

Mukkuthala Bhagawathi

By

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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 Saphthathi” 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 Kavuvu 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 Kakkaseri Bhatathiri, Poonthanam, Meppathur Narayana Bhatathiri , Koodalloor Namboothiri etc.