharishi. The sage agreed to do a special pooja. It happened that Yuvanasha drank the

divine water kept in a pot after pooja in the sage's ashram. He became pregnant. A son

was delivered to him by cutting his stomach. When the child was crying for milk,

Devendra asked the child to suck its own thumb saying “Maam daasya (drink me)”. This

boy became a great king called Mandhatha. He pleased Lord Shiva by doing great penance

and at last Lord Shiva appeared before him and gave him, Shiva's own statue, which goddess Parvathi worshipped for getting him as her husband. Mandatha consecrated this Lingam in Thiru Mandhan Kunnu. When Goddess Parvathi came to know about it, she was upset and sent her daughter Bhadrakali to recover it. There was Great War between Bhadrakali and Mandatha. (commemorating this, there is a festival in this temple in the month of Thula in which two groups of people throw Attanga (a wild fruit of a tree growing in the temple) at each other). When Bhadrakali tried to snatch the Shiva Linga from the hands of Mandatha, it split in to two. Lord Shiva and Parvathi appeared before them. This is why the Shiva lingam installed in the temple is split in to two. Then King Mandatha consecrated another temple for Bhadrakali, who was the daughter of Parvathi. She faces north at this temple. When King Mandatha was nearing his end, two learned Brahmins came to the temple. The king taught all the rituals to be followed to them and entrusted the temples to them. He is supposed to have attained Samadhi then. His Samadhi can be found in Kukshipara which is to the north of the main temple. Some texts say that this temple was built in 343 AD. The ayilya star of the Kanni month (September-October) is celebrated as the founder's day.

Some people say the Goddess at Kodungalloor is the sister of the Bhadra Kali here. Among all the three gods, Bhadra kali is considered most important. But any one visiting the temple should first visit the Lord Shiva temple and The Parvathi temple before visiting the Bhadra Kali temple. The Shiva lingam in this temple can be seen only during early morning and during the Abhisheka before. Puffed rice is offered to the God. On the Northern side of the Shiva temple is the place where Goddess Parvathi prayed to get him as her husband. The Bhadrakali Statue is made out of Jack wood. And no Abhisheka is performed to her. She has eight arms and holds sword, Soola, snake and Stick in her right hands and Asura's head, bell, sword and shield in her left hands, She sits with her left leg folded and right leg hanging down. She appears as terrible to bad people and merciful to good people. Once in a year Chandu (kum kum paste) is applied on the statue in a ceremony called Chandattam. The western gate of this temple is always kept closed. It would open only if the king of Vellatiri kingdom who built the temple comes to visit the temple. This temple was initially under the management of this king. Mangalya Pooja is extremely important in this temple. It is believed that if this is done, the concerned person would get married soon. This is done in

the month of Thula

(October-November) on the first Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The people doing this

Pooja should come to the temple at 9 AM. After the Pantheeradi pooja they should go to

the Parvathi temple. The chief priest will give them a garland made of leaf and betel leaf.

They have to eat the betel leaf. And wear one leaf per day from the garland on their

heads. Very large number of people from all over India come to this temple to attend this

pooja and get married. The pooram festival of this temple , which is held in the month of

Vruschigam (November-December) is a great festival of this temple.

Thirunavaya Nava Mukundan

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple of Lakshmi Narayana which is situated on the banks of Bharatha Puzha(Also called Neela Nadhi) is one of the most ancient temples of Kerala replete with history and several stories about it, This temple is situated 8 km away from Tirur town on the way from Shoranur to Kozhikode. On the opposite shore of the temple of Vishnu, there are temples of Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma. There is also a celebrated school of Vedas to the Namboodiris adjacent to the Brahma temple , which it is believed was consecrated by Lord Parasurama. So the devotees consider this place as equivalent to Varanasi (Benares) , The river near the temple also is considered extremely important to do Pithru Karmas(Worship of manes) especially in the

months of Thulam(October-november) and Karkidagam(July-august) It is not clear whether the idol of the temple is made of metal or stone even to those who touch and worship it.

The temple was supposed to have been established by the nine occult yogis viz. Sathuvanathar, Saaloga nathar, Aadhinathar, Arulithanathar, Madhanga Nathar, Macchendra Nathar, Kadayanthira Nathar, Korakkanathar and Kukkudanathar. It seems the idol of Mukunda was consecrated by one of these yogis and as per the custom, the temple was shut for seven days. But when they opened the temple after seven days , there was no trace of the idol. Then the second yogi did the consecration. The same story was repeated till the eighth yogi. So when the ninth yogi consecrated the yogis did not wait for the stipulated seven days but opened the temple after three days. They were surprised to see that the idol has already sunk up to the knee. They immediately used occult manthras and stopped the further sinking of the idols. So even today , you can see the idol sunk up to the knee. It is believed that in spite of it the idol is sinking and when it has completely sunk, Kali Yuga will come to an end the final deluge will take place then . In course of time the first eight yogis attained salvation but the ninth yogi , prayed God and wanted him to send those great yogis back to the temple , The god replied to him that the eight yogis were still there worshipping the God and showed them to him, The ninth yogi also wanted to join them. The God fulfilled his wish and it is believed that al the nine yogis are always there worshipping the god.

It seems there is a bottomless pit behind the present idol and once upon a time a priest wanted to measure its depth. He tied his ring to a very , very long thread and slowly introduced it in side the pit . But in spite of keeping on adding fresh threads,

the ring seemed not to touch the bottom. Hurriedly he withdrew the thread and was surprised to find that the ring was missing.

The Great yogis and Thanthris do not stand on their foot in this temple but kneel down before the deity in the belief that underneath the entire floor several God's idol (which were lost) lay buried.

Just behind the temple there is a lotus pond and it seems the great devotee of Vishnu Gajendra(king of elephants) and goddess Lakshmi used to pluck the lotus flowers from the tank and offer it to Lord Mukunda. At one particular time the lotus flowers were about to be over and the upset Gajendra petitioned the Lord. To solve his problem, Lord Vishnu drew Goddess Lakshmi inside his temple and gave her a separate sanctum inside the temple compound and requested her to make the place prosperous.

Another story is about the connection of sage Markandeya to this temple. It seems when Markandeya attained the age of 16, Yama , the God of death started chasing him. Markandeya ran in side the Nava Mukunda temple. It seems then the God gave him one handful of mud and instructed him to rush through the west door to the Shiva temple at Thirprangode , make a shiva linga out of the mud given to him and worship it. As soon as Markandeya crossed the west entrance, Lord Vishnu closed it by putting a big stone there.(Even to this day , that door is blocked). Markandeya did as instructed and was saved by Lord Shiva, who killed , Yama , the God of death.

Apart from the main temples of Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi there is also a temple dedicated to Ganesa in this temple.

The rituals to the manes (Pithru Kriya) is supposed to be very

propitious, if done on the Amavasya of Karkidaga month (July-august) and if it is done at this temple because, it is believed that on that day Goddess Saraswathi, Gayathri, Lakshmi, Parvathi, Planet Shani, sage Markandeya and rivers Ganga and Jamuna are supposed to assemble at this temple.

Mahamaham (Maha magma) used to be celebrated in this temple during olden times. The Zamorin (Samudiri) of Calicut used to come along with his army by the side of the temple. Warriors of the king used to take a vow of fight unto death and march against the zamorin. They were called Chaveru pada (Suicide squad) and were killed by the warriors of Samudiri and thrown in the big well there. Though this well still exists, this aspect of the Mahamaham festival has been discontinued..

. The annual festival of this temple falls on the month of 'Meenam' (March-April), lasts 10 days. The festival starts with the 'Kodiyettam' ceremony (Flag of) and ends with 'Arattu' (bathing of the idol).

. The worshipping time here are from 5.00 am to 11.00 am and from 5.00 pm to 7.00 pm.

Another very interesting aspect of the temple is the puzzles in this temple. Some of them are

1. It is not possible to say whether the river flows from north to south or from South to North.
2. The outside Pazhukka Mandapam of the temple is so made that it is not possible to tell whether it is inside or the outside the temple.
3. The leaves of the banyan tree in the temple look the same on both sides and after picking it is not possible to tell which is the top or bottom of the leaf.

4. It is not possible to tell whether the Krishna idol of the temple is made of stone or metal.

Thirunelli Vishnu Temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is a famous temple in Kerala where the worship of Pithrus (manes) is done. It is 32

Km from the Manandavadi town of Vayanad district, which is a dense tribal area of

Kerala. The nearest Railway station is Kozhikode in Kerala, which is 72 Km from this

place. It is in a valley called "Brahma Giri" (Mountain of Brahma)

It is believed that Lord Brahma did a great fire sacrifice here and because of that, this

place is divine. According to legends, once upon a time, some Brahmins happened to

travel through these dense forests. When they were very hungry and had nothing to eat,

they called Lord Vishnu for their help. Then they saw a goose berry tree. (Called Nelli in

Malayalam), which was laden with fruits. All of them satiated their hunger by eating

fruits of this tree. Suddenly their hunger and thirst was satiated and they felt the divine

presence. Then they decided to call the place as "Thiru Nelli (sacred Gooseberry)."

Records exist to prove that this temple of Lord Vishnu is at least 1000 years old. It is

also referred in Unni neeli Charitham which is the first book written in Malayalam.

The temple is a very simple structure made of granite stone.

The idol consecrated in

this temple is that of Lord Vishnu with four arms. The walls of this temple are also made

of granite. On these walls, very beautiful etchings are there. It seems one king of Coorg,

tried to renovate this temple. When he was half through, the Vellattiri king who owned

the temple objected. The renovation was discontinued. Even today we can see proof of

the half finished renovation work. There are no wells in this temple. Water is being

brought by a stone aqueduct from a stream in the Brahma Giri valley.

Very near the temple , there is a river called Papa Nasini(killer of sins). It is believed

that if we do rituals to the manes (pithrus), they would get salvation. It is believed that the

good effect is equivalent to doing Karmas(Rituals) in Gaya. The Pindas (rice balls) are

placed in the stream after the worship. People believe that both Lord Rama and Lord

Parasurama did the Pithru Karmas here Also in the vicinity is a sacred rock where ritual

offerings (known as bali) are made for the ancestors on the New Moon days of the

Malayalam months Karkkidakom, Thulam and Kumbham.

Besides the rituals during the

two-day festival, art forms like Kathakali and Ottanthullal are

performed. Very near the Papa Nasini is the Padma Theertha pond. . In the middle of it on a raised stone, you find the marks of Lord Vishnu's feet. People believe that Lord Vishnu stood on this rock and gave divine advice to Lord Brahma. Nearby in a cave there is a Shiva temple also. All the people who do Pithru Karma visit this temple on their way back.

There is a great lodge called "Thirunelli Agraharam" in these sylvan surroundings. Its address is

Address

Yatri Nivas Road

Thirunelli Temple Post

Manathavadi, Wayanad

Kerala - 670646

India

Thiruvallam Parasurama Temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

The only temple dedicated to Lord Parsurama, the creator of Kerala and a major Avathar of Lord Vishnu is located in Thiruvallam in Trivandrum town. It is about 6 km from the Trivandrum station. People believe that the temple is very

ancient . Even the present day g historians believe that is about 1000 year old.

Lord Parasurama, the 6th incarnation of Maha Vishnu is considered as a Chiranjeevi (that is a person who does not have death) .The Temple due to its ancient nature is a protected monument.The temple is located in the triveni Sangamam of three small rivers Karamana , killi and Parvathiputhanar..It is believed that when Vilvamangalathu SAMiyar came in search of the Padmanabha SWamy temple , He saw a huge idol of Padmanabha , with his head in Thiruvallam and feet in THirupappur.The saint was awe struck and prayed the God to reduce his size and the God did to the present form which is consecrated in Ananthapadmanabha swami temple .Devotees believe that their pilgrimage to Trivandrum would be complete only if they visit the Three temples of located in east fort (padmanabha swamy) , Thiruvallanm and Thirupappur in the same day.

Apart from the main temple of Parasurama , the temple also has sub temples for Lord Shiva as well as Lord Brahma. There is also the feet print of the God , worshipped by Parasurama , which was consecrated and worshipped by ASwathama , the disciple of Parasurama, The temple of Parasurama with an axe and separate trimurthy temples as sub temples in the temple, which are believed to be consecrated by Lord Parasurama himself. There is also a shrine for Veda Vyasa in side the temple , where students come and pray for getting good results in the examinations.

Devotees believe that Adhi Sankara performed the Bali for his mother at this temple after her death. Because of this Pithru Tharpanam performed at this temple is considered as special. On the new moon day(Amavasya) of the month of Karkidaga(July -august) very large number of devotees visit the temple to give Bali to their ancestors. Similarly the Amavasya day of month of Makara(January-February) is also considered important for this purpose.Parasurama Jayanthi also celebrated in the temple in a grand scale.

The temple is open from 5 AM to 11 AM and 4 PM to 7 PM. The telephone number of the temple is 0471-2380706.

Thiru van vandoor Mahavishnu temple

(Built by Nakula the fourth Pandava brother and one of the 108 Divya Kshetrams)

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated 7km from Chenganoor and is believed to have been built by Nakula, the fourth brother among the Pancha pandavas. The God is also called Pambanai appan (Lord who sleeps on serpent) or Kamalanathan. People believe that Panchali the wife of Pandavas got the Akshya Pathra in this temple and in memory of this daily anna dhanam is carried out in this temple. Some people are of the opinion that this place was called "Thiru Pandava oor" and this name became over years as Thiru van vandoor. Others believe that due to heavy population of Bees (Vandu in Malayalam) which make sound around this place. But one of the old inscriptopna call this place as Thiru van Mandur.

This temple has been mentioned in Narada Purana. It seems once Narada was cursed by Lord Brahma who was his father and that sage came to this place and did penance addressing Lord Vishnu. It seems Lord Vishnu came and gave him the boon of wisdom and as a result sage Narada wrote the Narada Purana consisting of 25000 verses in this place. It seems sage Narada also wrote a book detailing the worship procedures at this temple. Devotees also believe that sage Markandeya was able to see Lord Shiva in Thiruvandur. Nammalvar one of the great Azhvar saints has written poem with eleven stanzas extolling the greatness of the God here. Because of this Thirvandoor is one of the 108 Divya Kshethram of Vaishnavas.,

The Lord Vishnu is consecrated here facing the west unlike the other four Pandava temples in Kerala. In an inscription by king Vallabha kodha, this God is addressed as "Thiruvan mandur Pattara". Here also the God Vishnu is in the standing posture with four hands holding conch, wheel, Lotus and mace. Near Lord Vishnu , statues of Lord Ganapathi and Lord Dakshinamurthy is specially consecrated.. At the entrance of the sanctum sanctorum , there are two huge Dwara Palakas and on the , over the door , There is a statue of Lord Vishnu sleeping on the snake . This possibly musyt have lead to the name Pambanai appan. There are sub temples of Sastha, Shiva and Ganapathy out side the main temple. There is another remarkable Krishna temple in the temple compound. Here Lord Krishna is in his baby form standing on two folded legs and one hand and showing the left hand containing curd rice..He is seen holding the rice with two of his fingers . It seems in the year 1325, the king of Ambalapuzha send his emissaries to bring this Krishna statue to the temple at Ambalapuzha as there was some defect in the statue there. , Jnazhapalli Nambudiri who was priest of Thiruvanvandur did not want to happen and threw the statue in the river flowing on the east of the temple and disappeared. In 1960 One Damodaran who was an art teacher in the local school saw a dream , in which he was told that this statue was in the temple pond of Thiruvanvandur. He was instructed to recover the statue and consecrate it.Damodaran with the cooperation of local people dug the pond for 47 days but still could not find it. A Christian family whose house would be affected if the digging continued warned Damodaran and others to stop the digging next day. The next day they found this great pretty idol of Balakrishna. It was again consecrated in a very grand manner . In memory of this the local people started a festival lasting for 51 days. On the fifty first day , a huge procession starts from Thiruchithat temple and reaches here. A feat in which about 1000 kg of rice is cooked greets the devotees on that day.

In the month of Kumbham there is a eleven day Ashtami Rohini festival in this temple. The temple is open from 5 Am to 11.320 Am and 5 Pm to 8 pm.

Thiruvvarppu Krishna temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is one of the famous temples of Krishna in Kerala which is at least 1500 years old.

This temple is located in Thiruvvarppu, which is 6-8 km from the town of Kottayam on the shores of Meenachil River. (Varppu is the cast used by smiths to make bell metal vessels)

There are several stories about its origin. All of them talk of recovering the statue of

Lord Krishna with 4 hands which was kept in an Uruli (Flat vessel made of bell metal).

Here are some of the stories:-

1. This temple is connected to Mahabharata. When the Pandavas lived in the forest, Lord Krishna gave them his statue with four hands so that they can daily worship it. It seems when Pandavas finished their sojourn in the forest and wanted to go back, the people of that area, requested for that statue. . This was worshipped by the people of Cherthalai.

But after some time due to reasons beyond their control, they were not able to continue their worship. So they simply dropped the statue in the sea.

After a long time a great sage (some say it is Vilwamangalam Samiyar and other say it is Padmapadacharya , the disciple of Adhi Shankara) was travelling by a boat in these parts. Suddenly his boat became immobile. When some one got in to the sea to find out the reason, the sea dried at that spot and they were able to recover this statue. The divine person took the statue with him. Though he wanted to go west, the boat travelled to the east via Kunnam and Pallikkara and reached the present spot of the temple.

The divine person got down there along with the statue and found a temple of Dharma Sastha without any idol. So he consecrated the idol in that temple.

2.The above divine person got down from the boat along with the statue. But due to inclement weather he was not able to provide any further. So he kept the statue in an Uruli , which he found near the tank and went away. Later when he came, he found that the statue has got pasted to the Uruli. That Uruli belonged to an individual called Kunnan Kari Menon. As soon as he knew about the statue in his Uruli , he gave the land for temple construction and completed the temple with the help of a saint called Madappurathu Samiyar. Even today special Pushpanjali (offering of flowers) is done on behalf of the Asram of Madappurathu Samiyar in this temple.

3. It seems Pandavas put the statue that they were worshipping along with their Akshaya Pathra in the sea, before leaving to their Agnatha Vasa. It seems the fishermen fishing in the Vembanad back waters in a place near Vechur (called Mangalathu Vila) recovered only the statue and not the vessel. They built a temple in a place called Chara Mangalam and consecrated the statue there. It seems various calamities occurred in their village. So they again put the statue in the back waters. It seems this time statue fell inside the original vessel itself. It was then the divine person referred to earlier found it out. He found the statue as well as the vessel. His boat travelled via Kunnam and Palikkara and was not able to travel further due to dense aquatic plants. It seems the people of the area swam in to the water and made way for the boat to reach the shores.. The statue in the vessel was kept in the shore temporarily in a structure called Valiya Madam. On that day they were able to offer to the God only tender mango pickles and tender coconut water. Later the statue was shifted to the present temple. During the Arattu, the statue is taken to Valiya Madam and Tender mango and tender coconut water is offered to it even today. The Lord faces west along with his four hands. The temple opens very early around 2 AM in the morning. Around 3 AM a special offering called Usha

Payasam is offered to this lord. This is prepared using rice, jaggery , ghee , kadali banana fruit and dried coconut. When the rice is cooked well, the melted Jaggery is poured in to it till it stops by itself. This method of preparation is very peculiar to this temple.

Another peculiarity of this temple is that , the priest is given an axe as well as the key to open the door in the early morning. People believe that this God cannot tolerate hunger and so if there is any problem in opening the door with the key, the priest is permitted to break open the door with an axe. People believe that Lord Krishna's statue in the temple is of the very exhausted Krishna after he killed Kamsa. So after the Abhishekam is over, the Lord's head is first dried,, the Naivedyam offered to him and then only his body is dried.

There are five times pooja but the Deeparadhana is only after the Athazha pooja (last pooja carried out at night 7 PM).Since people believe that the statue came from Cherthalai, the priest after the Athazha pooja asks "Is there any body from Cherthalai here who is hungry?" . It is believed that no body from Cherthalai in the temple should be hungry.

Another peculiarity of this temple is that even during eclipse, the temple is not closed.

People believe that this God would become hungry. It seems once , the temple was closed during eclipse. When they reopened the door they found that the waist belt of the Lord has slipped down. Vilwamangalam Samiyar who came at that time told that , it was because God became very hungry. From then on, they stopped closing the temple during eclipse.

This temple has a very peculiar drum made of bell metal. It seems Lord Krishna announced the killing of Kamsa , playing on this drum. There is a 12 tier brass lamp in this temple gifted by a Christian devotee .This temple also has a sub temple for

Bhoothanatha .All offerings to the main deity are also offered to him Outside the temple there are temples for Subramanya, Ganapathy, Yakshi , Shiva and Bhagawathy.

The temple festival is during the first ten days of the month of Medam.(april-may) .On

the tenth day there is a race of Elephants like that in Guruvayur. During the festival time girl children who are less than ten years of age dress themselves like Lord Krishna and

offer lamp to the Lord during morning and evening. On the tenth day of the month when

the sun sets, his rays enter inside the sanctum sanctorum and this referred to as Pathaam

Udayam,

Krishna's birthday during Ashtami Rohini is celebrated in this

temple. Sundays and

Thursdays are special in this temple and attract lot of devotes.

Another peculiar celebration of this temple is Pullattu Pooja,. It seems there was a rich

nair without children in the Pullattu house. He wanted to donate all his wealth to the

temple and requested them to observe his death anniversary.

When astrologers consulted

the God, his consent was given. On the Thai poosam day ,

Pullattu Nair came inside the

temple, kept all his wealth , keys to treasures and documents for all his properties before

the Lord. Then he prostrated before the Lord. It seems he died there and then. Even today

three special poojas one day before his death and fifteen

special poojas on the day of his

death are performed in his name and referred to as Pllattu Pooja.

Milk Payasam, Ghee Payasam, Appam etc are offered to the Lord usully. There is a

special offering called Chathurchathadam also.

Thiruvithikou Uyya vanda Perumal

Thiruvithukodu

BY

P.R.Ramachander

This is one of the Vaishnavite Divya desams located in Kerala.

It is located about 2 km

from Patambi, which is a village with a railway station near Shoranur. You have to get

down in Pattambi, cross the Bhatatha Puzha River and walk about 2 km to reach this temple. This temple also is called Thirivichikodu, Thiruvinchi Kodu and Anjumoorthis temple.

As soon as you enter the temple you see Lord Shiva facing the east. Behind him is the temple for Lord Vishnu. He is called as Uyyavanda Perumal (The lord who came to give salvation). He is also called Abhaya pradhan (One who saves you) and also as Abath sagayar. The goddess is called Vithuvakottu valli and also as Padma pani nachiyar.

This temple has been sung about by Kulasegara Azhvar, who was a Chera prince as well as one of the Twelve Azhwars of Tamil Nadu.

People believe that originally this temple was built by king Ambareesha, This king used to observe Ekadasi fast religiously and take food after feeding a Brahmin the next

day. It seems once sage Durvasa came to his place on an Ekadasi day and accepted his invitation to take food on Dwadasi. He went to take bath in the near by river but did not come back till Dwadasi thithi was over. King Ambarresha took Paranai before Durvasa came back at the proper time. Sage Durvasa got very angry and sent an ogre to kill him.

But Lord Vishnu came and saved Ambareesha by killing the ogre. Durvasa realized his mistake and requested the king's pardon. Ambareesha then requested the Lord to appear him from all directions. The five statues of the Lord are supposed to have been consecrated by the Pancha Pandavas. The centre one by Yudhishtira, the one in the west

by Arjuna, that in the left by Bhema sena, that in the right by Nakula. It seems Sahadeva also joined in the worship of the statue in the right. It is also believed that king Amabareesha attained salvation in this temple.

Thiruvizha Mahadeva temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated 40 km away from Ernakulam on the Ernakulam –Cherthalai road.

There is a Shiva temple which is consecrated in a pit where water keeps on ebbing. It is believed that people who are mad or people who have been under the control evil effects

set on them by black magicians get cured at this temple. The famous Nadaswara

Vidhwan, Thiruvizha Jaya Shankar hails from this place.

There was a very dense forest in this area belonging to arakkal panikkars. There was a

pond in the forest which had lot of tortoises. A group of hunters called Ulladaas used to catch these tortoises for their living. They would introduce a long sharp staff in to the

pond and keep on hitting. Then the injured tortoises would come up. Then they would

catch them. Once when a lady of their tribe was doing it, suddenly she saw blood ebbing

out of the pond. The entire pond became the colour of the

blood. Then they started pumping out the water of the pond. After three full days of removing the water, they saw a stone in the bottom of the pond from which the blood was oozing out. On the fourth day, a great sage came and applied sacred ash on the wound. The blood immediately stopped. He told the people there to build a temple over the pond without removing the stone from that place. They filled up the pond, partially by sand. Even today, we can see the Linga only at the bottom of the pond, where water would be constantly oozing out. In rainy season, the idol will be covered by water and we would not be able to see it. So in rainy season the pooja is performed only to the Uthsava moorthi. Immediately after the temple was built a mad man belonging to the Thalakkatt family of nairs used to daily visit this temple. The devotees were afraid of him and prayed to the Lord to cure him. That day, one nair was instructed in his dream "Tie up the mad man overnight. Next day, a new plant will appear near the temple. Collect one hand full of leaves from this plant and hand it over to the priest. He would take out the juice inside the temple, mix it with cow's milk and do Pandeeradi pooja to the God, Then keep, three chakras (The coin of Travancore) before the temple and take out the milk and make the

mad man drink it. (The mixture would first become blue, then become dark red and then black and later become yellow and then white.) One hour after he drinks the milk, give him tepid water to drink. Then that mad man would vomit a lot. Then in the noon make him eat the milk kheer (paal Payasam) offered to the Yakshi. He would become all right.”

This was followed and the man regained his sanity. People who were mad were then brought to the temple and the same treatment followed. Most of them became all right. People who are mad , are brought to the temple in the previous night itself. Then after the evening worship of the temple they attend the saffron (kuruthi) worship to the “Bhootha kala Yakshi” which is outside the temple. Then next day the treatment described above will be done at 9 Am. Most of them become absolutely all right. So large number of pilgrims bring the mad persons from all over India to this temple. The right to bring the holy medicinal leaves is forever with Thalakkat family, to which the original mad man belonged.

There is a custom of worshipping lord Shiva by abhisheka (anointing) of tender coconut water and milk, The abhisheka(ceremonial drenching) with milk for 1001 times is special to this temple. It is believed that the Goddess in Kanichukulangara temple in

the neighborhood of this temple is the daughter of Lord Shiva. So everyday noon the Goddess is brought to this temple for an offering of Payasam along with her father. The temple opens at 5 Am immediately there is Abhisheka and the god is adorned with sacred ash and sandalwood paste. Immediately puffed rice (Pori) is offered to the god. At 8.15 Am, Pandeeradi pooja is done and later the medicinal milk is distributed to the patients. At 11 am, Payasam is offered to Lord Vishnu who is having a temple in this complex itself. This also is given to the patients after they vomit the milk taken by them. In March April, there is Arattu festival in this temple. There is a festival in the month of Dhanu (Margazhi-November –December), which lasts for ten days.

Tiruvanchikulam Mahadeva temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Tiruvanchikulam temple is located 2 km away Kodungallore town in Kerala. This is a very unique Siva temple in Kerala on three counts.

1.It is the only temple in Kerala sung by the Saivaite saints of Tamil Nadu called Nayanmar and is termed as a” Padal PethaShiva sthalam”. The great saivite saint Sundaramurthy Nayanar has sung about this temple.

2.This temple has the largest number of upadevathas among all the temples of Kerala. The upadevathas are Ganapathy , Lord Subramanya , Palliyara Sivan,Dakshinamurthy , SAndhyavelakkal Sivan, Parameshwara , SAkthi Panchakshari Bhagwathi , Goddess Parvathi ,Goddess Durga , Goddess Ganga , Goddess Varahi , Goddess Indrani , God Veerabhadra Pradosha nrithya saptha mathas , Ayyappa, Hanuman , Nagaraja, Nagayakshi ,Sundarmurthy Nayanar, Cheraman Perumal and so on. It is interesting to note that there is no temple for Lord Vishnu in side this great temple.The main llingam is having a scar mark on its left side. It is supposed to be caused by the arrow of Arjuna when Lord Shiva as a hunter attacked him. Kani KOnna (Indian Labrnum) is the temple tree. This is also one of the four Tali temples of Kodungallore.

3.It is perhaps the only temple in Kerala with two Thidapllies, where Naivedyams are prepared to the God .One Thidapalli is used for Naivedyams of the forenoon worship and the other for the afternoon worships.

It is believed that this temple is located in the old capital city of the Cheras which was called as Mahodhayapuram. Cheran Senguttuvan was the most famous king who ruled from this city .He was also called as Cheraman Perumal . It was his brother Ilango Adigal who wrote the great Tamil epic Silappadikaram. It was he who built the temple for Kannagi , the heroine of Silapadikaram in Kodungallore. This temple was completely destroyed both by the Dutch as well as Tipu Sultan and the present temple is believed to have been reconstructed in 1801 by Paliath Achan of Kochi kingdom . It is believed that

both Sundara Murethy Nayanar riding on an elephant and Cheran Senguttuvan riding on a blue horse ascended to the heaven from this temple and on the way to heaven, Sundaramurthy Nayanar sang about this temple and sent the song back to this temple. It is believed that the Siva Linga which is consecrated in this temple was brought from Chidambaram.

It is believed that A Nambudiri Brahmin took away the serpent Vasuki guarding Mahadeva in his Palm leaf Umbrella. Then onwards, his house became famous as Pambumekkatil Mana, which is about 6 km from this temple and is visited by all people who want to worship the serpent. It is also believed that sage Parasurama did penance at this temple to get rid of the sins associated with following of Marumakka Thayam (the properties go from uncle to nephew) in Kerala

One of the major worship of the temple is Dampathi Pooja where the Lord is worshipped along with Goddess Uma. Sankabishekam, that is anointing the Linga using a conch is also an important form of worship. Daily there are five poojas in the temple. Five poojas and three shribalis are the routine. The day starts with Palliyunarthal (waking up of the lord) at 3.00 a.m., escorting the lord and his consort from Palliyara to Mukhamandapa, changing of Nirmalyam, Abhishekam (ablutions), and leading them to the Moolasthanam, Usha pooja, Dhaara to the accompaniment of Rudram, Pantheeradi pooja, Navakam, Panchagavyam, Uchapooja and closing of temple for noon at 11.30 a.m. The sanctum opens again at 5.00 p.m., changing of Nirmalyam followed by Abhisheka, Deeparaadhana, Athazha pooja, escorting the lord and consort to Palliyara and conducting Palliyara pooja (Dampathi pooja). The pooja of Palliyara Sivan is believed to help in early marriage. There is an eight day festival in the temple in the month of Kumbham which is believed to commemorate the ascending of heaven by king Seran Senguttuvan.

The nearest railway station is Irinjalakuda and the nearest air port is Cochin airport(35 km) . There are frequent buses from Trichur to this temple. The temple is open 4.30 Am to 10.30 Am and 3.30 Pm to 8.30 PM.

Thuravaoor Ugra Narasimha Morthy and Sudarasana temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Thurvaoor ins located by the side of NH47 , 25 km south of the city of cochin .This temple has two ancient temples within it. One is that of Maha Sudarsana Moorthy , believed to be 1300 years old and athe Ugra Narasimha Murthy might have been built in the 7th century Ad. Nothing much is known about the origin of the sudarshana temple but there is interesting story about the Ugra Narasimhamoorthy temple . It seems there was a king called Keralendra belonging to the Chera dynasty, His Guru was a great savant called Mutingottu adigal. Once when Adikal was participating in a fuction to worship ancestors , he realized that he would soon die and be born as a dog. He instructed the king to protect him when he is born as a dog from doing evil acts. The king agreed and he saw his Guru was born as a dog .He was taking care of it but one day he was forced to kill the Dog. The sin of killing his Guru fell on him. To get rid of that , he consecrated a Lakshmi Narayana temple near Angamali in a place called Naya thottam(Dog's garden) . The Namboodiri who conducted the function told the king that he would take his fees after returning from his Kasi pilgrimage . While in Kasi, A huge flame of light appeared and told that , it would lead him to a place where an idol of Lord Narasimha lay buried. It wanted to him to consecrate that statue near a Sudarshana temple. Then the light took him to a place near Thuravaoor. When he dug there, the Statute of Lord Vishnu came out from there.With the

money given by the king , that Nambudiri built a temple in the compound of the Sudarshana temple itself.. There is a belief that this place has very many temples and in ancient days it was called Surapuri..The King Brought five Brahmin families from THulu Nadu and settled them there..There is a peculiar practice in this temple regarding priests. .Every two years, the chief priest (mesanthi) would become assistant priest(Keezgh santhi) and the assistant priest become the chief priest. This is because the Chief priest should not leave the temple, should observe celibacy .

The temple of Lord Narasimha moorthy is built in a very grand scale with lot of sculptures and paintings. The Sudashana temple has an idol has four hands holding conch, wheel , mace and the lotus flower. Unlike other Sudarshana temples , inside it there is no Vishnu temple , which is separate temple in the same compound. However the well for both temples are shared with each other. Though called Ugra Nasimha murthy , the idol is that of a standing Lord Vishnu. There is also small temples of Lord Ganapathi, Lord Shiva, Sastha, Nagas and BHagawathi in the compound of the temple. The temples observe several festivals. The most important is the nine day festival in the month of Thulam. There is a grand Palli Vetta festival in Medam month . The Konkani Brahmins attend this festival in very large numbers.On Deepavali day there is a festival called Valiya Vilakku.Ashtami Rohini. On pathamudayam day the Gods are taken out for a procession outside. The temple is open from 3am to 11 Am and then from 5,20 Pm to 7,30 Pm. Big gun like crackers (Vedi) are burst in the temple as the offering to gODs, because it seems when the Narasimhamurthy came out of the earth, it made that type of sound.

Though the temple's land belonged to Cochin state , due to political reasons it was managed by Travancore kings under a condition that when the Travancore king steps in to the temple, the temple would be transferred to Cochin, It seems

after independence that last Travancore king came to this temple but walked only on carpets spread inside the temple

Thiruvairanikkulam Shiva temple

Thiruvairanikkulam

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple of Shiva is situated near a village called Srimoola nagaram, in the banks of

Periyar, near the town of Alwaye

The temple consists of two temples-One dedicated to Lord Shiva facing the east and

another dedicated to Goddess Parvathi which is facing the west. The peculiarity of this

temple is that while Lord Shiva's temple is open all round the year, the temple of

Parvathi is open only for 12 days in a year. There is an interesting story behind this

practice.

It seems the Shiva temple was not here but in a place called Iranikkulam near

Irinjalakkuda. An old Namboodiri from Srimoola nagaram who was a devotee of the God

Shiva used to daily cross the river and walk a long distance to pray to this God. There

was a boatman called Chathan, who used to keep a stone boat and who used to help the

Namboodiri to cross the river. (He was one of those great people called Parachi Petha

Pandheeru Kulam) When the Namboodiri became very old, one day he cried before Lord

Shiva and told him, "Oh God, this is my last visit. I simply cannot come and see you."

That day while returning home, Namboodiri felt that his

umbrella was unusually heavy. But as soon as he crossed the river and got down, it became very light. Chathan, the boat man told Namboodiri that Lord Shiva had come along with him in the umbrella and as soon as he got down, has occupied some place in the village. Next day a lady grass cutter, when she was cutting the grass, happened to cut a stone and the stone started bleeding. That women was terribly scared and ran about three kilometers and died at that place. Chathan told all people that the stone she cut was God Shiva of Iranikkulam. A temple was built there for Lord Shiva and it was called Thiruvairanikkulam. They also built a temple for Goddess Parvathi. The place where the grass cutter fell is today called Varanattumadam. In this place annually a special Pooja called Irukki Pooja is conducted every year. After the pooja puffed rice is given as Prasada. People believe that by taking this puffed rice all diseases are cured. The stone boat of the Chathan is still preserved in this temple. Initially it seems the priest used to keep all material for making offering to God (Naivedyam) in the temple of Goddess Parvathi and close. After some time, the fully cooked Naivedyam was prepared and kept ready in her temple by Goddess Parvathi. One day one devotee peeped through the Window as to see what was happening in side the Parvathi temple and he saw that Goddess Parvathi herself was cooking the Naivedyam. But because of this the Goddess got very angry and asked the priest to close her doors for

ever. All the devotees wailed and requested her to pardon the act of the ill conceived devotee. The goddess pardoned him but gave permission for her door to be opened for only 12 days in a year. Her temple gate opens on The Thiruvadira festival day. A minstrel singer called Brahmani amma sings about the Goddess before her gates are opened .Recently the only member of that family called Sridevi refused to sing at the festival. It seems her husband became terribly sick and goddess appeared in her dream and pointed out to her that she was insulting the Goddess. Sridevi realized her mistake and started singing in the festival again. Not only her husband was cured but she was also blessed with divine powers. Since any body with prayer for marriage or child birth who visit the Goddess Parvathi during those 12 days, gets their prayers fulfilled, large number of devotes from all parts of Kerala visit the temple during that time.

Thiruvalla Vallabha Swamy temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is another temple of Kerala which is one of the 108 Vaishnava Divya desams. This deity has been sung about by Thiru mangai Azhwar. It is ten km from Changanassery station which is in the rail route between Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram. This temple can also be approached by road or boat.

In a place called Sankaramangalam nearby there was a very devout old lady who was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. She was referred to by people as Snakaramangalathu amma. She was very particular in observing Ekadasi. It seems an ogre called Thugala (tholaga) used to trouble her a lot. One Dwadasi day she could not find any Brahmin to take food. Lord Vishnu himself took the form of a Brahmachari and came there as her guest. Sankaramangalathamma requested him to take bath in the nearby well and come. Lord Vishnu asked her whether there are any rivers nearby. She then told him that an Asura was living near the river and was not allowing any one to take bath in the river. Lord Vishnu went to the river and killed the Tholagasura with his Sudarshana Chakra and washed the Chakra in the river. This place is presently referred to as Chakrasala ghat. When the lord returned back, there were four more Brahmins. Sankakamangalathamma served food for all the five of them in areca nut sheath (paala). Even today this feeding is done in areca nut sheath and is referred to as Paala Bhojanam. There is another interesting story about this great devotee. It seems she was illiterate and used to calculate the occurrence of Ekadasi, by putting a stone everyday one out of the fifteen stones given to her by a literate man. Once some Brahmins came to her

house and requested for food. Sankaranmangalathamma told them that it was Ekadasi.

They laughed at her and told that it was Dasami. One of them was an astrologer and he used Prasna to find out the exact Thithi. When the Prasna was done in her house it showed Ekadasi but when they stepped out of the house, it showed Dasami.

It seems when Lord Vishnu came as a Brahmachari to the house of

Sankaramangalathamma he consecrated Sudarshana Chakra there. This Chakra has eight corners denoting Conch, wheel, mace, lotus flower, rope, goad , bow and stick. Sacred ash called Vibhuthi is given as Prasada in this temple of Chakra. The main deity of this temple is Sri Vallabha. This is a eight foot tall statue in the standing pose which faces east. Here sandalwood paste is given instead of sacred ash. There is a story about Sri Vallabha.

It seems it was the same statue which was got made by Lord Krishna using the expertise of Viswakarma,. Lord Krishna was worshipping this statue. When his end came near he entrusted the statue to his cousin Satyaki for Consecration in a proper place.

Sathyaki entrusted the Job to Lord Garuda. But unfortunately it slipped from his talons and fell in a river.

After a long time when Cheraman Perumal was ruling Kerala,

God appeared in his dream and pointed out the exact location and asked him to consecrate in a temple. The king found the statue. There was an empty temple in Thiruvalla which was waiting for a suitable idol. The king consecrated the divine statue in that place. When the statue ordered for the place came, it was consecrated in a place called Malayin Keezh. Even today the people of Malayin Keezh call their God as Thiruvalla Appan. There is an inscription on the stone on the temple indicating that it was constructed in the year 59 AD. It seems Padathi Banana that was used as an offering by Sage Durvasa when he visited the temple. Even today Padathi Pazham is offered to the God. The temple is built in such a way that if you are seeing the face of the God, you would not be able to his feet and if you are seeing his feet, you cannot see his face. People believe that the great devotee of Vishnu called Gandakarna who used to hang two bells in his ears so that he will never hear the name of Lord Shiva attained salvation in this temple. There is a 50 feet black granite flag pole in this temple. This flag pole is buried very deep and only a small portion is visible outside. A Garuda statue made of Panchaloha is chained to the flag pole.. It seems when Perumthachan made the Garuda, it started flying

away. So he decided to chain it to the flag pole. In 1970 a new flag pole has also been installed.

During olden days women were not allowed to enter the temple.,. This was because a lady was so enchanted by the beauty of the Lord and refused to go out of the temple.

Nowadays ladies do visit this temple.

In this temple the God is worshipped five times. In the early morning pooja God is

worshipped as Brahmachari, in the Pandeerati pooja he is worshipped as sanyasi, in the

noon Pooja he is worshipped as Vaasudeva dressed with royal dresses. In the evening

Pooja he is worshipped as Narayana and in the night Pooja he is worshipped as Lakshmi

Narayana. While the goddess is dressed in the usual manner, the God during this Pooja is

dressed as a Sanyasi. Later they will keep all material necessary for doing pooja in the

sanctum sanctorum before closing the door, in the belief that sage Durvasa would come

in the night and do Pooja to the Lord.

Apart from Lord Vallabha this temple also has temples of Varaha, Dakshinamurthy,

Sastha, Ganapathi, Koorain Appan, Ayal yakshi and Maya yakshi.

Performing Kathakali is one of the main forms of worship to this Lord. It seems when

Vilwamangalathu Swamiyar visited this temple, he found the Lord watching Kathakali

along with every one. So they keep a seat covered with silk and a keep a lit lamp near this cdivine seat , when Kathakali is performed at this temple. In the Kumbha month (February march there is an Arattu to the God, In the Meena month (March-April) again there is a grand festival called Uthra Seeveli.

Thiruvvarppu Krishna temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is one of the famous temples of Krishna in Kerala which is at least 1500 years old.

This temple is located in Thiruvvarppu, which is 6-8 km from the town of Kottayam on the shores of Meenachil River. (Varppu is the cast used by smiths to make bell metal vessels)

There are several stories about its origin. All of them talk of recovering the statue of

Lord Krishna with 4 hands which was kept in an Uruli (Flat vessel made of bell metal).

Here are some of the stories:-

1. This temple is connected to Mahabharata. When the Pandavas lived in the forest, Lord Krishna gave them his statue with four hands so that they can daily worship it. It seems when Pandavas finished their sojourn in the forest and wanted to go back, the people of that area, requested for that statue. ,. This was worshipped by the people of Cherthalai.

But after some time due to reasons beyond their control, they

were not able to continue their worship. So they simply dropped the statue in the sea. After a long time a great sage (some say it is Vilwamangalam Samiyar and other say it is Padmapadacharya , the disciple of Adhi Shankara) was travelling by a boat in these parts. Suddenly his boat became immobile. When some one got in to the sea to find out the reason, the sea dried at that spot and they were able to recover this statue. The divine person took the statue with him. Though he wanted to go west, the boat travelled to the east via Kunnam and Pallikkara and reached the present spot of the temple.

The divine person got down there along with the statue and found a temple of Dharma Sastha without any idol. So he consecrated the idol in that temple.

2.The above divine person got down from the boat along with the statue. But due to inclement weather he was not able to provide any further. So he kept the statue in an Uruli , which he found near the tank and went away. Later when he came, he found that the statue has got pasted to the Uruli. That Uruli belonged to an individual called Kunnan Kari Menon. As soon as he knew about the statue in his Uruli , he gave the land for temple construction and completed the temple with the help of a saint called Madappurathu Samiyar. Even today special Pushpanjali (

offering of flowers) is done on behalf of the Asram of Madappurathu Samiyar in this temple. 3. It seems Pandavas put the statue that they were worshipping along with their Akshaya Pathra in the sea, before leaving to their Agnatha Vasa. It seems the fishermen fishing in the Vembanad back waters in a place near Vechur (called Mangalathu Vila) recovered only the statue and not the vessel. They built a temple in a place called Chara Mangalam and consecrated the statue there. It seems various calamities occurred in their village. So they again put the statue in the back waters. It seems this time the statue fell inside the original vessel itself. It was then the divine person referred to earlier found it out. He found the statue as well as the vessel. His boat travelled via Kunnam and Palikkara and was not able to travel further due to dense aquatic plants. It seems the people of the area swam in to the water and made way for the boat to reach the shores. The statue in the vessel was kept in the shore temporarily in a structure called Valiya Madam. On that day they were able to offer to the God only tender mango pickles and tender coconut water. Later the statue was shifted to the present temple. During the Arattu, the statue is taken to Valiya Madam and Tender mango and tender coconut water is offered to it even today. The Lord faces west along with his four hands. The temple

opens very early around 2

AM in the morning. Around 3 AM a special offering called Usha Payasam is offered to

this lord. This is prepared using rice, jaggery , ghee , kadali banana fruit and dried

coconut. When the rice is cooked well, the melted Jaggery is poured in to it till it stops by

itself. This method of preparation is very peculiar to this temple.

Another peculiarity of this temple is that , the priest is given an axe as well as the key

to open the door in the early morning. People believe that this God cannot tolerate

hunger and so if there is any problem in opening the door with the key, the priest is

permitted to break open the door with an axe. People believe that Lord Krishna's statue in

the temple is of the very exhausted Krishna after he killed Kamsa. So after the

Abhishekam is over, the Lord's head is first dried,, the Naivedyam offered to him and

then only his body is dried.

There are five times pooja but the Deeparadhana is only after the Athazha pooja (last

pooja carried out at night 7 PM).Since people believe that the statue came from

Cherthalai, the priest after the Athazha pooja asks "Is there any body from Cherthalai

here who is hungry?" . It is believed that no body from Cherthalai in the temple should be

hungry.

Another peculiarity of this temple is that even during eclipse, the temple is not closed.

People believe that this God would become hungry. It seems once , the temple was closed during eclipse. When they reopened the door they found that the waist belt of the Lord has slipped down. Vilwamangalam Samiyar who came at that time told that , it was because God became very hungry. From then on, they stopped closing the temple during eclipse.

This temple has a very peculiar drum made of bell metal. It seems Lord Krishna announced the killing of Kamsa , playing on this drum. There is a 12 tier brass lamp in this temple gifted by a Christian devotee .This temple also has a sub temple for Bhoothanatha .All offerings to the main deity are also offered to him Outside the temple there are temples for Subramanya, Ganapathy, Yakshi , Shiva and Bhagawathy.

The temple festival is during the first ten days of the month of Medam.(april-may) .On the tenth day there is a race of Elephants like that in Guruvayur. During the festival time girl children who are less than ten years of age dress themselves like Lord Krishna and offer lamp to the Lord during morning and evening. On the tenth day of the month when the sun sets, his rays enter inside the sanctum sanctorum and this referred to as Pathaam

Udayam,

Krishna's birthday during Ashtami Rohini is celebrated in this temple. Sundays and Thursdays are special in this temple and attract lot of devotees. Another peculiar celebration of this temple is Pullattu Pooja. It seems there was a rich nair without children in the Pullattu house. He wanted to donate all his wealth to the temple and requested them to observe his death anniversary. When astrologers consulted the God, his consent was given. On the Thai poosam day, Pullattu Nair came inside the temple, kept all his wealth, keys to treasures and documents for all his properties before the Lord. Then he prostrated before the Lord. It seems he died there and then. Even today three special poojas one day before his death and fifteen special poojas on the day of his death are performed in his name and referred to as Pullattu Pooja. Milk Payasam, Ghee Payasam, Appam etc are offered to the Lord usually. There is a special offering called Chathurchathadam also.

Mahadeva Kshethram, Thiruvegapura

BY

P.S.Krishnan

Thiruvegapura is a village in Ottapalam Taluka in Palakkad District. It is on the Pattambi

– Valancherry Road, 5 Kms from Valancherry. Thiruvegapura is the Gateway of

Palakkad District as one reaches Malappuram District on crossing the Thutha puzha river bridge which is bordering the village. It is a typical Valluvanadan village with beautiful landscape and vegetation on the banks of Thutha Puzha, a tributary of Bharata Puzha. The people are mainly Hindus and Muslims. Hindus consists of Nairs, Nambuthiris and ambalavasi communities. Fairly a good number of Nambuthiri Illams are there in this village. Only three Tamil Brahmin families were staying here out of which one family has moved out. This village has produced many eminent people: Famous Sanskrit scholar, Thiruvegapura Anayath Krishna Pisharody was the Guru of Manavedan Raja, the then Zamorin Raja of Kozhikode . All are aware that Manadevan Raja started Krishnanattam, the present day Kathakali and Pisharoti, being his Guru was also involved in the development of Kathakali. World famous magician Prof.Vaazhakunnam, was a native of this village. Chenda maestro Thiruvegapura Rama Poduval who excelled in Thayambaka during his days, poet and Shaakunthalam translator Cheruliyil Kunchunni Nambeesan and Scientist Dr. T.M.K. Nedungadi a close disciple of Prof. C.V.Raman, Nobel Laureate, are all from Thiruvegapura.

Temple:

Thiruvegapura is famous for the Mahadeva Kshetram. This Siva Temple is on the banks of Thutha Puzha, a tributary of Bharatha Puzha. This temple is built in the 14th century and is unique in many ways. The main deities are Lord Sivan, Lord Sankaranarayanan and Lord Krishnan. The sthalapuranam says that the Lingam was founded by Garudan. Garudan was bringing the idol from Himalayas and the muhurtham time was fast approaching. The Lord ask Garudan to fly fast (Vegam parakkanam) and thus the name Thiru vegam para. This is one of the few temples, where you can find in the inner prakaram three separate Sreekovils for the three deities with three flag posts (Kodimaram), three balikallu at the entrances, also three separate sets of upadevatas like small balikallu and stone navagrahams around the garbhagrahams. Apart from these three deities, Ganapathy prathishta is there in the inner prakaram on the right side of Siva. In the inner prakaram big homakundam built with stone, which looks like a well from outside is there. In olden days on Vaikkathashtami day Vasordhara homam (continuous pouring of ghee without break in to the homakundam with chanting of manthras) was conducted here. In the outer prakaram, the Koothambalam is there in the south – east corner which is very large with exquisite typical

Kerala architecture. (bigger than the one at Guruvayur). Padma Shri Mani Madhava Chakyar used to perform Chakyar Koothu and Koodiyattam here for decades. In the outer prakaram we have the prathishta for Sastha, Erinjoodan (Thripuranthakan), and Kirathamoorthy. Here the abhishekajalam and water for Neivedhyam are brought from the river by the Nambuthiri who is doing the poojas.

Offerings:

The main offerings are Divasa pooja, Palpayasam and Sathasathayam. Koovalamala, Nei Vilakku are also offered by devotees.

Festivals:

Vaikkathashtami is celebrated in Vrischika Masam. Sivarathri is important in Kumbhamasam. Ulsavam for eight days are celebrated from Kumbha Masam Uthrttathi . Ulsavam ends with arattu on the last day.

Income:

The temple gets an amount from Guruvayur Dewasthanam and Devaswon board. This is just sufficient to do poojas. The temple is in a dilapidated stage and needs urgent repairs.

Timings:

The temple is open in the morning up to 9.30 – 10AM and in the evening up to 7.30PM .

How to reach:

The temple is situated in the Pattambi – Valanchery route. Buses are there from Palakkad,

Pattanbi, Valanchery etc. One has to take the ticket to Ambalanada stop. Nearest Railway station is Kuttippuram

Thiruvegapura Nearby places :

Vettekaran (Kirathamoorthy):

In Thiruvegapura, there is a famous Kirathamoorthy temple managed by Padinjarepattu

Mana. In this temple the prathishta is Lord Vettekaran (Kirathamoorthy) and his consort

Kiratha lady (Parvathy) Thousands of people visit this temple and fulfil their wishes.

Naranathu Branthan, Rayiranellur Mala :

Naranathu Branthan was one of the 12 sons of Parayi and Vararuchi in the story of

Parayi petta panthirukulam. This Mala is at Naduvattom, 3 Kms from Thiruvegapura.

Here the hill has a height of 500 feet with an area of 300 acres.

Naranathu Branthan got

Devi darshan at this place. The place where Naranathu

Branthan got vision of Devi is

converted into a temple. There is no idol here but Devi's foot print has formed a pit and

it is in this pit, a Goddess shrine was built later. The pit is the incessant source for water

and being on the hill top, the water in the pit never went down (never dried up).

Thousands of people outside and inside Kerala visit the place to have blessings from the

Devi on every year on the next day of Deepavali in the month of Thulam - Naranathu

Branthan is supposed to have got Devi's vision on this day.

There is a big statue of Naranathu Branthan on the hill top which can be seen from the plains. There are caves and black rocks built by Naranathu Branthan here. It is to this hill top that Naranathu Branthan rolled up the big stone and after reaching the top, he used to push the stone down. This he was doing Every day. The serenity and scenic beauty of the place attractsthousands of people on the day after Deepavali.

Thiruvilwamala Ramabhadra Swamy temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Thiruvilwamala(The sacred mountain of Vilwa) is a small village on the shores Of Bharatha Puzha. The main temple houses two temples. The one in the west is supposed to be a temple dedicated To Sri Rama and the one in the east is dedicated to Lord Lakshmana. But both idols are of the form of Lord Vishnu with four arms holding conch, wheel, mace and lotus flower. Near this temple there are two more rivers viz Cheerakuzhi puzha and Padur puzha. Though in the olden times there were no bridges in any of these rivers, the approach was only through Pazhyannur but now there are bridges in all the three rivers and Thiruvilwamala can be approached from several sides. It is believed that behind the idol of the temple there is deep hole in which there is a golden Vilwa tree. The name of the place comes from this legend. The temple also has idols of Ganapathi, Hanuman and Ayyapan

which are consecrated there . There are many stories about this temple.

One of them says that Lord Parasurama after killing all the royal families of India wanted to give salvation to their souls. So he did great penance addressed to Lord Shiva. It seems Lord Shiva appeared before him and gave him an idol of Vishnu. Sage Parasurama liked Thiruvilwamala most because Vilwa trees were growing there. He consecrated the Vishnu idol given to him by Lord Shiva . Then Lord Parasurama summoned the souls of all those killed by him as well as his manes. Most of them got salvation and some of the very bad ones did not. Lord Parasurama chained all of them in a place near by called “Rakshasa Paara”(The stone of the Rakshasa.)

There is another story about the origin of this temple. There was a sage called Amalaka who was the son of Kasyapa Prajapathi. He started doing penance in this place. Indra , under the impression that this sage was doing penance to get his post, sent dancing girls Urvasi and Thilothama to disturb the penance of the sage. When their tricks failed Indra approached Amalaka’s father Kasyapa, who told him that Amalaka was doing penance to get salvation and nothing else. Then Indra stopped harassing the sage. Then the Rakshasa thinking that sage was an agent of Indra started harassing him , by causing rain and throwing stones at the sage. At this when the sage opened his eyes , fire came out of it and burnt all the Rakshasas. The ash of those Rakshasas joined together and became a big rock. This according to the local people is the Rakshasa para. Later it seems Lord Vishnu appeared before the sage and requested him to ask for the boons that he wanted. The sage requested for undying devotion to Lord Vishnu and also requested God to bless all the suffering human

beings of the world and requested the Lord to stay there itself to do it. The Lord then became an idol of Lord Vishnu which was consecrated in the west temple of Thiruvilwamala. So people believe that the idol in the western temple is Swayambhu(Not man made). Sage Amalaka liked to chant the holy name of Rama in front of this lord. So slowly the other devotees branded the idol there as that of Lord Rama. Normally it is believed that we have to worship first Lord Lakshmana and then Lord Rama . There are others who believe to the contrary. Several times both temples have been ravaged by fire but it is a miracle that the idols have never been damaged. The last such reinstallation of the temple took place in the year 1882 by the then king of Cochin. There is another custom in the temple of saluting Pazhani Andavan, Vadakkunathan, Guruvayurappan and Thirunavaya Mukundan in the different places of the temple . Some people believe that the Guruvayur temple can be seen from a particular point of the temple. There is also a story that after the Mahabharata war the Pandavas came to the Bharata puja near here and did oblation to the souls of all those who died in the war. It seems that they built a temple for Lord Krishna called "Ivornadam Sri Krishna swami temple.". "It is also said that the pathway inside the cave seen near the peepul tree close to the eastern gateway of the temple had been connected to 'Tirunelli' through an underground passage. The story goes that when a priest returning through this passage after worshipping the deity at Tirunelli, the young lady walking in front showing light to the priest got impure and consequently the underground passage behind was sealed forever. Even now a part of this underground passage where extreme darkness prevails is explorable."

On the northern side of the temple there is a beautiful Kulam (Pond) , known as Bhagavathi Chera and on the north-west side another pond called Raman Chera.

There are many festivals in this temple . The most important one is the Ekadasi on the Vruschiga month(November-December) . It coincides with the Guruvayur Ekadasi.

The Priests who perform the worship in the temple take bath in Bhagavathi Chera

before entering the temple. On that day the men devotees enter a cave called Punarjaneer(which is km from the temple) on one side and come out on the other side. The priest of

Thiruvilwamala temple , comes there after the main poja and

then rolls a gooseberry(Nellikka) in side the cave from one

side. It easily emerges from the other side. The cave is about 15 meters long and is of different heights. It starts from the

southern side of the mountain. To cross it is difficult because it involves standing , sitting , lying down and crawling. It is

believed that if we cross the Punarjaneer on that day, we will not have any more births. Nowadays there are men available who, if paid money would cross the cave on our behalf.

Before entry in to the Punarjaneer cave , we have to touch the Ganapathi Theertham which is on the northern side of the

mountain. Then we have to climb a narrow and steep rock for some distance and reach the Papanasini thertham. People

believe that Sage Parasurama has consecrated river Ganges in this Theertha . After crossing this we have to enter the

Punarjani cave(Punarjani noozhal) , come out and then again go to the Papanasini theertham and take bath there. Then we have to go to the Pathala Theertha, wash our hands and legs

and then go to the Kombu Theertham (Made by dashing of the tusk of Indra's elephant Iravatha) and visit the Ambutheertham.

The manes are worshipped in this temple during the new moon day in the Karkidaga(July-august) month and other festivals are Niramalai in the month of Kanni (Aug-Sept) and Ashtami vilakku which ends on Ekadasi day in the month of Kumbam (Feb-Mar). Sri Rama Navami also is celebrated in this temple. On the Ekadasi day many people observe fast and do not sleep at night and remain in the temple.

Trichattu Maha Vishnu temple

(Consecrated by Yudhishtira, the eldest of Pandavas)

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

TRichithattu Maha Vishnu temple is situated 2 km away from Changannur in the Chengannur-Pandanadu road. People believe that it was a temple consecrated by Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas. It seems After Parikshith, the son of Abhimanyu was made the king, The Pandavas decided to take up Vanaprashtha and came to Kerala. They were greatly attracted by the divine atmosphere at that place. After doing penance there, when they decided to go to the other world, . Yudhishtira who had to tell unwillingly a lie about Aswathama's death, was greatly worried about the sin that he did and wanted to consecrate The MahaVishnu idol he was worshipping in some place in Chengannoor. He it seems consecrated that statue in Trichattu.

Nammalavar a great Vaishnavite saint of Tamil Nadu had visited this place and has sung about this God and because of that this temple is included as one of the 108 Divya Desams .

The God in the temple faces east and adjoining the wall is the tank known as Trichitharu(Holy stream) or Shanku Theertham. .The temple has a high walled enclosure, which

has dorrs on all the four sides. Except for some statues made of wood in the Namaskara Mandap . , the temple has a very simple architecture. But the sanctum sanctorum is built by granite stone.. The God in this temple is in a standing pose and has been chiseled out of granite stone. The peculiarity of the Lord is that only in this temple the Lord holds the conch in his right hand instead of the wheel .The learned people are of the opinion that this indicates that the God is not in a position to destroy but to look after the world.The lord holds the wheel on the left hand and the lotus flower on the lower right hand. The temple also has two subsidiary temples , one for God Sastha and the God Gosala Krishnan.

This temple was also the place where the caste court of Namboodiri Brahmins of Kerala were situated. There used to be one great Namboodiri having a title of Smarthan. He was the judge who used to enquire and punish several ladies for the lack of their virtue. This process in the Namboodiri families were called Smartha Vicharam. Thousands of innocent women under suspicion of having lost their virtue have been punished in this place.. The familes of these clans are now almost lost for ever and this great temple which was once great had lost all its glory. On 18th may 1996, some miscreatnts broke open the door of the sanctum sanctorum and broke the original idol. When next day this was noticed, the great thanthric Thazhamon Namboodiri, got out the God's spirit in that idol and placed it on the Uthsava idol.. Omn 19th may 1997 a new idol was consecrated at this temple. Now the temple is again regaining its pristine glory.

Vadakkunathan Temple, Trichur

By

P.R.Ramachander

Vadakkunathan temple also known as Then Kailasam

(Kailasam of the South) and Vrishabhachalam occupies the pride of place on a hill top in the center of Trichur town of Kerala. The Malayalam name for Trichur is Trisiva Perur (The big town of holy Shiva). People believe that this is one of the first consecrations done by Sage Parasurama after he recovered the present land of Kerala from the sea. It seems he requested Lord Shiva to show him the proper spot to build a temple. Lord Shiva then sent his steed Nandi and Simhodara to choose a proper place for the temple. They chose the present place and Lord Parasurama consecrated the present temple here for Lord Shiva. It seems he also consecrated the statues of Lord Rama and Lord Shankaranarayana in this temple. Besides these three Gods, the temple also has Lord Ganapathy, and Goddess Parvathy. In the Shankara Vijaya , it is mentioned that Adhi Shankara's parents came to this temple and did Bhajanam(prayer) for a son. Lord Shiva blessed them with Adhi Shankara. Some people also believe that except for the Lord Shiva in this temple all other Gods were consecrated by sage Adhi Shankara when he visited this place. There is also a belief that Adhi Shankara wrote his magnum opus "Soundarya Lahari" extolling the virtues of Goddess Paravathi in this temple. There are many interesting stories about this great temple.

Some of them are:-

1. When Poonthanam Namboodiri did pooja in this temple, Lord Shiva appeared before him as Lord Vishnu and told the assembled people about the oneness of the Gods.

2. When Adhi Shankara came here he first did Pooja to Lord Shiva. But he was not able to walk to the temple of Pravathy which is behind this temple. At that time a baby girl came and offered him a cup of milk. But Adhi Shankara could not lift his hands to receive the milk. He told the baby, "I do not have Shakthi (strength) to receive this cup from you.". Then the girl told him, "That is because you seem to have forgotten about Shakthi." It seems then he realized his mistake and started composing prayers in praise of the Goddess. Soundarya Lahari is among the first and it was composed here.

3. Once a handsome saint used to daily sing the praise of the Lord. All the women devotees used to watch him with great devotion. But it seems, all the children born after that had the features of the handsome saint. People started getting perturbed. Then Lord Shiva sent his white bull to this temple. Then people saw that all the Calves born after that were white. Then they realized their mistake and

requested pardon of the great saint.. The statue of this white bull is still in this temple.

4. The statute of Vadakkunathan is that of the hunter who gave Pasupathasthra to

Arjuna. In the altercation, Arjuna hit the Lord with his bow. This caused a wound.

When the doctors were consulted, they told that pouring of Ghee over the wound

will cure it. Because of this the main worship of the Shiva temple is Abhisheka

(Anointment) with ghee. Since this has been going on for ages, we will not able to

see the God but only a mountain of ghee. It is a wonder of wonders that this ghee

never gets spoiled and never melts. Once in a while a small portion of the ghee

falls from this mountain of ghee. This is given to the devotees and it is believed

that it has lot of curative properties.

5. There is big ground of 18 acres surrounding the temple. This was once upon a

time a teak wood forest(Even today it is called Thekkin Kadu (teak wood forest) ,

one great king of Cochin who was interested in the development of Trichur town

ordered the clearing of the forest. Then the soothsayer of Parmekkavu temple told

him that the teak wood trees are the hairs of the goddess and should not be cut.

But Shakthan Thamburan first cut off the head of the

soothsayer and later cleared
the forest.

Another strange fact about the temple is that though Tippu
Sultan marched

through Trichur he did not cause any harm o the temple.

There are no festivals in this temple except the observation of
Shiva Rathri. But

several temples in the neighbour hood viz Thiruvambadi,
Chembukkavu, Paramekkavu,

Naithalakkavu, Panekkam palli, Karamukku , Ayyanthol,
Lalooru, Kanimangalamand

Panekkampalli come to see Lord Shiva on the Trichur Pooram
day along with their

elephants. Thirty elephants assemble in the courtyard,. Those
night huge quantities of

crackers are burst . This festival is one of the greatest festivals
in Kerala.

In this temple there is a very elaborate routine for a visit. As
given in the prayer

“Vadakkunathande Darshana Kramam.”

First we have to take bath in the tank which is to the west of
the temple .Then we have to

Go round the banyan tree seven times. And enter the temple
through the main gate. In the

left there is the pit made by Arjuna’s bow. We have to wash our
legs there and visit the

Lord Krishna’s temple. Then we have to salute the statue of
Nandi followed by saluting

Lord Parsurama’s statue. There we have also salute the
Simhodharan who was one of the

co founders of the temple. Later we have to walk towards

north and salute Lord Viswanatha of Benares.. Then we have to walk towards south east and climbing the stone salute Lord Ramanatha of Rameshwaram and Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram. Then we have to move south and salute the Bhagawathi of Kodungallore, and later the Bhagawathy of Oorakam and then later Lord Bharath of Irinjalakkuda. Then we have to meditate on Veda Vyasa and write the 51 alphabets on the stone of Vyasa. Then we have to salute Lord Ayyappa and walk towards north. There we have to pluck a flower , wear it and after saluting the conch and the holy wheel enter the temple of Lord Shankara Narayana. And offer salutations to the picture on the left , offer prayers to Bhoomiswara and then enter the temple of Lord Shiva. There we have to salute the learned people sitting in the Mandap and salute the dance of Chandika on the left side. Then with all devotion salute the Vadakkunathan. Go to the right and again salute the Lord..Then in order salute Bhagawathy, Ganapathi, and the God in the centre in the south, then Ganapathi, then Bhagawathi and then again Vadakkunathan.

Trikodithanam Maha Vishnu temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

(Temple consecrated by Sahadeva, the last of the Pandavas and a Divya desam)

This is a temple built by Sahadeva , the last brother of the Pandavas. Unlike the other four Pandava temples which are in Changanoor , this temple is inside the town of Changanaserry.(4 km from Changanaserry Railway station)

Ghatikas were centre of learning of ancient times. The devotees believe that This place was called Thiru Gatika Sthanam and there was a Gatika attached to the temple. Nammazhvar has visited this temple and has sung the praises of the lord. The God here is alled Arpudha Narayana, There are only two Gadika temples of Vaishnnavism. They were located in Sholingur in Tamilnadu and Deva Priya in North India.Devotees believe that if a devotee stays in these gadika temples for 24 minutes(Kadika) , they would attain salvation. The inscriptions mention that this temple was located in Nandrulai nadu(Land of farmers)

It is believed that when the Pandavas each decided to consecrate their private idol in a temple, Sahadeva did not have any idol. So he decided to jump in to the fire when the time comes. When he was about to do it, the Arpudha Narayana it seems came out of the fire. People also believe that this was the place where Lord Vishnu appeared before his great devotee Rukhmangadha who was observing the Ekadasi penance in a very strict manner.

The huge boundary wall (possibly built in seventh centaury) around the temple supposed to be built by the ghosts within a night attracts every one. It is a wonder of wonders that the stones for building the wall are simply arranged on each other and not pated by lime mixture as it is usually done. The main idol of Vidhnu is facing the east. Near the temple is the sacred temple tank which gets its waters from five different springs. Each spring has a different colour of water and they all join together o make this tank, which is called Panchatheertham. Just outside the temple within its compound there is a hall

where people are addressed regarding religious matters.. There is an unusual statue adjoining it. The statue is of a man wearing a sacred thread lying in a balanced form on a pillar. Only the hips rest on the pillar and he holds a conch on his right hand. No body is clear as to who he is and what is the significance of this statue. The common belief is that he has committed a great sin and his atoning for it. There are lot of statues and inscriptions in this temple. There are also wall paintings.

There are many idols in the sanctum sanctorum. The main is that of Vishnu (Adbutha Narayana) standing with four hands and holding conch, wheel, lotus flower and mace. This statue is made in a black stone. There is Uthsava statue and another statue of God for regular worship. There is another statue of Bhama Narayanan or Radha Narayanan also, In the sanctum itself there are statues of Ganesa, Lord Shiva and Lord Dakshinamurthy. Since there is no separate door for these idols, they can be viewed through a window like opening on the wall.. There is also a separate temple for Lord Narasimha murthy inside the sanctum itself. Outside the sanctum there are separate temples for Lord Sastha and Lord Ganapathi. In the compound there is also a very old jack fruit tree, with very many bents. People believe that the Adbutha Narayana came out in this place. There is a separate statue of Nirmalya Murthy believed to be Lord Vishvaksena.

There is a ten day festival in the month of Vruschigam in this temple. On the ninth day a huge lamp constructed by banana stem and arecanu leaf sheath. The lamp when lighted burns the entire night. While some people believe that this represents Lord Shiva who came there in the form of fire on Karthiga day, other believe that it represents the fire from which Sahadeva got his statue. Ashtami Rohini, the birth day of Lord Krishna is also celebrated in this temple. The temple is open from 5 Am to 11 Am and 5 Pm to 11 Pm.

Childless couple who offer prayers at this temple are believed to be blessed with children. This is followed by organization of a Kathakali program. There is also another prayer where God is offered 12000 Banana fruits, half of which are distributed to the devotees. Every Saturday is an important day at the temple.

Truprayar Rama Temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Like the neighboring states in Kerala also the number of temples dedicated to Rama are very few. One of them is the famous Truprayar temple. This temple is about 20 km from the town of Trichur. It is between Kodungallor and Guruvayur. The river flowing through this village is called Truprayar Puzha. It seems once fishermen trying to catch fish in the sea, got 4 statues. They were not able to identify them and took it to the house of Vaykkal Kaimal. Recognizing the divinity in the statues, as is usual, daiva prasnam was done. They came to know that the statues are that of Rama, Bharatha, Lakshmana and Shatrugna. The god ordered them to consecrate Rama in Truprayar and other Gods in near by places. This order of God was followed. Rama was consecrated in Truprayar, Bharatha in Irinjalakuda, Lakshmana in Moozhikulam and Shatrugna in Payamel. They heard a divine voice tell them that Rama idol has to be

consecrated in a place shown by a divine peacock bird. In spite of waiting for long, the bird did not come. So they consecrated the idol in a place chosen by them . Later the divine bird did come and sat in another place. The people constructed a big Balikkal in that place. But the Balikkal started moving on its own. A great Mahatma called Narayanathu Branthan hit a nail and fixed the Balikkal in a place. Even today we can see the hole of the nail in the Balikkal. There is a belief that going round the temple should include that Balikkal also . The God Rama in this temple has four hands .He holds the wheel, conch, Kodanda bow and Akshamala in his hands. He is surrounded by Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Bhoodevi on both sides. It is believed that it was Vilwamangalam Swamiyar who consecrated Goddess Lakshmi and Bhoodevi in this temple. When he was on a visit to this temple , he saw the Bhoodevi and Sridevi enter the temple for doing Pooja through the western gate , He consecrated them there it self and ordered the western gate should be closed for ever, to have their divine presence always and for ever.. There is no temple of Hanuman in this place but it is believed that Hanuman is always present here. Daily beaten rice is offered to him in the Mukha mandapam. In the south of the sanctum

sanctorum , there is a temple for Dakshinamurthy. , Ganesa and Ayyappa. Gingelly lamp is offered as worship to this Ayyappa on Saturdays. Strangely there is a temple for Chathan(devil) Sami near this temple. People believe that Chathan Sami is the son of Lord Rama.

There is a reference to this temple in one of the ancient works of Malayalam called Kokasandesham. Taking this in to account , it is clear that this temple was very famous even in the fourteenth century.

The three main festivals of this temple are the Ekadasi of Krishna Paksha in the month of Vruschiga(November-December) called Truprayar Ekadasi, , Mageeram of the month of Meenam (March-April) and Arattupuzhapuram.

On the Ekadasi day the God travels our of the temple with 21 elephants and goes to see his son at Chathan Sami Temple. When this procession nears the Avanangadu Shiva temple, it moves silently till it passes the temple. It seems once Lord Rama promised Lord Shiva of Avanangadu that he would give paddy which has been grown within a day and a coconut. Since he was not able to fulfill this promise. Lord Rama prefers Lord Shiva not to know about his passing by this temple.

Arattupuzha pooram is held in Arattupuzha with 101 elephants coming from 101 temples. The leader of the group is the

Lord of Truprayar.

There is a belief that if we are able to start from this Rama Temple and see the other three temples of his brothers in nearby places before noon, we would get our wishes fulfilled. This is called Nalambalam Kanal. There are special buses starting from Truprayar , in the early morning for this purpose.

Tripuliyur Mahavishnu temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

(Built by Bheema near Chenganoor and a Divya Sthala of Vaishnavites.)

This temple is beloved to have been built by Bheemasena near Chenganoor (Please read about Arunmula Parthasarathy temple and Trichithattu Maha Vishnu temple for more particulars).Thirumangai Azhvar and Nammazhvar has sung about this temple and because of that it has been included in the 108 Divya Kshetrams of Vaishnavites of Tamil nadu.

Possibly when the temple was built there were large number of tigers in this village as indicated by its name Puliyur. There lot of caves belonging to old stone age in this area. There is a temple of Duryodhana , who is the greatest enemy of Bheema in a place called Malanada in Kollam district. So the people of Puliyur village are banned from visiting the Malanada village and worshipping the God there . The is temple is situated on a top of the hill called Kari Manikkathu Mala. We have to climb eighteen steps to reach this temple. The sanctum of the temple is a very tall building and has a copper plated roof. The idol is that of Mahavishnu with four arms, three arms holding conch , lotus flower and wheel and the fourth arm resting on his thigh. It stands on a 20 inch high platform and is in a standing posture its height being three feet ten inches, The idol faces

the east and the sanctum has doors leading to all four directions. Ganapathi is a wall idol of the temple and there are sub temples for Lord Shiva and Lord Sastha. There is also a Yakshi in the form of a mirror and also a Brahma Rakshas worshipped at this temple. It seems that once a Brahmin priest along with several Brahmins were killed in the sanctum sanctorum of this temple by a ruling family called Varayanna family. It seems some of the Brahmins went and hugged the Shiva idol but they were also killed. This incident is supposed to have happened in end of 4th century AD. Because of this the temple was not maintained properly for another 200 years. Then the patrons of the temple did all rituals necessary to remove the effect of the sin committed inside this temple. The Brahma Rakshas represents the Brahmin who was killed, when he was hugging the idol. These rituals were done by The Samiyar Madam of Trichur (Adhi Sankara is supposed to have established this madam.) Some rights of the temple were also given to the chief of the Samiyar Madam. There is also a corner of the temple set apart for tribals of that surrounding forests to offer worship. There is also a four foot high pillara with a platform outside the temple believed to be the base of the stow Bheema used to cook his food.

History records of an offering in this temple called Mabharatha pattathanam (Possibly Dhanam to the Brahmins of Maha Bharatha,). The major offering nowadays to the temple is "Chathusatham" which is a sweetened rice, . The requirements for making this offering is about 25 kg of rice, 101 coconuts, one and a half liters of ghee and 40kg Jaggery. Pal Payasam and also Kadum Payasam are also offered. There is a temple festival in the month of Makaram. Possibly because the tragedy that happened here, just before God is taken in procession, one employee asks three times "Is there any body here from Varayannakudi family?" and the God is brought out only if there is firm no for answer, There is a kavadi yattam festival on the first of Makaram month, which was started about 30 years

back. This Kavadi is brought from Pazhayathu devi temple till this temple.

Possibly because Bheema who was a very huge size built it, the temple is very tall. Old books about this temple mention that the Idol of Mahavishnu also has the power of Lord Narasimha murthy instilled in him and because of this the Idol appears to be angry. Mondays and Thursdays are considered as auspicious in this temple. The temple opens at 5.30 Am and is kept open till 11 Am. and it again opens at 5.30 Pm and remains open till 8PM.

Thiru van vandoor Mahavishnu temple

(Built by Nakula the fourth Pandava brother and one of the 108 Divya Kshetrams)

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated 7km from Chenganoor and is believed to have been built by Nakula, the fourth brother among the Pancha pandavas. The God is also called Pambanai appan(Lord who sleeps on serpent) or Kamalanathan ,. People believe that Panchali the wife of Pandavas got the Akshya Pathra in this temple and in memory of this daily anna dhanam is carried out in this temple. Some people are of the opinion that this place was called “ Thiru Pandava oor” and this name became over years as Thiru van vandoor. Others believe that due to heavy population of Bees(Vandu in Malayalam) which make sound around this place. But one of the old inscriptopna call this place as Thiru van Mandur.

This temple has been mentioned in Narada Purana. It seems once Narada was cursed by Lord Brahma who was his father and that sage came to this place and did penance addressing LKord Vishnu. It seems Lord Vishnu came and gave him the boon of wisdom and as a result sage Narada wrote the Narada

Purana consisting of 25000 verses in this place. It seems sage Narada also wrote a book detailing the worship procedures at this temple. Devotees also believe that sage Markandeya was able to see Lord Shiva in Thiruvandur. Nammalvar one of the great Azhvar saints has written poem with eleven stanzas extolling the greatness of the God here. Because of this Thirvandoor is one of the 108 Divya Kshethram of Vaishnavas.,

The Lord Vishnu is consecrated here facing the west unlike the other four Pandava temples in Kerala. In a inscription by king Vallabha kodha, this God is addressed as "Thiruvan mandur Pattara". Here also the God Vishnu is in the standing posture with four hands holding conch, wheel, Lotus and mace. Near Lord Vishnu , statues of Lord Ganapathi and Lord Dakshinamurthy is specially consecrated.. At the entrance of the sanctum sanctorum , there are two huge Dwara Palakas and on the , over the door , There is a statue of Lord Vishnu sleeping on the snake . This possibly musyt have lead to the name Pambanai appan. There are sub temples of Sastha, Shiva and Ganapathy out side the main temple. There is another remarkable Krishna temple in the temple compound. Here Lord Krishna is in his baby form standing on two folded legs and one hand and showing the left hand containing curd rice..He is seen holding the rice with two of his fingers . It seems in the year 1325, the king of Ambalapuzha send his emissaries to bring this Krishna statue to the temple at Ambalapuzha as there was some defect in the statue there. . Jnazhapalli Nambudiri who was priest of Thiruvanvandur did not want to happen and threw the statue in the river flowing on the east of the temple and disappeared. In 1960 One Damodaran who was an art teacher in the local school saw a dream , in which he was told that this statue was in the temple pond of Thiruvanvandur. He was instructed to recover the statue and consecrate it.Damodaran with the cooperation of local people dug the pond for 47 days but still could not find it. A Christian family whose house would be affected if the digging continued warned Damodaran and others to stop the

digging next day. The next day they found this great pretty idol of Balakrishna. It was again consecrated in a very grand manner . In memory of this the local people started a festival lasting for 51 days. On the fifty first day , a huge procession starts from Thiruchithat temple and reaches here. A feat in which about 1000 kg of rice is cooked greets the devotees on that day.

In the month of Kumbham there is a eleven day Ashtami Rohini festival in this temple. The temple is open from 5 Am to 11.320 Am and 5 Pm to 8 pm.

Udayanapuram Subrahmanyaswamy temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This very famous temple is very near the famous Vaikom Mahadeva temple and the Kumaranallor Bhagwathi temple . Devotes believe that a visit to The Mahadeva temple is only complete after visiting Udayanapuram temple . The devotees of Palani Subramanya belonging to Kerala consider that a visit to Udayanapuram is equivalent to going on a pilgrimage to Palaani.

There is a very peculiar story about the origin of the temple. It seems the temple in Kumaranallore was built with an idea of making it a Subrahmnya temple and Udayanapuramtemple , then known as Udayanayaki puram was intened to house the Bhagawathi(Goddess) .But The Goddess BHagawathi wanted to stay in Kumaranallur and the temple of Subrahmanya was shifted to Udayanapuram. The temple town of Bhagathi was then onwards called Kunaran allallore(The good place where Subrahmanya is not there.)

The God Subrahmanya in this temple has four arms and neither 12 nor two which are very common. The temple has

very large number of carvings , paintings and statues carved of wood and stone.

The Thaipooosam festival is celebrated in a very big way at this temple. Similar to Palani temple , large number of Kavadis are carried to this temple. On the last day of the Brahmotsavam of the Vaikom temple. Vaikathappan comes to Udayana puram to see his son., This is celebrated in a very grand way at this temple. Skanda sashti and Panguni uthram are also celebrated at this temple.

On the Vaikathu Ashtami day Lord Subrahmanya from this temple goes in a grand procession to Vaikom ,

This temple is only 2 km from Vaikom Mahadeva temple.

Uthralikkavu – A Durga Devi temple

By

C.K.Narayanan

Uthralikkavu, or Rudra Maha Kali Kavuvu, situated in the halcyon pastures of Akamala Desham (aka 'inside'; mala 'woods', in other words, a valley), in Thalappilli Taluk, Enkakkad Village, Wadakancheri Panchayat, Trichur District, Kerala, is famous for its annual pooram/vela festival. Uthralikkavu Pooram is one of the spectacular temple festivals to be witnessed in Central Kerala during Summer (Feb-March). It is a festival filled with thrills and excitements with the procession and marching past of a number of elephants with colourful decoration to the accompaniment of the resounding Panchavadyam and the

Pandimelam - two types of drum orchestration quite loved by the locals and tourists alike - and the fireworks that follow after the panchavadyam and chendamelam is one, it can be said, with no parallels to be found anywhere, even in Trichur Pooram that is wellknown all over the world.

Regarding the history of Uthralikavu, there is a story told by the elders about this temple in Enkakad. They say, the name Enkakad is derived from the word Thinkalkadu meaning The hair of Shiva(thirujada) in which moon resides. Lord Siva begged rice from the hill nearby called Uriyarikunnu (Uriyari— About 150 ml of rice) and with the rice so received, he prepared his dinner at a nearby place. This place was called Vechanad in Malayalam, which later became Machad. Lord Siva found this place so beautiful that he gave seats here to the two goddesses (Bhagavathies), one at the north east i.e., Akamala for Rudrakali (Rudhiramahakali or Uthrali as known now) and the other at south i.e., near Vazhani for Thiruvaani (Vaani means voice, speech, music etc.). It is also believed by the local people that Thiruvaanikavu Bhagavathy is elder sister of Uthralikkavilamma. Accordingly, Thiruvanikkavu Vela / Pooram (better known as Machad Mamankam or Kuthiravela) takes place one week prior to Uthralikavu Vela / Pooram.

There is also another belief that Uthrali Bhagavathi who is another form of Mookambika Devi, is the sister of Mahakurumba Bhagavathi, who is one of the deities installed in the Shiva temple in Karumarakkad, Wadakancheri, 3 Kms. away to the south from Uthralikavu. So, on the day of Pooram, Karumarakkad Bhagavathi comes to Uthralikavu on elephant back to see her sister. Poorams at both these locations, Karumarakkad and Uthralikavu, with caparisoned elephants, start simultaneously and then from Wadkancheri the decorated elephants in procession come to Uthralikavu with the 'akambadi' (protection) of a team of policemen and a large number of devotees. They converge in Uthralikavu where both

the Bhagavathies meet and stand in line and a *Kootti Ezhunnallathu takes place.

However, there are variations in the story. As legend goes, Kelathachan was a local chieftain in Talappilli Taluk of Trichur District, like the Paliathachan of Trichur. Kelathachan had his mansion in the bosom of Akamala, an evergreen forest famous for its flora and fauna. The green stretches of paddy fields owned by him on the western valley of these forests were rich in yields.

During his tours Kelathachan used to keep a palm-leafed umbrella (Olakuda). It was believed that Goddess Mookambika, when once Achan visited Kollur, came along with him sitting on top of his umbrella. When he kept his umbrella on the ridges of the paddy field owned by him near his Farm House in Mullakkal, Akamala, on the east side of the railway line, bhagavathy got out of the umbrella and sat on the ridges. This place is known as the Mullakkal Sreemoolasthanam of Uthrali. An 'Aal' tree was planted behind this place, to protect Devi from sun and rain.

After a long time, once a harijan lady had a strange experience a little away from this location on the other side (west) of the railway line. While sharpening her sickle on a stone, under a 'Poovam' tree, she saw blood dripping from the stone and was frightened and therefore screamed aloud. Male workers who heard the sound, came to the scene to witness the strange incident. They reported the matter to Kelathachan. As was the practice, he consulted the Astrologer. According to the astrologer, bhagavathy liked to have a permanent abode there under the tree to bless her devotees. In the 'Prasnam' i.e. indications appearing to the astrologer, this goddess was found to be 'Vana Durga', who liked to be under the tree, and so an open roofed temple protecting the Poovam tree was built there and Bhagavathy was consecrated in it and worshipped with all

relevant rituals. Even now the sanctum sanctorum of this temple is under a Poovam tree, which is replanted after the earlier tree perished over time.

It was also seen in the Prasnam that this Devi liked a poojari belonging to tamil Brahmin community only rather than the usual Namboodri community who used to be ruling in most of the temples in Kerala. A Tamil Brahmin was, therefore, located in a nearby village called Padinjattimuri village (near Wadakancheri) and he was appointed there as the Chief Priest. He belonged to Chakkingal Madam and to this date for generations from Tippu Sultan's time, the priest here is from Chakkingal Madam only.

In fact, this tamil Brahmin family originated from a Brahmin lady who had run away from Palghat (previously of Madras State) hearing that Tippu Sultan was going to conquer Palghat very soon. She wanted to escape from the Muslim Ruler and came over to central Kerala. She came to a place called Vlaha near Triprayar Srirama temple and took abhayam/asylum in a Namboodri's Illam. She had her small child and an 'Uruli' (a vessel of a particular alloy which is used for making Payasam especially in temples) with her when came over to Vlaha. The boy was, later on, known as Vlahayil Annayan Pattar and the Uruli his mother (the Paatti who came to Vlaha) had carried along with him was available, fully worn out, even till recently with the descendents of the family as a piece of evidence of their ancestral history traced from the time of Tippu Sulatan's padayottam.

Annayan Pattar was a very good cook (cooking was his profession – As TN Sheshan very aptly told, only three categories were there among tamil Brahmins settled in Kerala and they were, cooks, crooks and civil servants! The three Cees. - His progenies, Chakkingal madam descendents, became very famous people such as Judges, Lawyers, CEOs, Collectors,

Musicians, Doctors, Priests, Landlords, and whatnot. They all owe their progress to the devotion and dedication with which they worshipped Uthrali Bhagavathi.

Chakkingalmadam Krishna Iyer, - CK Krishna Iyer – a descendent of this family, fondly called by everyone as Ambi Swamy, and father of the existing chief priest of Uthralikavu, Sri CK Rama Iyer alias Ramu Swamy was the Chief Priest here for more than six decades, from 1918 to 1981, and during his time the temple developed from stage to stage from frame to fame. He used to devote his entire time for Devi upasana and dedicated his life for the service of the devotees coming to this temple. He was a vedic scholar by profession who had his 'Adhyayanam' (Gurukula learning) at the Sanskrit Veda Patashala at Thiruvidadimarathur for over seven years.

Figure 1 A 1970 file photo of the Chief Priest, Sri Ambi Swami and wife

The temple administration and other routine maintenance, etc. was previously in the hands of the people belonging to the three villages – Enkakkad village (in which the temple is situated), Kumaranellur and Wadakancheri villages, the two neighbouring villages adjoining. They conducted the annual temple festival (Vela) in a small scale by collecting subscriptions from the villagers then and now they conduct it in a grand scale by collecting money from devotees all over the world. However, the administration was eventually passed on to the Cochin Devaswam Board and this temple is under this Devaswam who takes all the income from this temple and also make monthly payments to the employees of this temple such as melsanthi, keezhsanthi, variar, marar, masappadi, velichappad, etc. who eke out a living by serving the temple.

Uthralikavu pooram - In olden days it was Uthralikavu Vela. Now it is called pooram. The change from vela to pooram –

bigger form - was gradual. Seven days in advance of the Pooram day, the flag hoisting ceremony (kodiyaattam) takes place. Bhagavathy comes out of the kavu (temple) and goes around the nearby villages to bless her devotees at their residence and to accept their offerings, in the form of Nirapara (Para is an old measurement of grains in Kerala). The materials offered should have minimum one Para of paddy, supported by flowers, raw rice, fried paddy, jaggery, turmeric, fruits etc. The Komaram/Velichapad who visits the homes (Velichapadu being the representative of Bhagavathy) gives oracles, in a faith-evoking atmosphere created by Chenda (trumpet), Ilathalam (cymbals) and Kombu (musical horn). The first Para in this weeklong tour of Bhagavathy is expected to be given by a member of the family of Kelathachan at his Mullakkal Tharavadu. Both the temple (Uthralikavu as it is called by the public) and the Sreemoolasthanam (Akamala Mullakkal Alinchuvadu) are situated in Enkakad Village. Therefore, the villagers of Enkakad have the privilege of beginning the pooram, on the pooram day. This will be followed by Kumaranellur while the pooram procession from Wadakancheri will reach the temple premises when the pooram by Kumaranellur is half way through. Later all the three parties will join together and line up the decorated elephants at the main pooram venue in front of the temple after the fireworks are over. This is called *Kootti Ezhunnallethu in Malayalam (means joint procession) which will be a wonderful scene to enjoy with all the elephants with glittering and colourful decorations alongwith Pandi Melam (orchestrated drum beating).

Uthralikavu Pooram / Vela is also a festival of Villagers, after the harvesting season presenting various rural art forms like pootham, thira, nayadi, kummatti, kalakali etc.

Uthralikavu pooram is conducted with the active participation of the three villagers in Wadakanchery Panchayat, viz. Enkakad, Kumaranellur, Wadakanchery, who mobilize

resources from all over, and make the Pooram more and more grand year after year. They vie with each other in presenting leading elephants, percussionists and pyrotechniques.

Figure 2 A scene from Uthralikavu Pooram

How to reach the temple and where to stay

10 degrees, 40 minutes, 21 seconds North, and 76 degrees, 15 minutes, 47 seconds East

Uthralikavu temple is well connected by State Highway (Trichur-Shornur State High Way-22); it is at the very brinks of the Highway in a valley which is full of greenery and food-crops. In fact, Uthrali Bhagavathi is Annapoorneswari Herself as is evident from the richness of the area and ambience of the temple where She resides. The Trivandrum-Shoranur-Chennai railline is running next to the boundary of the temple and a rail traveler in this route can see this temple from the train and enjoy the scenery.

One can reach the temple by any mode of road transport running between Trichur and Shoranur or between Trichur and Chelakara. The nearest town is Wadakancheri which has got a Railway Station (barely 4 Kms. from the temple) where most of the trains do halt. However, Trichur is the major railhead south of Uthralikavu where all the long-distance and other high speed trains, like Rajadhani Express, will stop. Trichur is only around 20 Kms. from the temple. Similarly Shoranur Junction is another major railhead north of Uthralikavu where people from North Kerala, such as Pattambi, Calicut, Kannur, Kasargod, and also from Mangalore can disembark and come to the temple travelling a small distance of 10 Kms by road which is well connected by buses and taxis. The nearest airport is Nedumbansseri, near Cochin and the

distance is about 50 Kms. from there to the temple which can be travelled by rail upto Wadakancheri and from there by road 4 Kms, or the entire distance by road / by bus or taxi. Calicut and Coimbatore are the other two airports nearest to this location from where plenty of surface transport (rail and road) is available to reach the temple. The approximate time to reach the temple from these two airports either entirely by road/taxi/bus, or rail and road will be around 4-5 hours only including the time taken to travel from the airport to the departure railhead and from the arrival railhead to the temple by road.

One can stay put in Wadakancheri town with a moderate budget in small hotels, but if one is particular about staying in high class accommodation/some star hotels, one has to seek such accommodation in Trichur town only which is the nearest major town in the mainline at a distance of 20 Kms. from the temple. Besides, Trichur does have three famous temples viz., Vadakkumnathan Shiva temple, Parmelkavu Bhagavathi temple and Thiruvambadi Krishna temple. Apart from these, the famous Guruvayoor temple is only at 40 minutes' travel by train from Trichur.

The temple can also be located/viewed by Google search at geographical coordinates: 10 degrees, 40 minutes, 21 seconds North, and 76 degrees, 15 minutes, 47 seconds East. [10°40'21"N 76°15'47"E]

Other festivals in the temple

Uthralikavu temple was re-constructed a few years ago with more beautification plans and the picture given on top of this description is the current view of the temple from the State Highway. As a result of the re-construction 'Kalasam' was done (it is a ceremony performed for the purification of the temple and its premises) and the day on which the Kalasam was performed is called 'Prathista Dinam' and it is celebrated every year with pomp and pageant. Although this concept of celebrating an 'installation day' or Prathista Dinam as is known

in Malayalam, is contrary to what was stated above in the history of the origin of this temple, (i.e., that the Bhagavathi here is not an 'installed' deity, that it originated itself as Swayambo) under a Poovam tree, for the sake of commemorating the reconstruction of the temple, this annual festival is conducted. During the re-construction, however, care was taken to preserve the Poovam tree as it is and the Sreekovil (sanctum sanctorum) was done up only without disturbing the tree and the open sky nature of the same. On the day of Prathista Dinam which is conducted on the Avittam Nakshatram/star during the Malayalam month of Medam (April-May), there will be Sheeveli (Elephant ride) of Bhagavathi with three elephants for about two hours in the morning from 10 AM and also two hours in the evening from 4 PM. A smallscale fireworks will also follow this. In other words one can witness a Mini Pooram here on this day. There will be Annadanam for all the devotees visiting this temple on that day.

Another notable event in the temple calendar is Mandalam which is a period of 41 days during which special puja is performed beginning from the Malayalam Month Vrischikam upto 10th of Dhanu (November-December). The temple premises will be decorated during these days and special pujas will be offered. It is said that during these days, the goddess will come out of Sreekovil and remain in the special Mantapam decorated for this purpose. It is during this season generally Ayyappa devotees start penance and visit Ayyappa temple at Sabari Mala. So one can see many Ayyappas visiting this temple during this time, taking bath in the temple pond and calling Saranam.

Temple timings and main vazhivads/offerings

The temple is thrown open early in the morning by 4-30 and it is closed by 10-30 every day except on Fridays, Tuesdays and

Sundays when the closing will be done only at 11 AM. Similarly, in the evenings, the temple opens at 5 PM and remains for darshan till 8 PM on all days. On the Pooram day, however, the temple will be open throughout day and night. The main vazhivads/offerings in the temple are:

Niramala, Chuttuvilakku, Nei Payasam, Kadana Vedi, Nei Vilakku, Pushpanjali/Archana, Mala and Bhagavathi Seva.

Apart from these, there are offerings such as Chatussatayam, Thrikala Puja i.e., Udayasthamana puja, and such other normal vazhivadus found elsewhere.

To perform special pujas such as Chuttuvilaku, Niramala, Udayasthamana puja, etc., one has to book in advance and for all offerings, one has to take receipt from the Devaswam Board employees posted in the temple. The items of offerings and their rates are displayed in a board kept near the cash counter in the temple.

Vadakkanthara Thirupurakkal Bhagavathi

in Palakkad town (Vadakkanthara Kavu) ..

BY

P.S.Krishnan

This temple is located in Vadakkan thara locality of the Palakkad town. It is believed to be a Kannagi temple.

Ithihyam (story)

Kannagi is the heroine of the famous Tamil epic – Silappadikaram. Her husband

Kovilan is wrongly sentenced by the king of Madurai to death.

When Kannagi came to

know of this she asked for justice . The king realizing his mistake died instantly. In her

fury Kannagi burnt the city of Madurai and then came and settled down as a Goddess in Kodsungaloore. But on her way to Kodungallore , she took rest under a fig tree In Vadakkanthara, Palakkad. In the place where she took rest an idol was formed. Since no roof was built over the goddess, she was called Thiru purakkal Bhagawathy. Even in rainy seasons during heavy downpour along with wind none of the oil lamps burning in front of the Goddess are disturbed or put out.. The serene atmosphere is always in our mind when we go home after darshan of Devi. There is another story that Lord Shiva created Kannagi along with Kannu kottu Bhagawathy and Kannadathu Bhagawathy to kill Dharuka Kannagi after killing of Dharuka, was born as a human being Called Kannagi, who burnt the city of Madurai as told above. She came to Kerala along with her two sisters .A king called Keasari Verma built a temple for all the three of them. Later it seems the Kannadathu and Kannu Kottu Bhagawathy went and settled in a place called Pirayari, where the temple for Kannu kottu Bhagawathi is still there. A temple was later built near Thirunallai village of Palakkad for Kannadathu Bhagawathy. Only Kannagi remained in a place called "Nadu pathi mandil." Once when there was a war(Padayottam) in Palakkad, the temple was shifted to the

present location.

There is yet another story that the idol of Kannagi was brought was brought to Kerala by a group of People called Muthaan from Tamil Nadu,, when the Pandya king wanted to marry Kannagi. The Moothaans are merchants Their caste deity is Kannagi. They have also built a temple for her in a place called Moothan Tharai, in Palakkad itself.

In the month of Kumbam (February-March), the Vadakkanthara Vela is celebrated. This is one of the famous festivals of Palakkad. The Devi is very powerful and rush of devotees is large, especially on Tuesdays and Fridays. The temples normally opens at 4.30AM in the morning with devotional songs are broadcast through loud speakers It remains open up to 12 noon when the Ucha Pooja takes place. Then the temple opens at 4 30 Pm and remains open up to 8.30 Pm

The Koottu payasam vazhipadu at Uchcha pooja is famous and the taste of the payasam prasadam remains in our tongues for ever. . Hundreds of devotees make cheettu for koottupayasam vazhipadu every day..

Another famous vazhipadu is kadhana - vedi - Daily at 7.30 AM, 11.45 AM and 6.15PM

(Evening the number of vedi is more - almost a hundred-) kadana is lighted and the sound can be heard in many parts of Palakkad town.. Another vazhipadu is Vivaha

archana..

Festivals : Navarathri festival is very important..Many famous carnatik singers come to

this temple during Navarathri and sing in front of

Bhagavathi..Sri Chembai Vaidyanatha

Bhagavathar used to find time in his busy schedule and come to this temple every year

without fail and render his kacheri in front of Devi..

Vijayadasami day is reserved for students of Palakkad Music Academi (Chembai Music

Academi) and other beginners - arangettam..

Another festival is Vadakkanthara Vela (Valiya vela.. This is celebrated once in three

years on the last Friday of Kumbha masam - Feb-March.. In the year of Vadakkanthara

valiya vela, all Fridays of Kumbah masam are important and cheriya velas with one to

three elephants, come to temple organised by many groups..

On Vadakkanthara valiya

vela day 9 or 11 elephants take part and the night vedikkattu is very famous.. The temple

is run by executive officer appointed by Govt Devaswom Board..

There are other three temple in a row here.. They are Krishna temple, Ayyappa

temple and Siva temple..The Ayyappa and Siva temples are in Vadakkanthara Gramam..

Vaikom Mahadeva Temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is a very big temple with an area of approximately eight acres. It is believed that

Vaikathu Appan (God in Vaikom temple) has three different aspects. By saluting him in the morning, you get wisdom, by doing it at noon you get victory and by doing it at night you get happy life.

There is a story about the origin of this temple. It is believed that an Asura called Khara got three Shivalingas from Lord Shiva himself. He brought them to Kerala, holding one by his teeth and one each in his left and right hand. While the Lingam held by his teeth was consecrated in Kaduthurthi, the one held in his right hand was consecrated in Vaikom and the one held in his left hand was consecrated in Ethumanur. People believe that if we can visit all these temples on the same day, it is very propitious.

The 4-5 feet tall God stands on a two feet high pedestal. The Uthsava Vighraha is decorated with golden crescent, three eyes etc. The statue is normally decorated with Bilwa leaves and other flowers.

On the south of the temple, is the temple of Panachikkal Bhagawathy. She is considered as Vana Durga. There is no roof over her idol . It seems that after the temple was built, there were problems created by a Yakshi. So people went and requested for help from Vyagrapada Muni. He told them that one Gandharwa

maiden had become

Yakshi due to the curse of Agasthya. She can be saved only by an assistant of Ganapathi

called Trishuli. So all the people prayed Lord Ganapathi. Then Lord Ganapathi sent

Trishuli to remove the curse given to the Yakshi Trishuli cut her in to three pieces and

threw those pieces. The present temple of Panachikkatu Bhagawathi is in the place where

her trunk fell. Where the head fell, there is a temple called Moothedethu Kavu and where

the legs fell, there is a temple called Koodachelu Bhagawathi. It is believed that The

Ganapathi statue in the north eastern portion of the temple is due to this incident.

The greatest offering in Vaikom is Annadhanam. Originally the feast was restricted

only to Brahmins but now it is for everybody. It is believed that Lord Shiva and Goddess

Parvathy partake in the Morning feast at Vaikom in the form of Brahmins. The prasada of

the temple is the ash collected from the big main kitchen of the temple. Daily all that is

prepared is offered to God, before offering it to others. It is believed by partaking in this

morning feast all incurable diseases would be cured and wealth will accumulate in our

house.

The Vaikathu Ashtami (dhanu month-November-December) which is celebrated for 12

days, is the biggest festival in this temple. There is a custom of

sick people rolling on the leaves used to eat after the feast. People believe that one such leaf was used by Lord Shiva and if you happen to roll on it, all your diseases would be immediately cured. From the Subrahmanya temple of Udayanapuram, Lord Subrahmanya goes out to kill the Tharakasura and Soorapadma. It is believed that the Ashtami feast is given by Lord Shiva for the victory of his son. After the feat Lord Shiva waits outside the temple for his son in the east side of the temple. After his victorious son comes. Lord Shiva along with his son takes up seat in the east gate and great offerings are made to the father and son. The Kaimal belonging to Karuga hose has the right to give the first offering. When he returns people shout at him and throw arecanut peals at him. The reason for this is not known.

Valayanad Devi temple, Govindapuram, Calicut

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This temple is also called Thiru vilayanattu Kavu temple .This temple is situated in the middle of Calicut city .There is a very interesting story about it. It seems the Zamorins of Calicut were constantly defeated by Valluva Konathiri , the kings of Valluvanad. The Zamorin found out that it is due to the power and blessings of Thiru Mandhankunnu temple in that kings kingdom. Hiding his form , he went and did Bhajan am in Mandhan kunnu temple. The Goddess was pleased and agreed to his request to accompany him to Calicut. But she told that at any time he gets a doubt and checks whether she is really accompanying him, she will go back. Unfortunately the king looked back and Goddess decided to go back. But pleased with the kings devotion, she threw her bangle inside Calicut and she promised him that the place where it fell will have her presence. The bangle fell and went on rotating for a week and stopped. That place was later known as ThiruValayanad(Vala means bangle) .From then on the Zamorins took the royal oath of becoming the king in this temple. In this temple along with the Goddess SAptha Mathas are also consecrated.

This temple has given rites to all communities except Christians

It is believed that worship of the temple would help you in success of your actions, getting cured of diseases and getting wisdom.

This is one of the rare temples in India where the worship is done as per the Saktheya system of offering Meat and toddy .In the Sanctum sanctorum is the Sri Chakra consecrated there by Siva yogi Thayyavur Shiva Shankar. The Goddess in this temple faces the north and is supposed to be very fierce, The festival starts in the Karthika star of the month of Makaram. "The annual festival commences every year on the day of Karthika of Makaram and continues for seven days. Devi's 'utavall is Kept in Tali Mahadeva Temple. Few days before the 'Uthsavam'(festival) It is taken to Valayanad temple. The 'Arat'(the holy dipping of the idol after the

'Pallivetta') is conducted in Trissaala kulam in Mankavu. During the annual festival There will be not Madhyama (saktheya) Pooja. Brahmins were brought the temple to perform the Uthama Pooja. Kalamezhuthupattu is observed from 1st Vrichikam for 41 days during the Mandala season. Tuesdays and Fridays are considered to be more auspicious for praying in this temple.(From Wikipedia)”

The address of the temple

Valayanad Temple Rd, Govindapuram, Kozhikode, Kerala
673007

Phone 0495 2741083

Timings

4 am to 9 am

% pm to 7 pm

Varkala Janardhana temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Temple in this town is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. He is called Janardhanan there. The

place is 45 km from Trivandrum in the Trivandrum –Kollam road. The temple is 3 km

from the Varkala station which is in the rail route connecting Trivandrum and Kollam.

Story of the temple.

In times of yore, Lord Brahma came to the earth to perform a Yaga (fire Sacrifice). He

did it in the present Varkala. He was so much immersed in doing Yaga that he forgot his

job of creation. Lord Vishnu came to Varkala to remind Lord Brahma about it in the form of a very old man. The Brahmins assisting Lord Brahma, received the old man and gave him food. But whatever he ate, his hunger was not satiated. Lord Brahma's assistants went and told him about it. Then Lord Brahma could understand that the guest was Lord Vishnu himself. He immediately came near Lord Vishnu. And found him trying to eat AAbhojanam. Lord Brahma then prevented Lord Vishnu from eating it and told him, "Lord, if you eat it, then the final deluge will swallow this world. " Lord Vishnu then requested Lord Brahma to stop the Yaga and recommence his job of creation. He also showed him his Viswa roopa, After this one day Sage Narada followed by Lord Vishnu was walking in the sky over Varkala. Lord Brahma who came there saluted Lord Vishnu. The nine prajapathis to whom only sage Narada was visible laughed at Lord Brahma. Because they thought that Lord Brahma was saluting his own son Sage Narada. Then Lord Brahma corrected them. They felt sad at having committed a sinful deed. Lord Brahma told them that the proper place to pray for their redemption would be shown to them by sage Narada. Sage Narada threw the Valkala (deer's skin) that he was wearing towards the earth. It fell in the

present Varkala. The Prajapathis wanted a pond to do the atonement. Sage Narada requested lord Vishnu, who made a pond there; using his Chakra (wheel) The Prajapathis did thapas there and were pardoned for their sins. It is believed that the devas constructed a temple of Lord Vishnu there and were worshipping the Lord Janardhana. But this temple got dilapidated. At this time the Pandya king was affected by a ghost. He went on a pilgrimage but no where he was cured. When he came to the present day Varkala, he saw the remnants of a dilapidated temple by the side the sea. He prayed God saying that he would rebuild the temple there. Next day he had a dream. It told him that the next day he should go to the sea and stand near the dilapidated temple. Nearby he would see huge amount of flowers floating in the sea, if he searches there he would get the idol. That idol will not have left hand. He was instructed to make a golden hand and attach it to the idol and build a temple round it. The present Janardhana idol was recovered from the sea by him. He built the temple and laid down the rules for maintenance of the temple. The idol of Janardhana has Aabhojana in its right hand. People believe that over years this hand is raising slowly. The day that the idol is able to eat the aabhojana from his right hand; the

world will face the great deluge.

There are small temples of Lord Shiva, Ganapathi, Sastha and Naga Devatha in this temple .The idol is always dressed in sandal and flowers either in the form of Janardhana, Narasimha, Venugopala or Mohini. The rohini star as well as Ashtami thithi of the month of Chingam (August-September) is celebrated as a festival here. On the southern side of the temple two bells are tied. There is a story about it. It seems one dutch ship was passing this way and suddenly the ship refused to move in spite of all efforts. The people told the captain of the ship to tie a bell in the Janardhana temple. It seems the captain and his assistant came ashore and tied the bells .As soon as they tied the bells, the ship it seems started moving. The names inscribed in the bell are Peter von Belson and Michelle evarald. People believe that if worship of ancestors is done in this temple, then they would be pleased.Possibly because of this the Janardhana is also called Pithru Mokshakan.

Vellamaserry Garudan kavu. Alathiyur

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This is perhaps the only temple for Garuda in Kerala and is situated near Alathiyur of Malappuram district .This is again

one of those temples where people with Sarpa dosha worship in Kerala. It has got a very interesting story behind it.

It seems a great sage did Thapas addressed to Lord Vishnu in this spot and when Lord Vishnu came, he wanted to know the ways and means of getting salvation from human birth. Lord Garuda flew to this spot and sat there to hear the elucidation given by Lord Vishnu. Later temples were built for Lord Vishnu and Lord Garuda at this spot.

There is also another interesting story about its origin. It seems once the famous Perum thachan made an idol of Garuda which was almost throbbing with life. The B Vettathu Nadu king very much desired to see it alive. Perumthachan it seems replied that, the Garuda would become alive if a very virtuous wife touches it. When Raja doubted it Perum Thachan's wife came and touched the statue and it came to life. It flew and landed near the Lord Krishna temple at this spot which had Lord Vishnu in Koormavathara. There the temple was built to Lord Garuda facing the west. The name of the place became Vella Aama Sery (The place of white Tortoise),

“The temple complex grew later substantially. Sankara Narayana and Shiva prathisthas facing the east came up. On the left of Lord Garuda, one can worship today Veettekaran and Kartha Veeryarjunan. Vishnu and Sankara Narayanan have Namaskara Mandapa. Vishnu has a balippura on the south as well. At west one can pray Sastha, Bhagavathy, Ganapathy and Bhadra Kali. There is a gopuram at the west and a deepasthambham inside. The large and serene temple pond on the south adds to the pride of this temple. There is also daily pooja in the temple.”

Special offerings at this temple are made for getting rid of skin diseases, Breathing difficulties, Leucoderma besides snake bite. Farmers also pray Lord Garuda to prevent damage to their crops due to birds. Normally fruits with tender coconuts are offered to Lord Garuda. A special offering is the Manja Payasam All Sundays are important at the temple especially the Mandala Kalam of Lord ayyappa.

The address and phone number of the temple is given below :-
Vellamassery Devaswom - Shri Garudan Kavu Kshethram,
P.O Allathiyur, Pin - 676 102

Call Us

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Vellore Manakkapady Nagaraja temple

By

Aswathy Girijan

Sree Nagaraja Temple Velloor Manakkapdy (Kottayam district, Kerala) is famous for its disease curing effects and it can also be described as a land of miracles. The mighty lord NAGARAJA and the omnipotent NAGAYAKSHIYAMMA are the principal deities of this temple along with Sarpayakshiyamma, Ashtanagas, Bhadrakali....

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