

## Mannarsala

By

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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 Mannarasalai 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.