

Thiruvairanikulam

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple of Shiva is situated near a village called Srimoola nagaram, in the banks of Periyar, near the town of Alwaye

The temple consists of two temples-One dedicated to Lord Shiva facing the east and another dedicated to Goddess Parvathi which is facing the west. The peculiarity of this temple is that while Lord Shiva's temple is open all round the year, the temple of Parvathi is open only for 12 days in a year. There is an interesting story behind this practice.

It seems the Shiva temple was not here but in a place called Iranikkulam near Irinjalakkuda. An old Namboodiri from Srimoola nagaram who was a devotee of the God Shiva used to daily cross the river and walk a long distance to pray to this God. There was a boatman called Chathan, who used to keep a stone boat and who used to help the Namboodiri to cross the river. (He was one of those great people called Parachi Petha Pandheeru Kulam) When the Namboodiri became very old, one day he cried before Lord Shiva and told him, "Oh God, this is my last visit. I simply cannot come and see you." That day while returning home, Namboodiri felt that his umbrella was unusually heavy. But as soon as he crossed the river and got down, it became very light. Chathan, the boat man told Namboodiri that Lord Shiva had come along with him in the umbrella and as soon as he got down, has occupied some place in the village. Next day a lady grass cutter, when she was cutting the grass, happened to cut a stone and the stone started bleeding. That woman was terribly scared and ran about three kilometers and died at that place. Chathan told all people that the stone she cut was God Shiva of Iranikkulam. A temple was built there for Lord Shiva and it was called Thiruvairanikkulam. They also built a temple for Goddess Parvathi. The place where the grass cutter fell is today called Varanattumadam. In this place annually a special Pooja called Irukki Pooja is conducted every year. After the pooja puffed rice is given as Prasada. People believe that by taking this puffed rice all diseases are cured. The stone boat of the Chathan is still preserved in this temple.

Initially it seems the priest used to keep all material for making offering to God (Naivedyam) in the temple of Goddess Parvathi and close. After some time, the fully cooked Naivedyam was prepared and kept ready in her temple by Goddess Parvathi. One day one devotee peeped through the Window as to see what was happening inside the Parvathi temple and he saw that Goddess Parvathi herself was cooking the Naivedyam. But because of this the Goddess got very angry and asked the priest to close her doors for ever. All the devotees wailed and requested her to pardon the act of the ill conceived devotee. The goddess pardoned him but gave permission for her door to be opened for only 12 days in a year.

Her temple gate opens on The Thiruvadira festival day. A minstrel singer called Brahmani amma sings about the Goddess before her gates are opened. Recently the only member of that family called Sridevi refused to sing at the festival. It seems her husband became terribly sick and goddess appeared in her dream and pointed out to her that she

was insulting the Goddess. Sridevi realized her mistake and started singing in the festival again. Not only her husband was cured but she was also blessed with divine powers.

Since any body with prayer for marriage or child birth who visit the Goddess Parvathi during those 12 days, gets their prayers fulfilled, large number of devotes from all parts of Kerala visit the temple during that time.