

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 Ashtadavyams. 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 Yatra 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 Samooham 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.