

MUDIYETTU

Traditional Art-form of Kerala



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The Socio-Cultural And Ritualistic Aspect of Mudiyettu



Chapter 1

The Tradition of Mother Goddess Worship

Right from the pre-historic period, Mother goddess worship was prevalent in India. The findings from Harappan civilisation, especially the statues of women goddess leads to this fact. It is also believed that mother goddess worship was prevalent even in Syria, Asia minor, Egypt and such other places. However from Gupta age women goddesses were worshiped in India as evident in the history. Since 8th century AD due to the muslim invasion in the northern part of India Vishnu Bakti movement got strengthened as pointed out by the historian A. L. Basham. And hence the tradition of goddess worship became very less but in Bengal, Assam and in the coastal belts, including Kerala the mother goddess concept was enriched by the Dravidian culture and thus the mother goddess became the deity of Shrishti (creation) Sthithi (maintenance) and Samhara (Destruction) considering the bhava and rupa (Character and form) the mother goddess as called by different names: Durga (Undefeatable), Kaali (Black mother) and so all. The kottave in Tamil culture is a unique representation of Durga. She used to move over the heaps of dead bodies in the battle filed and feed on human flesh. Thus Kottave is considered to be a ferocities mother goddess.

It is believed that Durga has the Dasavathara concept. All the ten Avatharas can be comprehended into 3.

1. Mahaavidhya

This comprises of two types of deities- a) Kaali(Black and ferocious mother goddess) b) Thaara (virgin goddess)

2. Vidhya

This comprises of seven types of deities. a) Shodasi- Tripura(Sixteen year old most beautiful goddess) b) Bhuvaneshwari (Black in colour with three eyes) c) Bhairavi (highly ferocious and angry) d) Chinna masthaka (Holding a bleeding head on the hand) e) Dhoomavati(The form of smoke)

3. Sidha vidhya

This comprises of three types of deities: a) Bakula (with the face of crane) b) Mathangi (belonging to the untouchable cast) c) kamalatmika (Athma dhevatha-seated in Padmasana)

When the Dasavatharas are analyse we can see that all the nine avatharas gets merged into the tenth one – Kamalatmika. All avatharas leads to the soul consciousness and Kamalatmika is the one which reaches its heightent stage. That means Durga itself is parasakti or paramatma. Durga is the seat or origin of all the emotions, behaviour and karma of men. Thats how the final analysis lead us to the most minute aspects of human life.

Rathi, Bhoothi, Bhudhi, Mathi, Keerthi, Smrithi, Drithi, Sadhana, Medha, Swadha, Swaha, Kshudha, Nidra, Bhaya, Daya, Gati, Thushti, Pushti, Kshama, Lajja, Jrimbha and Thandri are the different and minute human characteristics, which are evident in goddess Durga. One can see the representation of all these characteristics or a few in the goddess in different parts of India and in other nations and continents. However Durga is the most prominent among all and Kaali is the manifestation of Durga.

The origin of Kaali is mentioned in Devi Bhagavata in the tenth skantha, in the story of king Suratha. The king Suratha after losing his treasury, kingdom and relatives reaches the hermitage of sage Sumadhas. He asked the sage, “though I have lost all the physical and monitory assets still I haven’t lost the passion for the life in the physical world!. Why is it so? “ Aa an answer to his question sage Sumedhas explains the origin of Kaali goddess. The Maya which is the basis of shrusti sthithi samhara as

the special power to steal the mind of all the living beings. Hence the relationships between them and their passion are all the result of of the Leela(Game) of maya. At the end of the Mannondhara when Mahavishnu retreating from all the activities was in Yoganidhra stage at palazhi on his abode Anantha. At that time to demons were born out of god's ears: Madhu and Kaidabha. Both of them were very strong when they could not find to anyone to fight with they decided to kill brahmadheva who was seated at the navel of Mahavishnu. Brahmadheva knowing that there is on one to help him, got very much afraid. Suddenly he got an idea. He decided to awaken Mahavishnu himself. But its not easy!. To awaken Mahavishnu from his sleep the most beautiful goddess of sleep should be willing to do that. Brahmadheva started worshiping the goddess of sleep. Thus the goddess of sleep who was pleased with the worship of Brahma, leaving the body of bagvan Vishnu. She entered into the bodies of Madhu and Kaidabha. The two demons were empowered by the immense power of darkness. They started to fight with Mahavishnu. After 5000 years of physical fight the demons became more and more powerful. Finally Mahavishnu had to retreat seeking boons from them. But Mahavishnu sought the boon to kill both of them. As they had already agreed they had no way other than blessing Mahavishnu with the boon. But they put forward a condition that they can be killed at a place where there is no water. As the whole area was flooded there was no place without water. But the cleaver Vishnu bagvan laid them on his thighs and they were annihilated. This powerful god of darkness is called Kaali.

Thus the Devi was born

Swarvayogeswareswari

Makakaali, Jagadhathri

Vidhi vazhthiya velayil (Devi Bagavata)

Most of the Kaali puravrutha are related to the god of destruction, Paramsiva. Sati, wife of Paramsiva went to take part in the yajnja conducted by her father Dakshaprajapati, without the consent of her husband. Because of the severe enmity to Siva, Daksha did not extent due welcome and asked her to leave. Frustrated Sati devi ended her life in the sacrificial fire itself. Knowing this, Siva became the embodiment of anger and slapped his braid of hair on the floor. Suddenly Veera badra and Kaali were born out of it and cut the throat of Daksha.

After the death of his wife Sati, Siva became very sad and he was in a mood of self-mortification and severe meditation. During this period demon Tharaka could

achieve even Indrapada because of the boon he had secured. Demon Tharaka could be annihilated only by the son born out of Siva. When Kamadeva tried to awaken Siva, he was even burnt down out to the fire from the third eye of Siva. Later the three daughters of Himavan- Ragini, Kudila and Kaali were devoted to commence severe meditation. Their intention was to secure the boon from Brahma to get Siva as husband. Winning all tests Kaali could please Siva. Thus, getting half of the body of Siva she became Ardhangini- wife of Siva. Though she was the wife, she didn't like Siva calling her 'black lad'. She thought that she was called like that because of the dark colour of her body. It disturbed her very much. She again started meditating to get a boon from Brahma to remove the darkness from her body. Thus the darkness originated from the body of Devi became famous in all the world as Koushiki. Indra enshrined Koushiki on the vindhya mountains. Thus she was called Vindya nivasini, Bhairavi, Chandika, Mahakaali etc. It is believed that even human sacrifices were conducted to please Koushiki Devi. In Maharashtra Kaoushiki was enshrined as Karthayini at Kolhapur. Chatrapati Sivaji worshiped goddess Karthayini for his victory in the wars.

Kannaki is considered to be the form of Kaali in Tamilnadu. We can see the elements of Durga and Kaali in the traditional concept and worship style of Kannaki. On her long journey to Madhura, tired Kovalan and Kannaki take rest at the abode of Durga devi. There they could see 'Vettuvaram', a traditional performance. Devi entered into the body of priestess Salini and demented human sacrifice as a favour for the boons from her. Kovilan and Kannaki heard this. As per the tradition in Kerala Kaali is the goddess who gets pleased with human sacrifice. There are two different aspects imposed on mother goddess: 1, Durga as embodiment of power (Swatham). 2, Kaali embodiment of darkness (Thamasa). In Chilappathikara Kannaki is given these two different concepts. She burns down Madhura city with her power of yoga and immense anger. Later when she reached Chera territory she became cool and calm and she is described as Varavarnini, adding beauty to the shadows of the tree. As per Chilappathikara it is considered that Chera Chenguttuva enshrined Kannaki constructing a beautiful temple, almost 2000 years ago. Later both in Kerala and Tamilnadu Kannaki Amman was enshrined and worshiped in different temples. Badrakali worship at Kodungallur Sreekurumba temples in Thrissur and Palakkad districts etc are the living examples of this. Bharani festival marks the season for celebrating the worship of Kaali.

Another source regarding the origin of mother goddess worship is Mookambika purana. It is believed that Sree Sakaracharya after his severe meditation maid the

mother goddess appear at Kudajadri. This is basic legend behind founding of Kollur Mookambika temple. The story of Mookambika is described in the third chapter of Skantha purana. Sage Kola was conducting deep mediation in the valleys of Kudajadri. Siva appeared and blessed him with the boon that the Sreemaharanya hermitage will be famous around the world along with his name. In addition to this Siva offered that the companied power in the name of Mahalakshmi will be seated at this abode. And it will be a famous temple. Again sage Kola went in deep meditation. At this time the great demon Kamhan secured the boon from Sreebairavi that he will not be killed by men. He started creating trouble to whole world and all were afraid of him. He came to Kolhapura and removed sage Kola out of his hermitage and he made it his abode. Now Tripura Bairavi mother goddess reached the place with all the preparations for war. Afraid of her Kamhan had to flee. He reached Riswamooka mountains and started deep meditation. Later in the fourth mannounthara the demon Mahisha arrived along with his army and defeated Kolhapuri which the Kamha had made his city. Demon Mahisha defeated even Indra and he was the lord of all the territories. At this time sage Kolha awakened from his meditation. He could see all what had happened through his eyes of wisdom. Again he fell in deep meditation to make Siva and Vishnu Appear. Both the gods appeared and awakened sage Kolha. Now brahma arrived along with all other gods. All of them complaint to Siva and Vishnu that they cannot stand to the evil deeds of demon Mahisha. Hearing all these Siva, Vishnu and Brahma became very angry and the fire of anger came out of their eyes. Along with it the heat of fire from the eyes of Yama, Indra and all other gods came out and joint with the fire of anger Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. It became a mountain of glow and later took the form of a young lady- Mahalakshmi. Goddess Mahalakshmi shouted by which all world got trembled. Demon Mahisha came out to fight with her. The war between demon Mahisha and the goddess was very fierceful. Sreeparamswara now drew a circle where sage Kolha conducted Sivlinga pooja. Suddenly goddess annihilated demon Mahisha. This circle of light became famous as Sreechakra. Goddess asked sage Kolha what else he wanted. Sage Kolha requested that in this chakra which was drown by Siva goddess herself should make her abode along with other gods like Vishnu, Brahma and so on. It is believed that goddess Sreelakshmi in the form of Vaisnavi, Yasoda, Nandini, Maya devi etc is seated in the centre of Sreechakra along with other gods. However the style of Kaali worship at Mookambika, in the northern end of Kerala is different from the worship styles in central and southern parts.

Chapter 2

Tradition of Kaali worship in Kerala and performance of the myth



It is a fact that Kaali worship in Kerala is different from the worship styles in other parts of India. It maybe because of the unique geographical division from other parts of the country. The historians believe that the ‘Nannaans’ or Ayikas entered Kerala crossing the Vindhya mountains and influenced the aborigines of the area and embraced their rich culture. Later the culture of the aborigines and the newly arrived inhabitants got mixed and blended to form a common culture, rich in all aspects, imbibing the best out of both. Famous Sanskrit pundit, K.P. Narayana Pisharody has mentioned in the book, ‘Sree Badrakali Mahathmyam or Darika Vadham’ written by T.S. Thriumunpu that first and foremost Badrakaali enshrinement in northern Kerala is the Madayi kavu near Ezhimala. Madayikkavu is mentioned in Brahmandapurana as part to the shrines founded by Parasurama. It is believed that the nether world which is considered to be the abode of demon Darika, as described in ‘Bhadrakaali mahathmyam’ is Kerala. Such aspects emphasise the roots for the tradition of Kaali worship in Kerala.

The story of Darika is described in detail by sage Markandeya at his hermitage, as per the request of a Brahmin named Sivasharmavu. The noble king Chandrasenan of the kingdom of Kashmir went for hunting in the forest along with his entourage. When he was tiered after the hunt he took rest on a rock. Close to the rock there was

a big anthill where the team chained their two elephants. The king and the ministers were enjoying the chess game. The elephants happened to step on the anthill. Immediately a huge black beast came out and swallowed both the elephants. The roaring beast rush towards the king and ministers. Fearing the huge beast the king and his team had to flee and seek shelter at the hermitage of sage Sudheeshna. The sage could know that this beast is the servant of Badrakaali and is very dangerous. He approached the beast and consoled it with kind words. Thus it went back without hurting anyone. The king was shocked to know that if such huge beasts are servants of Badrakaali, what would be the feature of Badrakaali herself. He wanted to know more about Badrakaali. Thus sage Sudheeshna further explained the story of Darika.

During the war between devas(gods) and asuras (demons) Mahavishnu joint along with the gods and fought against the demons. With his sudharsana chakra he could annihilate all the demons cutting their throats. However four young demon ladies escaped and took shelter in the nether world. Out the four, two ladies Danamathi and Darumathi were married and they decided to commence severe meditation to get a boon for child birth from Brahma. They hoped that their children would destroy the community of gods all together, who killed the demon community. Both of them conducted the severe penance at the sea shore at Gokarna. Finally Brahma appeared and asked what boons they wanted. As per their wish Brahma told them that they will be blessed with child birth. Thus Danavati had a son named Danavan and Darumati got another son named Darikan. When they became adults they learned how their community as such was wiped out by the gods. They decided to take revenge and started deep penance at Gokarna, seeking boons. When Brahma did not appear even after the severe meditation and worship, Darika decided to cut away his own head and present it to Brahma. Suddenly lord Brahma appeared and told them that if your body is cut from each drop of the dripping blood thousands of demons will be born!. Pleased Brahma asked them to seek the boons. Darika made the request that no one of the gods and demons and humans should be able to kill him and he wanted to have strength and power of ten thousand elephants. He also sought for the magical brahmadhandu(most powerful stick of Brahma). In addition to this Brahma gave them to Devatas- Mayavati and Thamasi, for their help. Finally he asked Darika why didn't he asked the boon not to be killed by women. The proud demon said he never expect such a pathetic confrontation . Knowing his pride and ego the Brahma cursed him, "a godly women herself will kill you. And also the brahmadandu and the mantras bestowed on you by me will never be useful to you at that time". The proud Darika acquiring wealth and power, threatened the three worlds. He conquered the nether world and earth, and challenge god Indra to come for fight with him. All the gods

unitedly fought against him. But when Darika was about to use the Brahmadaṇḍu, the gods had to flee. Even the kalpavṛkṣa, Kāmadenu and all such divinities were under the custody of Darika. He married Manodari, the daughter of Maya and the godly beauties Urvāṣī, Rāmbā, Thiloṭhama and such other aśpaṣas became his maid servants. There was no one to fight against him in the three worlds. Devas (gods) finally approached Brahma requesting for help. But Brahma, realising that the boons he offered were the cause of all these destructions, approached Mahaviṣṇu. But Viṣṇu could not help them. Finally, realising the seriousness of the situation Brahma, Viṣṇu and all the gods reached mount Kailāsa and bowed to Paraśiva. Śiva asked them, “how can we kill this demon Darika who has acquired immense power?”. They realised that for the sake of peace in the three worlds, a universal revolution is needed. Lord Brahma explained the loopholes of his boon- Darika cannot win over women!. Now Lord Viṣṇu suggested that a few women shall be created who will kill Darika. Thus six celestial mothers were born out of six gods- Brahmī from Brahma, Maheswari from Maheswar, Kumari from Kumaran(Subhramanyan), Vaiṣṇavi from Viṣṇu, Varahi from Yama and Indrani from Indra. Each of them were given enough soldiers and other forces. There was a fierce battle between the forces of mothers and of demons. The chieftain of Darika was killed immediately Darika’s brother Danava started to lead the fight. He too fell dead in the battle field. Finally Darika himself came forward to lead the fight. When he started the māyā war, Maheswari could burn down all the creations of Maya with her third eye on the forehead. When she hit Darika with her trisul on his neck, blood started dripping down. From each drop of blood thousands of demons sprang up to fight against the gods. Thus the battle field was filled with lakhs and lakhs of demons who were empowered with new vigour and strength. The tired army of the gods and the six mothers could not stand to it. They had to flee. At this time sage Narada came to the battle field and tried to talk to Darika. But the proud Darika ridiculed sage Narada and asked him to get out of the field. Narada ran to mount Kailāsa and explained to Paraśiva how mothers and their army got defeated and finally fled. He described the cruelties of Darika in detail. Hearing this, Śiva became the embodiment of destruction, and when he got up, he looked like another peak taller than Kailāsa. Holding on his four hands- deer, axe, trisul and tabor, he shouted making the whole world trembled. From the third eye of his divine forehead light and fire came out like thousands of burning sun. Suddenly with a roar frightening the three worlds Badrakālī jumped out the third eye with thousands of heads and hands. The mount Kailāsa trembled as if on an earthquake. No one could look at the eyes of Badrakālī as all of them were highly fierce. Even the wild animals fled from the nearby caves out of fear. Looking at the terrific sight of Badrakālī Śreeparvatī was

stunt. She however tried to console Badrakaali and requested her to calm down. Thus the fearful form of Badrakaali was tamed and reduced to a normal form with one head, three eyes, sixteen hands equipped with weapons. Being the daughter of Siva whose neck (kantha) is filled with poison kaalakooda, Badrakaali is called 'Kanthekaali'. When Kaali asked Siva her father what is her mission, he asked her to annihilate Darika, save the whole world and be the pride of universe. She was bestowed with sixty six crores Bhootganas and the vahana(transport)- Vethal. The six mothers seeing the movement of Badrakaali and her team to fight against Darika, came out of their caves where they had taken shelter. All the six mothers joining with Kaali became Saptamathas(seven mothers). The war between Bhoothaganas and the army of Danava was very fierce. The war field was filled with dead bodies. Blood flowed like rivers. All the eight ministers of Darika fell dead, fighting against the army of mothers. The gods, seven sages, yakshas and their men watched the war from the sky. They worshiped and praised Kanthekaali who was fighting victoriously against Danava.

Darika was arriving the war field he called his wife Manodari and asked her to continuously recite the mantras advised by Brahma, for his victory of the war. He also told her to duly entertain the guests who come to the palace. Darika fought against Kanthekaali moving like storm. He used the divine weapons one after another against Kaali. But Devi could defuse all such weapons as she could produce equally powerful weapons. Finding no other way to win over the goddess, Darika threw the Brahmadaṇḍa at her. But it could not reach the goddess as he expected. Goddess Kaali moved to another place to take rest as she was damn tired.

Seeing that Kanthekaali was very tired, goddess Durga appeared. She knew that Darika can be killed if she could get the mantras advised by Brahma to Darika. As Darika's wife Manodari was reciting these mantras, Durga decided to go to the palace of Darika and acquire the mantras tactfully. She reached palace of Darika in the form of a Brahmin lady and very tactfully received the mantras from Manodari. Thus Darika's brahmadaṇḍa lost its power the army of Badrakaali fought against Darika with added power and might. Darika knew that the powerful mantras were exchanged to a Brahmin lady by his wife Manodari. He saw many ill omens. But decided to continue the fight. The brahmadaṇḍa slipped out of his hands. Goddess Kaali took it and slapped him with it. Darika started feeling from the war field. Kaali went after him on her vahana- Vethaal. Darika took refuge in a cave in the nether world. Badrakaali, on reaching the nether world, could not trace Darika. Suddenly a sound was heard in her ear that Darika is hiding in nearby cave. The daughter of Siva

approached the cave with immense power and vigour. Her bluish black body rose up to the sky. Her hair spread like black cloud. It became dark in the nether world. Thinking that it is night, Darika tried to come out. Badrakaali stretched her long tongue into the cave. When Darika was stepping forward he felt moisture on his feet. But he thought that it maybe the moisture of the blood of the war field. Suddenly Darika was pulled out and lifted up to the sky by the goddess with her tongue. She threw him out to the sky. When Darika was falling down from the sky Badrakaali took her trisul and hooked him on it. She stabbed him on to the floor. Darika started crying for mercy. For a moment Badrakaali, being a lady and mother listened to his cries and felt kind to him. Immediately all the mothers and gods described the evil deeds of Darika and requested her not to be kind to him. Now goddess Badrakaali with all her anger and hatred started roaring trembling the whole world. The chest of Darika was pierced open, and she drank the blood. She roasted his liver in the fire and ate it. Cutting the head of Darika and holding in her hand she shouted with uncontrollable anger. The sages and gods could not even look at that; they started to flee. Badrakaali rushed to mount kailasa on her Vethal. Even lord Siva was frightened by her sight and sound. He even feared that she may even engulf him and mount kailasa if her anger is not cooled. Immediately he asked children Ganapati and Nandikeswar to lay down on her path as very small children crying for their mother. Badrakaali who was rushing like black ocean of anger suddenly looked at the small children and her motherhood was aroused. Immediately she took them in her four hands and as a loving mother she started feeding them with breast milk. All her anger was melted and her love became its peak. The gods approached her with worship and finally she bowed down at the feet of her father.

The fact that the story of annihilation of Darika and the importance of Darika-Badrakaali war is described with such details in 'Sreebadrakaali mahathmyam', emphasises the origin and development of Badrakaali worship in Kerala and its importance in the culture and the tradition. Even the geographical description in the story relate it to Kerala precisely. Danamati, Darumati and Darika conducted their penance at the sea coast at Gokarna, which is the northern boundary of Kerala. The betel leaf garden, areca nut tree, the palm tree, Konna (cassia fistula plant -golden rain tree), Punna (Alexandrian laurel- *Calophyllum inophyllum*) etc are all the specialities of Keralite vegetation. Other than Mudiyyettu, the story of Kaali-Darika war is the basic legend for many other ritualistic art-forms and traditional customs. 'Markandeya purana' is a Sanskrit text. The part of it is Darika vadha which is re return in Malayalam as 'Badrolpathi Kilippattu', is the local basic text for many of the art-forms in Kerala.

Other Performing Art-Forms in Kerala Based on Kaali-Darika Myth

a) The tradition of Kaaliyoottu in Southern Kerala

Ancient cultures in our country and outside are enriched with glorious myths and legends. Rituals can be considered as the main cause of action enriched by the myths. Ritualistic art-forms consists of performance styles and patterns to convey the meaning and purpose of the rituals for human understanding. Different ritualistic performing art-forms show difference in the quantity and quality of ritualistic elements and artistic elements. Its a fact that even the popular traditional art-forms are all based on such rituals which have its roots in the myths. Victory of Badrakaali over Darika or annihilation of Darika is a strong myth that forms the theme for very many ritualistic art-forms in Kerala.

'Markandeyapurana' carries the myth of Kaali and Darika where as no other Purana or Aryan texts has any mention of such a myth. Hence it is considered that this myth is highly popular in Kerala than in other states. The enormous number of Bagavati kaavus or family temples in Kerala show the influence of this myth in the Keralite tradition and culture. Very many art-forms have been evolved out of this myth in different parts of Kerala. Mudi yettu, Kaaliyoottu, Padayani, Theyyam, Pana, Kalampattu, Thottampattu, Karikaaliyattam etc are based on the same myth of Kaali and Darika.

b) Structure of performance

The conflict between Devas and Asuras, as narrated in the Puranas and mythologies usually end up in the Victory of Devas. Of course! Devas represent the good and asuras represent the evil. In Mudi yettu and Kaaliyoottu this myth is transformed into beautiful dramatic visual art-forms blending it harmoniously with a sense of dramatic horror, making it a sort of total theatre. It is difficult to trace back the period of its origin. The transformation and evolution of these art-forms through the passage of time from generation to generation make it difficult to pin point the time of origin and also the structure of original form. However we can only appreciate the forefathers who, with their artistic and performing abilities made it aesthetically and ritualistically attractive and very rich. In art-forms like Kaali yettu and Mudi yettu,

the dramatic appeal is by far augmented by a convincing transformation augment in to gods and demons(Devas and Asuras). In both audio and visual levels of these art-forms, we can see the effect of transformation portrayed artistically and ritualistically. The music, rhythm and accompaniments on the audio level and the masks, makeup, costumes and chorographical patterns on the visual level make it clearly evident.



As mentioned, Darika vadha(killing of Darika) has been the theme of many visual art-forms in Kerala. In the northern part, it is in the form of Theyyam, where as in the central parts it is portrayed as Mudi yettu and Padayani. In southern parts of Kerala it is Kaaliyoottu. Kaaliyoottu is performed in the mudippuras and Badrakaali temples in Trivandram district. As it is mainly ritualistic in nature it is not staged outside the temple premises. And also it is not performed in very many venues as Mudi yettu.

In the southern region of Kerala, a practice of singing Thottam songs before the deity- mother goddess is prevalent during the months of February and March. The idol of goddess is taken out to a panthal made of green fresh green leaves. The panthal is put up usually in paddy field after the main harvest is over, in the months of January, February (Makara in Malayalam). Kaaliyoottu is mainly performed at Sarkaradevi temple, Ponnara family temple, Elampayil temple, Vellanadu devi temple, Porittakaavu and Vellayani devi temple. However considering the rising cost for conducting the festival and performance, sometimes the frequency of performance may vary according to the financing conditions. But Saarkara devi temple at Chirayankil is an exception, where the performance is an annual feature. This practice was commenced during the reign of king Marthanda varma and it is continued even today.

As this temple is administered by the Travancore Devoswom Board, and Kaaliyoottu is related to the history of Travancore, the patronage is continued without any financial problem.

As per history, Marthanda varma became the king of Travancore after surmounting very many obstacles. Initially he undertook the administration of a small principality named Venad. Then he set out on enlarging the kingdom. Small neighbouring princely states were annexed easily. But he had to face stiff resistance when he approached Kayamkulam. Delenoy who joined the king from the Portuguese side when the Portuguese army was defeated, added additional strength to the army of prince Karthika thirunal. In the year 1742 a joint attack of Kayamkulam was led by prince Karthika thirunal himself with the support of Delenoy and Dalava Ramayyan. The army took interim rest near Sarkara temple, where all the temple lamps were lit. On enquiry by the king it was learnt that the people in the locality had profound faith in divine powers of the deity-Bagavati, and Kaaliyoottu was being conducted to propitiate the deity. Realising the divine powers of the deity and the strong faith of the people the king vowed that he would arrange for Kaaliyoottu every year, should he succeed in his conquest. It was a memorable war and the of Kaayamkulam was forced to enter into a treaty with Marthanda varma. Kaayamkulam was fully annexed only after another battle in 1746. Anyway, as per the king's vow the Kaaliyoottu became an annual function without any hindrance and is continued even today. However there is no clear evidence to establish the exact year of its commencement. The king Marthanda varma dedicated his kingdom to lord Sree Padmanabha, the deity of the historic temple in Trivandram, in the year 1750. It is obvious that was the conjunction time for the king to fulfil his vows which he had taken during the period of exile and also to make amends for the atrocities committed during his conquest. Thus historians came to the conclusion that the practice of Kaaliyoottu at Sarkara temple was began in the year 1750 or around about the same period. Even now it is followed that the Kaaliyoottu ritual ceremony at Sarkara temple is conducted prior to the Aarattu festival at the Sree Padmanaba temple at Trivandram.

Kaaliyoottu takes place at Sarkara devi temple during the Malayalam month of Kumbham(February-March). A Friday, excluding the star-days Barani and Chithira as also the new moon day, is usually considered as the auspicious day to perform Kaaliyoottu. After deciding such a convenient date, one of the devotees carrying a docket goes as a representative of the king to meet the head of the Ponnarana family at Aattungal. One member of the Pazhaveedu, an ancient family of Chirayankil, usually takes the role of the devotee-messenger. Panikkars of the Ponnara family are having

the right to perform the rituals. Ponnara family has got certain special rights provided by the king. It is one among the sixty family brought by the king Marthanda varma from kolathunadu for various purposes and requirements. They have the rights not only to conduct the Kaaliyoottu at Sarkara temple, but rituals in the surrounding temples also. In the earlier days it was conducted under the supervision of thanthrees of Vaaranattu family. Now a days poojari of the temple himself as got the right for it. In earlier days the ritual art-form of Kaaliyoottu is performed by two brothers, Velayudhan pillai adn Padmanaba pillai. Very aged people in the area still remember the grand Badrakaali vesha performed by Padmanaba pillai. However Kaaliyoottu is performed by the same family even today obeying the unwritten rule that the any member of the family who appears of the venue should be offer a chance to participate. The leader or Karanavar of the Ponnara family receives the docket brought by the devotee-messenger. He offers a dakshina and thus becomes committed to conduct the Kaaliyoottu rituals. Accompanied by other members of the party he arrives at the Sarkara temple on a Thursday, precisely 8 days prior to the Friday chosen for the event. The rituals commences after regular poojas in the temple. A peedam(wooden stool), a silk cloth piece and a sword are placed at the usual spot where the Vritchikakkalam is laid. Then, chanting hymns in praise of Kaali Bagavati, offerings are made to the goddess and the ashtadikk palakas(the protectors of the eight directions). This is followed by a kuruthi (scarifies) performed on the Chamundi stone outside the temple, to absolve and protect the temple and its surroundings. In earlier days people living around the temple also did these ceremonies once the Kaaliyoottu ceremony is began, till it gets finished, no fresh venture used to be conducted in the temple premises. Any works even maintenance of roof etc are considered to be a taboo before the completion of Kaaliyoottu. This shows the significant and importance that the local people attached to the Kaaliyoottu function.

After the kuruthi as mentioned above, the performer, carrying the kuruthi vassal goes back in to the temple and receives the cloths which are dedicated for Vellattam Kali. This is followed by a magnificent procession through the southern gate carrying the reigning deity, which is supported by Vadhyagosham (traditional orchestra). The procession moves to the Kaaval madappura which is situated outside the temple. This madappura is the auspicious spot to conduct all the important rituals of the Kaaliyoottu. Along with the deity an oil lamp, a kuthuvilakku and lighted coconut-tree- leaf-torch are also brought into the Madappura. If the lamp is put out, it can be re kindled by the Kuthuvilakku. And if both these are put out, the lighted torch is used to re kindled them. If all the three are extinguished at once, it is considered as an ill omen. Then it becomes a must that a fresh flame is to be brought from Sree

Padmanaba swami temple in Trivandram. But such an eventuality never occurs because the indigenous torch called 'chootu' is never put out. The person who carries the sanctified lamp should have observed very strict vrithanishta or ritual-discipline. Or else it is believed that there would be evil happenings.

Sarkara devi temple is believed to be a special Devi-shrine. As per legend, Villwamangalathu Swamiyar on his holy journey in search of Ananthan kaadu(the forest of Anantha) had solemnised many Devi-shrines. When the Swamiyar reached the kaaval madappura of Sarkara Devi temple, he saw Devi in the form of a girl playing with sand, who was surrounded by pulayas(untouchable). This strange site is believed to be the spot where the present kaaval madappura is erected. Devi, on seeing the Swamiyar ran away and hid herself in one of the pots containing molasses which were placed at the spot where the present sanctum-sanctorum of Sarkara temple is located. Swamiyar by his occult power could sort out the pot in which the Devi had hidden herself. He made the Devi pradhishta (enshrining the goddess) at the exact spot. The name of the temple, Sarkara originated in this manner as it was the spot the molasses pot was placed.

Kaval madappura is very important in the ritual of Kaaliyoottu as the ritual is commenced at this spot. It is in the presence of devotee-messenger representing the king and the potti representing the Varanaattu thanthrikal. The first day opens with the singing of Badrakaali pattu with the accompaniment of music instruments like Karatika and Chengala. Vellattam kali takes place after the first recital in tune with the rhythm set by Karatika. This dance sequence of Kaaliyoottu is quite different from the Vallattam kali of Theyyam and Thira of northern Karala. Wearing a thin and immaculately white doti and with another white cloth tied round his head, the performer holds the white cloth received by the temple, with his both hands in a peculiar style, leaving the ends of the cloth loose. Then he begins the dance with rhythmic steps in a circle, alternately swinging the loose ends of the cloth held in his hands. Both the swinging of the cloth and the rhythmic footsteps will be quite in tuned with the thalam (rhythm) of Karatika. In the beginning it is on a very low-key. Slowly the rhythm of the footsteps and the hand movements becomes brisk and fast. The dance, culminating on a high pitch stops abruptly. The performer whirls round one of the loose ends of the cloth, held in his hand over his head. The whole dance piece (Vellattam-kali) is performed in four varying rhythms. The beating of the Karatika is as important as the performance of Vellattam. After a performance, the native torch (choottu) is lighted and one person goes with it inside the temple. The song and vellattam are repeated twice more. Immediately after this the dance sequence

called kurutholattam is performed, the performer wearing kuruthola (stringed tender coconut leaves) on his arms and legs dances to the rhythm of Karatika. It is almost like a basic physical preparation for the person who takes the vasha (role) of Badrakaali and fights against Darika on the last day. A person who is physically fit and who has observed austerity for the specific period can accomplish the dance performance. After the Kurutholachattam the program for the day gets concluded by receiving dakshina(ritualistic offering) from the poojari and from the person who is responsible for conducting the festival(Nombukaran). The ceremonial rituals on the second day is almost a repetition of the first day. However there will be two performers, since the second day for Kurutholachattam.

The third day of the ritual of Kaaliyoottu is more dramatic as a question-master is introduced in the pageant. Wearing a doti and a cloth banded around the head, the question-master carries a long staff in his hand. Since the third day till the seventh day the dialogue between question-master and other participants reveal the story and context of the performance in detail. It is almost like Koimbadar versus Narada and Narada versus Pasupati(Siva) samvada in Mudi yettu. Sage Narada is introduced first as the 'muni' who wanders all the time in the three worlds. The dialogue between Narada and the question-master described the birth of Darika. The narrative performance is very interesting as it is like the traditional Koothu or Padakam temple art-forms of Kerala. In between the narration many doubts are raised by the person who puts forward questions. The explications furnished by the performing artists as replay to the question is very interesting. The dramatic effect of this performance gets heighten according to the erudition and skill of the narrator. The question- answer session is very funny and comical at times. For example reciting certain poetic stanza, the inquirer poses certain doubts like this, "One may turn to god and exclaim- oh Siva when one sustains a severe physical injury or so. But will anybody ever call god if he loses his Koupeenam (a type of native underwear) ?". To contradict this, sage Narada narrates an anecdote to describe the fact that even in such a plight one may turn to lord Siva.

Sage Narada explains his confrontation with Darika in detail: on his way from Kailasa Narada comes upon Darika unawares. On seeing the sage who carries a Tamburu(fiddle like instrument), Darika desires him to sing a song. Narada begins with Ganapati stuthi (worshiping lord Vigneswara). Darika, thereupon ridicules the Ganapati stuthi and ask the sage to sing praising himself and his queen, Manodari. But Narada, instead of praising Manodari he chants worshipful hymns about Saraswathi, the Goddess of Learning. Shaken by anger Darika gets hold of Narada by

his legs and swirls him upwards. From the very heights, whirling round and round losing all his dress including the Koupeena Narada finally falls into the (Kadikkuzhi) garbage pit of Kailasa. By the narration of this incident Narada establishes that one may call out for Gods help even when he loses his Koupeena. This is the introductory part of Narada which is called Narada-Purappadu.

Purappadu of Kaavilutaya Nayar is on the fourth day. This character is considered to be the representation of Nandikeswara, the chief of the entourage of lord Siva. He is supposed to be the protector who vouchsafes the uninterrupted and peaceful conduct of the ritualistic performance whenever Kalliyoottu is celebrated. He wears a red cloth tucked upon the waist over his dhoti. He has a black beard and a conical cap improvised from the dried areca nut palm. His main duty is to have a confrontation with the inquirer, contradicting his doubts. Thus he makes the people laugh by putting forward illogical and funny arguments. To add to the amusement he even blurt out blunders in the course of his narration and also by using words with double meaning and even obscene connotations. His conversation is fully in simple rustic style. His speech is interspersed with a peculiar laughter like, 'Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!'. He usually substantiates his arguments quoting from scriptures. As an example while reciting a sloga (stanza), commencing with 'Viswamithradi...' He establishes the use of staff borne by the inquirer. He explains that the long stick is a protection against birds, cows and foes. Finally he reveals who he is and what is purpose of his visit, concluding the day's program.

Purappadu (arrival) of Ayiranippara takes place on fifth day, after the Vellattamkali and the Kurutholachattam. There are four main characters in this section who introduce themselves as Olanpilli, Ugranpilli, Nanayaru and Kantharu. The claim that they come from Vadakkumkoor and Thekkumkoor, two major principalities existed before the formation of state of Travancore. Both Olanpilli and Ugranpilli enter with a Para(a vessel used for measuring paddy). It is meant for measuring out the paddy collected as offering to the Devi during the ritual, Mudi-uzhichil, which usually precedes Kaaliyoottu. Olampalli takes the role of the elder and Ugranpilli that of the younger. Olanpilli narrates:

Me the elder, this one the younger,

This one the younger, me the elder;

But, at times the younger gets cross

And arrogates the elder role,

Oh then I swear on thy name,

There is no Uzhichil here...

The younger repeats loudly whatever is uttered by the elder. It is almost like the repeat recital by the second singer in the traditional art-forms, Thullal. Both Olanpilli and Ugranpilli brag about their physical skills and describe the people and the ceremonies they have come across during their southward journey. Claiming to speak a different lingo, they utter all sorts of blunders and funny jocks. The inquirer gets tired of explaining each and everything to these to idiotic characters and correcting them as and when they utter awful blunders. Finally, as feared by the elder, the younger gets crossed and makes his exit carrying the Para on his head, marking the end of fifth day's performance.

Nanayaru and Kantharu appear on the six day as elder and younger. Their dialogue and language appear to be a mere emulation of what was going on on the previous day. But purpose of their visit is quite different. The ritualistic ceremony of Purappadu of Kaniyarukuruppu is indented to find out before-hand if there has been any imperfection or ungodliness in the preparation for Kaaliyoottu. With the aid of sea-shells laid on the floor according to manthras such imperfections are traced and try to absolve it if there has been any. Supporting it Malavetas chant the manthras to absolve the problem. The different sequences of enactment provide very interesting moments. The dialogue between inquirer and other participants regarding the thatching of the Panthal for Kaaliyoottu and such other preparations takes a serious turn. Now there appear Malavetas on the scene and by certain indigenous methods of guessing declare that there has crept in some unholliness and that it must be absolved. The Kaniyaru prescribes a chart for the absolution ceremony, marking the end of the day's performance.

On the seventh day there will be ritualistic ceremonies throughout the night. The Vellattam-kali and Kurutholachattam are performed elaborately. Then comes the Purappadu(arrival) of Pulaya. This is to relate to the legend of Villwamangalathu swamiyar seeing Devi as a small girl, playing in the midst of Pulayas. In the beginning of Pulaya purappadu, the hereditary disentanglement of that tribe eagerly get engaged in a search for the Goddess-girl who had disappeared from their midst. They call out tries, standing in the quadrangle of the temple: "oh thou Goddess! Thou may please come to us again!" Then they moved to the Kaavalmadappura. The inquirer takes his usual position, by this time. The Pulayas come forward playing a game of small hand-drum (cheppu) and balls (panthu). They makes some absorbed utterances which have no

apparent meaning. Neither the spectators nor the inquirer can make out what babble. The land-lord of the Pulayas come in search of them. He explains what they have said. He also elucidates the benefits of the obeisant acts of kneeling and bowing. Then a person appears behind a half curtain dressed as a Pulaya women. The others begin to play the instrument Karattika. This short sequence is called Pulayipurappadu. The common belief is that it is Devi herself who appears as the Pulaya women. As Pulayas are untouchables this belief and legend has got immense relevant which can revolutionize the social customs and divisions.

In the next scene Kayyan and Kayyi, a Pulaya appears with his two wives. They dance and sing a cores praising lord Govinda. They also cracks some funny jocks. Then arrives ' the drunken man'. He comes howling, from among the crowd, as a representation of common man. He spits here and there and jostle with the by-standers. This character is considered to be Lord Sree Parameswara in the disguise of a drunkard. He demonstrates the pranks of a bousy fellow very crude in appearance. But what is peaks is very lofty philosophic principals, high Vedantha. He always enters into wordy warfare with the inquirer. He sings a drunkards rhyme and receives donations from the assembled crowd and makes his exit.

The paradesi Brahmana makes his entry when drunkard leaves the performing area. He too takes his entry to participate in the ceremonies of Kaaliyoottu. Then enters lord Subramanya marking the Purappadu of Perumal. This character is introduced in Kaaliyoottu based on the surmise that Darika Challenged not only Lord Sree Parameswara but all the Gods and disciples in Kailasa. At the time of sunrise Lord Subramanya garlands Valli and the night's performance gets concluded.

On the eighth day the ritual called Mudi-Uzhichil is performed. By about 5 o clock in the afternoon two persons dressed as Badrakaali and each wearing a Mudi (wooden head-gear) appear and move in search of Darika in all directions. One person goes along the road around the temple first to the south and then to the north. The head-gear he wears is heavy and highly decorated. It is a beautiful sculpture with artistic carving on the bottom trunk-piece of a jack-fruit tree. The figures of many intertwining serpents with spreaded hoods are carved on it. This ornamental head-gear is the property of the temple art repository of Sarkara-temple. The other person dressed as Kaali goes towards east direction. He wears a comparatively lighter head-gear which belongs to Ponnara family. Both these representations of Kaali in the course of their search for Darika are ceremoniously welcomed with the offering of Nirapara (paddy filled traditional measuring bowl) and Nilavilakku(lighted traditional lamp), by the devotees living alongside the routes taken by the Kaalis. The performer

in Kaali-vesha take few handful of paddy from the Nirapara and scatters it all around. The worshipers who had gathered around collected the paddy grains in their dhothis worn over the shoulder (melmundu). They preserve it in their homes as there is a common belief that the paddy grains so kept will ward off the break-out of small-pox. The disease small-pox is believed to be the result of Kaali Bagavati's anger. The paddy thus preserved will bring of all material prosperity to the families. The two Kaali veshas(performers as Kaali Bagavati) reach places far away from Sarkara temple before they take rest and after some respite they return. Their trip back to Sarkara temple will always be at the dead of night, as it is believed that it is inauspicious for the devotees to see Kaali's coming back. The Mudies (head-gears) have been taken out to distant places through the dwelling areas of all sorts of people. Hence it is believed that both Mudies have become polluted . The next program of the night is to perform absolutions of the two Mudies. For this purpose Kuruthi (absolving bath) and Bali (scarifies) are performed before the Chamundi prathishta. After this the paddy grains are collected two Kizhis(cloth bags) and preserved as offerings to the Goddess Uma and Gangadevi.

c) Preparation for the final event

Nilathil-poru (fight on the field), the most significant function takes place on the next day. Since early morning temple premises are prepared and arrange for this function. Two high-level platforms are erected at the two ends of the temple compound. These are called 'Paranas'. They are prepared in a short while by the combined efforts of two communities. The most difficult task is the preparation of the raised rostrum for Badrakaali. The four pillars needed for the purpose are obtained by vertically halving two coconut-tree trunk into four long pieces. The coconut-trees used would be at least 45 feet long and it trunk should be quiet straight, without any spots of decay. It is the responsibility of Thachar caste (carpenter community) to search out such ideal coconut-trees in advance. Once such suitable trees are spotted out, consent of the senior carpenter of the Pattickal family is to be obtained. Then the two trees are cut down on the fifth day. The first cut of the tree-trunk should necessarily be made with the carpenter's chisel. No other cutting instruments shall be used for this purpose. Halving of the tree-trunk vertically should also be done with a chisel itself. Four halves of the two tree-trunks are carried in a ceremonial procession to the temple ground on the eighth day. The accompanying crowd shouts in joy along with the beating of the drums.

The construction of the platform for the war sequence commences early in the morning on the 9th day. The head carpenter marks out the points where the pillars

are to be erected. Considering the height of the pillars for the construction of the platform, the holes are to be dug out deeper for its stability. The floor of the platform, rafters and such other adjacent structures are made of raw areca-nut trees. The structure of the platform for Darika is made exclusively of areca-nut tree trunks at a height of 25 feet. No ladder is provided for climbing up to the top. Only pegs driven into one of the four pillars are used for ascending to the top. When the different parts of the whole structure is completed by the separate carpenters, fellow members of the Thachar community get together for assembling them. Iron nails or coir ropes are not used for binding together the different parts. All the binding works are carried out with the help of a particular type of cords already prepared out of the fibrous inner layer of coconut-leaf stem. By noon time the heavy task of preparing the platform structure will be over. The members of the Ponnara family take charge of the finished platforms after performing certain poojas (oblations). According to the traditional belief, when the poojas are performed, indications can be noticed as to whether the whole ritual of Kaaliyoottu will go ahead smoothly or not.

d) Sequences of performance

The performers have to undergo strict Vrithanushtanam (austere self-discipline) to keep their body and spirit fit and pure. After the heroic display of Vellattam-kali and Kurutholachattam on the presiding days they arrive at the performing area before noon. These artists take only very light food like fruit and milk on the last day of the performance. First of all they go to the temple, worship the deity and receive prasadam, which consists of sandal paste and vermilion, from the high priest of the temple. They meditate for a while remembering their parents and gurs (sires). Then they move to the Chuttippura (green room), in the south-western corner of the temple compound, for makeup. The performers lie down flat on their back for the long sequence of makeup. Palakkara (sap-juice of a tree which is very sticky) is used as the base for applying makeup on the face. Rice-dough in a viscous form is used for chutti, which is jutting out on the face as we see in Kadakali. The chutti of Badrakaali extends from ear to ear going round the chin. It is like the steps in a ladder. The columns in between on the face-skin will be made blood red with a mixture of turmeric powder and lime. But cinnabar is used for applying red colour to the lips. The face except nose and eyes are coloured green. Manayola (a type of stone) and blue powder are mixed to form the green paste. Nose is coloured red with white line across it. After applying eye-tex, conspicuously tiny white dots are mounted around both the eyes, using rice-flour paste. The face makeup with its special look- beautiful, catching and fierceful, gets completed after hours. As soon as the makeup is over it is time for wearing the

costume. Badrakaali-vesha is red in colour. A mulappatta(a chest wear to show off the breasts) and different ornaments are the special features of aharya (costume and jewellery) of Kaali. The costume is worn tight, using different layers of cloths. It is done very carefully in such a manner as not to hinder the free movements of the limbs of the performer. Makeup of Darika is very much similar to that of Kathivesha (role of unrighteous characters in Kathakali). It is believed that the style of makeup might have evolved to this to the present form imbibing different elements of other temple art-forms.

The makeup and costuming of Darika are finished first. Then he comes out to the makeup room carrying a long staff and walks up and down in front of the devotees and onlookers, displaying certain physical feats. Immediately after finishing the general makeup and costuming, the Badrakaali-vesha wears **Chilanka** (anklet that jingles) and **Damshttra** (canine teeth for a fierce look) and prances out to the makeup room with a ritual dance, holding a **Thakadam** (plate like material) on her hand. The performer's hand will be held by two persons on either side. **Darika** begins to run as on as the **Kaali-vesha** is sighted. **Badrakaali** with the same tripping movement goes inside the temple through the northern entrance and a takes around anti-clockwise (apradikshana). Standing in front of the **Sreecoil** (sactum-santorum) she accomplishes a frenzied dance. Now the poojari(heigh priest) sprinkles holly water on her body and adorns her fore-head with prasadam(sanddle paste, turmeric paste and vermilion). Then she goes out through the southern entrance to the Madappura and there she wears the sanctified **Mudi** (head-gear) on her head and holds a sword in the hand leaving aside the **Thakadam** (metallic plate). When all these happen worshipers and the people gathered around shower betel-leaves like a rain of flowers over the Kaali-vesha. Again Badrakaali goes into the temple and performs a dance in front of the reigning Deity. The priest sprinkles holy water from the sacred conch-shell on the Kaali and adorns her **Mudi**(head-hear) with a garland of crimson flowers. When all these actions take place Darika must have been strutting about in front of the eastern gate. Once Kaali comes out the temple brandishing sword, both Darika and Kaali move towards the broad arena on eastern side of the temple. All the important rituals of **Nilathil-poru** (fight on the field) takes place in this vast open ground.

The crowd of spectators witness the dramatic movements of Kaali and Darika running and challenging each other, occasionally turning back creating more drama. Badrakaali pursuing Darika engage in a frenzied prancing movement gets ready to kill him. When Kaali chases Darika she does not wear the heavy and highly

decorated **Mudi** which belongs to the temple. A lighter one is specially chosen for this occasion so that the performer can move easily and faster. Sometimes the head-gear is avoided so as to enable the performer make brisk movements which render the spectacle lively. The hands of the chasing Kaali will be held by two helpers. They release their hold only during the ritual called **Kaivittottam** (rise with none holding the arms of the runner). When Kaali and Darika complete three rounds of chasing and running round the vast field, it is time for **Paranettam** (ascending the raised platform). Even while ascending the high platform Badrakaali is always in state of frenzied body movements. But one helper above and another one below will be assisting Kaali-vesha in its ascent. During the brief respite upon the raised platforms, the helpers of both the performing artists can set-right any flow in appearance caused by body movements so far. When Kaali rests on the raised rostrum the impression is that she is worried and thoughtful because Darika could not be killed as yet. As she gets down from the platform, she goes straight into the temple through the southern gate. Poojari(priest) once again garlands the **Mudi** (head-gear). Now Kaali returns to the battle field. The next significant item is a scarifices. A special pandal has already been put up in the north-western corner of the field. Here Kaali performs a frenzied dance, as if possessed and chops down the stem of a plantain-tree, it is suggested that sacrifice is over. Following this, the **Ninam** (red solution which is supposed to be blood) kept in five vassals underneath the raised platform is spilled over by Badrakaali, kicking the vassals upside down. Coconut flower-bunch drenched in the **Ninam** is then thrown high up in the air scattering it grains. As per history, till year 1903 the practise was to make a sacrifice of a live fowl. But this was then stopped by a proclamation by Regent, Rani Lakshmi Bai.

The **Kuruthi** is followed by a pageant of lighted lamps. Badrakaali is led inside the temple with the accompaniment of **Nadaswaramelam** (Traditional orchestra). After taking seven rounds the procession moves towards the Kaaval-madappura which serves as a music room too. Kaali gets into the shelter house taking a brisk turn. The heavy head-gear is removed and she is seated on a **Peedam** (wooden stool) and water is sprinkled over the body to make her cool. After resting for sometime Badrakaali performs the **Mudithalam-thullal**, wearing the lighter head-gear. Towards the end of this ritual dance the head-gear of Darika is brought in and the **Mudi-Uzhichil** ceremony is conducted. Mudi-uzhichil is precisely moving the head-gear of Darika up and down in circular manner in front of the head-gear of Badrakaali. Simultaneously, refrain in colloquial slang, signifying the killing of Darika, is repeatedly sung thrice. The paddy grains stored in small cloth bags in the previous day and meant as offering to Goddess Uma and Gangadevi are now taken out and scattered over the

head-gear of Kaali. The paddy grains left over are then distributed among the devotees who have come to witness the Kaaliyoottu ceremony. Now the performer who enacted the role of Darika helps the artist who played the role of Kaali. Thus the Kaaliyoottu festival comes to an end.

Nilathilporu (fight on the field) and the **Paranettam** (ascending the high platform) are the attractive items that hold people's attention. In some temples these two items are given much emphasis and the other ceremonies are treated as mere rituals. Nowadays even the popularly known **Nilathilporu** and **Paranettam** are neither comprehended fully nor performed properly. A proper understanding of all the underline aspects of Kaaliyoottu is possible only if one listens to the songs recited by the artists. But this vocal part handed over from generation to generation remain as oral medium and no written text is maintained. Hence the visual part which is attractive with its dramatic qualities gets more importance leaving the meaning and purpose of the traditional ritual. At Sarkara temple, members of the Ponnara family make use of **Badrakaali-pattu** (hymns on Badrakaali) which is their own. They also try their best to conduct the Kaaliyoottu strictly according to their text.

e) **Mudiyettu and Kaaliyoottu- a comparison**



Both Mudiyettu and Kaaliyoottu are based on the same myth and same characters are enacted- Badrakaali and Darika. Nowadays Mudiyettu is performed at times in places other than temples. But Kaaliyoottu has never been so far presented outside the premises. A close analysis of both these art-forms reveals many striking resemblances which are common. In Mudiyettu the first scene is Siva-Narada samvada

(dialogue between Siva and sage Narada). It is almost similar to the **Prasthavana**, an essential element in Sanskrit drama, through which the story is unfolded. But in Kaaliyoottu the whole story is narrated by Narada during his **Purappadu** scene. The dance steps of Narada are almost similar in both Mudi yettu and Kaaliyoottu. Mudi yettu has a unique character called **Koimbadar** or **Koimbada Nayar**. The **Kaaviludaya Nayar** in Kaaliyoottu is almost the counterpart of **Koimbadar**. Same is the case with the character **Kooli** in Mudi yettu. The Character **Kooli** is not included in Kaaliyoottu at the Sarkara temple. But the original text has this character and Ponnara family presents **Kooli** along with such others as **Kaalaratri** and **Pashanta** – all appearing as creatures that serve as helpers to Badrakaali, when they perform Kaaliyoottu in their family **Kaavu** or temple. In Mudi yettu we can see Badrakaali getting on to a **Peedam** (raised wooden seat) when she is in a frenzied state. This is almost parallel to the **Paranettam** (ascending of the high level plat-form) in Kaaliyoottu.

There are some sharp differences also between Mudi yettu and Kaaliyoottu. In Mudi yettu the rituals begin only after the **Kalam** is drawn and the **Kalam-pooja** is completed. **Kalam** is a ritualistic and tantric design of Badrakaali drawn on the floor of the temple using differently coloured organic powder. It is given a three dimensional effect especially at the breast using the powder in the form of a mount. Without drawing the **Kalam** and conducting **Kalam-pattu** (Reciting hymns worshiping Kaali from head to toe and vice versa) , Mudi yettu is not at all performed. But Kalam is not the part of Kaaliyoottu. Anyway it is prepared in the pattu-pura during the 41-day festival at the Sarkara temple which begins on 1st of Vrischika (Malayalam month) and continues till 11th of Dhanu (Malayalam months almost corresponding to November-December). The Kalam is prepared in the pattu-pura by members of Ponnara family who perform Kaaliyoottu. All the same, the members of the Ponnara family gets up by the Kalam when they conduct Kaaliyoottu in their family temple. The depiction of the last day of Kaaliyoottu will be the awesome figure of the Kaali represented as riding on Vethalam after the valiant killing of Darika. Yet another striking difference is variants in the costumes used by different characters in the two art-forms. One can see distinct dissimilarity in the details of face makeup also. On a general observation, it is felt that the makeup and costumes of Kaaliyoottu is more refined than that of Mudi yettu. The figure of Kaali is rather dreadful in Mudi yettu, where in Kaaliyoottu she is given a graceful and awesome look.

f) Man's susceptibility to tradition and culture making the myth a performance

Art-forms based on the Kaali-Darika myth, viz Padayani, Theyyam, Karinkaaliyattam etc shows similarities and differences in various aspects. In Padayani emphasis is given to the return trip on Badrakaali after the murder of Darika and the connected events. The masks used in Padayani are very special as most indigenous- made out of areca nut palm leaf base. The colours and patterns of these masks bear likeness to those used in the Kalam done up by the Ponnara family for Kaaliyoottu. Many of the comic characters in Padayani are echoes of those that appear in the earlier days of the Kaaliyoottu ritual. Similarly the characters in Pulayappurappadu in Kaaliyoottu remind us of a certain characters in Porattu-nadakam, another folk art-form. One may recall to ones mind the character, Ittikandappa Kaimal in Sangakkali, yet another performing art-form of Nambuthiries, when one sees the drunkard who appears in the sequence of the Pulayapurappadu. However many such elements of different art-forms in the same geographical area, and also different art-forms based on the same myth share common elements in characterisation, makeup , costume, masks and performance styles.

Man's susceptibility to tradition is just like the bondage he bears with his mother's womb through the navel-cord. On the material plane that bondage doesn't persist as it was at the time of birth; nor should it. It is subject to change and transformation. But spiritually that attachment never vanishes. It lives with his inner-being and remains beyond time and place. It is then quite natural that man's mind flies back to his home-village off and on wherever he may be- to the village festivals and festivities that he had enjoyed; to the celebrations in which his native folk-arts were thrown into a gorgeous display; to the colourful demonstrations of his traditional ritual arts and to similar occasions. A Keralite, howsoever far away he be from his native-land, will, on the wings of fancy, fly back to his home-country so as to enjoy himself in thought the newness and freshness of festivals like Vishu, Pooram, Padayani, Thiruvatira etc. With a nostalgic gusto that is abiding and linked with the traditions of his inherent culture.

Man's affinity for traditions, especially for traditional ritual arts has a particular bearing on the board connotation of the term 'Theatre'. The word 'Theatre' in the context of traditional ritual arts is applied euphemistically. Even so, the subtle differences between the fundamental components of what is known to be 'ritual' and what is termed 'theatre' shall not be lost sight of. Judged from any angle, 'Theatre', in any condition, is a spectacle meant to be displayed. Obviously, in it, spectators are

an inevitable factor, which in turn makes performers too indispensable. Pleasure and aesthetic appeal achieved through excellence of performance are more predominant than any art has entirely different aims as its objectives. In it there are neither spectators (audience) nor performers (actors). Nor is there any systematised performance or frame work for exposition. The devotees or the believers and the ritualistic acts performed in front of them are what is supreme. Style of performing is secondary. Furthermore, performers as such are no great factor. The possessed (piniyal) oracles (Velichappadus) and godly impersonations (Theyyams) are upper-most. Pleasure and impersonations (Theyyams) are upper-most. Pleasure and aesthetic appeal are not its aims. Faith and devotion are the primaries. Therefore, in Theatre there has been. Right from its inception, an aspect of 'duality'. In the case of rituals the aim has been and is a process of consummated sublimation.

g) Blend of Ritual and Theatre in the Performance



The common element in theatrical art and in traditional ritual art is the element of spectacle. But, even in this respect, as observed earlier, aim or objective of each being different, a good deal of divergence in the manner of explosion and in the design of structure is noticeable. The spectacles in the 'ritual' have no entity or being of their own. Their roots have run deep into the myths upon which they are based. And these myths are mingled up with the ancient communities and the environments in which they lived; with their elemental sensibilities; with their concepts of gods and goddesses; with their codes of virtue and vice; with their awareness of beauty and truth; with their convictions and disbeliefs and to sum up. With their interaction

with the cosmos as it were! It is therefore we see that if the spectacle of a particular ritual in particular environment is displayed in different social back-ground having a different ethos of its own, the elemental colour, flavour and appeal of that spectacle get depleted, if not they disappear altogether! Not only that, those who practise ritualistic arts are no performing artists. To them the ritual is an eventful social activity; and its annual enactments aims at the full and absolute participation of the village populace. So much so, different communities must be participating in it in various ways. Persons belonging to different clans or sects, persons hailing from different families, may all mix up; but, each activity in the ritual is looked after by each clan or sect or family. For instance, if the representatives of one sect attend to oblations and offerings made to a god or goddess, those of another attend to the playing of instruments; if it is the right of one clan to don the characters in the ritual, it is the privilege of another to attend to the task of makeup and so on. These artists, if they may be so called, take upon themselves their peculiar role in the ritual as a matter of birth-right and their prerogative is handed down from generation to generation! Evenwhile they attend to particular activity in the ritual they may have their own individualistic family-trade. But, in so far as annual enactment of the ritual is concerned, it is, to them, the inevitable observance of certain vital principles of life! Never can a theatrical performance evince the aforesaid peculiar characteristics of the ritual.

One may here put forward a pertinent question: Can't a theatre performer draw inspiration from the world of the Ritual? Well, the answer is, he can. But, in no event can the wide-ranging, multi-phased spectacle of the Ritual Art be accommodated within the limited precincts of the of the Theatrical Art. Furthermore, it is not absolutely correct to endow the traditional Ritualistic- Spectacle- Art with the appellation 'Ritualistic Theatre'. That which derives inspiration from the Ritual, imbibes the culture that emanates creatively from the totality of the Ritual and re-delineates the new-culture in the manner of the Ritual alone can truly be called 'Ritualistic Theatre'.

This generic tradition does enrich our culture as an underlying factor whether we perceive it or not. And it fascinates anyone who does not wander away from his/her intrinsic cultural moorings. Perhaps, the changes that time brings about in the social structure may seriously affect the element of spectacle which is the manifestation of the ritual tradition we speak of. But, man will ever dread to meddle with rituals he has practised from time immemorial. The vicissitudes that the spectacle is subject to are, in way, inescapable. Formerly, the family vocation of the performer

of the traditional ritual art was such that it, by far, equipped him with strength and endurance that were essentially needed to enable him participate in the spectacle of the Ritual Art. Like-wise, in the absence of 'actor-training' the performer's skill was formulated through regular practices of physical discipline enforced by his **Guru** (Teacher) or **Karanawar** (uncle- family chief). Nor did he learn the skills of the art from any codified books of reference. Instead he learnt straight from the mouth of his master. Oral knowledge handed down generation to generation was all the source of information. The performer of the traditional ritualistic art was thus physically fit as a fiddle to play his part, and mentally alert through the austerities of his training. The balance between the fitness of the performer and the excellence of what was performed was at once wholesome and unique. But all that balance has these days gone awry. Trades and vocations have considerably changed, as customs and living conditions have undergone obvious transformations. Consequently, those who earn their livelihood as office-clerks or policemen or auditors cannot attain the enduring skill that the enactment of the Ritualistic Art demands. Their physique does not and cannot exhibit the vigour and vitality of their ancestors. This fact, in turn, curtails the duration of the spectacle that goes with the Ritualistic Art, besides toning down its 'totality of effect'. This phenomenon is commonly seen in all ritualistic spectacles.

This visible decline in the most basic element of the ritualistic art viz 'the spectacle' is necessarily the reason why a votary of the 'theatre of the earth' takes pains to record for the sake of posterity every detail connected with the ritualistic spectacles in their original, pristine glorious forms. It is not for a mere archival interest. Nor is it out of his apprehension that these visual ritualistic art forms will, in the long run, cease to be. As far as he is concerned, the documentation of the Ritualistic spectacle in its essential spontaneity and entirety has a deeper significance. A creative interaction with the varied Ritualistic Visual Arts, the inner enlightenment he may thereby achieve and the resultant inspirations he may derive are all that he aims at! It was with this end in view that a project for documenting our traditional, ritualistic and performing art-forms was formulated by the author, being a professional in the field of audio-visual documentation. The main undertaking of the project have been: (i) discovering all the art-forms allied to 'the mother cult' and 'the fertility cult'- two prominent features of Kerala's native culture- (ii) making sincere attempts to re-establish the villagers umbilical attachment to these elemental art-forms which have in many ways been impaired by change of time and staled by new-born customs.

Chapter 4

Tradition of Worshiping Mother-Goddess for Cure of diseases



Throughout India we can see traditional ritualistic performances and customs to worship Mother-Goddess for getting proper cure from diseases especially contaminative diseases small-pox, chicken-pox, cholera etc. Mariyamma, Mothimatha, Maribhavani and such other Mother-Goddess are worshiped when people are affected by cholera. If it is plague, Olaichandi, Maayi, Peddamma, Annamma, Nukalamma, Marithiyamma, Kokkalamma and such other variants of Mother-Goddess are worshiped for cure from the disease. Muthyalamma, Sukhajamma, Uddalamma are the different names of the Mother-Goddess worshiped for cure from small-pox. In Kerala Sreekurumba, Cheerumba and such other variants of Mother-Goddess basically SreeBadrakaali is worshiped for cure from small-pox. There are very many myths and stories related to the power especially for the cure of the diseases. Almost all the rituals in connection with the worship for cure contain elements of performing art in various degrees. The most popular among them in Kerala are Theeyattu, Mudi yettu, Kaaliyoottu, Patayani, Theyyam, Thira etc. Mudi yettu is performed as precaution to avoid the attack of small-pox and Theeyattu is performed to get a cure from the disease for the patients who are already affected by it. Hence there is a saying in central Kerala that 'Varathirikkan Mudi yettum vannal Theeyattum (as a prevention Mudi yettu and for cure Theeyattu). The legend regarding the origin of Theyyam is centralized on Thrikkariyoor Siva Temple. When the whole area was affected by small-

pox the people gathered in front of the Thrikkariyoor Temple and prayed to Bagavati to save them from this contaminative disease. Suddenly Bargavaram appeared at the Sreekovil as a Brahmin with a country torch (pantham) in his hands. He said that if this torch is used to encircle the patient ritualistically the disease will be cure. He stretched the country torch to a Brahmin child who has completed his Upanayam (Brahminical function). The boy was shocked and in a hurry he received the country torch with his left hand. Traditionally it is considered to be a gesture of disrespect to accept holy gifts with left hand. Immediately he was made an outcast by the Brahmin community. This family was later known as Theeyattunnikal(children performing Theeyattu). Thus they were given the right to conduct Theeyattu. Whatever may be the credibility of this story, the relationship between small-pox and Kaali Bagavati, and also Siva and Kaali Bagavati are deep rooted in tradition and culture. When we analyse the rituals, decorations and participation of the people, we can see that the whole members of all the communities in the area take part in the rituals and its artistic presentation directly or indirectly. Uzhichil (ritualistic encircling) using the Mashal (country torch) and Mudi (head-gear of Kaali Bagavati) provide blessing to all the devotees devoid of cast and creed. Darika-vadham pattu(the song describing killing of Darika),Kaali-Kalamezhuthu(forming victorial design of Badrakaali on the floor) and performance of Kaali-vesham(role of Kaali) etc have similarities both in Theeyaattu and Mudiyettu. However Mudiyettu is more dramatic than Theeyattu. In Theeyattu there are only two characters- Kaali and Darika. Where as in Mudiyettu Siva, Narada, Darika, Danavendra, Koimbadar, Kaali and Kooli are the different characters. The highly decorated Mudi (head-gear) of Kaali her peculiar makeup resembling the swelling of small-pox the chest plate with protruded breast, Damsotra (metallic canine teeth) etc and the dramatic performance of Kaali attract and influence the devotees to have a feel of Goddess Kaali moving around amidst of them. As furnished in a book on Theeyattu(Theeyattu oru Patanam), this art-form is performed at 49 places. Quite a few of such centres have the tail 'Kaavu' along with it. It means it was basically performed in the family temples since long back. Many of such Kaavus have been reconstructed as modern temples. However right from pre-historic days Mother Goddess worship was prevaanat in Kerala and also in different parts of India.

Patayani is another highly theatrical ritualistic performance based on Badrakaali worship in Pathanamthitta district, southern part of Kerala. Here Kaali appears as the Mother Goddess who protects her devotees from those who trouble the people. In Malabar there was another popular ritual- Ninabali(Sacrifice of blood). The war between Kaali and Darika was performed in this ritualistic art.

Bagavatiyattu is another traditional ritual performed in the northern part of Kerala to worship Kaali Bagavati. In Vettathunadu this ritual is performed annually at 72 centres. Thanneer Bagavati who is an element of Devi Mookambika is the performing deity in Bagavatiyattu. Though this deity is a mild and calm Goddess, the ferocious aspect of Kaali cannot be avoided even in the concept and performance. According to Mookambika Purana, Devi Mookambika is worshiped as Mahalakshmi- the Goddess of prosperity, as Saraswathi- the goddess of knowledge and also as Kaali- the goddess of victory over the evil. Thanneer Bagavati, it is believed that cures small-pox, red eye and such other diseases and bless the devotees with health and prosperity. Precisely, Bagavatiyattu is a ritualistic expression of the tradition of Kaali worship in Kolathunadu, northern Kerala.

There were very many small and big principalities in northern Kerala claiming to be the rulers of the area. In almost all these families Kaali Babavati was worshiped as family deity. In fact it is believed that the Kola Sworupa (family of Kola rulers) was taken to the heights because of their belief in their family deity- Thiruvarkattu Bagavati of Madayikkavu. Even the most reputed and heroic ruler Pazhassi Kerala Varma and his Kottayam Sworupam worshiped Kaali Bagavati- Mridangasailanilaya or Sreeporkkali(ferocious war goddess). Within the ruling area of the sworupas there were different casts performing different rituals according their family custom. However all these families worshiped one family deity- Kulaparadevata, who was none other than Badrakaali. The Bagavati worship was conducted annually, once in two years, once in five years or at least once in twelve years with the performance of Perumkaaliyattam or Theyyam. In Thottampattu different places of worship and performance are mentioned as Alayam, Koolakam, Nallambalam, Kaavu, Kottam, Edam, Madham, Vathilmadam, Gopuram, Kootharangu, Veettinukannirasi etc. Different types of worships and ritualistic performances are mentioned as Thira, Kolam, Kalassam, Mudra, Thiramodu Kaaliyattam and so on.

Korakkottu Bagavati-typical tradition of Bagavati worship

There is a prominent legend of worship of Arya Karthiyini of Vindhya hills by Sivaji Maharaj. This concept of Badrakaali worship has entered into the performing art of Theyyam. On a closer analysis one can see the interesting aspect of the intermingling of legend, history and ritualistic performance. It is believed that after defeat of Sivaji Maharaj, a community from Maharashtra region fled and came to Mangalore area, where they got settled. They had brought along with them the idol

of their deity, Arya Karthiayani. They had the strong believe that Goddess Karthiayani will protect them to cross over all the odds. After sometime they left Mangalore and moved further towards south to Kasargodu area and settled at Korakkodu. There they worshiped their deity in their traditional style. In the course of time Arya Karthiayini became the Goddess and spiritual power of Tulunadu. And this spiritual power was later translated into a visual performing art Theyyam and it was performed ceremoniously with Aattam and Thottam. The tradition of the worship was later welcomed by different families in their Tharavadu and thus Arya Karthiayani became family deity in most of the traditional Tharavadu. There are many stories revealing the power of destruction and recreation of Korakkottu Bagavati. It is believed that at Payyarattu a hill area eastern side of Cheemeni. There was a Brahmin occupation which the Korakkottu Bagavati burnt down with her destructive powers. But its a paradoxical belief that this Bagavati who considered Brahmins as enemies, was tamed and got into a sort of friendship with their tactful dealing. Thus even the Brahmins also worship Korakkottu Bagavati and conduct the Theyyam performance of Bagavati.

Kavadiyanganathu Raktheswari (the blood sucking Goddess of Kavadiyanganam)

Kavadiyanganam Kaavu situated very close to the Western Ghats is considered to be the cradle of the tradition of Thulunadu. This Kaavu is a virgin forest in the area of four square miles near Adoor Mahasiva temple, 30 kms on the eastern side of Kasargodu. It is believed that nobody including the government surveyor has dared to enter into this virgin forest. Even the poojas which are to be conducted in secret at least once in 12 years, have not taken place even for a century. The place where pooja is to be conducted inside the Kaavu is family secret of the Pulaya community. When it is time for the pooja, after a period of 12 years, the members of the Pulaya family cut the most necessary vegetation to reach up to that place. On the appointed day the head priest of the Adoor Mahasiva temple along with an assistant and necessary materials to conduct the pooja reach the worship spot and return immediately when the pooja is over. The poojari of anyone who take part in the pooja are not supposed to talk about their experiences to the outside world. No pooja was conducted in 20th century after the first one in the initial year. Because of the evil happened since the priest explained his experiences unknowingly. A few Brahmin families who left Thulunadu and settled further towards the southern part of Kerala, worship the Raktheswari of Kavadiyanganam as their family deity. The Theyyakkolam(The figure of the particular Theyyam) of Raktheswari is very colourful and beautiful and at the same time highly ferocious and fearful with the burning indigenous torches around her waist and the typical facial makeup. When the Theyyam

is performed at the Brahmin family temples the sacrificial worships were also conducted meticulously. Kodakkattu Kunnathu Illam, the Brahmin family known for their magical ritualistic powers, worshiped **Raktheswari** as **Sailapureswari**. And the deity was enshrined inside their temple. It is believed that Raktheswari was born to annihilate **Rakthabeejasa**, a demon. Devi Chamundi is also a prominent Theyyam kolam as **Rakthachamundi**. Chamundi is worshiped and her Theyyam performances are conducted at different places in Kerala in different names.

Pathalamoorthi (The Goddess of the netherworld)

There is an interesting sequence in the legend of Darika Vadha- when Darika could not stand against the highly powerful Badrakaali he had to flee and take shelter in the netherworld. Immediately Devi Badrakaali rushed to the netherworld in search of Darika. It is already mentioned in the legend that six Mother Goddess were originated from the six Gods including Indra. **Varahi** is the Mother born out of Yama deva (The god of death). It is this **Varahi** who lifted up the earth on her canine teeth after killing the demon Hiranyakshan, who took shelter under the oceans carrying the earth in his hands. The Theyyam of **Varahi** is performed in the name of **Pathalamoorthi Madayi Chamundi**. This Theyyam conduct a sacrificial ritual called **Kozhichavittu** (stabbing the foot on the sacrificial chicken). The performance of this Theyyam require Kalasam, Kuruthi, Kaliyampalli and so on (sacrifice of live chicken and such other rituals). The nether world can be considered as the symbol of the collective unconscious of the human society. The deity portrays the two contradictory roles- the savoir and destroyer. Both the Adivasies and the Hill tribe perform the two types of the deity- 1, Karimanal Chamundi 2, Madayil Chamundi. It denotes the age old tradition of worship of the Mother Goddess which can be traced back to pre-historic times.

Chapter 5

Mother Goddess Worship and Man's Fear, Competition, Love and Hope for Survival



As we see in all other parts of the World, in Kerala also people live in a complex condition formed out of different elements like Geography, Weather, Vegetation and in general the fauna and flora in the nature around. Different customs, life styles, worships, art, culture etc are based on the above fact. The blessings and dangers bestowed by the nature on humans moulded men to formulate his talents, thought, hope and life style. Different communities were entrusted to do different works for sustenance of the society. And thus different life styles were developed by different communities. The fear of death, fear of competition, love and mercy might have compelled man to turn to nature worship. Tree worship is considered to be the most ancient form of nature worship. Later it developed into ancestral worship and slowly took the form of Mother Goddess worship. Kerala, being a place very rich vegetation and varied number of trees, no doubt became the cradle of tree and mother Goddess worship. Worship of snakes and Snake Gods is also very popular in Kerala. Tree in a way is considered to be the mother for all, as it provides oxygen and food. Special emphasis is given to certain trees which produces milky stain when cut. In the same way trees which produce bitter fruit and leaves were also considered for special

worship. The tradition and concept of Kaali worship in Kerala is somehow or other related to such kinds of trees. We can see in the tradition of Kaali worship the relationship between plants producing milky juice and mother. Even today many of the customs in the Kaali worship is related to the trees and plants produce milky juice. Usually in the very young age itself, when a child is afraid, it cries for the help of its mother. This primordial fear might have given birth to the tradition of worship of Mother Goddess. In Mudi yettu and such other performing art-forms based on Mother Goddess worship the ritualistic custom commence from the concept of tree worship. A stone placed under the tree near its trunk becomes automatically a deity for worship. It is believed that there is mother under the shadow of the tree seated near its trunk. This concept takes physical form when a stone is placed under the tree. That stone which accepts rain, sunrise, mist and all such blessings and hardships of nature in a way represents nature itself like the tree.

In good old days leaves and stones were the most essential elements for the worship of mother Goddess. Kaali worshiped as both Vanadurga and Nanadurga. Later the Kaali worship was limited to the tree base and Kaavu(family temple). When the power of the whole nature is comprehended into the stone that particular stone and the area get empowered with the spiritual abilities for construction and destruction. The concept of Kaavu in Kerala is the result of a unique belief and tradition. Kaavu is a virgin forest protected with all its natural flavour. In a way it represents the wider forest land in a miniature vegetation. Forest is the mother for human civilization. Even when man progressed his love and longing for the forest continued. Thus Kaavus were protected along with each family compound. And worship of Vanadurga, Nanadurga and serpent continued in the Kaavu. Very many deity concepts were originated out of after the Kaavu and different styles of worships were formulated. Kaavus consist of fearful creatures and worshipful deities whose blessing each family seek. Badrakaali, Vettakkaran, Anthimahakalan, Karinkaali, Neeli, Ayyappan, Serpent and such other deity concepts are deeply rooted in the tradition of Kaavu. If at all there is any problem in the family, immediately suitable pooja or Upasana is conducted in the Kaavu as a solution to the problem. Certain families observed the traditional custom of 'Kaavilkudiparkkuka' (live inside the Kaavu) till they get the blessing which they sought from Devi. Thus in a way it is the social/personal psychological reasons which prompted man to preserve a miniature forest close to his house which always relate him to his life in the forest in the initial days of human civilization.

The fear element of the individual and the society is also embedded in it. Kaavu has of course a divinity and purity! And hence encroachment to the Kaavu is considered

as a great sin. Kaavu was not at all considered as a temple. But later, maybe after the Aryanization temples were constructed at the Kaavus and different Male Gods like Siva, Vishnu etc were enshrined. An area of a village belonging to a Tharavadu (traditional family) is called **Chuttuvattam**. And its centre is called **Thattakam** meaning the inside of the roundabout. Devi was worshiped as Thattilamma (who protects the Thattakam) thus each family had the concept of ancestral grandma and she was worshiped as Bagavati or Kaavilamma. At that time there was no drastic divisions in the society based on cast and creed. But later when temples were constructed there were many boundaries demarcated based on cast and creed. The mother deities who enjoyed the blessings of mother nature without any hindrance in the open area under the tree where removed to the roofed temples and thus the deities also were forced to enjoy the effects of the development of human civilization. Marutha (fierciful Goddess), Pillatheeni (Goddess who eats the child) etc where the crude concepts of mother worship before it got developed into Badrakaali worship. At the time of pregnancy and delivery special rituals were performed to please Pillatheeni for protecting the child in pregnancy and also for smooth delivery. Kalam was drawn and worship was conducted which included the sacrifice of live chicken. It was believed that one life was born out of the sacrifice of the other. Such crude style of worship was later evolved into better aesthetic and dramatic performance which attract the society and become a common platform for the expression of artistic and creative talents and craftworks.

a. Mudiyetu Folk Theatre-a Ritualistic Drama

Ritual-folk theatre forms seem to imply a whole complex theory of art, which is no way inferior to the so- called classical theatre. The assumption of divine or semi-divine roles by human beings, as we find in Mudiyetu, Theyyam, Pootham, Kaaliyootu and Patayani etc are variations of kolam tullal or mask dances-is itself a demonstration of the power of imagination not only to understand reality, but even to go beyond the existing or known forms of reality, and to modify, recreate and manipulate reality. The exemplastic quality of artistic imagination derives ultimately from the limitless capacity of the folk audiences to visualize almost anything and encourage the folk artist to move to any length in his self-appointed task of creating what constitutes the only kind of reality that exists for him without resort to reason or mere arithmetic.

b. Bhadrakali-Darika War proclaiming Victory over the evil

While Kali is inside, Darika must have been strutting about in front of the eastern gate. Once kali comes out of the temple brandishing the sword, she and Darika move towards the vast arena on the eastern side of the temple. All the important rituals of the Nilathali poru (fight on the field) take place in this vast open ground.

Spectators witness the running Darika, occasionally turning back and challenging Kali and the pursuing Kali engaged in a frenzied prancing movement, ready to do the killing. When Kali chases Darika the heavy Mudi (head-gear) that belongs to the temple is not worn. A lighter one is specially chosen for the occasion. Sometimes the head-gear is totally avoided so as to enable the performer make brisk movements which render the spectacle lively. The hands of the chasing Kali will be held by helpers. They release their hold only during the ritual called Kaivittottam (race with none holding the arms of the runner).



When Kali and Darika complete three rounds of chasing and running around the vast field, it is time for **Paranettam** (ascending the raised platform). Even while ascending the high platform Kali will be in a state of frenzied body movements. One helper above and another below will be assisting Kali-vesha in its ascent. During the brief respite upon the raised platform, the helpers of both the performing artists can set-right any flaw in appearance caused by body movements so far.

As Kali rests on the raised rostrum the impression is that she is worried and thoughtful because Darika could not be killed as yet. When Kali gets down from the platform, she goes straight into the temple through the southern gate. Inside the temple the Poojari (priest) once again garlands the Mudi (head-gear). With the second garland on her Mudi Kali returns to the battle-field. A sacrifice is the next significant item. For this a special pandel has already been put up in north-western corner of the field.

There, Kali presents a frenzied dance, as if possessed and chops down the stem of a plantain-tree, thus suggesting a sacrifice. Following this, the ninam (blood-red solution supposed to be blood) kept in five vessels underneath the raised platform is spilled all over by Kali, kicking the vessels upside down. Coconut flower-bunch drenched in the ninam is then thrown high-up in the air scattering its grains. Earlier

the practice was to make a sacrifice of a live fowl; but this was substituted later with the cutting of kumblanga.

c. Entertainment aspect of the ritualistic performance with its moral content

A ritual performance in the folk tradition is more than secular entertainment. It is meant to bring about purification or rejuvenation to the whole community. Within the structure of the self-contained village economy of the past, the Mudi yettu was organised as a total festival centered around the most important temple or bhagavati-kavu of the locality. The temple provided the focal point, but people of all castes and tribes were drawn into it. Each caste may be said to have had a special role which ensured its participation and its importance as well.



The parayan has to provide the leather for the drum, the tandan must bring the arecanut fronds required for the masks and headgear, the ganakan has to paint the masks and sing, kuruvan has to keep the country torches burning. The veluthedan (patiyān) has to wash the clothes to be used for the deity's dress and the Maran has to get the torches ready and keep them supplied with oil. The core of the performance, no doubt is religious ritual and the human enactment of superhuman roles continues as sacred offering or sacrifice. Perhaps the dance of the god of death is a form of vicarious communal sacrifice which alone can ensure immortality- the dramatic triumph over the forces of death through the intervention of benign deities. The dramatic element probably holds out the possibility of human survival through the surrender of personal, through the extinction of personality, through identification with the other, through self-transcendence. The village artist who performs his role in these ritual dances knowingly or unknowingly seems to hold the key to the secret of all art in this sense: by taking on other roles one sees life from angles other than one's own, the cultivation of the 'a-pourusheya', the impersonal in the surest means

to achieve sadharanikarana or universalization. The joy that only tragedy can give arises from this aesthetic process of sacrificing the self, which of course has its counterpart in religious practices. But are the two modes of self-transcendence essentially different from each other? Aren't they similar or perhaps the same process, seen perhaps from two different stand-points?

' The pronounced Shaivite content of the various ritualistic items in Mudi yettu may perhaps point to a possible Dravidian origin or basis for the different of this temple art-form. Mudi yettu is thus both religion and art, both ritual and entertainment. It is at present confined to a few temples in three districts-Trichur, Ernakulam and Kottayam. But in recent times public interest in it has been awakened because of the increasing recognition and its close connection with drama and theatre. The rising trend now a days to turn to religious customs for achieving physical goals by pleasing the deity has also helped Mudi yettu to become popular. One can see in it the origins of the Dravidian theatre, In which drama is related not to 'yajna' but to 'aradhana.

Common Myth of Bhadrakali and Darika shared by different Folk Forms



Myths are certain concepts that treasure all the glories of ancient cultures. They are prevalent among peoples world over, irrespective of colour and language. Rituals can be considered to be the element of action contained in myths. Ritualistic art forms are performance-patterns for conveying these ritualistic myths and customs. However it can be seen that even the popular traditional classical theatre arts have imbibed theatrical elements from these ritualistic art-forms.

Darika Vadha (killing of Darika) or Bhadrakali Vijaya (Victory of Loniess Kali) is a myth that forms the theme for many popular ritualistic performing art-forms have emerged from this myth. The reason for this perhaps lies in the innumerable Goddess temples and Kavus (traditional worship centres in each family) found in Kerala. Even though the same myth has been the basis of many of these art-forms, there exist differences in the performing patterns with regard to time and place of origin. Among these, Pana, Kalampattu, Mudi yettu, Theyyam, Kaaliyoottu and Padayani the emphasis is more on dramatic situations and spectacle. Out of these, the Mudi yettu is the most developed environmental and total theatre performance.

The basic myth or plot of the performance of Mudi yettu

The myth about Darika runs as follows-Conflicts between Devas and Asuras, narrated in our Puranas and mythologies usually end in victory for the Devas after the rout of the asuras. Nevertheless, to prevent annihilation of the entire tribe, a few asuras escape and live in hiding. During one such enforced hiding, two asura women, Darumathi and Danavathi, start penance to please God Brahma and are successful in obtaining a boon from the Lord for mighty off-springs. Darika is thus born as a mighty son to Darumathi. He learns about the destruction of life in subduing the Devas. In order to be powerful enough to achieve this end, he performs a severe penance to propitiate Lord Brahma. The Lord, pleased with his devotee, appears before him and bestows all the yams (boons) that Darika asks for. One blessing that Darika seeks is that he must not be slain by any male from the fourteen worlds. Another boon he gets is that a drop of his blood, when spill, should cause the birth of a thousand Darikas, each with the strength of a thousand elephants. The Brahmopadesa Mantra is also passed on to him to be kept secretly for his use. But, strangely enough, together with these boons a curse also befalls him. As he has slighted and ignored the chance of being killed by a woman the Lord curses him that he shall die at the hands of a woman born in the Deva class.

Feeling triumphant and bragging he is invisible, Darika sets out to fulfill his long cherished desire of conquering the Davas. On his way with his naughtiness and conceit he bring on him further curses from karthyayani Devi, Vethalam and many others. As the name of Darika spreads, those asuras living concealed, come out to serve their new king. Thus commences the despotic reign of Darika. Mighty as he is, by force he compels even Manodari, the daughter of Maya, to become his consort. At last, the Devas and Munis like Narada, totally disturbed by the tyranny of even his divine powers, deputes his creatures Kali and Bhoothas for the murder of Darika. Riding on the Vethala and accompanied by an army of Bhoothas, led by Nandi, Bhadrakali challenges Darika on the battlefield. In the first phase of the fight Kail and followers face a set-back. Kali realises that the reason for the reversal is that Darika and Manodari are defended by their knowledge of the Brahmopadesha Mantra. Darika, engaged in a fierce bathe, gets indications of this but continues the fight undauntedly. All the same, Kali at last kills Darika and rescues the world from his evil spell. This is the theme of Darika Vadha.

In Mudi yettu and Kaliyoottu we find this myth transformed into beautiful visual art forms with the aid of dramatic situations that harmoniously blend the verisimilitude and sense of horror. These art-forms trace back to such a distant period in the past that it is difficult to fix the time of their origin. Passage of time and improvisations on the form by generations after generations might have modified the essential form and content. However, they go a long way to enable us to get an insight into the culture and artistic vision of the people of ancient times. In all these art-forms the dramatic appeal is by far augmented by a convincing transformation of men into Devas and Asuras. This is evident in both the audio and visual levels of these art-forms. On the audio level, music rhythm and accompaniments and on the

visual Level masks, make-up, costumes and choreographic patterns bear testimony to it.



Darika Vadha has been rendered into varying visual performing art forms in different parts of Kerala. In the northern regions it is in the form of Theyyam and it's connected Thottam songs. Mudi yettu and Padayani are the forms popular in central Kerala. The ritualistic art-form Kaliyuttu is staged in the southern regions, especially in the **mudippuras** and Bhadrakali temples in Trivandrum District. This art-form is not so famous as Mudi yettu. As it is more ritualistic in nature, it is not staged outside the temple premises, a fact which makes it less popular than Mudi yettu. However the myth of Kali and Darika presents the morale-Victory of Good over Evil, presenting hope for a peaceful future for humanity.

Chapter 7

Common Mores of moral value projected through myth with it's cultural and artistic expression

The myth of Darika Vadha (killing of Darika) by Kali projects certain mores aiming at the moral uplift of the traditional society. 'Mores' imply behaviour patterns which are traditionally prescribed in a society. 'Mores' are regarded as of great importance for maintaining social order, so these change very slowly and breach of 'mores' is a punishable offense in the society. The 'mores' are always considered 'right' by the group that shares them. As the group members have experienced something while practicing a particular folkway of the society, they feel as a whole it is 'right' or it is 'wrong'. "It is experience transformed and stereotyped into tradition, distorted by dominant interests, and reinforced by fear or dislike of the untried". Sumner pointed out, "When the folk-ways take on a philosophy of right living and a life policy of welfare, then they become mores".

Mores represent the normative system of a particular society. It deals with the 'should' and 'should not' in a society. Davis pointed out, 'Belief rationalizes them in the form of myth, ritual expresses them in the form of symbols, and action embodies them in the form of right conduct'. A society lives on 'mores' in this sense, violation of the same may cause expulsion from the society. In the case of Kali -Darika myth, Darika becomes an anti social element and his expulsion from the society is considered



to be the need of the hour. Hence the killing of Darika by Kaali is justified. The 'mores' are always justified in a specific society because the people believe it is 'right'. In most occasions the 'rightness' is not based on any simple agreement among the people. The members of the society share sentiments highly favorable to the 'mores'. Any one going against them means he does not share the 'sentiments of the society. So he should be rejected by the society. In Indian society the widows are not to take fish or meat, wear ceremonial dresses, or to get married again. Even in the present society, sometimes the widows face the consequences as the impact of the old mores existing today. This is an example of a 'more', which is strongly supported in the society, though with changing time, it is slowly being transformed. Punishment for anti social activities and discarding such persons from social gatherings is considered to be one among the strong mores in all societies. The mores in this context act as the guardians of solidarity in a society.

Notion and Attributes of Culture & Civilization in relation to Mudiyettu

'Culture' and 'Civilization' are the two concepts which relate human beings to something distinguishable from other animals. 'Culture' helps to transcend humanity from mere physical existence and inherited identity, to place man in a state of aesthetics, emotions, beliefs, intuitions or imaginations. It is believed that, culture is a repertoire of learned behaviour that can be socially transmitted, seldom independent of any genetic contributions. And this is the exclusive preserve of 'man'. Physical evolution of man has been even supplemented by socio-cultural evolution. The advent of cultural activities predates the rapid growth of the human brain and moral values for a better society.

Throughout the history of civilization we can trace the shares of cultural evolution. On the basis of geological time-scale, homogenizes appeared during holocene period and a crude form of tool industry emerged thereafter, which grew into a number of prehistoric cultures ranging from Paleolithic period to Neolithic, copper, bronze and steel iron ages. Our conception regarding the notion of culture and civilization is based mainly on the cultural and artistic expressions in the society. This has been carried from generations to generations as their cultural experience, orally, visually or through various means of documentation in the later stages.

a. Cultural expression in Mudiyettu

Culture is defined by E.B. Tylor in a comprehensive manner saying, "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" He defined the term from an anthropological viewpoint Here, man is considered a part of a wider

society sharing the whole body of knowledge, customs and patterns of behaviour. This implies, culture can be transmitted from many to one, from one generation to another and it can be shared by all. The second implication of this definition is, the culture is created, evolved and transferred by man only. It is not just a gift of nature. Culture represents the ways of expressions of man and their responses towards the necessities. As per Indian concept, culture is considered to be the result of man's interaction with nature, with his fellow beings and his own self. Hence it is very complex and cumulative. Its roots have gone deeper into the age old habits, experiences and conclusions. In Mudi yettu man becomes God and even terminates the highest evil from society. Though Darika was blessed with many boons, his evil character has no place in that culture of the traditional society. The same is the case even today. And so the cultural expression merged with social mores represent a civilization which is rich and healthy.

Malinowski understood culture 'as the handiwork of man and as the medium through which he achieves his ends. He further classified, "Culture is an instrumental reality, an apparatus for the satisfaction of the biological and derived need". Thus, for him, human needs imply something more than mere biological needs; but those needs are definitely associated with biological ones. He also distinguished between 'needs' and 'impulses', both can be satisfied in away which is an element of culture. Thus, Malinowski viewed culture from a functional angle, i.e. human beings have several needs to be fulfilled for which they have to innovate something in the realm of ideas and emotions that finally gives birth to culture. The myth portrayed in mudi yettu can be considered as an example.



David Bideeny offered another version for studying culture, he pointed out that four facts, viz, the artifacts, socio-facts, agro-facts and menti-facts should be considered as the characteristics of culture. He defined, "culture is an attribute of human behaviour and is, therefore, to be studied as an integral part of human behaviour, not as if it were a dynamic entity capable of acting and developing apart from the

organism which express themselves through it “. Here also, we find, an association of biological and sociological dimensions in culture. Human beings are limited by their physiological capacities and needs, at the same time they try to overcome their limitations by using their intelligence and emotion. The man can go beyond their biological existence and express themselves in something made by their own effort- this new realm created by man is designated as culture.

The moral codes and mores derive through cultural expressions protect the society much more effectively and spontaneously than mere rules and regulations. That is how the cultural expressions of the traditional society become relevant today to formulate a healthy social behaviour, aiming at the well being of all, as depicted in Mudi yettu.

A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Khuckohn defined culture in a different way: culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action and on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action. Here, human action is conceived as a part of a continuous process. ‘Artifacts’ created as a result of human action are also included as the embodiment of culture. The action and its product both design culture’ which is not always generated by nature. Human effort, human creativity etc. have important contributions to form culture. The various properties, decorative items made of indigenous material with a sense of offering, for the performance of Mudi yettu have an important role in this context.

b. Interpretation of Culture promoting moral values as realised in traditional performances like Mudi yettu.

According to Tylor. “Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. Redfield is also of the same view. “An organised body of conventional understanding manifested in art and artifact which persisting through tradition characterises human group”. White is more specific : “ Culture is a symbolic, continuous, cumulative and progressive process”. J. Biedanz and M. Biesanz make it more detail, “a configuration of learned and shared platerns for behaviour and of understanding concerning the meaning and value of things, ideas, emotions, and actions”. Magaret Mead and her Associates also share the same view “a culture may be said to be just as much the expression, their mode of human psycho-dynamic adjustment, as it is a condition for the grooming of successive generations of individuals in this mode”.

Culture is a response to a necessity-the necessity may be instinctive but the response may be creative which involves an extent of artificiality. Thus, language is natural to man, but the words that he uses, the style he follows while speaking are individual specific and culture-specific or the dress on the innovation of man. Thus, Gisbert remarked, “culture itself is natural, but its types and manifestations depend on certain conditions, environmental as well as social and psychological”.

The impact of the performance of Mudiyettu as an offering satisfies the various necessities of man, both mental and physical and also helps him in the psycho dynamic adjustments in a society where evil forces acquire power and threaten the peace and harmony. It also helps to obey and follow a common social code for a better and healthy living of all the members in the society.

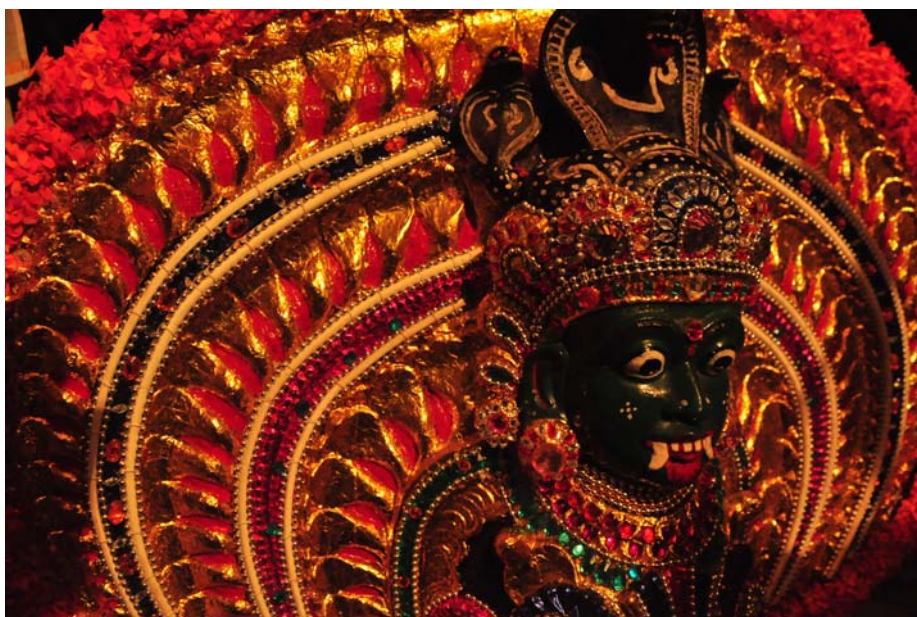


Chapter 8

Bhadrakali Vesha - A study of The Aharya (costumes jewellery and makeup) of Bhadrakali

Costumes of Mudi yettu are very decorative and majestic in appearance. The head-gear or **mudi** of Bhadrakali is unique with its semi circular shape and carved decorations. It resembles more of the crown of Theyyam performing art-form in its shape. It is made of dried jack wood, after treating it properly in the traditional way. The weight of head-dress with all decorations will be a minimum of ten kilo grams. The costume on the backside has similarity to that of the Chakyar of classical traditional art-forms, Koodiyattam or chakyar Kuthu. White cloth folded in many layers is used to prepare the raised buttocks. Another white dothi is used as the loincloth. Sword and shield are held in both the hands.

Mudi - Semi circular Crown of Bhadrakali



The wooden crown shaped by carving is of the same width and height-3 feet. Serpent heads are carved on from top to bottom. Images of elephants are shaped on either side in front the crown, seven in the first row, three in the second and twenty in the third. As per the myth, when Bhadrakali was born, her two ears were adorned, one with the image of a lion and the other with that of an elephant. The design of the crown has tantric influence and it projects the tradition and culture of Puranas. Colour combination is rich with green, red, black, white, blue and golden. There is a prominent crown face in green colour with a head dress on it's top, all most in the style of Buddhist mask. This is a reflection of the synthesis of local Dravidian and the imposed Jainist/Buddhist cultures. It is believed that the use of yellow colour and the

typical Bhudhavihara shapes on carvings further establish the synthesis of different cultures.

The hair on the back, which is one and half feet long, would hang down from the crown made up of tender coconut leaf, cut into thin strips. Round thick garlands made of red Techii flowers would be hung in semi circular form on the crown. To fix the crown on the head red woolen pieces are used on the head. A small rope from the crown is tied around the head tightly over the head.

The external costumes of Bhadrakali is red in colour, where as face is painted with black. Black natural paint made out of charcoal from the burnt wicks and coconut oil is applied on the face. Afterwards a paste made of rice powder and lime is used to give shape to the face what is called Chuttikuttal.

Vethalamukham of Badrakaali



This is tied below the **mulamaru** (chest plate), on the waist, over the stitched decorated hanging in the shape of Nettipattam. Vethala is the vehicle of Badrakaali.

She is supposed ride on its top sitting on the shoulders, during her fight. It is unique with it's black coloured face, red lips, white teeth, red and white eyes, all denoting the style of a Buddhist mask dance costume.

Tadavala (hasthakhadakam) of Badrakaali

The bangles are carved out of wood and decorated in golden colour, in balance with the rest of the costume.

Mulamaru (chest plate with projected breasts) and Kazhutharam (neck ornaments) of Badrakaali



Chest wear to show off breasts & neck ornaments are special features of Kaalivesha, costumes of Kaali. It stands out of the red costume, which is worn tight, to make the movement convenient. Serpent heads are fixed on both sides above the chest wear. The centre part is a depiction of the characteristic fierceful face.

Kaathippuvu (ear ornament) of Bhadrakaali

The ear ornament with it's size and colourful decorations is in proper balance with the total pattern of costume and jewellery.

Maru mala (garland covering the breast) of Badrakaali

The breast ornament with golden beads in about 40 layers and a colourful floral ball in the centre, is the speciality of Bhadrakaali. This is also called Mathumani mala (garland with golden beads). Mala with golden beads is an attraction for both

male and female, irrespective of age, caste or creed. Such beads were used in India for garland since the Mohanjedaro-Lothal period.

Pallu-damshtra (canine teeth) of Badrakaali

Curved long teeth on either side of the lips, made of shining metal is worn by Badrakaali. It protrudes out of the red lips to add to the fierce look.

Chilambu (jingling anklets) of Bhadrakaali

Jingling anklets made of metal are used on both legs. Its sound merging with rhythmic music of the instruments reverberates during the movements, emphasising the thal or rhythm.

Valu (sword) of Bhadrakaali

Sword used by Kaali for the fight with Darika is one and half feet long, with sharp pointed tip, made of thin iron bars.

Turmeric powder and lime mixture lines are drawn on the face between numerous white dots to resemble small-pox pits or pox marks. Curved long teeth is drawn on either side over the red lips. Thechi flowers are nipped and affixed on the forehead-three of them on the cheek, on the nose and jaw, with the help of arimaavu (rice powder).

Inner costume is **vellakacha** and **mattu**. These are white cotton clothes properly frilled and folded, tied around the waste. The cloth is pulled back and tucked behind the body. On the two sides of the mattu clothes, kattiyavu (decorated hangings) are tied. The face of vethalam is fixed in front. It is believed that Kaali is traveling on vethalam as it is her vehicle. Over the red costume mulamaru (breast decoration) in the shape of breast, is fixed. Two serpents encircling the breast stand out with its spreaded hoods. In addition to this, kazhutharam (neck ornament), hastakhadakam and vala (bangles) adorn neck and hands. Uthareeyam is also used by Kaali. The mudi or kireedam (crown) of Kaali will be fixed only after entering on to the main area of action. This is for the convenience of the actor for a free movement. Kaali uses curved sword for **Purappadu** (ceremonial entry), whereas pointed sword for the fight. Ear rings of Kaali are comparatively thin and wide with decorations. Flower garlands are adorned around the neck. Artificial breast will be seen substantially standing out. From feet to knee rice paste will be applied.

Curved sword is the favourite weapon of Kali, usually the type that Velichappad (oracle) use. The sword would be placed on the stool on the stage for Arangu pooja. The sword for the fight with Darika is one and half feet long, with pointed sharp tip, and is made of thin iron bars.

The colour of Kaali-vesham(Kaali makeup and costume)

As per Dravidian concepts the colour of Kaali projects Kaalima. It is basically black or dark blue denoting fear. Considering this concept suitable names were given to the varied forms of the deity- Karinkaali(black Goddess), Kodum Kaali(dark Goddess), Kandankaali (Kaali with male powers). People belonging to the lower casts worship Mother Goddess in the names of the above mentioned deities. Their colour and the colour of the Goddess were similar. Kaali, Karumba, Neeli were the very common names for ladies among the lower casts. Black is not just a colour; it represents the iconography of the Moorthy or deity. The destructive form of Kaali is marked with blood stains on the deity. The blood dripped during delivery(Shrishti) and during destruction(Samhara) are both represented as a unified symbol in the physical form of Kaali. Of course in Mudi yettu Kaali represents the love and affection on one side and destructive power to annihilate the evils to protect her children on the other side. The nature which protects its creations becomes at times the cause of destruction. This relationship of creation and destruction is represented in the relationship between Kaali Bagavati and devotee. The nature which is the mother of all living beings is called Mannamma (mother earth) as per our tradition Mannamma, Mannappan, Mannunni etc all represents nature. The findings at Harappa and Mohoun Jadaru include statue of Mannamma. According to the belief a human mother gives birth not to a human child, but to a tree. Mathrubhoomi is the refined word originated from the crude word Mannamma. In a way it is the simple representation of unification of the concepts of Mannu and Pennu (earth and women). Kaali is considered as Mother Goddess in all aspects as the primordial form of power. There is an interesting myth behind the repulsion for the colour-black. In northern parts of India Kaali is considered to be the power originated from Siva and hence his wife. But in Kerala Kaali is treated only as Siva's daughter. In the myths prevalent in northern parts of India Kaali becomes Gouri. It is believed that Siva once called her Kaali, Kaali. Devi thought that Siva was calling her Kaali because of her black colour. And hence she became very angry. She decided to find a solution. She started severe meditation seeking a boon to change her colour. The Gods appeared and blessed her with a boon to change her body colour as golden. The black colour of her body was melted away and the river Kaalindi was formed out of it. As she got gourav varna she was named Gouri. In a way it is treated as the attitude of Aryans to the Dravidian tradition and culture. As per Dravidian culture the Goddess of war were called Daivathayi (mother of Gods). The kingdoms and principalities of different rulers gave much importance to worship of Daivathayi. The Gods of war as per Aryan tradition are male gods; were as in Dravidian

culture Goddess Daivathayi is the worshipful deity for agriculture, hunting and also for war. Thus Kaali became the deity who kill the cruel Darika and protect her children or devotees. In other parts of the country Goddess Durga is worshiped as she annihilates demon Mahisha.

Chapter 9

Conclusion



Documentation and Publication of a book like this is just a beginning to open up a few casements. However the vision of the eternal Theatre based on the traditional Ritualistic Art-forms- that one gets will inspire every lover of art for further quest and inquiry into that wonder-world of naive unsophisticated beauty and grandeur!