

The village Gods of Tamil Nadu

During my stay of six years in Tamil nadu , I was greatly fascinated by their village Gods .Very little information is available about them.Few tamil books have been published but not at all sufficient

Here is a brief write up by many of them,

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Introduction

Any body who have traveled in to Tamil Nadu must have seen lot of roofless temples (mostly terracotta figures) established near the entrance of most villages. They might have also seen the temples dedicated to the Goddess of pestilence –Mari , in the middle of the village.
Most of these Gods do not form a part of the pantheon of Hindu Gods. They have a great role to play in the day to day life

of the villages. They

- 1.Are the Gods that guard the village from robbers, epidemics, pestilence and enemies.
- 2.Are the judge of the last resort to the villagers,
- 3.Are Gods that control rain fall.
- 4.Are Gods that cure the domestic animals of their diseases.

The faith of the villager in these Gods is more than 100%. Their devotion to these Gods is tinged with fear. Another very interesting facts about these Gods is that their priests are not Brahmins. Alcohol , meat. Cigars etc are offered to these gods as the sacrificial offering. Apart from the priest , there are individuals called Samiyadi attached to these temples. During the village festivals these Samiyadis go on a trance and answer all queries of the villagers. Even to this day sacrificial offering of goat, sheep, chicken , buffalo are done to appease these Gods. I am not an expert on them. Whatever facts that I give about these Gods are my own summary taken from two great publications in Tamil. They are Bhaarathi kanthan (2006) Nalla Chethi chollum Sami, New Horizon publishers, Madras
Kula.Shanmuga Sundaram(2006) Yellai Chamigal Part I and II, Vikatan publishers, Madras

Male deities

Some of the most important male deities are Ayyanar, Karuppu sami, Madurai veeran, Sudalai madan, Muneswaran, ellaiamman etc.

Out of them attempts have been made to link Ayyanar with God Shastha(ayyappan) who is the son of Shiva and Vishnu. He normally appears along with his wives Poorna and Pushkala.

Female deities

The most important female deity is Mari. Other important female deities are Angala Parameshwari, Nalla Thangal, Katteri Amman, Mutharamman, Pechi Amman etc.

Out of them attempt has been made to identify Mari with Durga or Kali and Pechiamman with Goddess Saraswathi.

Almost each and every village in Tamil Nadu have their own village Gods. Some times a single God is shared by several villages. Daily worship is rare but usually festivals are held with great fan fare. Persons belonging to that village come to these festivals wherever they are in the world. Each of these temples have their own stories. But examining them, we will find that the incidents narrated in the story are almost common. For examples, some village gods come to the village and appear in the dreams of the villagers, some others come floating in the river etc.

I am trying to give in a summary form stories of as many deities that I can read in the above two books as well as in some web sites.

Aachi Kizhavi of Usilampatti

By

P.R.Ramachander

Paapapatti is a village which is 15 km from Usilampatti of Madurai district. From here Karumathur is 15 km. Paapayi was a girl born in this village and was given in marriage to a man in Paapan patti. There is an Ochandamman temple in Karumathur Once the family of Aandayi offered pongal in the Ochandamman temple. Aandayi and her sister in law(his husband's brother's wife) came to this function. There is a custom in Ochandamman temple , in which the priest takes a small part of the rice used to prepare pongal as well as part of the prepared pongal from each individual offering Pongal. Aandayi objected to their taking a part from her sister in law saying that" My in laws will think very low of me, if you take a share from some body from their village." The priests did not bother and took the share. This infuriated Aandayi. She took the hot pongal pot, kept it on her head and started walking towards Paapapatti. Her brother who followed her lost his eye sight as son as he crossed the village boundary, Aandayi told him to follow her as Karumathur people would disrespect him if he goes back. When they reached Usilampatti, Aandayi asked her brother to stay in Chinna Karuppu temple there. And went to take bath in the Palace pond. While she was taking bath the watch men of the palace took away her sari to cradle their baby. But because Aandayi had some divine power that sari caught fire. So they showed a place in their town for Aandayi to take rest. Aandayi entered there with the pongal pot. No body has seen her after that. Her ten children when they entered the bush only found the pongal pot. So they assumed that their mother has become God. near the place where she became God there was a temple for Angala Iyer. They built a small temple within that temple for their mother. People believed that she was followed by Ochandamman when she left Karumathur. So they built a temple for Ochandamman also there. From then Aandayi was called as Aachi Kizhavi.

When the children partitioned their property one son got a rough uncultivated parch of land and all others got fertile land. When that sin came and cried before Aachi kizhavi, a voice from the temple told "I would see you with one eye and other nine with another eye." From then the rough patch became very fertile and that son's family became very rich compared to others.

In this temple there are several Gods. Angala Iyer Sami along with Thanganni and Poonganni is in the main temple. Out side his temple is Mayandi. On the left side seven prince Gods are there. On the write side a picture of Aachi Kizhavi has been draw and Garlanded. On the opposite side in a row are Agni thangu, Madana thangu, Periya Thavasi, Chenthavasi, Ochandammal, Ulaganathan and near them there is Virumala Rakku. By her side is a small platform, which is worshipped as Aachi kizhavi. Her picture is drawn there also. By her side are Pechiyamman, Chandana Karuppu , Kalanji karuppu and

Kotai karuppu. Also statues of China Karuppu , Periya Karuppu , Agniveeran , and Kollimalai Rakkammal are also there. People who are troubled by false cases come and pray to Aachi kizhavi and get relief immediately. The Shiva Rathri is celebrated with fan and fare at this temple. All the material of Aachi kizhavi are stored in Chinna karuppu temple of Usilampatti. They are brought from there with drum and pipe music. The Chamiyadi (God's representative) of Angala Iyer accompanies it along with a whip. In a place called Ilamthoppu, the descendants of Aachi kizhavi receive her ornaments. They check whether every thing is all right. Then it is brought to Aachi kizhavi's temple and three Poojas are performed. After the Pooja the boxes are taken back to Usilampatti. Later Goats are sacrificed to Chinna and Periya Karuppu.

There is another interesting story about this temple. In front of the temple of Karuppu there are two elephant statues. One of them is black and another white. Once it seems a white man asked the Chamiyadi whether the elephants will eat sugarcane. When Chamiyadi said yes, the white man brought lot of sugar cane. The elephant was covered with a cloth tent and the sugar cane was placed there. After some time, when they opened the tent they saw that the whole sugarcane has vanished. Later The Chamiyadi told the white man that his son is sick and will not live long. It seems immediately the white man received news about his son's death. On the day when the procession carries the ornaments of Aachi kizhavi, it seems all offices and shops are closed for a day.

Adaikkalam Kathar of Gopala samudram

By

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Uppoor Gopala Samudram is about 4 km from Muthu pettai of Thiruvavur district. There is big Muneeswaran statue in the village. He is the guardian God to Adaikkalam Kathar. Adaikkalam means surrender and also protection. This God is supposed to have protected a ship once upon a time. Once upon a time Gopala Samudram was a sea shore village. Ships regularly used to pass near this village, when they are going from Colombo to Nagapattinam and back. Once a ship laden with goods was passing from Nagapattinam to Colombo. When it neared this village, the sea became tumultuous and the ship was in great danger. The ship owner prayed God and suddenly the ship stuck to some thing and stopped. The ship owner sent one sailor to investigate. To his surprise he found that the ship stopped because of a brick. He brought back the brick. Though surprised, the owner of the ship did not believe that the ship was stopped by a brick. He threw the brick back to see and told, "If this place has divine power, when I come back let there not be sea here." To their surprise when he came back there was a small island there and the brick was on the top of the island. He immediately built a temple for the brick and called it "Adaikkalam Kathar as it had given support to his ship. From that time the merchant started earning large money, as his business improved. He attributed it to Adaikkalam Kathar so he built a better temple. He wanted to build statue of an elephant near the temple. The body was built first. But as soon they completed the head, the head fell down. They tried once more. Then also it fell down. Then the Chamiyadi told them that Adaikkalam Kathar rides on a horse and not on an elephant. Not wanting to build the statue again, they made a horse face to the elephant body. This remains there up to date. There is no statue of Adaikkalam Kathar in his temple. The original brick recovered from the sea is consecrated there. There is also a very majestic statue of Muneeswaran near the temple. He is supposed to be guardian to Adaikkalam Kathar. People first worship Muneeswaran and then Adaikkalam Kathar.

In the month of Vaikasi (April-May), there is a horse festival in this village. From Alangadu village which is about 2 km from this village horses (mud-painted) are brought in a procession with musical accompaniment. Adaikkalam Kathar is a vegetarian God. So there is no animal sacrifice for him. But they are sacrificed to Muneeswaran.

There is a curved road running from Muthupettai to Thiruthurai poondi in front of the temple. It seems no accidents take place there in spite of dangerous curves.

Agaram Serathamman of the herb garden.

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Agaram is a village near Thamarapakkam of Thiruvallur district. Nearby flows the Kosasthali river . When water flows in the river , people spend a lot of time near it , talking fishing etc. Once when people went to the river they saw an idol of the Goddess on the side of the river. She was caught in the slushy mud called Cheru in Tamil. So they called her Cheru athu Amman(The Goddess of the slushy mud near the river). Unlike other temples of Goddesses , these people decided to raise a garden of medicinal herbs around her temple . The people of the village have very great devotion to the Goddess and great respect to the herb garden. Initially this temple was built as a small stone temple by the Chethupakkam Jamin(land lord) . The members of the Family of Chethupakkam Jamin it seems used to carry water in pots to the temple and daily anoint her. Last year the villagers have built a grand temple to the Goddess. People believe that the herb garden there was planted by one sidhar who lived in the temple long time back. When any one is disturbed or sad , people believe that just a visit to the Herb Garden and the temple would make them contented and happy. They

also believe that if unmarried girls with wet dress after bath goes round the temple 11 times, she would get married soon. Similarly barren women would become proud mothers if they go round the temple 21 times. The temple is open from 7am to 12 noon and again between 6 Pm to 8 Pm.

Aindu oor Nalla Thangal

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated in the Kodikkulam village (27 kms from Madhurai in Madhurai-Usilampatti road) which is the mother village of Vadukapatti, Udankattupatti, Piraviyanpaati and Akhilandapuram. Aindu oor Nalla Thangal (Good Thangal of five villages) is the presiding deity here.

It seems once upon a time there was severe faming in these villages. Many people went out in search of jobs. One of them was Padivu thevan. He went to Vathiraypuu where Nalla Thangal committed suicide after throwing all her children in the well. There was a small temple for her in that village. But it was not being looked after in a proper manner. He joined as a cowherd with a rich man in that village. Once when was in the forest looking after the cows, one small girl crept in to his basket and slept there. When he returned home, Padivu thevan was perplexed and put the child outside on his way back. Next day two cows in his herd vanished. When he told to his employer he got wild and beat him with a stick. Without food and with pain, Padivu thevan slept in the courtyard, and then he again saw the child. The child came and sat on his lap and told him, "Brother, I am Nalla Thangal. I do not like to stay in this village. Please take me to your village." Padivu thevan did not believe this. Then the child again told, "I have hidden your cow in the waters of the pond" and then brought both cows alive. Understanding her power, Padivu thevan put her in his basket and traveled to his village Kodikkulam. As son as they reached the border, the child told, "Brother, you place me here itself. I would then go to my brother Raman in the village and ask him for a place to me." Then the child went to the Vishnu Temple in the village. Lord Vishnu appeared before her and showed her a place and asked her to sit there. Padivu thevan consecrated here in the place shown by God Vishnu. That time Pirava thevan he younger brother of Padivu thevan quarreled with him and told, "I do not believe she is a Goddess and I do not want her to be here." Padivu thevan consulted the Goddess /. She told him to bring him seven unburnt pots, put in it the unhusked paddy from the fields and hear with lighted Banana stems. The Banana stem burnt like dried wood and the paddy he put in the pot became milk mixed rice. Pirava thevan feel at the feel of Nalla Thangal and both of them together built a temple for her. They also consecrated Ayyan, Mayan, Arasamagan, Aruthakulalan, Aandi, Agni veeran and Karuppan in the same temple. The family members of Padivu Thevan are till this day priests at this temple. The family members of Pirava Thevan are the assistant priests. The only festival celebrated in Shiva Rathri. The ornaments of Nalla Thangal are kept in a box in the priest's home. On the evening of Shiva Rathri these are brought to the temple with musical accompaniments. Along with them 21 gods and their Chamiyadis also come. The Chamiyadi of Mayan wears a slipper of nails and answers questions of people. The Veerabhadran Chamiyadi shows light to this Chamiyadi. Behind them comes the Chamiyadi of Nalla Thangal. Next day Pongal is offered to gods and goat sacrificed to Karuppan. Nalla Thangal drives evil spirits from affected people. People requiring babies appeal to Mayandi Chami.

Akasa Mariyamman of Thirunarayur

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Once upon a time the people of Thirunarayur were bangle sellers. They used to carry glass bangles on their head go from home to home I villages and villages and sell their bangles. Once these people went to Samayapuram.. That time Panguni festival was being celebrated in Samayapuram. Then old bangle seller saw a dream. One young and very pretty came in his dream and asked him for bangles. At that time the old man had very less bangles. He put each bangle he had in the ladies hands and all of them broke. Then the old man told the lady "all the bangles I had have broken and so if you come to my village, I would make you wear pretty pretty bangles. Then she said, "Would you give me bangles only if I come to your village? No, there is no need for that. I would make your village people wear bangles." And she disappeared. The old man woke up suddenly and he saw that all the bangles had broken and were lying by his side and he saw that all other villagers had pox all over the bodies. At that time the priest of Samayapuram temple came there and told them, "The goddess wanted to compensate you for the broken bangles." And he gave them the cash for it." Then the old man realized that the young lady who came in his dream was Samayapuram Mariyamman herself. Then he applied the ashes got from Samayapuram temple on their bodies and all the pox marks disappeared.. Then the goddess appeared to them on the sky. They called her akasa Mari and saluted her and requested her to visit their village.. She asked them, "Which is your village?" and they replied "They said it is narayur famous for its Jasmine flowers." And she said, "I would come every year to your village for the sake of jasmine flowers and your bangles."

It is believed SAMayapuram Mariyamman comes there through the sky every year (may-june) and stays there for twelve days during the spring. She has a temple there in the north east side of the path where chariot runs. Lakhs of pilgrims come there on all those days a, pray to her and make her offerings. There is no statue or idol for this goddess. During the festival days using a potm, silk cloth, Durbha grass and decorations the form of a very pretty Mariamman is made. She is made to wear all sort of gold and jewel ornaments. She daily travels on a palanquin made of flowers on the shoulders of her devotees. All the Nadaswara artists assemble there and a special Raga called "Mangala Mallari " is chanted. It is a custom in the village, during these 14 days, no other individual family celebration would take place.Devotees bring Kavadis to the temple.Non stop feast is given in the temple during the festival days.On the thirteenth day , Amman would depart to Samayapuram. On other days a lighted lamp is kept in the Akasa Mari temple and is worshipped. The temple is kept open from 6 Am to 10 Am and 5 pm to 8 PM. People pray here for marriage and child birth.. The temple is 10 km from Kumbhakonam on the Kumbhakonam- Nagapattinam road near to the Nachiar kovil town.

Alamaathi Pidari Echathamman temple

Compiled by
P.R,Ramachander

.There is an interesting story behind this temple:-

When Goddess Parvathy was fighting with an ASura called Mahishasura, wherever a drop of blood fell from that ASura's body a new Rakthabheeja was created. To Stop this Goddess Parvathy created the Ferocious form of Kali who drank all the blood that fell from the Body of Mahishasura. Due to consumption of blood, she became extremely ferocious and Goddess Parvathi made her wear a garland of limes which cooled her down. She then covered herself by an ant hill in that village which was called Erumavetti palayam(The village of cutting of elephant) .

Later when Rishabhasura the grand son of Ravana lusted for Goddess Parvathi and started troubling her, she again woke up that Kali who cut off the head of Rishabhasura and drank all his blood. DEvas who saw her ferociousness Offered her several lime garlands and saluted her. She then became Elumichai B Nayagi(Lime Goddess) and again started living in an ant hill. The ant hill became very huge and the villages who knew about her offered g her Bali on wednedays and also decorated her with lime garlands

AS Time went by the attention of the villagers came down and they started neglecting her. At that time she caused torrential rain on the village which troubled them greatly. Then their village was visited by sage Markandeya who advised them to start worshipping the Goddess again. So in the month of Masi (February-march) on a Wednesday when it was also Amavasya(new moon) , the villages started worshipping her. Then they heard the Goddess assuring them that she would protect that village as well as the seven villages surrounding it.Sage Markandeya also started living in that village.

Once there was huge storm and torrential rain in the village again and those seven villages were about to be drowned by a flood and the lake which was the life line of the village was about to break.. People got scared and approached sage Markandeya who prayed the Goddess to solve their problem.Then Elumichai Nayagi rose from the ant hill and went and sat at the bank of the lake which was about to break. The banks became strong and rains stopped. All the villagers requested the Goddess to stay there itself and she agreed. She from that time was known as "Pidario Echathamman".. Here echa indicates yAgna and Athuthal means curing. Since she rose up like a flower in the village that village became known as "Alar Mathu" which later became Alamathi

Pidari sits in a small temple facing the north. There are separate sub temples for Ganesa, seven maids(Saptha kanniyar), Karumari and Durga of anhill in that temple.Tuesdays, Wednesdays , Fridays and Sundays are important in the temple and huge crowds of devotees visit their goddess .

Maha Shivarathri and new year are celebrated in this temple . The festival month of the temple is Aadi(July-august). SEvarl festivals take place during the month. Ear boring , marriages, worship of new Vehicles etc of these seven villages take place only at this temple.

A special worship practiced in the temple is anointing her , offering her pongal on Wednesdays for five weeks.Every time they offer five limes to the Goddess. The priest returns two of them. They then pierce one lime on the spear of the goddess, and cut the other in two.The juice of the fruit is poured on the Bali Peda of the Goddess and they light two ghee lamps on the lime skins and offer it to the Goddess. On the fifth Wednesday, they make the Goddess wear a lime garland and offer her sweet pongal.Devotees believe by doing this all their problems would get solved. The temple is open every day from 7 Am to 12 noon and 4 pm to 7 PM.

Ambagarathur Bhadra Kali amman temple

Compiled By

This temple is located near Karikkal town and very near to Thirunallaru temple. The Goddess in this temple is the fierce form of Kali called BhadraKali. It seems once upon a time a Rakshasi called Madhanalolai tried to tempt sage Durvasa and he cursed her. As a result two sons called Ambaran and Amban were born to her. They were very cruel and started troubling the world. . . When Indra, Brahma and Vishnu went and complained about them to Lord Shiva, he sent Bhadra Kali to kill them. At that time Ambara took the form of a buffalo and dashed against the Goddess. She cut off his head using her sword. The devas requested Goddess Kali to live in that place and protect the people of the world and she stood there facing the north (Vatabhadra Kali) . She agreed and started living there. Since she killed Ambaran there, that place was named as Ambargalathur. She is an extremely powerful Goddess and devotees in thousands visit her on Tuesdays and Fridays at Rahu kalam. On full moon day there is special worship to this Goddess. People who have pain or suffering in their limbs , came to the temple and offer a statue of the limb made in silver to this Goddess. Women waiting for marriage come to this temple on Fridays and light a lamp at Rahu Kalam., The temple is open from 7am to 1 Pm and 4 Pm to 9 Pm.

The major festival of the temple is Poo Choriyal(Raining of flowers) . This festival starts at the end of the Chithirai month. The temple has a website which gives all information about the temple . Please refer

<http://www.ambagarathurkali.com/index.php>

Anai Malai Masani Amman temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated 14 km from Pollachi and 60 km from Coimbatore. Unlike other Goddesses , this Goddess is seen in the lying position position that too in the burial ground. Burial ground in Tamil is called “Mayanam” and possibly she might have been initially called “Mayana Sayani”. She is seen with four hands , two of them are seen as raised up and two are kept close to the earth. Her devotees believe that she can solve all their problems. They write their problem in a paper in a slip of paper and give it to her priest. They believe that within three weeks their problem would be completely solved.

If her devotees are troubled by evil spirits or if they suffer heavy losses in business they approach the Goddess , appeal to the justice stone in front of her and grind chillies in the pestle and mortar and apply it on her “Justice stone.” They believe that by doing this their problems would be solved quickly. There are two entirely different stories about her origin.

1.It seems that there was a king called Nannan who was ruling that forest area. It seems in his garden, on the banks of The Aazhi river, there was a mango tree. He had a law that no part of this mango tree including its fruits should be used by any one.. Once few ladies were taking bath in the Aazhi river and one of them gathered a floating mango fruit which had fallen from this tree. As soon the king heard this the king passed a death sentence on that girl. Though her father promised that he will give gold equal to her weight and 81 elephants, that girl was put to death. Then she was buried in a burial ground on the banks of Aazhi river. People later started seeing her movements in the burial ground and started worshipping her and she was addressed by them as "Mayana Sayani", It seems one of her lady friends killed king Nannan.

2. Another story has relation to the story of Rama. It seems when sage Viswamithra took away Ram and Lakshmana to kill Thadaka and protect his fire sacrifice, Goddess Parvathi appeared before Rama and gave him his statue. She it seems told Rama that if he worships her in the form of an idol, she will ensure his victory. After Rama killed Thadaka, it seems he consecrated the idol of the Parvathi in the forest itself so that the world would be benefitted. It is also believed that Masani Ammam blessed Rama and gave him victory over Ravana.

The temple is open for worship from 6 Am to 8 Pm. Special worship is done on all tuedays and Fridays, on Karthika days as well as on Full moon days. There is a 19 day long festival starting from the full moon day of Thai month(January-February.) on the sixteenth day there is a chariot festival as well walking on the fire pit by her devotees. Adi Pooram, Tamil New Year day and Navarathri are also celebrated in the temple. This temple also maintains its own web site

<http://www.anaimalaisaniamman.tnhrcce.in/indexta.html>

Angala Parameshwari of Yenadhi chenkottai

By

P.R.Ramachander

Yenadhi chenkottai is a village which is 12 km from Manamadurai of Shiva gangai district. . Angala Parameshwari presides over this village with 21 assistant gods and 61 other Gods.

It seems once upon a time a hunter from Benares undertook a pilgrimage to Rameshwaram. He brought with him the idol of Angala Parameshwari which he was worshipping. On the day he reached the forest near Yenadhi chenkottai, he took out the Goddess, kept her below a tree and offered her fruits. The Goddess somehow loved the spot and told the hunter that she wants to stay there and asked him to proceed on his pilgrimage. He obeyed her. But somehow he never came back. Over years the idol of Angala Parameshwari was covered with lot of soil and there was only a mound seen over her idol. A lady belonging to Yadava caste, from a village nearby called Maravanendal used to supply milk to Yenadhi chenkottai village. One day she slipped and fell near this mound along with her milk. This started happening daily. At this time one Brahmin belonging to Benares, who had a dumb daughter came on pilgrimage to Rameshwaram. He was assured that some thing strange will happen and his daughter will regain speech. When they were relaxing near the mound, the Yadava lady fell with her milk. The Brahmin's daughter cried, "Oh she fell with the milk." Then he told the villagers that there is some Godly presence there. They dug the earth and found out the idol of Angala Parameshwari. The Brahmin got the idol placed below a Vanni tree in Yenadhi chenkottai. He then went and met the king Bhaskara Sethupathi of Ramanatha puram. The king did not have children. His queen was suffering from intense stomach pain also. The king said that if Goddess helps him by curing his wife and blessing them with a child, he would definitely build a temple for the Goddess. Goddess did that but the king forgot his promise. One day while the king was passing near Yenadhi chenkottai, his horse fell down. The king asked help from the watch man of the Angala Parameshwari idol. The watch man simply took some ash from near the idol and put it on the horse. The horse was immediately cured. The king then remembered his promise and built a big temple for the Goddess. He also built small temples for 21 assistant gods like Patala Rakku, Muthu Rakkachi, Bhadra Kali, Chandana Karuppu, Muthu irulayi and the 61 soldiers of the Goddess. About 12 years back, this temple was renovated by the villagers. They built three sanctums by consecrating Angala Parameshwari, Chandana Karuppu and Muthu irulayi and consecrated their helpers around them. The worship for Angala Parameshwari is vegetarian. But animals are sacrificed and offered to other Gods. The annual festival of this temple starts two days before Sivarathri and continues for eight days. On Sivarathri day Angala Parameshwari goes to Pari Vettai (moving around) and goes to the place where she was originally recovered and then comes back. She is offered the nine different grains that day. Next day she is offered Pongal. Other Gods are offered Animal sacrifice.

To the Bhadra Kali who is an assistant Goddess to Chandana Karuppu, a pregnant goat is sacrificed once in three years.

Angala Parameshwari has large number of devotees. Some of them are settled abroad. When Vaigai River is in flood, it seems water surrounds the temple also. Then people tie turmeric in a yellow thread and put it on the neck of the Goddess. Some time later this thread is put in a pot and left in the river. It seems as soon as this is done the flood water recedes very fast.

Aranmanai Chandana Karuppu.

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is at Natham of Dindukkal district. Once upon a time this area was ruled by a king called Lingama Nayakkar. He was a good king and used to go other kingdoms to see what improvements he can bring to his kingdom. Once he went to Thirumayam which was ruled by Azhagan Nambi Raja. He was a very proud king and there was a rule in his kingdom, that no one except him should wear a head gear and travel in a chariot. So Lingama Nayakkar was asked to remove his turban and get down from his chariot. He refused to do. So he was taken before Nambi Raja. During the argument Lingama Nayakkar claimed that he was a better king. Then Nambi Raja said that he would arrange for a test. If Lingama Nayakkar wins, he would give his daughter Muthu Thiruvai Nachiar to him in marriage. He also gave some time to Lingama Nayakkar for preparation.

Lingama Nayakkar returned to his town and consulted his astrologer Kerala Mannadi Parambu Nayar. Before that he arranged for a test to the astrologer.

He kept a bitch about to deliver in a room, tied a thread on its front leg and gave the other end of the thread to Nayar. He told him that a woman was about to deliver. He wanted to know as to how many children would be born and their sex. Nayar predicted that four pups would be born, two of them male. He also told that two of the pups would be white and two black. This happened exactly as foretold.

Then Lingama Nayakkar asked him, how to win in the test to be arranged by Nambi Raja. He told, "In Kottarakkara a boy belonging to a Namboodiri family is living as a washer man. His name is Manthra Balan. Only he can help you." Lingama Nayakkar managed to bring Manthra Balan.

When Nayakkar told about his problem Manthra Balan asked him, "What will you give me?" Then Nayakkar promised that he would be made god of the 64 villages under his rule. Manthra Balan showed a spot and asked Nayakkar to dig. He got a magical pot and a magical wand from there

On the day of test Nambi Rajan gave a spoiled oil expeller, a banana plant which can never yield, a cock which does not crow, and a girl who will not marry, which were all turned in to stone and asked him to set them right. With the help of water taken in the magical pot, the magical wand and Manthra Balan he did this. Nambi Rajan gave his daughter in marriage to him, as promised and gave several villages as dowry, Manthra Balan was treated like God and lived in the palace. After his death, a temple was built for him just outside the palace. This God was called by people as Aranmanai Chandana Karuppu.

The idol of Chandana Karuppu is made of mud and painted every three years. Mud is brought from all villages over which he rules and a new statue installed in Thai month (January-February). This is the only festival in the temple. But before any festival in any of the temples in the 64 village he rules, special worship is offered to Chandana Karuppu.

On the day on which the new statue is installed, they kill a cock and cook it, this is mixed with Pongal. The Chamiyadi takes this in a plate. He buries the plate along with Pongal in a particular spot and comes out. After some times when he goes the plate along with the Pongal would have come up above the soil. He walks some distance from there makes it in to balls and throws them in the sky. It is believed that these balls do not again fall down on earth.

Chandana Karuppu fulfills all the prayers of his devotees. In return they give him sickles or chain of beads.

Ariyakurichi Vettudayaar Kali Amman

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Ariyakurichi is a small village which is about 15 km from Sivaganga town on the road to Thondi. There was a temple of Ayyanar deep in forest with path covered by stones and thorns. This temple was looked after and worshipped by two brothers Kari Velaar and Karuppa velaar. Kari Velaar went to Kerala learnt magic and Manthra Sashtara came back and went inside the thorny forest, cut the idol of Ayyanar from the ground and brought it outside in the Ariyakurichi village. When he was consecrating the idol of Ayyanar, Kari Velaar saw the magical Words written on the ground and realized that the place where they are consecrating the idol had been chosen by Kali to do her penance. And so he consecrated a Kali idol also in the temple. Since the Ayyanar was cut from his place, he was called Vettudayar (one who has a cut) and the Kali in the temple also was referred to as Vettudayar Kali. Over time the importance and power of Kali grew many folds and the temple now is referred to as Vettudayar Kali temple.

There is a epic story behind Kali. It seems once goddess Parvathi playfully shut the eyes of Lord Shiva. Because of that darkness spread all over the world and Parvathi also became jet black. This form of Parvathi is called Kali. For getting rid of the sin of making the world dark for a moment Kali had to do penance in our world. At that time she killed Chandasura who was giving lot of trouble to Devas and also men. Then Devas requested Kali to kill Chandasura. The place where they requested came to be known as Deva Kottai. The place where Kali came before them and consented to help them was Called Kandadevi. The place where Kali fought with Chandasura and destroyed his flag as well as Chariot was later called as Kodikulam. The place she won over him was called as Vethiyur and later named as Thiruvethiyur.. The place where the grateful devas worshipped Kali with flowers was known as Poongudi. Then Kali started penance towards Lord Shiva so that her black colour would go away and the unintentional error that she committed is pardoned in Ariyaa kurichi(Ariyaa-means without knowing) Kali is seen sitting there, with her right leg folded and left leg hanging, with eight hands in which she holds various weapons, as if she is doing penance. Ayyanar on the other hand is sitting with his right leg folded and folding his left leg, With a flame as his cap, wearing Dhoti in the Pancha Kacha style and tying the Yogic cloth on his waist along with Poorna and Pushkala. Opposite to the Kali temples, the idols of Hanuman, Meenakshi Sundareswara, Cholaimaali, Vishnu Karuppachami, Veerappachami, Muniyappa Chami, Pechiamman, Solattukali and Bhairava are consecrated. Among them the solattu kali attracts us more. Opposite to the Ayyanar statue There is his elephant steed. In this temple daily early morning the sun's rays falls on Ayyanar in the morning and on Kali in the evening

It Seems when the British were hunting for Velu Nachaiar who was fighting the British for freedom. A General called James smith came near the temple in search of her. There he saw a young girl tending the cattle. When he asked about the whereabouts of Velu Nachaiar, the girl replied, "I know where she is but will not tell you." The furious General cut off the head of the girl without realizing That it was The Vettudayar ayyanar. Later it seems Velu Nachiar gave several gifts to the temple including her Diamond studded Mangalya.

After some time people thinking that it is not proper to worship a cut statue wanted to change it. But at that Time Ayyanar entered a girl and she told, "I am in the form which is suitable to Kali age and so leave out this plan."

There is a very peculiar form of prayer in this temple which involves cutting a coin and putting it in a cage in this temple. Those who are not getting what is due for them take a Coin, pray Ayyanar and Kali, cut the coin and put it in this cage. It Seems Kali sees to it that what is justifiably due to them would reach them quickly. People with children whose speech is late come to this temple and their children start speaking soon. People also pray here to meet their old friends. Devotees also pray the Goddess for getting children and to get married

In front of Vettudayal Kali there is a flag post. On Swathi Nakshatra day in the month of Panguni a great festival is celebrated in this temple for 12 days..On the ninth day there is also a chariot festival.. On 18th day of Adi month there is a poo Choriyaal(shower with flowers), on last Friday of adi month there is a lamp festival, During Navarathri the Goddess comes out on a horse steed. There is a book called "Vettudayal Veera Chakram" which extols her greatness. The Temple tree is Eecha maram (wild dates?)

Bhadra kali and Murasappan of Velliyampathi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Velliyampathi is a small village near Perunthurai of Erode district, the temple of Bhadrakali, Murasappan and Kundathu Kali are located here. There is an interesting story as to how these Gods reached here from Natathi village of Thirunelveli district.

Once upon a time Natathi village was populated by Nadars. Many of them were soldiers in the army of Pandya king. Once flood waters entered the Thirnel veli town. The king ordered that one man from all families should help to clear the flood and save the people. But the villagers of Natathi refused saying that they are commanders of his army. From then on the king started troubling them too much. So they decided to go away from the village and started one night with all their materials. In their village they had three Gods- Bhadra kali, Murasappan and Kundathu Kali. They took three bricks representing these gods with them. They had to walk a lot of distance. In two or three places they threw away these bricks and to the surprise next day the bricks came back in to the basket. Later in one place they threw the bricks in to a thorny bush. That day Kali I came in the dream of the priest and told him, "Your man has thrown me in to a thorny bush. You take me out and keep me below the poocha tree in front of you and start worshipping me. I would look after you., the priest did as directed and the people of Natathi village settled in their new home, The Velliyampathi village.

Initially the villagers worshipped only the three bricks. Later they made idols and started worshipping them. The original bricks are preserved even today. The Bhadrakali faces east and Murasappan her assistant faces north. Outside the temple they have made a gigantic statue for Murasappan. Apart from them Ayyanar, Konnavel perumal, Chappani Nayinar and Anai Thambiran statue are with these two gods.

After consecrating the Kali, it seems the priest went to climb palms to do toddy tapping. As soon as he climbed, it seems the palm was shaken and he was made to fall, The priest understood that the Kali does not want him to go to any other job. The priest did not understand this but thought that this was done by a called Mundakannan. He started beating the

Mundakannan statue with a whip. Later he understood that it was done by Kali and asked her, "Suppose I stay full time with you , how will I make both ends meet." Kali told him that she would find a way out. That night Kali went inside the village and placed a human led on his sheep pen. That owner decided that it was the work of Kali and gave one sheep as offering to the temple. This went on for some time. Later the people of the village understood Kali's intention and started giving regular gifts to the temple so that the priest does not suffer. Murasappan is also not an ordinary God. Below hid left hand there is a statue of a lady carrying a basket. People call her as Uppukari. She was from Pongupalayam of Thiruppur district and came to this village to sell salt. Once she took rest by keeping her bag of salt in the kali temple. It seems she heard her being called by some body. When she came before Murasappan statue, she was made in to a stone. The people Velliyampathi village do not take any decision, whether private or public without the consent of Kali. Lots of Offerings of hosiery goods come to this temple regularly. In the month of Avani (August-September) the fire pit (Agni kunda) festival is celebrated. On Thursday night all gods come outside the temple. Next day night ladies offer and worship kali with lamp made of rice flour. Every year Murasappan statue is painted afresh but they never paint his eye. On Saturday , his eye is painted ceremoniously. Then onwards offering of textile and hosiery goods are offered to Murasappan ,who is 22 feet high. The offerings reach to a much greater eight. That day mid night a pit of 2 feet by 60 feet is dug in front of Kundathu Kai. First they sacrifice a sheep and put it in the feet and the raise the fire. Next day morning the priest with God's blessings walks on that fire. Later all those people who have told the Goddess that they will walk on fire will do it. After this a buffalo is sacrificed and buried near the fire pit. Next Tuesday ,one more worship is carried out and goats are sacrificed. Later all the offerings to Murasappan are auctioned. Later they offer Pongal before the temple and again sacrifice goat. Its blood is mixed with Pongal and thrown towards the sky. In the month of Karthigai (November-December) there is a lamp festival to the Kundathu Kali. A light on the pillar before her is lit. It seems it continuously burns for 3-4 days in spite of wind or rain. If it burns well people of the village believe that the year will be prosperous.

Bhilavadi Kaththayee Amman

By
Sri.N.R.Jayaraman

(Please see his other blogs at <http://santhipriyaspages.blogspot.com>)

Stated to be incarnation of Parvathi , she appears in Chittadi in the form of Kaththayee and relieves the sufferings of her devotees. Kaththayee Amman is Valli devi and Kaththayini Amman is Parvathi. Similarity in name sometime causes confusion to many. However this temple has been built only for Valli, consort of Lord Murugan and affectionately called Kaththayee though both the deities Kaththayee and Kaththayini (Pachai Vazhi Amman) find their place here. Two very interesting legends surrounding Kaththayee and Kaththayini are in vague . Parasakthi protected her devotees against evils and gave darshan to her faithful devotees in several forms and governed the universe from immortal times. Here in Chittadi she came as Kaththayee to alleviate their sufferings. From the inscriptions and documents available in the Tanjore Saraswathi mahal Library the land 400 year old temple for Kaththayee Amman (Valli) exists in a place called Bilavadi,a small helmet in the outskirts of Kumbakonam in Tiruvurur district of Tamilnadu. The place where it has been built was earlier known as Chittadi. It is difficult to explain the mystics of the temple which has beautiful structures. The temple lies in a sprawling field in the southern part of river bed Mudikontan. to the temple was reportedly donated in the year 1577, to a saint by Sevvappa Naicker erstwhile King of Tanjore . The place has been recorded as Avanam Chittadi.

Valli alias kaththayee Amman- Legend

The interesting story of Kaththayee goes as thus. Once upon a time, in the midst of a gathering in Devaloga (Heaven), two drops of tears fell from the eyes o Lord Vishnu in ecstasy which turned into two girls. The elder of them was named Amudavalli and the second as Sundaravalli. Born twins and grew together both wished to marry Lord Muruga and remain together for ever . Seeking such a boon from lord Muruga they went to river bank of Saravana Poigai and sat over the forest reeds and meditated. Pleased with their prayer, lord Muruga appeared before them and explained that it would be difficult for him to marry them immediately since they were born as Kriya and Icha sakthis, but would certainly marry

them after vanquishing demon Suran. However till such time his mission was accomplished the elder of them should live in Devaloka (Heaven) and the younger in Bhooloka (Earth). While Sundaravalli went to earth, Amudavalli in the form of a motherless child, went to Indira and sought asylum. He initiated her as his daughter and directed Elephant Iravada his palace guard to bring her up . She came to be known as Devayanai . Deva as she was brought up in Devaloga ie Heaven and Yanai meaning Elephant . In Bhooloka, Lord Tirumal, born as a Rishi out of a curse from Lord Indira was meditating in a lonely place . Tirumal's wife Lakshmi came as a Deer, and stood before the Rishi who when opened his eyes stared at her in lust for a moment. She became pregnant out of that act. Taking cue of it Sundaravalli immediately entered into the womb of Lakshmi who soon gave birth to a female child. As soon as Vishnu was relieved of the curse of Indira, they abandoned the child in a bush near a pond called Vallikulam and proceeded to Vaikunta. By chance Nambirajan, a hunter saw the abandoned baby and took her home out of pity . When she grew up she was sent to the millet field to guard the crops against the hunting birds and other Ganapathi Nataraja Sivakami Subramanya Devasena Ayee i.e Kaththayee (Kaththa in tamil meaning guarded and Ayee meaning a tribal lady). Once accidentally Murugan met Valli in the millet field, befriended her and their friendship blossomed into love which grew deeper with time. Murugan decided to marry her and went to Vallimalai to meet her accompanied by a trusted guard . Sensing Murugan's plan his brother Vijayanagar accompanied by his parents, sage Narada, other Rishies and saints also followed them discreetly. Events transpired fast and finally with the blessings of everyone, Murugan married Valli. Lord Shiva who was present there requested Sage of Kanchamalai to built a temple in honor of Valli at the same spot. Sage of Kanchamalai and others regretted that though they were Siddas (Great Muni/Rishies) none respected or cared for them and therefore felt that it could be achieved only by some others, but would certainly carry out the orders of Siva. They promised that a temple with three sanctums- Parvathi in the centre sanctum , Valli in left, and Murugan at the right side sanctum would be established. Saints and sages like Vishvamitra, Lord Narada, and other seven Rishies (Saptha Rishies) who were present in Murugan's marriage would also be seated at suitable place in the same temple. Agreeing to their request Lord Shiva blessed them saying that as a honor to Sage of Kanchamalai he would also like to be present animals which was the custom of the tribes to engage marriageable girls for such duty. Valli stood as guard at the field, sitting in an elevated platform called paran (High Platform). She was called Kaththa there as Kanchamalai Muni in separate sanctum. As soon as Sage of Kanchamalai got Lord Shiva's nod, he immediately took invisible form and called a Brahmin walking at a distance away " My son come here". Hearing the voice of an unknown Brahmin went from where the sound came, but could not find anyone. Astonished he started walking back when again the invisible asked him not to go back as she had come there to alleviate their sufferings. Valli ,Kalinga Nardana (Dance of Krishna over the head of a snake)- Dakshinamoorthi and Bhairava and protect it from the severe heat during summer ? Therefore he offered only flowers to the vermillion. During day time he used to keep his hand over the heap like an umbrella to prevent sun rays falling on it. Days passed. Mysterious female voice came again asking how he was going to protect her from the rains ? Sensible question he thought, but could not find an answer readily. The puzzled Brahmin considered several options and finally he made a clay mould and placed it above the vermillion heap and continued the prayers. When he realized that the clay mould like human body would also perish and can not protect it permanently he sat in meditation seeking solution to the vexed problem. Slowly he realized that inner vision over shadowed his thought process. Some feeble image appeared in his vision followed by several squares which merged together finally to display forty three triangles in seven structures i.e 4+3=7. Next came Kaththayee. He was amazed to see her beauty and fainted. Kaththayee woke him up saying that she was the same god who Soon dump struck Brahmin immediately saw heap of vermillion lying on the ground at a distance from where the voice came. He realized that the voice belonged to some deity which indeed remained there. From next day onwards he started worshipping the heap of vermillion, but the nagging concern was evident. How to conduct prayers to the heap of governed the universe and repeated that had come there to only alleviate their sufferings . She also indicated that she would emerge from the river displaying three head gears which should be taken out and consecrated at some place for worship. Scenes that followed slowly melted away. Next morning the brahmin went to the river bed , sat there in the bank starrng the river all through the day. Suddenly he saw one bunch of three head gears floating and disappearing into the water. He jumped into the river brought out a idol lay buried inside the sand. Elated at its beauty , he kept it over his shoulder and jumped , rejoiced and wept in happiness. Anticipating such a find he had earlier constructed a small platform on the western side of the river to consecrate the find. He walked back dancing in ecstasy all way to the spot collected the heap of vermillion, spread over the platform and placed the idol over it and started worshipping it. In the same haste without realizing the consequences, he threw away the clay mould into the river which went down. Some times everyone indulges in such foolish acts , no wonder fate played its role to make the Brahmin commit such folly. Next morning when the brahmin concluded prayers and as usual waited for the invisible to indicate something only an eerie silence remained. He shouted aloud mother, mother but for some time nothing happened. When he repeated the shout the invisible asked him not to search her as she had already left that place along with the clay mould thrown into the river. He realized his foolish act, which of course was not intentional. He was

unaware of the consequences, he committed a sin not reversible. How to retrieve back the clay mould from the water ? Crying aloud like a motherless child, he pleaded for pardon as it was borne out of ignorance. In spite of it if she refused to return back he would jump into the river and commit suicide carrying the idol. He went on telling how he painstakingly plucked the flowers and showered on her till both hands pained. He blamed his two legs which were real culprits that took him to the river side to help throw away the clay mould and therefore would punish them by doing 'sit and stand' exercise till the tissues in the legs broke leading to oozing of blood. A mother can not remain a spectator to the suffering of her kin and kith. After all, the priest had worshiped her with utmost sincerity ? Kaththayee appeared before him to assure that his mistake had been condoned and she would return back and remain there as Gnanambika (mother of Wisdom), Odyana roopini (Ottiyana meaning remain struck in heart) and Karunamayee (One who is kind) to remove their distress. Symbolizing the above three aspects in three head gears, she merged in to the idol. First she appeared in the form of heap of vermillion, stayed in the clay mould and finally in the idol. Like Nambiraj who brought her up (Nambi in Tamil means believed) she assured to remain there for ever alleviating the sufferings of those who surrendered themselves into her feet, drive away evils like how she drew the birds and animals from millet fields. She also expressed her desire to be with those who attended her wedding – Murugan's parents Parvathi and Shiva, Saints Jada Muni, Narada, Agasthya and Gouthama, Karu Muni, Chem muni, Saptha Rishies like vazuvuni, veda muni Vamadeva, Vishwamitra, Muthu Muni, Bharadwaj. She became Katha + Aayee = Kaththayee , because she guarded the fields (Katha in Tamil meaning protected and Aayee means a tribe girl). Town became to be known as Muthu Muni Pachai Muni Sada Muni Chem muni Lada Sanyasi Chittadi since many Siddhas meditated there (Chitta meaning Siddhas and Aadi means danced) and river named Mudikondan conveying her appearance with three headgear in that river.

Wonders of Kaththayee

The mystic acts of Kaththayee who called up a stranger to construct a temple 400 years ago is not difficult to believe. Many had strange personal experiences and enjoyed the gratitude of mother in several ways, out of which only few can be told. Read this incident which occurred several years back. In the midst of a night a holy Brahmin was walking through the temple area. It was 20.00 hrs at night. Tired and fearing to continue the journey in night with huge cash in hand he searched for a rest house. The temple appeared like an isolated house and as he reached there seeking shelter a lady came out . He told her that he was proceeding to the next village with lot of cash to buy bullocks and therefore sought her help to find a place to stay that night. Without uttering a word she took him inside, served some food and asked him to leave the cash bag there and proceed to another house along with her son to take rest . He advised him to come back in the morning to collect the money. After handing over the bag containing the cash the Brahmin followed her son who walked through the bushy areas carrying a lantern, and showed a sleep yard outside the house in an Agrahara (Place where the Brahmins reside as a community) in village Chththadi to take rest . Next day morning the owner of the house came out and awakened the stranger to inquire the purpose of his visit. When the Brahmin narrated the entire story, the owner scotched at him and refused to believe the story stating that no such house existed in the near vicinity and blamed that he was bluffing. 'What will be the fate of my money ?' Brahmin was panicky. 'Okay let us go and see' said the owner and accompanied him to the house where he had deposited the money the previous night. Tracking back the same route he walked the previous night the Brahmin took him near the temple site where he said the house was seen. The temple priest who opened the temple said 'Don't worry, let us pray to the deity' and took them inside. Alas ! They were shocked to find the same bag as described by the Brahmin lying at her feet and entire amount remaining intact. Unable to control his emotion the tourist cried aloud ' mother not only you saved the money, my prestige has also been saved, lest I would have remained a liar in front of all' wept the Brahmin who then spent the entire money to build the temple. This relates to an incident that happened 300 years ago. On an occasion two family members of Kaththayee group traveled to the temple to offer prayers in two bullock carts. After offering prayers and other rituals they returned home. One of the female child who was playing in the temple complex was unknowingly left behind . Everyone thought that she was traveling in the other bullock cart. Back home they found the child missing and searched all over. Finding no trace of the child the agonized family rushed back to the temple in search of her. As they were all crying in the sanctum sanctorum an invisible said ' calm down and do not search the child any more. Years back when she fell ill it was promised that the child would be given to me. Since you failed to honor the promise I have taken her. She is my child now' The family remembered that indeed such a promise was made years back when the child was seriously ill . It is believed that the statue of a small child seen at the feet of the deity is the same child. Forty years ago Janaki Ammal wife of Krishnamurti was returning to her native place Thirunilankudi a nearby small village from Chittadi in a Jadka (Bullock Cart). The river on way suddenly swelled and the cart began to

submerge. 'Kaththayee save us shouted the lady' What a miracle ? Some one came in a bicycle, pulled up the cart and the bullocks and safe landed them. He also accompanied them in his bicycle till the border of the village and disappeared. Every one forgot the incident. In the next few days when once Krishnamurti and his family went to the temple again to attend a function, the temple priest Duraappa Gurukkal in trance started dancing and went near Krishnamurthy uttering 'It is me who helped your family from the swollen river'. They now realized that the person who came in a bicycle and saved their lives was none than Kaththayee. In the year 1939 same Krishnamurti's mother who carried a pot full of milk entered in to the burning Yagna Kund (Holy pyre). To everyone's astonishment she stood in the midst of the burning fire for full ten minutes and not even her silk saree burnt. Only after the request of the temple priests Sri Sundaresa Gurukkal and Sri Duraappa Gurukkal did she come out without even a scratch on her body. One family was in trauma as their daughter's marriage did not realize for many years. One of their family friends advised them that instead of going to several other temples to pray for it, it would be proper to go and offer prayers first to the family deity to find a solution. Taking his advice they went to Kaththayee temple and prayed there. In the next one month their daughter got married. Some more miracles occurred in the same family. On the advice of the Kaththayee trust secretary they prayed for a grand son and got the wish fulfilled. Once their son could not return back to India from U.S due to several obstacles and when they prayed at Kaththayee by keeping a coin tied in a yellow cloth, his transfer orders came forth with . Whoever went to her and prayed with utmost devotion and sincerity their trust were never betrayed.

Legend on Pachaivazhi Amman (Kathyayini)

Pachai vazhi amman (Kathyayini) mother of Murugan too is seated in another sanctum in the same temple carrying behind an interesting story. Very long ago Kathyayana maharishi sat in tapas seeking Siva's blessings. His wish was that Parvathi should be born as his daughter and that he should get her married to Shiva . Strange wish. However Shiva granted the boon. He ensured that Parvathi was born to him. The child was named Kathyayini and when attained puberty she desired to marry Shiva. Her father's friends like Siva, Dharma, Nada, Yoga, Vazz, Puruda and maha muniswars (Saints) helped her succeed in her tapas . When lord Siva appeared before her she expressed her desire and also wished to remain there so that whoever came there seeking marriage boon she could fulfill their wish. As per the wish of Kathyayana Muni Siva-parvathi got married. Shiva allowed her to remain in a separate sanctum to grant boon to the devotees seeking alms for the marriage. It is believed that those who observed Kathyayini vrith (Fast) obstacles on the marriage gets removed.

Structure of the Temple

Kathyayini remains seated in the centre of sanctum sanctum with Kaththayee on the right side and Murugan on the left side in two separate sanctums. Kaththayee holds a lotus in her right hand and keeps the left slightly folded in a stylish fashion. Three head gears appears on her head, left leg folded and right leg stretched to the ground. A child is also found seated below her leg. Outside the temple complex Kanchamalai Siva holding a lotus in his hand is seen. He keeps his left arm over a cobra. It is interesting to see that Kathyayini devi too holds a lotus in her hand in similar fashion. At different ends statues for Veerabagu muni with veera mitra bommi, nine saints, lada sanyasi Danvanthri muni, and Pachi amman are seen consecrated. Vilvam and neem trees are considered to be the sacred trees of the temple.

Courtesy: ----I sincerely thank the Kaththayee Bhaktha jana trust, No 2, -Sarangapani Street, T'nagar, Chennai-17 for rendering valuable assistance to collect the information and supplied several photographs without which the 400 year old history of Murugan's consort Valli's beautifully architected temple could not have been compiled and would have remained unknown to many readers.

Changili karuppar of Kizha vayal

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kizha vaval is a village in near Singanam puri of Shiva Ganga district. There is a prosperous village called Natha Kalai pattinam near Kizha vaval. Once upon a time, people were very prosperous there. Knowing this some magicians started to trouble them. There is an Oli Vidai ayyanar temple in this village, People went and appealed to Ayyanar. But the magicians started troubling him also. So ayyanar went his sister Meenakshi in Madhurai. She said she has a big army of 121 persons. She asked him to take whomsoever he likes. By examining them he liked Changili Karuppan. And took him with him. As soon as Changili Karuppan reached the village he took a very gigantic form and by a stare made all magicians in to stone. When Karuppan asked for compensation, Ayyanar told him that the first worship in these villages would be for Changili Karuppan. He is now the God for ten villages around Kizha vaval. Initially he was in a paai tree there but later people wanted to build a temple for him. Then the Chamiyadi of Karuppar told them. "I want the sun light to fall on my face and the rain water to fall on my back". The temple was built fulfilling this condition. Except for the weapons of the God and the bells that have been offered by devotees, there is nothing else in the temple. The large number of bells is proof enough that Changili Karuppan is a powerful God.

It seems a few years back a thief came to steal the bells from the temple. Changili Karuppan in the form of a boy went and told about this to an elder in the village. The villagers immediately caught the thief. Since then there is no theft in the temple.

It seems water was a problem in this temple. Digging of bore well was costly as even at thousand feet depth water was not available. Changili Karuppan appeared in the dream of his devotee and pointed out the place water is available. They got plenty of water there even at 150 feet.

Around once in ten years a festival is celebrated to Changili Karuppan, if he agrees. The elders assemble near his temple and ask his opinion. If he is willing a lizard will make sound from his knife planted there. Three months before the festival the men of the village observe severe penances. They do not go out of the village at night; do not take food in outsider's house and so on. About 1000 goats are sacrificed during the festival. Women do not go anywhere near the temple at any time.

Chellandi Amman of Madhukarai

By

P.R.Ramachander

Mayanur is village 20 km from Trichy in the Trichy –Karur road. Madukkarai is the adjoining village. In the ancient times, when Tamil Nadu was being ruled by Cheras, Chozhas and Pandiyas, they were always waging war with each other. As a result people of Tamil Nadu suffered. So the smaller kings under them met a sage and wanted a solution. He advised them to approach Goddess Parvathi. He told them that the Goddess was doing Thapas near a mountain north of Karur, after lot of efforts and difficulties; they were able to see the Goddess. She said that she would visit Mayanur and talk to the three great kings. She appeared in Mayanur as a tribal girl. Chera, Chozha and Pandya kings came to Mayanur to talk with her. She talked with them and told them that the east of Mayanur is chozha nadu (country), west Chera nadu and south Pandya nadu. The three kings agreed to this. When she was about to go away the kings realized that she was Goddess Parvathi herself. They all fell at her feet and requested her to be forever with them. She agreed and decided to stay in Madhukkarai. They started calling her Chellandi Amman. All the three kings together looked after the temple. Once there was a famine in Chozha Nadu. The king came to Madhukkarai and requested to help him. She then told him that from then onwards she would see Chozha nadu and started looking towards the east. The problems of Chozha nadu were solved.

With a coconut garden in the south, Cauvery River in the north and looking at the north eastern direction, Chellandi Amman sits on a lion. There will always be water in the Cauvery which Chellandi Amman sees. So for all holy deeds of the temple water is taken from here. There was a king called Aariya Raja in Madhurai. It seems once he took water from this river for anointing Meenakshi Amman of Madhurai. It seems he built a road from here to Madhurai.

On the left side of Chellandi Amman, there are statues for Aariya Raja and his wife Chandanathammal. Near by there is an idol of Pechiyamman.

It seems there was a small kingdom within a Chozha Nadu. He was a tyrant and was troubling people. It seems his people came and complained to Chellandi Amman. Pechiyamman went from there killed the king as well as his son.

Apart from this there are idols of Madhurai Veeran and Kathavarayan in the temple. Outside the temple (east side) Chandana Karuppar riding a horse is protecting this temple. From this side there are eighteen steps leading to the river. On the left side of these steps there is a statue of Shiva below a banyan tree. People believe that by praying to Lord Shiva, women can be blessed with children.

It seems after a long time after establishment of the above temple, The Chera, Chozha and Pandya kings again wanted that

the Chellandiamman temple should be in their kingdom. The Goddess cut herself in to three pieces and sent each piece to one country. In Urayur, only the leg (without body) is consecrated. In Simmakal her head is consecrated and in Noyyal near Karur her torso is consecrated.

Chellandi Amman of Oruvanthur near Mohanur

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

The two younger sisters of Chelliamman of Madurai and Kali wanted to decide the place they wanted to live. They decided they would hit a ball each and wherever the ball falls they would have their temple there. The ball hit by the eldest sister fell in Oruvanthur, the ball hit by the younger one fell in Paranthadi and the ball hit by Kali fell in Thottiyam. Because of that the elder sister became Oruvanthur Pidari, the second one became Panathadi Periya Kandi Amman and Kali became Thottiyam Madurai Maha Kali.

The Oruvanthur Pidari took the shape of a golden ball in a place where salt was manufactured. Those people thought that it was an ordinary ball and put it in a pot. The Ori king who came to know about it somehow, along with a poet called Parana came there and a young girl also came there in search of the ball.

When king asked the salt manufacturers about the ball the young girl claimed the ball belonged to her. The salt manufacturer told, that any one of them who tells exactly where the ball fell can claim it. When the girl told the exact spot, the worker introduced his hand inside the pot. The pot had broken at the bottom and the girl also vanished.

from there. When the king removed the pot , below it was a pretty statue of the Goddess. The poet told that the girl who came there was Goddess herself. That Goddess was named as Chellandi Amman and people started worshipping her in Oruvanthur. In the Sanctum she stands with eight hands holding weapons in the form of killing an Asura. They also sanctified Ganesa , Pattavan Chami , Karuppanna Chami , Madurai Veran , Seven maids , Pechi amman , Chadaichi amman etc.

After they recovered a statue of Goddess Parvathi worshipping Shiva from the temple, Ladies visit the temple and pray for fulfilling their wants. Near the sanctum there is a depot like structure and the salty mud from the depot called “Uppiliyan thittu Uppu Man” is given to devotees as Prasad. People believe if it is applied over the body , the mental and physical diseases would be cured. Devotees pray for getting married, and getting children and Anoint the Goddess and present her with Silk saris. In the month of Margazhi there is a festival in the temple called Vel thiruvizha . In the month of masi the founding day of the temple is celebrated for 15 days. In the last Friday of Adi month the Goddess is anointed with 1008 pots of milk.

The temple is situated 5 km from Mohanur which is 23 km from namakkal. The temple is open from 6 Am to 8 Pm

Chellayi amman of Sri Rangam

By

This Goddess is called Chellayi Amman because she grants Selvam(wealth). This Sellayi Amma was one upon a time within Sri Rangam temple along with Saptha Mathas. Once upon a time the waters of Kollidam river entered and spoiled this temple..Then Sri Koorar Narayana Jeeyar who was incharge of the repair works decided to shift this temple to the east of the town on a high pedanstal facing north.

In the sanctum first we see Lord Ganesa, Mannyi amman. Brahmi called Kanchi amman, The Maheswari called Chellayi amman, Vaishnavi who is called Thiruvaramba Amman, Varahi called Manikhyai nachiyamma, Kaumari called Badrakali Amman, followed by Chamundi and together they are called Thiruvaramba chellayi amman temple

It is believed by worshipping them, all unsolvable problems like property problems, monetary problems, family problems can be solved and all auspicious pending functions would take place

In the Ardha mantapa Ani arangathaman representing all these seven goddesses sits alone.. Then there are sub temples for Muthukaruppanna sami, pattavan, lada muni, sannasiyappan, muniyappan, mamundi, agora veerabhadran, kudirai karuppu, pechiyanman, chadaichiyamma, Madurai veeran samga murthi, and naga kannis.

Before the starting of brahmotsavam, in the streets, god Ranganatha visits, the goddess of the border village Thiruvaramba, Chelliyamma takes a round to check the security

Twenty eighth of aadi month is celebrated as festival in chellayi amman temple, and water from kollidam river is brought to anoint the goddess. In the Ganapathi temple within the temple Vinayaka chathurthi is celebrated. The full moon day of Purattasi month also is celebrated as festival for the saptha mathas.

This temple is situated near Sri rangam railway station, the temple is open from 7am to 11am and 5.30pm to 8 pm.

Chelliamman temple of Thottapalayam, Vellore

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This Temple is situated adjacent to the new city bus stand of the Vellore visited by thousands of devotees daily. She is considered to be another form of Chamundeswari, one of the Saptha Mathrukas (Seven mothers viz Brahmi, Vaishnavi, Maheswari, Kaumari, Chamundi, Varahi, Narasimhi). Inside the sanctum the idols of all the Saptha Mathrukas are also seated but Goddess Chelli Amman who is Chamundi is prominently shown. There is a very interesting story of this temple.

It seems Bommi and Dhimmi were two brothers hailing from Karnataka deserted their original home due to the ill treatment of their step brothers and reached the Banks of Palaru in Vellore. At that time this part of Tamil Nadu was ruled by Chozhas and they permitted the brothers to stay in Vellore. Seeing the Saptha Matha idols they started worshipping the idol of Chamundi who was their Kula Deivam (clan god.) Once when dacoits attacked that village and these brothers drove them out due to the power given to them by Chamundi. The other villagers who only then realized the power of the Goddess started worshipping Chamundi but in Tamil called her Chelli Amman.

Her devotees have great belief in the powers of the Goddess and any good thing in their homes is only initiated after getting the permission of the Goddess. They offer statues of horses and tie cradles on the banyan tree of the temple. The very large number of these statues and cradles go to prove the popularity of the Goddess. The temple is open from 6 AM to 8 PM. It is about 4-5 km from V the Katpadi Railway station.

Chemmuneeswarar of Poosariyoor

By

P.R.Ramachander

Poosariyoor is 12 km from Velli Thirupoor of Erode district. This story happened during Tippu Sultan's rule. There is a village called Thittakudi near Chidambaram. A Brahmin priest was doing Pooja to Pachiyamma and Mannatha Sami of this village. He had a pretty daughter. Once when he was sick, this daughter offered worship instead of him. The sultan saw her there and wanted to marry her. Fearing this the Brahmin along with his daughter and two stones from the temple of the gods he was worshipping ran away from the village. He traveled through lot of villages. Every where he halted, he never used to forget to worship to his Gods. At last they reached Poosariyoor. Here both Gods told the priest that they wanted to stay there and would protect him. That area was a forest area. So Pachiyamma asked her brother Lord Vishnu to give some body to protect her. Lord Vishnu created a God called Veeran and gave her as a body guard. Pachiyamma gave Veeran boon of deathlessness and a sword. Once she sent him to eastern direction so that he will tell about her greatness to devotees. He started doing Thapas below a Thapas tree and people started worshipping him. Pachiyamma was enraged and appealed to Vishnu. He advised her to meditate on Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva came and created two lasses using two fists of earth of the river bank. From the first lass he created Vamuni, Muthumuni, Veda muni

and two more munis. From the second girl seven munis were created six munis among whom were Chemmuni, Poo muni, Lada muni and Kodi muni. Chemmuni went and asked Lord Vishnu, why he was created. He told him that he has to subdue Veeran and bring him back and protect Pachiyamman. There was a big war between the 12 munis and Veeran. At last Veeran changed himself in to a fish and jumped in to the sea. Vaamuni drank all the waters of the sea. Then Chemmuni caught Veeran. He told him to come back and be gods of the village along with them. Pachiyamman was happy with Chemmuni and told him that though she was the prime Goddess of the village, she is giving it to Chemmuni. There is a very huge statue of Chemmuneswarar in the village. In a small shed Pachiyamman has her temple. Apart from her Mannathachami, Vendamalai Anuman, Ranganathar, Mkkattukanni, Idakumara Kanjamalai Sidheswarar also have temples in side this shed. All the twelve Munis stand side by side. Chemmuni and Vaamuni have huge statues. Chemmuneswarar is supposed to have great powers to drive away Ghosts and evil spirits. These people are brought and given a bunch of burning Agar bathis. Then the priest asks them who they are. They reply. Then if they agree to go way, they are taken in front of Vaamuni to confirm whether the spirit has really gone. Three iron chains are thrown in the ground. If the affected person picks the chain thought by the relative who brought him, it is concluded that the evil spirit has gone. If not they are again brought next week. People also come and complain about injustice done to them. They sacrifice a goat after that; the body is left there itself. It seems as when the meat dries Vaamuni would give lot of bodily suffering to the culprit. In the third week of Chithirai month (April-May) there is a festival at this temple complex. Pachiyamman, Manaadacami and Chemmuneswarar are taken round in decorated chariots which are carried and kept before the temple. Then the ornaments are brought from Kundangal Maduvu which is half a km from the temple. While the procession comes hundreds of goats are sacrificed. Their meat is not to be taken outside the village and given to the temple workers as a gift. Later there is worship to Pachiyamman and other idols. With this the festival comes to an end.

Chenpaka moorthi Ayyanar

By

P.R.Ramachander

Iyamkottai is a small village on the road from Madurai to Dindigul near the station called Kodai road. Once upon a time this and the neighboring four villages were called Ammaya naikanoor Jamin. Once this Jamin was ruled by a Jamindar called Kamsaiya Nayakkan. At that time due to continues failure of rain, these villages were suffering due to lack of food. So the people went and requested the Jamindar to do some thing. He called an astrologer and asked him. The astrologer told that, if an Ayyanar temple is built in the village all problems would be solved. The Jamindar took immediate action. He built an Ayyanar temple with Poornai and Pushkalai. At that time the Pandya king was called Chenpaka Moorthi. So in his hour the Ayyanar was called Chempaka moorthi Ayyanar. From that time there was regular rains and all the problems of these villages were solved.

Once a cowherd saw a box made of pal leaves in the forest. Being scared, he ran to the village and told them. But by the time he returned the box had vanished. People were surprised by this turn of events. Immediately after this the Jamindar told them to cut a big neem tree by the side of Ayyanar temple so that they can build a big temple for Ayyanar. One of the people went to cut the tree entered into a trance and said, " My name is Chandana Karuppan, Without knowing where to go I am inside this tree." The people first did not believe this. Then Chandana karuppu asked them to back at that time and return next day, so that he can leave them signs of his presence. Next day when people returned to the neem tree, they saw the box made of Palm leaves. In side was a statue of Chandana Karuppan. Chandana Karuppu told them that he was from Kerala and since the local people there were not able to worship him properly, he was causing them lot of trouble. Because of this the people put him in a box made of palm leaves and floated in a river. He told them that he reached their village through the river. He also promised them that he would guard their village properly. So they built a temple for Chandana Karuppan on the right side of this Ayyanar temple. Chandana Karuppu did his job with efficiency but there were also minor troubles. Even if people wear slippers and go any where near his temple, they were thrown back. So people were even afraid to walk near the temple.

It seems a Moslem family came to Madurai to see the festivities there. On their way back, they took rest near Chandana Karuppan's temple. After some time they started their journey from there. After traveling a few miles they noticed that one girl babe=y was missing. They returned back to the temple. They heard a voice from the locked Chandana Karuppan temple, "The baby is sleeping in my temple, If you come tomorrow at this same time, you can take your child back." Bu the family head broke open the door of the temple. There was no trace of the child. Karuppu has made the child a part of him. The members of this family are devotees of Chandana karuppu till this day. There were also other similar incidents. So the people went and complained to the Jamindar. He again called the astrologer who advised him to shift the temple of Chandana Karuppu to the left side of Ayyanar temple. This was done and afterwards there had been no problems caused by Chandana Karuppu.

When the temple was built for Ayyanar the priest was a man called Karutha Velar. The descendents of his family continued to worship in the temple. Sivanadiyan, who was the son of Karutha Velar was priest immediately after him. He was very famous and a great devotee of Chandana Karuppan. The villagers got jealous and alleged him that he behaved

badly with a village woman. They decided to cut his head off and took him to a hill top. Meanwhile some people went and told about this to the Jamindar., Jamindar who had a very high pinion of Sivanadiyan rushed to that spot but could not save Sivanadian. Before beheading him the villagers asked for the last wish of Sivanadian. He told them that the land up to which his blood flows should be given to his family. Immediately after beheading him, there was a torrential rain and his blood spread over 8 acres. The Jamindar gave this land to his family.

Apart from Ayyanar and Chandana Karuppar , there are some more gods in the temple. There are two giant statues of Bhoothas(Ghosts) who are the assistants of Ayyanar. Below them there is Sonai Chami, Veera Bhadra Chami, Chandana lingam, Mayana Karuppu , Pechiyamman, Bhadra Kali , Rakkayi and Andi chami.

In the month of Adi (July-August)there is a horse giving festival (Kudirai eduppu vizha) for the Ayyanar. From the pat of village thy always order for two horses. These are made in the Thanihiyam village. From there the horses are brought ceremoniously. Before the horses reach a pot of sandal paste is offered to Chandana karuppar.

One of the horses is the steed for Ayyanar. The other horse is called Devendra Vahanam. Poornai and Pushkalai are supposed to be the daughters of this horse. People believe that this horse comes there to see his daughters. It seems for the betterment f village Poornai and Pushkalai make requests to Devendra Vahanam, who tells Devendra, and who in turn tells Lord Shiva, The God then sends his cow to the village so that they live in plenty. That cow is called Nachankalai. For this purpose that night they select a calf , anoint it with turmeric water, cloth it and worship it. Then they set free the Nachankalai.

TO satisfy the other Gods, there is a bull catching ceremony conducted in the village They believe that at least few drops of human blood falls during this ceremony and the Gods are satisfied. People of the village take permission from Ayyanar before taking any important decision in the family.

Cheruppalur Mutharamman temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Cheruppalur is a small village in Kanyakumari district. It seems once upon a time this place was filled with Madhuca (Iluppai tree) trees. Once THumburan Sami and Bhodathan Sami (two village Gods) were walking by that road To Cheruffalur and took rest below the Iluppai trees. At the time there was a great epidemic in Cheruppalur and people were dying like flies, They all went to a Mutharamman temple in a place called Yeethan Kadu and prayer her as well as the God(devan) there to save them., The goddess Mutharama and Devan agreed and while they were coming to Cheruppalur, they happened to see THamburan Sami and Bhodathan sami , and they decided to stay there itself and then they protected the people from the great epidemic. The grateful people built a temple for Mutharamman as well as Devan.. When the regular worship was being done there , the priest noticed the growth of an anthill there.. Scared that it may spoil the statue of the Goddess , he broke that anthill.. Next day another ant hill grew up and he felt something is there behind it and summoned the astrologer, who told them that They have to install a Ganesa statue at the place where the anthill appeared.

Another time , there was an epidemic of Smallpox in that village., All villager appealed to Mutharamman. On the 8th day small pox disappeared from the village and on the same day , a well in the temple crashed and closed itself. When astrologers were called that the small pox affecting the village was put in the well and it has disappeared for ever . It was also seen that they could dig another well.

In the sanctum sanctorum of the temple are Mutharamman and the devan and outside separate small temples have been built for Ganesa, THampuran Swami , Bhothathan , Cholla Madan and Nagaraja. In the Panguni (March-April) month every year there is a five day festival in the temple. On the fifth day, Mutharamman and DEvan come out of the temple and go round the village If the Amman is worshipped for seven weeks , umnnmarried people would get married and also childless couple would get children. People also believe that all diseases get cured by praying to Amman. The temple is open from 6 Am-9 AM in the morning and 5 PM to 8 PM in the evening. The temple is ion the road connecting Marthandam and Pechiparai , about 9 km away from Marthandam of Kanyakumari district.

Chithakoor Ayyanar (Sevuga Perumal)

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Ayyanar is the main guardian deity of the villages of Tamil Nadu. Normally this imposing terracotta figure is seen in the boundary of the village. Surrounding him would be the colorful terracotta war steeds. In some temples the idols of Poorna and Pushkala who are his consorts are also present. Along with him normally Goddess Karuppu (black) is also present. He is also called Kari, Purathuvan, Kadal vanna, Chathan, Poosanaikelve, Putkalai manavalan, Masathan, Kondayuthan, Arihara kumaran etc.

Chithakoor is a small village in the Pudukkottai district of Tamil Nadu near Avudayar Kil. He presides over more than one hundred villages surrounding Chithakoor. He is called Sevuga Perumal ayyanar (Ayyanar who is a servant god). It seems he was once upon a time the presiding deity of Singanam puri which is about 80 km from Chithakoor. One day he rode on his war steed and reached Chithakoor. He liked the pleasant environment of Chithakoor. He tied his horse near the water source of the village and went in to the village, knocked the doors of rich people and told them, "I have decided to stay near your water source. Please build a hut for me." When they refused to believe it seems he told, "Tomorrow, you go to the water source. You will find my steed there." At the strike of morn the entire village rushed to the water source and saw the statue of the horse. Then they realized that the man who came and woke them up was indeed Ayyanar. They immediately started the job of building a hut and started collecting leaves and sticks for that purpose. It seems one stranger who was passing through the village that day, happened to take one of those sticks. It seems he lost his eye sight as soon as he came out of the village. He ran to the water source and told Ayyanar that it was his mistake. He promised to return 1000 sticks instead of the one stick he has taken. It seems he regained his eye sight. From then onwards, the villagers realized that their Ayyanar was a very serious God and would punish them if they do a mistake. Even to this day he is the court of last resort to all the villagers of Chithakoor. Whenever they have a problem regarding another person they go to the temple of Ayyanar, pay Rs 12.50 and lodge a complaint on either a Tuesday or Friday.. It seems their problem is immediately solved. Since people believe that the punishment of Ayyanar is terrible, they tell the truth in front of him, ask an apology if they have committed a mistake etc.

Several miraculous events are supposed to have happened the village. It seems once their water source went dry. All villagers went and complained to the Ayyanar. The Samiyadi (person in whom God has entered) entered in to a trance and asked them, "Do you want a rain or do you want your water source to be filled up?". It seems the villagers chose the second alternative. Next day morning their water source was full without a single drop of rain.

Chithakoor Ayyanar it seems is very particular about his dues. It seems one day, he appeared in the dream of a rich man and asked him, "Why have not the given me bath with the orange which was given by a devotee?". Next day the rich man rushed to the temple located the orange and got the sacrificial bath done.

The Ayyanar statue at this place has a whip in his hand. He is surrounded by Pooranam and Pushkalam, who are his consorts. On his right side there is a temple for Big Karuppu and Small Karuppu and surrounding the temple are Adambur Kali, Sannasi, Sidhi Vinayaga, Anjaneya, Valli etc. It seems initially Ayyanar was housed in a thatched shed. One day he appeared in the dream of a villager and wanted him to build a tiled temple for him. This was immediately carried out. The temple festival is on Chithra Pournami day. Ten days before the festival Ayyanar is taken to his original village Singanampuri.

Ezhai Katha Amman of Vellalur Nadu

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

The chozhas used to maintain armies in several places in their country to protect their kingdom. One such group was called Ambalakara and who were stationed in Vellalur Nadu near Sivagangai and their job was to protect the kingdom from the sea robbers. The chiefs of these castes were eleven in number and they were called "Karaikararkal", The Ezhai Katha Amman (Goddess who protected the poor) belonged to this caste.

In Vellalur about 900 years ago lived two sisters. The elder one though married did not have any children. The younger sister had about 8 children. The elder sister loved these children, and fondled all of them. The younger sister became jealous because of that. Other people told her that all her children will desert her and go with her elder sister. One day, when the elder sister came in search of the kids, the younger sister locked all her kids in the Chicken cage and told her sister that they were not there. The elder sister who happened to see the children in the cage, then said, "If they are not there, then they would not be there..". After she went back the younger sister found that all her kids had turned in to stone. When her neighbours saw this they advised the younger sister to go and approach the elder sister. The kind hearted elder sister then brought back to life all the kids. This elder sister was well known for helping poor people. After her death, her clan members started worshipping her as Goddess. The festival of her temple starts on the last Tuesday of Avani or first Tuesday of Purattasi. And would continue for fifteen days. Seven small girls are selected on the first day of the festival and have to live in the temple for fifteen days. On the fifteenth day these children carry pots of milk to the goddess on the fifteenth day.

People believe that praying this Goddess for anything connected with children would be answered positively. People believe that prayers done on Tuesdays and Fridays are more effective. This temple is ten km away on the Melur Sivagangai road. On Tuesdays and Fridays temple would be open from 9 am to 2 Pm.

Ezhilur Chelliamman temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Ezhikur meaning pretty village is near Thiruthuraiipoondi. There is a famous saptha risheeswarar temple in the village. On the temple's north side is a Chelliamman temple. It seems a near by Jamindar became greatly sick and he prayed Chelliamman. She appeared in his dream and requested him to build a temple for her and she will cure him. The

Goddess was located deep in the forest area where no vehicles could go. The king then made a human chain from his place to the temple and everything that was needed to build the temple was passed on 6 km from one person's hand to the next person. People round this place believe that she can cure any disease. On the second Tuesday in the month of Panguni there is a great festival here. The blood of all goats sacrificed during the festival is stored in a mud pot and for 18 days, it never gets spoiled.

People believe that if they can worship for four continued full moon days in this temple all their wishes would be realised.

The place is 6 km from Thiruthuraipoondi on the road to Kalappal.

The temple remains open from 9 am to 11 am and between 5 pm to 7 pm.

Gowri vallavar of Padamathur

By

P.R.Ramachander

There was a small country called Sethu seemai in the present Ramanathapuram district. This was ruled by two brothers called Udaya natha thevar and Gowri vallavar about 200 years back, the white men of east India Company were troubling them often. Once from Madurai their army was marching towards Sethu Seemai. There was a war between the brothers and white men in Kannambur. The brothers won. After this these kings stayed there it self along with the queens. They spent the time by hunting in the nearby forest. This place was called Padamathur. The brothers liked this place and often came to Padamathur. Unfortunately Gowri vallavar fell in love and maintained her in Kannambur itself. The local people did not like this. So they decided to kill Gowri vallavar. But after great fight, Gowri vallavar escaped and started riding towards Padamathur. But his horse was killed on the way by the spears tied on palms. Belittled Gowri vallavar killed himself with a spear. At that time his lover came there. Seeing her crying and thinking about her future, Gowri vallavar killed her with the same spear. His Charioteer was Azhagappan who belonged to the Dalit caste. He also committed suicide. His brother his wife and his sister also committed suicide at the same spot.

Due to this all the people of Sethu Seemai were sad. Gowri Vallavar appeared in the dream of one of the elders and told him, "I have not gone any where. Please build a temple for me at the spot where I died. I would look after all of you and cure your diseases." In another man's dream Veer Kali appeared and requested him to build a horse for her. Immediately the people of Padamathur built a temple for Gowri vallavar. People believed that his lover has taken the form of Veera kali and accommodated her also in the temple. They built a huge horse of thirty feet height before the temple. Facing east on a horse along with a turban sits Gowri Vallavar. BY his side is his loved in the form of being killed by a spear. Outside the sanctum, there is a mound. People call it as Kottai Nachiyar, the wife of Gowri Vallavar. In between the gigantic horse is the statue of Veera kali. Out side the temple there is statue for Azhagappan, There is also a statue for Pathinettam Kruppan in this temple. Azhagappan is considered as trusted assistant to Gowri Vallavan and the front god to him. Before asking anything to main God, Azhagappan should be consulted first

For the royal family here Gowri vallavar was born, their family deity is Gowri Vallavar. They first come and ask Azhagappan when they should meet vallavar and on that day ask Vallavar when their problems would be solved. There are two medicinal trees in the temple compound. They are Malai Vembu and Vilvam. When a sick person comes to the temple, the priest finds out the proper medicines by chants and gives the leaf from the concerned tree. On Fridays and Tuesdays, there is a huge rush to the temple

On the 18th day of Adi (July-August) there is a festival for Vallavar. Cocks are sacrificed after burning them to Azhagappan. Sheep are also sacrificed. The festival continues for another 7 days.

Hosur Kottai Mariamman

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Hosur is a town situated in Tamil Nadu near the Karnataka border.. In the twelfth century this town was ruled by a king called Tirubhavana malla Poorvadi Raja Shiva Pada Sekara Perumal. He built a mudfort in the present Ram Nagar area of Hosur. Even before that the tribals of that area were worshipping one ant hill as their Goddess..At that time a Bosala dynasty called Ramanatha conquered Hosur. At this time the king wanted to build a temple for his worship inside the fort. The family of that king were suffering from several diseases. The tribals brought to his notice their anthill temple. By worshipping that Goddess all the illness in his family vanished. The king made that anthill as his family's goddess and built a temple for her. He called her as "Kottai Mariamman" (Fort Mariamman) he also repaired the Rama and shiva temples near the temple. After several years of his death Hosur was conquered by Tipu Sulthan..He abducted and employed a British engineer called Hamilton to build a fort for him in the place where the mud fort was there.. He built a rock fort in that place. Hosur was conquered by the British from Tipu Sultan. The collector of Hosur Mr. Pratt took up his residence inside this fort and without the knowledge of British Government he built a fabulous house inside the fort in the model of Kenilworth castle. Mr Pratt was dismissed and Mr Walter Eliot who

was appointed as the collector took up his residence in that house along with his wife. Both of them found the worship to the Kottai Mariamman temple very noisy and Mrs Eliot berated the devotees. Soon she was affected by small pox.. MrEliot consulted the locals who advised him to worship the Mariamman inside the fort. She was immediately cured and Eliots became devotees of the temple. They also presented two big pillars inscribed with an elephant to the temple. Outside the Mariamman temple there is a grove of Peepul trees and neem trees. The Statues of Ganesa and serpents have been consecrated there. People also believe that an invisible river flows below the Mariamman temple. Devotees believe that by worshipping the Goddess they would get quickly married. They also believe that barren women would get children by worshipping the Goddess. There is big three day festival in the temple in the month of Chithirai.. All tuesdays and Fridays of Adi month and eighteenth day of Adi are festival days in the temple. People say that There are eight security goddesses around this temple to protect Kottai Mariamman. The temple is about a km from the city Bus stand of Hosur. And it would be open between 5 Am to 11 Am and between 6 Pm to 8 Pm.

Idamalai Mahalinga Maya Karuppu of Vatthalakundu

By

P.R.Ramachander

Vathalakundu is a small town in Dindukkal district. This temple is situated there. But this Maya Karuppu originally came from a tribal village called Ettur kotta kudi of Theni district. Though the people worshipped this god there, they did not do it properly. So Maya Karuppu started troubling them. So they made a basket with cane and put Maya Karuppu and his 21 assistant Gods including Chinna Karuppu, Munnodi Karuppu, Kazhu udayan, Kanavay Karuppu, Alathikkari etc and floated the basket in the river. When it reached Kattakaman Patti, it was seen by a Brahmin, who took it home. That night, he heard jingling sound of anklets and Maya Karuppu told him that they were Gods who drink blood of Animals and so he should be restored to the mountain. Next day the Brahmin took Karuppu and placed him in a mountain near the river. He gave all the assistant Gods to along with the cane box to the Back ward caste people of old Vattalakundu. Since the Maya Karuppu chose the mountain, he was called Idamalai Mahalinga Maya Karuppu. On the mountain there is only a wall which is worshipped as Maya Karuppu. However they have drawn a picture of the Karuppu. The assistant Gods Also have small walls by his side. Only Chinna Karuppar has a statue.

The Kalari festival being held in the month of July-august is the most important festival for Idamalai Karuppu. In the first Friday of Adi month, all the villagers assemble before Idamalai Karuppu temple and ask his permission to conduct the festival. If the lizard from left side of the temple makes sound then, that year no festival is held. But if the lizard on the right side makes sound, immediate preparations for a great festival are started. Next Friday the entire village and all the houses in it are cleaned up and offer Pongal to the God in a new pot. That evening 21 Chamiyadis representing all the Gods who came floating in the box, go to the river where this box was found. Before them all the prayer needs like bells pots etc are taken out from the village house where they are kept and carried on head. After the bells pots etc are washed the concerned God enters the 21 Chamiyadis. People fall at their feet and ask questions. All questions are answered. After keeping the bell and other things in the temple that days festival comes to an end. On the next Friday around 5 in the evening , all the statues are taken out , anointed with oil and then worshipped. After the worship, the statues are again kept in the box and then the box locked. That night again the 21 chamiyadis are called. Only the Chamiyadi of Chinna karuppu stands on a five feet long sickle held by four or five people . Then all of them start towards ida malai. As soon as they reach ida malai, pongal is prepared in three pots. ,Later they call Maya Karuppu and ask him different questions. At some Maya Karuppu tells the people that he is hungry. The sacrifice of goats starts then. The blood of all these goats is drunk by the Chamiyadi of Maya Karuppu. At the dawn when this procedure is over Maya Karuppu tells them that he will take care of their interests. Afterwards there would be a great feast using the meat of the goats sacrificed. One prayer at this temple is to pat rupees twenty one and ask Maya Karuppu to take revenge on a particular person. People also pray for children and curing of diseases.

Inampuliyyur Sabari vara Mariamman temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Inamnpuiliyur village is near Puliyyur near Trichy town of Tamil Nadu. It seems several hundred years back, the cow herds and goat hers of the village noticed that a particular place of the forests was avoided for grazing both by the goats as well as cows..One day they all joined together and when they searched , they found a statue of Mariyamman lying there. When they informed the villagers about it, they decided to build a temple for that Nariyamman in the spot she was found. Slowly the villages realized the power of the Goddess and a fairly big temple was built in that place. The Goddess is in the sitting pose and is facing the east. She has a very peaceful face and the devotees who go worried there return with great peace in their mind.. On the left of the Mariamman Sannidhi is the temple for Karuppannaswami. Daily only a ghee lamp is showed to the Goddess ,But on the first day of Tamil as well as English montha , Fridays of Aadi month, full moon and new moon days, special pooja and Abhisheka are offered to the Goddess,Sivarathri is celebrated in a grand

scale. After the worship on day Chundal made of THattai Payaru is distributed. In the month of Chithirai (april –may) , there is a festival in the temple for three days. On the second day Pongal is offered to the Goddess and Mavilakku (A lamp on rice powder mixture) is observed. In the evening of the second day devotees carry milk pots, walk over burning fire and so on when the Goddess comes out to see her people. On the third day, she is given bath in turmeric water. Devotees believe that they would get children if they attend the third day celebration..

The temple trees are Banyan and Peepul tree , both of which are several centuries old. People desiring children hand baby cradles on the Peepul tree. Next to the temple is a structure called Amma Mandapam . Here the people getting b pox diseases are brought and are given the sacred water from the temple . It seems they get cured very fast..

The temple is open between 6 am to 8 Am and 5 PM to 8 PM. From Chathiram bus stand of Trichy town buses go to Puliur and from there this temple is about one km away.

Irulappan-Pathala Pechi of Srivilliputhur

By

P.R.Ramachander

This famous temple is near Thirumukkulam of Srivilliputhur town of Tamil Nadu. It seems three dacoits called Irulappan, Mayandi and Veerabhadran used to enter this village daily and commit robberies in the village. There are two stories about the origin of the temple for them in the village.

I. The villagers requested Goddess Parvathi to help them and she assured that she would solve the problem. Next day when the robbers were coming she was lying on her road as a pregnant woman who was in late stages of pregnancy. When they requested to give her way, she told, "I am not able to get up and so you can go round me. They agreed but the lady was growing at a fast rate preventing them from going to the village. The robbers understood her divinity saluted her and asked for her pardon. They assured her that they will no more steal. The goddess made them as a part of her. That lady in the form of pregnant woman was worshipped as Patala Pechi and by her side and the three robbers were worshipped as the power of lord Shiva.

II. It seems there was a deep well in the place where the present temple is there. It seems some bad elements attacked a pregnant woman who came to take water from the well and threw her inside the well. Irulappan and friends, who came to hunt there fought with the bad spirits and saved the pregnant woman. That lady wanted them to save the village also and lay own on their way. Since they were not able to cross her, they also sat there.

It seems during this time a black magician came from Kerala, stayed in Chaturagiri Mountain near by and wanted to take Pechiyamman and Irulappan in two pots by his magical powers. It seems Irulappaswami told about this to one of his devotees in a dream. He also told that the magician will suffer a lot. That year was a very dry year with no rains but it seems torrential and a terrible rain lashed at the place where the magician was doing pooja and the pots were swept away. The magician understanding the power of Irulappan ran away from there.

The patala Pechi who is about 6 feet tall is in the form of a pregnant woman lying on the floor. Behind her in a stage are the heads of Irulappan, Veerabhadran and Mayandi. There is no roof to this temple. It seems Pechiyamman has not agreed to have one. On the wall to the temple, there are 18 lamps. They are considered as assistant Gods. First worship is offered to Irulappan and others and then Patala Pechi is worshipped. In the shed outside the temple, there is a statue of Irulappan riding on a horse.

Normally devotees of such temples belong to one caste or even one clan. But this temple has devotees belonging to nineteen castes including Brahmins. On Tuesdays and Fridays, there is heavy rush in Patala Pechi temple. Except for the annual Shiva Rathri, there are no festivals in this temple.

On the day before Shiva Rathri at midnight the priests of temple enter the temple. No body except the drummers who are strictly confined to a circle and are not allowed any where near the temple. And the priests sacrifice a two month old sheep, mix its blood with pongal and throw it in the four directions in side the temple. It is believed that Pechiyamman takes the pongal. If it falls down on earth, the priests would conclude that Pechiyamman has gone from there. Then they bury the head of the sheep just outside the temple and give the body to a particular caste.

Then on Shiva Rathri day there is a great celebration with worship, anointing and giving of general feasts. Nineteen oracles representing the nineteen castes get in to a trance and tell answers to all questions asked to them. This goes on for seven days.

Devotees believe that Patala Pechi would cure all diseases they keep a lime fruit on the body of Pechi, worship it. Later by drinking the juice of the lime fruit, they believe that their ailments would be completely cured.

There is another peculiar custom at this temple. They keep a big ghee lamp and show a Ghee applied bottom of a pot to this flame. A black paste forms at the bottom of the pot. This is taken and put in tins and distributed. This is called "Mai kutti Marundu." People believe that when going on an important job, if we apply a dot with "Mi kutti Marundu" on their forehead, the job will succeed. This medicine cannot be got as a routine and would be given by the priests according to the wish of God.

Kadaipillai Ayyanar of Melur

By

P.R.Ramachander

Melur is a small village near Sri Rangam. People say that this temple is a very old. It seems once upon a time, a bird called Kadai Kuruvi (?) used to take bath in river Cauvery and sit on mound near by. Some villagers who noticed this went near the mound to investigate. To their surprise, they found a box near the mound. In side the box was an Ayyanar Statue in the yogic pose. They consecrated the statue in their village. Since the God was found out by Kadai Kuruvi, they named the Ayyanar as Kadaipillai Ayyanar.

This was the time when Kallanai (Grand Anicut) was yet to be built. Kari kal Chozha who was the king at that time was passing through this village for finding out a proper place to build a dam. He was followed by many people riding in horses and elephants. It seems when they were crossing the temple of Ayyanar, all the elephants and horses lied down on the floor and refused to move. Ayyanar entered one of the soldiers. He told the king, "I like your horses and elephants. If you give some of them to me, I would solve the problem". The king agreed and all his horses and elephants began to walk.

After going back to his capital, the king arranged to build a gigantic elephant statue in front of the temple and three very big horse statues behind the temple. These statues are still there.

Another strange thing also happened at this time. A man called Chivandhiyandi konar from Sri Rangam used to bring his cattle to graze near the temple. One day Ayyanar met him in a human form and asked him to daily offer milk anointment to him. Konar refused. In one hit Ayyanar killed Konar. That day he appeared in the dream of the wife of Konar and told her, "Your husband disobeyed my orders. So I have decided to keep him with me. I want you and your descendants to be priests at my temple." They obeyed and till today the priests of the temple are from Konar caste (Yadavs of Tamil Nadu). Ayyanar sits in side the sanctum in yogic pose. Below him there is a Ganesa statue. On both sides of the sanctum there are guards. Outside the gigantic elephant stand and behind the temple are the three horses. By the side of Ayyanar are Manavala Mamuni, Ekambara Nadhar, Kamakshi Amman, Katha Parimanachami, Chivandhiyandi Konar, Madhurai Veeran and Periyannachami. Opposite Ayyanar statue there is Karuppanna Chami. His eyes are made a peculiar stone. Wherever we stand, it appears as if he is staring at us. In this temple the worship is to Ayyanar and not Ganesa as is the custom in other temples. The statue of Chivandhiyandi Konar also gets worshipped.

There is a three day Sivarathri festival in the month of Masi (February-March) Vegetarian worship is offered to Ayyanar .However Goat , cock and pig are sacrificed to please Karuppanna chami. For Karuppanna chami, the festival does not take place every year. After every festival, The God is asked when he wants the next festival. The chamiyadi replies on behalf of Karuppanna chami.

In the sanctum besides the Uthsava statues of Ayyanar his queens Poornambikai and Pushkalambikai stand.

People routinely pray Ayyanar for early marriage and children. It seems he fulfills their wishes. It seems that once there was a big flood in river Cauvery. While neighboring villages raised their banks, Melur people only prayed their God. To the surprise of every one, while all other villages were damaged, water did not enter Melur village. People had an immediate thanks giving festival.

Kadambagudi Ulagammal

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kadambagudi is ten km from Thondi of Ramanatha puram district. Ulagammal of that place is not a statue/idol but a trident.

Once king Sethupathi was returning from a hunting expedition. Then he saw a trident and a lemon fruit floating in the sea. The king asked his assistant to get it from the sea. Though he failed 2 times, in the third time he was successful. The king did not want to take the trident home but he simply made it stand in the mud near Kadambagudi.

Later on the people came to know that this trident was Ulagammal who was worshipped by Dalits in a place called Uppur. Some people in Uppur were told in their dreams that she has established herself in Kadambagudi. The people decided to respect the action of Ulagammal and along with families would visit her in Kadambagudi along with family in the month of Avani (August-September) The people of Kadambagudi brought a Pathinettampadi Karuppan from the next village and made him as security to Ulagammal. The Chamiyadi for both Ulagammal and Pathinettampadi Karuppan are Dalits of the village. Some higher caste people who were engaged in making pots for preparing pongal for Ulagammal , were offended by this. So they did some magical rites so that Ulagammal will enter them and they would be Chamiyadis. They made the magicians tie Ulagammal. Troubled by magic Ulagammal destroyed the roof of her temple and went away through that

hole. She killed the magicians, put their guts as garland and started going round holding their heads in her mouth. She cursed the man who brought the magician that they and all the members of their family would stutter. This is found to be true even today. From this time no body lock the temple of Ulagammal. It is always open. She also wanted that her roof should be made of palm leaf. So now though they have built a temple for her, the roof for the trident (Ulagammal) is made of palm leaves only.

In the month of Avani (August-September) there is a ten day festival for Ulagammal. As soon as the festival starts, the trident is brought and kept in her temple. The priest after blind folding himself, takes out a snake from the pot and leaves it in her temple. What is strange is no body is able to see the serpent in the hands of the priest. Now instead of a pot, they put the serpent in a wooden box kept at the temple. On the eighth day the Chamiyadis of Ulagammal and Karuppan go jumping and dancing to the sea. Here they take three times dip in the sea. After the third dip, the people drag them to the sea shore. This is because once the Chamiyadis were swept by the sea after the third dip. They return at night around 3 Am. A pit of burning fire is kept ready. They enter the pit and come out. People ask them questions of the welfare of the village and themselves and the Chamiyadis answer them. With this ends the eighth day festivities. On the ninth day pongal is prepared in forty pots and offered to Ulagammal. A part of it is made in to small balls and thrown to the lame ghosts (Nondi piasu). It seems, if this is not done, the Chamiyadis are troubled by the ghosts. It seems once a pregnant woman hid behind a tree and was trying to find out where this balls offered to lame ghosts go. She had a miscarriage and died at that spot.

On tenth day two goats are sacrificed to Ulagammal and Karuppan. The Chamiyadis drink the blood of the goats which are sacrificed. The Chamiyadi of Ulagammal tears open the stomach of the goat, and wears its gut and dances in memory of the incident narrated earlier.

Ulagammal it seems saves the life of the husbands of the village woman. She also fulfils the desires of all the villagers.

Kadayur Vellaimmal Koil

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Vellaimmal who was extremely white was born in a rich family of "Porul thantha Muzhukkathar kula", who belonged to the Kongu Velalar caste. Her rich parents were not able to find a suitable groom for her. At that time a labourer called Kangeyan came to the village for Adhikarumapuram to herd to look after the cattle belonging to the village. Seeing that he was very handsome and honest, the parents of Vellaimmal wanted to make him as their son in law. Kangeyan was agreeable to the marriage provided his parents consented for the match. The parents of Vellaimmal approached the parents of Kangeyan and they were agreeable for the marriage. At that time Kangeyan who was poor demanded some land for himself so that he can till the land and live. This was also agreed to. Kangeyan married Vellaimmal and continued to live in her house. They had three sons. By this time the parents of Vellaimmal died. So her brothers, who did not want to give her any share of the property one day took Kangeyan to the forest and killed him and spread the news that he was missing. At that time Vellaimmal was in the family way. Her brothers drove her away along with her sons saying that, she bore that child to somebody else and her virtue was in doubt. When she was walking along with her three sons in a lonely forest, the Sardar of the place came driving on a horse in that path. Though Vellaimmal tried to hide herself in a bush, he found her out. When he came to know about the story of Vellaimmal, he sent word to her brothers. They insisted that Vellaimmal was bearing the child of someone else after the death of her husband Kangeyan. Sardar insisted that it was only a false story. Then the brothers laid down a test of virtue of Vellaimmal. They told that she should bring water in an unbaked mud pot from the river, sprinkle it on the mud horse of Kadyeswarar temple. Then the mud horse should shiver. Then she should sprinkle the water on the Dead wood meant for hanging people and that should sprout leaves. The Sardar said this test was very harsh and Vellaimmal need not undergo these tests. But to prove that she was virtuous and that her brothers were telling a lie, Vellaimmal agreed to undergo the test. Without any difficulty she brought water in an unbaked mud pot, sprinkled water on the mud horse and made it shiver. Then she sprinkled the water on the dead tree and made it sprout with leaves. The people of the village and the Sardar drove away her brothers and gave all her father's property to her. She delivered one more son and lived for a long time. The people of the village considered as Goddess and after her death installed a statue in the Kadaeswarar temple. The clan of her four sons consider her as their clan goddess and maintain her statue in the kadaeswarar temple. Her story is also painted on the walls of that temple. People facing any type of family problems come and worship her and get rid of their problems. All her clan members bring their children to this temple for the ear boring ceremony. Kadayur is 6 km away from Kangeyam on Kangeyam Coimbatore road. The temple is open from 5.30 Am to 7 PM. The famous Tamil cinema actor Shiva Kumar considers Vellaimmal as his family God.

Kadha Maravar Kali of Keezhkathi

By
P.R.Ramachander

Kezhkathi is a very small village six km from Aranthangi of Pudukottai district. Once upon a time two brothers called China Maravar and Periya Maravar lived in this village. After the offering of meat during the festival to Karuppar, they used to share the meat equally. But during one festival, Chinna Maravar took more share saying that Periya Maravar had only a small family. When it happened in the next ear, the wife of Periya Maravar taunted him saying, "I won't serve you food. Let the village and temple give you food." Dejected Periya Maravar left the village and reached a far off forest. When he slept there, he was woken up by a small girl, who told him, "Don't bother, I will help you". Immediately he vanished. Periya Maravar thought that it was a dream and slept further. When he woke up, he found statue of Kali by his side. He took that statute and reached back his village. His wife received him properly and started treating him well. Periya Maravar consecrated the statue in the village. Suddenly the village started facing lot of problems. The villagers suspected that it was due to the newly installed temple. A magician advised them to install a Adaikkalam Katha Ayyanar temple near by. They did it and afterwards, Kali looked after them well. Since she was brought by periya Maravar, the kali was called Kadha Maravar kali or Katham periyal.

From the beginning her statue was made of mud. Every year the village will make two new idols. People as prayer would offer more. All old statues are removed and kept in the back side. The new ones are installed during the festival in the month of Adi (July-August) or Avani (August-September). Some how for a very long time festival has not taken place in the village.

The main offering to the Kali is offering of a sari. These Saris received are not sold or given to any body. They are bundled up and put in the hall behind the temple. Since the temple does not have a roof, these Saris get spoiled.

Another practice in the village is that Women do not do circling round the temple. Another prayer is to keep some money in the lap of Kali and take it back. This money is kept in the house safely. People believe this will protect their wealth. After one year that money is given to the temple and new money taken.

By the side of Kai, there is a Karuppu and near by is the Adaikkalam Katha Ayyanar. Temple. By his side many more sub gods like Chinna Karuppu, Periya Karuppu and 12 different Ayyanars. By their side there is another statue of Kadha Maravar Kali.

On Tuesdays and Fridays, there is tremendous rush at the temple. On Fridays of Adi month, special buses run to this temple.

Kaja Pettai Cholapuri amman

By
P.R.Ramachander

In Trichy town, there was an army camp. Soldiers in that camp used to worship a goddess inside their regiment. When it was decided to shift the regiment they gave the goddess to two of their civilian friends, one of whom was a Hindu and another was a Jain. Since the goddess came from Cholapuri (Sholapur?), they made her as Cholapuri amman and consecrated her in a thatched hut. Slowly people around the temple became her great devotees and it has now grown to a temple with a big tower facing east. As soon as you enter the temple through the tower, on the left you see Pillayar and on the right Bala Muruga (Subrahmanya as a boy). The Goddess is in a sitting position. There is also a Hanuman temple inside this main temple. Apart from this devotees have also consecrated Nagar besides the Nava Grahas along with their consorts.

Since people of all communities and castes visit her, you can gauge the popularity of the Goddess. Navarathri and Adi pooram is celebrated in a grand way in the temple. During Adi pooram day, the Goddess is decorated with bangles which are later distributed to the devotees.

The annual festival lasts for six days. On the third day of festival, people take Kavadi before the Amman. Eleven people who dress like Kali also carry fire Kavadi.

Her devotees believe if they approach the Goddess she would remove all her problems. The temple is 2 km away from Trichy main bus stand in a locality called Kaja pettai. The temple is open between 5.30 Am to 9 Am and 5.30 Pm to 9 Pm.

Kaliyamman of Devi Pattanam

By
P.R.Ramachander

There are two small mountains called Chathura giri and Podigai Malai in western Ghats. It is believed large number of sages and Sidhas in these mountains. One of the mountain here was called Thiruvilangam Malai and there it seems once the sages and Sidhas were worshipping Goddess Adhi Parasakthi and she came before them having a pot on her head and standing on one leg and later she stayed in that place as a lamp pillar.

In that place there were two Jamins called chethur and Sivagiri. Once a severe famine came there and people were suffering. It seems the goddess appeared in the dream of those Jamindars and asked them to build a small dam and leave water to both jamins. The north side rivulet was named as deviyaru and the southern river was named as Shanmukha Nadi. The water problem was solved but when due to huge rain a flood came there, the Goddess who was being worshipped in the form of lamp pillar floated and reached a forest area called Thattangulam. The people guessed that the pillar was divine and started worshipping it. Some cow herds and goat herds who used to graze their animals there used to take rest near that pillar. They started a play of worshipping that pillar. They used sand as food offering called pongal, bricks as coconuts and wooden fallen sticks as incense. They also used to whistle or hum to play music to the goddess. The goddess was pleased with their play and appeared before them. Then the play music they were playing became a great music and echoed everywhere. The entire place was filled with food offering to goddess. All the villagers rushed to that place, That night Goddess appeared in the dream of Jamindars and ordered them to build a temple for her there near the banyan tree bush in Thattangulam. The goddess also told them an eagle will fly and show them the correct place. As per her direction a temple was built at that place. She is called as Thanga malai kaliyamman, Thamarai kulam kaliyammam, Thattangulam Kaliyamman etc. Later on this place where the goddess came and sat was named as Devi pattanam. In the month of June-July (Aani) a big festival is celebrated in this temple. All round the temple you can see plenty and prosperity. The first girl of the family in these parts are usually named as Kaliyammal.

Apart from the very pretty smiling idol of the goddess there are sub temples for Karuppachami and Chinna Kaliyamman. Banyan tree is the temple tree (sthalavruksha). It is believed that if we worship the goddess we can get rid of problems due to loan as well as that due to planets. This goddess also blesses devotees for getting good family life and children. Every full moon day is a minor festival day in this temple.

The temple is 6 km from Sivagiri which is in the road connecting Tenkasi and Madurai towns. You can go by bus to this place from Rajapalayam town. The temple is open from 5 am to 7 pm.

Kali theertha Ayya of Aayakaranpulam

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is located in Aayakaranpulam which is near Vedaranyam. It seems one upon a time, the Brahmin priests of Vedaranyam temple were searching for sweet water to Abhisheka to Lord Vedaranyeswarar. They found it in a spring after a great search in a nearby forest. They daily went there and brought the sweet water from the spring for anointing their God. Five days after the new Moon (Amavasya) they saw a strange sight there. They saw a glowing circle descend from the sky to the earth near the spring. When it came near the earth, they also heard sounds of some musical instruments. This was seen only by a few of them. When they told it to others, they lost their eye sight. Because of this they went after one month to the same spot and saw the same sight. They planted a brick at the spot where the light has descended and started worshipping it. In the next month, when the light came again, the Brahmin priests sacrificed a goat to that God. As soon as the goat was sacrificed the light did not go back. The Brahmins did pooja and Abhishekam at the same spot for 48 days. At that time, the land below the brick, split open and slowly the split widened. Later a stone started emerging out of the split. From then on the ball of light stopped coming from the sky.

People started worshipping the stone as "Kali Theertha Ayya", meaning, "Sir who solved our sufferings." From then all people who have problems come here and request the God to solve their problems. People believe that their problems are getting solved. People also believe that the stone which emerged out from the split is still growing. A brick is placed before the stone and all worship is done to the brick. But for that there are no idols for "Kali theertha Ayya."

Opposite him there is Thoonnil Karuppar and by the side is Veerappa Sámi. Also statues of Samban and Pethan statues are there by the side of the main temple.

Devotees say, that "if my problem is solved, I would give a horse to Kali Thee than (Kali theertha Ayya)." Others offer other animals like goat, dog etc. Because of this there are several statues of animals especially horses, before the temple. Some people, who get sick, pray that they will offer their statue to the temples. Hundreds of such statues can also be found in the temple.

Some times, when people get serious incurable diseases, they are given in adoption to Ayya. Most of them get cured. On Friday and Tuesday, there is a huge crowd at the temple. The chamiyadi enters in to a trance and answers questions of devotees on these days. On the New Year's Day there is a festival at this temple. Ayya is a vegetarian but every week some other animal is offered to Veerappachami.

Though the place where the Brahmin priests read Veda for 48 days is in a sandy patch, the place where they read Vedas is filled with red soil.

Kanaka (kaanaka) Nachiar temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Once upon a time in Vellore , the area starting from the northern part of Andhra Pradesh to the Sholingur , where a river named Deva river(ponnai river) flows became very dry without any rain..All the fields and forest had a burnt look,Then the people of that area prayed their goddess Kanaka Nachiar .That night the goddess took the form of a young woman, and sitting on the river shore, she saw the river and sky. Torrential rain started and there was a huge flood in the river.The people got scared.At that time the Goddess sat on a leaf floating on the river and lead the river..In the middle there was a rock preventing the water flow. She melted the rock and created a huge hole there and divided the river in to three branches anlead the river and made it join the Pampai river at Kanchipuram..

When she was returning one Rakshasa started following her with a view to trouble her.She took him to a top of a hill and made a hole on its top and buried him there. Unfortunately the goddess also started getting drowned and her steed pulled her up and what we see is only her face.This temple is in Andhra border(in Chithur district) and is called Kangunth.Some people do call her as Kaanaka (forest) nachiar.

Through out the year pilgrims visit this temple,On tuedays and Fridays and on full moon and no moon days, Very large number of people do come .The eighteenth day of aadi month is celebrated as a great festival..On that day people worship Pithrus at this temple,Devotees believe that if they pray the Goddess for Children, they would be definitely blessed.

The goddess gives what is asked by devotees within 18 days.and so the crowd keeps on increasing.This temple is the border of Tamil Nadu vellore and Andhra Kuppam.. The tedmple is on the banks of Palar river in Perumpallam village. Buses are available from Vaniambadi and Thiruppathur(near Jolarpet Junction.)

The temple is open from 6 am to 12 noon and 3 pm to 7 PM,The phone number of the temple is **0944301295**

Kannaki Durgai of Nallu thevan patti

By

P.R.Ramachander

The story of Kannagi whose husband was unjustly hanged by the king of Madurai is very famous. After this Kannagi burnt Madhurai and started walking towards Chera Nadu. It seems a sage called Tholandi Pathan who was doing penance in a mountain near Nallu thevan patti stopped her and made her the goddess Kannagi Durgai. They agreed. They were asked to. This village is 2 km distant from Usilam patti of Madurai district. A girl of Aariyapatti village which is 10 km from this village came and settled down in this village after marriage. Once, her daughter was sleeping in a cradle. Instead of asking the village Goddess Kannaki Durgai to guard the child she asked Kalyani Karuppu, the goddess of her village to guard the child. Her father –in –law became enraged and hummed. He was a man of God. So the child died in the cradle itself. The child's mother went and asked explanation from Kalayani Karuppu. Her relations also appealed to that God. The enraged Kalyani Karuppu came in to Nallu Thevan patti and started killing people of the village. The local villagers engaged a magician. He wanted to imprison Kalyani Karuppu in a pot. When he was trying to do that Kalyani Karuppu went and appealed to Poongodi Ayyanar. He told him, “after imprisoning you in the pot the magician will ask whether you are Kalyani Karuppu .You tell him that you are not Kalyani but Yeliyani. For making you tell the truth he will search for his cane. At that time, you escape from the pot.” Kalyani Karuppu did accordingly and started destroying Nallu thevan patti. Then the villagers of this village appealed to Tholandi Pathan. He then showed them Kannagi Durgai and asked them to take her. Then the Kannaki Durgai which was a statue asked them, “offer me pongal in 1000 pots, sacrifice 100 buffalos and seven women who are pregnant. Then I will get down from this mountain. They agreed to the condition and took her to their village. As soon as they got in to the plain, the goddess asked the villagers to keep her there. She started her fight from there it self. She started killing the people of Ariyapatti indiscriminately. Then the villagers decided to have a treaty. They decided that these villagers would not inter marry. They should not talk to each other and should not go to even death of relation in each others village. After this Kalyani Karuppu and Kannaki Durgai cooled a bit. Even to this day part of the treaty is being offered by these villagers. There is no inter marriage between these villagers. At that time the people of Nallu Thevan Patti compelled the husband of the lady who was the cause of all these problems, back to her village. The husband refused. From then on, this family lives there but is boycotted socially by other villagers. Nowadays slight improvement is there in mutual relations.

Also they were not able to offer seven pregnant women as sacrifice to Kannaki Durgai. She is still waiting in their border

and protecting them.

For removing black magic, and to get children people pray to Kannaki Durgai. On Tuesdays and Fridays, there is huge rush in this temple. On the 15th of Purattasi, there is a festival in this temple. People do not go and stand in front of the goddess as they are afraid she will demand for the sacrifice promised by their ancestors.

Kannathal (kannudaya Nayagi) of Nattarasan Kottai

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Nattarasan Kottai is a small town in the Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu, which is 51 km from the city of Madhurai. There is a famous temple of Kannudaya Nayagi (also called as Kannathal), 2 km out of Nattarasan Kottai.

Once upon a time the butter- milk merchants of Nattarasan Kottai were not able to go beyond Pirandikulam which is a near by village in the forest. Some power upturned their butter milk pots. The merchants wanted to approach the king to solve this problem. That day Goddess Kannathal appeared in their dream and told them that she was lying buried beneath the mud in Pirandikulam. Under the orders of the king while the people were digging in the village for finding out the idol, the spade of a devotee hit his own eye and it started bleeding. When in spite of it he continued, he could recover the statue and as soon as it was taken out, his eye injury was cured. Because of that they started calling her "Kannathal(mother of the eye)". The statue has eight hands holds a small drum (udukkai) and trident in her hand and her left leg is seen stamping an Asura called Mahisha. When the people(Cowherds) were trying to transport the statue, they were not able to take it beyond a point and there it was consecrated facing east in a village called Nayanmarkulam. The Nattu Kottai Chettians(Nagarathars) were directed by the Goddess to offer sacrifice and Kaliyattam. They assembled, made themselves in two groups called Kallar and Kanakku Pillais and sacrificed 1499sheep.No blood came out of any of them. But when the 1500th sheep was sacrificed, blood came out and the statue started moving and it halted in a place called Virakandan Urani in the south of the Shiva temple and the statue faced north. Initially the Pujas were performed by people belonging to the Bangle sellers (Valai chetty community) and then the Goddess ordered through voice from the sky that she should be worshipped by people belonging to the Uvachiar community (The poet Kambar belonged to this community and his tomb is situated near this temple). Till today only people belonging to this community are priests in this temple.

A kaliyattam festival is celebrated in this temple once in every twelve years, which coincides in the year when Mahamaham is celebrated in Kumbakonam. This festival is celebrated for 22 days. There is an annual festival lasting for 10 days in the month of Vaikasi(May-june). On 7th day the idol is taken out in a golden chariot and on 8th day the deity is taken out in a silver chariot wearing a Nagarathar ornament called "Kuzhutu Uru". On 9th day she is taken out in a wooden chariot. On the 10th day a rabbit is sacrificed to please her. On the pongal day, pongal is offered to her by the Nagarathar community.

The temple is open from 7.30 Am to 12.30 PM and from 4 PM to 8.30 Pm. The goddess is decorated in a golden dress during the first Friday of every month and this dress is contributed by Nagarathar community in Singapore.

People with eye problems, people wanting a child, people who are not able to get married worship at this temple and get their wishes fulfilled. After fulfilling their wishes, the devotees arrange for Abhishekam of the Amman and offer her new cloths. Maa vilakku is also offered to the Goddess.

Karaikadu Pachai Vaazhi amman temple, Cuddalore

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Karaikadu is a locality near Cuddalore town. It seems Goddess parvathi once did thapas addressed to pataleeswara(Shiva). All her friends and helps were sitting around her. When Lord Shiva came it seems she told that she is going to stay there as "Pachai Vaazhi amman(God who takes care of greens) along with her friends, God shiva agreed and goddess Pachai vaazhi amman started staying here along with her 18 friends and guards,

Initially it was a small temple. This area came under control of Nawabs and their minister wanted to remove this temple. It seems the local people objected saying that she is the goddess taking care of them. The minister said that next day he will come along with his people and remove this temple. The people were agitated and all night they stood guard to the temple. Next day a servant of minister came and told that the minister was attacked by small pox and he will not remove the temple.

The people went and met him and he was in a pitiable condition and requested them to pray the Goddess for him. The people went back and started doing Abhisheka with water and soon the minister got cured. He helped them to build a big temple there. There is a belief locally that Queen Victoria hearing about it had come and visited the temple and helped them for development of the temple. It seems she gave an order that no one should occupy that land

As soon as we enter the temple there is a Bali peeds and Nandi. If we turn left there is a mud statue of Vaazh muni, Laada muni, Veda muni, Muthu muni, Karumuni, Chemmuni, kumbha mnuni and on its left side Thapa Rishi, Irupallaa. Maaya veera, Madhurai veera, anthara veera, Thanthira veeran and Ananda veeran, Then there are separate sub temples to Idumban and Pavadaai Rayan.

Then in the Maha there are made of earth, Pachai Vaazhi amman, Pillayar, Muruka, Parvathi and Paramashiva are there

Then there is a big sanctum where Pachai vaazhi amman with four hands, Holding in her right hand a staff and in her left hand the Vel. She is in a standing position

On her right are Ardha Nareeswara and Maha Vishnu and on her left are Vengai malayamman, evvengayamman, Karu Vengayamman, Sita Lakshmi amman, Kathayi amman., Muthu kumara swami, Muthu kumathiyappan, Subrahmanya, C Valliu, Deivanai, Pachai vengayamman, Aghora vengayamman, Thiru malai kanniyamman, Pookurathiyamman, Mudi velMudiyazhaki amman in a row. We can go inside the sanctum and do worship

Outside you have small temples dedicated to Dakshayaniyamman, Durgai amman, Dandayudha pani and Muthu Kumara swami

In the chithirai (april-may) a ten day festival is held in the temple. On the tenth day there is a marriage of Lord Subrahmanya with valli and devayanai

Lads and lasses who find it difficult to get married join in the marriage function, Tie a turmeric on yellow thread, keep it in the feet of Goddess and pray that once they get married they will present her with a golden Thali, They then take the yellow thread home and do worship to it. It is seen that most of them get married soon, They come to the temple and offer Golden Thali to the Goddess

The cultivators in the area believe that it is only due to Pachai Vazhi Amman's blessing they ar

Karkuvel Kayyanar Temple.

By

P.R.Ramachander

This Kayyanar temple is in a village which is near the famous Thiruchendur temple of Tamil Nadu. The Karkuvel Kayyanar's temple is on the west side of the village. It seems once upon a time this area was ruled by a pandya king called Athi veera rana soora Pandyan. He had a minister called Kayyanar. It is believed he was the human form of the son of Shiva and Vishnu.

In this kingdom there was a special mango tree near a pond. This mango tree yielded only one mango fruit per year. It was believed that eating that fruit would give divine powers. So the king protected the mango tree with several security guards. In that village there lived a pious widow. She used to daily take water for her use daily morning. One day the mango which had fallen in the previous night went in to her water pot and she carried it home without knowing. Next day morning the security guards started searching for the fruit. When they tried to enter the widow's house, Kayyanar told them not to enter there. The king refused his request and the security found the divine mango in the widow's house. When the king wanted to give her death punishment and again Kayyanar told about the innocence of the widow. Then the widow got angry and cursed that the entire village including the king's country should burn. Only Kayyanar escaped. He entered a Karkuva tree and became one with it.

After several centuries, the village was rebuilt. Whenever the load bearing bulls tried to cross the Karkuva tree, it seems they fell down. So the villagers decided to cut the roots of the tree. When they tried to cut it, blood started oozing from the tree. Then a voice from the tree told them That Kayyanar was living in the tree. So the villagers built a temple for him and started calling the God Karkuvel Kayyanar. He sits in the temple along with his wives Poornam and Porkamalam (compare Poorna and Pushkala, the wives of Sastha). There are several minor Gods in the temple such as Udhiramadan, Malayamman, Ivar Raja, Vanniya Raja, Vannichi, Pechiyamman etc.

It seems when the temple was being built a thief stole the ornaments of the wives of Kayyanar. He immediately became blind. He was also beheaded by Vanniya Raja. All the local people were informed about this by Kayyanar. The villagers pleaded for giving life to the thief. Kayyanar made him alive. Later, this thief also became a God in this temple called- Robber God. Due to this incident no theft takes place in the boundaries of the village even today.

On the last three days of the month of Karthigai (November-December) a great festival called "The cutting of robber" festival takes place at this temple. First two days, there is ritual worship of Kayyanar who is vegetarian God. The story of Ayyanar is sung as Vilu Pattu (bow music) during this festival. After this the priests of the fifteen subsidiary Gods go to the festival shops and bring whatever they like from there. Three hands full of whatever is taken are given to the musicians. Later one red coconut is kept on a rope symbolizing Kayyanar and is cut. It seems previously the coconut was cut kept on the head of Samiyadi of Kayyanar. Then all the villagers prepare Pongal in front of the Kayyanar temple.

Next day lots of animals are sacrificed for pleasing the subsidiary gods of the temple.

There is also a festival on the Panguni Uthram day (March-April)

Wednesdays and Saturdays are considered special days at the temple. People wanting children pray Pechiamman of the temple and people pray Vanniya Raja to get rid of the effects of black magic

Karumandapam Ilamkattu Mariyamman

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

It seems there was a Mariyamman in a village called Ilamkadu without any place to stay..Shhe appealed to her elder sister "Samayapuram Mariyamman" .She advised her."Many people going on a pilgrimage to Pazhani would pass through your village. yOu join them.When you reach the town of Uchi pillayar koil, Kali and Karuppachami would prevent you from going further..You stay there." As her her advice Ilamkattu Mariyamman came and was stopped near in a place called "Karumandapam" in Trichy..Initially she was staying in a hut constructed by the people. Now it is a permanent temple

The temple faces the east. As soon as we enter, you can see Karupannachami sitting on a horse on your left side. On the western side you would find Pillayar, Nagar and on the north the idol of Vishnu Durga. The Mariyamman has a peaceful look in the month of Vaikasi there is a ten day festival in this temple. Apart from several celebrations, walking on fire is also observed.

Aadsi pooram is celebrated in a grand scale in this temple. That day the Goddess is decorated with One Lakh bangles. These would be later distributed among ladies

On Fridays The goddess is offered Rose flower garlands and devotees pray for early marriage and child birth. As soon as their desires are fulfilled, they offer a Sari to the Goddess. People going on Pilgrimage to Pazhani by this way, take rest at this temple.

Karumathur Moonu sami koil

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is located in a village called Karumathur which is about 20 km from Madurai. The story of the origin of this temple clearly shows that the village people of Tamil Nadu were influenced by the Hindu concepts of Trinity and wanted to adopt certain aspects of it.

It seems after the Kali age started Mayan (Lord Vishnu), Viruman (Lord Brahma), Sivan and Pechi (Goddess Parvathi) were unhappy on the top of Himalayas and decided to shift to the South India. But Mayan was doing Thapas at that time and informed the others that he would join them later. The other Gods reached the bank of Vaigai river near Madurai. They reached a place called Kachirayapu and did not find the place suitable. Viruman decided to go to Kerala to search for suitable place. Pechi was impatient and started further search. Near Nagamalai Pechi turned herself in to an old hag and requested the people there to take her to a safe place. It seems she also created a golden Palanquin to carry her. When they entered Karumathur forest, Pechi thought that it was suitable. She asked the people to leave her there. That night when she was doing her worship with bells and fan fare, a local Devil God called Pey Kaman came there and told that it was his place and she should immediately vacate the place. Pey Kaman came twice with livers of animals as garland. Though Pechi turned them in to flower garlands, she was scared. Pechi enlisted to the help of Sivan. But Sivan being a vegetarian God was not able to do anything. So Pechi summoned Mayan who was doing Thapas in Himalayas. Even he was not able to do anything. So she searched and found out Viruman in Kerala. Viruman who was happy there refused to come. Pechi told him that, if he comes to Karumargur, he would be offered six times worship a day. Attracted by that offer, Viruman came and fought with Pey Kaman. In the fight, the leg of Pey Kaman's horse was broken by Viruman. Disturbed by the fight, Chokka Nathar, Meenakshi and Subrahmanya came to make peace between Pey Kaman and Viruman. Lord Subrahmanya told that Viruman should travel in Pey Kaman's horse and travel for a day. The area that he covers would be his. Similarly Pey Kaman should travel in Viruman's horse and whatever area that he covers would be his. They did and Viruman could cover only a small area due to the broken leg of the horse of Pey Kaman. Pechi got very angry and said that in that area if any one worships Lord Subrahmanya, he would be destroyed. So even today, in Karumathur area Lord Subrahmanya is not worshipped.

Since Viruman was strongest was them and was needed there Pechi imprisoned and chained him in a hole in the earth. He was told that during the last Friday of Adi month (July-august) a special worship would be done to him.

Since Siva was a Vegetarian God he has a separate temple in Keezh kuil kudi and the other three gods a common temple in Karumathur. On the festival day (last Friday of Adi) for Viruman three sheep (black, white and multi coloured) would be sacrificed. Then their heads will be buried in soil. Then Pongal is prepared using the meat from the sheep. The priest of the temple throws three times that Pongal towards the sky to please the Gods. People say that whatever is thrown towards the sky never comes down. In the pit where Viruman was chained, there is a tall granite lamp post. When worship is done to Viruman, it seems that the lamp post shakes.

That same day at mid night A pregnant sheep is sacrificed to please Pechhiyamman. Three days before the festival, all pregnant women and ladies who have delivered recently leave the village and return only after the festival. That Pechi is also called Thilai Vana Pechi and Mai Kara Pechi.

It seems when a person was murdered and his baby son requested to give suitable punishment to the murdered. She took

the form of an old woman, went to the court and stood as an unshakable witness. Due to this that murdered was punished. So she is also called High Court Pechi.

Kanaka (kaanaka) Nachiar temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Once upon a time in Vellore , the area starting from the northern part of Andhara Pradesh to the Sholingur , where a river named Deva river(ponnai river) flows became very dry without any rain..All the fields and forest had a burnt look,Then the people of that area prayed their goddess Kanaka Nachiar. That night the goddess took the form of a young woman, and sitting on the river shore, she saw the river and sky. Torrential rain started and there was a huge flood in the river.The people got scared.At that time the Goddess sat on a leaf floating on the river and lead the river..In the middle there was a rock preventing the water flow. She melted the rock and created a huge hole there and divided the river in to three branches anlead the river and made it join the Pampai river at Kanchipuram..

When she was returning one Rakshasa started following her with a view to trouble her.She took him to a top of a hill and made a hole on its top and buried him there. Unfortunately the goddess also started getting drowned and her steed pulled her up and what we see is only her face.This temple is in Andhra border(in Chithur district) and is called Kanguinthu.Some people do call her as Kaanaka (forest) nachiar.

Through out the year pilgrims visit this temple,On tuedays and Fridays and on full moon and no moon days, Very large number of people do come .The eighteenth day of aadi month is celebrated as a great festival..On that day people worship Pithrus at this temple,Devotees believe that if they pray the Goddess for Children, they would be definitely blessed.

The goddess gives what is asked by devotees within 18 days.and so the crowd keeps on increasing.This temple is the border of Tamil Nadu vellore and Andhra Kuppam,. The tedmple is on the banks of Palar river in Perumpallam village. Buses are available from Vaniambadi and Thiruppathur(near Jolarpet Junction.)

The temple is open from 6 am to 12 noon and 3 pm to 7 PM,The phone number of the temple is **094430 19295**

Kattu Chelliamman Kovil

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

The Kattu Chelli Amman temple is situated in the middle of the forest below a Herb Pandal. It is believed that after Kaliamman killed Darukasura , the anger which she had at that time became a small baby. Feeling that this personification of anger is dangerous to the world Lord Shiva took her in to his body and made that baby as the part of his body. Kaliamman was enraged and there was a dance competition between Kaliamman and Lord Shiva. Kaliamman was defeated and the very sad Kaliamman went to the forest near a village called Chengarai which is near Gunmmidi poondit town and started living there in the deep forest in the shade of trees. She also hid her form within an ant hill. I could find two stories connecting this Goddess with the British army people who used to camp there.

1. Once the British soldiers were chasing a deer in the forest. It went and hid itself in a bush in the forest,. The soldiers tried to clear the bush but they encountered a black Cobra there which went and hid itself in an anthill near by .The Soldiers then started breaking the anthill and saw an idol of the Goddess there. At that time the Goddess entered in to a lady and she told those soldiers that the goddess was Chelliamman. She was greatly allergic to sound produced by mortar and pestle, crying of babies and that is why she was living in the forest.

2.Once a british captain who was camping near the forest sawed and bright light coming out from a forest bush at night. When he enquired about it with the chief of Village , he told him that a Goddess was residing there.. That night when he was deep asleep he heard the jingling of anklets and could smell the burning of camphor. Disturbed by this that captain came out of his tent. After some time when he tried to reenter his tent a black Cobra came to attack him but some upkown unseeable power hit the cobra on its head and it died, Next day the villagers told him that he was Saved by Kattu Chelliamman only They took him to the forest , prepared pongal and worshipped the Goddess. But the captain was not able believe in that Goddess nor could he believe that She was wandering at night. On the way his hose threw him down ,his body was covered with sweat and there was great pain in his chest. The villagers sprinkled the holy water of the temple on his face , made him hold the lemon brought from the temple and put some pongal offered to the Goddess in his mouth .The captain became normal and went next day and worshipped the Goddess .

The fame of Kattu Chelliamman spread and the people wanted to build a temple for her in the nearby village . She through a lady told them that she is allergic to sound of mortar and the sound of crying of babies. They could bring her up

to a pond called Alangulam but since they were not able to fulfill her conditions Chelliamman went back to her anthill. Once again the villagers went and asked her permission to build a temple for her. They slowly started removing the mud from the anthill and she rose from there as an idol with a flame crown, Soola, skull on the top hands, The other two hands signifying calling them arose from the anthill. There were two Ganesa idols with her. The temple is open from 6 Am to 6 Pm. Nobody is allowed to worship her after 6 PM Since she first appeared on a Thursday, Thursdays are important days at the temple and large number of devotees come to see her on that day. On the first date of Chithirai month (April 15th or 16th), Vadai garland is offered to the Goddess. Barren couple visit the temple 9 or 11 times in that many weeks and are blessed with children. Most of these children are called Chellan, Chelli, Chellayi etc Those who are not able to get married tie a cloth on the nearby tree. People who want to silence their enemies put a lock at the temple. Ladies also present bangles in 11 or 51 or 101 numbers to get themselves married.

Keerangudi kudavarasi Amman

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Keerangudi is a small Village/hamlet in Kollidam Taluk in Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu State, India. It comes under Sathiyakudi Panchayath. It is located 72 KM towards North from District head quarters Nagapattinam. 235 KM from State capital Chennai. ON the way from this village KOnnangattu padugai is the Kudavarasi temple. Her devotees believe that Kudavarasi Amman is Renuka Devi, wife of saint Jamadagni and mother of God Parasurama. When Renuka devi was slain by her son under the orders of her father and later given back her life, Renuka it seems sat on the banks of Kollidam rived and did great penance addressing Goddess Durga, The Goddess appeared before her and asked her to stay there itself proving the greatness of virtuous woman. Renuka devi stayed there for several eons as Kudavarasi. Amman. Slowly her temple got destroyed and covered with mud. Over her idol it seems there was an ant hill. They were not knowing that a cow l was letting out all her milk on the ant hill. When they returned their master got very angry and beat them black and blue. Next day the master was surprised to see that all the vessels in his house was full of milk,. The master went to the boys and begged for their pardon. Then one of those looking at them, got the goddess in him and told, "I am goddess Kudavarasi who has come here. Your cow gave milk only to me and quenched my thirst. Go to the ant hill and see." They found the idol of Kudavarasi at the ant hill and consecrated that idol there it

self and started worshipping her. Since floods in the river was common, they later shifted the temple nearer to the village. Many people tried to build a temple for her but failed. But later one Ramrutha Sivacharyar who collected money for that travelling to several villages succeeded in erecting a small temple. The full moon day (Pournami) of Masi and Chithrai month is celebrated with great fanfare in this temple. In the month of Asi Goddess Kudavarasi would go round all nearby villages and each village would worship her in a grand manner. In each village the Goddess would visit each individual home and they would offer her a part of the harvested produce from their fields. They believe that by doing so wealth will flow in to their homes.

Keezh Kaathi Maravar Kali

By

P.R.Ramachander

The village of Keezh kaathi is near Aranthangi of Pudukootai district. Once upon a time there were two brothers called Periya Maravar and Chinna Maravar. There was only a Karuppar temple in the village. It was practice for the brothers to share equally the meat of the goat sacrificed at the temple. Once lesser meat was given to Periya Maravar because he had a smaller family. So during the next annual festival Periya

The festival of the temple takes place in July-September. During every festival two idols made of Mud is made by the villagers. Many other devotees also bring Mud idols. Till next festival these idols are worshipped. At the festival, the old statues are kept in the back. Since during temple festival there were problems, for the past 70 years no festival has taken place.

One of the major prayers for the Kali is offering her Saris. These Saris are not given to any body either for money or as a gift. All the saris are bundled and put behind the idols. Since Kali temple does not have roof the saris deteriorate. No women/ladies go round the Kali temple.

Ladies, who want children, tear a piece of their Sari and tie it on a tree in front of the Kali. Once they get children they replace the sari piece by wooden cradle.

It is a practice to bring money, keep it on the lap of Kali and then take it back. Such money is kept carefully at home. People believe that once such money is present in their homes, they will never suffer for money. After one year that money is given to the Money box of the temple.

New money is placed on her lap and taken back.

On the right of the Kali there is a Karuppar. There is also a temple for Adaikalam katha Ayyanar and his two wives. There is also another temple for Big Karuppar and Sall Karuppar. There are also a temple for 12 Ayyanars.

People who seek justice from Kali come to the temple pay Rs 51 to the temple and tell their complaint. The Kurathi Amman who is a subsidiary goddess in the temple asks for explanation. There are also temples Murukku Samban and Muneeswaran.

The temple is crowded on Mondays and Fridays.

Kokkuvetti Karuppannachami of Thiruengomalai

By

P.R.Ramachander

This Karuppanachmi temple is situated in Thiruengomalai of Musiri Taluk of Trichy district.

Kokkuvetti Karuppanachami was earlier in a village in the Podhigai Mountain. He was a very troublesome god and use to punish people mercilessly. The villagers got fed up and put the God in a palm leaf box and put the box in the Cauvery River. After a long travel, it reached Thiruengomalai. When the local villagers saw a box, they opened it. They were surprised to see a statue and simply consecrated in the river bank. It seems one day evening two sisters called Kanjamma and Thirumalai went to take bath in the river. Karuppannachami fell in love with them and started troubling them in a very ferocious form. They ran home, became very sick and died the next day. After this incident people had more fear than devotion towards Karuppanachami. So in the day time they used the statue as a counter weight in the manual pump for pumping water. As soon as people went home, Karuppannachami reached the river bank. Possibly since he was hungry he started to kill cranes (kokku) which were in the river bank. So the people decided to treat Karuppannachami with more respect and built a small temple for him. When they were about to built the roof, one man came in trance and told them not to build the roof as Karuppannachami did not like that. Since Karuppannachami had killed several cranes, people started calling him, "Kokkuvetti Karuppannachami". Since Karuppannachami fell in love with Kanjamma and Thirumalai, and their statues have also been kept in the temple. There are also statues of Kunnimarathan, Madhurai Veeran and a Ganesa inside the temple. During festivals special worship is done to these ladies.

All round Kokkuvetti Karuppannachami, several tridents have been planted. There are several typed requests and complaints tied to these tridents. People believe that once they complain in the court of Karuppannachami, he will settle the matter or give severe punishment. If the complainant wants death penalty to the criminal, he has also to bring a cock and pierce it on the trident along with his complaint.

There are no special festivals for Karuppannachami. Every Sunday animals are sacrificed to him in large numbers. Many people appeal for child birth and marriage. There is also a belief that he takes care of vehicles. So all vehicles by the way are stopped and the drivers salute Karuppannachami.

Kolli Pavai of Kolli Malai

Kolli Pavai

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Kolli Malai is a small mountain range near Namakkal of Tamil Nadu. Literally it means "Mountain of death". There is a famous Shiva temple on the top of Kollimalai called "arapaleswarar temple". There are lot of references to this mountain in ancient Tamil Literature. There is a belief that this place was connected to the Great philanthropist Val Vil Ori in the ancient times. On the way to this temple is a village called Poonthottam (Flower garden). Four km from this village is the mysterious Kolli Pavai temple. Literally the name means "Maiden of death". She is not in a temple but in a hut with palm leaf roof. This hut does not have any doors also. She has a very enigmatic smile that attracts all. This idol also has eight legs and is also called Ettu Kal amman (Goddess with eight legs). It seems there are references to this Goddess in Sipadhikaram, one of the ancient Tamil epic. The idol is always covered with sandal paste. The anointing of the idol by sandal paste is done by her priest behind a curtain.

It is believed that in Kolli Malai large number of herbs and medicines grow and lot more are buried in caves and pits in the mountains. It is believed that Many saints and Sidhas are doing penance on the top of the mountain.. The famous Saint Gorakh Nath is supposed to have his cave on this mountain. These saints requested The Asura architect Maya to make a idol which would attract all bad people and kill them and they called the idol, "The maid of death." As soon as that idol gets the scent of bad people or asuras, it seems she attracts them by her smile and kills them. But the priest of the temple says that Kolli Pavai is the Goddess providing protection to all the villagers in that area. He anoints the idol with sandal paste and then runs and jumps all round her shouting and also dances. Then he shows the camphor light to the Kolli Pavai, wears in a trance a wooden sandal with three inch long nails and sharp iron pieces and answers all the questions posed by the devotees of the Goddess. After getting rid of the trance, he gives Prasada of sacred ash to all her devotees.

People believed that The Sidhas who come to collect rare medicinal herbs from the mountain, first take permission from Kolli Pavai, go and collect the herbs, bring them back and take permission of Kolli Pavai to use them. They believed that the full effect of the herbs collected could be experienced only if they follow this method.

Some information about this Goddess is available in

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.183396041713821.53997.165705026816265&type=3>

Kodungayoor Nagathamman

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Once Kodungayoor was a prosperous farming village. Near a big pond there several snakes were living. Near that place there was a banyan tree. The villages consecrated three Nagas under a thatched roof below that banyan tree and they were worshipped as the Gods of the village. The village slowly became a part of a city. Then about 50 years back the villagers erected a permanent structure and along with the three Nagas, they also consecrated an Amman. She was called as Nagathamman. The temple was called "Sri Devi Nagathamman temple". There is a very big pond before the temple. There is a separate temple for Lord Subrahmanya along with Valli and Devayanai in the temple complex.

In the sanctum sanctorum the Goddess appears before an umbrella of serpent holding in her right hand a sword and a hand drum and Soola, pot of Kumkum in her left hand. On the platform where Amman is consecrated there is a head of Amman also.

Those who light a ghee lamp and worship her are blessed with children, long life, health, removal of problems due to loan, removal of problem of stoppage of education etc. People pray her for removal of Naga dosha in their horoscope. On the right side of the sanctum below the Banyan tree the Nagas who were consecrated originally are also there. The specialty of Nagas is that each of them are seen holding a Shiva linga. There are also temples of Ganesa and Gajalakshmi behind it.

Rahu kala pooja are performed on all Fridays and Tuesdays. Special poojas are done on full moon days and sankada hara chaturthi days. Vaikasi visakham, Naga chaturthi and Adi pooram are also celebrated. There is a special worship of lamps on the first Friday of the month. On Chithra pournami day there is a festival of pots of milk.

From Kannadasan Nagar bus stop, Madras-118, the temple is 2 km away. It is in the 7th street of Ever ready colony. On normal days temple is open between 7.30 am to 10.30 am and 5.30 pm to 8 pm. On special days and Fridays it is open from 7.30 am to 12 noon and 3 pm to 8 pm.

Kondrayandi Ayyanar

By

P.R.Ramachander

Once upon a time a particular caste of people lived in side a fort is Sri Vaikundam of Thirunel veli district. They were particular that their women should never come out of the fort. But once the fort caught fire and many people along with Families fled the fort. But those who stayed in side were able to put out the fire. Later they did not allow those who fled from the fort during the fire. So all those who were expelled from the fort went in search of a place to stay long with their God Ayyanar. They reached a village called Maravan Kulam which is near Sri Villiputhur of the Virudunagar district. That area was a forest of Pandanus flowers and Konrai flowers (Ixora). They consecrated Ayyanar below a Konrai tree by the side of a big pond in the forest. They also built huts for their stay and settled down there. From then on the Ayyanar was called Konraiyanandi Ayyanar.

Since it was a forest area, there were lot of wild animals like deer, rabbit etc around the temple. Some hunters always hunted there. Once a group of hunters caught hold of a cow of the village and cut off its head. They kept the head in front of Ayyanar. When they were taking out the meat, the owners of the cow came there. Seeing the meat they suspected the hunters. But Ayyanar turned the head of the cow to a head of a deer. Thus the hunters were saved. From then on the hunters also started worshipping this Ayyanar.

The Ayyanar is with his wives Poorana kalai and Por Kodi. The statute of the king and queen of that area who dug the pond in that area are also worshipped in the temple. Coconut and rice are offered during worship to the king and the queen. Several gods like Lada Sanyasi, Seven maidens, Pathinettam padi karuppar, Rakachi Amman, Pechi Amman are also consecrated in the temple. Two Boothas stand on both sides of Ayyanar to guard him.

The festival for Ayyanar is on Shiva Rathri day. That night Abhisheka is done four times. In the morning there is a feast. In the month of Aani (June -July) The Ayyanar is bathed by three types of fruits viz Mango, Jack, and Banana. Between April-June the hunters also conduct a special worship of this Ayyanar. There is a Nelli (gooseberry plant) in the temple. Omen worship this tree and pray for children on Sundays. When the child is born, if it is a male, he is called Konraiyanandi and if it is a girl she is called Pechiyamma.

Outside the temple Kaladi stands as a security guard below a Tamarind tree. Since the people who brought the Ayyanar were vegetarians, only Vegetarian food is offered to the Ayyanar. For the other security guards some times animals are sacrificed.

On Wednesdays and Saturdays the temple would be open from morning to evening. On other days it is open from 10 Am to 12 noon.

Koodamudayar of Kalayar kurichi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kalayarkurichi is a village which is 20 km from Sivakasi of Virudhunagar district. The Arjuna River and Sarawathi River merge in to one near this village. These start from the Chaturagiri Mountain. There was a group of people who were rearing cattle on the Chaturagiri Mountain. Lord Shiva wanted to play with them. So he took the form of a calf and drank the milk of all cows. The people were wonderstruck. So they decided to watch as to what is happening. They saw this strange calf and started chasing it. Lord Shiva hid in a pot of cooked rice. He then asked Varuna to create huge rains and flood. This pot floated in the flood and reached the Arjuna river of Kalayar kurichi. There it broke. Lord Shiva hid himself inside the mud there. During those times there was a village called Kovil patti very near to this spot. Yadava people who look after cows were more in that village. Once one man was leading his cows by the spot where Shiva was buried. Lord Shiva knocked his leg and he fell down. When next day also the same thing happened, that man told his friend Muthukaruppan Chettiar about it. Both of them dug at the place. First milk came flowing and then blood. So they immediately closed the place with a basket. After some time when they tried to open it, they found that a Shiva lingam has grown inside the Basket. God entered Chettiar's body and he told the villagers that that he is Koodalingam and should be worshipped. They went and told about this to the villagers of Kovil Patti. They did not believe Chettiar and his friend. Enraged by this Lord Shiva turned all the cows and calves of the village in to stone. The villagers rushed to the spot and asked pardon from the God. Then God again made the cows and calves normal. The people then built a temple for Lord Shiva and called him as Koodamudayan. Muthu karuppan Chettiyar and his descendents became the priests of this temple.

After some years another group of people of Kovilpatti started troubling the people who built the temple. They drove them

out of the village and chased them. The Lord Shiva then made a path in the flooded river and these people reached the other shore. These people then built a temple for Koodamudayan at the spot where they reached the other shore of the river. Lord Shiva faces the east seeing the river. They also have an installed an Ayyanar along with Pushkala and poorna facing north. This Ayyanar is called Koodamudaya Ayyanar. Apart from this there are Verrabhadran, Chinnakaruppu, Periyakaruppu, Pechi, Rakachi, Ottai Karuppachami, Ladan, Sannasi, Kali, Durgai, Vettai aruppuchami and Agni Karuppuchami idols inside the temple.

Just at the entrance is the idol of Chethur Muthayya. He is the guardian God of this temple. There is an interesting story about him. This Muthayya was a Youngman living in Chethur a near by village. He fell in love with the queen of Chethur and kidnapped her. The king caught him, took him to Chaturagiri mountain and beheaded him. The ghost of Muthayya used to daily take the queen at night and bring her back in the morning. The king announced a reward of 300 gold coins to the one who imprisons the ghost. Muthu karuppan Chettiyar who was the priest of Koodamudayar temple promised the ghost the last worship of the temple every day. Muthaya agreed and then became a part of the temple. The king gave 300 gold coins to the Chettiar and sent some six soldiers to kill Chettiyar and bring back the money. Chettiar who knew magic made five of them to keep on uprooting the grass and made one of them go and inform the king. The king came and begged the pardon of Chettiyar. From that time, the first worship in Koodamudayar temple on Shiva Rathri is in the name of Chethur king.

People believe that by praying this God all their requests would be fulfilled. The festival is three days during Shiva Rathri. Animal sacrifices are done to the Karuppus. There is also festival for two days during Adi Amavasya. Similarly there is a festival in Vaikasi Visakham, once in every three years, People of the village who has migrated to different parts of Tamil Nadu, come in bullock carts and stay near the temple for a week. It seems about 500 carts come every year.

Kongalamman temple , Erode

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Kongu Nadu was an integral part of Tamil Nadu , which spread over the present day Erode and Coimbatore districts .The Tamil speaking people of Kongu Nadu seem to have a great culture of their own. Kongalamman is the guardian deity of Kongu Nadu and her temple is situated in the Erode town of Tamil Nadu .The wall writings on the temple indicate that it is a very ancient one .Most probably the temple was located in the Adhi Kongalamman temple in Anangur , which is a village near Erode town. It seems about 150 years back some thieves were trying to steal the idol of Kongalamman from Erode temple . When they reached Anangur , they heard a voice from the sky telling them that if she is stolen from there , they would face great danger. The thieves left the Goddess there itself and ran away,Next day the people of Anangur found the statue of Amman and built a temple for her there.The people of Erode then got made another idol and consecrated there in the Erode temple .So before the Chariot festival of the Erode temple , the Goddess Adhi Kongalamman at Anangur would be worshipped. People believe that Kongalamman would guide them in the day today administration of the village. It seems when a discussion was going on , in side the temple whether to have Kalingarayan Canal , The Goddess told them to build it. Kongalamman has eight hands and is believed to fulfill all the needs of her devotees. Even today , when water is being collected for the temples in Erode town, a part of it is first given to Kongalamman and the rest is taken to their respective temples. There is a Prathyangira Devi temple in side this temple with five temple trees. People with Sarpa Dosha come to this temple and by worshipping the Goddess get rid of their Dosha. , The temple also has mahishasura Mardini, Madurai Veeran, Karupaanna Chami, the saptha mathrikas , The Saptha Kanni and Pechi Amman temple inside it.The chariot festival of the temple is on the Month of Thai on the Poosam day. There is special worship of the temple during all Fridays in the moth of Aadi. The temple is open from 6 Am to 8 PM.

Koovakam koothandaar

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Koovagaam is a very small village very famous for its annual festival in which eunuchs and transgenders participate in a very huge way. Koovagam is a very small village without much activity. It has a very small temple made of stone . The presiding deity is Koothandavar .Translated in to simple English, it would mean, "The God of dance ". As soon as we enter the temple there is a small hall. After that is the sanctum sanctorum and there one swing would be hanging. On the swing is the head wearing a crown. With Vaishnavite Namam on his forehead, prominent Moustache and gnashing teeth which are like that of a lion .There are no other Gods in this temple. The local people offer once a day worship to this God. Few outsiders come to this temple to get rid of their disease. There are no monthly festivals at this temple . But there is a great festival on Chithra Pourmni day.

Koothandavar also known as Aravan was the son of Pandava Prince Arjuna and a princess of Nagas (serpents) called Ooloo. Before the start of the Mahabharatha war, he needed to sacrifice a perfect person so that the Pandavas would win the battle. The general preference was to sacrifice Aravan the son of Arjuna and it was decided that he would be sacrificed the next morning. He too agreed to this but with three conditions.

1. Since he was not married he wanted to get married and live with her for that night.

2. He wanted to see the Mahabharatha war with his own eyes.

3. He wanted to jump and dance in the battle.

Though the first condition was agreed to, no lady was prepared to marry him and become widow next day morning.

People believe that Lord Krishna transformed into Mohini (enchantress) and married him. Next day Aravan or Kootandavar was sacrificed. When he was sacrificed he cut tissues from 32 parts of his body and offered them to the Goddess Kali. Due to the request of Draupadi, goddess Kali gave one fourth of his power to Aravan and Aravan fought in the Bharatha war for eight days, jumping and dancing. But an Asura called Alambasura cut off his head by deceit. Then to fulfill his second condition, Krishna consecrated his head on a nearby rock and asked him to witness the war. Even the cut head of Aravan jumped and danced and killed several enemies.

At the end of the Mahabharatha war, the head of Aravan was given the status of God. God asked Garuda to put the head of Aravan in the Sarabhanga river. It floated in the river and via Thirupathi reached Thirukovalur and from there it started floating in the Pennai river. That country during that time was called Chandragiri. Aravan's head took a form of a child and was adopted by the local king. Then that child killed Koothasura who was the enemy of Chandragiri king and gave him the kingdom and again took the form of a head. When the king became sad that head assured him that it would come to the kingdom on all Chithra Pournami days and solve all their problems. He also told that Lord Krishna would take the form of a Transgender and marry him every year on that day. He also told that all this was made possible due to the grace of the God who is the enchanting dancer and so he would be called as God of dancers. He further told that since he was the son of The Naga maiden (Aravu means serpent), he would also be called Aravan. The place where Koothandavar decided to stay was called Koovakam (the home of the dancer.)

The Koothandavar festival is celebrated for eighteen days during Chithra Pournami. Large number of transgenders gather there and spend the first seventeen days wearing colourful dresses in dance and song. On the seventeenth day, they assume that they are The Mohini form of Lord Krishna and marry the Koothandavar wearing Mangala Suthra and bangles. On 18th day they wear white cut off their Mangala Sutra and break the bangles and return to their respective homes. This festival is repeated every year. They believe that by participating in the festival, they can lead one year of trouble free life.

The nearest towns to this temple are Vizhupuram (25 km) and Ulundurpet (15 km.)

Kottai Mariamman koil , Dindukkal

By
Sundararajan Ambiyer

Old year : 500 years old
Historical Name : Dindeeswaram
City : Dindigul
District : Dindigul
State : Tamil Nadu

Festival:-

Soon after the new moon day in the month of Masi, (February-March), on the fifth day, the festival flag would be hoisted for a 20 day celebration in the temple. The festival continues for 30 days also in some years.

Temple's Speciality:-

The bottom of the idol is deeply installed in this temple than in other places.

Opening Time:-

The temple is open from 6.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Address:-

Sri Kottai Mari Amman Temple, Dindigul – 624 001.

Phone:-

+91 451 2427267, 94444 02440

General Information:-

A post called Kamba Thadi made with copper is at the entrance of the shrine. Close to this are shrines for Lord Vinayaka on the south, Madurai Veeran and Navagrahas on the north, Muneeswara shrine on the rear south Karuppanasami, Kalliamman and Durga in the north

Prayers:-

Devotees pray for child boon. It is also believed that praying to Kottai Mariamman effectively relieves the devotees from sickness, small-pox, prolonged illness and disabilities.

Thanks giving:-

Devotees offer turmeric and salt at the foot of the post. Women perform a sacred abishek on the flag hoisting day hoping that the Goddess would be cooled down of Her anger and bless the people. Those seeking child boon carry fire pots. People blessed with the child carry the child in a cradle made of sugarcane and light flour lamps – Mavilakku. The crowd will be as high as 20 lakh during the festival days.

Greatness Of Temple:-

It is noteworthy that Dindigul district has all the Vasthu aspects to its advantage. It is also historically famous. The fort built three hundred years ago is still afresh and majestic. It is said that there was an underground passage to Palni which Tippu Sultan used many a time, according to history. The temple is behind this serene environment behind the fort., hence the Goddess is named Kottai Mariamman.

Mariamman graces in a sitting form with 8 hands. She holds snake, trident, skull and bell in the right hand, bow, a bowl and weapons on the left.

Temple History:-

During the 18th century, there was only a small peeta and the idol of the deity. The army men of Tippu Sultan built a small mutt and installed the idol, which today is the Kottai Mariamman and guardian deity of the people of Dindigul. There are three special entrances to the temple. The processions are arranged through the front entrance. Other entrances are close to the Fort. The temple celebrates a 20 day festival each year. KOTTAI MARI AMMAN THAYE CHARANAM!

Kottakudi –kurangani KOMBu thooki Ayyanar

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

(Based on article in Shakthi Vikatan October issue.)

This temple is situated in a village called Kurangani, which is 44 km from Theni, in the road going to Bodinayakkanoor and is the shore of Kottakudi river. There is an interesting story behind this temple. In a village called Kottakudi near Madurai, A young pretty girl went to the pond to bring water. She was seen there by the King of Poojayaru who fell in love with her. He sent word to her relatives that the girl should be entrusted to him. Since the king was already married and had a child, her relatives were not willing to do this and so that the entire village moved from there towards theni. But without informing them a young man went to the king's place and killed his child and joined back the villagers. Since he was expecting an attack from the king he went on telling them to walk quickly. The villagers became suspicious and got the truth out of that lad. But by that time the king's army had already surrounded them. Then the lad, whose name was Karuthalaimudayar, asked them to hide for safety behind a big rock, fought with the king's army and killed all of them. When the villagers requested Karuthalaimudayar, he refused them saying, "I have enjoyed sacrificing of human beings and so I cannot live with you." Later the villagers went to the spot and established a centre stone in that place in memory of that great hero. They also brought a hand full of mud and established a temple for their family God Called "Karkudai ayyanar." And they also named the place as Kottakudi, which was the name their original village. They started calling this Ayyanar as "Kombu thooki Ayyanar (Ayyanar of lifted horn)", possibly because daily in the noon worship at that temple, there is practice of blowing horns to summon the devotees. They also consecrated idols of Vanapechi, Nagammal and Changili Karuppan below a fig (athi) tree in the temple.

Barren couples believe that by tying a cradle on the fig tree, they would be blessed with babies. They also believe that if they take the lime fruit given in the temple after worship to their home, and add camphor and salt to its juice and spray that juice in their house, no evil spirit can do anything to them. Also they believe that by offering a dish made from rice, jiggery and shredded coconut to the God, All the civil and criminal cases troubling them would be settled.

Kurangani Muthu Malai Amman temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

(A great temple near Thoothukudi- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvzNyOwS4qc>) -

Kurangani can mean an ornament of monkeys. It can also mean the battalion of monkeys. This small village in near Thoothukudi town of Tamil nadu

It Seems while Ravana was kidnappig Sita, she dropped a pearl necklace when she was flying over this place .It seems Lord Hanuman found it and showed it to rqama(kurangu anI) whom he met at this place .Rama identified it and after wards Rama and sugrreeva agreed to search and later the monkey army (kurangu ani) marched from here,It is believed that Goddess Sita gave that pearl necklace to Hanuman as present during Rama pattabishekam,

Near the present day temple there is a huge banyan tree ,It is believed that Rama met Hanuman below that tree.,

There are other stories about the origin of this temple

Ancient times

A sage called Sathyama munivar was doing penance in the shores of THamravarni,The thapas (penance) was so intense that the heat of the thapas reached Kailasa .God shiva was at that time dancing and so sent Goddess Parvathi to enquire about the source of the heat,When she reached the place the hear produced pearl like eruptions all over her body. It seems sweat covered her forehead and it dropped in the fire,From that several deva maidens arose and all of them were shining because they were wearing pearl necklaces.After goddess went back they all went to take bath in river Thamra barni. While going for bathing they kept all their ornaments on the banks of the river.When they came back they saw that all their ornaments had merged in to a huge flame of light.They worshipped that light and went for pilgrimage.That light was waiting for some one

Modern times

Long long afterwards A toddy tapper called Panayadiyan was tapping for toddy on Palmyrah palms near the present temple.From the tree he saw some thing shining on the earth,He got down from the tree and thinking it is a treasure ,tried to go near the shining light.He cosed the light by the pot in his hand and went home.At night when he came he was not able to move the pot.That night the goddess appeared in his dream .She told that she was Muthumari amman and instructed him to do worship to her on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Panayadiyan told about this to the villagers, and stage was erected for the Goddess made of mud and thatched shed waxmade over that,Panayadiyan was appointed as the priest.,There was only two days in a worship in the intial days Later a huge temple was built over there and a stone idol was installed .The nadars s of that area became trustees to this temple,The morning and night worship was introduced.

It seems during invasion of Navabs this temple was about to be destroyed,He wanted to straighten the Thamra barni river and for that destroy the temple,Four brothers of the village prevented them and said the goddess was very powerful.Then that captain said."I will call her.Will she reply me" They said yes.When the captain called three times there was a thundering reply and the captain fainted and fell down.His horses also fell down.When the villagers sprayed the amman's theertha on his face he woke up.He also built two horses in front of the temple

The main goddess is called Muthu Malai Amman ,On its left side is the statue of Narayana Murthi

there are small temples with statues of Muppidiathi aman , Saptha Kanyakas , Parvathy amman , Brahma Saktrhu, Mariamman , Chandana Mariamman, Bhairavar and Veera BHadrar,

There is a separate temple for Periya swami.There is a story about it,It seems one day the Goddess came in dream of the trustees and the priest that her Body guard made of huge stone will come floating in the river .She ordered them to to build a seperatve temple for him .

There is a peculiar type of worship there.Daily one pot of water would be brought from thamrabarni river and kept in temple Narayana swami.In the noon priest will take the water to the temple of goddess,he will offer dhal kuzhambu and rice on palm leaf.later he will spray that pot of water in face of devotees and give Vibhuthi.Devotees believe that black magic will go away and mad people would be cured.

Festivals

The biggest festival in this temple is on the last Tuesday of month of aani (June-july). The goddess would be decorated with pure gold. Fifteen days before that, Maha Abishekam will take place to all Gods surrounding main God. At that time without fail eagle will go round and round on the sky. There is another small festival in month of thai (January- February)

The temple is kept open on all days between 5 AM to 1.30 PM and 5 PM to 8.30 PM

You can travel in the bus going to Thichendur from Thirunelveli and get down in a place called Then Thiruperai. The temple is 2 km from there

Kuisai Mutharamman temple of Kulashekarapattinam

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Kulashekara pattinam is located near Thiruchendhur of Tamil Nadu, and is 55 km from Thoothukudi. It seems there was a Swayambhu idol of Lord Shiva in the village and the Goddess appeared in the dream of a worker (king Kulashekara?) and requested him to get her an idol of her made through the priest who was coming from Kulisai and she also appeared in the dream of the priest and instructed him how she wants her idol made. The idol was installed along with the Swayambu Shiva Linga (Jnanamoortheswarar) facing north. But though it is a Shiva temple maximum importance is given to Goddess Mutharamman only. Navarathri is celebrated in a great manner in this temple. People believe inaugurating any venture during the festival with the blessings of the Goddess would lead it to great success. Lakhs of People assemble in the temple for attending the festival. Some people dress up like Kali after observing very strict penance for 41 days during Navarathri and worship the Goddess. They also can dress up like any other Gods they wish depending on what for they are praying. Rahu dosham is removed by dressing as Durgai, financial status improves if they dress up as Viswakarmeshwarar, Wealth accumulates if they dress up like Parvathi, Long life if they dress up as Muruga, sickness cured if they dress up like Krishna, Get power if they dress up as Mahishasura mardini, Get salvation by dressing up as Nataraja and Education improves if they dress up as Goddess Saraswathi. Apart from this an Adi Kodai festival for three days and the Chithirai festival is also celebrated.

The temple is open from 6.30 AM to 1 PM and 4 PM to 9 PM. On ordinary days and 5 AM to 9 PM on festival days.

Kurathi Amman of Anaivari village

By

P.R.Ramachander

Anaivari is a village which is 18 km from Pudukottai. Kurathi Amman has a temple in this village. There is an interesting story about this village, which goes back to the Ramayana. It seems when Sita was kidnapped by Ravana, Lakshmana and Rama went in search of her. Sage Valmiki who was in the forest accompanied them. They happened to come to Anaivari village. Somehow, sage Valmiki liked the village very much and decided to stay there. Rama and Lakshmana continued their search. Valmiki who did penance in the village, over time became a God to the village and settled there, the villagers started calling this God as Mayavar.

Kuravan is a nomadic tribe of Tamilnadu. They tell astrological predictions, sell knick knacks like needle etc. If their woman (called Kurathi) stays outside their camp for one night, they used to murder them. Once seven Kurathis along with their babies missed their way and stayed for a night in the forest near Anaivari. The men of their group murdered all the seven women along with their babies. It seems they appeared in the dream of a villager and told them, that if they consecrate them as Gods in the village and worship them, they would look after the village. The villagers agreed and consecrated their statue near Mayavar temple. They were called by the villagers as Kurathi Amman. After this one Kudukuduppai karan (a beggar who tell that he lives in the burial ground and foretells future of people accompanied by a drum in the morning) once stole the Thali (Mangalya Sutra) of a woman of the village. It seems immediately he became blind. People said that this was done by Kurathi Amman. He immediately came to her temple, kept the Thali at Kurathi Amman's feet and begged forgiveness. Kurathi Amman pardoned him and restored his sight. From that time no thief has come to the village. The villagers also appointed the Kudukuduppai Karan as their police man. They gave him some grain as compensation during harvest. Now Kudukuduppai karan does not do police duty in the village but some of them come during harvest to collect the grain. Even simple things like hair pin which falls in the streets are not touched by anybody. Since Kurathi Amman is their God, if at any time a Kuravan comes to the village he is treated

properly and given food. These seven Kurathi women stand on the left side of Mayavar. On his right side, Chinna Karuppar, Perriya Karuppar and Otha Mani Karuppar statues are there. A story is there about Otha Mani karuppar. It seems once some villagers, who went to an outside market town caught hold of a goat and cut it and were preparing to cook it. At that time the owner of the goat came there. Recognizing him the villagers put the meat of the goat in a box. When the owner wanted to see what is inside the box, they were forced to open it. But the colour of the goat had completely changed and the owner said sorry and went his way. Then Otha Mani Karuppar entered one of them and told, "I have saved you. So build a temple for me also." Thy built a temple for him near the existing temple of Kurathi Amman.

Another peculiarity of this village is that all statues of their God are made of Mud. When they break or get dilapidated, they build a new statue. This is done with a grand celebration. On all Mondays and Fridays, Kurathi Ammans are worshipped by preparing Pongal.

All girls of the village, who get married to an outside villagers, give three fifty rupees and seven measures (Marakkal) of paddy to the Kurathi Amman. This is given in a rope box. The paddy from this box is made in to rice and Pongal made out of it is offered to Kurathi Amman. A part of the pongal is given to the girl, to take it to her husband's home.

People of the village believe that orders of Mayavar are executed by Kurathi Ammans. There is a pond on the way to the temple. People who have complaints against any body else and take bath in this pond and go the temple of Kurathi Amman with wet cloths. They pay Rupees twelve and Paisa twenty five at the temple. They believe that Kurathi Amman would punish the guilty. If a man outside the village makes such complaints he should observe silence till he crosses the village boundary.

Kuzhumani Ooradachi Amman

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Kuzhumani is a small village 10 km from Trichy town of Tamil Nadu. This village got its name because One villager got a Shiva Linga while ploughing his land .Kozhu munai , is the "Corner of the plough. There are several village goddesses situated in this village,. The Vallam Thangi Amman, who is believed to prevent floods from the Uyyakondan river which flows near the villge, Kulanthalai Amman who is suppost to help people of this village by making it cool, and another Amman called Kollachi Amman. But the most important Goddess of the village is the Ooradachi Amman, who is believed to guard this village from evil spirits cand evil men. People of the village believe that , the head of the Goddess is hot like a flame of fire. The Goddess faces the northern direction. In the temple for her , there are also Kanni moola Ganapathi, Rajali Karuppu, Madurai

Veeran, Bommi, Kathavarayan Karuppu Chami and Panayadi Karuppu ,People believe that Panayadi Karuppu is the assistant of OOradachi Amman who is deputed by her whenever injustice lifts its head in the village.,He is supposed to be the special God of the merchants of the village.They believe that by worshipping him, their business becomes prosperous.People believe that Panayadi Karuppu travels at night on his white horse every night. People also report hearing the sound of hoofs of his horses at night..

Ooradachi Amman is the Kula deivam (clan goddess) of hundreds of the families belonging to this village. Daily they come and prepare Pongal and offer to her. There is a special worship for this Goddess during the new moon and the full moon days.. Ladies without children visit this temple on six consecutive full moon days and are suppose to become pregnant. On the third month of pregnancy they come offer bangles to the Goddess and distribute Prasada to the devotees , to show their gratefulness.

A few months back Kumbabhishekam of this temple was performed after several hundred years, The temple is open from 6AM to Noon and 5 PM to 7 PM.. There are town buses from Trichy to reach this village .

Madappuram Bhadrakali

By

P.R.Ramachander

Madappuram is a small village near Thiruppuvanam of Shivagangai district. It seems once when there was huge deluge; Madhurai Meenakshi Amman asked her consort Lord Shiva to show her the boundary of Madhurai He became a huge serpent and lay down in the water in a circular form. The place where the mouth of the snake touched its tail is the present

Madappuram. Later it seems once; Lord Shiva and Meenakshi came here for hunting. By the time they reached Madappuram, Meenakshi was terribly tired. So Lord Shiva asked her to take rest there and Asked Ayyanar to guard over her. Later it seems Shiva blessed that if any one takes bath in Vaigai River near this village, he would get more punyam than taking bath in Ganges itself. From that time Mother Meenakshi is staying in this village in the form of Bhadrakali. The Ayyanar who is with her is called Adaikkalam Ayyanar (Ayyanar who gives protection) . Main worship is of course to Bhadrakali. She stands there thirteen feet high guarded on both sides by two Boothas. A very gigantic horse stands raising its legs over the Bhadrakali. It seems one devotee prayer to her that he wanted to be with her always. Then Bhadrakali made him in to a horse and gave him a place behind her. She holds a trident and has a crown of fire. She likes lime fruit. The devotees offer her a lime fruit garland. If the garland has to put on her, it has to be made of 100 lime fruits. If it is to be put over the horse also 1000 fruits are required.

This Bhadrakali is considered as court by the people here. Outside her temple there is a small mound. Both the prosecutor and defender come here and after a lighting a lamp take an oath that what they are telling is truth and go back. It seems within 30 days , the one who takes false oath will be severely punished. Some times, they would not be even able to cross the village limits. The punished people should come gain to the temple compensate the other party and give fine to her. Poor people fighting against injustice done by rich people come here with wet cloths and go near a Pattayakkal installed here. There would be a knife and hammer there. They have to state their complaint and cut a coin and put it there. Bhadrakali gives severe punishment to the person against whom the complaint is lodged.

It seems once upon a time judges used to come here along with both parties and ask them to take an oath in front of Bhadrakali. There is a neem tree behind Bhadrakali. People praying for marriage and children come here and pray . It seems their prayer is answered immediately. On Tuesdays and Fridays, there is a huge crowd at this temple. There are no festivals for Bhadrakali.

Madhavaram Chelli amman temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Devi Mahathmyam tells that the Goddess Parvathi took seven forms to kill the asuras. These Goddesses were adopted as Village Goddesses to protect them from natural epidemics and natural calamities. One of the most important is Pidari Chelli amman.

During the time of Pallava king Nandivarman II The Kailsasnadhar temple and Karivaradaraja Perumal temple were built in Madavaram.. People believe that Chelli amman was also consecrated then. It seems the king consecrated her facing east but next day morning the temple was facing north.. Again and agasin the king tried and same thing happened. It seems initially the idol was consecrated below a neem tree. In 1941 she was shifted to the present temple . Goddesses Mariamma and Lakshmi Amma who have temples in Madhavaram are considered to be her sisters and the Manjapakkam Ellaiamman is considered as her mother..

Opposite the Goddess there is a Bali peeda and a soola . Near to her the statues of seven maidens and Nagar(serpents) are also there. Wednesday is considered as the most auspicious day for Chelliamman and on that day she wears a green sari. The villagers of most of the surrounding villages to the temple consider her as their clan god. And before starting any important thing in their house, they come to the temple, offer Pongal to the Goddess and then only take any important decisions. Similarly if festivals are to be celebrated in Mariamma and Lakshmi amman temples, unless Chelli Amman gives permission, they do not celebrate.

In the month of Avani a one day festival is celebrated in the temple.. On that day she is decorated with care and there are special workshops. Around 9 Am, from Her mother's (Manjapakkam Ellaiamaan) temple special gifts(cheer) of the house of birth are brought to her temple accompanied by drums and music.. Then the Koozh varthal(Giving of gruel) ceremony takes place . Aroung 6 Pm the festival comes to a close with a feast to her devotees. Then from next day Chelliamman goes to all the villages who are her devotees and returns only after one month.

Makaliamman of Pulavar palayam

By
P.R.Ramachander

Pulavar palyam is village in the Namakkal-Karur road. The very gigantic statue of Makaliaman is in this village. It seems once instead of a statue, there were only three stones representing the Goddess. The people were worshipping these stones were worshipped by the villagers as Makaliamman. Every year in the month of Masi (February-march) the place would be cleaned and sacrifice of goat, cock and Buffalo was given to please the Goddess. After this no body will go to the place where this was done till next year festival. It would be completely covered with weeds and trees. Once the villagers heard a child crying from inside this bush. When some body reported this most of the villagers refused to believe it, after this abruptly stones from no where started falling on the houses of villagers.

Then Goddess entered an old man and he told, "I am Kali. I want worship to be done daily. If it is not done I would make this village in to a cremation ground. Hearing this, the villagers cleaned up the place and built up a small temple. Initially the three stones were kept inside the temple and daily worship was offered. Later they made a Kali Statue with ten hands and kept it in side the temple. They also made a 35 feet tall statue of Makaliamman and kept it outside the temple. The festival was shifted from Masi to Chithirai (April-may). On the first Monday the festival is celebrated with sacrifice of three types of animals as before. A small uthsavar state is taken in procession in side the village. Once the Uthsavar

reaches the temple v, the main deity is worshipped and offered Pongal. Around mid night the sacrifice of Buffalo, Cocks and Goat is taken up. The blood of these animals are mixed in the Pongal and the Chamiyadis (Oracles) go to the east side of the temple and throw the mixture in to the sky. They believe that whatever is thrown never comes back and Kali receives it in the sky. The Chamiyadis normally keep a lime fruit to protect themselves, while going to offer this rice. It is also a custom that the animals should be cut in one sweep of the knife. If this does not happen, the villagers think that there is some deficiency in the festival. The bodies of all buffalos which are cut are buried in a pit. After this no one goes near the temple till next morning.

It seems one lady of the neighboring village came to see the festival. And offered Pongal. After returning from the festival she remembered that she has left the ladle near the temple. At night when she went in search of it, she saw seven girl children playing in front of the temple. They told her, "Don't you know you should not come here at night. You are lucky to have seen us." Then the six children vanished and took the form of Makaliyamam. She warned the lady not to tell what she saw to any body. After two years, it seems by mistake the lady told it to other ladies about this happening. She died that night because of high fever. After this even on ordinary days no body goes near the temple after 8 Pm.

Behind Makali's temple there is an Oonja maram. There is statue of snake below this tree. People with Naga dosha, who are not able to conceive, worship this snake for six weeks and later sacrifice a cock. It seems they get children. On Fridays at noon, one man becomes an unmarried oracle stands on a nail slipper and answers all questions. In his trance, it seems he would be able to identify even strangers. He then tells their problems and the antidote. This is very popular in the village

Malai Karuppu Chami of Kattupalayam

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kattupalayam is a small village neighboring the forests of Andhiyoor of Erode District. Once upon a time lived a rich man in the village called Vellaya Gounder. Vellaya Gounder was very devoted and used to go daily in side the forest to do Yogic practices. One day while walking in the forests, He was suddenly arrested by a power. Some how he came back. But this kept on recurring. He thought that some powerful God was present at that spot. He told about this to other villagers. He took some mud from that spot and made a statue of Karuppu and started worshipping it. He started being at that spot without food and sleep. He used to clear the doubts of villagers when they went to the forest. Later he died at hat spot. People buried him and built his mud statue, called it as "Thavasiyappan" and started worshipping that God also. When this was going on, some villagers told that Muni was present in another spot at the forest. They also built a statue for Muniyappan.

The local villagers believed that Thavasiappan and other Gods are doing meditation. So no bell or other sound is made any where near the temple. In Thavasiyappan's temple, there is a stone called Annapparai. The priests of the temple go to the forests nearby, bring some herbs, grind it on Annapparai and extract its juice. This juice is distributed as medicine on all Tuesdays and Fridays. People believe that this medicine can cure all diseases especially the diseases of women. There is a huge rush in the temple on these days.

People also bring copper and tin plates and give it to the priest of Thavasiappan Temple. The priest puts it behind the idol and returns back a piece to them after five weeks. People wear this plate as a Talisman.

People affected by spirits are also brought to this temple. After they live here for some time they are also cured.

Though the three temples are not at the same place people of the village believe that they are the same God. On the Tuesday of third week of Chithirai month (April-May). Pongal is offered to Thavasiyappan. And a big worship is done throughout night. Next day animals are sacrificed to Malai Karuppu Chami, which is followed by a great feast during these worships Bells are rung and drums are played.

Malai palli thoppulaan-thottilamma

By

P.R.Ramachander

Malai palli is a small village below a mountain..It is called Painapalli(The village at the top in telugu).Though in the rainy season the village is green, in the summer it would dry up and people suffer a lot. There was a man called Kondaiah in this village.He had a son called Basavaiah.He married his uncle's daughter seethamma.,Seethamma used to take the family's cattle to graze in the mountain. Seethamma was not getting any child and so her mother in law started troubling her. One day her mother told that they are planning to sell the cows for meat to the Britishers from vellore fort..Seethamma cried a lot and along with cattle reached her usual spot and sat crying there. Then suddenly she saw a pretty lady in that isolated spot..when enquired the lady told that she had come there to go the temple., When Seethamma asked about the whereabouts of the temple that lady told that , they have to climb further and through two stones they have to cross to the other side of the mountain. She said there would be an anthill there. It was called Thoppulan chami(God who never gave birth from womb) and nearby there would be a stone and that is Thottilamma. Both these gods should be worshipped and a lady ties a cradle in a nearby neem tree, and eat some of its leaf. Then nearby in a hole there would v be water,She should drink little of that water and within ten months she would get a child.

Seethamma did that and told her villagers about this temple. The villagers came there and wondered how the water which they could not find in their village was in plenty on the hill top. With ten months Seethamma had a baby and not only villagers but all the people of the entire area started worshipping that god and goddess. They built a temple for the Gods. The entire Adi month is celebrated in a grand way in that temple. Not only people from near by places but people from Andhra and Karnataka come to that temple in very large numbers.

The neem leaf near the temple is called Thulakkai leaf. Thousands of ladies after the worshipping the god and eating Thulukkani leaf, drinking one spoon of water from there for one month, have become proud mothers. They also do Abhishekam to amman with milk and Punugu.

This temple is located on a top of a mountain near Nathampalli near Vellore on the Madras-Nagalore road. It is an open temple. There are doors to close and so it will always be open.

Mambarai Muniyappan

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated near Markampatti village which is about 20 km from Ottan Chathiram of Dindukkal district. In the days when Pandavas were living in the forest for 12 years, there was a great sage called Saindhava who was doing Thapas below a mango tree. It seems, every 12 years once this tree yielded a miraculous mango. It was believed by eating this mango all occult powers can become ours. Sage Saindhava was waiting for the mango fruit. Once Pandavas with Panchali came near there. It seems Panchali wanted to eat that mango. Immediately Arjuna sent an arrow to cut the mango. As soon as the mango came down by 6 feet, Lord Krishna came there and held it in the sky. He told Pandavas that if the mango falls to the ground, Sage Saindhava would curse them. He then requested each of the Pandavas as well as Panchali to tell their innermost beliefs. As and when one person told his innermost belief, the mango rose by one foot. When all of them completed it got attached to the tree. Pandavas went away but Lord Krishna remained there in the form of a cowherd boy. Then the sage opened his eyes and thought that the boy before him was stealing the mango and started chasing him. Lord Krishna ran up the hill and jumped in to a pit at the top of the hill. Sage Saindhava tried to catch him but was able to only catch the last part of the hair of the boy. Using his divine vision the sage could find out all that happened. He decided to stay there and continue to do Thapas. He slowly became a stone which is now being called Rishi. To protect him from wild animals Muniyappan sat near the stone. A temple was later built for the Rishi. Muniyappan still guards the Rishi's temple. The local villagers started worshipping the Rishi as well as Muniyappan. There is no roof for Muniyappan temple. It seems he has not given permission to build one. The Rishi's temple has a very low roof. People have to bend to see him. Since Panchali was the reason for the initial problem, even today, women do not enter the temple. On the hill top where Lord Krishna jumped in to the pit there is a temple for Lord Krishna. Sheep and cocks are sacrificed to please Muniyappan. Even the cooking of their meat is done by men. There is a custom of bursting crackers at the Muniyappan temple as a form of worship.

There are no festivals in this temple. People believe that if they come to these temples and tell their problems, they will be solved. If they believe that their problems are due to evil magic or witches, they keep a black thread on the lap of the Rishi and later tie it in their hand. It is believed that all of them get rid of their problems. Whenever any person buys a new vehicle in these parts, he brings it for worship to the Muniyappan temple. There is also practice of writing their problems in paper and tying it on the guarding fence of Muniyappan temple.

Manakkal nangayaramman

By

P.R.Ramachander

This is a very important Saptha Matha temple. It seems one merchant came to Manakkal to sell turmeric. He was not able to sell any and then he saw seven ladies taking bath in a tank. He took away their cloths and started troubling them to buy turmeric. They refused and since it was embarrassing one of the ladies Kaumari threw a rose flower and asked the merchant to give equivalent weight of turmeric. Though he put in the balance all he had as well as what he could get from other shops, it never became equal to the rose flower. He then realised that they are Gods and fell on the mud before them. Later a temple for saptha mathas was built in Manakkal and Kaumari was given maximum importance. Kaumari was called by the people as Nangayaramman. Normally saptha matha temples face north but this temple faces east. As soon as you enter the temple on the left side is the statue of Madurai veeran and the right the turmeric merchant. Then on both sides of the sanctum of the Saptha mathas are huge statues of Dwara Palakis. Inside the sanctum all the seven mothers are seated in a row. On the south side of the temple Ayyanar can be seen sitting on an elephant and Karuppannachi on a horse.

Devotees believe that Karuppannachi is an expert in getting back loan which they have given to others. They believe all that they need to do is to garland Karuppannachi and his horse. Even in case of family problems and problem due to marriage Karuppannachi solves it with great speed. There is a karuvli tree in the temple which never flowers. People believe that if you go round the tree and pray, they would get children.,

This temple is about 800 years old and is the family deity(kula deivam) of many people. Daily there is one time worship. In the month of Masi there is a five day long Karaga festival. Navarathri is also celebrated in a great way. On the tenth day the entire Ardha mantapa would be covered with curd rice and this festival is called Thayir pavada. The mandapa would appear as if it is decorated with white flowers. Later the curd rice is given as Prasada. On the first day of Chithirai the goddess comes out riding on a lion vahana. All Fridays of Aadi and Thai months are important days in the temple.

This temple is on the road from Thiruchi to Anbil, one km away from Lalgudi.
The temple is open from morning 7 am to night 8 pm.

Mandu Karuppu-Mandu Karuppi of Jeyamangalam

By

P.R.Ramachander

Jeyamangalam is a village 12 km from Aandipatti of Theni district, this village is in the shores of Varaha River. Mandu Karuppu and Mandu Karuppi temple is in this village. These are worshipped by a dalit community called Kolachiyavan. The origin of this temple is not in this village.

There was a Jamindar in Jothinayakkanur near Vathalakundu. He was a bad man and was troubling people. A heroic man called Mandu Karuppu of that village was a rebel. He formed his own group of people and opposed the Jamindar. Once he refused to pay tax to the Jamindar. Jamindar sent his army to capture Mandu Karuppu. Mandu Karuppu vanished in the forest. From the forest he kept on troubling the Jamindar. At this time, he fell in love with a girl of the same village called Mandu Karuppi. She used to go to the forest and meet him. The Jamindar's people came to know of it. But Karuppi did not bother. Once Mandu Karuppi went to meet Mandu Karuppan in the day time. The Jamindar's people caught and tortured her to tell the place of hiding of Mandu Karuppu. When she refused to tell, they cut off her head. It seems the head flew in to the air shouting, "Mandu Karuppa, please take care." And fell at the feet of Mandu Karuppan. Due to this Jamindar's people could locate Mandu Karuppan and behead him also.

His people took the heads of Mandu Karuppan and Mandu Karuppi and started worshipping them as Gods. Whenever these people migrated to a new place, they would take a fist full of mud from the place where Mandu Karuppu was killed, plant two stones and worship them. The temple in Jeyamangalam is one of them. There is no worship or festival to these Gods.

If a marriage is settled for two people of the community, the groom first goes, anoints the Mandu Karuppi stone with oil and washes it with soap nut powder (Cheyakkai). Then the bride will go and perform the same rites to Mandu Karuppan stone. Then after marriage both of them go together, anoint the stones together and light a lamp. In this community, regardless of their status, everybody has to do this for getting married. They believe that if this is done they would love each other like Mandu Karuppan and Mandu Karuppi.

Mangala devi (kannagi) temple at Vannathi parai

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This dilapidated but ancient temple dedicated to Kannagi, the celebrated heroine of possibly the greatest epic of Tamil Nadu viz Silappadikaram is situated on the border of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. It is located about 7 km from Pazhiyankudi in [Theni](#) district and 15 km from Thekkadi of [Idukki](#) District. From Kumili town of Kerala jeeps can be hired to reach the temple. (there is considerable difference of opinion of it. People of Kerala believe, the temple dedicated to her is in Kodungalloor and people of Trivandrum believe that it is in Athukal temple in Trivandrum)

Due to an unjust judgment of the Pandya king, Kovalan, the husband of Kannagi is put to death by the Pandya king. Overcome by wrath Kannagi burnt the city of Madurai and walked fourteen days to reach the Chera kingdom. She is received there by the hunters (some say Kuravas) who inhabited that area. It is said, that in front of them Kovalan came to that place and took away Kannagi to heaven. This area at that time was ruled by the great king Chera Chenguttuvan. When the hunters informed this incident to the king, he consecrated there a temple in honour of Kannagi by bringing stones from the Himalaya mountain and the local people started calling this temple as Mangala Devi temple. Engravings at the temple record that The king Gajabahu (Kayavagu?) of Lanka attended the consecration ceremony of the temple. Even today there is a pond near the temple in which that great lady Goddess took her bath. Initially only the people in the Kambam valley of Tamil Nadu were worshipping at this temple. The Britishers recognizing the importance of the temple even constructed a road to reach the temple in 1897. Earlier records suggest that a festival of about two weeks was being observed here. After the division of linguistic provinces, this temple was located in Kerala state. From

then on The temple is opened for pilgrims only on the Chithra pournami day(6 Am-5 PM) . It seems that the original statue of Kannagi was broken and the board the trustees of the temple who live in Tamil Nadu, carry the idol with them on Chithra Pournami day , consecrate it, do pooja, anoint it with Sandal paste, offer curd rice to the idol and bring back the idol once the festival is over. Large number of devotees who want to get married and also devotees who want children visit this temple the temple or those who want to reunite with their husbands.. Every year free food is provided on Chithra Pournami day to about 30 thousand pilgrims who visit this temple.

Manjaneeswarar Ayyanar appan of Keezhputhupattu

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

It is believed that the power of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu who had come as Mohini joined together to form a God. This form looked similar to a cloud and it was called Manjani by the villagers who saw it . This power became An Ayyanar and got settled down in a forest in a village called Keezh Pudupattu which is near Pondicherry on the eastern express way connecting Pondicherry and Madras. He along with Gods Ganesa , Shiva, Sani as well as Ravana is believed to protect all the villages surrounding Keezh Puthu pattu. Due to his original name of Manjani he is also called as Manjaneeswarar and also Ayyanarappan.His devotees believe that he would be living in Puthupattu only till evening and as soon as the sun sets, he starts going round the world riding on his white horse all over the world to protect every one .He would come again to Puthupattu only next day early morning., This Ayyanar temple was supposed to be built about 900 years back by one Kulothunga Chozhan. Like some other Ayyanar temples , this Ayyanar has two consorts Poorna who is the daughter of king of Ilavanji and Pushkala the daughter of king Bikaranjan. And these consorts sit on both sides of the Ayyanar idol. Unlike many ayyanar temples, animals are not given in sacrifice to this Ayyanar but are sacrificed to a folk God called Malayalathan (Man of Malayalam) who is at the entrance of this Ayyanar temple. People believe that the king of Pandala came for hunting in this forest and found a child in this spot and that child was adopted by the king and Named Manikandan .Manikandan later was consecrated as Ayyappan in Sabarai Malai of Kerala. Because of this, Many Ayyappa devotees who go to Sabari Malai visit this temple also during their Annual pilgrimage and believe that their pilgrimage would not be complete without visiting Keezhpudupetta.

This Ayyanar is the Family God of very large number of families. Many of these people pray to this Ayyanar to lock the mouth of their enemies who jeer at them . They write their prayer on a piece of paper and tie it to the feet of this Ayyanar . Many other people who are slaves to bad habits write on the chit of paper that they have left their bad habit. Since Ayyanar punishes those who tell a lie , many of these people do leave out their bad habits, Other forms of worship include , making dolls of small white horses and keeping them at the Ayyanar temple . Preparing pongal and offering to Ayyanar , Giving their hair to ayyanar , Offering goats and hen to Malayalathan etc, People who are being troubled by the planet Sani(saneeswara) visit this temple on every Saturday and get rid of their problems, The temple is open from 6.30 Am to 8 PM.

Additional note:-

"Elderly devotees recall making the trip to the temple by bullock cart, when priests and pilgrims had to brush aside branches on the narrow path to the shrine in the center of the forest. Now a wide dirt road (tar in some places) connects all the subsidiary shrines in the forest. Devotees can freely drive from the ECR all the way up to the main temple gate, but on auspicious days (Mondays) they generally park their vehicles along the road through the forest, inadvertently widening it still further. Devotees enter the forest from the west, passing two giant horses, an anthill shrine (the first of at least three), and the shrine of Veerabhadra, Ayyanarappan's guardian deity, and his Veerans. The actual temple to Aiyannarappan is a large complex built on the pattern of a typical south Indian temple complete with brightly painted gopuram, cool inner sanctum, and verandah equipped with metal railings to direct pilgrim traffic. On Mondays in Adi (June-July) vast crowds come to visit. "<http://www.scribd.com/doc/142441178/Meanings-of-Trees-and-Forests-in-India>)

Manveli Draupadhi amman temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Manveli is a small village in the kumbakonam Nagapattinam high way and is about 30 km from Kumbhakonam .Draupadhi is the wife of Pandavas of Mahabharatha.

There is a story about the origin of this temple. Achyutha Nayakkar who was ruling over Thanjavur went through the place and was taken sick suddenly and almost fainted. His people took him from the Palanquin and made him lie on a tree shad. He was at that time gasping for his breath. Suddenly he heard an old lady calling him "sir" to wake him up. When the king opened his eyes, he saw that in that place there was no body except him and that old lad. He asked her about the whereabouts of his army and she told they have gone some place near by.. She also told him, "You seem to be greatly tired and also you seem to gasp for breath.. Please take this Gruel(Kanji) .". And then she gave him little of the gruel from the mud pot.. Seeing her old age and her kind gesture , the king took a little of the gruel from her. Suddenly she became

completely all right. He wanted to give her some present and searched for his army. But when he again saw, he saw the old lady entering a hut which was far away. And he saw suddenly that he was surrounded by all his army members. He asked them, "Where were you all this time?". They replied that, "We were all here only round you and all this while you were sleeping." Then the king showed them the hut that was far away and asked them to go and call the old woman who was the owner of the hut. When the soldiers went there they did not find any old woman but a Statue of Draupadhi amman. The grateful king converted the hut into a well built temple. Again over time the temple got dilapidated but now her devotees recently have built a pretty temple for that Goddess. Outside the temple, there are mud statues of Aravan (The son of Arujuna and the Naga princess uloopi and that of Muthala Ravuthar, belonging to religion of Islam.)

People believe that Goddess Draupadhi who is very merciful would cure diseases of all children. When a child becomes seriously ill, it is brought and made to lie down before the Goddess and parents request the Goddess to cure the disease. Then after the child is cured the parents bring the child again to the temple during the festival and fulfill the prayer oaths that they have taken

Every year during the month of Vaikasi a grand festival of eleven days is celebrated to this Goddess. Daily Street plays depicting important stories of Maha Bharatha is acted before the devotees, This is done so that the uneducated devotees also know about the stories of the great Mahabharatha.

Mappilai Veeran of Thagatoor

By

P.R.Ramachander

Thagatoor is a small village near Vedaranyam of Nagai district. Mappilai veeran translated meant the Son in law hero. There is no statue for this god. There is only a stone which is worshipped. There is a story about it. There was swamiji living in this village. He used to Worship a Kali Statue. He called her as Thirumeniamman. When he neared his death, he attained Samadhi opposite the statue of Thirumeniamman. There was none interested in her worship and large number of thieves started troubling the village. In Athiyangadu (neighboring village), there was big shiva temple. People thought that these thieves will steal all the ornaments of the God. So they bundled the ornaments and buried at the place where the Swamiji's Samadhi was there. They also planted a neem tree over it. They called the neem tree endearingly as Mappilai Veeran. They had built a roof with dried pal leaves. One day this caught fire from the temple lamp. The tree was burnt but its remnants are still there near the temple. They decided to build a stone temple. When they dug there their equipment broke a stone and lot of blood came from there. They built a stone mandap without further digging. They installed a stone in the corner of the mandap. They inscribed the letter "om" on the stone. This stone is being worshipped as Mappilai Veeran till this day. They believe that Mappilai Veeran is guarding the statues and ornaments of the Shiva temple buried there. In the month of Panguni (march-April) there is an 18 day festival in this temple. There is a Bhairava temple in Athiyangadu. The Chamiyadi from there comes to Mappilai Veeran temple and does Pooja and Abhishekam to Mappilai Veeran. Then he answers questions in his trance to all devotees. People believe, if any of their body part is affected by making a toy of that part and offering it to Mappilai Veeran, their problem would be cured. The huge collection of toys in front of the temple proves how effective Mappilai Veeran is.

Marathurai Kathyayani

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Marathurai village is situated in the road between Kumbhakonam and Manalmedu, two km from Pandanallur. The presiding deity in the village temple is Kathyayani. This temple was also housed in a hut inside the forest in early days and about 40 years back, it was built with stone.

Kathyayani is supposed to be the daughter of sage Kathanana. She is also called Kathayi in Tamil nadu, which means, the mother who protects. On the southern side of the wall of the inner temple are Madurai Veeran, Bommi and Vellayammal who all are in the standing pose. Also the mud statues of the seven Munis Vaazhmuni, Chemmuni, Muthu Muni, Jatamuni, Palakkattu muni, Veda Muni and Lada muni. On the western side are three Statues of Pachai Amman facing east and on the northern side are SAngili Karuppan, Veeran, Madan and Nagar. On the main entrance in south is Lord Ganapathi and near the main entrance of north is Bala Murugan. On the southern side path leading to the main temple are three mud Statues of Pachai Amman and Pookurathi and the north is Valli amman carrying a baby in her lap. In the next entrance on the Southern side is the Ceremonial statue of Kathai Amman and on the northern side is the Pachayamman.

In the sanctum sanctorum is Kathyayani Amman who holds a Parrot and lotus flower in her hand, folds her left leg and hangs down her right leg. A five hooded serpent is holding Umbrella over her head.

Kathyayani or Kathayi is called by this name because she protects her devotees. Some believe that she is Valli Amman because she protected the fields of her father. The idol of Valli Ammai is seen to hold a baby child on her lap.

Pachayamman, the Goddess Parvathi is supposed to do penance at this temple. It seems the Gods of eight directions wanted to stop her penance. Then Val (Vaazh?) muni(Kuzhandai muni) youngest of the Seven munis (sages) , who were the sons of Nambi Raja and brothers of Valli fought with those eight heads of directions and brought back their eight heads. He gave one head each to his elder brothers and kept two heads for himself. The idols of these seven Munis are on the southern side of the temple. Each of the elder brothers are seen keeping one head each below their right leg but Val muni is seen keeping one head below his right arm and one head below his right leg. Apart from the Seven Munis, the idols of Madhurai veeran , Kanjamalai easwarar, Bommi, Vellayammal and Katteri karuppan are on the southern side of the temple and Three Pachayamman statues and that of Poonkurathi on the west side and Changili Karuppan , Veeran, Madan and Nagar on the northern side.

Mariyamman of Punnainallur

By

P.R.Ramachander

Punnainallur is a small village near the city of Thanjavur. When Chozhas were ruling Thanjavur, a Mariamman temple existed here. But for reasons unknown this temple disappeared. In the year 1680, Thanjavur was ruled by a Maratha king called Venkoji. He was a great devotee of Samayapuram Mariyamman. Once he reached Samayapuram only at night. So he slept outside the temple. That night Mariamman came in his dream and told that there was no necessity for him to come to Samayapuram as she herself is in Punnainallur, buried in an ant hill. Venkoji rushed to Punnainallur and stated searching for Mariamman. He located the ant hill. And started digging for it. He located the statue and built a temple for Mariamman and started worshipping her. After him, this temple again fell in to disuse. In 1738 another Maratha king Thulaja was ruling Tanjore. His daughter was affected by small pox and lost her eye sight. The king wept in sorrow. That night Mariamman again came in his dream in the form of a small girl and told him about his location. She assured him that she will solve his problem. He located the anthill with the help of a goatherd and started digging there. First he got a palm leaf. It instructed him to build the body of Mariamman with the mud of the ant hill and fix over it the head that is buried there. A great scholar called Sadashiva Brahmendrar helped him. He consecrated the idol as per instruction. As son as his blind daughter was brought o the temple she regained her eye sight. From then on the kings of Tanjore endowed special attention on maintenance of this temple. It is now a huge well maintained temple, blessing all her devotees.

Maya Kuruvi – Chamayi of Mukkudi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Mukkudi is a village in between Shiva Ganga and Madhurai. There is no proper transport facility to reach this village. The Maya Kuruvi- Chamayi temple is in the eastern part of the village. Once upon a time a cobbler couple was living in this village. They did not have any children. Some people advised them to go and pray in the Azhagar temple. They went and prayed the God and slept there for one night. In their dream Mayan (Lord Vishnu) came and told them that he has blessed them with a son. Please name him as Maya Kuruvi." He chose one cow herd boy and sent him to be born as their son. That boy told him, "I alone cannot go there. Please send some body else for company." Lord Vishnu agreed. He chose one girl who was making garlands for Rakkachi Amman, who is at the top of Azhagar Mountain and sent her as a girl child to a village called Chithalakudi. Since she was born at midnight, her parents decided to call her Chamayi. The parents of Maya Kuruvi were cobblers. When they did not get much of that job, they used to go as farm workers. His mother would take Maya Kuruvi along with her. One day when she went to work, she made a hammock with a cloth and hung Maya Kuruvi on a tree branch on a river shore. That day her work was on the other side of the river. She crossed the river and went for work. Mayan wanted to play with Maya Kuruvi and created a huge flood in the river and torrential rain. A five hooded serpent protected Maya Kuruvi from the rain and a sheep gave him milk. Maya Kuruvi's mother was able to cross the river only after three days. When she came she was surprised to find Maya Kuruvi hale and healthy. When she tried to carry the child from the Hammock, the serpent wanted her to take an oath, that none of their family members would ever hurt any serpent. The sheep wanted her to promise that none of her family members would ever eat the meat of a sheep. Grateful for them, Maya Kuruvi's mother promised as they asked and went back home with her precious child. The next day she left the baby with her husband and went out. At that time Maya Kuruvi's father who did not know about the oath, cut the only sheep they had and cooked the meat and its blood. All the people who ate became blind. Hearing this Maya Kuruvi's mother rushed back. And then made all of them take an oath, keeping the meat on Kuruvi that will never, ever take sheep's meat. They all got their sight back. Maya Kuruvi grew up and became a lad. At that time one hunter brought a bird called "Vallathan Kuruvi". Maya Kuruvi wanted that bird as a pet. They made a slipper for the hunter and he gave Vallathan Kuruvi as pet to Maya Kuruvi. Once for the famous Chithirai festival, Maya Kuruvi went along with his parents to Madhurai. Chamayi had also come along with her parents. Both parents met and decided on the marriage f Maya Kuruvi and Chamayi. They also fixed a date for the marriage. When this was going on Maya Kuruvi one day went to take bath in the pond. He kept his pet Vallathan Kuruvi on that shore. That Kuruvi went and sat in a big hole on a tree. Maya Kuruvi climbed the tree. When he was trying to catch his pet, A snake in the hole bit him(according to instructions of Mayan). Some one went and told this to his

mother. She rushed there and Maya Kuruvi died keeping his head on the lap of his mother.

When they try to cremate him, some how they were not able to light the pyre. Then his mother in god's trance told, "The pyre will burn, only if Chamayi comes and lights it." So they sent word to Chamayi. Chamayi rushed to the place throwing the pot she was carrying on the floor. She requested for fire to light the pyre from several houses. None of them gave her the fire. Then went and asked the king of Siva Ganga. He was convinced about her greatness and gave her fire taken three times by a golden trowel. She tied the fire in her sari and came to the cremation ground. She made the eyes of all people blind for a moment, lit the pyre and jumped in to it. She also threw the Vallathan Kuruvi and the snake that bit Maya Kuruvi in the fire.

Then the people of Mukkudi understood that Maya Kuruvi and Chamayi were gods born amidst them. They started worshipping them. Since their community people were cobblers, these Gods told them to have festival only once in two years. They said in between these festivals, nothing should be spent on their worship. So no temple was built for them. The festival is celebrated in Vaikasi month (May-June). The statues of these Gods are only made then. Maya Kuruvi statue has a Vallathan Kuruvi in his hands and Chamayi has a pot kept in her hip. These statues are made by a Velar family, which lives south of this village

From the village the new statues are brought in the wedding dress. The old statues are removed and the new statues are installed. Around 11 PM, they offer Pongal to the Gods. Then there is lot of merrymaking for two days. On the third day at the spot where Maya Kuruvi and Chamayi was created, hundreds of families offer Pongal. That day and the next day several goats are sacrificed.

Obedying the oath given by Maya Kuruvi's mother, none of the descendents of the villagers of Mukkudi eat sheep meat. They also do not trouble snakes. It seems wherever they go snakes do not harm them.

Mel malayanoor Angalamman

By

P.R.Ramachander

Angalamman is a very angry and furious form of Goddess Parvathi. Normally she is present in her temples in the form of an ant hill. Mal malayanoor is a small village near Thiruvannamalai.

There are two stories which are being told about the origin of this temple.

1. Once after fighting with a Rakshasa, Parvathi took the fierce and furious form of Angalamman. She was so angry that even the devas and great sages were scared of her. To appease her Lord Vishnu appeared in a chariot in front of her. Seeing that it is her brother Vishnu, she sat in side the chariot. Lord Vishnu drove the chariot to the burial ground of the above village. He parked the chariot there and he made himself and the chariot vanish. This made Angalamman to fall there in the sitting pose inside an ant hill. She is worshipped there,

2. Once Lord Shiva was meditating in his five headed form in Mount Kailas. Parvathi was attracted by this form and went to the garden to pluck flowers to worship him. At that time Lord Brahma who had five heads came there to see Lord Shiva. Goddess Parvathi thought it is Lord Shiva and prostrated before him. Later she understood that the mistake was because Lord Brahma had five heads like her husband. On her request Lord Shiva took away one head of Lord Brahma. This made Goddess Saraswathi very angry and she cursed Goddess Parvathi to assume a vicious and furious form. This form is Angalamman or Angala Parameshwari.

On the annual festival day the people of the village make a new chariot and take her round the village in that chariot. ON all new moon days the temple is open through out the night and the Goddess is continuously worshipped through out the night. People from various village come prepare Pongal and offer it to the Goddess.

Mel malai karuppu

By

P.R.Ramachander

Natham is a village near Dindukkal. Thottiya karuppu and Azhagu nachiyar were gods of the village. Without knowing their power, the people not only disregarded them but started doing unjust acts The Gods got angry and destroyed sixty families just by their look. They then contacted their leader Lingama Nayakkar and requested to help them. He went and requested the Karuppu and Nachiar to pardon the villagers and look after them. They said, they will pardon them, if they look after their needs properly. Lingama Nayakkar undertook to do that. He became their great devotee. Once there was case going against Nayakkar. He was worried and appealed to the Gods. They told that he will win the case provided , he takes them to the court. He did. But twice the case was adjourned. While on the way to Madurai Karuppu and Azhagu nachiyar were terribly impressed by the valley near Soma giri Malai(Mountain). The third time Lingamma Nayakar won the case. This time karuppu and Nachiyar told him, that on the way to his village he should not keep them any where on the earth. He agreed., But when they reached Soma giri Malai, Nayakkar felt very thirsty and kept down both the statues. They got fixed there and he was not able to take them out. When he was upset and sad, they consoled him and told that every year they would come once to his village.

Karuppu established himself facing west and Azhagu nachiar established herself facing east. There was also an Ayyanar temple below the mountain. Though the local people worshipped Ayyanar and offered him sacred offerings they did not bother about Karuppu and Nachiyar. They both got very angry and decided to teach a lesson to the villagers. They broke down the bund of the local lake at night. All villagers came , struggled a lot and got it repaired. But Karuppu again broke

the bund. The villagers were bothered and after repairing the bund put one watch man. In spite of that Karuppu rode on his horse and was breaking the bund. The watch man saw this and got hold of the stirrup of the horse. Karuppu got angry and cut off the little finger of the watch man. Having been offered human blood, Karuppu started obeying the watchman. After this incident the villagers started taking notice of Karuppu and Azhagu Nachiyar. Then there was a clash between Karuppu and Ayyanar who was already there. Then when Karuppu came with a knife by which he has cut a cow, Ayyanar who is a vegetarian agreed to go away. He went and established himself in a near by village called Attapatti. From then on Karuppu became the uncrowned king of Soma Giri Mountain. Instead of Thottiya Karuppu which was the original name, people started calling the God as Melmalai Karuppu. Melmalai Karuppu is just below the lake. If you climb twenty steps to the mountain, there are three more Karuppu statues. These were old statues built for Melmalai Karuppu. A small roof has been put over these statues. Buy their side in between several tridents stands Munnodi Karuppu.

Melmalai Karuppu likes only sweet Pongal and so it is offered to him. But Goats are sacrificed for Munnodi Karuppu. There and then the cook the meat, mix it with rice and offer it to Munnodi Karuppu.

In the month of Purattasi (September-October), there is a horse giving festival for Mel malai Karuppu. But some how for the past several years, this festival has not been conducted. There is also a festival on Thiru Karthiga day. They also light a lamp at the top of Soma Giri malai. Regular worship is done on all Tuesdays and Fridays, For Azhagu Nachiar, the lamp is lit only twice a week and worship is done.

There are several priests for Mel malai Karuppu temple. They all have to live a very austere and disciplined life. They should not eat or drink anything including water, out side their house. If they fail to do this, they meet with their death. If devotees do not come with devotion and cleanliness, a kind of Gnats from the mountain bite them and drives them away. People need only think of their problems when standing before Mel malai Karuppu. He will solve them.

Muppandal esakki amman temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This temple is also called as Muppandal avvayaramman temple. Muppandal is a small village which is 25 km North of Naagarkoil town of Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. People believe that the Goddess was originally called "Iyakki" meaning she makes things work and this over time became Esakki. The temple has a statue of the great ancient poetess of Tamil Nadu and hence it is called also as avvayara amman temple. There are two stories about this temple, one about its recent origin and another about its ancient origin. Another interesting fact about the temple is that the Goddess remains under a cactus plant here.

Story of the recent origin of the temple

In a place called Panakudi of Tirunelveli district a lady devotee was greatly suffering due to unbearable stomach ache. Though she consulted many doctors nobody was able to cure it. Then she thought of her clan Goddess and shouted crying "Amma(mother)". That night in her dream her clan God Esakki Amman came, sat near her and massaged her stomach and asked her, "I am now below a cactus plant. Can you not build a thatched shed for me?" and then vanished. The pain of the lady vanished and she ran to the temple of her Clan Goddess and she saw The mother Goddess in the form of a already made stone below a cactus plant. The villagers immediately built a thatched shed for the Goddess there itself. Several people whose prayers were answered slowly improved the temple by matching it in to a built temple. This temple is in a valley whose three sides are covered by mountains of the western ghats and one side is a plane. Possibly this lead three place to be named as Muppandal (Three temporary sheds). There is also a story that The chera, Chozha and Pandya kings of ancient Tamil Nadu, met at this temple to solve their problems. When they came for meeting they erected three different temporary sheds and lived there. This again could have lead to the name Muppandal (Three temporary sheds)."

Ancient story of the origin of the temple.

There was an ancient temple of Lord Shiva in a nearby village called Pazhavur. He developed relation with a Prostitute of the village. She being a great devotee of Lord Shiva, protected her virtue by being faithful to only the priest. When the priest lost all his wealth, the other prostitutes were trying to get her separated from the priest. The priest who was interested in getting back all his wealth murdered the Lady Prostitute m, near a cactus bush. The ladies elder brother who saw her dead also died there itself and the priest who tried to escape was bitten by a snake and he also died. That girl and her brother to take revenge were born as a Yaksha boy and girl called Neelan and Neeli and lived in Chozha kingdom. When the people found out that they were not human beings, they ran away from their residence and reached a Cactus bush. The brother turned in to a neem tree and the girl lived under that neem tree. The priest was born as a merchant and when he came once near the cactus bush, she created a baby, followed him and told people that he had cheated her and when he came back with her, she killed him near the cactus bush. When with great anger she was going away from the great poetess Avvayar who was an old lady, told her that since her mission is over, she can stay near the cactus bush itself. When Lord Shiva, the friend of Yakshas took pity on Neeli and requested Goddess Parvathi to help her, the Goddess gave her the great power called Veera Shakthi. From that time Neeli, then known as Esakki started the protecting Goddess of the villages near by. In that Cactus shrub even today there is a neem tree and a Temple of a Goddess. People call that place as Adhi Moola sthanam (The ancient sanctum). There the goddess statue made of baked clay is still there. Even today people who want to be blessed with children keep cradles at The mantapam at the Aadhi moola Sthanam.

In the other temple built as per the words of Avvayar, the Goddess Esakki has a very peaceful look. On her right side there is the Goddess Kalyani called Piranathi Amman. The temple is guarded near the gate by the two brothers of Esakki Amman called Sudalai Madan and Pattavarayan. There are separate statues of Durga, Vaishnavi and Avvayar in the outside corridor of the temple. Outside the temple there is a 33 feet tall Statue of Esakki Amman in the I open ground.

In the temple a protective sacred thread is tied so that evil spirits and black magic does not give any trouble to the devotees of the temple. They offer White Pongal and Payasam to the Goddess and distribute it to people as

Prasada. There is a huge crowd of devotees at the temple on full moon days. People believe that if they worship on that day, the unmarried girls would get married soon. After the worship on those days, the priests tie a yellow thread on the hands of the girls. It is also a practice of the farmers to offer a part of their harvested to the temple. The Goddess is also offered a sweet made of jiggery and Gingelly.

All the vehicles passing in front of the temple stop their for a minute and drivers pray for their safety. The last Tuesday of the Adi month is celebrated in a grand way in the temple. On the second Tuesday, the Amman is anointed with turmeric water. There is also a ritual of walking on fire by the males who do penance for 41 days at the temple on that day. There is another prayer when the devotees offer scented flowers and cover up the Amman statue. But all festivals and worship start only at the Adhi Moola Sthanam.

The temple is open daily from 6.30 Am till 8 PM. Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays are considered as special days to worship the Goddess.

Musiri Azhagu nachiyamman temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This is a temple that is situated in the banks of Cauvery in the Musiri town of Trichy district. It is believed that about one thousand years ago when the river Cauvery was in flood, two people who were taking bath in the river notice a Palmyra leaf box floating in the river. Thinking that it may be a treasure or a child, they swam in the river and with lot of difficulty saved the box and brought it to the shore. To their surprise they found idol of a Goddess. The village people consecrated the Goddess on the shores of the river and erected a thatched leaf shed over her. Over time that hut was replaced by a pretty temple and the Goddess who was called as Azhagu Nachiamman became very famous and goddess of several thousand clans of the village. Just outside the sanctum there is a statue of a white horse and its rider. The people believe that the souls of their ancestors lay buried under the feet of that horse. If any one of their family dies, they bring a handful of the mud with boneir bones and bury it under the feet of the horse. In the sanctum there are seven virgins Kaumari, Maheswari, Varahi, Azhagi Nachiyar, Indrani, Vaishnavi and Brahmi. ON all the days of Margazhy month, Navarathri, on all Fridays of Aadi month special worship to the goddess takes place. Devotees believe that by worshipping her ladies get married quickly. The temple is open from 6Am to 8.30 Am and 1 pm to 6.30 PM.

Musiri Kannimar Kamakshi temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

On the southern side of Musiri village of Trichinopoly district of Tamil Nadu flows the Cauvery river. Once that river which never dries, dried. Villagers who were digging the river were surprised when their spade hit a statue of nine maiden's made of one stone. The very religious villagers were taken aback and made a thatched hut in a nearby forest of Vanni and neem

trees.Because the prayers of devotees were answered quickly , that temple became popular.

At that time who wanted to erect a Kamakshi temple in Trichy were bringing the statue of Kamakshi from Madras.When they reached Musiri village , they kept the statue of Goddess Kamakshi in the temple of the nine maidens and went to take bath in river Cauvery,.But after bath when they came back , they were not able to find the statue of The Goddess Kamakshi and so they consecrated that statue there itself and went back. Thus Goddess Kamakshi was added to the temple along with the nine maidens..Slowly the local people were able to expand the temple and build a temple with stones. Due to Kamakshi and the nine maidens being consecrated there, people started calling it “Maidens Kamakshi Temple.”.The devotees also consecrated a Ganapath, Kathava Rayan, Madhurai Veeran, Masi Periyannasami , Bommi and Vellayammal in the same temple on the southern side of the main temple. People say that the nine maidens statue found here was the original statue that they found in the river . In the entrance to the Ardha Mantapa Kamakshi Amman is consecrated. Mud statues of the nine maidens decorate the entrance of the Amman temple. In the main sanctum sanctorum, the new statue of the Seven maidens is consecrated.

This temple is 30 km from Trichy town. The temple is open from 6 Am to 1 Pm and 4 Pm to 8 Pm.

Muthu pillai Palayam Naga Muthu Mariyamman

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This place is near Pondichery town, You have to travel 2 km from the Pondichery bus stand on the Vilayannur road to reach this temple. It seems once upon a time a farmer was growing ash gourd in his fields which were in the place where the temple stands. One day , one well grown ash gourd plant stood up in the form of a hooded serpent. That farmer called all the villagers to see this greatmiraculous happening,.. Then the goddess entered one lady who had come there and she it seems told, "I am Nagamuthu Mariamman. I can be seen in this field with this form for 45 more days.If you build a temple for me here, I would see that this village remains always prosperous."

As per her wish the local people built a temple for her in that spot. And that goddess is fulfilling the requests of all her devotees from there.

The goddess faces north in this temple. She looks extremely merciful with four hands and is made of mud.. With her in the temple are Lord Ganesa, Lord Subrahmanya, Lord Ayyappa and Lord Kathavarayan. In the moth of Adi there is a three day festival at this temple..On Chithra Pournami day the Goddess is anointed with milk.On Vinayaka Chathurthi day also there are special worships.

Nachikurichi Madhavai Amman temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Nachikurichi is a small village near the city of Trichinopoly in Tamil Nadu.In this village there is a temple of village Gods and Goddesses . In front of the temple on both sides are temples of Lord Muruga with Valli and devanai and Lord Ganesa with Sidhi and Budhi, As soon as enter the temple are huge trees of neem and peepul. These are considered as temple trees. Below the trees is a big hall with God sambhavan. Devotees believe that by sitting and meditating peace descends in to out mind quickly.. In the outer corridor of the temples , there are temples for Madhurai veeran and nagappan. Those who have dosha in their horoscope due to rahu and Kethu , bring Nagar statues and keep them before Nagappan and worship them .People who have snake bite are brought to this temple and if they worship Nagappan , the effect of poison is considerably reduced.. There is also a believe that no one is bitten by a snake in this village.If some one sees a snake in the house , they bring a mud pot and keep it near the snake. It seems the snake of its own enters the pot. Then the snake is brought to Nagappan temple and left there, this Nagappa swamy is the clan God for many families surrounding the temple . In the corridor there are temples for Periyanna swami, Panayadi Karuppaswamy. This Karuppaswamy temple is below two huge Palmyrah palms in the temple,People believe that by praying to Nagappa swami and Periyanna swamy the effect of black magic done by others can be removed..In the middle of the temple is the temple of Saptha Mathas.Vaishnavi who is in the middle of the saptha Mathas is called Madhavai amman.On full moon days special pooja and Abhishekam are offered to Madhavai Amman.In the month of Masi there is a 15 day festival in this temple. People regardless of caste or religion participate in this festival.

This village is 5 km from Trichy central bus stand and the temple is open from 6 Am to 12 noon and 4PM to 8 Pm.

Nadiyamman of Pattu Kottai

By

P.R.Ramachander

Pattaukottai is in Tanjore district. This place was once upon a time covered with forest .At that time Thanjavur was ruled by Maratha kings One day one of them came for hunting in to this forest. He was surprised to see a very pretty woman in the middle of the forest who was laughing at him loudly. The king followed her. But as soon as he neared her she disappeared in a bush. The king cleared the bush and asked his people to dig the place. There he saw a statue of the Goddess. He consecrated that statue by the priests of the Shiva temple at Pattu Kottai (At that time called Veerama nagar) He entrusted the worship with one priest called Nataraja Pandaram and the job of building the temple to Chinnan Chettiyar. She was called as Nadiyammal as she was satisfying the wishes of people who come to see her.

A slightly different story is also prevalent. It seems the king came for hunting. A rabbit which he was chasing ran and disappeared in the bush. He cleared the bush and started digging that place. When they dug, they saw blood oozing out of the place. Then they did the job with caution and recovered the statue of the Goddess, which they consecrated there. It seems Chinna Chettiar who was entrusted the job of building the temple, got made a statue of Gold for worshipping in the temple as Uthsava idol.

There is a 12 day festival for the Goddess in the month of Panguni. (march-april) starting on the second Tuesday of the month. In the first Tuesday of the same month, the village celebrates the festival of Ayyanar who is consecrated in a

different part of the village. This goes on till the Nadiyamman festival starts. Nadiyamman goes on a chariot to the Srinivasa temple of the village and returns along with gifts from her brother.

Nadupatti Veeru Mallamma Koil

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Nadupatti is a small village in the Dindukkal – Madurai road .Most of the settlers here are the Vokkaligas from Karnataka. Their major occupation once upon a time was sheep and goat rearing . Normally they make the sheeps graze in the surroundings of the village itself. However the goats are taken to the mountainous terrain for grazing. Once all the men and women of the village had gone to the forests which was nearby. A torrential rain started and they were not able to go back to the village , where only children and old people were there . All the children and people started crying due to great hunger. Then one seven year old girl called Veeru Mallamma milked all the white goats and gave its milk to children for three days. All the children and old people who were cured of their hunger were happy . When the parents returned, they understood that it was due to Veerumallamma that their clan was alive. So they considered her as their God.

After some time a huge epidemic spread in that village. Veeru Mallamma that by giving her life , she will save all the villagers and did that too. The villagers built a small temple to her. Even today the villagers believe that the temple (called by them as" Maalai temple" –evening temple) protects them from all problems. Since they were saved by the milk of the goat , none of the villagers eat the meat of the goats. Several miracles are ascribed to Veeru Mallamma, including her saving the life of her priest when he was critically ill.

Nallampatti Kunjayi and Kannadachi amman temple.

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Nallampatti is a village which is 5 km from the Dindugal town of Tamil Nadu . There is a peculiar temple there with two village Goddesses . The story of these goddesses goes like this.

Kunjayi Amman: There was a landlord in Chinnakaran Patti who was greatly troubled by evil spirits sent by his enemies. He learnt magic from a famous magician and Attracted Karuppachami who was an expert in driving away such evil spirits and after praying that God , he sent him to attack his enemies and they were all destroyed. Then that Land Lord kept Karuppachami in a mud pot , kept it in a box made of palm leaf and floated it in a river. When that box was floating suddenly a great flood came in that river. A girl who was taking bath with her elder brother was swept away by the flood . And that girl went on shouting Anna(elder brother) and asked him to help her .Karuppachami who was in the pot heard her appeal and saved her . Then the girl addressed Karupachami as Anna (elder brother) with great affection. Karuppachami accepted her as her younger sister. She was called Kunjayi Amman . A practice of building Temple of Kunjayi Amman along with or without Karuppachami exists in these parts

Kannadachi Amman belonged to a village called Thayanoor. This village was once surrounded by flood water. The people of the village who were scared of the raising water started vacating it. On their way, they saw a crying girl child. They did not bother but went ahead. However a man called Pandaram took the girl along with him to a safe place . After a few days due to serious illness and when Pandaram was about to die he entrusted the girl to his sons and requested them to look after her. AS per the practice of the caste Pandaram was cremated. That night the girl child left the house without any one noticing her. Her brothers searched for her and at last found her head lying on the ashes of their father in the cremation ground. When everybody was standing perplexed the girl's head spoke and told if her eldest brother lights up a stick , she would vanish. She also told them if she is worshipped along with Kunjayi Amman and Karuppachami , she would protect the villager. Since the girl closed the eyes of her brothers and vanished , she was named as Kannadachi Amman.

IN the temple at Nalampatti the gate of the temple faces west. As soon as you enter the temple, on the left side you would see Madhurai Veeran and Karupannachami majestically sitting on a horse. After that there are small temples of Madhurai Veeran , Bommi , Vellayammal , Seven virgins and Nagamman. On the outer corridor of the temple you would find Malayala Karupannachami , Paramasivan , Parvathi and Durga, There is also a huge Navagraha Ganesa on whose body the nine planets are carved. It is believed that Worshipping that Ganesa would remove all problems due to planets..If a coconut garland is offered to him, it is believed that marriage would be settled soon..Next to is the Sannidhi of Lord Srinivasa Outside the sanctum sanctorum a huge lion's statue is there and near the gate , there are two Lady guards. In side on the same platform Kunjayi Amman and Kannadachi Amman are seen sitting.

Kunjayi Amman holds a hand drum(udukkai) in one hand and the other hand she keeps on her thigh. Kannadachi Amman is seen holding a sugarcane.

On 17, 18, and 19 of Aadi month(July-august) there is a festival for Karupannachami . Both Goddesses would be decorated with a Karagam at that time. On 17th , Karupannachami is worshipped by taking Milk pot and there is a procession on the main streets of the town. One priest who holds a whip goes in front of the procession. People who believe they are being troubled by evil; spirits , go and appeal to him. He hits them with his whip and it is believed that

the evil spirits go away. On New moon and full moon days special worship to the Goddess is conducted. The temple tree is a banyan tree. The temple is open from 6 AM to 9 PM and is about 5 km from the Dindugal main bus stand.

Nannilam Madathi Amman temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Madathi was the youngest sister of seven brothers. After the early expiry of her parents, her brothers looked after her well. Though a rich man called Vadavedu Mirasudar was in love with her, her brothers gave her in marriage to a person in the nearby village. The rich Mirasudar started visiting the village where Madathi was living often and her husband became jealous. Once when Madathi went to attend a festival in a nearby village, her son wanted to ride in the giant wheel. When Madathi and her son got in to it, the Mirasudar who was there also got in to the same coach as her. When her brothers came to know about it, they felt that Madathi has insulted their family and chopped off her head. The head of Madathi which fell on the earth cursed her brothers that, their children also would become orphans like her son. Slowly one by one all her brothers died and the entire village which found fault with her was completely destroyed. Her Village Cherankulam built a temple for her at the spot where she was killed. The temple which was a hut for the past two hundred years has now been built as a strong temple. She has become the Clan Goddess for many people in the village. One peculiarity of this temple is that sacrificing animals never take place there as she had ordered her people like that. Daily the priest anoints her with one big pot of water and closes down the temple. Her devotees are trying their best to start normal worship for her. Since the house of her priest is in the same village, devotees can go any day and worship the Goddess.

Navaladiar of Mohanur

By

P.R.Ramachander

Mohanur is a village which is 14 km from Paramathi Velur of Namakkal district. In the eastern boundary of the village is the temple of Navaladi Karuppana Chami, who is referred to also as Navaladiyan. He is also known as Pattamarathan and Judge Durai.

It seems some merchants of the Chera kingdom came to do business with Tamil Nadu. They brought their material on bulls. They also had a cow and calf with them. When they were camping at Mohanur, they noticed that even without milking the udder of the cow used to go dry. They thought that there is some evil spirit in that place and were preparing to depart. On that day they found that their cow was missing. After great search, they located the cow in the forest bush of naval trees (*Syzygium cumini* (L.)). In spite of the best efforts, the cow did not come out of the bush. At last they found out that the cow was pouring all the milk in its udder at a spot below a naval tree and there was also a stone below the tree. They understood that the stone was divine. Near by there was also a neem tree. Since the stone was below the naval tree, the merchants called that God as Navaladiyar (He who is below the naval tree). They donated the cow and calf to Navaladiyar and went back. Local people started calling the God as Navaladi Karuppu. The local king called Mogur Pazhayana, used to daily worship this God. Once he observed that milk was coming out of the neem tree nearby. He then made the neem tree as his Security tree. It was also worshipped then afterwards. The local queen's brother Nannan, who had the neighboring Vijaloor kingdom used to anoint Navaladiyar with milk, every time he visited his sister. Near Vijaloor, there was another kingdom called Ganga kingdom. The king there was Irungovel. These three kings had complete control of Kongu Nadu (present Coimbatore area) during that time.

In Nannan's palace there was a mango tree which yielded one fruit, once in 12 years. During the year, it yielded tight security was put to the tree, as the people believed that by eating the fruit people would live a long life. Once there was a cyclone and the fruit fell in a nearby river. One lady who was taking bath in the river ate that mango fruit. Hearing this Nannan sentenced her to death. The local people tried their best to get pardon for the girl, but Nannan did not bother and put the lady to death. The people got angry on Nannan and cut of the mango tree in his palace. Nannan also turned mad. His sister made Nannan pray Navaladiyan three times a day for a period of 40 days. He became all right and went back to his country. Similarly king Irungovel also committed by refusing to marry one of the orphaned daughters of king Pari which made Sage Kapila to give up his life. So Irungovel came to Navaladiyar temple and by praying to him, got his sins excused.

Thus the fame of the God Navaladiyan spread throughout Tamil Nadu. Many other kings were jealous of the king Mogur Pazhayana in whose kingdom Navaladiyar's shrine was located. One of them was Ayirai. He made a plot so the neem tree which was the security tree of Pazhayana was destroyed.

At this time Villavan kothai who was the Commander in chief of the army of Cheran Chenguttuvan came to worship at the Durga temple in the kingdom of Ayirai. Ayirai went and met the commander and told him that, "Nannan killed an innocent girl. He should be taken before your king and given proper punishment." Villavan Kothai agreed to this. He went and met Nannan and told him, "King Cheran Chenguttuvan wants your friendship. His minister is waiting in my country. If you come with me, I will introduce the minister to you,." Nannan was attracted by the proposal and accompanied

ayirai. He was imprisoned by Ayirai, in his country. Nannan prayed Navaladiyar to rescue him. Then suddenly a tunnel appeared in his jail. He went out through the tunnel and reached his country. Later Pazhayar, Nannan and Irumborai set out to destroy Ayirai. Since Ayirai got information through spies, in the guise of a woman, he escaped from his country. The three friends conquered the country of Ayirai. They also destroyed the Durga temple.

Ayirai went and met Cheran Chenguttuvan and told lot of lies about the three kings. Cheran decided to wage a war and destroy their country. They managed to kill Pazhayar. Ayirai then wanted to destroy the temple of Navaladiyar. Cheran Chenguttuvan prevented him from doing it. But advised him to cut the neem tree which was guardian of Pazhayar. Ayirai was not satisfied with this. He shaved off the hair of the queen of Pazhayar and insulted her. The queen cursed him, "Oh rogue, you would be destroyed." And died that spot itself. Not satisfied with this Ayirai wanted to destroy Navaladiyan temple. He lifted a huge stone so that he can put it on the temple. A cobra came from underneath the stone and killed Ayirai. Cheran then understood, what a bad man Ayirai was and also the type of lies that was being fed to him. He arranged for the honourable burial of Pazhayar and his queen. Ayirai's body was thrown as food to the foxes in the forest. He then did redemptive acts to Navaladiyan and returned to his country.

The Navaladiyan statue is now under a new Naval tree (the old dry tree also stands there. This called Patta Maram and hence the name Pattamarathan) which came out of the roots of the old Naval tree. Similarly a new neem tree also has grown up in the place of the old destroyed neem tree.

Once some villagers went for wishing in the near by river. They found a statue floating in the river and recovered it. Since it had the looks of God Chellandiamman of Madhukarai, they consecrated in the same sanctum sanctorum of Navaladiyan. They are calling it Chellandiamman. There are also Kannimar (maids) deivam and Ganesa in the temple. Outside the temple are very big statues of two Bhoothas. The original temple built by Pazhayar was a small one. Now they have rebuilt it but Navaladiyan temple has not been disturbed. There are two big mud horses standing outside the temple now. There is also a horse made of bell metal. Apart from a wooden horse.

There are no festivals for Navaladiyan. But if a devotee pays Rs 3500, Navaladiyan is decorated and taken out as procession. There is a practice of bringing the anointed water to the Uthsava statue and throwing it to the devotees face. It seems this act removes all the problems of the devotee. Opposite the Uthsavar Statue of Navaladiyan, a big Vel has been planted. It is called Shakthi Vel. While Vegetarian dishes are offered to Chellandiamman, animals are sacrificed before Navaladiyar.

This temple is very popular in Namakkal district. Any problem is brought before him for redressal and because of this he is also known as Judge Durai. Any thing can be offered by a devotee to Navaladiyar. For example a cobbler has offered a very big shoe to the God. He hangs it in the tree outside. Every year a new pair is brought and old one replaced. Goats and Cocks are offered to the Navaladiyar. There is also a mid night pooja known as Sathya Poojai in the temple. Devotees also can submit written requests to Navaladiyar. These should be written or typed and offered along with Rs 5. People believe such requests are heard by Navaladiyar and he fulfills them. These are pierced on several iron rods outside the temple. You may find medical reports, X rays and even ECG reports there.

Karupparaya Sami of Onnipalayam

By
P.R.Ramachander

Once upon a times Sidhas in Tamil Nadu used to fly from one place to another by putting a mercury tablet(Rasa Mani in their mouth). People believe that a Sidha called Bogar went from India to China using this method. Once it seems one sidhar was flying like this from Podigai mountain carrying a very rare medicine. When he reached Onnipalayam, it seems the rare medicine fell down inside the forest. He got down and went on searching. Since he did not get it he started doing Thapas(penance) aimed at Lord Shiva. Some evil spirits started troubling him. Then by his magical powers he created Karupparaya Sami and ordered him to protect him. The people of the village understood the power of Karupparaya Sami and built four walls and eight pillars around him. And inside they built a small temple for him. There was a small hermitage behind this temple. People from other areas used to come and used to stay in the hermitage and do worship to Karuppanna sami

The temple faces east and outside you see Nagar(serpent) god. Opposite to the temple there are three stone swings of the god and his horse steed. If you climb four steps you can see God Karuppanna swami. He wears a turban, has a cloth tied on his hip, fearsome moustache. He carries a scythe(arrival) in his right hand and a mace(Gadhai) in his left hand. There is no roof over him. But one huge Bilwa tree and wild lemon tree give him shade. People do worship themselves offering him two betel leaves, three betel nut, one lemon fruit and one rupee. Devotees believe that he would keep them safe and all good functions in their home would go along without any problems.

On his right side is Kannimaar sami and on the left side beyond the bilwa and lemon tree there is a mud statue of Thannasi appar and few small village gods.

The god is only once worshipped in the morning. On full moon, new moon, monthly siva rathri as well as on maha sivarathri days lot of pilgrims come to visit him.

Devotees believe that the Sidha is still doing penance in the adjoining forest.

Onnipalayam is 6 km from Karamadai which is in Coimbatore district. You can get bus auto etc from Kara madai. You can see the God any time you go there.

Oor kattiya Pattayya of koo pudupatti

By

P.R.Ramachander

Koo pudupatti is a village near Kambam of Theni district. Once upon a time a sage called Veerasikku Chithar arrived in the village. He liked the environment of the village and stayed there.

At that time an evil spirit called Muni used to enter the village often and kill pregnant woman as well as, just born kids. At that time Sarangapani a magician from Karnataka happened to visit the village. He could easily recognize that the problems were due to Muni. He also told that this muni was below the village Banyan tree. Veera Sikku Chithar went to the Banyan tree and requested the Muni not to harm the villagers, Then the Muni replied, " I would not harm them provided the first hair of the first born of all the villagers is offered to me. ". Veerasikku Chithar requested the villagers to follow this, Suddenly all the problems of the village stopped. So the people started calling him "Orr katha Pattayya" meaning "Grandpa who saved the village."

After this the cattle of Nanda gopala Swami temple of Kambam entered the local Jamindar's field. Enraged the Jamindar caught all the cattle and tied them in his cattle shed. The local people sent Veerasikku Chithar as their representative. The Jamindar bombarded Chithar and sent him away. Chithar came to the boundary of Jamindar's land and played his flute. All the cattle of Jamindar broke their cattle shed and went near the Chithar. This increased the anger of Jamindar but he acted as if he understood the greatness of Chithar. When Chithar went back to his house, Jamindar with his men set fire to his house. All the local people assembled there with sorrow. But nothing happened to Chithar and he came out of the burning house with a smile. Jamindar fell at Chithar's feet and begged for his pardon.

Later the villagers started treating Chithar as their god. When Chithar died in his old age, the villagers built a temple for him over his Samadhi and called it temple of "Oor katha Pattayya." The wooden slippers used by Chithar are also kept in this temple. The Muneeswara and Pattaya guard this village very well. When there is a quarrel or cheating in the village the people go to the temple of Pattayya and the case is settled quickly. The ash from Pattaya temple is treated as medicine by the villagers and they believe that it cures all diseases. Even today the first hair of the first born of the family members, wherever they are is offered to Muneeswara. This even includes the girls of the families.

During Pongal, Karthigai Dheepam and Siva Rathri there are special worship to Pattayya,

Oor Kattu Chudalai Madan of Uppanimuthur

By

P.R.Ramachander

This God is in the Uppanimuthur village which is 9 km from Cheranmahadevi. This village once upon a time was a part of Oorkattu Jamin.

This Chudalai Madan came to this village from Kerala. It seems during those days there were very powerful magicians in Kerala who could even a tie up a God. Chudalai Madan was protecting the people of Kerala during that time. So the magicians try to tie him up. The people, who were benefited by Chudalai Madan, put him in a Palm leaf box and floated in the river. This box reached via Thamrabarni River, the Oorkattu Jamin. Some people saw it in Uppanimuthur. They opened the box and saw a seven feet statue, with Moustache and hair made up in the Kerala Style. The God then spoke to them and requested them to consecrate him near the river and promised to take care of them. Since the place belonged to oor Kattu Jamin, they consecrated the statue below a banyan tree and started calling him , Oor Kattu Chudalai Madan. That God besides taking care of the people of the Jamin also took care of the people of Kerala. So the magicians started searching for him. One of them located Chudalai Madan and started methods to destroy him. He put tainted cloths at the gate of the temple so that Chudalai can be immobilized. But Chudalai Madan took the form of a lizard and escaped through the window. The magician located him and cut him with a sword. The Lizard lost its tail. By this time the villagers caught the magician tied him to a tree and burnt him alive. When they examined the statue of Chudalai a part of his hand was cut. When they were thinking of replacing the disfigured statue, Chudalai Madan told them not to do it and they obeyed . But one man from a rich family got a new statue made and threw the old statue in the river. This infuriated the God and he started causing bodily harm to the villagers. Some people also became mad. The villagers went to the temple begged for the pardon of Chudalai Madan and a gain consecrated the old statue. All the people of the family which threw his statue in the river were later destroyed. Apart from Chudalai , his temple contains Pechiyamma, MUnda madan and Munda Madathi.

In one of the months of Chithirai, Vaikasi, Avani, there is a festival of Kodai Vettu to Chudalai Madan. The Maruladis accompanied by drums and pipe music go to the river , where Chudalai Madan was found as they believe he is still alive there. They offer Pongal and sacrifice a goat. Then they return to the temple. There is lot of joyous celebration at that time., Then the Maruladis go to the cremation ground(Chudalai means cremation ground) and bring a few human bones. They again offer Pongal in front of the temple. Then a peculiar ritual takes place. Black goats are tied and mounted on posts like a spread eagle. Then the Maruladis split open their chests and fill it with Banana fruits. Then they eat those fruits mixed in the blood of the goats. This goes on till all the blood of the goat is exhausted. This is called "Uruvam Chappiduthal(Eating of the form)" Next day there is worship and anointing of the God. That night the festival ends with a common feast.

Chudalai Madan's temple is far away from the village. Inside the village there is a temple of Uchimahakali Amman. During

the festival at his temple a Mud statue of Chudalai Madan is made and consecrated every year. Once the festival is over, the statue is floated in the river.

Oppilatha Amman of Ariyalur

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Oppilatha Amman meaning the Matchless Goddess has a temple in Ariyalur. This temple is in Ariyalur itself. There is a very interesting story of how she came about to have a temple there.

Long time back it seems on Bangalore seller was trying to sell bangles in the streets of Ariyalur. Then he saw a very pretty girl standing in the middle of the street. She called him and requested to give him lot of bangles. When the bangle seller hesitated, that little girl told him, "Are you hesitating because you think I will not give you any money? In the next street there is a very big house. Go to the owner of the house and tell him that you supplied bangles to a matchless girl. He will give you ample money." The bangle seller was impressed, requested her to sit on a stone and made her wear lots and lots of bangles. The girl happily went away. The bangle seller went to the next street and he saw a very big house there. People informed him that the house belonged to the king who was residing in that house. Boldly the bangle seller entered the house and asked the security people for money to his bangles. They told him that there was no little girl in the house and thrashed him. Then the bangle seller told, "I was deceived, she told that her name starts with "Matchless". Then the king whose clan name was "Matchless" understood that the girl was their clan goddess. He profusely apologized to the Bangle seller and presented him with lot of money. The king immediately got a temple built in the place where on the stone she sat to wear the bangles. That temple does not have a roof and is below a huge banyan tree.

That temple is called the temple of the Matchless Goddess. Along with her inside the sanctum are the seven sacred maidens(Saptha Kanniyargal) Devotees believe that worshipping this Goddess would make them get all that they wish. They believe that if we prepare Pongal, offer it to her and worship her, they would get all sort of wealth. In a near by temple are Lord Ganesa and Lord Subrahmanya. Outside the temple are Muniyappasami, Ayyanar, and Karuppasami. The animal sacrifices are done in front of these Gods. There are special worship to the Goddess in the months of Adi, Chithirai and Margazhy. The temple is open from 7.30 Am to 11.30 Am and between 5.30 Pm and 8.30 PM. People take Turmeric, Kumkum powder and bangles as offering to this Goddess.

Oothukattu ellayamman kovil

Compiled by

P.R. Ramachander

This temple is in a diversion to Valajabad near Oragadam in the Tambaram to Kanchipuram road. It is a very popular temple. There is a story behind the temple. It seems once King Krishna Deva Raya who came for hunting in the Othukadu forest got tired and was taking rest below a neem tree. A pup called Bhairava which accompanied the king roamed in those parts and found out the water source and lead the king there. When the king was drinking water he noticed a lime fruit floating in the lake and following it one statue of the Goddess which was two and half feet long also came. He built a small temple below the neem tree and consecrated that Goddess there and she was called The "Oothukadu ellayamman". (She is also called Oothukattu amman) This is believed to have been established in the year 1608. There is also a story that the temple was established not by the king but Nagal Naidu who was working in his army. The Temple tree is supposed to be Vanni tree.

She is the family deity of large number of people in those parts and people believe that all their prayers are fulfilled by her. They express their gratefulness to the Goddess by offering Pongal to her on tuedays, Fridays and Sundays. A festival called Brahmotsavam is celebrated to the goddess in the April-may month. People dressed in yellow cloth dipped in turmeric, walk on the open fire to please her during this festival.

Recently the temple was expanded and an enyance Gopuram was built to the temple. Temples for Lord Ganesa, Durga, Seven brothers, nine planets and Kala Bhairava are consecrated surrounding her temple.

Several photographs of the temple can be seen in <http://sanctifiedspaces.blogspot.in/2011/01/uthukadu-ellamman-temple-visit.html>

Pachai malyaan of Kappathampatti

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kappathampatti is a small village near Jalagandapuram of the Salem district. The village has arid land. Once upon a time a great water shortage came to this village. Some villagers thought that then can to Pachai malai (literally Green Mountain which is 80 km from the village). Four people belonging to one clan went there and reached the top of the mountain. There in a thatched hut, water was kept for the god in three new mud pots, since they were thirsty they drank all the water. Immediately they lost their eye sight. The tribals who had gone back to their village came after three days. Their priest gave sacred ash of their God to the villagers who had lost their sight. They immediately regained their sight. The villagers realizing the power of their God begged them to give their God to them. The tribal priest gave them a stone from inside their temple. The villagers of Kappathampatti brought the stone and consecrated it in their village. They called that God as Pachai malyaan. After the coming of the new God village became rich. They got regular rains. Even today only a few stones are shown as Pachai Malyaan. Round him there are other Gods viz seven maids, Sannsi , Veerakaaran, Naadar , Vedar , Chinnannan(holding a bow and arrow) , periyannan holding a spear. Chinnannan and Periyannan are represented by two statues riding on horses. Except for them all others are represented by stones only. Initially this temple was in the open ground. Later the villagers constructed a stage and shifted the gods there. It seems they forgot to shift two gods from the ground. These Gods appeared in their dreams. But by that time they were not able to identify the stones representing them. So they put all the stones round there on to the stage.

Pachai Malyaan is a vegetarian God. So in the month of Vaikasi(may-June), a festival called Pachai Malyaan thava thiru Vizha is celebrated in the village for him and other Gods. The festival is only for a day . Around May first all members of the village assemble at the temple and ask the God , permission to celebrate the festival. If the sound of Lizard comes from a Banyan tree to the north of the temple , then the festival would be celebrated.. If the sound comes from the Azhinjil tree to the south of the temple, they assume that God does not want the festival.

The arms and bells of Pachai malyaan are kept in a temple house in the village. Once the festival date is fixed the first thing to be done is to get new pots made. The potters observe lot of penance and a disciplined life for making these pots. Pongal is prepared in at least 1000 pots on the festival day. The rice has to be pounded only in the temple house. So the ladies of the village come to the temple house, pound the rice , tie it in a bag over which they write their names. Around 3 Am on the festival day, his arms and bells are transported to the temple. Over the temple they make a shed with green palm leaves. First in a big pot Pongal is prepared to the seven maids Later it is prepared for Pachai Malyaan. The people go and bring the Chamiyadi of Pachai malyaan from about 300 meters distance along with music. He goes in to a trance and predicts the future. Every year he answers questions of only very few people.

Later Goats are sacrificed to Chinannan and Periyannan. And their grand father Pattappan. They then start for pig hunt. The pigs are which are offered by the devotees are let loose and are killed. Later they keep three pots full of water in the temple. Thus ends their festival.

Pachai nachiyamman temple of Trichinapally

By

P.R.Ramachander

Trichy is an important temple town of Tamil Nadu situated in the banks of river Cauvery. Long long ago, this area was a forest. Once a bangle seller was pausing through a forest. He saw a lady dressed in green sitting outside a small temple. She wanted bangles. When asked her preference for colours told green. The bangle seller put large number of green bangles on both her hands. When asked for money, she told that it has to be collected from her brother Prayadyan, whose house is near by. The bangle seller walked on the direction indicated. He could not find any houses. Then he came across a temple. The temple was locked. To the surprise of the bangle seller, the exact cost of the bangles was kept outside the temple. Late he came to know that the God was called Prayadi Karuppu Sami. He rushed back in search of the lady . She was nowhere to be seen but all the bangles he had put in the ladies' arms was in the arms of the statue. The Goddess of this temple is Pachai nachiyamman.

The temple faces north. Behind the temple there is a big banyan tree entwined with a neem tree. There are also Nagar (serpent) and Ganesa statues below the tree.. On the east there are statues Of Madhurai Veeran, Bommi and Vellai ammam. In the month of Vaikasi for the first 15 days, there is a festival at this temple. There is no uthsava statue at this temple. Instead , they make a statue made of palm leaf and take it in procession. People believe that all their prayers are answered by Pachai nachiyamman. All the offerings at this temple are to be in green colour.

Padaveetamman of koyampedu, Chennai

Compiled By
P.R.Ramachander

This happened about 250 years ago. Some people from Chennai from Thiruppathi after a pilgrimage to Thiruppathi. When they heard of Chennai, they saw a wheel like stone rotating on the road.. That wheel was rotating on the road and stopped in the middle of the road blocking it. The people travelling in the cart got down and wanted to put that stone on a side but to their surprise they saw it was a statue of the upper part of a Goddess. When they were not knowing what to do, , one girl who was looking after goats nearby Goddess in her..She told, “ I was the goddess of the war zone (padai veedu) of a chozha king.. Over time my temple disappeared. I am rolling and travelling to find out a proper place for me to stay. Little from this place there is a Neem tree. Please keep me there and worship me. I would fulfill your wants and always protect you.” They searched and saw a Neem tree near by and kept that Goddess there. From that day that Goddess is still below that neem tree. That forest area has become an important locality of Chennai city..The name Padai Veet Amman slowly changed to Padavettamman. People have constructed a small sanctum sanctorum for the Goddess below that same neem tree.. On the head of the Goddess a serpent opening its hood and a flame of fire is seen. People say that

this indicates that she was worshipped by soldiers once upon a time. The face of that goddess is pleasant like moon in the middle of the wheel like stone. Just before anointing only this form can be seen clearly. After Abhisheka they decorate the Goddess with silver. Another important thing about the temple is that, they often find a cobra sleeping at the feet of the Goddess at night. So priests clean up the old garlands etc very carefully. Many families have adopted this Goddess as the family deity and worship her by offering Pongal. From the fifth Friday of Adi month there is a festival at this temple which lasts for three days. All her devotees firmly believe that she will fulfill all their wants which are just.

The temple is 4 km from Koyampedu bus stand of Chennai on the main road. The temple is open from 6 Am to 12 noon and 6 PM to 9 Pm.

Palayadi Karuppu

By

P.R.Ramachander

Gandharava kottai is a village which is thirty km from Pudukottai. Varappur is 12 km from this village. This is the head village for the surrounding 35 villages near there. The same caste people there have divided themselves into eight groups. They did not have any God to protect them. So two elders of the village went to Kerala. They saw a sage who was doing meditation there. They waited in front of him for 90 days. Drinking only water. The sage realized their earnestness and opened his eyes and gave one fist full of mud to each of them. One man kept it safely in side his turban and the other made a packet with his cloth and hung it on the thread that he had tied in his hip. They reached their village. When the man went to the pond to drink water, he removed his turban. The mud in his turban became like an arrow and went through a Pala tree and fell below it. The elders then rushed to the village and brought all the people. Then God entered one of the assembled and he told them, "I am Karuppan. I like this place. If you build a temple for me here, I will take care of you." Then he asked God, as to what has to be done with the mud brought by the other person. Then the God told them to place it below another Pala tree in Nerunchipatti which was two km from there. The people did accordingly. The people built a temple and the Karuppu was referred to as Palayadi Karuppu (Karuppu below a Pala tree). All the 18 villages around Varappur consider this Karuppu as their God and are firm that he will satisfy all their wants. The Pala tree has become into a very big tree. Along with Palayadi Karuppu, there are three more sub gods called Chinna Karuppu, Changili Karuppu and Muthu Karuppu. Nearby in another structure, there is a small statue of the man who brought Palayadi Karuppu from Kerala. When Karuppu is worshipped, he also is worshipped. Lot of mud horses are also there built by devotees as their offering. Nearby there is temple for the fearsome God Billi muni. People believe he is the god who does things for Karuppu.

Once a Muslim gentleman called Mal Ravuthar went by this side and he teasingly told about whether the horses would eat grass. After he left Palayadi Karuppu told Billi Muni, "When he is returning back, I will make these horses eat grass. Then he would be surprised and come here. At that time you cut off his head." As a memory of this incident there is a small

structure for Mal Ravuthar also. He sits headless on a horse. Below the feet of the horse, his head is seen lying. Worship is done for Mal Ravuthar also. The Billi muni temple does not have any doors. It seems all attempts to put a door have failed. In the month of February – March there is a ten day festival for Palai Karuppu. All the villagers attend this festival without fail on the eighth day there is a festival called “Billi koduppu Vaibhavam.” It seems once upon a time to satisfy the ferocious Billi Muni, every year, one child was sacrificed. Its blood would be mixed with Pongal and the balls of rice and blood would be thrown in to the sky on all four directions. It seems in one direction the ball will not fall back. They would then conclude that Billi has taken the ball of rice on that side. They also believed that the villages in that direction would become prosperous for that year.

This sacrificing of a child continued till the family which was supposed to give child for sacrifice had only one son. The family members went and cried before Palayadi Karuppu. Then Karuppu appeared before them and told them not to sacrifice the child but take out a little blood from the thigh of the child.

On the eighth day of the festival , pongal is prepared and offered to the other Karuppu kept below the Pala tree in Nerunchi Patti Then the Chamiyadi of Palayadi Karuppu and Billi muni jump and dance Then they start walking towards the Palayadi Karuppu temple. On the way many villagers garland both the Chamiyadis. They ask al their doubts and in trance the Chamiyadis reply heir questions. Around 12 mid nights they prepare Pongal and offer it to Palayadi Karuppu Then the blood is let from the thigh of the boy. Then the villager belonging to the village of that boy mixes the blood with pongal and throws it towards the sky. With this festival of the eighth day comes to an end.

People of the 18 villages have great faith on Palayadi Karuppu. The first invitation to any function in any house in these eight villages is always to Palayadi Karuppu. The Pala tree behind the Palayadi Karuppu is also believed to have magical properties. Women without children chew the leaves and people honour the leaf by putting them on their head.

Panamkudi Mariamman temple

Compiled By
P.R.Ramachander

This is a 300 year old temple situated in annilam Taluq and is the village Goddess for the four villages of Panamgudi , Mangulam , Keezha panamgudi and Mela vassal. After a big tinned shed , there is big hall followed by a small hall . On both sides of the temple the guardian gods Kathavarayan and Mahamayi made of wood stand. On the right side of Kathavarayan is Aariya mala and on the left is Karuppxhagi. There are also separate temples for Thottikatti chinna and pechayi . The Mariyamman of the temple has a fierce look with round eyes and protruding teeth. Devotees believe that she has taken this form to prevent black magic from entering there

In the month of Aadi(July –august) there is a festival in this temple. The goddess crosses the river on a tuesday and stays in the other shore for two days, Next day she goes in to the villages of Melavasal, AAndipanthal , Mangulam and Keezha panangudi . Similar procession of the goddess takes place during the pongal festival also. On Shivarathri day there is a practice of fire pot accompanying the Goddess to her four villages. There is a huge crowd in this temple on Tuesdays and Fridays.

This village is 40 km away from Nannilam in Thiruvavur district of Tamil Nadu and is on the banks of Mudikondan river. The temple is open from 9 Am to 12 noon and 5 Pm to 8 Pm.

Pandi Muneeswarar of Melmadai

By

P.R.Ramachander

This God is situated in Melamadai village which is very near Mattu Thavani of Madurai town. People also call this God as Pandi Ayya. People believe that this God is the rebirth of Pandiyan Nedumchezhiyan who wrongly sentenced Kovilan the husband of Kannaki to death.

The present place of the temple was once upon a time a very dense forest. One group of nomadic people from Nerur, which is near Karur, happened to come to Madurai. Valliammai was an elderly lady of the group. One day in her dream she saw a well bearded tufted individual. He showed her a place in the forest and told, “I am lying here buried. Take me out and start worshipping me. Then you need not travel from one place to another. I would look after you.” She then told about her dream o others. They went to spot shown in her dream and started digging. They soon found a statue, which was sage like but was having an imposing moustache. Many people from the nearby areas came to see this statue. One of them was a saint. He told them, “This is the place where Madurai was situated and kannagi burnt it. The king at that time was Nedumchezhiyan. He died due to the shock of the injustice that he had done. Later he was born in, Madurai itself. He did great penances and Lord Shiva gave him salvation. This is his statue.” The people did not believe it. When they wanted to ask their doubts to the sage, he had vanished by then. People then started digging around the area and found many burnt artifacts. So they decided that the statue was that of the Panda king. They built a small temple and started worshipping the statue. They called him Pandi Muneeswarar or Pandi Ayya. Valliammai and her descendents were appointed as the priests and oracles (Maruladi) of the temple.

Behind the Muneeswarar temple is a temple of Lord Ganapathi People should salute Ganapathi first and come and offer Worship to Pandi ayya. Just opposite him is the place where people tie toy cradles to get children. East of that place is the temple Of Aandichami. There is no form to this God. It is only a few steps and a mound. People believe that it is Lord Subrahmanya. Near this is the temple of Samaya Karuppar. He is supposed to be the assistant to Pandi Ayya and would

obey his commands.

"Pandi Muneeswarar is most famous and well known for granting his boons to the devotees who worship him. He is showering his graces to one and all in a seated position (Padmasanam). He is bedecked with white cloth and colourful flower garlands. He is worshipped with milk, Pongal, Rosewater, Athar, Javvadu, jasmine flowers and dedicated love from the devotees. He will manifest at the place, where you think of him to redress your grievances, hurdles and to grant your wishes without fail."

There is another interesting story of Samaya Karuppu. It seems once when a white man was going for hunting, he came and asked jeeringly Samaya Karuppu, "How many animals will I kill today." Samaya karuppu did not answer.. So when the white man could not hunt for any animal, he came to the temple, broke the head and hands of Samaya Karuppu. It seems before he left the village the white man and his horse were turned in a stone. After this incident, people were very much afraid of Samaya Karuppu. Even today his idol is without head and hands.

Vegetarian offerings are offered to Pandi Muneeswarar, Pongal without sugar to the Aandi ayya and animals are sacrificed to Samaya Karuppu. Even arrack, cigars etc are offered to him.

People believe that ghosts and devils will leave their body, if they go to the temple of Pandi Ayya. Two km away from the temple is the place called Kazhungati. Here several tridents are planted. The people with ghosts and spirits start jumping and dancing as soon as they reach this spot. In fact the conductors of buses going to Pandi ayya's temple, make people get down before this place fearing the violent dance and jumping of ghosts and spirits. The present Maruladi (oracle) is a lady called Rajathi Ammal.

There is no separate festival for Pandi Muneeswarar. In the month of Adi (July-August) Aandi ayya is offered mango worship. From the Maruladi's house the ornaments of the temple are brought. Then Pandi Ayya is offered Chakkara Pongal. They put a screen and then sacrifice animals to Samaya Karuppu. And then the steps of Aandi ayya are covered with mango fruits. And he is offered salt pongal (Ven pongal).

Pattalamman, Chandana Karuppu and Dombarai amman

By

P.R.Ramachander

Kullapuram is a small village which is 12 km from Aandi patti of Theni district. It is on the banks of Koottaru. The people of this village were completely dependent on waters of this river. Two brothers called Ammiyappan and Kuzhaviyappan, both of whom were barbers came to settle down in this village. They both knew magic and brought with them their Gods Pattalamman and Chandana Karuppu. They consecrated these Gods in both sides of the village. Ammiyappan had a pretty daughter. Once Ammiyappan and Kuzhaviyappan had gone to a nearby village. At that time one black magician came and stopped the flow of the river much above the village by his magic. He challenged the villagers to get the water released. The villagers went to Ammiyappan's house for help. Ammiyappan's daughter agreed to help. With great faith in Pattalamman and Chandana Karuppu, he sent her magical spells. The water in the river was released. She also killed the black magician. When the brother's returned they were shocked by the action of their daughter. According to them she did not have power to do such magic and if some thing had gone wrong, the entire village would be affected. They decided to sacrifice her. They decided to offer Padayal worship to Chandana Karuppu. During these times food would be stored in a deep mud pit called Dombarai. They asked their daughter to get some food item. When she was inside, they covered the Dombarai. After killing of their daughter both of them found that their magic was not effective. They realized that their daughter was Pattalamman herself. Ammiyappan committed suicide by jumping in to the river. Afterwards, the people of the village started worshipping the daughter of Ammiyappan at the spot where she was killed. They started calling her Dombarai Amman.

The day before Chithra Pournami, the festival starts in the village. First they sacrifice a white cock at the point of the river where Ammiyappan committed suicide. Then they offer Padayal to Chandana Karuppu. This contains Drum stick and eggs. Near the temple is a very deep well constructed by Ammiyappan by his magical powers by summoning two Bhoothas. They first offer the Padayal to them. Then along with materials for worship of Chandana Karuppu kept in a box they go to the river. These are washed and they return to the Chandana Karuppu Temple by mid night. Then they sacrifice goats to Karuppu.

Next day (Chithra Pournami) the worship for Pattalamman is started. For this every year they decorate the Pattalamman statue kept in Chandana Karuppu temple. Then they start worshipping Dombarai Amman. The unmarried girls of the families worshipping Dombarai Amman offer Kozhakattai (rice ball) and Kamma Urundai to this Goddess. These are given to the girls for eating. One of them goes in to a trance and she will carry materials for worship of Pattalamman to her river. She gets them washed in the river and brings back. After this, worship of Pattalamman is performed. The worship and sacrifice of goats takes place.

People affected by evil spirits come to these temples and are cured.

Periya Kandi Amman of Veerapur

Veerapur is 14 km from Manapparai of Trichy district. There is a strange intricate tale about the Goddess Periya Kandi Amman who has a temple here.

It seems once upon a time a five headed serpent did intense Thapas so that, the Goddess Parvathi would be born to him, The Goddess was born but she was born s a eunuch, She did intense prayers to Lord Shiva, to get rid of this problem and asked her to do intense penance on a needle pit. He told her that after some time, two brothers will fight and die here and their sister Arukkani would cure the problem of Periya Kandi Amman. He also sent six maids (Kannimar) to help her. When she started the penance it disturbed a sage called Veeramha muni. The sage understood that Periya Kandi Amman was Goddess Parvathi herself. So he came to the place where she was doing penance and became her guard. That are called Ponni Vala Nadu during those times. Two brothers called Ponnar and Shankar ruled over the place. Another king called Thalayur kali became very jealous of these brothers. He knew the only way to win them is to make them fight with each other. He sent his Goldsmith with a gold plated measure to the palace of Ponnar in the evening. The gold smith said that measure was to be used to measure pearls to the chozha king. Since it was evening he requested the king to carefully keep the measure. He agreed and kept in his pooja room. De to the heat of the lamp all the gold melted and only a wooden measure was found the next day, When the king said that it was the measure given by gold smith, he asked to take bath in Vellangulam and take an oath before Ganesa there. He agreed. He entrusted the security of the place to Shankar. He requested sons of his aunt to guard the gate and asked his commander Sambuga to guard the town from outside.

As soon as he left the place Thalayaur Kali attacked with a huge army. Sambuga with twelve men killed all of them. Then Thalayur Kali retreated and came with much bigger force. This time the three sons of the king killed them all. Thalayur Kali went back and came with another huge army. Shankar drove them but was killed by Maya Kannan (Lord Krishna) who had come in the form of an enemy soldier. He told Shankar that, the life span allotted to him and brother was over and he was calling them back

Mean while Ponnar get in to the pond to take bath. The Gold smith tried to kill him by throwing a big stone. Ponnar got out of the pond and killed the Gold smith. He returned back to see his dead brother. Then Maya Kannan appeared before him and told the purpose of his birth and also informed him that his time was over. So Ponnar took his own sword and cut off his own head, His sister then came to the battle field crying, Kandi Amman heard this and sent her six maids to console her. The maids made her as one of them and then became seven maids. She then went to see Kandi Amman. As soon as Kandi Amman met her she became a full female. Then Kandi Amman went to the battle field with this lady and gave new life to Ponnar and Shankar. Then they told, that their time in the earth was over and they wanted to go back to heave. They also told their sister that Periya Kandi Amman and her maids will look after her.

When Periya Kandi Amman was doing penance, she met a man called Veera Sangan Poosari whose job was extracting honey from wild honey combs. He said to her "we do not keep up cleanliness and how can I offer you any thing." She it seems promised him that coming from him, she will accept any thing. Afterwards, that Poosari made a temple with green palm leaves and consecrated her on the hill top. Since it became difficult for him to walk that much distance, he brought Periya Kandi Amman and her maids to the plains and consecrated them in Veerapur. Since Kandi Amman is a strict vegetarian her temple is separate, half a km from there is another temple in which Ponnar, Shankar, Their sister (Thangal) and the six maids of Amman facing north. In another temple Karuppannachim is consecrated, with his temple facing east. There are also temple without roof or walls to Mahamuni and Veeram aha muni, who are both guardian Gods. In the month of Masi there is a ten day festival To Periya Kandi Amman. The people of the clan of Ponnar and Shankar have taken one fist of mud from their temple and have established their temple in many places. Since Periya Kandi Amman fulfills all the prayers of her devotees, there is huge rush in her temple on all days.

Periya Mariamman koil of Ramanathapuram

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Pookuzhi which literally means "Pit of Flowers" is the pit of burning embers kept free of ashes by fanning the pit. This is very common in many of the Mariyamman temples as well as Draupadi amman temples in Tamil Nadu. Normally male and female devotees after observing penance and drenched by bath of turmeric water, enter this Pookuzhi and walk through it. It is a great miracle nothing happens to any of them. But there is a Mariamman temple in Ramanathapuram town called Periya Mariyamman temple where entry in to the pookuzhi is banned to the fairer sex.. The temple believes that since the marriage of a girl is done with fire as witness, they should not enter the Pookuzhi. However the men who walk over the pookuzhi, take the burning embers from the pookuzhi by a spade and pour it over the heads of the female devotees who had observed penance. Nothing happens to any of the ladies. This temple is situated is situated about half a km distance from the new Bus stand of Ramanathapuram town. It is believed that one very old king of the Sethupathi dynasty after he defeated the Mysore kings was attacked by small pox. The present temple at that time was situated in a locality called Alli kulam. The king as per the advice of people worshipped the goddess and was cured of the dreadful disease. One of his descendants called Ramanatha Sethupathi, joined three cultivation water reserves by a canal and diverted the income generated by it for the upkeep of this temple, Many Sethupathis then took lot of interest in the development of this temple. Slowly it became a bog temple and hence was called the Periya Mariamman temple. This goddess is very famous for curing of poxes, ensuring long married life as well gifting of progeny. Apart from Mariamman, this temple also has Gods like Durgai amman, Chandana Mariamman, Rakkachi Amman, Kurathi Amman, Lord Ganesa, Young lord Subramanya, Karuppannachim, Pathittu padi Karuppan and Kala BHairavar. There is also a temple of snake pit and a temple dedicated to the old King Sethupathi who started it all. Ithi tree and Malai Vembu are the temple trees.

The temple is open from 6Am to 10 Am and 6 PM to 8 PM. However on Tuesdays and Fridays it is open from 6 Am to 2 Pm and 6 Pm to 9 Pm.

The main festival is the Festival of Pookuzhi which is held in Panguni (March-April) . Apart from this Chithra pournami festival , and Navarathri are celebrated in the temple . All Fridays of Adi month (July-August) and Thai (January-February) are also festival days.

Periyasami Ayyanar of Chokkampatti(Kadayanallur)

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This is a great Ayyanar temple which is near Kadayanallur of Tirunelveli district . This Ayyanar is housed in side a Shiva temple .A story tells about the Reason. Once sage Agasthya who was sent by Lord Shiva to the South India came to this Shiva temple, which had a Shiva linga consecrated by Lord Indra. The saint wanted to talk to Lord Shiva and called him "Karumshivalingame(Hey blackish Shiva linga) " . But his voice was stopped from reaching Shiva by a saint who was at that temple. When after two or three times, Shiva did not answer him, Sage Agasthya was greatly upset and told , "After some time an Ayyanar would come here and your fame would reduce." As per the words of Sage Agasthya , after some time the statue of Ayyanar accompanied by his consorts Poorna and Pushkala came out at the temple near the Shiva linga . Also a sacred bench identified as Goddess Rajarajeswari also appeared . Slowly the fame of Lord Shiva at that temple reduced and the Ayyanar became famous as "Periyasami Ayyanar(Big God ayyanar)."

In front of the temple the sacred river Karumba flows.(Karumbu in tamil means Sugarcane). People believe that to any one who takes bath in Karumba river and worships the gods of this temple, the bitter life would become sweet. If one climbs 18 steps from the river he would reach in front of "Attadi Karuppasami" sannidhi. After taking his permission and after worshipping Lord Ganesa, one has to enter the main temple. There is a God called "Koopitta Chol thaduthavar(One who prevented the call being heard) and temples of Kanni Vinayagar, Pal Vanna Nadhar , Madathi, Madasami, Veerabadrar , Sinnayyan, Ivar Raja , Draupadhi, Lada Sanyasi, Thavasu thambiran, Kartha Veeryarjunan, Kili udayar Sastha, Thalaikavar Udaya Sastha, Irulapasami, Kurukittan Sami, Peci, Kulapechi, Vana Pechi, Kadolai Pechi, Punamalai pechi, Bhodathar, Sangili Bhodathar, Vana Durga, Saptha kanyas, BHairava , Sandikeswarar etc. People who came with some request to God, tie a bell in this temple after their wants are fulfilled. Thousands of such bells are seen in this temple. There are large number of statues of cows, horses and elephants in this temple. The Vilwa tree, which is the Stala Vruksha of this temple is seen behind these temples.

There are two very attractive white horse statues at this temple. Ayyanar rides on one and Poorna and Pushkala on the other. It seems during British rule one Britisher jeeringly asked the villagers whether these horses would eat grass. It seems they replied that they will not only eat grass but also poo. Immediately it seems the Britisher threw some grass to these horses. It seems the horses ate all the horses and went to poo also

Another interesting story is about the priest who was detained very late one day asking help from Ayyanar. It seems Ayyanar promised him help and accompanied him till that priest reached his house.

The first of every Tamil month, the last Friday of the Tamil month , New moon day of Thai month, Maha Sivarathri, Panguni uthram , the new year day of Tamil year are celebrated in this month.

Many pilgrims who go to Sabari Mala visit this temple on their way.

Pirandi Ayyanar of Chellyampatti

By

P.R.Ramachander

Chellyampatti is a small village near Piran Malai of Shiva Ganga district. The God who guards this village is Pirandi Ayyanar.

About 700 years back about 200 people of the same joint family migrated to south from North India. Along them with about was Brahmin youth who used to assist them and his sister.

They settled in the Vanniya country. There was a king of Vali country in this state. Once he happened to see a pretty girl of this group and fell in love with her. He sent his emissaries with a proposal for the marriage. Since he was the king, the people of this family could not tell no to him. But the girl did not like to marry the king. So they went on making preparations for the marriage publicly but were also packing of their things to go away from there. When their preparation for departure was over, they put all the ornaments that they made for the bride on a dog's neck and departed from there and hastily started going away. The Brahmin lad and his sister accompanied them. Mean while the king with his army found about their duplicity and started chasing them. The family reached a river shore which was in floods. They prayed God to save them. He told them to kick a Vanni tree. They kicked a big Vanni tree on the shore. It fell across the river another tree from the opposite shore also fell. The family crossed the river on this god given bridge. Unfortunately the sister of the Brahmin lad fell in to the water and died. They consoled the Brahmin youth and went on traveling from place to place. The Brahmin youth also died. That family thought that the Brahmin youth and his sister were their Gods. . At night wherever they stayed, they use to powder rice and make a ball and offer it to the Brahmin youth. For this they had with them an Ammi (flat granite stone) and a kuzhavi (Pestle). One day when they camped in the forest, they found that

the Kuzhavi was missing. Since without offering the rice ball, none of them took food, they started a vigorous search. At last they found the Kuzhavi in an upright position in the middle of the forest. When they tried to lift it, it told , "I like this place. I want to live here." Because of this they thought that the Kuzhavi was the Brahmin youth , and constructed a temple for him. They also built houses for themselves and started calling their God as Pirandi Ayyanar. They also made a statue for his sister. When they dug a pond (chengai) for drinking water, they saw that a tamarind tree started growing near by. Some dogs started howling and scratching the soil near by. So they thought that both the pond as well as the tamarind tree were divine. They started calling the pond as Bhairava Chengai and the tree as Bhairava Chengai puli. Even today this tree is alive. They also made a mound , in which they buried all their wealth and ornaments and started calling it as Dindodharan Medu. Some black magicians tried to steal these treasures, then the Aandi deivam which was also consecrated at the temple went to Kerala and brought Malayala Karuppu to help them. Malayala Karuppu destroyed the magicians. When he wanted to go away, the other Gods in the temple requested him to be with them. He was reluctant but when he was told that he would also be worshipped, he chose to stay with them not in the temple but near a pond which was at a short distance. He was initially staying in a crab hole., one lady without knowing this introduced her hand in the hole. Then Malayala Karuppu ordered her to worship him. She was doing it regularly on all Fridays. But after a few days she entrusted the job to a boy who had come to graze goats. Till today his descendants are the priests in the temple of Karuppu.

A statue and a temple for Malayala Karuppu has been built in the temple complex of Pirandi Ayyanar. There are seven maidens and Chinnu Karuppu temples also. Besides there are 21 Hanuman statues ,sixty army gods and twenty seven thavasi gods , who are all represented by mounds. There is also a Ganapathi temple. There are no annual festival for the Ayyanar. If he permits there is a horse offering festival in some years. During that time animals are sacrificed to Malayala Karuppu in which only males participate. People believe that Pirandi Ayyanar would solve their problems , even before they reach back their homes.

Por panai kottai Muneeswarar

By

P.R.Ramachander

Translated in to English, the name of the God means "The sage God of fort of the golden palm". This great temple is situated in Por panai kottai village near Pudukottai town. There is an interesting story about its origin. It seems once Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi were flying above Tamil Nadu. Their trusted assistant Pushpa Danthan was following them, holding an umbrella over them. When they were flying over Pudukottai, some very pretty girls were taking bath in a tank there. Pushpa Danthan forgot himself and stood in the sky staring at the girls. When Lord Shiva noticed his absence he cursed Pushpa Danthan to become a golden palm. This place was then a forest and some hunters were occupying that area. This golden palm yielded one golden fruit every day. The hunters did not know its value. So they took it to Kattudayan Chettiyar of Kalasamangalam, which was just five km from that spot. The chettiyar asked them to bring the fruit to him and gave them lot of money to look after their day to day needs. During that time Sundarapuri Chozhan, who was the king of that area was affected by leprosy. Lord Shiva asked him to go and find the golden palm and take bath in the pond nearby. The king did and was cured of his disease. Then he heard about the fruit and Kattudayan Chettiyar. He approached the Chettiyar, who gave the king the 99 golden fruits that he collected till then. But when the king returned to the place where the golden palm was there, it had vanished. The king decided to stay there till he sees the God and built a fort there and started living there. Four km away from the fort was a village called Idayapatti. They used to supply milk to the fort from this village. Suddenly a mound appeared in between the village and the fort. People bringing the milk regularly fell down at this place. So the people dug the mound. Their instrument touched a stone object and blood started splashing from that. People recovered it and saw that it was a Shiva Linga. The king rushed to that spot and built a temple for the God by selling few of the Golden fruits. He buried the rest of the fruits below the temple. On the northern gate they consecrated Por panai Kali and at the southern gate placed an Ayyanar to guard the temple. For the east gate, he consecrated the God of the hunters, the Por Panai Muneeswarar. He also made him as the security guard of the entire fort. The fort though slightly damaged still exists. The place where the hunters used to stay is the Por Panai kottai village. On the east of the village is the temple of Muneeswarar.

Vinayagar, Pathinattampadi Karuppar , Por panai Kali and Muthal Ravuthar surround this temple. Ravuthar belongs to Islam. It seems he was from Mecca. He had come here to visit his friend Pila viduthi Kallar who was related by marriage to the king. Once Kallar was carrying a box of ghee made sweets , to the king. When Ravuthar asked , jestingly he told that there was only hair in the box. Ravuthar turned the sweets in to hair. The king summoned Ravuthar, who refused to go. Then the king prayed Por panai kottai Muneeswarar and Thadi Konda Ayyanar. They killed Ravuthar but made him as their assistant god.

During the period of one Divan of Pudukottai called Seshayya Shastri, a big statue of Por panai kottai Muneeswarar was got made in Thiru gokarna malai. . He also constructed the modern town of Pudukottai. It seems that the statue took round of all the 16 wide streets of Pudukottai before being consecrated. Though the God appeared from a Palm tree, Palai tree is worshipped s temple tree . People without children are asked to eat the leaves of the tree kept at the feet of Muneeswarar. It seems they are blessed with children soon. Girls praying for marriage put bangles for Por panai Kali. Sunday, Monday and Friday are busy days at the temple. On 16th day of Adi month , there is a milk pot festival for Karuppar. On that day some animals are sacrificed.

Poruloor Nalla Mangai Amman

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated in a small village called Poruloor which is near Ottan Chathiram of Dindukkal district of Tamil Nadu. There is an interesting story about this temple. It seems once upon a time, Poruloor was a very prosperous village. And very many rich people were living there. So some black magicians from Malayalam (Kerala) entered the village without any one seeing them and started stealing the riches of the people there. Scared the people of Poruloor went to the local Shiva temple and prayed the Lord to take suitable action. A voice was heard from the sanctum sanctorum that their property would be recovered and would come in search of them. That might also the Kerala Magicians came to steal in the village. Some power prevented them from entering the village and started chasing them. Understanding that it was a divine power, the magicians brought back all the wealth they have stolen and left it at the boundary of the village. People were happy and thanked Lord Shiva, After a few days the cows of the village when they were left for grazing reached a particular spot and poured their milk there. The people dug that place and got an idol of the goddess. Then the goddess entered in to a lady who had come there and she told in her trance, "I am the Nalla Mangai Amman. According to wishes of Lord Shiva, I only drove away the magicians and recovered your money." People thanked the Goddess and built a temple for her in their village. The goddess has eight hands and is in the pose of having killed an asura. There was a poor poet called Periyana Pulvar near Poruloor. He got fed up with his poverty and went to Thirupathi. There he composed a poem chiding Venkitachalapathy and told that he was the cause of his poverty. Immediately he lost his eye sight. When the poet further begged the lord he was told to go first to Pazhani, where he will regain sight of one eye and then to Nalla Mangai temple of Poruloor, where he would regain the sight of the other eye. When he complied with the order, he got back vision of both eyes. He settled down in Poruloor, wrote poems on the goddess and till his death he was a priest of the temple also. Unlike other similar temples Poruloor Nalla Mangai Amman does not have any minor gods with her. But there is a temple to Karpannachami for guarding her. IN the temple below the Vilwa tree they have kept the statue recovered when they dug the earth and inside the sanctum a new statue has been consecrated. Vegetarian dishes are only offered to this goddess. On Shiva Rathri day a mixture of green gram, horse gram and Bengal gram is boiled and offered to her. People of the village observe severe fast. From Kodu mudi which is 100 km from the temple people bring Kavadi and offer to the Goddess on Shiva Rathri days. It is a practice to seek the opinion of the Goddess before important decisions are taken by the villages. They keep a flower on the head of the Goddess. If it falls on her right, they believe that they can go ahead with the proposal However if it falls to the left side, they drop the proposa.

Poy cholla meyyar Bhadra kali of Moolangudi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Moolangudi village is in the Pudukottai district near Ponnamaravathi. There were a brother sister who were children in this village., they were very close. One day when they were guarding paddy which was put to drying, one villager it seems remarked that they were like husband and wife. This hurt both of them. They left that place wandered here and there and at last hid themselves in a pot of Bhajra. By the time the villagers located them, they had breathed their last. When they were cremated together, their body turned in to ash but nothing happened to their cloths. So they gain put it in the pyre. Still nothing happened. Then they heard a voice from heaven saying that both of them are Gods and would look after the village.

The brother was called Poy Cholla Meyyar(Meyyar who does not tell a lie) and the sister as Seelai Kari Bhadra Kali. But immediately after wards the village started facing lot of problems. Thinking that it is due to Bhadra Kali, the removed the statue from the temple and threw is facing the earth in the forest. Things subsided but once a goatherd found the Kali and turned it to see the sky. The entire village caught fire „ They then approached Poy Cholla meyyar and prayed to him to pacify his sister. He asked them to bring the statue and consecrate it facing him. The problems of the village disappeared. In this village there was a temple where Ponnann and Brahmar Karuppar were consecrated. They do not have a roof over them. These two gods belonged to a village 25 km from Moolangudi. Once a girl of Moolangudi got married to a boy of that village. When Moolangudi people went to that village after the marriage, they slept in the temple of Ponnann. That night Ponnann came in their dream and asked them to take Him along with them. Then they told him that taking a God from the boy's place would lead to trouble. But when they assured that they would make Moolangudi prosperous they agreed. They got the symbolic stick from that temple came back and consecrated them in their village. The girl who went in marriage from Moolangudi was sent back. But Karuppar and Ponnann kept their promise and Moolangudi became a very prosperous village.

Ponnann and Karuppar have become the assistant to Poy Cholla meyyar. By the side of Meyyar, two of their horses(statues) are always kept in readiness so that they can start to do any job at any time. People believe that daily night they go to their native village riding on these horses.

Very near Moolangudi there is a Mountain called Vemmalai. There were two Sidha sages on this mountain. After their death they built a temple for them. They were called Mooligai Malayan and Shiva Lingam. They consider that Mooligai Malayaan is Lord Muruga, These villagers used to go on an annual pilgrimage to Pazhani. Once in their absence all their wealth was stolen. After this Mooligai Malayan came in their dreams and told them, that they need not go to Pazhani but come to his temple. Now this custom is followed. Apart from these Gods there are also Karutha Kaliyan and Chinna Karuppu temples in this village.

There is ten day festival for Meyyar in the month of Vaikasi (May-June). During Maha Shivarathri also there is a festival. Once in every five years there is a festival called Avery Padaippu , when animals are sacrificed to Ponnann.

Poyyalamman of Okkur

By

P.R.Ramachander

The temple of Poyyalamman is in a village called Okkur which is 5 km from Avudayar Koil Of Pudukottai district.

Once upon a time the Poyyalamman temple was a part of the Siva temple of the village. Once when the priest came back from the temple he had locked a child in side the temple. Once he realized he rushed to the temple. When he was trying to open the door, he heard the voice of Poyyalamman, " I want to play with the child. Let her be here for the night, " The priest who was nervous tried to open the lock. Then Poyyalamman tore the child in to pieces and threw her out of the temple. When the villagers heard about this incident , they decided to have nothing with the temple and stopped all worship to the goddess. After some time, Poyyalamman came in the dream of one of the elders and told him, "I am very sorry for what I did. I am sad that I am not being offered any worship. Please build a temple for me. Then onwards I will take care of the delivery of all the women of the village. " The people believed her and a temple was built for her. From then onwards the villagers have stopped spending money for the delivery of the women of the village. When the family knows that the delivery time is nearing , they take her to an enclosed stage near the temple, leave her there and come back. Poyyalamman takes care of the delivery. The lady and her child live in a temple belonging to the hut for another 15-16 days. The villagers believe that Poyyalamman would also take care of the after delivery problems. There are two festivals at the temple in the months of Vaikasi (May-june) and Chithirai (April-May) Apart from Okkur , even all the nearby villagers send their girls for safe deliver to Poyyalamman temple.

Putheri Ant hill temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Putheri is a small village which is 4 Km from Nagar Kovil town. On a part called Vishnu Puram of Putheri many people were living.. At that time a sage called Yogeeshwarar came to the village and started living there . After he came the village prospered greatly. After some time the sage attained salvation and in a place in the town he was buried. A huge anthill started growing in the place he was buried. It grew up eighteen feet in height and all the people were greatly surprised. . To prevent damage to the ant hill, the people built a walled structure around the huge ant hill. All those who worshipped the ant hill started seeing positive results. In the temple which is on one acre land there are temples for .Yogeeshwaramudayar , Naayinaar.Poolavuydata Kandan Sashta and Bhothathan . There is a hall for doing devotion (Vazhipadu) .The new year in Chithirai month and Visagam star of Vaikasi month and Panguni Uthram are festival days in this temple. On all Saturdays in the vazhipattu hall, Bhajanai(Musical combined prayers) are held.. The Guru Pooja for Yogeeshwara also is celebrated. The mud from the ant hill is only is given as Prasada. People believe that this mud cures all diseases.

Rasipuram Nithya Sumangali Mariamman

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is about 500 years old and is situated in Rasipuram ,Near Namakkal of Tamil nadu .It seems that once some people were digging a field and blood came out and then the found out the statue of the Goddess in the form of a linga. Goddess entered in to one person there and he told thm to build a temple for her in the village.This temple is situated between four hills viz Kolli malai , alavai malai , natha malai and Bodha malai.

In this temple before the Goddess a wooden post with three branches representing her husband (Kambam) is planted .Since the goddess is always able to see her husband , she is called as Nithya Sumangali..Women believe that offering worship to this Amman would also keep them as Nithya Sumangalis.Cooked rice is the normal offering of this temple.

Women seeking children do a strange pooja in this temple.During Aipasi month, they come and remove the old kambam and plant new Kambam immediately.They take the old Kambam do pooja to it, offer curd rice to it and eat that curd rice.It seems this pooja assures them child birth .People also worship the Amman if they have vision problems.There is an annual festival in this temple in the month of Aipasi

The temple is open between 6 am to 12 PM and 4.30 pm to 9.30 Pm.The phone number of the temple is 04287-220411.The temple is on the road from Namakkal-Rasipuram ,Nearest railway station is Salem. This is a Tamil video about the temple https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtoHz_L8Lsc

Salem Pootu Chami or Alankottai muniyappa temple.

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Alankottai was the prison building in Selam town during the end of nineteenth century. And in that place a Muniyappa Sami temple was built and it was called as Alankottai Muniyappan. The devotees who want to put an end to family problems , for solving quarrels between husband and wife, For leaving out drinking habit, For solving property disputes, for getting their children married , for getting children, to end quarrels between daughter in law and mother in law etc come to this temple, keep a lock before the god Muniyappan , worship the God and hang the lock after locking it with a key in the special place meant for it.. They believe that their wishes would get fulfilled if they do like this and so they call th is NMuniyappa God as Pootu Chami(lock god) They specially believe that if there are raging quarrels between daughter in law and mother in law , by hanging a lock like this, their mouth gets locked. The Eighteenth day of Adi and certain auspicious days in the thai month are considered as special; days and goat is sacrificed to the God and pongal is prepared and offered to God, They also offer Cigars and toddy to the God., Many devotees settled abroad come every year and worship this God.

This temple is situated opposite to the Salem ITI and from the new bus stand you can go bu bus or auto.

Samana Malai Ayyanar and Karuppana chami of Keezh kuil kudi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Keezhkuil kudi is a village is 10 km from Madhurai in Madhurai -Theni road. This village is in the bottom of Samana Malai. Samana Malai was once upon a time a great centre for Jainism in Tamil Nadu. There are several caves and drawings left by people belonging to this religion here. Vadivel kkarai was a neighboring village.

Once upon a time only Ayyanar temple was there below the hill and Karuppanar temple was in the top of the hill, During those times white men used to camp in Madhurai. They used to ride on horses in front of Meenakshi temple. They jeered at the Goddess and behaved like ruffians. Karuppana Chami, who was seeing all this from the top of hill, could not tolerate this behaviour. So one day, while the white men were crossing the temple gate the horses slipped and white man was injured. When this began to happen regularly, the white people asked an astrologer. He told them to shift the Karuppana chami from the hill top to the plane. The Velars (potters) did the job for the while men and consecrated the Karuppana chami near the Ayyanar temple facing north.

Keezhkuil kudi and Vadivel kkarai were in the banks of river Vaigai. Due to consecutive failure of rains, both these villages suffered great famine. Some of the villagers went to different villages in search of livelihood. Some of them went as priests to the Munu Chami Koil in Karumathur. Later there was rain and the economy improved. At that time those who went to

Karumathur wanted to come back. But Virumappachami and Kasi Mayan whom they were worshipping prevented them from leaving Karumathur. So they brought a fist of soil from Moonu chami temple in Karumathur and consecrated Virumappachami and Kasi Mayan near Karuppannachi. Also they consecrated as their assistants Kazhuvanathan, Karppayi ammal, Irulappan, Sangili Karuppann chami, Chonai Chami and VeeraBhadra Chami. Before Karuppar was brought down from the hill top, Brahmins were priests in Ayyanar temple but later Velars were appointed as priests. They used to come from Vilachari which is 5 km from these temples. Since the path was full of wild animals as well as thieves, it seems the bears from the forest used to escort these priests to and from the temple. They believed that Karuppar was coming in the form of bear to help them. They even named their children as "Samana malai Karadi (bear of jain mountain).

In the month of Margazhy, the Brahmins who were original priests of the temple offer "Pavadai poojai" to the Ayyanar.

The expenses will be collected by contribution from every family living in Keezh kuil kudi. They buy 160 padi (a local measure) of rice, make Chakkarai pongal (sweet pongal) and this is stacked like a temple tower in the hall opposite Ayyanar temple. All the villagers are summoned by a drum and then the Ayyanaradi gets down in the fire pit where this pongal was made and answers their questions. Later the pongal is divided equally among the villagers.

Similarly on all thirty days of the month of Purattasi pongal is offered to the gods.. The two villages each celebrate for 15 days each. On the first day they make a statue of Muthalamman with mud taken from the village, the women of the village worship her by lighting the flour lamp. Then Muthalamman is taken in procession and mixed with waters of the local ponds. Next day it is the horse taking festival. Several horses including the three horses on behalf of the village are got made in Vilacheri village. And they are brought in a procession from there. Then every house offers pongal and sacrifice a goat to the Karuppar.

The villagers protect a lotus tank in the village with care. It seems once a contractor who did fishing in the tank spoiled it. Later when the fish(they had three lines on them) caught from the tank were cooked, the food was full of blood. Then villagers approached Ayyanar and this was set right. They offered a lamp pillar to the God. Women and unclean people are prevented from entering the pond.

Whenever any villager wants to take an important decision, he picks a flower packet from the temple. If they get red flower, then they abandon the plan. If they get green flowers, they post phone the plan and later implement it. If they get white flower, they implement their plan immediately,

Semapudur village with several temples of village Gods

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Semapudur is a small village which is very near Keezha Iral village which is on the Madurai Thoothukudi road(108 km from Madurai). The village has only about 150 houses but has seventy different temples dedicated to various village Gods of Tamil Nadu. Since no logical reason or village stories are found for the reason of having so many village Gods in a small village, experts believe that once upon a time it was prominent town where large number of villagers from different villages settled along with their family Gods. For some unknown reason, the town started growing smaller and the villagers migrated to other places including towns. The fact that these people have not forgotten either the village or their family Gods is proved by the fact that during Maha Sivarathri festival and Panguni uthram festival most of them reach back to this village to worship their family Gods. These days are celebrated with great grandeur and pomp by all the guests of the village. They also come to the village for the ear boring ceremony and first head shaving of their children. The invitation to the family God is invariably sent to their respective family Gods.

This village also contains some common village God temples like that of Ayyanar (at the entrance of the village), Munnodi Karuppan, Maruthu Pandiar, Sudalai Madan, Pala vesa karan, Malayamman, Kaliyamman etc. The research scholars in several universities should study this village in a more thorough manner and find out more about the collection of village Gods.

Singapatti Ayyanar temple, NaLLur

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

About 500 years back, a person from Villiputhur, due to famine had to go to some other place for living.. In his native village he had worshipped Ayyanar, Pechi and Karuppasami. He went to that temple, took one fist of soil from there, put it in a palm leaf box and took it along with him. When he was nearing NaLLi village, he saw that the lake there was about to break up. He could see fertile crops in the field. He kept the box of soil in a near by place and tried his best to repair the lake bank so that its water would not come out. When he was not able to do it, he left all his things there,

went to naLLI village and brought them to repair the bund. When he came back the bund was already repaired and in a good condition. From that persons basket Ayyanar came out and told ll of them, "It was me who repaired the bund and saved your crop. If you build a temple for me and the gods with me here and do daily worship, we would protect you for ever. People went and told SEvalpatti Jamindar who was looking after the village about this. Jamindar immediately built a temple and made every body worship those gods. Since the lake was called Singamada lake this ayyanar was named as Singamada ayyanar.

In the sanctum sanctorum Ayyanar is there along with his consorts, Poorna and Pushkala. Pechiyamman has a temple there. Turmeric paste is always applied to her face. So she is called Manjanai Pechi Amman. There are also statues of Madan, Madathi, Pathala Kanni, Raakaachi Amman and Pathinettam Padi Karuppachami.

Three days after Shivarathri, after taking permission from Ayyanar, Karupachami goes for hunting. This is the biggest festival in the temple. Most of the important Hindu festivals are also celebrated in this temple. The temple is open from 7 Am to 5 PM. At 12 noon there is a special pooja to Ayyanar. Devotees believe that if some one comes to this temple, takes bath and goes round the God three times on a Friday, all his mental worries would get solved. Devotees also believe if they take Turmeric from Pechiyamman temple and keep it in their home. Auspiciousness will always be there in the house. The temple tree is Bilwa tree

From Kovilpatti travel towards Chathur in the state highway for 11 km. The temple is nearby to this point.

Siravetti ayyanar of Melayur

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This temple is near the tourist town of Poompuhar. It seems once upon a time this entire area was covered with forest. One villager was eking out his living by cutting trees to fire wood. One day he cut a tree and made it in to pieces and left for his home. Next day when he went back he saw that all the firewood have again joined together in to a living tree. That night Ayyanar came in his dream and told him that it was he who was in the form of a tree. He wanted that man to build a temple for him. The wood cutter went and told other villagers and they planted three stones and started worshipping them. Later a new temple in that soulful surroundings was built for Ayyanar. Apart from Ayyanar, two security gods, Purbudayan and Nallasiva murthi also find place in that temple. People who get in to fight, robbery etc come and request Purambudayan to solve their problems in writing. People believe that he solves them quickly. Nallasivamurthy was a saint who lived in these parts. His Samadhi is also inside this temple and Nalla Siva Murthy statue is established on it. On every new moon day, There is a special worship to this Ayyanar from 6 Am to 10 Pm. People believe that, if they participate in this worship, all their problems, like marriage, child birth sufferings of the family get solved. All the pilgrims who come from outside stay that night in the temple and go only after participating in the next day's worship at 4 Am. This temple is near Dharmakulam on the Cheerkazhi-Poompuhar road and would be open from 6 Am to 12 noon and from 4 Pm to 7 Pm.

Sudalai Madan of Seevalapperi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Seevalapperi is a village which is 12 km from Palayamkottai of Tirunelveli district. The temple of Sudalai Madan is located there.

When Lord Subrahmanya left Kailasa and settled down in Pazhani, Goddess Parvathi wanted another child. Lord Shiva asked her to her near the Emerald pillar lighting an ever shining lamp. She started doing it. When the luster of the lamp reduced Lord Shiva pushed the wick little. Then three sparks of the light fell in the lap of Goddess Parvathi. They became a mass of flesh. Then she prayed Lord Brahma who made the piece of flesh in to a child. This child was called Chudalai. It grew up. But the child was voraciously hungry and started going at night to burial grounds and eat the corpses. One day Goddess Parvathi noticed the smell of the corpse from the baby. When she told this to Lord Shiva, he became very angry and asked her to send out the boy from Kailasa. She sent the boy along 21 measures (kottai) of cooked rice, a preparation using drum stick and sent the baby along with Vana Pechi.

The child reached Seevalaperi on the banks of Thamra parni. It liked the place. But he was very hungry. So one day the God approached Masanam a goat herd and asked him to give goat milk after milking a particular goat. Masanam told that, that particular goat was barren. When Sudalai Madan insisted, he milked and to his surprise got lots of milk, which Sudalai Madan drank. He then drew a wheel on the tongue of Masanam. He also promised him that he would come and solve all the problems when called by Masanam.

Masanam went to Shiva giri and learned Religion as well as yoga and returned after several years. In the place where he saw Sudalai Madan, there was a Shiva Linga. People called Masanam as Vala Guru Sannasi and entrusted the worship of God to him. He and his clan started worshipping Sudalai Madan. Though he initially worshipped the Shiva lingam, later they made a statue of Sudalai Madan with four hands. Besides him they also consecrated Vana Pechi and Bramara Shakthi. Just outside the temple there is a Puthia chami (Sudalai Madan after giving shape by Lord Brahma). Behind

him is a stone without shape called Munda Sami. About half a km from this temple, there is a temple of Vala Guru Sannasi in the form of a linga. This is the place where he was buried after death. The Abhisheka to Sudalai Madan is done twice with water from the river Thamra Parni. When offerings are made to Sudalai Madan, a part is taken to Vala Guru Sannasi temple and offered to him.

Another strange custom in this temple is that the Prasada in this temple is the mud from the burial ground of the village which is 2 km from the temple.

People believe that this prasada is a cure for all and fulfiller of all wishes.

On Thai poosam day pongal is made and offered to Vala Guru Sannasi and later distributed.

On the last day of Panguni (march-april) there is a big festival in the Sudalai Madan temple. The dress for the God is brought from the Vala Guru Sannasi temple. It is believed that Vala Guru Sannasi worships the God that day. Next day the Gods wear the silver dresses and the Chamiyadi of Sudalai Madan goes in to a trance. He runs to the cremation ground of Brahmins searches for corpses and not getting it he runs back to the temple. There a black sheep is sacrificed. He drinks its blood. He also drinks the blood of other goats which are offered to the temple.

Then 21 measures of rice is cooked along with eggs, chicken etc and offered to the Gods. Then the Gods are worshiped.

Sudalai Madan is also offered Cigars, alcohol etc.

People pray for their welfare and disperse.

Thiruppani Karisalkulam mariamman temple

Compiled By

P.R.Ramachander

hirupani karisalkulam is a village, which is 8 km from Thirunelveli town, The great speciality of the temple is the festival that is held there,

This festival starts 16 days before aAdi amavasai (New moon day in July-august)>it is called KLodai festival, The sun day previous to the starting, the potters would make two dolls, paint them and keep them in the Mariamman temple. They are called Anal maari (Mariamma of burning embers) and Agni Mari (Mariamma of fire). These dolls would be decorated and offerings made to them. An important washer man of the village, would get cooked rice from people, offer them to those two maris and would distribute it to all people. Men would dance and sweetly sing about their stories (I could not get them)

On Tuesdays early morning at 3 AM a ritual called "Kayiru kuthuthal" would take place. This is driving in needle below the hips of the dolls, attach thread and draw it to the other side of the doll. After this the two Maris would come in procession in a flower chariot

Then what is called "poomalai yerivathu (throwing of garlands)" would take place. It is nothing but decorating small children with flowers and asking them to accompany the chariot. The next Wednesday when the chariots come to a halt a worship called "Odukku poojai" would take place. This consists of ladies of each house of the village cooking rice in a new pot and bringing it to the home of the chief (washerman). He will carry them and offer it to both the Maris

Later goat and cock would be cut and offered and later that tailor would take both Maris to the burial ground. Then he will take a stick of Kul kuthi draw lines on the mari Am, mans and all people would return without seeing back to their homes

People who treated those Maris as their babies, decorated them and fed them, would cry uncontrollably,

Some people do a sort of penance thinking of these goddesses,

You can have a glimpse of festival <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dck7I5xIqB4>

Thakaraveli Mariamman Temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Thakara veli is a very small village in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu. This village is situated on the road between Thiruthuraiipoondi and Thiruvavur near Alathambadi village. The goddess called Ayiram Kannudayal(Goddess of thousand eyes) and Mahamai(great enchantress) who hasa temple there is considered as extremely powerful This Mariamman is also called Puthadi Mariamman as her idol is supposed to have risen out of an anthill. This village which rarely has visitors is visited by Lakhs of people during the temple festival of this Mariamman. People believe that she is all powerful and cures all diseases. When some devotee is cured he is brought in a village coffin(Paadai) by people and placed before the goddess. Unlike many other Maiyamman temples, this Goddess does not accept sacrifice of animals. However devotees bring lakhs of goat and hen and release them in the temple and go back. The festival is a very grand affair. But I could not get either the timings of the temple or the time of the festival.

Thambi kalai Ayyan

By

P.R.Ramachander

Thangamedu (Hill of gold) is a village on the shores of river Bhavani which is 20 km from Erode on the Erode Sathyamangalam road. The temple of Thambi kalai Ayyan is there in this village. The story of Thambi Kalai Ayyan is as follows

There was a rich Jamindars in these parts called Thambi kounder. He was maintaining a large herd of cattle. His younger brother Nallayyan used to take his cattle to graze in the forest. One day Nallayyan noticed that there was no milk in the udder of one cow while returning back. Next day he watched this cow carefully. It went in to a bush of cactus. He followed with difficulty and found that, the cow was standing above an ant hill and a Cobra living in the ant hill was drinking its milk. He told about this to his brother Thambi kounder. But Thambi kounder refused to believe this story and beat Nallayyan, black and blue. Other relatives saved Nallayyan and they along with Thambi Kounder went along with him next day to the forest. They also witnessed the cobra drinking milk from the cow. Thambi Kounder was stunned and felt very sad that he has beaten his younger brother. The relatives consoled him and brought him back to the village. That night the snake came in the dream of Thambi Kounder and requested him to build a temple for him(snake). It said, if you do it, I would look after your future generations. That night Thambi Kounder went to the forest and started sitting near the ant hill. He refused to return back to the village Thambi Kounder started worshipping the snake. Several divine acts were performed by Thambi kounder after this.

One great magician of Kerala who laughed at him became his disciple. One king of Orissa called Vijaya karna heard about him and came to the village and again became his disciple.

One merchant from Orissa brought his dumb daughter Padmavathi before Thambi Kounder and he made her speak. He also gave sight to the son of Anantha a Brahmin from Avanthi. After a long life, Thambi Kounder attained Samadhi. The people raised a temple for him and the cobra God there itself. Thambi kounder was called by his devotees as Thambi kalai ayyan.

In the temple Thambi ayyan faces north and Nageswari Amman is the adjoining temple facing east. There is a tunnel below her temple. Large number of snakes live there even today. These snakes normally roam inside the temple and have not harmed any one till today. Devotees offer milk in cups to these snakes. Though peacocks are enemies to snakes they do not harm them in this temple.

Behind Nageswari Amman's temple there is a temple for Naga Lingam. The Theertha (divine water) which is given from this temple is believed to be capable of curing all skin disorders. Like this people who have bitten by poisonous snakes are brought to the temple and lie down before the temple of Thambi ayyan. People believe that they will be cured. People who want to get married do Milk Abhishekam (anointment) to Nageswari Amman. Just out side the main temple, there is a temple to Nallayyan, the younger brother of Thambi Kounder. Near it there is a statue of a cow from whose udder a statue of Cobra is drinking milk. There are also temple of Pambhatti chithar, Ganapathi, Sankara Narayanan, Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, sage Thirumoolar and Karupannachami.

On Tuesdays, Fridays, full moon and new moon days, lot of devotees visit the temple of Thambi kalai Ayyan. From the Tuesday just before Panguni Uthram till next Sunday there is a festival in this temple. People bring water from river Bhavani and anoint the Uthsavar statues of the temple on the first day. On all the six days Pongal is offered to the Gods. Goat sacrifice is done only to Karupannachami. During the last three days a very big cattle fair is arranged in the temple. On the Karthigai festival day, one lakh lamps are lit in the temple.

Thavasi Aandi of Melaurappanur

By

P.R.Ramachander

This village is near Thirumangalam of Madhurai district. Thavasi Aandi which was once upon a time worshipped by a higher caste is now being worshipped by the Dalits of the village, there is no temple but a decorated platform on which there is a stone, and People believe that Thavasi Aandi is a very powerful God. Nothing is known as to how he came to this village and why the temple priest as well as Chamiyadi is Dalit. People believe that every year they are able to harvest a good crop because of Thavasi Aandi. So once the harvest is over a certain portion of the harvested produce is marked to belong to Thavasi Aandi. The person who gives the grain as well as its quantity is clearly recorded.

On the third Friday of Karthigai (November-December), the festival for Thavasi Aandi is celebrated. All the grain marked to him by different people are sold and banana fruits are brought for that amount. Normally more than 50 thousand Banana fruits are brought. On the day of the festival both the priest and Chamiyadi do not take any food and observe strict penance. Two she buffalos are tied since morning without milking. The priest throws some sacred ash at its udder and it seems its calf will not go any where near it.

The ornaments of Thavasi Aandi kept in a house in a box are ceremonially brought to the temple. The box is taken to every house and worship is offered there. Till the boundary of the village women accompany the box. Since ladies are not supposed to visit this temple, they go back to their homes. After midnight the buffaloes are milked and mixing few fruits Abhisheka is performed to the God.

Later all the male villagers assemble before the temple and pray, "Rain and water should come. We should be able to get a good harvest. Please protect us. Please give a good sign." After some time they hear the clear sound of a lizard from the near by banyan tree. Till they get this sign, they keep on waiting. If the sign is delayed people believe, it as a result of wrong doing by the village. All of them pray and fall at the feet of the Chamiyadi. Under no circumstance the people of the village return to the village without hearing the sign it seems in one year they got the sign only after two days. Similarly individual people ask for this sign before taking important decisions in the family.

The Banana is then divided among the families living in the village according to the contribution they have made.

Theepayntha Nachiyar of Bhoothangudi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Bhoothangudi is a small village near Vadalur of Cudalore district. This is mainly populated by a caste known as Chethiyar. They were soldiers of Chozha kingdom. Usually during peace, they cultivate the land and hunt animals in the forest. Once when several Chethiyars went hunting, they saw a girl weeping in the forest. One of the Chethiyars brought her back.

Attracted by her the entire village considered her as their daughter. When she was about eleven, her foster father died and was cremated. This girl also wanted to be cremated in a separate pyre along with him. Though people refused, they agreed as she was insisting on it. That girl coconut tied Thali Lime fruit and betel leaf which are holy things in her cloth while jumping on the fire. She also told the villagers that she would take care of the villagers. After her live cremation, the people were surprised to find that all the holy things she carried to the pyre were fresh and not burnt. So they understood that she was a goddess. Chethiyars consider her as their clan Goddess and she continuously protects them. There is a rare tree called Yer Azhinji near her temple. People wanting babies will tie a cradle on the tree, put a baby toy in it and rock the cradle. Once they get the child they offer the child's first hair to the Goddess. People consider as incarnation of Goddess Sita. In her temple God Chakra (Holy wheel of Vishnu), Lord Ayyappan, Nava Grahas surrounding the slippers of Lord Rama are also there.

The poovaraga Swamy of Sri Mushnam comes and stays at this temple during Masi Magam while going to the beach for sea bath. During Nava Rathri and all Fridays in the month of Adi there are special worships in this temple. Since this temple is by the side of the highway all drivers do not forget to salute this goddess while traveling.. New vehicles are also brought here for special worship.

Thenachi Amman Temple

By

P.R.Ramachander

Chiravayal puthur is a small village near Pillayar Patti of Siva Gangai district of Tamil Nadu. Near by in the banks of the river Thenaru and on its bank is the temple of Thenachi Amman. There is a story about its origin.

A cowherd woman was supplying butter milk to the surrounding villages near the river Thenaru. Once after completing her trade, when she was washing the butter milk pot in the river, she saw a big Statue of a goddess made of stone floating in the river. She requested the Goddess to remain there till she comes back. Then she rushed to the near by villages and brought people from there. Once the people assembled, they took the statue from the river and placed it in the banks of Thenaru. One of the ladies in the crowd was taken over by the Goddess and she showed where exactly the statue should be consecrated. The cowherd woman also started living with the Goddess. It seems after death she was also made a minor goddess of the temple called Idaichi Amman and consecrated near the idol of Thenachi Amman. There is another unconfirmed story also It seems a cow herd woman who was in the family way visited the temple and the goddess killed her. The cow herd lady's soul started troubling the villagers in various ways. So they built a temple for her. Even today no

lady in a family way enters the temple.

The goddess is with eight hands and is in the pose where she is killing Mahishasura. She appears very furious and faces the north. The idaichi Amman faces her. Near by there is a separate consecration for Sani (Saturn). By his side is Bhairavar. Also statues of Shiva, Visalakshy, Ganapathy and Subrahmanya are also found in the temple.

In the entrance room of the temple there are many broken statues. People say that they are the statues of the people who built the temple.

It seems that there was one Minnam Chettiyar who used the services of Ghosts (Boothas) to build the temple. Once the job was over, they were not compensated properly so the ghosts stayed in the temple and started troubling the devotees. The devotees thought that by breaking the statues where they reside they will go away. That is the reason why those statues are broken. Later all the broken pieces were collected and buried out side the temple. They also consecrated a Kali Statue there. That Kali is called Minnan Chetti Kali.

On the 3rd of Thai month (January 17th) there is a Manju virattu (Taming of bulls) held at the temple. After witnessing a violent bull fight , it seems the European Collector of the district (in pre independent days) asked them that it should be conducted with out Kombu(horn of the bull) .The organizer was very sad because of it. That night the goddess told him to conduct it without Kombu (A musical instrument). He conducted without Kombu music next day. The collector, who appreciated the reply, gave a huge land for conducting Bull fight to the village.

This temple is managed by the Kundra kudi adheenam. Huge crowds gather at the temple on Tuesdays and Fridays. The Nattu Kottai Chettians (nagarathar) who brought the Goddess from the river and constructed her temple do not commence any important activity without praying o this Goddess.

Thimmarayan samuthiram Suyambu Nagamani Devi temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Thimmarayan Samuthiram is on the road from Thiruvanaikkaval temple and Kallanai in the TRichinopoly town. On the road while proceeding from THiruvanaikkaval , on the left side you would be able to see a 12 feet ant hill. This ant hill is the sanctum sanctorum of the temple , which is 400 years old. Nearby there are steps going down and if you get down there is a pretty temple there. It seems initially , only a Karuvela tree near that anthill was worshipped as Nagamma. And over time that ant hill itself became the sanctum sanctorum of the Nagamma idol. This idol has a lady goddess face on the top portion and the bottom is the usual Shivalingam. Once decorated it only looks like the statue of the Goddess. This idol faces north and on both sides there are guardian goddesses, Next to idol of Nagamma in front of the anthill below the Karuvela Maram are the statue of Kali and outside the anthill is the statue of Angala Parameshwari. People say that several serpents live in the anthill and once in a while come out. In the front of the temple, there are idols of Kali and Pechiyamman. In the middle there is a Soola and statue of a lion. On the outer Prakara of the temple are Mahalinga Sastha, KOMbareswarar, Kamakshi Amman, Kalinga Narthanar , Seven mothers, Mahalakshmi and Anjaneya.

Angala Parameshwari , Samayapurathu Bhagawathi , Karuppu Chami, Muneeswarar and Madhuraiveeran are inside the compound of the temple and are considered as guardian gods.. There is gooseberry (Nelli) tree in the temple and below it are Bhairava , Sudalai Madan and Sambuga moorthi.. The temple tree is a neem tree and possibly to indicate that the temple is the Temple of three goddesses, It has split in to three branches. The Hastha star and Sashti thidhi in Thai month (January-February) is considered as the founding day of the temple and is celebrated as a festival.. The mud from the anthill in the temple is considered to have medicinal properties and the Prasada of the temple, is this mud mixed in water used for anointing the Goddess. Full moon day of every month is also celebrated as a festival . The poojas and anointing of the Gods are done before 8.30 Am and the temple opens to devotees only after that . On Sundays in Rahu Kala the Goddess is anointed with milk. Devotees believe that by participating in the milk Anointing , all doshas would go away , Marriage problems would be solved and Son would be born.

Going round the temple three times and tolling the temple bell three times is supposed to fulfill our wishes.. The temple is open between 8.30 Am to 7 PM..Thimmaraya Samuthiram is situated 4 km away from Thiruvanaikkaval on the Kallanai road.

Thiruvanaikaval Margamudaya Ayyanar

Compiled by
P. R. Ramachander

During the time of King Kari Kala Chozhan , the paddy crops from Trichy to Tanjore used to dry in season of lean rain and used to drown in water when the rainfall was in excess. So the king raised both the banks of Cauvery river and on the northern shore in Thiruvanaikkaval consecrated an Ayyanar temple. And prayed him to show the way to solve the problem. He suddenly got an idea of Building Kallanai (stone dam) and took the water stored there using canals to the paddy fields . When this solved their problems , people believed that Ayyanar was the cause of it and so called "Margamudaya Ayyanar.(Ayyanar who has the path to solve problems) ." From then on thousands of people in living very large number of villages started worshipping him as their God. Apart from them large number of people of all religions and caste visit this temple and worship this God and get their problems solved. People believe that many Sidhas have come and lived in this temple which is many hundred years old. The temple faces the east and besides it in a Mandap are the temples of

Maurai veeran, SARASwathi, Mahalakshmi, Durga, Kamakshi, Ganesa Subramanya with his consorts Valli and Deivanai , Dashinamurthy etc.. On the northern side of the temple is the makizha tree which is the temple tree , Pavadai Chami , Uchimalai Karuppu , Changili Karuppu , Karaikkal Ammayar , Chandana Karuppu , Manapparai Mamundi, Pechi amman, Agjora Vera BHadrar, Irulappan , Chappani Karuppu , Periya Karuppu , Malayala Karuppu and Periyanna Chami.

In the sanctum sanctorum, Ayyanar sits with a pleasant smile. Near to him is the temple of Panayadi Aandavan. There is a very peculiar story about this God. It seems that with one of the Chozha kings who was ruling in Urayur , Adhi Raghava Pillai was working as an accountant. He had seven sons and a very pretty daughter called Rajathi. The king wanted to possess Rajathi. Raghava Pillai and his family members ran from Urayur to protect Rajathi. The king chased the, Rajathi jumped in a maize pond (chola kuzhi) and committed Suicide , giving her red cloth to one of her brothers. Raghava Pillai and brothers jumped in the river Cauvery and started swimming. Six brothers and Raghava Pillai reached different places on the other shore. But one remaining son who was named as Pandyan could not swim properly. He prayed Goddess Kamashy and suddenly a palm tree came floating in the river. He tied himself to it with the red cloth and reached the other shore near Tiruvanaikaval. There he and his father buried the red cloth given by his sister on the earth and prayed Margamudaya Ayyanar. All brothers got united. Later the brother Pandyan was called as Panayadi Andavar and people started worshipping him too. Opposite the temple of Ayyanar are huge statues of Elephant and horses., The first day of month of Margazhi, Shiva Rathri, Eighteenth day of the month of Adi are festival days in the temple On Sivarathri day from 8 Am to 8.30 Pm, continuous free feast is held at the temple. People celebrate their 60th, seventieth and eightieth birthday in the temple . It is believed that this Ayyanar cures all those people affected by black magic. People believe that the Pechiyamman God of this temple is extremely powerful. Young girls who do not attain puberty come and worship Prechiamman and attain puberty soon . The Palm tree in this temple is full of flowers and bears fruits throughout the year. People come and anoint this palm tree with milk and pray that it should protect them similar to the way it saved Panayadiyar. This temple is one km away from Thiruvanaikaval temple on the Kallanai road.

Thiruvettazhaigaya Ayyanar of Peyadi kottai

By

P.R.Ramachander

Peyadi kottai is 27 km from Avudayar Koil and is in the border of Pudukottai and Ramanathapuram districts. The Pambaru which is dry passes through this village. There are lots of bushes with Indian date palm, People send their cattle to graze here. One day a dalit youth belonging to Kulathoor had brought his cattle to graze here. He was trying to cut a fruit of date. By mistake his knife fell on a rock and it started bleeding. He was fear struck and swooned. In his dream he saw an Ayyanar who told him , " I am thiruvettazhaigaya Ayyanar. I have been brought out by you. I want you to be my priest. Daily offer me pongal." The Dalit youth was very poor. So he requested the cattle owners' wife for a little rice. Then he would milk some cow and make Pongal and offer it to the God. The land lord wanted to find out what he was doing with the rice and followed him one day. Being a devout man, he was thrilled by the sight that he saw. When he asked the labourer , he told everything to his master. The master then undertook to give rice, milk and firewood so that the labourer can offer Pongal without any problem. After this the villagers started visiting the temple. When their cattle got sick, if the labourer brought some mud from the temple and applied to the cattle, they got cured. Some higher caste people did not like to get sacred ash from the Dalit labourer. So they appointed a higher caste priest. The Ayyanar started appearing as a snake before the high caste priest.

Then the villagers appointed a Brahmin to worship the God. The Brahmin with his daughter used to go daily with his small daughter and offer worship. One day while coming he locked his daughter inside the temple. When he went back and tried to open the temple, he heard a voice, "Your daughter is safe with me. Come tomorrow morning." Unconvinced the Brahmin went on hitting the temple door with his head. Angered by this Thiruvettazhaigaya Ayyanar, cut his daughter in to small pieces and threw them out of the temple. The Brahmin cursed the God, " You are a debased one. Only a man of the lowest caste will now look after you. No one else will do it."

From then onwards till now only people of Dalit caste come as priests to the temple. Opposite his temple there is a pond. On its shore there is small temple housing Karuppar, Kali Pechiyamman and Sonai. It seems these four Gods came to take sea bath and were going towards the sea. Thiruvettazhaigaya Ayyanar made them stay there. There is a big pillar in the temple complex. This is Periyannachami and near him Kammalachi Amman resides in a small room. Kammalachi Amman had seven brothers. She fell in love with Periyannachami. Since they thought that her brothers would not agree to the marriage, they decided to elope to nearest town. They were caught near Thuvettazhaigaya Ayyanar temple and were beheaded. Ayyanar made them as Gods and asked them to be with him. Since Ayyanar thought Kammalachi Amman died because of Periyannachami, he told him that , he would stand bare without any roof and suffer the rain and Sun's heat. That is why till to day there is no roof over Periyannachami.

People believe that Ayyanar looks after their cattle and crops. If there is some disease to the cattle, they pray and leave a calf to the temple. If there is some problem to the crops , after the harvest without measuring a part of the harvest is given to Ayyanar.

Fridays and Tuesdays are suitable days for Ayyanar and Karuppar. Ayyanar is a vegetarian and only pongal is offered to him. Animals are sacrificed before Karuppar. Karuppu does not allow the meat of sacrificed animals to be taken out of the village. So whatever be the number of animals sacrificed, it is handed over to the local villagers.

On Chithra Pournami day Milk Kavadi is offered to Ayyanar. On that day there is also bull taming sport. In the month of Ai (July-August) the horse idol offering takes place. These horses are made in a village of Chenganam. The temple offers only two horses but people offer large number of horses. These are brought from Chenganam village with great fan fare. Opposite Karuppar is Sonai chami. If any baby is born in the village, on the thirtieth day Ear and nose ornaments are offered to Kammalachi Amman and a cock is offered to Chonaichami. People believe that if this is not done , these gods would pinch the babies and will not allow them to sleep. Since Kammalachi Amman died due to love failure, it seems she

does not allow girls to take bath after offering Turmeric paste. If some body does it , they will suffer with skin disfigurement. Even the Thali in this village is tied on a red thread.

Thoppampatti Soolathamman

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Thoppampatti is on the road between Coimbatore and Mettupalayam..You can take autos or buses to reach this village from Coimbatore Junction. There is an interesting story about how the temple of Goddess here.

It seems one cultivator purchased a small piece of land from his friend, after taking loan..In that land, in a corner there was a neem tree.Below that tree , there was a statue of A goddess, which was mostly buried in side.The purchaser was requested by the seller to worship that Goddess..He also did it without fail. Then he started planting coconut trees and inter crops in the land that he purchased.. Slowly that area became a part of the town, and houses camp up all around that piece of land.People living there started worshipping that Goddess.But since the Goddess was in a deep pit , they found it difficult to worship her,. Then the cultivator constructed a compound wall around his property. Then The goddess was just outside the wall in a pit and only about 9” of her visible.Then the worship to the Goddess was stopped and evil things started appearing in all surrounding areas..A priest cum astrologer was consulted and he told that the stopping of worship of the Goddess was the reason for all their troubles. When they approached the cultivator , he agreed them to remove the Goddess from there and consecrate in another place. When they dug out the Goddess they found, she was more than five feet tall and was holding a trident and on the top of the statue, Sun and moon were sculpted. Experts who examined the statue told that it was at least 600 years old. People started calling Soolathamman and shifted her to a temporary shed. They all felt they were becoming very fortunate..They built a permanent stone temple for her. They also consecrated Mariamman, Vishnu sakthi and Shiva Shakthi in side the temple.Neem tree was adopted as the temple tree. First day of Chithirai month and on all Fridays Adi months are celebrated in the temple, The temple is kept open from 7 am to 10.30 am and 6 pm to 8 pm. On Tuesdays Fridays , in the evening temple is open from 7 PM to 8 Pm.

Thottichi Amman of Periya Poolankulam

By
P.R.Ramachander

Periya Poolankulam is a small village 8 km away from Madhurai in the Madhurai-Shiva Gangai road. Once a family who foretold the future of people came to this village. This family consisted of a father, mother and two daughters after finishing their job while they were returning they were planning to take rest in Perumparai which is near the village. At that time the younger daughter became very thirsty. She along with her elder sister went in search of water. They located a stream near by. The younger daughter got down in the stream to drink water. But there was a whirlpool at that spot and she was drawn in to it. The family cried and left there because nothing could be done.

On that night an elderly man of Dalit caste saw a dream in which one young girl told him, “My name is Thottichi. I have fallen in the whirl pool of the village stream. If you save me and worship me I will make your village prosperous.” The elderly man asked her, how this could be done. She told him, all that he needs to do was to go to the stream and call her by her name.

That elderly man took his younger brother and went immediately to the stream. They called “Thottichi, Thottichi,” The girl came out of the stream and immediately died. Both brothers became sad and cried. Then they heard a voice telling them, “Please give me a place in your village. I would take care of you.” The villagers buried her in the village border, kept a stone and a trident there. They started worshipping her as Thottichi Amman. From that time she looks after the village and made the village prosperous. No temple has been built and she sits on a mound. Near her temple there are temples for Ayyanar as well as Ammachi Amman.

Since she is at the entrance of the village, no body can come to the village or leave the village without saluting her. In the month of Karthigai (November-December) on the third Friday there is a Kalari festival in this temple. All villagers contribute money and buy three goats. They sacrifice the goats in the three temples at the same time. Later they bring water from the river, prepare Pongal and offer it to Thottichi Amman. This as well as the meat is equally divided among the families of the village. Thus ends the festival.

Thottichi Amman hears their woes and redresses them. Once a lad drank toddy and broke the bottle on her statue. He was dead before the next festival.

As soon as they make preparations for the festival, they tie mango leaves all round the village to indicate that people who are not clean should not come to the village. Also no outsider is allowed to stay in the village during this time and none of the villagers go out from their village also.

On all Fridays women assemble in large numbers at the temple. Since the Goddess was identified by a Dalit, his caste people only are priests at the temple.

Thuravu Mel Azhagar of Chaluppai

By

P.R.Ramachander

Meenchuruti is a village in Perambalur district which is 37 km from Kumbakonam. Six km from here is Chaluppai village. Thuravu in the local dialect indicates well and Thuravu Mel Azhagar would mean, "Pretty man on the top of the well." One thousand years back, there was a Brahmin locality in this place. There was a well attached to this locality. The Brahmin women used to collect water from this well. Once a sage came to this village and started doing meditation sitting on the top of the well. Without knowing this two ladies drew water from the well. Some water fell on the sage. He cursed them to become formless and he himself became formless.

The villagers of Chaluppai started worshipping this sage as Thuravu Mel Azhagar.. They closed the well and on it established the sanctum for this God. Since he does not have a form, they have a kept stone to represent him and this stone is worshipped. Since all the symbols of Lord Shiva are there in this temple, Azhagar is worshipped as Lord Shiva. Her also they have consecrated a Nandi (bull) statue slightly away from the temple. Since Azhagar is powerful, even Nandi is not kept directly in front of him. Both sides of the Azhagar temples have Lord Ganesa's temple. One Ganesa is in the form in which he gave protection to a Rakshasa woman.

Over time the Brahmin locality got destroyed. So the Statues of Lord Vishnu's temple in the locality has been shifted to Azhagar's temple.

Since the meditation of Azhagar was disturbed by women, young women do not come to this temple. Children and old women visit it however. Sixty feet from Azhagar's temple there is a small structure. Unmarried girl's can come only up to this point. Near this hall there is a temple of Veera Bhadra Swamy. He offers protection to Azhagar. Lot of tridents are planted in the soil near this temple. People write their wants and complaints and give it to the priest of this temple. The priest hangs these papers on the tridents. VeeraBhadra Swami appears in the dream of people against whom the complaint is lodged in the form of a horse or elephant. Next day these people come terrified to the temple and rectify the injustices done by them.

Next to this God there is a Madhurai Veeran Statue and also that of Vada Bhadra Selva Maakali. She has eight hands and people believe that she cures all diseases of women. Near to her there is a Verali tree and people believe that pathinettanpadi Karuppan is on this tree. Animals are sacrificed to Madhurai veeran and Pathinettan padi karuppu.

For Azhagar there are no big festivals. On Thai poosam day , they light a lamp take it in a grand procession and they do worship and Abhisheka for Azhagar before lighting the lamp keep it in the four pillared hall.

No houses are built near the temple . This is so because people do not want to disturb the meditation of Azhagar.

Thurayur Angala Parameswari temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Thurayur is a small town near Trichy. This temple is situated about 2 km from the Thurayur bus stand. This temple is approximately 300 years old and has a door facing east. As soon as we enter the temple on our left is the temple of Aghora Veera Bhadra and next to it is the Kuthirai Veeran(Hero on horse.) , Pavadai Rayan , Isakki Amman, Periyannachami, Muthu Karuppannachami , Thengu perumal and Rahu kala Durga. On the right side is Madurai veeran and next to it near the entrance of the main temple are Lord Ganesa and Lord Subrahmanya. On both sides of the temple are two huge Dwara Palakis(security guards to Goddess). In the sanctum sanctorum is the smiling Angala Parameswari in a sitting pose with four hands. Side by side are Maheswari, Mahishasura Mardini , Vaishnavi , Brahmi and Durga idols. There is also a temple for Pechi Amman having a child in her lap and Periya Nayagi who is about 9 feet tall in the lying down pose. The temple tree is the ber tree(Ilanthai tree) and nearby is the Karuppa Sami who is in standing pose playing the flute,

The story of the temple is as follows. It seems a son of Goddess Parvathi called Kathava Rayan was guarding her house but he was very mischievous and when the seven maids complained to Lord Shiva , he came there to punish Kathavarayan. Being a mother , the Goddess wanted to protect her son and gave the boon of immortality (vega chudalayil chaga varam-His body would never be burnt in cremation ground) . Shiva got further enraged and cursed that Goddess Parvathi to leave his left side of the body and be born in earth . Lord Vishnu who was her brother came with her to help her. Kathavarayan also got reformed and started helping her. The Goddess then became Angala Parameswari and started protecting people around Thurayur.

There is another story about a Vallala king who was ruling over this part of Tamil Nadu. He was a great miser. Though he was rich he did not have children. At last the king came to this temple for his prayers. Answering his prayers the queen became pregnant. But though 15 months were over , she did not deliver the child. With great pain in the heart the king and queen came to this temple and begged the Goddess to help them. Immediately the goddess took the form of an old woman came before them and took out the child from the queen with bare hands. Then that old woman took the a fierce form of Pechiamman and listening to the prayers of the royal couple took the form of the peaceful Angala Parameswari. The king got reformed and stated helping all people generously.

Shivarathi is an important festival in this temple . A huge crowd of devotees carrying huge pots of milk come to this temple and Angala Parameswari is anointed with milk. On Deepavali and the first of Chithrai month special worship is done to the Goddess. Ladies desirous of having children come to the temple of Pechiamman and tie toy cradles in the tree nearby . Ladies desirous of getting married come and present Saris to Pechiamman. The temple is open between 8 AM to 1 Pm and from 4 Pm to 7 Pm. The temple is situated in the Chandai road of Thurayur.

Vagurani Palla Karuppu

By

P.R.Ramachander

Karuppu (black) or Karupannachami is a very popular village God in Tamil Nadu. Some people believe that this God has come to Tamil Nadu from Kerala and call it Malayala Karuppu. Palla Karuppu is one such God in the Vagurani village, which is 20 km from Madurai.

It seems once upon a time two people of the village went to repair the irrigation channel to their field. On the way from a bush of Sangam plants they heard a girl crying loudly. They both requested the girl to come out. But the girl sad, "Give me some cloth to cover myself. Then I would come out.". One of the cultivators had an extra dhoti and he gave it to her. When she came out, they asked her , who she was. She told them that she was a goddess and had come there along with her brother. The villagers refused to believe her. Then she told them, "Go to the village potters house. He will have only one pot which is not burnt. Bring that here.". When they went to the potter's house they found that only one of his pots was not burnt. They brought the pot to her. She asked them to make a fire and kept the pot on it with water and new raw paddy. The husk from the paddy got separated. The girl introduced her bare hands in to the boiling mixture and stirred the rice then the villagers recognized that she indeed was a goddess. Then she took her original form and asked them to sacrifice a goat for her then and there. They sacrificed a black sheep. One of the cultivators drank the raw blood from the sheep. He belonged to Dali caste of Pallan. The villagers built a temple for the Goddess "Velai Amman" and her brother Karuppu. But since he was being worshipped by a priest of Palla caste, The God was called Palla Karuppu. Other communities look after all other work related to the temple.

Though Velayi Amman was first found, more Importance in the temple is given to Palla Karuppu. Except for the festival days, The Palla Karuppu temple would be open only on Tamil New year's day, First of Adi month, Deepavali, Thiru Karthikai day and Pongal day. Offerings on other days are offered only at the gate of the Palla Karuppu temple. While worship for Palla Karuppu is done by a male priest that for Velayi Amman is done by a priestess. On the day when the temple is open, A big ditch with burning fire is dug before the temple and the both the priests walk over the burning fire. They then answer questions about future from the devotees. The villagers do not take any important decisions without the consent of Palla Karuppu. Festivals are also decided after getting his consent. They assemble before the temple and ask him, if a lizard makes sound from the right side of the temple, people think that the God has given his consent the festival is conducted normally after 90 days. Once he gives sent people strictly follow the following rules:-

1. No lady will wear new cloths till festival is over.
2. They would not wear bangles during the time.
3. They do not also decorate their hair with flowers during the time.
4. No loud speakers are permitted in the village
5. All people eat only vegetarian food during the time.

The festival normally starts on a Wednesday. The vessels for worship are normally kept in the house of the male priest who lives in the near by Vadakkathanpatti village. One day before these are brought in a ceremonial procession. They used an unfired pot and prepare pongal in it . The priestess stirs the boiling Pongal with bare hands. After the festival the vessels for worship are taken back to the priest's home.

If Palla Karuppu agrees some time a festival in which a sheep is sacrificed is also carried out in Vaikasi month. It seems that for more than 40 years he has not given permission.

Vaikunda moorthi of Sundara pandiyam

By

P.R.Ramachander

Sundara pandiyam is a village which is about 15 km from Madhurai in Madhurai-Srivilliputhur road. About 300 years back, this area was ruled by a king called Mara varman Pandiyan. An old man and woman were walking in the forest near the village one day. Suddenly in front of them an ant hill grew up. They tried to find out what is in side the ant hill. The knife with old man touched a stone and it started to bleed. They went back to the village and brought other people. In side the ant hill was the statue of Vaikunda Murthi with his wives. The king came to the village to see the God. When he was there, the God entered one villager and he requested the king to build a temple for him. The king and the people built a temple there. During this time, in the mountain above the village there was a temple of Periya Karuppachami. There was an earth quake on the mountain and the idol of Periya Karuppachami was pushed before the temple of Vaikunda murthi. Vaikunda Murthi permitted him to have temple near him. From that time onwards Periya Karuppachami helps Vaikunda Murthi in all his affairs. In the village of Manapparai, it seems there was a God called Mamundi Karuppar, who used to Sundara Pandiyam very often. During one of his visits, Vaikunda Murthi summoned him through Periya Karuppachami. Vaikunda Murthi wanted Mamundi Karuppu also to stay with him. But it seems Mamundi Karuppu agreed provide his orders were obeyed by Periya Karuppachami. This was agreed to.

During the early times it seems a Kerala King who was a magician tied up all rains and water to this kingdom. Mamundi Karuppu went there and caused serious stomach ache to the Kerala queen. No doctors were able to cure it. Mamundi Karuppu approached the king for curing the disease. When he did, he asked the Kerala king to untie the rain and water to Sundara pandiyam. There was heavy rain in Sundara Pandiam and all their problems were solved.

There is another story of an English man insulting the temple. Periya Karuppachami threw the English man's horse in the sky. The English man understood the power of the God and left his horse to the temple. In remembrance of this just

out side the temple there is a statue of a 15 foot high horse on which Vaikunda Murthi is seen to be riding. Apart from the two Gods mentioned there are several gods in the temple. Some of them are Pechiyamman, Rakkachi Amman, Lada Sanyasi, Seven maids, Poo Maalai Raja, Madathi, Mada Chami, Irulappa chami, Veera bhadran, Meenakshi, Uthrakali, Bhadrakali and Mariyamman. There are also small statues for the old man and woman who located the temple. Out side the temple below a neem tree there is a statue of Sundara Mahalingam. It seems prayers to Pechiyamman and Rakachi Amman are offered to beget children. People also believe that devils and spirits run away if they come to Vaikunda Murthi temple. On Sivarathri in the month of Masi there is a three day festival in the temple. A goat is sacrificed before Periya Karuppannachami and its blood is collected in a new vessel. This is mixed with rice offered to Periya Karuppannachami. After it is offered the Chamiyadi take this rice and offer it the evil spirits living in the Tamarind tree near the temple by making the rice balls and throwing it up the tree. It seems none of the rice balls fall back Apart from this there is also a festival, on the Tamil New Year's Day.

Valladi karar of Ambalakkaranpatti

By

P.R.Ramachander

Valladi karar temple is situated in Ambalakkaranpatti which is ten kilo meters from Melur of Madhurai district. This village is situated in Vellalur Nadu which is a group of 60 villages. It seems long long ago, t in this village mysterious thefts were very common. People believed that it was done by a magician who came to these villages in a flying horse. The people of the villages appealed to their Goddess "Ezhai katha Amman, "to stop these thefts. She met the magician and asked to stop these robberies. She also assured him that if he stops these thefts, he would be worshipped by the villagers of Vellalur Nadu. Hearing this, the magician agreed and vanished in to the earth in that place. Some how this was forgotten by the villagers. One day a lady taking food to her husband who was working in the field fell down at this spot. She thought that it was an accident. Next day also she fell down at the same spot. Then her husband came there and tried to uproot a stone which was there. Blood started oozing out of the stone. Then the village elders came there along with a Kodangi (God man who used to foretell.). He told them hat the magician called as Valladi Karar was there in that spot and they have to build a temple for him. They immediately built a temple for Valladi Karar and started worshipping him. They also built a statue of horse in front of the temple. It stands keeping its leg on a devil. It seems one white man came near the temple and teased the villagers, Would this horse eat grass? Would it neigh?" The chief of the village was hurt and went in to the temple and prayed to Valladi Karar. Then he heard a lizard making sound. He understood it as the positive answer from Valladi karar. Then he went out and offered a basket of grass – to the horse statue in front of the white man. Though the basket of grass was full it seems, the white man saw the horse eating the grass and also heard it neigh. His horse was disturbed and started running uncontrollably. The horse and the white man died by drowning in a pond in the village. This pond is now being called White man's pond. Near the temple of Valladi karar who sits along with his wives Poorani and Porkalai is a temple of Periyakaruppan. In the back of the temple is a rare tree called Kookamuthi, which looks like a mango tree. Below the tree, there is a stone and the villagers identify it as the original stone dug at the spot where Valladi karar vanished. There is also an outer wall to the temple. Two boothas are guarding the temple. Inside also the temple is guarded by two boothas. When the villagers tried to remove the boothas in sides, it seems a big snake came out and hissed at them. They thought that Valladi karar wanted them also there. There is an Uchi Panai pongal worship to the Valladi karar on Maha Shiva Rathri day. Next day all the men of the 60 villagers start from Valladi kara temple and walk 40 km to reach a village called Man kondan chiru vayal. There is a pond and an ayyanar temple in this village. All the men wash their feet and take bath in the pond. And return to Ambalakkaranpatti by noon. Then they take out an old palm leaf and read the story of Valladi karar. This is called "Reading of Bharatha," Next they fix the dates for the festival. Once this date is fixed, no villager belonging to these sixty villages would wear new cloths. They would not be sound of drum or crackers in these villages. All the pregnant woman are sent out of the villages. If some one dies during this period new cloths or garlands are not worn to the corpse. They would not mix new soil with water. No non vegetarian dishes are prepared .Not even Idli is prepared. On the eighth day bull taming takes place. On the ninth day pongal is offered to the horse of Valladi karar. In the evening Pongal, fruits and milk are offered to Valladi karar.

Then a goat is sacrificed to periya karuppan and villagers celebrate the festival in their homes by preparing non vegetarian dishes. Then there is a chariot drive and the festival comes to an end.

Vana Bhadrakali of Thekkepatti

By

P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated in Thekkepatti which is near Meetupalayam. This place was called Nellur Pattinam once .It was ruled by seven sisters called Aaravalli, Sooravalli, Veeravalli etc. They were all experts in magic as well as black magic. They wanted their country not to have even the smell of males. They caught hold of small kings near by using black magic and tortured them. Lord Krishna told Pandavas who were kings of Hasthinapura and requested them to put down these

sisters. Bheema waged a war and almost destroyed them but due to their black magic was imprisoned by them. Lord Krishna using his powers managed to make Bheema free from their bondage. Hearing this Aaravalli told, "Are the people who are afraid of ladies men?" and sent a letter to Bheema. Pandavas became very angry and sent Allimuthu, their sister Sangvathi's son to capture the Aaravalli sisters. Before entering Nellur Pattinam, Allimuthu, went to the Vana Durga temple and requested for the blessing of the Goddess. The goddess gave him a powerful sword and a handful of sacred ash. Allimuthu defeated the Aaravalli sisters and subdued them. They told him, "We are impressed by your valour. We want you to marry our daughter Palvarisai. Marry her and take her with you." Since Palvarisai was pretty, Allimuthu agreed and married her. Unfortunately he forgot the sacred ash given by Vana Durga. At one point when he was very tired Palvarisai gave him the juice of a lemon given by her mother to him. Poor, innocent girl did not realize that the lemon was full of black magic. As soon as he took the juice, Allimuthu died. Hearing this Abhimanyu the son of Arjuna went to the world of Indra and brought the soul of Allimuthu in a bottle and made Allimuthu alive. After this all Pandavas went to the Vana Durga temple and requested for her blessings to put down the Aaravalli sisters. They entered Nellur Pattinam and defeated the sisters. One sister ran away to Kerala. The nose of the other sisters was cut and they were killed. They renamed Palvarisai as Valamma and married her again to Allimuthu.

After that people started living peacefully in Nellur Pattinam. They were grateful to Vana Bhadrakali who was the one who helped them and started worshipping her. There was also another reason for them to worship Vana Bhadrakali. There was a place called Bhagasuran Kottai near the Vana Bhadrakali temple. This Asura was tormenting the villagers and eating one of them every day. Once it was the turn of a boy who was the only son of a clan. His mother was crying. Bheema who was there agreed to go to Bhagasura, instead of the boy. Instead of taking the food to Bhagasura, he started eating it. There was a big fight between Bhagasura and Bheema. But whenever Bheema cut Bhagasura in to pieces, the pieces again joined back. Bheema worshipped Vana Bhadrakali. She told him to cut Bhagasura in to two parts and put the two pieces next to each other but the cut ends on the opposite sides. Bheema did this and Bhagasura was killed. At the time of his death Bhagasura prayed Vana Bhadrakali and requested her to make him as a village protection God. She agreed. His temple is facing Vana Bhadrakali temple and is 200 feet away. In between them there is a temple of Aaravalli. Also there is a Muniyappa statue near the Bhagasura temple. Recently they have also constructed a Shiva temple near by. Vana Bhadrakali removes the effect of black magic and blesses barren woman with a child. They put lemon garlands to Vana Bhadrakali. The lemons from these garlands are supposed to cure all diseases.

From the second Tuesday of Adi month (July-August) there is fifteen day festival in this temple. A big pit of fire keeps on burning during the days of the festival. About thirty thousand people walk through the fire pit without any problem. Apart from that on new moon day in Adi and on eighteenth day of Adi month, there are festivals.

There is another custom at this temple. Before the goddess many packets which contain either red or white flowers are kept. People, who want to take decision on important matters, think of a colour and take a packet. Only if the desired colour comes, they do the job they want to do.

No animal sacrifices are done to Vana Bhadrakali. But goats are sacrificed to Bhagasura some days even one hundred goats are sacrificed to him.

In many of the big mils and business places in Coimbatore and Mettupalayam districts, before a years account is written, they give a big feast in Vana Bhadrakali temple.

Vandambalai Mahasakthi Mariyamman temple

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

This temple is situated in the banks of river Cauvery 6 km away from Thiruvavur in the Thiruvavur-Mayiladuthurai road. It is a very huge temple facing the east. You first see the forms of Ashta Lakshmis as soon you enter the temple. On the left site Karuppayi Amman who holds Subrahmanya on his lap has a small temple. Ladies without children come here to worship the Goddess. They take the rice and turmeric powder home. They add the rice to the rice cooked daily and apply the turmeric on themselves after bath. It seems within 48 days, they will be in a family way. They all come back and offer pongal to this Goddess. Next you would come across Pechayi Amman. It is believed she removes all attacks of black magic on all villagers. Then there is a temple of Kalludayaana who is the family god of many people of this area. Then towards right you would see Karuppanna sami riding on an elephant. It is a custom to salute him and then only enter the main temple. Then you enter the temple of Mahasakthi Mariyamman. She is supposed to cure all pox diseases. Amman has a yen day festival in the Chithirai month. Daily the Amman comes out and visits the villagers. When you come out of the temple on your left you would see Kathavarayan, Aryamb, Bommi and Thottikatti Chinnan. The temple is open from 9 Am to 8 Pm.

Vazhumuneeswarar-Kathayi temple at Karunkanni

Compiled by
P.R.Ramachander

Once it seems the sage brungi wanted only to go round Shiva and not Parvathi. After this the Goddess requested Lord Shiva to give him his body to her. When Lord Shiva told that this can only be done with great penance, Goddess Parvathi

came to warth along with 64 Yogins and started going on a pilgrimage to different Shiva temples. On her way she came to Ujjain which was at that time ruled by seven brothers called Akasa veera Agni veera etc. They were bad people and ordered the Goddess to be their wife. She childed them and shouted at them. Since they did not go away she prayed to Lord Vishnu, Lord Brahma etc who appeared there in person. Lord Vishnu took a Viswa roopa and destroyed Agni veera. Since he touched the sky he was called Van-muni. The other sages also took mega forms like that of Lord Vishnu and killed all the seven kings. The mega form of Agasthya was called as "Chemmmuni (red sage)". The other sages like Narada, Parachara took mega forms which were called Muthu muni, Karu muni, Veda muni etc and started protecting the Goddess. Then Veera muthu the son of Agni veera came for a battle. When Vaazhmuni (Lord Vishnu) was about to kill him, his wife requested Lord Vishnu to spare him. So Lord Vishnu appointed Veera Muthu to be security to the Amman temple. He also created goddesses Vengadamalai Nachiyaer, Ponkurathi nachiyar, Anai kurathi, mudiyal Azhaki and Vana Kurathi and instructed them to look after the Goddess. He also created a lady form merging himself with Ganges, who was keeping Lord Subrahmanya on her lap. He named her as Kathayi. They went on visiting several Shiva temples and arrived at Naga Pattinam, which was called as Capital of Shiva places. Then Goddess Parvathi requested her assistants to search for a place which was suitable for meditation and was alone for some time. At that time a local devotee approached her and took him to his home. Goddess liked that home. At that time, her assistants found a place on the banks of Vellaru river, where a Mahalinga tree and Macizha tree were growing together. The Goddess started her penance there. Vaazhmuni, Chemmmuni, Karumuni, Muthumuni, Veda muni and poomuni stayed outside as security guards to her. After some time when she started to Kanchipura for doing further meditation, the villagers approached her and requested her to live there itself. She promised them she would after becoming a part of Lord Shiva. And as per her word she came there. Lord Shiva took the name of M

Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays are important days in the temple. Pachayamman is offered Pongal, Kathayi is offered Maa vilakku, Varamuneeswara Milk pongal and Periyachi Amman is offered non vegetarian dishes. Pachayamman considers Nagapattinam as her mothers place and goes there along with Kathayi Amman for 15 days in a year in the month of Aadi. During this time no worship is offered in the main temple. On Aani third she returns back. This temple is situated in the Nagapattinam - Thiruthuraiipoondi road on the banks of a river called Uppathankarai. The temple is open from 9 am-12 noon and between 5 Pm to 6 Pm.

Veera Bhayangara Ayyanar

By

P.R.Ramachander

Veera Bhayangaram village is 14 km away from the small of Chinna Salem of the Vizhuppuram district of Tamil Nadu. This also is called Veera vangi. It seems 200 years back Veerabhadra used to be the guardian God of this village. The Ayyanar who came in search of a place to stay drove away Veera Bhadra Swamy and occupied his place. It seems Veera Bhadra Swamy requested Ayyanar to at least name the village after him. That is why the village is known as Veera Bhayangaram.

In the temple in this village there are three sanctum sanctorums. These are occupied by Ayyanar, Nalla Thangal and Muneeswara. While Ayyanar and Nalla Thangal are Gods which do not accept Animal slaughter, Muneeswara likes it very much. So while Pongal is offered to ayyanar and Nalla Thangal, sheep, hen and even big are sacrificed at the Muneeswara temple on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

There are no fixed days when the temple celebrates its festival. The occupants of the Veera Bhayangaram village and near by Koogayoor village meet together and take a decision on the festival days. The three Gods are individual (5 km away) which is on the river shore. Then they build three sheds and summon the power which will grant permission to celebrate the festival. Then they offer the sacrificial offering to each God. After sun set they return to their villages along with the sacrificial offerings, leaving the Gods there. Then after finishing their night meals, at around 9 PM they go to Govindam Palayam along with fire torches and bring back the Gods. There they sacrifice a goat. Then the Gods come to Veera Bhayangaram village and visit each house in the village. Villagers offer rice, flour and bananas in their houses to the Gods. This would end around mid night. The people of Koogayoor would take over the Gods and take them to a visit to their village. There they cover the Gods with cloth. In the morning they clean the idols with Oil and Soap nut powder and offer a bath with curd. Then that night the Gods go round Koogayoor village. Around 3 PM, there will a bath to Gods with turmeric water. Leaving Ayyanar and Nalla Thangal there, Muneeswara then goes to a visit of the fields of the village. From each field the priest takes some thing for himself. After this the Gods are taken back to their temples.

Veeramakali temple of Perambur

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Perambur is a village in Pudukottai district of Tamil Nadu which has the very famous Veeramakali temple. There is a very interesting legend about this temple. It seems several thousands of years ago, this village was terrorized by a spirit called Chemmmuni, which used to like to eat Human flesh. When it started attacking mindlessly, the village people made an agreement with the spirit that daily one of the villagers would go to him as food. A roster was drawn up in the village for this. One day a widowed lady with only one son had to send him as food to Chemmmuni. She got agitated and

requested Veeramamuni , a folk god who lived in Veerappoor mountain to save her son. Veeramamuni took a very mega form and with his feet stamped on the head of Chemmuni and pressed him. Chemmuni was buried in the earth. Though Chemmuni requested for pardon, Veeramamuni destroyed him completely and then summoned his sister Kali and requested her to merge with the Kali of Perambur which was worshipped by the cultivators there. She became Veeramakali and was made as the Guardian Goddess of the village of Perambur.

People of the village believe that She prevents all evil spirits from entering the village. They also believe that sick people, if they are brought to the temple get cured. If anything is stolen from the village they pray that they would give one fourth of the cost of the lost article and the Goddess recovers it for them. This village is 22 km from the town of Trichy.

Velappar of Mavuthu

By

P.R.Ramachander

Mavuthu is a village near Theppampatti which is 19 km from Aandipatti of Theni district of Tamil Nadu. Here Velappar temple is situated on a mountain. This is a tribal village. A tribe called Paliyars used to occupy this village. Once when they were searching for tubers for eating they located a handsome Muruga idol. They consecrated him there itself and started worshipping him as their Kula deivam (Family deity). There is a mango tree near the temple. From below the mango tree water flows as a spring from time immemorial. This spring has never dried. This is called Mavuthu by the villagers. They believe that all serious ailments of the skin would be cured on taking bath in this spring. This spring water is only used at the temple and given to devotees. Near by there is a karuppanachami temple. The temple can be reached on climbing 167 steps. The Paliyars are priests of this temple.

Velipettai angalamman temple , Dharmapuri

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

The temple of Angalamman is situated in Dharmapuri town of Tamil Nadu. Though the main deity of the temple is angalamman who sits below the umbrella held by the serpent holding a small drum , rope , sword and skull with fire as her crown. Before entering her temple is Nandi and on her left side is Nagar (*serpent). On her right side is Durga in a separate sub temple. In front of her is her primeval form which was being worshipped in early times. Outside the sanctum is Ganesa , Madhurai veeran , Bommiyamman and vellayamman. Pavazha mali tree and white Arali tree are the temple trees. On full moon (POurnami) , on new moon (Amavasya) , Fridays and Tuesdays special worship is done to Angalamman. Chithra pournami , Adi pathinettu , Navarathri and Maha Sivarathri are celebrated at the temple. The main festival is around the Maha Sivarathri day. After the flag is hoisted for the festival , for one week , the goddess goes in a procession around the village around 7 Pm. On the last day of those 7 days , the marriage of the mother is celebrated. On that day the Goddess goes out in a glass chariot at night. That day newly harvested from several fields on the way are offered to her. Two days later early morning at 1 Am , five dolls of different colours made of Maida is taken to the cremation ground and they are smashed there. This is called Pancha Mukha Vettu festival. It is believed that the Goddess protects the villagers because of this. On that day at 10Am , the goddess travelling on a Bootha (ghost) goes to the cremation ground. Three days later a festival called Pillai Pavu is celebrated. It is believed that ladies without children would get children by participating in this festival.

The temple is about 1 km from the Dharmapuri town Bus stand. It is daily open from 6 Am to 12 noon and later between 4:30 Pm to 8 Pm,

Vendimuthu Karuppu of v. Kallapatti

By

P.R.Ramachander

V. Kallapatti is a small village near Usilampatti of Madhurai district. There is a big artificial lake there... There was a person called Vendimuthu who was in Chettinad worshipping Malayala Karuppu. After his death, his children did not bother about it. So Karuppu started troubling them. Then with the help of a magician they tied Karuppu in chains. One day he broke those chains and reached V. Kallapatti. At that time the bank of the lake breached and villagers repaired it with lot of effort. Karuppu breached the bank again. When this continued for two days, the villagers kept vigil at night. And they caught Karuppu. Karuppu told them he was a god and if they sacrificed Goats and made him happy, he would look after

the lake. They immediately did it and continue to do it. After that till today the banks of the lake have not breeched. Since Vendimuthu was worshipping this Karuppu, he is known as Vendimuthu Karuppu. The villager built a temple for him. Behind the temple there is a big banyan tree. Before beginning any new venture or before deciding anything important in the family the villagers come to this temple and ask Karuppu's permission. Permission is signaled by the sound of a lizard. In the month of Masi there is a three day Kalari festival in this temple.

Veppilai Kari of Mangudi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Mangudi is a small village near Thiruvavur of Thanjavur district. Once all the villagers saw a dream in which, the Goddess announced that she is coming to the village. They were all confused as they did not know when and how she will be coming. Again they got a dream in which they were told that the Goddess would be coming by the river. The entire village assembled near the river to welcome her, for several days nothing happened. When they were tired of waiting, one day there was a torrential rain and there was flood in the river. People were singing praises of the Goddess and were waiting the river bank. Then they saw a light floating in the river. Then a small floating platform on which the statue of Kalikambal, a lamp and neem leaves came near them. They made a temporary tent and consecrated the Goddess there. Each family looked after the worship of the Goddess in turns. The village became prosperous and they made the temple in to a tiled building and later in to a permanent temple. Since along with her neem leaves also came, she was called Veppilai Kari.

Vettudayar Kali of Ariyakurichi

By

P.R.Ramachander

Ariyakurichi is 15 km from Shiva Ganga town. One story about the origin of the temple is as follows. This area was completely occupied by forests once upon a time. Two brothers called Karuppa Velar and Kari Velar went to this forest for digging of tubers. Once they got a statue of Ayyanar from the place that they cut. They started calling the God as Vettudayar Ayyanar. They built a stage there, consecrated the statue and started worshipping it. Once Kari Velar went to Kerala for learning magic. When he returned, he saw some writing in the mud before Ayyanar. He understood that they are the chants meant for Kali. Using his magical powers, he immediately made a Kali statue and consecrated near Ayyanar. She was called the Vettudayar Kali.

Another story about the origin is as follows. A king of Shiva Gangai called Muthu Vaduga nathar was killed by the British during a war. His queen was Velu Nachiyar. After completing the death rites to her husband, she escaped to her to one of their minister called Thandava Rayan. She was being followed by the Britishers. When the army neared Ariyakurichi, the army saw a Shepard girl called Udayal. When they enquired about the whereabouts of the queen, she told them that she will not tell them. They immediately beheaded her. It seems later the queen consecrated her as the Vettudayar Kali. It seems she gave several of her costly ornaments to the temple. Her statue is fearsome and stands with eight hands. If unjust acts of individuals are brought to her notice, she punishes them severely. There is a cage behind the temple, where people cut coin and put in it with a prayer to get them justice. There are lovers appealing them to unite them. She fulfills all their requests. Her judgment comes within 8 days. If the people against whom allegations are made, have anything to say, they should come to the temple within these eight days and ask for her pardon and right the wrongs made by them. On the north side of her temple is the temple of Sonai Karuppannachi, who is her guard as well as assistant. He carries out her orders faithfully.

Though the Kali temple is more famous, the first worship in this village is only to Vettudayar Ayyanar. Within the temple there are small temples for Karuppar, Solattu Kali and Bhairavar. The temples are open from 6 Am till evening 6 PM. From the Thiruvadirai of Panguni month, a ten day festival is observed in this temple. There is phenomenal rush in these temples on all Fridays and Tuesdays.

Yelur Sumangali mariyamman temple

Compiled by

P.R.Ramachander

Yelur is a very small village near Sathyamangalam of Erode. Once upon a time, it seems these villagers would do penance and go To Pazhani on Vaikasi (may-june) Visagam day. Once in the midway at night they took rest on a dilapidated building. Due to being tired, they all slept. Then one of them heard a humming sound of suffering from one room of the Building. One of them, with a lamp went and saw there and found a statue of Mariamma there. When without doing anything he became and slept, that Goddess came his dream and requested him to take her to their village and build a temple for her, so that she can look after all of them. Next day when he told the others, They all took the statue and consecrated her in a thatched roof in their village and decided to call her "sumangali Mariyamman". Since she used to help all of them who pray her, they eventually built a pucca temple in the village for her.

They also searched and planted 27 trees inside the temple, each tree denoting a birth star. There are also 9 trees which are meant to 9 planets. As soon as you enter the temple there is a temple for "SELVA vinayagar (ganesa for wealth)". People believe that by offering him a garland made of Groundnut and cashew nut, he would take care of all their problems. Opposite the sanctum of the goddess there is a statue of lion, on which she rides. Once when a person of the village was involved in an accident and was in a critical condition, his offered to offer her Golden Mangalya (Thali) to the goddess. He returned back healthy. And so all women pray in this temple for long life span of their husbands.

They also pray for education of their children, improvement of business, to get rid of worroies etc and the Goddess is believed to help them without fail.

Like hand, feet also have lines. People believe if they do step by step Pradakshina of the goddess with their Feet lines getting marked in the ground, they can get rid of any great difficulty. On Tuesdays, and Fridays they do abhishekam to the goddess. Those people whose problems are solved also Feed the devotees (anna Dhanam) on these days. Devotees also go round the tree for their birth stars and do pooja.

Yelur is 8 km from sathyamangalam town of Erode district. The temple is open from 7.30 am to 12.30 pm and 5 to 7.30 pm