

## Kumaranallur Karthyayani temple

By

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Kumarnallur is a small village which is 4 km from the town of Kottayam . The goddess in this place is considered as very kind, merciful and soft. She is Karthyayani.

It seems long long ago, once the nose stud of goddess Meenakshi of Madurai was stolen. The king suspected the innocent priest and told that if he does not return the stolen nose stud by the next day, he would be killed. That night, Goddess Meenakshi appeared in the dream of the priest and told him, "You are in great danger. I would be leading you out of the country in the form of light. So follow me." The priest did what he was told and followed the light and reached Kumaranallur. There was a vacant temple in the village ready for consecration of the God. When the priest came near the temple, the leading light vanished from his vision. When he went inside the temple he saw Goddess Karthyatani sitting in side the sanctum sanctorum. Though he could see it, nobody else could. They all simply laughed at the priest. At the time Kula Shekhara the king at that place happened to visit this temple. He had decided to install Lord Subrahmanya inside this temple. But the priest from Madurai told him that since Goddess was already inside the temple, only goddess Karthyatani should be installed there. But the king could not see anything in side the temple. So he told the priest, if there is a goddess inside let her construct a temple for herself and left that place. But when he came outside he was not able to move out as the entire place was completely covered with fog. He realized his mistake and went and approached the priest. The priest then requested to touch him and then see inside the temple. When the king did that, he was able to see the Goddess. At that time the king was also constructing a temple at Udayanapuram for the Goddess. So he decided to shift the Subrahmanya temple to Udayanapuram and shift the Bhagawathi temple to this place. So he sent people to bring the idol of the Goddess from Udaayanapuram. Some how at the appointed time the idol of the Goddess did not reach Kumaranallur. The goddess came in the dream of the king and told him, "In a well in the forest nearby there is the idol of the Goddess which was personally worshipped by Lord Parasurama. You can bring the idol and consecrate it here." The king did exactly that.

The main idol at the temple is made of black stone. It is extremely pretty, with four hands and is in a standing posture. She likes to be showered with turmeric powder and that is the major worship in this temple. Unlike other temples, the worship by lights (Deeparadhana) of this temple in not done at dusk but at night. There is huge stone lamp in front of the temple, which was gifted by the king of Chembakassery. At a time 24 wicks can burn from this lamp. Lighting this lamp is also one of the important methods of worship. Since the original priest came from Madurai, even today the priest's family is called Madurai Namboodiri.

Just outside the temple there is a temple of Vana Durga. There is no roof for this temple. She is called Aalingal Bhagwathi (The goddess of the Banyan tree) , possibly because it was originally consecrated below a Banyan tree. There is also a Temple of

ayyappa on the west side of the temple. He is called Manibhooshanan in this temple. There is a small temple for Lord Shiva in the southern side.

The major festival in this temple is the Karthiga Festival in the month of Vruschiga(October-November)in this festival there is a usual parade of the elephants but in this temple only she elephants can participate. People believe that all the Gods are present with Karthyayani on the Karthiga day. There is a story that on that day Vilwamangalam Samiyar happened to visit Vadakkunathan temple but found that the God was not there in the temple. He saw him in a particular spot of the temple watching the festival at Kumaranallur.

After the morning worship they make the Goddess wear her golden dress. This is removed only on the next day.

People believe that by Worshipping Karthyayani, your marriage would be settled quickly, the children would become intelligent etc.