

## 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(painiting 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.