

## Thirukodithanam

By

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This is one of the few temples in Kerala which is a divya desam of Vaishnavas. This means that it has been sung by one of the 12 Azhwars, the minstrels of Vaishnavism of Tamil Nadu. In fact Nammazhwar one of the greatest saints in this pantheon has sung about this temple.

This temple is about 3 km from Changanaseery town, which is near Kottayam. The God in this temple is called Arpuda Narayana (Narayana of wonder) or amrutha Narayana (Narayana who is nectar). It is believed that the God in this temple is consecrated by Sahadeva, the youngest of the Pandavas. It seems Sahadeva wanted to build a temple for Lord Vishnu here. Since he was not able to get a proper idol he decided to die by entering the fire. But then in the fire, he got the present idol of Lord Vishnu. Since it was a great surprise he preferred to call it Arpuda Narayana. It is believed that every 60 years this idol gets extra power and at the beginning of the deluge, this idol will convert itself into light and merge with heaven.

The God in this temple is in a standing pose and has four hands. The goddess is called Karpaga Valli. There is also a temple for Lord Narasimha, which is possibly a later addition. On the southern part of the temple there are two temples, one for Lord Dakshinamurthy and the other for Lord Ganapathi. Both these temples do not have doors.

Normally Pal Payasam (milk Kheer) is daily offered to Lord Narasimha. It is believed that this being done to reduce his fierceness.

This temple also has sub temples for Lord Subrahmanya., Nagar (snake), Lord Ayyappa and Goddess Kali. The Dasavathars are carved in this temple.

It is believed that King Rukmangadha used to rule over this place. It seems he used to maintain a great flower garden. It seems Devas used to steal the flowers and take it to heaven. The king's soldiers caught them. Because of this the devas, lost their power to go back to heaven.. They then requested King Rukmangada to give the effect of observation of Ekadasi by him. When he gave it to them, they were able to go back to heaven.

There is grand ten day festival in the month of Vruschigam (November-December). During this time 1008 lamps are lit in this temple. Once lit, these lamps burn all night.

The reason why Karthigai festival is celebrated in a Vishnu temple is as follows. It seems once Lord Shiva appeared before Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma as a ball of fire. Unable to bear the heat, they prayed Lord Shiva. Then on Karthigai day, Lord Shiva transformed himself into a small lamp.. There are Tamil inscriptions in this temple indicating the fact that once upon a time, this place was ruled by Tamil kings. This place in these inscriptions as "Nandru Uzhaitha Nadu (The country which worked hard)."

It is also believed that Kunti the mother of Pandavas died in this place.. There is a custom of lighting lamps in the corner where this happened.

Records indicate that this place was a Gadiga Sthana where Vedas were taught to people. The present name must have derived out of Gadika.

The walls surrounding this temple are famous and are supposed to be built by Ghosts. They are an arrangement of stones not pasted by any material. Even today , no harm has come to these walls.