

Kodungallore Bhagawathy Temple

By

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This temple is situated about 40 km from the town of Trichur. The goddess of the temple is Kodungallore Amma, who is the mother of everybody.

It is believed that Kannagi the heroine of the Tamil work Chilappadikaram is consecrated here as Goddess by Chera Chenguttuvan, the brother of the author of the above great epic. Though originally belonging to a rich business family, she was forced to migrate to Madurai along with her husband. Due to the straitened circumstances, Kovalan went to sell her anklets and was suspected to have stolen the anklet of the queen. The king of Madurai in a wrong judgment executed him. When he came to know the magnitude of the error, he died instantly. In her wrath, Kannagi burnt the town of Madurai and entered the Chera Nadu, which is the present Kerala. Historical records in Ceylon show that this temple was in existence 1800 years ago and is referred to as "Pathini Daivam" (The virtuous wife who is a God). But over time, this temple is now being referred to as a temple of Kali. In the list of 108 Bhagawathi temples of Kerala, this most famous Bhagawathi temple has not been included. Also most of the Kerala Brahmins did not recognize this temple as a temple of Bhagawathi. There is a record that Mezhattoor Agnihothri (who lived in the seventh century) in consultation with Adhi Shankara brought the temple under Brahmin worship and systematized the worship procedures. It is believed that animal sacrifice and offering of Toddy to the Goddess was prevalent before that time. It seems Adhi Shankara established Sri Chakra in this temple and also constructed a shiva temple. But the entire responsibility of worship of the temple is not done by Brahmins but also shared by three matams viz. Matathi matam, Kunnath matam and Neelathum matam.

The chief God of the temple is Bhadra Kali. The goddess sits facing the north. The statue is made of Jack tree wood. The goddess looks fierce and is six feet tall and is in the form of having returned after Killing Dharukasura. There is a Secret room called "rahasya Aara" near this sanctum. It is also called Sri Moola Stanam. It is believed that originally consecrated 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 the idol of Kshethra Palan (Guard of the temple). Pulinjamarutham, which is curd mixed in Jaggery payasam is offered to him. Another Goddess is Vasuri Mala (Pox goddess). Guruthi, which is blood red in colour and is got by mixing Kumkum in water is offered to her.

The most famous festival of this temple is Kodungallore Bharani (In the star of Bharani of the Meena month (March-April)). The worship during this time is in almost pure Dravidian style. Large number of commoners flock round the temple. They sing Bawdy songs 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.