

## Panachikkadu Bhagawathi

By

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This temple is situated near Singavanam, which is a place in between Kottayam and Changanassery. It is the only temple of Goddess Saraswathi in Kerala. People also call it Dakshina Mookambika (Mookambika of the south).

There were three Namboodiri families near this temple. One of them was Kizhuppuram Namboodiri. Since he did not have children, he decided to undertake a pilgrimage to Kasi. On the way he visited the Temple of Mookambika. That night Goddess came in his dream and told him, "You do not have the luck to have children in this birth. One lady of Karunattu house in your place will give birth to twins. If you request them, they will give one of them for adoption by you. Once this boy grows up he will have 10 children and your family would grow in leaps and bounds.

The Namboodiri returned home and kept his umbrella in the shores of the temple tank and went to take bath. But after bath he was not able to move the umbrella. A sage who came there at that time told him that Goddess Mookambika wants to have a temple there and he can get her statue, near the forest of the local Vishnu temple. He was told that a Yakshi was guarding that statue, so before taking possession of the statue, he should please the Yakshi by offering her Tender coconut water, fried rice powder and Jaggery.

He recovered that statue and consecrated it facing the east. According to the words of the sage he also consecrated in the same place another statue facing west. Only the statue facing the west is worshipped. This statue does not have any form. But the statue facing east which has a form is not worshipped. Mountain and water falls surround this temple. Water would be falling on the statue always. This water is removed constantly and is used for the pooja at this temple. Opposite the statue, a stone lamp will always kept burning. Near by rough sand is spread on the wall. After saluting the Goddess people write "Hari sree Ganapathaye Nama" on the sand. People believe that by doing this their knowledge would increase and they would become very intelligent.

Plants called "Panathi Kuthu Chedi" completely surround the Goddess facing east. It is not permitted to cut or remove these plants. People say that this plant has never ever wilted. Some times due to wind or rain, the plant is disturbed and we may be able to see the Goddess. But this is very rare.

Just above the Saraswathi idol, the Rakshasas, Nagar (snake) and Yakshi are consecrated. For any important pooja or change in the Saraswathi temple, it is a custom to seek the permission of Yakshi and then only do it. It is the custom in this temple to offer Trimadhuram in the morning, milk and sugar in the noon and Jaggery payasam made of rice at night.

The Navarathri festival is celebrated in a grand manner in this temple. On Vijaya Dasami day, all children who are going to start learning are brought here, placed in the lap of Guru. He writes "Hari sree" on the tongue of the child using silver or gold coin. Later they are made to write "Hari sree" on the sand.

Saraswatha Ghruthm - Saraswatha ghrutham purified and enriched with saraswathasooktham thousand times repeated is given to the devotees from the temple which is a medicine for boosting memory power by the grace of Devi.

The temple is open between 5.30 Am to 11.30 am and between 5Pm and 7.30 Pm.