

# **History of Kalpathy**

*Project submitted to the University of Calicut  
in partial fulfillment for the award of degree*

**Bachelor of Arts**

**In**

**English and History**

**By**

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## **Acknowledgment**

I owe my gratitude to the god for his endless blessings and intervention in helping me complete my project without any hassles and on time. I am indebted to my supervising teacher, Sajive Varghese and Coordinator Dr. George Alex, Department of English & History (Double Main), Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda for guiding me throughout the project and for the countless hours and effort he put in to help complete my project I thank him for his timely help and generous encouragement. I am eternally grateful to Rev Fr. Jolly Andrews CMI, the Principal, Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda for the congenial atmosphere of research he has always tried to foster in the campus throughout my studies.

I owe my thanks to my parents, my teachers, my friends and all those who have helped me directly and indirectly in the successful completion of this project work.

**Arshitha S**

## **Certificate**

This is to certify that this project entitled **The History of Kalpathy**, a record of research work carried out by **Ms Arshitha S** under my supervision and guidance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Bachelor of Arts in English and History** submitted to the University of Calicut.

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**Coordinator**  
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Place: Irinjalakuda

April 9th 2021

## **Declaration**

I, **Arshitha S** hereby declare that this project entitled **The History of Kalpathy** submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the **Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English and History**, is a bonafide record of original research work done carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. George Alex, Coordinator, Department of English & History (Double Main) Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda.

Irinjalakuda

April 2021

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## Introduction

Kalpathi (Kalpathy) Ratholsavam (Kalpathi chariot Festival) is an annual Hindu Temple festival in the Kalpathy village of Palakkad district in Kerala state, South India. The festival is at the Sri Visalakshi Sametha Sri Viswanatha swamy temple where the deities are Lord Siva (Lord Viswanatha) and his consort Visalakshi, another name for Parvati. The annual ten-day chariot festival conducted here during the month of November is one of the most remarkable festivals of Kerala. Vedic recitals and cultural programmers are held in the temple during the first four days of the festival. This is believed to be over 700 years old. On the last three days, thousands of devotees gather together to draw decorated temple chariot through the streets. The ancient temple nestles by the banks of the Kalpathy river which is also known as the *Nila* river. The temple dates back to 1425. The similarities to the famous Varanasi Kashi Viswanatha temple on the banks of the Ganges in North India gives this temple the moniker: *kasiyil pakuthi Kalpathy*—Kalpathy is half Kashi. Kalapathi (Kalpathy), as the village or *Agraharam* in which the temple is situated is known, is an early Tamil Brahmin's settlement. The chariot festival has a history of around 700 years. The legend behind it unfolds as: A Brahmin widow named Lakshmiammal was fortunate enough to visit Kashi(now Varanasi), the spiritual center for Hindus. She brought with herself a Lingum, an iconic representation of Lord Shiva. She placed the lingam on the banks of Nila river and handed some gold coins to the then king Palakkad to look after the lingam. The king built a beautiful temple for the lingam to be placed. At present, Lord Shiva and his consort, Parvati sit in this 700 years old temple and are brought out during the festival with their children, Ganapathi and Murugan. The village of Kalpathi is also known by the phrase- “kasiyil pakuthi Kalpathy”, meaning “Kalpathi is half Kashi”. Many similarities can be observed between the two places. The Kashi Viswanatha Temple, standing by the river Ganges is equaled with the Sri Visalakshi Sametha Sri Viswanatha Swamy temple which stands by the Nila River. The river itself is called Dakshin Bhagirathi. Sri Viswanatha Swamy Temple, also known as the Kalpathy Temple, is one of the famous temples in Palakkad district of Kerala. Locally known as Dakshina Kashi and Kundukovil, the temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and his consort Goddess Parvati. Lord Shiva is worshipped here in the form of Lord Viswanatha Swamy and Parvati is worshipped as Vishalakshi. There is a Siva temple here that resembles the famous Kasi Viswanatha Swamy temple of Benares. The flagstaff of the Kalpathy temple is known for its sheer size. Kalpathy is also famous for the very popular Kalpathy Ratholsavam, or chariot festival, that is held in November. All the temples in the vicinity take part in the chariot festival.

## History

History has many instances of whole communities moving and settling down in distant social milieus different from their traditional moorings. Most such communities have not only flourished in their new homes by adjusting themselves to the social environs they have come to stay but have zealously guarded their culture and values without giving in to the assault of time. The story of the migration of the Tamil Brahmin community to Kerala from 'Tamizhakam' the present-day Tamil Nadu, over the centuries, is a classic case of this phenomenon. This exactly is what "Saga of Kalpathy -- The Story of Palghat Iyers", written by veteran journalist and columnist M K Das with illustrations by noted cartoonist E P Unny, narrates. Kalpathy is a village in Palakkad district - earlier referred to as Palghat in records in English -- which has a cluster of Tamil Brahmin settlements, called 'Agraharam'. 'Though there are Tamil Brahmin concentrations in several other places in Kerala, including the capital Thiruvananthapuram, Kalpathy is considered the quintessential home-away-from-home of the community with all the cultural props associated with it. Palghat remained, and still remains, the hub of the Tamil Brahmins. The place gave Tamil Brahmins and itself an unmatched identity", the author notes. It is obvious the author has carried out painstaking research, drew upon a large body of works on political, social and cultural history of Kerala and the adjoining areas, talked to people familiar with the subject and even gathered anecdotal evidences in writing the book.

Apart from narrating the story of the community, many of whose members have left a deep impression in diverse walks of life like Carnatic music, business, judiciary, media and bureaucracy, it broadly traces the history of Kerala over the centuries. Though geographical, historical and economic factors have lured many communities to Kerala, the two factors, according to the author, that set Tamil Brahmins apart from other migrants are their "sheer resilience and adaptability-published by Ahalia Publications, Palakkad, and Darpan, Bengaluru, the book is to be launched at a function in Kerala soon. Its central theme is Tamil Brahmins of Palakkad, their settlement pattern, integration with local population, challenges and crises they met with and overcame and the eventual transformation into a progressive community. It also has brief but vivid accounts of how some other communities, including the Jews and Goud Saraswat Brahmins, came and settled in certain pockets of Kerala, either as part of their mercantile pursuits or displaced by the upheavals in their homelands. Appealing to the scholars and lay readers equally, on the whole it is a journey through a long, often tumultuous, period that saw the rise and fall of royal powers, political churning and social transformations that Kerala in particular and South India in general had undergone. What gives a graphic dimension to the work is

the drawings by Unny, whose brush strokes have vividly captured the images of not only Kalpathy but also many other landmarks like the Jewish synagogue in Mattanchery near Kochi



# Chapter 1

## Kalpathy Agraharam

An Agraharam (Brahmin Street) welcomes you to similar-looking houses lining both sides of a road that leads to a temple, all following the traditional style of architecture. The Kalpathy Agraharam in Palakkad is one such place situated on the banks of River Kalpathy. The settlers here mainly belong to the Brahmin community, who fled from Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu during the 1790s fearing attack by Tipu Sultan. It is said that they were on their way to Kozhikode when en route the Raja of Palakkad provided them with a settlement at Kalpathy. The Brahmins set up an Agraharam which is, today, a combination of four Agraharam " Chathapuram, Govindarajapuram, Old Kalpathy and New Kalpathy. There is a Siva temple here that resembles the famous Kasi Viswanatha Swamy temple of Benares. The flagstaff of the Kalpathy temple is known for its sheer size. Kalpathy is also famous for the very popular Kalpathy Ratholsavam, or chariot festival, that is held in November. All the temples in the vicinity take part in the chariot festival.

### Location of Kalpathy Temple

Kalpathy Temple is located on the banks of the river Kalpathy, also known as Nila Nadhi, which is a tributary of Bharathapuzha. It is surrounded by 4 Tamil Rahman Agraharam (traditional villages) Old Kalpathy, New kalpathy, Govindarajapuram and Chathapuram.

### Kalpathy Temple

An aged lady named Lakshmi Ammal resided in Kalpathy long ago. It is said that she lived there alone, while the rest of her family was in Mayiladuthurai. As she wanted to build a temple for Lord Shiva, she visited Kashi (Varanasi) and brought a Bana linga from there and installed it in Kalpathy. Later, a temple was built there by the then ruler of the region.

## **Features Of The Kalpathy Temple**

The temple is locally called as Kundukkul Kovil as it has 18 steps downward from the ground, to the East and South. The temple also has steps to reach the river. The temple is also known as Half-Kashi as the rituals for the deceased are done here. The Golden Hall, or the Kanaka Sabha, is another peculiarity of the temple. This is where the shrine of Lord Nataraja is worshipped. The Navagrahas in the temple are worshipped along with their consorts. The deities here are believed to be powerful. Devotees flock in to get blessings from Lord Shiva and Parvati, and to ward off obstacles in their lives. One of the major offerings to Goddess Parvati is the Kumkum Archana performed for the Goddess to fulfil wishes like being blessed

## **Reaching Kalpathy by Bus / Road**

Kalpathy Temple is just 3 km from the town of Palakkad. Palakkad Central Bus Station operates bus services which connects Palakkad with all nearby towns and cities in Kerala including Guruvayoor, Thrissur, Ernakulam (Kochi), and Thiruvananthapuram. Palakkad Bus Station also operates interstate bus services to many cities including Bangalore, Coimbatore and Chennai.

## **Reaching Kalpathy by Air / Flight**

Coimbatore Airport in Tamil Nadu is the nearest airport to reach Kalpathy, just 55 km away. Other nearest airports to reach Kalapthi are the Karipur Airport or Calicut International Airport (130 km), and Cochin International Airport (140 km) at Nedumbassery, Kochi.

## **Reaching Kalpathy by Train / Railway Station**

Palakkad Junction Railway Station, one of the major railheads managed by the Southern Railways, is the nearest railway station to reach Kalpathy Viswanatha Swamy Temple. Located at Olavakkode, the station is also known as Olavakkode Railway Station. Palakkad Town Railway Station is another nearest railway station situated inside the town limits.

## **Nearby Temples in Kalpathy**

The temple of Sri Lakshminarayana Perumal of Old Kalpathy Village is in the south-west direction of Kalpathy Temple. Other temples situated nearby include Varadaraja Perumal Temple at Govindarajapuram, Manthakara Maha Ganapathy Temple at New Kalpathy, Maha Ganapathy

Temple at Chathapuram, Chokkanathar Temple at Chokkanathapuram, Kshipraprasada Maha Ganapathi Temple at Pandhrandaam Teruvu, and Jain Temple of Jainmedu.

### **Tourist Attractions in Kalpathy, Palakkad**

Located at the foothills of the mighty Western Ghats, Palakkad is a beautiful Kerala town with all its glory to be called as one of the best town in the God's own Country. There are lots of tourist attractions and places of tourist interest in Palakkad. Here are some of the places worth visiting during your journey to visit Kalpathy Viswanatha Swamy Temple in Palakkad.

Palakkad Fort (also known as Tipu's Fort), Malampuzha Dam and Malampuzha Garden, Thiruvallathoor (10 km), Kuzhalmannam (12 km), Malampuzha Dam (12 km), Choolanur Peacock Sanctuary (30 km), Dhoni Hills (15 km), Walayar Dam (25 km), Thenari Natural Spring, Chittur Garumadam (a memorial to Thunchath Ezhuthachan, the author of Adhyatma Ramayana), Pothundy Dam (35 km), Seetharkundu, Nelliampathy (Known as the Ooty of Kerala, 80 km away), Silent Valley National Park (80 km), Attappady (75 km), and Parambikulam Wildlife Sanctuary (135 km).

Festivals of Kalpathy Temple Kalpathy Ratholsavam, or the chariot festival of Kalpathy Temple, is one of the famous temple festivals of the region. It is celebrated like the festival in Mayurathaswamy Temple in Mayiladuthurai. This 10-day long festival takes place during the month of Aipasi which falls in October-November every year.

## Chapter - 2

### Kalpathy Ratholsavam

(Kalpathy) Ratholsavam (Kalpathi Chariot Festival) is an annual Hindu Temple festival in the Kalpathi village of Palakkad district in Kerala state, south India. The festival is at the Sri Visalakshi Sametha Sri Viswanatha Swamy temple where the deities are Lord Siva (Lord Viswanatha) and his consort Visalakshi, another name for Parvati.

The annual ten-day chariot festival conducted here during the month of November is one of the most remarkable festivals of Kerala. Vedic recitals and cultural programmes are held in the temple during the first four days of the festival. This is believed to be over 700 years old. On the last three days, thousands of devotees gather together to draw decorated temple chariots through the streets.

The ancient temple nestles by the banks of the Kalpathy river which is also known as the Nila river. The temple dates back to 1425. The similarities to the famous Varanasi Kashi Vishwanath temple on the banks of the Ganges in North India gives this temple the moniker: kasiyil pakuthi Kalpathy—Kalpathy is half Kashi. Kalpathi (Kalpathy), as the village or Agraharam in which the temple is situated is known, is an early Tamil Brahmin settlement.

Kalpathy Viswanatha Swamy temple is the oldest Siva temple in Malabar. It was built around 1425 AD by Kombi Achan, the then Raja of Palakkad. Legend has it that a Brahmin widow named Lakshmiammal went to Banaras and brought Lingam and installed in the present site on the Southern bank of river Neela Bhagirathi. The location of the temple and steps leading to the river brings mind of a visitor the Banaras Temples on the bank of Ganges. Hence this temple is called "Kasiyil Pakuthi Kalpathy" (Half Banaras). Kalpathy Car Festival is based on vedic Tamil Brahmin culture. The main center of the festival is Kalpathy Sree Viswanathaswamy temple. The three satellite temples in the village of new Kalpathy, old Kalpathy and Chathapuram also celebrate the festival this period. The festival is celebrated over a period of 10 days.

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## **The Festival**

The festival is conducted over a period of 10 days, usually 8 to 16 November. During this time, 6 chariots (rathas) from 4 temples of Kalpathy come together and circumvent streets of the villages in a grand procession. The 4+2 as follows: main chariot carrying Lord Shiva and additional small chariots for his sons, Ganapathy and Murugan; chariots from the other 3 villages namely New Kalpathy with Lord Ganapathy, Old Kalpathy with Lord Krishna and Chathapuram with Lord Ganapathy. This is known as 'devarathasamgamam'. Thousands of devotees converge at Kalpathy and pull the chariot every year

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## **Viswanatha Swamy Temple, Palakkad**

Sri Visalakshi Sametha Sri Viswanathaswamy temple, popularly known as Kasi Viswanathaswamy Temple or locally as kundukovil is a famous Hindu temple located in the Kalpathy village of Palakkad in Kerala, India. It is the site of the annual Kalpathi Ratholsavam which is one of the most famous temple festivals of Kerala. This ancient temple nestles by the banks of the serene Kalpathy river (Nila Nadhi). Dedicated to Lord Siva and his consort Visalakshi (another name for Parvati), it dates back to early fifteenth century. The similarity to the Varanasi Kashi Viswanatha temple on the banks of Ganges is responsible for the moniker kasiyil pakuthi kalpathy and the name Dakshina Kashi associated with this temple. The Temple is surrounded by the four Tamil Brahmin Agraharam or traditional villages: New Kalpathy, Old Kalpathy, Chathapuram and Govindarajapuram.

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## **Antiquity and history**

There is an inscription in kolezhuthu on a stone slab placed in front of the temple between the flag staff and the Nandi Mandapam, outside the temple, but within the temple courtyard. This inscription records some endowments made by one Ittikombi Achan, member of the Royal family of Palakkad in Malayalam Era 600 [1424–25 AD]. Evidently the temple must have been founded earlier than that. The villagers, however, claim that the temple was consecrated at the instance of one Lakshmi Ammal, a Brahmin wife of Venkitanarayanaier of Kollengode,. They are reported to have brought the Siva Lingam from Kasi (Varanasi) during one of her visits to that holy place and desired

to construct a temple and instal the Lingam. On reaching Kalpathy, she along with her husband and with the help of the then King of Palakkad Installed the Siva Lingam in Kalpathy and the idol is very powerful in blessing all, by showering all prosperities especially to Business community. The temple is on the banks of Nila River. Villagers believe that she approached the then Raja (Prince) of Palakkad with this request, who had readily agreed and constructed the temple. It is also said that Lakshmi Ammal had given the Prince 1320 gold coins and entrusted him with the responsibility of managing the temple affairs. A record to this effect kept on the palm leaves is believed to have been lost during the time of one Somasundara Kurukkal, who was the priest of the temple at that time. According to depositions by Sri Somasundara Kurukkal, it is believed that the Prince who Lakshmi Ammal approached was Ittilkombi Achan.

Sri Somasundara Kurukkal has also confirmed that the Prince had entrusted the management of the temple to his descendants belonging to the Valia Konikkal Madom. The Prince had also donated land for the upkeep and maintenance of the temple. The lands set apart for this temple came to be made inam or revenue-free by him and this was allowed to be continued as revenue free by the subsequent rulers, Tipu Sultan and later by the British Government. Even today the management of the temple continues to be in the hands of the Trustee, a descendant of the erstwhile princely family. Lakshmi Ammal also constructed three other temples in nearby Kollengode, Koduvayur and Pokkunni. Naturally she installed lingams brought from Varanasi . They are Brahmin ( in kollengode) Ksahtriya ( Koduvayur) Sudra ( Pokkunni in Kollengode). The land reforms of the Government of recent times had deprived the temple of the income from these lands. The Temple at present is being run by the offerings of the devotees and vazhipadu collections. The first face of the inscription on the granite slab in front of the Temple contains the details of the lands given as gift to the temple with the four boundaries thereof. The Agraharam sites of the four streets of Old Kalpathy, New Kalpathy, Chathapuram and Govindarajapuram are all included within the boundaries of the lands given, as described in the stone inscription. It is clear from this that the Brahmin houses in the four Agraharam were in existence on the date of the gift mentioned in the stone inscription.

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## Structural location and layout

The temple is situated at the bottom of eighteen steps leading from the eastern Gopuram. In the south-west direction of the temple is situated the temple of Sri Lakshmi Narayana Perumal of Old Kalpathy Village and Prasanna Maha Ganapathy of Chathapuram village, in the east the Kshipraprasada Maha Ganapathi Temple of Pandhrandaam Teruvu and the Manthakara Maha Ganapathi Temple of New Kalpathy village and in the east-west direction Sri Varadaraja Perumal of Govindarajapuram village. In the eastern direction at a distance of a kilometer is located the Chokkanathar temple of Chokkanathapuram village. On the right side while entering the temple, there are two banyan trees. The Serpent Gods [nagaprathishta] are consecrated beneath the first banyan tree, which is also the "sthala Vriksham". Pooja is performed for this tree and naga prathishta, treating it as "Vishnu Amsom". The flag staff (Kodimaram) is erected in front of the temple. The stone slab describing the land given to the temple etc. is installed behind the flag mast. Close to the stone slab is the Bhadralingam and in front of it the Gnana Nandikeswarar, facing Sri Viswanathaswamy. The eight sides of the prakaram (closed precincts of a temple) inside the Temple belongs to Indra, Agni, Yama, Niruruthi, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera, and Eesanan. The idol of Sri Viswanathaswamy is situated in the direction of Kubera facing east and close to this Sri Visalakshi facing south. In front of Sri Viswanathaswamy, Nandikeswarar appears in three forms. The Three forms symbolize Aathmathathwam, Vidyathathwam and Sivathathwam. The moolavar in this temple is Sri Viswanathaswami.

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## Pooja Vidhi (Religious Services)

The idols of Sri Viswanathaswamy and Sri Visalakshi are attached to the pedestals by Ashtabandhanam, a mixture of eight elements that help fix the idol to the peetham or base. The Viswanathaswamy idol is a Bana Lingam. The Bana lingam extends four carpenter's angul (inch) higher than the pedestal. The circumference at the level of the pedestal may be about eight angul (inches). The Vishalakshi idol stands twenty four inches above the pedestal up to the top of the crown. Pooja in temples are of two types: aathmartham and parartham.

The two differ in the sankalpam. In the former, the sankalpam will be in the name of yajamana of the temple i.e. udamasthan or owner. In the latter the sankalpam will be in the name of all people. In the Sri Viswanathaswamy temple, the Pooja performed is aathmartham. The Pooja in the temple is conducted on the pattern of the Pooja held in the Mayuranathar Temple at Mayavaram. Sri Subramanian Kurukkal of Mayavaram was the first poojaka (priest). The Pooja is conducted according to the Tamil Agama. There are 28 types of Agamas. The Pooja in this temple is being followed according to Kamikagamam. Pooja is conducted four times a day: 5:45AM Usha Pooja, 9:45 AM Uchikala Pooja, 5:45 PM Deeparadhana, and 7:45 PM Ardhajama Pooja. The Ardhajama Pooja is most important. It includes dhara and Abhishekam by milk daily. Performing Umamaheswara Pooja is said to be of great value because both Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathy are said to be pleased by the Pooja if properly performed.

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## **Recent news**

According to sastras, renovation and Kumbhabhishekham of temples are to be conducted once in twelve years in order to enhance the divine power of the Lord. The last Jeernodharanam and Kumbhabhishekham of this temple were conducted in 1956 and 1981, respectively. Thus, it has been more than 30 years since major repairs have been undertaken. The temple structure including the Garbhagrihams (sanctum sanctorum) has developed extensive damages and they require immediate attention to prevent further damages. Even though efforts were on for undertaking the repair works for the last several years, due to some reason or other they have not yielded the desired result. Now some serious efforts are on to undertake the work of Jeernodharanam to be followed by Maha Kumbhabhishekam ritual in order to enhance the divine power of the Lord. Sri K. Krishnan Embrandiri, Chartered Engineer and a renowned Temple Architect well-versed in vasthu shastras, was entrusted with the work of preparing the Renovation Project. He has prepared the estimates for the civil works connected with the Development/Renovation Project. Based on the project report of civil works involved and taking into consideration the expenditure involved for conducting the vedic rituals, veda parayanam, cultural events etc., an estimate of about 100 lakhs (10 million) Rupees has been prepared.



The Department of Tourism of the Kerala Government recently launched a Heritage Protection project at Kalpathy to preserve not only this magnificent temple, but also the Brahmin Agraharam around it. Kalpathi Temple Structure Kalpathy Viswanatha Swamy Temple is linked to the Kasi Viswanatha Swami Temple, because the main deity here is Lord Siva and the temple is on the banks of river Kalpathy, like Kasi on the banks of river Ganges. Hence there is a saying, Kasiyil Pathi Kalpathy, that is, half of Kasi is Kalpathy. The shrine is situated at the bottom of eighteen steps that lead from the eastern Gopuram. There is a huge Dhvajasthambam which is of 40 feet high in front of the temple. The banyan trees on the right side of the temple are considered as Sthala Vriksham (sacred tree) and the serpent gods consecrated here are offered Poojas. There is a stone inscription in front of the Kalpathy Shiva Temple which tells that it was built in the Malayalam Year 600 (1425) by Sree Ittikombi Achan Raja of Palakkad. Hence Kalpathy Viswanatha Swamy Temple is regarded as the oldest temple in Malabar. Next to the stone slab is the Bhadralingam (Bhadra Linga). The idol of Gnana Nandikeswarar is seen in front of it, facing Lord Viswanathaswamy. The eight sides of the prakaram are for Lord Indra, Lord Agni, Yama Deva, Niruruthi, Lord Varuna, Lord Vayu, Lord Kubera, and Lord Eesanan. The idol of Sri Viswanathaswamy is situated in the direction of Kubera, facing east, and near to this is Goddess Visalakshi facing south. Nandikeswarar, who is seen in front of Sri Viswanathaswamy, appears in three forms. The three forms indicate Aathmathathwam, Vidyathathwam and Sivathathwam.

Reaching Kalpathy by Bus/Road Kalpathy Temple is just 3 km from the town of Palakkad. Palakkad Central Bus Station operates bus services which connects Palakkad with all nearby towns and cities in Kerala including Guruvayoor, Thrissur, Ernakulam (Kochi), and Thiruvananthapuram. Palakkad Bus Station also operates interstate bus services to many cities including Bangalore, Coimbatore and Chennai. Reaching Kalpathy by Air/Flight Coimbatore Airport in Tamil Nadu is the nearest airport to reach Kalpathy, just 55 km away. Other nearest airports to reach Kalapthi are the Karipur Airport or Calicut International Airport (130 km), and Cochin International Airport (140km) at Nedumbassery, Kochi. Reaching Kalpathy by Train / Railway Station Palakkad Junction Railway Station, one of the major railheads managed by the Southern Railways, is the nearest railway station to reach Kalpathy Viswanatha Swamy Temple. Located at Olavakkode, the station is also known as Olavakkode Railway Station.

Palakkad Town Railway Station is another nearest railway station situated inside the town limits. The temple of Sri Lakshminarayana Perumal of Old Kalpathy Village is in the south-west direction of Kalpathy Temple. Other temples situated nearby include Varadaraja Perumal Temple at Govindarajapuram, Manthakara Maha Ganapathy Temple at New Kalpathy, Maha Ganapathy Temple at Chathapuram, Chokkanathar Temple at Chokkanathapuram, Kshipraprasada Maha Ganapathi Temple at Pandhrandaam Teruvu, and Jain Temple of Jain medu. Tourist Attractions in Kalpathy, Palakkad Located at the foothills of the mighty Western Ghats, Palakkad is a beautiful kerala town with all its glory to be called as one of the best town in the God's own Country. There are lots of tourist attractions and places of tourist interest in Palakkad. Here are some of the places worth visiting during your journey to visit Kalpathy Viswanatha Swamy Temple in Kalpathy, Palakkad

## Chapter 3

### Sree Viswanathaswamy Temple Kalpathy

Located in the Kalpathy village of Palakkad, Kerala, Sri Visalakshi Sametha Sri Viswanathaswamy temple is a famous temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathy. The temple is popularly known as Kasi Viswanathaswamy Temple. The temple dates back to early 15th century.

#### Legend

Lakshmi Ammal, a Brahmin wife of Venkitanarayanaier of Kollengode, brought a banalinga idol of Lord Shiva from Varanasi. The Brahmin family gave all their wealth to Ittikombi . anchan the King of Palakkad, and requested to build a temple for Viswanatha Swamy. The King also donated land for the upkeep and maintenance of the temple. The land set apart for this temple came to be made inam or revenue-free by the King and this was allowed to be continued as revenue free by the subsequent rulers, Tipu Sultan and later by the British Government.

#### Culture

Palakkad has a glorious tradition of art and culture, especially in music. The region gave birth to many acclaimed musicians including Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar and writers like OV Vijayan. Its proximity to Tamil Nadu has infused a blend of cultures, but it has got a distinct character.

## Temple Rituals

Pooja in temples are of two types: aathmartham and parartham. The two differ in the sankalpam. In the former, the sankalpam will be in the name of yajamana of the temple i.e. udamasthan or owner. In the latter the sankalpam will be in the name of all people. In the Sri Viswanathaswamy temple, the pooja performed is aathmartham. The pooja in the temple is conducted on the pattern of the pooja held in the Mayuranathar Temple at Mayavaram.

## Special Rituals

The idols of Sri Viswanathaswamy and Sri Visalakshi are attached to the pedestals by Ashtabandhanam, a mixture of eight elements that help fix the idol to the peetham or base. The Viswanathaswamy idol is a Bana Lingam. The Bana lingam extends four carpenter's angul (inch) higher than the pedestal. The circumference at the level of the pedestal may be about eight angul(inches). The Vishalakshi idol stands twenty four inches above the pedestal up to the top of the crown.

## Architecture

The temple is situated at the bottom of eighteen steps leading from the eastern Gopuram. In the south-west direction of the temple is situated the temple of Sri Lakshminarayana Perumal of Old Kalpathy Village and Prasanna Maha Ganapathy of Chathapuram village, in the east the Kshipraprasada Maha Ganapathi Temple of Pandhrandaam Teruvu and the Manthakara Maha Ganapathi Temple of New Kalpathy village and in the east- west direction Sri Varadaraja Perumal of Govindarajapuram village. In the eastern direction at a distance of a kilometer is located the Chokkanathar temple of Chokkanathapuram village. On the right side while entering the temple, there are two banyan trees. The Serpent Gods [nagaprathishta] are consecrated beneath the first banyan tree, which is also the "sthala Vriksham". Pooja is performed for this tree and naga prathishta, treating it as "Vishnu Amsom". The flag staff (Kodimaram) is erected

in front of the temple. The stone slab describing the land given to the temple etc. is installed behind the flag mast. Close to the stone slab is the Bhadralingam and in front of it the Gana Nandikeswarar, facing Sri Viswanathaswamy. The eight sides of the prakaram(closed precincts of a temple) inside the Temple belongs to Indra, Agni, Yama, Niruruthi, Varuna, Vayu, Kubera, and Eesanan. The idol of Sri Viswanathaswamy is situated in the direction of Kubera facing east and close to this Sri Visalakshi facing south. In front of Sri Viswanathaswamy, Nandikeswarar appears in three forms. The three forms symbolize Aathmathathwam, Vidyathathwam and Sivathathwam. The moolavar in this temple is Sri Viswanathaswami.

### **Darshan Info**

The temple rites are based on the Aagama system of worship, which is about spirituality involving ritual worship and ethical personal conduct through a precept of a god.

### **Darshan Dress code**

Kerala traditional dress is advised, men are not supposed to wear shirt or t-shirt on while inside the temple.

### **The Shrine at Kalpathi Ratholsavam (Source)**

The car festival, which takes place in the last three days, journeys from the Viswanatha Swami temple to a small settlement inhabited by Brahmins and has been acknowledged as a World Heritage Site due to its peculiar and striking similar looking houses divided just by a wall.

Three smaller temples in New Kalpathi, Old Kalpathi and Chathapuram also participate in the festival. These temples carry Lord Vishnu, Ganesha and Murugan on the chariots.

The main and the lost stupendous chariots roll out from the Viswanatha Swami temple carrying the favorite deity of the people, Lord Shiva with Parvathi.

All of these chariots are drawn by devotees and meet at a point, that is, the Brahmin settlements.

For the first 6-8 days, the main temple echoes with the chanting of hymns and are livened by particular Vedic rituals. And the last few days mark the extravagant chariots rolling.

This festival banishes any kind of discrimination as devotees, no matter which caste they belong to, come and draw their deities' chariots.

So, here was all that you needed to know about this unique and sacred Chariot Festival.

## Conclusion

History is the foundation of every society and each society has developed its own norms and traditions over centuries, it's like a palimpsest over which layers of thoughts and reveries have been inscribed upon. These cultures and traditions have stood the test of time and tide and are still standing intact. Kerala, as it is called God's own country, has seen many influences which have been a benchmark in its history. This paper intends to shed some light on the lesser known historical influence which is the Brahmin migration to Kerala. Kerala has always been tolerant and secular to every religion. As a consequence, a unique blend of Architecture and Culture is seen throughout Kerala. It is quite interesting to note the synthesis and cultural adaptations of Kerala Brahmins, who uprooted from their native places, carved their own niche in the Kerala society and today have a separate set of cultures and practices which has an influence of both Malayalalee and Tamil styles. The *Agrahaarams* of Kerala have adapted some features from the vernacular architecture. However, other than this, the spatial organization of the Tamil Brahmin houses in Kerala remains unique and untouched. Similarly in the other socio-cultural aspects, the Kerala influence is seen on an outwardly appearance. The language has its own distinct accent and style, which is majorly Tamil, but with a lot of Malayalam vocabulary. Kerala Iyers are often proficient in both Tamil and Malayalam, as Malayalam is the medium of education in the schools. Over the years, the *Agrahaarams* have seen a lot of changes in terms of built fabric, but the basic built form and skeleton remains the same, intact from centuries echoing the forgotten tales of a large scale migration that altered the Geography in terms of spatial planning and is one of the excellent examples of sustainable communities.

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