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FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KERALA

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skill and imagination—declined with the punitive export policy of the East India Company and the unrestricted import of machine-made goods, so much so that at the close of the last century fairs and festivals were reduced to a matter of concern only for the Public Health Department. They were no longer regarded as important centres of trade and commerce, but were now from the Government point of view merely a collection of human beings among whom epidemics were to be prevented from breaking out. Fairs and festivals continued to be a matter of law and order and the Police Department and the District Board continued to maintain full lists of them in their local offices, a source which has so far remained unquarried.

Following the census operations of West Bengal in 1951, a slim volume, containing a list of fairs and festivals arranged according to districts and their Police Stations, was brought out as part of the West Bengal scheme of Census Publications. This list was mainly made up of information supplied by District Boards and Superintendents of Police of districts. The two lists were collated to make up a comprehensive list containing several columns: the name of the village arranged under its district and Police Station, with its Jurisdiction List number, the name of the festival or fair by which it is commonly known in the locality, the English month of the year in which it is held, the duration of the festival or fair, and finally the number of persons attending it. Although merely a list, and not quite complete at that, this volume attracted attention and received the appreciation both of scholars and the general public. Its general value lay in its being a compendium and its particular value lay in presenting a distribution throughout the country of particular festive occasions. The Superintendent of Census Operations for West Bengal, who continued in an honorary capacity, was pleased from time to time with requests to undertake an extensive survey of the subject which seemed to accord well with the Superintendent's own personal desire. For one thing, quite a few of the old and traditional fairs and festivals of West Bengal are on their way to extinction on account of various forces working against them and a record of these rapidly vanishing fairs and festivals could be made only now as never again in the future. In the next place, the Census Office considered in its duty to sustain by a more searching survey the interest that the publication had aroused.

A different approach suggested itself as the new task was viewed in terms of collection of extensive first-hand material on each fair and festival. It was necessary therefore, in the first place, to approach as many individuals as possible in each locality, and not restrict the enquiry only to Government or semi-Government sources, Departments or organisations. In the second place, a satisfactory questionnaire was considered most essential. A number of aims were kept in view in framing the questionnaire. These were:

- The questionnaire should be very simple and precise in language, designed primarily for the understanding of a person of primary education standard. At the same time, the question should be suggestive enough to invite ancillary information. Were this objective achieved, it should be possible to obtain exhaustive information without irrelevant detail.
- It should succeed in obtaining a clear environmental, social and economic background of the village or place in which a particular fair is held or a festival is observed.
- It should emphasise those aspects of a festival or worship which would bring out the details of rituals and religious practices peculiar to the locality.
- It should obtain information not only on the more important and better-known festivals or fairs, but also on the less known but otherwise significant fairs and festivals. It was decided to extend the scope of enquiry beyond those fairs and festivals that are approved and licensed by the District authorities, for the latter would be a small number compared to the total.

- It should attempt sufficient information on economic activities and patterns in

respect of each fair, however big or small. The information so obtained should suggest the scope for studying the movement of local handiwork and local forms and raw materials. The questionnaire should also give a list of local amusements favoured by the public.

The questionnaire which was several times pre-tested was finally mailed in 1957 to about 10,000 addresses in West Bengal on the Business Reply scheme. One of the devices which seems to have evinced much responsible reporting was the assurance that each piece of information would be fully acknowledged to the correspondent whose address also would be published for the benefit of future investigators.

The information thus collected was sorted district by district and further sub-sorted by Police Stations. The work of compilation, once the preliminary verification and checking of the answers was over, was to be in three sections as follows:—

- The first section was to contain systematic information on the village, the villagers, their occupations, communications and other special features, mainly based on Section A of the questionnaire.

- The second section was to contain all available information on the festival itself, the worship of deities, particularly rituals and forms of worship. This would be based mainly on Section B of the questionnaire.

- The third section, to be based on Section C of the questionnaire, would contain information about the fair and economic activity and amusement connected with the fair.

It will doubtless be a matter of great satisfaction to scholars that the scheme was very enthusiastically received by all my colleagues when its outline together with the West Bengal questionnaire was circulated in February 1960. My colleagues felt that the Census provided a unique opportunity for conducting such a comprehensive survey with the help of the network of staff placed by the State Governments at their disposal. State Superintendents were quick to recognise that such a survey would be of great help to those who might care to investigate the religious centres and festivals, inland trade and commerce, art motifs and designs, circuits of trade, ancient trade routes, and special manufactures. It would give the student of toponymy much valuable clue and the student of history much valuable insight into the organisation of markets.

The proposal to conduct this survey was accepted in the Second Conference of Census Superintendents held in August 1960. Various aspects of the Survey, then in progress, were discussed again in the regional meetings of Census Superintendents held in Trivandrum, Darjeeling and Srinagar in May and June 1961. My colleagues were able to report further progress at the Census Social Studies Camp held in December 1961, when several elaborations of the original questionnaire and in investigational methodology were also discussed. It was further proposed to undertake more intensive surveys of a small number of very important fairs and festivals in each State. At the third Conference of Census Superintendents in February 1962 my colleagues took the further decision to prepare maps of fairs and festivals on the basis of districts and even of tehsil or taluks, some States having already made much progress in this direction.

The scholar will find in these lists much to excite his curiosity. First, they show what an extensive network of seasonal and perennial markets village fairs still provide to native craftsmanship and industry. Secondly, they help to connect economic streams with social and religious movements. Thirdly, they suggest how a succession of small fairs in a time series culminate in a very big fair, almost always in the heart of a particular area, and how this big event gradually subsides through another time series of small fairs, so that an endless cycle of trade, social and religious intercourse is kept in motion. Fourthly, they insinuate a great deal about what Buchanan-Hamilton was charged to investigate a century and a half ago: "the

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situation of the artists and manufacturers, the mode of providing their goods, the usual rate of their labour, and any particular advantages they may enjoy: their comparative affluence with respect to the cultivators of the land, their domestic usages, the nature of their sales, and the regulations respecting their markets". Fifthly, they can very greatly help in reconstructing ancient and not so ancient trade routes in the country, and, again, what Buchanan-Hamilton was asked to investigate; "the nature of the conveyance of goods by land and water, and the means by which this may be facilitated, especially by making or repairing roads".

New Delhi,
5 September 1964

ASOK MITRA
Registrar General, India

PREFACE

The fairs and festivals of a country represent a great cultural heritage. It is one of the achievements of the 1961 Census that an attempt has been made to devote a part of the Census Report to the fairs and festivals of the country. So far as Kerala is concerned this is the first time that such an attempt has been made. This part of the Census Report consists of two publications, 'Part VII B (i), Fairs and Festivals of Kerala' containing the descriptive portion and 'Part VII B (ii), Fairs and Festivals of Kerala—Statements' giving the tables relating to the fairs and festivals. It is the first part that is presented in this book.

2. It is a unique feature of this publication that it is entirely a compilation of the descriptions furnished by various writers. These descriptions are arranged in the order of fairs and festivals of statewide and local importance. Those relating to the State as a whole are presented first. These are followed by the descriptions of the fairs and festivals in each district. I should express my deep sense of gratitude to the authors of the various descriptions given in this report for having so kindly obliged the Census Organisation devoting a good deal of their time.

3. The collection of data for this part of the Census Report as well as sub-part (ii) presented several difficulties. At first it was thought that the data could be collected through departmental agencies. Among the Departments which furnished information special mention should be made of the Departments of Health Services, Police, Local Bodies and Revenue and the Devaswom Boards of Travancore and Cochin. With a view to supplement the information received from the various departments various ecclesiastical dignitaries, administrators of places of public worship and heads of local bodies like Municipalities and Panchayats were also addressed. With their co-operation it has been possible to collect a good deal of data and present them in this book as well as its sub-part (ii). I am extremely grateful to all those who have, in response to the request made by me, furnished valuable information relating to the fairs and festivals in the State. In spite of the data collected as above it was found that certain important fairs and festivals were still not covered. The editors of some of the important newspapers who have devoted their valuable columns to the description of fairs and festivals were hence approached for help in this connection. They gladly extended their help and sent me copies of their papers containing descriptions of fairs and festivals. These have been a valuable source of information. I take this opportunity to thank the editors of the various papers who have so kindly obliged us in this attempt especially the Editor of the Malayala Manorama. I am also grateful to the authors of the various articles published in these papers for according their consent to publish a free translation of their articles in this book.

4. Most of the materials received happened to be in Malayalam. These had therefore to be translated into English. As far as possible a free rendering of these in English has been given in this publication. The entire work of translation was attended to by Shri M. Mohammed Usman, Junior Research Assistant of my office. I have great pleasure in acknowledging the valuable contribution made by him in this regard.

5. This publication has in no small measure been enriched by a large number of photographs. The entire work of photography with a few exceptions was done by the Department of Public Relations of the Government of Kerala, free of cost, the conveyance and a few films alone being supplied by the Census Department. I am deeply grateful to Shri V. R. Narayanan Nair, ex-Director of Public Relations of the Government of Kerala for the

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enthusiastic cooperation and goodwill extended by him in implementing the programme through his photographers Sarvashri T. M. Joseph and K. V. Ravindranathan Nair. The maps given in this book were prepared by Shri S. Krishna Pillai, draughtsman of my office.

6. I acknowledge with gratitude the following sources from where the remaining photographs in this work were received.

The Registrar General, India	Plates 9 to 11
Messrs. Sivaram Studio	Plates 13 and 14 (on payment)
Corporation of Trivandrum	Plates 19 to 25
Rt. Rev. Mgr. J. N. Fernandez, Trivandrum	Plate 34
Rev. Fr. Sebastian George, Trivandrum	Plate 35
Tahsildar, Mavelikkara	Plates 56 and 57 (on payment)
Very Rev. Fr. F. J. Fernandez, Ernakulam	Plates 69 to 71
Shri Joseph Vivera, Ernakulam	Plate 72
Shri K. V. George, Darres Salaam	Plate 73
Dr. John Berchman Francis, Alur	Plate 74
Coir Board, Ernakulam	Plate 76
Vicar, St. Mary's Church, Koratty	Plates 81 to 83

7. The blocks of [redacted] Plates Nos. 13, 14, 62, 76 and 91 to 93 were made at Messrs. Klein and Peyerl, Madras, Plates Nos. 1 to 3, 7, 8, 19 to 33, 34, 35, 39 to 74 and 81 to 84 at Messrs. Printers Blocks, Trivandrum and the rest at Messrs. Malayala Rajyam Process Studio, Quilon. These process studios have bestowed great care in preparing the blocks promptly and well. The printing of such a book with several photographs, some of them in colour, requires a good deal of patient application and skill. The C. M. S. Press, Kottayam, under the able guidance of Shri John Mathai has executed the work quite efficiently.

8. I am deeply grateful to Shri Asok Mitra, Registrar General and ex-officio Census Commissioner for India for the inspiration, guidance and encouragement I have received from him in connection with the preparation of this volume.

9. Apart from the fairs and festivals of unusual importance, this publication contains particulars of the festivals of the various sections of the population of Kerala like Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Jains. Adequate attention has been paid to represent the various sub-communities of these sections. A presentation of the fairs and festivals with the rich variety representing the various communities in a single volume would, it is hoped, be taken as a contribution to national integration. If this purpose has been achieved through this book it should be a matter of gratification.

10. Since this report is confined to such fairs and festivals about which accounts have been received from the public, it is not claimed that this represents all the fairs and festivals in the State. As far as possible every attempt has been made to secure accounts of as many fairs and festivals as possible.

Trivandrum,
January 17, 1966

M. K. DEVASSY

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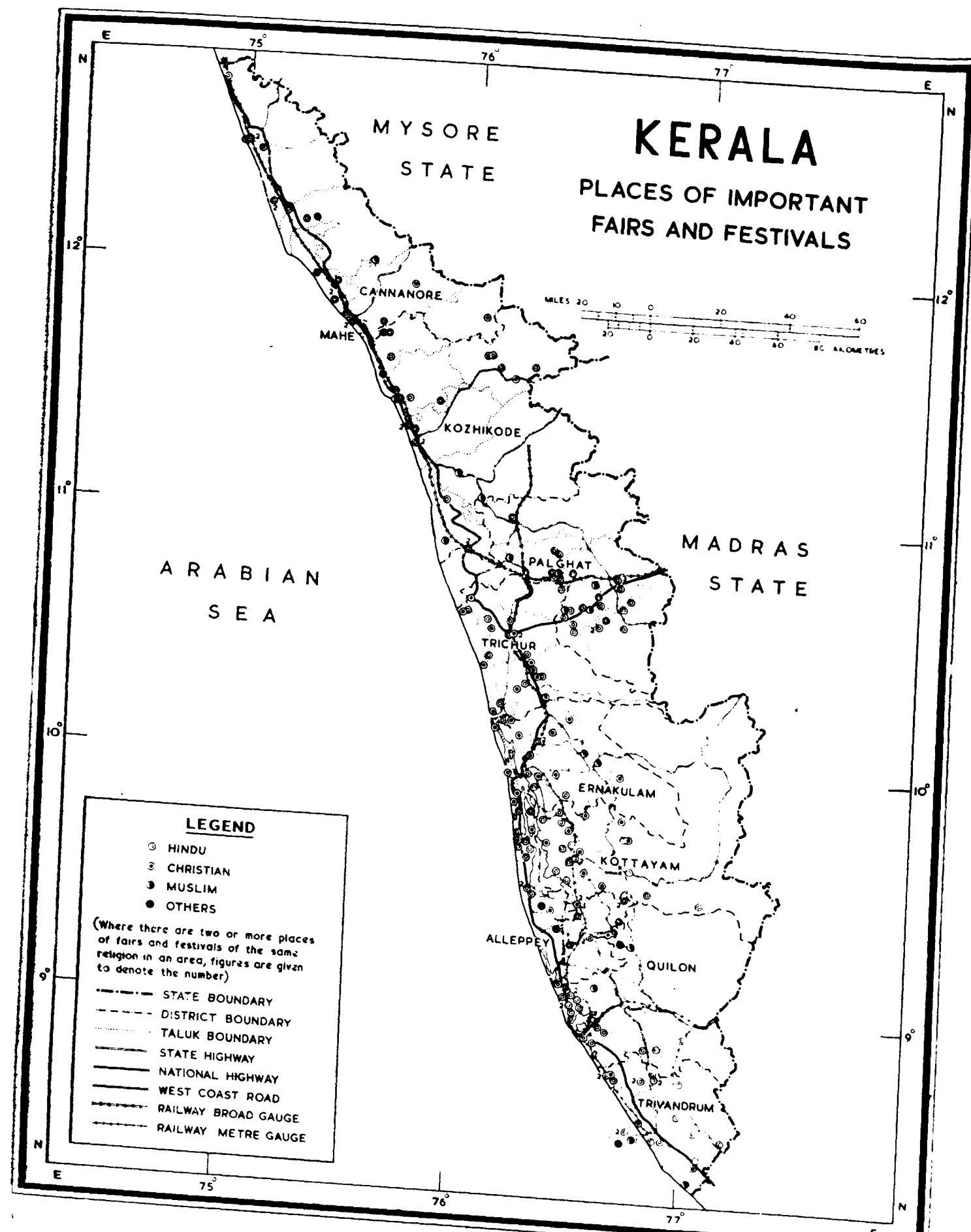
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STATEWIDE FAIRS AND FESTIVALS



INDEPENDENCE DAY AND REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS

(SHRI V. R. NARAYANAN NAIR, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, KERALA STATE)

Every nation marks some date or dates in its history as occasions for celebration. Among the most famous of such festivals is America's Fourth of July, observed all over the world by the citizens of the United States, which on that date in the year 1776 declared themselves free and independent of Britain. Another date commemorating a great event in the annals of human liberty is the 14th of July in France, the date on which, (in 1789) the Bastille was stormed by the Parisians and the French Revolution commenced. Armistice Day is another annual occasion which has caught the national imagination of many countries, both as grateful remembrance to those who fell in the First World War and also as a yearly appeal for the prevention of any further insane attempts to settle international disputes by force. First of July perpetuates yet another date (in 1867) on which the emergence of the Dominion of Canada was announced by Royal Proclamation. The 26th of January, known in Victoria as Foundation Day (but everywhere else in the Dominion as Anniversary Day), is the anniversary of the foundation of the Australian State with the landing of Captain Cook in Botany Bay on the 26th January 1770. Dingaan's Day on the 16th December, observed to recall the defeat of a cruel and treacherous Zulu king, is a holiday peculiar to South Africa, with particular appeal to those of Dutch origin.

The 15th of August 1947—Independence Day—perpetuates the victory of a marathon struggle for freedom and the culmination of a bloodless revolution representing the unbending aspiration of the Indian people for liberation from the shackles of foreign domination. The commemoration of this great

event in the history of India not only matches similar national celebrations in other countries but, indeed, even surpasses them in that while the goal of independence has been achieved by bloody revolutions in most countries, India has achieved it through the path of non-violence and search after truth, a heroic story of suffering and sacrifice by the valiant soldiers of freedom at the altar of India's liberty under the unequalled leadership of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, revered today as the Mahatma and as the Father of the Nation. Likewise, Republic Day, which commemorates the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of India on the 26th of January 1950, is another unforgettable day for the entire Indian Nation.

Nationwide Celebration

The celebration of these two historic occasions has always been nationwide in character. In Kerala, noted for its many religious festivals, whether of the temple, church or mosque, the two national days are observed with great enthusiasm. The preparations for the celebrations take final shape by the evening of the previous day with people of all walks of life getting busy with the decoration of their houses and places of business with flags and festoons, green plantain trees with their long, broad leaves and heavy bunches of fruits, festoons of silvery coconut leaves and bunches of emerald coconuts, the construction of ornamental arches at important junctions and entrances to public offices and institutions, the hoisting of flagstuffs and quite a large number of other items of decoration which announce with elan the coming day. The celebrations begin with the entire country blooming in full decorative colour

STATEWIDE FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

and glory to proclaim the significance of the freedom. Starting the day in a mood of prayer and dedication, people foregather at the place where the National Flag is unfurled in solemn ceremony. Later, as the hour advances on this proud National Day, the people give way to merriment and happiness, throughout the length and breadth of the country. In Trivandrum, the capital of the State, the National Flag is unfurled in the morning at a ceremonial parade, at which either the Governor (before the re-organisation of States 1956, the Rajpramukh) or the Chief Minister of the State takes the salute and addresses the parade. The parade is composed of the contingents of the Army, Police, N. C. C., Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. Units of mounted police add colour to the ceremony, while military and police bands enliven the impressive march past. The maidan where the ceremonial parade is held echoes with the enthusiastic cheers of the tens of thousands of people who throng to participate in the function, in addition to the invitees consisting of important officials and non-officials. The occasion is often utilized for the conferment of Presidential honours on those chosen for the purpose.

Hoisting the National Flag on the first Republic Day (26th January 1950) in the Capital of Travancore-Cochin, His Highness the Rajpramukh said:

"I have just now hoisted the Flag of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India. Today we have become a Republic under a Constitution which we have given to ourselves and this day marks the commencement of a new Chapter in the history of our ancient land with its heritage of culture and tolerance. This is a red letter day in our lives which we should cherish in our hearts for ever.

"Let us rally round and salute this National Flag which is the symbol of our unity and our status and make a firm resolve to sink all our differences and

banish from our hearts all feelings of territorial and sectarian rivalry and march forward hand in hand towards the common goal of a greater and more prosperous India."

In the Districts

As in the State capital, at the district level also the hoisting of the National Flag and the ceremonial parade are held at the district headquarters, the District Collectors preforming the ceremony and addressing the parade (except in the Ernakulam district where the Chief Justice usually performs the flag-hoisting). At the taluk headquarters also such ceremonies are held, the Tahsildar performing the ceremony. The ceremony extends to most of the institutions in the State, whether at taluk headquarters or otherwise, where the heads of the institutions unfurl the Flag. School children are given sweets on these national holidays. The ceremony of unfurling the national Flag is followed in many places by poor-feeding, a gesture of special importance in a poverty-stricken country. This feature is more common on Independence Day.

On Republic Day, a large number of miscellaneous programmes follow the unfurling of the Flag. Following the pattern set up in Delhi, in the capital of the State a colourful procession is organised with all pageantry provided by caparisoned elephants and decorated floats representing Government Departments and cultural themes, while contingents of the Army and the Police participate, headed by the *Thayampaka* and the *Panchavadyam*, typical Kerala orchestral bands of percussion and wind instruments. The procession invariably starts from the East Fort Gate in front of the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple and proceeds to the University Stadium, some two miles away. After the procession reaches the stadium, cultural shows including folk dances representing the different areas of the State are presented. These cultural programmes have become so popular that people from all parts of the State take lively interest in



PI. 1. SCENES FROM THE REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS, TRIVANDRUM

1. Governor inspecting the parade
Governor taking the salute of—
2. the Cavalry,
3. the Home Guards, and
4. the Cadets of the Sainik School
5. Kombuvili (blowing the bugle)

Cultural performances

6. Mudiattam
7. Vedarkali





PL. 2. CULTURAL PERFORMANCE—'TILAK'



PL. 3. FIREWORKS

INDEPENDENCE DAY AND REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS

sponsoring representative units for presenting their respective folk dances. An All-India Exhibition is usually held in Trivandrum under the auspices of the Corporation in connection with the Republic Day celebrations.

At the district headquarters also picturesque processions are taken out on the afternoon of the Republic Day. A good number of educational institutions participate in such processions with highly attractive floats befitting the occasion. To encourage healthy competition among the various units which participate in the procession and entertainments, prizes are distributed to the deserving. A public meeting is usually held, at which speeches are made, referring to the history of the Indian Independence movement and stressing the need for eternal vigilance. Wherever there are facilities for boat races and water carnivals, these are organised on Republic Day with great enthusiasm. Illumination on the widest possible scale is arranged, both in the metropolis of the State and as many district headquarters as possible. There are also displays of pyrotechnics, a

show in which Kerala excels. The celebrations at the village level are no less enthusiastic. Irrespective of caste, age and sex the people of every village feel the warm glow of freedom which the day commemorates. Infused with a spirit of patriotism and a sense of the greatness of the Nation, the people pay homage to the Father of the Nation and the valiant soldiers of the freedom fight, dedicating themselves at the same time to the great cause of acquiring for free India an honourable place in the comity of nations.

Broadcasts by the Head of the State and the Chief Minister or other Ministers are relayed from the Delhi and Trivandrum Stations of All-India Radio, while many daily newspapers (of which there is a prolific number in Kerala) bring out special numbers to mark the day of national rejoicing.

The addresses of the Governor and the Chief Minister at the flag-hoisting ceremony on the Republic Day and Independence Day parades held in Trivandrum in the Census Year 1961 are given in the Appendix.

APPENDIX

Address delivered by Shri V. V. Giri, the Governor of Kerala on 26th January 1961

It is a matter of immense pride and pleasure to me to be here this morning to participate in this ceremonial parade on our Republic Day. Your smartness and excellent bearing today have greatly impressed me. It is an indication of the very high standard of your training, discipline and efficiency. To the two officers who have just received awards for gallantry, I offer my heartiest congratulations.

The members of our Armed Forces have earned for themselves a great and abiding name, by their high standards of efficiency, integrity and discipline. In the midst of grave and difficult situations—a recent instance is their effort to bring peace in the troubled Congo—they have strained their every nerve to maintain peace and concord. Rightly have they been acclaimed for their great and sincere efforts to enforce the commands of the U. N. They have indeed served as our Ambassadors for peace and friendship.

We have no aggressive intentions towards anyone and our foremost desire is to promote peace and

goodwill among all nations. But let there be no doubt in any one's mind that we shall fight for our freedom and way of life to the very end. Our gallant soldiers, sailors and airmen are always ready along with the rest of the country to stand up and to lay down their lives, if need be, against all those who try to violate our frontiers. Let our countrymen remember that no price is too great and no sacrifice too big to defend our territorial integrity and national sovereignty.

The members of our Police Force have also set up high standards of efficiency and discipline and have maintained their excellent record of service. Gradually, but surely, they are being accepted as friends and guides of the people. Their task in maintaining law and order and preserving life and property is sometimes very difficult. They deserve the fullest co-operation from all sections of the general public in this work. After all, the preservation of our democracy and the liberty of our citizens is entirely dependent on how well they can

STATEWIDE FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

do this. For their part, I have no doubt, every single member of the Police Force will continue to regard himself as a servant of the people, existing solely for their service.

The Tricolour Flag which I just now unfurled is the symbol of our independence and we should all remember that it is our bounden duty to keep it fly aloft and stand united to meet any challenge. This is equally an occasion for us to remember that the fruits of freedom which we now enjoy have become possible through the great sufferings and sacrifices made by many gallant sons of India under the

leadership of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Experimenting with the supreme weapons of truth and non-violence he wrought the miracle of an unarmed nation winning its independence when the entire outside world was placing their faith in atomic and nuclear weapons. In fact, Gandhiji has given a completely different turn and means to the furtherance of World Peace.

Let us all rededicate ourselves on this auspicious and memorable day to do our best in maintaining the prestige of our country and that of our National Flag.

Extracts from the address delivered by Shri Pattom A. Thanu Pillai, the Chief Minister of Kerala on 15th August 1961

Today is our Independence Day. For long we had to be under foreign domination. This day represents the 14th Anniversary of our liberation from the slavery. We cannot forget the national movement launched from one end of this great country to another for the attainment of our freedom. Lakhs and lakhs of people—some of them renowned and a larger number consisting of ignorant masses—suffered not a little for the independence of our country. Several have lost their lives. Lakhs and lakhs of people had undergone a good many tribulations. Indians will ever remember the Father of the Nation who gave the lead for this movement. His life is a beacon light not only to guide us but the whole world. It is doubtful whether in her whole history India can think of a greater fortune

than the leadership of one like him. What should engage our attention today is what was the object of our attaining independence and how best can this independence be used. Considering the vast extent of India it is but natural that there are people who belong to different religions, who follow different customs and manners and who speak different languages in such a country. But in spite of this diversity history has taught that a fundamental unity existed in the country. It is our duty to foster this unity. Whatever tendencies of disunion which we find in this great country today are the result of ignorance and thoughtlessness. It is for us to make up this deficiency. We must lead our country forward and for that what is most needed is discipline and our readiness for work.

ONAM

(SOORANAD SHRI P. N. KUNJAN PILLAI)

1. The Tradition

The tradition of Kerala has handed down the sweet memories of a period of peace and plenty in the dim distant past when Mahabali, a celebrated emperor of the Asuras, was ruling over this land. His period is believed to have been the golden age in the history of this country. There is a popular folk-song which narrates the glories that were then Kerala.

Maveli natu vanitum kalam
Manusharellarumonnupolay
Aamodathoday vasikkum kalam
Aapathangarkumattilla thanum
Kallavumilla Chathivumilla
Ellolamilla Polivachanam
Kallapparayum Cherunazhiyum
Kallatharangal Mattonnumilla¹

When Maveli was ruling all men were equal. Then they were leading a life of happiness, nobody had any calamity. There was neither dishonesty nor deception, nor was there any instance of false utterance, counterfeit measures there were none, nor other kinds of dishonest practices. The ideals of a Welfare State were then realised if we believe the folk-song. There was not a man, woman or child who suffered from want, fear or disease. Absolute economic welfare and social justice were ensured. No wonder, therefore, that the memories of such a period are enshrined in the folklore and tradition of this country.

2. But this golden age came to a tragic close, according to the legend, when Mahabali was expelled from his Kingdom by Vamana, the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu. The Devas, the eternal enemies of the Asuras, grew jealous of the prosperity of Mahabali's Kingdom, and they appealed to

Vishnu to expel Mahabali. Vishnu acceded to their request and assumed incarnation as Vamana. He went to Mahabali in the guise of a Brahman *brahmachari* and begged of him for a small plot of land, not more than three feet, to put up a hermitage. The generous emperor, not knowing the design behind this, readily agreed to grant the request. Vamana, thereupon, assumed a most gigantic form and measured the whole earth with one foot. He covered the lower and the celestial regions with his first and second steps. To complete the three feet of promised ground, Mahabali had to place his head also underneath Vamana's foot. Vamana then pushed him down to *Patala*, the lower world. Thus by the designs of the gods, the glorious reign of the Asura emperor came to an end. But his grateful subjects demanded with all popular might that their former ruler should be permitted to return to his country once a year. This request was granted. The time for his visit was fixed in the first Malayalam month *Shravana* (August-September), and this occasion became one of jubilation throughout the length and breadth of the land, reminiscent of the prosperous times of Mahabali. This is an age-old tradition in Kerala known to every child, and is partly in consonance with the puranic story relating to Vamana and Mahabali. According to the Puranas, Mahabali was expelled from his imperial position by Vamana as stated above, but they are silent as regards Mahabali's relation with Kerala and his annual visits to this country from *Patala*.

3. A Harvest Festival

Whatever be the truth of this tradition, this keeps alive the memories of a period of

¹ മാവേലി നാട്ടു വാണിടം കാലം
മാനുഷരല്ലാക്കുമാനുപോലെ
ആമോദത്തോടെ വസിക്കും കാലം
ആവത്തങ്ങാക്കുമൊട്ടില്ലതാനം

കള്ളവുമില്ല ചതിവുമില്ല
എളുക്കമില്ല പൊളിവചനം
കള്ളപ്പറയും ചെറുനാഴിയും
കള്ളത്തരങ്ങൾ മറെറാണുമില്ല.

STATEWIDE FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

peace and plenty in the history of this land conveying to the people an ideal of a Welfare State. There are also historians who feel that the *Onam* is a harvest festival (vide History of Kerala by K. P. P. Menon—Vol. IV—Page 287). This opinion derives support from the circumstance that the *Onam* is celebrated in *Chingom* (August-September), the harvesting season, when nature is particularly gay in Kerala. Although the relation of this festival with the harvest cannot be rejected as irrelevant, that cannot explain away the traditional genesis connecting this celebration with Mahabali.

4. The Glorious Past

Whatever be the origin of *Onam*, it has for the last several centuries become a grand national festival in which all sections of the people of Kerala participate with extreme jubilation. The most striking fact about this festival is that it is celebrated in commemoration of a glorious past when there prevailed an ideal state of prosperity and peace. This aspect has a special significance to the people of modern times when all our dreams are for the realisation of such a State.

5. The Celebration

The festival falls in *Chingom*, the Malayalam month corresponding to August-September. The festival is supposed to begin from the lunar asterism, *Attham*, which falls ten days before the asterism *Tiruvonam*. The most important celebrations are on four days *Utthradam*, *Tiruvonam*, *Avittam* and *Chathayam*. But for the whole period of the *Onam* Season there will be mirth and jollity among all people, especially among the younger folk. The preparation for the celebration usually begins from the *Attham* day. Houses are cleaned and food-stuffs for feasts are collected. The rich and poor alike make every preparation. There is a popular saying "*Kanam vittum Onam unnam*" i. e., for conducting *Onam* feast one may sell away anything. It is an occasion for all people to show their mutual regard and liberality. In former times,

under the feudalistic system, agricultural labourers of well-to-do families invariably used to offer presents to their landlords on the eve of the *Onam* day, and in return they received new cloths, paddy and vegetables for celebrating the *Onam*. Village artisans like blacksmiths, washermen and barbers also used to receive similar perquisites.

6. Thrikkakkara Appan

The *Tiruvonam* is the most important day. To quote Sri. K. P. Padmanabha Menon "A quasi-religious portion of this ceremony is performed early in the morning that day." In the front yard of the house flower carpets are spread on every day from *Attham* and conical figures made of sticky clay are put up. One of these is the idol of Thrikkakkara Appan, the deity of Thrikkakkara, where the festival is believed to have had its origin. In olden days, tradition says, that this festival was conducted in the Thrikkakkara temple for 28 days when all the Kings of Kerala went there to participate in the celebrations. It is in commemoration of the journeys undertaken to Thrikkakkara in olden times to participate in the *Onam* celebration, that *Atthachamayam* is performed by the Maharaja of Cochin and the Zamorin of Calicut even to this day.

7. Costumes and Feast

On the *Tiruvonam* day early in the morning every one bathes and offers worship in the temples. Then the gayest apparel is put on. Presents are distributed to the younger members by the *Karanavan* or the senior member. Clothes of yellow colour are included among the presents as a characteristic feature. Then follows feasting at which a brass lamp is lighted and before that viands are served in a plantain leaf as an offering to Ganapati. Food is served on plantain leaves. Rice is the main item and along with it several sorts of curries or vegetable preparations are also served. *Upperies*, *pappadums*, pickles, *payasams* and *prathamams* (various kinds of puddings) are also invariably included in the menu. Meat preparations are however not served. Members of

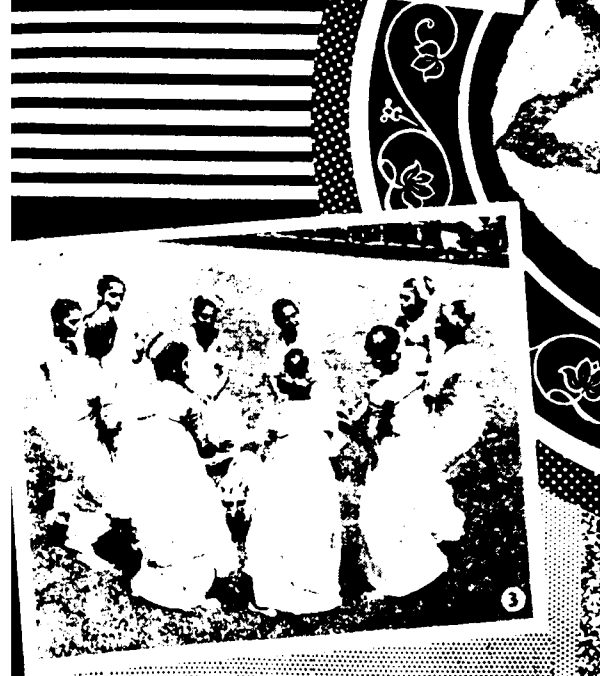
PI. 4. SCENES FROM ONAM CELEBRATIONS

Athappoovu

Atham is the 10th day preceding Onam which marks the commencement of the approaching Onam celebrations. The front courtyard of the house is decorated by spreading flowers in beautiful designs. Such a floral carpet is called Athappoovu. Items 1, 5, 8 and 9 represent the different types of Athappoovu.

Snake boat race

Kerala is famous for her snake boat races held in various places almost as an annual feature. Pictures in items 2 and 4 give a graphic representation of some of the



scenes in the boat race at Aranmula held in connection with Onam celebrations, 1961.

Kaikottikali

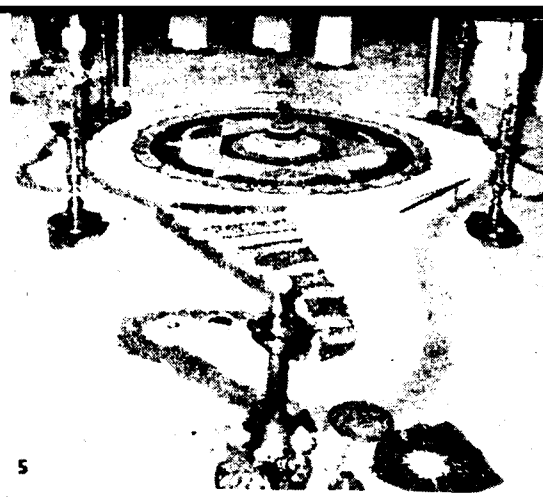
One of the ancient and highly enchanting folk-dances associated with Onam in which ladies in neat and simple attire dance and sing is Kaikottikali given in item 5.

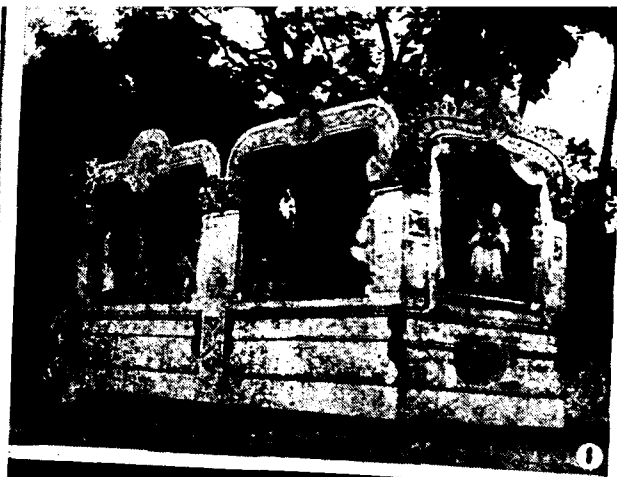
Thalapoli

This is a ceremonial Malayali form of reception. The picture covered by item 6 is of a Thalapoli arranged in connection with the Onam celebrations, 1961 at Kozhikode.

Kalaripayattu

Item 7 shows a fencing exercise exhibited in connection with Onam celebrations.





PL. 5.
SCENES FROM THE ONAM
CELEBRATIONS

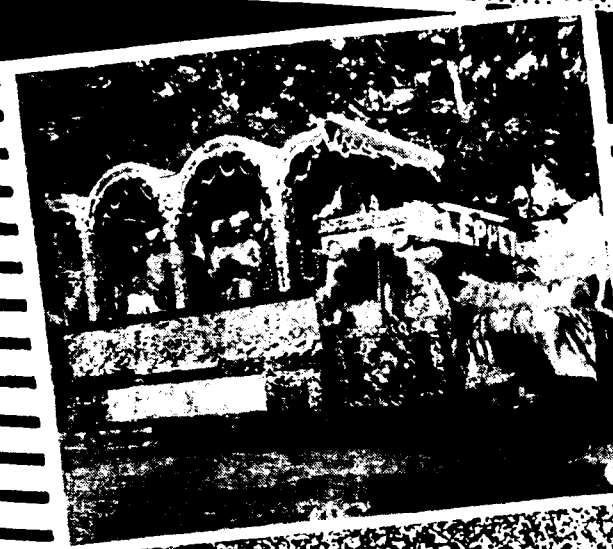
Cultural pageant

The cultural pageant in Trivandrum held in connection with the Onam celebration in 1961 was the grandest the city had ever seen. This page is devoted to the floats in the pageant presented by :-

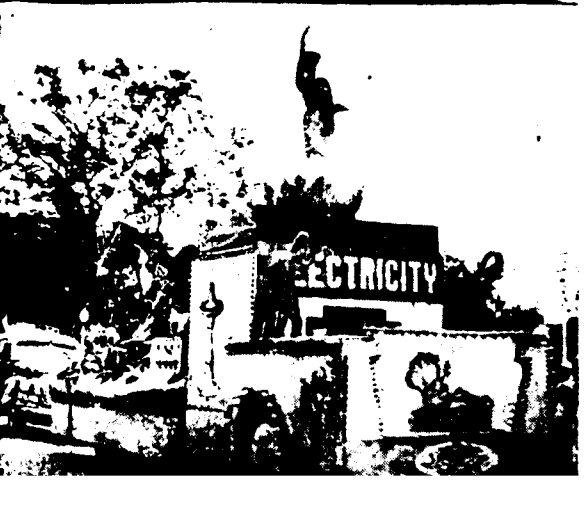
1. Industries and Commerce Department,
2. Education Department,



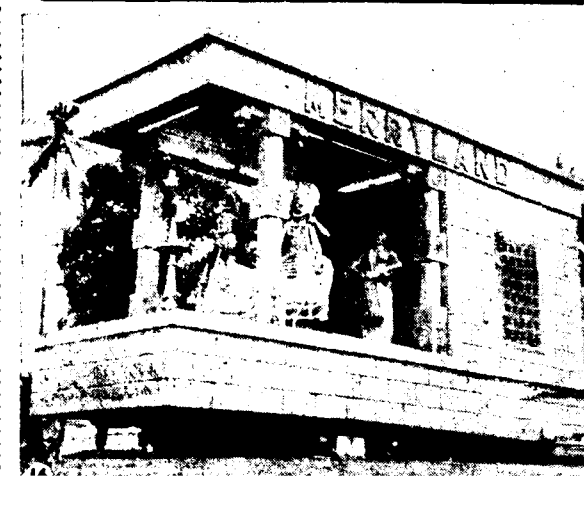
9. Quilon District,
10. Kottayam District,
11. Public Works Department,
12. F. A. C. T.,

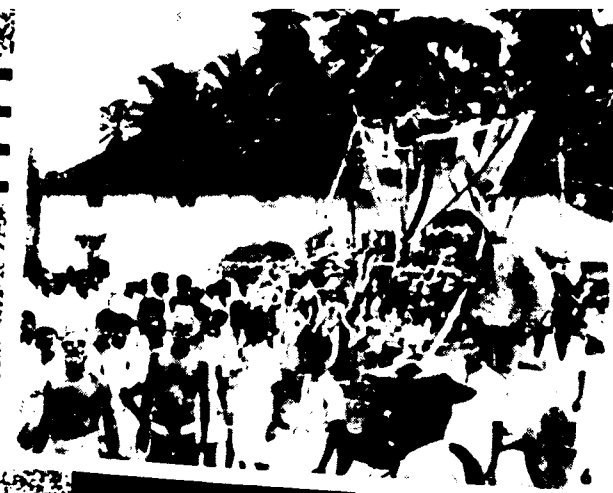


3. Alleppey District,
4. Kozhikode District,
5. Ernakulam District,
6. Fisheries Department,
7. Agriculture Department,
8. State Transport Department,



13. Trivandrum Water Works, (won first prize)
14. Trichur District,
15. Kerala State Electricity Board and
16. Merryland Studio,





- Pl. 6.
SCENES FROM THE ONAM
CELEBRATIONS. Concl'd.
1. Boat race, Ernakulam.
 2. Mutiyattam or lock dance at Ernakulam. The rhythmic movement of the dancers is adjusted to the play of the drums by the Udukku kottu party.
 3. Parivamuttukali or shield-and-sword dance at Kozhikode.
 4. Aravanamuttikali, a folk-dance.
 5. Community feast in Trivandrum.
 6. Kuthirakettu or procession in which the effigy of a horse carrying Hindu idols is taken round.
 7. Pachavadyam or the five musical instruments at play of a party from Thrippunithura. The participation of ladies found in this party is a rare phenomenon.
 8. A feat at balancing at Ernakulam.
 9. The lordly caparisoned elephants at the head of the cultural pageant in Trivandrum.



ONAM

the family staying in other places generally go home to be present for the *Onam* celebrations.

8. Sports and Amusements

After the feasting there will be sports and games, indoor and outdoor, in which every one participates according to his or her inclination. Among outdoor games *panthukali* (using a kind of football generally made of leather and stuffed with coconut fibre) is very common. *Thalapanthu* and *Kayyankali* (a kind of boxing) are also important games.

There is an old poetical work "Haryakshamasa Samarotsavam", assigned to the 16th century A. D., describing *onathallu* or mock fight, during *Onam* festivals. There is also reference to *onathallu* in an ancient Tamil work entitled "Maturai-Kanci" composed by Mankudi Marutanar of second century A. D. (see Kerala Sahitya Charitram by Mahakavi Ullur. I. 35). Among other amusements *thumbi-ihullal*, *karadikali*, *thiruvathirakkali* and *oonjal-attam* are very common.

A description of the traditional items of entertainments associated with *Onam* is given below:—

Panthukali

This is known under several names like *thalapanthu*, *thalama*, etc. The ball used in this game is made of coir rope or leather stuffed with coir or of the leaves of *Clerodendron*. The players divide themselves into two parties, one party standing by the side of a stick perpendicularly planted on the ground which may be called the stake. In the first service the person who serves the ball turns his back and propels the ball in the hind direction holding his right hand above the head. The opposite party can either catch the ball in the air or if it falls down, drive it with foot which is then returned in the same manner by the serving party. This process continues either till the ball comes to a standstill at some point or shoots off the stake. In the former case the opposite party has a right to strike the stake

with the ball. The server is out either when the ball shoots off the stake while driving with foot or strikes the stake when thrown. Each service is done three times. The second service is called *otta*. In this the server drives the ball with one hand standing in the front of the stake facing the opposite party. The third service is called *eratta* in which the server floats the ball in the air with his left hand and drives with his right hand. The next one is called *thodama* in which the server has to float the ball with his right hand, clap on his thigh with the same hand before the ball comes down and drive the ball with the same hand towards the opposite party. The fifth service called *kalumkeezhu* is much more complicated. In this the ball has to be thrown into the air from between his legs and driven as it comes down towards the opposite party. The last one is *odi*. This is most enjoyable to the server as he has only to drive the ball with his foot. The process of receiving the ball by the opposite party as described in the first service is repeated in all services. If all the services are successful the serving party wins the game. Similarly, if all the services are lost the party sustains a defeat. There are, indeed, local variations in the rules and terms set forth above. But the game is substantially the same in all parts of Kerala.

Vettukali

In this game two parties stand opposite to each other at a good distance. They choose as their playground usually an open field. A ball of the same material as mentioned in the previous case but of smaller size is propelled by hand by floating it with the left hand and driving it with the right hand towards the opposite party. The ball is either hit back and driven again from the place where it falls or taken from the ground when it falls and driven in the opposite direction. The more a party succeeds in striking the ball with greater force which automatically means the driving of the opposite party more and more to the rear that party ulti-

mately wins the game when the limit agreed upon between the parties is transgressed.

Karakali

This is nothing but native hockey, the ball being the root of a plant cut to shape and the sticks being cut out of the branches of *kara*, a thorny bush.

Kayyankali (Native boxing)

The villagers interested in this game divide themselves into two parties, each one standing for a few combatants trained in *kayyankali*. One party sends forth their first combatant who challenges anyone of the opposite party for a combat whereupon one of the opposite party accepts the challenge. When they reach the centre of the ground they then begin to exchange blows in measured steps both with open and closed fists. While doing so each combatant tries to ward off the blow of his opponent and at the same time to deal his own blow on him. The process is repeated until one of them comes out victorious. The whole combat is subject to special rules. This game requires long training for the combatants. One of the manuscripts containing the secrets of success in this game is "*Kayyankali-chadangu*". There may be other manuscripts as well on the subject. Each party may have more than one combatant in which case after the victory or defeat of each set of combatants a fresh set come forth and fight in the same manner. Each step of the combatants is attended by shouts of encouragement from the respective parties.

Aitakalam

This has been described by Shri T. K. Gopala Panicker as follows:—

"This is essentially a boyish pastime, though adults also at times take part in it. A large circle is drawn on the plain sand floor and people are selected for each of the two sections from amongst the assemblage. One section is then placed in a collective body inside the circle, while the other stands around the outside. The latter then try with, of course, as little personal injury to

themselves as possible, to strike at, and bring outside, the former who are inside, each by each. In the interval between one outsider getting inside and touching the body of any one among the inside group, the latter are allowed to beat and worry the antagonist. But the moment he touches the person of the inside man, he obtains complete immunity from violence at the hands of the rest of the inside batch. But the person who is caught is at liberty to strike him and struggle to prevent his being driven out. If he gets turned out, then he is no more to remain inside; and when the whole of the inside section are thus driven out, the first batch has finished its turn and is then followed up by the other batch and if any body is left inside who cannot be driven out, his party is declared successful. Sometimes, presents are given to the winners as tokens of appreciation of their training and strength."¹ A game more or less resembling this is found in Central Kerala called *thodum pidutham* meaning touching and holding. In this a party of youngsters stand inside a circle and the opposite party outside it. Those outside the circle try to touch the members inside the circle. On so touching, the person touched pursues the opponent and tries to catch hold of him and stop him. If he succeeds in this the opponent loses the game. Otherwise he sustains the defeat. Though no blows are exchanged in the struggle to stop the opponent the game is, nevertheless, risky as the struggle to escape the hold is often violent enough.

Villukottu

In this, a bow is made of strong and slightly elastic wood joined by a small cord made of bamboo material. It is played upon by means of a small stick when it produces a very delectable musical tune. Sometimes more than one bow are held by a number of persons who constitute a bow party. Generally, this is a game of children.

Thumbithullal

In this game a girl sits in the centre of a circle closing her eyes with both the hands and a number of girls sit round the circle singing songs and clapping their hands to the rhythm of the song. After sometime when the song has reached its high pitch the girl in the centre begins to shiver and falls to the ground, often unconscious. Water is then sprinkled upon her, when she regains her normal condition.

Karadikali

In *karadikali* a person wears a mask resembling the face of a bear. His body is painted black and covered with dried plantain leaves, the idea being to get the appearance of a bear. He is accompanied by a small party of men who play drums or musical instruments. This party visits houses during *Onam* days on moonlit night and after dancing in a crude form for sometime, pass on to the next house receiving presents, if any, given by the households. This is a popular item in Central Travancore.

Thalipeelikali

This is current in North Kerala. Two sets of girls stand opposite to each other, one set holding a girl who is sought by the opposite party. The members of the opposite party in musical tunes enquire whether there is a girl with the other party and whether she would be parted within their favour, whereupon the party holding the girl refuses to surrender her and sings to that effect. After a series of musical exchanges of demands and refusals, the opposite party loses patience and attempts to take the girl child by force which, indeed, is resisted by the party holding her.

Tiruvattirakali and Oonjalattam*

A National Festival

9. From days of antiquity, *Onam* was regarded as a national festival in which not only all the sections of the people participated but which was also sponsored by the rulers of the land. The *Athachamayam* celebrations at Cochin and Kozhikode and the

participation of the Rajas of Venad, Olanad, Matathinkizh and Desinganad, in the *Onathallu* described in the Haryakshamasa Samarothsavam point to the active association of the rulers of the land with the celebrations. But, in course of time this participation of the State seems to have waned making it almost a people's concern. The festival however has never lost its importance or its grandeur so far as the celebrations are concerned. Recently, the awakening national consciousness has been responsible for resuscitating *Onam* and making it as much a national celebration as a people's festival.

The celebration of *Onam* as a National Festival was taken up on Government initiative in 1961 in Kerala. A financial grant was given for the celebration and a committee called 'Onam Celebration Committee' was appointed by the Government for the purpose. In 1962 the celebration was conducted on a scale much larger than ever. The committee had the Governor as the chief patron and the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister as patrons. The Minister for Public Works was the chairman. The committee was a widely represented one. The celebrations in the Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Kozhikode zones were directly under the guidance of the State Committee. While the celebration extended throughout the State, the metropolises of the State and districts were the main centres of celebrations. The important items of celebrations included *inter alia* flag hoisting, *thayambaka*, *panchavadyam*, *nagaswara* *cutcherry*, musical entertainments, poetry seminars, mass drills and variety shows by school children, exhibitions of flower carpets, dance drama, ballet dances, folk dances, *chavittunatakam*, *kannavarakali* wrestling, *kalaripayattu* fancy football matches, torch-light tattoo by M. S. P. (Malabar Special Police), circus, fancy dress competitions, entertainments of Kalasamithis, film shows, water carnivals, boat races at Neerattu-

* The descriptions on *Tiruvattirakali* and *Oonjalattam* have been given under *Tiruvattira*.

¹ Malabar and its folk : T. K. Gopala Panicker. Page 79.

STATEWIDE FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

purum, Payipad and Aranmula, pyrotechnics, community lunches and pageants etc. The more important items among these were the pageant in the Trivandrum City, the water carnivals, boat races and community lunches.

The pageant in Trivandrum was the grandest which the City had ever seen. It was a highly representative one having picturesque floats representing the various districts of the State, departments of Government and private bodies. The float of the Alleppey district was a beautifully decorated palanquin in which *velakali*, an ancient martial folk dance was staged. The Cannanore district presented the legend of Parasurama reclaiming Kerala from the sea by throwing his axe and Mahabali, the popular celebrated Emperor of the Asuras with whom the *Onam* celebration is associated. While the float of the Ernakulam district displayed a splendid sea coast with a Chinese net, a popular fishing device in and around Cochin, and a ship approaching the Cochin harbour, 'the queen of the Arabian sea', the Kottayam district exhibited the model of a church with absolute realism. A no less interesting scene of the reception given to Vasco-da-Gama by the Zamorin of Kozhikode in the latter half of the 15th century was presented by the Kozhikode district, while the Palghat district paid its respects to Pazhassi Raja, the legendary hero of Kerala whose battle with the British forces led by

the Duke of Wellington leaves a glorious chapter in Indian warfare by depicting a scene in which the Raja meets Tippu Sultan of Mysore. The new Collectorate building of Quilon with the light house at Thankasery as background was the float of the Quilon district. The Vadakkunnathan temple of Trichur along with a scene showing mount Kylas with Siva and Parvathi on it represented the Trichur district and the glorious ancient temple of Sreepadmanabhaswamy with its picturesque gate of rising and receding tiers represented the Trivandrum district. Among the other floats which participated in the pageant were those of the departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Education, Fisheries, Industries, Public Health Engineering, Public Works and Transport of the Kerala Government and the Aluminium Industries, Kundara, the Electricity Board, Fertilisers and Chemicals, Alwaye, Merryland Studio, Trivandrum, Small Scale Industries Service Institute and Udaya Studio, Alleppey. Led by caparisoned elephants, cavalry, State Police, N. C. C., Scouts etc. and accompanied by a veritable sea of people, the procession, extending over a mile in length, started from the Vellayambalam square and gradually proceeded to the East Fort, cheered by several thousands of spectators all along the way. The celebration on Government initiative was suspended in 1963 in view of the national emergency.

TIRUVATIRA

(Shri N. SANKARA MANNADIAR)

A Women's Festival

Even though the *Tiruvatira* is celebrated by most of the Hindu communities, it is essentially a Nair women's festival. Defying the biting cold of the December season the women get up at about 4 a. m. and take their bath in a tank for seven days, commencing from the asterism *Aswati*. While taking bath, they sing certain songs mostly pertaining to the god of love, accompanied by a rhythmic sound produced by splashing the water with their fists. In conclusion, they stand in a circle in the water and make it froth by both their hands accompanied by songs. This is called *thayirkalakkal* or *thayirkatayal* (churning the curd). *Tiruvatira* is a day of fasting and the women do not take the ordinary rice meal on that day, but only *chama* (*Panicum miliaceum*) or wheat. Other items of their food include plantain fruits, tender coconuts and a preparation of arrowroot (*Maranta arundinacea*) flour mixed with jaggery. There will also be a *puzhukku* (a kind of curry), the main ingredients of which are tubers like *Kachil* (*dioscorea alata*).¹ They also chew betel and redden their mouths and lips. Among Nambutiris, Ambalavasis (temple servants) and high class Nairs, there is a convention that each woman should chew 108 betels on that day. The first *Tiruvatira* coming after the marriage of a girl is known as *Puthantiruvatira* (new *Tiruvatira*) or *Pootiruvatira* and it is celebrated on a large scale in her house.

2. From prehistoric times the Malayali woman enjoyed an enviable position and she was practically the mistress of her house. The elevated position she occupied at home and in society has distinguished her from her neighbours and has influenced to a consider-

able extent the social structure, customs and religious rites of the people. The culmination of this phenomenon is clearly visible in setting apart one of the three great festivals of Kerala viz. *Tiruvatira*, exclusively for womenfolk, for which a parallel can hardly be found in any of the Indian Society.

Its Origin

3. *Tiruvatira* festival falls on the asterism *Tiruvatira* in the Malayalam month of *Dhanu* (December-January). The origin of the festival is enshrouded in obscurity and the legends alone are the basis for the popularly accepted versions. The people celebrate the festival because it has been the tradition and they try to follow it dogmatically to show their respect for the past. The *Ardra Darshan* celebrated in Tamilnad corresponds to *Tiruvatira* of Kerala. It is considered to be highly auspicious to worship Siva on that day and the devotees go to the temple before sunrise for *darshan* (worship). Apart from the worship in the Siva temple, there is very little celebration in houses. Chidambaram, Suchindram and Perur (In Madras State) are famous for *Ardra Darshan*. Tradition goes that *Tiruvatira* festival is celebrated in commemoration of the death of Kamadeva, the god of love of the Hindu mythology. The story of the death of Kamadeva as described in Sivapurana is as follows:—

4. One of the ambitious and oppressive Daityas called Tarakasura "forced Brahmins by his penances and austerities to promise him any boon he should demand. Among his austerities he went through the following series, each of the eleven specific mortifications during one hundred years.

5. 1. "He stood on one foot, holding the other and both hands up toward heaven,

¹ In certain parts of Kerala, *ettangadi nivedyam* is customary on the previous day of *Tiruvatira*. This is an offering of eight kinds of tubers cooked by direct exposure to fire, to Siva and Parvati.

with his eyes fixed on the sun; 2. he stood on one great toe; 3. he took as sustenance nothing but water; 4. he lived similarly on air; 5. he remained in the water; 6. he was buried in the earth, but continued as under the last infliction, in incessant adoration; 7. the same in fire; 8. he stood on his head with his feet upwards; 9. he stood on one hand; 10. he hung by his hands on a tree; 11. he hung on a tree with his head downwards. Such merit was irresistible; and Indra and the whole host of demi gods alarmed, lest their sovereignty should be usurped by the potency of the penance, resorted to Brahma for consolation; who, however, said that although he could not desist such austerities, he would, after rewarding them by granting the boon demanded, devise a method of rendering it ultimately inoffensive to them.

6. "The demand by Tarika was that he should be unrivalled in strength and that no hand should slay him but that of a son of Mahadeva. He now became so arrogant that Indra was forced to yield to him the white eight-headed horse; Kuvera gave up his thousand sea-horses, also white except the left ear, which was black. The Rishis were compelled to resign the all-yielding cow, Kamadhenu; rivers and seas the riches of the deep. The Sun in dread gave no heat; and the moon in terror remained always at full; the winds blew as he dictated and in short he usurped the entire management of the universe. Narada had prophesied the marriage whence should arise the destined deliverer of the world; but Mahadeva was cold, and could not be influenced with the passion of love. Indra persuaded Kama to lie in ambush, and contrived that Parvati should be seen by Siva while engaged in the amiable and graceful act of gathering flowers, wherewith to decorate his emblem, the Linga. Kama accompanied by his wife, Reti (affection) and his bosom friend Vasanta (Spring) took his aim and launched an arrow at Mahadeva, who, enraged at the attempt, reduced poor

Kama to ashes by a beam of fire darted from his central or third eye. At length, however, by ardent devotion and austerities, Parvati propitiated Siva, and the deity consented to espouse his persevering devotee."¹

7. In due time a terrible combat ensued between Kartikeya, the son born to Lord Siva and Tarakasura, which after continuing for ten days, ended in the death of the oppressive Daitya.

8. The day on which Siva showed *Ardra* (compassion) towards Parvati is known as *Ardra* or *Athira*.

9. According to another version, *Tiruvattira* is the birth day of Lord Siva. In Astrology, each asterism is attributed to a particular deity and Lord Siva is the Lord of *Tiruvattira*. One of the *Tiruvattira* songs runs thus:—

"*Dhanumasathe Tiruvattira*
Bhagavan thane tirunalall"

Meaning, *Tiruvattira* in the month of *Dhanu* is the birthday of our Lord. The womenfolk are supposed to join Parvati on the delightful celebration of the birthday of her husband. However, the festival is centred round Lord Siva, Parvati and Kamadeva and the ultimate aim of the celebration is conjugal harmony and happiness. The worship of the god of love is not peculiar to Kerala. Cupid is the Roman god of love. The Greek mythology connected Eros, the god of love with the creation of the universe. In a somewhat similar way, Kamadeva is exalted to a supreme god and creator in the *Atharva Veda*. The festival to propitiate the god of love was celebrated throughout India from the days of great antiquity. The *Vasanta* festival coinciding with the fifth day in the bright half of the month of *Magha* is still observed in many places. The *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana refers to it as *Suvasantaka* which is explained as the festival dedicated to the worship of the lord of love and says that the citizens indulged in sports involving

dance and music both oral and instrumental. The festival is also referred to by Kalidasa. In the '*Malavikagnimitra*' the Sutradhara says that he had been asked by the *Vidvat-Parished* to stage the drama as part of the *Vasanthotsava* celebrations. In the *Jivaka chintamani* of Thiruttakadeva, which is a romantic epic of the Tamil literature, there is a reference to the celebration of the *Vasanta* festival. On this day, a quarrel arose between two young ladies Suramanjari and Gunamala about the quality of the powder used by them for bath. The wise youth Jivaka, to whom the matter was referred gave a verdict in favour of Gunamala. The sorrow-stricken Suramanjari kept back from the *Vasanta* festival while Gunamala pleased by the verdict went out to enjoy the festival.¹

Uzhinjalattam or Oonjalattam

10. *Uzhinjalattam* i.e. Swinging to and fro on an *Uzhinjal* (swing) is an item of amusement on the occasion. A bamboo piece of about 15' in length is taken and a hole is bored at one end just above the lowest joint and it is split into two upto a length of about 5' in such a manner as to retain the hole on the two split portions. Another small piece of bamboo of about the size 3' x 3' is taken and its ends are made into points which are fitted in the holes of the split portions of the bamboo. The other end is suspended from a horizontal branch of a tree, with the help of a piece of the aerial roots of screw-pine (*Pandanus tectorius*) or the lower part of the leaf-stalk of a palmyra tree. Two holes are made on the end of the bamboo about half foot apart and two corresponding holes are made on each end of the piece of the aerial root of screw-pine or the leaf-stalk of the palmyra tree and it is made in hair-pin shape by heating the middle portion on fire. It is then placed over the branch of the tree and the end of the bamboo is placed between the hanging

parts and two pegs are fitted through the holes. The pegs are generally made of the branches of tamarind tree (*Tamarindus indica*) which is noted for its strength. The wear arising out of friction is minimised by putting some hay between the branch and the material on which the swing is suspended. The bamboo swing is, however, not common in Travancore and Cochin areas. There a much simpler swing with a coir rope or vegetable rope is used. According to T. K. Gopala Panikkar the swinging process typifies the attempt which the maidens make in order to hang themselves on these instruments and destroy their lives in consequence of the lamented demise of their favourite deity, Kamadeva and the beating on the water symbolises the beating of their chests in expression of their deep felt sorrow.² But from the various references in Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa*, it can be seen that these two items were the popular amusements of ladies. In the ninth Chapter, mention is made about the celebration of the *Vasanta* festival by the women-folk by erecting a new swing for the purpose.³ Agnivarna is described as swinging with women on his lap. (*Raghuvamsa*-Chapter XIX.) The sixteenth chapter is replete with references about the splashing of water by women and the sound has been compared to that of a *mridangam* (tabor).

Tiruvattirakali

11. In the night the females keep vigil for Siva. They divert themselves by a dance called *Tiruvattirakali* or *Kaikottikali*. They stand in a circle around a lighted brass lamp and dance each step to the rhythm of the songs sung by them, keeping tune in the meanwhile by the clapping of their hands. The songs sometimes include *Ka'hakali* songs, amongst which the works of Trayimman Thampi are generally seen preferred.

12. A specimen of the *Tiruvattira* song

¹ The antiquity of some Hindu festivals from literature by Vasudeva, S. Agarwala, published in the K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar Commemoration volume, pages 479-480.

² Malabar and its folk by T. K. Gopala Panikkar.

³ There are scholars who think that this verse is one among the later additions to Kalidasa's writings.

¹ The Hindu Pantheon by Edward Moor, pages 35-37

STATEWIDE PAIRS AND FESTIVALS

is given below :—

Lo! The *Tiruvattira* of *Dhamu*
Is the birthday of our Lord,
A day of holy fast for goddess
And of humble fast for us;
We have to dance, and sing this day.
Come, thou 'Athemar',¹ let us bathe;
The ear-rings and pendant, I will give;
We have to dance and sing this day.
Come thou, 'Warasiar',² let us bathe;
Neck-ring and string, I will give;
We have to dance and sing this day.
Come, thou, 'Pushpini',³ let us bathe;
Flower and thread, I will give,
We have to dance and sing this day.*

Patirappoo Choodal

13. Among Nambutiris, Ambalavasis (temple servants) and Nairs who have close associations with Nambutiris, there is a custom called *Pathirapoo Choodal* meaning wearing flowers at midnight. On the midnight of the *Tiruvattira*, an image of Siva is placed in the central courtyard and flowers, plantains and jaggery are offered to the deity. Then they perform a dance around the deity (*Kaikottikali*) and a few flowers from the offerings are taken and worn by them. Among the various flowers that are offered to the deity, the flowers of *Koduveti* (*Plumbago ceylanica*) is a necessary item. It is only natural that in this age of transition and progress, these traditional observances are slowly becoming a custom more honoured in breach than in observance.

A Hygienic undercurrent

14. Some of the curious factors which may strike a careful observer of the rituals on *Tiruvattira*, are the cold water bath, at a

time when the climate is extremely cold and the food of the women consisting of the cooling articles like tender cocoanut. It has always been an easy and effective method of preserving civic or hygienic principles by giving them a religious touch. The winter season in which *Tiruvattira* festival falls is the healthiest of all seasons, as the metabolic and digestive power is considerably increased during this season. The harmonious toning up of the different parts of the body during the season often results in emotional climaxes which bear some direct connection to leucorrhoea, an affection common among the womenfolk. In Allopathy, Naturopathy and Ayurveda, cold water bath is considered to be an effective treatment for this indisposition. Apart from the fact that the songs and production of the rhythmic sound in the water with hands during the early bath for the *Tiruvattira* festival are good exercises and entertainment, it helps the women to remain plunged in the water for a considerably long time, without which it would be quite impossible to do so in a cold season.

15. The light meal consisting of the arrow root preparation, tender cocoanut and *channa* (*Panicum milliaceum*) is also not without any significance. Arrow root is rich in calcium and it is a medicine in Ayurveda for many diseases like rheumatism, jaundice, anaemia, urinary disorders etc. The cocoanut milk (the water-like liquid in the cocoanut) is very rich in phosphates and potash. The qualities of the cocoanut milk are described in 'Ashtanga Hridaya', one

TIRUVATTIRA

of the earliest treatises in Ayurveda, as follows :—

"*Nalikerodakam Snigdhom
Swadu vrishyam himam laghu
Thrishna pithanilaharam
Deepanam vusthisodhanam.*"

The cocoanut milk is fatty, sweet, aphrodisiac, cooling and easily digestible. It alleviates thirst, biliousness and rheumatism. It helps digestion and is diuretic.

16. The pleasant sweet taste of the cocoanut milk has attracted the attention of many early travellers. According to Marco Polo it is as 'clear as water, cool and better flavoured and more delicate than wine or any other kind of drink whatever.' The

kernel of the cocoanut is also sweet, fattening and diuretic. Betel leaf is alkaline and it helps to neutralise the excess acidity in the stomach. Phlegm will increase in the human body during the winter season. According to 'Ashtanga Hridaya', betels and *chama* possess the qualities to mitigate the excess phlegm. Swinging on the *Uzhinjal* and the *Tiruvattirakali* are good exercises and at the same time popular entertainments.

17. Though most of the details of the celebration have fallen into disuse and have decayed through the passage of time, the spirit of the festival is still maintained, thus providing a symbolic representation of the culture and heart of the people.

¹ Nambutiri female

² Warrior female

³ Pushpaka female

*ധനുമാസത്തെ തിരുവാതിര

ഭഗവാൻ തന്റെ തിരുനാളല്ലെല്ലാ

ഭഗവതിക്കു തിരുനോൽസ്ഥാണം

അടിയങ്ങൾക്കു പഴനോൽസ്ഥാണം

ആണും പോൽ പാണും പോൽ

ആത്തേച്ചാരെ വാ കളിപ്പാൻ.

ചിററും കാലീം ഞാൻ തരുവേൻ

ആണും പോൽ പാണും പോൽ

വാസുദാമെ വാ കളിപ്പാൻ

മാത്രം ചരളം ഞാൻ തരുവേൻ

ആണും പോൽ പാണും പോൽ

പുഷ്പിണിയെ വാ കളിപ്പാൻ

പുലും നാതം ഞാൻ തരുവേൻ

ആണും പോൽ പാണും പോൽ.

CHRISTMAS

(FR. R. SAMUEL, S. J., ESOBHAVAN, ERNAKULAM)

A Feast of Glad Tidings

Christmas is the most popular of Christian feasts. No other celebration is so spectacular and jovial, none so enriched with so many customs and ceremonies. There is an array of merry usages and practices in the Christmas Star, the Crib, Christmas plays, Christmas Cards and Carols, the Christmas Tree, Christmas presents and the Christmas Father. The last named is quite a fascinating personage, who claims moreover to be the very embodiment of the spirit and quintessence of the gayest of festivals. Children readily believe in him, applaud his claims and succumb to his exuberant *bonhomie*. As this enchanted company of Christmas Father and children is allowed to occupy the centre of the stage, Christmas takes on the look of a festival of children. It is exactly that, but this peculiar trait of the feast and the significance of the customs mentioned above, some of which are much older than Christianity itself, can be truly understood only in the background of the historical events which this celebration is meant to recall and honour.

The good news

The simple and beautiful account of the events as given in the book of The Good News reads as follows :—

"In those days a decree was issued by the Emperor Augustus for a general registration throughout the Roman world.....and so Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth to be registered at Bethlehem. And with him went Mary his wife, who was then in her pregnancy. While they were there the time came for her child to be born; and she gave birth to a son, her first born. And as there was no room for them in the khan, she wrapped him round and laid him in a stall for cattle.

"Now in this same district there were shepherds out in the fields, keeping watch

through the night over their flock, when suddenly there stood before them an angel of the Lord, and the splendour of the Lord shone round them. They were terror-struck, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid; I have good news for you: there is great joy coming to the whole people. Today in the city of David a deliverer has been born to you—the Messiah, the Lord. And this is your sign: you will find a baby lying all wrapped up, in a manger'. All at once a great company of Heaven's army appeared at the angel's side, singing the praises of God:

'Glory to God in highest heaven,
And on earth his peace to men on
whom his favour rests.'

"After the angels had left them and gone into heaven the shepherds said to one another, 'Come, we must go straight to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.' So they went with all speed and found their way to Mary and Joseph; and the baby was lying in the manger. When they saw him, they recounted what they had been told about this child; and all who heard were astonished at what the shepherds said. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered over them. Meanwhile the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for what they had heard and seen." (St. Luke II, 1—20).

If an angel told the news to simple shepherds a star would intimate it to wise astrologers. These came from the east asking, "Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We observed the rising of his star, and we have come to pay him homage." The inquiry perturbed king Herod and upset the whole of Jerusalem. The astrologers, however, got the desired information and set out for Bethlehem. "..... and the star which they had seen at its rising went ahead of them until it stopped



PL. 7. CHRISTMAS CRIB WITH THE FORTRESS IN THE BACKGROUND



PL. 8. CHRISTMAS CRIB —A CLOSE-UP

above the place where the child lay. At the sight of the star they were overjoyed. Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and bowed to the ground in homage to him; then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh." (St. Matthew II, 1—12).

It is this good news that Christmas commemorates, this event at once simple and sublime, human and divine, the birth in lowly surroundings of the world's Saviour, the inbreak of God into human history, the encounter everlasting of man and God in the person of a Child, the call to the simple and to the wise to seek and find Him. Christmas is, therefore, a feast of joy when one rejoices over Mary's Child, and in so doing one rejoices over man and his existence accepting all life's lowliness and limitations, bravely bearing the burden of honour which God lays on it, and giving thanks for the simple blessings which fill it, like light and air and food and water, and for such wonders as mother and child and brothers and sisters. It is a feast of gladness because in Mary's Child God takes world to heart and joys over it.

Clearly then Christmas is in the first instance a religious festival. One prepares for it by fasts and other penitential acts. These were originally adopted to counter-act the dizzy influence of pre-Christian observances in honour of the Sun, falling on the same day or in the same season as Christmas. There used to be a rigorous fast of twenty-five days from the end of November. Abstinence was prescribed not only from flesh-meat, fish and egg, but from milk, curds, butter and ghee. The fast has been made much milder now, and the number of days reduced, even to one! It falls at present on the Friday preceding the eve of Christmas.

A Happy Sign

So we come to the eve of Christmas, December 24 to find merry children everywhere busy making Christmas stars with bamboo strips and coloured paper. These

four-pointed and six-pointed stars, big stars and bigger ones, with a tallow candle or a bulb burning inside, are hung by night in the veranda or in front of the house or from a pole on the roof or the branch of a tree or the trunk of a coconut palm. The star is the most universal and characteristic symbol of Christmas. In this season there is no Christian home or shop without this beautiful pointer to the Babe of Bethlehem. Travel by train from Shoranur to Ernakulam, take a bus from there to Kottayam, and proceed by boat to Alleppey and to Quilon, and everywhere the Star will softly shine on you from house-tops and through trees, accompany you as it did the astrologers of old, and gently suggest, as you anxiously peer into the future, that God has provided an answer to your questionings and has in one child made secure the destiny of mankind.

Stars are often accompanied by rows of multi-coloured Chinese lanterns whose contribution to the season's pageantry and pleasantness is by no means small. And here and there you come upon a gay crowd watching a rotating lantern. A paper lantern with figures neatly cut out from Christmas pictures stuck to it, is made to rotate by the simple contrivance of a small lamp and fan enclosed, and is encased in a larger paper barrel, on which the figures are cast in shadows which move on as the lantern inside rotates. You see Mary and Joseph pass on their way to Bethlehem; you watch the child lying in the manger; the angels chanting the Gloria appear and vanish; the shepherds come with the offering of a lamb; and fantastic camels rear their heads announcing the coming of the Magi; and the star streaming with light rises overhead.

She Laid Him in a Manger

Like the star, the Crib too derives from the Bible, and is even more central to the celebration of Christmas. It is a miniature reproduction of the stable where Jesus was born. It may consist of a simple bamboo or wooden structure thatched and floored with

straw or grass; or, imagination given the reins, a whole hill may be constructed out of real earth and stones or crumbled brown paper or painted canvas giving the appearance of rocks. The hill, capped with a fortress from which light gleams, is covered with moss and greenery. Young rice plants grown in cocoanut shells and small earthenware, raised at times in the shade without exposure to the sun to secure for the leaves a tender gold flush, come handy to add a touch of native charm. The valley is traversed by blue and silver streams hurrying on beneath painted bridges. The heart of this elaborate scene is a cave in the hill, its entrance often adorned with blushing cocoanut clusters or emerald banana bunches turning to gold. Inside the cave is the Crib proper with the figure of the cradled Baby, candles burning before it, the images of Mary and Joseph and shepherds with animals tastefully disposed, and the Magi in the background. Above the cave are suspended a star and an assembly of angels the chief of whom holds a scroll with the words, 'Glory to God in high heaven.' The figures usually are of plaster, wood or earth, the angels of paper, wax and straw! It may be added that modern architects of cribs are lavish of such items as gold and silver paper and line, and strings of tiny electric bulbs, as jar on the homely quaintness in which a Christmas Crib ought to nestle.

The Crib developed from the old practice of giving dramatic or spectacular expression to the events of the birth of Christ. The practice was soon taken over into ritual worship. Adoration of the Child by Old Testament Prophets, by non-Jewish prophets and Roman poets, by the shepherds and by the Magi became part of the liturgy. By the thirteenth century these plays were laicised, and in 1223 Saint Francis of Assisi, so the story goes, constructed the first Crib, the ancestor of the Crib of today. It became very popular in the Latin countries, and thence spread to others. Today

every Latin and Romo-Syrian church in Kerala, as also churches under Latin influence, and nearly every catholic home even in rural areas has a crib for Christmas. In the Syro-Malankara rite the Crib is being given admission in some places. The churches and homes of the Church of South India (C. S. I.) may have cribs even with statues and candles, unless the pastor and people are low church to which all such representations are alien. Among the Marthomites cribs are admitted only when required for the Christmas stage, and then without images and candles.

Worship

In Catholic Churches, be they Latin or Syro-Malabar, there is in the present liturgy little that is special for Christmas. Priests celebrate the Mass (the Eucharistic sacrifice) three times instead of once, and the first starts at mid-night. For the rest these churches only have an optional para-liturgical function in connexion with the crib. A few minutes before the mid-night Mass an image of the Child is brought by the priest, preceded by rows of children holding lighted candles, from the priest's house or a side altar to the high altar, is venerated with incense, and carried, with or without a procession round the church and the sound of crackers, to the Crib prepared at a convenient point inside the church. Or, instead, the Mass starts at 12—00 p. m., and as the hymn, 'Gloria in excelsis Deo' (Glory to God in high heaven) is intoned, bells peal, crackers explode, lights flash, the Crib is unveiled, and a great angel so far hiding in the roof descends upon the Crib, holding in his delicately painted wax hands an elaborately done Gloria scroll.

The Syro-Malabar Rite recommends a special Christmas ceremony, which, however, has disappeared from use except in a few ancient churches. On a little square ground in front of the church one places twigs in the form of a triangle, and on it sets, in the shape of cross, blessed palms of the current year. Three candles are stood

at the corners of the triangle. The priest approaches with the image of the Christ-Child in his arms, and lights the candles one by one, sets fire to the palms, throws incense into the fire and goes round it, reciting in the meantime pertinent prayers which give a clue to the symbolic meaning of the objects, arrangements and actions. The most significant of the symbols is the fire itself: on Mount Sinai God appeared to Moses in the midst of a flaming bush; the new Christmas fire proclaims the definitive coming of God in Jesus to effect the deliverance not only of Israel from Egypt but of mankind from sin and death.

A similar ceremony exists in the Syro-Malankara Rite, in the Orthodox Syrian (Jacobite) Church and in the Church of the East. After midnight prayers and before Mass priest and people institute a procession round the church. It is interrupted in front of the church and all stand around a cross-shaped hollow dug in the ground, place in it palms blessed and distributed the previous Palm Sunday but now collected for the occasion, and set fire to it in a solemn way with appropriate prayers and reading of Bible passages. The priest circuits the fire several times, and everybody present throws incense into it. What is the meaning of the rite? Does the fire stand for the one round which shepherds kept watch the night Christ was born? Or for the splendour which shone round them when the angel appeared? Or for Christ, the Light of the world newly risen on this happy night? Or, indeed, is it a remnant of pre-Christian fires kindled to aid the Sun in his ascent on solstice, ancient lights transformed by and absorbed into the Light of Christmas night? And the incense, does it represent the gifts the Wise men brought to the Christ Child? Or does it merely symbolize prayer?

The Marthomites and the C. S. I. have in their churches an early Communion service on Christmas day, preceded by the Nativity service consisting of hymns, select Bible readings and an address conveying

the Christmas message and the Pastor's greetings to the congregation. This may be followed by the Christmas Tree arranged inside the church or outside, the appearance of the Christmas Father, and distribution of presents, special presents being given to children of poor families. The C. S. I. sometimes holds the Nativity service and celebrates the Christmas Tree on the eve of the feast, which is the time in both churches for well organised carol singing.

A Merry Christmas

A Joyful Noise

Carols and manger songs developed from earlier nativity plays, and became one of the cheeriest aspects of Christmas festivities, sharing meanwhile their privileges with words and tunes of a less sacred origin. The "Adeste Fideles" and the "Silent Night" seem to be the best known of genuine Christmas carols. Troupes organized by church, Sunday School, Youth League, or some pious association, or also wholly private groups go round the parish and visit nearly every house, singing to the accompaniment if possible of the violin, the mouth-organ and the tambourine, and making collections for charitable (usually), and other (usually, too) purposes. The custom is rather recent and clearly western, but has been gaining ground through Anglican influence even in the Antiochian communities in Kerala. Anglo-Indian communities claim that children's serenading in colourful costumes is quite an old custom among them, though they concede that grand carol singing was first organised about 1918.

Flowering Trees

The Christmas Tree too is a new feature in Kerala, perhaps less than fifty years old, even among the Anglo-Indians. It is a custom proper to the northern countries of Europe. Unknown for long it is only beginning to gain popularity in Italy, Spain and South America. What the Christmas Crib has been to these Latin countries the Christmas Tree has become to the Teutonic

nations. The Tree had its origin in Germany, whence it spread in the latter half of the nineteenth century to the rest of Europe and to America. A first description of it dates from 1605. Was it Martin Luther that introduced it? or can it be traced back to the eighth century when Saint Boniface countered Teutonic worship of the sacred Oak by transforming it into a simple Christmas joy? A thirteenth century epic shows candles shining on a flowering tree. Three centuries earlier an Arab geographer refers to a belief that trees and flowers blossomed on Christmas night. We know of a pre-Christian practice of greenery decorations for the beginning of months. It was natural that this should develop in the Christian community into a usage marking the beginning of a new era for the world with the coming of the Saviour.

And Santa Claus

So then we too have the Christmas Tree in Kerala, arranged inside the Church, or outside it, in the open, in the Clubs, in Y. W. C. A. halls, and in a few advanced homes. It is most in vogue among the Anglo-Indians, and then in the C. S. I. and Marthomite communities. One stands a large casurina or other branch, decorates it with candles, balloons, silver and gold paper and variegated ribbons, and hangs from every twig pretty parcels containing gifts for children. All Christmas gifts are the boon of the Christmas Father, who is the reformed or protestant version of Saint Nicholas or Santa Claus, the kind-hearted provider, according to legend, of dowries to destitute girls. He comes robed in white and red, his hair and beard a cascade of snow, his old face a picture of gushing good-naturedness and his whole person bulging at every point with favours for the little folk. He comes to distribute the presents and gladden young hearts with toys, ballons, dolls, crackers, sweets, mouth-organs, pens, pins and slides, new clothes, books and ribbons, toy-trains, curiosities of many sorts and delightful surprises. To children this is

a moment of fulfilment, for in places like Tangassery every child had written days earlier to "Santa Claus, Quilon Station," neatly indicating the gifts he or she would have him bring. And Santa Claus cannot but comply with children's requests at Christmas time. After this great experience at the Club the Anglo-Indian children will have a smaller, more intimate Christmas tree in the home, where Santa Claus will preface his distribution of gifts with a gentle comment on the winner's conduct during the year. When everybody has had his honour, all come up to the father and kiss him.

In communities like this the entire Christmas programme is so conceived and run as to make it a children's festival. But elsewhere too, where nothing particular is done for the children, the little ones feel, by the very nature of the feast, that it is their own. "They sense," said the father of a large family, "the presence of the Child, and are happy."

The custom of sending cards by way of greetings and remembrance, which those who know say grew up round the year 1860, is spreading in this country too, but the point most worthy of note in this regard is the fact that some C. S. I. pastors send a Christmas card to every family in his parish, with a motto for the following year printed on it. It is, therefore, exposed at home the whole year and so becomes a means of permanent communion between the people and their pastor. Non-Christians too are adopting the practice, but there is a growing awareness that the Christ-Child should not be wholly banished from Christmas cards in favour of cats, dogs, bells, flowers, and non-sense with a dash of colours.

Toddy, Rice-cakes and Kulkuls

It goes without saying that there is on Christmas day a splendid meal with many good things to eat, though not so many good things to drink, at least not everywhere in Kerala. Meat forms part of the feast, even in rural homes where meat is rarely

eaten. The writer has been assured that cake is becoming fashionable in the villages too, for women have learnt to make it. Wine, of course, is scarce. But there are excellent native equivalents of the traditional Christmas cake and wine: there is toddy, and rice cakes of varying quality and constitution. Among the Anglo-Indians Christmas cake is always a fruit cake, and wine is prepared from grapes, plum or beet-root; the cake and wine are never bought, but made at home. But their real speciality for Christmas is Kulkuls, into the blessed creation of which go flour, cocoanut juice, egg and ghee, and the enthusiasm of all the children. The stuff is shaped into oblong tablets and fried. Mothers and children, while giving this piece of information, looked so transformed that the writer was convinced that Kulkuls was a thing quite nectareous and heavenly.

But Why on This Day?

There now remains an interesting question to tackle. Why do we keep Christmas on 25 December? The Gospels do not indicate the day of Christ's birth. The reference they make to the shepherds seems to exclude the winter season. Night watches were kept only from March to November, in Spring, Summer and Autumn.

Indifference and Wit

As a matter of fact the early Church does not appear to have thought of celebrating the birth of Christ. His Death and Resurrection were the central events to keep; the Pasch was the one Christian feast. Hence of the Apostles and Martyrs too only the day of death was honoured. Down to the middle of the third century we find Christian writers like Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Arnobius and Epiphanius repudiating the idea of celebrating birth-days, since in the Bible only the wicked are seen to do so; the practice was held to be unchristian.

But the existence of this criticism shows that Christians were beginning to be interested in the birth-day of Christ

though the official Church was indifferent during the first three centuries, and let people exercise their wit. Men assigned various dates to Christ's birth on various, at times fantastic, grounds. March 25, 28, April 2, 19, May 20, December 25, and January 6 were among the dates suggested or 'established.' A seventeenth century investigator has shown that there was no month of the year to which respectable authorities had not assigned the great event. One may nevertheless note in the dates a preference for Spring, the Season of beginnings, of creation; Christ's Birth was taken to mark a new Beginning and the Spring time of man's history. Reflection on his Death and Resurrection gradually brought out the importance of his Birth. The coming of Christ too was a saving event. In the Asian, African and Greek churches men meditated on the wonder of the manifestation of God on earth in the Son of Mary. The Christian faith was that God had truly manifested himself in the historical Person of Jesus. From this historical concept came the feast of Christmas.

January 6 and a Double Feast

The way it happened was as follows:— Towards the close of the second century certain Egyptian gnostics began to celebrate the descent, as they erroneously held, of the divine Christ into the man Jesus on the river Jordan. This was for them the birth and manifestation or Epiphany of Christ; they said not a word about the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem since that had no significance for them. They kept this feast on January 6 because it was already a day of many ancient Egyptian festivals: in honour of Dionysos (Bacchus) in connection with the lengthening of days; and in memory of Eon's birth from Kore. It was a day sacred to Osiris, and on the night of January 6 the water of the Nile was supposed to receive miraculous powers. Hence the gnostics chose this day to feast the birth of 'Christ' at the baptism of

Jesus on the Jordan.

In opposition to gnosticism, orthodox Faith held that already the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem was the definitive epiphany of God, and that Jesus was from the beginning the Christ. The point was stressed more and more as controversy on the Divinity of Jesus rose and grew. But no separate days were assigned to feast the two events of Birth at Bethlehem and Declaration on the Jordan. Both were kept on January 6. We have ample proof of this in a fourth century liturgical papyrus, in the hymns of Saint Ephrem of Syria, in early Spanish liturgical books, in the writings of Ambrose and Epiphanius, in homilies attributed to many Latin Fathers, and in the Peregrinatio (pilgrimage account) of Egeria Sylvia who attests to the celebration in Jerusalem in the year 385 of the physical birth of Christ on the night of 5-6 January at the grotto of Bethlehem, and of his Baptism as a festival of light at the Jordan on January 6. It is, therefore, clear that all the Christian thought which is associated with the feast of Christmas is present liturgically in the feast of January 5-6.

The Unconquered Sun Conquered

This double feast came to the West and to Rome, and was kept on the same day. But it is nearly certain that between 325 and 354 Rome dissociated the two feasts and fixed December 25 for the commemoration of the Nativity. A separate liturgical remembrance of Christ's Birth was seen to form an excellent defence against arian and similar heresies which disputed the divinity of Jesus, and to serve as an effective proclamation of this basic truth. The choice of date was influenced by the New Testament symbolism of Christ as the Light of the world, the fact of December 25 being the Roman solstice, and the birthday of Sol Invictus (the Unconquered Sun), and a colourful feast of light to honour him and aid his ascent, and later on, a day dedicated to Mithra. The Roman Church

countered the pomp and lure of this day by instituting its own feast of light, the Birth of him who is the Light of the nations and the Sun of Justice. The Sol Invictus was thus finally saved in that his day was subsumed into that of Christ, signifying the resumption of all natural revelation into the revelation made in Christ's act of love.

Rome then sought to impose on the Eastern Churches the new date for the celebration of Christmas. There was resistance everywhere, till Antioch and Syria succumbed to Saint John Chrysostom's oratory championing the new date. Egypt yielded after a longer opposition. The Palestinian Church held out till the middle of the sixth century, and then capitulated. The only Church to withstand Rome successfully was the Armenian, which to this day feasts the Birth of Christ on January 6.

To Conclude

It will, therefore, be well to remember that in celebrating Christmas on 6 January or on 25 December one is not celebrating a historically established date. One is not celebrating a date at all, but a reality, namely, the manifestation of God on earth in the Son of Mary of Nazareth. The impulse to solemnize this event came from within the Christian Faith itself, from religious reflection on the meaning of the act of Redemption through which the Son of God became Man and humbled himself to us. But the choice of date in both cases was influenced by non-christian feasts already in existence, a fact likely to throw light on the origin and nature of many a feature of popular Christmas celebration.

We close with the prayer and wish that in Kerala Christmas may ever retain its homeliness, may express itself more and more in the cultural forms of the country without losing what is native to itself, and may, as a pledge of peace, as a sign of light, a symbol of reverence for children, a token

the dignity of women and the sacredness of motherhood, and as a revelation of God's

love for man, influence the shaping of this nation into a great and happy people.

IDUL-AZHA (BAKRID)

(PROF. M. A. SHUKOOR, M. A., L. L. B.)

Bakrid, to be rightly called Idul-Azha or the Festival of sacrifice, is the second of the two festivals in Islam. This festival also is observed by Muslims all over the world. It falls on the 10th of Dhul-Hajj, the last month of the lunar year. It is celebrated in commemoration of Abraham's willingness to offer his only son as a sacrifice in obedience to God's command.

Religion is a system of complete resignation of one's will to that of God, the method of resignation slightly varying from one religion to another. Abraham is one of the ancient prophets and a common ancestor of several important religions of the world.

He was served with a Divine order to offer his son as a sacrifice, as an expression of his complete resignation to the will of God. Accordingly Abraham took his son Ismail with him to the place of sacrifice. When he was about to slaughter his son who stood there smiling and prepared to obey God's bidding, he received revelation expressing Divine satisfaction of his preparedness to obey the will of God. He was also asked to sacrifice a goat in the place of his son. This scene took place on Mount Mina, near Mecca. This practice of sacrificing animals—the animal may be either a sheep, a goat, a cow or a camel—in commemoration of the great event and as a token of one's preparedness to resign oneself to the Supreme will of God, has come down to us, through the centuries. The Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca) which owes most of its ceremonies to the prophet Abraham, includes the commemoration of the memory of Abraham's preparedness to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's will.

That nothing will ever be withheld in the course of surrendering to the will of God, is expressed in the form of animal sacrifice during the time of Hajj by the pilgrims as

well as by other Muslims all over the world. This practice of sacrificing animals is one of the important items of the celebration of Idul-Azha or Bakrid. The flesh of the sacrificed animals is distributed among the people particularly the poor and the deserving enabling all, irrespective of the rich and the poor, to feast alike that day.

The Idul-Azha is celebrated on the 10th of Dhul-Hajj all over the Muslim world. In Kerala as in other parts of the Muslim world, this day dawns with the resounding of Thakbir (Allahu Akbar), the declaration that God is Great. Every Muslim house wakes up with the spirit of sacrifice and festivity. Men, women and children dressed themselves in their best attire and reciting the Thakbir proceed to the Id-Gah which is the wide open space set apart for public prayers. The whole atmosphere is filled with the resounding voice of Allahu-Akbar. The assembly then prepares for the congregational prayer led by the Imam. After the ceremonial Id prayer, the leader addresses the devotees, exhorting them to be conscious of their duties to God and follow the example of Abraham. The prayer and the sermon over, the gathering exchange greetings and as an expression of affectionate brotherhood, hug each other to their bosoms.

The festivities at home commence after the ceremonial prayer. They enjoy hearty feasts in their homes followed by social calls on friends and relatives. Even the Pardha women enjoy this occasion by paying visits to the neighbouring houses and engaging themselves in singing and dancing. All festivities in Islam which are having some religious importance are occasions to register the believers' gratitude to God.

In Kerala on the occasion of the celebration of Bakrid, special meetings are held

IDUL-AZHA (BAKRID)

in which distinguished members of the sister munities participate. The occasion dvantageously utilised for building up herly relationship among the members

of the various communities. A spirit of large-hearted tolerance, mutual understanding and universal brotherhood pervades such gatherings.

VISHU

(SHRI N. SANKARA MANNADIAR)

Among the various Hindu festivals and social celebrations of Kerala, *Vishu* occupies a unique position in more than one respect. As a symbol of the unostentatious Malayalee, *Vishu* keeps away from the usual pomp and show and the merry-making associated with other festivals. When almost all the festivals are connected in some way or other with religion, *Vishu* has nothing to do with it, though it is observed with religious solemnity. The first day of *Medam* is the unchangeable day of *Vishu*, whereas other festivals are determined according to the lunar asterisms on which they fall.

This day on which *Vishu* falls is the astronomical new year's day and it is celebrated as such. The Malayalees believe that the fortunes for the year depend upon the nature of the object one sees first in the morning of *Vishu*. In order to fulfil the desire to look at the auspicious articles, they prepare a *kani* (an omen) on the previous day for the use of the New Year's morning. In a circular bell-metal vessel known as *uruli*, some raw rice is placed and over it a folded newly washed cloth is spread. A golden coloured cucumber, betel leaves, betel-nuts, metal mirror, yellow flowers of the *konna* tree (*Cassia fistula*), a *grantha* (book of palm leaves), and a few gold coins are then placed over the cloth in the vessel arranged in a decorative fashion. Two cocoanut halves containing oil and lighted wicks are also placed inside the vessel which illuminate the articles inside it. A bell-metal lamp filled with cocoanut oil is kept burning by the side of the vessel. Early in the morning of the *Vishu* day, at about 5 o'clock, one of the members of the house, usually the eldest female member gets up and lights the lamps and looks at the *kani*. She wakes up other members, one after another and the *kani* is shown to everyone

of them, taking particular care not to allow anyone to look by chance at something else. The vessel is taken to the bed side of the members or if it is too big to be carried, it is placed at one spot and the members are led there blindfolded. Even the cattle are not deprived of this privilege, as the *kani* is taken to the cattle-shed and placed before them to have a look.

The next item is giving of handsel (*kaineet-tam*). The eldest member of the family takes a few coins (currency notes are avoided as far as possible) and hands them over to a junior member with some raw rice and *konna* flowers. The process is repeated in the case of other members also and they in turn give such handsel to their juniors, relatives, servants etc. After this, the little children begin to fire crackers, which they enjoy very much on the occasion.

In the morning all bathe and put the marks of ashes and sandal paste and go to the temple for worship. After worship, they prepare a feast which is moderate and elegant without affectation. In certain parts, this is confined to rice *kanji*, reserving a feast for the evening. The *kanji* is not served in ordinary plates, but a square frame is made out of the plantain rind and a sufficiently big plantain leaf is placed inside it, which serves as a plate for the purpose. The spoon is made of the green leaf of jack tree. Cocoanut scrapings are put in the *kanji* and *puzhukku* and *pappadams* are served as appendages. As the months following *Vishu* till the advent of *Onam*, are mostly days of poverty for the agriculturists, the serving of *kanji* for *Vishu* has a special significance.

Apart from the firing of crackers, there is very little amusement for *Vishu*. Till recently the crackers were made in each house for the purpose. But the element of risk involved in the production and the

availability of cheap varieties of other kinds of fancy crackers have almost effaced the old fashioned types.

In certain parts of Kerala, where the paddy cultivation commences after the monsoon, there is an observance called *chal* (furrow) closely associated with *Vishu*. This is nothing but the auspicious commencement of the agricultural operation in the new year. The first process of agricultural operations consists of either digging or ploughing and a *chal* is observed for these two items separately. At about 3 p. m. on the *Vishu* day, a small plot is cleared in the compound and a *Pooja* (worship) is performed for Vigneswara, in front of a hoe. A small gardenbed is then prepared with that hoe and brinjal seeds are sown in the bed. This is called *kaikkottuchal*. The *chal* relating to ploughing operation is generally performed on the first available auspicious day after *Vishu*. When *Vishu* approaches, it is the practice, of the *kaniyan* (village astrologer) to go round the village giving predictions for the ensuing year of the prospect of rain, success in crop and the luck or ill-luck of each individual for which he gets his usual share of paddy etc. At this time he will also inform the villagers of the auspicious time and date for *chal*. On the appointed day, the agriculturist bathes his buffaloes or bullocks and takes his own bath. He puts ash and sandal marks on his forehead, arms and chest and the buffaloes or bullocks are given such marks with rice flour. In the centre of the paddy field, a set of new ploughing materials like plough, yoke etc., are placed and a *pooja* is performed for Vigneswara. After the *pooja*, a *konna* flower is tied on the plough. The buffaloes or bullocks are then yoked and the ploughing is started with great veneration facing the east. The ploughing is done in a circular order covering a radius of about 3' to 4' and ends in a diametrical furrow facing the east, with a bent towards the north at the eastern end of the furrow. A basket of cowdung and a bundle of green

manure are deposited in the ploughed area and the shoot of a screw-pine is planted in the centre. A bunch of *konna* flowers is put on the screw-pine shoot. The buffaloes or bullocks used for this purpose are fed after the observance with a fresh jack fruit cut into pieces. The propriety of commencing the paddy cultivation by planting a screw-pine shoot cannot be easily explained. Protection of the fields from the natural calamities is an important factor in cultivation and the screw-pine has been dear to the agriculturist in this respect being capable of preventing erosion to his fields.

In former days, it was the practice of the land owners to distribute paddy to the family workmen during *Vishu* season. Acceptance of this dole was considered to be a contract and it was the convention that the workers should work till the next *Vishu* under the land owner who has given them the dole.

Although the human race does not all begin the new year at the same time, yet the celebration of the occasion is very general and goes back to antiquity. The beliefs, customs and manners may vary from region to region but the spirit of the celebration remains the same and the belief which may appear as baseless for an outsider, will have its counter-parts in other countries. For example, the belief of the Malayalee that his fortune for the year depends upon the first thing he sees on the *Vishu* day has its counterpart viz., first footing, in many places of Europe and U. K. "The first person who enters a house in the New Year is supposed to have an influence on the life of the inhabitants. In some places it is held that a fair man brings good luck and a dark one misfortune; in other places dark men are considered luckier. It is generally agreed that for a woman to be the first to cross the threshold is most undesirable. The 'first footer' should take with him some gift—it may be a bottle of whisky, it may be something to eat, or it may be merely a shovelful of coal. He should not go empty-handed,

if he hopes for a warm welcome from peasant hosts. Some people who do not keep up this practice open their doors a little before midnight and leave them ajar until a little after the hour to let the New year in".* The Jews believe that if New Year's Day is warm, the whole year will be warm and if cold, the cold will last for twelve months. For the Chinese New Year, there is a continual cracking of fireworks, and sometimes a loud beating of gongs. The future-telling for the New Year is also prevalent in other countries. The Lithuanians tell of the future with bread. 'Dough is made into various shapes which

are placed under covers, three at a time. You take off a cover and the shapes which fall to you are indications of what will happen during the year. A heart or coffin means marriage or death; a leg or an arm means accident; a house suggests a move; a cow or a pig indicates luck with live stock, and so on. Greek future-telling takes another form. Olive leaves are put in the embers, two and two, representing pairs of lovers. If the leaves curl up and draw together, the omen is good; if they separate and shrivel the union of the lovers cannot be looked for; if they flame up and burn, passion will consume the unhappy pair'.**

* Manners and customs of Mankind by J. A. Hammerton, Vol. III. page 123.
 ** Ibid. page 1234.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

(FR. R. SAMUEL, S J., ESOBHAVAN, ERNAKULAM)

As old as Marduk

In most minds today New Year is the first day of January, and is associated with the Christian Era and the Christian Religion; and it is reckoned among Christian festivals. The fact, however, is that New Year has a wider connotation and a longer history. Its celebration is at least as old as the Babylonian festival of the god Marduk, 3000 B. C. It has been kept in various times and climes on a vast variety of dates, and January 1 owes only small and indirect thanks to Christianity for its present world-wide popularity. While it is true that significant religious ideas and practices enter into the texture of the New Year festival, as they do into the make-up of most things truly and deeply human, it must also be clear that there is not much in it that is specifically Christian.

The majority of Christians in Kerala take little or no notice of the New Year's day which falls on January 1. They still follow the Malayalam era, date their letters and babies' births accordingly, and keep *Onam* as new-harvest festival though not as a Hindu religious feast. Catholic liturgy, though full of the idea of a New Age, of the Renovation of Time and the Regeneration of the World, has no regard for the end of an old year, and ignores the beginning of a new one. One of the deepest convictions of Christian worship is that it is the coming of Christ, His Birth and His Resurrection from the dead, that truly mark the end of the Old and inaugurate the New. The practice of keeping a prayer-vigil during the last hour of the year, and of starting the New Year with a midnight sacrifice, is new enough, and is only slowly becoming a custom.

In the Shadow of Christmas

In communities, however, that have come under more or less direct English influence,

New Year wears a festive look. But it is clearly a reflection of the look of Christmas. Christmas decorations remain. No star has set, the lamps still burn, and tinsel is but little dishevelled or not at all. Only the tree has disappeared, and with it the young flock's expectancy, and the enchantment which had hung from every branch. And there is nothing come in to take their place. As for New Year's sweets, they are the sweets of Christmas. They last; they have the power to endure; or, if they depart, there is in them an uncanny knack of reincarnation. But they are none the less welcome. Equally welcome is the New Year's dinner, though it is, as often as not, a repetition of the experience of Christmas. The fact that it is in the shadow of Christmas that New Year thrives stands out particularly in Christmas cards which convey to you a 'Bright-and-Happy-New-Year' wish, and 'All Heaven's Choicest Blessings for the Coming Year', and naively remind you at the same time of New Year cards which do not exist or are scarce. For, the public seem to have the idea that to follow a Christmas card with a card for the New Year would look a wee bit queer if not extravagant and tedious like wearing two shirts at once, one over the other.

The Years of Our Life

In a Marthomite home parents would pray in the closing hours of the year for their children, and, if possible, with them and all the members of the family. They would together offer prayers for all affairs of common interest, for the needs of the Church, for the growth of the Gospel, for the poor of the community; and give thanks for the many gifts which have gone into the fabric of the passing year; and ask for a blessing upon the year they are newly beginning to build. Reading out of significant passages from the Bible gives

this homely service uncommon spiritual depth and power. Our days and years pass, our world grows old and we with it, but God's is eternal life. He has the power to renew things and keep us from going to pieces.

"O my God, I say, take me not hence in the midst of my days, thou whose years endure throughout all generations! Of old thou didst lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They will perish, but thou dost endure; they will all wear out like a garment. Thou changest them like raiment and they pass away; but thou art the same, and thy years have no end." (Psalm 102)

Or again,

"O Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place throughout the ages. Before the mountains were brought forth, and the earth and the world were born, From eternity to eternity thou art, O God. A thousand years in thy sight are as but yesterday which is past, or as a watch in the night. All our days pass away under thy wrath, our years come to an end like a sigh. The years of our life are seventy, or, if we are strong, eighty, Yet most of them is toil and trouble: and they quickly pass, and we vanish. So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90)

To which prayer, a ready answer comes from God:

"Behold I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered. But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create, for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be

accursed.

For like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

(Isaiah 65)

"Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End'". (Revelations 21)

When these words have been lodged in the heart of the family, and they have engendered hope and comfort in the spirit of man, the good news is proclaimed like the unfurling of a flag under which the New Year will march:

"You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide under the shadow of the Almighty, say to the Lord: 'My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'

For he will deliver you from the snares of the fowler....he will shelter you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge...

He has given his angels charge over you to guard you in all your ways.

On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone." (Psalm 91)

This prayer-vigil is often conducted as a Church-service in the last hours of the dying year, till at midnight the bells peal joyously ringing in the New Year. Communion service follows, either immediately, or in the morning after which it is the custom in some places to serve all present coffee and cake, the church meeting the cost.

The Vigil in the Church of South India usually lasts from 7 to 12 p. m., and culminates in the Holy Eucharist in the High Church, while in the Low Church it occupies an hour or so before midnight. It is a service of thanksgiving, with an address recalling the past year's blessings and the grateful fact that 'hitherto God had led us.' Then when the bells have chimed and the New Year is come there is hearty exchange of greetings, and a hymn, and a prayer, and

in some places a second address meant to orientate the mind and the heart to newness of life and love.

A Gracious Face First

The Anglo-Indian mothers gather the family in the hall, and with lighted candles keeps watch to welcome the New Year. Among the watchers is a decrepit old man, ready any moment to fall to pieces and to vanish. As the midnight hour strikes, in trips the Young Year in the shape of a winsome little belle, who then proceeds unceremoniously to drive out the old fellow. Laughter and merriment subsiding, all pray together and retire. Elsewhere in the country the fate of the Old Year, (wipe my tears, friends. Thank you.), is tragic. Boys, cruel boys, lead a fake Santa Claus round the town, and wherever they find themselves at midnight make a bonfire of him to the accompaniment of gleeful noises of which only boys are capable. There are Anglo-Indian homes where before going to Mass in the morning all are to collect before an adorned image of the Virgin whose should be the first face one looks upon on New Year's day. One does well to start with a Vision of Graciousness. There are others where the inauguration of the New Year consists in the mother's (it is her privilege, and it is reserved) kindling the fire and boiling milk. Till that is over no servant may touch or handle anything whatsoever.

Women emerge in new attire.

And you, men?

"We are only men", grumbled a retired official; "We manage with the old rags we always had on. But the ladies, they must have a new dress for the New Year."

"Don't I buy you new things every time I buy for myself?" asked his lady.

"Thank you," said the old man.

Children too must have new wear, and the servants are remembered and given theirs. For, New Year's day is at times even more festive than Christmas. Houses are cleaned and white-washed, and curtains and cushions renewed for the New Year, though not

necessarily for the earlier feast. In the home there will always be something to serve anybody who cares to drop in during the day. Beggars come in troops and never miss a house for they know that on New Year's day nobody can be sent away without a generous gift of food and money.

Harvest, Flowers and Stars

But what is the origin and significance of New Year celebrations? The New Year is a festival of beginnings. It is one of the most ancient and universal of mankind's feasts. Men of learning say that nearly all peoples as they emerged from barbarism began to keep some kind of record of the flight of time, the change of seasons, and their cyclic movement. They recognised certain days, recurring at regular intervals, as having particular significance for human life, as days therefore of special rejoicing, or mourning, or religious observance. Of these days it was only natural that the one marking the start of a new time-cycle after the close of an old round should be viewed as exceptionally important.

In most primitive communities, where interest centred round immediate primary needs of life, it was with the harvest that the year began. Harvest meant health and survival. It insured the continuance as well as the prosperity of the tribe. Hence it was an occasion for rejoicing and for ritual. Food reserves were renewed with solemn ceremony. Taboos were lifted, and the entire population gave itself up to feasting and free indulgence.

As the mind developed and interest widened, larger facts were taken into consideration than the life and fate of the closed tribe. Nature's recurring seasons were felt to be of more vital concern for every tribe and for all living things than single harvests could be. The opening, therefore, of Spring, with young life stirring everywhere, and freshness and music in the air, was looked upon as Nature's own New Year's day. Accordingly the ancient Roman year began with March. You have a reminder of this

fact in the names of the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth months: September, October, November and December. But July and August, until they were so named in honour of the Caesars Julius and Augustus, were simply the fifth and the sixth months. It was Julius Caesar that, in the year 46 B. C., two years before the fatal Ides of March, prefixed two months to the ancient year and called the first of these January in deference to the two-faced god Janus who, as he looked in opposite directions, was the god of the past and the future, the god of the gate and the door, the god of entrances, the god of beginnings, a sort of Roman *Vishnuevara*, invoked before all other gods at the commencement of every enterprise. Let me round off the story with the useful information that later on, in Emperor Hadrian's time, this lucky god was supplied with two additional faces.

The astronomically inclined Egyptians seem to have been the first to leave both harvest and Spring flowers behind, and proceed to rule the year by the sun's course. They fixed their New Year for the Autumnal Equinox, September 21. They were followed in this by Phoenicia and Persia. Babylonia chose the Vernal Equinox, March 21 or 25, while ancient Greece and Rome preferred the Winter Solstice, December 21 or 25.

There have been numerous other eras with varying dates for the beginning of the year, determined by particular historical events. The era, for instance, of the Olympiads starts on 13 July; that of the Foundation of Rome, on 21 April; that of Alexander, on 12 November; of the Hegira, 16 July.

The Christian New Year

Divergent dates for the year's commencement were in use among Christian nations too. The Middle Ages knew as many as six New Year's days. Some accepted the Julian Calendar with its year-start on January 1. Others preferred Spring time and March 1, the natural beginning of the year and a beautiful season. The astrono-

mically determined New Years of March 25, September 1 and December 25 retained their popularity. But then something remarkable happened; Easter began to be reckoned as New Year's day. With this a deeply religious idea was introduced into the treatment of time. Here we meet not merely a fresh addition to the four factors,—namely the new harvest, Spring time, the sun's course and historical events—on which, as we have seen, the opening of the year had so far hinged, but a new thing which included these realities and surpassed them. The new view was that with Jesus' rising from the dead, time was reborn and a new era had come into existence of which recurring Spring time was but a symbol. The same reflection as it developed came to realize that the very Birth of the Saviour (Christmas, December 25), or even his conception (Annunciation, March 25) was already the dawn of the New Age, and therefore New Year's day.

Thus in England till the Norman conquest (1066) the year began on March 25 or December 25; but William shifted the year-head to January 1. Some seventy years later England went back to the feast of the Annunciation. January 1 was re-introduced only on the belated acceptance by England of Pope Gregory XIII's Calendar, in 1582. France used to reckon the year variously, from Christmas day, from the eve of Easter, or from Annunciation, till in 1564 the Julian Calendar was adopted. The German New Year used to fall on Christmas day till it was transferred in 1554 to January 1. In Italy and in Rome too Christmas was the Christian New Year. A change came only in 1582 when Pope Gregory's reform gave them and us the Calendar in use today the world over.

Revelry and Racket

New Year's day has always been an occasion of Universal rejoicing and great festivity. Harvest time naturally lent itself to feasting, and the season of Spring, to mirth. The usual moral restraints and social checks were laid aside or loosened for a time in

favour of licence and luxury running to saturnalian orgies and masked debauchery. On the other hand, New Year was also accompanied often enough with definite rites meant to rid the people of all uncleanness and sin, through preparatory fasts, ablutions, purification ceremonies, confession of sins. renovation of fire in the hearth and in the temple, the driving out of demons with cries, noises and beatings, and the sending out of a beast or a man to bear the community's sins away to regions far from human habitation. The souls of the dead were believed to come back to the earth at the close of the year; for a day they would be surrounded with attention and then in solemn procession led or chased to the frontiers of the village. It was not unusual to fight ceremonial battles between groups representing ancestors or gods. New Year was also the time to perform initiation rites of the young. In Rome January 1 was celebrated with great pomp it being the day of change of officers in the State.

The Church objects

The Christian Church fought the wildness and errors of the festival through writings, sermons and conciliar decisions. It reacted to revelry, sought to transform the day into one of fast and penance, forbade dances, and prescribed a Mass with instructions and prayers combating association with idols. But the Church's pains could not put an end to all extravagance; they succeeded however in holding the worldly drift of the feast within reasonable bonds. The new move was to have some Christian observance on January 1. The celebration of Christmas was extended to this eighth day. And as Jesus was circumcised eight days after his birth, (an ancient practice found among numerous people whether primitive or advanced, and signifying many things from hygiene to habilitation for marriage to religious initiation) the event was kept on New Year's day, with external solemnities pared to the minimum. This sober religious festival was used to divert the

newly baptised from the seductions of the old ways.

Not a word about the New Year was heard in the liturgy. The situation has since remained the same. The Christian Church has never thought it fit to give the popular New Year festival a place in her worship. The Reformers, however, who came after Luther, tried to give this festival a liturgical standing by making it a day of thanksgiving and prayer, and by promoting New Year hymns. The idea surely has an appeal, and has induced certain para-liturgical practices among Catholics too, like the singing of the *Te Deum* (We proclaim Thee our God) at the year-end. But the newest Evangelical liturgy follows the old Roman use in ignoring the New Year and celebrating on January 1 the Circumcision and Naming of the Lord. But why?

Why was the Church so unsympathetic? Why this opposition to and rejection of an observance so wide-spread, deep-rooted and alluring as the New year? The Christian attitude could not have been taken on purely moral grounds. As a matter of fact the source of resistance lay deeper. Beneath the variety of New Year practices and dates lurks a common idea which enshrines the fundamental significance of the New Year festival, but which clashes with a basic tenet of the Christian Faith. The New year not only connotes the end of an old world and the beginning of a new creation, but implies a periodic regeneration of life, a symbolic repetition of cosmogonic processes, a cyclic renovation and redemption of the world solidary with the cyclic renewal of Time. The driving out of sin, sickness and demons is an attempt to restore the First Age, the pure age of Creation; but it is understood that the restoration is not definitive, that the struggle will not end, that there is no vision of ultimate hope on the horizon. The ritual war, the return of the dead and the orgies denote the mythical defeat of Chaos and the rise of Cosmos; but again one is keenly aware that there has been no decisive

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battle and that the forces of Chaos are still on the march. In brief, the New Year is new, but is destined to grow old and pass. **The new age**

Christianity accepts all this in the sphere of nature and its processes, but claims that it is itself no simple product of these processes, but the result of divine 'invasion' of the world. Also in the realm of religion it retains the idea of end and beginning, and the thought of a New Creation; and readily makes use of nature as vehicles and symbols of the realities it holds within it. But it rejects the cyclic concept. It views the whole of history as one day or year, which began with evening twilight, deepened into darkness, was blessed with the dawn and led up to a glorious consummation. Its position is that, with the coming of Christ, an epoch of world history is ended for ever, never to be repeated; and a New Era has been established which does not lapse, but opens into Eternity. Where Christianity enters history, so it is claimed, there is something definitive and irreversible; there is a decisiveness about time, there is a fullness and ripeness of time, a finality and a judgement. Instead of going round and round time comes to maturity and to a point,

bringing man to adulthood, and standing him before God so that he may make his decisions and shape his own everlasting destiny beyond nature's cycles and repetitive processes. The New Age will not pass but grow up to its plenitude, for, that on which it is based and in which it consists, the union, namely, of man and God in Christ is eternal, and the world's Redemption achieved in the Risen Jesus is for ever.

This point of Faith explains to us the reason why the Christian Church instinctively stood apart from the celebration of a New Year ruled over by nature's recurring phenomena. She was deeply aware of belonging to a different order of things, in which the New Year was no hopeless iteration, but a constant pressing forward to a goal clear and assured. She felt she was herself this New Order, the Ripe Time, the irreversible Godward Movement inserted into history. This amounts to a conviction that she is herself the New Year. Hence she keeps her heart fresh and glad, and celebrates her mystery in a daily Banquet in which God keeps transforming the world, saying, "Behold, I am making all things new".

FESTIVALS OF JEWS

(SHRI SHABDAI SAMUAL KODER, FORT COCHIN)

The history of the Jews of Kerala has marked an interesting episode in the chequered history of the Jewish people. How and when they came to South-West coast of India are some of the unsettled problems of their history. Whatever be the date of the first settlement, it is an undisputed fact of history that from the 5th to the 16th century the Jews in Kerala had an independent principality ruled over by a Prince of their own race. Tradition has it, that ten thousand Jews came to Kerala soon after the destruction of their second temple in 72 A. D. The Jews are then, the first foreigners who migrated to India and made her their second home. Among the many castes and creeds that inhabit this country, it will be interesting to know something of the religious customs and ceremonies of this oldest but microscopic minority of India. **Sabbath**

In presenting the Jewish Festivals the Sabbath (Saturday) must occupy a place of pride. Associated with the creation story in the Bible, it has become today what a working man may call his own, when his hammer is silent and the boom stands idle. It is a holiday for the soul as well as the body. In his economy of thought, man to the Jews is the master of labour and labour did not mean the bondage of man. The Sabbath gave the labourer every week, a day of freedom and leisure. The far-reaching humanitarian significance of the Sabbath is now recognised and the observance of it has become a law in all civilized countries. In short, the observance of Sabbath is a standing protest against the doctrine of wage-slavery.

Passover

Passover or the feast of unleaven bread is the first of the three pilgrim festivals. It falls in April or May and is essentially a feast commemorating the birth of Israel as

a nation and deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian slavery. The lesson of the festival is that God by taking notice of brick-making slaves against a Royal oppressor, has shown that He is God of Justice and Freedom. Man created in the Divine Image has an inalienable right to Justice and Freedom. **Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks**

Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks is the second of the Jewish Pilgrim festivals and it falls either in May or June according to the Jewish calendar. Like the three Pilgrim festivals, Pentecost too has an agricultural and a historical significance. At this period of the year, fruits and flowers adorn the trees of the Land of Israel. The commencement of the weekly harvest was marked by the bringing on Pentecost of two loaves of wheat into the Temple as an offering unto the Lord. The farmers of Israel brought the first ripe fruits to Jerusalem. The festival of Pentecost is also associated with the anniversary of the giving of the Ten-Commandments which remain for all time the fundamental rules of right for all mankind.

Tabernacles

The feast of Tabernacles is the last of the three Pilgrim festivals and falls either in September or October. During this feast, Jews have to sit in booths of a temporary structure covered with palm leaves as a reminder of the episode that occurred at the beginning of their history, the wandering of the children of Israel in the wilderness after their exodus from Egyptian bondage. The booths are decorated with citrons and other fruits. These agricultural symbols are to remind the Jews of the pastoral celebrations.

The New Year

The Jewish New Year falls either in September or October. Unlike the three Pilgrim Festivals, the message of the New Year is less for the nation than for the

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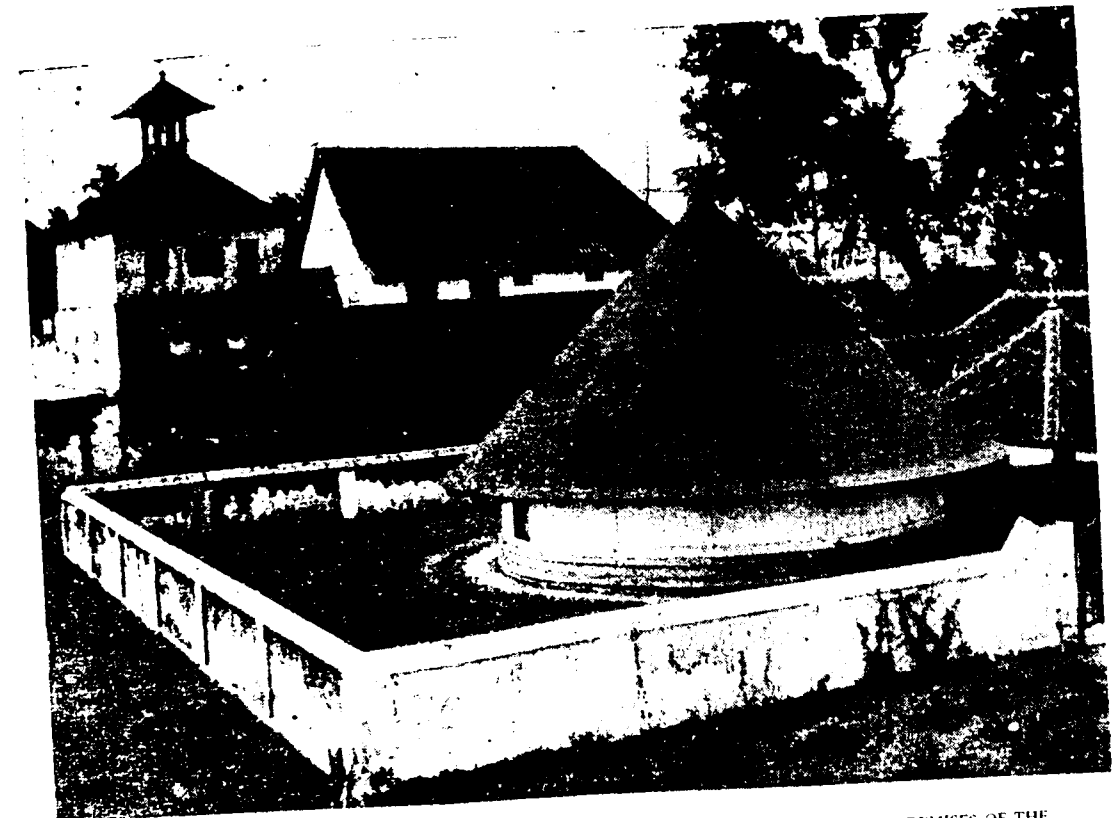
individual. The individual is urged to cease from the folly of sin and to look instead upon the realities of life. Lack of any special historical or national significance has made the celebration of the Jewish New Year the most universal as well as most personal of all celebrations unlike the universal celebrations of New Years among many nations old and modern. The Jewish New Year is not a time for revelry; it is a solemn season of self examination and self judgment in the life of the Jew.

Day of Atonement

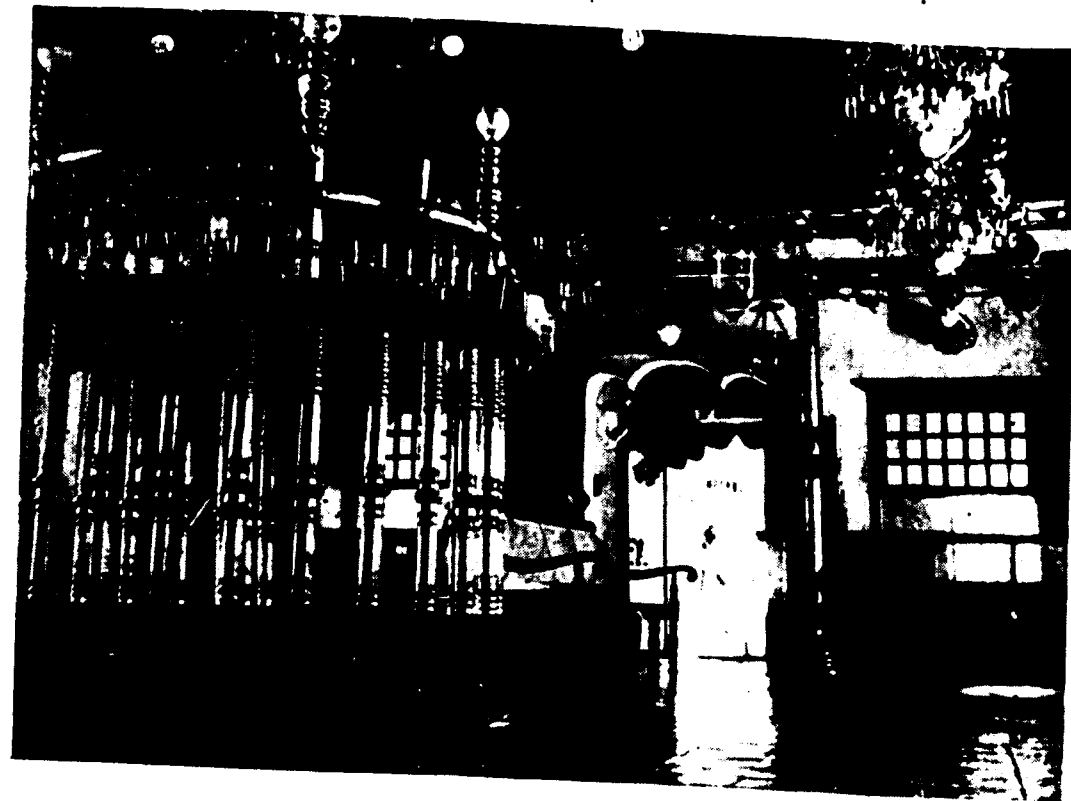
The Day of Atonement which soon follows the New Year is the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar. The Jew rests not only from all manner of work but from all earthly affairs as well. Not a morsel of food nor a drop of water will pass the lips of the observant Jew from sunset of the previous day till after the night fall of the next day. The evening before as well as the whole day following, the Jew is in the synagogue devoting himself to fervent prayers, scripture reading, hymns and confession of sins. Its message is the moral freedom of man and

infinite power of true repentance.

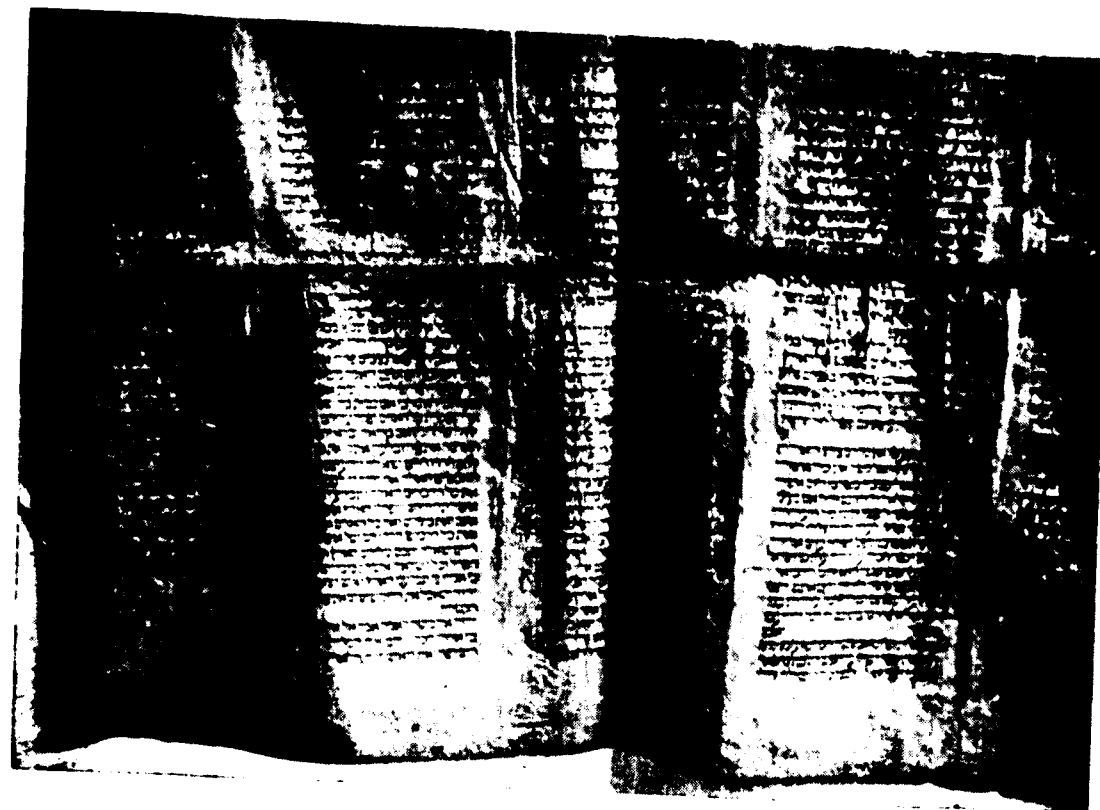
Besides the above mentioned Jewish holy days, there are a few minor festivals and fasts, the most popular of which is the feast of Hannukka or the festival of lights. The story of this feast is vividly described in the Apocrypha. In 168 B. C. a small Maccedean Band after three years of ceaseless struggle and guerilla warfare against Antichus Epiphanes who schemed to uproot the Jewish faith by drastic measures emerged triumphant. The feast of Purim or Lots is another minor festival. It depicts the story of Esther, who armed with faith in God and girded by a love of her people defeated the machinations of Haman who plotted to exterminate all the Jews in Persia. The festivals of the Jewish calendar are the embodiments of the cardinal truth of the Jewish religion and outlook. The Sacred Symbolism ordained for the Sabbath and the festivals has illumined the home of every observant Jew and taught him that true piety goes hand in hand with the highest cultivation of the mind and heart.



PL. 9. JEWISH SYNAGOGUE, MATTANCHERRY (TOP LEFT) WITH A TEMPLE IN THE PREMISES OF THE DUTCH PALACE, MATTANCHERRY IN THE FOREGROUND



PL. 10. JEWISH SYNAGOGUE, MATTANCHERRY - INTERIOR



PL. 11. EXTRACT FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT WRITTEN ON LEATHER PRESERVED

IDUL FITR (RAMZAN)

(PROF. M. A. SHUKOOR, M. A., L. L. B.)

Idul Fitr, of late, known by the misnomer 'Ramzan' is one of the only two festivals of Islam. Ramzan is the name of the seventh month of the lunar year. During this month the Muslims observe fast, giving up all kinds of food and drink during day-time and spend the major part of the night in devotion and prayer. This practice of fasting was enjoined in earlier scriptures too. Moses practised it for forty days before the revelation of the Old Testament. So too with Jesus. Islam enjoins fasting during the whole month of Ramzan. It is one of the basic principles of the faith and, therefore, one of the most important religious practices of the Muslims. Purification of the body and soul is the chief aim of this religious injunction.

When the crescent appears on the western horizon heralding the end of the month of fasting, it marks the beginning of the Idul Fitr festival. Because this festival is connected with the month of Ramzan, it came to be known as 'Ramzan'. The Idul Fitr festival starts with the commencement of the first day of the month of 'Shawwal'. The first item of the celebration is distribution of food materials to the poor and the deserving. This practice is intended to remove the possibility of any case of starvation in the society on that day. Any person who holds food materials in excess of the day's need must necessarily make his contribution in accordance with the rates prescribed by Islam.

Muslims all over the world celebrate this festival with great eclat and in gratitude to God. In the morning, men, women and children cleanse their bodies and attired in their best proceed to the mosque or the Id-Gah as the case may be. The Id-Gah is a place set apart for public prayers. The assembled Muslim gathering then offers the congregational prayer, led by the Imam

(Leader of prayers). After the prayers the Imam delivers the 'Khutba' (Sermon) pointing out the extreme importance of the occasion, explaining the essential obligations involved in fasting and exhorting the believers to hold fast to the principles of the Faith and live as true Muslims. One most important duty of the Muslims on this occasion is the distribution of the Sadaqa-thul-Fitr. At the end of the service, the members of the congregation embrace and salute each other.

Returning home after the ceremonial functions, they visit friends and relatives. It is the occasion of the cheerful meeting of friends, of paying social calls and distribution of presents to dependants. Some make it a point to visit the graves of the near relatives on this day.

In certain parts of Kerala, for instance, Chowghat, Muslim women dressed in their best clothes and wearing their jewellery, celebrate this occasion by paying group visits to the neighbours and with fitting entertainments. It is the gala occasion when children especially enjoy the day with fun and entertainments. The women organise themselves into groups and spend the time in singing and group dance and visiting houses. These gatherings of women are usually enlivened by songs and stories artistically re-captured from the celebrated events in the history and the lives of the heroes of Islam as beautifully depicted in some of the popular *Mopla* songs.

Recently in certain parts of Kerala new practices in connection with the celebration of this festival have been set up. It is a novel feature of the Id celebration in Kerala that members of the sister communities are invited to participate in such functions. On this occasion, the non-Muslim guests watch the whole proceedings of the religious ceremony and after prayers, the chief guest

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who is invariably a member of the sister-community delivers a speech often stressing the importance of communal harmony and brotherhood. Such practices certainly go a

long way in strengthening good and healthy inter-communal relations and paving the way for national integration.

NAVARATHRI

(SHRI P. VASUDEVAN NAMBOODIRI)

The *Navarathri* festival is dedicated to Devi, the 'Divine Mother'. It is celebrated all over India. In some places it is called *Desara*, in some others it is called *Kali Puja* and *Saraswathi Puja* and in still others, *Ayudha Puja*.

During the *Navarathri* days the Divine Mother is worshipped in one or the other of her different manifestations—Durga, Saraswathi, Kali etc. The *Puja* in connection with *Navarathri* is known as *Bhuvaneswari Puja*, which means the worship of 'Universal Mother'.

The concept of 'Universal Mother' is pre-vedic in origin and it is said that 'of all the concepts of god, this is the grandest'. She forms the '*Mula Prakrithi*, Primal Energy or the functional aspect of the Supreme Power'. In the Devi Bhagavatha she is styled as the creator of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, the Trinity of Gods, to whom, as consorts, she gives away from herself, Saraswathi, Lakshmi and Parvathi (respectively) with specific functions to perform for the conduct of the world. Again, she is the source of all other gods. Moreover, she has appeared in different manifestations—Bhadrakali, Durga, Chamundi, Subhadra etc. for the good of mankind.

The Divine Mother or Devi is the source of consolation and hope even for the gods. There are stories in the various Puranas, Devi Mahatmya and Devi Bhagavatha describing the instances of their Devi worship. As advised by Narada, Sree Rama worshipped her during the *Navarathri* days, while he was at Kishkinda, in order to get strength and courage to defeat Ravana. Lord Krishna offered prayers to her while he was at Gokula. Siva did so, during his fight with the demon Tripura. Brahma too worshipped Devi when he fought with the demons. Indra sought refuge in Her to save himself from a curse of Durvasa. Again, Sita and

Rugmini worshipped Durga, the former for getting Sree Rama as her husband and the latter for getting married to Sree Krishna. Arjuna sang in praise of Durga before the commencement of the Kurukshetra war, as desired by Lord Krishna.

In short, the Sakthi cult has been very popular through centuries, especially among the Saivites. The great poet Kalidasa is said to have been a worshipper of Kali and his very name is believed to represent the intensity of devotion he had to Kali. A legend is popular among the people stating how Kalidasa secured the blessings of Kali, the source of all his talents in art. Even in our modern times the great teachers like Sree Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda worshipped Kali or the Divine Mother with great devotion. The following extract taken from the Gospel of Sree Ramakrishna shows his concept of the Divine Mother:—

"One must propitiate the Divine Mother, the Primal Energy in order to obtain God's grace..... Therefore one must take refuge in the Divine Mother, the Cosmic Power ItselfBondage and liberation are both of Her makings. By Her *maya* worldly people become entangled in 'woman and gold', and again through Her grace they attain their liberation. She is called the Saviour, the Remover of bondage that binds one to the world.....She bestows the fruit of *Amrit*....."

Again Swami Vivekananda advises the devotees to worship the Divine Mother for immediate results. He says thus: "Worship the father and you can get the result in a hundred years, if the mother in five minutes".

In Devi Bhagavatha, the worship of Durga with devotion is stated as essential for overcoming sorrow and poverty, for achieving victory in wars and for being free from the fear of foes. It is also necessary

for carrying out daring deeds and also for securing happiness in both the worlds—earth and heaven.

Now the selection of the *Navarathri* days for the Devi worship is based on certain grounds. The *Navarathri* occurs both in *Vasantha* (Spring) and *Sarat* (Autumn.) These *ritus* (seasons) are considered as the two fierce incisor teeth of Yama, the God of death. These seasons are supposed to bring in diseases, death and other ill beings and the *Sarat* particularly, which spreads over the months of *Aswina* and *Karthika*. The psychology of selecting this particular season, *Sarat*, for the propitiation of Devi requires no further explanation.

The festival is celebrated during the first nine days in the bright half of *Aswina* which corresponds to September-October of the Christian era or *Kanni* according to the Malabar era. The selection of these particular nine days, assigning greater importance to the last three days for offering prayers to Devi is also meaningful.

There are stories in certain Puranas, *Devi Bhagavatha* and *Devi Mahatmya* describing the importance of *Navarathri*. All the Gods together worshipped Devi from the first day of *Navarathri* for securing protection from the demon Durga. Devi appeared before them in Her famous Durga manifestation on the eighth day or on the *Ashami* day and she killed the demon on the tenth, the day of *Desami*. Sree Rama worshipped Durga during the *Navarathri* days in *Sarat* and she blessed him in person on the eighth day, at midnight. Rama killed Ravana on the *Navami*, the ninth day and he propitiated Devi on the succeeding day. Again, for destroying the 'Deksha-Yaga' she was born as Bhadrakali along with her *ganas* or followers on *Ashami* day.

There is still another story, perhaps more popular than the rest, relating to the destruction of Mahisha (the buffalo-demon). He worshipped Brahma and secured boons by virtue of which only a woman could destroy him. Thereupon he became very

powerful and harassed the Devas very much. He conquered the three worlds and drove Indra from his abode seizing all his possessions. The Devas assembled together to think over the situation and find a way out from the danger. They created from their *thejas* or power a maiden with 18 hands. She was well provided with weapons and a lion to ride. She dwelt in a mountain formed out of fire emitted from the eyes of the Devas. On seeing Devi, Mahisha desired to marry her. She agreed to marry him if he could win her in a battle. A fierce battle took place with Devi on one side and the demon and his army on the other. Towards the end of the fight Devi killed the demon in a terrible duel. She also took her terrific forms of Kali, Chandi and Chamundi to kill Mahisha's associates. It is believed that Mahisha was put to death on the *Ashtami* day.

Mainly for these reasons, the last three days of the *Navarathri* are qualified as *Durga Ashtami*, *Maha Navami* and *Vijaya Desami*, and they are considered more sacred than the other days for Devi worship. It is believed that by offering prayers to Devi during the last three days one can secure the full benefits of observing the *Navarathri* rites for the whole period.

There are also narrations in the Puranas describing how Devi rewarded some of her devotees, for having worshipped Her during the *Navarathri* days. Incidentally, they also give the origin, and to some extent, the reasons for popularity of the *Navarathri* celebrations. A very brief sketch of two such stories is given below:—

Suketha, a famous King of Kartayuga, with his affectionate wife Suvedi wandered in a forest on account of the loss of his kingdom in a battle. On the way he fell ill and his devoted wife carried him on her shoulders. While she was trying to find her way out of the woods, the sage Angri-gus met her. The sage was moved very much when he heard her sad story. He advised her to go and worship Durga during

the *Navarathri* days, at Panchavati. She did accordingly. Suketha regained his health and in due course a son was born to them whom the sage named Suryaprabhapu. Due to the blessings of Devi, Suryaprabhapu became very powerful, even in his younger ages. He defeated his father's enemies and got back his kingdom.

In Kosala there was a king, Dhruvasandhi by name. He had two Queens—Manorama and Leelavathi, the former being the mother of his elder son Sudersana and the latter being the mother of his younger son, Sathrugit. Leaving his sons in their boyhood, the king passed away. On their behalf their maternal grand-fathers tested their strength in a battle for securing the crown. Sudersana's grand-father was defeated and slain in the battle. He and his mother took refuge in Bharadwaja *asrama* and the sage saved their lives from the enemies. Through Bharadwaja, Sudersana became a devotee of Devi or 'Buvaneswari'. Due to her blessings Sasikala, the beautiful princess of Kasi, married him in a *Swayamvara*. On his way to the *asrama* with the princess, Sudersana was attacked by Satrugit and his supporters. While the fight was going on, Devi appeared in person seated on a lion, amidst the battle field. She killed Satrugit, his grand-father and destroyed their army completely. During Sudersana's reign a beautiful temple was constructed in her honour and through a proclamation he popularised the *Navarathri Puja*.

The people of Kerala also take their due share in celebrating *Navarathri* in a befitting manner. The *Saraswathi Puja* and the *Ayudha Puja* are performed during this period. The goddess Saraswathi is worshipped as the goddess of learning, the deity of Gayatri, the fountain of fine arts and science, the symbol of supreme Vedantic knowledge. The importance of *Ayudha puja* (the worship of implements) on the occasion, to a very large extent, may be due to the fact that on the *Vijaya Desami* day Arjuna took back his weapons, which he had hidden in a *Vani*

tree in order to lead a life in disguise for the promised period of exile. It is believed that one who begins or renovates his learning or work on the *Vijaya Desami* day will secure a grand success as Arjuna did in Kurukshetra war.

On the Durga *Ashtami* day a ceremony called *Puja Vaipu* is performed in the evening. In a village, generally, it is done only in certain households, in temple and also, sometimes, in the village schools. The Brahman houses and the houses which enjoy reputation for learning and chivalry for a very long time, mainly take the lead in celebrating the festival. The members of the other houses in the village attend the ceremony performed in these houses or in the institutions and get their books worshipped.

In a well-decorated room, books and *grandhas* are tastefully arranged with a picture or an image of goddess Saraswathi in front. In certain places the worship of weapons and implements, other than agricultural ones, is also of equal importance and hence they too are kept by the side of the books and *grandhas* arranged for worship. Then a *puja* is performed to Saraswathi during which fruits, beaten rice, roasted paddy (*malar*), molasses, etc., are offered to her. Sometimes, there may be music, vocal or instrumental, while the *puja* is going on. When the worship is over the items offered to the deity are distributed among those who are attending the ceremony. Just before the *Puja Vaipu* all sorts of studies and work, which mainly require skill, are kept in abeyance.

The following day is known as *Maha Navami*, and it is completely devoted to the worship of Saraswathi. *Puja* is performed both in the morning and in the evening. Many more items such as rice, *Payasam*, *thirali*, etc., are also offered to her along with the others mentioned above. Some people fast, but people are many in number who avoid rice meal at night on this day.

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On the *Vijaya Desami* day or on the third day, after a *puja* in the morning the books and implements are removed from the room and this ceremony is called '*Puja Eduppu*'. The time for the break up of the *puja* is determined by referring to a calendar. Then follows the *Vidyarambha* or the beginning (or renovation) of learning, and the work and learning commence anew at this moment.

The literates, in general, write the alphabets on sand and read a few sentences during the occasion from sacred books. Similarly the craftsmen and the other skilled workers using their implements do some work. Again at this auspicious moment, the children for the first time, are given instruction to write the first few alphabets on rice or on sand. This is called *Ezhuthinu Eruthu* and according to the custom in vogue, only after this ceremony a child becomes entitled to write or read.

This being the general case, there are certain communities which celebrate the festival for all the days of the *Navarathri*. Images of gods, animals and toys of different variety are arranged for exhibition and this performance is called *Koluvaipu*. The worship of Saraswathi begins in the evening of the first day itself and on the other days *puja* is offered to the deity both in the morning and in the evening. The females and children from the neighbouring houses gather together and sing in praise of the goddess on each day. They are rewarded with betel leaves, areca-nut and money. Again sweets, fruits, preparations from grams and pulses etc., are also distributed among them. These communities also observe the last three days of the *Navarathri* with greater importance and during this period books and implements are also worshipped, like the others.

In the former State of Travancore the *Navarathri* was a State festival celebrated with great magnificence. Even now, the essential features of the ceremony are observed during the festival. The following

extract taken from 'The Travancore State Manual' gives the nature and magnitude of the festival during the reign of the Maharajas.

"The festival commences with the bringing of the images of goddess Saraswathi from the Padmanabhapuram palace, Velayudha Perumal from Veli Malai and Munnuttinanka from Suchindram. The image of Saraswathi is carried on the back of a caparisoned tusker, that of the Velayudha Perumal on a decorated silver horse and that of the Munnuttinanka in a palanquin. The procession reaches at Karamana, a part of Trivandrum, on the afternoon previous to the date of commencement of the festival. From there the procession is on a grander scale. The procession enters the Fort by the east gate and halts at the Old Patakasala gate of the palace where offerings are made. The Maharaja worships the image there and retires after making offering of money. The image of Saraswathi is alighted and taken inside the palace while the procession is continued along the main roads of the Fort.....On the first day, at the auspicious moment the image of Saraswathi is removed to a room at the southern end of the *Chokkitta Mandapam* and the formal ceremony of Pujavaipu or placing sacred grandhas and weapons including the Maharaja's State-sword at the foot of the image for the performance of *puja* is conducted.....

On all the nine days of the festival every evening the *Chokkitta Mandapam* is gorgeously decorated with garland made of flowers, areca-nuts and limes, and the premises are well illuminated in the night. Every evening a 'kavati' decorated with garlands of flowers is taken in procession around the Padmathirtham tank, with military guard and accompaniments of music to the gate opposite to the *Chokkitta Mandapam*.....

Throughout the festival musical concerts and Parishad of Sanskrit scholars are held in the palace.....The routine is gone through

NAVARATHRI

on all the nine days. Important Hindu Officers assemble in the pandal erected in front of the *Chokkitta Mandapam* when His Highness the Maharaja goes there to worship in the evening. On the morning of the *Vijaya Desami* day the grandhas and weapons are removed from the place of their temporary deposit and the Maharaja performs *Vidhyarambam* and offers *Gurudekshina*.

On the evening of the *Vijaya Desami* day the Maharaja with all State paraphernalia leads a procession.....His Highness drives either in the Ratham (State-car) or in a coach. The Maharaja wears the State dress on the occasion. As His Highness comes out of the palace the military presents the royal salute which is duly acknowledged... The procession moves through the Chalai Bazar, Antiyrakkam and the Pujappura road to the front of Vijaya Vilasom Palace at Pujappura. The Maharaja alights there

and after changing the dress proceeds to the Mandapam opposite, where the image of Velayudha Perumal is placed. As soon as His Highness reaches the mandapam, the temple priest takes a bow and after shooting three arrows on an unhusked cocoanut hands over the bow and the remaining arrows to the Maharaja. His Highness also shoots three arrows and after worshipping the deity at the "diparadhana (offering of burnt camphor) returns to the Vijaya Vilasom palace... .." *

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EASTER

(FR. R. SAMUEL, S. J., ESOBHAVAN, ERNAKULAM)

Easter is not, at present, so spectacular as Christmas, and, therefore, neither so familiar to the general public, nor so well understood. Yet not Christmas, but Easter is the chief Christian Festival, and the oldest, as old in substance as Christianity itself. Easter commemorates the central fact of the Christian religion; and the central fact is not the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, but his Resurrection from the dead. It is from this Easter or paschal mystery, from the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, that Christmas derives its beauty and meaning.

To understand Easter, therefore, one should bear in mind the pattern of Jesus' life as conceived and disclosed by Jesus himself. The whole of his life gravitated towards death; everything in it was orientated deathward. His death was no accident, but the centre and summit of a plan. It was a death big with immortality, an agony which was the birth-pangs of a New World. Hence he said of his mission:

"I am come
that men may have life,
and have it in all its fullness.
I am the good shepherd;
the good shepherd lays down his life
for the sheep.

I lay down my life for the sheep.
The Father loves me
because I lay down my life,
to receive it back again.
No one has robbed me of it;
I am laying it down of my own free
will.

I have the right to lay it down,
and I have the right to receive it back
again." (Jn. 10)

"The Son of Man did not come to be
served,
but to serve,

and to surrender his life as a ransom for
many." (Mt. 20)

Accordingly he took the Twelve aside,
and said to them:

"We are now going up to Jerusalem;
and all that was written by the prophets
will come true for the Son of Man.
He will be handed over to the foreign
power.

He will be mocked, maltreated, and spat
upon.

They will flog him
and kill him.

And on the third day

He will rise again." (Lk. 18).

And so it happened. Jesus hung on the
cross, and gave a loud cry and said,
"Father, into thy hands I commit my
spirit;" and with these words he died.
And he rose from the dead. Saint Paul's
witness is:

"He was raised to life on the third day;
he appeared to Cephas (Peter)
and afterwards to the Twelve.

Then he appeared to over five hundred
of our brothers at once, most of whom
are still alive (about 57 A. D.)

Then he appeared to James,
and afterwards to all the apostles.

In the end he appeared
even to me." (I Cor. 15)

The Original Easter: Sunday Mass

Jesus' disciples had a clear and deep
perception of the significance and world-
transforming nature of the Death and Re-
surrection of the Lord. The Resurrection
was seen as the inauguration of the New
Heaven and the New Earth which God had
promised in place of the one we had
wrecked; and as the power God was wield-
ing to bring this new creation to completion.
From the beginning, therefore, the event
was recalled and liturgically celebrated in
every Christian assembly on the first day

of the week which was the day Christ rose.
The Sunday Eucharist or Supper celebration
was the memory of the Lord's Death, the
presence of the Risen Lord among his own,
and the opportunity for all who have faith
to enter into and make their own the whole
of Christ's experience of life: his joy and
gratitude, his sorrow and his glory. This
Sunday celebration of the paschal mystery
still continues and maintains throughout the
world the original sense of victory and
freedom, of fulfilment, home-coming and
rest.

The Festival

But soon the anniversary of the event
began to be kept with special solemnity.
The Jewish Christians observed it at the
Passover feast of the Jews which fell on a
fixed date; other Christians preferred the
Sunday following the Passover. Bitter
and prolonged controversy ensued till Easter
was finally fixed by a council in 325 for
the first Sunday after the full moon follow-
ing the Spring equinox. It was not long
before this annual festival came to be counted
as the first day of the civil year, which
it already was in the Church Calendar.
This use was in vogue for several centuries,
and in some countries it survived the Mid-
dle Ages.

Even today Easter is the centre of the
greater part of the Christian year; on its
date depend the date and order of many
feast days and Sundays going before it or
coming after. But such a shifting Easter,
which can now vary from year to year and
fall any time between 22 March and 25
April, disturbs many a neat arrangement
in civil and commercial life, in University
and Law terms, in holidays. Hence the
desire for a fixed Easter has been gathering
strength. The English Easter Act of August
1928, fixing the feast for the Sunday after
the second Saturday of April, never got the
international acceptance it was expecting.
Now that the Second Vatican Council has
decided to join other Christian Churches in
fixing Easter and even in discussing a per-

petual calendar, things, we hope, will
move fast, especially if the co-operation of
the U.N.O. and the Governments is forth-
coming.

The content of Easter was gradually
analysed into its historical elements, and
each began to be celebrated on a different
day. As a result, Easter grew into Holy
Week; and came to have a preparatory
season to precede and a festive season to
follow. Thus we have four distinct periods
in connection with the observance of Easter:
(1) Lent, the forty preparatory penitential
days; (2) Holy Week leading up to the
Lord's Supper on Thursday, the memory
of the Passion on Friday, the Great Vigil
of Saturday, and the splendour of Easter
Sunday; (3) the Octave of Easter during
which the newly baptised—for Easter was
the classical time for Baptism and self-
commitment into the Death and Resurrec-
tion of the Saviour—kept there white gar-
ments on signifying the newness of life that
was now theirs; and (4) the Easter tide
or paschal season extending over forty
more days, the festive character of which
finds expression in the repeated acclama-
tion, Hallelujah, praise be to God.

Lent

The idea of forty days of penance must
have been inspired by the memory of Christ's
long fast as well as of the passion. Lent
used to be days of severe and con-
tinuous fast, of abstinence from flesh, fish,
egg and all other animal products like milk,
butter, cheese etc., and of strict asceticism
in married life. In recent years laws of
penance have become greatly mitigated,
though among all sections of Christians
there are men and women who freely
observe the old customs and rules in all
their original rigour. It is an ancient usage
in many Christian homes to read aloud in
the evenings accounts of the passion of
Christ and of Mary's sorrows from the
Gospels and from the *Vyakulanprasanga*, or
sing them out of the *Puttan Pana* of the
German Jesuit, Father Ernest Haxeldon.

The practice, however, is now on the decline.

The Marthomites have a special service on the fourth Friday of Lent in memory of Christ's fast. In the Malankara Rite Lent begins with a liturgical ceremony, called 'Subukono,' of reconciliation and forgiveness. Every noon throughout the season there will be in the Church forty penitential prostrations accompanied with the invocation, *Kyrie eleison*, which is Greek for 'Lord, be merciful to us'. On Wednesday of Mid-Lent fast is interrupted, and a 'Calvary' erected in the Church: a black cross is placed on a table or pedestal covered with red cloth in the body of the Church.

Palm Sunday

The last week of Lent opens with the festival of palms which commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, when mounting a donkey he advanced along a road carpeted with the cloaks of an enthused throng, and spread with branches cut from trees, and was welcomed by children shouting Hosanna to the Son of David, to the great chagrin of his opponents and critics. On Palm Sunday, then, the priest vested in red, which colour is symbolic of Kingship and love, blesses the long gold and fawn tender leaves of the cocoanut palm which the people are already holding in their hands, or are heaped on a table for distribution after blessing. The distribution is accompanied with singing of hymns to Christ the King.

The Gospel account of Christ's entry into Jerusalem is then sung, and the congregation listens standing, palm leaves in hand, after which a joyous procession is organized covering as long a way as is convenient, people holding palms and singing hymns. Returning to the church all celebrate the Eucharist, during which the history of the Passion (according to St. Mathew) is sung or read out. In the Malankara Rite and the Orthodox Syrian Church (OSC) the reading of the Gospel

is done during the procession, in front of the church. The OSC does not bless the palms before the procession, but on re-entering the church collects them for consecration and redistribution. The Church of the East (often referred to as the Nestorian Church) takes care to organise boys and girls below twelve into several choirs, each fifty strong, to hymn the Lord in procession. The Marthomites have neither procession nor any liturgical service with palm leaves, though in cities children carry them to Church.

It is the custom of Christians all over Kerala to prepare on Palm Sunday or the day before a cookie known by the name *Kozhukkatta* or its interesting variants which, unfortunately, may not be discussed here. Balls of rice dough, containing a mixture of cocoanut shavings and molasses, are cooked over steam, and served to everybody. Any good Christian in Kerala will tell you the meaning of these sweet balls: they stand for the stones the Jews took up to throw at Jesus (John 8. 59; 10. 31.) Some good Christians, despite the Gospel record, think that what the Jews took up to destroy Jesus with was not stones but Chalmoogra fruit or Jungli almond; they have noticed that *Kozhukkatta* bears a closer resemblance to these than to murderous stones!

Holy Week

Every evening in Holy Week, beginning with Sunday, there are special devotions in non-Catholic churches. An address on the Saviour's sufferings, some prayers, and songs are common features. The Litany is a speciality of the Church of South India (CSI). Among the Marthomites there are two practices which arrest attention. During the evening prayers in church everybody sings himself with the sign of the Cross a great number of times and follows each of them with a prostration. The number of signs and prostrations grow with the Week, and by Saturday come to exceed a hundred. To facilitate these

adorations the church is cleared for the week of benches and other encumbrances. Obviously, the prostrations are penitential, and not, as a good many seem to think, a memorial of the Apostles' and holy women's taking joyous hold of the feet of the Risen Lord. The second remarkable thing is the Marthomite custom of every one missing a meal or cutting it down everyday of the week in order to make a larger contribution for Gospel work and for the uplift of the poor.

For Catholics Monday of Holy Week is a quiet day. On Tuesday and Wednesday the Passion is read at Mass from the Gospel of Mark and Luke. Jacobites have no Mass during the Week unless March 25th falls within it. On that date fast is dropped and Mass is celebrated even if it be Good Friday. This probably is the remnant of an ancient position of certain Christian communities which considered March 25 as the anniversary of the death as well as of the birth of the Saviour.

The Lord's Supper

For some centuries the Eucharistic celebration on Holy Thursday, the memory of the Passion on Good Friday and the Saturday Vigil were held in the morning with the result that the meaning of words and symbols became obscure, the Gospel accounts and their liturgical representations got confused and the sense of worship weakened. But of late an excellent reform has restored Holy week liturgy to traditional and meaningful hours and forms. Not all churches have caught up with the reform, but it is hoped they will do so soon enough.

On Holy Thursday the Lord's Supper is held in the evening, and one remarkable feature of the celebration is that on this anniversary of the Institution of the Eucharist Christians take Holy Communion almost to the last man, and among the Jacobites to the last child. Another, the most remarkable, trait is the washing of the feet, with its clear emphasis on love for one another. This is done in the Latin Church during

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Mass, after the reading of the Gospel, which on this day consists of St. John's account of Jesus' humble act of love (John 13.) In the Romo Syrian Churches this is done after the Mass. To each of the twelve persons, boys or men according to custom, whose feet are thus liturgically washed, is a small gift made of a loaf of bread and a measure of cloth. An elderly person in Tangassery remembers that these presents used to be offered in a small earthenware dish, which fine custom exists, alas, no more.

In the Church of the East it is always children that are chosen for the ceremony, and they are given bread and wine. In the Jacobite Church and the Malankara Rite the washing of the feet is done only by the Bishop.

A little after the beginning of Holy Mass organs in church go silent; bells cease to ring and are replaced by wooden rattles which give out a cracked lament. A great sorrow descends upon the people, and the spiritual sky is overcast. For it is the Passion of Christ, the Lord.

Agape: Many are One

In the home there is on this great Thursday the rite of the paschal bread. Flour of rice or of black gram and molasses, with an addition sometimes of minced cocoanut kernel and onion, are mixed in cocoanut juice, and steamed to a firm cake. Two narrow strips of palm or plantain leaf placed cross-wise on the dough will now come off revealing the sacred sign on the cake. After supper this 'paschal bread' or 'cross cake' is brought out; the entire family gathers round it; the head of the family signs himself, cuts the cake into strips, breaks a piece, dips it into a sauce or porridge prepared by boiling cocoanut juice and molasses with chips of plantain fruit, and hands it to each member of the family in due order. The preparation is usually called *indari*, or *indri*, or *undari* cake. Most people when asked refer this sound to the letters INRI which you find at the

top of the crucifix, which are the initials in Latin of what in English would mean, 'Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews' (John 19. 19). But such a reference would only make this homely rite difficult to understand, and would suggest, contrary to probabilities, that it is of recent, Portuguese origin. The likelihood is that the ceremony is a remnant of the Agape of Christian love-feast which used to be held even when no priest could be had to celebrate the Eucharist. In South Kerala a large bread is baked with flour, sugar, currants and cocoanut juice for ingredients; it is called *Orappam*, one loaf for all, and all eat of it.* It is a veritable Agape.

In the Orthodox Syrian and the Malankara Churches, and in places like Tangassery too, the paschal bread is prepared not on Thursday but on Wednesday evening. All who can afford take part of it to Church on Thursday morning; the gifts are pooled, blessed by the priest and distributed among the congregation after the liturgical services. Here the Agape character of the rite seems to stand out clearly.

The Lamb that was slain

Good Friday is a day of grief. Every Christian heart is overwhelmed with the memory of the Lord's sorrow and death. One talks little on this day, and one talks low; laughter is hushed, and one goes out little or not at all. Churches are dark and empty; altars have been stripped of ornaments, of covering, candle and cross, and left bare. The church of the East lays candles and cross flat on the altar and ties up the sanctuary veil, while the CSI keeps them lower than usual and drapes the altar in black. For, today these things symbolize not the exalted Lord but the humiliated Redeemer.

Services are held in the afternoon. The history of the passion recorded by Saint John is read or sung; the Old Testament

Paschal Lamb, of which the killing and eating marked Israel's safe exodus into freedom, is recalled. Prayers are said for the needs of the entire Church and of the whole world. The cross, covered up for some two weeks now, is solemnly unveiled and venerated, everybody coming up to kiss it. This is followed by Holy Communion. The time before the services and after is taken up by popular devotions. Various stages of the Passion may be dramatically represented with the aid of the large statues. Today these representations are much more sober than in former times. A touching procession may be organized to follow a large statue of Christ borne on a bier. The 'way of the Cross' may be made along the roads and streets, each of its fourteen stations or stages explained in a 'ferverino,' meditated upon, hymned and prayed over. Some, not many, good souls may take part in the procession and the stations moving along on their knees in a spirit of penitence.

In the Malankara liturgy the history of the passion is read out with intervals for hymns and prayers. This is followed by the way of the Cross which in this liturgy is a recent addition. The third part of the service consists in the solemn burial of the Cross in the Altar: the Cross is reverently washed in rose water, wiped with cotton, anointed with *attar*, sprinkled with incense, wrapped in new linen, tied with palms and laid in the altar cavity and covered. Very similar is the Jacobite entombment of the Cross.

The Marthomite Church service lasts from about 8 in the morning till 3 in the afternoon, and consists of the history of the Passion with addresses and hymns, and intervals for tea. After the second interval attention centres on the Seven Words Christ spoke from the Cross. This is a special feature taken over from Anglican devotions,

In fact for the CSI the core of Good Friday services consists in seven meditations on the Seven Words, each led by a different person, clergyman or layman, and followed by prayers.

In most churches one finds a bitter drink prepared from leaves, vinegar etc. for everyone to taste a little when the service is over. This is an expression of our willingness to share in the bitterness of the Saviour's Passion and in particular in his experience of tasting wine mixed with gall. In some Jacobite centres contribution from families make it possible to follow the liturgy with a service of 'Kanji', mango pickles and peas, which nobody may refuse to share. The poor too are fed, alms given, help extended to dependents, and, as they do in Tangassery, candles and charred cocoanut shells for the censer for the whole year are offered to the church. In many Christian homes it is only at night that any food is prepared, and then, oftener than not, it is nothing more than rice boiled with methi or fenugreek (*Uluva*) which is mildly bitter.

The Easter Vigil

Holy Saturday is a day of mourning and waiting. It is the quietest day of the year. A total silence reigns in the Church from morning till night. The bareness inside emphasises the sense of bereavement, and throws into relief the starkness of the lonely Cross on the altar. But by ten in the night the church is full. It is the solemn Easter Vigil in which the profoundest events of the Christian religion are represented and relieved.

Lights are out. In the gloom which fills and envelops the church new fire is struck from flint and blessed. The meaning is that from Christ bursts the flame of a new life, pure and bright and warm, uplifting and irresistible. This we take into our heart.

A big candle is then consecrated, lit from the new fire, and carried in procession through the darkness. From it is lighted at a first stage in the procession the Bishop's

or leading priest's candle; at a second stage, the candles of the clergy present; and finally at the third, the hundreds and thousands of candles held by the entire assembly. The symbolism is clear; the splendour of Faith and Love and the New Life coming from Christ spreads over the world through his apostles and helpers and transforms men and things. While the candles burn in silent gladness the mystery and meaning of their light is proclaimed in a well-sung poem of rare beauty and power. The great light is Jesus. He has broken through the night of death and is rising as the Beginning and the Lord of a new day and a new creation. In him, and by committing our life to him, we too are empowered to shake off the shackles of slavery to sin and death, and emerge victorious from life's fray. This is the night of liberation from Egypt, of passage into freedom through the Red Sea of Baptism, the night when Christ destroyed death and rose from the tomb to live for ever, and we in him.

Readings from the Old Testament follow, which prophetically foreshadow this New Creation, this New Exodus, this New Splendour and the Promised Land of security and plenty, which is the Risen Jesus.

As baptism is our first entry into Christ's Resurrection this night used to be in former centuries the choice time to receive the Sacrament, and the whole of Lent was designed as a preparation for this definitive dying and rising with Christ the Lord. Even today the ideal is to have baptism conferred on this night. Whether this is had or not, the entire assembly renews in common at this stage of worship, their baptismal vows by answering the questions put to them by the priest leader of their prayer.

The CSI may on Saturday have a short morning service of meditation on the burial of the Lord, or an evening service, or none at all. In the Malankara Rite and the Orthodox Syrian Church there is, on this day of Christ's descent into Sheol (the

* In some parts of Kerala neither *indari* nor *Orappam* is served on this day. But porridge made of cocoanut juice, molasses and rice flour is given. *Indari* or *Orappam* is prepared and distributed on the 25th day of the lent in such places.

world of the dead), an obligatory midday Mass for the repose of the dear departed. People bring to their priests lists of their dead to be remembered at Mass. The Rite has, besides, an evening ceremony of reconciliation. In the Church of the East Mass starts soon after sunset on Saturday, for in this matter they follow the ancient Hebrew view in which a new day was on with the fall of evening. At midnight, however, they will have the liturgy of candles, very similar to one described above.

Hallelujah

In the Roman liturgy the Easter Vigil comes to a climax with the Mass of the Resurrection which starts as the midnight hour strikes and of which the jubilant singing of the Hallelujah is the characteristic note. Hallelujah is the joyous word of Easter wish. Bells peal again, music fills the air, light floods the hall once more, and the splendour of the Risen Jesus envelops and elevates the world of men and things.

The High Church follows the Roman in keeping a Vigil ending in midnight Mass. Others hold an early morning Eucharistic service on Sunday. The Marthomites have a three hour service coming to a close by 6 or 7 a. m. Everything in their Church—linen, candles, bunting, decorations—is new on this day, and the sound of numberless crackers marks the end of the Easter sermon, and of the Communion service, after which there will be a hilarious break of fast, and feeding of the poor.

The New Heaven and the New Earth

Easter Sunday is a quiet day, coming as it does after a long season of penitence and the grand liturgy of Holy Week. Its celebration is spiritual and inward rather than social and showy. In the line of external festivity there is not much to note except the great dinner at home and some visiting of relatives. It is only in Tangassery and some isolated monastic communities that one hears of Easter eggs and Easter bunnies.

Eggs are painted; when surrounded with onion rings and boiled hard the resultant colouring and cracks on the shell give a marble effect. They are served in artistically done vermicelli nests, which may, if you are lucky, contain an exquisitely prepared white fluffy chicken too. Easter egg is rare today, and rabbits rarer.

Both rabbit and egg are pre-Christian symbols of fertility and new life. In nearly all cosmogonic myths the egg plays a great role as the supreme symbol for the mystery of creation and the origin of life. In these myths the world, the first man, and even the gods derive from an enormous primal egg. We have only to recall how Prajapati was born of the Hiranyagarbha. This religious association of the egg with creation and birth explains the importance it has acquired among peoples. As primal source of cosmic life the egg in cultic use was supposed to assure and bestow fruitfulness, renovation of nature and rebirth for man. Hence it became a feature of the Spring festival in which the re-awakening of nature was celebrated. And many a pre-Christian custom, symbolic of the return of Spring, gravitated towards Easter because this feast fell in Spring and had for meaning the definitive re-creation of man and his world through the rising of Jesus from the dead to live for ever. But in the Christian community the egg soon lost its religious symbolism, and merely marked the return to table, together with fish and meat, of food generally abstained from during the long period of Lent.

All such symbols of mankind's cosmogonies and theogonies, myths and religions find their final meaning, and discover the reality they were obscurely hinting at, and come to completion and fulfilment in the death of Jesus on the cross, and in his resurrection from the dead, and the establishment thereby of a new heaven and a new earth.

MILADI SHARIF

(PROF. M. A. SHUKOOR, M. A., L. L. B.)

Muhammad (May the blessings of God be upon him), the prophet of Islam was born on the 20th of April 571 (12th Rabiul Awwal). Muslims all over the world celebrate this event of the birth of the prophet in various ways. It is difficult to trace the origin of this practice. One thing is certain that the companions of the prophet did not celebrate this day as the present day Muslims throughout the world do. Learned Muslim opinion on the matter traces it to an Iraqi monarch who introduced the practice some time during the 14th century. In the beginning the practice of celebrating this day was confined to the conventions of the learned Muslim ulemas in which scholarly discourses on the various aspects of the life of the prophet were given by chosen speakers. Feeding the poor was an important item of activities connected with such celebrations. In Kerala the practice of large-scale celebrations of the prophet's birth-day is of recent origin. It used to be the common practice for many years in Muslim houses in Kerala to observe this day by reading what is commonly known as the 'Maulood'. Maulood is a short biography of the prophet written both in verse and prose in the Arabic language. During nights, on all the first twelve days of the month of Rabiul Awwal, the Maulood used to be recited. Ceremonial and religious sacredness is often attached to this practice by some of the Muslims in this part of the country, though learned Muslim opinion does not consider it a truly Islamic practice, since neither the Quran nor the prophet makes such a practice obligatory on the followers of Islam. Of late in Kerala there has developed another practice connected with the Miladi Sharif. Night lectures are organised during the first twelve days of the month when Muslim ulemas through their discourses enlighten the people on the

various aspects of the life of the prophet.

Since it is religiously incumbent on the Muslims to follow the prophet in every aspect of day-to-day life, they must know the details of the life of the prophet, for, says the Quran "Obey God and follow the prophet". The companions of the prophet were scrupulously careful to observe the prophet closely and not to miss anything said and done by him. They were also eager in passing these details to others, to enable them to follow the prophet. Many are the instances in which the eminent companions of the prophet went to the extent of following the prophet even in the matter of smiling while in places where the prophet had been found smiling. Thus through the celebrations connected with the Miladi Sharif, the Muslim masses get an opportunity to be enlightened on the life and practices of the prophet.

The celebration of the Miladi Sharif in certain parts of this state, for instance Ponnani, is marked by busy activity connected with large-scale feeding of the poor. Here, in the Muslim centre, one finds that the town is awake during the whole night, busily engaged in the charitable work of supplying food to the poor. The big mosques aglow with hundreds of lights are the centres where food for the poor is prepared and supplied, hundreds of Muslim volunteers being engaged in the work of distributing food to the various houses in the different parts of the town.

Recently Miladi Sharif celebration has assumed great importance in Kerala. On such occasions, colourful processions parade through the town reciting Thakbir. These processions finally assemble in some central place where public meetings are held. These public gatherings are addressed by well-known speakers, who, in their speeches deal with the various aspects of the prophet's

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life. Such meetings are often attended by a large number of non-Muslim brethren some of whom actively participating as speakers. Thus meetings go a long way to create an atmosphere of mutual goodwill and understanding among the various communities in the country by emphasising the

exemplary model of the prophet in large hearted religious tolerance, sympathy to the poor and the suffering irrespective of caste, colour or nationality. It also engenders a spirit of appreciation of other cultures and values.

MAHASIVARATHRI

(SHRI P. V. VASUDEVAN NAMBOODIRI)

The *Mahasivarathri* is essentially a religious festival unlike the *Onam* and *Thiruvathira*. The word means 'the great night of Siva' or 'the great holy night'. According to the *Sivapurana* it falls on the *Krishnachathurdesi* day which falls on the 14th day during the waning of the moon, in the month of *Magha*, though in some years it may occur in *Phalguna* also. Again the *Thiruvonam* star covers at least the mid portion of 'the great holy night'. In Kerala the month of *Kumbham* is noted for its *Sivarathri* festival and generally speaking the holy day comes in February-March.

The festival is said to commemorate the day on which Siva protected the world from a total annihilation either by drinking the deadly *Haalahalam* poison which was held up in his neck or by effecting a healthy compromise between Brahma, the creator and Vishnu, the protector. The puranas describe these incidents in details and only a very brief account is given in the following paragraphs.

While the Devas were engaged in the extraction of *Amrithu* (Nectar) from the Ocean of Milk (*Palazhi*) using the *Manthara* mountain as the churning wheel and the great serpent *Vasuki* as the rope, the latter got completely exhausted and was about to vomit the most dangerous poison, *Haalahalam* the falling of which on the earth would have resulted in the destruction of the universe. Requested by the Devas, Siva received the poison vomitted by the serpent in his palm and drank it. Parvathi who was by His side suddenly pressing on his neck swore on her chastity that it shall not flow down his neck. Vishnu immediately closed Siva's mouth to prevent the poison from falling on the earth. The Devas became very anxious and gloomy. They fasted the whole day and keeping vigil throughout the night, prayed for Siva's

health. Siva in his turn, absorbed the poison in the neck and it became blue in colour which brought him the name 'Neelakanta'. The night devoted by the Devas for Siva in this connection became known as '*Sivarathri*.' Another version goes as follows :—

As he faced some difficulties in remembering the vedas, Brahma suspended creation for a time in which he had been engaged, and went into meditation. At this juncture the earth sank in the ocean. Immediately Vishnu woke up from his meditation or *Yoga Nidra* and taking the 'Pig Incarnation' lifted the earth from water. He became proud of his own action and claimed supremacy over the earth. By this time Brahma completed his meditation and on seeing the living beings he created felt proud like Vishnu. They challenged each other and there ensued a battle to decide the question of their supremacy. At a certain stage of the fight Vishnu and Brahma simultaneously used the most powerful of weapons '*Sudersanachakra*' and '*Brahmashtra*' respectively, a clash of which would have been fatal to the world. Suddenly a divine light (*Thejas*) appeared in between the weapons and the gods stood surprised. Before long, they recognised that it was due to the power of Siva, and worshipped him. Siva blessed them with boons and effecting a compromise, vanished. It happened in the third quarter or the third *Yaama* in the *Krishnachadurdesi* night of *Magha* and this particular night thenceforth came to be known as *Sivarathri*.

Stories are also there showing how Siva blessed even some great sinners for having observed the *Sivarathri* rites, though the observance was not purposeful.

There dwelt in a forest a hunter or *Veta*. His name was *Suswara* and he supported his wife and children by hunting. One day he went

about the whole forest in search of animals and it was only very late in the evening that he got a deer. The darkness fell in and he missed his way home. At last he climbed on a tree to spend the night. He was starving the whole day. Due to hunger and fear he kept awake throughout the night. His wife and children were also starving and they too keeping awake spent the night in anxiety and prayer. The tree on which he rested was a *bilva* tree and the leaves which fell from the tree which at times shook while he moved in his seat fell on a *Sivalinga* below. Due to fear he might also have prayed occasionally. In the morning he returned home and met his wife and children. By the time the meat he brought was cooked ready, there stepped in a guest and Suswara honoured him by serving him the meat. He got the full benefit of observing the *Sivarathri* and he and his family were taken to '*Sivaloka*' the abode of Siva, in a plane. It is said that in his succeeding birth he was born as a king in the well-known solar dynasty. (A similar story with slight variations is given in the History of Kerala, Volume IV, pages 359-360).

In a vernacular version of *Sivapurana* there is a story showing the importance of fast and Linga worship on the day of *Sivarathri*. The sage Gouthama met Mithrasaha, a king of the solar dynasty, who was being haunted by a witch on account of the *brahmahathyapapa*, the sin of killing a brahmin. He had killed a brahmin while he led the life of a demon owing to a curse from Vasishtha, the great sage. Gouthama directed him to the famous Siva temple at Gokarna and advised him to observe *Sivarathri* rites. In this context he narrates an incident which he and his fellowmen witnessed with their own eyes in the very same morning.

It was the morning succeeding the *Sivarathri*. They saw a very old Chandala lady lying on the ground. She was hungry and weary and was suffering from dreadful diseases like leprosy. She was struggling

with her life. Much to their surprise there appeared a plane in the sky with the attendants of Siva who took her to *Kailasa*. In the previous day she starved and kept awake throughout the night. While she begged at night somebody put a few leaves of *bilva* in her hand and knowing that they were not edible, she threw them away. Fortunately for her those leaves fell on a *Sivalinga* and this simple act of hers secured her salvation. The sage also added a few words regarding her previous birth.

In her previous birth the Chandali was a Brahmin lady, Sowmini by name and she excelled the crescent in beauty. While she was in the prime of her youth her husband died. Before long she fell a slave to passion and became pregnant. She was driven out of her house and at last a Sudra took her as his wife. She began to take liquor and meat in plenty. One day at night out of her desire to take mutton she killed a cow unknowingly, being intoxicated by liquor. She fell under the grip of *gohathya papa*, the sin of killing a cow. So in the present birth she was born as a Chandala child with dark complexion and all other deformities including blindness. As she grew up her very sight became intolerable to others and the dangerous diseases like leprosy attacked her. By narrating the story, the sage meant that even the great sinners could secure blessings and salvation if they fasted and worshipped Siva with *bilva* leaves on the day of *Sivarathri*.

Whatever might be the legend and stories behind it the *Mahasivarathri* is considered as a very important day for fast and Siva worship. Though the observance of *Sivarathri* rites promises both material comforts in this world and bliss in the other, it is mainly observed for securing the latter. In the History of Kerala Shri. K. P. Padmanabha Menon observes how the Hindus of Kerala spend the holy day. On this day the people fast. Some abstain from every kind of food for the whole day, while others content themselves with one

meal. Strict vigil is kept in the night. The people cluster round the Siva temple and after bath smear their bodies with holy ashes and keep on reciting the prayers to Siva. Enthusiasts, more devout than the rest perform circumambulations around the temple while the ordinary worshipper goes round it on foot a number of times. *Pooja* to Siva is kept up all the night. Early next morning people bathe once more, worship Siva and return to their ordinary avocations.

There has not been much change from the date of the above general observations but for a little more negligence of the ritualistic aspect of the festival. On this day the Siva temples and their surroundings become lively. Before dawn the villagers come in small groups from different directions. They take bath in the tank attached to the temple. Some of them may purchase flowers, fruits, oil etc. and offer them to the deities. Among those who observe the *Sivarathri* rites women and children form larger in number. By about 9 or 10 in the morning the crowd in the temples becomes thin. Again in the evening from almost every Hindu household persons consisting mainly of women and children go to the temple. They take the tender cocoanuts, *bilva* leaves, flowers, oil, ghee, milk and camphor etc. as offerings. After the *Deeparadhana* or 'flame worship' is over a good many of them return home. They may come again only if there are items of entertainment. Those who do not observe a complete fast would take the water of tender coconut which has been already offered to the deity and break the fast. They take only light refreshments at night. The strict observers of the *Sivarathri* fast wait for the morning to break the fast. They, as far as possible, spend the night in the temple by going round the temple again and again reciting prayers to Siva and attending the *poojas*. Again many people avoid rice meal at night on this day.

Most of the people who keep a complete or a partial vigil in this holy night do so by enjoying some or other items of entertainments. In certain temples, the *Kathakali*, dance, *Kathakalakshepam* or music etc. may be arranged with this end in view. Nowadays theatres are not few in number where special film shows are held successfully on this day.

In certain parts of the State the orthodox Hindu households prepare the holy ash required for an year on this day. Before dawn well-dried pure ball-like cowdung cakes are heaped in the front of the courtyard, covered with paddy husk and set fire at the top. It gradually begins to burn and it might take two or three days for all the cakes to burn down completely into fine holy ash. Anyhow, a little bit of ash is taken out before the succeeding morning.

The special *poojas* performed in the Siva temples and in the Brahmin houses on this day are known by the name *Chadurdesi pooja*. There will be *pooja* in every quarter of the night or in every *yama*. The number of *poojas* may vary from temple to temple. There are temples where as many as 24 *poojas* are performed on this day.

The *Abhisheka* and *Dhara* form the important items of the *Chadurdesi pooja*. The pouring of some liquid or smearing powder over an idol is known as *Abhisheka* while *Dhara* means a continuous flow of some liquid over the idol for a fixed time. There is a special vessel used for this purpose. It is adjusted above the idol by means of a tripod. Some *darbha* grass is inserted through the hole in the centre of the vessel and the flow is controlled by adjusting the grass. The concerned liquid is poured into the vessel frequently to keep the flow steady. The *Ashtabisheka* and *Jala Dhara* are very common while the *Bhasnabisheka* and *Ghriddha Dhara* are performed only in certain temples. For the *Ashtabisheka* the items used are water, milk, curd, honey, ghee, juice of sugar-cane, water of tender coconut and sandal paste. Again in

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certain parts of the State there are Siva temples where *Kavadi Attam* is of great significance in the celebration of the *Sivarathri* Festival.

There is no other place in Kerala where *Sivarathri* is celebrated on such grand scale as in Alwaye. The celebration of *Sivarathri* Festival at Alwaye is as famous as the festivals like *Ashtami* at Vaikom, *Pooram* at Trichur etc.

"The celebration of this festival at the Siva temple at Alwaye on the sand bank of the Periyar river is attended with great eclat. The *Lingam* of Siva rises out of the sand on the bank by the river. There is only a temporary shed to serve as a temple, as the whole place will be flooded during the rainy season. The sand bank here is extensive and the pilgrims repairing to the place amounting to many thousands congregate here. All classes, castes and creeds come up for this festival; some for worship,

some for merchandise, some for mere sight seeing. The fair held is on a very large scale. There are rows of shed built where merchants expose every kind of merchandise for sale. There are shows, dramas, dances etc., supplied for the pilgrims to keep them away from sleep. There are number of small sheds spread about the sand banks where the devout Siva worshipper sets up his own Sivalingam for worship". (History of Kerala, Volume IV, page 357).

In many respects the festival can be considered as a miniature of the *Ardha Kumba Mela* held at Thriveni, the confluence of the holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the invisible river Saraswathi.

More than fifty thousand of people gather at Alwaye in connection with the festival. In addition to the observance of *Sivarathri* rites most of the pilgrims offer *bali* to their ancestors in the morning succeeding the holy night.

Books of reference :

1. 'Vrethachudamony' by Shri Pandit Adiyat Krishna Menon.
2. 'History of Kerala' by Shri K. P. Padmanabha Menon.
3. 'Sivapurana' (A vernacular version)

MUHARRAM

(SHRI M. MOHAMMED USMAN)

Muharram, 'the forbidden month'* is the opening month of the Hejira year. The 10th day of this month is honoured by the Muslims all over the world, by the Sunnies as well as by the Shias. Historically, this day has assumed much importance. It was on this day that God created Adam and Eve. It was on this same day, again, that the Pharoah of Egypt and his countrymen were drowned in the Red Sea by the will of the Almighty. Again, it was on this day that the most lamentable carnage at Kerbala took place. On this day the Jews observe fast. The prophet enjoined on the Muslims to observe fast on the 9th and 10th of Muharram. Quite a few only know that it was to commemorate the victory of Moses over Pharoah that fasting was enjoined upon Muslims on these days.

To the Muslims, particularly to the Shia Muslims, Muharram brings in its wake, sad memories of one of the most tragic events in the annals of Islam. It brings home to their minds memories of the cold-blooded murders committed in the most brutal manner in the plains of Kerbala in October 680 A. D. during which Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him) and a small band of his men met with their end in a most agonising manner. History speaks in the most pathetic words the inhuman and the savage cruelties done to them by the Ommayad ruler Yazid. It is to bemoan the martyrdom of Imam Hussain that the Shia Muslims all over the world are observing Muharram every year. In the following lines may be traced out the historical background that led to the martyrdom of Imam Hussain.

After the demise of Hazrath Ali, the last of the four disciples of the Holy Prophet, the Caliphate fell into the hands of Muawiyah, the founder of the Ommayad dynasty. "Astute, unscrupulous, clear-headed, miserly, but lavishly liberal when necessary, outwardly observant of all religious duties, but never permitting any human or divine ordinances to interfere with the prosecution of his plans or ambitions—such was Muawiyah".¹ On his death in April 680 A. D. his son Yazid, according to the testament of his father and without waiting for formal election by the people, ascended the throne and declared himself as Caliph. He was "both cruel and treacherous; his depraved nature knew no pity or justice. His pleasures were as degrading as his companions were low and vicious."² The people, however, accepted him as Caliph, but there were several who stood out; the most prominent among them was Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him). Hussain was virtuous and of chivalrous disposition; of whom, Sedillot says that "the only quality that he lacked was the spirit of intrigue which characterised the descendants of Ommayya." He refused to swear allegiance to Yazid, for he had held him in utmost detestation for various faults of his character and besides, his right to the Caliphate was expressly reserved in the treaty concluded between his brother Hassan and Muawiyah during the latter's regime. And, therefore, when Yazid ascended the Caliphate, Hussain had to flee from Medina to Mecca for his life. About this time the people of Kufa (Iraq) besought Hussain's help to deliver them from the oppression of

* According to the Holy Quran, waging war is forbidden to Muslims during this month.

1. History of the Saracens by Syed Ameer Ali, page 82
2. Ibid, page 83

Yazid and they came out professing allegiance to him and promising whole-hearted support to his candidature to the Caliphate. They made repeated requests to him to go over to Kufa and take up reins of government. Emboldened by the encouragement obtained from the people of Kufa, Imam Hussain ventured to uphold his right to the Caliphate by going over to Kufa. His friends and relatives counselled him not to be misled by the promises of Kufans and wanted him to retreat from his bold venture as they knew very well that the Kufans were a fickle-minded people, for their antecedents were such as to confirm their judgement. An eminent authority describes the character of Kufans as follows:—"Eager, fierce, and impetuous, the people of Kufa were utterly wanting in perseverance and steadiness. They knew not their own minds from day to day. One moment ardent as fire for some cause or person, the next they were cold as ice and as indifferent as the dead." All the entreaties of his friends and relatives to deter Hussain from going over to Kufa were of no avail. In September 680 A. D. he set forth to Kufa accompanied by but a small band of his close associates and near relatives including the women of his household and children.

Traversing the sun-burnt and parched desert of Arabia, full of hope and expectation that he would receive the help of the Kufans as promised by them, he reached the confines of Kufa, only to be betrayed by the Kufans. There was no sign of a Kufan army coming to his aid. He could only see the hostile face of the country. He was sure that his onward march would only endanger his life and of his men. Dejected and heart-broken as he was, he encamped his men, in the early part of the month of Muharram, at a place called Kerbala on the western bank of Euphrates, lying about 62 miles south south-west of Baghdad on the rim of the desert. For days their camp was

surrounded by the enemies and the source of the supply of water was closed to them. And there, they were shut in for a few days, of course, with some intermittent combats between some individuals of both sides. Yazid wrote to his governor: "If Hoscin and his followers submit, and take the oath of allegiance, treat them kindly; if they refuse, slay them, ride over them, trample them under the feet of thy horses."¹ Hussain was quite reluctant to shed the blood of his fellow countrymen, for he wanted peace to prevail in the country. He informed the enemy commander thus: "Let me return in peace to the place from where I have come. If you do not agree, confront me with Yazid and let me speak face to face with him. If you don't agree even to that, permit me to fight in arms against the enemies of Islam."² This request was flatly turned down by the enemy commander, Obaidulla. Now there were only two alternatives before Hussain, either to submit to the enemies and swear allegiance to Yazid or to court martyrdom, of which he chose the latter. And at last, the morning of that fateful day, Muharram 10th of Hejira 61 (10th October 680 A. D.) dawned as usual. Hopeless of any success at making peace with the enemies, but at the same time undaunted of facing any eventualities, Hussain decided to fight against the enemies. He arrayed his small band of men, in the plains of Kerbala, against an army much bigger in numerical strength than his. A fierce battle took place on the day. The invincible valour of Hussain's men made great havoc to the enemies. They were still unable to prevail against the bravery and indomitable heroism of Hussain. Failing to achieve success in open combats, the enemies began to dart arrows against them from a safe distance and no more able to stand up against this onslaught of the enemies, the defenders fell fighting one after the other 'until at last there remained but the grandson of the

prophet.' Wounded and dying and raging with thirst, Hussain, with a little child on his breast, dragged himself to the banks of the Euphrates for a last drink, but the enemies drove him off back to his tent. A missile from the enemy struck at the child on his breast. Wearied and fatigued with the labours of the battle and tormented by thirst, he sat alone helpless at the door of his tent, greatly agitated in mind at the loss of his dear ones. One of the women from inside the camp brought him some water to assuage his burning thirst, but the moment he lifted the cup to his lips, a javeline came from the enemy side and pierced in his mouth. Hopeless of life, he threw himself among the enemies; 'a lance was thrust through his back and he fell over, a corpse.' The enemies cut off his head, trampled his body under horses' hoofs and 'with savage fury subjected it to every ignominy.' These together with a ghastly load of 70 trunkless heads which were carried on their lances by the soldiers and paraded through the streets, were sent to the enemy commander, Obaidulla at Kufa. He sent Hussain's captured sister, his surviving children, and his trunkless head as a present to Yazid. When the prophet's family reached Medina and the people heard their plight and saw them wearied and fatigued, in their tattered and travel-worn garments, a deep and pathetic cry of lamentation went up from all Medina. The people began to strike their chests and cry in unison "Alas for Hussain! Alas that he should be dead." Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* rightly says "In distant ages and in distant climes, the tragic scene of the death of Hussain will awaken the sympathy of the coldest readers." It can now be easily understood why the adherents of Ali and his children, the Shias, give vent to their sorrow annually, during Muharram, by commemorating Hussain's martyrdom.

'Shiisin was born on the tenth of Muharram.'³ The martyrdom of Hussain sowed the seeds of the Shia sect among the Muslims. Today Hussain's grave at Kerbala is a most sacred place of pilgrimage for all the Shia Muslims. It is said that the ardent desire of every Persian is to have his eternal resting place at the side of Hussain's grave. The Shia Muslims all over the world have established the practice of observing annually the first ten days of Muharram as days of lamentation during which they enact a passion play stressing the heroic struggle and sufferings of Hussain. In Persia, it is said that the whole populace is wrought up to this intense excitement during Muharram when the whole story of Kerbala will be idealized and dramatized. For ten days a grand festival of mourning takes place 'in which the entire story is re-enacted with a realism so terrible that on some occasions the actors are really sacrificed as their prototypes are represented to have been'.² "This annual passion play is enacted in two parts, one called ASHURA (the tenth day) in Al-Kazimayon (closeby Baghdad) in memory of the battle, and the other forty days after the tenth of Muharram in Kerbala entitled the Return of the Head³."

In India, usually, at the commencement of Muharram, the Shia Muslims, both males and females, put on black clothes, at least a small piece on their body, as an outward sign of their mourning and begin to mourn for the loss of Hussain by striking their chests and wailing as 'Alas for Hussain! Alas that he should be dead.' This mourning continues uninterruptedly for ten days. The intense excitement reaches the climax on the 10th of Muharram, the day when Hussain fell as martyr at Kerbala. Various methods are adopted by them to intensify the tempo of the passion play. To mention but a few; some of them assume the guise of a tiger by painting their whole body

1. The Saracens by Arthur Gilman, Page 301

2. History of the Muslim World by Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah, pages 86-87

1 History of the Arabs by Philip K. Hitti, page 191

2 The Saracens by Arthur Gilman, pages 303-304

3 History of the Arabs by Philip K. Hitti, pages 190-191

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in that manner or wearing the masks made up with a tiger's skin and parade themselves through the streets, playing, dancing and mimicking like a tiger. Rarely there can be seen certain 'Tiger-man,' lifting a small lamb or a sheep with his teeth during this occasion to show his valour. Another set of people use to walk over or jump into the

big burning pits, specially prepared for the occasion, to show their mourning. Perhaps these are done to idealize the valour of Hussain and his loss. In the evening of the day, all the Shias of the locality join in a procession and take a round through the streets mourning all along the route.

Note:—The Sunni Muslims do not celebrate Muharram in the manner as Shias do annually. Not only do they not celebrate it, but do not even appreciate this celebration. The devout Sunni Muslims however, observe fast during the 9th and 10th of Muharram as enjoined upon them.

DEEPAVALI

(SHRI N. SANKARA MANNADIAR)

Deepavali, the festival of lights, is a day of rejoicing throughout India. In Kerala, this festival is celebrated only by the Hindu population of Tamil origin. It falls on the preceding day of the new moon in the Malayalam month *Thulam* (October--November). It is celebrated in commemoration of the happy incident of the destruction of the demon called Narakasura, by Lord Krishna.

In the Mahabharata and Vishnu Purana he is said to have carried off the ear-rings of Aditi to the impregnable castle of Prag-jyotisha, but Krishna, at the request of the gods, went there and killed him and recovered the jewels. In the Hari-Vamsa the legend differs. According to this, Naraka, king of Prag-jyotisha, was an implacable enemy of the gods. He assumed the form of an elephant, and having carried off the daughter of Viswa-Karma, he subjected her to violation. He seized the daughters of the Gandharvas, and of gods and of men, as well as the Apsarasas themselves, and had more than 16,000 women, for whom he built a splendid residence. He also appropriated to himself jewels, garments and valuables of all sorts, and no Asura before him had ever been so horrible in his actions.¹

As Lord Krishna killed Narakasura on the *Chaturdasi* day (the fourteenth lunar day) it is also known as *Narakachaturdasi*. Before sunrise, the inmates of the house have their oil bath in hot water and put on new clothes. They partake various kinds of sweets and fire crackers. It is said that Lord Krishna killed Narakasura, after the midnight and due to the cold weather, he had his bath in the morning in hot water. The hot water bath for Deepavali, represents the bath of Lord Krishna after killing Narakasura.

The word Deepavali means a cluster of lights. The usual practice of lighting up one's residence on Deepavali eve, is not highly popular in Kerala. The people of Dwarka greeted Lord Krishna with illumination and rejoicing in honour of his victory over Narakasura. The darkness at the night of the *chaturdasi* day compelled them to use many lamps on the occasion and subsequently the illumination became a part of the celebration.

In some parts of North India also, the legend of Narakasura is associated with Deepavali. But in some other parts, the festival is connected with ancestor worship and the worship of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Some others celebrate the festival as the day of Rama's coronation after the destruction of Ravana.

The merchant class treat this day as the beginning of their new financial year which indicates the association of the day with the goddess of wealth. In Vatsyayana's Kamasutra, Deepavali is referred to as *Yaksharatri*, the night of *Yakshas*, semi-divine beings of *Alaka* over whom Kubera, the Lord of Wealth, rules.

The relationship between Deepavali and ancestor worship can be seen from the various days dedicated to Yama, the god of death, during the Deepavali season, like *Yamadipa*, *Yama-tarpana*, *Yama-dvitiya* etc. Deepavali follows soon after *Mahalavapaksha*, the fortnight sacred to the departed ancestors. It is believed that the ancestors would come down during this season from the other world and *Sradha* and *Tarpana* are performed to propitiate them. The Deepavali lamps are considered to be offerings to them and the festival, a *Deepasradha*. During the *Hir* giving festival of Rajasthan, celebrated on the eve of Deepavali, burning

¹ A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History and Literature by John Dowson, page 220

torches are taken to the roofs of the houses and shown in all the directions, which is believed to illuminate the path of the departed souls and guide them back to their places. The Jains, who worship the goddess of wealth on the Deepavali day, observe it also as that of the passing of Mahavira.

Light has always been a symbol of the highest ideals of man and the festival of lights is celebrated all over the world in one form or other. In Thailand, there are two festivals of lights in honour of Buddha and Vishnu and here as in Bengal, is found the practice of floating lamps on rivers and of setting up lamps on long poles. The latter is understood to be for the purpose of scaring away spirits wandering in the firmaments.¹ The Japanese use so many lights for the feast of the dead to light the spirits on their way and the festival is known as the Feast of Lanterns.² The imagination of the folk of early Christendom was touched by the belief of the revisit of the departed souls on All Souls' eve and the surviving customs of burning candles to guide them can still be noticed. "An Irish custom is to place them on windows so that they may shine a generous welcome through the darkness. In some parts of Europe lighted candles are placed in church yards as well as in houses. The Belgians have a procession with lighted tapers and a sacred candle which burns all night to welcome and bless. In Brittany church bells toll in the darkness and pious mourners visit churchyards to kneel barefooted, repeating prayers, beside the graves of the remembered dead, while in houses the fires are kept burning and supper is spread."³ The custom of lighting lamps and laying out food for ghosts is prevalent even among Eskimos.

It is the practice in South India to take a preparation of dry ginger and molasses, soon after the oil bath on the Deepavali day. Dried ginger and molasses form the *Nivedya* or offering for Dhanvantari, a great exponent of Ayurveda. The Dhanvantari Jayanti falls on the day immediately preceding Deepavali. The separate observance of this day has ceased to exist and a part of it viz. taking the preparation of dry ginger and molasses, has merged into the adjacent festival Deepavali.

When Deepavali is celebrated as a day of illumination and rejoicing by millions in India, it is a day of mourning for the Gujars, who were once the supreme rulers of Gujarat. The story goes that one hundred selected Gujar heroes were invited by the Rajput chief for a Deepavali festival and by a friendly approach they were ruthlessly killed. The Gujars cannot easily forget this tragic incident even to this day. They observe Deepavali as a day of mourning and perform *Sradilha* and offer water oblations to their forefathers who fell prey to the treachery.³

Deepavali may have a deeper significance than what is popularly believed. At the time of the festival the sun is in the house of *Thulam* (Libra i.e., the scales) which signifies commerce and hence the association of Deepavali with merchants and the goddess of wealth.

The darkness and light symbolise ignorance and knowledge. As the light removes darkness, the ignorance is displaced by knowledge. There is a prayer in the Upanishads: *Tamso ma Jyotirgamaya*—i.e., carry us from darkness to light. Some people are of the opinion that Deepavali, the festival of lights, is the implementation of this prayer.

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¹ The Significance of Deepavali by V Raghavan, published in the Illustrated weekly of India, November 13, 1955

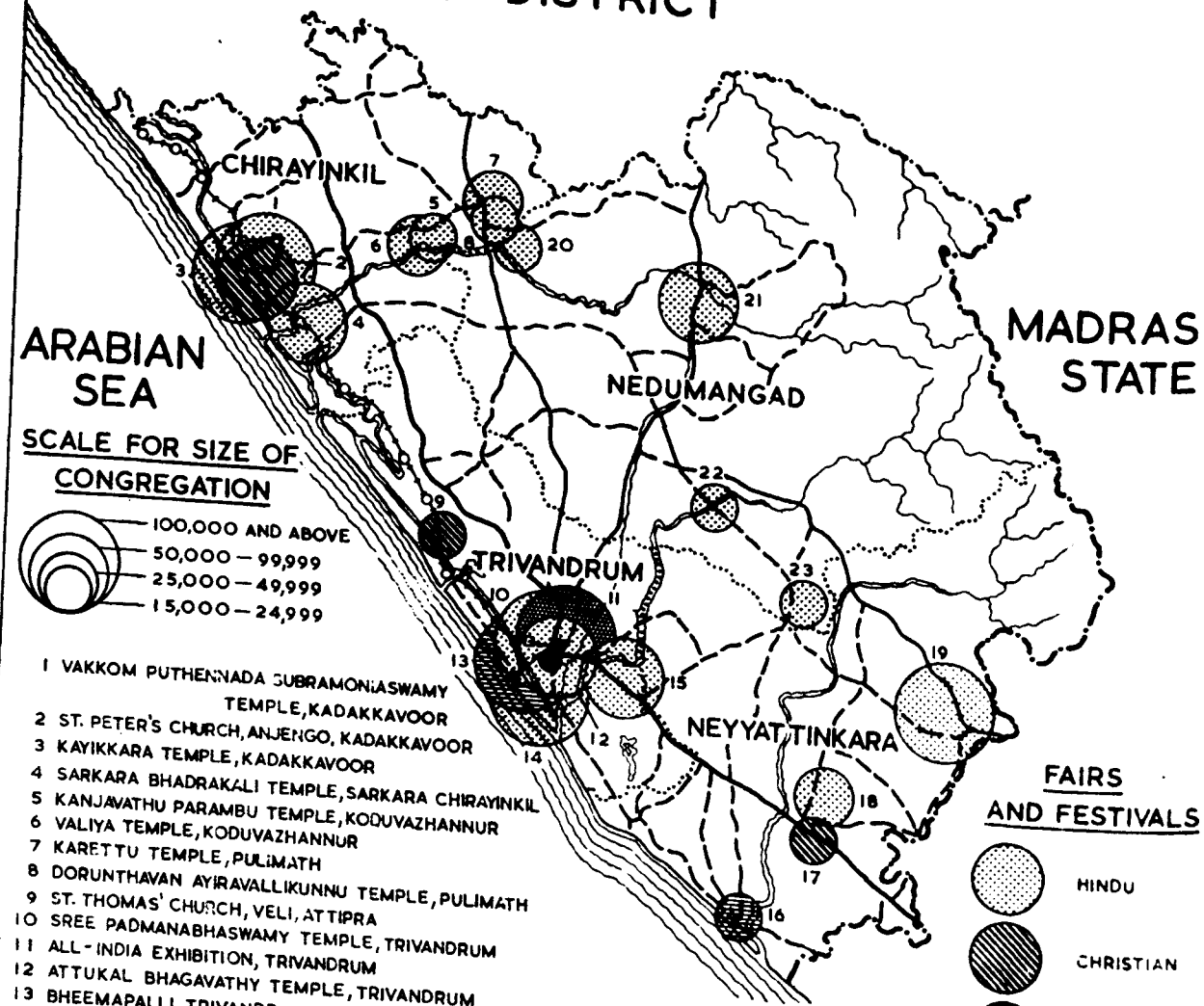
² Manners and Customs of Mankind by J. A. Hammerton, Vol. III, page 916

³ Deepavali—The Festival of Joy and Sorrows by Naredra Shai Saxena published in "Folklore," November 1963.

TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

PLACES OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS WITH CONGREGATION OF 15,000 AND OVER

QUILON DISTRICT



THE ARAT AT THE JANARDHANASWAMY TEMPLE, VARKALA

(SHRI N. BALAKRISHNAN NAIR, SREEKARYAM, VARKALA TEMPLE)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Chirayinkil
Village	Varkala

The Janardhanaswamy Temple at Varkala is situated about two miles from the Varkala railway station. The *Arat* festival is celebrated in this temple every year in *Meenam* (March-April) commencing with *Kodivet* (flag hoisting) on *Karthiga* day and ending with *Arat* on *Uram* day.

The festival extends over ten days. On an average about ten thousand people (every day) gather for the festival. The fair is confined to the sale of petty goods.

There are many interesting traditional lores about this temple. Once when the sage Narada was travelling in this world playing *vina*, Lord Vishnu, absorbed in the melody of the music, followed him unawares. When Narada reached the domain of Lord Brahma, the latter saw Vishnu and at once prostrated before him in obeisance. Vishnu, realising the delicate situation, at once disappeared. When Brahma rose up it was Narada whom he saw before him, and the realisation that the person before whom he prostrated was none other than his own son greatly embarrassed him. The *Devas* who were with him burst into laughter and made fun of Brahma. Infuriated by this Lord Brahma cursed the immortal *Devas* that from henceforth they be mortals subject to the sorrows of birth and death. Narada consoled them and advised them to do penance at the place where his *Valkalam* (mantle made of the bark of a tree) would fall. Accordingly he threw his *Valkalam* and it fell on the top of a tree at the place which is now called 'Varkala.' It is said that 'Varkala' is the colloquial form of *Valkalam*. The *Devas* built a temple there dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The said temple is said to have been destroyed by sea

erosion. Years later, a Pandya king possessed of evil spirit reached Varkala in the course of his numerous pilgrimages and religious offerings for his liberation from the affliction. Miraculously enough the evil spirit left the king on reaching Varkala. As a gesture of gratitude for the wonderful cure recieved by the king he at once started the reconstruction of the eroded temple. One night a heavenly being appeared before the king in a dream and told him that if he watched the sea on a particular day he could see flowers on the surface of the sea over the place where the image of the old temple was lying and that the image should be installed in the new temple. The king readily agreed to this, lifted the image from the sea with the help of fishermen and installed it in the new temple. The left hand of the image which had been broken was fixed in its position with gold. Several devotees who had gathered from far and near for the installation ceremony were struck by a trance at the time of the installation of the image. When they regained their senses they saw that God Brahma himself had appeared and disappeared after installing the image. The king was greatly pleased and lived there in prayer for some more time. At last when he left, he donated large extents of properties to the temple and entrusted the temple to trustees.

There are two sacred bathing places at Varkala.

1. Chakra Thirtha

The *Devas* while doing penance as in the above tradition prayed to Narada for pure water as they could not get it there. Narada approached Lord Vishnu and informed him of the request of the *Devas*. Vishnu threw

his *chakra* (fiery discus) whereupon it brought from Hades the Ganges to the surface of the earth in the form of a spring. Thereafter this spring was called the 'Chakra Thirth.'

2. Papanasa Thirth (Papa=Sin, Nasa=Absolution)

A plunge in this spring liberates one from his sins. It is said that the water here is made up of 66 crores of holy springlets. Once God Brahma was making preparations for a sacrifice (*yaga*). The preparations were on such a grand scale that Brahma got inflated with pride. Vishnu observing this planned to humiliate him and entered the sacrificial hall in the guise of an old Brahmin and demanded food. Even after giving him everything, the Brahmin could not be satiated. At last Brahma realised the truth,

gave up his pride and begged Lord Vishnu to be merciful to him. He decided to give up the sacrifice. Instead, on the advice of Vishnu, he covered the 66 crores of holy springlets collected for sacrifice with a hill so that they transformed themselves into a spring for the benefit of mankind. The well-known *Papanasa* holy spring originates from this.

A plunge in these sacred springs on the new moon days in the months of *Makaram* or *Karkadakam* is considered to be highly sanctifying. Besides, Varkala is getting more and more popular as a health resort. A colourful procession with caparisoned elephants, ornamental silk umbrellas, peacock fans, whisks of yak tail, snake pipe music etc. is one of the prominent features of the festival.

FESTIVAL AT ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, MUNGODE

(REV. FR. LORENZ PAUL, POONTHURA, TRIVANDRUM-9)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Chirayinkil
Village	Ottoor

The St. Sebastian's Church, Mungode, is an ancient church and is dedicated to St. Sebastian, a famous martyr of the early Roman Catholic Church. The Parishioners of this church originally belonged to Navaikulam, where there is a good concentration of Muslims also. Communal discord developed between these communities. The Christians, therefore, migrated to Mungode and established a parish there. Most of the parishioners are agriculturists, cultivators or agricultural labourers. The feast celebrated in this church is that of St. Sebastian, the patron. Though according to the Church calendar the feast is observed on 20th January, it is celebrated here on the first Sunday in *Kumbham* (February). The festival is celebrated for 11 days. During the first nine days there will be *Novena* prayers and litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Benediction in the church. Sometimes a mission will be preached during these days. On the 10th day, the eve of the feast, a special ceremony called vespers is sung in the church. This is followed by a grand procession the like of which is rare in the locality. The procession starts by dusk and moves slowly along the Mungode lake. The statue would be placed on a gaily decorated *jangada*. The entire bank of the lake would have been magnificently floodlit by torches. The procession proceeds on

the lake accompanied by several other decorated country crafts, and lands about a mile to the south of the church and returns to the church by land. The statue of the Saint will be taken on a decorated dais. The route of the procession would have been decorated. It is a noteworthy feature that the decoration is done more by non-Catholics than by Catholics. A peculiar custom connected with this procession is that all along the route women would have lined themselves up irrespective of religion or community and shout *Kurava*¹ when the procession approaches. The procession reaches the church by around midnight.

The next day will be the feast day. There will be a solemn High Mass, sermon and Benediction. On this day also a procession is taken out, but in a direction not covered by the previous day's. The fair connected with the festival commences one week before the festival day i. e. on the Sunday after the commencement of the celebrations and lasts for a fortnight i. e. till the Sunday after the feast-day. All sorts of commodities are available in the fair. Items requiring special mention are bangles, earthenware, root tubers, vegetables, vegetable seeds, reed baskets etc. The attendance during the festival and fair is about 10,000. The congregation consists more of non-Christians.

¹ *Kurava* is a time-honoured Hindu custom proclaiming auspicious events like marriages and births.

POORAM AT ATTOLY MATOM
(SHRI A. G. NARAYANAN NAMBOOTHIRI, ATTOLY MATOM)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Chirayinkil
Village	Kilimanoor

The temple is dedicated to Harithripurakulangara Bhagavathy.

The festival is celebrated for the three days of *Ayilyam*, *Makom* and *Pooram* in the month of *Meenam* (March-April). People of all castes and communities take part in the festival. The usual functions are *Noorum Pahum* for the *Naga* King on the first day, *Cheriya Kuruthy* on the second day and *Valia Kuruthy*, *Thalapoli*, *Kalappattu* etc. on the final day.

Kathirkala, *annam*, *kathakali* and *thullal* are some of the attractions associated with the festival. Vegetable tubers and seeds are the main items of the fair.

Kalamezhuthu is a special offering in this temple. The function is performed by Ponnara Panicker. They also sing the songs for the ceremony. A design of 1½ ft. square

akin to swastik is made on the ground with the sheaths of plantain leaves. Tender leaves of cocoanut palm about 8 to 9 inches long are stuck on it vertically surrounding a tender spike (flower-stalk) of cocoanut planted in the centre. When the *pooja* for Bhagavathy inside the temple is over the deity is invoked on a torch and the torch is planted on the swastik. The conch is sounded continuously from the moment the deity is invoked till it is planted in the swastik. A break means calamities to the household in the succeeding year. Similarly calamities will occur also if the torch on which the deity is invoked does not burn properly. This is followed by a few main religious ceremonies. The festival concludes with *Vilakku*.

SREE NARAYANA JAYANTHI AT ERATHU MUKKALAVATTOM TEMPLE
(SHRI E. N. SANKARY, MANAGER, ERATHU DEVASWOM)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Chirayinkil
Village	Kadakkavoor

The temple is situated at Kayikkara, famous as the birth-place of Mahakavi Kumaran Asan, in Kadakkavoor village, on the side of the Anjengo-Varkala Road between the Arabian Sea and the Koilthottam lake. The temple is dedicated to Sastha, Subramania, Ganapathy and Bhagavathy.

From time immemorial, the temple used to receive a financial assistance of 18 *fanams* per annum from the Travancore royal family for lighting lamp in the temple. In 1112 M. E. this assistance was revised by the

Government to Rs. 5/- per mensem for the daily *poojas* and Rs. 250/- for repairs to the temple. It was again revised on various occasions and at present the temple is getting a monthly grant of Rs. 25/- from the Travancore Devaswom Board.

Archaeological experts are of opinion that originally this was a Buddhist temple, that the granite image now seen in the vicinity of the temple is the image of Buddha which was originally installed in the temple and that the Hindu rulers encouraged the re-

SREE NARAYANA JAYANTHI AT ERATHU MUKKALAVATTOM TEMPLE

conversion of the Erathu family, a leading Buddhist worshipping family to Hinduism by bequeathing rent-free land and a grant of 18 *fanams* for the expenses of the temple. But the tradition goes that the gift of rent-free land and financial grant were to the Erathu family because its members were generals in the army of the Attingal royal family. Special services are offered during the festival even today in honour of the heroic death of a general in battle.

The festival celebrated in the temple is *Sree Narayana Jayanthi* (birthday of Sree Narayana Guru) on *Chathayam* day in *Chingom* (August-September). Sree Narayana Guru used to rest in this temple during his tours. The consecration of the temple to Sree Subramonia, the performance of *poojas* in the temple by Mahakavi Kumaran Asan and Swami Sree Narayana Thirthan in their boyhood and the institution of daily *poojas* here are attributed to Sree Narayana

Guru. This accounts for the celebration of the birthday of Sree Narayana Guru in the temple. The festival day begins with *Gurupooja* (offering to Sree Narayana Guru) followed by a religious session. In the afternoon a procession is held in which the prominent features are caparisoned elephants and the temple orchestra (*panchavadyam*). Community prayers are said at dusk. The celebrations close with cultural programmes like *kathakali*, *ottamthullal*, *harikatha* etc.

On the day of the consecration of the temple to Sree Subramania all who assembled were treated to a feast of *payasam* (pudding) at the instance of Sree Narayana Guru. This tradition is kept up even today. *Payasam* (pudding) is also considered to be an important offering in the temple.

Religious articles, pictures and works of Sree Narayana Guru are the important items of the fair.

KALIYOOTTU AND BHARANI AT SARKARA BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE

(SHRI R. KRISHNANKUTTY NAIR, SREEKARYAM, SARKARA DEVASWOM)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Chirayinkil
Village	Sarkara Chirayinkil

The temple is situated at Sarkara village, about two furlongs to the south of the Chirayinkil Railway Station.

A legend about the origin of the temple runs thus :—

Long ago this place was a rest house. Jaggery merchants from Alengad used to pass along this place with loads of jaggery in earthen pots and stay for the night in the rest house. One morning the merchants, ready to depart, lifted the jaggery pots, when one of the pots was found stuck up and could not be lifted. The exasperated merchant broke the pot whereupon blood began to flow from the broken pot. One

Tharunanallur Namboothiripad who was going that way was informed of the incident. He, by virtue of divine vision, saw the presence of *Devi* and therefore, consecrated *Devi* in that place. As the *Devi* emanated from the jaggery pot she was known by the name *Sarkara Bhagavathi* (*sarkara* means jaggery).

The festivals celebrated in this temple are *Kaliyoottu* in *Kumbham*, and *Bharani* in *Meenam*. *Kaliyoottu* is celebrated to commemorate the fight between Daruka and Bhadrakali. The festival extends over nine days, starting on an auspicious Thursday in *Kumbham* (February-March) and ends

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

on the 9th day which will be a Friday. Over 20,000 people assemble for the *Kaliyottu* festival. *Bharani* in *Meenam* is the birthday of Bhagavathi. The festival

commences on *Pooradam* day in *Meenam* (March-April) and ends on *Bharani* the tenth day. The attendance for *Meena Bharani* is usually well over 50,000.

KODIYETTU UTSAVAM AT THIRUVARATTU KAVU BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE, ATTINGAL

(SHRI P. SIVASANKARA PILLAI, SREEKARYAM, THIRUVARATTU KAVU DEVASWOM)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Chirayinkil
Village	Attingal

The *Kodiyettu Utsavam* of this temple, dedicated to the Goddess Bhagavathi, is celebrated in memory of the consecration of the temple. Commencing on the *Makayiram* day in *Vrischigam*, (November-December) it ends on the *Utram* day, thus extending to eight days. The average attendance during the festival is about 1,000 persons. The deity of this temple is the household deity of the royal family of Travancore. Some princesses of Kola-

thunad were adopted by the royal family of Travancore. The household deity of these princesses at Kolathunad was brought to Attingal and installed as the household deity of the royal family at the place where the temple stands now. Performances like *kathakali*, *thullal*, *harikatha* etc., procession with caparisoned elephants and pyrotechnics are the main features of the celebration. Bell-metal wares and vegetable tubers are the main items of the fair.

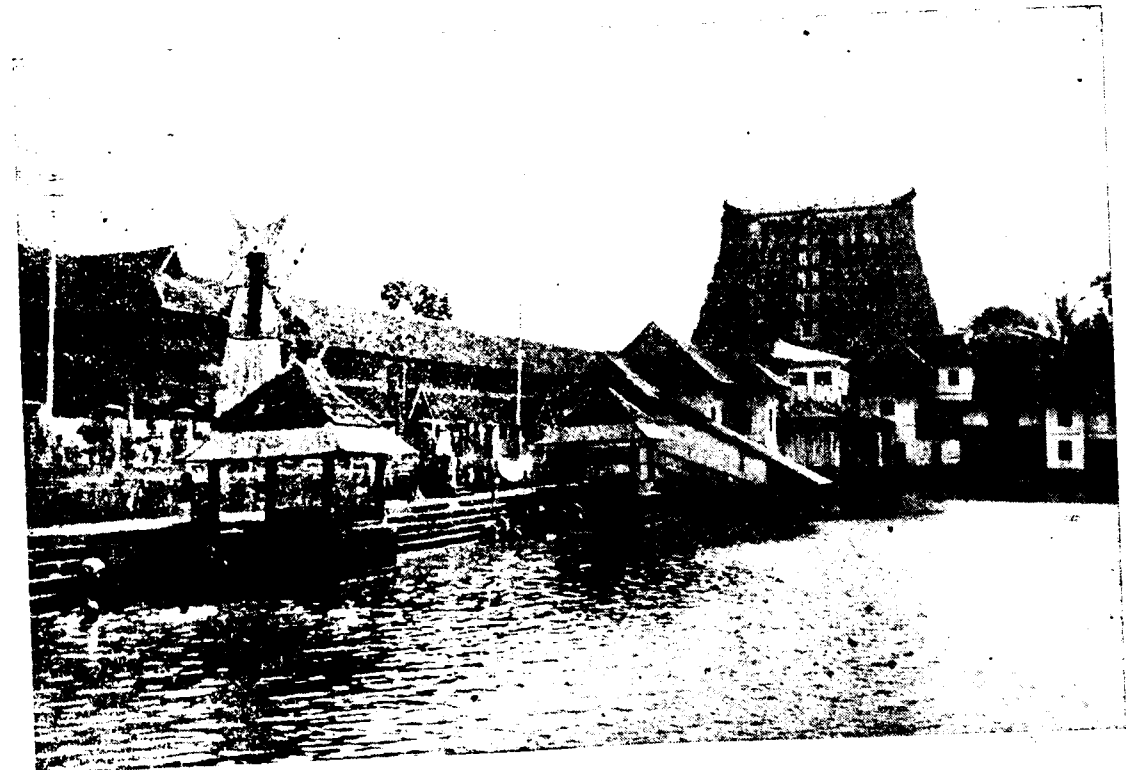
MURAJAPAM IN SREE PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE, TRIVANDRUM

(SHRI S. VAIDYANATHA IYER, SECRETARY TO H. H. THE MAHARAJA OF TRAVANCORE)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Trivandrum
City	Trivandrum

Murajapam is a religious ceremony which is held in the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple once in six years. The word means recital of the *Veda-Mura*. The ceremony lasts for eight weeks and Namboothiris belonging to the Kerala area who are adept in the recitation of the *vedas* are invited to participate in the ceremony. The *vedic* recital begins early in the morning and goes on every day for a period of nearly two hours and it takes seven days to complete the

recitation of each *Veda*—*Rig*, *Yajus*, *Sama* and *Atharva*. Of recent years, no Namboothiri Brahmin has been available to recite the *Atharva Veda*. Rigvedins and Yajurvedins are available fairly easily but there are only a very few Namboodiri *illoms* belonging to the *Sama Veda* group, perhaps two or three. In the eight weeks, the *Vedas* get recited eight times over and on the concluding day, there is the '*Laksha Deepa*' *Mahotsava* in the Temple. On the



PL. 12. SREE PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE, TRIVANDRUM

morning after the *Laksha Deepa*, there is a function corresponding to 'Avabhruta Snana' (concluding bath) and with that the ceremony terminates.

The historical origin of the *Murajapam* is given in the Travancore State Manual, 1906 as follows:—

After the subjugation of the several petty principalities which formed the nucleus of modern Travancore, Martanda Varma, in 919 M. E. (1744 A. D.) with a view to expiate the sins of war and annexation of territory and for the increased welfare and prosperity of his kingdom, held a council of learned men and on their advice instituted two half-yearly *Bhadradipam* ceremonies and when twelve such had been duly performed a *Murajapam* prayer accompanied by feeding and feeding of thousands of Malayala Brahmins the original landlords of Kerala, and concluding with a grand illumination in the temple called *Leksha Deepam* was also fixed upon. The first *Murajapam* ceremony came off in 1750 A. D. It was not only a religious expiation for the atonement of sins involved in the spilling of human blood, the conquering of less powerful neighbours and robbing them of their land and goods; it was also in the manner of a peace offering, a political concession to the barons and landlords of the subdued principalities and a bid for transfer of their allegiance and fealty to a better king on more favourable terms. The *Murajapam* is one of the forms in which this object was intended to be gained.¹

During the *Murajapam* ceremonies, except the last one which was held in the year 1959, quite a large number of Namboothiris used to be present, some of them adepts in the

recitation of the *Vedas* and others who could recite only some *Sthothras* like the *Sahasranama*. They were all accommodated in special *pandals* and buildings. They were all given bed and board for the whole period as also an adequate *dekshina*.

For the last *Murajapam*, however, it was decided to restrict the invitation to such of the Namboothiris only as were adept in the recitation fully of one or other of the three *Vedas*. Brahmasri Tirunava Vadhyam of Malabar and Brahmasri Vamanan Namboodiri of Kulangara *Illom*, Mancompu in Travancore State, were entrusted with the selection of such persons and the maximum number we could get of such adepts was less than 100. The function went off in a more ordered and satisfactory manner. The rate of *dekshina* was increased and there was happiness all round. The *Leksha Deepam* was conducted as in previous years. The Pagoda was flood-lit from outside and along the outline of the Pagoda and along the top of the walls round the temple electrical illumination was made. Inside the temple, however, there were only the cocoanut oil lamps following the old tradition. In every available space in the courtyards of the temple, trellises were put up and small lights placed on them in rows. The whole of the inside of the premises except the *Sribelipura* and where arrangements were made for pilgrims to gather and see the sight, was practically filled with small oil lamps with wicks burning. Thousands of people from the neighbouring States of Madras, Andhra Pradesh and Mysore visit Trivandrum for seeing the *Leksha Deepam* as it is a sight beyond compare.

1. The Travancore State Manual, 1906 by V. Nagam Aiya, Volume II, page 276-277.

ARAT IN THE SREE PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE, TRIVANDRUM

(SHRI S. VAIDYANATHA IYER, SECRETARY TO H. H. THE MAHARAJA OF TRAVANCORE)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Trivandrum
City	Trivandrum

Arat festival is the closing ceremony of the festival in the temple which lasts for ten days. There are two such festivals in a year in the Sree Padmanabha swamy Temple. One takes place in the Malayalam month of *Thulam* (October–November) and the other in the Malayalam month of *Meenam* (March–April.) The *Arat* is a ceremonial procession of the Lord with all His paraphernalia to the sea to have a ceremonial bath at the close of the ten day festival. The previous night there is a procession *Pallivetta* inside the Fort area.

The ten day festival is called *Utsavam*. *Utsavams* are regular ceremonies of all important temples.

For the ten days of the *Utsavam* there will be processions in the temple twice a day; once in the afternoon and once at night (except on the first day when there will be only one procession at night). His Highness the Maharaja, the male members of the Royal family, Palace Officers and Hindu Officers of the Government desiring to do so, escort Sree Padmanabhaswamy during the processions. Different *Vaahanams* are used for the procession on different days as shown below:—

1st day	Simhaasana <i>Vaahanam</i>
2nd day	Ananta <i>Vaahanam</i>
3rd day	Kamala <i>Vaahanam</i>
4th & 7th days	Palanquin
5th, 8th, 9th & 10th days	Garuda <i>Vaahanam</i>
6th day	Indra <i>Vaahanam</i>

On the 9th day is the *Pallivetta* procession. After a few formalities inside the temple, the procession moves on from the east corridor in pin-drop silence and passes out of the temple through the western gate.

His Highness the Maharaja and all the above mentioned persons and the *Yogakkars* (members of the old temple committee) join the procession from inside the temple. Outside the gate the procession is accompanied by armed Indian Army units and Police Guards provided by the Government. The procession moves along the streets and reaches the *Vettakalam* (theoretical hunting ground) improvised near the junction of the Padmavilasom road and the West Street. There, a hunt is symbolised by His Highness shooting an arrow into a tender coconut, immediately after which, the silence with which the procession was moving, is broken by the play of drums and pipes. The procession then moves along Padmavilasom road to the northern gate of the temple. The armed guards stop there and the rest of the procession enters the temple.

The next day is the *Arat* day. His Highness enters the corridor and after some formalities, the procession, to the accompaniment of *Nagaswarams*, drums, etc. moves out of the temple through the western gate as on the previous night, escorted by His Highness the Maharaja, with sword in hand, armed guards, infantry, officers etc. to the beach about two miles away. A caparisoned elephant goes in front with drums on its back which are beaten to indicate that the Lord is coming in procession. Six more caparisoned elephants follow. Behind the *Vaahanams* carrying the deities, a few caparisoned elephants with the deities of a few other temples who have *Arat* on that day form a rear line.

The procession leaves the temple gate at about 5.00 p. m. and takes about an hour to reach the sea-shore. As the *Vaahanams*

ARAT IN THE SREE PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE



VIEW OF THE ARAT PROCESSION

FESTIVAL AT ST. GEORGE'S ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH, TRIVANDRUM

day on which 6th May falls. The feast commences on the Sunday previous to 6th May and ends on 6th May. Therefore, if 6th May falls on a Sunday the celebration will last for eight days and if it falls on a Monday the celebration will last for two days only. Every day there will be evening service, during which the Saint will be remembered. On 5th May there will be a special service

in the evening in memory of the Saint followed by a procession. On the final day a solemn mass called *Moonnimmel Kurbana* is offered and another procession is taken out. Edible offerings are brought to the church by the people which are distributed among the devotees. The attendance will be about 700.

THE ALL-INDIA EXHIBITION, TRIVANDRUM

(SHRI G. APPUKUTTAN PILLAI, COMMISSIONER, TRIVANDRUM CORPORATION)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Trivandrum
City	Trivandrum

The Origin

Although fairs are usually connected with religious festivals, the organisation of exhibitions where articles of interest are exhibited from various parts of the country and sold wherever possible has been a salutary supplement to the chain of fairs associated with religious festivals. Trivandrum, the metropolis of Kerala has the tradition of having an impressive pageant in the *Arat* festival and a highly popular exhibition in her annual All-India Exhibitions. The first exhibition held in living memory in Trivandrum was during the regime of His Highness Srimoolam Thirunal, the Maharaja of Travancore. The Government of Travancore participated in the Empire Exhibition held at Wembly after the Great War. As a preliminary to sending the exhibits to the Wembly exhibition, an All Travancore Exhibition was arranged in the playground west of the Victory Jubilee Town Hall where the University Library now stands. This exhibition was opened by Lord Willingdon who was then the Governor of Madras. It could be said to the credit of the late Dr. N. Kunjan Pillai, who was in charge of the conduct of this exhibition, that it has left its footprints

in the sands of time as a model for future exhibitions. It also opened the eyes of the Government as well as the public to the great importance which exhibitions of the kind deserved in giving an impetus to the growth of agriculture, industries and fine arts. His Highness Sri Chithira Thirunal, the Maharaja of Travancore continued the patronage extended by His Highness Srimoolam Thirunal to the exhibition. The birthday of His Highness Sri Chithira Thirunal, the Maharaja of Travancore was celebrated all over the State with great eclat during his regime as the ruler of the State. A week-long festivities were associated with this celebration in the Trivandrum City. The celebration commenced with the opening of the exhibition in Trivandrum and a Durbar on the day previous to His Highness' birthday. It could be said that the All-India Exhibition in Trivandrum as an annual feature had its origin in this. From the very beginning the public were associated with the conduct of the exhibition by the appointment of a committee of officials and non-officials to assist the Government. The State Government budget provided for exhibition expenditure in the case of every department of Government. The enthu-

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

siasm of Government departments in getting up their stalls as attractive as possible with the maximum number of models, posters and products of educative value has contributed not a little to the importance and splendour of the exhibition. Apart from the spirit of emulation, goodwill, enthusiasm and gaysome gusto which it draws forth from its participants the exhibition constitutes for a certain period every year the cynosure of interest of the entire public and a venue for the graphic demonstration of the many-sided growth of the Nation. Since 1950 the Corporation of Trivandrum came forward to take up the conduct of the exhibition and, thereafter, it is being conducted by the Corporation, the Government, indeed, giving every possible encouragement. Of late it used to be opened in connection with the Republic Day celebrations with the exception of the exhibition in 1961 in which year it was associated with the celebration of the National Festival of *Onam*.

The Venue

2. The usual venue of the exhibition has been the Police Parade Ground (now the Central Stadium) or the Cavalry *Maidan* (now Chandrasekharan Nayar Stadium) or the the Putharikandam *Maidan*, the latest preference being in favour of the last. The campus of the exhibition extends over a large enclosed area with a magnificent gigantic gateway, beautifully decorated and profusely illuminated. Situated opposite to the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple premises the Putharikandam *Maidan* is identified with the ancient *Ananthakad* associated with the miraculous appearance of Lord Vishnu which accounts for the establishment of the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu in *Ananthasayana*. This is also the family deity of the Travancore Royal Family.

A brief description with particular reference to the 1964 Exhibition

3. As one enters the exhibition premises he finds a fitting welcome in the lovely fountain which, shooting forth its rays of water

into an immense lotus flower, is as old as the origin of exhibition itself. Next to the fountain is the life size figure of a *jawan*, the defender of the Nation against the evil forces of Chinese aggression. He so proudly represents the spirit of the Nation that the visitor is automatically inclined to bow his head before him. The artistically constructed auditorium in which dramas, dances, music and a variety of entertainments are held also continues to be a popular feature as in the past. While the life-like figures of a purring cat and a roaring lion in full action catch your eyes as you enter the pavilion of the Electricity Board, the models of hydro-electric projects, generator sets, the electronically operated automatic tap and the like of the stall draw you deeper into more educative subjects as you proceed. If the grand process of conversion of the dark ilmenite into the popular white pigment of titanium dioxide demonstrated through suitable models in the adjacent stall gives an insight into the working of the Travancore Titanium Products, the collection of a prolific variety of bell-metal products in the succeeding stall representing a craft of ancient origin and a genius of high order reminds one of not only the massive wave of the hollow and solid cast copper and bronze images which poured out of the foundries of the Buddhist monasteries at Nalanda in the 8th to the 9th centuries and the numerous castings of the Pallava period found in Kerala but also of the *cire perdue* products of India of the pre-Christian era. In striking contrast to the highly durable and costly products of bell-metal are the models of gods, goddesses and human figures of clay in hollow pattern and painted in life colours displayed in another part. The models and posters of the best breeds like the Sahiwal, the Sindhi, the Gir, the Ongole, the Kankrej and the Murrah which adorn yet another part are highly educative to those interested in dairy farming. Hand printing has almost usurped the place of



Pl. 15. EFFIGY OF DHARMAPUTHRAR

The display of the effigies of the five Pandavas is a feature associated with the Arat festival.



Pl. 16. EFFIGY OF BHEEMA

ARAT IN SREE PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE—*Concl'd.*



Pl. 17. VELAKALI

This is a dance depicting mock fight to the accompaniment of drums. Velakali is held on all days of the Arat festival to commemorate Kurukshetra, the battle between Pandavas and Kowravas.



Pl. 18. VELAKALI—ANOTHER SCENE

THE ALL INDIA EXHIBITION, TRIVANDRUM

embroidery in decorating one's pillow cases, table cloths and the like. The products of this industry from more than one centre seem to attract quite a large number of visitors. Prisoners are no more convicts cut off from society and confined to iron bars but active agents in enhancing the productive capacity of the Nation by their valuable contribution to the manufacture of handloom and handicraft products. The collection of a good many intricately woven and splendidly decorated cotton carpets, numerous varieties of footwears varying from the tiny slipper to the weighty shoe, suitcases and handbags, pillow cases and cushion covers and a variety of similar items in the stall of the Central Jail and Rescue Home stand eloquent testimony to the above. The State Transport Department extends a royal welcome to you through the model of a lady standing at the entrance of its pavilion who sprinkles rose-water over you with one hand and welcomes you with the other. The model of a lady who plays on the *veena* often pulls you up to a quiet musical retreat from the din and bustle of modern traffic exhibited in another corner. While the figure of a helpless pedestrian puzzled by the ceaseless flow of vehicles along the road hardly finds his way to place two steps together without interruption, the working of the automobile engine and its various parts opens a highly educative chapter of this magnificent pavilion which also contains various other exhibits designed to give an idea of the rapid growth of the State Transport service. A tiger, electrically operated, comes out from its cave in a corner and roars as the visitors come in. The fisheries which commands increasing importance in Kerala has been represented by different types of fishing boats, fishing nets including nylon nets of the latest pattern, the model of the boat building yard at Vizhinjam, life jackets, different types of fishes preserved in spirit, floats like thermo floats, aluminium floats, glass floats etc. and models of the Norwegian

Foundry, Ice Factory, Cold Storage Factory, Boatyard, Workshop, Refrigerator, Thermocol etc. The beautiful cotton handloom carpets of enchanting designs from Punjab stand out as an outstanding achievement in handloom weaving. No less important and captivating are the golden laced dhotis of fine counts woven in Kerala. A land of velvety seedlings and flowers is formed by the various stalls exhibiting nursery products. Some of the important projects like the various river projects, prevention of sea erosion, the fishing harbour at Vizhinjam etc. are displayed through effective models in the stall of the Public Works Department. The splendid display with statistical details and pictorial demonstrations on the achievements of the State in agriculture so far under the National Plan Schemes and prospects of the future under the schemes in progress are the main attractions of the palatial pavilion "KRISHI BHAVAN" installed by the State Agricultural Department. The Nation is shown preparing for defence in the magnificent pavilion of the Defence Department exhibiting numerous models, posters and statistics of great value to the Nation. Quite consistent with the growing importance of public health problems in the State, the Public Health Department has exhibited a variety of models, postures and specimens. The specimens represent a large number of rare diseases, malformations etc. Apart from these, the functioning of the heart and other vital organs is demonstrated. The anatomy of a dead body is also shown in addition to several models of educative value of the internal organs of the human body. A medical check-up is done on payment of a nominal fee by highly qualified doctors. The exhibits of the City Improvement Trust and the Department of Town Planning and Architecture cover a variety of city improvement projects like the drainage scheme, models of cities etc. The Art Pavilion exhibiting the paintings of Sudhi Chatterjee represents creative expres-

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

ssion in modern painting. The valuable statistical details given in the posters exhibited by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics in their departmental stall are highly educative. The pavilion organised by the Department of Industries consisting of a large number of stalls is representative of the dynamic growth of industries in the State both of large and small scales, greater emphasis being on small scale industries. The working of important items of machinery in the production centres of the Government of India started in Kerala has been effectively demonstrated in one of these stalls. A large number of articles like iron tools, kora grass mats, rattan goods, coconut pith products, *Kathakali* models, coconut shell articles, sandalwood carvings, bamboo flower-vases laminated wood articles, lamp stands, gold and silver ornaments, ivory carvings etc., besides products of conch shell, clay, horn, ceramics, canning, plywood, steel etc., which are exhibited in this pavilion add much to the value of the exhibition. Among the exhibits in the stall of the Public Health Engineering Department are a model of the Village Water Supply Scheme and maps on water supply schemes and Environmental Sanitation Programme and of those in the stall of the Forest Department are some of the important forest products like reeds, rattans, samples of valuable timber and planks, tusks of elephants, model of elephant cage etc. The models of paintings, craft models and quite a large number of other products coming out of the schools of various kinds under the Department of Public Instruction form a valuable contribution to the educative role of the exhibition. The stalls of the Co-operative, Animal Husbandry and Public Relations Departments are also equally important. The stall of the Department of Animal Husbandry has exhibited young and old white pigs, a beautiful gathering of white leghorns, selected bulls, cows and goats, posters showing the various stages in the evolution of

good breeds, the instruments used for artificial insemination and bloodless castration, grading of eggs by appropriate machinery both local and foreign, preservation of meat, eggs etc., in deep freeze cabinets for months together and a large number of other valuable items. An exhaustive list of the exhibits in the exhibition held in February 1964 is given as an appendix to this account.

An Inaugural Address

Inaugurating the All-India Exhibition in Trivandrum on the 25th of January 1961 the Governor Shri V. V. Giri said:—

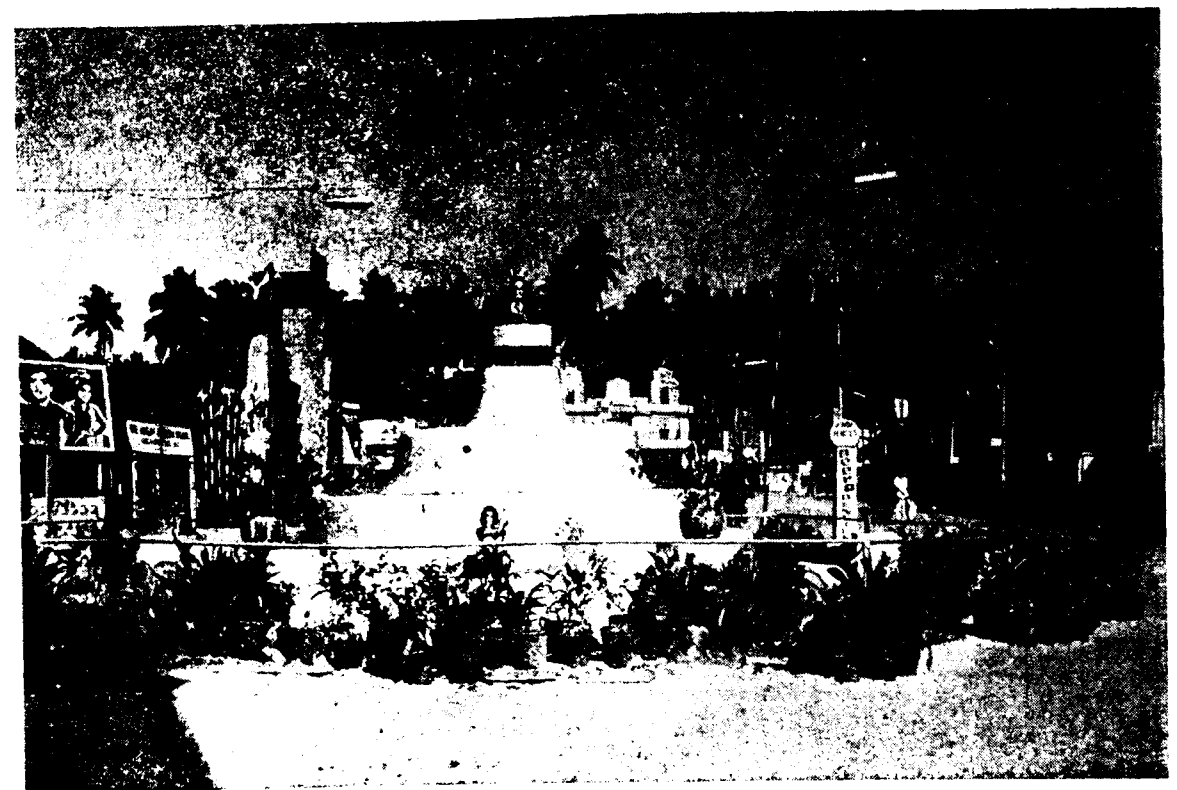
"Today the nation stands ready to launch its Third Five Year Plan. The First Plan and the Second Plan have been successful in the realization of their goals but I am fully aware that in certain projects we have not achieved that much results as we would have liked to make.

"Look at these exhibits in different stalls. Do they not reveal that we are on our way and determined to realize the goals which we have set up before ourselves? They reveal that the object of comprehensive national planning which will embrace every facet of the individual's life and make him feel that the purpose of all these planned efforts is directed towards his well-being, prosperity and happiness."

"Formerly such exhibitions used to be of attraction only to the local population and they were only of a minor importance. But today, we find they draw men from different countries of the world to display their products and also invite people from far and wide. Why is this so? Firstly, there is a greater understanding and increasing appreciation of the fact that if a nation or a region is to progress it can do so only when there is a close co-operation between the State and its neighbours. Secondly, it is realised that a well planned out economic co-operation would be of benefit to all and



Pl. 19. THE GATEWAY



Pl. 20. THE FOUNTAIN AT THE ENTRANCE

ALL-INDIA EXHIBITION, TRIVANDRUM -Contd.



FIG. 21. ART GALLERY



FIG. 22. PAVILION OF THE K.S.E. BOARD

THE ALL INDIA EXHIBITION, TRIVANDRUM

this is accepted clearly and world-trade has replaced mere trade between one nation and another.

"I would utilize this occasion to suggest that while this large scale exhibition is very useful, it may be worth while to consider whether permanent museum-cum-emporia could also be established in different parts of the country where the local products and those manufactured in other parts of the country could be displayed and the general public desirous of making some selections can see the particular types of

goods they seek to purchase and also place their orders in such emporia without the unnecessary intervention of a middleman. If once this is done, I would go a step further and plead for the creation of mobile exhibition which can go from village to village and provide an opportunity to exhibit the many wares to the rural population. This will be a part of their education campaign and also prove invaluable to them in making right and proper purchases."

* * *

APPENDIX

THE ALL INDIA EXHIBITION, TRIVANDRUM, 1964

LIST OF IMPORTANT EXHIBITS

KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD

- 1 Model of an electric train with railway lines
- 2 Model of the Sabarigiri Hydro Electric Project
- 3 Model of the Poringalkuthu Hydro Electric Project
- 4 Multi storage service for multi storage utility—model transmission network
- 5 Maximum protection by minimum capacity—model showing the working of fuses
- 6 Model of the turbo generator in Poringalkuthu Hydro Electric Project
- 7 Model steam engine
- 8 Electronic counter
- 9 Potential Transformer (for meter safety)
- 10 Current Transformer (do.)
- 11 Strain insulators in glass
- 12 Post type insulator for high tension
- 13 'Intruders warned' (model of a lion set in natural surroundings which roars on the approach of any object—operated by photo electric cells)
- 14 Electronic controlled kettle
- 15 'Singing Paper'
- 16 'Milk is mine'—model of a purring cat
- 17 'Try me with a match stick' (an electric bulb begins to burn when a match stick is lighted in front of it—operated by photo electric cell method)
- 18 'Chemical Plant' (actually crystals, formed on mixing potassium permanganate, copper sulphate, common salt and certain acids, which resemble small water plants)
- 19 'Don't Play with Fire'—artificial flames created with crimson colour paper
- 20 The following paintings on common electrical accidents and the precautions to be taken to avoid them
 - i Lady sitting very near a fan may get her hair entangled in the wings of the fan
 - ii To protect electrical equipments use a switch controlled plug
 - iii Don't touch the stay wires
 - iv Don't fly kites near transmission lines
 - v Switch off before removing bulbs
 - vi Inform promptly, damages] to electrical lines to the nearest electrical officer
- 21 Statement showing the salient features like the storage capacity, catchment area, generation capacity, installed capacity etc. of Pallivasal, Sengulam, Neriamangalam and Poringalkuthu Projects now under operation
- 22 do. do. of Panniar, Sholayar and Sabarigiri Projects now under execution
- 23 Chart showing power potential and development
- 24 Chart on percentage revenue under major heads from electricity sales
- 25 Graph showing the K. W. H. generated and purchased during the years 1950—'51 to 1962—'63
- 26 Graph on the load growth and effective capacity for the period 1939—'40 to 1965—'66
- 27 Graph on working expenses (maintenance

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

expenditure, during the years 1950-'51 to 1962-'63

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

(a) *Weights and Measures*

- 1 Working standard measures—20 milliliters to 10 litres set
- 2 Liquid measures, dipping type—20 milliliters to 1 litre set
- 3 Liquid measures, pouring type—20 milliliters to 2 litres set
- 4 Test weights, cast iron—200 grams to 50 kilograms set
- 5 Dry measures—100 milliliters to 10 litres set
- 6 Conical measures—100 milliliters to 5 litres set
- 7 Bullion weights, brass—1 gram to 100 grams set
- 8 Commercial weights, brass—1 gram to 1 kg. set
- 9 Wooden and metal metre scales (1 metre)
- 10 Outdoor type working standard balance measuring up to 5 kg.
- 11 Old type measures and weights like *vellicol, parah, angazhi, thrass* etc.
- 12 Conversion charts and conversion cards giving conversions from
 - i Inch to metre
 - ii Yard to metre
 - iii Mile to kilometre
 - iv Pound to kilogram, etc.

(b) *National Savings and Plan Publicity*

- 1 Paintings calling for investment in National Savings
- 2 Chart showing the expenditure under First Five Year Plan for Industry, Agriculture and Community Development, Irrigation and Electricity, Transport and Communications, Social Welfare, Miscellaneous etc.—Travancore-Cochin State
- 3 Similar chart for expenditure under 2nd Five Year Plan, Kerala
- 4 Chart showing the 3rd Five Year Plan total outlay and plan provision under the five major categories, India
- 5 Chart showing the 3rd Five Year Plan total outlay and plan provision under the five major categories, Kerala
- 6 Map of world showing the density of population in different countries
- 7 Bar graph showing increase in population during the decennial years 1901—1961
- 8 Map of Kerala showing all rivers and the Irrigation and Power Projects (existing and under construction)

STALL NO. 8 M. S. MADRAS SNUFF

- 1 Snuff in different size packets and tins

PYARY AYURVEDIC PRODUCTS

- 1 Pyary Ayurvedic Soap
- 2 Aruna Nalpamara Soap
- 3 Pyary's Nalpamara Soap

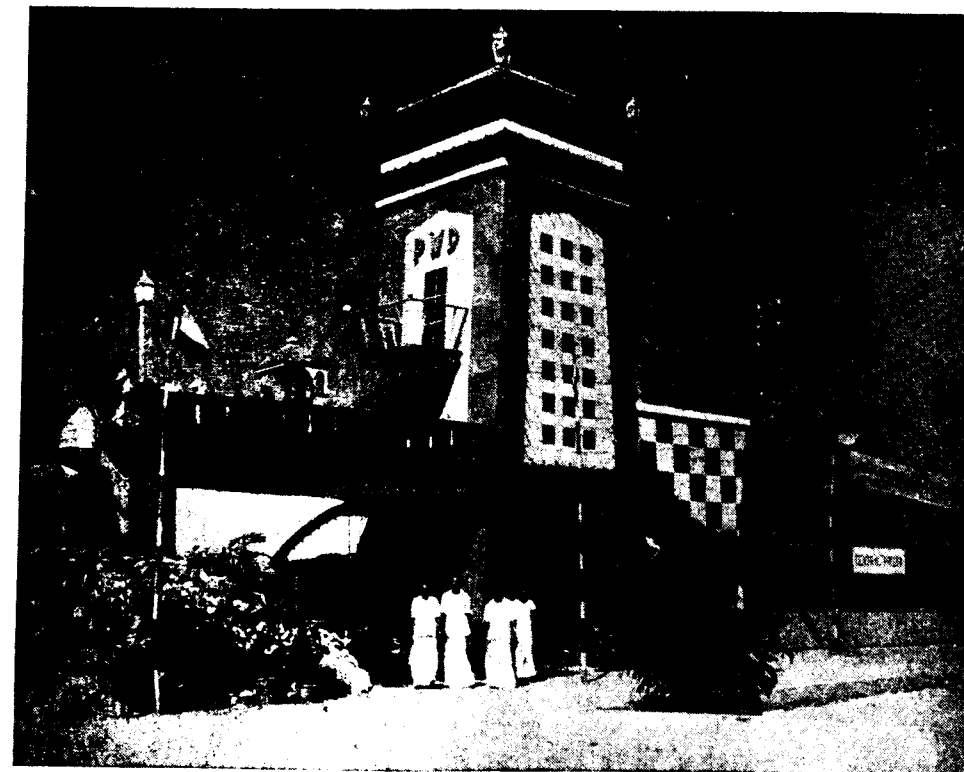
TRAVANCORE TITANIUM PRODUCTS, TRIVANDRUM

- 1 Photograph of the aerial view of the Titanium Plant
- 2 Photograph of the inauguration of 18 tons production of titanium dioxide by the Governor, Kerala
- 3 Photograph of the Sports meet, Travancore Titanium Products in September 1963
- 4 Photograph of the company inauguration by the Travancore Maharaja in 1951
- 5 Photograph of the Sulphuric Acid Plant
- 6 Do of the Control Room
- 7 Do of the Calcium
- 8 Do of the various sections of Titanium dioxide Plant
- 9 Do of the laboratory
- 10 Do of the X-Ray Department
- 11 Sample of Quilon beach sand and its components
- 12 Floor diagram of the process of manufacture of Titanium dioxide
- 13 Model of the Titanium dioxide plant showing the different stages of production
- 14 Crystal models of Rutile, Anatase and Ilmenite
- 15 Samples of
 - i Raw ilmenite sand
 - ii Ground ilmenite
 - iii Crude liquor
 - iv Clarified liquor
 - v Precipitation liquor
 - vi Filtered and washed pulp
 - vii Calcined pigment
 - viii Titanium dioxide pigment
- 16 Some of the common products in which Titanium dioxide is used, viz., rubber, paint, paper, floor coverings, fabrics, leather, cosmetics, vitreous enamels, plastics, soaps, printing ink etc.
- 17 Model of the Administrative buildings of the Plant
- 18 Charts, graphs or pie diagrams on the following aspects of the Plant :—
 - i licensed expansion capacity programme implementation
 - ii Indian demand and production
 - iii Total production
 - iv Indian sales
 - v Uses of titanium dioxide
 - vi Share holding

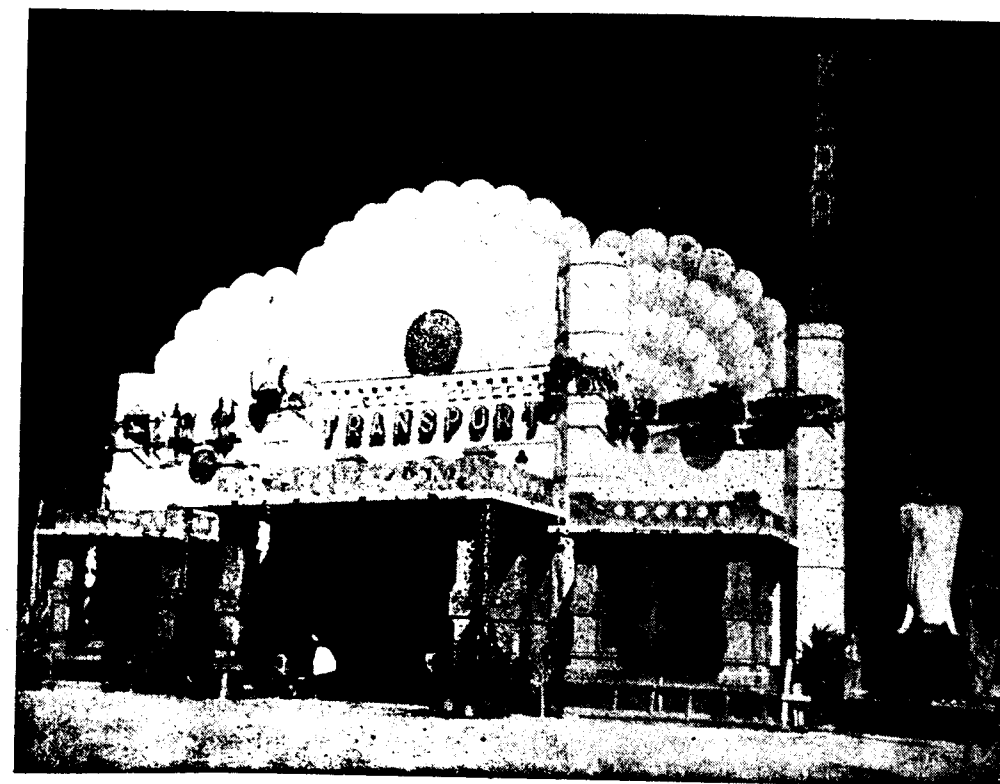
KOMALA VILAS METAL INDUSTRIES

(P. Madhavan Thampi)

- 1 All types of household utensils in stainless

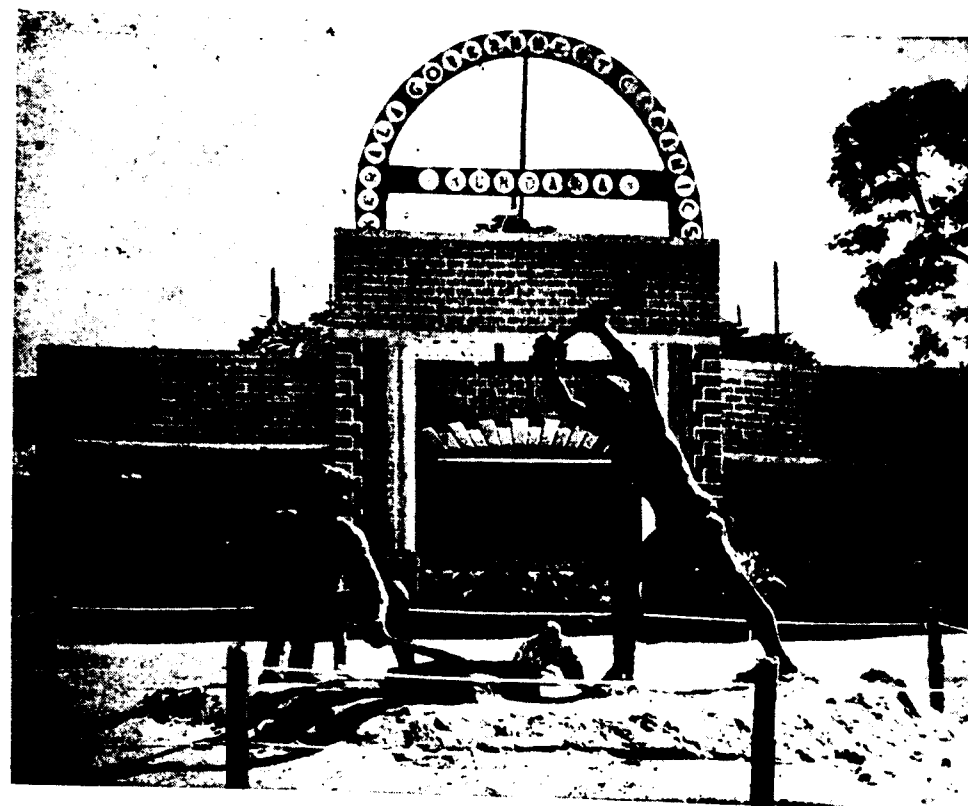


Pl. 23. P. W. D. PAVILION



Pl. 24. STATE TRANSPORT PAVILION

ALL-INDIA EXHIBITION, TRIVANDRUM—Concl'd.



Pl. 25. THE MIGHTY HANDS THAT WORK FOR THE NATION

THE ALL INDIA EXHIBITION, TRIVANDRUM

- steel, brass, bronze, bell-metal and in aluminium alloy
- 2 Flower vases in brass
- 3 Table lamps
- 4 Giant size floor lamps in bell-metal
- 5 Images of Hindu gods like Siva, Vishnu etc. in the new aluminium alloy
- 6 Kerosene stoves

PHARMACEUTICALS & CHEMICALS (TRAVANCORE) PRIVATE LIMITED, TRIVANDRUM

- 1 Pct Hepoler—a tonic for debility
- 2 Pct Broncol—a tonic for cough
- 3 Pct Pain Balm—for headache, cold etc.
- 4 Pct Penicillin ointment—for burns, wounds etc.
- 5 Pct Syrups pineapple, orange and lemon
- 6 Pct Vinegar
- 7 Pct Phenyl
- 8 Pct French Polish

DOWLATH STAMP SERVICE

Postage stamps of all countries in different denominations

COMBINED AGENCIES, TRIVANDRUM

- 1 Antipyl tooth powder
- 2 Pain-O-Balm
- 3 Salve-O-Fowl (for diseases of fowls)
- 4 Galactagogue or Ksheera vardhini (for increased flow of milk in cows)
- 5 Gooseberry tonic
- 6 Renjiny medicated hair oil

AMBIKA PROVISION STORES, TRIVANDRUM

- 1. Pure gingily oil in bottles and tins
- 2. Powdered condiments
- 3. Arrowroot flour
- 4. Wheat rava

SURIA NARAYANA COTTAGE PLASTIC WORKS CHANGANACHERRY

Engraving of names, address etc. in plastic pieces for key bunch

STALL NO. 23

Juices of Pineapple, orange, grape etc.

DAIRY PAVILION

- 1. Photographs or panels of photographs on the following topics :—
 - i Importance given to cows and milk in ancient India
 - ii Adoption of scientific methods for breeding
 - iii Proper care for herd (use good bull, scientific breeding, milk recording, dehorning, grooming, tattooing, proper medical aid)
 - iv Pasteurized milk is disease free and has long keeping quality

v Phosphatase test checks pasteurization efficiency

vi Fodder farm at Valiathura

vii Different processes involved in the pasteurization of milk

2 Model of (i) insanitary milk shed (ii) sanitary milk shed (iii) ideal milk shed and dairy buildings

3 Specimens of properly pasteurized milk and improperly pasteurized milk

4 Models of the following important varieties of cows in India :—

i Sahival

ii Sindhi

iii Gir

iv Ongole

v Haryana

vi Kankrej

vii Murrah

5 Picture showing the main animals meeting the needs of milk in different countries

6 Milk products like cream, butter, cheese, ghee, ice cream etc.

7 Incubator—for growing bacteria for testing milk

8 Sediment tester

9 Lactometer

10 Butrameter—for fat testing

11 Weighing machine—for weighing butter

12 Hansa test—for testing the mixing of buffalo's milk with cow's milk

13 Cream separator

14 Ideal milk can

15 Specimens of rats fed with milk and without milk to show the value of milk in diet

16 Picture calling for the adoption of 'Co-operative method' (in milk production)

17 Charts or diagrams on the following topics :—

i Constituents of milk

ii Quantities of the various nutritional elements contained in $\frac{1}{2}$ litre of milk

iii Quantities of different food materials containing protein equivalent to that in $\frac{1}{2}$ litre of milk

iv Quantities of different food materials containing calcium equivalent to that in $\frac{1}{2}$ litre of milk

v Quantities of different food materials containing Vitamin B₂ equivalent to that in $\frac{1}{2}$ litre of milk

vi A comparative study of the number of cows above three years, quantity of milk obtained in a year from one cow and the quantity of milk consumed by one person in a day in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, U. S. A., Denmark, India and Kerala

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

- vii Dairy development schemes and their set-up in Kerala
- viii Milk and its products
- 18 Map on dairy development in Kerala (3rd Five Year Plan) showing the locations of pasteurization plants, Rural Dairy, Extension Units, milk chilling plants and fodder development schemes.
- PREMIER LEATHER WORKS**
Different varieties of chappals, shoes and bags
- MODERN TOY ARTS**
Toys made of cotton
- STAR PHOTO STUDIO**
Taking of photographs, enlargements etc.
- STALL NO. 42—43**
Everest sewing machines
Pine sewing machines
- MEENA TILE WORKS, QUILON**
Tiles, vessels, images of gods in clay
- BEE KEEPERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY**
- MARTHANDAM**
1 Pure honey in different size bottles
2 Instruments for extracting honey
- SOVIETLAND PUBLICATIONS**
Books, periodicals and other publications of the Sovietland publications
- TEKSHA AGENCIES, TRIVANDRUM**
Ovomalt — a food beverage
- ORIENT INDUSTRIES, CHINGAVANAM**
1 Printed table-cloths, pillow-cases
2 Bed-sheets
3 Fancy umbrellas and festival umbrellas (*Muihukkuta*)
- JAYACHANDRA METAL FACTORIES, VARKALA**
1 All types and varieties of household utensils in stainless steel, brass, bronze and also of aluminium alloy
2 Floor lamps in bell-metal
- SRI SUDARSANA PERFUMERY WORKS**
1 Victory agarbathis
2 Special agarbathis
3 Mysore loban baths
- TAMILNAD HANDLOOM WEAVERS**
- CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY**
Handloom dhotis, shirtings, bed-sheets and gold laced sarees
- STALL NO. 55**
S. S. Madras Snuff
- ELREDA TRADERS, TRIVANDRUM**
1 Instant chicken soup powder
2 Prawn pickles
3 Prawn *chuttini*
- CENTRAL JAIL, TRIVANDRUM**
The following items manufactured by the inmates

- of the Central Prison, Trivandrum :—
- 1 Dungree cloths
 - 2 Coloured *jemakalans* (carpets)
 - 3 Derry
 - 4 Carpets
 - 5 Bed-sheets
 - 6 Shoes, chappals etc. of all sizes for gents and ladies
 - 7 Suitcases and leather bags
 - 8 Sarees, white and coloured
 - 9 Bath towels, loin cloths and kerchiefs
 - 10 Beds and pillows
 - 11 Bandage cloth
 - 12 Brass badges and buckles
 - 13 Spectacle cases
 - 14 Cloth bags
 - 15 Table-knife
 - 16 Wooden dressing tables with and without mirror
- KERALA STATE TRANSPORT**
- 1 A panel of twelve paintings on the principles to be borne in mind while travelling in buses
 - 2 'A shower of welcome'—model of a lady dressed in Punjabi style which welcomes and sprinkles water on persons entering the stall
 - 3 The following motor vehicle systems mounted on wooden board :—
 - i Cooling system
 - ii Friction clutch
 - iii Charging circuit
 - iv Power plant details
 - v Brake system
 - vi Ignition circuit
 - 4 Gear system of a motor vehicle
 - 5 System of working of the steering and wheels
 - 6 Tyre retreaded by the Transport Department
 - 7 List showing the materials used for retreading and repairing tyres
 - 8 'What the tyre has to say'—panel of paintings on the precautions to be taken for the longevity of tyres
 - 9 Currents and cross currents—model of a road traffic junction
 - 10 In his jungle home—model of a roaring tiger
 - 11 Tapioca weighing 52.4 kg. from a single plant cultivated by the staff in front of the Transport Recreation Club, Trivandrum
 - 12 Model of a lady playing on *veena*
 - 13 Miniature models of buses
 - 14 An electrically operated miniature bus
 - 15 Miniature models of boats manufactured by Kerala State Transport

- 16 Lingerin burden of life—model of an old man walking slowly with a walking stick in hand
 - 17 Panel of paintings showing the signs to be followed in road traffic
 - 18 Trophies won by the State Transport Teams in various tournaments
 - 19 Road map of Kerala showing routes operated by the State Transport Department
 - 20 Charts or graphs on the following topics :—
 - i Gross revenue during the period 1938 to 1962—63, total expenditure and net profit
 - ii Vehicle schedules and holdings
 - iii Mileage operated and passengers conveyed
 - iv Staff position
 - v Earning and expenditure per mile
- KERALA FISHERIES DEPARTMENT**
- 1 Marine diesel engine
 - 2 Marine diesel engine—parts mounted on wooden board
 - 3 Marine diesel engine—working demonstrated
 - 4 Model of boats
 - 5 Lifebuoys
 - 6 Life-jackets
 - 7 Refrigerator—used for keeping frozen prawns
 - 8 Model of Indo-Norwegian Project and Boat Yard
 - 9 Materials used for boat building
 - 10 Navigation lanterns
 - 11 Model of Vizhinjam Boat Yard and workshop
 - 12 Frozen shrimp
 - 13 Canned fish (prawns, sardines, clans etc.)
 - 14 Aquarium with the following fishes :—
 - i Gold fish
 - ii Angel fish
 - iii Cyprinus carpio
 - iv Labio
 - v Gourami
 - iv Catla fish
 - 15 Nylon fishing twine
 - 16 Twine for angling
 - 17 Artificial baits for trolling lines
 - 18 Floats of glass, polythene, aluminium and thermocole
 - 19 Flexible wire ropes
 - 20 45 ft. trawl net
 - 21 Tool box for engines
 - 22 Floats and sinkers for fishing clear mounted on board
 - 23 Insulation materials like cork and thermocole
 - 24 Model of the Ice Plant (Indo-Norwegian Project, Neendakara)

- 25 Model of the Administrative Buildings of the Indo-Norwegian Project, Neendakara
- 26 Specimens of the following fishes
 - 1 Star fish
 - 2 Pristis
 - 3 Shark—embryo and shark
 - 4 Hammer headed shark
 - 5 Fistularia
 - 6 Epinophelus malabaricus
 - 7 Trichurus
 - 8 Chirocentrus dorab
 - 9 Arius
 - 10 Tylosurus
 - 11 Penacs carinatus
 - 12 Cybium
 - 13 Seranus
 - 14 Balistas
 - 15 Caranx
 - 16 Saurus
 - 17 Eggs of sepia
 - 18 Polynemus
 - 19 Saurus myops
 - 20 Cuttle fish (sepia)
 - 21 Balistes Stellalus
 - 22 Stromateus niger
 - 23 Synogris japonicus
 - 24 Lobster
 - 25 Lutiganus falvus
 - 26 Lactarius lactarus
 - 27 Sardinella
 - 28 Sardinella longiceps
 - 29 Dussumieria
- 27 Photographs of the different stages in boat building
- 28 Charts (histograms) on the following items :—
 - i Export of frozen marine products 1961, 1962 and 1963
 - ii Export of canned marine products 1961, 1962 and 1963
 - iii Loans and grants issued to fishermen's societies 1957—'58 to 1962—'63
 - iv Memberships of societies, 1958 to 1963
 - v Export of marine products, 1957—'58 to 196.—'63
 - vi Fish landings, 1957—'58 to 1962—'63
 - vii Number of mechanical fishing boats issued, 1957—'58 to 1962—'63
 - viii Number of fishermen trained, 1957—'58 to 1962—'63
- 29 Maps on the following items showing plan provision under 3rd Five Year Plan and locations of the projects, Kerala State
 - i Freezing factories
 - ii Education and staff training
 - iii Housing and colonisation
 - iv Subsidiary industries
 - v Training of fishermen
 - vi Mechanisation of fishing crafts

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

- vii Ice plants and cold storages
- viii Canning factories
- ix Community amenities
- x Fish farming and river fisheries
- xi Fishing harbours
- xii Fish curing
- xiii Commercial trawler fishing
- xiv Major reservoirs
- CHEKKUR BROTHERS
Ready-made dresses for children
- NEW MADRAS BAKERY
Sweets, biscuits, cakes etc.
- NEW STUDIO
Photo taking
- STALL NO. 80
Engraving of names on plastic pieces, fountain pens etc.
- STALL NO. 81—82 AND 83—84
Fancy articles
Glass, rubber and plastic bangles, chains, earrings, studs etc. etc.
- MALABAR SIDHA VYDIA ASHRAMAM
1 Ramachandran's soaps
2 Ramachandran's eye-linings
- GOLDEN TEXTILE PRINTERS
1 Printed pillow-cases, teapoy covers, table-cloths etc.
2 Bed-spreads
3 Umbrellas
- HIND CYCLES
Hind, Admiral, Norton and Royal Star brands of bicycles, spare parts of bicycles
- MAHALAXMI WEAVING CO-OPERATIVE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY, PUNJAB
Punjabi carpets and bed-spreads
- BALARAMAPURAM WEAVERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY
1 Handloom sarees of different designs and texture
2 Gold-laced sarees
3 Dhotis
4 Shirts etc. etc.
- STALL NO. 93
1 Handloom products like sarees, dhotis etc.
2 Art silk carpets
3 Bed-sheets
- SATHYAMOORTHY WEAVERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, PARAMAKUDI
Handloom sarees
- BHUVANESWARI CLOTH STORES,
CHINNALAPATTI
Handloom sarees
- THANGAMANI NURSERIES
1 Vegetable and flower seeds

- 2 Rat poison
- 3 Insecticides
- STALL NO. 98—99
Banians of all sizes
- SUKUMAR BOOK STALL
1 Books and periodicals in Malayalam
2 India map
3 World map
4 Pictorial alphabetical chart (English)
- TATA PRODUCTS
Tata soaps, hair oils and face powders
- PARRY'S STALL
Parrys sweets
- CURRENT STUDIO
Photo taking and enlargements
- RAVI NURSERY, TRIVANDRUM
1 Vegetable seeds
2 Flower seeds
3 Garden implements
- ERODE WEAVERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY
Bed-sheets, bath towels and door and window curtains
- JANATHA STUDIO
Photo taking
- POONTHURA COTTAGE INDUSTRIES
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY
Cotton toys and dolls
- STALL NO. 113
1 Household utensils like stainless steel plates, glasses and trays
2 Cutlery and agricultural implements
- T. C. D. S. LIMITED NO. 4 PUTHENCHANTHAI
All varieties of consumer goods
- KERALA FANS
'Kerala' brand pedestal fans, table fans and exhaust fans
- KAYCEE PRODUCTS
'Kaycee' brand electrical goods like bulbs, fans, shades, switches, iron, room heater, cooling range etc.
- PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
1 Model of the Tagore Centenary Memorial Theatre, Trivandrum
2 Design for the Thunchathu Ezhuthachan Memorial, Tirur
3 Lathe assembled in the Government Engineering Workshop, Chackai
4 Model of the anti-sea-erosion work
5 Model of the proposed Art Gallery at Trivandrum
6 Model of a minor irrigation and ideal tank
7 Model of the Vizhinjam Harbour under construction
8 Model of a typical cross-section of the break water at Vizhinjam

- 9 Drawing of the typical cross-section of break water at the proposed fishing harbour project at Vizhinjam
- 10 Drawing of the aerial view of the Fishing Harbour Project under construction at Vizhinjam
- 11 Location plan and marine diagram of the Fishing Harbour Project under construction at Vizhinjam
- 12 Fancy models of chairs, teapots, cots, desks etc. manufactured at the Government Engineering Workshop, Chackai
- 13 Maps on the following items :—
i Major projects in Kerala—North circle
ii Major projects in Kerala—Central circle
iii Major projects in Kerala—South circle
iv Kerala—Bridges completed in Five Year Plan periods
- 14 Charts on the following items :—
i Classification of roads in Kerala
ii Category of roads in Kerala as on 1-4-'48, 1-4-'52 and 1-4-'56
iii Signs on roads
- 15 Photographs on :—
i Boat race
ii Peechi dam view
iii Typical backwater scene in Kerala
iv Bison at Periyar Wild Life Sanctuary
v Elephant herd at Periyar Wild Life Sanctuary
vi Vallamkali—snake boat race
vii Malampuzha dam, garden, lake and tourist bungalow
viii Kovalam beach
ix Typical canal view
- RUBY SWEETS
Sweets
- PILOT TEA STALL
Sales of Pilot Tea Dust
- SETHUS BISCUITS
'Sethu' brand glucose biscuits
- SARASWATHI STORES
Ready-made garments for children and gents
- JAYABHARATH TAILORING BUREAU
Ready-made garments for children
- STALL NO. 129—130, 131 AND 132
Fancy articles, glass, plastic bangles, rings etc. etc. and plastic flowers
- STALL NO. 133
Foam chappals
- STALL NO. 134
1 Sale of fancy birds like parrot and goldfish
2 Plastic models of fruits like mangoes, plantains, tomatoes, grapes oranges, lemons, cashew etc.

- STALL NO. 135
Leather belts and leather money-purses
- PANDURANGA STORES
All types of kitchen utensils, kerosene stoves etc.
- PRABHAT BOOK HOUSE
1 Books and periodicals in Malayalam
2 Soviet literature, books and periodicals
- UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES, MADRAS
1 Reintan thambol pills
2 Kalighat dental powder
- BENGAL SILK NOVELTY
Manipur sarees
Handloom silk sarees, shirtings etc. etc.
- KRISHNA JEWELLERY
Fancy articles, toys etc.
- TOWN HOTEL RESTAURANT
Catering
- LAL PRODUCTS
'Chandrika' medicinal soaps
- KANYA FRUIT STALL
Juices of fruits like oranges, pineapples, lemons and mangoes
- KRISHI BHAVAN (DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE)
1 Photographs or panels of photographs or drawings on the following items :—
i Production, distribution and cultivation of improved paddy seeds (with a State map showing the district-wise acreage under paddy cultivation)
ii Importance of fertilisers
iii Availability of improved seeds to farmer
iv Different methods of irrigation
v Improved agricultural implements
vi Main cash crops of Kerala
vii Methods for increasing the production of coconut
viii High yield for the T & D variety of hybrid in coconut
ix Cashew fruits
x Pest controlling operations
xi Need for adoption of improved methods in cultivation
xii Cultivation of cinnamon
xiii Different kinds of aids given to agriculturists by the department
xiv Symptoms and methods of controlling certain diseases affecting different parts of paddy
xv Drying of pepper
xvi Tapping of rubber from the rubber tree
xvii Clove cultivation
xviii Sugar-cane field
xix Snakegourd, bittergourd and chillies cultivation

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- xx Sappotta tree
- xxi Papaya tree
- xxii Pineapple plant
- xxiii Citrus plant
- xxiv Nutmeg plant
- xxv Grosdmichael variety of banana
- 2 Different varieties of cocoanut seedlings like the Andaman dwarf, Philippines, St. Settlement, Cochin China, Jawa, Laccadive ordinary, Laccadive dwarf, T & D variety etc.
- 3 Live specimens of the following plants
 - i Camphor
 - ii Cardamom
 - iii Nutmeg
 - iv Lichi
 - v Clove
 - vi Rovolphia serpentina
 - vii Hungarian chillies
 - viii Vanila plant
 - ix Cherry plant
 - x Avocado plant
- 4 Diseased specimens of portions of the following plants :—
 - i Galls of tomato (a fungus disease)
 - ii Bacterial disease on citrus canker
 - iii Mahali disease of areca-nut,
 - iv Virus disease on cardamom
 - v Virus disease on sugar-cane
 - vi Fungus disease on groundnut
 - vii Bud-rot of cocoanut
 - viii Red-rot of sugar-cane
 - ix Leaf-rot of cocoanut
 - x Blight disease of paddy
 - xi Smut of sugar-cane
 - xii Udbatha disease of paddy
 - xiii False smut of paddy
- 5 Specimens of insect pests like rice weevil, bruchus analis, araecerus faciculatus etc. found in stored products with their life-history
- 6 Specimens of the common cocoanut pests like red palm weevil, rhinoceros beetle and cocoanut leaf roller
- 7 Specimens of the common pests of paddy viz. spodoptera mauritia, paddy stem borer, leaf roller, rice bug etc.
- 8 Specimens of the following fruits or seeds :—
 - i Abnormal-sized brinjal
 - ii Double cocoanut within the same shell
 - iii Millets
 - iv Corn
 - v Avocado (Butter fruit)
 - vi Neelum, Khudahad, Bangalore and Malgoa—varieties of mango
- 9 Live specimen of different varieties of plantain
- 10 Several varieties of paddy seeds
- 11 Sun Hemp (a green manure) seeds
- 12 Abnormal sized specimen of male and female enfiorescences and fruits of cymas
- 13 Models of tube well and Persian wheel
- 14 Model of seed drill
- 15 Model of paddy thresher
- 16 Motor tractor
- 17 Hand tractor
- 18 Unit of the soil testing equipment
- 19 The following plant protection equipments :—
 - i Knapsack sprayers of different capacities
 - ii Cyno gas food pump (for killing rats)
 - iii Pyrackone injector
 - iv Rotary duster
 - v Rocker sprayer and hose
- 20 Sample of insecticide D. D. T. 50%
- 21 Sample of fungicide like Agrosan etc.
- 22 Samples of fertilisers like super phosphate, hyper phosphate, muriate of potash and calcium ammonium nitrate
- 23 Different varieties of flowering plants like rose, bougainvillaea, dahlia, cosmos etc. etc.
- 24 Seeds of various vegetables in packets
- 25 Garden kit containing vegetable and garden seeds and a few garden tools
- 26 Juice of fruits like oranges, pineapple, lemon etc.

M. S. P. BEEDIS

'M. S. P.' brand beedis

HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

(A) Medical College

- 1 Preserved specimens or models of the following organs of human body and the abnormal developments in some of them :—
 - i Different stages of the development of human embryo (model)
 - ii Human embryo — 5th week
 - iii do. — 7th week
 - iv do. — 9th week
 - v do. — 10th week
 - vi do. — 11th week
 - vii do. — 12th week
 - viii do. — 14th week
 - ix do. — 15th week
 - x Pregnant uterus
 - xi Gradual development of foetus (model)
 - xii Vertical section of abdomen showing the position of the embryo (model)
 - xiii Human foetus—19 weeks—with placenta and chord
 - xiv Uterus opened to show foetus
 - xv Fully-developed foetus
 - xvi Foetus sagittal section
 - xvii Child with liver on the left side
 - xviii Strange children—two children with their chests joined together

- xix Congenital hydrocephalus—child with swollen head
- xx Strenomelus or mermaid—child with the legs joined from hip to toe
- xxi Cyclopia—child with only one eye on the forehead
- xxii Amorphous foetus
- xxiii Anencephalic foetus
- xxiv Ectopic pregnancy—foetus developing outside the uterus
- xxv Vesicular mole abnormally developed
- xxvi Child with bilateral cleft palate and hare-lip
- xxvii Exomphalos—child without the front abdominal covering
- xxviii Double monster—child with two heads
- xxix Quintuplets
- xxx Human body with thoracic and abdominal cavities opened to show the organs inside (model)
- xxxi Thorax and abdominal viscera *in situ*
- xxxii Brain *in situ*
- xxxiii Nasal cavity, lateral view
- xxxiv Head and neck—a vertical section (model)
- xxxv Teeth *in situ*
- xxxvi Vertical section of head showing orbit and maxillary antrum
- xxxvii Heart (model)
- xxxviii Human heart
- xxxix Human heart—a cross-section
- xl Appendix—Calcium with Ileum and vermiform appendix
- xli Pancreas with its duct system
- xlii Lungs
- xliii Liver
- xliv Male pelvis (model)
- xlvi Female pelvis (model)
- xlvi Male urinary apparatus (model)
- xlvi Female urinary apparatus (model)
- xlvi Urinary apparatus in female *in situ*—specimen
- xlix Medium and ulnar nerves in the palm
- l Plantar arterial arch—blood-vessels of the foot
- li Shoulder joint—posterior aspect
- lii Posterior tibial artery and nerve
- liii Human skeleton
- liv Development of human teeth (model)
- lv Deep nerves and vessels of face (model)
- 2 Following diseased organs of the human body :—
 - i Amoebic liver abscess
 - ii A cluster of hair removed from the intestine of an insane person
 - iii Gall bladder stones
 - iv Stones in kidney
 - v Bladder stones
 - vi Bascillary dysentery and specimens of liver fluke, whip worm, round worm and tape worm
 - vii Amoebic dysentery
 - viii Cancer of breast
 - ix Cancer of lower jaw
 - x Peptic ulcer
 - xi Mitral stenosis—Rheumatism of heart
 - xii Cirrhosis liver
 - xiii Cancer of rectum
 - xiv Cancer of liver
 - xv Cerebral haemorrhage
 - xvi Undescended testes
 - xvii Fibroid uterus
 - xviii Cancer Perus
 - xix Cancer of bone
 - xx Retinoblastoma—Cancer of the eye
 - xxi Epithelioma—Cancer of the skin
 - xxii Gastric ulcer
 - xxiii Tooth diseases (model)
 - xxiv Tongue of typhoid patient (model)
 - xxv Blindness due to Gonorrhoea (model)
 - xxvi Cancer tongue (model)
 - xxvii Lupus vulgaris cheek (model)
 - xxviii Diphtheria of the throat (model)
 - xxix Toad skin (model) caused due to absence of vitamin A
 - xxx Pellagian child (model) due to absence of vitamin B
- 3 Dissected human body
- 4 Operation table
- 5 Chimographer—an instrument to measure the heart beats
- 6 X-ray plate illuminator
- 7 Check up of B. P., vital capacity etc.
- 8 Immunisation centre
- 9 Check up of heart by electro cardiograph
- 10 General check up
- 11 Medical check up
- 12 Dental clinic
- 13 Family planning advice
- (B) Family Planning
 - 1 Male pelvis with the sex organs (model)
 - 2 Female pelvis
 - 3 Photograph of a planned family
 - 4 Photograph of an unplanned family
 - 5 Mechanical and chemical contraceptives like French letter, sheaths, tips, foam pills etc.
 - 6 Rhythm method of controlling conception—model
 - 7 Chart showing the safe, unsafe periods etc. of the menstrual cycle
- (C) Public Health
 - 1 Chart showing the 3rd Five Year Plan Health Programmes in Kerala
 - 2 Pie graph showing the total plan outlay and provision for public health in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Five Year Plans in Kerala

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

- 3 Graph showing the in-patients and out-patients treated in Government Institutions 1956-'62
 - 4 Publicity poster on Rural Health Services in India
 - 5 Bar graph showing the number of medical institutions in Kerala in 1963 according to bed strength
 - 6 Map on Development of Health Facilities, Kerala
 - 7 Chart on the targets and achievements in Health Services in Kerala during the 2nd Five Year Plan
 - 8 Chart on medical institutions and beds—pre-plan and plan periods
 - 9 Poster containing diagrams on how the malaria spreads
 - 10 Malaria life cycle with models of the different stages in the life history
 - 11 Prevention of Malaria—methods
 - 12 Model of smallpox-affected face
 - 13 Two types of smallpox on hand (model)
 - 14 Smallpox of the face (confluent)—model
 - 15 Different stages of vaccination—model
 - 16 Bar graph showing smallpox attacks and deaths in India 1950 to 1961
 - 17 Bar graph showing taluk-wise coverage by mass vaccination in Palghat district
 - 18 Bar graph showing taluk-wise coverage by mass vaccination in Kozhikode district
 - 19 Bar graph showing taluk-wise coverage by mass vaccination in Cannanore district
 - 20 Pie-diagram showing district-wise attacks of smallpox in Kerala for 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959 and 1960
 - 21 Map on National Smallpox Eradication Programmes in Kerala
 - 22 Bar graph on the average cost of a vaccination in India as compared to some other countries of the world
 - 23 Chart on the global position of smallpox (total for India and Pakistan and total for all other countries in the world) in 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1961
 - 24 Miniature model of a man affected with filariasis
 - 25 Panel of drawings showing the life cycle of the two varieties of culex mosquito causing filariasis
 - 26 Culex mosquito—head and mouth parts (model)
 - 27 Models of filaria larvae
 - 28 Leprosy on the hand (model)
 - 29 Model of the face showing the red patches of leprosy
 - 30 Nerve leprosy (model)
 - 31 Skin leprosy with nodulation of face (model)
 - 32 Poster showing how the leprosy spreads
 - 33 Soft and hard chancre on penis (model)
 - 34 Extra genital chancre on lips (model)
 - 35 Soft and hard chancre on vagina (model)
 - 36 Secondary syphilitic eruptions on the whole body (model)
 - 37 Syphilitic eczema (model)
 - 38 Lepa syphilitic (model)
 - 39 Syphilitic granuloma (model)
 - 40 Specimen of the lymph node affected with tuberculosis
 - 41 Gland tuberculosis (model)
 - 42 T. B. of the intestine—specimen
 - 43 Intestinal T. B.—model
 - 44 Tuberculosis of the lungs with cavity at the apex—specimen
 - 45 Cross-section of lung showing tubercular activities (model)
 - 46 Section of lung showing tubercular infiltration (model)
 - 47 Tuberculosis of the bone—specimen
 - 48 Publicity poster containing diagram showing how tuberculosis spreads and its symptoms and how to root out the disease
 - 49 Bar graph showing T. B. institutions and beds during 1st, 2nd and 3rd Five Year Plan periods
 - 50 Map showing the locations of the various T. B. treatment centres in Kerala
 - 51 Model of an insanitary latrine
 - 52 Model of a sanitary latrine
 - 53 Model of pit latrine
 - 54 Samples of antirabic, vaccine, anticholera vaccine and T. A. B. vaccine
 - 55 Domestic sewage disposal by septic tank
 - 56 House fly-life history—models
 - 57 Round worm—model
- (D) *Ayurveda College*
- 1 Constituents and composition of Dasamool-arishtam
 - 2 Constituents and composition of Chyavana-prasam
 - 3 Model of 'Swedam'
 - 4 Model of 'Pindaswedam'
 - 5 Idol of Sree Dhanwantari
 - 6 Model of 'Urovasti'
 - 7 Model of 'Thakradhara'
 - 8 Photographs on the following methods of ayurvedic treatment
 - i 'Shirovasthi'
 - ii 'Thakradhara' and 'Fizhichil'
 - iii 'Navarakizhi'
 - iv 'Nethra tharpanam'
 - 9 Several varieties of ayurvedic preparations
 - 10 Map of Kerala showing Ayurvedic and Homoeo Medical Institutions

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- 11 Important medicinal plants like
 - i Plumbago rosea
 - ii Datura stramonium
 - iii Adathoda vasica
 - iv Herpestis monniera
 - v Acorus calamus

NATION PREPARES—DEFENCE

- I The following photographs or panels of photographs on the activities in the various fields aimed at strengthening the Nation in all fronts in order to meet the challenge to its borders and also increase its defence potential :—
 - 1 Every Indian a Sentinel of Freedom
 - 2 People are the Backbone of Defence
 - 3 Symbols of Determination—protests against aggression
 - 4 Everything for the Nation—people contributing to the defence fund
 - 5 Defence fund collection by film stars
 - 6 Entertainments to the Jawans in the forward areas by film artistes
 - 7 Different aspects of the training to army, navy and air force personnel
 - 8 Outline map of Ladakh
 - 9 Outline map of N. E. F. A.
 - 10 Second Line of Defence—compulsory N. C. C. training of college students
 - 11 Construction of roads in the front areas
 - 12 Patrolling in the front areas
 - 13 Farms Too Have a Role—more production to meet the increased needs
 - 14 National Plans Form Part of Defence
 - 15 Bhakra Dam on the Sutlej river
 - 16 Industry For Victory—importance of industry in National Defence
 - 17 Fighter planes of the Indian Navy
 - 18 View of a steel plant
 - 19 Another steel plant
 - 20 View of an oil refinery
 - 21 More Power to the Nation's Elbows—photos of important dams
 - 22 Lifelines of the Nation—Railways for quick transport—photographs on ports, docks and electric locomotives built in India
 - 23 Healthier Nation to Fight the Enemy—photographs of a penicillin factory etc
 - 24 Second Line of Defence—photos of the training of N. C. C., National Volunteer Rifles, Home Guards and L. S. S.
 - 25 Every Village a Rampart—photos on village panchayats, family planning advice to mothers, better breed of cattle for more milk etc.
- II Models of the following items :—
 - i Silo Grain Elevator, Harpur (U. P.)
 - Ship built at Hindustan Shipyard at Vishakhapatnam

- iii HT-2 plane built at the Hindustan Aircrafts Limited, Bangalore
- iv Vampire jet fighter plane
- v Railway coach
- III Brave sons of India—Photographs of the following persons either dead or missing, who are noted for the exceptional gallantry shown at the time of Chinese aggression on our northern frontiers
 - i Major Dhan Singh Thapa
 - ii Subedar Joginder Singh
 - iii Sepoy Kewal Singh
 - iv Major Shaitan Singh
 - v Brigadier Hoshiar Singh
 - vi 2nd Lt. Shyamlal Dev Goswami
 - vii Naik Thapa
- CITY IMPROVEMENT TRUST
 - 1 Chart—'Trivandrum city at a glance' giving figures of area, population, density of population, literacy, sex ratio, number of households, average income etc.
 - 2 Design of the E. S. I. Hospital at Udyogamandal
 - 3 Design of Calicut Medical College outpatient block
 - 4 Design of the proposed undergraduates hostel, Medical College, Kottayam
 - 5 Ground-plan of the proposed undergraduates hostel, Medical College, Kottayam
 - 6 Design of the proposed plant protection building, Agricultural College, Vellayini
 - 7 Ground-plan of the proposed plant protection building, Agricultural College, Vellayini
 - 8 Design of the Jubilee Market, Tellicherry
 - 9 Design of a building for University at Trivandrum
 - 10 Design of the proposed shopping centre at the Tapioca Research Farm housing colony
 - 11 Design of a health unit at Pangapara
 - 12 Design for P. W. D. office
 - 13 Design of the post graduate students' hostel
 - 14 Design of the Civil Station, Alleppey
 - 15 Design of the municipal office at Neyyattinkara
 - 16 Map of Kerala State showing physiography
 - 17 Map of Trivandrum district showing provisional boundary of the planning region
 - 18 Map on urban settlements and areas under planning
 - 19 Map on Kerala State hydro-electric schemes
 - 20 Map of Kerala showing potential industrial areas and urban settlements
 - 21 Map of Trivandrum city
 - 22 Map of Trivandrum city showing Chalai-Kuriathy development
 - 23 Map on master plan for Trivandrum city

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- 24 Map of Trivandrum city showing development possibilities of large and medium scale industries
- 25 Model of the Tapioca Research Farm Centre housing colony
- 26 Models of 17 buildings with details of the floor area etc.

ART GALLERY

Drawings and paintings (Paintings of Sudhi, Calcutta constituted the predominant collection)

CORPORATION OF TRIVANDRUM

- 1 Maps on the following :—
 - i Trivandrum city
 - ii Trivandrum city showing mosquito catching units
- 2 Charts or diagrams on the following items :—
 - i Morbidity pattern in paediatric age groups
 - ii Ill balanced and well balanced diet
 - iii Quantities of different fruits containing 50 milligrams of vitamins required by a person per day
 - iv Quantities of nutritive elements in different foods
 - v Life history of culex mosquito
 - vi Quantities of different food materials to be taken by a pregnant woman per day
 - vii Property tax in various towns in Kerala
 - viii Expenditure and receipts of Trivandrum Corporation
- 3 Photographs on the following items
 - i Corporation meat van
 - ii Fairs
 - iii Public conveniences
 - iv Slum clearance
 - v Night soil depot
 - vi Maternity and child welfare centre
 - vii Nursery school
- 4 Model of the main building under construction for the Trivandrum corporation

LEATHER MART

Shoes, chappals, bags, etc.

BUREAU OF ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS, KERALA

- 1 Maps on the following items :—
 - i Kerala—Tourist map
 - ii Kerala—Administrative Divisions
 - iii Kerala—Communications (Roads and Railways)
 - iv Kerala—Number of Panchayats and Municipalities
 - v Kerala—Community Development Programmes (Percentage of area and population covered)
 - vi Kerala—Rural and Urban Population 1961

- vii Kerala—Population of Municipalities, 1961
- viii Kerala—Rainfall
- ix Kerala—Health Services Institutions and beds
- x Kerala—Soils
- xi Kerala—Area and Production of Coconut, 1962-'63
- xii Kerala—Area and Production of Rice, 1962-'63
- xiii Kerala—Area and Production of Tapioca, 1962-'63
- xiv Kerala—Area and Production of Rubber, 1962-'63
- xv Kerala—Area and Production of Tea, 1962-'63

- 2 Charts or diagrams or graphs on the following items :—
 - i Variation of population 1901-'61
 - ii Variation of population 1901-2001
 - iii Percentage of literate population, 1961
 - iv Employment services — working of Employment Exchanges 1959-'63
 - v Plan provision under major heads of development in Kerala during 1st and 2nd Five Year Plans
 - vi Classification of area—Kerala, 1962-'63
 - vii Cost of living index of major towns in Kerala, 1963
 - viii Industrywise distribution of factories in Kerala

ROXY STUDIO

Photo taking

V. R. RAMASWAMY & SONS

Handloom sarees
'Vel' sarees

KALANILAYAM BOOK STALL

Books, periodicals, magazines etc. of the Kalanilayam Publications

PARANS TOOTH POWDER

Paran's tooth powder

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

- 1 Model of Filter Point well
- 2 Model of an insanitary well
- 3 Model of a sanitary well
- 4 Model of bowl finished with mosaic
- 5 E. S. P. Type Water seal squatting slab
- 6 Slab finished with mosaic
- 7 Sanitary latrine slab
- 8 Trivandrum drainage scheme—disposal arrangements
- 9 Chart on the environmental sanitation programme and latrine construction
- 10 Model of Trivandrum Water Works scheme
- 11 Wind mill pumping unit
- 12 Model of rural water supply scheme
- 13 Model of the swimming pool at Trivandrum

STALL NO. 235

Leather articles like bags, purses etc.

STALL NO. 236-237

Sweetmeats

PARAMKUDI CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

Handloom sarees

PANAMA CIGARETTES

'Panama' cigarettes

CENTRAL FURNITURE EMPORIUM

Furniture like chairs, sofa sets, cot etc. in teak-wood and rosewood

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

- 1 A radio with all the parts exposed and assembled on a wooden board—by the students of S. M. V. H. S. Trivandrum
- 2 Pencil portraits of the Indian President and other personalities
- 3 Models of animals made out of shell
- 4 Model of a typical garden
- 5 Chart—Human physiology
- 6 Scrap books
- 7 Models made out of cocoanut shells and egg shells
- 8 Embroidery works using cotton, woollen, plastic and other threads
- 9 Models of animals made out of plastic buttons or beads
- 10 Models made out of china clay, lime stone and cocoanut leaves
- 11 Charts to teach alphabets, numbers and words
- 12 Products of crafts work in different schools :—
 - i Dhosis, towels, shirtings etc.
 - ii Rattan work—trays etc.
 - iii Card board models
 - iv Grass mats
 - v Handbags, vanity bags, pillow-cases etc.
- 13 A welcome board which automatically works when one steps into the stall
- 14 An album of embroidery models
- 15 Shopping bags made of plastic bands, wires and beads
- 16 Vanity bags made of plastic threads, oil paper etc.
- 17 Model of a swan made of cotton
- 18 Paintings of (i) landscapes, (ii) soldiers in action (iii) animals catching prey and (iv) important personalities
- 19 A map of Kerala showing Revenue and Educational districts
- 20 A working model of Aruvikkara dam and reservoir
- 21 Portraits of President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, late President Rajendra Prasad and late President Kennedy in coloured threads on cloth

- 22 Paintings of Kathakali scenes
- 23 Full size model of the circulatory system of man in clay
- 24 Night sky in February—A dome 6 metres in diameter showing important constellations and planets in February night sky
- 25 Physical and Political maps of continents
- 26 Graphs and charts showing
 - i The percentage of population attending lower primary, upper primary and high schools
 - ii Strength of pupils in standards 1 to 10 from 1956 to 1963
 - iii Total school going children in the years 1956 to 1963
 - iv Rate of increase in the strength of pupils and total expenditure 1957 to 1963
 - v Percentage of pass in the S. S. L. C. examination from 1959 to 1963
- 27 Aids to teaching
- 28 A globe made of paper pulp
- 29 Coir mats
- 30 Bunches of flowers made of thin coloured wires
- 31 A big model of a periscope about 6 metres in height showing a view of the main road outside
- 32 An automatic drink supplier—delivers just one cup of water when a switch is pressed
- 33 Different types of audio visual aids like epidiascope, film strip projectors, lantern projectors, tape and wire recorders
- 34 Working models of epidiascope, overhead projector, telescope and amplifier
- 35 Quiz boards showing capitals of Indian States, important cities, scientists and their discoveries or inventions
- 36 A model of a man who moves his right hand when his body is touched
- 37 Chart showing the life histories of mosquitoes, ants and other harmful insects
- 38 Collection of old coins
- 39 An electric bulb burning when a match stick is lighted
- 40 Paper pulp model of an elephant

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PAVILION

- 1 " Jersey cross breeding scheme—the light of prosperity "
A photographic panel with illuminated colour transparencies describing in detail the process of upgrading our cattle using Jersey semen to breed high yielding milch animals and comparison of the milk yield of our local cattle with that of the improved variety also was exhibited
- 2 "Key Village Schemes produce Kamadhenus"
The key village scheme—the friend, philosopher and guide of the farmer is a package

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

programme for cattle development. This photo panel gives a picture of the various activities of the scheme

- 3 Along with these photographic panels a special set has been arranged to describe the various aspects of artificial insemination starting from the collection of semen up to insemination, with the help of equipments and photographs

- 4 "Drystock Farms—A boon to the cattle owners"

A photographic panel which gives the details of the working of the Drystock Farms

- 5 "Prevention and treatment of Animal diseases—its relation with public health"

Another photographic panel with details of activities connected with veterinary hospitals, dispensaries, mobile dispensaries and laboratories

- 6 "Live-stock Farms in the State."

Another set of photographs regarding the activities of live-stock farms in the State

- 7 "Profitable Poultry Keeping"

This display board gives hints about the ways and means about profitable poultry keeping

- 8 "Selection of birds for egg production"

This chart gives a complete idea about the selection of birds for egg production

- 9 "Deep litter system in poultry production"

This display board gives an idea about the latest method of poultry raising, giving deep litter system which is quite economic

- 10 "Good fodder for cheap milk"

Various types of fodder grass and methods to preserve them were exhibited with the use of this exhibit

- 11 "Cow—mother of prosperity"

This large display board exhibited in the background of beautiful colour blending and mural paintings, the message of Dr. Radhakrishnan, the President of India, in red velvet with a portrait painting of the President illuminated with the traditional oil lamps of Kerala.

LIVE-STOCK SECTION

Apart from the above photographic exhibits a medium white Yorkshire pig (275 kg. weight) with its 11 piglings, a heifer bred by Jersey cross breeding (17 months old and 5 months pregnant) and a Jamunapari type buck. Apart from these, a practical demonstration of deep litter housing system of poultry with white rock variety birds was also exhibited

Charts dealing with rations for various types of animals and poultry, colour slides regarding diseases, grading of eggs and specimens were also exhibited.

Equipments like, incubator, brooder, debeaker egg grader, deep freezer microscopes with live sperms etc. were also among the exhibits of this section.

CO-OPERATIVE DEPARTMENT

CHARTS

- 1 Organisational chart of the co-operative movement in Kerala
- 2 Member associations at Panchayat level in the Quilon Co-operative Bank
- 3 Progress statement. Quilon Co-operative Bank
- 4 Co-operative movement in Kerala—position as on 30-6-1963
- 5 The Cochin Central Co-operative Central Institute Limited—subordinate personnel course—H. D. C. course
- 6 Malabar Co-operative Institute Kozhikode—Particulars of trained personnel
- 7 Progress of Junior Officers training (Kerala Co-operative Institute)
- 8 Non-official Education Scheme up to the end of January 1962 conducted by the T. C. Co-operative Institute
- 9 Progress of Co-operative Education—Trivandrum Co-operative College
- 10 Progress chart—The Trivandrum District Co-operative Bank Limited
- 11 Receipts and Expenditure Statement—Trivandrum Co-operative Urban Bank Limited (1959-'60, 1960-'61, 1961-'62)
- 12 Kerala State Co-operative Bank, showing banks in all districts, primary land mortgage banks in Kerala
- 13 The progress made by the Kerala Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank Limited during the five years—1956-'57 to 1960-'61
- 14 Long term credit structure
- 15 Progress chart—Trivandrum district Co-operative Bank Limited, borrowing, working capital, loans and advances, share capital, profits earned etc.
- 16 Operations of marketing societies, share capital and working capital
- 17 Operations of agricultural credit societies (a) Percentages of villages covered (b) Percentages of agricultural population covered
- 18 Kerala stands first in India in respect of average membership per society—average deposit per society—average loans issued per society

PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1 Scientific method of cultivation, paddy field, ploughing, fish pond

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- 2 Coconut Marketing and processing (1) Dehusking, dessication and drying, oil pressing, cutting, kernel drying etc. (2) Office-cum-production centre
- 3 Co-operative Cashew Factory shelling, frying, packing, peeling and grading, drying chamber
- 4 House constructed by the Trivandrum District Co-operative Housing Association
- 5 Building construction—Chandranagar Co-operative Colony
- 6 State Co-operative Seminar—1962
- 7 Shell-lime Industrial Co-operative Society in production
- 8 Co-operative Tapioca Cultivation Society—Anamalai
- 9 (a) Co-operative week celebration—1961 (b) Distinguished guests

INDUSTRIES PAVILION

A large size industrial map of Kerala drawn in glass at the entrance to the Pavilion

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRODUCTION CENTRE, ETTUMANOOR

- 1 Power hammer 65 kg. complete with electric motor and accessories
- 2 Oil fired tilting furnace complete with electric motor and lining 200 lb.
- 3 Power hacksaw 6" x 6"
- 4 Sand riddle 1500 kg.
- 5 Sand mixer 60 litres
- 6 Bench drilling machine 1" cap
- 7 4' - 0" lathe— all geared head
- 8 4' - 0" lathe (cabinet type)
- 9 Machine vice (swivel type)
- 10 Machine vice (plain type)
- 11 Bench vice
- 12 Tool makers parallel clamps—125 mm.
- 13 do. do. 100 mm.
- 14 do. do. 75 mm.
- 15 Silver steel centre punches 1"
- 16 do. do. 3/8"
- 17 'V' Blocks 62 x 62 x 80 mm.
- 18 Surface gauge
- 19 Angle plate
- 20 Ball pane hammer 1 lb.
- 21 do. 1/2 lb.
- 22 Cross pane hammer 1/2 lb.
- 23 Allen wrenches 1/2", 1", 7/16", 5/16" and 7/8"
- 24 Surface plate 8" x 8"
- 25 Cube
- 26 Tong flat bit - 550 mm.
- 27 Tongs pincer bit—450 mm.
- 28 Goose neck tongs for rounds—550 mm.
- 29 do. do. 450 mm.
- 30 do. do. square 550 mm.
- 31 do. do. 450 mm.
- 32 Flat cutter (top and bottom) 38 x 6 mm.

- 33 Rod cutter (top and bottom) 20 mm.
- 34 Cold set chisel—35 x 165 mm.
- 35 Hot set chisel—38 x 178 mm.
- 36 Set hammer—38 mm. sq.
- 37 Flatter—64 mm. sq.
- 38 Fullers (top and bottom) 6, 9, 12, 16, 19 and 25mm.
- 39 Swages (top and bottom) 6, 9, 12, 16, 19 and 25 mm.
- 40 Square punches—6, 9, 12, 16, 19 and 25 mm.
- 41 Round punches—6, 9, 12, 16, 19 and 25 mm.
- 42 High Duty C. I. anvil 2 cwt.
- 43 High duty C. I. swage block—15" x 15" x 5"

THE KERALA COIR MATS AND MATTINGS

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD., ALLEPPEY

- 1 Coir door mats of sizes
 - i 14" x 24"
 - ii 16" x 27"
 - iii 18" x 30"
 - iv 20" x 33"
 - v 22" x 36"
 - vi 24" x 39"
 - vii 26" x 42"
 - viii 28" x 45"
 - ix 30" x 48"
- 2 Coir carpets of sizes of 27" x 54", 30" x 66", 36" x 72", 54" x 72", 72" x 108", 6' x 12', 9' x 12' and 9' x 15'
- 3 Stencilled rugs of varying sizes
- 4 Coir matting's of different sizes

COCOANUT PITH INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY, VAIKOM

Images and other decorative articles in coconut pith

GOVERNMENT CERAMICS, KUNDRA

Varieties of decorated and plain dinner sets, tea sets, lemon sets soup sets etc., plates, cups and saucers, jugs etc., toys and other fancy wall and table decorative articles in china clay

UNITED ELECTRICAL INDUSTRIES LIMITED.

Electricity meter

VENUS ENGINEERING WORKS, NEMOM

Cycle spare parts

WESTERN INDIA PLYWOODS LIMITED,

BALIAPATAM

Samples of different varieties of plywoods manufactured in the company

GOVERNMENT BLEACHING AND CALENDERING FACTORY, PAPPANAMCODE

Different kinds of calendered fabrics

MERCURY STEEL PRODUCTS, ALLEPPEY

Sofa sets, chairs, almirahs etc. in steel

ELECTRICAL AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES

(TRAVANCORE) LIMITED, KUNDARA

- 1 House wiring accessories
- 2 Fuse units and cut outs

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

- 3 Iron clad switches
 - 4 Structural steel works
 - 5 Bakelite mouldings
 - 6 Ferrous and non-ferrous castings
- GOVERNMENT HYDROGENATION FACTORY
- Vegetable oils
 - Seed dresser
- TRICHUR SURGICAL PRODUCTS
- Operation tables
 - Examination table
 - Invalid wheel chairs—folding type
- INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, NEYYATTINKARA
- Manufacture of parts of water metre
- WEST COAST INDUSTRIES, ETTUMANOOR
- Electroplating of materials
- KERALA CYCLE RIM FACTORY
- Cycles rims
- HINDUSTAN METAL WORKS, ALLEPPEY
- Cycle spare parts
- ROYAL SMITHS, KUNNAMKULAM
- Surgical instruments
- KERALA ELECTRONIC INDUSTRIES, OLLUR
- Manufacture and assembling of radio and spare parts of radio
- BHARAT RADIO, ETTUMANOOR
- Radio and spare parts of radio
- INDO LEATHER INDUSTRIES, ERAVIPURAM
- Leather articles like chappals, shoes etc.
 - Finishing machine
- MATHER STORES
- Agricultural implements
- SRIDHAS
- Fountain Pen Ink
- KERALA STATE HANDLOOM WEAVERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY
- Handloom sarees, dhotis, shirtings etc. etc.
 - Bed sheets
- INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED NO. T. 44, KUNNATHUKAL
- Kora mats and handbags
- ANAVOOR WOMEN'S INDUSTRIES NO. T. 63.
- PERUMKADAVILA N. E. S. BLOCK
- Fancy mats and handbags made of palm leaves
- VARKALA RATTAN VYAVASAYA CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED
- Cane chairs sofa sets, teapots etc.
- COCOANUT PITH AND FIBRE INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, PAPPANAMCODE
- Brushes
 - Fancy decorative articles in cocoanut pith
 - Toys made of cocoanut pith

- CONCH SHELL INDUSTRY, NEYYATTINKARA
- Paper weights, pin cushions, ash-trays etc. made from shells
- PRODUCTION CENTRE, THIRUVALLA
- 1 Induction motors of 5 H. P. 940 RPM
 - 2 do 5 " 1420 "
 - 3 do 3 " 940 "
 - 4 do 5 " 1420 "
 - 5 do 1.5 " 1420 "
 - 6 do 1 " 1420 "
 - 7 do 1 " 1420 "
 - 8 do 1 " 2800 "
 - 9 Single phase motor
 - 10 Cylinder head for 15 H. P. engine
 - 11 Cross-section of a cylinder head 15 H. P. engine
 - 12 Hook
- PRODUCTION CENTRE, ATTINGAL
- Household utensils in stainless steel and aluminium
- SMALL INDUSTRIES SERVICE INSTITUTE
- I Mobile carpentry van
- 1 Spindle moulder
 - 2 Wood turning lathe
 - 3 Jig saw machine
 - 4 Double ended bench grinder
 - 5 Bench drilling machine 1/2" cap
 - 6 Portable circular saw machine
 - 7 Spray painting unit
 - 8 Portable jointer (surface planer)
- II Mobile smithy van
- 1 Kirlosker lathe
 - 2 NEI bench grinder
 - 3 Bench drilling machine 1/2" cap
 - 4 Welding set
 - 5 Black and Decker valve master refacer
 - 6 Metal cutting machine (power hacksaw)
- III Mobile footwear van
- 1 Skiving machine
 - 2 Strap cutting, edge marking and embossing machine
 - 3 Out-sole stitching machine
 - 4 Sole stitching machine
 - 5 Hand punching and eyeletting machine
 - 6 Skiving and ranging machine
 - 7 Sole splitting machine
 - 8 Sandle press
 - 9 Heel attaching machine
 - 10 Singer sewing machine
 - 11 Strap folding machine
 - 12 Seam rubbing instruments
 - 13 Lasting jack
 - 14 Leather finishing machine
- HANDICRAFTS STALL
- IVORY CARVINGS
- 1 Nataraja (8" in height)
 - 2 Krishna bronze model (8 1/2" in height)
 - 3 Farmer (9 1/2" in height)

THE ALL INDIA EXHIBITION, TRIVANDRUM

- 4 St. George (6 1/2" in height)
 - 5 Sakunthala set
 - 6 Sakunthala with deer
 - 7 Kerala lady
 - 8 Snake charmer
 - 9 Poojari
 - 10 Elephant
 - 11 Reproduction of carvings in stone in Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple, Trivandrum
- WOOD CARVINGS
- 1 Rosewood Bali head
 - 2 Bison standing
 - 3 Flower vase
 - 4 Elephant pulling and pushing a log
 - 5 Elephant
 - 6 Three elephant headed teapoy
 - 7 Cigarette tin with ivory inlay
 - 8 Vyali
 - 9 Bowl
 - 10 Sivagana set
 - 11 Krishna Standing
 - 12 Lady with musical instruments etc.
 - 13 Reproduction of carvings in Sree Padmanabha-swamy Temple, Trivandrum
 - 14 Masks
 - 15 Kathakali life size figures in wood etc.
- HORN CARVINGS
- 1 Table flower
 - 2 Mango paper weight
 - 3 Fish paper weight
 - 4 Bird paper weight
 - 5 Swan
 - 6 Tortoise paper weight
 - 7 Garuda Big
 - 8 Mango bunch with leaf
- JEWELLERY
- 1 Thoda big
 - 2 Thoda small
 - 3 Nagapadapoothali
 - 4 Pulinagamala
 - 5 Mahalakshimimala
 - 6 Kasumala
 - 7 Mullamottumala etc.
- CANE PRODUCTS
- 1 Leaf model tray of different sizes and shapes
 - 2 Oval tray
 - 3 Round plate
 - 4 Flower baskets of different shapes etc.
- KORA GRASS
- 1 Ladies' handbag
 - 2 Prayer mat
 - 3 Sleeping mats of different qualities
 - 4 Colour sleeping mats
 - 5 'Panthu' mats etc.
- BELL-METAL
- 1 'Annapakshivilakku'
 - 2 'Deepasthambam'

- 3 'Kolvilakku'
 - 4 Hanging lamps
 - 5 'Kavadi Vilakku'
 - 6 Bell (Big size)
 - 7 Lamps of different sizes and shapes and Pooja sets etc.
- PAPER MACHIE ARTICLES
- 1 Malabar Lady
 - 2 Bird etc.
- KATHAKALI COSTUMES AND MODELS IN WOOD
- 1 Duryodhana and Dussasana
- BAMBOO
- 1 Lamp shades
 - 2 Baskets
 - 3 Trays
 - 4 Bowls
- KOLIS
- 1 Malabar Lady
 - 2 Village Women
 - 3 Koladikkar
 - 4 Manipuri Dancer
 - 5 Deer Set
 - 6 Christian Girl
 - 7 Toilet Lady etc. etc.
- SCREW-PINE
- 1 Tea-sets
 - 2 Luncheon-sets of different sizes
 - 3 Sleeping mats
 - 4 Tea cosy
 - 5 Slippers etc.
- GRANITE CARVINGS
- Dolls of different sizes
- ARANMULA METAL MIRROR
- Metal mirrors of different sizes
- LAMINATED WOOD
- 1 Biscuit bowl
 - 2 Biscuit container
 - 3 Cigarette container
 - 4 Round fruit bowl
 - 5 Cigar container
- STRAW WORK
- Straw pictures of different sizes and designs
- KOFTGARI
- 1 Round tray
 - 2 Panel model Tray
 - 3 Deepalakshmi etc.
- COCOANUT SHELL
- 1 Ash tray
 - 2 Nuts tray
 - 3 Cups & saucers, teaset
 - 4 Lamps of different sizes etc.
- COCOANUT SHELL AND BRASS DECORATIONS
- 1 Hooka, table lamps etc.
 - 2 Flower vases, ash tray etc.
- FOREST DEPARTMENT, KERALA
- 1 Timber specimens

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 2 Plywood charts | 32 Belt hooks |
| 3 Balsa wood | 33 Detached handles |
| 4 Cane bundle | 34 Pick room with removal handle |
| 5 Elephant tusks | 35 Cant hook |
| 6 Elephant Kraal model | 36 Small axe with leather cover |
| 7 Rotating view finder | 37 Bamboo board ladies vanity bag |
| 8 Chaste written kulavu plank | 38 Mosaic jewellery book |
| 9 Elephant legs | 39 Mosaic coffee tray |
| 10 Hat rack | 40 Diaper medium coffee tray |
| 11 Air seasoning shed model | 41 Diaper peg table |
| 12 Furnace heated kiln model | 42 Diaper tray |
| 13 Bamboo lamp stand | 43 Plywood tray |
| 14 Rock table chair models fitted on a board | 44 Machan model |
| 15 Scrivellows fitted with Gandhiji's photo | 45 Plywood fan |
| 16 Laminated flower vase | 46 Rayons silk sample |
| 17 Elephant models | 47 Wood pulp |
| 18 Battery separators board | 48 Wrapping paper roll |
| 19 Pencil making stages in a board | 49 Sandalwood tree |
| 20 Bamboo waste pencil making stages | 50 Big-bee honey |
| 21 Elephant tooth | 51 Bee's wax |
| 22 Match Industries various stages | 52 Kulavu oil |
| 23 Bamboo board suit-case | 53 Bamboo pieces |
| 24 Maravuri | 54 Hillmen handicrafts |
| 25 Bow saw with blade | 55 'Incha' bark |
| 26 Measuring stick | 56 Reeds mat |
| 27 Kron wedge with wooden head with ring | 57 Fish trap |
| 28 Axe guards in leather | 58 Reed basket |
| 29 Trimming axe | 59 Muthuvan's bow and arrow |
| 30 Lumber saw | 60 Fibres of all varieties |
| 31 Cleaver with handle | |



Pl. 26

BEEMA PALLI MOSQUE

CHANDANAKUDA MAHOTSAVAM IN THE BEEMA PALLI

(SHRI M. MOHAMMED USMAN)

District
Taluk
City

Trivandrum
Trivandrum
Trivandrum

The holy shrine of Beema Beevi, more popularly known as Beema Palli, which is held sacred by Muslims as well as others, is situated about three miles south-west of the Trivandrum Central Railway Station, away from the busy hum of the city, on the beach road leading to Poonthura via Valia-thura. Quite a few only know that Beema Palli is a shrine dedicated to the hallowed memory of Beema Beevi, a pious and devout Muslim lady gifted with divine powers. The popular notion among most of the people is that it is a Masjid of the Muslim community. It is one of the most distinguished Muslim holy places in Kerala and

draws a large crowd of pilgrims. Hardly half an hour's journey by the government transport bus which often plies from the city to this place takes one to this sacred place. Fringed on all sides by the golden-bunched cocoanut trees that stand in striking contrast to the vast expanse of sandy beach and lashed by the unfathomed Arabian waters that seem to end in the distant horizon stretching endlessly on the west, just within a stone's throw from the place, the shrine, with its massive tower rising high up in the sky, presents a glorious dream. Streams of pilgrims of both sexes and all ages from all communities heading towards the shrine



Pl. 27

CHANDANAKUDAM



Pl. 28

RATHEEB

P. 97



Pl. 29

DISPLAY OF FEATS WITH SWORDS

P. 97

CHANDANAKUDA MAHOTSAVAM IN THE BEEMA PALLI

can be seen all along the route leading to it. The sanctity and sacredness of the place is more and more felt as one goes nearer and nearer the shrine. Devout pilgrims can be seen moving about here and there, all around the shrine. Having walked up the stepstones of the main structure, one enters directly a big hall the extreme end of which leads to a small room. In the centre of this small room is located the tomb proper. Herein is laid to eternal rest the mortal remains of the two holy saints Beema Beevi and her son Mahin Abubacker Oliyulla. The tomb is neatly covered with a scarlet silk cloth and is profusely decked with wreaths of flowers. The smoke that emits from the incense burners hovers over the room forming a snow clad canopy over the tomb and surcharging the air with refreshing fragrance all round. Two or three Mullas squat around the tomb reading out verses from the Holy Quran uninterruptedly for the whole day. Some devotees can be seen standing before the tomb in deep reverence, some in still meditation and yet others lying flat on the ground in the big hall as if in a reverie. A gentle calmness prevails there which is broken only by the loud reading of the holy Quran by the Mullas and the occasional moaning and groaning of the maimed, the crippled and the distressed who throng at the shrine in the expectation of achieving riddance from their diseases and misfortunes. The atmosphere inside the shrine is still, tranquil and all serene.

Closely attached to the tomb, as an adjunct to it, there is a small mosque which is said to have been founded about 200 years ago. Not long ago, the tomb and this mosque, being found small and in dilapidated condition, were renovated to their present position by the local Muslim community. Close to the tomb, there is yet another building containing a few rooms which are lying contiguous to one another in a row. These rooms are constructed for the convenience of the devotees coming from far off places who wish to stay and pray and

invoke the blessings of Beema Beevi for the recovery from their diseases. These are let out to them by charging a nominal rent. Outside the shrine has sprung up for the occasion small shops and stalls dealing in all sundry articles. The place around the shrine is thickly populated by all communities, the predominant community being the Muslims who number today, on a rough calculation, about 4,000 or so.

The Beema Palli is managed and administered by a committee consisting of the elders of the locality. Under the management of this committee, 3 *Madrasas* are run at present for imparting religious instructions to the children of the local Muslims. All expenses for running these *Madrasas* are met mainly from the funds of the Beema Palli, received there as offerings, donations and contributions from the devotees. Various articles in silver such as human figures, lamps etc., and live animals like cows, goats, poultry etc. are received there as offerings apart from cash offerings.

The ancestry of the two saints, Beema Beevi and Mahin Abubacker Oliyulla, is still enshrouded in mystery as no precise information about their life history is available today. What little information is obtained about their life and deeds is from the *Munajat* (a poem written in praise of them) compiled by one A. Muhamed Abdul Khader Pulavar and from the various anecdotes relating to them. The *Munajat* is full of praise for them. The local tradition has it that they were originally immigrants from Mecca. It is said that Beema Beevi, accompanied by her son Mahin Abubacker Oliyulla, came from Mecca about 200 years ago and settled at the first instance at Thiruvallam, a place lying about 5 miles south of the Trivandrum city. They were engaged in teaching holy Quran to the local children. After some time, they moved on to Jonaka Poonthura (the place where the shrine is located) and spent the rest of their life there till their demise. While so, Mahin Abubaker Oliyulla, once went on a pilgri-

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

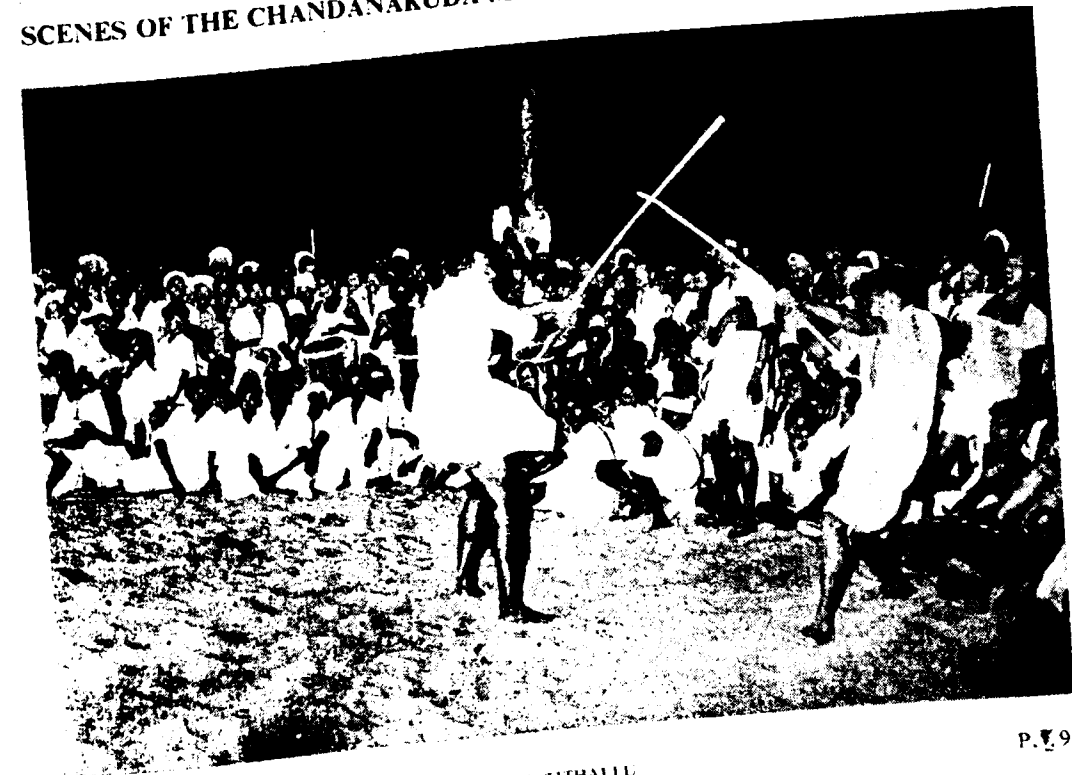
mage to Mecca, leaving Beema Beevi alone at Jonaka Poonthura. During his absence from Jonaka Poonthura, it is said, that some estrangement took place between Beema Beevi and some of the local people on certain matters. On his return from Mecca, Mahin Abubacker Oliyulla came to know this unhappy incident and he could not bear the disgrace done to his mother in his absence. Enraged as he was at this ignominy, he ventured to avenge the offenders. In the skirmish that ensued between him and the offenders, he was overcome by the latter and brutally slain. Beema Beevi also did not survive long to bear the loss of her son. Ere long, she also followed him. They were buried, the mother and the son side by side, in the place where the shrine is located today. Various stories are current among the local people with regard to the miraculous powers of these saints. It is said of them in the above mentioned Munajat that while they were traversing through a dense forest on their way to Thiruvallam the wild animals rushed forward to attack them, but no sooner did they come before them, these ferocious creatures, instead of attacking them, turned mild, bowed before them in reverence and departed in silence making way for the mother and son.

Although some more festivals are celebrated here, the *Chandanakuda Mahotsavam* is, by far, the most important. The occasion of the festival is the commemoration of the death anniversary of Beema Beevi. This festival which is celebrated with much pomp and festivities, begins every year on the 1st of Jamadul Akhar of the Hijra era and lasts for ten days. On all days during the festival, a large number of pilgrims, at any rate not less than 5000 in number, gather at the shrine every day to pay their homage to Beema Beevi. The largest influx of pilgrims, however, takes place on the last day of the festival, i. e. on the 10th of Jamadul Akhar

(on 29th October in 1963) when the entire locality about the shrine turns into a veritable human sea. The number of pilgrims partaking in the celebrations on this day would be well over a lakh.

On the first of Jamadul Akhar, the Palli flag, a well designed green coloured silk cloth with the figures of the crescent and the star encrusted in its centre, is ceremoniously hoisted over the shrine, on its tower, in the presence of the elders and a big gathering. This marks the commencement of the festival and the celebrations that are to follow in subsequent days. During all the days of the celebrations, special prayers including 'Ratheeb' ¹ and 'Moulood' ² will be conducted at the shrine for the eternal happiness of the saints. The pomp and pageantry of the celebrations reach the climax on the final day of the festival when the flag kept at the tomb is taken out in procession around the place. The whole locality wears a festive appearance on this day. The shrine and its premises are richly decorated with festoons and other decorative articles. Among the articles marketed in the shops on the festival days are sweetmeats, fancy articles, toys etc. A curious thing that is in high demand on this day, however, requires special mention. It is a small earthen pot smeared with sandalwood paste on its sides. The top opening of the pot is tightly covered up with a small white cloth, a small flower garland tied around the neck of the pot and two or three *bathees* thrust into the top covering. This pot is known as *Chandanakudam*. The pilgrims purchase these pots from the wayside vendors and putting some coins in the pot, devoutly carry them on their heads to the shrine. These pots are then given as offerings at the tomb. Streams of pilgrims belonging to various communities carrying these pots, with the burning *bathees* emitting out smoke above their heads, and

¹ Recitation of sacred songs and prayers, often read by one man and followed by others in chorus
² Recitation of verses in praise of Prophet Muhammed, often read by one man and followed by others in chorus



Pl. 30

A duel in which the combatants use long sticks as weapons.

P. 97



Pl. 31

DAHARA MUTTU

P. 97

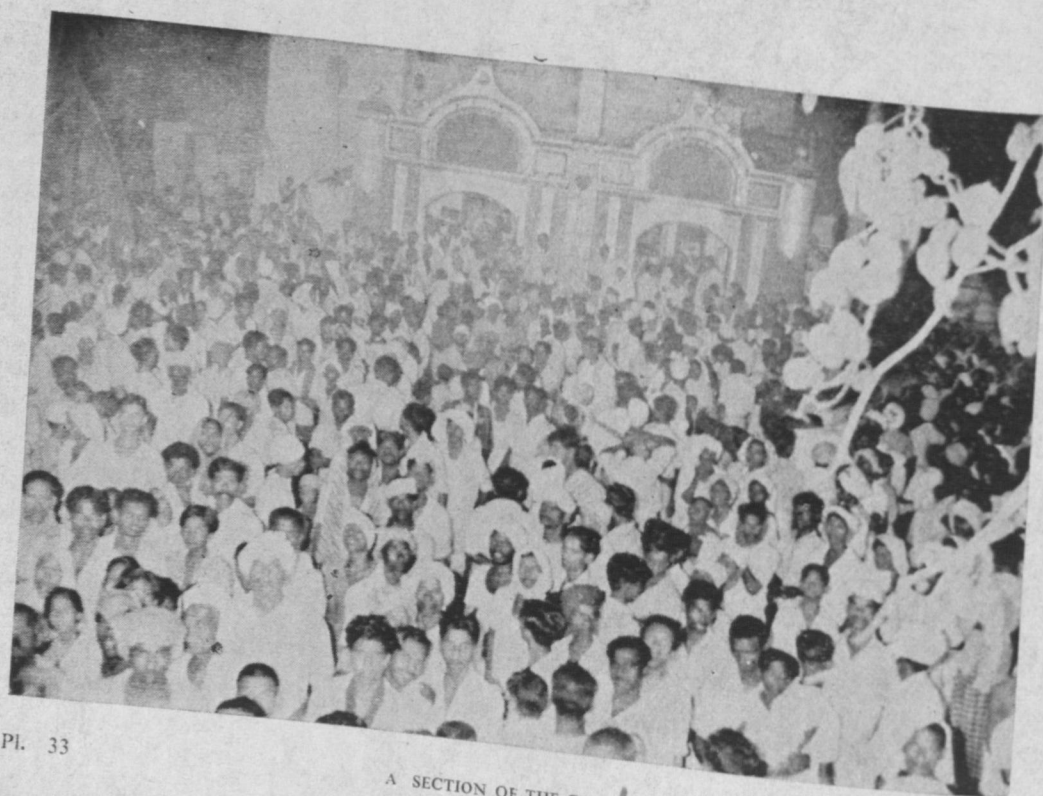
SCENES OF THE CHANDANAKUDA MAHOTSAVAM IN BEEMA PALLI—Concl'd.



Pl. 32

PROCESSION STARTS

P. 97



Pl. 33

A SECTION OF THE CROWD

P. 97

CHANDANAKUDA MAHOTSAVAM IN THE BEEMA PALLI

moving towards the shrine in small batches, is a special feature of the festival. Probably, this feature accounts for the name 'Chandanakuda Mahotsavam' for this festival.

Hundreds of pilgrims begin to pour in from the morning of the festival day. As the day wears on, the crowd increases to unmanageable proportions. By dusk, the entire area is illuminated with neon lights and multicoloured electric bulbs. With this the tempo of the celebrations also increases. Various entertainment parties take up their respective positions and begin to play their roles. Inside the campus of the shrine, a special kind of *Ratheeb* (act of self immolation done with a religious fervour), *Dahara Muttu*¹, sword play², *Vadithallu*³ and the like are played, while outside the campus, dance, music, drama, *katha-prasangam* and similar other entertainments take place throughout the night. At about 1.30 a. m. the flag kept at the tomb will be taken out in procession within an area of one sq. mile round the shrine. This is known as *Pattanapravesom*. Amidst cheers from the crowds and the beating of drums, the President of the Palli managing committee mounts upon a caparisoned elephant, holding the flag in his hand and then the procession

starts the *Pattanapravesom* through the northern gate of the shrine. The organisers of the celebrations spare no pains to make this procession as grand as possible. The procession is led by two caparisoned elephants and with all the accompaniments of *Panchavadhyam*, band, *Daharamuttukali* and similar other entertaining troupes. Starting from the northern side of the shrine the procession heads at first to the west and crossing past the road that runs parallel to the west of the shrine, reaches the beach and from there, proceeds a little further to the south and finally returns to the shrine at about 3.30 a. m. It is no wonder that this is a huge procession as a good majority of the pilgrims join it. As soon as the procession returns to the shrine, the last item of the usual programmes, which marks the end of the festival, takes place. This is a grand show of fireworks which continues until the day breaks and is followed by poor-feeding. The closing ceremony takes place at about 10 a. m. when the 'Palli flag' hoisted earlier at the commencement of the festival is lowered from the shrine. And then, the pilgrims depart from the place, one by one and again a gentle calmness prevails around the shrine.

- 1 A kind of recreative game played by a few Muslim men together by singing and beating small, flat-bottomed basin-like drums and followed with rhythmical movements of their bodies
- 2 A display of feats with a single or multiple bladed 'sword.' This is not actually a sword, but is made up of discarded steel blade used for binding wooden packages in transit
- 3 Feats with sticks played by two or more people

FESTIVAL AT MADRE DE DEUS CHURCH, VETTUKAD

(REV. FR. PETER PUTHENPURAKAL, VICAR FORANE, ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, KOCHUVELY TRIVANDRUM-7)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Trivandrum
City	Trivandrum

The Church of the Mother of God is one of the famous coastal churches of the Trivandrum city situated a few furlongs to the south of the Travancore Titanium Products. In the beginning it was a Chapel under the parish of St. Anne, Pettah. The first chapel was situated a few yards east of the present church, at the site where the Mistical Rose Convent stands today. It was dedicated to the Mother of the Mother of God (Madre De Madre De Deus). When the chapel got old and dilapidated a fresh one was put up under the same name, a hundred yards west of the old one. The ornamental decorated altar works were brought to this new church and made use of to adorn the new one. It was then found out that the inscription under the niche in the main altar where the Patron's image is kept, was 'Madre De Deus' which means Mother of God and not Mother of the Mother of God. Therefore, consequently the church came to be known as the church of the Mother of God and not as the church of St. Anne. This church also got old in course of time and, therefore, a new one was constructed at the same spot in which the present church stands. The belfry attached to the church was completed only 15 years ago.

With the reorganisation of the Padroado in 1886 A. D. the church at Vettukad was separated from the parish of Pettah and made filial to St. Thomas Church, Veli. The church became an independent parish around the year 1900. The statue of Christ, the King enthroned on a separate pedestal behind the church facing the road has brought great fame and money to the church attracting as it does several people of all castes and places. This statue is the gift of

a parishioner. The most important feast celebrated in this church is that of Christ, the King. This feast is observed for 11 days ending with the last Sunday of October on which date the Catholic Church observes the feast of Christ, the King. The feast is celebrated by the church. On the 10th day, after the vespers in the church, there is a procession which goes around the parish lasting for about 1½ hours. On the final day there will be a solemn High Mass, sermon, Eucharistic procession and Benediction. The attendance for this feast is well over 10,000. It is usual for the State Transport Department to detail special trips to Vettukad to facilitate the coming of pilgrims. There is a peculiar fair attached to the festival which consists mainly of sugar-cane, dates, sweets, religious articles like pictures, medals, books etc.

A few other feasts are also celebrated in this church. The Patron's feast is the feast of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This feast is celebrated for 11 days ending on 8th September if it is a Sunday or on the Sunday after 8th September. The attendance in the feast is 3,000 and the feast is conducted under the auspices of the church.

The feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is celebrated for 9 days ending on the last Sunday in June. The feast of Our Lady of Mercy is celebrated by the confraternity of St. Mary. The festival lasts for 11 days and ends on 24th September if it is a Sunday or on the Sunday after 24th September. About 3,000 people attend each of these festivals. There will be no fair except for the confraternity feast. The fair in this case consists of religious articles, crockery and edibles.



Pl. 34

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL, TRIVANDRUM

P. 99

FESTIVALS AT ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL, TRIVANDRUM

(REV. FR. JOHN NEVES FERNANDEZ, VICAR FORANE)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Trivandrum
City	Trivandrum

St. Joseph's Cathedral

The St. Joseph's Cathedral is situated in the heart of the metropolis on the side of the main road between the L. M. S. Junction and the Secretariat. It was constructed over 150 years ago. The massive belfry in front of the church crowned by the statue of Christ, the King, looms large drawing the attention of every visitor to the city. The belfry was constructed 30 years ago.

Though many festivals are celebrated in the church, the following deserve particular mention.

I. Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

The feast extends over nine days ending on the Sunday following May 1st. The 1st of May is the feast-day of St. Joseph, the Worker. A nine-day Novena precedes the feast. On the eve of the feast the evening Service called 'Vespers' is held in the church followed by procession and Benediction. The feast concludes with solemn High Mass during which a homily is preached on the Saint. This is the parochial feast as the church is dedicated to St. Joseph, and, therefore, it is conducted under the auspices of the parish.

II. Feast of the Confraternity of our Lady of Mount Carmel

There is a confraternity established in the parish under the patronage of our Lady of Mount Carmel. The feast is celebrated by the members of this confraternity, the president elected being chiefly responsible. A nine-day Novena precedes the feast that is celebrated on the Sunday following the 16th July. 'Vespers' is sung on the eve, to be followed by procession and Benediction. The feast ends with solemn High Mass in the morning.

As the church is situated in the city, there is no fair attached to any of the festivals. The attendance is well over thousand for each one of the feasts.

III. Feast of Christ, the King

The feast is celebrated for 3 days ending on the last Sunday of October on which day, the feast is annually celebrated by the entire Catholic Church. The preparatory prayers during the preceding three days constitute the "Triduum", besides which a three-day retreat is preached sometimes. The usual 'Vespers' is sung on the eve to be followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. A solemn High Mass is sung on the final day in the morning, and the feast ends with procession and Benediction in the afternoon. The feast of Christ, the King is celebrated under the auspices of the Catholic Action Society of the parish.

IV. Feast of Our Lady of Snows

The feast is annually conducted by the Bharatha community of the parish. The feast extends over nine days during which time the usual Novena prayers are recited. The 'Vespers' is sung on the eve followed by procession and Benediction. The feast ends with solemn High Mass in the morning. The Bharatha community originally belonged to Tuticorin where the feast of Our Lady of Snows is very popular.

V. Feast of St. Sebastian

This feast also extends over nine days ending on the 2nd Sunday after 20th January. The feast begins with the hoisting of the Flag on the first day. The usual Novena prayers are recited in preparation for the feast. On the eve, the evening service 'Vespers' is held following the procession. The statue of St. Sebastian is taken in procession along the main road to Kunnukuzhy,

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

down University Square. Vespers and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament follow. The feast ends with solemn High Mass in the morning. Soon after the Mass the flag is unhoisted. This feast is annually conducted by the 'Guha Kula Arasa

Sangam' an association formed by the fishermen-folk of the parish. A president is elected each year who would, so to say, be the mouth-piece of the community. On him would rest the responsibility of conducting the Feast the following year.

FESTIVALS IN ST. ANTONY'S CHURCH, VALIATHURA

(REV. FR. PETER PUTHENPURAKAL, VICAR FORANE, ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, KOCHUVELY)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Trivandrum
City	Trivandrum

The St. Antony's Church, Valiathura situated as it does close to the Valiathura pier, facing the vast expanse of the Arabian Sea with but a road and a few meters of sandy beach in between, stands as a sentinel of the Trivandrum port. Though the present edifice is only about 40 years old, the church claims 400 years of standing, it being the first of the only five churches of this mission at the dawn of Christianity in this part of the country. Formerly the place was known as *Reithurai* which means royal port. At the time when Trivandrum was made the seat of the royal family the place might probably have acquired the honour of being the royal port, in view of its proximity to the capital and of the fact that it was the only outlet to the sea along the entire coast. Later on, when other sites were explored and people began to inhabit them and make use of them for launching fishing boats, many places came to be called *thurais*. e. g. Cheriathurai, Pallithurai, Chinna-marthandanthurai, Poonthurai etc. But this place was the biggest of them all and, therefore, the name was rightly changed to *Valiathurai*. The church is now the Forane Church of the district known as Valiathurai district. One feature peculiar to this church is that among all the churches

in the coast pews are arranged only in this church.

Unlike in most other Catholic churches, several feasts are celebrated in this church. The more important of them are dealt with hereunder.

1. St. Antony's Feast on the 13th day of January

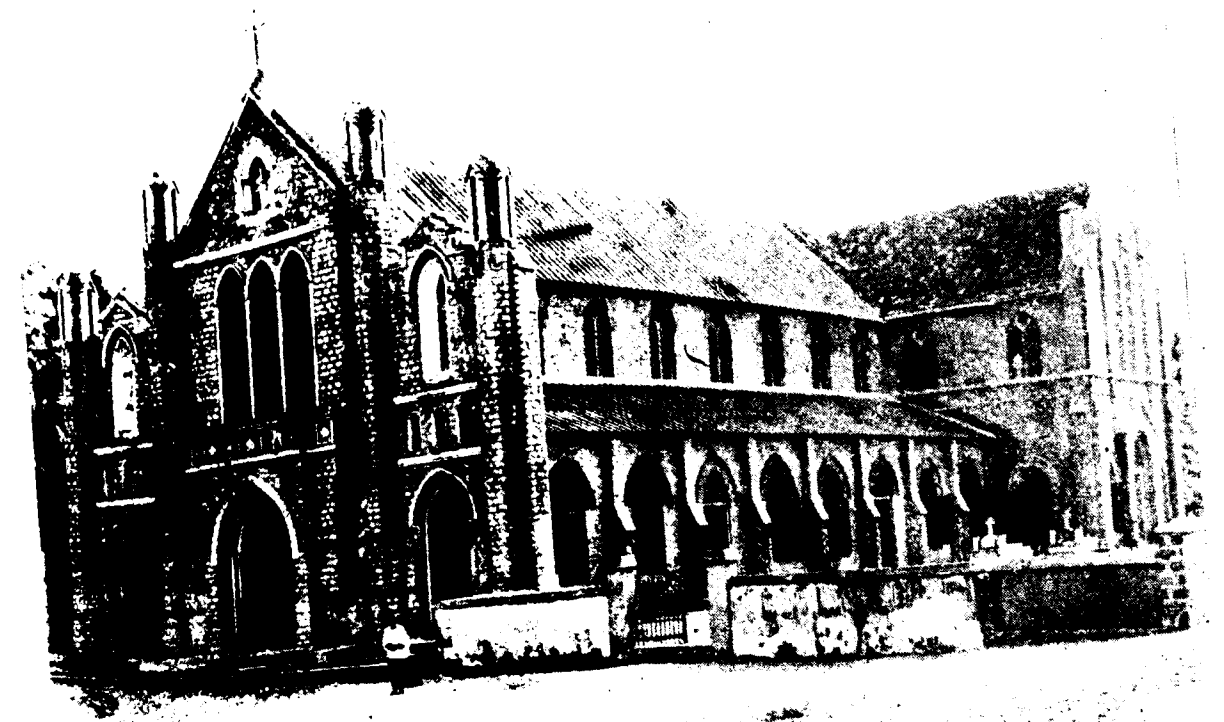
As the church is dedicated to St. Antony this feast is celebrated as the Patron's feast and is conducted under the auspices of the parish church. The feast lasts for 15 days ending on the Sunday after 13th June, on which date the Catholic Church observes the feast of the Saint.

2. Confraternity feast of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception

This feast is celebrated by the confraternity established in the church. Every year a president and office bearers are chosen from among the members of the confraternity for celebrating the feast next year. The feast is for 10 days and the celebrations end on 8th December if it is a Sunday or on the Sunday following that date.

3. Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

This also is a confraternity feast and is celebrated by the confraternity of that name established in the church. The festival is for 10 days ending on the Sunday after 16th



ST. ANTONY'S CHURCH, VALIATHURA

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PONKALA IN THE ATTUKAL BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

July. The rest of the feasts which are all celebrated for 10 days and the dates on which the celebration ends are given below :—

- 4. The feast of St. George—Sunday after 23rd April
 - 5. The feast of Our Lady of Fatima—13th October or the Sunday following that date
 - 6. The feast of Our Lady of Lourdes—Sunday after 11th February
 - 7. The feast of Little Flower (St. Teresa) — Sunday after 3rd October
 - 8. The feast of St. Jerard—Sunday after 31st August
 - 9. The feast of St. Francis Xavier
- There is a chapel dedicated to St. Francis which is a sub-station of this church. This

is an independent parish of the Nadar Christians.

The functions connected with these feasts are more or less common. On all days except the last two days, prayers will be recited in the church in the evening. The Litany of St. Mary will be sung. The day's programme will end with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. On the eve of the feast, a special ceremony called 'Vespers' will be chanted. On the last day there will be solemn High Mass followed by a sermon. There will then be a procession in which the statue of the Saint will be taken out, the priest and the faithful participating. The celebration ends with the solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

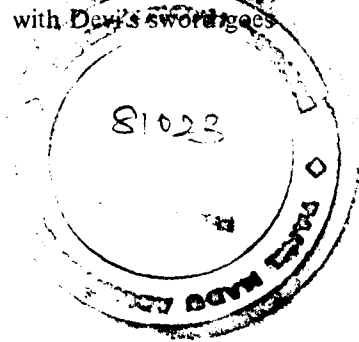
PONKALA IN THE ATTUKAL BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI R. SUBRAMONIAN ACHARI, MANACAUD, TRIVANDRUM)

District	Trivandrum
Taluk	Trivandrum
City	Trivandrum

There is an ancient Bhagavathy temple (Mudippura) at Attukal in Kalady ward of the Trivandrum Corporation. Over and above the daily *pujas* in this temple, *mandalapuja* is observed every year from 1st *Vrischikam* to 12th *Dhanu* with occasional *Chirappu*. But the most important festival in the temple, generally known as Attukal *Ponkala*, commences on *Bharani* day in *Kumbham* and continues for 9 days. The festival begins with *thottampattu* (a song about Bhagavathy) which continues during all the 9 days. On the 9th day several thousands of women would have assembled in the temple compound with *ponkala* pots and the required quantities of rice and other ingredients for *ponkala*. Many of them would have even brought with them firewood required for cooking the *ponkala*. The hearth is made at the spot by taking burnt bricks on hire which will be available in the

locality in plenty. *Ponkala* is an offering usually made in Bhagavathy temples. It is prepared in the form of pudding by cooking rice, jaggery, cocoanut shavings and plantain fruits in varying combinations. Two main varieties of *ponkala* are one with rice, jaggery, cocoanut shavings and plantain fruits and another without jaggery. The proportion of these ingredients is one measure of rice, one pound of jaggery, shavings of one cocoanut and a few plantain fruits. Another difference in the *ponkala* offering is with regard to the quantity. Usually *ponkalas* are made with quantities of rice varying from one measure, 3 measures, 5 measures, 7 measures and so on with corresponding quantities of other ingredients. Very early in the morning the *ponkalas* begin to be prepared. By the evening almost all the *ponkalas* would have been ready, when the *Melsanthi* with *Devi's* sword goes



all over the fields and compounds around the temple where innumerable *ponkalas* would have been prepared and blesses them by sprinkling holy water and throwing flowers. It is almost impossible to estimate the number of *ponkalas*. After this, the Devi is taken in procession to Manacaud Sastha temple accompanied by *thalapoli*, *kuthiyottam*, *annam*, *vaahanam*, caparisoned elephants etc. In this procession famous troupes of instrumental music like *chenda*, *nagaswaram*, band and *neyyandimelam* would take part. There will also be *kumbhakudam* during the procession. All along the route, the procession will be welcomed by *nirapara*, which will be kept ready in front of houses. The procession returns the next morning.

Kumbhakudam

This is a kind of offering usually seen in Bhagavathy temples only. The person performing *kumbhakudam*, places on his head a pot with a narrow neck and large body called *kumbham*. The pot will be filled either with milk or turmeric solution and decorated with flowers. He dances in front of the image during the procession. At the close of the procession the contents of the *kumbham* are poured over the image of the deity.

The fair connected with the festival is fairly large and very peculiar in that only two commodities are available, namely, burnt bricks and light firewood. These two things are required for the preparation of *ponkala* which the women coming to the temple prepare as an offering to the deity.

BHADRAKALI PATTU AT ARIYOTTU BHADRAKALI TEMPLE

(SHRI RAMAN KUNJAN, ARIYOTTUKALIYIL)

District
Taluk
Village

Trivandrum
Trivandrum
Andoorkonam

This temple is dedicated to Bhadrakali, Thenkasi Madan and Ganapathy. The annual festival lasts for 7 days in *Kumbham* (February-March) between the new moon and the full moon. Not less than 5,000 people participate in the ceremony. The main items of celebration consist of *Bhadra-kalippattu* for the first five days and *thampuran oottum-pattum* for the next two days. In addition to these, there will also be *thalapoli*, *vilakku*, procession with caparisoned elephants and *kuthiyottam*. During the days of *thampuran oottu* poor-feeding

UTSAVAM AT NEYYATTINKARA KRISHNASWAMI TEMPLE

(SHRI N. SANKARAN NAIR, SECRETARY, TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD)

District
Taluk
Town

Trivandrum
Neyyattinkara
Neyyattinkara

One of the most important towns in south Travancore, Neyyattinkara is situated about twelve miles south of Trivandrum, the capital of the State. The place which is of great historical importance is closely connected with the early history of Travancore and it witnessed some of the deeds of heroism and valour accomplished by the powerful sovereigns and their warlike subjects. The place is also important as a locality that gave birth to some of the greatest men of Travancore in early times.

In the heart of the town, on the banks of the river Neyyar, is situated the famous Sri Krishna shrine known throughout the State and resorted to by crowds of devotees from the neighbouring villages every day. History goes to say that His Highness Marthanda Varma the great, the founder of modern Travancore, reached the present site of the temple in the course of a flight for escape from the enemies who were plotting against His Highness' life. While His Highness's thoughts were concentrated on the means of escape from the enemies who were in hot pursuit after their victim, His Highness saw the approaching figure of Sri Krishna in the guise of a boy, under a jack tree that stood close by. His Highness at once realised the significance of this strange sight and gathering fresh hope and courage, entered the hollow of the jack tree and remained there in anxious expectation. But strange to say, the enemies did not entertain even the least suspicion that the person whose life they were aiming at was hiding in the hollow of a poor jack tree, in so open a place. They

searched the temple and went away disappointed and His Highness took a breath of relief when the sound of their footsteps faded away. When His Highness ascended the throne, a temple was constructed near the jack tree and an image of Sri Krishna was installed there, in memory of the holy vision granted to His Highness under the tree. The jack tree, popularly called '*Ammachiplayu*' (mother jack-tree) stands in front of the temple touching the *Nalam-palam* and has its yield even to this day. During every *Anizham* star day, special offerings are made to the deity to commemorate His Highness' miraculous escape.

Ekadasi, *Anizham* and *Dwadasi* are celebrated on a grand scale as *Masavishesams* and the important *Attavishesams* connected with the temple are *Ashtami Rohini* in *Chingom*, His Highness the Maharaja's birthday in *Thulam*, *Onam* in *Vrischikam*, *Vishu* in *Medom* and *Nira & Puthari* in *Karkadagom*. The most important festival connected with the deity is the annual *Utsavam* in *Meenam* (March-April) which lasts for ten days, and which is celebrated on a very grand scale.

The main *Vazhivadus* offered by devotees to propitiate the deity are *payasam* of various kinds, *appom*, *sahasranama archanu*, *muzhukkappu*, *thulabharam*, and *choroonu* and *namakaranam* (feeding a child with rice for the first time and naming it).

This temple is one of the major temples under the administration of the Travancore Devaswom Board and the annual expenditure connected with the *Poojas* etc., in the temple comes to about Rs. 10,230.

FESTIVAL AT ST. ANTONY'S CHURCH KAMUKINKODE

(REV. FR. PAUL KURISINKAL, PETTAH, TRIVANDRUM)

District
Taluk
Village

Trivandrum
Neyyattinkara
Athiyannur

St. Antony's Church Kamukinkode is a Mission church, about 75 years old. The mission is more than a century old. The parishioners are entirely Ezhuva converts of the locality. The church is situated in Athiyannur village about 3 miles to the south of Neyyattinkara town. There are one training school, one middle school and one primary school conducted by the parish. The training school caters to the need of the entire Trivandrum diocese.

The feast of St. Antony is celebrated in this church as the Patron's feast. The expenses connected with this celebration are met entirely out of public contribution. Though according to the ecclesiastical calendar the feast of St. Antony falls on 13th June the feast is celebrated in this church on Sunday before Ash Wednesday i. e. the first Sunday of lent. The feast lasts for 11 days. Usual prayers and Litany of St. Mary are held in the church on the first 9 days. On the last three days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday there are important items of celebration. On Friday evening a colourful procession is taken out with the statue of St. Antony placed on a tastefully decorated and illuminated dais. The entire parishioners join the procession and the procession goes to the extreme limits of the

parish. On Saturday evening there will be the vespers and Eucharistic procession. The Eucharistic procession is confined to the vicinities of the church along a route which will be elaborately decorated for the purpose. On Sunday morning there will be a solemn High Mass, sermon and Benediction. Another procession is also taken out on this day. After the procession a community feeding is held. Any person is given a meal free of charge. On an average 1,500 persons are fed every year. The average attendance for the festival is estimated at 10,000. The fair connected with the festival is considerably large at which all sorts of articles are bought and sold.

A peculiarity about the celebration of the feast deserving mention is that unlike other Christian festivals, there will be cultural programmes with items like *kathaprasangam* musical concerts, dramas etc. These items are held on a convenient day before Saturday. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the parishioners are educated people.

There will be some pyrotechnics after the procession on Friday night which will extend to the small hours of Saturday morning.



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KRISHNASWAMY TEMPLE, NEYYATTINKARA

OTTAM IN MUTTHARAMMAN TEMPLE, NEDUMANGAD

(SHRI A. MADASWAMY PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Trivandrum
Nedumangad
Nedumangad

The temple is in the heart of Nedumangad village about 2 furlongs to the north-west of the State Transport bus stand and located by the side of the main road which branches off from the Trivandrum-Shencottah road at the 11th milestone and again joins it about a furlong below the temple. Nedumangad itself is situated on a hill and the temple stands on the northern edge of it facing north. From Trivandrum Central railway station the distance to the temple is 12 miles by road. Though the temple is known by the name "Muttharammankovil" the Lord of the *Devi* is also seated by her side.

A *siddha* by name Unmaivilankum Perumal from the east coast, a devotee of goddess Parvathi, during his wandering life came to Nedumangad in or about 850 M. E. At that time a member of the palace at Nedumangad got a severe attack of smallpox and the king who had heard of the divine powers of the *siddha* sent for him. The *siddha* cured the disease in a miraculous way that the whole symptom of the disease disappeared on the very day and the patient became normal. Immensely pleased with this, the king asked the *siddha* to choose his reward. By this time the public also began to respect the *siddha* considerably out of devotion. The *siddha* asked the king only a small plot of land and help for the construction of the *Devi's* temple which was readily agreed to. With the help of the public the construction of the temple was begun. The whole *srikovil* (sanctum sanctorum) has been constructed with the timber of a single *Pongu* tree given by the king. The tree was considered to be the abode of an evil spirit and none dared to cut it for fear of death by vomiting

blood. The *siddha* after invoking the evil spirit to the nearby Ganapathy temple cut the tree easily.

From the Amman (goddess) story songs it is understood that the consecration of the deity was in the month of *Meenam* 888 M. E. The present *poojari* is the direct descendant of the *siddha* who is even today worshipped in a small shrine built at a corner of the compound in which the *poojari* lives.

The story of goddess Parvathi assuming the title 'Muttharamman' goes as follows:— In order to get rid of the atrocities of Mahishasura, Devendra prayed to the *Trimurthis* (the Trinity) for protection. Being convinced, the *Trimurthis* (the Trinity) became enraged. The angry radiance which emanated from them transformed into a formidable form of *Devi*. The *devas* armed the *Devi* with all kinds of weapons and enriched her power with their blessings. Varuna, one of the *devas*, put on the neck of the *Devi* a pearl (*mutthu*) garland (*haram*) with which the *Devi* was immensely pleased and took a gentle and beautiful form and assumed the name 'Muttharamman'. Even today on festive occasions the *poojari*, representing the *Devi*, can be seen wearing a garland of pearls and gold.

The annual festival is celebrated for 5 days in this temple. It falls in the month of *Kumbham* (February-March). The last Tuesday in *Kumbham* is the final day and the flag hoisting ceremony for the *Utsavam* is conducted on the previous Friday. On all the five days there will be a variety of entertainments like *Kathakali*, *Ottamhullal*, *Kathakalakshepam*, *Bhajan*, religious discourses, music performance, *nagaswaram*, drum etc. On the final day the important

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRIVANDRUM DISTRICT

items of worship are in the form of *urul*, *ottam* and *poomala*. These are done as *nercha* (offering). *Urul nercha* is done by males alone of all ages. *Ottam* is performed by young boys and *poomala* by girls. The *urul nercha* begins by about 4 p. m. with accompaniments like *nagaswaram*, drum etc. and continues for one or two hours in the midst of packed crowd. There will be several persons partaking in the *urul*. The person concerned will lie flat on the ground and rotate himself sidewise and circumambulate the temple at least thrice.

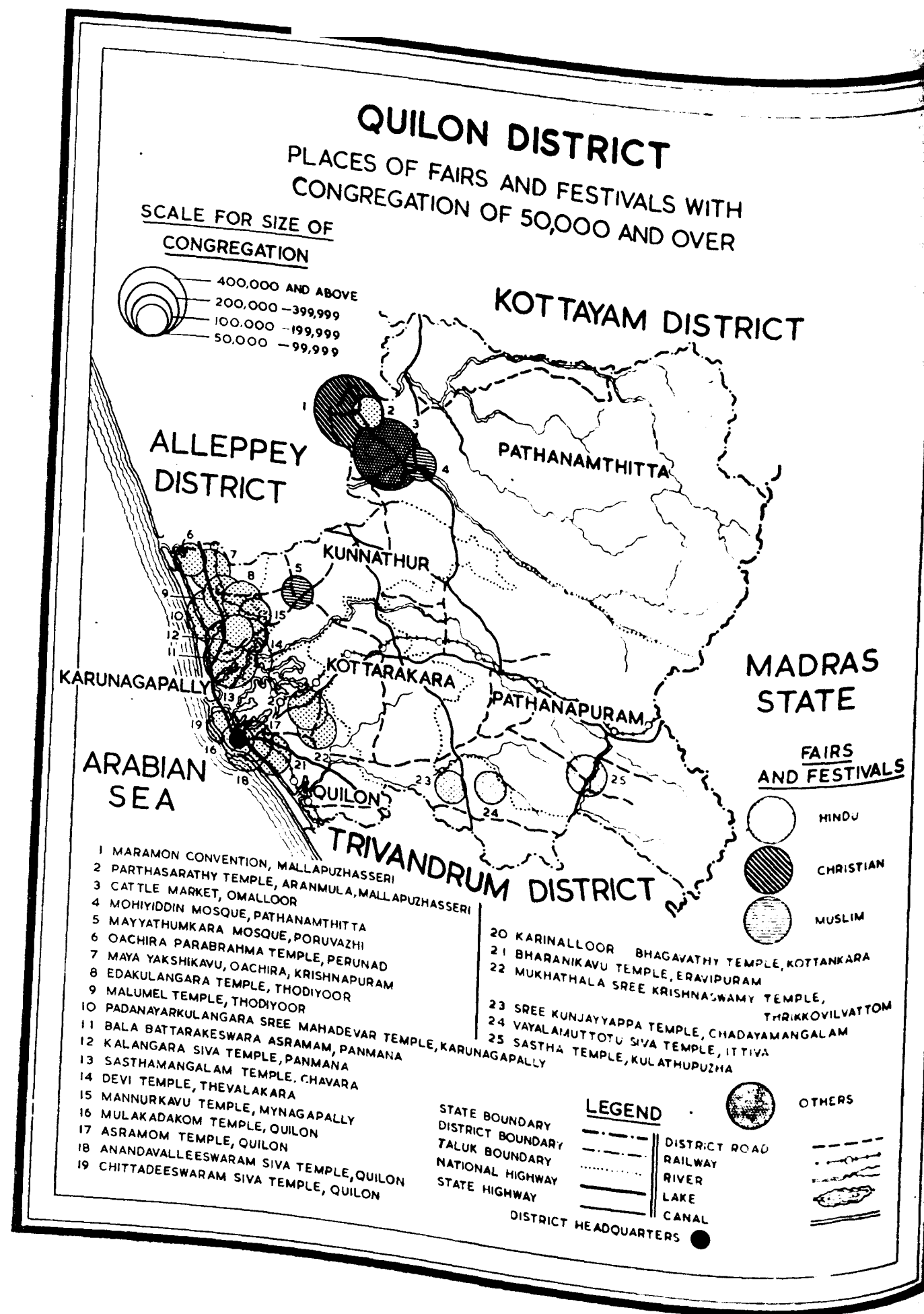
The boys who have *nercha* of *ottam* (race) have to be on a *vritham* (fast) from the flag hoisting day. On the final day they assemble in the *Koickal Kottaram* (old palace of the king) a furlong away from the temple. After the *urul* is over the *poojari* wearing trident and *nandakam* (sword) of Devi goes to the *Koickal Kottaram*, distributes *prasadam* to the *ottakkars* (runners i. e. persons performing *ottam*) and then takes them in a grand procession to the temple accompanied by *nagaswaram*, drum etc., followed by a very large crowd of people. In front of the temple very thin silver wires are pierced into the sides of the body of the *ottakkars* and they are led to the neighbouring temples for worship and return. The silver wires are then removed and taken back to the temple. The *poomala nercha* is done by girls as already said. The girls, mostly below 14 or 15 years of age start from their own houses well dressed and holding

thalam (brass pan) in which there will be a lamp made of *thina* flour paste and filled with ghee, burning. They worship before the Devi holding the *thalam* by both hands and then return.

After midnight there is a function called *Muttheduppu*. This is considered to be the feast given by the Devi to her retainers. Rice, curry and sweets are prepared in a corner of the temple compound and taken to the temple in procession under a red canopy over white cloth spread on the ground. With this *pooja* the festival comes to a close. But on the next night there is a function called *vilpattu* or *villadichanpattu* narrating the ancient story of the Devi. The attendance during the festival days is generally large coming to over 20,000 on the final day.

There is a fair attached to this festival which may last for 2 or 3 days more after the conclusion of the festival. The households in and around the village make use of this fair for making suitable additions to their stock of utensils and other articles like screw-pine and kora grass mats, earthen wares, cutleries, crockeries etc. Temporary bookstalls, brass and copper vessel shops, sweetmeat shops etc. will be opened for the time. Dates are sold in plenty. Special mention has to be made of the glass bangle merchants as this period is their hey day. Formerly this business was the monopoly of merchants from Tamilnad. But nowadays their number has been reduced as there are some local merchants also.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF QUILON DISTRICT



UTHRAM PATTU IN THE KAKKADU SASTHA TEMPLE

(SREEKARYAM, SABARIMALA DEVASWOM)

District	Quilon
Taluk	Pathanamthitta
Village	Perunadu

The Perunadu Sastha temple, also known as Kakkadu Sastha temple, is situated in the Perinadu village and is 30 miles away from the Chengannur railway station.

The story goes that soon after the consecration of the idol of Sastha at Sabarimala another one was installed in the Kakkadu temple to enable the ladies of the Pandalam Palace to worship Lord Ayyappa.

During the Makaravilakku celebrations at Sabarimala, it is the practice that jewelleryes

are sent from Pandalam for adorning the idol Sastha. When the celebration at Sabarimala is over, these ornaments are brought to the Kakkadu temple for adorning the idol of Sastha installed here. After adorning the idol, special prayers are performed there. This is considered as more or less equal to the pilgrimage to Sabarimala.

The *Uthram Pattu* conducted in this temple starts in the *Uthram* asterism in *Medom* and lasts for five days.

MARAMON CONVENTION

(SHRI C. E. ABRAHAM)

District	Quilon
Taluk	Pathanamthitta
Village	Mallappuzhasseri

Maramon

Maramon and Kozhencherry situated opposite to each other on the banks of the river Pamba and lying 10 miles east of Thiruvalla have for centuries together been recognised as centres of Christian culture and influence in the area formerly known as Central Travancore. Maramon is also famous as the birth-place of Palakunnath Abraham Malpan of revered memory, leader of the reformation in the Syrian Church of Malabar in the 19th century. This village which is fast evolving into a town has the added distinction of being the venue of a religious gathering known as Maramon Convention, reputed to be the largest Christian gathering of its kind in the world except the Kirsehentag in West Germany.

In the month of *Chingom* (August-September) when the river is in spate, it is seen in all its glory, especially during the *Onam* season when the boat race is on in the vicinity of the Aranmula temple opposite to Maramon and lower down the river. But in February owing to the scorching rays of the sun the river is reduced to a ghost of its former self and becomes shallow, fordable and narrow in this region, exposing to view a large expanse of white and glistening sand washed down from the Western Ghats where the river takes its origin. It is on the wide sand-bed of the river below the Kozhencherry bridge that the Maramon Convention is held year by year.

Preparation for the Convention

About a week before the convention is

due to commence, the sandbed becomes a scene of great activity. Christians from the parishes round about Maramon are seen carrying cadjan leaves and bamboo poles and other materials for erecting the *pandal* and bit by bit the *pandal* takes shape as a result of concerted action on the part of the parishes in the neighbourhood. It is all a labour of love and no one of the co-operating parishes is paid anything for the services rendered. In fact it is considered a point of honour with the parishes to vie with each other in the matter of rendering maximum service in connection with the construction of the *pandal*. Inside the *pandal* on one side is a raised platform for speakers, fitted with the microphone and also there are seats provided for visitors. The *pandal* has seating capacity for about 50 thousand people. All round the *pandal* there are temporary sheds and tents put up for various purposes furthering the objects of the Convention. Stalls for sale of religious literature, church offices and restaurants and hotels are allowed to operate in the vicinity of the *pandal* under the strict control of the authorities. Hawkers and petty shopkeepers and other elements who might disturb the calm atmosphere of the convention are not allowed to ply their trade on the premises. There are long *vallams* with canopies, and stored with provisions, which provide accommodation for families from distant places lying anchored in the river, which remind one of the houseboats of Srinagar or Kowloon and Hong Kong. At night when the electric lights in and around the *pandal* are switched on and tapers and candles in the houseboats are lighted, the sight is a most pleasing one and those who are poetically inclined may find in it a reflection of the Milky Way in the heavens. During the day too, the scene is equally lovely with the gentle flow of the cooling stream on one side with lush vegetation on the banks and the cocoanut palms standing sentinel to this charming and hallowed spot.

Nature of the Convention

Vedaparayanam—reading of the scriptures—has been given a place of honour in India from time immemorial. In North India the custom is still prevalent of large numbers of people congregating in certain places and at certain seasons to listen to the reading of the *Ramayana*. The Maramon Convention is pre-eminently an assembly of Christians who meet together once a year for listening to the Word of God as read and also as expounded by leaders of Christian thought and action from all over India as well as overseas. Preaching and Bible study occupy a most important place in the conference programme. In the long history of the Convention leaders of international reputation of the past generation like Bishop Gore of England, Dr. Kagawa of Japan and Sadhu Sunder Singh of North India have served as preachers at the Convention. Some of the preachers who belong to this category such as Dr. Stanley Jones, Dr. Bob Pierce and Dr. Paul Rees of America are fortunately still with us and they come to help us year by year. The grand objective in preaching the gospel is to bring men nearer to God and to wean them away from the things that hold them down in bondage to sin and evil. Conversion or turning away from evil and entering into a new experience of peace and joy under the influence of the spirit of God is a common experience on the part of a large number of those who attend the Convention. Along with reading and exposition of the Word of God, singing of hymns and praying for others play an important part in the lifting of men and women to a new experience of God. It is a grand sight to see the whole assembly consisting of forty to fifty thousand men and women engage in prayer for the sick and suffering for half an hour every day for a week or in singing hymns and lyrics lustily to the accompaniment of musical instruments to the praise and glory of God. Public prayer and worship at the Convention accompanied by singing is a wonderful

experience for every participant—an experience which purges and cleanses his soul and draws him closer to God and to his fellowmen.

Origin of the Convention

The Maramon Convention is a child as well as an agent of the spiritual revival that characterised the Syrian Church in the latter part of the 19th century. Following the advent of the Mission of Help in Travancore, 1816—1819 from the Church Missionary Society in London there was a new surge of life in the Church in Kerala which manifested itself in various ways. Among the things that were rediscovered at this time, especially in the section of the Church that supported the reforms of Abraham Malpan of Maramon, were the importance of Bible reading and study and the duty of preaching the gospel to others. The Maramon Convention was started in 1894 on the occasion of the visit of two preachers from Tamilnad and Ceylon. Since then through the ministration of illustrious preachers from Kerala as well as outside the Convention has established itself in the affections of Kerala Christians as an institution that stands for the spiritual revival of the Church in Kerala through the study and preaching of the Word of God. This ministry has been carried on from year to year for the last 68 years. The Convention held at Maramon in March 1963 was the 68th in the series.

Different aspects of the Convention

Any visitor to the Convention will be struck by the high standard of discipline that is maintained in the Convention. Traffic in the premises is well regulated. Men and women reach the Convention through different approach routes and occupy different wings in the *pandal*. A hush comes over everyone as he or she enters the *pandal* and squats on the sand. The gong is sounded, the singing starts and everyone joins in it as heartily as possible. Prayer over, the preacher (and the interpreter stands near

him if one is a foreign visitor) starts preaching. There is pin-drop silence, except for the voice of the preacher. Notwithstanding the discomforts caused by sitting on the sand, by weather conditions and other things which are inevitable, there is no expression of irritation, no complaint, and no attempt to walk out of the *pandal*. Though there are a few volunteers stationed outside the *pandal* to act as ushers they are not looked upon as solely responsible for maintaining peace and order in the assembly. The discipline that is at work is really self-imposed and is beyond all praise.

Another thing that is worth mentioning is that the Convention site and its premises are kept scrupulously neat and tidy. Thanks to the co-operation of the Government of Kerala proper sanitation arrangements are made at the Convention and the people themselves take a pride in keeping the place free from litter. Visiting the Convention, one finds it easy to believe that cleanliness is next to godliness.

The beggar problem is one of the most obstinate social problems in India and we have to find a solution for this in Kerala as elsewhere. Wherever people congregate there one finds the inevitable beggar. He may, in addition, be one suffering from an incurable disease or one handicapped in the race of life through some physical defect or deformity. For years together, out of compassion for the beggars who crowd round the Convention premises a collection used to be taken, and rice and money were doled out every evening for a whole week. This attracted large and increasing numbers of beggars, deserving and genuine as well as bogus, to Maramon. This posed a big problem for the authorities of the Convention as well as the traffic police. The problem was solved boldly on a long-range basis by establishing a Home for Destitutes in Kumbanad near Maramon under the auspices of the Evangelistic Association. Waifs and strays and those who are infirm and destitute, in fact all who stand in need

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of help are directed to this Home of Mercy, the doors of which are always open to anyone in need of food and shelter. Collections are taken at the Convention towards the support of this poor-home, which is named Dharmagiri Agathi Mandiram and also for Carmel Agathi Mandiram at Ayroor. This may be taken as an illustration of the success of imaginative and concerted action on the public front in the solution of acute social problems.

The Convention indirectly helps the people in various ways. Though the object of the Convention is entirely spiritual, it enables people from various parts of Kerala to make contacts on the social plane. Petty shop-keepers and traders come to Maramon from far and near and for a week the approach roads to the Convention take on the appearance of crowded thoroughfares in a big city filled with men and women and children out on shopping expeditions. Cultural and political meetings round about the dates of the convention are not an infrequent phenomenon. The opportunities pro-

vided by the Convention for contacts on a social and cultural level may be taken as a significant contribution in our march towards the goal of a welfare state.

Co-operation from Government

Such a big undertaking as the Maramon Convention cannot become a success without the co-operation of the public and the Government. One is glad to pay a tribute here to the officers of the Government in the various departments—Police, Transport, Communications, Health, Posts and Telegraphs—for the excellent manner in which they have co-operated with the Convention authorities in the past.

The Maramon Convention is a focus of co-operation and union between different sections of the Church in Kerala. It fosters an ecumenical outlook. It is a rallying point for members of the Mar Thoma Church. It is a source of spiritual inspiration and power for thousands, irrespective of class and creed, who listen to the proclamation of the good News of Jesus Christ.

ARAT IN PUNNAMTHOTTAM DEVI TEMPLE

(SHRI V. K. THANU PILLAI)

District	Quilon
Taluk	Pathanamthitta
Village	Mallapuzhasseri

The Punnamthottam Devi Temple is situated in Mallapuzhasseri village, seven miles away from the Chengannur railway station. The festival in the temple is celebrated in the month of *Meenam* (March-April) every year. It commences with the flag hoisting seven days before *Pooram* asterism in *Meenam* and lasts for eight days. The important function connected with the festival is the *Arat* of the Devi. At midnight on *Pooram* day the idol of the Devi is taken in a *Vahanam* to the bathing ghat dedicated to Thiruvaramula Appan

in the Pamba river in front of the Arammula temple, where the Devi is bathed by immersing the idol in the water.

The festival is of an ancient origin. The image of the Devi itself is very ancient and is said to have been worshipped by great men.

Devaki, Kamsa's sister, bore successively only female children. Kamsa used to kill every child at birth by smashing it on stone. The eighth child was also female. But to save at least that child from being

FEAST OF MAR ELIAS, PATRIARCH IN MANJINIKKARA CHURCH

slain by her brother, Devaki sent word to Kamsa that a baby boy was born. Nevertheless Kamsa wanted to kill that child also. He took the child by its legs as usual and raised to smash it on the rock when it slipped away to the atmosphere and reprimanded him. Legend has it that the idol in the temple is the same Devi.

Kathakali, *ottamthullal*, religious seminars, *harikathaprasangam* etc. are attractions during the festival. From the fourth day of the festival to the eighth, the idol of

the Devi is taken on a *vahana* in procession attended by *thalapoli* and *vanchipattu* to the neighbouring karas to receive the *para* offering.

The offerings made by the devotees include money, oil and ghee for lighting the lamp before the deity, molasses pudding (*sarkara payasam*), sweet cakes (*appam*) etc.

The fair connected with the festival consists of bell-metal utensils, earthenwares, the famous Arammula metal mirror etc.

FEAST OF MAR ELIAS, PATRIARCH IN MANJINIKKARA CHURCH

(REV. M. C. JACOB RAMBAN)

District	Quilon
Taluk	Pattanamthitta
Village	Omalloor

The church and Dayara (monastery) at Manjinikkara near Omalloor in the taluk of Pathanamthitta in Quilon district in the State of Kerala derives its importance from the presence of the holy tomb here. It is here that the sacred body of the late Ignatius Elias III the Holy Patriarch of Antioch and all the East was interned. His Holiness came to India from the Churches' headquarters in Syria in 1931 in response to the invitation of the then Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, to bring about a reconciliation between the two contending parties of the Jacobite Syrian community under His Holiness' rule in India (Malankara). As the supreme head of the whole Syrian Church and as State guest His Holiness was accorded grand and hearty receptions everywhere. After paying visits to the Viceroy and the rulers of the different States in India His Holiness came to Kerala and began visiting the important churches and institutions of which His Holiness was the supreme head and to work assiduously for bringing about peace in the Church.

His Holiness came to Manjinikkara in the course of His Holiness' visits and on February 13, 1932 suddenly demised due to heart failure. His Holiness had a weak heart even before he left Syria, but undertook this arduous journey in spite of it, being the prophet of peace he was.

The sacred body was buried here and ever since that day the devotees of the church have considered it as a sacred place. The new church and the monastery were built only after this event. The members of the Jacobite Syrian Church believe that the Holy Father was a true saint and one who sacrificed his life on the altar of peace.

Manjinikkara church has now become one of the foremost places of pilgrimage not only for the members of the Jacobite Church but also for other Christians and non-Christians as well. Every year on the 12th and 13th of February the anniversary of the Holy Father's demise is celebrated with due ceremony and grandeur. A large number of pilgrims from different parts of India throng to the church every year and

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are receiving spiritual and physical healings and blessings. The fair in connection with the festival consists of stationery, toys, religious books etc.

It is worth mentioning that this is the only

known tomb in India of a Patriarch of Antioch and all the East. From all points of view Manjinikkara can be considered as one of the major places of pilgrimage in India.

UTSAVAM IN OMALLOOR SREE RAKTHAKANTASWAMY TEMPLE

(SHRI R. GANGADHARAN NAIR)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Pathanamthitta
Omalloor

In olden days there was a temple dedicated to Sastha and established by Parasurama, like the temples in Achankoil and Sabarimala, in a place called Kalleli to the east of Omalloor, by the side of the Sahya hills and on the northern bank of the Achankoil river. In course of time the place became depopulated due to unknown reasons whereby the temple routines suffered. It is said that the ruins of this temple can still be seen in the locality. At one time, a woman of the Karyathil family went for bath in Achankoil river at Omalloor. While taking bath in the river she saw a flower revolving strangely in the water. She took the flower in a pot and placed it on the bank. On returning from bath she found to her consternation that the pot with the flower which was placed on the ground could not be lifted. She hastened to her home and informed her people about this incident. The Kurups of the Karyathil family in turn informed the lords and other leaders of the locality of the incident. On investigation into the cause of the incident they concluded that it was the manifestation of the power of the deity of Kalleli. Therefore, temporarily a temple was erected at the same spot, the deity was installed and *poojas* were performed. In course of time, as a result of the great enthusiasm of the people of the locality the present

temple came into existence at Omalloor, and the deity was installed in it. This is the legend about the origin of the Omalloor temple.

The place on the bank of the Achankoil river where the deity was installed in the beginning is still considered sacred. It is to this place that the *Arat* procession is taken from the 2nd to 9th day of the *utsavam* which commences on *Uthram* asterism. *Poojas* are also performed here in this connection. Unlike the *Utsavams* in other temples the festival in this temple is peculiar in that there is *Arat* every day. The deity of the temple is called differently as Arathakantan, Rakthakantan, Abhimanyu, Sastha, Siva etc.

In connection with this festival there is a big fair. The most important item is a cattle fair. Commodities like bell-metal utensils, fruits and seeds, screw-pine mats, items of wooden furniture, etc. both from Kerala and from outside are marketed. Several people come there from within Kerala as well as from other places for trade. Beautiful songs composed in praise of the deity of the temple are recited by the people of the locality from generation to generation. As a result of the efforts of the local people a golden flagmast has been put up recently. For the conduct of the festivals of this temple extensive properties are held

SIVARATHRI UTSAVAM IN PUTHIYIDATHUKAVU DEVI TEMPLE

by the Brahmin congregation as well as Sree Pattathanam properties. Nowadays functions are conducted nominally. The people of the locality worship and give offerings irrespective of cast or creed. The old records show that in olden days properties were bequeathed even in the name

of Christians for the conduct of the affairs of this temple. Nowadays several marriages are performed in the temple. Snake-pipes, chains and other things carved in stones and preserved in the temple proclaim the existence at one time of clever granite masons here.

SIVARATHRI IN PUTHIYIDATHUKAVU DEVI TEMPLE

(SHRI K. KARUNAKARAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Pathanamthitta
Vallikode

The Puthiyidathukavu Devi temple established in the year 1078 M. E. is situated in Vallikode village seventeen miles away from the Chengannur railway station. Bhadra and Lord Siva are enthroned in the temple. It is said that both these deities appeared to the person who established the temple.

The temple is known for serpent worship. There are two beautiful images, one of *Naga* king and the other of *Naga yakshi* here. It is believed that once when *sarpa pattu* was being conducted in an open place, the *Naga* king danced oraculously and indicated a spot, from where the images were dug out. Even to this day, *neerum palum* and serpent dance—two ceremonies associated with serpent worship are conducted on the *Ekadesi* day in *Kumbham* (February-March).

The programme for the seven days of celebrations includes religious ceremonies like *pooja* thrice a day, *sarpabali* (offerings to the serpent god) *seva* at night etc. and cultural entertainments like *ottamthullal*, *seethankanthullal*, *velakali*, religious seminars etc. during the day and *harikatha*

kalakshepam, music concerts, *ashtapadi* performance, *patakam*, *kathakali*, dance, pyrotechnics etc. at night. Whenever *sarpabali* is performed there will be *Pulluvan pattu* with the accompaniment of the play of five musical instruments (*nagaswaram*). The play of five musical instruments and snake-pipe music are unavoidable during *pooja* and *seva*. There will be play of drums (*chenda melam*) on all days.

Lighting of lamp in the temple, performance of ceremonies like *Ganapathy homam* and *Bhagavathy seva* and offering of human figures in metal are some of the forms in which devotees seek the help of the deity for cure of diseases. For the forgiveness of sins devotees take *nivedyam* (offering to gods), sanctified tender cocoanut and ghee and worship in the temple regularly. To guard against snake-bite people light lamps at the serpent grove here, offer turmeric and serpent's eggs and snake-hole in gold and worship. On special occasions devotees can actually see the serpent.

The fair held in connection with the festival deals in agricultural produces.

UTSAVAM IN THE THAVANURKAVU SIVA TEMPLE

(SHRI R. MADHAVAN PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Kunnathur
Poruvazhi

The Thavanurkavu temple is just five miles away from the Sasthamcotta railway station. The temple is dedicated to gods Siva, Ganapathi, Bhadrakali, Yakshi and demons. Festivals are celebrated in this temple for one day each on three occasions viz, *Thiruvonam* asterism in the month of *Chingom* (August-September), *Ayilyam* asterism in the month of *Kumbham* (February-March) and *Aswathi* asterism in the month of *Medam* (April-May), all the three being *prathishta* (dedication) days.

A thousand years ago two women from Pattathanam, Quilon came to Poruvazhi with their family deities, serpent gods, spirits, Nambiathiris, Panicker, Marans and other followers. The two women settled in Pellam and Kannankara, the Nambiathiris in Manikkamangalam, Panicker in

Kochukalickal and the Marans in Nochi and the devas were installed in a place now known as Thavanurkavu at the southern end of Poruvazhi. The place, about 3 acres in extent, is an extensive grove impenetrable by men, and the abode of Bhadrakali, Ganapathi, Siva, serpent gods and demons.

On festival days, *poojas* are performed in the morning and at noon by Brahmins with the accompaniment of the music of five musical instruments (*panchavadya*). *Pooja* is performed also at dusk. Among the attractions during the festival are cultural programmes like *ottanthullal*, processions with elephants and effigies during day time and *harikatha*, religious speeches, *kathakali* etc., during the night. Elders say that *kathakali* is an important item of entertainment for devas.

AMMANKODA FESTIVAL IN SASTHAMCOTTA AMMANKOIL

(SHRI ANDI ACHARI)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Kunnathur
Sasthamcotta

The place where the temple is situated is called Muppareth in Manakkara *muri* of Sasthamcotta village, just one and a half miles from the Sasthamcotta railway station. It is dedicated to Bhadrakali. The festival of this temple, which is called *Ammankoda* is celebrated in *Bharani* asterism in *Meenam* (March-April) which is the day of Bhadrakali.

AMMANKODA FESTIVAL IN SASTHAMCOTTA

come to the temple, worship and give offerings (*payasam*). Daily *poojas* are conducted both in the morning and in the evening by a *poojari* specially appointed for the purpose.

There are a few stories about this temple, one of which is narrated below :—

The people of the locality lost confidence in the then *poojari* of the temple, the late Alappurath Vadakkethil Veetil Padmanabhan Achari. They, therefore, decided to conduct a test. A chain of the sort used to fetter elephants was heated to 'red hot' and was put round his neck. Miraculously enough it did not cause the slightest burn in his body. But when the same chain was put on a nearby tree, its branches broke and fell and the leaves got charred.

The *poojari* has helped the recovery of the stolen properties of many persons by revealing the names of the thieves by his oracular announcements. For instance, once a pickaxe with the name of the owner carved on it was found missing from a house near the temple. The housewife offered a golden egg and silk to the temple for recovering

the lost article. On the next *Utsavam* day the *poojari* danced oraculously and took out the pickaxe from the ceiling of the thief's house. The golden egg and silk were presented to the *poojari* which are still preserved in the temple. There are also stories of the *poojari* having cured people affected by contagious diseases like smallpox. It is said that one of such persons lived for 6 years after the cure.

From very old times this idol was being worshipped by *Pandi-Thattans*, as a deity of that community, which heritage has been handed down to the present generation. The idol was shifted to the temple from a nearby house. From that day the temple began to be known as Ammankoil and is held in esteem by all people irrespective of community or religion.

Among the items in the Ammankoil festival the more important ones are the taking of a decorated pot with water in procession (*karakam ezhunnellippu*), *kuthiyottam* offering, *vilpattu* etc.

THIRUVATHIRA UTSAVAM IN KEECHAPALLIL BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI N. PARAMESWARAN PILLAY)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Kunnathur
Kunnathur

This temple dedicated to Bhadrakali is 9 miles away from the Sasthamcotta railway station. The festival celebrated for two days i. e. *Makayiram* and *Thiruvathira* in *Makaram* (January-February) is known as Thiruvathira Utsavam. More than 10,000 devotees attend the festival.

Once this place and its surroundings formed the domain of the Raja of Kayamkulam. It is said that the Mannadi temple, very close to this temple, was the abode of the family deity of Kayamkulam Raja, and

that the famous golden head-gear of this temple was offered by this Raja to please the family deity. The Keechapallil temple is considered to be a subordinate temple of Mannadi temple and a subordinate place of worship of Kayamkulam Raja. The offering of some precious objects made by the Kayamkulam Raja bears testimony to this.

Except for a few legends, everything about the origin etc. of this temple is enshrouded in obscurity. The place where the temple stands is called Ivarkala. Accord-

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ing to the local dialect the word *Ivarkala* means the place (*kala*) where the five Pandavas (*Ivar*) lived during their exile. It is said that the nearby place separated by Kallada river known as Attuvassery is really Nootuvassery and the rocky formation across the river is even now called Maranchira. The tradition goes that this place and the temple formed the refuge of the Pandavas.

There is another story which also takes support from the name of the place. The Raja of Kayamkulam appointed a Brahmin (Iyer) to administer the affairs of his domain consisting of this and the neighbouring places. The Raja was so pleased with the

ability of his minister that the latter was allowed to continue in office for a long time, with the result that the place began to be called Iyerkala after him meaning the place of 'Iyer.' In course of time *Iyerkala* changed to *Ivarkala*.

About 15 years ago *kalakettu*, *kuthirakettu*, *thullal* and *kathakali* were conducted here. Now the annual *Thiruvathira Utsavam* is celebrated with a programme including religious sermons, *thullal*, *kadhakalakshepam* and other entertainments. The fair deals in different kinds of mats, bell-metal wares, toys, agricultural implements, agricultural produces, textile goods etc.

KETTUKAZHCHA IN THE PARABRAHMA TEMPLE AT OACHIRA

(OACHIRA C. A., B. SC.)

District	Quilon
Taluk	Karunagapally
Village	Perunad

Oachira has been famous for long as one of the sacred places in Kerala. Historically too, this place is very famous for, it was on the plains of Oachira that the much famed battle in the history of Travancore, the battle of Kayamkulam between Maharaja Marthanda Varma and the Raja of Kayamkulam, was fought. In commemoration of this historic event *Oachirakali* is conducted on the 1st and 2nd of *Mithunam* here every year even today. This place was known as 'Oamchira' in the past; but, in course of time, it came to be known as 'Oachira.'

The Parabrahma temple at Oachira visited by pilgrims from all parts of South India and widely known as the 'Kasi' of Southern India, which is dedicated to Lord Siva, is very ancient and historic. This is the only temple which was opened to all classes of Hindus before the Travancore

Temple Entry Proclamation. Usually sacred places are associated with particular communities. But Oachira is held sacred not only by Hindus but also by others. It is sacred to Muslims as it is to Hindus. The famous Saithavar mosque is situated close to the Oachira temple. It is said that this hallowed place was once a Buddhist Centre.

Years back, Oachira had been a part of Kayamkulam Raja's territory. The vast *Padanilam* (maidan) extending to 36 acres and lying around the temple was in former days used as the battle field by the then Rajas. The successors of the old *Kalari Asans* (fencing school instructors) are now the heirs to this temple. The *Aikaravallil Kalari* (fencing school at Aikaravallil) is said to have had connections with this temple from very early times. There are many legends about the origin of this

KETTUKAZHCHA IN THE PARABRAHMA TEMPLE AT OACHIRA

famous temple. The following is one among them.

After his victorious conquests of many principalities lying as far as the boundary of Cochin, Maharaja Marthanda Varma settled down himself to the task of ruling the country peacefully. He wanted to make amends for all his sins. Accordingly, as an act of atonement, he presented his kingdom to Sree Padmanabhaswamy and began to rule it as his vicegerent. He also instituted the celebration of *Murajapam* at Trivandrum. Namboothiris came from far and near to participate in this religious function. Once, two Namboothiris, a *guru* (teacher) and his disciple, came from North Kerala to join this celebration. They were very pious and devoted people. Even during their long journey, they scrupulously performed all their religious duties. One day the disciple asked his *guru* about whom he was meditating, to which the *guru* sarcastically replied 'I am meditating upon *madappothu*' (male buffalo). Since then, years passed on and again the time for *Murajapam* approached. Again the *guru* and his disciple started for Trivandrum to join these celebrations. They reached the 'Aikaravallil Kalari' situated near the temple, and performed their daily routines and continued their journey to Trivandrum. When they approached the 'Oachira Padanilam,' the *guru* enquired of his disciple about his bundle containing his belongings. The disciple replied that it was there on the back of the *madappothu*. The *guru* was quite puzzled at this reply and enquired which was the *madappothu* he was referring to. The disciple coolly replied that it was the one which he had named some time back. 'Where is this *madappothu*?' the *guru* asked. Came the reply immediately, 'Ondeekattil,' meaning that it was there in that forest. This forest, even today, is known by the name 'Ondeekadu.' Meanwhile the buffalo had disappeared from the scene. That is why the muddy, cloddish earth taken from this place where the

buffaloe had disappeared, is given as the *prasadam* of this temple. The devotees believe that this *prasadam* is a panacea for all ailments. Quite often the patients get relief from their sufferings by its use. Although the *guru* humorously referred to the *madappothu* when his disciple inquired as to whom he was meditating upon, the disciple took it for granted and believed his statement to be true; therefore God appeared to the disciple in the guise of a *madappothu*. Both the *guru* and the disciple were happy over this and ere long, they found their *samadhi* beneath the banyan trees standing to the east and west of the temple. This is the story which is widely current among the people as throwing light on the origin of this temple. The 'Parabrahma' of Oachira is Siva dominant. Here, all Saturdays are considered as holy days and special *poojas* are accordingly conducted on these days.

Unlike in other temples of Kerala, there is no big edifice for this temple and the *nivedyam* offered does not consist of cooked stuffs. The *poojas* and other rites are not performed by Brahmins, but by the Kurups, a sub-section of Nairs. The *Vazhipadu Sanghom* (persons acting as waiters) of this temple are drawn from Veerasaiva community.

Apart from that of Lord Siva, the idols of Ganapathy and *Naga Raja* (serpent king) have also been installed here on the *altharas* (platforms raised around the banyan trees). The *Nagayakshi* is installed in a special corner, north-east to the temple, where *poojas* and other rites are performed by Brahmins. Another important place of worship here is the Ganapathy *althara* at the easternmost end. It is only after offering worship here that the devotees go to other sides to worship other deities. The most important offering made in this temple is *ettukandam urulichcha* (rolling oneself over the ground around the temple). Another one is the distribution of *kanji* (rice-gruel) to the poor and hungry. On these occasions when

kanji is distributed beggars will flock in thousands between the two temples. Yet another important item of offerings received here is the various articles distributed to these beggars as alms. This will include articles like salt, betel leaves, rice, *pappadam* etc.

Nerchakalas (bulls received as offering) are received here from all parts of the State. The amount realised through the sale of these bulls constitutes one of the major items of income of this temple.

Quite often people possessed of evil spirits and suffering from hysteria etc., come and stay here for some time wholly devoting themselves to prayers and meditations. The number of such devotees who secure cure is also not small.

Among the various factors which contribute to the ever increasing fame of this temple, *Irupathettam Onam* and *kettukazhcha* are by no means unimportant. The *kettukazhcha* is celebrated from *Thiruvonam* asterism in *Chingom* (August-September) to *Thiruvonam* in *Kanni* (September-October). Among the effigies displayed at the *kettukazhcha* (exhibition of effigies) the more important ones are of Siva's vehicle (the bull), horses, Bheeman, Panchali etc. This is a grand festival which attracts large number of people from all corners of the State. No information whatsoever is available regarding the origin of this *utsavam*. Another festival which has contributed in no small measure to the fame and glory of Oachira, is the *Pandrandam Vilakku Utsavam*. This *utsavam* which succeeds the *Irupathettam Onam Utsavam* is held for twelve days from 1st to 12th of *Vrischigom* (Novem-

ber-December). Pilgrims drawn from all parts of the State, some of them with their families, set up small hutments with palm leaves on the *padanilam* and observe fast, remaining in these huts for days together in meditation. The rich and the poor alike forget their differences for the time being and spend the days in these huts in meditation. Among the devotees coming for worship on these days, a good majority are ladies. During these days, Oachira will practically look like a small town. It is during this period that the Hindu religious convention, attended by great theologians and learned speakers, is held here. As in the Chottanikara temple, the *Karthika* asterism, especially the *Karthika* in *Vrischigom*, is celebrated in this temple too.

As indicated above, the *Oachirakali* was one of the factors that brought fame and glory to Oachira. On the first and second of *Mithunam* (June-July) the young and the old, drawn from the two *karas* lying east and west of Oachira and forming themselves into two groups reach the *padanilam* and conduct the age-old fencing exercises under the leadership of elder *Kalari Asan*. It is to perpetuate the memory of the great battle fought between Maharaja Marthanda Varma and the Raja of Kayamkulam, that *Oachirakali* is conducted with much eclat. Thus the *Irupathettam Utsavam* comes to an end with the *Oachirakali*. A big cattle fair is also held in connection with the above festival.

The administration of this temple is supervised by elected council of members.

Courtesy: The Malayala Manorama Weekly dated 17th December, 1960.

UTSAVAM IN THE MARARI THOTTAM TEMPLE, THODIYOOR

(SHRI K. JANARDHANAN PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Karunagapally
Thodiyoor

Marari Thottam temple is a very ancient Hindu temple situated in Thodiyoor village, just on the side of the Karunagapally-Sasthamcotta Road, about two miles east of Karunagapally. This is said to have been founded about 3,000 years ago. It is a stone-edifice built by the efforts of Brahmins alone, without any assistance from craftsmen like masons, carpenters etc. It is doubtful whether there is in existence in Kerala any other temple which is not built by traditional craftsmen. Another noteworthy feature is that, unlike in other temples, no idols have been consecrated in this temple. The place selected for consecration is now a vacant pit which is covered with a box. This is done on the basis of astrological prophecies that the idol will come into being by own accord and that no idol need be consecrated there.

According to tradition, it was in this place that Siva retired for self-mortification and penance (narrated in the 'Dhakshayaga'). It was here that Kamadeva who came here for inducing Siva to take to the ways of the world was reduced to ashes in the flame that emanated from the third sacred eye of Siva; and the place thus came to be called 'Mararithottam' (the garden of Kamadeva's enemy). In support of this legend, it is believed, that the bathing ghat

on the southern side of the temple has its name 'Chamba Kadavu' (ghat of ashes), since the ashes (*chambal*) of Kama Deva have been immersed in the river Pallickal flowing on the southern side of the temple.

Some precious medicinal herbs, not found in any other temple of Kerala, grow on the walls of this temple which had been left uncared for many years, without any religious ceremonies or festivals being conducted there. It was the high priest of the Sabarimala temple who was brought here once by the present trustees of the temple that informed the public about the existence of these medicinal herbs in the temple. The 'Lada' physicians coming from Tamilnad now are collecting these precious herbs which are named *Mayiloosi*, *Inayadi* etc.

The present condition of this once famous temple is pitiable.

The *utsavam* in this temple is celebrated for eight days commencing from *Thiruvathira* asterism and ending on *Atham* asterism in *Kumbhom* (February) which will be attended by nearly 12,000 people. Mats, bell-metal vessels, toys, coir products and food-stuffs are the important articles marketed in the fair held during the festival days.

FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, NEENDAKARA

(THE VICAR, ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, NEENDAKARA)

District	Quilon
Taluk	Karunagapally
Village	Thekkumbhagom

The Neendakara church is one of the oldest churches in Kerala, believed to have been founded about 400 years ago by the Portuguese. It is about 6 miles away from the Quilon railway station on the Trivandrum-Ernakulam bus route. The Portuguese had found this locality convenient and useful for their trade. It gave them facility to go up to the interior parts of Travancore through the Kallada river to collect pepper and other spices and to export them to Portugal from Neendakara. The Kallada river empties itself in the Ashtamudi lake which, in turn, joins the Arabian sea forming the Neendakara bar. The boats could ply throughout the year, at all seasons, from the Arabian sea through the Neendakara bar to the very heart of Central Travancore. The Portuguese who came to this place were devout Catholics and as soon as they arrived here, founded a place of worship for them—a church at Neendakara where they had formed a colony for themselves by establishing their quarters and godowns for keeping their merchandise.

There is a legend current among the local people about the place of the location of this church. It says that there was a fresh water pond very close to the sea and that sick people used to get cured of their ailments on taking bath in this pond. To find out whether the water in this pond had miraculous powers, nobody had ever made an investigation. About 100 years ago, it is said, this pond had disappeared due to sea erosion.

St. Sebastian's feast, the most important festival of this church, is celebrated every year in the month of January for 11 days; the celebrations come to a close on the

Sunday falling immediately after 20th January. This is purely a religious festival celebrated in honour of St. Sebastian, the Martyr. St. Sebastian is the powerful protector of people against epidemics like smallpox and cholera. Many a time he has shown this protective power. When the people inhabiting the surrounding areas were suffering from these dangerous diseases and dying in hundreds, the people in this locality over which he presides, were not affected in any way by these attacks. All people in the locality belonging to different castes and creeds, therefore, flock together in the place to venerate the saint. About ten thousand people partake in these celebrations.

The special attraction during this festival is the solemn torch-light procession conducted on the eve of the concluding day of the feast, always on a Saturday night. The procession starts from the church at dusk with accompaniment of instrumental music and singing and with innumerable petromax lights. Members of various religious associations, confraternities and other Catholics form the procession which is headed by a cross. They walk slowly reciting prayers and singing various psalms and hymns. At the other end of the procession, just before presiding priest, the statue of St. Sebastian, richly decorated, is carried on a pedestal on the shoulders of four devotees. The houses on either side of the road, through which the procession passes, are gaily decorated and wonderfully illuminated with numerous multi-coloured electric bulbs. As the procession vents its way through the streets, crackers are fired from the houses on both sides of the street. Large

PATHAMUDAYAM FESTIVAL IN THE MULAMKADAKOM TEMPLE, QUILON

number of people collect themselves at vantage positions to pay their respect and humble offerings to the saint, and yet others line up on either side of the road, with respectful silence as the procession makes its way. At about 10.30 in the night, the

procession which started early in the evening, returns to the church.

Household utensils, mats, stationery goods, religious articles etc. are marketed in the fair held in connection with this festival.

PATHAMUDAYAM FESTIVAL IN THE MULAMKADAKOM TEMPLE, QUILON

(SHRI N. KOCHURAMA PANICKER)

District	Quilon
Taluk	Quilon
Town	Quilon

Sri Mulamkadakom temple situated in Quilon town on the side of the Quilon-Alleppey road, about a mile west of the main public offices is one of the most prominent temples of Kerala. The extensive maidan around the temple, the tall twin palmyra palms in front, another single palmyra standing at a point further north of the temple and the two *Kavus* (small temples), one in front and the other at the north-eastern side, give an atmosphere of solemnity and sanctity to the premises of the temple. The site of the temple was once a thick jungle of bamboos which accounts for the name "Mulamkadakom".

The temple is dedicated to Bhadrakali or Bhagavathi. The temple is owned and maintained by the Viswakarmas of Quilon taluk. The legend attached to the temple is that there was an old Viswakarma *sanyasi* at Quilon about 10 centuries ago. He was popularly known as *Yogeeswaran*. He was a devotee of Devi Bhadrakali. His devotion to the Devi was deep and unselfish. His aspiration in life was only to have a *darsan* of the Devi. He was searching for Devi everywhere until at last Devi gave him *darsan* in the midst of the bamboo jungle mentioned above. The *Yogeeswaran* was satisfied. Devi showed him the present site of the temple so as to construct an abode

for her to remain. Accordingly the *Yogeeswaran* constructed a temporary temple and consecrated it. Soon after, the *Yogeeswaran* having fulfilled his life-mission, expired. But the descendants and disciples of the *Yogeeswaran*—the Viswakarmas of Quilon—took up the work commenced by the *Yogeeswaran* and not only completed it but also expanded the temple to its present shape and dimensions.

The goddess Bhadrakali of the Sri Mulamkadakom temple is considered to be all powerful by innumerable devotees. The *poojas* of the temple are being conducted by members of a Viswakarma family at Quilon specially designated for the purpose. Though the temple belongs to the Viswakarma community, people of the different sections of the Hindu fold flock to the temple regularly for worship and adoration. During times of epidemics like smallpox the number of people coming to the temple for worship and *Vazhipad* (offering) will be more. The Devi is supposed to be a super-power to protect her devotees from such epidemics.

The main festival of the temple commences on the 1st of *Medom* (*Vishu* day) every year and is spread over the next 10 days terminating with the 10th *Medom*—known as the *Pathamudayam*.

People from different sections and religions of the locality and elsewhere liberally contribute for the conduct of the festival in great pomp and splendour. Though the management of the temple is vested with the trustees elected from the Viswakarmas of Quilon taluk, members of other communities also join to constitute a special committee for the conduct of the annual festival.

The main and regular item of the festival during all the 10 days is the *Chamaya vilakku* i.e. decorated lamps carried by beautiful girls in their teens, appearing in special costumes. The array of these lamp bearers in hundreds is an interesting sight and attracts many onlookers. The number of lamp bearers increase from day to day so much so the number may come to a thousand on the 10th day. Besides this item, there will be other items like dances, *Thiruvathirakali*, music concerts, *Kathakali*, *Thullal*, *Pulluvan pattu*, *Kuthiyottam* etc. daily.

The most outstanding items of the festival are the *Eduppukuthira* and *Vandikuthira*. The *Eduppukuthira* is an item of festival which was prevalent throughout central Travancore in important temples like Chettikulangara, Sasthamkotta and Mukhathala. The construction and carrying of these *Eduppukuthiras* require the assistance and co-operation of hundreds of people. The carrying of these *Eduppukuthiras* on the shoulders and sometimes on the tips of the fingers, gives room for much rejoicing and jubilation.

The *Eduppukuthira* may be described as a pedestal carried on two beams with its base in the shape of a horse and the top portion rising in tiers upto several feet high in a niche of which is placed the image of Devi.

The whole pedestal is richly decorated and carried by about a hundred people or more. The *Vandikuthira* consists of a four-wheeled effigy of a horse about ten feet in height. This is usually made of hay covering a wooden skeleton with its head and tail of wood. The whole effigy is attractively decorated. At times images of gods and goddesses are placed in front of the effigy. The effigy is usually pulled with a rope when the wheels begin to move. It should be mentioned that the display of these effigies is accompanied by musical items, beating of drums, band, *Nagaswaram* etc. The mass of people following the display make it a veritable procession. Besides the above, the *Garuden Parappu* and the *Thookkam* are also performed on the tenth day of the festival. On the last day of the festival, the priest (*Poojari*) representing the deity moves in procession holding a silver plate with holy ashes in the left hand and the special sword known as *Nandakam* in the right hand, accompanied by the play of snake-pipes, beating of drums and torches, to the single palmyra mentioned in the first paragraph where *Madan* is consecrated. There he (*Poojari*) offers special *pooja* and proceeds to the *Kavu* on the eastern side and after performing the *pooja* then returns to the temple. The *Ezhunnallathu* usually takes about three to four hours.

The *Ezhunnallathu* is followed by pyrotechnics till almost the day break.

A huge crowd numbering 50,000 and more assemble in the temple to participate in the festival on the tenth day. A number of tea shops, hotels and shops dealing in utensils and fancy goods would spring up on the maidan in connection with the festival. The collection of rent for these shops is a major item of revenue for the temple.

ASHTAMI ROHINI IN THE VADAYATTUKOTTA SREE KRISHNASWAMY TEMPLE

(TRUSTEE OF THE TEMPLE)

District
Taluk
Town

Quilon
Quilon
Quilon

The Vadayattukotta Sree Krishnaswamy temple is situated about three furlongs away from the Quilon Railway Junction.

The *Ashtamirohini-Uriyadi* Festival usually commences on the *Ashtamirohini* day every year of the first month of Malayalam era i.e. *Chingom*. The festival is scheduled to last for eight to twelve days. The festival symbolises the birth of Lord Krishna on the *Ashtamirohini* day. The celebrations include *Ushapooja*, *Kumbabhishekom*, *Deeparadhana*, *Pushpabhishekom*, *Harikadha*, music concert, *Bhajan*, *Ottamthullal*, *Patakam*, *Kathakali*, *Thiruvathirakali*, dance and the like. The celebration usually concludes on a following Sunday with *Uriyadi* which is sybolic of Sreekrishna's love for butter.

The *Uriyadi* procession starts from the temple at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The decorated chariot would carry the golden and silver images of Sree Krishna. It is held that god Krishna gives *darshan* to his devotees visiting their door-step on that day. After covering all the *uris* and receiving *Vazhipad* from devotees in the main thoroughfares the procession returns to the temple by about 4 o'clock in the next morning, when the silver and golden dieties are transferred to the *Sreekovil* of the temple proper to the tune of *Nagaswaram*

and *Bhajan* songs. Then *Deeparadhana* takes place. After distribution of *Prasadam* the celebration comes to a close. There will be *Bhajan* throughout when the procession is on. Also non-stop *Nagaswaram* and *Chenda Melam*.

People from far and near line up before the chariot carrying the image of Sree Krishna for worship. This colourful event continues to attract thosands of people.

Formerly this Vadayattukotta temple was only a small *Bhajana Matom* when weekly *Bhajan* was being held beside the daily two *Poojas*. That was some 50 years back.

It was late Shri K. G. Nanoo Pillai who took the initiative in converting this private *Bhajana Matom* which was founded by late Shri K. G. Velu Pillai somewhere in 1875 to a modern temple. Formerly pictures of Sree Krishna and other deities were kept in the *Bhajana Matom* for daily worship and *pooja*.

In the temple with the *Sreekovil*, Sreekrishna *Vigraham* is installed. At present Shri Damodaran Namboothiripad of *Puthumana Illom*, Ambalapuzha is the main *Thantri* of this temple.

It was the K. G. Brothers of *Unichakkom Veedu*, Vadayattukotta, Quilon who founded the modern temple.

FESTIVAL AT ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, ARAVILA, KAVANAD

(BY THE PARISH PRIEST)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Quilon
Quilon

The St. George's Church at Aravila, more popularly known as Aravila *Palli*, is one of the oldest churches in the Quilon district. It is located in the Quilon village about 4 miles away from the Quilon railway station. Tradition says that a divine power had played a great role in the establishment of this church. About 1003 M. E. the local people decided to build a church for St. George, the Patron and they approached Shri Kadappurathu Veetil Xavier, a wealthy man of the locality, for releasing the land for the purpose. Shri Xavier flatly refused their demand, but God had willed otherwise.

Shri Xavier had, in addition to his private work, the responsibility of detection of smugglers and informing Government about their whereabouts. On one of such occasions during these days, he caught hold of Shri Kureepuzha Cheran, a Muslim engaged in smuggling and caused him to be sent to jail for 3 months. Shri Cheran, on his release from jail, decided to wreak vengeance on Shri Xavier who had been instrumental for his imprisonment. One day Shri Xavier had gone to Quilon on some errand and knowing this fact Shri Cheran, determined to kill Shri Xavier, hid himself with a knife on the latter's route.

As soon as Shri Xavier was seen returning home, Cheran pounced upon him, but no sooner did he approach him, than Xavier jumped himself into the sea for his life. After a few minutes, he was completely exhausted and all his limbs were giving way when he prayed to God that he would release the plot requested for by the people for constructing the church if he was saved from drowning in the sea. The moment he prayed, he saw a band of people coming to his side and with their help he got himself to the shore. Thus the Aravila *Palli* was completed in 1004 M. E. Today the successors of Shri Xavier enjoy certain privileges during the festival days. Besides, a Holy Mass is said annually in the month of November for their well-being and prosperity.

The feast of St. George is celebrated here as the patron's feast for 11 days ending on the second Sunday after Easter every year.

Among the offerings received in this church, mention has to be made of *Neyyappam*, a kind of sweetened cake prepared with rice flour. About 5,000 people partake in the festivities. Earthenwares form one of the important commodities traded during the festival days in this place.

FESTIVAL IN KOCHUMANDAKAT OTTATHIL BHADRAKALI TEMPLE

(SHRI V. R. MADHAVAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Quilon
Eravipuram

The Kochumandakat Ottathil Bhadrakali temple is located in the Eravipuram village in Quilon taluk at a distance of 4 furlongs from the Eravipuram railway station on the Trivandrum Quilon railway line. The anecdote relating to this place is that years back, a molehill sprang up in the place and when it was broken, blood was seen on the spot and gradually this molehill grew up in greater proportions and snakes were found roaming about the place. The place thus came to be known as Kochumandakat. The deity of this temple is Bhadrakali.

The annual festival in this temple falls in

the Malayalam month of *Kumbham* (February-March) and lasts for 8 days, the important festival, however, being on Tuesday coming immediately after 20th of *Kumbham*. The important rituals like carrying of swords and trident in procession, *Thalapoli*, *Chamayavilaku*, *Mudi Ezhunnellippu*, *Garudan varavu* etc., are conducted during the festival. Procession of elephants (*Ana Ezhunnellippu*), effigies of horses on wheels (*Vandikuthira*, *Ettummu Kuthira*) etc., are the main attractions of the festival. The assemblage during this festival is estimated to come to about 5,000.

UTSAVAM IN PULIYILA KOCHUMANDAKAT BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI N. JANARDHANAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Quilon
Nedumpana

About 5 miles away from the Kundara railway station, in the village Nedumpana, Quilon taluk, is situated the Puliylila Kochumandakat Bhagavathy temple. The legend about the origin of this temple is as follows. About a century and a quarter ago, this place was a forest, only grazed by the cattle. On one Tuesday in *Kumbham* 1040 M. E. when two Harijan ladies were collecting green leaves and twigs for manure, they found a molehill near a banyan tree. They tried to destroy this molehill, with their sickle, but surprisingly enough, blood was oozing out of it. They were wonderstruck

and related this amazing story to the neighbours. Some of the elders of the locality accordingly verified this truth after an on-the-spot inspection. In the same year, the entire locality was infested with epidemics such as smallpox which proved so dangerous that cure became impossible. Greatly distressed, the people approached an astrologer who revealed that the place around the molehill was sanctified by the presence of the Devi and that they would be relieved from the epidemics if they would install the idol of the Devi in the place according to the religious rites and begin to

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF QUILON DISTRICT

worship her. The place has thus been transformed into a place of worship.

The festival (*Utsavam*) in the temple is celebrated on the third Monday in *Kumbham* (February-March). During the festival attractions like *Kettukazhcha* and cultural programmes like *Kathakali*, *Kathapra-*

sangam, *Ottamthullal* etc. are conducted. Religious ceremonies of the occasion includes *Deeparadhana*, *Chamayavilakku*, *Ponkal* etc.

Handloom fabrics, agricultural produce, stationery articles and handicraft articles form important commodities of the fair.

FESTIVALS IN THIRUVAKKANAD TRIKKOIKAL TEMPLE

(SHRI R. SANKARA PILLAI, VAKKANAD)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Kottarakara
Thrippilazhikom

In the Thrippilazhikom village in the Kottarakara taluk, at a distance of about 4½ miles from the Ezhukone railway station on the Quilon-Virudhunagar route, is located a temple known as the Thiruvakkanad Thrikkoikal temple. This temple is said to have been founded by Pakkanar, one of the twelve children of Vararuchi and who is presumed to be one of the incarnations of Maha Vishnu and the seat of wisdom. The consecration of the deities in this temple was also done by Pakkanar who had ordained Vilwamangalam Swamy and on his death, his disciples, to administer the affairs in this temple. The deities consecrated here are Paramasiva, Subramonia and Sree Krishna. The story goes that this place was known years back as Pakkanad as the temple of Pakkanar was there and gradually this term was changed to Thiru-

pakkanad, for the word 'Thiru' means 'holy.' And years after, this name Thiruvakkanad again came to be known as Thiruvakkanad, the consonant 'PA' in the former term transforming into 'VA'.

The festivals celebrated in this temple are (1) *Ashtami Rohini* in *Chingom* (August-September) (2) *Thaipooyam* in *Makaram* (January-February) and (3) *Sivarathri* in *Kumbham* (February-March). During these festivals, religious rites such as *Pushpanjali*, *Dhara*, *Kalabhacharthu* etc. are performed according to the Vedic injunctions. *Kalakettu* (effigies of bulls on wheels), *Kavadiyattom*, *Uriyadi*, caparisoned elephants etc. help to increase pomp and gaiety of the festivities. A large number of people collect themselves for these celebrations. Retail trade in the day-to-day essential commodities takes place during these days.

UTSAVAM IN POREDAM MAHADEVAR TEMPLE

(SHRI G. AYYAPPAN PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Quilon
Kottarakara
Chadayamangalam

Long long ago, a Brahman from Chengannur came to Chadayamangalam and settled there after marrying a girl from one of the Brahman families there. One day he went to Chengannur to perform the *Neyyabhishekom* ceremony, annually conducted in the Mahadevar temple there. This ceremony used to be conducted by the 72 Brahman families residing in Chengannur village at that time. Although the Brahman reached the place in time with the required quantity of ghee for performing *Abhishekom* he was denied entry to the temple by the other Brahmans who just before his arrival, closed the door and commenced the ceremonies. The persons who could not perform these ceremonies had, however, to make amends for their default. Greatly distressed at his disappointment in performing the *Neyyabhishekom* to the Lord and reflecting over the atonement he had to offer for the same, the Brahman, on his way home, rested a while in one of the wayside *satrams* (rest house). Fatigued in mind and body, the Brahman soon fell asleep. While he was asleep, it is believed, that the Lord appeared before him in a dream and apprised him that it was enough if he would install the idol of the Lord at a suitable place near his residence and perform *pooja* and other religious rites there. For this purpose, it was revealed to him that he would obtain the sacred idol from the bank of the river he used to frequent for his daily ablutions. Accordingly, the sacred idol was obtained from a place known as Poredam in Chadayamangalam village in Kottarakara taluk where it was consecrated for worship. This temple is located at a distance of 17 miles from the Kottarakara railway station.

The Arkathur Neduman family people (*Neduman Madakar*) are now believed to be the descendants of the above Brahman. Till 1112 M. E. these people had conducted the *Utsavam* for 3 days succeeding the hoisting of the temple flag to mark the beginning of the celebrations. They also used to perform the ceremony called *Ahassu*. Formerly there were large number of Brahman families in this place and they had extensive landed properties in the premises of this temple. Now most of them are not there. Among those who survive in the place, mention may, however, be made of two families, namely, Neduman family (*Neduman Madakar*) and Ennesseri family (*Ennesseri Madakar*). The Ennesseri family also used to conduct *Utsavam* for three days and *Ahassu* in this temple as the Neduman family was doing.

The above legend is supported by the fact that in no other temples in Travancore save this temple, is a festival celebrated for 14 days. Further, the spiritual administration in this temple (*Thanthram*) is done by the famous Chengannur Thazhamon family (*Thazhamon Madakar*). The deity of this temple is believed to be Chengannur Mahadevar.

One of the articles given as offering in this temple, requires special mention here. This is 1000 *Pazha Nivedyam*. To those who make this offering with great devotion and piety, their wish is always obtained and their illness cured. The chronic asthma patients occasionally get relief on reverentially placing a water container made of the spathe of areca palm and a rope at the temple (*Nadakku Vekkuka*).

The annual festival of this temple is celebrated in the month of *Medom* (April-May)

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which lasts for 14 days. The celebrations begin with the hoisting of the temple flag on the *Avittam* asterism. The *Arattu* takes place on the next *Pooyam* asterism and *Arattukalasam* on the next day. *Kathakali*, *Ottamthullal*, *Chakyarkoothu*, *Harikatha* religious seminar, reading of Vedas and hymns, caparisoned elephants etc. are some of the attractions of this festival. Household articles, vessels, mats etc. are sold in the fair held in connection with this festival.

To the student of archaeology, this temple provides certain information to ponder upon. On the southern side of the sanctum sanctorum, at its western extremity, there are, certain inscriptions on the stone wall. In 1961 some experts from the Archaeological department of the Government of India came and examined these inscriptions, but, it seems, that no one has so far deciphered these writings.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS
OF
ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

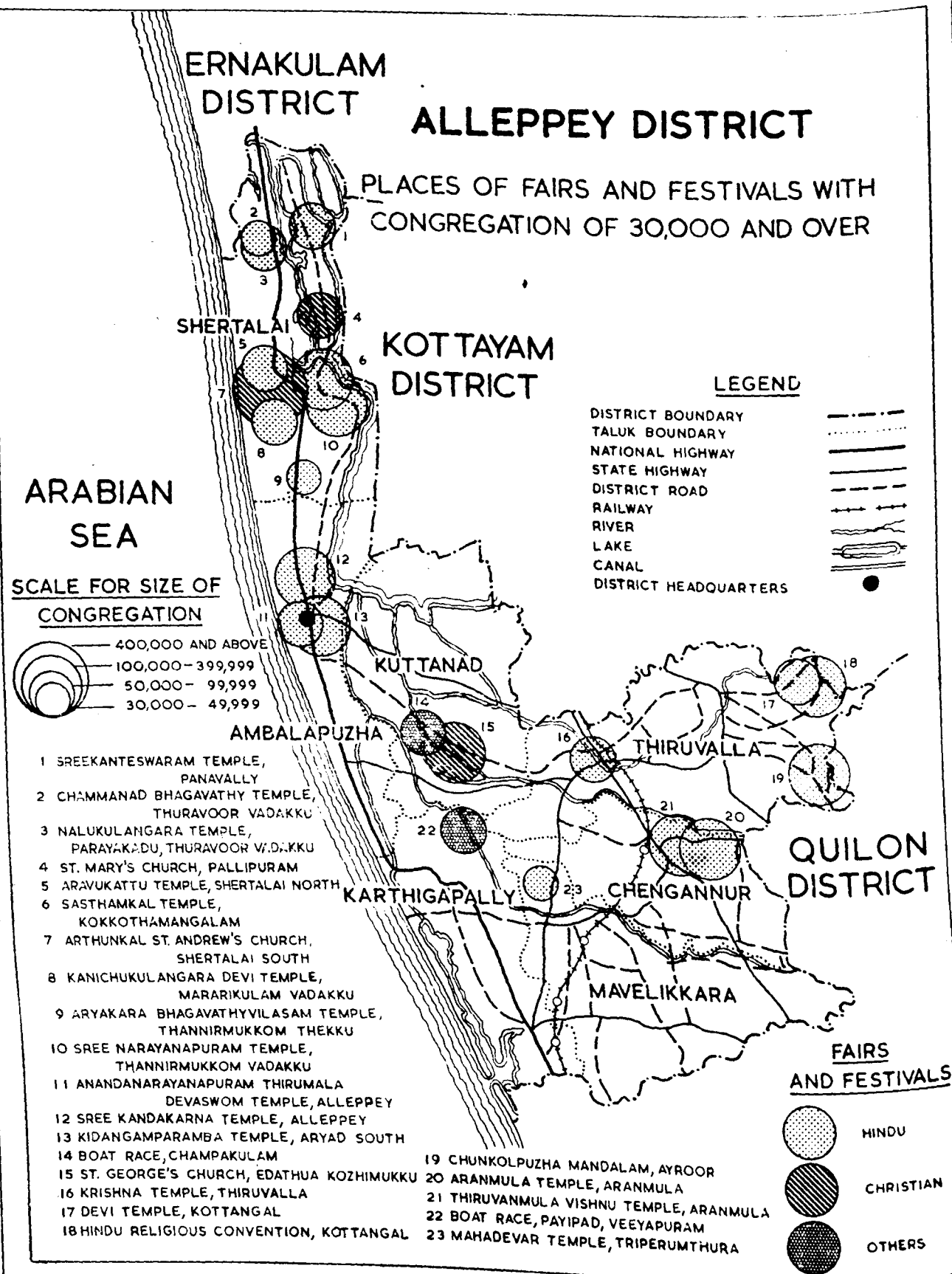
FEAST IN THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH, KARAVALLOOR

(REV. FR. CYRIAC PERINGELIL)

District	Quilon
Taluk	Pathunapuram
Village	Karavalloor

The feast in the Immaculate Conception Church, Karavalloor, Pathanapuram, which lies about one and half miles away from the Punalur railway station, is held for 2 days, on 7th and 8th of December. On 7th December at 6 p. m. vespers are sung. This is followed by a procession starting from the church and going up to the nearby junction where the public roads meet together. The statue of St. Mary is carried with great veneration in this procession. At about 8 p. m. the procession returns to

the church. Then begins the Eucharistic Benediction. The Benediction is followed by a sermon on St. Mary's Immaculate Conception with which the day's ceremonies close. On the 8th December, at 10 a. m. the High Mass is said. Immediately following this are the Eucharistic Benediction and a sermon on St. Mary. All the assembled there take a round about the church and with it, the celebration is over. About 150 people take part in these celebrations.



FEASTS IN THE St. MARY'S CHURCH, MUTTOM, SHER TALAI

(SHRI MATHEW KOTTOOR)

District
Taluk
Town

Alleppey
Shertalai
Shertalai

1. The feast of the Holy Marriage of Our Lady

Since the patroness of this church is Our Lady (St. Mary, the Mother of Christ) this feast is probably as old as the church itself i. e. 1023 A. D. The feast took the present form since 1864, when the confraternity was founded in this church under the title of "The confraternity of the Holy Marriage of Our Lady". The feast is, therefore, also known as confraternity feast.

In former days the celebration of the feast lasted for a full week but since 1924 it has been reduced to four days, starting on the 18th January with flag hoisting and other ceremonies and concluding on the 21st January every year. The church is neatly decorated and solemn religious functions are conducted in the church on all the four days. The functions are attended by a large gathering of devotees. On the 19th January there is the colourful ceremony of crowning the president for the following year's feast. The feast ends with a solemn and colourful procession along the streets on the 21st January.

In connection with the feast on the last two days a variety of goods are brought for sale. Among them one can find the cottage industries products such as earthen pots of all varieties, mats, coir products, wooden articles, goods produced by local smiths, fruits like oranges, dates etc. sugar-cane and tubers.

2. The feast of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception

In the chapel facing the bazaar and attached to the northern side of the church

stands a beautiful statue of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception. The chapel is known as the chapel of Our Lady, the wonder worker. Many, irrespective of caste and creed, flock to the chapel to request favours from and offer thanks for the many favours received, to Our Lady.

The feast as it is celebrated to-day started only 16 years ago and the reason for the same is said to be the following :—

One night after the cinema show, a non-Christian youth passing in front of the chapel used indecent language against the statue in the chapel and it is said the youth was immediately bitten by a poisonous snake as a result of which the victim fainted. Shertalai is a place where snakes are rare especially poisonous ones. The Vishahari (physician treating snake-bites) to whom the youth was taken stated that it was the result of God's anger. It is further reported that the youth came back to the chapel, did reparation for the wrong done and that he was cured later.

The feast starts with flag-hoisting on Thursday following the 8th December and ends on the following Sunday. Besides solemn religious functions in the chapel and church, sermons are delivered in the church courtyard in the evenings. The decorations and the illuminations done around the church and its premises add colour and grandeur to the functions. The final procession with the statue of Our Lady brings the celebration to a close. In connection with the feast, on the last two days different commodities of goods (as mentioned for the first feast) are brought for sale.

GARUDAN THOOKAM IN THE CHEMMANAD BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI NARAYANAN KARTHA)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Shertalai
Thuravoor North

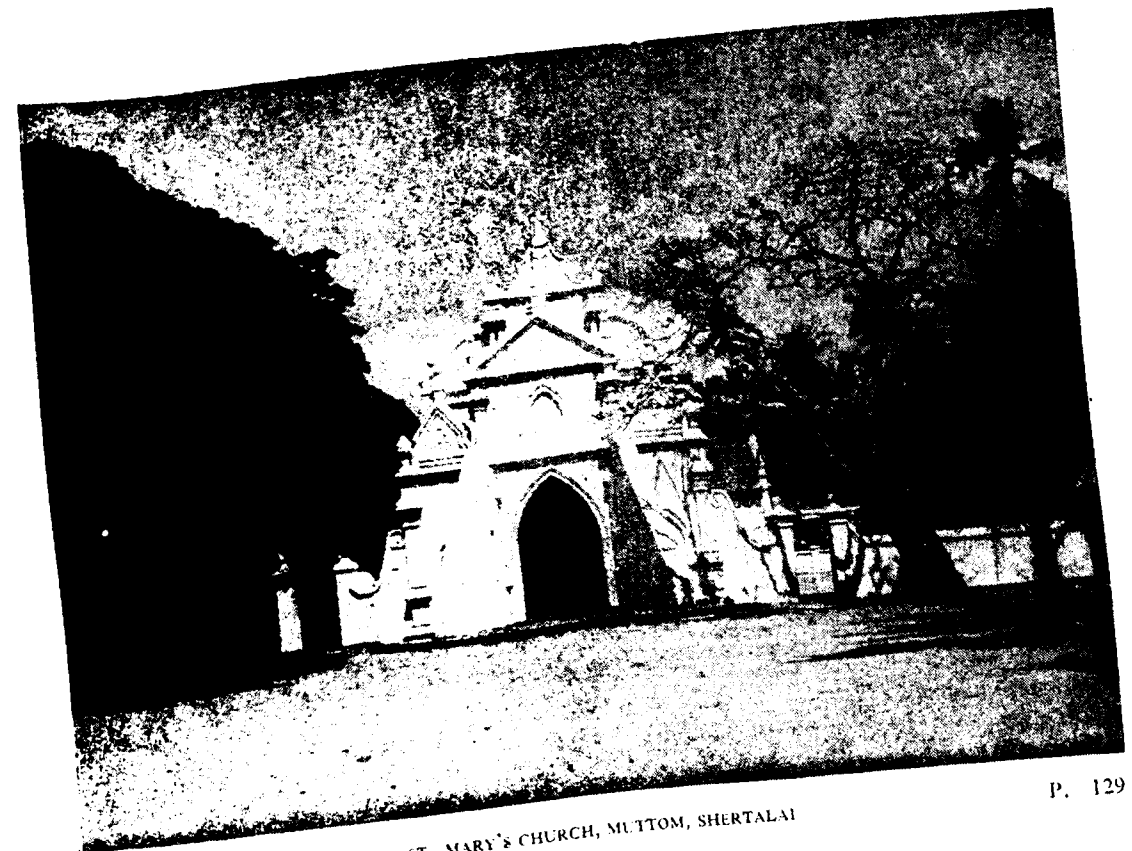
A traveller going through the Alleppey-Aroor section of the national highway, when he passes the 23rd milestone, reaches a spot lying just 10 miles away from the Mattancherry Halt railway station. This is the vicinity of an old temple. A little away from this particular spot, on the eastern side of the road, is a big maidan. Here at the western extremity of the maidan stands the Chemmanad Bhagavathy temple. Although time has wrought many changes on it the grandeur and glory of this temple have not yet been affected. This temple belongs to the Ettuveetil Karthas, one of the influential families in Chemmanad and the descendants of the local rulers. This temple is dedicated to Bhadrakali.

The *Garudan Thookam Utsavam* is celebrated in this temple annually for 13 days in all, ending on the *Pooram* asterism in *Kumbham* (February-March). The *Utsavam* commences with the hoisting of the temple flag on the *Uthrattathi* asterism in *Makaram*. This stage of the celebration lasts for 8 days till *Thiruvathira* asterism. The most important *Utsavam*, however, takes place on two days viz., during *Punartham* and *Pooyam* asterisms, when the people in this village, forming themselves into two groups, celebrate this festival on a grand scale vying with each other. On these days, the temple premises are beautifully decorated with flags and festoons. In the evening, the temple will glow itself with illuminations of wicker lamps. The entire locality seethes with activity. The huge procession headed by not less than 8 caparisoned elephants accompanied by music, *Panchavadyam* etc., starts at 4 p. m. from the temple, the image of Bhagavathy being carried on the back of the

biggest caparisoned elephant and proceeds in slow pace to the maidan two furlongs to the east of the temple. On reaching the maidan the procession stops for a while, the caparisoned elephants at the vanguard of the procession standing in line facing the temple. The scene is both beautiful and grand. The vast maidan, the caparisoned elephants, the accompaniments of drums and music, the multitude of people in many coloured costumes—all seem to bathe in the profusion of the golden rays of the setting sun. After a while, the procession returns to the temple with greater enthusiasm. The drummer accelerates the rhythm of his beat; the *Panchavadyam* is tuned to the highest pitch; the multitude of torch lights are held high; the boom of the pyrotechnics is on. With these the procession reaches the temple and is followed by a special display of pyrotechnics with which the programme comes to a close at about 9 p. m. This is called 'Pakalpooram' and is followed by various cultural programmes and shows to entertain the gathering. Again at 1 o'clock after midnight another procession much bigger than the former makes its start. This is followed by a grand display of pyrotechnics and the celebration concludes early morning.

During the two days following the above celebration 'Velapadayani' (martial dance) is held. The following day of the *Pooram* asterism is the final day of the festival. The 'Garudan Thookkam Utsavam' is celebrated on this day.

It is estimated that about 30,000 people participate in these celebrations. Retail trade in households and daily necessities takes place during these days in the fair held in connection with the festival.



Pl. 37

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, MUTTOM, SHERTALAI



Pl. 38 'GARUDAN THOOKAM' P. 130
(Chemmanad Bhagavathy Temple)



Pl. 39

MULLAKAL DEVI TEMPLE, ALLEPPEY

SACRED HEART'S FEAST IN THE SACRED HEART'S CHURCH, VALAMANGALAM

(REV. FR. MATHEW, PAZHEMADAM)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Shertalai
Village	Thuravoor South

The Sacred Heart's Feast is the most important festival celebrated in the Sacred Heart's Church of Valamangalam in the Thuravoor South village of the Shertalai taluk. This church which was founded in the year 1925 is situated about 18 miles away from the Mattancherry Halt railway station. The above festival which was originally started as the titular feast of

this church in the year 1928 falls every year on the last Sunday of October. The expenses for conducting this festival are usually met by the President who is elected by the confraternity. Besides the parishioners of this and of the neighbouring churches, a large number of people belonging to other communities also attend this festival.

FEAST OF ST. JOSEPH IN THE ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, THIRUNELLOOR

(REV. FR. JACOB PUTHENVELIYIL)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Shertalai
Village	Pallipuram

This church which is in the Archdiocese of Ernakulam, dedicated to St. Joseph, the patron of the universal Catholic Church, was established in the year 1952 during the centenary jubilee of St. Thomas, the Apostle of India and St. Francis Xavier, who is called the second Apostle of India. There are 152 families and about 1,000 parishioners in this parish. Formerly these were the parishioners of the St. Mary's Forane Church, Pallipuram and St. Mary's Church, Muttam. In the beginning, it was the filial church of the St. Mary's Forane Church, Pallipuram. Afterwards it was separated and made an independent parish church.

This church is situated in the Pallipuram village of the Shertalai taluk in Alleppey district, on the western shore of the Vembanad lake, near Shertalai-Arukutty road.

Since it is a newly started church there are no schools or other institutions connected with this church. The main feast of this church is the feast of St. Joseph, the patron of the universal Church. There is no fixed date for the feast. Every year the feast is celebrated on the fourth Sunday after Easter. About 1,500 people participate in the feast. The celebration lasts for three days.

ST. MARY'S FORANE CHURCH, PALLIPURAM

(FR. KURUVILLA PANJIKARAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Shertalai
Pallipuram

This church of Pallipuram is one of the ancient churches of the first century. Even at that time the Christians, being much devoted to Mary, the Mother of God, dedicated this church to her. As a gesture of special devotion to Mary and as a manifestation of the high and rebounded esteem and appreciation the people have for her feast, they observe fast for fifteen days before the feast. On August fourth, Mary's flag is hoisted and with it the festival begins. On the fifteenth of August (the last day of the festival), the feast is celebrated grandly by the local confraternity of Blessed Virgin Mary with the help and co-operation of the parishioners. This feast is of very ancient origin, believed to have been started in the first century with the establishment of

the church itself. Although other churches were built in different parts in due course and the confraternity was divided into many parish units, those people from Muvattupuzha, Meenachil, Kottayam, Ettumanoor, Vaikom and Shertalai taluks come over here on this festival day to pay their respect and homage to Mary, Mother of God, and to commemorate and to perpetuate their unity and belief in the mother church at Pallipuram. It has now become, by custom, the bounden duty of the afore-said Catholics to take part in this festival. The young and the old, men and women, numbering about fifty thousand in all, gather here on this day to make this feast a grand one.

KOOTTAKALAM (ARATTU UTSAVAM) IN THE KANDAMANGALAM TEMPLE

(SHRI V. A. BALAKRISHNAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Shertalai
Vayalar Mekku

The Kandamangalam temple is situated in the Kadakkarapally kara of the Vayalar Mekku village in the Shertalai taluk, just 20 miles to the south of the Mattancherry Halt railway station. The chief idol (*Prathishta*) of this temple is Sree Chakra. The story goes that years back, a certain Brahman who fled from Kolathunad fearing the Moplah rebellion there, happened to reach this place

with this idol. The local people, attracted by the beauty of this idol, decided to snatch it away from the Brahman. They killed him and took possession of the same. At last, the idol passed from hand to hand until it happened to be consecrated in this temple. No information is now available as to the person who had consecrated this idol in this temple. The principal deity is not depicted

ST. SEBASTIAN'S FEAST IN ST. ANDREW'S FORANE CHURCH, ARTHUNGAL

in the form of an image but a wheel with forty triangles inscribed in an unidentified metal.

Prior to 1112. M. E., this temple was considered as one dedicated to Bhagavathy. The oldest lady of the locality had been performing *pooja* and other rites in the temple. The idol was always kept back from public eye in a box. And *Kozhivettu* (poultry sacrifice), *Pooramthullal*, *Parisamuttu Kali*, *Velan Pattu* etc. were ceremoniously conducted there. But after 1112 M. E., the animal sacrifice and the allied customs were stopped and the idol was caused to be re-consecrated there. Besides the chief idol of

Sree Chakra, the idols of Subramania, Ganapathy, Sastha and Balabadra have also been installed here for worship. Now, the daily *poojas* are performed with offerings five times a day.

The *Koottakalam Utsavam* in this temple, lasting for 10 days, commences on the *Thiruvonam* asterism in *Meenam* and concludes on the *Rohini* asterism in *Kumbham*. About 20,000 people flock to the place during these days. *Chikara*, *Thalapoli*, *Thulabharam*, *Koothu*, *Urulicha*, *Kumbhakudam*, *Kavadiabishekam*, *Sarppamthullal*, *Thiripidithadeepakazhcha* etc. are performed at the temple during these festival days.

ST. SEBASTIAN'S FEAST IN ST. ANDREW'S FORANE CHURCH, ARTHUNGAL

(REV. DR. DENNIS ARASHAR KADAVIL)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Shertalai;
Shertalai South

The St. Andrew's Forane Church at Arthungal, one of the sacred shrines in Kerala, attracts every year, lakhs of devotees from all parts of the State, both Christians and non-Christians alike. The feast of St. Sebastian is celebrated in this church on the 20th of January. It is not the dazzling decorations or the pyrotechnics or any propaganda that attracts the innumerable devotees to St. Sebastian but the depth of faith in God and devotion that they experience here.

The Portuguese historians have recorded about this church as 'St. Sebastian's Mission in Moothedom'. The book written by the famous historian George Shurhamer S. J. based on the annual reports and other documents sent by the Jesuit Fathers to Rome, and the book, 'The History of Malabar', written by the first European Father of this church, Rev. Diogo Gonsalves S. J. furnish

valuable historical data regarding this old church.

Moothedom is one of the principalities which rose in power in the medieval Kerala. Before Cochin bar came into existence with the great floods in 1341, the Anthakaram bar, also called Manakkodam bar, located to the south of Cranganore was one of the important outlets of the country. It was through this Manakkodam bar that the Bishops Mar Saphor and Mar Prothum came to Moothedom in 835 A. D. Moothedom is considered to have been one of the important centres of activity of these bishops, the old church of St. Thomas, the Apostle, being the place of their rest and meditations. There is historical evidence to show that when, in the sixteenth century, the Jesuit Fathers commenced their work of the Arthungal Mission in the name of St. Andrews, the coastal area from Cochin

to Cranganore was largely inhabited by the Marthoma Christians.

The royal seat of the rulers of Moothedom principality was at Arthungal, a place situated about 25 miles south of Cochin. The Moothedom dynasty was a collateral branch of the Cochin royal family. Although they had only a military strength of 14,000 Nair soldiers, they were at times able to maintain their independence against the Cochin rulers who had an army of a lakh of Nair soldiers. One of the factors which accounted for this was the power of the local Christians and their support to the Moothedom royal family. In 1540 the Moothedom navy attacked a Portuguese ship. Enraged by this attack, they retaliated with the assistance of the Cochin King. In the battle that ensued at Arthungal, the Moothedom army was completely routed and the Kaimal (ruler of Moothedom) was slain. Not satisfied with this outrageous attack and the victory they won over the Moothedom army, the Portuguese army, completely devastated the coconut palms and other fruit-bearing trees and set fire to all the houses that stood in the coastal line between Cochin and Prakkad. The rulers of the Moothedom dynasty were notorious as the chieftains of an organised set of invincible pirates. In those days 500 Nair soldiers used to accompany the procession in the St. Sebastian's festival under orders of the Moothedom ruler. On 30th of November 1584, the Moothedom ruler and 7 Nair chieftains embraced Christianity in the St. Andrew's Church. Again on 17th of December, another set of 200 Nair chieftains came to the Christian fold with the sanction of the Cochin King.

The old St. Thomas' Church at Arthungal was located at a distance of 2 miles north-west of the present church of St. Andrew. The St. Andrew's Church was originally constructed in 1581. It was a wooden structure. The first vicar of this church was a native of the locality. In 1597 this church was reconstructed in bricks and stone and

the image of St. Sebastian was taken from the church in the beach and reconsecrated here with much eclat. There are different versions current about the disappearance of the old St. Thomas' Church. Some consider it to have succumbed to sea erosion while some others think that the Portuguese who detected Nestorian heresy in the ancient Catholics, replaced the statue of St. Thomas with that of St. Andrew. To-day the statue of St. Thomas, one of the most elegantly finished pieces of ancient artistic perfection that adorned the church of St. Thomas, occupies a prominent place in the church of St. Andrew at Arthungal.

It is not on account of St. Thomas or St. Andrew that the Arthungal church has attained fame and glory. It is the mediatory power of St. Sebastian and his love for his devotees that make them seek Arthungal. The hallowed image venerated here was finished in France and originally intended to be sent to the famous church at Mylapore, Madras. When the ship laden with this precious treasure approached the harbour at Thaikkal, it came to a sudden stop and would not move further and consequently, the statue of St. Sebastian was caused to be consecrated in the old St. Thomas' Church.

In the former days, the people in and around Arthungal had been dying in large numbers every year due to smallpox, cholera and such other dangerous epidemics. During such calamities the statue of St. Sebastian used to be taken in procession around the entire locality, as a result of which the epidemics miraculously subsided. There are several descriptions in historical documents which show that during the great epidemics on various occasions since 16th century till date, St. Sebastian had blessed the local people with his miraculous curative powers and they had found relief. Pilgrims from all parts of South India and even from Jaffna in Ceylon used to come to this church at all times to pay their homage to the saint. According to the decree of

Pope Paul V issued on 6th of February 1616, this church was transferred from the Ankamali diocese and brought under the Cochin diocese. During the time when the Carmelite bishops were administering the diocese of Verapoly, they discontinued some of the cultural programmes like *Beemakali*, *Annanada* and *Koothuparachil* which were conducted in the churches in olden times. It was the decennial parish retreats conducted on a large scale that were mainly responsible for this and similar reforms.

About 100 years ago, another statue of St. Sebastian, quite similar in shape and size to the original one, was made. This new one was caused to be made as a result of an unsuccessful attempt made by some unknown miscreants to take away the original statue by stealth. It was also feared that the old statue would get spoiled if constantly taken round in all parishes. At midnight on 17th January this old statue which is safely kept in the treasure-room of the church will be brought to the church for public worship. It must be remembered, that the old statue installed at the altar inside the church, is never removed from its original position. The sacred statue which is brought to the church in procession on 17th midnight, will be returned to the treasure-room of the church for safe custody on the eighth day of the feast i. e. on 27th January.

On the 18th of January, as the day dawns and the gate of the church is opened, thousands of pilgrims who return from the Sastha temple at Sabarimala throng to this place, take bath from the tank attached to the church and pay their homage to the saint. The oracle at Sabarimala temple used to say "Those who come to see me, should also see my 'Veluthachan'".

In the early days, it was the chariot which was presented by the Moothedom royal household, that was used in the procession of the festival. With the decay of this chariot due to wear and tear, another beautiful one was made. But the bishop

of Verapoly ordered that the new chariot should not be used as he considered that it was made in the Hindu style. The vicar of the church read out this prohibitory order only after the procession was over, lest, he feared, it would have created great resentment and chaos among the pilgrims assembled there. Consequent on the prohibitory order several alterations were made and the chariot was transformed into its present shape and is still taken out during the procession.

Formerly the pilgrims had to undertake long journeys by foot to reach this sacred place. Now thanks to the State Transport Department, they can reach this place easily without any difficulty. During the festival season, the Transport Department plies special buses to this place for the convenience of the pilgrims. With the increase of transport facilities, the number of devotees visiting this place has also increased substantially.

The feast of St. Sebastian is celebrated here on a grand scale for eleven days. But due to the unmanageable crowd of pilgrims and much confusion on the 20th January, the final day of the feast, the church authorities instituted another minor feast on the 8th day after the principal feast. This is known as *Etam Perunnal*. This festival has also now attained as much importance as the principal feast.

Among the devotees who flock to this holy shrine to pay homage to the saint, a greater part consist of those who recovered from dangerous epidemic attacks, those who escaped miraculously from grave accidents, the maimed, the crippled and the mentally deranged. Those who have obtained special favours of the saint show their gratitude and pay homage to him by crawling on their knees from the local beach to the church, performing the '*Urulu Nercha*' and making offerings of gold and silver images of human limbs, bows and arrows.

Finding that the old church, built in 1597 was quite insufficient to accommodate the

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

large number of devotees coming there, it was decided to construct a new one and accordingly the foundation stone for the same was laid on 15th February 1915. As a preliminary step for the construction activities, a canal from Sherthalai to Arthungal, joining the two together, was dug in order to bring down stones and other building materials necessary for the new church. But the construction of this church had to

be postponed due to certain unavoidable reasons. In 1950, however, this work was restored with new modifications being made in the original plan. It is expected that this church will be completed within two years or so. When completed, it will surely be one of the grandest churches in Kerala.

Free translation of an article by Rev. Dr. Dennis Arashar Kadavil in the Malayala Manorama Sunday Supplement dated 19th January 1964

FEAST OF THE ARCHANGEL IN THE ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, THATTAMPALLY

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Ambalapuzha
Town	Alleppey Municipal

The St. Michael's Church, Thattampally is situated in the Thattampally ward of the Alleppey municipal town. The nearest railway station to reach this church, namely Kottayam, lies only sixteen miles away from this place. This Church was founded as early as in the beginning of the fifteenth century. It was constructed on the plot donated as a gift by Avaloor Panicker, the chief executive of the Raja of Aryad and hence it was called as *Dathampally*. Long after, this came to be known as *Thattampalli*. Perhaps this evolution of name was due to the absence of letter 'D' in the Tamil language which was current in the locality then. It is believed that whenever dangerous epidemics like smallpox and cholera

spread over the place, the Archangel will appear on the scene and save the people from these attacks. During such epidemic seasons, the image of the Archangel is taken round in procession through various streets of the Alleppey town and the neighbouring villages with great reverence and devotion. As a result, the epidemics used to subside.

The feast of the Archangel is celebrated in the church every year with great reverence and devotion for six days, commencing on the 24th and ending on the 29th of September. Large number of people partake in the festivities. Earthenwares and handicraft articles are the main goods marketed in the fair held in connection with the festival.

FEAST IN THE LITTLE FLOWER MISSION CHURCH, KALAVOOR (FR. J. A. KACKERY)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Ambalapuzha
Village	Aryad

The feast of the Little Flower of Jesus began to be celebrated in this mission with the establishment of the Franciscan Mission at Kalavoor for evangelisation hereabouts and in the nearby districts. The venue of the celebrations is situated by the side of the national highway, six miles to the north of Alleppey. This is the patron's feast of the Little Flower Chapel, which stands at a distance of only half a furlong from the road itself.

The conclusion of the feast is kept up always on the 1st Sunday of May. Though the feast is usually celebrated for eleven days including nine days of the Novena, people begin to assemble only towards the last two days of the feast. From the year 1962 onwards the date of the feast was

changed to 3rd October every year. This change is intended to bring the feast in conformity with the universal calendar of the Catholic Church, so far as its liturgy is concerned.

It may be said without exaggeration that about ten thousand persons usually attend this festival on the eve and the final day and the vespers on the following night. The principal articles for sale brought to the fair attached to the feast are mature seeds and vegetables of different descriptions. Farmers living all round Kalavoor, especially within the periphery of the Aryad Block area are interested in this sale. The other items of attraction of this feast do not differ from those of other church festivities common in Kerala.

FEASTS IN THE ASSISSI CHURCH, VELLAPPALLY

(REV. FR. PETER M. CHENAPARAMPIL)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Ambalapuzha
Village	Aryad South

Three feasts are celebrated annually in this parish with some external solemnities and some fairs are held in connection with them. The biggest of the three is the feast of Our Lady of Fatima held in May on the Sunday after the thirteenth.

Our Lady—the Mother of God—has deigned to appear in the world several times to give messages to her children. One of the most recent apparitions is the one that took place in Cova delria—a mountainous

spot in the parish of Fatima in Portugal. On May 13th in 1917 the Heavenly Queen appeared to three little children and exhorted them to pray and do penance. Our Lady appeared to the children on the thirteenth of every month till October 1917 when with a prodigious sign—the miracle of the dancing sun witnessed by 70,000 people—confirmed the truth of the apparitions.

The feast of Our Lady of Fatima is cele-

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

brated in this parish on the day of her first apparition. It is a seven days feast. On the last day a procession is taken out with the statue of Our Lady of Fatima well decorated and carried in a car. People fall in lines singing invocations to the Heavenly Mother. The procession goes nearly half a mile. On the last day of the feast, people from far and near flock to the church. Merchants and pedlars also take this occasion to attend the feast.

The fair lasts for about a day and articles like sweets, nuts, sugar-cane, scapulars and medals are sold.

The feast next in importance is that of St. Francis of Assissi held in this parish annually on the Sunday nearest to the fourth of October. No cultured man can ignore the great personality of St. Francis who effected such a great revival of faith

and morals in the middle ages in Europe. St. Francis is known as the second Christ. His life is one of great sanctity and charity.

St. Francis of Assissi is the patron of this church and so a feast for five days is celebrated in his honour. A course of spiritual conferences is given during these days. On the last day we have some fairs. Nuts, sweets and wild olive fruits are sold in the fairs that last for a few hours.

In one of the side chapels of this parish the feast of St. Sebastian is held early in the month of April. St. Sebastian is a saint of the third century who died a martyr for the Catholic faith. He is invoked in times of contagious diseases like smallpox. The feast lasts for 3 days. On the final day there may be one or two pedlars selling fruits and sweets.

MANDAPA MAHOTSAVAM IN THE KIDANGAMPARAMPU TEMPLE

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Ambalapuzha
Aryad South

The Kidangamparambu temple which is situated in the Aryad South village of the Ambalapuzha taluk about sixteen miles away from the Kottayam railway station was constructed about 300 years ago by the then Maharaja of Travancore for the local Ezhuvas and other backward communities to conduct their prayers. The Maharaja had also been gracious to donate a few acres of land and paddy fields to this temple for its maintenance. Now this temple is used by all Hindus irrespective of caste differences. The temple is dedicated to Sree Bhuvaneswari. Legend has it that the area around the present temple was once a forest and there was a fortress belonging to the Maharaja of Travancore to the south of this temple. The soldiers guarding this fort happened to use this place where the idol of Bhagavathy lay hidden

among the twigs and leaves fallen from the neighbouring trees for insanitary purposes. The Devi got infuriated over this and as a result the soldiers were harassed by attack of smallpox. The Maharaja heard about this distressing news and immediately constructed a temple there (the present one) as an act of atonement for the evil deed committed by his soldiers.

The *Mandala Mahotsavam* is celebrated here for eleven days. The celebration commences from the 15th December and lasts till 26th December. During the *Utsavam* the idol of Devi will be taken round in procession. Nearly one and half lakhs of people will gather in all, to partake in this *Utsavam*. Sugarcane and handicraft articles are the important things sold in the fair held during the festival days.

FEAST IN THE ST. THOMAS' CHURCH THUMPOLLY

(SHRI K. S. BASTIAN PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Ambalapuzha
Aryad South

The parish of Thumpolly, the area of which is about nine sq. miles, lies partly in the Municipality of Alleppey and partly on its outskirts. It is nearly thirty miles south from Port of Cochin and nine miles north of Prakkad, the seat of an ancient royal family, which is now extinct. The place is renowned for its beautifully constructed church, called after the Apostle, St. Thomas.

The history of Thumpolly is lost in the dim ages of the past, and the records kept in the early church archives were destroyed by fire. It is, therefore, very difficult to get a glimpse into its antiquity. But the light of its history dawns with the erection of a cross, which then people called "Muthappan Cross", before which they used to bow, light lamps and put their offerings. From the names of the later churches in the parish one can conclude that by *Muthappan* is meant the Apostle St. Thomas. It is believed to have been brought over to this place by bishops Sapor and Proth who landed at Manakkodam in 835 A. D. Another tradition is that it was fixed there by immigrants from Cranganore. There were immigrations to the place from Cranganore and Thoyhiyure (Angoorkara). In times past the cross was thought to have been destroyed along with the chapel in 1411 A. D., by hostile communities. Very recently, when the foundation was dug up for the chapel of 'Our Lady of Fathima', it was discovered, but was buried deep in the foundation. This was identified as the ancient cross, since it was found at the spot where it was reported to have stood.

The struggle and opposition between the Christians and the Nairs continued

with construction and destruction of the chapels and crosses until at last Fr. Giacomo Fenicio, an Italian by birth, appeared on the scene. A man of prayer and zeal for the salvation of souls and propagation of the faith, he exerted his influence to get permission from the prince of Cochin in 1600 A. D. to erect a cross and a chapel at Thumpolly in honour of 'Our Lady.' It is the predecessor of the present church which bears the name of St. Thomas, and celebrates the confraternity feast of the Immaculate Conception of 'Our Lady' on December 8th. Thus Thumpolly or Thumpolly comes to signify a parish dedicated to St. Thomas and the Blessed Virgin Mary: (Thom = Thomas; Polly = Mary)

The Statue of 'Our lady' of Immaculate Conception is popularly called '*Kappal-karathi Amma*' i.e., the Mother that came in a ship. The devotion of the people of Thumpolly to their Blessed Mother looms so large at heart that the fact of St. Thomas being their patron saint fades away and now only a little interest is shown in celebrating the saint's feast. But it is not entirely neglected, for the staff and students of the St. Thomas' School have begun to celebrate it in honour of their patron saint.

The feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady lasts for eleven days and ends on December 8th. It is the grandest feast of the parish. There is a large gathering of people every day, coming from far and wide either as pilgrims or as buyers and sellers. The surroundings of the church are quite alive and picturesque with a moving sea of human heads. Oh! what a hurry and bustle it is then?

The 8th of December is the last day of

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

the feast. After the morning solemn service, arrangements are made for the evening procession. When everything is in apple-pie-order, the procession starts amidst the ringing of bells, report of petards and rockets, beating of drums and blare of trumpets. It ends with the benediction of

the Blessed Sacrament.

There is also an octave of the feast. During that time the parishioners and the faithful from the vicinity of the parish bring their offerings to 'Our Lady'. The feast terminates with another procession.

UTSAVAM IN THE ANANDANARAYANAPURAM THIRUMALA DEVASWOM, ALLEPPEY

(SHRI M. D. GOVINDA KAMMATH)

District
Taluk
Town

Alleppey
Ambalapuzha
Alleppey

Long ago when the Shertalai taluk was a part of Cochin State the idol of Nrusimhaswamy was installed in the Thuravoor Thirumala temple by one *sanyasi* named Ravala Naicken. When the offerings given to the deity began to wane, God was greatly displeased and his wrath had no bounds that the people were subjected to untold sufferings by droughts and pestilence. It was then revealed through the astrological calculation that the idol of Nrusimhaswamy should be removed from the temple where it stood, and consecrated at the Cochin Thirumala temple. At that time both the Thuravoor and Cochin Thirumala temples were under the control of one administration. Fearing the attack of Sakthan Thampuran of Cochin the idols of Venkateswaraswamy, Nrusimhaswamy and Laxmi Devi which were formerly installed in the Cochin Thirumala temple were subsequently removed from that temple and brought to Alleppey and installed in the old Thirumala temple there. Ever since these deities were consecrated there, trade and commerce flourished greatly in the Alleppey town. The Maharaja of Travancore

was greatly pleased to hear this happy news and so he arranged for constructing a new temple there. This temple was completed in 1027 M. E. and it was called Anandanarayanapuram. This temple has obtained great many favours from the Travancore royal family. The nearest railway station to reach this temple is Kottayam, located 20 miles away from this place.

The legend says that the above mentioned idols were got from *ijayanagar* and were consecrated at the Cochin Thirumala temple.

Rathotsavam, *Mahotsavam*, *Nrusimhajayanthi* and *Anandavatham* are the important festivals of this temple. The *Rathotsavam* and *Mahotsavam* are conducted in honour of Venkateswaraswamy. Each of these two festivals is celebrated for eight days. *Nrusimhajayanthi* is celebrated in honour of Nrusimhaswamy for five days. The *Anandavatham* is performed for four days. Large number of people attend these celebrations. Cultural programmes like *Nagaswaram*, *Harikatha*, musical concerts etc., are some of the attractions during the festivities.

UTSAVAM IN THE KALLERCODE MAHADEVA TEMPLE

(SREEKARYAM)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Ambalapuzha
Punnappa

The Kallercode Mahadeva Temple is situated in the Punnappa village of the Ambalapuzha taluk within easy reach of the Changanacherry railway station. This temple is dedicated to Siva and Ganapathy. This is the earliest temple built in Kerala for Lord Siva which was constructed by Parasurama when he redeemed Kerala from the ocean. When the land came up from the ocean, Lord Siva saw the sage Kalyakodan as worshipping Siva. He ordained the sage Kalyakodan to install Siva there and to perform *pujas* for him. This is the story regarding the origin of the temple. The tank, located on the western side of this temple, is said to have sprung up when Parasurama thrust his bow on the earth.

Prior to 1068 M. E., the Maharaja and the elephants were denied entry to this temple. Yet, Maharaja Vishakom Thirunal

had once visited this temple and conducted worship standing outside the temple buildings. From 1068 M. E. onwards, the elephants used to be admitted to the temple for the festival. The *Sreekovil* of the temple is believed to be the one which was erected long ago at the time of the construction of this temple. There are beautiful engravings on the walls and the wooden panels of the temple depicting stories from the ancient *Puranas*.

The annual *utsavam* of the temple takes place during the month of *Thulam* (October-November) and lasts for eight days ending on the *Amavasi* day of *Thulam*. The assemblage attending the festival will roughly come to eight thousand people. *Kathakali* and the *Sathakalasam Vazhipadu* (offering) are the important attractions of the *utsavam*.

ARAT IN THE SREE KRISHNASWAMY TEMPLE AMBALAPUZHA

(SHRI H. GANAPATHY SARMA)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Ambalapuzha
Ambalapuzha

The Sree Krishnaswamy temple at Ambalapuzha, dedicated to Parthasarathi was established by the Chempakasseri Pooradam Thirunal Devanarayanan Thampuran in the year 790 M. E. He offered his State to Sree Krishna and ruled the country as his vicegerent after assuming the name of Devanarayana. When the last Thampuran of the Chempakasseri dynasty was defeated

and taken as prisoner, it was only after placing the keys of the State granary and royal treasury at the feet of the Lord Krishna, that he surrendered to the enemies.

One day while the Pooradam Thirunal Thampuran, accompanied by his teacher Villumangalam Swamy was travelling in a boat, he happened to hear the melodious musical note of a flute emanating from a cer-

tain place uninhabited by men. The Swamy told him that it was Sree Krishna's music and that he should construct a temple there in his honour. Accordingly the Thampuran constructed a temple there. An idol of Sree Krishna in black granite stone was carved out to install in the temple. An auspicious time was fixed for installing the idol and accordingly preparations for the same were made since a week before the appointed day. Meanwhile, to the great disillusionment and dismay of the Thampuran and others, the idol was found damaged and unfit for installation in the temple. Thereupon Villumangalam Swamy advised him to get the idol of Parthasarathy from Kurichi, a neighbouring place belonging to the Thekkumkoor Raja. It was not an easy job to bring it from Thekkumkoor, for the Thekkumkoor Raja was not on friendly terms with the Chempakasseri Thampuran. If it was taken by force, it was definite that a fierce contest would take place between them and even so, who could forecast that the Chempakasseri Thampuran himself would come out successful in the contest? If the idol was stolen and brought over there, the same would be unfit for consecration being tainted by the sin of stealth. The Thampuran was in a dilemma as to what should be done further to get that idol. Finally after some thought, he found out a plan. The Thampuran's minister went to Kurichi and got permission from the holder of the idol. On the same night, the minister accompanied by a handful of well equipped soldiers, reached the borders of Thekkumkoor by country boats. The soldiers stayed behind in their tents. At the dead of night, borne by a Brahmin and followed by the holder of the idol, it was taken to the boats that lay waiting for its arrival. The soldiers opened fire into the air and proclaimed aloud by beating their drums that the soldiers of the Chempakasseri Thampuran were taking home the idol by force and that anybody who dared to check it, might do so. Although the soldiers of

the Thekkumkoor Raja woke up from their slumber, they were not prepared for an encounter with them, simply for the loss of a granite stone statue. Next morning, the minister and party arrived at Champakulam *Madom* with the idol. The Thampuran and his retinue went to the *Madom* in native boats to receive the idol and brought it to the temple with great rejoicings. It was on the *Moolam* day of a *Mithunam* that this event took place. It is to commemorate this event that the Champakulam boat race is held every year. The idol was ceremoniously installed in the temple at a propitious time on *Thiruvonam* day in *Mithunam*.

A celebration called *Vijayabali* is conducted in this temple after completion of one hundred and forty-four years. The last *Vijayabali* was conducted in the year 1130 M. E. *Velan Pattu* called *Vallipana* is also conducted here once in twelve years.

Ottam Thullal is not allowed to be conducted inside this temple during the festival days. This is said to be due to a ban imposed by the Thampuran against the performance of *Ottam Thullal* in the temple. When Kunjan Nambiar, the exponent of the *Ottam Thullal* was conducting *Thullal* inside the temple during a festival, Chakiyar objected to it and complained to the Thampuran, who decreed that henceforth *Thullal* should not be performed in the temple.

During the invasion of Tipu in 965 M.E. the deity installed in the Guruvayoor temple was brought here for safe custody and installed temporarily in a specially constructed building to the south of the temple. After the retreat of Tipu, the idol was taken back to Guruvayoor. The building in which this idol was kept in safe custody, is still there and is known as *Guruvayoorambalam*.

The famous Ambalapuzha *Palpayasam* (a milk porridge of exceptional sweetness) is the important offering of this temple. There is a legend about the introduction of this *Payasam* in the past.

Once the Chempakasseri Thampuran

happened to borrow a certain quantity of paddy from a Brahman coming from Thalavady. The Thampuran could not repay the same even after a long time. One day when the Thampuran came to the temple for prayers, the above Brahman met him and demanded to clear off his debt immediately. Thampuran gave orders to his minister to clear off the dues and left the place. In fact, there was not sufficient paddy in stock to clear the debt to the Brahman. The clever minister of the Thampuran managed to obtain the required quantity of paddy from the barons living around the temple and measured out the paddy in the *Anakkottil* (elephants' house) located east of the temple, to the satisfaction of the Brahman. But the minister ordered the Brahman to remove the paddy immediately before the midday *pooja* of the temple lest it would cause inconvenience for conducting the rituals in time and unless he removed the same before that time, the whole lot of paddy, would be forfeited to the temple. Despite his best efforts, the Brahman could not get a porter to remove the paddy from the spot, since the minister had secretly arranged the plan. The time for the midday *pooja* arrived and the doors of the *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum) were closed. The Brahman was greatly perplexed and disappointed. When the *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum) was opened after the midday *pooja*, the Brahman wrote a will in a palmyra leaf stating that the entire quantity of paddy has been given to Sree Krishna and then performing *pooja*, he offered it to Lord Krishna. It was willed by the Brahman that a *Payasam* should be prepared daily with thirty-six *paras* (a measure) of milk and distributed to the

poor people out of the interest derived from the paddy. This is the famous Ambalapuzha *Payasam*, given as offering during the time of midday *pooja* in the Sree Krishnaswamy temple at Ambalapuzha. This *Payasam* is available even today at one rupee for an *edangazhi* (a measure). Another offering of this temple during the *Ashtami Rohini* days is *neyyappam*, a kind of sweetened rice cake.

On all *Thiruvonam* days of the Malayalam calendar, people used to distribute *Sarkarapayasam* (molasses pudding) to the poor, as an offering. So far as the Krishnaswamy temple of Ambalapuzha is concerned the *Thiruvonam* day is quite an important day there, because the consecration of the deity was performed on a *Thiruvonam* day in *Mithunam* and again the *Arat* festival takes place on a *Thiruvonam* day. On the 15th of *Makaraim* 1096 M. E. this temple, somehow or other caught fire, but was extinguished quickly. The idol was removed to a safe place. It was re-consecrated on a *Thiruvonam* day.

A gold flagstaff was erected in this temple on the 21st of *Kumbham* 1064 M. E. The *Murajapam* started by Maharaja Marthanda Varma was conducted for the first time in Chempakasseri (Ambalapuzha). During the *Murajapam*, it is the Thekkedath Bhattathiripad who gives water to the Brahmans before their meals, acting as the representative of the Chempakasseri Thampuran.

The *Arat* festival of this temple commences with the flag hoisting ceremony on the *Atham* day in *Meenam* (March-April). The important *Arattusavam*, however, takes place on the *Thiruvonam* day of *Meenam*. *Velakali* is an important feature of this festival.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

UTSAVAM IN THE MULLAKAL DEVI TEMPLE, ALLEPPEY

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Ambalapuzha
Town	Alleppey

Situated in the centre of the Alleppey town, that Venice of Kerala, is the beautiful Devi temple famous as the Mullakal Devi temple. Although this temple is located in a busy centre of the town, in the Mullakal ward, the atmosphere around the temple is, however, serene and calm. In the morning and evening, the entire locality about the temple reverberates with the tinklings of temple bells and gongs and melodious notes of *Bhajan* songs. Streams of devotees, men and women, throng to this temple daily to pay their homage to the Devi and invoke her blessings. The refreshing fragrance emanating from the flower marts on either side of the street, the dazzling brightness of countless electric lights in the shops and the street, the soothing westerly breeze blowing gently over the place in the evening caressing everybody—all these enchant the people.

About the origin of this temple, there are differences of opinion among the people. One section ascribes it to a branch of the Chempakassery royal family. Once a *Thampuram* of this royal family, a celibate all through his life, had dwelt in this place where the temple is located today. He grew a jasmine plant in his palace courtyard. Daily twice, in the morning and evening, he watered this plant and nurtured it with fondling care. As a result, this plant flourished and in due course flowered. One day, at dusk, when he was watering this plant as usual, a glorious object, a feminine figure, came to his vision. That angel of enchanting beauty was there standing before him. The *Thampuram* was breathless for a while with wonder and joy and slowly approaching the lady, he enquired who she was. That gentle lady plucked some budding flowers from the plant and sighed, 'it is

I, don't get scared of me'. These were the words of Devi. The joy of *Thampuram* knew no bounds when he understood that it was no less than the person of the Devi who was currently standing before him in her pristine purity and all her glory. Immediately he prostrated before the divine Mother and craved, 'Oh! Mother! Be pleased to grace this place always with thy presence. And make it possible to thy servant to wait on thee always.' His earnest request was granted and Devi chose to remain there for ever. The Devi was thus installed there.

According to another tradition, this temple is believed to have been built by a Brahman devotee of Devi from Kolathunad. This Brahman had brought with him an idol of Devi for worship. When he arrived at Mullakal it was dusk, the time for evening *Pooja*. Keeping that idol beneath a jasmine plant, he got into a nearby tank for ablution and thereafter, performed *Pooja*. When he came back to take the idol, quite strangely, it was found firmly rooted to the ground beneath that jasmine plant and could not be moved from the place. The Brahman understood that it was one of the manifestations of the presence of Devi in that place. Accordingly he founded a temple on that spot and dedicated it to Devi.

Unlike in other temples, the sanctum sanctorum of this temple is of a special type in that it has no roof over it and the deity is always exposed to the sun and rain. The shape of this temple building is also quite unlike that of other temples in Kerala. The front portion of the temple is built in such a way that it resembles almost the upper story of the palaces of the Rajas of the olden days used by them as their bed-chamber. Like in other temples in Kerala, there is a *gopuram* (entrance) in front of this

UTSAVAM IN THE MANCOMPU BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

temple. The *Anakkottil* (elephant's house) of this temple is also grand. Despite the fact that it is situated in the once famous gold trading centre of Alleppey, namely the Mullakal street, as fate would have it, it was only in 1961 that a golden flagstaff was erected in this temple.

Ganapathy is the only sub-deity installed in this temple. Cracking cocoanuts by ceremonious throw is the votive offering made to this temple.

Although a minor festival namely the *Kodiyettu Utsavam*, is also celebrated in this temple during the *Navarathri* days, the *Chirappu* is, by far, the most important festival of this temple which is as famous as the *Sivarathri* festival of Alwaye and the *Astami* celebrations at Vaikom. A visit to Alleppey during the festive days of *Chirappu* will be quite a pleasant experience to any person. Past the month of *Vrischigom*, when *Dhanu* approaches, the entire Alleppey town dons a festive look, throbs with activity and exults with jubilations.

During these days, streets and buildings are decorated with flags and festoons. Big arches are put up on the roads and the entire locality is illumined. The main thoroughfares are bespread with snowy bright sands and the roads would appear as though they were covered with a white carpet. Various fancy goods, especially requirements of the fair sex, vessels of various size and types etc. are lavishly displayed for sale in the fair during the *Chirappu* days. The occasion is a rich harvesting time for the pedlars, hawkers and the business community at large, in and around the Alleppey town. Everywhere one could see only excitement and festive activities in these days. Certainly in no other Devi temples in Kerala, the *Chirappu Utsavam* is celebrated on the scale as in the Mullakal temple. The pomp and grandeur of this *Utsavam* has to be enjoyed by one's actual presence on the scene.

Based mainly on an article by Shri Evjoor N. M. C. Warriar in the Malayala Rajyam daily dated 6th July 1964

UTSAVAM IN THE MANCOMPU BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI P. PURUSHOTHAMAN PILLAI)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Kuttanad
Village	Pulincunnu

The Mancompu Bhagavathy temple is situated in the Pulincunnu village of the Kuttanad taluk. The temple is dedicated to 'Bhagavathy'. The following story is told about the origin of this temple.

The Ettuviruthi Kaimals were once the most influential and wealthy landlords of the locality. There were eight families of these Kaimals and they were divided into two groups, consisting of four families in each, known as *Moothakoor* and *Ilayakoor*. The eldest member in the *Moothakoor* was

called *Mootha Kaimal* and the eldest of the *Ilayakoor* *Ilaya Kaimal*. One of the Kaimals one day went to the Mancompu hills near Poonjar to collect some timber in connection with the construction of a house. He had to stay there for a few days. On one of these days, a heavenly nymph appeared before him and told him that he should take her with him and saying so, disappeared from the scene. When the raft carrying the logs approached the Kaimal's house, it broke down and the whole lot of

logs went under the water. The Kaimal was greatly amazed at the above strange occurrences and approached an astrologer who revealed to him that the damsel who appeared before him in the forest was none other than Devi and that he should take steps to consecrate her in some suitable place and offer prayers to her. Accordingly he constructed a temple using the timber brought from the Mancompu hills and installed the idol of Devi in it. Since the Devi had given *darsan* from the Mancombu hills, she was known as *Man-*

compil Bhagavathy and the Kaimal and his family as *Bhagavathy Kaimals*. Thus the ownership of this temple belongs to these Kaimals.

The *Utsavam* in this temple begins on the first of *Medom* (April) with the hoisting of the temple flag and lasts for eleven days. Religious seminars, *Pushpanjali*, *Garudan Thookam*, *Kathakali*, *Ottam Thullal* etc. are some of the attractions of this *utsavam*. About 4,000 people congregate in the temple to join the festivities.

PADAYANI IN THE BHAGAVATHY KAVU, NEELAMPEROOR

(SHRI K. NARAYANA PILLAI)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Kuttanad
Village	Neelamperoor

Kerala is a land of festivals. Each village in Kerala has its own festivals—religious as well as national festivals. Festivals commence in Kerala temples soon after the monsoon is over, from the month of *Chingom* onwards. While in important temples, festivals are celebrated with grand processions headed by caparisoned elephants carrying the image of the deity, *Pooram*, *Vela*, *Padayani* and similar other *Utsavams* are conducted in small temples of the villages. These festivals which symbolise and reflect in no small measure the tradition and culture of these villages, are even now the pride of Kerala. Among such village festivals, the annual *Padayani Utsavam* of the *Bhagavathy Kavu* at Neelamperoor, a village in the Kuttanad taluk lying near about the Changanacherry municipal town is a festival of no less importance than the others. Getting down at Kurichi, a place situated midway on the Changanacherry-Kottayam section of the M. C. Road and

proceeding further one and half miles to the west from that place, one can reach Neelamperoor.

The important rites of this festival are *Kolamkettu* (making of effigies) and *Kolamthullal* (a kind of frantic dance performed by carrying the effigies.) The chief *Kolams* (effigies) displayed are of swans, Bheema, Ravana, elephants etc.

In this way, this village festival of Kerala, the *Padayani Utsavam*, is celebrated on a grand scale in the *Bhagavathy Kavu* of Neelamperoor too. This *Utsavam*, spread over sixteen days, begins on the *Thiruvonam* day in *Chingom* (August—September) and comes to a close on the *Pooram* asterism. The grandest festival, however, is on the *Pooram* day, the sixteenth day following the commencement of the *Utsavam*.

Like all other *Padayani* celebrations, the Neelamperoor *Padayani Utsavam* is also of an ancient origin. It was during the days of that Perumal who settled himself at

PADAYANI IN THE BHAGAVATHY KAVU, NEELAMPEROOR

Neelamperoor after his conversion, it seems, that the celebration of this *Utsavam* originated. Shri Kuruppum Veetil Gopala Pillai, the author of 'Kerala Mahacharitra' holds that the converted Bana Perumal shifted his royal seat from Thiruvanchikulam to Neelamperoor and that the fifth *Onam* day, the day of his arrival here, was celebrated with much eclat which in due course came to be distinguished as the *Padayani Utsavam*.

Shri A. Ramakurup, a native of Neelamperoor, writes in the Kerala Society Papers thus: "For sixteen days from *Avittom* asterism to *Pooram* day following the *Onam* celebrations, it is usual to conduct celebrations at the tomb of the Perumal by taking the effigies of swans and the like. On all these days our village headmen, namely, Alappurathu Panicker and Puranattu Panicker, come to the tomb of the Perumal and meditate whether they could commence the *Padayani Utsavam*. Meanwhile we would all wait there with respectful silence till these two headmen depart from the place. On the final day, both these headmen visit together the tomb and pray silently to forgive the sins, if any, they had committed during the sixteen days since the commencement of the *Utsavam* and as an act of atonement for their sins they put three *Chakrams* (coins) each in a silken cloth and place them at the step below the tomb and seek permission as before to commence the *Utsavam*. When our swans and other effigies are taken in procession, the local Christians also render us all assistance."

It is believed that when the people ask for permission the perumal would give leave with a hem.

The effigies displayed and taken in procession during the *Padayani* of Neelamperoor are noble specimens of the high artistic skill attained by the people of Kerala.

Usually effigies of swans (Brahma's vehicle), Bheeman, Ravana, Kattalan (forester) and wild tusker are only made for this *Utsavam*. The swans displayed are

incomparable pieces of artistic beauty. Some of the effigies of swans made are 28 *koles* (70 feet) in height. In making these effigies all the villagers, the young and the old, join hand in hand. While swans are made with the shelly wings of the beetles for the *Shertalai Pooram*, in Neelamperoor these are made with the rinds of the plantain tree, *Ixora occinea* flowers etc. The effigies of Bheema are made with lotus leaves and *Ixora occinea* flowers (spider webs and leaves of *Vatta*, a kind of gum tree will be used if lotus leaves are not available), and the elephants with palmyra leaves and dried leaves and rinds of the plantain trees. Bheema and Ravana will be adorned with headgears, *Alavattoon* (Peacock fan) and *Venchamram* (whisk of yak's tail), both royal ensigns. Usually these effigies are worked upon a big wooden frame and they are brought to the festival ground by pushing them forward from behind. People dance holding small swans high above their shoulders.

After these effigies are made, they are secured at a place in front of the *Kavu*. At that time Bheema and Ravana will have no headgear and the elephants no ornamental head covers.

Thereafter there will be a sort of dance before the *Kavu*. Dried palm leaves and similar stuff are heaped up in front of the *Kavu* and set to flames around which the villagers gather themselves singing and dancing with ease, the theme being *Kuchelavrittha*. The musical instruments commonly used for *Ottam Thullal* form the accompaniments to the dance. Even the flames would seem to be dancing to the tune of the winds. The tempo of the dance gradually intensifies and culminates finally in a frantic rhythm.

This is followed by "bidding farewell." The village headmen standing before the tomb of the Perumal and making atonements for the sins committed during the past, beg leave of him for conducting the *Padayani*, and then depart from the tomb. The people then indulge in a dance by

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

swinging and waving with rythmic movements their scarves in the air. This dance of merriment begun in a low pace, on reaching its climax, would give an impression of a rock 'n' roll dance. This is also conducted around the bonfire.

The next ritualistic act of the *Utsavam* is the *Ezhunnellippu* (carrying in procession) of the *Kolams* (effigies.) While small *Kolams* are carried by people on shoulders the big ones are ceremoniously brought forward by pushing them from their back. Firstly small swans are taken to the festival ground and then, the big ones. In the bright flames of the burning fire, these swans would appear as though they were some rare artistic pieces studded with precious jewels. If a drizzling also occurs by the time, these swans will glitter in the light. These effigies will be taken in procession, amidst vociferous clamours and outcrys from the multitudes assembled and with the accompaniment of beating of drums and other rejoicings. Grand pyrotechnics will also take

place simultaneously heightening the tempo of the occasion. When the *Kolams* are brought before the *Kavu* and some rites are performed there, they are kept in a corner of the courtyard of the *Kavu*. This is what is known as *Padayani*. Subsequent to this the *Kolams* of Beeman, Ravana and caparisoned elephants are brought before the *Kavu* in procession. The *Alavattom* and *Venchamaram* are held high over the elephants by standing on the wooden frames on which they are secured. The whole-hearted co-operation and assistance of a large number of people are necessary for making these huge *Kolams*. All the artisans of the locality co-operate in making up these effigies for which they are allowed certain perquisites.

Making of the *Kolam* is an ingenious art. Only a small amount, say Rs. 10 is required for making a *Kolam*; yet in appearance that *Kolam* would resemble a diamond-studded swan worth lakhs of rupees.

Free translation of an article by Shri K. Narayana pillai in the Malayala Manorama weekly dated 27th September 1958.

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDATHUA

(FR. Z. PUNNEPADAM)

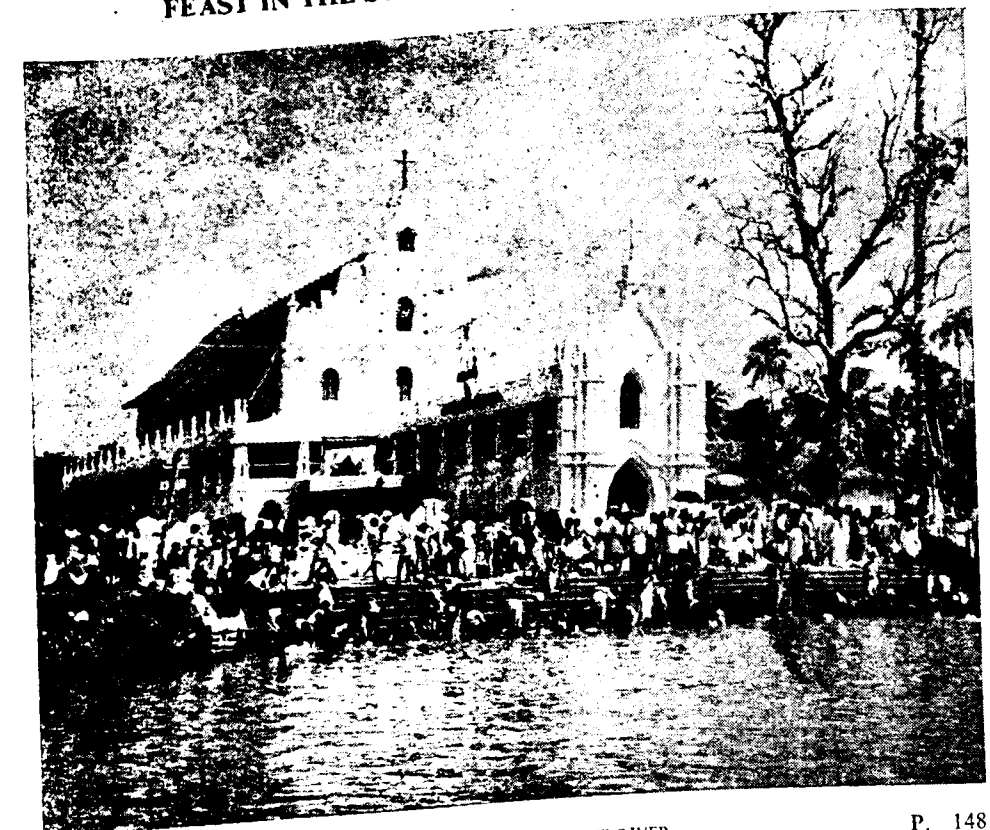
District	Alleppey
Taluk	Kuttanad
Village	Kozhimukku

The St. George's Church at Edathua stands on the bank of the river Pampa, sixteen miles south-east of Alleppey. Visited yearly by lakhs of pilgrims from all over South India and enriched by the picturesque background provided by the vast expanse of the paddy fields and cocoanut groves of Kuttanad, the massive and splendid structure of this Roman Catholic Church reminds one of a cathedral of mediæval Europe. This church is famous for the feast of St.

George celebrated every year in the month of *Medom* (April-May). It takes place from the 27th April till the 7th of May. Though the festival lasts for a period of eleven days, only the last couple of days present all the aspects of a major festival. Hence, calendars reckon the sixth of May as the feast day.

The history of the origin of the festival is shrouded in legends. In view of the fact that many of the ancient shrines of Kerala were built in honour of St. George it is

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDATHUA



Pl. 40

DEVOTEES TAKE BATH IN THE RIVER
(The church in the background)



DEVOTEES COLLECT THE OIL POURED ON THE FLAG STAFF AS OFFERING

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDATHUA—Contd



Pl. 42

THE HISTORIC STATUE OF ST. GEORGE

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Pl. 43

A VIEW OF THE PROCESSION WITH THE STATUE IN THE CENTRE

P. 149

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDATHUA

believed that the devotion to St. George took roots in this part of the world even before the close of the fourth century A. D. Just a century and a half ago in 1810 A. D. when the Koilmuk (Edathua) parish emerged from the Champakulam parish the new shrine was dedicated to St. George and his feast began to be celebrated as the major festival of the parish. As years went by, feeling the need for an additional statue of their patron saint, the parishioners went in search of it to Edappally, another centre of devotion to St. George. They selected one from many uncared-for statues kept in one of the rooms adjacent to the church there and left for their parish with it. As soon as the statue was taken away from the church, the alarmed by strange happenings, some of the people of that place rushed to get it back. Getting news of the pursuit the people from Edathua hurried with the statue in one of the traditional snake boats of Kuttanad and brought this treasure to Edathua. For some time it was kept in a house in the neighbourhood of the church and guarded by strong men. Later it was removed to the Church and kept safely under constant watch. This miniature statue of the Saint has a touch of Persian architecture and is believed to be very ancient. It is also said that God willed some manifestation of the powers of the Saint through this statue. The legend behind the origin of the festival of St. George at Edathua holds that apparitions of the Saint directed pilgrims going to Edappally to go to Edathua and that accordingly people who were formerly going on pilgrimage to the former shrine turned to the latter in larger and larger numbers. However, the many cures and other favours received through the intercession of the Saint and the vast annual concourse of pilgrims at Edathua have earned for the place a name as a major festival centre of Kerala.

On the 27th of April the festival flag of the church goes up in flag staff signifying the commencement of the festival and loud reports from fireballs mark the occasion.

The church is fully decorated and illuminated, inside and outside. The historic statue of St. George bearing a crown and other ornaments of gold is taken out from its station on an altar and set on a platform in the centre of the church and it stands there in full glory with a life-like face. The appropriate rituals are conducted in the church during all the festival days. The church and its premises are open to all, whether of the faith or not, and the devotees include Hindus and non-catholic Christians. For over a century pilgrims have been thronging here in large numbers and still some come walking from far away places in devotion or penance or thanksgiving. As a symbol of their devotion they make offerings of large sums of money and various other things including silver and gold medals of snakes and human eyes, ears and other organs. Many coming possessed by evil spirits go back in relief. On the festival days, when the statue of St. George borne on pedestals by pilgrims is taken out in procession around the church, hundreds of devotees take part in the procession on their knees or rolling notwithstanding the scorching summer sun. Frequently the church and its premises resound with the melodious prayers and hymns mostly in Tamil, the mother tongue of the bulk of the pilgrims. Illuminations around the church and elsewhere jewel the summer darkness and the fireworks late in the night on the 5th and 6th of May are so glorious that the whole sky seems to fall in showers of light.

During the festival days people come and go, some staying throughout. Owing to poor facilities for travel in the past people used to come to the place in big country boats or canoes and stay on cooking their food themselves. Now, thanks to the facilities for travel, only a few hundreds stay on for the full duration of the festival. Still on the last few days not less than a lakh of people are always seen in the festival area. At night thousands sleep in the church

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

premises clustered together. The rush of people centering round the church pervades the entire village. One can seldom find a household, Christian or non-Christian, which has not to entertain at least one guest in connection with the festival. Even the lanes and by-lanes are busy and noisy throughout day and night. In order to cater to the needs of the visitors temporary hotels and tea-shops, as well as many other shops including barber shops, begin to appear here and there. Sanitary arrangements are made by the Panchayat and parish committee with the assistance of volunteers from the village. The host of beggars drawn from all over the State are kept apart and well-fed. The District Superintendent of Police and other officials halt in the village during the festival days with a view to the maintenance of law and order. A large number of policemen are busy with detecting pick-pockets and other anti-social elements. Away from the church premises nothing of the religious aspect of

the festival is worth noticing. The various temporary shops, dealing in fancy goods and luxuries, various circus and other shows and exhibitions and the lavish display of crackers lend the impression of a typical Indian festival.

The festival formally ends on the 7th of May with the grand procession round the church and along with that, the recurring deafening reports from fireballs cease. The festival flag is lowered. But the buying and selling goes on for a few more days. Closely following the harvest, every year the festival is enthusiastically awaited by the people of Kuttanad who are anxious to make their annual shopping. Articles of furniture, household utensils, various kinds of fruits and a good number of other things are at one's reach in wide varieties. By the time the festival ends, just a fortnight before the onset of the monsoon, every household in Kuttanad must have provided itself with most of the requirements for one year.

FEAST OF ST. XAVIER IN THE ST. XAVIER'S CHURCH PUTHUKKARY

(VICAR, ST. XAVIER'S CHURCH, PUTHUKKARY)

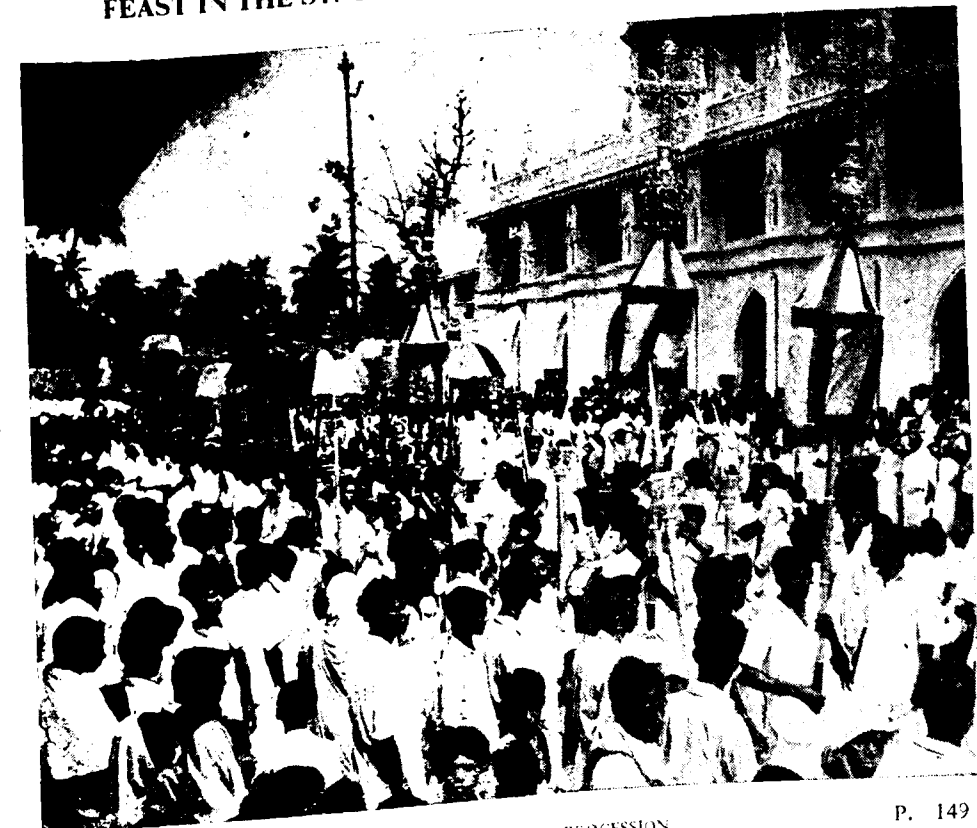
District	Alleppey
Taluk	Kuttanad
Village	Kozhimukku

About 8 miles away from the Changanacherry railway station, in the Puthukkary Kara of the Kozhimukku village in the Kuttanad taluk, is situated the St. Xavier's church, Puthukkary. This church was established as early as in 1869 A. D. It was then constructed primarily to serve the spiritual needs of the local Catholic families belonging to the Champakulam Forane Church. In 1964 this old church was reconstructed and now a magnificent building stands there in its place. It is said that the

local people have received many favours through the intercession of St. Xavier and it was as a token of their gratitude that they built and dedicated this church to Saint Xavier.

The feast of St. Xavier is celebrated here for 5 days from 25th to 29th of *Medom* (April-May). During all days of the feast, there will be special prayers and other religious functions in the church and public processions, for the last three days. The entire locality will be beautifully illuminated

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDATHUA—Contd.



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PL. 44

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE PROCESSION



PL. 45

DEVOTES TAKING PART IN THE PROCESSION, ROLLING ON THE GROUND IN FULFILLMENT OF VOWS

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDATHUA—Contd.



Pl. 46 FOWLS FOR SALE AT THE FAIR P. 150
(The fowls are important offering at the church)



Pl. 47 EARTHENWARES FOR SALE AT THE FAIR P. 150

UTSAVAM IN THE TRIKAVIYOOR TEMPLE

and a grand display of pyrotechnics will also take place on the eve of the concluding day of the feast. The feast comes to a close with the Eucharistic procession on the last day, i. e. on 29th of Medom.

Crockeries, stationery articles etc. are marketed in the fair held in connection with this feast. About 3,000 people congregate there to participate in this feast.

UTSAVAM IN THE TRIKAVIYOOR TEMPLE

(SHRI S. KRISHNA PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Thiruvalla
Kaviyoor

About five miles away from the Thiruvalla railway station in the Kaviyoor village of the Thiruvalla taluk, is situated the Tri-kaviyoor temple. This is one of the ancient temples in Kerala. The antiquity of this temple is traced as far back as to the days of Sree Rama. Tradition says that while Sree Rama was returning to Ayodhya after slaying Ravana in Lanka, accompanied by his spouse Seetha Devi, Hanuman and the monkey-militia, they happened to stop for a while at this place to take rest. On arrival in this spot, Sree Rama asked his favourite devotee Hanuman to bring back the *Sivalingam* adored by Ravana from Lanka and to install the same on this spot immediately. Although Hanuman started to Lanka very quickly, it took a little time for him to bring back the same. Meanwhile Sree Rama, fearing that the auspicious time for its consecration would be over, made a *Sivalingam* and installed it before Hanuman returned from Lanka. Soon after this, Hanuman returned from Lanka with the *Sivalingam*. Sree Rama told him to install it on the spot, removing the one he had installed there previously. Accordingly Hanuman tried to pull off the *Sivalingam* installed by Sree Rama. Although he tied his tail-end on the *Sivalingam* and tried to pull it out, he had to abandon his attempt finally as the *Sivalingam* went down

the earth and rose up in another spot. Therefore the *Sivalingam* brought by Hanuman from Lanka could not be installed there. Since Hanuman tried to pull off the *Sivalingam* from this spot, this place was called as *Kapiyoor* which in course of time came to be known as Kaviyoor. Long after this, one day, the pious Vilwamangalath Swamy happened to come over to this temple and detecting the manifestations of Hanuman on the near-by Mimusops elengi tree, installed there an idol of Hanuman made of an alloy of five metals. Even today, this Mimusops elengi tree is there and is venerated by the devotees with great devotion.

The temple is dedicated to Siva and Hanuman. The wooden ceilings, pillars and panels of the *Sree Kovil* (Sanctum sanctorum) of this temple are fully adorned with beautiful carvings depicting stories from *Ramayana* and *Puranas*.

In the *Sivan Kovil* (the place where the deity of Siva is installed in the temple) three festivals are conducted annually in memory of the foundation day of the temple, namely, the *Utsavam* in *Dhanu* (December-January), *Sivarathri* in *Kumbhom* (February-March) and *Sahasrakalasam* in *Idavam* (May-June). The *Utsavam* in *Dhanu* commences with the hoisting of the temple flag on the *Thiruvathira* day in *Dhanu* and lasts for ten days. About twenty thousand

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

people participate in this festival. The *Sivarathri* in *Kumbhom* is conducted only for one day attended by about two thousand people while *Sahasrakalasam* takes place for eleven days beginning from *Dwadasi* day in *Idavam*. The assemblage for *Sahasrakalasam* will come roughly to seven thousand people.

It is to commemorate the birth anniversary of Hanuman that *Kalakabhisekom* and *Hanuman Jayanthi* are conducted every year in the *Hanuman Kovil*, the place where the deity of Hanuman is worshipped in the temple. The *Kalakabhisekom*, attended by about seven thousand people, is celebrated from the 1st of *Chingom* (August)

extending up to ten days while the *Hanuman Jayanthi* is conducted only for one day on the *Moolam* asterism in *Dhanu* (December-January). Generally, about five thousand people use to participate in the festivities during the *Hanuman Jayanthi*.

Sreebali, *Parayeduppu*, *Velakali*, *Kathakali*, *Ottam Thullal*, *Harikatha*, musical concerts, dance, *Kavadi Attam*, *Panchavadyam*, religious preachings, fireworks etc. are some of the attractions of these festivals. The important commodities usually sold in the fairs held during these festivals, are aluminium, copper and bell-metal vessels, iron materials, wooden and stationery articles, vegetables etc.

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, CHUNAKAPARA, KOTTANGAL

(FR. PHILIP ERATTAMAKIL)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Thiruvalla
Kottangal

The St. George's Church, Chunakapara is situated in the Kottangal village of Thiruvalla taluk. This church was founded in the year 1940. The nearest railway station to reach this place is Thiruvalla on the Trivandrum-Ernakulam railway route.

The feast of St. George is celebrated in this church for 3 days from Friday to the first Sunday after Easter. This festival is said to have been initiated ever since this church was founded in 1940. About 2,000 people participate in these celebrations. On the first day of the feast, the ecclesiastical flag will be hoisted at 4.30 p. m. This will be followed by solemn community prayers in the Church lasting till 6.30. p. m. On the second day, Holy Mass will be said in the morning at 7. a. m. The actual festivities, however, begins only at 6 p. m. on the day when a grand procession of the devotees starts from the church to the local market lying about 4 furlongs away from the church. Silver crosses, silken

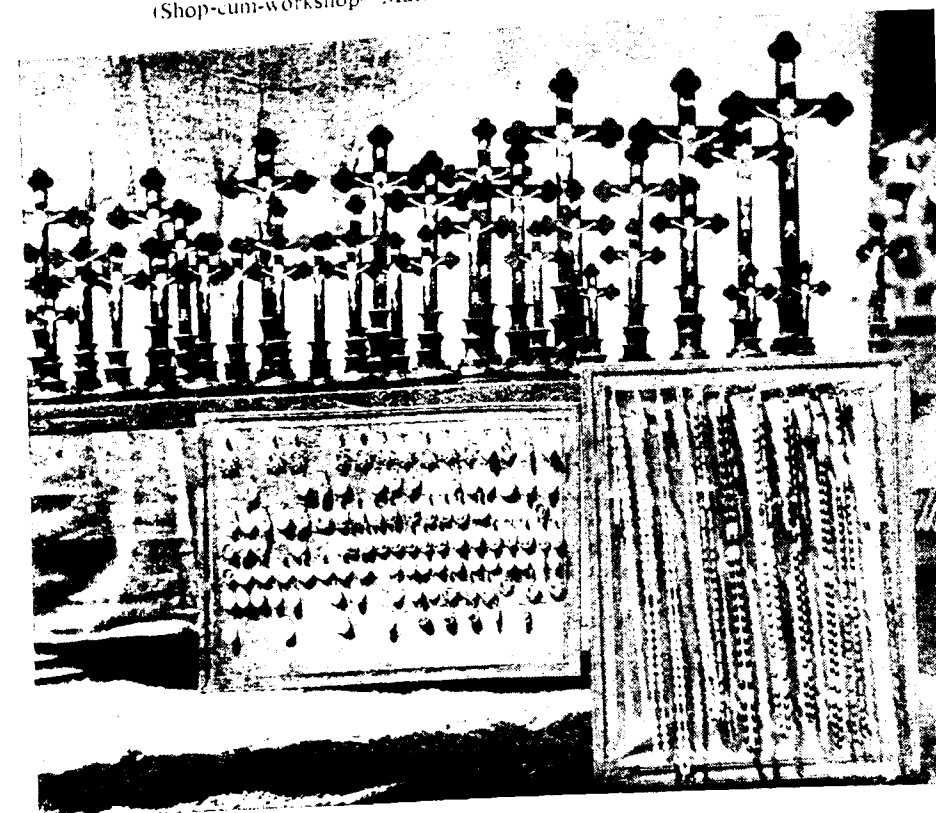
umbrellas (*Muthukudas*), flags with various colours and designs, playing of bands and similar other such items help to add to the gaiety and pageantry of the procession. The processionists and others gather around a small cross erected on the side of the public road. The cross and the premises where it is kept, will be neatly decorated and illumined by candle-lights. A good speaker, specially summoned for the occasion, then makes a sermon and the assembled devotees offer gifts and alms to the church. Afterwards the procession returns to the church. As soon as it reaches there, there will be a pyrotechnic display. On the third day of the celebrations, there will be only religious ceremonies, a High Mass at 10 a. m. followed by sermon and reverential procession circumambulating the church. With these ceremonies the celebrations come to a close at about 1. 30 p. m. on the day. The most important items in the fair are stationery articles.

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDATHUA—Contd.



Pl. 48

RELIGIOUS ARTICLES FOR SALE AT THE FAIR
(Shop-cum-workshop—Mark the man engaged in photo framing)



Pl. 49

CRUCIFIXES, ROSARIES AND MEDALS FOR SALE

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDATHUA—*Concl'd.*



Pl. 50

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE FAIR
(Brisk sale of religious articles takes place)

P. 150

FESTIVAL IN THE ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH, KALLOOPPARA

(REV. M. C. THOMAS)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Thiruvalla
Kallooppara

The St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church, Kallooppara, which is about 5 miles away from the Thiruvalla railway station, stands in close proximity to the Kallooppara Bhagavathy temple, on its western side. It is doubtful whether any other church is in existence so close to a temple. Although the antiquity of this church cannot be determined exactly, it is generally believed to have been in existence for the past 800 years. Inside the church, on its eastern and western wings, there are two granite slabs with some inscriptions in the Pali language. The slab in the eastern wing alone is located in such a manner as to allow one to copy down these inscriptions. Quite recently the Archaeological department has made some investigations about these inscriptions, but their findings have not been released yet. The wood carvings of the holy saints and other decorations of this church are quite bewitching in appeal and their artistic exuberance reflects the age old carvings found in some of the oldest temples in the State.

In the olden days the Christians residing

in Manimala and its suburbs had to go as far as Niranam for performing their religious duties. Once the Edappally Thampuran happened to see a corpse being taken all the way from Manimala to Niranam for its burial. He was full of sympathy for these people who are experiencing great hardships for want of a church in their neighbourhood. So he allowed the people to use the *Kalari* (fencing school) lying close to the temple for church and the place, where the church stands today, as the burial ground. The old church was subsequently converted into a school and handed over to Government.

Two festivals are celebrated in this church the *Palli Perunal* and the foundation day of the church. The former is celebrated on the 15th of January and the latter on the 3rd of July. About three thousand people attend these celebrations. Bamboo mats and various vegetable seeds are the more important items that are sold in the fair held during the above celebrations.

UTHRASEEVELI IN THE SREE VALLABHA TEMPLE, THIRUVALLA

(SHRI V. K. RAMAN NAIR)

District
Taluk
Town

Alleppey
Thiruvalla
Thiruvalla

The Sree Vallabha temple situated about 2 miles away from the Thiruvalla railway station is a famous temple dedicated to

Mahavishnu. There are many legends about the origin of this temple. The place where the temple stands now was once a

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

garden. The Pathillattu Pottis founded a small temple here and consecrated Mahavishnu's 'Sudarsanam' therein. Subsequently they also installed therein the image of Mahavishnu and called it after his name 'Sree Vallabha.' The big tank located near the temple is a self-sprung one. This is considered as a strange occurrence.

In addition to the deity of Mahavishnu, five other deities, all of which are made of an alloy of five metals, have been installed in the sanctum sanctorum of this temple. The main deity is supposed to be the one which was done for Sathyaki, the favourite devotee of Sree Krishna and installed in Dwaraka. After the ascension of Sree Krishna to heavens, this idol was handed over to Garuda who deposited the same in the Narmada river. One day Garuda appeared to the then ruler of Kerala in a dream and informed him about this idol. The king redeemed this idol from the river as desired by Garuda and installed it on the spot where the temple is located today. One of the striking features of this temple is its flagstaff. Made of granite, it is 50 feet tall and two feet in perimeter. It is not known how far its bottom part extends beneath the ground. However it is believed that its bottom touches the water-level. The adjoining regions lying around the temple within seven square miles are not

rocky and it is still a wonder how this tall granite piece was brought here and installed as the flagstaff. On the top of this flagstaff has been installed a three feet high idol of Garuda. This image of Garuda has the touch of a human figure with wings.

Ladies are not allowed to enter the *Nalambalam* (enclosure around the sanctum sanctorum) except on two occasions in a year, on *Vishu* in *Medom* (April-May) and *Thiruvathira* day in *Mithunam* (June-July).

Annually two festivals are conducted in this temple, *Utsavam* in *Kumbhom* (February-March) and *Uthraseeveli* in *Meenam* (March-April). While the *Utsavam* in *Kumbhom* is conducted for 10 days, lasting till the *Pooyam* asterism in *Kumbhom*, the *Uthraseeveli* is celebrated for one day on the *Makayiram* asterism in *Meenam*. Both these festivals are well attended by a large number of people. Apart from the religious ceremonies, cultural programmes like *Kathakali*, *Ottamthullal*, *Harikatha*, *Nagaswaram*, musical concerts, dance etc. also take place during these days giving colour and vigour to the festivities. Among the articles marketed in the fair held during the festival days, the important items worthy of mention are bell-metal, copper, brass and aluminium vessels, wooden articles, iron materials, and stationery goods.

GRAMOTSAVAM IN THE THIRUVALAMTHURUTHY BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI N. SREEDHARAN MOOSAD)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Thiruvalla
Village	Kavumbhagom

The Thiruvalamthuruthy temple, dedicated to Bhagavathy, is situated in the Kavumbhagom village of the Thiruvalla taluk and is three miles away from the Thiruvalla railway station. The high artis-

tic skill displayed in the finish of the sanctum sanctorum of this temple stands as evidence to its antiquity. A two storeyed square *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum) with a *Mandapam* (hall) in front of it, such as the



Pl. 51

1. MAHADEVA TEMPLE, VAIKOM P. 189
2. TRIKAVIYOOR TEMPLE, KAVIYOOR P. 151
3. KODDAL MANICKOM TEMPLE, IRINJALAKUDA P. 334
4. SRI SUBRAMONIASWAMY TEMPLE, HARIPAD P. 168
5. VADAKKUNNATHAN TEMPLE, TRICHUR P. 313





Pl. 52

SREE VALLABHA TEMPLE, THIRUVALLA

P. 153



Pl. 53

ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH, NIRANAM

P. 157

UTSAVAM IN THE VADAKKEKARA MADAPPALLI KAVU

one exists here, cannot, perhaps, be seen in any other temple in Kerala. Inside the temple courtyard, there are small temples for subordinate deities; also a tank and big wall around the temple. The image of the principal deity, Devi, is four-handed. *Poojas* are performed here daily four times as done in the Vishnu temples.

The festival of this temple 'Thiruvalla Gramotsavam' is celebrated for eight days from the *Makayiram* asterism in *Meenam* (March-April). From the second day of the festival onwards, the image of Bhagavathy is taken in procession every day to different centres of the village where the people receive her with due honour and celebrate the *Utsavam* for the day. The *Utsavam* thus conducted on each day at different centres is called by different names. The most important festival, the *Uthra Seeveli* takes place on the concluding day,

i. e. on the eighth day of the festival. The annual festivals in the neighbouring temples, Karinathukavu and the Padappad temple, will also take place about this time. The *Uthra Seeveli* of the Thiruvalla temple is thus a combined *Utsavam* of these four temples being celebrated in one day. During this festival, there will be no other celebrations in the Thiruvalla village. On certain occasions, the festivals in the Peringara temple and the Madappallikavu will be postponed till this festival is over. *Kettukazhcha* (effigies of man or animal) and *Ashtapadi* dance are some of the highlights of the festival. A special vehicle called *Sibika* is put to use for the *Utsavam* in these days. Large number of people, at any rate not less than thousand people daily, participate in the celebrations. In addition to the usual items of fair, vegetable seeds are also sold during the festival days.

UTSAVAM IN THE VADAKKEKARA MADAPPALLI KAVU

(SHRI V. G. KUMARAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Thiruvalla
Kavumbhagom

The Vadakkekara Madappalli Kavu, dedicated to Bhadrakali, is situated three miles away from the Thiruvalla railway station. No precise information is available as to the origin of this temple. Since the local inhabitants receive many favours by the grace of Devi, they adore her with great reverence and conduct *Pushpanjali* and similar other offerings to invoke her blessings.

The important festivals celebrated in this temple on a grand scale are *Nalppathonnu Utsavam* and *Pathamudayam*. The *Pathamudayam* is celebrated on 10th and 11th of *Medom* (April) and the *Nalppathonnu Utsavam* on 12th and 13th of *Dhanu* (December). On the 41st day after the commence-

ment of the *Nalppathonnu Utsavam* there will be a grand festival when 101 *Kalam Pooja*, *Padayani* and *Thalapoli* will be performed on a grand scale. Until three years ago, a grand procession in which huge effigies of human beings and animals were displayed was in vogue. Now this has been stopped. The effigies of Bheema, Krishna and Panchali are preserved in the office of the *devaswom*. These are elegantly made. The effigies of Bheema evoke fear when looked at. During the *Pathamudaya Utsavam*, the main attractions are the performance of *Kathakali*, *Thullal*, *Ezhunnellippu*, *Thalapoli*, *Kalakettu* etc.

For various purposes, people offer

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

Pushpanjali and *Thookam* to this temple. To get protection from the attack of contagious diseases like smallpox, *Kolam Vazhipadu* is performed. The crippled and the maimed will offer *Thendu Vazhipadu* to get relief from their sufferings. A fire pit is made by the side of the temple and the *Thendu* (*Thendu* is a sweetened rice cake) is put in that fire pit to be baked well and either the man who performs this *Vazhipadu* or any of his men, roll themselves in the pit and then circumambulates the temple with

the *Thendu* and offers it to the temple. Lamps, goblets, bells and sieves made of bell-metal, gold ornaments, ornamental umbrellas etc. are also received in this temple as offerings. Devotees from distant places often visit this temple and bring votive offerings to the temple. About 2,500 people usually attend the *Utsavam* in this temple. The fair held in connection with the above festivals deals mainly in earthen-ware and day-to-day stationery articles.

UTSAVAM IN THE THIRUVERANKAVU DEVI TEMPLE

(SHRI K. RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Thiruvalla
Village	Kavumbhagom

The Thiruverankavu Devi Temple is situated in the Kavumbhagom village, about half a mile to the west of the Thiruvalla Sree Vallabha temple, on the Thiruvalla-Mavelikkara public road. The following is the legend told about the origin of this temple. Once there was a Brahman house known as *Chamkroth Madom* (Sankaramanagalath Madom) opposite to the western entrance of the Thiruvalla temple and there lived a pious Brahman woman by name Sree Devi. It was her usual practice to observe fast on all *Ekadasi* days. At the end of her fast, she would take meals only after entertaining an unmarried Brahman with a sumptuous meal. On one occasion, she could not get such a guest to entertain by the end of her fasting and she was greatly sorry over it. There lived then in Thukalasseri, a place to the west of the Thiruvalla temple, a fierce and cruel demon by name Thukalan. Close-by the Erankavu temple also lived another *Yakshi* (nightmare). The people were very much afraid of these fierce demons that nobody dared to pass through their place

and to receive the hospitality of the *Brahmanee*. While thus she was heart-broken over her inability to perform her usual obligations uninterruptedly, Mahavishnu appeared before her in the guise of an unmarried Brahman. She was greatly happy to receive this Brahman for meals. As soon as she invited him for the meals, he told her that he would like to take a bath and cleanse his body before he took meals, and that he would return immediately after finishing it. So saying he disappeared from the place and went straightway to Thukalan and cut his head by his *Sudarsana-chakram*. Then he went to Erankavu and caught the *Yakshi* and put her in a well and closed the well with a big granite stone and installed the idol of Bhagavathi on it. Afterwards he accepted the hospitality of the above *Brahmanee* with great gratitude and blessed her with eternal beatitude. He then installed the *Sudarsanachakra* in the Thiruvalla Sree Vallabha temple facing west.

Another tradition says that the *Sudarsana-*

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH, NIRANAM

chakra facing west in the Sree Vallabha temple and the power deity, Devi, of the Erankavu temple were installed by Sree Narayana Guru. The administration of this temple is now being carried on by a committee constituted on that behalf. The Travancore Devaswom Board is now giving a monthly grant of Rs.20 by way of assistance to this temple taking into account the sacredness and importance of this temple and the representations made in that behalf by the local people. The temple authorities are now running an institution with the approval of the Devaswom Board for imparting instructions in religious and spiritual matters. This institution is known as Devi Vilasom Hindu Matha Padasala. There are

at present three teachers including one music teacher and 180 students attending this school where the students are taught according to the syllabi prescribed by the Devaswom Board.

Three festivals namely *Thalapoli Mahotsavam*, *Mandalapooja* and *Navarathri Mahotsavam*, are celebrated in this temple every year. During these festivals, apart from the usual religious rites in the temple, *Ezhunnuellippu*, *Kalashabhishekom*, religious discussions, *Panchavadyam*, various cultural programmes and a grand display of pyrotechnics take place which lend greater attraction to the celebrations and festivities. Large number of people, more than five thousand, participate in these festivities.

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S ORTHODOX SYRIAN CHURCH, NIRANAM

(REV. FR. SKARIA PANAKKAMITTAM)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Thiruvalla
Village	Kadapra

Of all the places hallowed in the annals of Christianity in India, Niranam, the little village on the Thiruvalla-Mavelikkara Road and half a mile to the west of Kadapra, holds its title to antiquity and pre-eminence. It was one of the strongholds of the Hindu hierarchy. In social, cultural, literary and political matters, this part of South India kept up to its own distinctive, pristine, traditions. Watered by the majestic Pamba and cradled in its arm, the Kolara River, Niranam is now one uniform panoramic garden of cocoanut palms and vast green paddy fields. It must once have been a busy, thriving port (and even a fort town too) as could rightly be guessed from local place-names such as Kadapra (for Kadal-puram) Kottachal, Kuthira Chall, Kottakkakam and Chalai and also from the lie of

the land and its flat eminence, the sandy shore-like aspect of the soil, the sudden depression (north-south in a straight line) to form the low-lying wet lands extending westward for miles to the Arabian Sea and probably reclaimed later and converted into the granary of Kerala. There was brisk maritime trade in its specialities like copra, coir, pepper, spices etc., with outlying countries, Italy, Venice, Ceylon, Persia, Arabia, and Syria and Palestine being the more prominent among them as well as with our coastal towns like Quilon, Calicut and Cranganore.

The fame of Niranam—its people and their wealth, its culture and philosophy and its idols—must have reached Syria. It must have weighed most with St. Thomas, who felt it worthy of his zealous faith and his

whole being, to introduce and spread the Gospel in this land, even at the risk of his life.

As legend has it we did not have the genius to write or otherwise record history in the modern sense of the term. St. Thomas, visited Niranam in 53 A. D., planted a cross, founded and built the church on the site, where the present edifice, one of the largest in all Kerala, stands. In right earnest, the apostle started the work of proselytization. The blue-blooded caste Hindus, led by the redoubtable Pathillathil Pottis, offered stout and steady resistance to the new ideas and the new religion of this foreign missionary. But, by his burning white-hot zeal and deep faith, St. Thomas gradually won his cause, in spite of the persecution and the infamy set upon him. Many of the local population embraced Christianity. In good time, he left behind him a number of devout believers to form a congregation which, in due course, grew into the Malabar Christian Church. It has been growing ever since, to swell into one of the major religions of this country.

It was to the name of St. Mary that St. Thomas dedicated the church, as all his churches are. The present edifice, a renovation of the old, was constructed in 1087 M. E. Not all the remnants of the old one, could be seen today. The tall, granite cross, which stands in front of the church, is certainly a relic of the past. The paintings and sculpture bear eloquent testimony to a high architectural standard. Time and lack of adequate efforts to preserve them intact, have effaced many of the age-old structures. But enough remains, to give the antiquarian some glimpses of those times.

The church owns some very valuable relics, dating many centuries back. A statue of St. Mary, exquisitely wrought in marble, and another in pure gold, are our

proud possessions today. A Holy Cross of this church, done in pure gold and set with precious stones, is unrivalled in craftsmanship and cost, perhaps in the whole of the Christian world.

The main religious festival, of-course, is in honour of the Holy Mother, on the 15th August. Special *Quorban* is conducted in the church on that day and a large number of devotees attend and take part in the sacrament.

The birthday of St. Mary, September the 8th, is also celebrated on a very grand scale. September 1st to 8th is set apart as a special season of Lent. Devotees take vows of fasting, prayer and meditation for Special Grace. On every day they assemble in the church, hold vigils and prayers and listen to devotional dissertations. On the closing day of the Lent on the 8th, the concourse of devotees, will be the largest and the function will close with poor-feeding, prayers and chants.

The feast of St. Thomas—the Founder Saint—is celebrated on the 3rd July, in a no less auspicious manner. We all remember with gratitude his work and martyrdom for the cause. In 1953, a grand public meeting, attended by several foreign bishops and archbishops, was held here to commemorate the completion of 1900 years of the visit of St. Thomas.

St. Behanan's Day falls on December 27-28.

Two venerable bishops, the 2nd Mar Thoma in 1686 and the 5th Mar Thoma in 1764 chose this church for their last resting place. *Medom* 28th and 29th, are set apart in their honour.

Justly proud of her antiquity, dating from the times of the Blessed Saviour himself, following His tenets and feeding His flock this church has been a beacon of Shining Light which wafts us all to glory.

POORADA DHARMAM IN ERAVIPEROOR

(SHRI K. S. PARAMESWARAN PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Thiruvalla
Eraviperoor

About four miles east of the Thiruvalla town, on the southern bank of the Manimala river, lies the Eraviperoor *kara*. There is ample evidence to show that this *kara* was once inhabited by philanthropic landlords like Pathillathu Pottis and great many influential Nairs and other Hindus. The Thirupuvapuzha Subramania temple, the Thirunelloor Sthanam temple and the Methrukovil temple—whose antiquity is beyond determination—standing in the centre of the Manimala river at the place where its course has been altered by the mighty build-up of granites, the seven storeyed chariots and snake boats that were used here until recent times and above all, the *Poorada Dharmam* conducted here though now reduced to a formal one-bear testimony to this fact. Although these temples have been dilapidated by lapse of time and become unfit for worship these decayed temples were recently renovated and, in addition, new ones constructed under the auspices of an organisation of the local Hindus known as *Hindava Seva Sangham*. *Meda Vishu*, *Thaipooyam*, *Sivarathri* and such other religious celebrations are also now conducted here under the supervision of this organisation.

For lack of precise information, it is difficult to answer such questions as to when the *Poorada Dharmam* in Eraviperoor originated and what was the factor that influenced the people to start this celebration and the like. However, the following tradition, relating to this celebration, current among the local people, throws some light in the matter.

Long ago, a *Sanyasi* happened to come to Pachamkulathu Illom, one of the branches

of Pathillathil Pottis still in existence and asked for a tender cocoanut to quench his thirst. At that time, there were no male members present in the house. Only one *Brahmanee* was present there and she being a *Brahmanee* was closetting herself in the inner apartments of the quadrangular building. She, therefore, threw out an axe before the *Sanyasi* and told him thus, 'There are no male members present here and therefore you may cut down one cocoanut tree and take as many tender cocoanuts as you want'. Greatly pleased at this offer, the *Sanyasi* approached a cocoanut tree and raised his right arm upwards when lo! the cocoanut tree stooped down to earth as to enable the *Sanyasi* to pluck the tender cocoanuts he desired and then it resumed its original position. The *Sanyasi* thereupon quenched his thirst, blessed the family and then left the place. The *Brahmanee* who was hiding herself inside the building was, however, viewing these strange happenings outside through a narrow opening of the door. As soon as the male members of the family returned home, she narrated to them the strange events. They were quite amazed and immediately they sent people to all sides to find out the *Sanyasi*; but in spite of their best attempts, they could not locate the whereabouts of the *Sanyasi*. Feeling greatly disappointed at their inability to find out the *Sanyasi*, they met together and concluded that the man who came over there, disguised as a *Sanyasi* and did the miraculous deed, was none other than Paramasiva and offered prayers to him. This event took place during the month of a particular *Chingom*, on its *Pooradam* asterism. It was then decided to give away tender cocoanuts as alms to all

the mendicants who throng to the place on the *Pooradam* asterism in *Chingom* every year. This decision was soon widely known everywhere and even the poor people, not to say of mendicants, began to come from far distant places to Eraviperoor on the *Pooradam* asterism in *Chingom* to receive alms. When the assemblage on these days grew in greater proportions, some philanthropists came forward to give them feasts and free meals and other alms. In this way when the *Poorada Dharmam* came to be treated as a sacred day for the devotees, the Kaniyans, Velans, Panans, Pulluvans, Kuravans, Vedans, and such other people belonging to the backward communities, began to frequent every house incognito under different guises and entertained people by their music, *Koothu*, *Thullal* and similar other cultural programmes for which they, in turn, received payment from them in cash and kind. Today, giving alms and acknow-

ledging the same from Eraviperoor on this particular day is considered to be a sacred act and many people come to this place for this purpose on this day. Many Christians of this locality also now give away alms to the poor on this day as is being done by their Hindu brethren. Thus the *Poorada Dharmam* celebration hightens the fame of Eraviperoor as a festival centre. Even when other festivals were prohibited due to public mourning the *Poorada Dharmam* was allowed. In spite of these facts it has to be admitted that the *Poorada Dharmam* is now conducted on a poor scale. This is largely on account of the economic downfall of the people and Hindus in particular. This is clear from the fact that whereas in the past this festival was celebrated from morning to midnight, today, it is conducted only for a short while, commencing at 6 o'clock in the morning and concluding at 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

UTSAVAM IN THE PUTHIYAKAVU TEMPLE, AYROOR

(SHRI N. JANARDHANAN PILLAI)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Thiruvalla
Village	Ayroor

The Puthiyakavu temple is situated in the Ayroor Village of the Thiruvalla taluk at a distance of twelve miles from the Chengannur railway station. This temple is said to have been founded long ago by a local chieftain of Ayroor who was a pious devotee of Bhagavathi. The local tradition has it that while Bhagavathi was returning after making an appearance in a dream to the above chieftain and Moothedath Thampuran (to whom belonged the land where the temple now stands), she arrived at the place called *Bhagavathi Kandamkavu* located in the Pullad kara for a little rest. The local people finding Devi staying there, took her

in procession to *Puthiyakavu* and consecrated her there. This event took place on the *Bharany* day of a certain *Makaram* (January-February) and it is in commemoration of the this procession that the local people celebrate the *Bharany Utsavam* during the month of *Makaram* every year. On this day most of the Hindus residing in the Pullad kara will come to this temple and observe fasts. Another festival of this temple is the *Kumbha Revathy*, celebrated in the month of *Kumbhom* (February-March). This is in commemoration of the installation of Bhagavathi in the temple.

The special feature of the *Bharany Utsavam*

is that during the night on the *Bharany* day the circumambulation ceremony is performed by carrying numerous specially-made sacrificial lamps called *Ashindi* around the temple. In the past, the *Kumbhom Revathy* used to be celebrated on a much grander scale than today. About two thousand people gather here to attend these festivals.

The important *Vazhipadu* (offering) performed in this temple is *Chandabishekom*, *Kalam Ezhuthupattu* and *Noottonnukalam Pooja*. An image done in jackwood has been installed in the temple which is anointed (*abhisekom*) with a specially prepared, *Chandu* (a compound ointment). This is known as *Chandabhishekom*. It is believed that this anointing gives strength and durability to the image. For *Kalam Ezhuthupattu*, a *Kalam* (floral or other design for religious

purpose) is prepared on the ground in the temple courtyard with rice flour, turmeric powder and powdered green leaves and people gather around the *Kalam* and sing in chorus eulogising the divine qualities of Bhagavathy. The *Noottonnukalam Pooja* is performed during the intervening period between *Revathy* in *Kumbhom* and *Bharany* in *Medam*. During this period the people flock in large numbers to the temple carrying with them in procession hundred and one new *Kalams* (earthen pots) and rice and other provisions for preparing *Nivedyam* and after preparing *Nivedyam*, fill the *Kalams* with the same and conduct *Pooja* in the temple. This *Vazhipadu* (offering) is said to be performed to ward off smallpox among the people.

MOONU NOYMBU IN THE KALLISSERI ST. MARY'S CHURCH

(SHRI P. C. ANDREWS)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Chengannur
Village	Thiruvannamoor

The Kallisseri St. Mary's Church is situated in most picturesque surroundings on the top of a hill on the right bank of the Pampa river on the outskirts of the Chengannur town. It is believed to have been founded between 1550 to 1578 A. D. after the establishment of the big church at Kottayam in 1550 A. D. Mention has been made of this church in the list of the churches that existed during the great Synod of Diamper in 1599 A. D. The forefathers of the founders of this church originally belonged to Kadathuruthy who had settled down in this place in due course. One of the images of St. Mary kept in this church which is believed to have been brought over here long ago from the Kadathuruthy church out of their collection of two images drawn by St. Lukose, bears evidence in support of this fact.

This church had originally been established in a compound called *Ayyam Palli* at Mazhukeer on the southern bank of the *Varattar*. Thirty years after the foundation of the church a great flood occurred in which the church building was uprooted and washed away. Some of the Christians who saw the uprooted building flowing in the water, took hold of it and slowly brought it nearer to a hill called *Pallimala* about the *Arattu Kadavu* and erected the church on the top of that hill.

During those days the Pathillathu Potti were the powerful barons who had sway over the region to the north of *Varattar*. The Thiruvalla temple was under their control. The *Arat* of this temple was celebrated from very ancient times at the *Arattu Kadavu*. On one occasion when the *Arat*

procession reached this landing place, there was some celebration going on in the church at *Pallimala*. Some fanatics could not tolerate this and being infuriated over this, they demolished the church. Some of the Hindus could not appreciate this violence over their fellow-Christian brethren. Therefore it was decided to reconstruct the church on a place outside the boundary of these bigots where they would have no say in any matter. Accordingly, as a result of the earnest attempts made by some of the Hindus and Christians, the site where the church stands today was finally selected for the construction of the church. This site then belonged to the Moothedathu Vanhipuzha Madathil Thampuran. Since the Thampuran was a minor boy, the family affairs were being looked after by his mother *Thampuratti*. The Christians approached the *Thampuratti* and asked for the land for the construction of the church. The *Karyasthan* of the *Thampuratti* (agent or officer looking after the properties and affairs of big families) had an eye over this piece of land and he had informed of his desire to the *Thampuratti* also. Placed thus in a dilemma as she did not wish to incur the displeasure of either party, the *Thampuratti* played a trick on them by telling them that who-so-ever could present her with a little quantity of gold dust would

be given the land requested by them. That was a demand beyond their reach and the deputationists had to return sadly disappointed at their mission.

Among the persons who took initiative for the construction of this church, the leading personalities were Palliyambil Uthuppu and Mangalathil Uthuppan. Palliyambil Uthuppu had all the more felt sorry for his inability to fetch the land that he forsook eating and drinking for some time whereupon his mother, understanding the reasons for the mental anguish of her son, gave him a tiny grass-bag filled with the required quantity of gold dust. Uthuppu and party presented this gold dust to the *Thampuratti* and got the land tax-free from her. The church constructed over this plot of ground in later years came to be called as Kallisseri Palli. The big cross standing in front of the church which was installed long ago during the days of its mother-church has a close resemblance to the granite cross of the big church at Kottayam.

The *Moonu Noymbu* is by far the grandest annual celebration of this church dedicated to St. Mary. It is conducted on two days on 7th and 8th September in commemoration of St. Mary and is well attended by nearly three thousand people.

Based mainly on an article by Shri P. C. Andrews in the Malayala Manorama Weekly dated 19th May, 1962

UTSAVAM IN THE MAHADEVAR TEMPLE, CHENGANNUR

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Chengannur
Vadakkekara

The famous Mahadevar temple at Chengannur is one of the oldest Siva temples in Kerala which is believed to have been erected thousands of years ago. It is situated just within three furlongs of the Chengannur railway station. There are various tradi-

tions regarding the origin of this temple. Aeons ago the *Prajapathimar* (the ten mythological sages) conducted a *Yaga* (sacrifice) and when Dakshan (father of Paramasivan's spouse Sathi Devi) came to this *Yaga*, all the assembled save Siva,



Pl. 54

MAHADEVAR TEMPLE, CHENGANNUR



Pl. 55

MAHADEVAR TEMPLE, CHENGANNUR

KETTUKAZHCHA IN THE CHETTIKULANGARA TEMPLE

(Effigies brought by the residents of the kara)



Pl. 56

CHARIOT (left) and HORSE

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Pl. 57

PANCHALI

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UTSAVAM IN THE MAHADEVAR TEMPLE, CHENGANNUR

his son-in-law, stood up and saluted him. Infuriated by the insult offered to him by Siva, Dakshan conducted a great *yagam* for which neither Siva nor his daughter Sathi Devi was invited; yet Sathi Devi wished to join this *Yagam* conducted by her father and hastened to the *Yagasala* (place of sacrifice) unaccompanied by Paramasiva. When she arrived at the *Yagasala* no one came forward to receive her, but instead she was greatly shocked to hear her husband Paramasiva being publicly scandalised by the followers of Dakshan in her presence and unable to bear this disgrace, she jumped into the sacrificial fire pit to put an end to her life. When Narada informed Siva of this tragic event of his spouse's demise, he was hot with anger that he pulled out his matted hair and thrashed it on the ground when came before him the deadly Veerabhadran. As ordered by Siva, Veerabhadran went direct to the *Yagasala* and slew Dakshan and all his followers. Thereafter, Siva, filled with great sorrow and remorse as he was, went to the *Yagasala* and took the burnt corpse of his spouse Sathi Devi and carrying it over his head began to reel himself about the place in frantic dance. Fearing the dangerous consequences, Mahavishnu wished to divert the attention of Siva from his pathetic plight that he followed him at his back with bow and arrow and began to shoot down and sever one by one the limbs of the dead body. It is held that wherever the limbs of Sathi Devi happened to drop down to the ground, Devi temples came to be established in due course and it is on the place where the *Ooru* portion (thigh) of Devi fell down that the Mahadevar temple, Chengannur stands today. The place described as *Sonachalam* in the old Sanskrit literature is supposed to be none other than Chengannur. The old Tamil books also confirm this supposition.

Another tradition has it that at the time of the marriage of Paramasiva with Parvathi, a large number of people gathered above the Himalayas and it was feared that the earth will go down being unable to carry

the weight. As a measure against this possible catastrophe, the Sage Agasthya was sent to Cape Comorin, the southernmost tip of the land, where he had to stay himself to keep the equipoise of the earth. The marriage over, the new couple Paramasiva and Parvathi started to the south of the land to meet the Sage Agasthya while, in turn, simultaneously the sage also started to the north to bless the couple. Enroute they met each other at a place which is now known as Chengannur. Thus this temple is considered as the second *Kailasa*.

According to another legend, it is believed that it was here that the hermitage of *Sakthi Rishi*, a sage of great spiritual powers, was situated in the ancient days and that the present temple tank was his *homakundum* (sacrificial pit) and that was why the present tank is known as *Sakthikundakulam*.

Again another anecdote says that Karnaki, one of the *Avathars* of Sathi Devi, observed *tapasu* (penance) on a hill that stood at Chengannur (the place where the temple is situated) and that from there she was taken to heavens by the Devas. A hunter residing thereabout conveyed this news to his king Chenkuttuvan who, on hearing this news, visited this place accompanied by his consort and constructed a temple there and consecrated Devi by giving her the name *Chenkamala Valli*. Anyway, the antiquity of this temple which was founded by one of the Chera kings, can be traced back to the remote past.

On entering the temple through its eastern entrance, one can see first the golden flag-staff (*Swarnadwajam*). *Koothambalathara* (*Mandapam* where *Chakayar* performs his *Kuthu*) and the *Nandi Prathishta* (image of Siva's bull *Nandi*) which are quite attractive. Now only the foundation of that old *Koothambalam* remains there. The present temple was designed and executed by the famous architect Uliyannur Perumthachan. The *Koothabalam* was constructed with great skill and ingenuity that when the oil lamps are lighted on all the sixty-four light posts

around the *Koothambalam*, there will be no shadow cast on the actor playing on the stage. Considering the fact that even the adjustment of electric lights to secure such an effect has become possible only in recent times it can be imagined how great was the skill of those ancient architects who made this. One of the holes on the walls at the western entrance of the temple is quite famous in that a serpent had dwelt inside this hole long ago and that there was a practice whereby the innocence of persons charged with some offences was tested by inserting their hands inside this hole.

An *Ashtabandakalasam* was fixed to be celebrated here in the year 889 M. E. But due to some unknown reasons it could not be conducted at the auspicious time fixed for it. As a result, the front side of the *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum), *Mandapam* and the *Gopuram* on the eastern side were all destroyed by fire. It was, therefore, decided to reconstruct this temple in granite stone to protect it from fire in the future days. For this purpose masons and carpenters were brought from distant places and encouraged to settle down in the place. Even today the progeny of some of these artisans are residing at Chengannur. They are known by the family name Thattavila.

The *Varshikotsavam* (annual festival), *Sivarathri*, *Chithra Pournami* and *Thripputharat* are the important festivals conducted annually in this temple. The most famous of these festivals is the *Thripputharat*. The *Varshikotsavam* commences on the *Thiruvathira* day in *Dhanu* (December-January) and extends to twenty-eight days till *Makaram* (January-February). *Sivarathri* and *Chithra Pournami* are conducted for one day each on *Sivarathri* day in *Kumbhom* (February-March) and *Chithra Pournami* day in *Medom* (April-May) respectively. The *Sivarathri Utsavam* is conducted by the Araya community inhabiting Alappad, Cheriya Azheekal and other neighbouring coastal areas. They, in turn, enjoy certain privileges from this temple.

The *Thripputharat Utsavam* takes place on the fourth day of the first *Thiruppoopu* (menses of the Devi) in the year. Devi, being a female, is supposed to menstruate periodically and on such occasions a red spot appears on the cloth wrapped round her image. The discoloured cloth is sent up to the ladies of the Vanhipuzha and the Thazhamon Potti families for examination and on confirmation by them, is brought back for safe custody, and the Devi's image is clothed with a single piece of white cloth. An *Archana Vighram* (idol made for worship temporarily) is put side by side with the original idol and after conducting special *Pooja* and other rites, Devi is invoked to it from the original idol and thus sanctifies it for worship. Thereafter, the *Archana Vighram* is removed and placed at a specially prepared alter in front of the *Sreekovil* which will be closed soon after the idol is removed from it. For three days usual *Poojas* are performed only at the place where the *Archana Vighram* is installed for worship by any of the members belonging to Chithrathuru and Kavanasseri families and two ladies sit by the side of the image acting as Devi's confidantes. On the fourth day Devi is taken out in procession to the Mithrapuzha ghat of the Pampa river for a holy bath. The confidantes also take bath simultaneously when the image is bathed in the river. After the holy bath is over, the idol of Devi is taken in procession on the back of a caparisoned elephant to the temple with all accompaniments of *Nagaswaram*, *Panchavadyam*, music etc. When this procession arrives at the courtyard of the temple, the idol of Siva would have been taken out on an elephant's back and kept waiting there for the arrival of Devi. As soon as Devi's image is brought back to the temple, both these images are taken in procession thrice round the temple and once around the *Sreekovil* and after the circumambulation ceremony is over, they are taken inside the *Sreekovil* through two entrances, the idol of Siva being through its eastern

ARANMULA UTHRATTATHI

entrance and of Parvathi through the western entrance. The *Archana Vighram* of Devi is thereafter placed by the side of the original idol of Devi and she is invoked back again to the original one. With this ceremony the *Thripputharat Utsavam* comes to a close.

The discoloured cloth which is passed as a holy relic is held in great demand by the people. After the *Utsavam* is over, small pieces of the cloth will be distributed to the people on payment of a sum of rupees three. People have implicit belief in the divinity of the Devi. The expenditure towards the conduct of the *Thripputharat* is met from the amount accrued as interest for the money endowed for that purpose by Col. Munro. The tradition goes that Col. Munro once went to Chengannur with his wife and

children to fix the *Pathivu* and he was at first sceptical about the truth of the phenomenon and disallowed the expenditure for this *Utsavam*. Strangely enough when the *Thiruppoopu* occurred, his wife and children suddenly took ill, and on approaching an astrologer on the advice of a Hindu officer accompanying him Col. Munro was told that the illness was because he objected the expenditure being incurred for Devi. Immediately Col. Munro admitted the above expenses and his wife and children were thus relieved of their ailments.

A large number of people from far and near attend these celebrations. *Kathakali*, *Harikatha*, *Panchavadyam*, *Pandivadyam*, *Koothu*, *Velakali*, *Thullal*, sword play, dance etc. are the special features of the festivals.

Based mainly on an article by Shri Babu Chengannur in the Malayala Manorama Weekly dated 6th April 1957 and the write-up furnished by Sreekaryam, Chengannur devaswom.

ARANMULA UTHRATTATHI

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Chengannur
Aranmula

Man's association with the rivers is as old as his civilization. The source of many a civilization had been the valleys or basins of some of the great rivers. Our *Vedas* and ancient literatures have nothing but full of praise for them. Kerala too does not lag behind in this respect. For ages, the Keralites had cherished a reverential attitude towards the rivers.

The stately march and exercise of the people in decorated boats of variegated types and sizes by singing and dancing with vigour and cheer is the *Jalotsavam* (regatta or water carnival) of Kerala. When the weather becomes delightfully pleasant and the nature exults in her full glory, it is time for Kerala to hold the *Jalotsavams*. The

riversides and the area round the backwaters then become noisy and gay.

The boat race is, in a way, the display of the physical might and strength of the Keralites, like the Olympic games of the ancient Greeks. The people forget their differences, stand united as one and partake in this sport. In that respect, this race is symbolic of the unity of the people of Kerala.

Champakulam, Payippad, Thazhathangadi (Kottayam), Aranmula and Neerattupuram are places famous for boat races. They are like the famous Regatta of Italy. Of all, the most famous is the Aranmula boat race conducted on the *Uthrattathi* day of *Chingom*. On *Thiruvonam* day in *Chingom* (August-

September) when the national festival of *Onam* begins in Kerala, Aranmula (a village located in the Chengannur taluk) is unusually cheerful and gay. From the short hours of the morning onwards, streams of people can be seen hastening to a particular spot. Their destination is the Aranmula Parthasarathy temple and the banks of the Pampa that flows with grave solemnity by the side of that renowned temple. Even before the day dawns and the morning sun rises from its concealment, multitude of human beings would have occupied vantage positions on the raised bank of the river flanked by the lofty temple buildings behind and the calm waters of the Pampa in front. In the river which flows majestically before them, countless boats of variegated types and sizes would have stationed themselves at suitable spots waiting expectantly for the arrival of something from far beyond the river. And all eyes converge eagerly to a moving speck far beyond the river which in no time becomes clearly visible to all as snake boats conveying another native boat heading towards the Aranmula temple with vigour and cheer. At sunrise the convoy reaches the temple with the boat laden with materials required for the *Pooja* and the feast in the temple. These materials are then ceremoniously taken to the temple. This marks the beginning of an age-old water carnival widely known as the Aranmula *Vallamkali* associated with the Aranmula *Uthraattathi* festival of the Aranmula Parthasarathy temple.

The materials brought by the native boat for conducting the *Pooja* and the feast in the temple are called *Thiruvonachilavu* and the conveyance used for this purpose as *Thoni* meaning native boat. The other boats conveying the *Thoni* laden with the above materials, are called *Palli Odangal*. These materials are brought to the temple by Kudamaloar Mangat Bhattathiripad under the supervision of the Devaswom Board authorities.

The *Prathishtha* day of Lord Parthasarathy,

the deity of this temple, is *Uthraattathi* and that day is celebrated fittingly with solemn ceremonies and festivities. All the boats which convoyed the native boat on the *Thiruvonam* day, gaily decorated with flags and festoons, reach Aranmula on the *Thiruvonam* day and the people in them after conducting *darshan* and prayers in the temple, indulge in an unusually merry water-sport from 12 noon to 4 p. m. People, of different castes and creeds, forget their differences for the moment, stand shoulder to shoulder and indulge in this delightful sport. It is perhaps doubtful whether there is in this part of the State, any similar national festival resplendent with an aura of spiritual devotedness, endearing friendship, majesty and rapturous delight than the Aranmula boat race.

Previously there were about fifty *Chundan Vallams* (a kind of boat) used for the water sport, but now due to lack of proper initiative and encouragement, most of them have been spoiled that now only twenty-eight of them are available for the sport. The State Government and the Travancore Devaswom Board are now giving encouragement by sanctioning special grants for the conduct of this festival.

Long ago when Aranmula was under the suzerainty of the Thekkumkoo Raja, there was a Brahman house called *Mangatillam* in the Kattoor Village lying four miles east of Aranmula. These Brahmans had extensive landed properties in the locality. As the very name of the village indicates, it can be conjectured that the house was surrounded by forests on all sides. There lived once a Brahman who was a devotee of Sree Krishna and it was his usual practice to observe austerities every twelfth lunar day and on the conclusion of the fast, to feed a bachelor Brahman after having washed his feet. Due to some unknown reasons the Brahman houses around the locality became extinct and a situation arose when Brahmans became rare in the vicinity. The above Brahman feared very much that he would not be able to continue his penance. While

he was thus brooding over this problem, a bachelor Brahman appeared before him and after acknowledging his hospitality, disappeared suddenly from the scene. During his sleep, Lord Parthasarathy appeared before the brooding Brahman in a dream and informed him that he need not worry over the non-availability of bachelor Brahman to be fed and that it would be enough if he would go over to Aranmula temple on the *Thiruvonam* day in *Chingom* and observe austerities and other rites from there. Ever since this occurred to the Brahman, all expenses incurred on the *Thiruvonam* day in the Aranmula temple including the expenses for the feast, were being met by Manghat Bhattathiripad. In course of time when the Bhattathiripad and his family shifted their residence to Kudamaloar near Kottayam, he donated all his landed properties lying east of Aranmula to the Parthasarathy temple, Aranmula and made an agreement with the trustees of the temple by which 1,200 *Paras* of paddy had to be given to the five families of Kattoor, Ayiroor, Naranganam, Palakkad, and Kannangad for *Onam* from the income of the lands donated by him. Another condition of the agreement was about the conduct of the festival in the temple. According to this, the *Thoni*, laden with the materials for *Pooja* and feast in the temple, had to start headed by Manghat Bhattathiripad from the landing ghat at Kudamaloar during the night on the *Uthradom* day and to reach Aranmula temple early by next morning of the *Thiruvonam* asterism. On arrival at the side of the temple, the sacrificial lamp should be lighted from the *Thoni* itself and taking

the same with them, they should open the temple and perform *Pooja*, other ceremonies, and the feast. At the end of these ceremonies, when the trustees of the temple entrust the balance amount of the income derived from the properties after meeting the expenses on that day to Manghat Bhattathiripad, he has to surrender the same to the temple and leave back immediately to Kudamaloar. This ancient practice is still followed scrupulously during the festival in the temple. For the above purpose the Kudamaloar Bhattathiripad should himself be present on *Uthram* day at Kudamaloar. The Bhattathiripad had donated landed properties to eighteen Nair families of the place for the conduct of the festival. Besides, some families have also been made to settle themselves at Kudamaloar. The deity of Lord Parthasarathy has been installed at Kudamaloar *Illom* and daily *Pooja* is performed there by employing special *Poojaris*.

Since this festival started at a time when native boats were alone the water conveyances, the carriage used for bringing the materials for *Pooja* and feast in the temple got the name *Thoni*. It was to protect the *Thoni* from the hostile barons named *Kovilanmar* that the system of conveying the *Thoni* was introduced initially. The shape and size of the boats conveying the *Thoni* have been modelled according to the old naval ships used in Kerala. The *Vedithadi* of the boats bears testimony to this. Although the quantum of paddy now used in the temple has been reduced much for various reasons, no changes have so far taken place in the age-old rituals of the *Utsavam*.

Based mainly on the article by Shri N. Parameswaran Pillai in the Malayala Manorama Weekly dated 1st September 1956.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

UTSAVAM IN SREE SUBRAMONIA SWAMY TEMPLE, HARIPAD

(SHRI N. V. DEVAN)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Karthigapally
Village	Haripad

Sree Subramonia Swamy temple, Haripad, one of the great temples of Kerala, is situated at the 32nd mile of the Quilon-Alleppey road. This temple is the oldest and most important of all Subramonia temples in Kerala. The image of Subramonia Swamy with four arms is the biggest of its kind. There are many legends about the antiquity and sanctity of this image. That the statue was worshipped by Sree Parasurama and was obtained from the river are confirmed facts. The temple and the image built after the pattern of the Buddhist period are still here.

A virtuous man had a dream that there was a wonderful image in the river. The dream was confirmed by astrologers. As a result of the enthusiasm of the local people, the great temple was constructed and the image was redeemed from the river and enshrined in the temple. The boat festival of Paipad river, which is observed as a national festival is in commemoration of the enthusiasm of the people. There is no surprise in the progressive elements of today taking pride in the society of that period, the spirit of cordiality that characterised the followers of different religions, the experi-

ences of mutual co-operation of Kadavil Tharakan, Kochuveetil Methar and others, the large-heartedness underlying the conversion of a religious festival into a national one, the great temple and the elephant's house.

Annually three festivals are celebrated in this temple viz, *Avani Utsavam* in *Chingom*, *Markazhi Utsavam* in *Dhanu* and *Chithira Utsavam* in *Medom*. The last one, the *Chithira Utsavam* is the most important and it attracts tens of thousands of devotees. The *Trikkarthika* of *Vrischigom* is also important for *Poojas*, the procession with the golden peacock throne and the grandeur of illumination.

Several devotees from Alleppey district and neighbouring places assemble for the *Kavady attam* in connection with *Thaipooyam* of *Makaram*.

In 1096 M. E. the temple succumbed to a fire. But it was rebuilt later on a new architectural pattern.

The new temple, the elephant's house, the big tank, the *Koothamabalam*—all these declare the importance and sanctity of the temple as well as the prosperity and attractiveness of the land.

UTSAVAM IN THE MANNARASSALA KAVU

(SHRI N. V. DEVAN)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Karthigapally
Village	Haripad

In olden times there was no Hindu family in Kerala without a serpent-grove (*Sarpa-*

kkavu.) But now the position is altogether different. Mannarassala, situated to the

SIVARATHRI UTSAVAM IN THE KURICHIKAL BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, KARUVATTA

north-west of Sree Subramonia Swamy temple, Haripad is the most important serpent worship centre in Kerala. The temple is situated in a beautiful village surrounded by groves. The *Illom* is a little to the north of the temple. The heir of the *Illom* is the oldest female member. In front of the temple there is a porch surrounded by images of serpents. The precincts of the temple would seem to promote piety. It is said that the origin of *Mannarassala Kavu* is from Vettikottu, which is also an important centre of serpent worship. This conjecture is supported by the first verse of *Pulluvan pattu* (a folk song) which runs as follows:—

"The origin is Vettikottu then Mannarassala." The local tradition has it that a girl from Vettikottu *Illom* was given in marriage to the Mannarassala *Illom*, who

gave birth to a snake and a boy. When this serpent-child grew and gave birth to numerous progeny, they were all removed to a spot on the south of the *Illom* where a magnificent grove was grown since then. This story as well as other details about this *Kavu* have been mentioned in detail at pages 624-626 in the Travancore State Manual, Volume I.

The *Valiamma* resides in the *nalukettu* of the *Illom*. That place is considered a temple. It is an unwritten law that the place should under no circumstances be polluted.

The important festival here is celebrated on *Ayilyam* of *Thulam*. On that day a large number of devotees come here from distant places also. There will be a fairly large attendance on other ordinary days also, especially on Sundays.

SIVARATHRI UTSAVAM IN THE KURICHIKAL BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, KARUVATTA

District
Taluk
Village

Alleppey
Karthigapally
Karuvatta

The Kurichikal Bhagavathy temple, Karuvatta (Karthigapally taluk) is situated just twelve miles away from the Mavelikkara railway station. The general belief is that the idol of Bhagavathy installed in this temple reached here in a cauldron from Kurichi flowing through the nearby stream. The *Sivarathri Utsavam* of this temple is celebrated annually for two days in *Kumbhom* (February-March). On one occasion while the *Utsavam* was on, the lamps faded out suddenly for want of oil. At that time a person from the assembled multitude who was inspired by Devi, cried aloud that the lamps be lighted by using water if oil was not available and accordingly the lamps were lit by pouring water in the containers.

On the *Sivarathri* day at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, a person who observed fast for forty-one days specially for performing religious rites, goes from the temple to the nearby *Ilankavu* carrying a cauldron containing holy substances and after the cauldron being got sanctified from there, returns to the temple, at about 5 p. m. carrying back the same over his head. Large number of people gather on the waysides and flock to the temple to see this procession carrying back the cauldron to the temple.

Kathakali, *Thullal*, dance etc. are the other usual attractions of this *Utsavam*. The offerings to the temple consist of plantains, molasses etc. equal to the weight of the person who makes the offering.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

UTSAVAM IN THE KALARICKAL TEMPLE, KARUVATTA

(SHRI K. KRISHNAN)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Karthigapally
Village	Karuvatta

The Kalarickal Bhagavathy temple is situated in the Karuvatta village of the Karthigapally taluk. This is a private temple belonging to the Thattupurackal Paraya family of the place and is located about sixteen miles away from the Mavelikkara railway station on the Trivandrum-Ernakulam railway route. The important festivals celebrated annually in this temple are *Sivarathri*, *Kottakazhcha* and *Kurusi* held on *Bharany* day in *Meenam* (March-April) and *Uthradom* day in *Chingom* (August-September). The *Sivarathri Utsavam* which is attended by about three thousand persons is held in *Kumbhom* (February-March) for two days and *Kottakazhcha* for one day attended by 3,000 people on the eve of *Vishu* in *Medom*. *Kurusi*, attended by about 500 persons is held for one day. *Kathakali*, *Thullal*, *Harikatha*, *Kolati*, *Thiruvathirakali*, musical concerts and similar other cultural programmes are conducted during the *Sivarathri Utsavam* which would help increase the tempo of the festivities.

Soon after the *Vishukani* (the first thing seen on *Vishu* which is considered auspicious for the whole year) is over, the temple flag will be hoisted in the Subramonia temple at Haripad to mark the beginning of the *Chithra Utsavam* of that temple. Among the articles used for *Vishukani*, the *Kottakazhcha* of Karuvatta Moopar (the Thattupurackal Parayas are called as *Moopar*) is

held in high esteem. On the eve of the *Vishu* day, the articles for the *Vishukani* in the Subramonia temple at Haripad are sent from the Karuvatta Kalarickal temple under the care of the elder *Moopar* of the Thattupurackal family. These articles, 2,600 baskets, 156 *Thukal*, 5 bamboo mats and 30 *Murams* (sieves) are taken to the Haripad temple in a grand procession with the accompaniment of *Panchavadyam*, *Alavattom* (Peacock fan) *Kuthuvilakku*, *Theevetti*, *Kalakettu* (effigies of bulls and other animals) etc. and having reached the temple, place them at the eastern *Nada* (entrance) of the temple. The temple authorities acknowledge the receipt of these articles with due honour and as a gesture of gratitude they, in turn, present the usual *Muppathiyarekalum Koppum* and one *Chothana* (a liquid measure) of cocoanut oil to the Thattupurackal *Moopar* and his party. These are brought back to the Kalarickal temple in procession similarly as the things were taken to the Haripad temple. This age old practice which is supposed to have been in vogue ever since the Haripad temple came into existence, continues even today in spite of the numerous changes that have crept into the customs and manners of the people. The important *Vazhipadu* (offering) in this temple is *Kurusi* (a mixture of turmeric and *Chunam*) *Theevetti*, *Soolam* (trident), *val* (sword) and *Koottupayasam*.

MAKARA BHARANY IN THE KURUTHICKAL DEVI TEMPLE, MANGALAM, THRIKKUNNAPUZHA

(SHRI V. SADASIVAN)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Karthigapally
Village	Arattupuzha

The Kuruthickal Devaswom is a private temple belonging to the Valyakattil family at Mangalam in the Arattupuzha village of the Karthigapally taluk. It is situated about ten miles from the Mavelikkara railway station. This is the oldest temple of the locality which is believed to have been founded about 500 years ago. Due to sea erosion, this temple had been destroyed thrice and it was reconstructed for the last time on 28th April 1960. For a long time, after the temple was washed away by sea, it was not reconstructed and prayers were conducted on the upstairs of a building called Medayil. Though this temple belongs to a private family called Mangalam Valyakattil it is now being used by all the residents of the locality. Regarding the origin of this temple, it is said that long ago a Brahmanee of the Puthumana *Illom* at Ambalapuzha, deserting her residence, came over to this place

and installed here a Devi brought from Puthumana *Illom* with a view to enable her children to worship Devi and perform other religious services. Even today the younger members of this family go on special occasions to Puthumana temple and conduct worship in that temple.

To commemorate the birthday of Devi, the *Bharany Utsavam* is celebrated in this temple for ten days in the month of *Makaram* (January-February). The most important days, however, are the last two days of the festival. The congregation attending the festival is estimated to come to about fifty thousand. *Katinkali*, *Nagaswaram*, *Kathaprasangom*, *Padayani*, *Kuthirakettu*, music, dance, pyrotechnics etc. are but some of the attractions of this *Utsavam*. Earthenwares and household utensils are the important things marketed in the fair held during these festive days.

MAKARA SANKRAMA UTSAVAM IN THE VARANAPALLY SIVA TEMPLE
(SHRI UMMINI KUNJU PANICKER)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Karthigapally
Village	Puthuppally

The Varanapally Siva Temple, a private temple belonging to the Varanapallil family, is situated in the Puthuppally village of the Karthigapally taluk at a distance of two and half miles from the Kayamkulam railway station. It is said that a forefather of this family who was of very pious and

religious disposition, had gone once to Kasi and on his return constructed this temple for his successors. The important *Vazhipadu* (offering) of this temple is called *Valiyada* *Pooja*. One of the ancestors of this family, namely Patheenatha Panicker, was the Commander-in-Chief of the Kayamkulam

Raja and when he grew old and became worn out in health, he wished to die like a hero than being sick and confined to a bed. Accordingly he firmly established a spear on the ground, with its sharp end pointing upwards and jumped over it and put an end to his life. A special *Prathishta* has been installed about the temple to commemorate the memory of this hero and *Poojas* are conducted thereat regularly.

Soon after the harvesting is over in

February, the *Makara Sankrama Utsavam* is conducted in this temple for eight days. Ordinarily about four thousand people participate daily in this festival. The main attractions of this festival are the performance of *Kathakali*, *Thullal*, music, dance, pyrotechnics and holding of religious discourses. The fair held in connection with this festival usually deals in foodstuffs, vegetable seeds, household utensils and stationery articles.

KUTHIYATTAM AND KETTUKAZHCHA IN THE CHETTIKULANGARA TEMPLE

(SHRI VARGHESE KOYPALLIL)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Mavelikkara
Village	Perungala

Chettikulangara temple is one of the famous Devi temples in Kerala. The *Bharany Utsavam* celebrated in *Kumbhom* (February-March) in this temple is quite an event to the local people as well as to those residing in the neighbouring villages. This temple is situated just one and half miles south of the Thattarambalam junction on the east of the Kayamkulam highway. Many legends are current about the origin of this temple. One of them is related below.

Long ago this place was a dense forest. There was a small road passing through the midst of this forest. Presumably this is the road which has been referred to in the *Unnuneeli Sandesom*. The remnants of this road can be seen even today. This temple has been constructed cutting across this road. During the time of a *Murajapam*, one Namboodiri Brahman came from the northern side of the state to participate in that celebration. Weary and fatigued by his long journey, he took rest for a while underneath a banyan tree that stood there in the forest. Just within a stone's throw from this place, there was a Christian household.

The Namboodiri got a goblet of water, a palm-bough and a tender coconut from this house and performed *Pooja* and other rites at the foot of this banyan tree. Meanwhile he heard a cracking sound of a gun shot. It was the sound of a shot fired against a bird by one of the members of this Christian family. The Namboodiri informed the local people that the forest was a centre oft visited by Bhadrakali and accordingly, as exhorted by him, they constructed a small temple there and appointed the above Christian family as the *Vedikkar* (gunners) of the temple. This Christian house is still there, but the present occupant has now embraced Hinduism.

It was in the year 1750 that *Murajapam* was instituted by Maharaja Marthanda Varma. In case this temple had been founded only after this event, it is doubtful whether it can claim antiquity for more than 200 years. Probably the Namboodiri who came from the north would have been a devotee of Kodungalloor Bhagavathy and it may be that the people, as desired by him, would have constructed this temple, dedi-

cating it as yet another abode of Bhagavathy. The assumption of the people is that the Chettikulangara Bhagavathy is the daughter of Kodungalloor Bhagavathy and that she goes every year to see her mother.

Among those who took initiative forestablishing this temple, the Mecherial, Pudupurakkal and Mangattethu Chembolil families were in the forefront of all people. Even today the first *Para* (offering) is received from the Chembolil family when the *Parayeduppu* (collection of offerings by going round in a procession) starts. In the early days this temple belonged to the residents of the four *karas* only, but now it stands for thirteen *karas*.

The temple is dedicated to Bhadrakali. The idol which is finished in superior jackwood, is about four feet tall. Around the main temple, there are small temples dedicated to Ganapathy, *Nagaraja* (serpent king) and *Nagayakshi*. An inscription on the door-frame of the temple reveals that the *Uttupura* (place where Brahmins are fed) was founded by Komalezath Chekon.

The important festival of the temple takes place on the *Bharany* asterism in *Kumbhom* (February-March), the birthday of Bhagavathy. The whole populace in the thirteen *karas* of the village join in the festivities. The highlight of the festival on this day is *Kuthiyottam* and *Kettukazhcha*. It is doubtful whether there is any other temple in Kerala where these two ceremonies are performed so elaborately as in the Chettikulangara Bhagavathy temple.

Kuthiyottam is performed as an important offering to the deity. The man who makes this offering (*Vazhipadukaran*) teaches young boys between eight and fourteen years of age certain religious rites for seven days from *Sivarathri* day to *Bharany* asterism during which these boys will be required to observe fast. Early in the morning on the *Bharany* asterism, after feast and other rituals are over, the boy whose body is coiled with silver wires, one end of which is tied around his neck, and an areca-nut fixed on the tip of a

knife held high over his head, is taken in procession to the temple with the accompaniment of beating of drums, music, ornamental umbrellas etc. All through his way to the temple, tender coconut-water will be continually poured on his body. After the circumambulation, the boy stands at a position facing the *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum) and begins to dance. This ceremony comes to a close with the presentation of prizes to the *gurus* (teachers.) This dance, if performed in pairs, is called *Irattakuthiyottam*.

On this day, just after midday the residents of the *kara* bring huge decorated effigies of chariot, horse, Bheema, Panchali, Hanuman etc. placed on wheeled platforms and after conducting *darshan* the parties take up their respective positions in the paddy field lying east of the temple with the effigies they have brought with them. This is an occasion when much heat and passion are aroused between the parties to take vantage positions in the field. During the night the image of Devi will be carried in procession to the effigies stationed in the paddy field. On the next day, these effigies will be taken back to their respective *karas*.

Historians are of the view that the present *Kettukazhcha* is a remnant of the past Buddhist ritualistic performances. When Hinduism got dominance over Buddhism, much of the Buddhist rituals were absorbed by the former and the same were employed against the latter. It is said that the Kodungalloor Bhagavathy temple was once a Buddhist centre. The Bhadrakali was installed as a vindictive measure against the nonviolent Buddhists. Although this temple is not so old, the fame and importance it has achieved now would have been through its association with the Kodungalloor Bhagavathy temple.

On the tenth day following the *Bharany Utsavam*, there is another festival celebrated in this temple for thirteen days. On each day this festival is conducted by the residents of each *kara*. Even though this temple is now under the control of the Devaswom

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ALLEPPEY DISTRICT

Board, the celebrations are conducted here only with the co-operation and support of the local people. During the festival days, Chettikulangara will turn into a big fair. The *Parayeduppu* commences on the *Makayiram* asterism and lasts till the midnight of *Aswathy* asterism in *Meenam*. Apart from the thirteen *karas*, collections are received from the other adjoining villages also. It is from here that the required paddy is supplied to the neighbouring temples for their use. The special feature of the *Para* of this temple is that paddy is received only in full measures.

The general conception is that Devi goes to Kodungalloor temple soon after the *Parayezhunnalleth* in the midnight on *Aswathy* asterism in *Meenam*. At daybreak, Devi bids farewell to all and goes to see her mother. The next day she comes back. The *Vedikaran* (gunner) of the temple, it is held, can know of her return, as either a wind may blow up or a small branch may fall down from a banyan tree when she

comes. Immediately he wakes up and fires the shot. Afterwards the *Poojaries* perform the usual rites. And again Devi presents herself in the temple and sanctifies the place with her presence.

It is held that the Mother Devi sends a few seeds of smallpox when the daughter returns. Telling the mother that she won't supply them to her devotees, she throws them off to the ocean. It is believed that when Devi is greatly displeased, she brings forth these seeds when smallpox spreads throughout the area. The Kodungalloor Bhagavathy is the goddess of smallpox too. Bhadrakaly, Chekambary and Chamundy are all different forms of Devi, the mother of earth. They are supposed to be controlling pestilence, the evil spirits etc.

Other offerings like *Chandattam* are also performed in this temple. These offerings are believed to be effective for getting the wish fulfilled. This temple has got large income but only less expenditure to incur on its maintenance.

Free translation of an article by Shri Varghese Koyipallil in the Malayala Manorama dated 10th March, 1963.

UTSAVAM IN THE IRAMBAMON TEMPLE, TRIPERUMTHURA

(PRESIDENT, N. S. S. KARAYOGAM, CHENNITHALA)

District	Alleppey
Taluk	Mavelikkara
Village	Triperumthura

The Irambamon temple, dedicated to Sree Subramonia, is one of the important *Keezhoods* (subordinate temples) of the Mahadeva temple at Triperumthura mentioned in *Unnuneeli Sandesam*. It is situated at a distance of three miles from the Mavelikkara railway station. For a long time this temple was left uncared and neglected as a result of which the idol was spoiled and the *Sreekovil* completely collapsed and in their place wild shrubs and

thick growths sprung up converting that once sacred place into a minor wilderness. The local Nair Service Society took interest in the temple and it resolved to be named after the deity of the temple as Shanmukavilasom N. S. S. Karayogam No. 95. In the year 1929 the Karayogam reclaimed the place and reconstructed the temple under the able guidance of Shri Dharmananda Swamy. The temple was reconsecrated on 18th April 1956 by Brahmasree Sankaran

UTSAVAM IN THE IRAMBAMON TEMPLE, TRIPERUMTHURA

Thanthri, Thazhamon Madhom. The Travancore Devaswom Board was also pleased to donate a sum of Rs. 2,500 for this purpose. Now the Devaswom Board is giving a monthly grant of Rs. 15 for conducting *Porja* in this temple.

Every year two festivals each lasting for one day are celebrated on a grand scale, the *Thaipooyam* and the *Prathishta* day. The *Thaipooyam* is celebrated in *Makaram* (January-February) and the *Prathishta* day in *Medom* (April-May). The special features of these festivals are *Navakam*, *Sree-*

bhoothabali, *Panchamrutha Nivedyam*, *Kathakali*, *Harikatha*, *Ottamthullal*, musical concerts, religious discourses, etc. *Kavadiyattom*, *Payasam*, *Ganapathihomam*, *Neyyuvilakku* are some of the *Vazhipadu* (offerings) of this temple. The *Neyyuvilakku Vazhipadu* is offered to get rid of the nuisance of the ants for which money is being received here even from distant places by Money Order. Large number of people (not less than 1,000) throng to this temple to attend the above festivals.

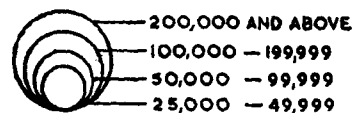
**FAIRS AND FESTIVALS
OF
KOTTAYAM DISTRICT**

KOT TAYAM DISTRICT

PLACES OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS WITH
CONGREGATION OF 25,000 AND OVER

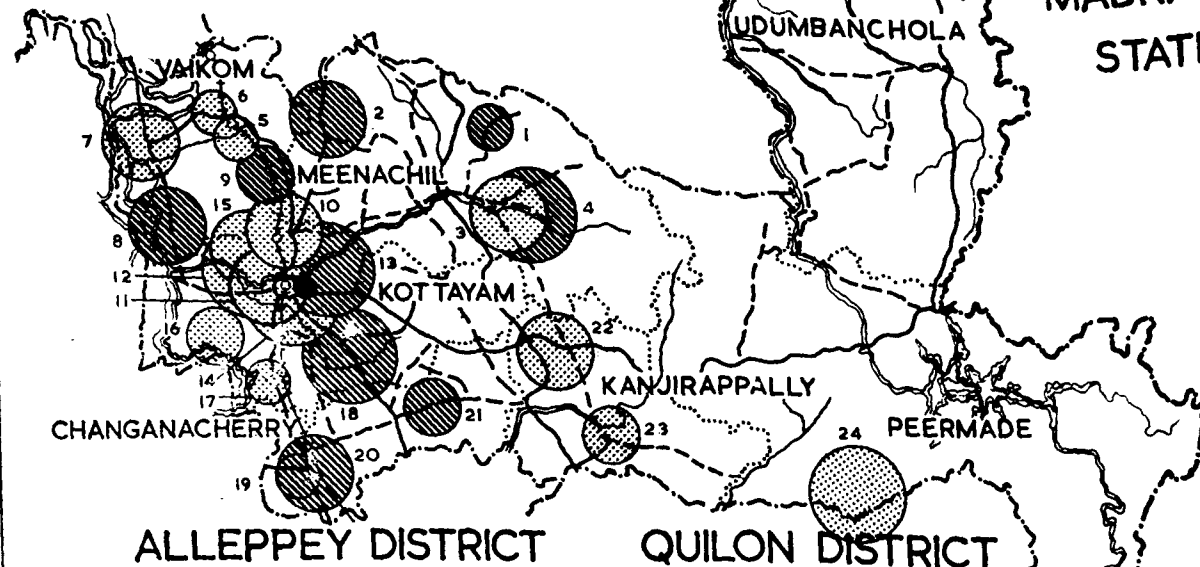
TRICHUR DISTRICT

SCALE FOR SIZE OF
CONGREGATION



ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

MADRAS
STATE

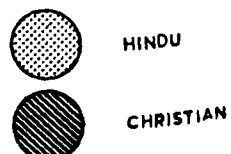


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|---|---|
| 1 ANAKKALLU FORANE CHURCH, BHARANANGANAM | 18 ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, PUTHUPALLY |
| 2 ST. MARY'S FORANE CHURCH, KURAVILANGAD | 19 ST. MARY'S METROPOLITAN CHURCH, CHANGANACHERRY |
| 3 THIDANAD TEMPLE, KONDOOR | 20 PAREL CHURCH, CHANGANACHERRY |
| 4 ARUVITHURA FORANE CHURCH, KONDOOR | 21 ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, NEDUMKUNNAM |
| 5 THALIYIL SIVA TEMPLE, KADUTHURUTHY | 22 PONKUNNAM PUTHIAKAVU DEVI TEMPLE, CHIRAKADAVU |
| 6 ELAMKAVU DEVI TEMPLE, VADAYAR | 23 SASTHA TEMPLE, ERUMELI |
| 7 MAHADEVA TEMPLE, VAIKOM | 24 SABARIMALA SASTHA TEMPLE, MLAPPARA |
| 8 ST. MARY'S CHURCH, VECHOOR | |
| 9 MANNARAPARA CHURCH, MANJOOR | |
| 10 SIVA TEMPLE, ETTUMANOOR | |
| 11 THIRUNAKKARA TEMPLE, KOTTAYAM | |
| 12 MAJOR THALIYIL TEMPLE, KOTTAYAM | |
| 13 ST. MARY'S CHURCH, MANARCAO | |
| 14 KUMARANALLOOR BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, PERUMBAIKAD | |
| 15 NAGAMPADAM SIVA TEMPLE, PERUMBAIKAD | |
| 16 SREE KRISHNASWAMY TEMPLE, THIRUVARPPU | |
| 17 KUTTIKATTU DEVI TEMPLE, NATTAKOM | |

LEGEND

STATE BOUNDARY
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
TALUK BOUNDARY
STATE HIGHWAY
DISTRICT ROAD
RAILWAY
RIVER
DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS



THE RAKKULI THIRUNAL IN THE ST. THOMAS' CATHEDRAL, PALAI

(SHRI V. C. GEORGE)

District
Taluk
Town

Kottayam
Meenachil
Palai

Rakkuli Thirunal is the terminology of common parlance to denote the feast of Epiphany celebrated every year on the 6th of January in the St. Thomas' Cathedral Church at Palai. For nearly a century now, it has been the occasion of a vast fair like the mediaeval fairs of Europe, famous in history. For about two months after the festival, the precincts of the church and the dry river-bed adjacent, would put on the lively appearance of a busy bazaar with gaily decorated stalls and show-rooms. Articles of every variety would be available for sale. Costly silks, weddingwares with gold thread embellishments, fanciful drapery, articles of varied hues and forms, different types and sizes, furniture, rattan and bamboo works, ironware ranging from simple kitchen knives to agricultural implements of all varieties, crockery, stationery, confectionery, earthenware, mats, baskets—in short almost everything that men and women of the past needed would be on display.

The festival symbolises the Biblical account of the three Magi from the east, being led by a new born star to infant Jesus in the manger of Bethlehem, where they do homage to Him with an offering of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In this eastern region of the country, there was no other Christian festival excelling this in

pomp, splendour or vastness of concourse. It was looked upon as a regional festivity and people of all creeds and castes from far and near flocked to it. In those days when transport was slow and tardy and marts and bazaars few, the rural population of the midlands found the opportunity here to buy for themselves the necessities and luxuries they needed round the year. If statistics were available of the sales and purchases effected during this fair of two months, it would have shown that the entire economic life of the country around, was centered about the Rakkuli Thirunal. Times have now changed. The church of St. Thomas, Palai dating back to 1000 A.D. has now risen to the status of a Cathedral. The age-old procession with its unique feature of the mount of Bethlehem bearing the cave, the manger, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the sheep in mute wonder goes on even today. But roads have developed. Transport has become faster. Secluded villages have grown into busy trade centres. All that man needs is available today at a stone's throw from his door. Consequently the Rakkuli Thirunal fair has lost much of its comprehensiveness and vastness. Still for several days following the feast, there is a brisk trade in various articles going on within the premises of the church.

SACRED HEART'S FEAST IN THE SACRED HEART'S CHURCH, MONIPPALLY

(FR. T. NEDUMKOMBIL)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Meenachil
Uzhavoor

The Sacred Heart's church, Monippally is situated eleven miles away from the Ettumanoor railway station in the Uzhavoor village of the Meenachil taluk. This is the one and the only church in the Kottayam diocese which has Sacred Heart of Jesus as patron. The Sacred Heart's Feast is celebrated here annually on 27th December, the day on which the foundation stone was laid for the church. The Christian community inhabiting the locality as well as the neighbouring places use to

attend this festival.

On the eve of the feast, there will be a sermon at the wayside chapel and a grand procession to the main church. Then Vespers will be sung followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

On 27th of December, Mass will be said early in the morning and many will receive Holy Communion on the day. At about 10 o' clock in the morning, solemn High Mass will be said which will be followed by sermon, Benediction and procession.

FEASTS IN THE ST. MARY'S FORANE CHURCH, BHARANANGANAM

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Meenachil
Bharananganam

Bharananganam, a small village town in the Meenachil taluk, originally known as Paranananyam, later as Parananaganam and finally Bharananganam, has been famous for long as one of the hallowed places in Kerala. It lies about 14 miles away from the Ettumanur railway station. Bharananganam has always been a refuge of the afflicted and the miserable as well as of the faithful. It is here that the famous St. Mary's Forane Church, one of the oldest churches in Kerala dedicated to the Holy Mother, stands attracting thousands of pilgrims from throughout the length and breadth of the country. It was very recently that this sacred place shot into greater fame and glory when the faithful Servant of God, Sister Alphonsa attained eternal bliss. It is not the historic importance and

the antiqueness of this church nor is its architectural beauty that attracts huge crowds of pilgrims to this church, but it is that rare spiritual ecstasy they feel in the sublime atmosphere of this church. The uninterrupted chain of pilgrims thronging daily to the tomb of Sister Alphonsa, seeking solace and redemption from their miseries, is itself an enduring proof of the greatness and sanctity of this church.

Years ago, the eastern border areas of the Meenachil taluk were thick forests, sparsely inhabited by man. In these days, the Christians inhabiting the regions lying to the east of Palai had their church at Aruvithura and they had to surmount several hardships to reach this church as they had to tramp the untractable routes through the dense forests infested by wild

FEASTS IN THE ST. MARY'S FORANE CHURCH, BHARANANGANAM

animals. To overcome this, the Christians of Palai and Bharananganam finally decided to found a church each in their respective villages.

Before Meenachil and the neighbouring areas were annexed to Travancore, the northern part of the Meenachil taluk was under the Vadakkumkoor Rajas and the southern part under the Meenachil Karthas. Meenachil and Palai were under the sway of the latter. The Kartha founded a temple dedicated to goddess Meenakshi. It is supposed that 'Meenachi' evolved from Meenakshi and 'Meenachil' from 'Meenachi'. The Meenachil Kartha was just and sympathetic towards his Christian subjects. Hence the Christians had no difficulty to obtain his permission to build a church for them in his country.

When attempts were going on at Palai to build a church there, simultaneously there had been similar attempts at Bharananganam too, but as fate would have it, the latter church came into existence only after two years of the completion of the Palai church. As a first step towards the establishment of the church, the Christians implanted a holy cross in a compound called Anakkallu lying at a short distance of two furlongs from the present church. But some miscreants pulled it from the place and threw it away to the nearby river.

The Christians, divided among themselves into two groups, had been dwelling on the banks of the above mentioned river. There arose among them a controversy over the site of the proposed church. Both of them wanted to have the church in their respective *kara*. For two years they could not arrive at an amicable settlement. Finally the Meenachil Kartha, at the behest of the Christians, came forward to mediate for them. A big stone would be put before the court elephant in midstream. The elephant would carry it and put it somewhere by own accord. The place at which the elephant thus put the stone would be released to the Christians for building their

church. This was Kartha's decision. Both the parties readily agreed to abide by this decision. The elephant took the stone to the present site of the church, then in the possession of the local Mekkokat Nair family. At the instance of the Kartha, they gifted this plot of land to the Christians. This was how the Bharananganam church came into existence. According to tradition it is supposed that the church is called as Anakallu Palli either because the holy cross was implanted by the early Christians on a plot of land called Anakallu or because it was constructed on the site spotted by the elephant. Whatever be the truth, all the official references about this church are even today made as Anakkallu.

As a token of gratitude for the gift of the land made by the above mentioned Mekkokat Nair family, they are granted a privilege from the church which they will enjoy so long as this church exists there. For every marriage conducted in this church, the church is collecting 2 silver *chakrams* and every year a lump amount, thus collected from the marriage parties during the year, is given to the above family on St. Sebastian's day. When the representative of this family comes to the church to receive the amount, he would present 51 *Neyyappams* (a kind of sweetened rice cake) and 51 plantains to the church.

The present church is the fourth one successively reconstructed on the spot. As the mother church at Aruvithura, this church too has been dedicated to the Holy Mother. The reconstruction work of the present church building, even though started in June 1913, could be completed only in March 1928 after fifteen years of its commencement. The church which is in the shape of a cross is 180 feet in length and 62 feet in breadth and is the biggest of all the churches in the Meenachil taluk. One of the outstanding architectural features of this church is that it is built in such a way that one could get a view of the altar and

the services performed there from any of the corners he occupies inside the church

The important annual festivals of this church are the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel celebrated on the 9th of November and the Feast of St. Sebastian on the 20th of January.

Nearby this church there is a Sreekrishna temple. It is said that the celebration of the St. Sebastian's feast in this church has, traditionally, some connection either with this temple or with a Namboodiri family which once prospered by the side of the temple. Probably, this tradition is based on the fact that, *Kolvilakku* (lamp with long handles) of high artistic perfection used in this church for the circumambulation ceremony during the feast of St. Sebastian closely resembles the one used in the temple procession. The feast of St. Sebastian of this church and the *Arat* of the temple are celebrated more or less during the same period in the month of *Makaram* in almost all years. Some hold that sufficient landed properties were bequeathed either by the temple or the Namboothiri *Illom* mentioned above to meet the expenditure towards the pyrotechnics and the oil for the lamps during St. Sebastian's feast.

This church has always kindled the true path and infused life and vigour among the Christian community of the Meenachil taluk. The contributions of this church towards the educational, cultural and social life of the people, are immense. The first English school in Meenachil taluk was the St. Mary's School at Bharananganam, started by this church. Today there are two high schools, one each for boys and girls and also one primary school at Bharananganam. Of the various branches of the Kerala Catholic Congress, the only popular organisation of the Catholics of Kerala, the Bharananganam branch has the largest membership. The Kerala Little Flower Mission, an organisation working

for the advancement of the Christian community at large, has both originated and holds its Central office at Bharananganam. The Mary Giri hospital, the first hospital set up in Kerala and supervised by American Sisters and the Mary Giri convent, are, by far, the greatest philanthropical achievements of this church. The Assisi Ashram of the Franciscan bishops and the Clarist convent, once hallowed by the presence of Sister Alphonsa, are the other prides of this church.

Without a word about the Servant of God, Sister Alphonsa to this account of Bharananganam church is incomplete. Born in an ancient family of the Kudamaloor parish, the Muttathupadom house, to pious and devout parents, and dedicated herself to the Lord from her very infancy, Sister Alphonsa, when came up of age, joined the Clarist convent in the service of God and served Him to the last until she attained blissful possession of God. Hers was a life of love and suffering in the path of piety. She manifested great horror against sin and inspired and encouraged the people to strive after holiness. Her noble soul joined with her Lord on 28th July 1946 and her mortal remains now lie entombed in the cemetery chapel attached to the south of this church. Little was known about her during her life time, but within a short span of three months since her passing away, the whole Christian world came to recognise her as a saintly person. Very many are the miraculous cures and very many are the favours received through her intercession. People of all castes and creeds throng in hundreds to her tomb either for favours to be received or for thanksgiving for the favours received by them. Pilgrims from foreign countries visiting her tomb are also not small in number. Investigations are in progress for the beatification and canonization of this Servant of God, Sister Alphonsa.

Mainly based on the article in Malayala Manorama weekly dated 17th March, 1962 by Shri Thomas Mathew, Kottarathumkuzhi.

POOYAM UTSAVAM IN THE MANKUZH SUBRAMONIA TEMPLE (SHRI K. K. AYYAPPAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Meenachil
Poonjar Thekkekara

The Mankuzhy S. N. D. P. temple, dedicated to Sree Subramonia, is situated at a distance of 23 miles from the Kottayam railway station in the Poonjar Thekkekara village of the Meenachil taluk. The *Pooyam Utsavam* is celebrated in this temple on a grand scale for three days in *Kumbhom* (February-March) attended by, on an average, not less than ten thousand people every day. This *Utsavam* begins on *Thiruvathira* day and ends on *Pooyam* day in *Kumbhom*. *Ottamthullal*, *Kathakali*, *Kathakalakshepam*, *Nagaswaram*, musical concerts, religious seminars, magnificent processions, etc. are some of the attractions of this *Utsavam*.

The *Panaka Nivedyam* and *Panchamritham* are the special offerings made to this temple. About the origin of the *Panaka Nivedyam*, the following legend is current among the people. Once, Parvathy informed her husband Paramasiva that she wished to hear some philosophical discourses. While Paramasiva was then sermonising, Parvathy's attention was somehow or other drawn towards her sons Ganapathy and Subramonia who were then playing by their side.

Paramasiva flung himself in a rage and cursed them that they would go to the earth and roam about there like human beings. Consequently Parvathy and her two sons came to the world and had to wander there in the forest for long with broken hearts. The God Brahma, Mahavishnu and the great sages who happened to hear of their pitiable plight came to earth and offered them various presents. There was nothing with sage Agasthya to present them; however, he also wished to offer them something by way of present and made a search to this effect here and there in the forest until at last he got some sugar-cane sticks and peas. He squeezed the sugar-cane sticks well and in the juice obtained, mixed the flour of the fried peas and gave the mixture to Parvathy and her children. In the presence of all, they relished it and satiated their hunger. Parvathy divined that the above stuff would become, in later days, an important *Nivedyam* for Sree Subramonia. Accordingly the above stuff is considered as an important *Nivedyam* of this temple.

FEAST OF ST. LUKOSE IN THE C. S. I. CHURCH, KOOTTICKAL (SHRI P. V. THOMAS)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Meenachil
Poonjar Thekkekara

The historic C. S. I. Church of Koottickal is a small church situated on the bank of the Manimala river that runs opposite to the Sea View Estate located on a lofty hill

facing the Arabian sea on the west. On the spot where there was once a Hindu temple, now a Christian church stands aloft. Even today there are a few descendants of

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

the hill tribe of Malayarays as members of this parish. These people who are the progenies of the Aryans, the early priests of the Koottickal temple and who belong to the Scheduled Caste, enjoy educational concessions from government. According to the legends current among them, they claim to be of Brahman origin and descendants of Kallel Brahmans.

Koottickal is a place in the Kottayam district, ten square miles in extent and comprising a part of the Kanjirappally village of the former Changanacherry taluk, portions of Kondoor village of the Meenachil taluk and Peruvanthanam village of the Peermade taluk. It is here that the Kokkayar and Pullakayar, the two tributaries of the Manimala river, meet together. Certain other brooks and rivulets also join here with this river. For these reasons, this place got the name Koottickal.

Some two or three centuries ago, a set of powerful people known as *Koyilmar*, had dwelt in this place besides their few dependants and a handful of Aryan priests. There was a village, exclusively inhabited by washermen (*Mannanmar*), known as Mannarkudi. These washermen lived on the bank of the river because of the facilities for washing. The present private market belonging to the wealthy Pottakulam family of Poonjar Thekkekara Panchayat is located on the side of Mannarkudi.

The remnants of the basements of houses graves and wells that are seen today in some compounds at Koottickal, reveal, to some extent, the splendour, prosperity and culture of the people who once inhabited this place. There was a famous temple, a well and a *kavu* (a bushy growth usually located in temple premises containing the *Prathishta* of deities) attached to the temple known as *Karimkulam kavu*. The neighbouring rulers, off and on, used to attend the festivals conducted in this temple. During a certain festival, believed to be the *Kumbha Bharany Utsavam*, when the Rani of Thekkumkoor came to attend the festival accompanied by

her daughter, the *Koyilmar* did not honour them with due respect and consideration. The Raja who came to know of this ignominy done to his Rani and daughter by the *Koyilmar* got furious and sent immediately his army to do away with the *Koyilmar*. The soldiers killed everyone of them—men, women and children. But a handful of persons, however, managed to escape from the place. It is said that a family descended from them is now residing in the Peruvanthanam village. Though the priestly class of Aryans was left unmolested by the soldiers, yet, they migrated to Entha, Codunga, Muttom, Njarakkad and Chathanpalli hills as they were afraid of remaining in that devastated locality. In due course, they began to migrate to other places like Urumbikara and Vadakke Mala also. Thus Koottickal which was once a civilized place became a wilderness, denuded of population and in due course turned into a thick forest a habitat of wild animals.

Gradually the descendants of the temple priests who moved into the hills, were got enlisted in the service of the Raja of Poonjar. In the year 1847 A. D. a European missionary by name Rev. Henry Baker, preached gospel at Kombukutty near Mundakayam and converted a few of the local inhabitants into Christianity. After a short interval, in 1849 A. D., he baptised seven families of the Malayarays who had all along been under the surveillance of the Raja of Poonjar. The seven families which thus embraced Christianity were Perakom, Kannattu, Moothasseri, Venadu, Puthenveedu, Nellithanam and Thadathil houses at Chathanpilappally. The Raja of Poonjar, who knew that his Malayarayan servants had gone to the fold of Christianity became so exasperated that he imprisoned all the leading personages among them and ill-treated them brutally. But the missionary, Rev. Henry Baker, intervened and managed to get them released. Nevertheless, these Malayarays did not wish to remain there. They informed the

THE MOONNU NOMPU IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KURAVILANGAD

missionary of their desire to go back to their ancestral land at Kootickal which then belonged to Vanjipuzha *Madom*. The wise missionary had already purchased forty acres of land from Vanjipuzha *Madom* for these converted persons. He took them to that place and stayed with them for some time in that forest region. Not content with this, Rev. Baker went again to the hills, preached the gospel and converted twelve more families of Kumbapally, Kochupura, Mundassery, Konnat etc. to Christianity. That was how the Kootickal church was originated. Even now the descendants of the seventeen Malayaran families, out of the nineteen proselytised by Rev. Baker, are dwelling in this place.

Since there was no common worshipping centre for the converted people, Rev. Baker decided to found a church and was in search of a suitable site for that purpose. These people discovered the remnants of the basement of their ruined ancestral temple and showed the same to the missionary. He set up a temporary thatched shed there and conducted prayers therein. Later on, they erected the present church at the site where their ancestral temple was located once, without a new foundation being laid down

there, as the basement of the old temple with its granite slabs having 3 to 5 feet length, 10 inches breadth and 8 inches thickness served as a good base for the church. The consecration of this church was performed on the 18th of October, 1852. To commemorate this day of the foundation of the church, the feast of St. Lukose is celebrated here every year in October.

The remnants of the old temple, the step stones leading to the bathing ghat, some idols of gods of Hindu pantheon and the granite pillars of the church, can be seen there even today. The well attached to the old temple is not fully covered and levelled up so far. About the Kokkayar which was flowing in olden days by the side of the *Karimkulam Kavu*, an abode of a large number of *Karungoli* serpents, it is said that the forefathers of the Christians of the locality had diverted the course of this river, joined it with Pullakayar at Kothuval and thus brought into existence the present Manimala river. Anyway there is no doubt that a powerful people had dwelt in this place long ago. Now it is left to the archaeologists to conduct further investigations about this place.

THE MOONNU NOMPU IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KURAVILANGAD (SHRI V. C. GEORGE)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Meenachil
Kuravilangad

Moonnu Nomp or three-day fast is a traditional Chaldeo-Syrian observance which had its origin in the pre-Christian era. It is based on incidents related in the old Testament, and carries us back to the time of Jonah, the Prophet. Jonah was asked by the Lord to go into the city of Nineveh and to raise his voice against the wickedness

of its inhabitants. The Prophet who wanted no clemency shown to Nineveh and its people wished to flee from the presence of the Lord and embarked from Joppa in a ship bound for Tarshish. "But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea so that the ship was like to be broken." (Jonah 1. 4.) Jonah

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

in those far-off days.

Since the introduction of *Moonnu Nomp* in Kerala several foreign nations could establish their authority in the land and had to disappear after comparatively short periods of pomp and glory, culture and civitization left their old moorings and had

their forward march in strange ways; but the fast-feast at Kuravilangad has all along remained with increasing splendour as the rallying point of people of all creeds and racial groups, religious devotees, tourists, antiquarians, artists, artisans and businessmen.

TITULAR FEAST OF NITHYASAHAYAMATHA IN THE CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR, KANAKKARI

(VICAR, ST. BONAFACE'S CHURCH, PATTITHANAM)

District	Kottayam
Taluk	Meenachil
Village	Kanakkari

The Chapel of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Kanakkari, more popularly known as Nithyasahayamatha Palli, is situated just one and half miles from the Kottayam railway station. The annual celebration of this church is the Titular Feast of the Nithyasahayamatha which takes place on 27th of June if that day falls on a Saturday or on the next Saturday following 27th of June. Prior to this feast, by way of preparation to the solemnity a Triduum will be conducted with High Mass and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament from the morning of Wednesday preceding the commencement of

the feast. On Saturday morning, Solemn High Mass, Novena of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, sermons, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and procession are performed in the church. It has to be specially mentioned here that on all Saturdays, both in the morning and the evening, the perpetual Novena of Our Lady of Perpetual Aid is conducted in this church in which a good number of clients of various castes and creeds will take part.

This church is a subsidiary chapel under the St. Boniface Church at Pattithanam.

FEAST IN THE ST. BONIFACE CHURCH PATTITHANAM

(VICAR, ST. BONAFACE'S CHURCH, PATTITHANAM)

District	Kottayam
Taluk	Meenachil
Village	Kanakkari

The St. Boniface Church, Pattithanam is situated about three miles away from the Ettumanur railway station in the Kanakkari village of the Meenachil taluk. The feast

of St. Boniface is celebrated in the church on the Sunday following the first week of January. The feast commences on Friday evening with the hoisting of the church flag

PURIFICATION FEAST OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KADAPLAMATTOM

followed by Holy Rosary and Litany in honour of the saint and terminates by noon on the next Sunday. On Saturday morning there will be High Mass and in the evening Holy Rosary, Vespers, procession and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and kissing of the relics of the saint. During all the days of the feast, the relics of the saint Boniface will be exposed for public

veneration. All the important functions of the feast will be attended, besides the faithful of the locality, by the members of the confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and other religious associations. The playing of drums or bands or fireworks which are associated with other festivals are absent for this. The feast is known as the Titular Feast of St. Boniface.

FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KADAPLAMATTOM

(FR. JOSEPH THOONKUZHY)

District	Kottayam
Taluk	Meenachil
Village	Elackad

The St. Mary's Church, Kadaplamattom is situated two miles south of Kidangoor, lying on the Kottayam-Palai highway, four miles east of Vempalil on the M. C. road and one and half miles south of the Marangat church on the Vaikom-Palai highway. This place is connected by transport connections with all the neighbouring places. There are many legends about the origin of this church dedicated to St. Mary.

This church is widely known as the church of the *Kadaplamattom Muthiyamma* — the wonder worker. The present church is a reconstructed one. The old church was rebuilt in 1947-48 in modern architectural style. There are many records available which prove the antiquity of this church. It is believed that the present church is the fourth one built on this spot. Even before 10th century, it is believed, there was a church on this spot dedicated to St. Mary and devotees came from all places, even from foreign countries with offerings to this church. It is also believed that this place was once a civilised town, more thickly populated than it looks today. During the time of Thekkumkoor-Vadakkumkoor Rajas, this

place had a glorious time. It was a military rendezvous of the day. There was a beautiful church at the spot where the present church stands today. The local Rajas extended all possible help to this church. Near this church, there was a Bhagavathi temple at the top of a small hill called *Bhagavathi kunnu*. During those days, all people irrespective of their religion, caste and creed, lived in amity and friendship. Even today, the remnants of the military camps and the powder-magazines that existed in those days can be seen in that locality. The bathing ghat used by the clergy of the day is still there. This place was then known as *Padathalamattom*. In course of time, the people suffered heavily due to the fierce battle against the Vadakkumkoor Rajas and therefore they left the locality and the place lay desolate and barren for a very long time. Thick growths sprang up there gradually and the place looked like a big forest. In spite of all these, the local people, as well as others, used to come to this church with offerings and conduct prayers. Even in those days, the custom of feeding twelve children and twelve

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

elders on the courtyard of this church was in vogue. This custom is still being followed in the church. On hearing from the devotees who came to this church about its plight the parishioners belonging to the churches at Kuravilangad and Cherypookal came accidentally to this place on the main festival day of this church and redeemed the church from its desolate condition. The church thus redeemed was entrusted to the parishioners of Cherchunkal. This was the first stage in the establishment of this church. While the forests were cleared for reviving this church, the people got a century-old image of St. Mary. Thus it is about 200 years since the redemption of this church.

The important festival of this church is

the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, commencing from 29th of January and lasting for 5 days till the 2nd of February. The main festival is, however, on the 2nd of February, the concluding day of the feast. The assemblage participating in the celebration will roughly come to ten thousand. Earthen pots, metal vessels, stationery goods, agricultural implements, mats etc. are the chief commodities marketed in the fair held during the festival days.

There is another attraction to this church. Herein lie buried the mortal remains of Fr. Kuttan Tharapel P. Ouseph. Large number of people visit his tomb daily. His death anniversary which falls on July 7th is celebrated on a grand scale every year by his devotees.

UTSAVAM IN THE SUBRAMONIA TEMPLE, KIDANGOOR

(SHRI V. P. NAMBOODIRI)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Meenachil
Kidangoor

The Kidangoor village and the adjacent places were once under the suzerainty of the Thekkumkoor Rajas. When the Vishnu temple in which the Raja was offering his worship fell into ruins, he wanted to reconstruct it and accordingly gave orders to his minister Adiyodi Nair to take early steps in that behalf. The temple was completed much earlier than it was expected. Greatly pleased with this, the Raja went to inspect this new temple buildings, but he was greatly disappointed to see that there was no *Mandapam* and therefore returned sad. Nevertheless, on the next day, much to his surprise, he came to understand that the consecration of the deity in the temple had taken place on the previous night without his knowledge. The following version explains how this happened.

Years back, when sage Gouna was observing *tapas* (penance) in the *Kudamurutti Mala*, an offshoot of the western ghats, Lord Subramonia went to him in the guise of a boy to become his disciple. The sage, knowing that the boy who came to him was none other than Lord Subramonia, wanted to install him at a place called *Illikkakallu* and prepared the *Kalasam* for the same. But the Lord who was greatly displeased over the non-installation of the deity in the new temple constructed by the Thekkumkoor Raja, smashed the *Kalasam* prepared by the sage and started straight to the temple at Kidangoor. The water split from the *Kalasam* began to flow behind the Lord, in the direction he was traversing to Kidangoor and finally reached Poonkunnu, a spot located at a distance of one mile

ASHTAMI IN THE MAHADEVA TEMPLE, VAIKOM

from sage Gounan's resort, where the Lord was anointed by the holy water. Again the Lord proceeded further, reached the Kidangoor temple and got himself into it through its northern entrance. The people who came to know of this strange event, traced the origin of the trail of water and met the sage Gouna at the place of its origin and knew from him about the arrival of Lord Subramonia in the Kidangoor temple. They informed the Raja of this great event and consecrated the Lord there with due reverence and rituals and thereafter conducted an *Utsavam*. At the conclusion of this *Utsavam*, they also conducted *Arai* at the place where the Lord was anointed by the holy water and renamed the place Poonkunnu as Ponkunnu, being the place where the Lord was seen in golden colour. The river which carried the holy water filled in the *Kalasam* by sage Gouna is called *Gounaru* up to the point the Lord had been anointed by the holy water and the place where the Lord had dashed away

the *Kalasam* and the water began flowing from the pot, as *Kudamurutti Mala*.

Annually three festivals are celebrated in this temple, namely, *Karthika* in *Vrischigom* (November-December), *Thaipooyam* in *Makaram* (January-February) and the *Utsavam* in *Kumbhom* (February-March). While *Karthika* and *Thaipooyam* are celebrated for one day each, the *Kumbhom Utsavam* which commences with the hoisting of the temple flag on *Karthika* day, is conducted for ten days. On an average, about ten thousand people participate daily in these festivals. The main attractions of the above festivals are *Kathakali*, *Thullal*, *Kurathiyattom*, *Padakom*, *Koothu*, *Nagaswaram*, *Ayyappanpattu*, *Deepakazhcha*, musical concerts, procession and pyrotechnics. The commodities marketed in the fair during the festival day are mainly bell-metal, aluminium and steel wares, earthen pots, agricultural products and implements, wooden furniture, mats etc.

ASHTAMI IN THE MAHADEVA TEMPLE, VAIKOM

(SHRI VADAKKUMKOOR RAJA RAJA VARMA RAJA)

District
Taluk
Town

Kottayam
Vaikom
Vaikom

The Mahadeva temple at Vaikom is one of the most famous and oldest Siva temples in Kerala. There is no historical record available now to confirm the antiquity of this temple. However it seems that this temple was in existence for four or five millenniums. Some hold that it was from here that Paramasiva enlightened one of his devotees Manickavachakar and that it took place in the third century B. C. Although there had been differences of opinion on this matter, there is no doubt that this temple is many centuries old. In

the early days this temple had not attained so much fame as it has today. In the famous *Sandesakavyam*, Suka Sandesom, no mention has been made of Vaikom temple. In the *Sandesakavyams* of a later origin, there is a description about this temple. From very ancient times onwards the festival at the Vaikom temple is celebrated in the dark lunar fortnight of *Vrischigom*. There is a tradition that Vyagrapatha Rishi got the vision of Siva on *Ashtami* day morning. Hence the importance of *Ashtami*. It was when the morning shadow on that day

lengthened to twenty feet that the sage got vision of the Lord. This is known as *Nakhamithachaya*. Therefore the devotees attach much importance for *Bhagavat darshan*, especially for the *darshan* made in the morning on the *Ashtami* day.

About one and half miles north of Vaikom, there is a temple at Udayanapuram dedicated to Lord Subramania. Here also the *Utsavam* is conducted in *Vrischigom* lasting for nine days and ending on the *Karthika* day. But the *Utsavam* at Vaikom is celebrated for twelve days, the *Ashtami* falling on the last day. Similarly as in the Vaikom temple, *darshan* is important in the Udayanapuram temple also.

In the early days, the Vaikom temple was under the control of *Oorazhmakar* (Namboodiris). In those days there were 1,007 Brahman households in the village. Now there are only ten or twelve families there. In the administration of the temple, these *Uralers* had all freedom; the sovereign power over this temple was, however, vested with the *Vadakkumkoor* Rajas from very ancient days. The *Uralers* of this temple were at liberty to do anything and everything as they wished but only with the consent of the *Vadakkumkoor* Raja.

At a later period, an estrangement took place between the *Vadakkumkoor* Raja and the *Uralers*. Due to the hostility of the Raja, the *Uralers* had to encounter great difficulties in the administration of the temple. Therefore, they conferred on the Maharaja of Travancore the sovereign title over this temple. This was after 500 M. E. The then ruler of Travancore was Aditya Varma. It was at Attingal that the *Uralers* conferred upon the Maharaja of Travancore the right over this temple. After this, the Maharaja appointed a person from Chengannur *Vanjipuzha Madom* as his representative to look after the temple affairs. He used to stay at Vaikom and look after the affairs of the temple. Later he appointed his own representative (*Samudayam*) to assist him. On special occasions he used

to come and stay at Vaikom.

Just a few days before the commencement of the *Utsavam* at Vaikom it is customary for the *Uralers* to meet together under the presidency of the *Samudayam* to discuss and decide upon the programmes of the festival. Even now this practice is continued though nominally. When the deities in the temples of Vaikom and Udayanapuram are taken out in procession, the *Samudayam* is expected to be with the procession on elephant's back holding aloft a sword in his hand. In fact the *Samudayam* is representing the Maharaja of Travancore in the procession.

Generally *Kodiyettu* (flag-hoisting) is conducted on the *Dwadasi* day by the end of the bright lunar fortnight. Before *Kodiyettu*, a sort of ceremony known as *Sandya Velakal* will be performed uninterruptedly for some days. This will be over before the *Kodiyettu*.

As said earlier the *Utsavam* of this temple is celebrated for twelve days. The festival for the first two days is conducted by the people of two *karas*. Even on these two days, there will be feast and offerings to the deity (*Vazhipadu*). On subsequent days, the celebration is conducted by the Travancore Devaswom Board. On these days the pomp and festivities of the celebration gradually increase. During day-time on *Ashtami* day, there will be no procession or any other item of rejoicing in the temple.

During the night on the *Ashtami* day, the deities of the neighbouring temples will be ceremoniously brought in procession to the temple. This is a very colourful and important function. *Moothedathu kavu* about four miles to the south of Vaikom temple, *Indamthiruthy*, two miles south of Vaikom, and *Koottummel*, a little away to the left of Udayanapuram, are some of the temples from where the deities are thus brought in procession to Vaikom.

After dusk, the deity of the Vaikom temple will be taken out in procession and kept in the *Anakkottil* (elephant's

house). At about midnight the deities of other temples will also be brought in procession to the *Anakkottil*. Thereafter a ceremony called *Kanikkiduka* (offering of presents) is performed. This is considered to be an important item. The *Karukayil* Kaimal is to inaugurate this function by making the first offering. This is an unalterable age-old custom. The *Uralers* carry the Kaimal in a palanquin to the place where the *Kanikkiduka* ceremony is conducted. It is to be specially noted that the palanquin bearers are the *Uraler* Namboothiris. On one occasion, the brave and adventurous Kaimal and his men saved the *Uralers* and the temple from the enemies. Carrying of the Kaimal in palanquin by the *Uraler* Namboothiris is an honour done to him as a token of their gratitude for saving their lives. In addition, a few landed properties have also been gifted to the Kaimal. This practice of coming to the temple in a palanquin, borne by the *Uraler* Namboodiris, to the presence of the deities and multitudes of gatherings and then opening the *Kanikkiduka* function, is indeed a unique function here found in no other temples than at Vaikom. Even now this custom is followed at Vaikom during the night on *Ashtami* day. After performing the *Kanikkiduka* ceremony, when the Kaimal returns the Namboothiris throw at him areca-nut husks. This is supposed to cast away the sin of the Kaimal in having travelled in the palanquin.

The day when *Kootipooja* is performed at Vaikom during the *Utsavam* is quite an important one. The day following the conclusion of the *Utsavam* in the Udayanapuram temple has the *Arat* at the Vaikom temple. The *Arat* is performed at the *Arat* tank located at a distance of one mile east from the temple. The *Arat* celebration over, both the deities are taken to Vaikom temple and they are worshipped together. This is what is known as *Kootipooja*. This *Pooja* is performed on the fifth day after *Kodiyettu* the hoisting of the temple flag. On the next day after *Ashtami*, *Arat* is performed

to the deity in this temple. This is performed from the *Arat* tank to the east of Udayanapuram.

The poet-laureate Meppathur Narayana Bhattathiri has written a book '*Ashtami* (Chambu) Prabandhom' in Sanskrit in the latter half of the 8th century. The important facts about the *Ashtami* celebration at Vaikom have been fully described in that book. Indeed, there are minor differences in the rituals and programmes followed then and now. But they are not material.

The *Ashtami* in the dark lunar fortnight in *Kumbhom* is also quite important in the Vaikom temple. On that day too, after midday, the deity of the Udayanapuram temple will be brought in procession to the Vaikom temple. Afterwards, the two deities will be taken in procession up to Vazhamana. On this occasion the devotees line up on either side of the route through which the procession moves on and make the *para* offerings. Vazhamana is a place laying at a distance of three miles east of the Vaikom temple. This procession will return from there at about 8 o'clock in the evening and would be back in the temple by about midnight. The return procession will be on a grand scale.

At the conclusion of this ceremony, the deity of the Udayanapuram temple (son, Subramonia) bids farewell to his father (Paramasiva) and departs. The scene of the elephant bidding farewell with its trunk is quite interesting.

For a long time there had not been any celebration during the *Ashtami* in *Kumbhom* in the Vaikom temple. It was in 1033 M. E. that the celebration of this *Utsavam* was revived. It was also in the same year that the Maharaja Sri Moolam Thirunal was born. The *Vadakkumkoor* Raja insisted that the *Uralers* should bring the deity in procession to their court and receive the *para* offering. The *Uralers* refused to do so and conducted the procession as usual. The Raja who was greatly angry at this insolence of the *Uralers* obstructed the procession and slew the men

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

on the elephant's back and the bearers holding the light and silken umbrellas and cut the trunk of the elephant carrying the deities to pieces. Thereafter for a very long time, the *Ashtami Utsavam* was not conducted in this temple. This attack on the *Uralers* took place at a time when the Vadakkumkoor Rajas were in power. Till quite recently, the *Uralers* used to refuse the *para* offerings from the gates of the Vadakkumkoor Raja's place. Therefore the *para* offering used to be made at the doorsteps of the neighbouring houses. Now the position has changed. It was only very recently that the Vadakkumkoor Rajas had expiated the sin of torturing the elephant and obstructing the procession. Images in gold of the crippled elephant, the beheaded *Maran* and of the musical instruments and the drum were offered by them to the temple to expiate their sin. Perhaps these golden images can still be seen in the temple. Ever since the celebration of *Ashtami* was revived in the temple it is being celebrated every year without break.

There was a huge banyan tree standing on the south-eastern side of this temple.

Only very recently it fell down. The legend goes that beneath this banyan tree Vyagrapatha Rishi performed his penance (*tapas*). The devotees coming to this temple also paid their respects to the foot of the banyan tree. It is because of this association of Vyagrapatha Rishi with this temple that the temple is called as *Vyagralayam*. The numerous buildings in this temple like *Uttupura* etc. and the golden flagstaff were all erected during the time of Peshkar Sankunni Menon. For a long time he had been the Peshkar of Kottayam and it was during that period that the temple was improved.

The manuscripts containing detailed information about the festivals celebrated in this temple, the customs, rights and privileges and such other information were in the custody of the *Uralers* till recently. Now most of these records are lost. The value of any historical account mainly depends upon the authenticity of the information gathered. If the relevant records are lost there is no history at all. This has happened in respect of the Vaikom temple also.

UTSAVAM IN THE UDAYANAPURAM TEMPLE

District
Taluk
Town

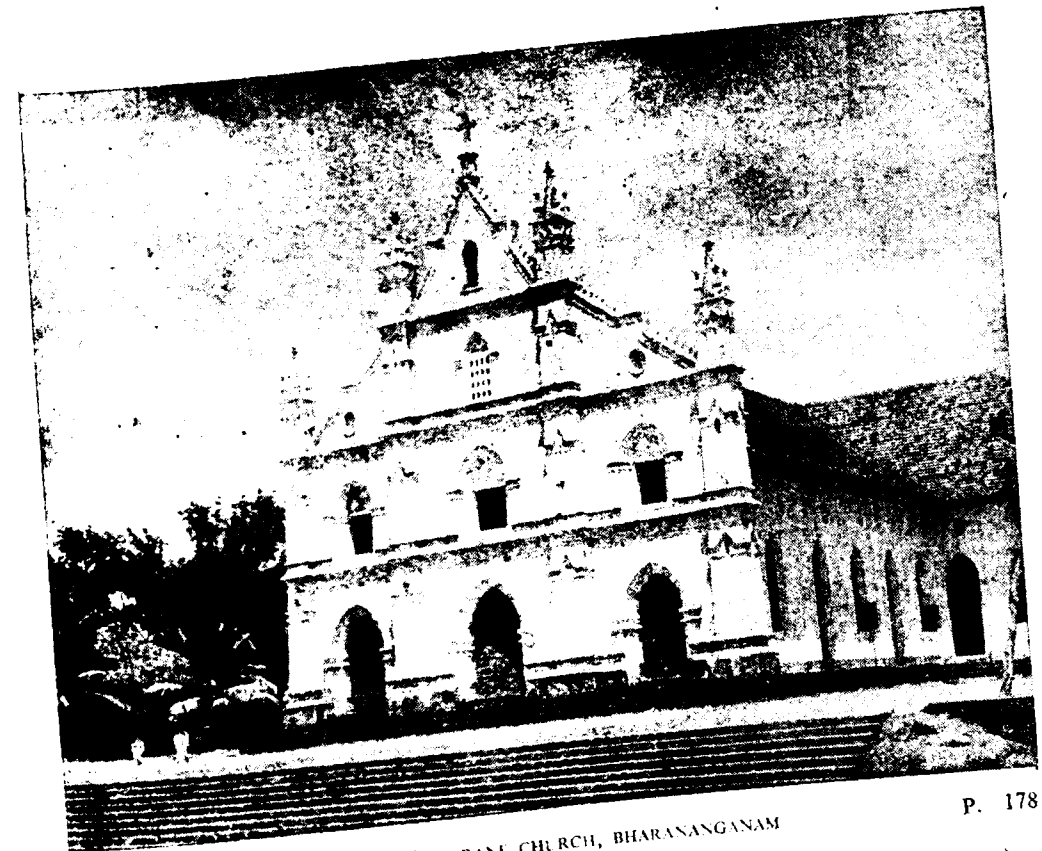
Kottayam
Vaikom
Vaikom

At a distance of two miles to the north of Vaikom, by the side of the Vaikom—Alwaye bus route, is situated the temple at Udayanapuram. The view of this famous temple which is dedicated to Karthikeya with its thick compound walls rising atop makes one to mistake it for the great temple at Vaikom. So great is the resemblance between these two temples.

As in the Vaikom temple, here also attached to the temple there are the *Nalam-*

balam, *Balikalpura*, *Anakkottil* and a big kitchen for cooking food for the feasts in the temple. Such is the close similarity of the rituals and ceremonies performed in the temples at Vaikom and Udayanapuram that it seems as though it is not justified to consider them as two separate temples.

Although there are many instances in Kerala where Siva and Subramonia are consecrated in closely located temples, it is doubtful whether there is any other temple.



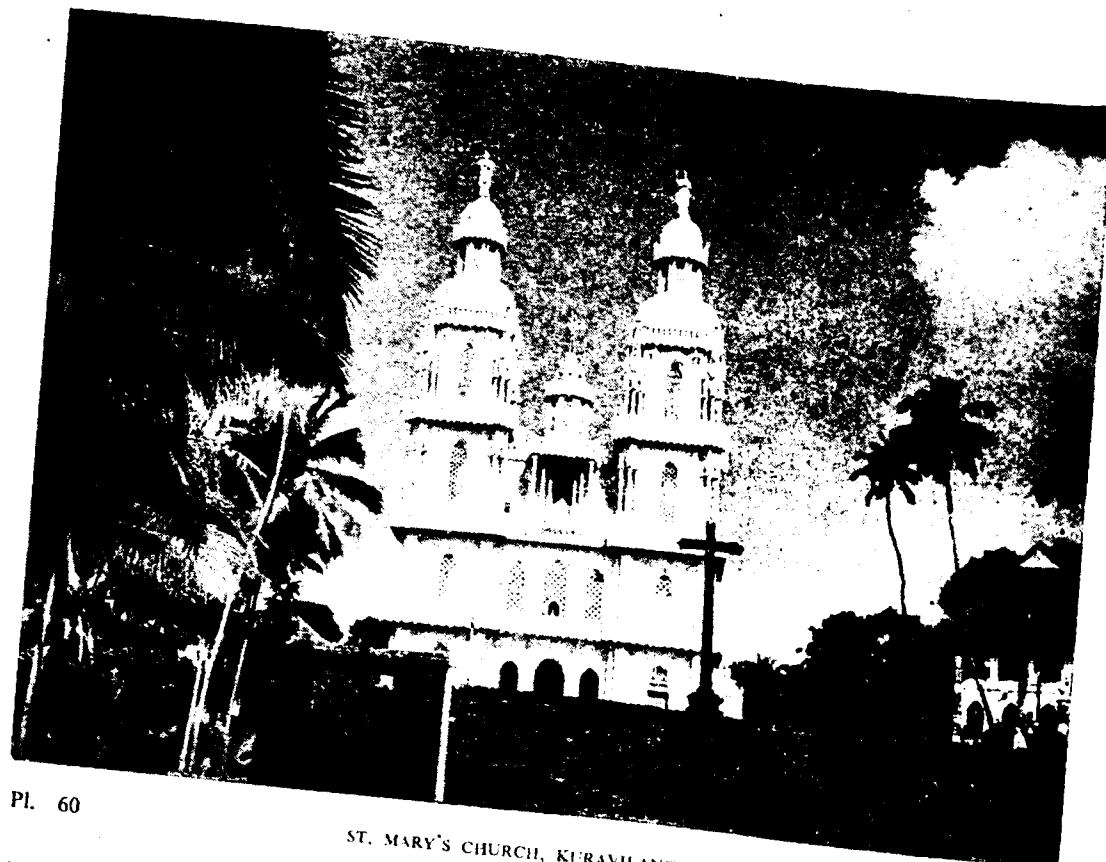
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ST. MARY'S FORANE CHURCH, BHARANANGANAM



Pl. 59

TOMB OF SR. ALPHONSA — ST. MARY'S FORANE CHURCH



Pl. 60

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KURAVILANGAD

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Pl. 61

KAVADI ABHISHEKOM IN UDAYANAPURAM TEMPLE

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UTSAVAM IN THE UDAYANAPURAM TEMPLE

either in Kerala or even in the whole of India, in which religious services and ceremonies based on the father and son relationship are so much observed as in the Udayanapuram temple.

Legend has it that this temple was originally intended for goddess Bhagavathy and the temple at Kumaranalloor for Subramonia, but it so happened that the presence of the deities got interchanged somehow or other causing the consecration of Devi at Kumaranalloor and Subramonia at Udayanapuram. As a result of this interchange of the deities, these temples also got different names as well. This is demonstrably clear from the fact that in this temple which is dedicated to Sree Subramonia, *Bhagavathy Seva Vazhipad* is offered to Devi. Whether the story of the replacement of the deities is true or not, it is a fact that *Bhagavathy Seva Vazhipad* offered in this temple is regarded as very important by the devotees.

The place names Udayanapuram and Kumaranalloor, according to the antiquarians, are associated with the deities installed in the temples there. It is claimed that when the building of the temple at Udayanapuram commenced it was called Udayanakeepuram, the chosen abode of goddess Bhagavathy, but since the proposed deity of the temple was changed, it became Udayanapuram.

The case of Kumaranalloor is also not different from this. It is contended that when goddess Bhagavathy intruded into the temple at Kumaranalloor, originally intended for Sree Subramonia, that place was named as '*Kumaran-alla-ooru*' meaning that it was not for *Kumara* (Subramonia). Anyway it is accepted consensually that the construction of these two temples had begun at simultaneously. This fact may perhaps stand to prove the legends referred to.

It is not understood whether any stone inscriptions, copper plates or any such records throwing some light on the origin of this temple which is as old as that of the

temple at Vaikom and as sacred as the Pazhani temple, have been discovered so far. However, the devotees are of the view that their worship at Vaikom temple becomes complete only when they offer worship in the Udayanapuram temple too.

Every year a festival is conducted in this temple for ten days. The hoisting of the temple flag for the festival is timed in such a way that the ninth day's celebration falls on *Karthika* day in *Vrischigom* (November-December). On the tenth day of this festival, the deity of the Udayanapuram temple will be placed on the divine pedestal by the side of the deity of Vaikom and *pooja* will be performed to both of them together. This is known as *Kootipooja*. Likewise on the *Arat* day at the Vaikom temple, the deity of that temple will be placed by the side of the deity of Udayanapuram and *Kootipooja* will be performed. The two *Kootipoojas*, the ceremony of bidding farewell and then the departure performed on the festival days as well as on *Ashtami* day in *Vrischigom* symbolising the filial affection of the father and the son, are splendid sights capable of moving the minds of the devotees. Since these ritualistic performances are not observed in any other temples, it can be presumed that no other temple is in existence in Kerala where Siva and Subramonia have been consecrated as father and son.

The usual *Karthika* day and the *Sashti* falling in the bright lunar fortnight are important days in this temple. On the *Sashti* day a good number of devotees observe fast, conduct worship, offer *Abhishekom* and *Nivedyam Vazhipadu* and perform *Kavadi Abhishekom* for various favours. Every year on the *Pooyam* day in *Makaran* a large number of *Kavadis* (A '*Kavadi*' is a decorated arch-shaped frame containing offerings to God Subramonia which the devotees carry on their shoulders) are brought here in a ceremonious manner. On this day the assemblage thronging to the temple will come to such a countless number that even moving space could

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

hardly be found around the temple.

Observing fast at least for seven days, devotees ceremoniously carry the *Kavadis* carrying vessels filled with special offerings in procession to the Vaikom temple to the accompaniment of music and drums. The offerings consist of sacrificial substances such as milk, rose water, honey, oil, ghee, tender cocoanut, *Kalabhom* (mixture of perfumes like sandal, musk etc.) and *Panchamrutham* (milk, curd, butter, honey and water as bath for idols). After offering worship in the Vaikom temple the devotees move to Udayanapuram temple. Here the offerings secured in the *Kavadis* are taken out and offered to the deity by anointing the idol with the same and return after receiving the leftover of the sacrificial substance. This is how the *Kavadi Abhishekom Vazhipadu* is offered by the devotees. This offering is made, besides on the *Thaipooyam* day, on other days also. This is offered by the devotees either to get cured of their ailments or to get protection from any impending catastrophe.

Another important offering to this temple is *Muzhukappu Vazhipadu*. Anointing the

deity with the mixture of sandal and other perfumes from top to bottom is the *Muzhukappu*. This is also offered for the fulfilment of the desires of the devotees.

All the important rituals and ceremonies conducted in connection with the *Ashtami* day celebration at the Vaikom temple during *Vrischigom* and *Kumbhom* have, as their objective, the celebration in this temple too. That is why this temple is held as important as that of the temple at Vaikom.

The *Mandapam*, *Balikalpura* and the *Sreekovil* of this temple are adorned with beautiful carvings and drawings par excellence and are superior to those found in other temples in northern Travancore. These carvings and paintings speak of the antiquity of this temple. The carvings on the *Mandapam* will particularly attract the attention of the patrons and connoisseurs of arts. The fact that the entire story of Ramayana has been so graphically delineated on the four beams of the roof of the *Mandapam* is itself sufficient to prove this statement. These drawings and carvings are preserved with the care that they rightly deserve.

Based mainly on an article by Shri Vaikom Devaraj in the Malayala Manorama Weekly dated 11th March 1961.

FEAST IN THE ST. THOMAS' CATHOLIC CHURCH, CHEMPU

(REV. FR. JOSEPH, THECKPERA)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Vaikom
Chempu

Chempu St. Thomas' Church was constructed in 1307, as seen from the church records. The legend goes that St. Thomas on his way to the South, halted at Chempu and founded the church, and so it is as old as the Catholic church in India. The feast is to honour St. Thomas, its patron and founder; and it falls on 3rd July. When it

was started is not known. People of all religions have great faith and fear, veneration and love for St. Thomas, whom they all address as *Muthappan*; and people of all creeds partake in the feast. There is a *Pachor sadya* during the feast for all people, for which Christians as well as non-Christians contribute rice and cocoanuts; they all



ANOTHER VIEW OF KAVADI ABHISHEKOM

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POORA MAHOTSAVAM IN THE UDAYAPARAMBATH BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE

take it home to eat and keep it as a souvenir, as a remedy for their malady. Hindus take active part in the contribution and *sadya*; and thus manifest that they have a great

love for their *Muthappan*. Usually 4 to 5 thousand people flock on the day of feast disregarding the usual rain to honour and pay homage to their grandpa.

POORA MAHOTSAVAM IN THE UDAYAPARAMBATHU BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE
(SHRI M. V. V. NAIR)

District	Kottayam
Taluk	Vaikom
Village	Velloor

The Udayaparambathu Bhagavathi temple, dedicated to Bhadrakali, is situated in the Velloor village of the Vaikom taluk, at a distance of two miles from the Piravom railway station. The annual festival of this temple, the *Poora Mahotsavam*, is celebrated for two days on *Makam* and *Pooram* asterisms in *Kumbhom*, attended by more than thousand people on both days. *Paya-sam*, *Guruthi* and *Enna Vilakku* are the special *Vazhipadus* offered in this temple.

In the early days, this temple was situated at Karipadam in Vadakara and every year *Thalapoli*, *Vilakku* and *Mudiyettu* were conducted here without break. About 120 years ago, when *Mudiyettu* was being conducted in the temple, there arose a tussle between Bhadrakali and Darikan. Bhadrakali who was greatly enraged chased Darikan, but the latter, finding his life in danger, jumped into a well outside the temple. Bhadrakali also jumped into the well after Darikan and cut off his head. Since then, the *Mudiyettu* has not been performed in this temple and the

well outside the temple was completely filled up. A little later, the temple happened to catch fire mysteriously. About sixty years ago, a new temple was constructed on a spot lying at a distance of two miles from the old temple and the deity was consecrated therein by Shri Vasudevan Namboothiri of the Manayathathu *Illom*. This new temple is called Udayaparambathu Bhagavathi temple.

For a long time, *Thalapoli*, *Padayani*, *Vela* and *Thookkam* were all used to be conducted uninterruptedly every year in this new temple, but after some time ceased to be celebrated due to factions among the local people. In the year 1123 M. E. these celebrations were revived under the auspices of the Vadakara N. S. S. Karayogam, and *Padayani*, *Thalapoli*, *Vilakku*, *Harikatha*, *Thullal*, religious discourses etc. are being conducted on the *Makam* and *Pooram* days in *Kumbhom* (February-March) with greater pomp and gaiety even now.

UTSAVAM IN THE BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE, KEEZHOOOR (SREEKARYAM)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Vaikom
Mulakulam

The Keezhooor Bhagavathi temple, dedicated to Bhagavathy, is situated in the Mulakulam village of the Vaikom taluk, about fifteen miles to the north of the Vaikom Road railway station on the Trivandrum-Ernakulam railway route.

Of all the temples, it was the *Thrikovil* temple that was built at the first instance. It then belonged to a Malayala Brahman. In those days, the site of that temple and its adjoining places were a dense forest and there were only a few Nair families and two or three Brahman houses in that locality. The Nairs of those days were very much fond of hunting. One day the Nair chief of the Kottarath family, accompanied by his friends, set out for a hunting expedition. After having rambled over the forest for some time, they reached a place called Kulasekarapuram lying about three or four miles away from their home and stayed there for a while to take rest. The Nair chief went to the nearby tank for a dip in the water and when he got down to the tank, a hard substance stumbled against his feet. When he redeemed it from the water, it was found to be an idol which he took home and kept safely in one of the apartments of his house. After some time, it was found that this idol was changing its position on Tuesday and Friday every week. An astrologer was therefore called in who informed the Nair chief that the idol was of Bhadrakali. Accordingly a *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum) was constructed near the *Thrikovil* temple and the idol was installed therein with the consent and assistance of the Vadakkumkoor Raja, for he was then the ruler of the country. Afterwards a temple was constructed there by the Raja

himself and the above Nair chief of the Kottarath family was appointed as the trustee of the temple to look after its maintenance.

The important festivals of this temple are *Pana* in the month of *Medom*, the *Utsavam* following *Pana* and *Mandalampattu* in *Vrischigom*.

Pana

Of all the festivals mentioned above *Pana*, which is celebrated as a *Vazhipadu* (offering) for four days commencing on the 10th of *Medom* (April-May), is, by far, the most important festival of this temple. As the important *Pana* day is considered to be an auspicious day for Devi, it is believed that all the other ordinary *Vazhipadus* (offerings) made on this day are also equally important as *Pana*. The *Panathullal* (a religious dance) is performed by the devotees in order to get their wishes fulfilled. *Panathullal* is performed to symbolise that Bhadrakali is going to kill Darikan. Those who perform this religious dance are required to observe fast during the days of *Pana*. The ceremonies of the first day of the *Pana* i. e. the 10th of *Medom*, are known as *Ari Erichil*. The *Pana* begins from a particular place on the northern side of the temple assigned for the purpose. *Poojas* and other religious rites are performed by an Elayath of the Brahman community. On the first day, he installs the idol of Bhagavathi in the specially constructed *Sreekovil* in the *Panapura*, and performs *pooja* and other rituals. The devotees who perform this religious dance have to don special costumes. They put on white clothes and wear white turbans and holding up a mace, perform this dance (*Panathullal*). It is said that in olden days,

KURUSUMALAKAYATTOM IN THE ST. THOMAS' CHURCH, ARNOOTTIMANGALAM, KADUTHURUTHY

they used to adorn themselves with jewels while performing this dance. In this way, they conduct *Pana* for three days and on the fourth day end this festival with a ceremony known as *Kuruthi*.

The third day of the *Pana* celebrations which is known as big *Pana* is quite an important day for the devotees. The offerings made on this day such as *Ottathookam*, *Garudanthookam*, *Kumbakudam* etc. are believed to have more importance and effect. It may be mentioned particularly here that only Nairs are associated with this *Panathullal*.

The person who is performing the *Thookam*, wears a coarse cloth and plumes of peacocks round his waist and a turban over his head and paints his face with arsenic powder and then ascends a wheeled dais called *Chattu*. This *Chattu* is then taken to the presence of Devi by other devotees and the *Thookakaran* who is performing the *Thookam*, after adoring Devi, performs some acrobatic feats. On conclusion of this, he is taken back to his former place. *Thookam* also begins from the same place from where the *Panathullal* dance starts. The *Thookam* is performed in order to quench the thirst of Devi for blood. In another kind of

Thookam persons attired in various costumes like the *Garuda* character in *Kathakali*, stand on the raised platform and perform certain acrobatic feats to the accompaniment of music and drums. This platform is carried by many people to the temple, where, the persons standing on the platform, again display the feats. In both these ways, the *Thookam Vazhipadu* is performed by the devotees.

Kumbakudam

This is an important *Vazhipadu* offered on the *Pana* day. *Kudams* (water pots) filled with turmeric powder and flowers, are carried by devotees on their heads and brought in a procession to the temple with great rejoicings. This is what is known as *Kumbakudam*.

Utsavam

The *Utsavam* commences on the 15th of *Medom* (April-May) with the hoisting of the temple flag and lasts for six days. *Kathakali*, *Harikatha*, *Nagaswaram* and musical concerts etc. are the highlights of this festival.

Mandalampattu

This commences on the 1st of *Vrischigom* (November-December) and lasts for 41 days.

KURUSUMALAKAYATTOM IN THE ST. THOMAS' CHURCH, ARNOOTTIMANGALAM, KADUTHURUTHY

(REV. FR. GEORGE NILAPPANA)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Vaikom
Kaduthuruthy

The *Kurusumalakayattom* of the St. Thomas' Church, Arnoottimangalam, situated in the Kaduthuruthy village of the Vaikom taluk, about two miles away from the Vaikom Road railway station, is celebrated for two days from the sixth Friday of the Lent. On the first day of the cele-

brations, towards the evening there is the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for one hour. From midnight till evening on the following day, people come in groups, even from distant places and make the way of the cross. Some drag themselves on their knees and palms.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

The way of the cross starts from the courtyard of the church and ends in the chapel situated on the top of a nearby hill. Many a people bring cattle with them and let them ascend the hill. This pious action which is of very ancient origin is known in almost all parts of Kerala. It is believed

that so many favours are obtained through this. Nearly four thousand people join in this *Kurusumalakayattom* celebrations. Stationery goods and religious articles are the chief commodities sold out in the fair held in connection with this festival.

CHETHANACHARA (CIRCUMCISION) PERUNAL IN THE VADAYAR CHURCH

(REV. W. KURUVILA PANJIKARAN)

District	Kottayam
Taluk	Vaikom
Village	Vadayar

The Vadayar Church is situated within a short distance of the Vaikom railway station. The following is the legend regarding the origin of this church. After a long and prosperous reign of Kerala, Cheraman Perumal, towards the evening of his life, divided and distributed his Kingdom amongst his sons and kinsmen and thus came into existence eighteen new principalities in Kerala, namely, Venadu, Attiungal, Desinganadu, Nedumangadu, Elayedathu Swaroopam, Karunagappally, Kayamkulam, Thrikkunnapuzha, Ambalapuzha, Pandalam, Thekkumkcor, Vadakkumkoor, Alangad, Poonjar, Edapalli, Paravoor, Cochin and Malabar. One of them, the Vadakkumkoor, having won suzerainty over Vaikom, Ettumanoor, Meenachil, Muvattupuzha, Thodupuzha and Kunnathunad, set up the court at *Kottara parambu* on the bank of a tributary of the Muvattupuzha river and began to rule the country. For assistance in anointing with oil in the royal bath, the Rajas brought from outside certain Christian families as *Palathunkal*, *Kinattukara* etc. and settled them at a place now called *Pallisrambil* where a church was also erected for their use. In course of time, some misfortunes befell the royal family and it was revealed by astrologers that the

same was due to the wrath of the family deity Badrakali and that as an act of atonement, a temple should be constructed there dedicating it to Devi. It was also revealed that that temple, if located by the side of the church, would adversely affect the royal family. Accordingly, the Raja consulted the local Christians regarding the construction of the temple. They informed him that whatever the Raja deemed fit in this matter was acceptable to them. And again when the Raja pressed for their views as to where they wished to have their church, the Christians still gave him the same answer as before. The Raja thereupon informed them that he would construct the church for them at a spot where the cross, which he would put in the nearby river touched the shore after it had flowed through the river.

Accompanied by the members of the royal household and his courtiers, the Raja visited the church and after paying glowing tributes to the loyalty and patriotism of the Christians, floated the cross in the turbulent waters of the river running by the side of the church and directed his minister to locate the spot at which it would get ashore. The cross that was thus floated into the river got to the shore at the place

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH OF VECHOOOR

where the present church is located today. The Raja, thereupon, released that land, free of tax, to the Christians for building their church and also gave necessary help to enable them to set up the church.

The *Chethanachara* (circumcision) festival is celebrated here for five days from 28th of December to the first of January every year. About three thousand people participate in

this festival, the highlight of which is the solemn procession in which the images of Christ and other saints are carried round the church with great reverence. Earthen-ware, vegetables, wooden furniture, and screw-pine mats are the chief commodities marketed in the fair held in connection with this festival.

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH OF VECHOOOR

District	Kottayam
Taluk	Vaikom
Village	Vechoor

Malabar has a unique place in the devotion to the Blessed Virgin from very ancient times and hence there are several churches in that area dedicated to the Holy Mother of God. Of these, some are very ancient and trace their origin even to the very first century of the Christian Era. The church at Vechoor is one of these famous Marian shrines, and has its own story of origin and prosperous existence till this day.

This church is situated in the Vechoor village of the Vaikom taluk in the Kerala State. The village is also known as Kudavechoor. In the earlier years of its existence an extensive area was within the parochial limits of this church and it ministered to the spiritual needs of a vast Christian population. Situated on the eastern shore of the Vembanad lake and facing the blue waters of that lake in the west, the beautiful church is a sight which attracts all who travel over the lake to the north and south.

The church of Vechoor is an offshoot of the ancient church at Pallippuram, which came into existence in the first century itself as a part of the Kokkamangalam church which is one of the famous seven churches founded in Kerala by the Apostle St. Thomas

himself. The Pallippuram church has the distinction of being the repository of the famous cross set up by St. Thomas at Kokkamangalam. This cross, as the story goes, was pulled out and thrown into the Vembanad lake by the local Hindus. But the cross miraculously floated in the water and reached a small islet in the lake to the east of Pallippuram. There, it was found by some people who reported the matter to the priest of the Pallippuram church and the Christians of the place took up the cross and carried it to their church where it remains even today.

Of the Christians under the jurisdiction of the Pallippuram church, those in the southern regions of the eastern shore of the Vembanad lake had for long been feeling the need of a church of their own to minister to their spiritual needs, especially as journey to the far away parish of Pallippuram was often found inconvenient in those days when no easy means of communication were available. But it took long before their dream could be realised. The Hindus of the place objected to the establishment of a Christian place of worship basing their objections, on the nearness of Hindu temples and so on.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

But by the special blessing of the Virgin Mother the objections of the opponents were overcome and permission was obtained in A. D. 1463 for founding the church. The Christians of the place fully realising the miraculous hand of the Blessed Virgin in this matter, dedicated their new church to her. It is recorded in the annals of the church that the Archdeacon who was the Administrative head of the Archdiocese of Angamali which had a very prominent place in the history of the St. Thomas Christians gave much help in the establishment of the Vechoor church. But this help must have been most probably for the development of the church as it is accepted that the Archdeacon lived at the end of the 15th century A. D.

The present church at Vechoor is the fourth or the fifth structure built after the original one. It is recorded that Very Rev. Fr. Cyriac Elias Chavara, known as the "Valia Prior" laid the foundation-stone of the present church in 1040 of the Malabar Era, and that his teacher and superior, Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Palakkal of happy memory officiated at the blessing of the church. The members of the Carmelite Monastery at Mannanam have all along evinced a special interest in the progress of the Vechoor church and have been of great service to it. The present parochial house, a huge building of two storeys was constructed only in 1062 M. E.

Under the efficient supervision of several very able priests who worked as vicars there, the church made rapid spiritual and economic progress. The period of the church's greatest progress was the eight years when the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Jacob Kallarackal, who subsequently became Administrator Apostolic of the diocese of Changanacherry, was vicar at Vechoor.

The chief feast at Vechoor is on 8th September—the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. In former years, before the pomp and expenditure were controlled and cut down, the celebrations were on a vast scale

for 8 days. In spite of the general directions limiting church festivals to four days, the functions in connection with the feast at Vechoor are, as a special case, allowed to continue even now for 8 days as in olden days, though not with the same pomp and splendour. The observance of the eight days' fast preparatory to the feast of September 8th, prevailed in olden days not only among Christians but also among non-Christians. The devotees then used to spend those eight days at the Vechoor church at the feet of Our Lady. But now devotees from distant places usually observe the fast at home and come to Vechoor only for its conclusion on the feast day.

Many stories are told about the miracles worked by the Blessed Mother at Vechoor. One such story is about the picture of the "Madonna and Child" on the main altar of the church. It is a beautiful painting on a wooden plate and is believed to be a true copy of the picture, painted by St. Luke. This miraculous picture is the cause of the fame and glory of the Vechoor church. The story goes that the Portuguese authorities ordered a famous painter to make seven copies of St. Luke's painting to be taken to Kerala. But when the time for the sailing of the vessel to Malabar came, only six of them had been completed, with the outlines of the seventh alone being done. But the authorities placed the unfinished picture also along with the others and set sail for Malabar.

When the ship reached its destination and the pictures were taken out, it was found that the unfinished painting had become miraculously completed in bright and beautiful colours and was the most artistic of the whole lot.

Another story about the miraculous powers of the Madonna of Vechoor may also be mentioned here. About a century and a half ago, during the invasion of Malabar by the fanatic Tipu Sultan of Mysore, it was feared by the pious Christians of Vechoor that the Muslim invader would destroy the precious picture of the Madonna which the

FEAST OF ST. GREGORY IN THE ST. GREGORY THOUMATHURGUS PARISH CHURCH, THOTTAKAM

valued so highly. So they removed their precious and holy treasure to Edacochin where the Portuguese were powerful. Later on, when the threat from Tipu had passed, the people of Vechoor demanded the return of the picture. But its custodians at Edacochin, reluctant to part with it, refused the demand, and put forward various objections. At last, the people of Vechoor, growing impatient went to Edacochin in snake-boats (native playing boats) and getting hold of the picture set off for Vechoor. The people of Edacochin, on finding out what had happened, set out in pursuit. But they were unexpectedly faced by a severe storm in the

Vembanad lake, had to return disappointed. This sudden storm, quite unusual during that season was taken as a miraculous work of our Lady to signify her special favour to the Vechoor people. So both parties came to a compromise and became more pious devotees of our Lady.

These and such other stories go to prove that the Vechoor church has been, from very ancient days, a centre of attraction to the devotees of the Blessed Mother of God, and it is even now a place of pilgrimage for those who desire special blessings of the Madonna.

By Courtesy : New Leader dated 9-1-1955.

FEAST OF ST. GREGORY IN THE ST. GREGORY THOUMATHURGUS PARISH CHURCH, THOTTAKAM

(FR. JOSEPH THURUTHIKKATT)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Vaikom
Thalayazham

The first pioneer priests of the Vincentian congregation, Rev. Fathers George Kattarath, Manuel Parankulangara, Cosmos Kattezhath and Joseph Kariapuredath arrived at Thottakam just after the feast of St. Gregory Thaumathurgus. The first of these four priests, Rev. George Kattarath, was a great devotee of St. Gregory, whose feast, according to the ecclesiastical calendar, falls on the 17th November. It was on the 20th of November 1904, that the aforesaid priests accompanied by a big crowd of Christians and non-Christians brought, in solemn procession, the statue of St. Gregory the wonder-worker from Vaikom Church to Thottakam and enshrined the statue at Thottakam, on which day, the then Bishop of Ernakulam diocese—now Archdiocese—Mar Aloysius Pazheparampil of revered memory, who also accompanied the proces-

sion, laid the foundation-stone of the church attached to the Vincentian House, Thottakam.

Even though the pioneer priests could not stay long at Thottakam, the shrine they planted has grown and a moderately big church has taken its place at present. It was completed in 1930 only, by the successors of the founders viz, Rev. Fathers Mathew Payyappallil, George Mannara, Antony Pauvathil, and George Vattamkandathil.

The feast of St. Gregory Thaumathurgus, since the erection of the new church, is uninterruptedly celebrated every year. The celebration takes place on the Sunday after the 17th of November. The feast begins on the previous Friday morning with the ceremonial hoisting of the flag and ends on Sunday following, with the solemn ritual

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

procession of the statue of the Saint. During these three days many believers, members of the confraternities and others, gather together, pray and give their offerings. On the last day, there will be marketing of the native products, such as earthenware, screw-pine leaf mats etc. Some petty stationery articles are also exposed for sale. Though there are so many minor feasts celebrated almost every month, they do not attract any buyers and sellers to the place.

The St Gregory's church is situated on the eastern bank of the Muvattupuzha river, facing the Kariyar to the west, very near the Vaikom-Vechoor road, where it crosses the river at Vallianapuzha, about a mile and a half from the centre of the Vaikom town. As the Vaikom-Kottayam trunk road, which passes through Vechoor, Kumarakam etc. is developing soon, there is the probability that Thottakam also may improve in its importance and status.

St. Gregory Thaumathurgus was a native of Neocaesarea in Asia Minor. He was born of pagan parents about the year 213 A. D. and died there between 270-75 A. D. His parents named him Theodore i. e. gift of God. In his teens, he, with his brother

Athenodorus, went to Beirut in pursuit of the study of Roman Law. But at that time, as his brother-in-law was appointed Roman governor in Palestine, the two brothers escorted their sister to Palestine, where Origen, the celebrated Christian teacher of the Hellenic School of Alexandria, was residing and taking classes for his pupils. Curiosity led them to attend his classes and the two young men charmed by his eloquence and personality remained with him for 7 or 8 years and learned philosophy and christian doctrines. When he returned to Pontus, his native place, he had still in mind the idea to study and practice law. But as he was already a Christian, he was elected Bishop of the place for a small community of 17 Christian souls. God favoured him with the gift of miracles, from which he was called by the people "Thaumathurgus" i. e. the wonder-worker. His sanctity, learning and miracles so converted the whole town of Neocaesarea, that at the time of his death there remained only 17 pagans to be converted to Christianity—the same number of Christians whom he took charge of at his consecration.

Condensed from Catholic Encyclopaedia Vol. VII, pages 15-16.

UTSAVAM IN THE SUBRAMONIA TEMPLE, THOTTAKAM

(SHRI N. K. THIRUMULPAD)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Vaikom
Thalayazham

The Subramonia temple, Thottakam, is situated at a distance of nine miles from the Vaikom railway station in the Thalayazham village of the Vaikom taluk. About the origin of this temple, the tradition goes as follows.

When once Vyagrapada Maharshi (tiger-

footed saint) who was performing *tapas* (penance) at the Vaikom temple, woke up from his meditations he happened to see a handsome boy standing before him. Attracted by the graceful look of this boy, the sage was moved with an irresistible feeling to embrace him warmly. With out-

ARAT UTSAVAM IN THE THRIKKODAM SIVA TEMPLE

stretched hands, he advanced towards the boy to clasp him in his hands; but the boy, without giving an opportunity for the sage to embrace him, at the same time tantalising him, walked slowly away from the sage. Greatly excited, the sage also followed the boy at his back and at last they reached the forest at Thottakam when the boy mysteriously vanished from the scene. Deeply disappointed at his inability to embrace the boy, the sage began to roam about here and there in the forest with a heavy heart. But as luck would have it, Lord Shanmukha granted him *darshan* on the next day following the above incident and when the sage adored him assumed the guise of the boy

and vanished away blessing the sage. Greatly overcome with joy and delight over his *darshan* of Lord Subramonia, the sage tried to construct a temple for him on that spot; but he felt sorry whether he had been privileged to build a temple on the land redeemed by Parasurama. Thereupon Parasurama himself made his appearance there and performed the consecration ceremony.

The annual *Utsavam* of this temple is celebrated for eight days from *Chathayam* to *Rohini* day in *Dhanu* (December-January). Large number of people throng to the temple during these festive days to make the *Utsavam* as grand as possible.

ARAT UTSAVAM IN THE THRIKKODAM SIVA TEMPLE

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Vaikom
Thalayazham

All the temples, big and small, located in the Vaikom taluk are collectively called 'Vaikom Group of temples'. The Thrippokudam Siva temple dedicated to Siva and situated at a distance of four miles from Vaikom near the new bridge at Thalayazham ranks with others as a major temple of this group of temples. It is now under the control of the Travancore Devaswom Board.

In the olden days the Vechoor-Thalayazham villages and the adjoining areas were mostly uninhabitable lands covered with shrubs and thick undergrowths. Journey through this bushy tract of land was well nigh impossible in those days. A handful of barons and a band of their Pulaya serfs alone lived in the place. While the former had their houses amidst the protected slopes of the hills, the latter had their dwellings in small islet-like pieces of reclaimed lands located in the centre of vast expanse of the paddy fields, known in Malayalam parlance as *thuruthu*. In those

days when there were no vehicles or other convenient means of transport as at present, journey had to be performed only on foot. Once, the wise and pious Vilvamangalam Swamy, in the course of his pilgrimage to all the temples in Kerala, happened to pass through the Thalayazham village.

While the Swamy and his disciples were crossing a paddy field at Thalayazham, he sighted smoke rising from one of the far off islets. When the Swamy neared that site, the hue of smoke began to change gradually until at last it shrunk itself to the shape of a *ku.lam* (water-pot) and simultaneously an astounding radiance was visible to him. The wise Swamy who understood by his divine powers the reasons for the shrinking of smoke into the shape of a *kudam* and who also heard at the moment some heavenly words, offered his humble prostrations before that radiant light. Surprisingly enough, when he got up and opened his eyes there was the *Ardhanareeswara* image

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

of Lord Siva lay before him. His joy knew no bounds that immediately he offered *pooja* to that image. Devout people of the locality, on hearing this strange occurrence, met together, raised funds and constructed a temple on that spot. This is supposed to be the origin of the Thrippokudam temple. In commemoration of Vilvamangalam Swamy's *darshan* of the Lord, the people called the temple as *Thrippukakudam*. In due course, this name got elided as *Thrippokudam*.

The *thuruthu* where Vilvamangalam Swamy had the vision of the Lord is known as *kandamthuruthu*. It is claimed that neither any accidents nor any violent deaths have occurred in this islet till date. By this reason, this islet is also held in high esteem as the temple and its premises. Soon after Swamy had the vision of the Lord, he had performed a special *pooja*, namely the *Pandeeradi pooja* to invoke his blessings. Even today this *pooja* is performed in this temple on behalf of the Swamy. Rice brought from *kandamthuruthu* alone is used for this special *pooja*. Necessary land has been given tax-free to four families for the supply of rice for the *pooja* in this temple.

Generally the *hirsuta* wood is not employed in this locality for construction of buildings. But it has to be specially noted here that this variety of wood alone has been employed in the construction of this temple. As in all the major temples, there are *Nalambalam*, *Balikalpura*, *Anappanthai* and *Uttupura* in this temple too. Presumably the sub-deities (*Upadevathakal*) of this temple would have been installed here simultaneously along with the consecration of the temple. There is evidence to show that the temple was administered under the advice of the Vadakkumkor Rajas due to factions among the *Uralers*.

A Strange incident which took place in this temple during the days of Vadakkumkor Rajas, is also worth mentioning in this context. One day the idol of Sastha of the temple was found toppled from its position.

According to the astrologer, another idol had sprung up beneath that Sastha deity and this was responsible for the uprooting of the Sastha image. He also revealed that this new idol must be venerated as Lord Sastha. Accordingly *pooja* is performed regularly to this deity. This is what is known as *Kumkuma Sasthamkovil*.

There is another self-existent idol in this temple. It is before the presence of this deity that usually culprits are asked to affirm the bonafide of their crimes. Closeby this idol, yet another one has also sprung up on own accord and it is believed that still some more may perhaps come up there. Since it is not known at which spot these idols will spring up, spitting inside the temple courtyard is strictly prohibited. Further, broomsticks were also not allowed to be used here for sweeping inside the temple campus in former days. The leaves and other rubbish were removed from the temple campus by picking them by hand.

The devotees of Siva once tried to adorn the *Sivalinga* with gold. When they put the gold ornament on this *Sivalinga* to test its suitability and fitness, strangely enough, it got struck up to it and could not be removed from the idol by any means. Even now that unfinished ornament, firmly secured on it, adorns that *Sivalinga*.

Another feature of this temple, worthy of note, is that the temple building and all the idols installed therein, stand a little inclined to the left. Some of the buildings like *Uttupura* lean to the left in such a manner that one would fear that those buildings might fall down at any moment. It is said that when once Chakyar was conducting *Koothu* in this temple. Paramasiva, moved by the Chakyar's narrative of Parvathi *Swayamvara*, anxiously peeped into the place to see whether his spouse was present there and from that time onwards, the temple building and all the idols therein leaned a little to the left from their original position.

The important offerings of this temple are *Thulabharam Thookal* and a sort of good

FEAST IN THE ST. GERVASIS AND PROTHASIS CHURCH, KOTHANALLOOR

variety plantain called *Poovan Pazham*.

There is also a story about this plantain. A person was carrying a few bunches of *Poovan* plantains in a native boat to a particular place. When the native boat reached by the side of Thrippokudam, it suddenly came to a halt and firmly got secured in the Vembanad lake. It moved from that spot only after the person offered some plantains for the Lord. Though this story may appear incredible, it is a fact that the people of

Thalayazham would taste the *Poovan* plantain only after they had offered it to the Lord. If any one acts contrary to this, he is likely to suffer from stomach ache. People suffering from this ailment can be seen though rarely in this place.

The *Arattu Utsavam* is the annual festival of this temple. It is celebrated on a grand scale for ten days in *Kumbhom* (February-March) every year, the *Arat* taking place on the *Thiruvathira* day of the month.

Free translation of an Article in Malayala Manorama weekly dated 10th February 1962 by Shri Vaikom Devaraj

FEAST IN THE SS. GERVASIS AND PROTHASIS CHURCH, KOTHANALLOOR

(FR. JOSEPH VALLIVATHUKAL)

District	Kottayam
Taluk	Vaikom
Village	Manjoor

The SS. Gervasis and Prothasis Church, Kothanalloor is situated in the Manjoor village of the Vaikom taluk, Kottayam district. This church was established in 1220 A. D. and is dedicated to SS. Gervasis and Prothasis. People of all castes and creeds have great faith in their patronage. Offerings are brought from distant places. The present church is a reconstructed one, but not on its old spot which is now in the hands of Hindus. Tradition says that the old church was demolished by the Mamalasseril Kaimal who was a petty chief of the place. That spot is still called *Pallikunnu*. The old cemetery then used is also in the possession of Hindus which is called as *savakotta*.

In course of time many misfortunes and calamities befell the Kaimal's family and they were forced to recompense the damages done to the Christians. Accordingly they surrendered a plot of land lying close to

their family house for the construction of a church. Thus the present church was caused to be established there. As a token of gratitude, the Kaimals are given an annual present from the church which is known as *Anche-kalum Koppum*. The new church was built by the untiring efforts of the late Rev. Fr. Kuriakose Mylaparambil of this parish. It is said that it took thirty years for the completion of the construction of the church which was done by the contribution of the people of different places. Fr. Kuriakose is supposed to be a saintly man. He is buried in this church itself and his tomb is visited by pious people, especially on the anniversary of his death.

The annual celebration of this church is in the feast of the Name of Jesus, commencing on the 1st January and lasting for three days. About 5,000 people participate in the celebrations.

UTSAVAM IN THE SIVA TEMPLE AT ETTUMANOOR

(SHRI MALLOOR RAMAKRISHNAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Ettumanoor

Ettumanoor is located seven miles north-east to the Kottayam municipal town. It is an ancient temple that has brought fame and glory to this place. This temple was famous even before the Puranic age. It is believed that the Pandavas, the sage Vyasa and Vilvamangalath Swamiyar had all conducted worship in this temple.

There are many legends regarding the origin of the name Ettumanoor. The original Sanskrit word Harinalaya, when got translated into Malayalam, became Manoor meaning the place (oor) of deer (maan). The place where there had been large number of *maan* (deer) came to be known as Ettumanoor. The *Maniman Theertham* described in the *Vamana Purana* and *Padma Purana* had been at this place. Thus it got the name *Manimanoor* which, in due course became *Manoor*. According to another tradition, the place where Kharan, Vyasan and Sivan got mental bliss, came to be known as Ettumanoor. Long ago Kharan conducted intense penance to propitiate Siva who appeared to him and enquired his wish. Kharan beseeched Siva for a boon that he should always be with him. This was granted and Siva began to stay with Kharan. Kharan was an expert at assuming various shapes and forms of man and beast. One day he wished to ramble like a deer. Siva, who followed the deer through hills and dales, got completely exhausted and finally unable to follow the deer, carried it in his hands. So the place where the deer was carried by Siva—in Malayalam parlance *Ettiya-maan-ooru* came to be known as Ettumanoor. The *Kathakali* performance of *Kharavadham* story is still prohibited in the temple at Ettumanoor. Years back, a self

existent *Siva Linga* was lying unknown and unnoticed by man at a place called Kattampakku. One day when a Pulaya woman was digging out the arrow-roots from the earth the pike she was using for digging the earth hit against a rock and as soon as it struck it, the rock began to bleed profusely. She feared very much at this terrible sight. The pike and the basket she was holding went off from her hands and fell down at a distant place. The basket dropped down at a place called Vadayare and the pike at Kovilpadam. On hearing this strange news, the king and the local chiefs came to this spot to see the *Siva Linga*. Siva who was terribly angry with the Pulaya woman cursed her that she would turn into a stone. So saying he left the place and came to Ettumanoor.

Once a Pandya king named Chanda Bhaskaran was possessed by an evil spirit. All the medicinal treatment and *manthras* were of no avail to him. At last he prayed the Deva of the Ettumanoor temple and recovered from his affliction most miraculously. It was he who constructed the Ettumanoor temple.

The Capital of Chanda Bhaskaran was at a place called *Valladinmillam*. The place where this temple is situated belonged in the olden days to the Ettonnesseri *Illom*. The Namboothiris of this *Illom* had donated extensive properties to this temple and helped the temple in various other ways as a result of which they got one eighth of the rights over this temple. It was only in the later days that their *Illom* got the name Ettonnesseri.

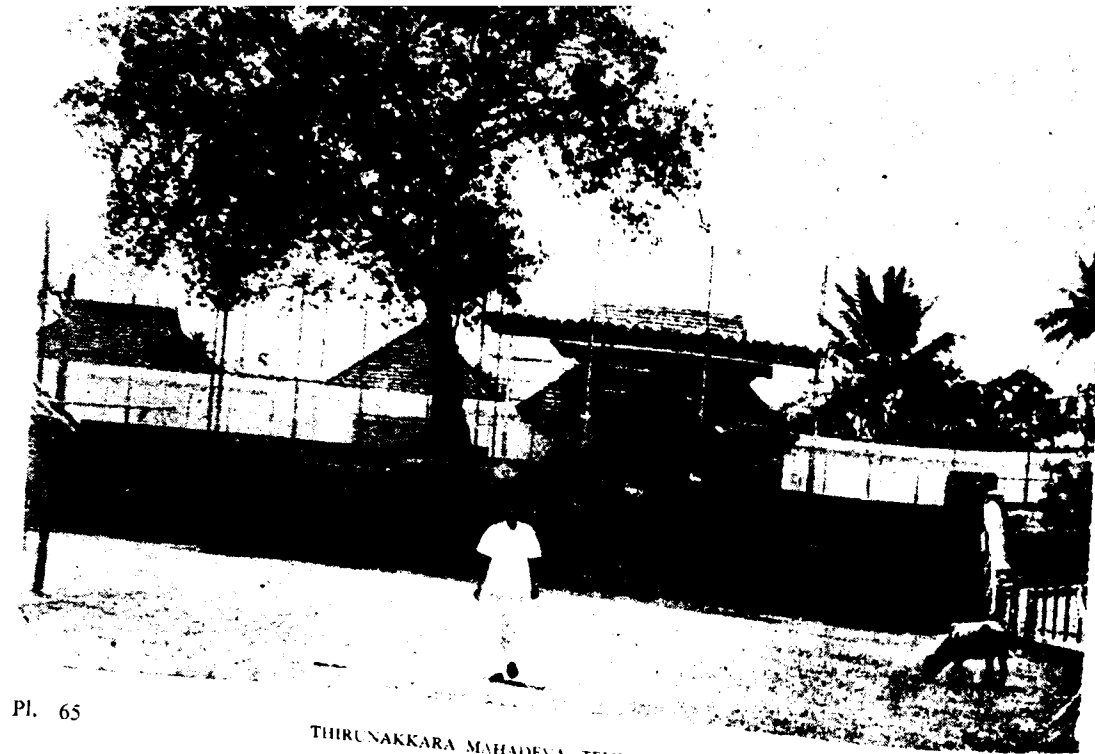
The inhabitants of Kattampakku who lost the presence of Siva got heart-broken.



SIVA TEMPLE, ETTUMANOOR



ANOTHER VIEW OF SIVA TEMPLE, ETTUMANOOR



Pl. 65

THIRUNAKKARA MAHADEVA TEMPLE, KOTTAYAM

With tears in their eyes, they beseeched Siva to turn himself to their place. The Pulaya woman also entreated him to set her free from the spell of the curse. Parama Siva said that he would return to the locality when the petrified Pulaya woman grew into more than a man's height. This rock is still there, which falls down whenever it grows tall. Even today Parama Siva is the tutelary deity of the locality. There are a good number of families enjoying the properties of this *Devaswom*. The *Siva Linga* consecrated in this temple has got a ridge on it as though it were pierced by the pike. Every year during *Karkadaka Sankramam* the progenies of the cursed petrified Pulaya woman conducts *Thalayattom*. They bring umbrellas made with cadjan leaves to hold over the Deva to protect him from the burning rays of the sun for which they are given some gifts from the temple.

Everybody began to worship the *Siva Linga* and the faith of the people grew intensely. Once Lomaharshnan, a disciple of the sage Vyasa, came to this temple to have a *darshan* of Siva. He got down into a nearby tank but slipped and fell down. The onlookers burst into laughter and ridiculed him. The sage cursed that the place would turn into a wilderness, denuded of population. Thus under the spell of this curse, this place remained for thousand years, devoid of population, as a thick forest inhabited only by wild animals. One of those days, Vilvamangalathu Swamiyar came to this temple and offered *pooja* with the plantains, molasses etc. brought for his food. Parama Siva appeared before the Swamiyar. Even today these articles are given as the first offering (*Nivedyam*) to the deity. In later days, some other devotees had also obtained *darshan* of the Lord.

The present temple buildings with its *Gopuram* and the big wall around it, was reconstructed in the year 717 M. E. The main entrance to the temple is through the western *Gopuram*. On the walls inside and outside the *Gopuram*, there are beautiful

mural paintings. On the outer walls of the temple, some of the episodes from the Purana like *Gopikanritham* and *Vastrakshepam* have been portrayed beautifully. On the inside walls, sketches of *Garudan*, *Ananthasayanam*, *Pradoshanritham* and *Bhadrakaliroudaranadanam* are beautifully painted. The images of *Balagopalan* and other *Devas* are painted with high artistic ingenuity. No wonder that these mural paintings which proclaim the high standard of artistic skill of the bygone ages have attracted the attention of the Archaeological department.

Getting inside the temple through the gate of the *Gopuram* one could see the golden flagstaff. This golden flagstaff which glitters in the sun, is a most beautiful sight. Beneath this flagstaff has been installed the deities of *Ashtadikpalakas* namely, *Indran*, *Agni*, *Pitrupathi*, *Nirruhi*, *Varunan*, *Vayu*, *Kuberan* and *Esan*. On the top of the flagstaff there is an image of a *Vrishabha* (bull). Small bells and metal-leaves of the banyan tree are fixed around the flagstaff at different points. When the wind blows, these will produce tinkling sounds. Unlike in other temples, the flagstaff of this temple is secured a little away from the *Balikalpura*. The *Villukulam*, bathing house, *Kuthambalam* (play house), *Palamkulam*, *Utupura* and *Anapanthal* (elephant's pen) are located inside the temple campus. Under the banyan tree has been installed the idols of *Nagaraja* (serpent king) and *Nagavakshi*. The temple roofs are covered with copper sheets. The temple has fourteen *Thazhika-kudams* (ornamental top of the temple).

Bhagavathi, Sastha and Ganapathy and also Yakshi have been installed here as subordinate deities. About each of them there are many legends. Knowing that Parama Siva was staying at Ettumanoor, Parvathi, his consort, who was leading then an idle and inactive life with Ganga Devi at Kasi, started with her retinue to her Lord's presence. Ganapathy and Sastha, her two sons, also followed her. She mounted a bull along with her daughter and started.

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to meet her lord. They reached the lovely Ettumanoor. She tied her bull on the *Mandapam*. Her daughter was seated near the northern pillar of the temple. Sastha was stationed to the north of the temple. Her confidante Yakshi remained by the side of the pillar on the eastern side. Then Parvathi, taking her infant baby Ganapathy with her went to see Parama Siva. And both of them were blissfully happy for some time in each other's embrace. The elephant-faced Ganapathy sat a little away to the south of the abode of the Deva.

Once there was a fiendish *Rakshasa* by name Darika who wished to get goddess Parvathi as his spouse. Siva got wild, scratched his matted locks and immediately the brave and fierce Badrakali was born out of it. She was greatly inflamed that she went to kill Darika. Sivajwara, Vishnujwara and the Yakshi also went to help her. She returned to Siva after killing Darika, but pondered deeply over her terrible act and got angry at her father who employed her to kill a man. Sparks of fire emanated from her eyes and she began the annihilation of the world. Everybody was terrified of this devilish act. It was getting late on that day and Parama Siva who was terribly puzzled over the matter, sank himself in deep meditation. It was at this time that epilepsy began to play havoc on the earth. Parama Siva who stamped this disease under his feet began to reel himself with frantic dance. The angels who happened to witness this beautiful dance, were very happy over this. Badrakali beamed with joy. She sat at a corner of the *Mandapam* and Yakshi, awaiting the orders of Siva, sat in another corner. These are the legends about the subordinate deities and the Yakshi. The great philosopher Sankaracharya came to Ettumanoor and conducted worship of Siva and other subordinate deities. It is believed that the *Sundara Lahari* was written by him from this temple.

On getting inside the temple, one is enchanted by the sparkling light of the big lamp

of the temple. This lamp is a self-lit one and had not gone out ever since it came into existence. The evil spirits depart from the persons they have possessed, by making vows after submitting to this holy lamp. Even today a good number of people get liberated here from the evil spirits. The soot that accumulates on the lamp by constant use, is a good remedy for all the eye troubles.

Inside the *Mandapam*, there are two images of the bull, one finished in granite stone and the other made of an alloy of copper and tin. The bull in copper and tin is filled with paddy, the grains of which can be taken out from one of its holes. This is used as an effective medicine for stomach trouble. This image of the bull is the one which had been offered to the temple, in the 8th century, by one of the Chempakasseri Rajas.

On the western side of the main temple, there is a small sub-temple in which the idol of Balagopala has been installed. This is known as *Keezhthirika*. A little away to the north of this main temple, another subordinate temple is located which is dedicated to *Anthimahakala*, the chief messenger of Parama Siva.

The *Arat* festival of this temple is conducted on a grand scale on the *Thiruvathira* day in *Kumbham* (February-March) every year. This *Utsavam* lasts for ten days. From the 5th day of the *Utsavam*, the large image and the silken umbrellas will be used for the procession. The *Asthanamandapa darsanam*, *Kanicka Idal* (making offerings to deity) and lighting the lamps to propitiate the deity are conducted on the 8th day of the *Utsavam*. On that day the seven and half elephants of gold (*Ezhara ponnana*) will be exposed. The next occasion when it is exposed is on the 10th day of the *Utsavam*. These elephants were offered to deity in the year 929 M. E. by Marthanda Varma, the then Maharaja of Travancore. These were made of gold weighing seven and half *thulams* (28 lb.) and had been finished repre-

UTSAVAM IN THE THIRUNAKKARA MAHADEVA TEMPLE, KOTTAYAM

senting the elephants of the guardians of eight points (*Ashtadikpalas*). If eight elephants were made, one had to be given to *Ertonneseri Illom*. Therefore only seven and half elephants were got finished, seven elephants in the same weight and size and the other finished as a baby elephant. Very recently another small elephant also has been offered to this temple. Large number of people flock to this temple during the festival days to see these golden elephants alone.

Ettumanoor temple is a prosperous and wealthy *Devaswom*. The golden elephants,

conches studded with jewels, areca-nut bunch of gold, musical instruments of granite producing nagaswaram pot of gold set with jewels, caparison of gold, silver bull, various diamond necklaces and other gold jewellerys, not to say of the landed properties, are the valuable possessions of this temple which is one of the wealthiest *Devaswoms* in Kerala.

The Ettumanoor temple is also a repository of the artistic and sculptural treasures. The *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum), *Balikalpura*, *Balikallu* and *Mandapam* are rich in artistic exuberance.

Based mainly on an article by Shri Malloor Ramakrishnan in the Malayala Manorama Weekly, dated 23rd November, 1957.

UTSAVAM IN THE THIRUNAKKARA MAHADEVA TEMPLE, KOTTAYAM (SHRI MALLOOR RAMAKRISHNAN)

District
Taluk
Town

Kottayam
Kottayam
Kottayam

There are quite a good number of Siva temples in Kerala. The main reason for the abundance of Siva temples here can be attributed to the general belief of the people that Lord Paramasiva is easily moved and affectionate towards his devotees. The Thirunakkara temple is one of the few important Siva temples quite famous for their historical importance, antiquity and holiness.

This temple is situated on the Thirunakkara hill, lying in the very centre of the Kottayam municipal town. Although this temple had all the necessary requisites like *Gopuram* (temple tower), *Kuthambalam* (play house), *Anakottil* (elephant's house), *Uttupura* (place where Brahmans are fed), *Thirthakulam* (temple tank) etc. it had the privilege of being considered as a *Mahakshetra* (great temple) only very recently.

Entering the temple precincts, one feels greeted by a holy atmosphere. Standing at the entrance of the temple, one can get a good view of the flag staff, *Balikkalpura* (the porch just in front of the sanctum sanctorum), *Mandapam* (hall) and the *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum). When performing the circumambulation, the *Uttupura* (place where Brahmans are fed), *Anakottil* (elephant's house) and *Kuthambalam* (play house) will also come to view.

The flagstaff is made up of bell-metal; at its foot the images of the guardians of the eight points (*Ashtadikpalakanmar*) have been installed. Lamps are also hung around the flag staff. An image of a bull is secured to the top of it. Steps are under way to install a golden flagstaff in the temple.

The *Kuthambalam* is on the south-eastern

side of the temple. The *Chakyarkuthu*, *Nangyarkuthu*, *Patakam* etc. are conducted in this *Kuthambalam* which abounds in artistic exuberance. The images of *Ashtadikpalakas* have been beautifully carved on the ceilings. On the cross bars supporting the rafters stories from Ramayana have also been carved. These pieces of wood carvings display high artistic finish and excellence. The contribution made by the Kerala temples to the arts and culture of the State is, indeed, invaluable. The famous traveller Ibn-Batuta, a native of Morocco, who visited Kerala in the 14th century, had commented highly on the artistic beauty and excellence of the Kerala temples. No wonder that places of worship which tell stories through their artistic carvings in inarticulate language had attracted the people beyond the seas.

Several minor temples have also been constructed beautifully in which Ganapathy, Sasta, Subramonian, Vadakkunnathan, Saraswathi and Rakshas are installed and *pooja* is conducted regularly.

Balikkalpara, *Mandapam* and the *Sreekovil* are situated in the temple courtyard. The entire *Purana* of Mahabaratha has been carved on the beams supporting the roof of the *Balikkalpara*. Those who go inside the temple cannot overlook these beautiful carvings.

The *Mandapam* in which the image of the bull (*Vrishabha Vighram*) is located, lies between the *Balikkalpara* and the *Sreekovil*. This idol, the inside of which is hollow, is made in bell-metal. There is a self-born (*Swayambhu*) stone image of a bull inside this idol.

The self-born image has been installed in the *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum). Behind the *Sreekovil*, a little away to the north, an *Inexora alba* plant stands blooming. The *Mandapam* is situated just in front of the sanctum sanctorum. There are numerous drawings on the outer walls of the *Sreekovil* which are mostly amorous in character. These paintings look as though pulsating with life and vigour.

This, in short, is the temple. To history it owes a great debt. There is a story about the origin of this temple—a wonderful story of a self sprung *Sivalinga*, *Vrishabha* (bull) and the *Inexora alba* plant. That great event took place centuries ago when Kerala was in the hands of innumerable barons.

In those days, the Thekkumkoor Rajas were reigning over the country. Their place was at Thaliyil, near Kottayam. That place, with the remnants of the ruined palace, is still there. The Tekkumkoor royal family too exists today. Once there was a king, valiant, pious and benevolent in that dynasty. The moment he ascended the throne, peace and prosperity began to reign over the kingdom. He was particular of visiting the Vadakkunnatha temple at Trichur once in a month, accompanied by his family and courtiers and offering prayers there. He became old; yet, without minding the weariness and fatigue, he continued to go on his pilgrimage to Trichur without break. Days and months went by and at last a stage came when he could not even move about without the help of others. Still he persisted in going to Trichur.

That was his last journey to the Vadakkunnatha temple. With a broken heart and full of tears in his eyes, he prostrated before the Lord and submitted that he had become physically weak, no more able to go over to Trichur to worship the Lord, that death was preferable to living without worshipping Lord Vadakkunnathan and that therefore, some alternate measures might be suggested to him to continue his worship.

That night the king slept quite peacefully. Vadakkunnathan appeared to him in a dream and consoled him by saying that he should not have taken so much trouble by undertaking a journey all the way to Trichur and that the Lord would appear in the *Nakkarakunnu* with a bull in his front and an *Inexora alba* plant at his back. This was the substance of his dream. The king who was greatly elated over his *darshan* of

the Lord returned home immersed in pleasant thoughts and joyful expectations.

On his homeward journey, he got down at Vaikom and worshipped at the Mahadeva temple there. There, he came across a Brahman whose family name was Perapparambu. He was poor, miserable and without any means to pull on. His was a life of utmost privations. Misery and starvation were his lot. The king was moved on hearing the miserable plight of that Brahman whom he wanted to help in all possible ways and, therefore, took him along with him to his place.

Perapparambu Namboothiri settled down permanently at Kottayam and got into touch with the members of the *Swamiyarmadam* house of the place. The Swamiar and the Namboothiri became thick friends that the former agreed to render him all possible help and thus Namboothiri began to stay with the Swamiar.

The place which now is known as Thirunakkara was a small hill in those days. It was called then as *Nakkarakunnu*. It was a great wilderness with thick undergrowths; a rambling place of wild animals. On the slopes of that hill which were safe from wild animals, the servants of the Swamiar had some sort of cultivation.

One day, when these servants were hoeing the ground, the hoe dashed against something hard below the earth. A cracking sound was heard. That was a piece of granite stone and blood was oozing out incessantly from the spot where it had been struck with the hoe. The servants got scared and ran away from the place and informed Swamiar about this strange occurrence. The latter went to that spot and examined the stone minutely. It was a *Sivalinga*. Soon, the Swamiar got the *pooja* conducted there by Perapparambu Namboothiri.

The Thekkumkoor Raja who was informed of this occurrence came immediately to Nakkara. A beautiful *Sivalinga* lay there with a bull in granite stone in front of it

UTSAVAM IN THE THIRUNAKKARA MAHADEVA TEMPLE, KOTTAYAM

and an *Inexora alba* plant in the rear; everything as divined by Vadakkunnathan. His dream had become a reality that he found salvation and eternal happiness. With a heart nothing but full of gratitude to the Lord, he offered humble prostrations to that *Sivalinga*.

His attention turned next to the construction of a temple on that place. He donated extensive landed properties to the *Devaswom* in order to meet the expenditure for conducting *pooja* every day, and *Utsavam* in the months of *Thulam*, *Meenam* and *Mithunam*. Even to this day, it is during these months that the festivals of this temple commence with the hoisting of the temple flag. The *Meenanutsavam* is conducted here on a grand scale. The Perapparambu Namboothiri became the first *poojari* of this temple. The *Moothathu* (a lower class of Brahmans, higher than *Moosad*) of the *Chengazhasserry* and *Punnassery Illams* were appointed to assist him in his religious duties. And the members of the *Nedumangad* house who were the first to show the light before the *Sivalinga*, were authorised to hold the light before the *poojari* while conducting the circumambulation of the *Sreekovil* and the *Palakkot* family people who had given rice to prepare the *Nivedya* were given the privilege of dehusking and pounding the paddy for the temple. To them, the king also granted some landed properties and conferred on them the titles of *Panicker* and *Kartha* respectively. Of these families, the *Palakkot* house is now extinct. The others still get on happily. Nakkara, owing to the presence of the Lord there, was known as Thirunakkara in due course.

Some years passed by. A white bull began to eat away the whole crop of the locality. Vegetable gardens and green fields became his play ground. But nobody could spot him out. He came as swiftly as the wind and vanished with lightning speed. The local people who were put to great hardships by the unbridled attack of this bull,

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became worried over their inability to catch that invisible animal.

At Velur, near Kottayam, a Paraya male, to scare away a bull which came to eat away the crops, flung a stone at it. The bull ran away and disappeared from the scene. On the next day, at midnight, the Raja of Thekkumkoo had a dream. It seemed to him that a bull had come and complained to him in the dream that though he had provided every thing for the Lord but nothing had been given to him and that consequently, he, who was the conveyance of Lord Siva had nothing to satiate his hunger and that he was roaming about here and there, harassed by the people. The king thereupon consulted an astrologer who informed him that the bull which appeared to him in the dream was the beloved conveyance of Siva and that all his requirements should be met with immediately. The king decided to donate the entire paddy field at Velur, where the bull had been pelted by the Paraya, for meeting the expenditure towards the feeding of this bull. This paddy field which is known as *Kalakandam* even now belongs to this *Devaswom*. It is believed that at midnight the bull of the Thirunakkara temple usually goes to graze in that field. The practice of rearing up the bulls in the temple is still in vogue. There were numerous temple-bulls, which by their mischief and ferocity, had earned affection and awe from the people. Many years have not elapsed since the Neelakantan bull which used to roam about the town and pick out policemen and municipal workers and scare them away, had met with its end. Hundreds of similar stories are told about that bull.

The temple constructed by the Raja of Thekkumkoo was indeed beautiful and magnificent. The power of Lord Mahadeva spread far and wide. Day by day the income as well as the offerings to the temple increased. The Perapparambu Namboothiri, the *poojari* of the temple, owing to the pressure of work, appointed a subordi-

nate to assist him in the performances of his religious duties. Not only Perapparambu Namboothiri was free from penury, but by the grace of God, became wealthy also. Due to old age, he retired from the temple service and went back to his native place.

The subordinate Madipalli Namboothiri became the chief priest (*Santhi*) of the temple. In those days, it was the *Muthathus* who were commissioned to carry the idol of the Lord around the *Sreekovil* during the performance of *Sreebali*. One of the *Muthathus* and the reigning king became bitter enemies. It was the time when the words of the kings were practically the law of the country. The king ordered to shoot down the *Muthathu*, but the soldiers mistaking Madippalli Namboothiri for Moothathu killed the former. Thereupon, the Namboothiri's spouse sacrificed her life in front of the temple. Thus that family became extinct. Subsequently there was a royal decree to the effect that no Namboothiri lady should ever enter the temple and that the *Muthathu* should not be engaged for the *Sreebali* procession. These two restrictions are still being kept up in the temple. The murdered *poojari* assumed the form of a demon (*Rakshas*) and it is that *Rakshas* who has been installed in a minor temple inside the temple campus.

The Thekkumkoo Raja's kingdom shattered into pieces and their power and authority dwindled. Their kingdom fell into the hands of the kings of Travancore. Along with it, the Thirunakkara temple also fell under their control and they became the trustees of the temple. Nevertheless, the Thekkumkoo Rajas even today venerate *Thirunakkara Devan* as their family deity. At present, this temple is under the direct supervision of the Travancore Devaswom Board.

About the image of the bull of the temple also, there is something to say in this context. During certain periods, pus and other impurities will flow out of its stomach. On such occasions, the famous

FEAST OF GOOD SHEPHERD IN THE GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH, KOTTAYAM

Ashtavaidyas will treat the bull and cure its disease. In the years 933, 973, 986, 990, 1014, 1022, 1036 and 1056 M. E. this bull had swelling in its stomach and had pus formed therein. The general belief and experience is that whenever pus is formed in its stomach, it is an indication of a foreboding evil to the king and the country. It is to be mentioned here that during the years referred to, the then reigning kings of Travancore had met with their end. The last formation of the pus took place during the time of the last Regency rule. On that occasion, the royal family paid a visit to this temple. Special *poojas* are conducted here at government expense to expiate the sins on such occasions. There is also a legend about the huge stone standing on the eastern side of the maidan of the temple. As has been mentioned above, when the servants informed Swamiar about the appearance of the *Sivalingam*, he rushed to *Nakarakunnu*. On their way, they saw a Pulaya couple collecting grass from the ground. It was the time when untouchability was in vogue. Moreover, the Brahmins were also

Based mainly on an article by Shri Malloor Ramakrishnan in the Malayala Manorama Weekly dated 13th July, 1957.

not accustomed to see the women folk. In spite of his request to leave clear his way, they did not care for him and therefore the enraged Swamiar cursed them as a result of which both of them turned into granite. That stone has the height of a man and the girth of two men standing together. It is believed that this huge stone is moving slowly from its place and that when it reaches the Kodur river, the Pulayan and Pulayi would get redemption.

[Every year, during the festival period, thousands of people, irrespective of their castes and creeds, flock to this temple to join the celebrations. The grandest festival of this temple is the *Arat Utsavam* lasting for ten days from 1st to 10th of *Meenam* which is attended by nearly one and half lakhs of people. In the fair held in connection with this *Utsavam*, industrial and agricultural products are mainly dealt with. The highlights of this festival are the various cultural programmes and variety entertainments taking place on the festive days.]

FEAST OF GOOD SHEPHERD IN THE GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH, KOTTAYAM

(FR. JOHN, O. C. D., VICAR, GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH, KOTTAYAM)

District
Taluk
Town

Kottayam
Kottayam
Kottayam

The Church of Good Shepherd, Kottayam was established in the year 1882. It is the first Church of the Vijayapuram diocese. Christ is the Good Shepherd seeking after the lost sheep, just as a shepherd looks after his sheep. A beautiful and devotional picture of Good Shepherd was brought from Alleppey and enthroned in the Church

and gradually the devotion towards the Good Shepherd spread among the faithful. When this Church was found quite insufficient for the parishioners, another big church was constructed near the Civil Stations about seventy years ago. Since this Church too was found inadequate to accommodate the increasing number of

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the faithful, it was demolished on 29th December 1963 to replace it with a huge church in the modern architectural style. This new attractive church which is being built now, will be a lasting monument to the Spanish Carmelite Missionaries to whose untiring missionary labours owe the present Diocese of Vijayapuram.

The annual festival of this church, the feast of the Good Shepherd, is celebrated for three days from 10th to 12th of April. On the first day of the feast, the church flag is hoisted with all solemnity. This is

followed by service in the church. On the second day evening, solemn vespers are sung; then a grand procession and pyrotechnics take place. On the last day of the feast, at about 9 o' clock in the morning the feast ends with a Solemn High Mass, sermon, procession and receipt of offerings from the faithful.

About three thousand people including non-Catholics join the celebrations. Many of the faithful bring with them goats, kids and calves as offerings. These are auctioned and the proceeds go to the church.

UTSAVAM IN THE PALLIPURATHKAVU

(SHRI MALLOOR RAMAKRISHNAN)

District	Kottayam
Taluk	Kottayam
Town	Kottayam

Those who have not heard of the Pallipurathkavu will be but a few. This famous Bhagavathi temple is situated at the southern extremity of the Kottayam town, by the side of M. C. Road. The long and winding Kodimatha river, the vast, beautiful, green fields and the cocoanut groves rustling in the gentle breeze, all this make this place so lovely and picturesque that it preserves the purity and freshness of a country-side as well as of urban attractiveness.

This temple is very old; about it many legends are told. In the Ithiyamala Volume V there is a mention of a legend about its origin which had wide currency during the many centuries past. The following is that legend.

In the 4th century A. D. a certain Unni (Unni is a caste), the ancestor of Kottarathil Sankunni who was a native of Chengannur reached Sree Porkali and performed *pooja* to Bhadrakali with intense devotion. Devi became greatly pleased

with him that she appeared to him in a dream and gave him her blessings. In addition, she presented him a *Nandakom* sword and ordained him to take it with him and offer *pooja* to it regularly and thus to get his desires fulfilled.

With this sword he went to Kumarnelloor, near Kottayam; approached the authorities of the temple there and requested them to provide him with a suitable building to keep his sword and to conduct worship. In those days there was a mansion at Kodimatha belonging to the Kumarnelloor *Devaswom*. The authorities released this mansion to Unni for keeping his sword.

Unni was a pious and devout man. He was not after worldly pleasures. He spent the days in meditation of Devi. Many miracles are believed to have been taken place during his meditative days.

With the March of time Unni became old and incapacitated. He entrusted that divine sword to his brother's son with

instructions to carry on worship of the sword. Ere long, he sunk himself in eternal sleep.

His nephew to whom the sword was entrusted was of a different type. His interest in Devi worship gradually waned as a result of which his family had to suffer many calamities. An astrologer was consulted. In the light of his advice, it was decided to transplant the divine sword to another spot and to conduct *pooja* regularly. Accordingly this sword was installed at the site where the Pallipurathkavu stands today. At the time of its re-installation, the sword had become spoilt due to wear and tear. Therefore the famous *thanthri* (priest) Mattappalli Namboodirippad released Devi from the sword to a glass image and on an auspicious occasion consecrated her according to religious rites. A temple was also constructed there. The *thanthri* named this temple as Pallipurathkavu. Thus the present Pallipurathkavu came into existence. The construction of this temple had been possible only with the co-operation and assistance rendered by the local inhabitants and the Vayaskara Pottis. Unni and his family settled themselves in that mansion where the divine sword had been kept previously for worship. Even today that mansion is still extant in the place. It was in this building that Kottarathil Sankunni was born.

Once an expert artisan, a native of Chengannur, became insane. In spite of many offerings and worships in many temples performed by him, he did not get any relief. At last, he conducted worship in the Pallipurathkavu and was miraculously cured of his ailment. On his return to his native place, he finished an idol of Devi in *Krishnasila*, in 36 inches length with proportionate girth to match its height. It took one year for him to perfect that splendid divine object. That idol is quite enchanting and worth looking at. With fierce teeth, three eyes and long tongue of a cruel visage, two hands holding aloft a trident that

UTSAVAM IN THE PALLIPURATHKAVU

pierces through the demon Darikan and the other six hands holding a sword, a shield, a skull, a rope, a *sooni* and a snake respectively, this is the exact representation of Bhadrakali relaxing over the shoulders of Vethala stretching out her beautiful eight hands. Such an image of Badrakali in *Krishnasila*, it is told, is not to be found in any other temple in Kerala. This idol and the divinity reflected thereon attracted one and all. People looked towards it with reverential affection, awe and belief. With the assistance and co-operation of Thekkumkoor Raja, the Vayaskara Potties and the local populace at large, this new idol was installed in this temple on the 10th of a certain month of *Medom*. This idol is the sum total of the imagination of a poor artisan who lived years ago in this place. Thus goes the long chapter in the history of this temple.

Every year, on the 10th of *Medom*, the *Pathamudayam* is celebrated on a grand scale in commemoration of the consecration of the deity. The important ceremony during this festival is *Kumbakudam thullal*. The idol of Devi, adorned with all fineries, will be carried in procession on elephant's back. Before that elephant, hundreds of devotees, donning yellow shawls and *dhotis* and carrying over their heads bright shining brass pots filled with paddy and turmeric into which are fixed upwards a few neem leaves and a bunch of flowers, dance, with jubilation under the scorching sun. This is a grand sight. The *Kumbakudam* procession starts from the Thirunakkara temple. By noon, the procession reaches Kodimatha. Carrying of *Kumbakudam* is an important offering made in this temple. The *Kumbakudam* dance is performed in the evening also. This is known as *Ammankudam*. It appears that this sort of dance conducted here has been adopted from the pattern followed in the Tamilnad.

The other less important ceremonies in this temple are the *Thalapoli* and *Thiyattu*. These ceremonies are performed not only

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

on festive days but on other occasions also. Girls line up before the deity with *thalam* (plate) and lights in their hands and conduct circumambulation of the deity. This is *Thalapoli*. It is held that *Thiyyattu* took its form from *Sanghakali*. An Unni masquerading himself as Bhadrakali tells her father Lord Siva about the murder of Darika by gestures and movements as in a dance. This is *Thiyyattu*.

Kuthiyottam is also performed as an offering to the deity in this temple.

The *Garudan* and *Thookam* are two important ritualistic performances of this temple attracting large number of spectators. One person assuming the guise of an eagle (Vishnu's bird) dances from the top of a chariot. The *garuda dance* is a combination of *Nritta*, *Natya* and *Nritya*. Before day break, the same *garudan* is baited with

a hook and is stationed in a *chadu* and blood is poured over him. This is *Thookam*. Thus Kali assuages her thirst for blood and becomes happy and gay. Thousands of people throng to this temple to witness these ceremonies. Another attraction to the devotees is *Atmavu* (*Almavu*) of this temple. It is interesting to see that tender mango sapling that has sprouted up from a huge banyan tree which flowers and bears fruits. These twin trees, grown together in one trunk, in the temple courtyard is called *Athmavu*.

After the demise of Kottarathil Sankunni it is his step son who is looking after the maintenance of this temple. The festivals as well as the religious services in the temple are conducted jointly by the authorities and the local inhabitants.

Based mainly on an article by Shri Malloor Ramakrishnan in the Malayala Manorama weekly dated 18th May, 1957.

CHERUPUSHPA PERUNAL IN THE LITTLE FLOWER CHURCH, ARPOOKARA

(REV. J. C. MADUKAKUZHAY)

District	Kottayam
Taluk	Kottayam
Village	Kaipuzha

The Little Flower Church is situated near the bank of a rivulet that flows into the Meenachil river. The majority of the people of Arpookara West belongs to the Little Flower parish.

The main feast of the parishioners is called *Cherupushpa Perunal*. *Cherupushpam* is the sweet name of St. Therese who is the patroness of the parish. St. Therese during her life time proclaimed that she, on reaching heaven, would shower on her clients 'roses' of spiritual and temporal graces. It is the belief of the religious minded people

that the saint showers on mankind graces in abundance.

To the church of *Cherupushpam* at Arpookara West come people of every caste and creed on the festive day, i. e. on the 2nd Sunday of February, every year. Men of goodwill rally round the beautiful statue of St. Therese exposed for public veneration and pray with folded hands. They kiss the feet of the saint with trust. The saint in turn fulfils the trust reposed in her by showering lavishly her graces on them.

On the eve of the Feast, a procession

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ATHIRAMPUZHA

starts from the St. Mary's Church, Kudamaloor, two miles away from Arpookara. Flags, crosses, candles, silken umbrellas and statues are carried in big boats which move in procession arrayed in a line. Small boats escort the big ones and all of

them move fast towards the church of Cherupushpam. This procession, conducted before dusk, is a very beautiful panorama which is vivid always in the memory of the parishioners.

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ATHIRAMPUZHA

(SHRI T. J. MADAPPALLY)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Athirampuzha

The St. Mary's Church at Athirampuzha is one of the ancient and famous churches in Kerala. It is situated at a spot lying one and half miles east to the landing place at Athirampuzha, on the Kottayam-Vaikom road. Though this church has been dedicated to St. Mary, it is the Feast of St. Sebastian that is celebrated here on a grand scale. The moment the church flag is hoisted on the 20th of January, the church and its premises will abound in multitudes of pilgrims for five days until the feast is over on the 25th of January.

There were seven churches founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle on his arrival in Kerala. Of these, the churches at Palayur, Kottakkavu and others were temples converted into churches. The churches at Kaduthuruthy, Aruvithura, Kuravilangad and Kalloorkad which came into existence after the establishment of the above mentioned seven churches were founded in the name of St. Mary.

The early churches were not dissimilar in their get-up from the temples. It is only after the advent of the Portuguese that there had been some notable changes in the structural form and pattern of the churches. It is also the Portuguese who introduced here the employment of granite stones, lime and

laterite stones in the constructional works. The first Portuguese church in Kerala was the Santa Cruz Church at Fort Cochin. The local people began to follow the constructional style of the church. The then Rector of the Vaypikotta Seminary at Cranganore, Fr. Vincent Legos, gave the Syrian Christians necessary advice and guidance for the construction of their churches. Of the churches founded accordingly, there are still many in existence. Due to constant contacts with the Dutch, English and other foreign Christians, considerable changes had again occurred in the constructional style of the churches in Kerala. Gradually the altars in the churches were modernised. Wide openings and concrete works came to be adopted in the construction of the churches.

The advent of Portuguese to Kerala was in 1498 A. D. In the year 1514 A. D., Pope Leo X granted to the Portuguese kings, the right over the churches and the archdioceses, parishes and seminaries formed by them. It was the Carmelite bishops, sent by pope Alexander VIII to make peace with the Syrian Christians who defied the authority of the then bishop Fr. Francis Garcia S. J., who established the Verapoly archdiocese in 1657 A. D.

It is not exactly understood as to when the

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

first church was founded at Athirampuzha. However, it is said that it was erected about 1080 A. D. In the early days the Christians of Athirampuzha were depending on the church at Kuravilangad. The present church is a reconstructed one. The first church was located at a central place between the present church and the cemetery building attached to the south of it. The present church was reconstructed in the year 1874 A. D. From an inscription on the walls of this church showing 'again on 8th December 1874' it can be surmised that the antiquity of the present church may be of less than one hundred years.

To the east of the present church, there stands a small beautiful church. This is the latest of all the churches erected here. On festive occasions, this church, with illuminations, presents a delightful spectacle. There are three huge bells in this church which were brought from Germany in 1905. The main altar of the big church is more than 70 years old.

The Christians of Athirampuzha were once leading merchants. When the Travancore State was in the hands of numerous barons, the Thekkumkoor Raja after a visit to Athirampuzha arrived at Kodimatha accompanied by his entourage, to go to his capital, Thaliyil, by boat. It was dusk when he arrived there. There were no roads in those days as at present. The nocturnal journey was possible only with the help of torches. To light the torch, there was also no oil available in the place. In those days it was the Christians who were mainly engaged in business. The Raja who understood the position enquired as to whether there were any Christians in the vicinity. To overcome this difficulty caused by the absence of Christians, he invited a few Christians of Athirampuzha to Kottayam. Several Christian families dwelling at present at Kottayam, Chengannur and such other places are the descendants of those who had migrated from Athirampuzha as per the invitation of the Thekkumkoor Raja.

The image of St. Sebastian installed here is a very old one. About this statue, there are many legends. During the days of Portuguese, three images were brought to Verapoly. Of these, one was installed in the church at Arthunkal and another in the church at Kuravilangad. The third was a small one. The local traders who were carrying business with Cochin, brought the small image here. This image was installed here with all solemnity. The then Vicar of the church gave a torch after blessing it to the persons who brought that image. The practice of blessing a torch in connection with the festival there was in vogue until about a hundred years ago. Even to this day the people concerned believe it to be one of their absolute rights to carry the image. The special feature of this image of St. Sebastian is that it has no arrows on it. This is called as *Adiyelpicha Roopam* (representing St. Sebastian after being flogged by his persecutors).

The St Sebastian's day which is celebrated on the 20th of January is called *Pathamthiyathi Perunnal*. This feast happened to be celebrated here on the 24th and 25th of January on a grand scale just because it falls during the period between the festival of Kuravilangad church and the *Pathamthiyathi Perunnal*. It was only after Mar Kurialassery became the bishop that this feast happened to be celebrated with so much pomp.

The pyrotechnics and illuminations during the festival of the Athirampuzha church were quite famous even from olden days. Since there is a vast maidan around the church buildings, accidents caused by the display of pyrotechnics are not many. Although the display of pyrotechnics has been banned in many places, it has not been done here. During the whole night on the 24th January, one would feel as if witnessing a grand festival of lights. Ever since the introduction of electricity in this part of the State, the entire church building used to be illuminated with multicoloured electric

ETTUNOMPU PERUNNAL IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, MANARCAD
bulbs. The church and its premises within a radius of two miles, will be gaily decorated with various flags and festoons during the festive occasion.

Mainly based on an article by Shri T. J. Madappally in the Malayala Manorama Weekly dated 10th February 1962.

ETTUNOMPU PERUNNAL IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, MANARCAD (DEACON JOSEPH KARIPPAYIL)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Manarcad

St. Mary's church, Manarcad is one of the outstanding churches of the Syrian Jacobite Church of Malabar. About 1,600 families are attached to this church. The church which is well over 750 years old was reconstructed 36 years ago, beautifying it with modern architecture, both in the interior and in the exterior.

The church is situated in Manarcad, one mile north of the 5th mile on the Kottayam-Kumily Road, not far away from the Kottayam town. It is no exaggeration to say that this church, of which the Christians can well be proud, is a source of hope and consolation for the people of all castes and creeds. Several devotees come to this Church every day to make their offerings, to express gratitude for the favours received through the intercession of St. Mary and to offer prayers.

Activities of the Church

The well run and unanimously admired St. Mary's Hospital which affords relief and hope to thousands of afflicted people is a great institution conducted by the church. The hospital is managed by a doctor, trained in England and under him, his associates and nurses. There are about 100 beds, an X-ray ward and a T. B. clinic attached to it. This institution has received

considerable aid at the hands of Government.

The church is running a high school that maintains good standards. Ample facilities are available here for expert technical training. N. C. C., Sea Scouts and Social Service League are receiving expert training here. The only Sea Scout Unit of Kottayam district is attached to this institution. This unit which has received expert training, is now training the Armed Reserve Police of Kottayam Zone in the first aid operations.

Service Association

There is a Social Service Association here, both the male and female wings of which are rendering admirable service. Educational aid to the poor and needy students, constructing houses for the poor, medical assistance to the sick, distribution of cloths etc. are the social activities that they perform. 'Service' is their motto.

This association is a boon to the pilgrims. They afford all facilities and convenience to the thousands of people assembling there in connection with 'Ettu Nomp' (8 days fast) and afford protection to the persons coming to the church with costly jewellery, dress etc. against pick-pockets and thieves.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

A "Safe Custody Branch" is functioning under the special supervision of the Association. Any article entrusted to the Association is kept in safe custody and returned whenever demanded. Generally pilgrims encourage this enterprise by giving donations to the Association.

The Association plays a commendable role in the distribution of 'Nercha' on September 8, the last day of the feast, when lakhs of people assemble. They also pay particular attention to protect the pilgrims against the nuisance of beggars.

Festivals

The most important festival of this church is the 'Eight Days Fast' in honour of St. Mary, popularly known as 'Ettu Nomp Pu Perunnal'. There is hardly any other festival in Kerala in which so many people participate.

The festival starts on the 1st of September and continues for 8 days. A peculiar feature of this festival is that the participants are mostly women as it is considered to be special fast for them. During all the eight days, several thousands of people, men and women of all religions and communities, assemble here to make offerings and observe fasting. Sanitary arrangements are made separately for men and women. People throng in multitudes inside, outside and around the church. The church and premises will be gaily decorated and flood-lit. From dawn to dusk and from dusk to dawn, the place resounds with the echo of the prayers and songs in honour of St. Mary.

The light of a new spiritual revival is manifest everywhere. The parishioners are eager to render whatever assistance the pilgrims from distant places would wish for. They place at the disposal of these pilgrims their houses and their premises leaving only a little space therein for their use. Here and there they make hearths by propping three stones and cook their food. Those pilgrims are welcomed even in poor small homes. Such is their spirit of sacrifice.

Mass is said for the pilgrims on all days of the feast, and the same is offered simultaneously by three priests on ordinary days of the festival and by five priests on the 8th day and intervening Sundays.

The important items of celebrations commence by the evening of the 7th day. After prayer a procession starts from the church. Thousands of pious people join the procession. On the afternoon of 8th the day of the feast—also there is a procession, which goes as far as the chapel at the 5th mile junction of the K. K. Road. Priests donning their ecclesiastical vestments, pilgrims and thousands of other participants move in procession, singing and with the accompaniment of musical instruments. Decorative articles like ornamental umbrellas, flags etc. add colour to the procession. Umbrellas of a peculiar kind called *Vettukuda*, made of coloured cloth to the likeness of cadjan umbrellas, a rare thing used only in festivals of Christians, especially of Jacobite Syrians, are also used during the procession. Petards and crackers add to the pomp of the occasion. People assemble in large numbers on the roadsides and road junctions to witness this rare sight. By the midnight of 7th September the magnificent display of pyrotechnics starts. On the morning of 8th September the church, its surroundings and roads would have become crowded from early morning itself. Every minute, people will be coming and returning in cars, buses and other conveyances. It will not be an exaggeration to estimate the attendance to be nearly one lakh. On the festival day, the 8th of September, the mass for the faithful ends at about 12 noon, after which there is a short interval. But all the while there will be uninterrupted songs and prayers. After the magnificent procession returns to the church, a special offering called *Pachor Nercha* (offering of rice boiled with coconut milk) is conducted. The offering is taken from place to place in hand-carts and distributed to the people. Everyone invariably

ETTU NOMP PU PERUNNAL IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, MANARCAD

participates in this as it is firmly believed that eating the offering is a source of grace.

Offerings

Several articles made of gold and silver are received as offerings. Human figures and limbs, animals and birds like goat, snake, rat, crow etc. and figures of some weapons are carved on plates of gold or silver offered. These are auctioned and the proceeds credited to the church Trust. The custom of offering oneself as the ward under the protection of a saint for a specified period which is known by the term 'Adima' is very popular in this church. The implications of this form of offering is that the person pays an amount as ransom every year to the church for the spiritual protection received from the saint.

Persons possessed by demons

The sick and the suffering begin to arrive from the first day of September itself. Among them are persons possessed of devils, the insane, the maimed, chronic patients and mental patients—both rich and poor. The huge stone cross on the western side of the church is their resort. The tumult occurring there is indescribable. Holding lighted candles and making inarticulate sounds, they frisk about making awkward, contorted and convulsive movements of the body. This will continue till about 10 p. m. when the sick are removed to their temporary camps.

Some get cured soon. Some get relief from their ailments only after severe temptation, torture and pain for all the eight days. Rarely some do not get cured. But mostly they get themselves relieved by the next year. The evil spirits are terribly afraid of St. Mary.

From morning till about 3 p. m. they fast and spend their time in meditation and prayer. They break their fast by eating the vegetarian food. They do not use meat, fish, milk, ghee etc. Instances of healthy persons who broke these observances having gone mad had occurred in the past.

Those who are devoted and observe fast strictly are generally cured soon. Persons who are possessed of devils are soon dispossessed. The invisible evil spirit speaks out his name, the day, time, place and mode of possessing the persons and leaves the patient after promising that he will not create any more nuisance. Certain signs are also seen at the time of dispossession. The patient swoons and falls to the ground. When first aids are administered, the person recovers thoroughly exhausted. After sometime there will be no indisposition. These thrilling scenes are incomprehensible even to rationalists.

Beggars

Even before the feast takes place, the beggars begin to arrive in groups. They know the exact dates of all festivals in Kerala. Festival days are hey days for them. Every one of them gets a fairly fat amount.

Most of these beggars are healthy persons who resort to begging as a lucrative business. Their exterior is often deceptive. The filthy wounds on their bodies are faked ones. Raw flesh of frogs is very cleverly pasted and tied to their bodies which give the appearance of gaping wounds. *Pappadam* and ripe banana also are used. There are also children specially trained in begging. Still others pose themselves as blind or maimed. Along with such dupes, there are indeed, genuine beggars, helpless, with no means of livelihood and affected with incurable diseases like leprosy, T. B., venereal diseases etc. A special place is set apart for beggars who come to Manarcad church. Special care is taken to see that they do not mingle freely with the devotees.

They return only after an 'eight days' harvest. During these days they give themselves up to gambling, drinking and prostitution. Unless they are effectively segregated, they are a serious danger to society.

Fair

The church compound is divided into

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

small convenient plots and rented out to hawkers. They begin to occupy the plots even towards the end of August. Household utensils made of aluminium, brass, bell-metal, copper and iron, items of furniture, earthenware, attractive rubber and plastic toys, toilets and perfumes, textile goods, ornaments, books on history, literature and devotion, stationery articles, and bidi, pan, cigarette and cigar all these are

largely sold and bought in the fair connected with the festival. Cool drinkbars and hotels also are not few. While hotels cool drinkbars and stationery close business by the termination of the festival, hawkers of earthenwares, household utensils, metalwares and furniture, linger there for about a month. Business to the tune of tens of thousands of rupees is transacted here during these festival days.

THRIKARTHIKA UTSAVAM IN THE KUMARANALLOOR TEMPLE

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Perumbaikad

The Kumaranalloor temple, owned by a few Namboothiri families and held in high esteem by the local people, is situated in the Perumbaikad village of the Kottayam taluk. A journey for a short distance of two miles northwards along the M. C. road from the Kottayam town and further for four furlongs north-west from there takes one to this temple. The area lying around this temple is known as Kumaranalloor. The word Kumaranalloor, literally, is supposed to mean *Kumaranalla-Ooru* i.e. 'not for Kumara'. The following story stands to prove this supposition.

Once the nose ring of the idol in the famous Meenakshi temple at Madura was lost when the priest was removing the garlands adorning the deity for its holy bath in the morning. The Pandya king, the then ruler of the country whose wrath knew no bounds at the loss of the ornament of his family deity, ordered to behead the priest in case he could not redeem that ornament in a day. The priest was greatly distressed. His anguish and sorrow grew greater and greater as the day wore on. He could not get a wink of sleep during that night. While thus

he lay drowsily cursing the fate awaiting him the next day, it seemed to him that an invisible person was prompting him to leave the country. Thrice in that night he felt that prompting impulsion. He was sure that it was no less than the Devi who had commanded him to flee from the place. And in the same night, without losing a moments time further, he fled from the place for life. He was soon exhausted and lost his way in the thick darkness of the night, but, providentially, a light flashed in front of him showing the way until he reached Kumaranalloor. This light was none other than goddess Meenakshi herself. On reaching Kumaranalloor Devi got into the temple and remained there.

This temple had been built long ago by Cheraman Perumal to install Lord Subramanian (Kumara). Since Devi had intruded into the temple, he had no other go but to install her there ceremoniously. Thus this temple which was originally intended for Kumara became 'not for Kumara' (Kumaranalloor). Cheraman Perumal learned through his divine powers, the arrival of Devi in the temple. He was greatly enraged

THRIKARTHIKA UTSAVAM IN THE KUMARANALLOOR TEMPLE

over her intrusion and therefore applied some measures to disgrace her. But later he had to repent for his unwise, hasty actions, for the entire locality was enveloped with fog, with the result that the whole place seemed gone out of sight. The place thus came to be called Manjoor meaning 'the place that disappeared'. Thereupon Perumal gifted away Manjoor to the temple.

The King who realised later the greatness of Devi consecrated her in the temple according to the Vedic rites and engaged a thousand Nairs from Nattassery, Mallussery and Perumbaikattussery for service in the temple. Further the management of the temple was entrusted to twenty-eight Namboothiri families. As days went on, some of these Namboothiri families dwindled and now only twelve of them are in charge of this temple, namely the Tannikad, Ezhumavu, Edat, Chemmangad, Elavannad, Vadakkummyal, Elayidam, Thalavannad, Kanjirakad, Keeranthitta, Chooravanam and Chengazhimattom families.

Generally *Krishna Shila* is used for making idols, but the idol in the Kumaranalloor temple is made of antimony sulphurate (*Anjanakal*) in the form of a beautiful lady. Adorned with the divine mark, of *Chank* (conch) and *Chakra* (wheel), this idol of goddess Devi is itself an attraction, not only for the devotees but even for the artists too. This idol is believed to have been found out from a well in the Bhagavathy Mala, a place lying two miles north of this temple. Ever since the establishment of this temple, the local Pariathunny family people were in charge of making garlands, wreaths etc. for the religious service in this temple. For this service they receive only nominal remuneration from the temple. Yet they are very prosperous. Another family, namely Peroor Kaimal has also connections with this temple. Usually whenever an important event takes place in their family, they will inform the trustees of the temple and receive their due right of paddy from the temple.

This temple has been constructed on the pattern of the temples in the Tamilnad. Some peculiar features are found in this temple. Even though there is still in existence a family known as Madura Namboothiries (supposed to be the descendants of the run-away Namboothiri from Madura) at Kumaranalloor, they are not authorised to perform *pooja* in the temple except on unavoidable occasions, when authorised priests are not available. Nevertheless, the *Devaswom* has donated landed properties for their living. The chief priest of this temple is from the family of Pathillakars in Kasaragod taluk. For three years only one is allowed to be a priest here, but he can continue as such if permitted by the above Pathillakars. It is obligatory that he should be a bachelor and should reside in the temple premises. *Ks'athriyas* and tuskers are denied entry in the temple premises. Tuskers are also not allowed for the procession in the *Utsavam* in the temple. Only female elephants are engaged for the purpose.

The important festival of this temple is *Thrikarthika* celebrated in the month of *Vrischigom* (November-December). On this *Karthika* day it is usual to make a *nivedyam* (offering) on the compound wall of the Udayanapuram and Trichur Vadakkunnatha temples. The story goes that the gods in these two temples were greatly charmed by the beauty of Devi who was returning after her *Karthika* bath, that they came out of the temple, got up on the compound walls of the temple and stood there looking amorously at the charming figure of the passing Devi; and that the temple priests who ran helter-skelter in search of the gods, finally met them on the walls at the southern side of the temples. Thenceforth, during *Karthika* day, *pooja* used to be performed over the walls in these temples.

This temple has abundant resources, movable and immovable properties. Some of the diamond studded ornaments, vessels, weapons of the old etc. which are kept safely

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

in the treasure house of the temple are worth lakhs of rupees. Paddy fields yielding about 14,000 *paras* of rice and lands

warranting two thousand rupees as tax are also said to be in the possession of this *Deveswom*.

Mainly based on an article in Malayala Manorama Weekly dated 14th December 1957 by Shri Thiruvappu Balan.

FEAST IN THE ST. ANTONY'S CHURCH, CHENGALAM

(Vicar, St. Antony's Church, Chengalam)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Thiruvappu

About twenty miles away from the Kottayam railway station, in the Thiruvappu village of the Kottayam taluk, is situated the Chengalam St. Antony's church. This church was established in the year 1913 A.D. Prior to its establishment, the locality around the church was haunted by black magicians and evil spirits. It was to save the place from their attacks that the devout Catholics constructed this church here. More details about this church would be available from the books '*Chengala Mahathmyam*' and '*Chengalam Palliyude charithra Samkshepam*.'

St. Antony is considered and venerated as the patron of the lost things. Many instances where incurable diseases were cured through the intervention of St. Antony, have taken place since the establishment of this church; even the evil spirits possessed in man, are cast away by the power of this saint. This church was accordingly considered from the

very beginning as a place of wonder and the people were and are still, attracted to this holy place.

The annual feast of this church, namely the feast of St. Antony, takes place in February and is attended by about ten thousand people. On the first day of the feast, the church flag is hoisted with some religious ceremonies. Solemn Mass and Vespers are said on the second day of the feast. On the third day besides the High Mass and Vespers, there will be a grand procession in the evening which will be followed by a grand display of fireworks and a free show of a drama. The last day is the most important day of the feast. The important ceremonies of this day are solemn High Mass, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Sermon by an eloquent speaker and the solemn procession which will be over by noon on the day. And with this, the feast comes to a close.

FEAST OF ST. MARY IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KUDAMALLOOR

(FR. K. V. KOYIPALLIL)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Aimanam

The St. Mary's Church, Kudamalloor, dedicated to St. Mary, was founded about

800 years ago. It was constructed by the first Raja of Chembakassery. It is a wonder

FEAST OF ST. MARY IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KUDAMALLOOR

that a Hindu king should have constructed a church for the Christians. It was as a token of gratitude for the many favours and the protection from the evil spirits he received through the intercession of St. Mary, that he had constructed this church.

There were twelve famous Namboothiri *Illoms* around the Kumaranalloor temple. The above-mentioned Raja was born in very straitened circumstance. His *Illom* was located very close to the northern gate of the Kumaranalloor temple. About 800 years ago, a few Nair soldiers of the Zamorin of Kozhikode had been dismissed from service. These soldiers went here and there in search of some employment. During their journey, they reached Kumaranalloor, where they happened to meet some well-fed and happy-go-lucky Namboothiris in the temple premises. The Nair soldiers approached them and requested for their help, but they directed them to a Namboothiri boy who was then returning to his *Illom* after his duty in the temple. The boy went to his mother and narrated the incident. In the meantime, the Nairs however understood the plight of the boy and his mother. They were sure that the Namboothiris whom they met earlier, had played a trick on them and therefore, were in great rage. With the permission of his mother, the boy gave them a ring, the one and the only ornament he had with him. They sold it out and satiated their hunger and then took a decision to remain as loyal followers of this boy for the rest of their life. They confiscated the properties of the Namboothiris who had ridiculed them before and gave them to the Namboothiri boy. Thus this Namboothiri boy rose to the position of a Raja. He went to the Raja of Thekkumkoor and begged him to accept him as a Raja and to release him the adjoining places around Kumaranalloor and to permit him to build there a palace for him. The Thekkumkoor Raja permitted him to take possession of as much land as could be conquered by him during

a day and night with a *Koduval*. Thus the boy Raja with his band of followers conquered some territories with a *Koduval*. Hence the place where the church stands today was called Koduvaloor which in latter days became Kudamalloor.

The Raja of Chembakassery had executed a good number of Namboothiris and had thrown off their corpses into a tank belonging to the Mannoor Namboothiri. The evil spirits of the dead Namboothiris always hovered over the place and troubled the people. There had been many occasions when the Raja himself was thrown away from his horse while riding by the side of this tank through the machinations of these evil spirits. Thus, no more able to suffer the tortures of these evil spirits, the Raja performed various religious ceremonies to ward off these evil spirits. But they were of no avail.

The Raja consulted the elders of the Muttathu Padam family (family of Sister Alphonsa) and directed them to pray to save him from the tortures of these evil spirits. Although these prayers had some effect in reducing the attack from these evil spirits, it could not be completely got over. Finally, the Raja sent for the court astrologer and wanted him to do something of permanent nature to ward off these evil spirits. The court astrologer in turn approached the famous astrologer of the Cochin royal family and consulted him in the matter. The only remedy he suggested to ward off the dangers of the evil spirits was to construct a church near the tank of the Mannoor Namboothiri *Illom*.

Having consulted his Minister Thekkedath Manakal Namboothiri and his friend Mathoor Ramakrishnan Nair, the Raja undertook the construction of this church. This was done under the supervision of European engineers. The design of the church is in Portuguese architectural style. While the construction was fast progressing, the Raja brought a number of Christian families from various parts of the state and

made them settle in Kudamalloor and Palyakunnu bazaar. These christians were mainly drawn from Kuravilangad, Kadathuruthi, Aruvithara and Kollengode, the strongholds of christians in olden days. Kuthukallungal, Karimbumalil, Thekkedam and Vadekkedam families were however prominent among them.

Even though a good number of families severed their connections with this church and set up independent parishes, there are still thousand families under this church. Thousands of devotees visit this church annually, make offerings and conduct prayers, particularly on Good Friday.

The important offerings given here are *Kari Nercha*, *Neenthur Nercha*, *Palayam Kayarum Nercha* and *Thamuku Nercha*.

Kari Nercha: At a time when the Chembakasseri Rajas were greatly disappointed for want of an issue for them, they conducted this *Nercha* as a result of which they were blessed with issues. The devotees who came to know about this incident, began to conduct this offering to get issues for them. Some fifteen or twenty *Kari Nercha* are conducted here every year. Full *Kari*, half *Kari* and quarter *Kari Nercha* are conducted by the people, depending upon their financial position. For a full *Kari Nercha*, besides the religious ceremonies, 3,001 plantains, 501 cocoanuts, 14 *thulams* of molasses and rice flour measuring six *paras* are required. After preparing the pudding the priest blesses it and performing

some rites, distributes it to all the assembled there. The persons who have no issues generally perform this offering and obtain their wish fulfilled.

Neenthur Nercha: For a very long time since the establishment of this church, the Chembakassery Rajas used to perform this offering by walking on four legs from the side of the big granite cross installed in front of this church and make gifts to the church on the Maundy Thursday. The devotees who know the miraculous effects of this offering, perform this offering on Maunday Thursday and Good Friday to get relief from their ailments like asthma, stomach ache and headache.

Palayam Kayarum Nercha: This is performed to get relief from diseases.

Thamuku Nercha: The Christians of Kumaranalloor had once miraculously escaped from a catastrophe by performing this *Thamuku Nercha*. This is performed today in memory of that event. The *Thamuku* is an edible thing prepared with rice flour, plantains and molasses.

The annual festival of this church is the Feast of St. Mary. This feast is celebrated for four days on a grand scale, attended by more than twenty thousand people in the month of February. The highlight of this feast is the circumambulation ceremony in which the gold and silver crosses, silken umbrellas (*Muthukuda*), holy images etc. will be taken round ceremoniously in procession.

MEENA BHARANY UTSAVAM IN THE CHENGALAM DEVASWAM

(SHRI M. G. RAMACHANDRAN NAIR)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Thiruvappu

This temple which is dedicated to Bhagavathy is situated at Chengalam in the Thiruvappu village of the Kottayam taluk, just

four miles away from the Kottayam railway station. During the Thekkumkoor Raja's time, Marangur Panicker and

Mannur Panicker were the two powerful chieftains who had sway over Chengalam. They were great *Kalari Asans* (instructors of the fencing school) who taught the people various fencing exercises. They were proficient in the witchcraft also. Besides these two Chieftains, there were other prominent persons also in the locality like Chengalathil Anekat Pillai, Elapallil Pillai, Karuvallil Nair, Kuttamasseri Namboothiri, Thekkedath Kovilakathu Thamburan and the Brahmins of the Pattaru Madam. They presented a united effort in everything necessary for the common good of the place.

Once, a Panicker of the Marangur family went to Cranganore and remained there for long in meditation. It was his ambition to be in meditation till Devi appeared before him. In spite of his meditations for long, Devi did not appear to him and he was greatly disappointed. So he decided to fast for forty-one days. On the 41st day much to his surprise, a beautiful lady, decked with all her fineries, came to him and informed him that during his old age, he need not have come over there to venerate her and that it would be enough if a temple was constructed near his house on the top of the hill standing east to his house and conduct worship there. The Panicker who was all the while fast asleep woke up suddenly but he was astonished to see none there in the vicinity. The people who happened to hear Panicker's story consensually came to the conclusion that it was none other than Devi who appeared to him in the dream and that he should go over to his native place and construct a temple there and venerate her. Panicker who had been away from his native place for a pretty long time was warmly received by his people on his return and he narrated his experience to one and all.

Panicker accompanied by some other prominent people of the locality, went to the hill top on a Friday morning to inspect the spot where he had to construct the temple. Much to their surprise, they found

a self-born image of Devi at the very place which Devi had hinted in the dream. Panicker and all others accompanying him prostrated before this idol of Devi and performed *pooja* and prayers. Then they entrusted a person to perform regularly *pooja* and prayers there and also made necessary arrangements to construct there a small temple. By next morning, people from far and wide began to flow to this place to get a vision of the deity and conduct prayers. A *Sreekovil* was also constructed there. And time went on and the above Panicker and his friends passed away; yet the temple affairs were looked after by his successors.

In course of time, difference of opinion arose among the elders of the locality and some of them strongly felt that the temple should be shifted from the hill top to the site where it stands today. Accordingly as suggested by the astrologers and experienced carpenters, this temple was reconstructed on its present site and on an auspicious day, the image of Devi was taken from the old temple and installed here in the present temple. Nevertheless, on all auspicious occasions, *Para veypu* and *Ezhunnellippu* to Vattakalam (the place where the old temple was situated) are still performed as dictated by the astrologers. Today only the remnants of the basement and the ground stones of the old temple remain in that site, reminding one of the existence of a temple there in olden days.

One day Karipurathu Panicker, a petty Chieftain of the locality, had a dream in which an unknown person appeared before him and exhorted him that the local people should celebrate *Meena Bharany* by taking the effigies of swans in procession and return jubilant, it being preferable to *Garudan Thookam* and similar other celebrations.

While things were going on as smoothly as it ought to be, there arose some differences of opinion between the Mannur Panicker and Marangur Panicker which made them ultimately bitter enemies and

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each of them wanted to kill the other. One day while Mannur Panicker was taking bath in the temple tank, one of Marangur Panicker's friends who belonged to the Poocheri family, shot him to death for which he was amply rewarded by Marangur Panicker.

After the execution of Mannur Panicker, the Marangur Panicker also killed a Brahman boy, the only child of a Brahman lady and robbed him of his ornaments. Gradually

Devi became dissatisfied with the Panicker and his family. All the members of this family gradually passed away, one by one. Today both these families are extinct.

The *Bharany Utsavam*, the annual festival of this temple, commences on the *Chathayam* day and lasts for eight days till *Bharany* asterism in *Meenam* (March-April). More than ten thousand people attend this *Utsavam*, the main attraction of which is *Annankettu*

ARAT IN THE KILIROOR KUNNUMMEL BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE

(SHRI P. GOPALA PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Thiruvappu

The Kiliroor Kunnummel Bhagavathi temple is situated just four miles away from the Kottayam railway station in the Thiruvappu village of the Kottayam taluk. This temple was founded in the year 117 M. E. during the days of the Thekkumkooor Rajas.

Once Kodungallur Bhagavathi and her sisters undertook a journey through the length and breadth of the universe. Each of her sisters settled down at various places. The *Maha Maya* who could not find a place, finally settled down at the temple at Kiliroor.

There was once a pious lady in the Kannot family at Kiliroor by name Kotha. It was her usual practice to take bath early in the morning everyday and on one occasion when she was taking bath at the local

stream, a beautiful lady came to her swimming from the opposite direction and told her that she should request the king and the people to install her in the temple located on the top of the nearby hill. Accordingly, as informed by Kotha, they consecrated *Maha Maya* in that temple.

Aranazhipayasam, *Charakilada* and *Adapandi Anazhi* are the special offerings made to the deity in this temple. It is said that the person who makes any one of these offerings is likely to have his wish fulfilled.

Annually the *Arat Utsavam* of this temple is celebrated for eight days. This *Utsavam* commences with the hoisting of the flag on *Rohini* day in *Meenam* and comes to a close with *Arat* on the *Pooram* day. About five thousand people usually participate in this *Utsavam*.

BHARANY UTSAVAM IN THE PARAPPADOM BHADRAKALI TEMPLE

(SHRI S. MADHAVAN PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Kottayam

The Parappadom Bhadrakali temple is situated in the Kottayam village of the Kottayam taluk, about three miles away from the Kottayam railway station. Years ago, an old man belonging to the local Thumbayil Veedu, was in the habit of worshipping Kodungalloor Bhagavathi once in a month by going over there. Once, owing to illness, he could not go over there and he felt sorry for his inability to conduct worship of Devi. But Devi who was satisfied by the deep devotion of the old man, appeared to him in a dream and informed him that he need not go to Kodungalloor any more and that it would be enough if he would construct a temple for her near his house and conduct worship there. Next morning he found himself in good health. He constructed a temple on the Vayara Padam, consecrated Devi there and began worshipping her. This is the legend about the origin of this temple. Even today, the members of this family enjoy free supply of

food and a small pension from this temple. Since it was founded at Vayara Padam, this temple was called as Vayarapadam temple, but in later days, it came to be known as Parappadam temple.

The *Meena Bharani Utsavam* is celebrated for eight days from *Thiruvonam* asterism to *Bharany* day in *Meenam* (March-April) attended by more than a thousand people. The special feature of the festival is that when the idol of Devi is taken in procession from the temple, the members of the Thumbayil family have to carry the *Kuthu vilakku* (lamp with long handle) like other *Kazhakkar*. During the procession when the image of Devi is taken to *Arat Kadavu* and back to the temple, a Muslim member of the local Pallikaryathil family will have to escort the procession and fire the muskets, for which this Muslim family is granted certain privileges from this temple. The above practice is still continued during the *Utsavam* in this temple.

UTSAVAM IN THE VENNMALA ERAVIPURATH PERUMAL DEVASWOM

(SHRI K. NARAYANA PISHARADY)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Puthuppally

The Eravipurath Perumal *Devaswom* is situated in the Puthuppally village of the Kottayam taluk, at a distance of seven miles from the Kottayam railway station, crowning the summit of a hill called Vennimala which lies at an elevation of 3,000 feet from sea level. This place was sacred from time

immemorial as it had been the abode of great sages and *Maharshis*. While, once, Cheraman Perumal was canoeing through the Vembanad lake, he saw far up in the east the *Saptha Rishis* performing circumambulation around a certain object. He was sure that there might have been some-

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thing sacred in that place which made the sages do a religious performance. So he turned his canoe towards the place where he saw the sages performing the circumambulation. He drew up his canoe near Puthupalli kavu and traversing a little further to the east from here, reached the top of a hill called Vennimala where the sages were seen performing the circumambulation. He was greatly astonished to see a self-existent idol of Vishnu in the place. After consecrating it there properly, he made arrangements for the conduct of daily *pooja* in the place. At that time the only inhabitant of that hill was a Malavedan named Eravi. Hence this temple was called after him as Eravipurath Perumal *Devaswom*. Even today this hill is inhabited by some hill tribes and nobody other than Hindus is allowed to settle down in the place. There are a few pools and springs on the top of this hill which have perennial flow of water on all seasons. By efflux of time some of them have ceased to exist. Yet, through the ridge of a rock, water is coming out always as if from a perennial spring. This is believed to be the holy water flowing from the heavens. On the dark lunar days in *Thulam* (October–November), *Kumbhom* (February–March), *Idavam* (May–June) and *Karkadakam* (July–August), a great number of devotees visit this temple and offer prayers. As a motorable road has been laid to the temple, the pilgrims can easily reach this holy place without much difficulty.

There are some big caves on the top of this hill. Through these caves, one can walk erect easily. These caves are said to have been the resort of the *Maharshies* of the olden days. In the legend stories (*Ithihya Mala*) written by Kottarathil San-kunnu, there is mention about this place. Only very few houses are situated on the top of this hill and usually the dead is not buried or cremated in this place. Chitrakoodathil Pisharody is the trustee of this temple. Besides two or three other local Nair families have also some right over this temple. The famous christian family of the Kunnukuzhi house is located to the east of this temple. The lands lying around the temple, about 400 acres in extent, are in the possession of this family. The christian households also view this temple with great reverence.

The *Utsavam* of this temple is usually conducted for 28 days from *Rohini* asterism in *Makaram* (January–February) to the *Rohini* day in *Kumbhom* (February–March). During all these days, there will be *Chakyar-kooth* performances in the temple.

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, PUTHUPPALLY

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kottayam
Puthuppally

There is no historical record save some legends regarding the origin of the Puthuppally church, situated at a central place among the historic Vennimala temple, Kadamuri temple, Iravinelloor Bhadrakali temple and the Thrikke temple and Vazhakulam temple believed to be founded by

Parasurama. Anyway it is certain that Puthuppally church is an enduring example testifying to the fact that Hindu rulers and the people of Kerala at large had been very considerate towards the Christians. The Kings and barons of those days had shown keen interest in setting up places of worship for

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, PUTHUPPALLY

the loyal and patriotic Christians who had been endeavouring and making invaluable contributions, politically and economically, for the well being and prosperity of the country. It is believed that all the ancient churches in Kerala had come up in this manner.

At one time, the capital of Thekkumkoor Rajas was Vennimala, near Puthuppally. Later, their capital was shifted to Kottayam. The elders say that the church at Puthuppally had been constructed long ago by the Thekkumkoor Rajas for their Christian subjects. In the beginning this church was on the top of the hill, located near the temple at Vazhakulam. In due course this church was shifted to the hill at Ilamthuruthil that was given as a gift, free of tax, by the Punnoorkad Namboothiri family. The hill where this church had been founded first is called even now Kochu Pallikunnu.

Though the date of establishment of this church cannot be determined exactly, it is supposed, that it is as old as the Thekkumkoor dynasty. To refer to countless multitudes, there was an expression in Travancore that there were as many people as for the *Perunal* of the Puthuppally church. Thus one can understand that the *Perunal* of the Puthuppally church had attained greater importance than the festivals of other churches.

The grandest festival of this church which is dedicated to St. George, is on the 24th of *Medom* (April–May). Large number of devotees, even from far off places, throng to the church to participate in the festival commencing on the 15th of *Medom* with the hoisting of the church flag. Even offerings by non-christians to get cured of their sufferings like poisoning, smallpox, mental derangement and possession by evil spirits, are quite common in this church. The fowls brought as offerings here, after having

been cooked well, are distributed to the assembled, soon after the circumambulation is over. Besides, it is also usual that rice is cooked (*Vachoot*) and distributed to the devotees, coming from distant places. The number of devotees using this rice as a medicine after having it dried and powdered, is not too small. On the eve of the grand festival day, the *Virakideel* ceremony in connection with the feast, will be conducted on a grand scale. All the parishioners, the rich and the poor alike, take part in this ceremony. The fireworks display conducted in connection with the festival of this church had been famous from very long.

There are about fifty parishioners who have since severed their connections with this church. To all of them, there due share of the offerings is given from the church. According to custom bound, the festival of the church is conducted by the people of 36 *karas* together.

Of late, there had been many an instance of bickerings, quarrels and litigations in Syrian Christian churches in Kerala as a result of which certain churches had to be closed down. Even though this church too had got entangled in the whirlpool of litigations, it is pointed out to the credit of this church that Holy Mass was held here on all Sundays without interruption. The devotees believe that this was possible only because of the presence of St. George, the valiant fighter of devils.

This Church is administered by Mar Ivanios, well-known as *Parettachan*. His Holiness who had been the Vicar of this church for a pretty long time, still continues to hold the position because of the affectionate pressure from the parishioners. The religious duties of this church are now being attended to by Rev. K. M. Elias, Rev. George Padinjarekootu and Rev. P. M. Kuriakose Parakal.

Based mainly on an article by Shri Ommen Chandy in the Malayala Manorama dated 5-5-1963.

UTSAVAM IN THE KADAMURI TEMPLE

(SHRI N. P. SREEKUMARAN NAIR)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Changanacherry
Vakathanam

The Kadamuri temple is situated at a distance of six miles from the Kottayam railway station in the Vakathanam village of the Changanacherry taluk. The temple is dedicated to Narasimhaswami.

Long ago, a Namboothiri lady set out from North Malabar to meet the Maharaja of Travancore to represent some of her grievances to him. On the way, she reached a place called Gadapuri. It was dusk when she arrived here and therefore she could not continue her onward journey. Hence, she went to the nearest Namboothiri house, the Vadasseri *Illom* and spent the night there. At day break on the next day, she continued her journey, accompanied by a Brahman boy who was sent from the *Illom* to show her the route. Midway on her route, she reached by the side of a temple and wanted to offer worship in that temple. Leaving her palmyra-leaf-umbrella (an inseparable item of the equipage of the Namboothiri ladies used by them as a screen against their being seen by males) outside, she went inside the temple to pray. On coming out of the temple after worshipping the deity and trying to take the umbrella she found, to her great consternation, that the umbrella had been firmly secured to the ground and that it could not be lifted. She was therefore very much worried as to how she could continue her journey without the umbrella. While thus puzzled over the loss of her umbrella and brooding over her plight, she heard a mysterious voice from inside the *sanctum sanctorum*, saying "Let the umbrella be there. I have come over here by the aid of this umbrella. Therefore, seek some other means and be off". On hearing this heavenly words, she instantaneously

wailed, quite perplexed, that in future the Namboothiri ladies might not be trapped into such an awkward position as she had been trapped in and thus saying, went back to Vadasseri *Illom*, got an umbrella from there and continued again her journey. The Vadasseri Namboothiri, on hearing this strange news, came to the temple and tried to lift the umbrella from the ground, but he had to give up his attempt. Thereupon he consulted an astrologer and he was informed that Narasimhaswami who had come to that place through the umbrella of the Namboothiri lady, should be installed on the place and that the Namboothiri himself should perform the consecration of the idol. Accordingly an idol of Lord Narasimha was got finished in antimonic stone and it was installed, facing eastward, at the place where the umbrella lay secured on the ground. This event took place on the *Thiruvonam* day of a certain month of *Kumbhom*.

After sometime, a Namboothiri lady happened to visit this temple for worship, when again there was a voice from the temple saying, "why did you come over here without the child?" Immediately the idol which until then stood facing eastward, changed its position to west. Even today, it stands there in that position. The Namboothiri lady who regretted very much for this ominous event, left the temple with a heavy heart, praying that that no Namboothiri lady should ever chance to come to this temple for worship. From that time onwards, Namboothiri ladies do not come to this temple for worship.

It is believed that the name Gadapuri, in later days, has been got transformed to

UTSAVAM IN THE THRIKKODITHANAM TEMPLE

Kadamuri. The special offerings of this temple are *Palpayasam*, *Chathushatham* and *Aravana*. There are certain stone inscriptions on the walls inside the temple. They have not been deciphered yet. Even from early days, the Kshatriyas, tuskers and Namboothiri ladies have been denied entry into the temple campus.

Annually, the *Prathista* day of this temple is celebrated on a grand scale in the month of *Kumbhom* (February-March). This festival which commences with the hoisting of the temple flag, lasts for ten days. About 5,000 people assemble here to attend this festival.

UTSAVAM IN THE THRIKKODITHANAM TEMPLE

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Changanacherry
Trikkodithanam

The Thrikkodithanam Vishnu temple, situated at a distance of two miles east of changanacherry, is historic and ancient. This is said to be one of the thirteen Vishnavite temples in Kerala.¹ According to legends, this temple was founded by the youngest of the Pandavas, Nakula and Sahadeva, during the period of their pilgrimage.² In the light of this story, some historians claim that this temple would have been built about three thousand years before christ.³ Modern historians do not, however, believe these legends. Yet, they also think that this temple might have been founded before 8th century A. D. This surmise is based on the fact that a poet by name Nammazhvar, attributed by Swami Kannu Pillai to the 8th century, has sung about this temple in his poems.⁴ Some inscriptions dating back to the days of Bhaskara Ravi Varma,⁵ as also the *Unnuneeli Sandeshom*⁶ in which mention has been

made of this temple⁷ tend to prove the antiquity of this temple. Thus the Thrikkodithanam temple has been famous in history as well as in literature. Hundreds of historians and research workers visit this place every year.

Far from the madding crowd of urban life this temple stands in a secluded and beautiful village. The high walls around the temple give it the look and grandeur of a castle or a fort. This laterite wall which is 20-25 ft. high is very old. The stones are so skillfully chiselled and fixed on the walls in the old constructional style that it is impossible to distinguish the joints in the wall.⁸ It is believed that this wall was built by some demons during a single night. Whatever it be, this wall is a convincing proof of the constructional skill of the people of ancient Kerala.

To the south of this temple, outside the compound wall, there is an old Subramoni

1. Travancore Archaeological Series, Vol. II, page 33
2. Kerala Maha Charithram, Vol. II, Page 288
3. Ibid page 288
4. Travancore Archaeological Series Vol. II, page 33
5. The period of Bhaskara Ravi Varma is said to be 1043-1082 A.D. by Shri Elamkulam Kunjan Pilla
6. Shri T. K. Joseph is of the view that Unnuneeli Sandeshom was written in 1341 A. D.
7. Unnuneeli Sandeshom, Part I, Stanza was 127
8. Kerala Maha Charithram, Part II, pages 288-289

temple which has been recently renovated and which, according to local belief, is older than the main temple. Subramonia was a Dravidian concept and therefore it might be that when the Brahmans got supremacy over others, they deprecated the Dravidian deities and kept them outside the temple walls. It was later that they were also accepted as adorable deities.¹ A good number of Sastha temples so built outside the temple walls could be seen attached to many other temples in Kerala.

To the north-east of the Subramonia temple and to the east of the Vishnu temple outside the wall there is a dilapidated tank almost filled by sand. This vast tank which extends to an area of two or three acres, was the temple tank in ancient days. Even today, a portion of this tank, is used as the temple tank. On the bank of this tank, near the temple gate, there is a big pillar on the top of which is seen kept hanging a human figure in granite stone. This image has a crown and an investiture string on it and holds a conch (*Sankhu*) in its hand. There is a story about this stone image.

In olden days, Thrikkodithanam was a part of the Thekkumkoor principality and this temple was administered by Ettillathil Pottis (eight families of Pottis). The doors of the temple never used to be opened on any account after the evening *pooja*. The consecrations of the deities in the temples at Thrippuliyoor, Thiruvarammala, Thiruvannandoor, Thrithikkat and Trikkodithanam were performed by Pandavas and according to the age of the person who installed them the deities had assumed precedence. Accordingly the deity of the Thrikkodithanam temple installed by Nakula and Sahadeva, is the youngest of all the deities installed by Pandavas. If this deity goes to the other temples to see his elder brothers, the glory of this temple will diminish. Once Thiruvarammala Appan

(the deity of Thiruvarammala temple) came to Thrikkodithanam to meet his younger brother. As usual, the temple gate was closed when he arrived at the temple and therefore he pushed aside the door. The crack in the gate doors of the temple is said to have occurred as a result of this push.

Once with a view to destroy the fame and greatness of the Thrikkodithanam temple, the Raja of Chempakassery set out incognito to Thrikkodithanam. When he arrived there, the temple had been closed and therefore, he got the temple opened by bribing the *Maran*, (an employee of the temple), worshipped the deity and returned. Next morning, the temple authorities came to know this incident. Adorning the *Maran* with a false crown, an investiture string and a conch in his hand, they hanged him for his fault. To perpetuate this unholy tie between the *Maran* and the Raja of Chempakassery who was a Brahman, a stone image was made and kept hanging in front of the temple. Perhaps this story and this image may be reminiscent of any intrusion or invasion, made by the Chempakassery Raja against this temple. Till sixty years back, before closing the temple after the evening *pooja* a *Maran*, standing outside the wall at the south western corner of the temple, used to blow the conch thrice and say 'may Ambalapuzha be ruined.'²

As in other temples, there is no *Anakkottil* (elephant's house) attached to this temple. The sanctum sanctorum is located inside the *Chuttambalam* (buildings of the temple court). The main deity here is Vishnu. Two other subordinate deities, of Dakshinamoorthy and Narasimhamoorthy, the former at the southern side and the latter at the western side, have also been installed in the sanctum sanctorum. Outside the *Chuttambalam*, on the western side, have been installed the deities of Sastha and the demons.

There are no remarkable sculptures or paintings on the temple buildings. But the stone inscriptions found around the sanctum sanctorum are of great interest and importance to the students of history. These inscriptions mainly relate to the appointment of Govardhana Marthandan by the emperor Bhaskara Ravi Varman for ruling the country that included Thrikkodithanam also and the reforms made in this temple by the former. The most important historical fact revealed through these inscriptions as well as the inscriptions in the adjacent temple at Perunna is that there was, in ancient days, a state known as *Nantuzhainadu* with Thrikkodithanam as its headquarters and that it was one of the important states in the Kulasekharapura empire. The rulers were sometimes appointed directly by the emperors themselves. Govardhana Marthandan was one of such rulers. Before him, another Raja of Venad, Vallabhan Kothavarman had also ruled over this place. It was he who introduced the festival *Uthrotsavam* celebrated in this temple on a fairly large scale in the month of *Kumbhom*.

Gradually the importance of the Thrikkodithanam temple began to wane. This happened because the Thekkumkoor Rajas had to maintain, not only this temple but many other similar temples also. Besides, an easily tractable route was also found out between Thiruvalla and Kottayam when the latter place grew into prominence. And

thus the old route to the Ettumanur temple at Kottayam via Thrikkodithanam, Vakathanam, Vennimala and Manikandapuram lost its prominence.

Unlike in other temples, the festival is conducted here in a peculiar manner. It is devoid of any festivities and rituals usually found in other temples. Annually a special function is held in this temple in *Vrischigom* (November-December) known as *Deepa Mahotsavam*. This is conducted in a melancholy setting. At the outset, materials commonly used for obsequies of the dead are collected. Green umbrella, unbaked earthen pots, green spathes of areca palms etc., are unavoidable items. On the ninth day, after the circumambulation of the deity around the temple, a small hut-like structure will be made in the temple courtyard with the rinds of plantain tree and innumerable lighted torches will be stuck over it making it resemble a funeral pyre. The Pottis then bring a false coffin, bedecked with flowers, from inside the temple and try to put it in that pyre when the assembled devotees cry aloud "don't do it, don't do it," forbidding them from putting the coffin in the pyre. After this *Deepa* ceremony, devotees collect the ashes from the pyre and smear on their foreheads. The whole ceremony is symbolic of the performance of *Sathi* by Madri, mother of Sahadevan, the founder of this temple.

Based mainly on the article by Shri Pallipad in the Malayala Manorama weekly dated 13th September 1958

1. Article by Ram Sunder on South Indian Gods in Democrat monthly 1939, page 16
2. Kerala Maha Charithram, Vol. II, page 290

UTSAVAM IN THE MAHADEVA TEMPLE, CHIRAKADAVU

(SHRI T. N. BHASKARAN NAIR)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Kanjirappalli
Chirakadavu

The Chirakadavu Mahadeva temple, dedicated to Lord Siva, is situated at a distance of twenty-two miles from the Kottayam railway station in the Chirakadavu village of the Kanjirappalli taluk. The following is the legend regarding the origin of this temple.

In ancient days, while the sage Koopa-maharshi was roaming about various places in search of ghee for the use in the Chengannur temple, he happened to arrive at Chirakadavu and to come across a Vaishnavite saint who was then conducting penance (*thapasu*) there. The saint, on hearing the object of his journey, gave an assurance to the sage that the required quantity for the Chengannur temple would be supplied every year from Chirakadavu, and so saying, vanished from the place. Even now the required quantity of ghee is sent from Chirakadavu to Chengannur temple for purposes of performing *Abhishekom* on the deity. Koopamaharshi thereupon settled down at Chirakadavu and consecrated the Lord there. It was in the well just in front of

the temple that he was performing penance. Even now, this well and the pit below it are seen there. Since the *Prathishta* was in front of the well and the *Koopam* (pit) below it, this place got the name *Koopathazha*, which in due course became *Kothazhu*. Since the *Prathishta* was in the Chirakkara, this place got the name Chirakadavu.

The special offerings (*vazhipadu*) of this temple are *Neyyabhishekom*, *Kadumpayasam* and *Neyyuvilakku*.

Every year the annual *Utsavam* of this temple is conducted for ten days from *Punaratham* to *Vishakhom* asterisms in *Makarom* (January-February.) About 4,000 people attend this *Utsavam*, the main attractions of which are *Kathakali*, *Harikatha*, *Nagaswaram*, *Panchavadyam*, *Ottamthullal*, religious discourses and *Ezhunellippu* of the image of the Lord on the back of caparisoned elephants. Bell-metal and copper vessels, stationery articles and rootcrops are some of the important commodities marketed in the fair held during the festive days.

FEAST OF OUR LADY IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KANAYANKAVAYAL

(FR. THOMAS ARYAMANNIL)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Peermade
Peruvanthanam

The St. Mary's Church, Kanayankavayal is situated about forty-eight miles away from the Kottayam railway station, in the Peruvanthanam village of the Peermade

taluk. The inhabitants of Kanayankavayal had originally come from Palai, Kanjirappally, Poonjar and Chennadu in search of cultivable lands and in due course they



Pl. 66 PILGRIMAGE TO P. 237
SABARIMALA

- 1, 2 & 3. Scenes of Petta Thullal at Erumeli
4. The Vavar Mosque at Erumeli (It is customary for the pilgrims to offer worship at the Mosque on their way to Sabarimala)
5. Chandanakudom, a Muslim Festival at the Vavar Mosque



SOME ASPECTS OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO SABARIMALA

settled down here. Previously this place was the private property of the Karimpanal brothers of Kanjirappally.

The majority of the immigrants were Catholics and as soon as they settled down here, they felt the necessity of a church for them. And accordingly this church was built by them and dedicated to Our Lady of Immaculate Conception. In the year 1954,

a Vicar was appointed in this Church.

The next attempt of the people was to establish a primary school in that locality for the education of their children. Soon a convent was also started there.

The parishioners celebrate the Feast of Our Lady, on 7th and 8th of December every year with all solemnities. About two thousand people usually attend this feast.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO SABARIMALA

(SHRI M. P. MANMATHAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Kottayam
Peermade
Mlappara

Bharat is a land of myriad pilgrim centres. From very early times the oneness and cultural unity of the country were maintained and fostered by the trek of pilgrims from one end of the country to another. Even today this ancient tradition is continued with unabated enthusiasm by the religious minded people of India. For many centuries 'Sabarimala' in the south (Kerala State) has been a very important pilgrim centre attracting lakhs of devotees.

The presiding deity at Sabarimala is Lord Ayyappa, known in puranas as Sastha. Sastha is considered a symbol of unity between the Vaishnavaites and the Saivaites, his origin being traced to a union of Siva and Vishnu under special circumstances. But Lord Ayyappa at Sabarimala is believed to be an Avathar of Sastha, who after fulfilling his mission in life has rejoined his supreme self enshrined at Sabarimala. Some people say that Sastha images seen all over Kerala are those of Lord Buddha, but this theory has been disputed by eminent scholars.

The origin of the pilgrimage to Sabarimala is shrouded in mystery. The shrine is situated in a spot consecrated by the holy life of Sabari who was met there by Sri Rama

during his wanderings in search of Sitha. It is believed that the original temple of Sastha was founded by Parasurama. According to one theory the pilgrimage commemorates an attack on a great Buddhist Vihara in a wave of militant Hindu revival. But legend has it that this hazardous pilgrimage is undertaken in memory of a military march against a formidable robber-Chieftain. Lord Sastha was born in the royal family of Pandalam (Central Travancore) as Ayyappan in order to crush the bandits entrenched in the Western Ghats near Sabarimala. The young warrior prince led a vast army into the interior of the mountains, destroyed the robbers and had the temple of Sabarimala renovated and re-consecrated. Anyhow, the pilgrimage is in some respects reminiscent of an organised march of a military nature.

The temple is situated in the interior of the mountain ranges of the Western Ghats (Sahyadri) and it is inaccessible except on foot. Pilgrims have to negotiate long distances of the thick forests and tall mountains infested with all sorts of wild animals. At present there are four important routes leading to the shrine with variations only in the length of the path

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOTTAYAM DISTRICT

and the duration of the journey, all the other hazards of a mountain journey being equal.

Pilgrimage to Sabarimala cannot be chosen at random because it requires long preparations and appointed timings. Nowadays the rigours of preparation are being relaxed by many pilgrims. But normally a devotee who wishes to perform the pilgrimage should undergo at least forty-one days' penance (*Vratham*) consisting of strict celibacy, morning and evening ablutions, growing of beard and daily prayers. Calling aloud the name of the Lord, (*Saranam*) is a necessary concomitant of the regular daily worship. This is a piece of training for the devotee, who should chant aloud the name of the Lord as he walks along the mountain path.

January 14, every year, synchronising with the day of *Sankramam* (crossing of the sun from *Dakshinayana* to *Uttarayana*) is the important festival day of the temple. The *Sankramam* day is usually the first day of *Makaram* (a Malabar month) which is considered the beginning of the Hindu New Year according to a certain calendar and this day is celebrated as 'Thai Pongal' throughout South India. It is only on the above festival day that lakhs of pilgrims, called Ayyappans (assuming the very name of the Lord) flock to the shrine for worship. Another important festival day is Vishu which comes three months later.

An intending pilgrim begins his preparations by the first of *Vrischigom* (about November 15th) when he wears the holy beads and takes the pilgrim's vow in a neighbouring temple. With this begins the period of a strictly ascetic life for two months. During these months the pilgrim is addressed as 'Swami' or 'Ayyappan.' The Ayyappans of a village assemble every night and have their prayers which include loud chanting of the names of the Lord and of devotional songs around a small *Pandal* erected for the purpose and tastefully decorated and illuminated. This ritual is some-

times very elaborate and colourful and includes holy dancing in a bonfire. This daily ritual is arranged in the house of each Ayyappan in turn. The pilgrimage lasts for a week and each Ayyappan has to carry on his head a big bag containing victuals and offerings of various kinds. The actual pilgrimage starts with the packing of the sacred bag. The bearded Ayyappans in dark blue robes and with the sacred bags on their heads trek in groups chanting aloud the names of the Lord under the leadership of veterans who have trodden the track many a time. The various groups assemble at a place called *Erumeli* at the foot of the hills and after further preparations begin the more difficult part of the journey in larger groups. There are many rituals to be performed on the way. The most important resting place before they reach the shrine is provided by the sandy banks of the river Pampa where they enjoy a sumptuous feast. After this they have many a steep hill to traverse and their destination is reached when they ascend the eighteen steps leading upto the little shrine. Here they see the 'Makara Vilakku' i. e. the holy lamps lit on *Makaram* 1 and return immediately tired in limbs but ennobled and strengthened in spirit.

Lord Ayyappan is worshipped as *Kaliyugavaradan*, i. e. the giver of all boons in this age of *Kaliyuga*. In the course of the strict and arduous penance you become one with the Lord and call yourself Ayyappa, and this is a practical experience of Sankara's *Advaita*. *Advaita* means that you and the Lord are one and not divided into *Jeevathma* and *Paramathma*, i. e. the human soul and the supreme Self. So the pilgrimage to Sabarimala is no ordinary visiting of a holy place but an effort of the *Bhaktha* to unite himself with the Lord and enjoy the eternal bliss of *Satchidananda*.

Some of the social aspects of the pilgrimage are worth noting. During the entire pilgrimage all distinctions of castes and class are forgotten. Such a gesture of unity

SOME ASPECTS OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO SABARIMALA

coming down the ages in a caste-ridden and hierarchical society is something unique. The pilgrimage has also to be viewed as an adventurous exercise in mountain-climbing and an exhilarating picnic. In fact these aspects are assuming greater importance and hence the increasing popularity of the great pilgrimage.

In conclusion a word about the Ayyappa Seva Sanghom may not be out of place. The Ayyappa Seva Sangham is ever at the

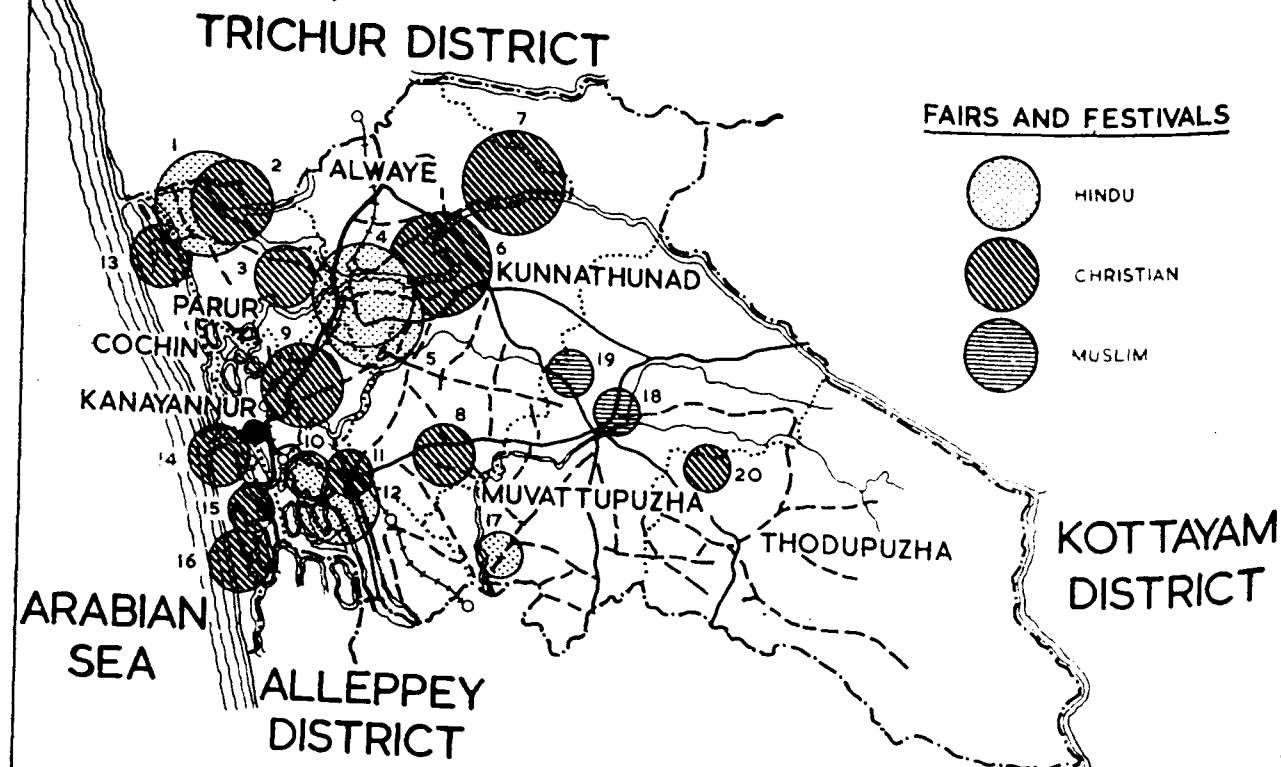
service of the pilgrims and any one in distress may confidently approach the Sanghom people for help. Camps of the Sanghom are established at important places of the main routes where they not only provide various amenities, but attend to the sick and the disabled. Every service rendered by the Sanghom is absolutely free, for they perfectly know that serving the *Bhaktha* is serving the Lord.

Note: Situated not far from the Sabarimala Sastha temple, there is a shrine in the name of Vavar, a Muslim of great valour who was a close associate of Sree Ayyappa. It is a rare feature of the pilgrimage to Sabarimala that the Hindu pilgrims offer worship at this shrine of Vavar also during their trip.

**FAIRS AND FESTIVALS
OF
ERNAKULAM DISTRICT**

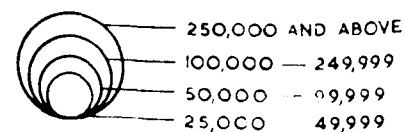
ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

PLACES OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS WITH
CONGREGATION OF 25,000 AND OVER



- 1 MOOTHAKUNNAM SREE NARAYANAMANGALAM TEMPLE, VADAKKEKARA
- 2 ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, GOTHURUTH, CHENNAMANGALAM
- 3 KUNNEL CHURCH, ALENGAD
- 4 SIVA TEMPLE, ALWAYE
- 5 MAHADEVAR TEMPLE, ALWAYE
- 6 ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KANJOOR, KIZHAKKUMBHAGOM
- 7 ST. THOMAS' CHURCH, MALAYATTUR
- 8 ST. PETER'S CHURCH, KOLENCHERI, AIKERANAD SOUTH
- 9 ST. GEORGE'S FORANE CHURCH, EDAPPALLY
- 10 BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, VARAMBANIARKULANGARA, ERNAKULAM
- 11 ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, KARINGACHIRA, THIRUVANKULAM
- 12 KOTTARAM BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, MARADU
- 13 ST. MARY'S CHURCH, PALLIPURAM
- 14 SANTA CRUZ CATHEDRAL, FORT COCHIN
- 15 MUNDAMVELI CHURCH, PALLURUTHY
- 16 ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, KUMBALANGHY
- 17 PERUTHRIKOVIL TEMPLE, PAZHOOR, PIRAVOM
- 18 PAIPRA MOSQUE, MUVATTUPUZHA
- 19 JUMAYATH MOSQUE, MULAVOOR
- 20 ST. MARY'S CHURCH, NAGAPUZHA, KALLOORKAD

SCALE FOR SIZE OF CONGREGATION



LEGEND

- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- TALUK BOUNDARY
- NATIONAL HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- DISTRICT ROAD
- RAILWAY
- RIVER
- CANAL
- DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS

FEAST IN ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, PARUR

(SHRI V. VARGHESE)

District
Taluk
Town

Ernakulam
Parur
Parur

This is the only church of the Ernakulam Diocese in the name of St. John, the Baptist. The church was established in A. D. 802 and it was destroyed by fire during the invasion of Tipu in 984. Then the church was reconstructed by the help of the Portuguese. The existing church was again reconstructed recently as the building was unsafe and not sufficient for the needs of the parishioners. Most of the parishioners have migrated from North Parur, Cranganore and other places. In ancient documents it is

stated 'Maha Devar Pattana Mahke—Parur Kudiirikum'. This Maha Devar Pattanam is Cranganore.

When the Synod of Dyamper was held in 1599, the proceeding of the assembly was postponed for a day considering the importance of the feast of St. John, the Baptist at South Parur, the only prominent parish of the neighbouring places. The feast of St. John, the Baptist is annually conducted here on 24th June.

FEAST OF MANJU MATHA, PALLIPORT

(FR. F. J. FERNANDEZ)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Parur
Chennamangalam

In the 8th century, a strip of land was formed between the Cochin Port and the Cranganore Port by the accretion of the Arabian sea. It is 15 miles long and 1 mile broad. Munambam Palliport is the northernmost village of the strip of land known as Vypeen Island.

In Munambam Palliport, the Maharaja of Cochin built a church for the Jesuits in 1577. (Oriente Conquistado Chapter II, 66). Though it was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin it is recorded in history that it was also known as Vera Cruz. To the south of the church was the historical seminary which the Jesuits founded and which was afterwards shifted to Chennamangalam. Towards the western side is the St. Peter's chapel, also

known as *Kadalattu Palli*. The fort which the Portuguese built when they first settled down here is on the northern side of the church.

During the time of the Dutch, they made an extension for the church at Palliport. Adjoining it on the southern side they built another church and dedicated it to St. Rock which is at present the cemetery chapel.

Besides, the Dutch governor built a residence for Roman Catholic priests attached to this church and gave them three acres of land free of tax and certain other privileges.

When the Dutch sold the fort of Cranganore and other places to Veera Marthanda Varma, the Raja of Travancore, they entered into a treaty by which it was agreed

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

that the Government would not levy taxes on the lands the Dutch had donated to the Catholic church and that the Government would not interfere with the Roman Catholic priests. This document is preserved in Fort St. George.

The legend goes that during the reign of Tippu Sultan, when the soldiers of Tippu landed at Pallipottam and destroyed it, the terror-stricken villagers took shelter in the church and implored Our Lady's protection. No sooner had they implored help than the whole place was enveloped in thick snowy mist, with the result that the soldiers had to retreat immediately. From that day onwards, the church is known as the Church of Manju Matha or of Our Lady of Snow, as the miracle was attributed to her.

The Catholic Church celebrates the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Snow on the 5th August. The same date is observed

as the feast of Manju Matha. People from all over South India come streaming to this church from the first day of the Novena, and on the feast day the crowd assumes a number not less than 20,000. A big fair is organised every year in connection with this feast. As thousands of pilgrims visit this church every day during the festival, which lasts for more than two weeks, it has become an attraction to the organisers of the fair. More than 10 stalls are temporarily erected for this purpose. All sorts of products and commodities are sold here. But the speciality of the fair during this festival is the sale of fishing nets, wooden furniture and all varieties of metal wares. People from distant parts of the country come here to take part in the fair.

The church which was built by the Raja of Cochin in 1577 was beautifully rebuilt and solemnly blessed in 1934 by the Archbishop of Verapoly.

UTSAVAM IN THE KANNAMKULANGARA DEVASWOM

(SHRI S. RAMAKRISHNA IYER)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Parur
Village	Parur

The Kannamkulangara Devaswom, dedicated to Mahavishnu, is situated in the Parur village at a distance of ten miles north west of the Alwaye railway station. Long ago, there was a Namboothiri Illom known as Kottakavu close by the present temple. This temple was constructed by the Namboothiris of this Illom for the use of their family as well as for the local inhabitants. Two bachelor Namboothiris of the Kottakavu Illom had made a bet with a Christian priest who was a magician as well and tried some tricks with him in which the Namboothiris were defeated. To keep their word of honour they embraced

Christianity and donated the Illom to the church. Some indications are still seen there which go to prove this fact. With the decay of the Illom, this temple, according to the law of the land, came under the control of the Raja of Parur and thereafter passed on to the hands of Travancore Maharajas and gradually became a scheduled Devaswom. This temple is held in high esteem by the devotees on a par with the great temple at Guruvayoor. The important offerings made to this temple are plantain Nivedyam, Muzhukappu (covering the deity with saturated sandal mixture) and Kalabam.

The annual festival of this temple is cele-

KUMBHA BHARANY IN THE KOTTUVALLIKAVU BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

brated for ten days, the Arat falling on the thiruvonam day in Makaram (January-February), the tenth day of the Utsavnm. Approximately, 5,000 people attend this

Utsavam. Vessels, toys and stonewares are some of the important items sold in the fair held during the Utsavam days.

KUMBHA BHARANY IN THE KOTTUVALLIKAVU BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI K. N. APPUKUTTAN ELAYIDAM)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Parur
Village	Kottuvally

The Kottuvallikavu Bhagavathy temple is situated nine miles to the east of the Alwaye railway station in the Kottuvally village of the Parur taluk. This temple is said to have been shifted by Kottakkal Padanayar from Kodungalloor and erected here and that when he became unable to look after the affairs of the temple entrusted the temple and its properties to the Thambakkal. Even now the people of Kodungalloor consider Devi as their fostering deity and make offerings to her. On the Aswathy day in Kumbhom, the Thalappoli procession is taken from Kodungalloor on a grand scale. This is known as Aswathy Thalappoli. Likewise the inhabitants of Valluvally kara also conduct the Aswathy Thalappoli. This temple now belongs to the Azhuvancherry Thambakkal. The Kumbha Bharany Utsavam is celebrated here for seven days from Avittam asterism to Bharany day in Kumbhom (February-March) attended by more than ten thousand people. From the day the temple flag is hoisted marking the commencement of this Utsavam, a large number of devotees flock to the temple and make votive offerings to the deity. On the last day of the Utsavam, in the afternoon, a special pooja with a thousand burning wicks known as Ayiramthiri

pooja will be performed. A large number of devotees participate in this special pooja. Daily, pooja is conducted at three times in this temple. In addition, on Sinkranthi days and for twelve days during the Mandalom period and on all days during the Utsavam Kalam Ezhuthu and Pattu will be conducted in this temple.

For the celebrations in this temple, carrying of deity on elephant's back is prohibited. The priest will carry in procession the sword and the foot-trinkets of Devi before which a large number of ladies will perform Thalappoli to the accompaniment of musical instruments. After the Ayiramthiri pooja is over Thookkam is also performed. Afterwards the devotees depart from the temple. On that night, the Velans perform a special ceremony known as Pathinettam bali.

The special offerings made to the deity in this temple are Pusphanjaly, Payasam, paddy, rice, turmeric, human figures of gold and silver, Thulabharam (offering of things equal to the weight of the person who preforms this Vazhipadu) and lighting the lamps. Bell-metal vessels, earthenwares, mats, stationery articles and tubers are some of the important commodities sold in the fair held in connection with the above Utsavam.

FEAST IN THE MIRACULOUS SHRINE OF KUNNEL CHURCH, ALENGAD

(FR. P. P. PARAVARA)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Parur
Alengad

Tradition has it that as far back as in the days of St. Thomas, the Apostle, he, while travelling from Parur to Malayattur stopped on the hillock, half a mile due south of St. Mary's church, Alengad. The hill and the surroundings were then covered with dense forest and were the abode of wild animals. As it was pitch dark, the servant of the Lord desired to spend the night there in meditation and prayer. He fell prostrate on the stony ground, and having marked the rock with the sign of the cross, he began his night-long prayer. At day-break the Apostle left the place, and the stone with the sign of the cross miraculously engraved on it lay there for centuries unknown to the public; for, the stone was in the run of years hidden by the intense growth of trees and shrubs of the forest.

Centuries ran by and about three hundred years back, wood-cutters and fuel-gatherers treading the hidden parts of the hill found the miraculous stone. Shrieking in consternation they ran down and informed the authorities of the present church dedicated to our Lady's Immaculate Conception. A temporary shed was put up on the revered site, the stone with the sign of the cross forming part of the masonry. Rain fell and wind blew against the time-worn shed and after a few years it fell down to pieces and disappeared.

Again, some hundred and fifty years back, on the night of Wednesday preceding the Septuagesima Sunday, an arrow in commemoration of St. Sebastian who has been believed to have died of them was taken in jubilant procession to the miraculous site on the hill, a thatched shed was put up and the people spent the whole

night in prayer and other devotions. From that time onwards favours of all sorts began to pour in, and miracles worked on the spot began to attract pilgrims of all castes and creeds. A few years after the incident the present Chapel was built, and every year on Wednesday and Thursday before the Septuagesima Sunday, the hill and its surroundings are the scene of numerous pilgrims and mercantile transactions.

The Chapel, usually called Kunnel Church, is dedicated to the wonder-working statue of the Infant Jesus and on the feast days, both Infant Jesus and St. Sebastian, the Martyr, holy protector from infectious diseases, are worthily commemorated. As the ancient church of Alengad has been dedicated to St. Mary, it is only quite justifiable if the filial church of Kunnel is dedicated to Infant Jesus, the Divine Son of St. Mary. Since the procession with St. Sebastian's arrow marked the beginning of miracles there, his hallowed memory is also held sacred by the innumerable pilgrims who year after year, tread the holy spot.

Every year the feast commences with a gala procession from St. Mary's church to Kunnel chapel. As soon as it reaches the destination, the flag is hoisted and from Monday evening to Friday morning pilgrims begin to pour in. The number of pilgrims is estimated upto twenty thousand.

Pilgrims bring as offerings besides money an edible sweet by name *Thamuk* which is a very palatable combination of rice-flour and plantains. It is usually believed that pregnant women will have a facile delivery if *Thamuk* is offered to the Infant Jesus of Kunnel Church. Pilgrims leave the hallowed

FEAST IN THE ST. DOMINIC SYRIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, ALWAYE

spot full of peace and consolation, after having confessed their sins and received Jesus in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Priests are got from outside to meet the demand of the people in this matter. On Thursday evening, small processional groups from all parts of the place find their way to the top of the hill piously bearing the arrows of St. Sebastian amidst din of tom-toms and noisy fire-crackers. The pilgrims spend the night in prayer and meditation. With the morning offering of the Holy sacrifice of Mass, the festivities come to a glorious close.

To meet the demands of the pilgrims, vendors of various types are on the spot throughout the days of the festivities. Meals and drinks of all kinds are ready at the lowest possible charge. Plantains for the preparation of '*Thamuk* offering' are in

plenty, though at a slightly higher price than elsewhere. Dates are available everywhere. Earthen, brass, copper, aluminium and ironwares may be had at usual rates. Stationery goods are also sold at the lowest possible charges. Sweetmeats of diverse sorts and religious articles of different kinds are obtainable in plenty. Spiritual and other readable books and pamphlets are sold throughout the place. Tallow candles forming part of the offerings can be bought everywhere.

Thus the feast of Alengad Kunnel Church, miraculously initiated by St. Thomas and revered by wonders and divine favours in recent years is gaining momentum year after year and it has become the holy place of pilgrimage, attracting thousands of people irrespective of caste or creed.

FEAST IN THE ST. DOMINIC SYRIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, ALWAYE

(VICAR, ST. DOMINIC SYRIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, ALWAYE)

District
Taluk
Town

Ernakulam
Alwaye
Alwaye

The Feast of St. Dominic

It falls on the third Sunday after the Easter. Three days prior to that, the ceremonial flag-hoisting is conducted with great solemnity amidst the peal of Church bells and the din of the firing of petards, accompanied by pipers playing to the rhythm of the beating of drums. Then on, for three days, until the most colourful final day, the entire parish is agog with light-hearted enthusiasm and the congregation for the morning and evening Services in the Church becomes larger. The church and its premises in view of this anticipated event are profusely illuminated with multi-coloured electric bulbs. On the last day, Sunday, the church and the premises will be crowded to overflowing with devotees coming from the

suburbs of the town. By about noon, the devotional services having ended with a sermon preached by some well-known priest, the signal for the starting of the procession is given by the thundering boom of petards and the ringing of church bells with which is joined the myriad musical sounds produced by band sets, pipers, drummers and *nagaswaram*. Preceded by rows of members of the confraternity of St. Dominic with their special uniform with a striking red silken cape, carrying stout lighted waxen candles fixed on long silver-plated handles, are those who walk parallel to the former carrying aloft, large silken umbrellas of different hues and flags waving atop long poles. The rear of this large concourse of pious processionists is formed

by three priests walking abreast in their ceremonial vestments under a silken canopy done in filigree and borne on silver handles held by four other persons. Immediately in front of the priests is the litter painted in gold and blue borne on the shoulders of a posse of able-bodied young men carrying the statue of St. Dominic. The priests are followed up by the members of the choir singing the litany of Blessed Virgin Mary in Syriac. The converging point of the main three streets of the older part of Alwaye is the St. Dominic's Church. The procession passes through all these three streets at the end of which it stops to say a short prayer before returning. Candles or bronze oil lamps are kept lighted in front of Catholic houses by which the procession passes; and some fire-crackers and petards, moved by their pious enthusiasm. By mid-afternoon the procession returns to the church after winding its way through the aforesaid streets and then the function comes to a close. Before the devotees disperse for their homes they make offerings before the altar of St. Dominic either in cash or in candles.

The Feast of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary

This feast is in fact a public demonstration of Catholic devotion to the Holy Rosary. The entire celebration consists of a spectacular mammoth procession taken through the Alwaye town. The feast is special to Alwaye since it is not known to be held anywhere else except in Santa Cruz Cathedral, Fort Cochin. When this festival was first started about 35 years ago, it was celebrated for some years immediately after the close of the ten days' Rosary prayer during the latter part of October every year. The intention for the Catholic Church for the month of October is the devotion to the Holy Rosary. Because of the north-east monsoon rains which used to damp much of the fervour and grandeur, the original date of this celebration had to be changed to the Sunday coming after 8th of December, which is the feast day of the Immaculate

Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Though the work in preparation of the celebration of the feast starts some days ahead, nothing is visible until the morning of the actual day of the celebration when one wakes up to marvel at the fairy land scenery into which the main public roads of the town are converted overnight, as if by magic. For the purpose of the decoration, the route, through which the procession passes, is divided into several sections each with a committee of its own. Each committee vies with the others and spares no pains for the simple satisfaction of being declared 'theirs was the best of the year's decoration.' The natural lay-out of roads in Alwaye is such that it affords the procession to make a full circular round of the town. Throughout the entire length of the route of the procession, the roads look canopied with serried lines of variegated fluttering paper festoons tied across tall bamboo posts planted for the purpose on either side of the road, at equal distances. They are further beautified with hanging paper flower baskets and rubber balloons of many colours. The sides of the road between the posts are adorned with buntings and evergreens and, in some parts of it, rows of plantain trees with ripe bunches are a striking feature of these decorations. At the road junctions, heavy ornamental arches are raised with words in invocation or salutation to the Virgin Mother. The procession starts at 3 p. m. sharp from the front of the church premises adjoining the Municipal Market Square and is composed of thousands of Catholic men and women of this parish as well as those from the neighbouring parishes. Priests and nuns are helped by scores of clerics of the local Mangalapuzha Seminary in controlling and getting the vast concourse of people resolved into two disciplined lines, each keeping to either side of the road. They move at a slow steady pace, solemnly and silently, except for the soft murmur of prayers as they recite the rosary held in the hands of everyone,

the beads passing automatically between the tips of their index finger and the thumb. The huge non-Catholic crowds, watching the procession from every vantage point all along its route, are phenomenal. The view they might thus catch of the mile-long procession in its enchanting setting with the full-sized statue of the Blessed Mother mounted high on a wheeled dais with her beautiful hands mercifully joined in prayer for her devout children on earth, will be panoramic and they are sure to remember this sight for a long time to come. For about three hours the procession takes the road, all vehicular traffic will perforce be at a standstill in which the local police and

traffic authorities dutifully render their helping hand.

In connection with either of these festivals, no fair worth mention is conducted except for a few pedlars hawking their cheap trinkets, glass bangles and other tinselled articles which specially appeal to common folk. The absence of any fair can be attributed to the presence of the Alwaye General Market in the centre of which the St. Dominic church happens to be situated and by-weekly fairs held on Saturdays and Wednesdays when anything can be purchased by anyone; besides, there is also a good number of shops fringed along the Market Square dealing in all kinds of commodities.

UTSAVAM IN THE MUKKANNUR KUTTALA TEMPLE, KOTHAKULANGARA NORTH

(SHRI K. KRISHNAN NAIR)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Alwaye
Kothakulangara North

The Mukkannur Kuttala temple, dedicated to Badrakali, is located in Kothakulangara North village of the Alwaye taluk at a distance of two miles from the Karukutty railway station. The Devi of this temple was the tutelary deity of the Cherampilly Karthas who were great gymnasts and once the chiefs of the locality. This temple was constructed by the Karthas for teaching the art of fencing to the local inhabitants and also for worshipping Devi. A *Naluket* and close by a *Sreekovil* (sanctum sanctorum) built by the Karthas for their residence and worshipping centre, could be seen even today at this place. When this family became extinct, this *Devaswom* came under the control of government. In Mukkannur village side, there are extensive landed properties for this *Devaswom*. About two thousand rupees and a thousand and

five hundred *paras* of paddy are obtained annually as yieldings from these properties. Only a big pedestal finished in superior jackwood, a sword and a few foot-trinkets are kept inside the main temple, known as *Karavathukavu*, instead of the idol. Again, lighting the lamps and blowing the conch alone are performed here. *Pooja* and other religious rites are conducted in the *Thazathukavu* situated about a furlong to the north of this temple. The important offering made in this temple is *Koottupayasam*.

The annual festival of this temple, the *Mudiyettu* and *Thalapoli*, is celebrated for one day on 11th of *Dhanu* (December January) in which about 600 persons take part. The *Thalapoli* performed by the ladies, lined in two rows, holding the *Thalam* (plates filled with certain religious articles) in their hands and a sort of dance

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

performed by the devotees masquerading themselves as Badrakali, are the main attractions of this *Utsavam*. Only commodi-

ties of daily necessities are available in the fair held along with this *Utsavam*.

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S JACOBITE SYRIAN CHURCH, MANJAPRA

(FR. VERGIS JAMESON)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Alwaye
Village	Manjapra

The church is situated on the right side of Manjapra-Ankamaly road, just about 2 furlongs west of the Manjapra-Chandrapura junction and about 6 miles east of the Ankamaly railway station. The foundation stone of the church was blessed and laid by the late His grace Joseph Mar Dynasius, (Pulikottil) Arch Bishop of Malabar Jacobite Syrian Church under the Holy See of Antioch, on 15th February, 1873. The church is dedicated to St. George.

According to the latest Census report of the church in 1955, the church has 201 families and 1,210 parishioners. There are 2 priests in this church both of whom belong to the parish conducting service on alternate weeks. There are 3 crosses of this church in 3 points. The western cross is dedicated to St. Thomas, the southern to St. Elias and the eastern, which stands in Chandrapura junction, to March Smuni and others.

From the very beginning the church is under patronage of His Holiness Moran Mar Ignatius, the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, subordinate and faithful to the patriarchal Throne, and under the immediate administration of the diocesan Bishop of Ankamaly, consecrated and appointed by the Patriarch. The most reputed Syrian Christian family of the locality, Nedunthalil by name, who once belonged to the royal family of Parur Raja, was the first to undertake the ownership of the establishment and hence it was considered as a private place of worship of that

family. But in 1883, they bequeathed the ownership of the church in favour of the public.

Festivals

The dedication Festival. This feast is celebrated in the church annually on 14th and 15th February. But recently the dates have been changed to February 1st and 2nd for convenience. Usually the parishioners alone attend the festival. No fair is conducted in connection with the festival.

New Sunday Festival

The Sunday after Easter is observed as a feast in memory of St. Thomas, the Apostle of India to whom the southern altar of the church is dedicated. The festival is attended by the parishioners.

St. George's day

The feast of St. George, the patron saint of the church is celebrated on 6th and 7th May on a small scale. Christians from the surrounding parishes as well as non-Christians of the locality attend the festival with their offerings of birds to St. George who is reputed for miraculous powers against snakes. The main offerings are birds and the images of snake in gold and silver which are sold in auction by the church authorities. No fair is conducted in connection with the festival.

Virgin Mary's day

September 8th is observed as the birthday festival of Our Lady Virgin Mary to whom the northern altar of the church is dedicated. Only parishioners attend the

FEAST IN THE HOLY CROSS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, MANJAPRA

festival with their bread offerings which are blessed and distributed to all just after the service.

The Grand Festival

The most important festival is celebrated on November 6th in memory of St. George, the patron. The celebration is for 3 days. Christians from all surrounding parishes as well as non-Christians of the locality attend the festival in large numbers with their offerings to St. George. The main offerings are fowl and images of snakes in gold and silver which are sold in auction by

the church authorities. A fair is held for two days, the important commodities, traded on the occasion being fancy articles, crockery, coffee and refreshments.

St. Elias day

February 13th is solemnized as a festival day in memory of the late His Holiness St. Elias Ignatius, the Patriarch of Antioch who passed away while in Kerala and buried in the patriarchal church at Manjanikara, Omallur in 1932 and to whom the southern cross of the church is dedicated.

FEAST IN THE HOLY CROSS ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, MANJAPRA

(FR. D. G. NALPAT)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Alwaye
Village	Manjapra

This Church in the Archdiocese of Ernakulam is located in the village of Manjapra, Alwaye taluk, Ernakulam district. The village extends to an area of about twenty-eight sq. miles and comprises over nineteen thousand inhabitants living in about nine sq. miles, the rest being hilly and mountainous. The church is situated in the most populated area, where over seven thousand Catholic Christians are having their houses. The Jacobite Christians who number about three hundred, have their own church nearby. There are Hindus, mostly Nairs and other backward communities of Pulayas, Parayas etc. In the north and east reserve forests form a semicircle, surrounding the cultivable and inhabitable region.

The main occupations of the people are farming and wood-cutting. Most of them are having only a hand-to-mouth existence. For want of traffic convenience the place was for a long time in a sort of aloofness from the neighbouring places such as Kalady and Ankamali. The people had to contend themselves with some pocket roads, quite

unfit for traffic. But since over a decade, roads were made fit for traffic and consequently there are bus services regularly.

The majority of the older folk are illiterate as the facilities for proper education were lacking. But thanks to the unflinching endeavours of the local church authorities, public schools were set up by which very many of the younger generation could get primary education. There are now three lower and one upper primary schools under the management of the church in addition to the two government lower primary schools. For secondary education the people at large are in the direct need of a high school and so, under the aegis of the church, they have been continuously putting applications for the past seven years.

Important feasts of the church are the feast of St. Sebastian and the feast of Our Lady.

The feast of St. Sebastian which is solemnized on 25th January every year, started in this church over two hundred year ago. St. Sebastian, a patrician Roman soldier

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under emperor Diocletian enjoyed such high favour and esteem before the emperor, so much so, ere long he was raised to the office of the captain of the personal guards of the emperor. Sebastian was a staunch christian. The emperor on the other hand was a bitter and dreadful enemy of Christianity and he did not want to leave any stone unturned in exterminating all those professing that religion. So Sebastian too was not spared and he was mercilessly shot down by arrows and killed. Thus Sebastian died for his faith and the faithful ever since held him as their prop and help both in their temporal and spiritual wants. A throng of more than ten thousand people of all castes and creeds use to gather around on the feast day in order to give vent to their feelings of gratitude and veneration towards the saint whom they believe the Almighty has empowered to ward off from his clients all kinds of epidemic diseases such as plague, smallpox etc. They consider that the statue of the saint, maintained in this church, possesses some miraculous attributes and so occasionally they fetch the water that was poured down from the feet of the statue in order to help the women in their travail to have an easy and comfortable child-birth.

On the 25th of January, the feast day, the hawkers abound in the vicinity and the people heartily welcome them by their purchase of *Varia* at their hands. The farmers will be busy in selecting and choosing the utensils such as spades, shovels, pickaxe, ploughs etc., while the housewives will spare

no pains to fetch their household necessities such as potteries, copper, bronze and aluminium vessels, baskets, mats etc. The children use to save their mite to procure and store their toys, the balloons, play guns and games materials.

The fair lasts for three days now, though it was in former days, when traffic convenience was very poor, held over a week so that the inhabitants of the mofussil might get time to furnish themselves with living commodities other than what they could earn at their farms.

The feast of Our Lady is celebrated on 28th November every year. The feast commences on the 25th and consummates on the 28th with all solemnity. There is a pious association of both men and women who become voluntary members and they foster a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since over eighty years, the feast in honour of Our Lady is celebrated yearly under the auspices of that pious association. One of the members is every year elected as president and it is his duty to defray the cost of the feast to a limited extent. All with one heart endeavour to make the feast as pompous and solemn as possible. The long procession, well arranged by the members with colourful costumes is really a cynosure.

The fair conducted during the feast days, more or less, maintain the same particulars as the one that is being held during the feast of St. Sebastian in January.

FEAST IN THE ANKAMALI CHURCH

(SHRI T. T. PAUL)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Alwaye
Village	Kothakulangara South
Ankamali, situated at the northern frontier of the former state of Travancore, has a unique historical, social and economic background. The natives of this place have	

FEAST IN THE ST. ANTONY'S CHURCH, ELAVOOR

made and changed the history of Kerala. In ancient time it was the scene of several 'angams', single combats, under the shade of an 'alu,' a banyan tree. From it the place got its name Ankamali.

In the eighth century it became a prominent Christian centre. The Hindu Mangattu Swarupam of those days made large endowments of land for the occupation of Christians. By the sixteenth century Ankamali became the headquarters of the Syrian Christians of Kerala, the followers of St. Thomas, the Apostle of Christ. They were administered by Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of Ankamali.

Later when the Kerala Christian church fell under the yoke of the Portuguese, it was vehemently opposed. Several conferences of representatives of Kerala Christians were held at Ankamali and their leader Kariyatti Malpan was deputed to Rome to place before His Holiness the Pope the grievances of the Syrian Christians. Though he was consecrated Archbishop, the Ankamali Archdiocese could not be revived due to his unfortunate demise at Goa on the voyage back.

Long before Richard the Lionheart of England died, the people of Ankamali, quite becoming of their nature, chose St. George, the soldier, who defied the tyranny of Diocletian, the Roman Emperor, as the

Patron Saint of their Forane Church. Every year the festival in his honour is celebrated in the week next to Easter. Lakhs of pilgrims even from Tamilnad throng to the place with gold and silver offerings as token of their devotion to the Saint. He is venerated as a protector against snakes.

On this occasion, an annual fair is held, when the products of the cottage industries of the place and its vicinity find a good market. Fine quality fishing nets, palmyra leaves, furniture and bamboo-mats are disposed off. Ankamali has an all-India monopoly in the production and marketing of bamboo-mats. According to tradition Ankamali was the most important trading centre on the short-cut mountain pass from Kerala to Tamilnad.

Yet another and more important festival of the place is the Forty Hour's Adoration held in the second week of Lent stretched over a period of three days. The grand procession of the Holy Sacrament attracts people from distant places of the State.

With modern facilities like hospitals, especially the Little Flower General Hospital with up-to-date arrangements, churches, convents, orphanages, high schools, public offices, markets, means of communications etc. Ankamali is a fast developing place. People of all communities, castes and creeds lead peaceful and contented life there.

FEAST IN THE ST. ANTONY'S CHURCH, ELAVOOR

(FR. FRANCIS PALATHY))

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Alwaye
Village	Parakkadavu
Elavoor Parish church is built on the top of a hill, nearly three miles west of Karukutty railway station. Formerly these hills and plains were dense forests and the abode of wild animals. The busy untiring hands of the local people converted this jungle into a beautiful hamlet. The sons of this soil still believe that it was due to St. Antony that they could do all these improvements and they dedicated their church to St. Antony	
St. Antony's feast is the biggest event in	

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

his village. It usually falls in February. Thousands of people from the neighbour-

ing villages attend this festival. For many, this is an annual fair.

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KANJOOR

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Alwaye
Kizhakkumbhagom

Kanjoor is a beautiful hamlet in the Alwaye taluk, far removed from the din and bustle of cities and towns. One sees there narrow streets and arrays of houses separated from one another only by their walls. Here and there may also be seen fortifications with old dilapidated buildings (*Nalukettu*) within them over-run by shrubs and thickets. These remind of the vestiges of the old feudal order which has disappeared once for all. Towering over all these one sees a huge granite cross, about forty feet high, standing like a flagstaff. Behind this cross stands the celebrated Kanjoor Church. In front of the church there is a huge gate resembling the 'Elephant Gate' (*Anavathil*) of Hindu temples in every respect. The wall in front of the church is richly adorned with sculptures. On one side of the wall have been portrayed the figures of the warriors armed with guns and on the other side, sculptures of a gallant cavalry. These, perhaps, represent some battles that took place during the days of Portuguese hegemony.

Sculptural and architectural works are rare in the present day churches. But Kanjoor church is an exception to this. From the very entrance of the church onwards could be seen sculptures and paintings and other works of art. As one enters the church, the baptismal font comes to his view on the left. This huge stone, cut and shaped representing as if four persons are supporting the font, is a rare and beautiful sight. The tomb of the holy man who died

in Kanjoor is also very attractive. The beauty of the gorgeous carvings and pictures inside the sanctuary is quite bewitching. On the northern wall of the church, there are about nineteen stone slabs with inscriptions, all plastered on to the wall one above another. These inscriptions furnish the dates of the demise of some of the prominent parishioners. As revealed from the inscriptions one can guess that the present Kanjoor church might have been constructed about 900 M. E. The oldest inscription on the wall relates to 705 M. E. and the newest to 864 M. E. The general belief is that the old church at Kanjoor fell into ruins long ago and that the existing church was reconstructed in its place at a later stage. These would have taken place during 850 M. E. and 900 M. E.

Based on the researches made by Fr. Hosten¹, it is believed that the origin of the church can be traced back to very ancient times. According to him the mortal remains of St. Thomas, the Apostle, who suffered martyrdom at Udumalpet (Udumalappettah) near Coimbatore were transferred from there in 225 A. D. to 'Kurisumudi' near Malayattoor. This increased the importance of Kurisumudi greatly and even foreigners began to come and stay in the place. Thus twelve monasteries sprung up in twelve places here and there, basing Kurisumudi as their head-quarters, in memory of the twelve disciples of Christ. It is believed that Kanjoor church is one among

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KANJOOR

those monasteries. Even today there is a seminary attached to the Kanjoor church. That there was a church in Kanjoor long before the period indicated by the inscriptions is also proved by the fact that some graves are found in many places around this church. If an investigation is made about the place lying around this church, it can be understood that there had been two other churches also in this place besides the present one. Several granite slabs left neglected are seen in the premises of the church. From the fact that there were three churches on the same spot during three different periods, it can be guessed that there would have been a church in the place during the very beginning of the Christian era. The historical researches made by Father Hosten stand to prove this belief.

It is only after the advent of the Portuguese that the existing church at Kanjoor became as famous as it is today. The wall paintings and the other works of art inside the church indicate the association of the Portuguese with this church and their influence.

There had been close connections between the Cochin royal family and the Kanjoor church. It began from the days of the famous Saktan Thampuran of Cochin. The incident that led to this relationship is as follows.

Once Saktan Thampuran came to the house of his father, Vellarappilli Namboothiri and stayed there. Vellarappilli is a place close to Kanjoor. Either due to his tedious journey or busy work, he had a

severe headache and was laid up of it. It was on the festival day at Kanjoor church he had the attack. The booming sound of the pyrotechnics pierced his ears and aggravated his headache. The Thampuran became angry and ordered his men to throw away all pyrotechnical materials in the church into water. But when the time for display arrived, these things began to crack and explode from the water to the great astonishment of all. The Thampuran's ailment increased terribly and medicines had no effect on him. Somebody suggested that he would get relief from his ailment if he approached the church. Accordingly he went to the church and expressed regret for what he did. Immediately his headache was cured. The Thampuran, who was now greatly pleased, felt sorry for his arrogance and made amends by presenting an elephant lamp (*Ana vilakku*) to the church. This beautiful bronze lamp is still preserved in the church.

The holy man who rests in the tomb inside the church attracts numerous people to this church every year. Many important incidents in the annals of this historic church are still shrouded in darkness.

The feast of St. Sebastian is celebrated here for two days on 19th and 20th of January every year. About 2,50,000 people attend this feast. In the fair held during the festive days stationery goods, household articles, vessels etc. are mainly bought and sold by the people.

Based mainly on an article by Sri K. S. N. in Malayala Manorama weekly dated 9th November, 1957

1. Articles in Indian Antiquity and Bengal Asiatic Society's Journal

FEAST IN THE ST. THOMAS' SHRINE OF MALAYATTUR

(REV. FR. THOMAS MOOTHEDAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Alwaye
Malayattur

Malayattur is a fast developing village, nearly six miles to the north-east of Kalady, the birthplace of the Hindu philosopher Sankaracharya. Buses ply at two hours' interval from Trichur and Ernakulam via Alwaye, Chowara and Ankamali. Situated as it does on the bank of the Periyar and covered with thick hills, it is rightly called Malayattur, a veritable compound of 'Mala' (Forest) and 'Aar' (River). The rich scenery of the surging mountains and the crystal waters of the Periyar is an attraction to all kinds of pilgrims from far and near. Those who live by the salt waters of the Vembanad lake make it a sporting chance to get in canoes and make a slow pilgrimage to the shrine incidentally availing themselves of a pleasant plunge at different times in the Periyar.

The St. Thomas' shrine at Malayattur is perhaps the greatest Catholic shrine in Malabar. The chief festival at the shrine is celebrated on the Sunday after Easter, that is, the second Sunday after the first moon after the Vernal Equinox (March 21st). The feast, therefore, falls generally in the month of April or at times in the last week of March. The octave is celebrated on the following Sunday. On Fridays of the Christian Lent, the penitential season in preparation of the anniversary of the crucifixion of Christ, devotees make the way of the cross, a pious form of spiritual exercise which consists mainly of a meditation on the passion and death of Christ.

There are no big hotels in Malayattur, not even a good road from the parish Church of Malayattur to the hill shrine. The pilgrims have to scale a hill nearly 2,000 feet high and there is no beaten path to reach the

shrine. Those who come in cars get down at the foot of the hill where there is a statue of the Apostle St. Thomas. The level rocky ground around is called 'Vanibhathadam' which literally means market place. There petty merchants and pedlars assemble in large numbers and from there beggars array themselves easily a thousand in number.

The pilgrim has to make his way now amidst dried shrubs in summer during the festival time and dense foliage in rainy season. The shrine is only a small sanctuary, a very plain building with no artistic attraction. The pilgrim is not so much concerned about the gorgeous mountain scenery around studded with highly peaked rocks or the mountain climb which though fatiguing is nevertheless exhilarating. The pilgrims' centre of attraction is best indicated in the slogans repeated by the pilgrims as they ascend and descend the hill. "*Ponnum Kurisu Muthappo, Ponmala Kayattom*" (O grandfather of the gold cross, we ascend the golden hill). "*Ponnum Kurisu Muthappo Ponmala irakkom*" (O grandfather of the gold cross, we descend the golden hill).

Who is this Ponnum Kurisu Muthappan, the grandfather of the gold cross? Why is he so called? These are questions which evoke lively interest. The grand papa, whom the pilgrims invoke is none other than St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Christ. It is now admitted by a vast majority of writers that St. Thomas preached Christ in India and erected seven churches and crosses in Malabar and appointed Bishops and priests wherever necessary. At the celebration of the nineteenth centenary of his arrival in India which was celebrated with great éclat at Ernakulam in December 1952,

FEAST IN THE ST. THOMAS' SHRINE OF MALAYATTUR

His Eminence Cardinal Gilroy, Archbishop of Sydney was deputed by the then Pope Pius XII to preside over the celebrations in the name of His Holiness. In the Bull of appointment, His Holiness has acknowledged the apostolate of St. Thomas in Malabar. At the end of the celebrations the Pope gave an allocution through the radio in which His Holiness again referred to the apostle Thomas' preaching in Kerala. The Kerala tradition is admitted by Mackenzie, the British resident in the Travancore State Manual. Bishop Medlycott, the first Vicar Apostolic of Trichur and a British citizen has defended the apostolate of St. Thomas in Malabar.

The local tradition about Malayattur has been recently put in black and white by several writers in the form of contributions to Malayalam journals like Malabar Mail, Deepika and Sathyadeepam. The best summary has come in the form of a Malayalam brochure by Rev. Fr. Joseph Vithayalil entitled "*Ponnumkurisumalamuthappan*". The earliest reference to Malayattur is found in the song of Thomas Rampan. It is said to have been first composed by Thomas Rampan II of the Malekal family from Niranam, disciple of the apostle Thomas and redacted in the present form by Thoma Rampan XLVIII of the same family most probably in 1601. St. Thomas first got down at Cranganore and after preaching the Gospel all through Malabar, he went to the Rajya of the Chozhas, that is Tamilnad and from there he returned to Malabar via Malayattur. This is most probable as the land route from Pandya at that time was through Aruvamozhi, Aryal-mavu, Achancovil etc. That route has now become obsolete probably because of the wild animals that were found in large number all along the route. According to the song

of Thoma Rampan¹, St. Thomas stayed at Malayattur for two months and made 220 Christians by administering to them, the initiation ceremony of Baptism. The apostle used to retire to this forest clad hill for solitary prayer and meditation, faithful to his Master who often "retired to the mountain to pray". After the second mission tour in Malabar, the apostle came over to Malayattur again to spend a few days in prayer before going to Tamilnad where he finally met his martyrdom in 72 A. D. Before taking leave of Kerala, he used to pray with greater fervour for the perseverance of his Christians. During his prayer, he used to make a sign of the cross on the rock and it is this cross which has come to be known later as the gold cross. Some pious tradition also says that Mary, the Mother of God, appeared to the apostle at prayer; so that to the devout Christian pilgrim, the hill shrine is a hallowed place.

All this history was, however, forgotten or ignored for some time. The wildness of the forest may have cooled down the enthusiasm of the Christian devotees; but the history was revived five hundred years after and it came along this way. One day some hunters selected this place for night rest; but, during the night when there was pitch darkness all around, they saw a golden illumination on the rock above. It was in the form of a cross. They explored the source of light by piercing it through when it turned blood red. The cross now became fully visible. They got down and informed the Christian inhabitants of the place who made a thorough search. They found besides the golden cross the imprint of the apostle's knees and feet on the rock. After ecclesiastical investigation, the place was opened for public worship with government

മലയാളത്തിൽ തിരികെ വരുവാൻ കരുതുന്ന ചെറുപ്പന്മാർ മാലാഖമാരുടെ മുന്നോടേ മലയാറ്റൂർ താൻ വന്നതായി

ഇതുകാണുന്നവിടങ്ങളിലും മാറ്റം തന്നിട്ടുള്ള ഇതുകുറിപ്പുകൾ വിശ്വാസികളെ താൻ മാനോഭിസാദിക്കും. (193-200)

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

sanction. Ever since, a lamp is being continuously burnt in the shrine. When it went out, a kind of wild goats used to come down to the valley and cry and this was a sign for the villagers to go up and light the lamp. These wild goats used to accept food from the people just like domestic goats and the pilgrims used to leave sesame on the rocks around the shrine as food. Even today the pilgrims strew sesame on the rock, though the goats have long since ceased to exist.

The important centre in the shrine now is the small antiquated chapel which encloses under its foundation the golden cross and the imprint of the apostle's knees and feet. This chapel is very old fashioned and is very strongly built to withstand the attack of the wild elephants. The marks of the attack of the wild elephants are yet visible on the chapel even today. Close to this chapel is another sanctuary which is not more than one hundred years old in which an arch of the ancient church can still be seen. During the days of the festival, ceremonies are kept in the open air; but at other times of the year when devotees go to the hill, they meet for prayer in this church to which a small

presbytery is attached.

A visit to the shrine of Malayattur during the festival days or any other part of the year will be very interesting, be he a christian or non-Christian. So inspiring is the hill and the dale which sing the glory of the CREATOR.

As at all shrines, a good deal of marketing takes place for a fortnight about the principal festival of the shrine. Brazen and Copper vessels, books, stationery articles, sweets of all kinds locally made, religious goods, women's ornaments, mats of all kinds, coir ropes, cloths made in handlooms and wooden articles such as boxes for the newly wed and wooden buckets for drawing water are sold in large numbers. In a word most of the cottage industries of Kelala are represented here. Temporary hotels and cafes cater to the needs of the pilgrims as well as the tradesmen. In fact, the valley of the hill shrine is, as mentioned above, a veritable 'VANIBHATHADOM', a market place. Merchants and agents of cottage industries have a good time during the festival; for pedlars, the festival is a good occasion to exploit poor folk.

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FAEST IN THE ST. TERESA'S CHURCH, VALLAM, RAYONPURAM

(SHRI DEVASSY O. PARAPPURAM)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kunnathunad
Town	Perumbavoor

There are many Catholic churches in Kerala State. This church has an important place among them. It is understood from the records that this church was built in the 15th century. It is dedicated to

St. Teresa of Avila. It is a legend that this church was built by Mr. Mathew Tharakan who was an outstanding person in the history of Travancore. This church is situated by the river Periyar. The Travan-

FEAST IN THE ST. TERESA'S CHURCH, VALLAM, RAYONPURAM

core Rayons Factory is very near to this church. This parish belongs to the Arch Diocese of Ernakulam.

There are three important festivals in this church. The festival of St. Teresa is the most important. It is a 4 days' festival. As a preparation there will be the Holy Rosary for 10 days. On the concluding day the flag hoisting will be held for the festival on 19th October. From that day onwards the festival begins. Every day evening there will be 'Ladeenj' (Litany of St. Mary) and other prayers.

On the third day i. e. on 21st October there is a High Mass early in the morning. There will be a large crowd inside the church and outside. People from the west coast of Kerala and from the neighbouring parishes come to participate in this festival. People belonging to every caste and creed come with firewood, flour, sugar and cocoa-nut oil to prepare bread and offer to the church. After the preparation they present bread and a portion of the oil to the church. The statues of St. Teresa and Archangels Michael and Raphael are brought out in procession and put on the platform. Hundreds of candles will be burnt before the statues. All the surroundings will be decorated and illuminated by coloured electric bulbs. The priests of the neighbouring parishes will be cordially invited during the function.

St. Teresa of Avila has been acknowledged by the people as the Patroness and a wonder worker. In all the tribulations, trials, and difficulties people request St. Teresa to pray for them, and they will not be disappointed. People offer a part of their earnings to the church. There occur so many wonders and miracles. The following incident occurred recently. There were 5 brothers in a family. They were poor farmers. One day the old woman of their landlord's family was murdered and others were injured by a group of robbers. The landlord thought that those brothers were

the culprits. He charged a case. Those innocent brothers were arrested and put in jail. They were in a dilemma. They requested St. Teresa to pray for them and save them from the jail. They also took an oath that they would meet the expenditure for the next year's festival. They prayed well to God the Almighty to save them from their misery. On the next day, the real thief, murderer, was caught by the policemen. The poor farmers were released from the jail. They thanked God. They spent a good amount for the next year's festival. Thus every year there will be a person, a group or all the parishioners to spend the money for the celebration of the feast.

On the evening of 21st October there will be a large crowd. The vespers begin at 3.30 p. m. There is a procession after the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The statues are taken for the procession and thousands of people walk in two rows. The procession will be attractive with golden and silver crosses, and beautifully coloured umbrellas, and flags. Lakhs of crackers will be fired during the procession. The procession ends at 6.30 p. m. rounding the four *Angadies*. By this time the surroundings of the church will be decorated and illuminated by hundreds of bulbs.

The 22nd October is the final day. There will be the High Mass and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. There will also be a sermon by a famous preacher. Then at 12 noon the final procession starts as usual. It reaches the church at 2.30 p. m. The services rendered by the volunteers during the procession are praiseworthy.

There will be several stalls where stationery books, pious articles, pictures and other things are available. There will be a large crowd even after the procession. Pilgrims depart only after 4 p. m.

The feast of St. Mary on 2nd February and the feast of The Little Flower on 3rd October are also celebrated more or less on the same lines.

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, PERUMBAVOOR

(FR. JOSEPH THEKINEN)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kunnathunad
Town	Perumbavoor

The only important annual festival of this church is that of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th. On the eve of the festival there is a Litany, a special prayer to St. Mary, followed by Benediction and a public meeting with one or two speeches on the Immaculate Conception. The actual celebration takes place on 8th December. Pontifical Mass, Sermon by a distinguished priest, an orderly procession about a mile long with the statue of St. Mary taken out in a decorated lorry atten-

ded by about two thousand people comprising the parishioners of the neighbouring churches also, are the main features of the celebration. Since the church is situated in the heart of the town, the fair on the occasion of the festival is not worth mentioning though there may be a few sellers mainly of religious articles like scapular, rosary, medals and books which are bought by about two hundred people who are mainly coming from rural areas.

UTSAVAM IN THE IRIANGOL BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI M. P. RAMANUJA KURUP)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kunnathunad
Town	Perumbavoor

The Iriangol Bhagavathy temple is situated 11 miles away from the Alwaye railway station in the Perumbavoor village of the Kunnathunad taluk. Long long ago there was an *Asura* by name Mahishan. When his atrocities became unbearable, Paramasiva, pleased with the prayers of the *Devas*, assumed the guise of Bhagavathy and along with two confidantes seduced him and finally killed him. Afterwards the two confidantes were seated at two different spots. Meanwhile, Bhagavathy came to Iriangol *Devaswom* to take rest. Knowing the arrival of Devi there, the *Devas* flocked around her, showered flowers on her person and praised her profusely. By the power of Siva, Sree Bhagavathy was turned into a stone, the *Devas* as trees and the flowers as the leaves

of those trees and thus they became the objects of worship. Pomposity, saffron and fragrant flowers are taboo to Devi. Big trees that grow all round the temple are even today nurtured with devotional care. For sometime, Sree Chattambi Swamy, realising the sacredness of the temple, had stayed meditating in this temple grove.

Pacha Sarkara Unda (Molasses shaped in the form of a ball) is the special *Vazhipadu* in this temple. Once, accidentally two pious Brahmins of the local Nagancherry *Mana* and Padassery *Mana* happened to adore Devi and at the first time, they offered Molasses ball as the *Nivedyam* to the deity. Devi was also pleased with this offering.

Two festivals are celebrated in this temple, namely the *Thrikarthika Utsavam* on *Karthika*

FEAST IN THE ST. PETER'S CHURCH, KOLENCHERRY

asterism in *Vrischigom* (November-December) and the *Kodiyeri Utsavam* on the *Uthramday* in *Meenam* (March-April). While the *Thrikarthika Utsavam* is conducted for one day, the *Kodiyeri Utsavam* is celebrated for nine days, the main *Utsavam* being celebrated on the *Uthram* asterism on the 9th day of the festival. About a thousand people congregate for the *Thrikarthika Utsavam* and eight thousand people for the *Kodiyeri Utsavam*. The main attraction of the *Thrikarthika Utsavam* is the *Deepa-*

kazhcha performed by virgin girls. For the *Kodiyeri Utsavam* there will be no *Sree Bali Ezhunnellippu* and every day, during the festival there will be *Arat*. For *Ezhunnellippu*, tuskens are not engaged. Female elephants should alone be engaged for the *Ezhunnellippu*. In the fair held in connection with the above *Utsavam*, the main commodities marketed are bangles, eye-text, *chandu* (compound ointment of sandal, camphor, musk and saffron) and foodstuffs.

FEAST IN THE ST. PETER'S CHURCH, KOLENCHERRY

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kunnathunad
Aikeranad South

Situated about 15 miles east of the Ernakulam town, on the southern side of the Ernakulam-Muvattupuzha highway, is the ancient and historic church of Kolencherry. This church is believed to have been built by one Thankan of the Kolencherry house in the 7th century of the Christian era in the name of St. Peter and St. Paul during a short period of one week for the exclusive use of his family. Some of the old manuscript records preserved in the church archives as well as certain inscriptions on the church walls bear testimony to this supposition. According to tradition, the ancestors of the Kolencherry family had originally come from Persia along with Canai Thommen and settled at Kozhencherry in the Thiruvalla Taluk. Later, some of their descendants shifted their residence to Aikeranad village of the Kunnathunad taluk. Their parish in those days was the church at Kadamattam. Because of his great affluence and personality, the head of the family who came to Kozhencherry earned the title Thankan.

As stated above, Thankan constructed this church for the use of his near ones. The

local Christians refused to participate in the religious services conducted in this church. As a result, the church had to be demolished after sometime. A new one was subsequently erected there by enlisting more than thirty families as its parishioners. Even to this day, certain privileges are conferred upon the head of the Kolencherry family from this church. The progenies of this family are now settled at various places namely Manjapra, Kunnamkulam, Kottayam, Kaduthuruthy and Kothamangalam.

The new church, constructed recently in the place of the old one, is a prodigious structure having 124' length and 56' breadth. Its steeples rise high above the skies to 125 feet.

The mural paintings of the old church had been commended by many visitors; but all those paintings were lost when the church was demolished for reconstruction. Although many of those old paintings have been redrawn in the new church, it is a fact that they have lost their antiquity and originality. Some experts are of the view that the paintings in the Kanjoor church

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are after those of the paintings in the old church.

The main feast of this church takes place annually on the 29th of *Midhunam* (June-July). This is celebrated to perpetuate the memory of St. Peter and St. Paul. In olden days, it was usual for a good majority of the participants of this feast to take liquor and meat that were set openly for sale in the church premises during the festive days. But thanks to the stout opposition put up by the Bishop Mar Osthathiyos of Malan-

kara church when he was the *Kaseesa* to the continuance of this custom it was stopped for ever. Large number of devotees from the northern parts of the old Travancore State and also from the Cochin State, flock to this church during the feast with their votive offerings. The offerings they bring with them are mostly domestic animals, for they believe that the *Muthappan* of this church bestows his special grace upon the livestock.

Based mainly on an article by Shri M. Kuriakose in the Malayala Manorama weekly dated 26th January 1963.

UTSAVAM IN THE PARIYARAM VISHNU TEMPLE

(SHRI P. T. NARAYANAN NAMBOOTHIRI)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kunnathunad
Aikeranad South

About the origin of the Pariyaram temple located at a distance of 8 miles from the Tripunithura railway station, there are no historical records but the following legend. Maharshi Gadhika was a good-hearted and a quick-tempered Brahman. One day a cow attacked and wounded his beloved son. Greatly enraged, he dashed a stone at the cow that hit the animal at a delicate part of its body as a result of which the cow immediately succumbed. Thereupon the sage wanted to make amends for his sin of killing a cow. On enquiry, he was advised that the dead animal should be hung on a banyan tree and under it he had to remain in meditation till the putrified corpse dropped down the earth bit by bit and that thereafter he had to install an idol of Gopalakrishna at the place where the cow fell down dead and also an idol of Mahavishnu at a suitable place. Thus the place where the putrified flesh of the cow dropped down got the name *Puzhthrikka* and the temple constructed by the sage by way of

atonement to his sin as *Parihara* temple. The name *Pariyaram* became in due course as *Pariyaram*. Nearby the spot *Puzhthrikka* are still in existence a place known as *Poothrikka* and also a temple. Though this is a Sree Krishna temple, cows are not allowed to creep even inside the temple campus. Soon after the consecration of the deities of Gopalakrishna and Mahavishnu, sage Gadhika retired from worldly life; and the rest of his life he spent in meditation. (*Tapas*). He joined with the Mother earth in a nearby bund (*Chira*) which is known as *Ghadika Chira*. There also, he had installed an idol of Sree Krishna. The fact that the idol of this temple which is made up in a superior variety of stone known as *Krishnasila*, has been greatly decayed by wear and tear, tends one to believe that this temple might have been in existence for the past 3000 years.

The annual festival of this temple is celebrated from *Anizham* day to *Thiruvonam* in the month of *Meenam* (March-April).

CHURCH, KADAMATTOM

Since this *Utsavam* is not celebrated on a grand scale, it is thinly attended by the

people. Daily 500 to 750 persons only attend the festivities.

FEAST IN THE SYRIAN CHURCH, KADAMATTOM

(FR. ISAAC PUTHUSERIL)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kunnathunad
Aikeranad North

The Syrian church at Kadamattom is at a spot twelve miles from the Tripunithura railway station in the Aikeranad North village of the Kunnathunad taluk. Mainly two feasts are celebrated in this church, one on 24th and 25th of *Makaram* (January-February) and the other on 22nd and 23rd of *Medom* (April-May). The feast on 23rd of *Medom* (April-May) is celebrated in commemoration of the St. George's day. This feast is usually conducted by one of the parishioners, the expense for the same being met by him. On certain occasions when no parishioner volunteers to conduct the feast, the same will be celebrated by the church itself. On some occasions, devotees of other parishes conduct this feast at their cost. During the past, there had been instances where, due to the increase of devotees who volunteered to conduct the feast, it had to be celebrated for three days on 22nd, 23rd and 24th of *Medom* (April-May). About 500 devotees, the parishioners as well as those in the neighbourhood of this church, participate in this feast.

The feast on the 25th of *Makaran* (January-February) is by far, the most important feast of this church. More than 20,000 people, drawn from all parts of Kerala, attend this feast. Devotees of different castes and tribes bring votive offerings during the days of the feast and invoke the blessings of the saint. There are no historical records save some legends dealing with the origin of this feast. There are different versions of these legends. Some

hold that this feast is celebrated in memory of *Kadamattathachan*, the founder of this church; some say that it is celebrated in remembrance of *Maravachan*, the *Guru* of the former, and yet others hold that the feast is conducted to commemorate the consecration of this church. Any way, the consensus of opinion is that both *Maravachan* and *Kadamattathachan* passed away on the 24th of *Makaram* and that the church was also consecrated on the same date.

Once a Bishop named Mor Abo arrived at Kadamattam from overseas. By the evening of the day he arrived, he went to a house known as *Poyedon*. The inmates of that house, a widow and her son, received the bishop with great respect. The Bishop took interest in the boy, educated him and ordained him as a priest. He is the famous *Kadamattath Kathanar*. In those days, Kadamattam and the area around it were in the hands of a baron, named Ayikkunnath Kartha. It was with his assistance that the present church was founded at Kadamattam which was consecrated in the name of St. George on 25th of *Makaram* of a certain year. Mor Abo (*Maravachan*) who had all along been doing missionary work in different places passed away at Thevelakara and his mortal remains were brought and entombed in the walls of the sanctuary of the church; a persian styled cross was installed there and some undeciphered letters are inscribed thereon. These events also took place on the 25th of

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a *Makaram*. In the later years, that great priest *Kadamattathachan* who remained a celibate all his life passed away on the 25th of a *Makaram* and was buried in the sanctuary just below the place where his *Guru's* relics are interned. It is believed that the above events took place in the 1st century of the Malayalam era.

The important offerings to this church

are fowls. In the fair held during the festive days, the more important commodities marketed are brass and copper vessels, stone-ware, mats, earthenwares, stationery articles and agriculture implements.

It is possible that the feast on 25th *Makaram* is celebrated in commemoration of the above mentioned incidents.

FEAST OF ST. GEORGE AT THE FORANE CHURCH, EDAPPALLY

(SHRI K. K. JOSEPH)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Edappally

To trace the origin of the Forane church at Edappally, we have to go back to as early as the year A. D. 593. It is one of the most ancient and prominent churches that existed in the early centuries, excepting the historical churches which were built and established by St. Thomas, the great Apostle of India. The endowments for the church in the shape of landed property were made by the Edappally Raja whose principality was and still is known as the Elangallor Swarupam.

There is a long history behind the massive devotion so patently manifested during the parish festival. Innumerable miracles are worked through the intercession of the great saint, St. George, a fact which amply proves his powerful mediation before the throne of God. From very ancient times, people from far and near have flocked to the place, lifting their hearts to heaven with sentiments of genuine gratitude for the favours received. In this connection, it may be especially noted that an ancient statue of St. George was donated by the local church to the Edathua church when a new church was built there and thus it is believed, was the beginning of the popular feast at the latter place.

Every year 'forty hours devotion' marks the commencement of the festival. The festival begins on the 23rd of April with solemn High Mass and Litany. On the 25th the flag is hoisted solemnly and ceremoniously. On May day the entire church is transformed into a blaze of colour, light and sound. The church and precincts are gaily and tastefully decorated and illuminated. The members of St. George confraternity gather in large numbers wearing their colourful costume taking its origin in the misty middle ages. Music and fireworks on one side and the expectant hum of devotees in their thousands on the other, reverberate in the solemn atmosphere. The perfume of incense and the chanting of hymns by priests clad in their sacred glittering vestments add to the solemnity of this unique occasion. The miraculous statue of St. George is taken out of its usual habitat on the side altar; and it is decked for the occasion. It is placed on the festive chariot and is taken out in solemn procession to be kept inside the church for special veneration during the days of the festival. The procession starting in the hushed silence characteristic of the most solemn Catholic religious functions blossoms into a verti-

FEAST IN THE LITTLE FLOWER CHURCH, KALOOR

table tornado of sounds and colour. It excels in grandeur, even the procession on the feast day wherein a seething mass of humanity takes part.

Every morning High Mass is said in the church, in which all the pilgrims participate. The ceremonies last for eleven days. The principal ceremonies are performed with due solemnity on 4th May. At about 10 a. m. High Mass is said; which is followed by an eloquent sermon preached by an eminent priest. The next significant item is the procession to the principal streets, carrying the miraculous statue of St. George, to the accompaniment of bands and other musical instruments and display of parasols of variegated hues. The grand celebrations come to a close with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The festival is one of the most popular in Kerala, almost on a par with *Alwaye Sivarathri* or *Vikom Ashtami*. There is also the celebration of the octave on May 11, which too attracts quite a few thousands of devotees. Special trains and buses enable people to travel from far and near in their earnest attempt to express their gratitude to the great saint. Innumerable miraculous cures of diseases, especially escape from poisonous snakes are obtained through the intercession of St. George. The place is frequented by numerous devotees irrespective of caste or creed. It is a coincidence that in several St. George shrines, the votive offering is fowl. Here at Edappally, however, fowl is a part of the offering. The fowls are auctioned even

as they are offered by the devotees.

The festival provides ample opportunities for shopping as hawkers often bring their wares from the towns and ply a vigorous trade. The products of most village industries and various articles like pottery, copper and aluminium vessels, furniture, golden and silver ornaments, electroplated things, glass and plastic plates and toys, sugar-cane, dates and fruits are all marketed during this festival. Thus the people can make purchase of commodities of any kind. Besides many companies provide show-rooms and much announcements of advertisements.

The offerings and donations are mostly utilised for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of the poor and the afflicted, in keeping with the ideal of the great saint. A hospital providing medicine and treatment to the poor and the sick is one of the serviceable institutions of this category. Further to promote the well-being of the illiterate and the unemployed, a Social Welfare Institute, a Khadi Vidyalayam and three Primary Schools do great service to the local public.

In short the famous church at Edappally, which has been established in the name of the great wonder-worker Sr. George, is a great place of pilgrimage. This is not merely a refuge of the suffering humanity. It is also the spiritual radio-active force which shoots its illuminating sparks through a morally and spiritually darkened world effecting the conversion of hearts.

FEAST IN THE LITTLE FLOWER CHURCH, KALOOR

(FR. JOSEPH, OLLATTUPURAM)

District
Taluk
Town

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Ernakulam

The Little Flower Church was established at Kaloor-Pottakuzhi Ernakulam in the

name of Little Flower of Infant Jesus in the year 1926. This is the first church

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

established in India in the name of Little Flower of Infant Jesus. Now a magnificent church building is under construction on account of the abnormal increase of the parishioners.

The Feast of Little Flower of Infant Jesus is celebrated in this church for five days. The main feast is celebrated on Sunday after 2nd October every year. As a matter of fact, the feast commences on the previous Wednesday of the main day celebration. Every year an elected president will celebrate the feast at his own expense. A detailed programme of the function will be published and circulated among the public. The programme will also be advertised in the important dailies. On the day of the commencement of the feast the flag will be hoisted by ecclesiastical dignitaries amidst the thunderings of pop-guns, fire crackers and band play which is usually attended by public at large. During the celebration days, in the morning, High Mass will be said and

in the evening there will be public sermon by eminent scholars followed by Litany and Benediction. On the eve of the main day of the feast, i.e., on Saturday evening, Vespers, will be sung followed by usual ceremonies. There is a very beautiful and attractive procession in the evening through a well decorated road nearly a mile long to the northern extremity of the parish. The function ends on that day with colourful pyrotechnics.

The important celebration, however, takes place on Sunday. As usual Solemn High Mass will be said followed by a festive sermon and a long procession through a highly decorated road to the southern extremity of the parish. The approximate average number of persons attending this feast will come between 15,000 to 20,000. Furniture items, stationeries, crockeries, earthenwares, iron materials etc. are the important commodities marketed in the fair held during the feast.

UTSAVAM IN THE THIRUMALA DEVASWOM, ERNAKULAM

(SARVASHRI P. K. RAMACHANDRA PAI AND A. K. NARAYANA PRABHU)

District
Taluk
Town

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Ernakulam

The Thirumala *Devaswom* at Ernakulam is hardly a mile away from the Ernakulam Town railway station. About four centuries ago, a few Brahmans had come to Kerala from South Konkan, Goa and other places fearing the large scale proselytism taking place then in those places. Among those who came to Kerala are included a few Goudasaraswatha Brahmans also. Those who settled at Ernakulam decided to set up a temple for them. Eight families among them took initiative in the matter, constructed a temple and consecrated it on *Uthrattathi* day in *Mithunam* 902 M. E. Along with it, the deity of Ganapathy was

also installed in the temple. After some-time, in the year 955 M. E., on *Punaratham* day in *Kumbhom*, this temple was rebuilt and reconsecrated. It was again reconstructed and reconsecrated for the last time on *Revathy* asterism in *Makaram* 1072 M. E. In the years 928 M. E. and 1000 M. E., the deities of Hanuman and Mahalakshmi were respectively installed in this temple. For sometime since 902 M. E. the principal temple of the Goudasaraswatha Brahmans at Ernakulam was the Thirumala *Devaswom* at Cochin and the *Devaswom* at Ernakulam was only a *Keezhood* (subordinate temple) of that temple. Later this

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, PERUMANOOR, ERNAKULAM

temple was made independent of the Cochin Thirumala *Devaswom*. Now this temple is being administered by a committee of elected members of the Community. Quite a good number of persons belonging to the community have donated landed properties to the temple and thus enriched the *Devaswom*. Often devotees conduct *Abhishekam*, *Thrikalapooja*, *Vahanapooja*, *Kalyanaotsavam* etc. as votive offerings to the deity.

The annual festival of this temple, lasting for eight days, takes place from *Revathy*

to *Punaratham* asterisms in *Kumbhom* (February-March). A large number of people, not less than 15,000 in number, take part in this festival. The special feature of the festival celebrated in this temple consists of the ritualistic acts and the procession in which the deities will be carried and taken round in *Vahanas* and on elephant's back. The *Vahanas* employed in this procession are *Pushpaka Vimanam*, golden *Garudan*, silver *Garudan*, Hanuman swan, Seshan and horse.

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, PERUMANOOR, ERNAKULAM (REV. FR. PETER VADACHERRY)

District
Taluk
Town

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Ernakulam

This church was established in 1742. At first this was a Syrian Catholic church. Later it became a Latin Catholic church by adopting the Latin rite. It is situated in a locality predominantly inhabited by high caste Hindus especially Nairs. This was so even from the very beginning. The church is built in a compound which was the abode of a very rich Nair family, namely, Edaparambathu Eravi Makoth brothers. Legend has it that the sign of the cross appeared in the middle yard of their *nalukett* and that they gave the place for the construction of the church (vide page 37, 'A guide to Cochin' — 'Cochin Calling' — published by the Cochin Government). Many miracles have been attributed to St. George, the patron saint. Tradition says that the saint riding on horse appeared in vision even to the Nairs of the locality. Some of these people regularly send their votives to the church. Proximity to the Cochin harbour is attracting foreigners and very often European Catholics visit the place.

Four feasts are celebrated in this church. These are St. George's feast, the feast of

Holy name of Jesus, feast of Our Lady of Dolours and the feast of the Holy Cross. The St. George's feast is celebrated for five days from Wednesday falling before or after or on the 23rd of April to the next Sunday and the feast of Holy name of Jesus for five days from Wednesday coming after Ist of January to the following Sunday. The feast of Our Lady of Dolours takes place from Wednesday (coming before or after or on the 15th of September) to the following Sunday. Similarly, the feast of the Holy Cross is also celebrated for five days from Wednesday (coming after or before or on the 3rd of May to the next Sunday).

The feast in this church are celebrated by presidents chosen from the parishioners. Very often people come forward to celebrate the feast. Devotional prayers by the faithful, special religious services and processions taking the statues of saints are the special features of the feast. About five to ten thousand people usually participate in this feast. Stationery articles, pots and plates are the important commodities of the fair held during the festive days.

FEASTS IN THE MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH, CHATHYATH, ERNAKULAM

(FR. GEO. G. THOTTAKATH)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Town	Ernakulam

The parish church of Chathyath, dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, stands on the side of the backwaters and commands a scene of enchanting beauty. It was built in 1673 by a Spanish Carmelite missionary, Rev. Fr. Matheo of St. Joseph. It was the second church built by the Carmelite missionaries who had been deputed by the Pope to minister to the spiritual needs of the Catholic community of Kerala. Till the year 1936 the church property was in the possession of the missionaries who then handed it over to the Archdiocese of Verapoly. The present parishes of St. Augustin's, Moolampilly, St. Antony's, Vaduthala and Little Flower, Pottakuzhy were erected from the outlying areas of this parish. The parish of Moolampilly was again recently bifurcated and the new parish of South Chittur was established.

The main feast or festival used to attract an unusually large number of people, the main attraction being a big fair. Gradually as other centres of worship and marketing areas came up, this number began to dwindle. In spite of this, on an average, ten thousand people visit the church during the annual feast.

The parish has three shrines of which the

most important is the church of Our Lady of Loretto at Thattazham, nearly a mile to the north of the parish church. The present church there, is the one that was constructed when the ancient shrine of the same name close by had to be demolished to lay out the Ernakulam-Shoranur railway line. The shrine is a pilgrim centre of the town of Ernakulam. The annual feast is colourfully celebrated. The most important feature is a grand procession to and fro from Chathyath and Thattazham along a mile long richly decorated and illumined route. Though still under the jurisdiction of this parish, the shrine is managed now by the famous Religious Congregation of Salesians who have established an Oratory closeby. Besides training up the candidates for the Salesian Order, the Oratory has grown to be a great centre of social and cultural activities including sports and games. The Oratory is attracting daily a large number of people, especially boys and young men of the town.

About ten thousand people attend this feast. Household utensils and toys are the important commodities sold in the fair held in connection with this feast.

FEAST IN THE ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH, MULAMPILLY

(FR. F. J. FERNANDEZ)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Village	Kadamakudy

Mulampilly is an island situated four miles north of the centre of Ernakulam city

with a population of about 2,000 people, mostly Catholics belonging to the Arch-

FEAST IN THE INFANT JESUS CHURCH, KANDANAD

diocese of Verapoly. A great majority of these people belong to a particular community called 'Farangees' now known as Anglo-Indians. They are known as the descendants of the Portuguese. The special feature of these people is that they monopolise a cottage industry of earthen pots of all varieties. This industry is known as a family trade of this particular community. Every man, woman and child of every home of this class of people is engaged in this industry and trade, so much so, every home is considered a workshop for this industry. The one drawback these people have is that, even after so many years of experience, they have not made any remarkable improvement in the process of manufacture. They follow

the same old crude method. In spite of this drawback, they are not able to cope with the demand for earthen pots. They have flourishing markets everywhere. This product forms one of the important items for sale in most of the festivals and fairs in this part of the country.

St. Augustine's feast in this island of Mulampilly which is celebrated every year on the 28th August, is the biggest opportunity for the 'Farangees' of Mulampilly to make a grand sale of their products.

They are now trying to improve their industry by unifying their efforts, pooling their resources and forming a co-operative society for effective and efficient work and better and profitable business.

FEAST IN THE INFANT JESUS CHURCH, KANDANAD

(FR. PAUL KAVALAKATHY)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Village	Kadamakudy

This church was established in A.D. 1708. After the unhappy incident of "Kunan Kurusu Sathyam" which took place in A. D. 1653, most of the people of Kandanad village became Jacobites opposing the supremacy of the Roman pontiff. A minority of the people only remained in the Roman Catholic church approving the supremacy of the Roman pontiff. However, the majority occupied the ancient church of Kandanad, namely Martha Mariam. The Roman Catholics were also practising their religious services in the ancient church of Martha Mariam. But this state of affairs did not last for long owing to the various difficulties caused by Jacobites to Roman Catholics. Therefore, in order to solve the problem, Roman Catholics determined to establish a new church at Kandanad. But owing to the great power of the Jacobites, Catholics

were not bold enough to come forward in public and to take necessary steps for the establishment of the new church. So the leaders of the Catholics made necessary arrangements privately and got permission from the Maharaja of Travancore and laid the foundation stone for the new church at midnight of the 17th January 1708. On that memorable day, people made a shed and celebrated the first holy Mass in the new church. The Jacobites came to know this only after the establishment of the new church.

In commemoration of this event, the faithful began to celebrate that day as a grand feast of the Infant Jesus. In course of time it has been arranged to conduct it solemnly on the Sunday following the 17th January.

FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, MULAVUCAD

(MRS. M. J. VIVERA)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Mulavucad

Mulavucad is a village about one and a half miles away from the Kerala High Court which faces the Cochin Harbour, the Queen of the Arabian Sea. This long strip of narrow land, of about 8 sq. miles with a population of 15,216 is one of the many islands in the beautiful Ernakulam backwaters. It is situated on the western side of the Ernakulam Municipal town, the capital of the old Cochin State. The nearest railway station is Ernakulam Town. The church of St. Sebastian being on the coastal side, faces the most important companies like Esso, Burmah Shell and Tata Oil Mills, the home of 'Cocogem' etc. of the Ernakulam Town. At the southern end of this island there is a lovely Tourist Bungalow, with well laid out gardens and lawns amidst the luxuriant cocoanut palms, which was once the seat of the old British Resident.

The church of St. Sebastian was founded in the village in the year 1842. It is dedicated to St. Sebastian, a famous Roman Martyr of the Catholic church. St. Sebastian is reported to be a miracle-worker and a powerful protector of his devotees against epidemics like small-pox, cholera etc. and therefore he is respected not only by the Christian community but also by other communities. Why the Martyr is sought as protector against epidemics by people is still not very clear. The fact, however, remains that in the year 680 Rome and in 1575 Milan and in 1596 Lisbon were saved by the miraculous intervention of St. Sebastian from the attack of a plague that shook those cities. The devotion to St. Sebastian spread rapidly all over the Christian world and he is considered to be a special protector in times of epidemics.

The feast of St. Sebastian at Mulavucad is celebrated for 5 days ending on 20th January if it falls on a Sunday or on the following Sunday after 20th January. This is the parochial feast. An association of the devotees in the parish is in charge of the celebration. From among them are elected, the President, Treasurer, Procurator and Scribe every year. They are helped by certain members from the association which is known as a 'confraternity' in the church language. The parish priest is the ex-officio chaplain of this confraternity. Historical records show that the celebration of feasts in churches of Kerala through the confraternity members began with the Portuguese missionaries. The Portuguese names of the office-bearers of the association, such as *Prasenti*, *Tisserere*, *Procudor*, and *Scruman* are still retained.

With the hoisting of the flag invariably on a Wednesday evening preceding 20th January every year the celebration of the feast commences amidst the thundering of pop-guns and fire-crackers when the church bells are tolled at that time. The church will be neatly decorated and illuminated by the elected President according to his means. And if the President happens to be a man of social status and if his financial position permits he will employ a set of band players to enhance the splendour of the feast days. During the festive days there will be High Mass in the morning and Ladeenj (Litany) in the evening with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

At Mulavucad the five day feast has the following items set apart for each day. The first day is devoted for the commencement of the feast itself. On the second day after



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ST. DOMINIC SYRIAN CATHOLIC
CHURCH, ALWAYE



Pl. 68

THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF VALLARPADOM



Pl. 69

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF VALLARPADOM — A VIEW OF THE PROCESSION

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FEAST OF OUR LADY OF VALLARPADOM — A VIEW OF THE FAIR

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FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN CHURCH, MULAVUKAD

the morning services a sumptuous treat is given by the President to the electors of the office bearers of the next year's feast. This treat is known as '*Leihormarudae virunnu*'. A well-to-do President sometimes invites his relatives and friends for an 'at home'. The feeding of the poor in the churchyard is still a beautiful feature of the Christian charity during the festive days. This feeding is known as '*Nerchakanji*.' Though not customary this is sometimes done depending on the goodwill and financial condition of the President. On the third day the new office bearers for the subsequent year's feast are officially declared and ceremoniously crowned in the church at the evening service after which the newly elected president is taken home in a procession by the parishioners and a light refreshment is given to all those who accompany him. The eve of the feast day witnesses the singing of the vespers of the Saint in the church followed by a procession of the faithful outside the church premises. If the president's financial position permits, display of pyrotechnics closes the evening item. Usually the gathering on this day for the evening service will be on the increase than on the former days.

The solemn High Mass and a stirring sermon by a favour preacher are the highlights of the concluding day of the feast. The grand procession following the Mass crowns the feast day when the statue of the saint is taken out on a gaily decorated dais, carried on the shoulders of devotees and goes round the chapel and returns to the church. The playing of band, firing of crackers and pop-guns, and the ringing of church bells till the procession returns to the church give a new inspiration to the life of his devotees. With the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament morning service comes to an end. The people come to the church in their Sunday best. The largest gathering is seen on this day which will approximately be four to five thousand. Not only the parishioners but people from neighbouring places as well flock to the

church. St. Sebastian being the saint of all, Christians as well as members from other communities come to pay their respects to their dear saint, to offer their gifts to him, and to pray to the saint for their protection. Besides money, rice, paddy, pepper and fruits are offered as offerings (*Nercha*).

The devotees of St. Sebastian have a firm belief that they will be protected by him against the attack of epidemics. As a token of that faith they take out the arrows of the saint in procession to their homes after paying a nominal amount to the church as their offering to the saint. After paying their respects in the form of prayers, these arrows are taken back to the church. To make the procession more attractive, devotees form into groups and provide band, *Panchavadyam*, *Parisamuttukali* etc. besides the firing of pop-guns and crackers. A peculiar feature of this procession is that persons who carry the arrows invariably walk under an open umbrella and sometimes rich clients under a *Muthukuda* (ornamental umbrella) which will be a thrilling scene to the on-lookers. At times the number exceeds hundred in a group. This devotion to the saint is known as '*Kazhnnu nercha*'. Besides the above, new arrows in gold are also offered to the saint by his devotees as a token of having protected them from epidemics in times of danger. Yet a third one known as '*Urakkamozhichil*' also form part of the devotion. This is done on a collective basis in a common place. In a temporary *pandal* set up for the occasion and on a decorated platform the arrow of the saint will be placed and venerated throughout the night by his devotees in a befitting manner, after which the arrow will be returned to the church on the next day.

Every feast day is attended by a large 'fair' at the churchyard where fancy and utility articles of all kind could be purchased like religious articles, crockery, toys, wooden articles, earthenwares, brass and aluminium vessels etc. Special mention has to be made here about the earthenwares brought

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

from a nearby place called 'Moolampilly' which is famous for making different kinds of earthen pots.

The feast of the saint comes to a close with the lowering of the flag in the evening of the last day.

FEAST IN THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF VALLARPADOM

(FR. F. J. FERNANDEZ)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Mulavucad

Vallarpadom is a charming little island situated about a mile to the west of Ernakulam, in the picturesque backwaters adjacent to the beautiful harbour of Cochin. It has an area of about 2 sq. miles and a population of about 5,000 mostly Catholics. These Catholics are under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Verapoly.

About the year 1676 a church was erected at the eastern end of the island and a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Ransom was enshrined therein. According to tradition this picture was one of those brought from Portugal, by the Portuguese during their sway over Malabar.

Owing to an unusually big flood, the church collapsed and the picture was afloat on water. It was spotted as a luminous thing on the water by the then Diwan of Cochin, Paliat Achan, who was travelling in a boat at that time. Efforts failed to secure the picture by boatmen. But Paliat Achan himself stretched out his hand and managed to get the revered picture. Knowing that it was the picture venerated in the church of the Christians of Vallarpadom, he landed at the site where the present church is situated and handed over the picture to the Christians, giving them all the necessary permission and facilities to erect a church there. Thenceforward a small subsidy was granted to the church from Paliat, the family of the Diwan, for burning a perpetual light in the church. This subsidy is continued to the present day.

This picture was looked upon as a miraculous one by all people without distinction of caste or creed. One of the most striking events that occurred about the year 1800 is narrated as follows: A Nair woman of the aristocratic family of Pallyil in Vallarpadom, was travelling with her child and some other members of the family in a boat to Cochin. On account of a violent tempest the boat capsized and all got drowned. The crew and the passengers except the Nair woman and her child managed to escape. The woman and the child who were lost in the waters, were believed to have been dead. Twenty-four hours after the event, the woman and child were caught in a net, who to the amazement of all, were taken out of water alive and unhurt. In reply to the numerous questions asked by her people, the woman replied that, at the moment of danger, she placed herself and her child under the protection of the Lady of Vallarpadom, who was popularly invoked as "Vallarpadath Amma" and while under water, they found themselves sheltered by the mantle of the loving mother. Coming to the shore, the woman refused to return home, but herself and child lived in the premises of the church as faithful servants of the loving Mother, rendering small services, such as sweeping the yard of the church. This practice is even now followed by many of the clients of "Vallarpadath Amma."

Being an island, all communications to



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FEAST OF OUR LADY OF VALLARPADOM—ANOTHER VIEW OF THE FAIR

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Pl. 72

CORPUS CHRISTI IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, MULAVUCAD
1. A VIEW OF THE EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION
2. ANOTHER VIEW OF THE PROCESSION

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UTSAVAM IN THE PANDARA PARAMBU SIVA TEMPLE, PONJIKARA

Vallarpadom are by water, and therefore, those who travel by water have great devotion to 'Vallarpadath Amma', as in many instances, she has miraculously saved her devotees from violent storms. Many people dedicate themselves to Our Lady of Vallarpadom either for a few years or for life. People from far and near without distinction of caste or creed bring their votive offerings to Our Lady and pledge their service to her. Every year the 24th September is a gala day for Vallarpadom on account of the feast of Vallarpadath Amma. People, even from places as far as Nagercoil, which is 200 miles away, come to Vallarpadom during festive days.

As the old church erected at the present site was not big enough, further extensions

were made in 1930. It has the privilege of being one of the consecrated churches in the Archdiocese of Verapoly, which is governed by the present Prelate, the Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Attipetty, Ph. D. S. T. D.; L. L. D.

During the festival days at Vallarpadom, the celebrations continue for more than a week. Nearly 15,000 people visit the shrine of Vallarpadom during the festival days. Consequently, an unusually big fair is organised here during those days. The most important products and articles that this fair is famous for, are country boats and oars, earthen pots and leaf or straw mats. The last item finds an important market here as the festival happens to be in the harvest season.

UTSAVAM IN THE PANDARA PARAMBU SIVA TEMPLE, PONJIKARA

(SHRI KOCHAYYAN KOCHAYYAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kananayannur
Mulavucad

In olden days there was a Namboothiri household called Kothat *Illom* at Ponjikara in the Mulavucad village. There was a clever Namboothiri in that *Illom* by name Narayanan. He was a well known sorcerer and proficient in the art of fencing. He worshipped many gods also. He was well-known for his acts of extraordinary courage and heroism.

In course of time the above *Illom* dwindled and became extinct without heirs. For a long time even after the death of the above mentioned Narayanan Namboothiri, there had not been any troubles in that locality. But recently this writer's grand father (father's father) had been possessed by an evil spirit and he experienced some changes in his manners and attitudes. It was revealed

by the astrologer that he had been possessed by the spirit of Shri Narayanan Namboothiri, that a temple should be constructed in that place in which the spirit of Narayanan Namboothiri and the gods he had been worshipping during his life time should be installed and that every year an *Utsavam* should also be conducted in that temple. Accordingly the Pandara Parambu temple was constructed and the spirit of the Namboothiri and his gods were consecrated therein. This temple is located one and half miles away from the Ernakulam Town railway station. *Pooja* is regularly performed in this temple. Besides, an annual *Utsavam* is also conducted here for three days in the month of March in which not less than 1,000 people usually take part.



ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, PAZHANGAD
A VIEW OF THE PROCESSION

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

There are no landed properties for this *Devasnom*. The expenses for the conduct of *Pooja* and *Utsavam* in this temple are solely

met with from the offerings received from the devotees.

CORPUS CHRISTI IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, MULAVUCAD

(MRS. M. J. VIVERA)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Village	Mulavucad

The most famous among the many customs connected with the fasts and feasts of the Christian Church which survived the Reformation, is Corpus Christi. It has no place in the Anglican Calendar probably because it was instituted by Pope Urban IV in 1264. In all countries professing the Roman Catholic faith, Corpus Christi Day is celebrated with great pomp and rejoicing. It falls on the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday, generally in the month of June, a month set apart for the special devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For the sake of convenience in some places Corpus Christi is being celebrated on the Sunday following the fixed date, that is, on the second Sunday after Pentecost. The main feature of the festival is the procession in which the Monstrance containing the consecrated bread is carried both within the church and throughout the adjacent places by one who has a canopy held over him.

Corpus Christi is a festival of the Roman Catholic Church observed in honour of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. "The institution of this feast is due to St. Juliana, Prioress of Mont Cornillon near Liege (1222-58) whose devotion for the Blessed sacrament was intensified by a Vision and who persuaded Robert de Torote Bishop of Liege, to institute the celebration of the feast for his diocese in 1246. It did not spread, however, until in 1261 Jacques

Pantaleon, formerly archdeacon of Liege, became Pope Urban IV. In 1264 Urban ordered the whole Church to observe the feast, for which a new office (still in use) was written by St. Thomas Aquinas; but the well-known story of the miracle of Balsena, which is supposed to have hastened the Pope's decision, is not supported by contemporary evidence and is probably a later adaptation of a type of legend which occurs at least as early as the 12th century. Owing perhaps to Urban's death soon afterwards (October 2-1264) his order was ignored in most countries until after its confirmation by Clement V at the Council of Vienna in 1311. By the middle of the 14th century it became in effect the principal feast of the Church. The procession of the Host, its most prominent feature (though not part of the original ritual) became a gorgeous pageant, in which sovereigns and princes took part, as well as Magistrates and members of trade and craft guilds; and was followed by miracle-plays and mysteries performed by members of the guilds.

"The rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation at the Reformation naturally involved the suppression of the festival, as a religious observance, in the reformed Churches, but the mystery plays survived for a time in places."

Every feast in Catholic church has a historical fact behind it. 'Corpus Christi'

CORPUS CHRISTI IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, MULAVUCAD

is not an exception to this. It is said that once in Balsena in the papal dominion a Catholic priest while saying the Holy Mass happened to spill out of the chalice, some drops of the sacramental species of wine. Immediately he tried to blot it with a linen. To his great surprise the cloth was filled with red spots in the form of a Sacred Host. The incident was then reported to Pope Urban IV and this caused the publication of the famous bulletin. Thus the old bulletin of Pope Urban IV was renewed at the council of Vienna (1311-1312) by Clement V. But at that time there was no procession of the Holy Eucharist which was instituted later on by Pope John XXII. The successors of this Pope until the Council of Trent were very zealous of the observance of this holy day. The Trent Council declared that this feast 'Corpus Christi' is to be considered as a triumph over the heresy against the doctrine of Holy Eucharist. At the time of Reformation, Luther and company abolished this holy day.

As already mentioned, the feast 'Corpus Christi' is a festival celebrated in connection with the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist is a Sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ. This Sacrament is called 'Sacrament of Love'. Its etymology comes from the Greek language eucharisteas (having given thanks) and this expression for the Sacrament is given in the original Greek Text of Luke XXII-19. 'Eucharist' in the Roman Catholic Church is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ and also the Christian covenant sacrifice. Church, as Holy Mother, teaches regarding this sacrament that it is the true and real Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the species or appearances or physical properties of bread and wine. The institution of the sacrament by Jesus Christ is well recorded in the three synoptic Gospels and in St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. This sacrament is the clear expression of God's love towards His beloved people. He loved His people to such an extent that He gave His only begotten Son for the redemption

of mankind. Thus God's love became man. And the Godman, when He was about to depart His people established the Holy Eucharist by which He wished to be among His people until the consummation of the world.

The words of the institution given in the above said evangelist St. Luke are "This is my body which is given for you". The perpetuation of the sacrament is commanded in these words "Do this for a commemoration of me". Jesus Christ has already mentioned about this sacrament during the last year of His public life.

The Roman Catholic Church from Apostolic times has received those words of her Founder and many other announcements he made touching this sacramental mystery in their plain literal interpretation—the interpretation put upon them by all who listened to them, Jews, disciples, Apostles, and by Jesus Christ himself; Church as Holy Mother teaches that in the Eucharist is present "truly, really and substantially" the body and blood of Jesus Christ together with His Soul and divinity. Again, she teaches that the Holy Eucharist or the Holy Mass is one and the same sacrifice with that of the cross on Calvary offered by Christ himself 2,000 years ago. On Calvary Jesus offered a bloody sacrifice while on the altar it is unbloody. In both, the victim is one and the same. Thus the offering upon the cross on Calvary is repeated daily in the Eucharistic sacrifice in obedience to the command of our Lord "Do this in remembrance of me". The words "Hoc est Corpus Meum"—This is my body, is said at least by four priests every second throughout the day all over the World. So we can imagine how many Eucharistic sacrifices are offered by the Roman Catholic priests within a day! Innumerable!!

This great feast is celebrated in every parish as solemnly as possible. To add to the solemnity of the feast, and to have a very organised celebration, in most of the parishes, parishioners are divided into two

1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. II, 14th Edition page 466.

or three groups, say southern party and northern party. The division is made in order to facilitate the work of decorating the pavilion where the solemn benediction of the most Blessed Sacrament has to be given and each party is responsible to decorate a part of the path (assigned to it) through which the Eucharistic Sacrament is carried to the pavilion in procession. The parties concerned try their best to decorate the way as attractively as possible befitting the occasion. It is the peculiarity of this feast that many kinds of fruits like plantain, pineapple, cocoanuts etc., are used for the decoration of the pavilion and the way to it. This decoration is done with a competitive spirit as each party tries to make their part most beautiful. Decoration is done with flags and festoons. Green plantain trees with their long broad leaves and heavy bunches of fruit and golden bunches of plantains are also not a rare item of the decoration. The long silvery cocoanut leaves are used for festoons which is a common thing in the church festival. Ornamental arches are constructed at the entrance of the temporary altar erected for the occasion. Paper garlands and flags also form a part of the items used for decoration. Little ones are attracted by the colourful flags and the different kinds of ripe fruits.

The celebration begins with solemn high Mass in the church with Blessed Sacrament exposed over the main altar. The priest sings the Mass vested in fine white chasuble (for every feast of our Lord the Mass is said in white vestments). Almost all parishioners attend the Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion. After the Holy Mass the solemn procession begins. The priest vested with cope and veil carries the Holy Eucharist to the pavilion. When the procession starts from the church all those who assemble in

the church line up in two rows, children to begin with, women and then men and a set of small boys and girls between 6 and 10 (say a dozen or two) dressed up in white, move along with the others just before the priest to adore the Holy Eucharist incensing and pouring flowers and perfumes on the Eucharistic Host. As the procession moves forward each time, two girls from either side come forward face the Holy Eucharist, take a few steps towards the priest kneel down and adore the sacrament and throw flowers from the beautifully decorated small basket hung from their necks. After this they get up and occupy their place at the back of the set of their company by the time two boys, the next in the line, come forward, kneel down and adore the sacrament and sprinkle perfumes from the sprinklers which they carry in their hands. The process is repeated till the procession reaches the altar set up for the occasion and as it moves the church bell rings aloud paying homage to the Holy Eucharistic Lord and the choir sweetly sings the Eucharistic hymns from the hymnals. White cloth is spread on the ground when the procession moves from the church till it reaches the temporary altar. As a mark of deep reverence the custom is long standing in the Church—perhaps from the time of the triumphal entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem before his crucifixion. As the priest reaches the altar in the pavilion, the faithful kneel down and receive the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. After the Benediction, the procession returns to the church and when the priest reaches the main altar all those who have assembled kneel down and receive the Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament. Thus the celebration comes to an end.

"Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar".

ATHACHAMAYAM

(SHRI PUTHEZHATH RAMAN MENON)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Poonithura

The *Athachamayam* celebration was in vogue not only in Cochin but also in some other places though with slight variations in the rituals and ceremonies. Among these, the most important was the one celebrated at the Zamorin's palace, Kozhikode. This is why Cochin and Kozhikode come uppermost in our minds when we hear about *Athachamayam*. Of these celebrations, it is about the *Athachamayam* in Cochin that an account is attempted to be given here. Although variations could be observed in the outward pomp and grandeur of the *Athachamayam* celebrations in the above two places, the *Athachamayam* in both these places had identical origin and meaning.

Not only *Athachamayam*, but even the *Ariyittuvazhcha* (coronation by pouring rice over the head) and the crowning of princes and kings have since disappeared from India. Perhaps, in future, these may become relics of the past and matters of history. Of the many ceremonies and programmes associated with monarchy, oligarchy and that socio-political order of feudalism which is now generally looked upon with contempt, one was *Athachamayam*. Any way, since *Athachamayam*, *Ariyittuvazhcha* and coronation ceremonies have all now become stories of the past, it does not seem there is any impropriety in stating a few words about *Athachamayam*. If all the crowns have not been deposited in museums as curios or have not been dismantled and

sold, it is certain that they are at least undergoing these transformations. Since rice has now become scarce and the 'makroni' has replaced it and become popular, the disappearance of *Ariyittuvazhcha* is quite timely. Though a tinge of artificiality could be perceived in all cases of getting ready as some amount of preparation is involved in getting ready for anything, a discussion about getting ready for the *Atham* day will not be out of place.

The word *Athachamayam* means only adorning oneself for the *Atham* day. In fact, the people of Kerala are accustomed to dress up on the *Atham* day to receive and celebrate *Onam*, that grand festival of Kerala coming on the 10th day of *Atham*. Yet, the word *Athachamayam*, in a special sense, signifies the wearing of costumes by the kings of Kerala on the *Atham* day. It is, therefore, clear from this that what *Athachamayam* signifies are the wearing of special costumes and the rites observed by the lord of Kerala on the *Atham* day fallidg ten days prior to *Thiru Onam*.

Glory of Atham

What is the glory of the *Atham* day? Why do the kings put on special robes and celebrate the occasion on a grand scale? What does it mean and what is its origin? The subject *Athachamayam* of Cochin could be discussed after probing into the above. As stated above, wherever *Athachamayam* celebration was in vogue, whether in Cochin or Kozhikode (in Trivandrum there was no such

Note: This is a free translation from a Malayalam article written by Shri Puthiezath Raman Menon on 24-8-1958. The reference to 'Makroni' is to a substitute for rice which was being popularised at that time. Though the *Athachamayam* celebration had ceased to exist when the article was written, it has since been revived on a smaller scale but without the Maharaja participating in the procession.

celebration at all) the historical background as well as the legendary version of this celebration is one and the same. Practically anything and everything about ancient Kerala—origin, name, people, religious customs, language, Government—is enshrouded in mystery. It is doubtful whether there is any other country so placed as Kerala in this respect. Till date, a definite, comprehensive view about Kerala and her history, has not been formed to the satisfaction of all. In these circumstances, it is no wonder that the historical background of the *Athachamayam* celebration too is enshrouded in the realm of tradition. Several stories are current about the origin of this celebration. Some hold that it signifies the march to the battle field. Others say that it is held to welcome Mahabali and to escort him. Another school of thought ascribes it to be the 'get ready' for an *Utsavam*. Again, some others hold that it is merely a show of power and glory of the rulers. Still others think that it is an imitative performance of certain ceremonies of the ancient Chera kings of Kerala or it is the continued implementation of certain wills of the Perumals. It is doubtful whether one could authoritatively say which of these divergent views is correct and which is not. The authority in support of the contention of each school would be some tradition known to it.

Although it cannot be precisely said as to when this celebration originated, who initiated it and why it was started, certain facts emerge from the combined effect of the various legends and historical versions. According to whichever school of thought it may be, the *Athachamayam* falls only on the *Atham* day, ten days before *Thiru Onam* in *Chingom*. *Thiru Onam* is a grand festival of Kerala. On that day, it is supposed, that Mahabali would visit Kerala to see his ancient kingdom. On that occasion, in every household, people install *Thrikkakara Appan* moulded in mud and offer *pooja* to him. On a careful scrutiny one could observe the

representations of Siva, Vishnu and Mahabali on these images. From this, it would appear that there is some connection among *Thiru Onam*, *Atham* and *Thrikkakara*. What can this be?

Thrikkakara the Capital of Kerala

Thrikkakara famous in puranas is a lovely health resort, lying just a little to the east between Alwaye and Edappally. There stands an ancient, historic temple attracting visitors even in its present dilapidated condition. The main deities consecrated in this temple are Siva and Vishnu. During the heyday of this temple, an *Utsavam* was celebrated there for 28 days, commencing with the hoisting of the temple flag in the month of *Karkatakam* and ending with the *Thiru Onam* day in *Chingom*. The most important days of this *Utsavam* were the last ten days, the ten days from *Atham* to *Onam*. *Atham* was the opening day of that *Valiya Vilakku* (grand festival). Thrikkakara was the capital of Kerala during the days of Chera kings. In those days Cranganore had not become so famous. It was only at a later period when maritime trade increased and Cranganore grew into a major port that the capital of Kerala was shifted from Thrikkakara to Thiruvanchikulam. This shifting of the capital would have taken place, probably, during the Perumals' regime in Kerala. Historians seem to agree that it was only after overcoming many vicissitudes since the days of Chera kings that the regime of Perumals had commenced in Kerala. Therefore, it is likely that the importance of Thrikkakara would have waned but gradually. An interesting historical fact that the perumals had held Thrikkakara either as their place of origin or their principal seat even after they had shifted their capital to Thiruvanchikulam, is revealed by the legend relating to Tholanthodu, located between Edappally and Ernakulam. The Perumal's consort ordered the digging of a canal 'like a snake crawling', so as to enable her to go to Thrikkakara from Thiruvanchikulam to offer worship in the

temple there and return as quickly as possible. The winding canal known as 'Tholanthodu' was dug by Perumal's minister Tholan accordingly in obedience to the commands of the Perumal's consort. Anyway, it is certain that the love and esteem the Perumals had for Thrikkakara, lasted for a very long time.

Hades and Mahabali

It is seen from the old Tamil books that the Chera kings belonged to Mahabali's as well as Banaperumal's dynasty. There are many reasons to think that Kerala was the Hades described in the Puranas. It is observed from the stories of Jeemoothavahanan and Garuda that the latter took refuge in the western ghats of Kerala. The *Naga Kanyaka* of Arjuna was a lady from Kerala. In short, the contention that Kerala was the Hades mentioned in Puranas cannot be said to be unacceptable. There is a belief that it is to this Hades that Vamanan, the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu, sent Mahabali once for all. For this reason, Kerala and *Mahabali pooja* would have been very important to Chera kings. It is no wonder, therefore, that Thrikkakara which had attained fame and glory during the days of Chera kings and the 23 days' *Utsavam* conducted there, of which the main festivities *Atham* asterism as well as the final *Arat Utsavam*, *Onam*, had all survived to subsequent days.

Whether there was a decree in force insisting that all subordinate kings and barons should present themselves on the *Atham* day for the inauguration of the celebrations or not, it can be presumed that all of them used to attend the *Athachamayam* celebrations. This practice was continued in later days also. During the days of Perumals and even after they shifted their royal residence to Thiruvanchikulam from Thrikkakara, this *Utsavam* continued to be celebrated without great changes in the rituals and ceremonies. The rulers who set up independent principalities after the disappearance of the Perumals would also

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have evinced interest in Thrikkakara. The rivalries and wars between the aspirant rulers for supremacy over Kerala were all happenings of a later period. If the facts that the Perumpadappu (Cochin) came into existence through the *Marumakkathayam* lineage and the Nediyruppu (Kozhikode) through the *Makkathayam* lineage of the last of the Perumals and that the authority and royalty bestowed upon the barons by the younger sons of the Perumals through the *Makkathayam* lineage had caused the growth of various principalities in Kerala (in the stories of Thampuran there is indication to the effect that the Kottayam royal house had come into existence in this way) are well-founded and correct, perhaps, the kings of Kerala are not at fault for the want of amity and friendship among them.

It is only to explain the historical circumstances that led to the origin of this celebration and its Kerala-wide importance that its historical background has been traced here. From all these facts what information have we gathered about our subject *Athachamayam*? In the great temple of Thrikkakara, the once capital and important city of Kerala, an *Utsavam* used to be conducted on a grand scale. Of this *Utsavam* the last ten days' celebration was the most important. During these days the great personalities of Kerala would come to Thrikkakara in all their pomp and splendour attend the *Utsavam* and pay their respect to the overlord of Kerala. Thus it is either a vestige of this practice or its commemoration that is known as *Athachamayam*.

Not an expedition for war

From the rites and programmes of *Athachamayam* it is somewhat difficult to believe that it is the commemoration of the expedition for a war as some would have it. It does not reflect a tinge of sorrow, despair or insult at all. Jubilations and self-esteem are the only manifestations throughout the celebration. At the most, those who know the historical background of this celebration could probably console themselves that

'in olden days we used to go to Thrikkakara bedecked in our fineries, but now the practice is extinct'. Nevertheless it does not signify anything more than a shift in history. Compared to this, how far more revolutionary are the topsyturvy changes of today, changes by which Kunnalakonathiri, Madamaheesan and Kulasekhara Perumal have all become stories of the past.

In later days the necessity to go to Thrikkakara ceased. The royal seat was shifted from there. Even if there was any *utsavam* there, it was celebrated only nominally. The emperorship too became a controversial affair. Not only rivalries existed but even battles were waged between those who deserved that position, between those who longed for it and those who were holding that position. The power and authority wielded by Cochin gave rise to the jealousy and enmity on the part of Kozhikode. The relationship between Cochin and Kozhikode at one time so worsened that it turned into a battle so fierce as between Asuras and Devas. Each baron and chieftain changed his allegiance and fealty and taking sides tore the country by factions and disruptions. The power and affluence of each of them got confined to his territorial boundaries. Thus *Atham* alone survived. The stately procession ceased. Nevertheless, the importance and greatness of the occasion were not fully overlooked.

Enquiry into complaints

Even now we are following certain ceremonies and functions which are reminiscent of certain ancient customs and past experiences or the splendour of the past. To cite an instance, in some great temples when the deity is taken in procession after the hoisting of the temple flag, either the *Thanthri* or *Mesanthi* or *Kariyasthan*, representing the Deva would ask aloud thrice, 'Is there any complaint for any one?' and somebody from the crowd would answer 'None'. Without hearing this reply, the procession will not move an inch forward; if there is any complainant present, his complaint

should be heard and his grievances redressed. Today no one would say he has got any grievance. If at all he has got any complaint, no one would take notice of it. What is after all, the sum and substance of this ceremony? In olden days the temple area was administered by the temple. The presiding deity in the temple was the overlord of the temple and the temple area. Unless and until the lord redresses his subjects of their grievances, that overlord would not proceed for the *Ezhunnellothu*. Is there anything of the like today? Yet, there is the custom of making this enquiry. Likewise, in *Athachamayam* too the commemoration of a historical event is reflected. On the *Atham* day, the important day of the festival in the temple at Thrikkakara, all the kings donning their royal robes and other insignia and accompanied by their retinue used to visit Thrikkakara and pay their obeisance to the deity as well as to the overlord of Kerala. Today there is no such celebration nor any overlord in Kerala. The overlord has disappeared not from Kerala alone but even from the world too! However, each king used to conduct the celebration befitting his status and power. Now all these kings have disappeared. Their kingdoms too became extinct. Along with it the celebration of *Athachamayam* also ceased. Onam alone survives. It is not known for how many days? If 'makroni' is the food consumed what is *Onam* celebration?

Desom Ariyikkal

Now let us pass on to the *Athachamayam* celebration of Cochin. Three days prior to *Atham*, at the behest of royal command, news of the conduct of *Athachamayam* is publicised in the locality which act is known in Malayalam parlance as *Desom Ariyikkuka*. This is the first item of the *Athachamayam* celebrations. This is done by the beat of a large drum carried on an elephant's back throughout the entire locality. Beating the drum and blowing the trumpet, one would proclaim the date of *Athachamayam*

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from the three gates of the palace, once at one gate in a day. Reference is made here only to three palace gates, because on the 4th day, namely on *Atham* day, the ceremonial procession passes through the fourth and the main gate of the palace. According to the established rule, the kings, barons, karthas, Thandans, Musaliyars and other privileged personages should all present themselves on the occasion.

Wearing the Robes

On the eve of *Atham*, the Maharaja would take food only once and would observe seclusion from the fair sex, offer *poojas* and prayers, shave neatly (*Chandam charthal*) and get ready for the *Athachamayam* celebrations. At daybreak on the next day, he would take the royal bath, put on the clothes in the prescribed manner (*Thattudukkada*) and having conducted prayers and offered special *vazhipadu* to Pazhayannur Bhagavathy and Sree Poornathrayeeshan, invoke the blessings of the family priest and enter the special apartment for personal adornment. From there, the Thirumulpad and Namboothiris and at times the royal servants also who are the appointed persons, put on the person of the Maharaja numerous necklaces, breastplates, ear-rings, bracelets, rings, gold embroidered silken robes, head-dress and other fineries. The royal sword is then handed over to him. All high personages who have arrived on the previous day to participate in the celebration and their leader Kakkattukaranavar present themselves before the Maharaja and pay their respects to him.

The *persona grata* of that assembly is Kakkattukaranavar. He is accorded the same status as the Raja of Thalappally. He is the overlord of six barons. The *Kakkattukaranavapad* is the title given to the senior-most Raja of the royal houses of Manakkulam, Chiralayam, Kumarapuram and Kunnathur. For him there are separate mansion, temple, assigned properties and the rank and privileges. Of late, it was considered enough if any member of his house

hold available presents himself as a representative on behalf of the 'Karanavar'. On the conclusion of the *Athachamayam*, he would be entertained with special feasts and presented with feast-clothes. All the barons will be present on the occasion wearing a single cloth and another fine thin cloth wrapped over it and holding their swords and shields. On the eve of *Atham* day, three big cannons would have already been brought from the powder-magazine at Ernakulam and kept in the premises of the Chakkamkulangara temple at Trippunithura. The boomings of the cannons will be one of the highlights of the ceremonial procession.

In Golden Palanquin

Although the Thandans wearing silken scarfs on their heads and holding sticks in their hands and the Muslims in their peculiar costume and playing their special musical instruments would come to attend the celebrations, according to ancient custom the Thandans will not enter the fort. The Maharaja, attired in his fineries, gazes at everyone with affection, comes to the porch, ascends the silver throne secured in the centre of a room illumined by silver lamp and decorated with green and ripe plantain bunches, greek lamps, conches (*pallisanku*) and war-drums (*Veeram idhulam*) etc. Afterwards he mounts the stately golden palanquin, specially made and beautified for the occasion and gives assent for the procession to start. The royal conch is sounded, war-drums beaten and the cannons boomed at this moment. A diamond-studded beautiful crown could be seen kept reposing in the laps of the Maharaja. That crown is the one which was originally of the Perumals and later passed on to the Cochin kings, but never worn by the kings after the downfall of Vettathunad following the wars with the Zamorin. It is only on this occasion that this crown is taken out. It will be only held in the lap of the Maharaja. Only the tassel of the crown will be severed from it and fixed on the golden head-dress worn by the Maharaja on that day.

The procession moves at a slow pace. Even if the procession starts at 8 o'clock in the morning, *Kuthuvilakku* (lamps with long handles) and Greek lamps, torches etc. will be held in the procession. The palanquin would be carried by eight heavy-built bearers. Another set of eight persons will follow them to give them relief at intervals. All the men will be in their best attire. Closeby, on the right side of the palanquin, the Diwan will keep pace holding aloft a drawn sword. The European Diwans too followed this practice. On the other side of the palanquin, the aide-de-camp (such a post came into existence only during the Diwanship of Sir Shanmugham) will walk with a drawn sword. Prior to the creation of the aide-de-camp's post, it was the senior most prince who took the place. All the princes, young and old, including the little ones who could take a walk, donning their stately robes and holding drawn out swords aloft, used to accompany the Maharaja. In later years their attendance in this procession became thin.

Rituals of the Procession

The rituals of the procession used to be followed scrupulously. At the head of the procession would be three caparisoned elephants. On the back of one of them there would be a howdah and just behind it, a decorated pillion; on the back of the second one would be a big drum; and on the back of the third, gongs, trumpets etc. Behind the elephants would be the state band party which is followed by the cavalry (a dozen horse-soldiers), the Nair soldiers, *Chettivadyam* (kind of beating of drums) scouts etc. In front of the palanquin, immediately before the torch-bearers, the *devadasis* would perform *dasiattom*. There are certain *devadasi* families who enjoy this privilege. Four or five of these *devadasis*, having adorned their persons, move along with the procession singing and dancing all through the way. Behind them follow the officers and the body guards of the Maharaja. Just behind the palanquin, the court musician and

his musical orchestra will move followed by a long procession of local dignitaries and high officers of the state. The police commissioner, attired in his official uniform, will be on horse back. Wearing his official dress, the sarvadhikariyakar will keep pace by the side of the palanquin. All the officers will be present in their durbar dress. The cannons boom continuously when the procession is on. Just within one or one and half hours of its start, the procession will again come back to the starting point.

Alighting from the palanquin, the Maharaja ascends the above mentioned silver throne kept in the porch of the palace. Before describing the other rites, special mention has to be made here of some other facts. It is the accepted convention that *Athachamayam* has to be celebrated wherever the Maharaja resides during the days of *Athachamayam*. There is a version that when Chazhoor Raja was the king of Cochin; the *Athachamayam* celebration was conducted at the Chazhoor Kovilakam, near Thriprayar. During the time of the Maharaja who passed away at Chowara, by his special command, the *Athachamayam* was celebrated at Trichur. The subsequent *Athachamayam* celebrations were held in the palace at Trippunithura until recently. Inside the palace at Trippunithura, there is a huge building called Kalikotta. It is here that the *Athachamayam* was celebrated at Trippunithura. The Maharaja, as stated above, will be taken in procession, starting from the southern side and coming to the eastern gate of the palace to the presence of Poornathrayeesan and after paying homage to him from the palanquin the Maharaja turns to the south, and again goes back to Kalikotta. This was the practice in those early days. Even after the abdicated Maharaja settled down at the Hill Palace, it was at Kalikotta that he used to celebrate *Athachamayam*. It was during the time of the Maharaja who passed away in Madras that the venue of *Athachamayam* celebrations was shifted to the Hill Palace. Since then

it was never conducted at Kalikotta or at Trippunithura. The Maharaja Keralavarma who passed away at Ernakulam was not interested in the show of pomp and splendour, and therefore the *Athachamayam* celebration of 1117 M. E. was conducted in a strange manner. There was no display of pomp and pageantry on that occasion. Wearing a special velvet costume and a head-dress over his head the Maharaja slowly came down to the *Naluket*, remained there for a while and then returned back to his apartment. That was how the *Athachamayam* was celebrated in that year. This had taken place at Trippunithura. From that year onwards, like the saying "coming events cast their shadows before", signs of the extinction of the *Athachamayam* celebrations became more and more visible. Now it has become extinct too. What sort of *Athachamayam* can be celebrated in a place where there is no king, no kingdom and resources?

Distribution of Presents

Let us now conclude the subject *Athachamayam* proper dealt in the preceding paragraphs. Other things could be thought of afterwards. As has been stated above, the procession, whether it started from Kalikotta or from the porch in the Hill Palace, returns to its starting point after one or one and half hours. The Maharaja on his return sits on the silver throne. The officers and other dignitaries offer salutations to the Highness and then keep aside. At that time the *Pattola Menon* (public accountant), attired in his special costumes, comes forward with a bundle of palm-leaf records and stands by the right hand side of the Maharaja. He will call aloud one by one the names of Brahmin chiefs, 'Samanthars', (chief), barons, 'asaimas' and 'desaimas', present on the occasion saying 'Money for Kodessery Kaimal', 'Money for Chagaram Kotta Kartha', 'Money for the Chathira Namboothiris' etc. The concerned persons, then hasten to the presence of the Maharaja, receive the packet containing

money at his hands and keep back after paying obeisance to the Maharaja. The amount that has to be disbursed to each of them would have already been kept at a nearby spot in separate plates, counted and packeted correctly in scorched plantain leaves. When the name of a person is called, the *Kanakku Karyakkaran* will entrust the packet to the king to hand over the same to the man. There are so many such other rites in connection with this celebration.

When the list of these persons is exhausted, the *Pattola Menon* will disappear from the place. Immediately the Sarvadhikariyakkar presents himself before the Maharaja. In his hands also there will be a big list containing the names of all the officers, right down from the Dewan present there. The Sarvadhikariyakkar would have found out the names of other important personalities, notable visitors, respectable foreigners etc. present there in addition to the officers and would have included their names in the list. The money present to the Officers is based on the salary. It seems 101 *Puthens* (a coin that was in circulation in the former Cochin state) will be put in the packet to be given to the Dewan. (19 *Puthens* and 2 Paise is equal to 1 Rupee). It seems 25 *Puthens* is the amount put in the packets that were to be distributed to the visiting dignitaries and other prominent personalities. Thus when the distribution of the money to all is over, the *Athachamayam* celebrations come to a close. All the assembled then depart and the Maharaja goes for his royal bath. Before he proceeds to the tank for royal bath, he would have presented the usual feast-clothes to the *Kakkattukaranavar*.

Feasting

Even though no separate feast is held exclusively for the Brahmins, a good feast will, however, be provided in the palace. Usually the officers and other high personages will leave the palace without attending the feast. Only the local persons and those who came from outside would remain to

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attend the feast. In certain years, according to the wish of the then reigning kings, public feasts (*Sarvani Sadya*) will also be held in connection with the celebration. Whether this feast is conducted or not, there will be a public distribution of *Sarvani Puthen* in the afternoon. The practice was to give one *Puthen* to all present there; in later years one anna each was given to one and all gathered in the palace. This is known as *Sarvani Puthen*. It has been stated before that the Maharaja goes to take bath when the assembled depart from the place. After bath the Maharaja sits at his meals. This too is highly ceremonial. A huge silver lamp would be lighted and kept there. Also *Nirapara* (a full measure of paddy preferably in golden colour and cocoanut flower bunches) would be kept by the side of the lamp. Persons for *Sakshyoonu* (dining with the king) should also be present. The *Valiavilamban* (royal waiter) clothed in the special attires, should also be present. Three pinnated plantain leaves are spread over a background of ordinary leaves. It is before these leaves that the Maharaja sits to dine. Eight kinds of *Upperi* (curry of fruits in salt), eight kinds of pickles, eight kinds of *Pradhaman* (pudding), large *Pappadams* (a thin, crisp cake), sugar, numerous other dishes (in all, it seems, sixty-four), various sorts of fruits, these are the items served for his meal. All these items will be served, but who would taste all these?

Chirutha vili

A grand ceremony known as *Chirutha vili* takes place at the conclusion of the lunch. *Chirutha vili* and *Mumbilthali* are marks of royalty of the kings in olden days. A person walks before the king during his trips and sprinkles water all through his way. This is known as *Mumbilthali*. Calling the lady-in-waiting, *Chirutha* to remove the plantain leaves containing the left-over of victuals is called *Chirutha vili*. This *Chirutha vili* was in vogue at the zamorin's palace

too. It is strange that everywhere this ceremony is known as *Chi utha vili*.

Who is, after, all, this *Chirutha*? When the Maharaja rises up after meals, the afore-said *Valiavilamban*—usually a Brahman from outside Kerala—attired in the prescribed manner and keeping his one arm on the *Nilavilakku* cries aloud in as high a pitch as possible, 'Chruthe,-e-e.' to which a middle aged Nair woman dressed in clean clothes, her eyes anointed with collyrium, her forehead adorned with a circular mark and wearing jewelleryes, answers to the call as 'enthe e. e.' meaning 'what?' in the same pitch as *Valiavilamban* has called her, hastens to the place and circumambulating thrice the *Vilamban* and the *Nilavilakku*, puts her right hand on the plantain leaf containing the left-over of the food. Till then the *Valiavilamban* will remain standing there. The waiter will then serve cooked rice from three *Paras* of raw rice on that leaf (the excess which cannot be held by the leaves will be retained in the cauldron itself) and departs from the scene. This rice is the rightful privilege of that lady who is to remove the plantain leaves from the seat. The Maharaja retires to take rest after lunch and *Chiruthavili*, and with it the *Athachamayam* celebrations also come to a close. Both when the Maharaja sits for meals and rises after it, the cannons will boom.

In the past, the entire expenditure in connection with the *Athachamayam* celebration, for the feast, disbursement of *Puthen*, *Sarvani Sadya*, travelling allowances to the officers, decorations, presents to certain privileged persons—all used to be met from the state exchequer. I was *Sarvadhikaryakar* during three *Athachamayams* of two Maharajas.

A big crowd will gather in the place to witness the *Athachamayam* celebrations. As in the temple festivals, there will also be a big fair in connection with these celebrations.

FEAST IN THE ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, VYTTILA, POONITHURA (FR. EMMANUEL MANIAMCOTT)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Poonithura

St. James church is situated in Vyttila in Poonithura village about a mile north-west of Thrippunithura.

The feast of St. James, the Apostle began to be celebrated in this parish in the year 1921. The feast commemorates the life and death of St. James, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. The date proper of the feast is July 25th, but for the sake of

convenience the feast is celebrated on Sunday before the beginning of Lent every year. The festival starts on Thursday evening and ends by Sunday afternoon. About 3,000 people participate in the festival.

There is a small fair in connection with the feast where commodities like stationery, sweets, tapioca products, toys, earthenwares etc. are sold.

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S JACOBITE SYRIAN CHURCH, THRIPPUNITHURA (REV. FR. MATHEW POOVANTHARA)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Poonithura

The feast of the Holy Mother is celebrated in the St. Mary's Jacobite Syrian church at Thrippunithura for three days from 12th to 15th of January every year attended by about 3,000 people. The main attraction of the feast is the *Rasa* (procession) with accompaniments of music and all other paraphernalia like silver crosses, ornamental umbrellas, church flags, *Alavattom* (peacock fans) and *Venchamaram* (whisk of yak's tail).

This church is about 800 years old. Following the Synod of Diamper, there arose schisms in the Roman Catholic community in Kerala. As a result, two factious groups sprung up among them, namely Romo Syrians and Antiochian Christians. In spite of their factions, both of them, however, continued, till 999 M. E. to conduct their religious services separately at this church. But when their differences of opinion grew intensely, they severed their connections from this church in 999 M. E., the Roman Catholics receiving Rs. 1,386.52 for 100 families. Following their separation from

this parish they founded the St. Mary's Jacobite Syrian church at Thrippunithura.

It is believed that it was a gracious lady named Mathiri of the Maliyakkal family at Thrippunithura who gave the lead in setting up this church. According to tradition, the land for building this church was obtained as a gift from Valamthuruthy Bhattathiripad. This supposition is perhaps true from the fact that the church ground is still held tax-free. Legend says that the family of the Bhattathiripad once suffered with an incurable disease, that it was cured by the prayers of his mother and that the Bhattathiri pleased with this donated the land for building this church as a gesture of his gratitude. For a long time the Bhattathiri's family used to give one *Chothana* (a measure) of cocoanut oil to light the lamps in the church on the foundation day of this church. In course of time when the family of this Bhattathiripad declined, this custom also became extinct.

FEAST IN THE KARINGACHIRA CHURCH

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Thiruvankulam

The Karingachira church, dedicated to St. George, is situated by the side of the Ernakulam-Muvattupuzha public road, at a distance of one mile to the east of Thrippunithura, the royal seat of the Cochin kings and two furlongs away from their palace. This is one of the ancient, historic churches in Kerala venerated by the Christians as well as Hindus. The present churches at Thrippunithura, Nadamel, Katungamangalam, Kanyattunirappa, Puthenkurish, Kurunji, Vadavukod, Varikola, Kuzhikkattukarapuram, Kakkanad, and Neeramole, it is believed, have all sprung up on various occasions from this church.

According to the belief of the Maliyan Veedu and Palathunkal families, it was their ancestors who founded this church in the 4th century A. D. Necessitated by the paucity of priests and also keeping to the traditional practice, the religious services as well as the maintenance of the church were done by the eldest members of these families. These dual functions, of the administration of the church and the administration of religious services therein, they continued to perform up to the hegemony of the Portuguese in Kerala. The tablet fixed on the southern wall of the church building near the main doors, containing the Malayalam translated version of the original inscription in 'Nanam Monam' language, reveals that this church was founded as early as in the 4th century and was reconstructed in the year 722 A. D.

After the retreat of the Portuguese from Kerala, factions arose among the Christian community. Soon after the famous Coonan Cross swearing took place, the parishioners of this church were divided amongst themselves into two groups of Romo Christians

and Jacobites. The members of the Maliyan family became Romo Christians and of the Palathunkal family, Jacobites. They took sides and began to quarrel with each other. However, for some time, both of them continued to perform their religious services at this church itself. Their factions gave room to skirmishes in course of time. At last, the members of the Maliyan family approached the then reigning Maharaja of Cochin and begged him to mediate their case. The Maharaja called both parties together and settled their differences, amicably. The letter addressed by the Maharaja to the authorities of the church is believed to be still preserved in the church archives. For a long time since then, the religious services of both parties continued to be performed at this church. But, finally, the Maliyan family and their followers received their due share of 10002 *Puthan* and severed their connections with the church. Most of the manuscripts throwing light on the past history of this church were destroyed on various occasions due to the factions of the aforesaid rival parties and their utter carelessness. With the demolition in 1952 of an old building that had remained in the church campus, everything seemingly ancient in the church at first sight was lost for ever.

Of all the antiquities that have survived the onslaught of time and are still preserved here, mention may be made of an old photo of St. George drawn by a Portuguese artist on a wooden plank of 5' x 3½' in the 16th century A. D. This is a beautiful drawing that it is still admired by lovers of art. During his visit in 1032 A. D. the Patriarch of Malankara destroyed all paintings and carvings in the Jacobite churches. It is said that at the time of the Patriarch's visit to the

FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS AT PUTHIYAKAVU CHURCH

Karingachira church, the trustees of the church removed this photo from the church and concealed it from the patriarch in a tank that was located to the north of this church. It was only after three months had elapsed since the patriarch left the place, that the church authorities recovered this photo from the tank and reinstalled it in the church. This photo which had been hidden under water for three months is now hung above the walls behind the sanctuary. In addition to the above, here and there could also be seen some wooden carvings in the church.

When the old church building was demolished for reconstruction in the year 1095, certain rare objects were discovered from its walls. A tiny cot 1½ square feet in length and breadth with beautiful carvings and a small piece of human bone, wrapped in damask, placed over it, was discovered. When the news of the discovery of this little piece of human bone was conveyed to the Metropolitan, he ordered not to dismantle them or to displace their positions and wanted to preserve them in their original spot itself. Accordingly the same were buried in the same walls from where they were obtained. There is a version that this human bone which was of the late Mar Basalios

Based mainly on the article written by Shri M. Kuriakose in the Malayala Manorama weekly dated 30th May 1959.

had been taken out of his grave at Kothamangalam and was ceremoniously brought and buried here in the walls. It is said that it was brought here by a priest of this church who had been employed in the church at Kothamangalam. The main feast of this church is on the 20th of *Vrischigom*. (November-December) celebrated in memory of Mar Basalios. This feast, in Malayalam terminology, is known as *Thamukku Perunnal*. For this feast alone, a large sum of money, at any rate exceeding Rs. 5,000, is received here from the devotees by way of offerings. Another feast of this church is celebrated on the 24th of *Medom* (April-May) in honour of St. George. Large number of fowls are received in the church on this day as votive offerings.

Under the auspices of this church, one high school and two primary schools are run at present. The money received through a number of *Nerchapettis* (small boxes put up at various places to collect money offerings from devotees) is a good source of income to the church. Besides, the church has also extensive landed properties worth lakhs of rupees. This is one of the leading churches in the Cochin diocese in wealth as well as in historic importance.

FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS AT PUTHIYAKAVU CHURCH

(VICAR OF ST. FRANCIS' CHURCH, PUTHIYAKAVU)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Kanayannur
Thekkumbhagom

St. Francis church at Puthiyakavu was founded in the year 1809. They got separated from the Udayamperoor old church, due to some social difficulties. It is a small church with only some 45 Christian families.

The feast of St. Francis Xavier is the biggest feast there. It is celebrated on a grand scale and there is a big gathering (about 4,000) from many parishes. The feast begins on the 30th of November and

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ends on the 3rd of December. The church and premises are well decorated. The people of the locality take a great interest in making the feast a success. The speciality of the feast is that people make a vow, for some favour to be obtained, to get the child vested with the dress of St. Francis's order. They bring the child with the dress, get the dress blessed and put it on the boy. After the appointed time, they bring back

the child with the dress on and after the prayers leave the dress at the foot of the statue of the saint and return.

From the eve of the feast many merchants with religious and stationery articles gather and they have good sale of them. Besides, there will be mats, seeds, pots, etc. For the convenience of the people the Octavo of the feast also is celebrated.

UTSAVAM IN THE SREE MARATTIL KOTTARAM BHAGAVATHY DEVASWOM, MARADU

(SHRI K. A. GOVINDA MENON)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Village	Maradu

The Sree Marattil Kottaram Temple, dedicated to Badrakali, is located in the Maradu Village, Kanayannur taluk. The nearest railway station of this temple is Thrippunithura, only 3 miles away from the place. The important festival of this temple, the *Thalapeli* and *Vela*, is celebrated for 8 days from *Relini* to *Pooram* asterisms in *Kintilam* (February-March). This is a grand festival, often attended by nearly one lakh of people. A grand display of pyrotechnics, *Thalapeli Vela*, *Padayani* and musical concerts by famous artistes of Kerala are the highlights of this festival.

In olden days, Mangalappillil Menons, known also as Mangalappillil Achans, were the *Pattola Menons* (accountants) of the Paravoor kings. When the royal house of Paravoor declined, these Menons, connived against their former chiefs and with the help of the Cochin Kings drove them away from power. And some desoms and this temple came under the suzerainty of the Cochin kings. The king of Cochin who was greatly pleased with his victory over the Paravoor Raja presented this temple, along with the

Pandavath Siva Temple, located just one furlong north-west of the former on the southern side of the Kundannur road, to the Mangalappillil family. In addition, a few landed properties were also gifted to them by the king. In later years this family fell in ruins due to mismanagement of the affairs. Liabilities increased and they were forced to dispose of their properties one by one. Their miseries grew intense as time went on that they were even hard pressed for their daily necessities. At last on the 15th of *Medom* 1083 M. E., they sold out their lands in the Maradu, Poonithura and Kundannur villages to Sarvashri Mangayil Nanu Panicker, Palliyil Kittunni Menon and Melathu Sanku Menon. As the income obtained from the remaining lands in the possession of the Mangalappillil family was found quite inadequate to meet the expenses for the daily services in the temple, the local Nairs donated a cocoanut tree each to this temple, the yieldings of which would fetch the required amount to the temple.

The main deity of this temple is Badrakali standing facing westward. About 20 feet

TITULAR FEAST IN THE ST. MARY MAGDALENE'S CHURCH, MOOTHEDAM, MARADU

to the north of it is another deity of Gandakarnan, facing south. One day at midnight when the wise Munnoorpillil Menon *Velichapad* was taking bath, he happened to drown himself in the water. After some time, as enjoined by divine revelation as well as astrological predictions, the spirit of that great devotee of Bhagavathy was consecrated in this temple, on the dais raised at the north-eastern corner of the temple courtyard. A furlong away to the west of this temple, there was once a huge banyan tree. This tree fell down uprooted during the hurricane of 1116 M. E. At present there is a small platform (*althara*) around it and a small banyan tree has sprung up from the trunk of the old tree. On the festive days, the idol

of Bhagavathy will be taken ceremoniously to this platform (*althara*) and keeping it over the dais *pooja* will be performed. According to legend, it is believed, that the spot where this banyan tree is located, was once the chosen abode of goddess Bhagavathy.

Besides regular *pooja* and *Paravaippu*, *Guruthi* and such other *Vazhipadus* commonly offered in the Badrakali temples, are made in this temple too. Sacrifices of animals at the altar of Gandakarnan of the temple was in vogue until killing of animals was prohibited by law. Besides these, at times when small-pox and similar epidemics fall upon the locality, certain other special *Vazhipadus* will also be offered to the deity.

TITULAR FEAST IN THE ST. MARY MAGDALENE'S CHURCH, MOOTHEDAM, MARADU

(FR. AMBROSE ARACKAL)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Village	Maradu

The St. Mary Magdalene's church, Mootthedam is located two and half miles away from the Thrippunithura railway station. The church was built in 1838 A. D. The circumstance which led to the foundation of this church is related below.

Long ago the head of the Moothedathu household in the Ochenthuruthu, fearing the attack by foreign navy, fled to Maradu with his most venerated cross. That cross was installed in a small house. Later that was transformed into a chapel. By that time the local Catholics wanted to construct a church for them. Only in the *Jenmom* lands could they erect any building for public worship. In those days, the Mangalappilly family alone had *Jenmom* lands in the locality. They were not ready to release the land to the Christians. On

one night the head of the Mangalappilly family heard during his sleep somebody telling him as 'give the land, give the land'. Greatly afraid, he donated to the Catholics, 19 cents of land where they founded a church and installed the cross belonging to the head of the Moothedathu family. Besides, it was usual for the Mangalappilly family members to give presents to the church every year and for the church to send, in turn, their due share to them. At present there are no heirs in the Mangalappilly family except one Pachu Menon. Though his family name is something different, he is still known as Mangalappilly Pachu Menon. Since Pachu Menon came to stay in that family the practice of giving presents to the church became extinct. The place where the head of the Moothedathu family, who brought the

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cross, had been residing is called *Mootha-dathu Parcmhu* and the church where his cross was installed is called *Moothadam Palli*.

The annual celebration of this church, the Titular feast of the church, is conducted for seven days from the 2nd Monday till the following Sunday coming after the Easter. The feast begins with the hoisting of the flag at 5 p. m. on Monday. After an hour, the Litany in honour of the saint is sung. This is repeated every evening except Saturday and Sunday. Every day morning High Mass

will be sung. On a certain day evening, ten electors will be chosen to elect the officials of the feast for the coming year. On Friday evening the name of the new officials will be read out in the presence of all and they will be given the office with certain ceremonies and taken in procession. On Saturday evening the solemn Vespers will be sung and on Sunday morning at about 9 a. m., there will be solemn High Mass, sermon and procession. By evening on the day, the feast comes to a close with a small ceremony.

FEAST IN THE M. P. S. CHURCH, CHATHAMMA

(REV. FR. PAUL KANJIRAKATTUKARY)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Village	Kumbalam

The venerable image of the Mother of Perpetual Succour was brought from Crete to Rome in 1499. The author of the picture is unknown to the world. The picture was brought to Rome by a merchant who kept it in his house. By a private revelation to the daughter of the merchant, it was placed in the church of St. Mathews in Rome under the Augustinian Fathers where it remained for 300 years. In 1798 when the church was destroyed, the Fathers removed the picture to a private chapel and it was kept hidden

until 1865. In 1865 Pope Pious IX ordered it to be returned to the site chosen by Our Lady on which now stands the church of St. Alphonsus under the Redemptorist Fathers. From Rome, the devotion spread to all parts of the world.

The church at Chathamma in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour is the first of its kind in Kerala established in 1924. Since that date the feast is celebrated in this church on Sunday after 22nd of November.

FEAST IN THE SYNOD CHURCH OF DYAMPER

(FR. PETER K. PARAVARA)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Village	Manakunnam

The Synod church of Dyamper, otherwise called Udayamperoor old church, was established in A. D. 510. It is a very important

church in the history of Kerala being the Royal church of the Villarvattam Christian Rajas of whom Thoma Raja was buried

FEAST IN THE SYNOD CHURCH OF DYAMPER

here. So tradition has it. Also the Synod of Dyamper was Held here in 1599 by the Archbishop Dom Menesis of Goa. This Synod made many changes, both social and religious among the Syrians, especially changes in the celebration of the Mass, making it more like the Latin Mass.

The present church was built by the Portuguese, so it is said. The fact that it was the Royal church of Villarvattam royal family and that it was found to be the suitable place to hold the Synod, shows the importance of Udayamperoor enjoyed once upon a time. The church compound was full of foundations of buildings constructed in olden days and got demolished in course of time. At present Udayamperoor is a small parish with only about 90 Catholic families, mostly poor. Many Catholics left the place to other business centres of Kerala owing to the slow decay of its importance.

Due to the antiquity, the church and parish house were on the way to ruin. The late Archbishop Mar Augustine Kandathil decided to make the repairs and the present Archbishop Mar Joseph Parekattil B. A., D. D. got it repaired in 1959 to 1961 without making any structural alteration whatever. When the inside walls of the church near the facade, were chiselled for replastering, both sides were found to be burnt from top to bottom. How it was caused, the present generation is at a loss to make out. Most probably, they believe that during the invasion of Tippu Sultan, fearing that he might come to the south and pollute the church, the people having set fire to it, escaped. There are some inscriptions on granite stones in 'nanam-munam' Tamil and Urdu languages, the meaning of which is not fully understood. These stones are kept safe on the church walls.

The main feast of the church is that of Saints Gervasis and Protasis in the month of June, beginning on the 16th and ending on the 19th. Though not a very big gathering, people from the neighbouring parishes come over here. The main article sold is a variety of pea-seeds besides other stationery and religious articles on a smaller scale. The season being suitable, all without any distinction of caste or creed gather here to buy pea-seeds. There is a common belief that pea-seeds brought from here will not fail to yield well. Some even called it *Payar-m-thirunal*.

Thaikkatt Amma's Feast

There is a famous chapel of the Udayamperoor old church, four furlongs to the south-east. It is in the name of Bl. Virgin Mary and the feast is generally called Thaikkatt Amma's feast. It is celebrated on the 1st Sunday after the purification feast in February. There is a very big gathering. All castes of people gather here out of special devotion to the Amma because they are all indebted to Our Lady due to the innumerable benefits they obtain through her intercession. The general offering is *Nazhiyum Pidiyum* i. e. one *Nazhi* and one *Pidi* more. Women at the time of delivery offer oil to be burnt at her shrine and get a portion of it for themselves which they use with miraculous effect. The *Pidi Nercha* just after the feast, is a peculiarity. The people bring the articles for it and prepare it there itself. All partake of it, and then only the people disperse.

Thaikkatt Amma's Feast is the biggest feast of the locality among the Catholics. From the eve of the feast onwards large number of merchants gather here. Besides religious and stationery articles, mats, sweets, pots, etc., are also put for sale. They have a good sale.

FEAST IN THE ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, ARAKKUNNAM

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Village	Mulanthuruthy

The St. George's church at Arakkunnam is one of the historic churches in Kerala, attracting thousands of devotees from all parts of the State. The grandest festival of this church is celebrated on the 5th and 6th of May every year.

Arakkunnam which is now growing into a small town with its churches, schools, hospitals and banks, was, about seventy or eighty years ago, a dense forest roamed about by wild animals. There was then only sparse human habitation here and there in that locality.

Centuries ago, when the Christian monarch of Villarvattom was reigning over this place, Arakkunnam was the seat of his government. It was then known as Hara-kkunnam. It is said that the name *Ayir-kunnam*, given by the blacksmiths of those days, as iron ore was then available in plenty in this place, would have in later days got changed into Arakkunnam. Thus this once prosperous locality became the seat of a government and in course of time, fell into ruins and became a rendezvous of robbers and highwaymen.

About 1400 A. D., a member of the *Pallivathukal* family of South Pallipuram, in connection with his business transactions, came to this place and settled in the *Menmukath Vettikat* house. It was his successors who took initiative for constructing a church at Arakkunnam. Among the Christians of Arakkunnam in these days some belonged to the Mulanthuruthy parish and some others to the South Paravoor parish. The Vettikkat family belonged to the Nechoor Parish. Since there was no convenient roads or streams through the thick forest infested by fierce tigers and wild tuskars, it was rather impossible for them to go to their respective churches.

It was a severe monsoon season. There was unintermitted violent downpours. A member of the Vettikkat family passed away quite unexpectedly and his dead body had to be taken to the Nechoor church. It was raining all through the day and the atmosphere was unbearably chill that one could not get out of his house. How could the people take the dead man to the Nechoor church for burial without the rain subsiding a little. For two days they waited in anguish and when the rain subsided a little, they took the dead body to the church at South Paravoor instead of Nechoor and buried it there. While returning home after burying the dead the elder brother of the deceased took a vow that he won't hear the Holy Mass until he had constructed a church at Arakkunnam. It was as a result of this vow that a church was happened to be established at Arakkunnam.

On the 10th of *Kumbhom* 1077 M. E. the foundation stone was laid for this church by Rev. Mar. Gregorios with the blessings of Mar Divaniasos. The former warmly congratulated Shri Varkey Varkey who took the lead in founding this church. The first trustees of this church were Shri Varkey Varkey and Shri Varkey Mathew.

There are many legends current about this church. The non-Christians too have great faith in the miraculous powers of St. George of this church. Fowls, goats and calves are offered to St. George to seek protection from snakebites. About St. George who presides over this church, it is said that he is the *Muthappan* (great grandfather) who always beckons to the call of the people.

Thousands of devotees throng to the holy place to participate in the festival of this church. During the festive days, the church premises will be crowded with pedlars and

hawkers, and the nearby houses with guests. Everywhere only smiling faces could be seen and the entire locality would look as if pulsating with rejoicings. The petard cracks

which form the main offering during the circumambulation ceremony of the church by the devotees—among them will include a large number of Hindus—are very famous.

Based mainly on an article by Shri Arakkunnam George in the *Malayala Manorama* daily dated 5-5-1963.

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, CHETHICODE (VICAR)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Kanayannur
Village	Edakkattuvayal

St. Mary's church, Chethicode was established on 30th November 1916 for the benefit of the Syrian Catholics of Edakkattuvayal village. The people have a deep-rooted devotion to the Mother of God and when the need arose to erect a church and a separate parish, they naturally chose the Blessed Virgin Mary as their special patron. The Immaculate Conception is one of the glories of Mary and the Catholic Church honours her every year on 8th December by that

title. This day appealed to the people as fitting to celebrate the feast. From 8th December 1916 the festival continues as an annual function.

Though the festival is conducted under Catholic auspices, the villagers, forgetting their religious differences, take part in the solemnities and make the occasion to serve the purpose of buying and selling various commodities, the products of local crafts and industries.

FEAST IN THE SANTACRUZ CATHEDRAL, COCHIN (FR. AUGUSTINE MANAKATT)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Cochin
Town	Fort Cochin

The Feast of Christ, the King

The feast of Christ the King is celebrated on the last Sunday of October. In the morning there will be Pontifical High Mass.

The procession of Christ the King's feast starts in the afternoon and strides through almost all the important roads of Fort Cochin. The procession is called Eucharistic procession because in it the celebrant holds the most Blessed Eucharist. All the

roads are well decorated and when the most Blessed Sacrament is carried through the roads, all the faithful on either side kneel down in profound adoration of the most Blessed Sacrament in which, according to Catholic faith, Christ is fully present both as God and Man.

The procession terminates in the parade ground. The huge crowds are addressed, then, by an eminent speaker instructing

them on how Christ alone is entitled to be the King of their hearts. With the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, the function closes.

Feast of Our Lady of Rosary

The celebration of the feast of Our Lady of Rosary is very ancient one. But the present order of celebration started a century ago. The tendays' feast ends on the first Sunday of October. In preparation for this celebration, a Novena is started nine days before, during which there will be Solemn High Mass every day in the morning and the Novena prayers, sermons in Malayalam and English by eminent orators and Benediction in the evenings. On the first Sunday of

October the feast ends with a grand procession in the evening along the main streets of the town. His Excellency the Bishop will officiate in it.

A characteristic of this long procession is that it is so beautifully arranged in different groups of pious associations of men and women who all move with such exquisite rhythm, prayers and hymns following one another that it fills the observers with sentiments of piety and devotion calculated to raise the heart of everyone to heavenly things. Any impartial observer will admit that in no other part in Kerala can one find such a devotional and inspiring procession.

FEASTS IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE COONAN CROSS SHRINE, MATTANCHERRY

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Cochin
Town	Mattancherry

The ancient Cochin diocese has been described at page 76 volume 4 of the Catholic Encyclopaedia as the cradle of the Catholic Church of India. Cochin had the good fortune of being the venue of activities of the Christian community ever since the propagation of the religion in the country. Legend has it that even before that tract of land now known as Cochin derived the name Cochin or a part of it as Mattancherry, Christian religion had already spread in that place. It was after the introduction of the Malayalam era that the Cochin bar (*Kochazhi*) came into being as a result of the great flood in the Periyar river. It was from the name *Kochazhi* that the place got the name Cochin. The Portuguese called this place as Mathancherry (Mattancherry) meaning the place where Mathan, a Syrian Christian landlord, was residing. It was only when this place came under the control of the

English that it got the name Mattancherry (Deepika 17-2-1957).

In the year 52 A. D. when St. Thomas, the Apostle, who landed at Cranganore, went to the southern part of the country to establish one of his seven churches at Kokkamangalam, he had already given enlightenment to some of the persons inhabiting the then thinly populated Fort Cochin—Mattancherry region. By the time when recorded history was available, Cochin had already developed into a big trading centre. Following the downfall of Cranganore, a good number of Christians of that place as well as some from Quilon took refuge at Cochin, fearing the religious persecution perpetrated against them in those places. According to legend, the Marthoma Cross brought by the Christians along with them from Cranganore, had been installed in the centre of that commercial town, Mattancherry. This cross

which had stood witness for centuries to many an historical event, still stands there, commanding the respect and confidence of the merchants of all castes and creeds of the locality. There is historical evidence to prove that the Marthoma Christian chiefs of Cranganore had gone to Cochin and met Vasco da Gama when he landed there in 1502 A. D. during his second trip to India and had presented him with the royal sceptre of Villavattom, the Christian king of ancient fame. (Kerala pazhama page 33, Cochi Raja Charithrom, Book I, Chapter 13, page 257). It is seen from the administrative reports of those Franciscan Bishops who did missionary work in Kerala as far back as 250 years prior to the arrival of Vasco da Gama that those Christians who received Vasco da Gama at Cochin had a church for them in the name of St. Thomas, the Apostle and that they had been offering worship in that church (Sinica Franciscana, Roma Vol. I, page 251). But after the advent of Portuguese, a good majority of Marthoma Christians embraced Latin rites. Accordingly religious services in this church had to be conducted simultaneously in Syrian rite as well as in Latin rite. Consequently this church was called *Iremeesa Palli*, church having Holy Mass in two different rites.

Many stories and legends are told about the Coonan Cross of Mattancherry. According to legendary version, it is said that when a Tamil musician-poet by name Chinna Thampy Annay recited a devotional song, this cross leaned forward and when he repeated the song, it got back to its original position and that from that day onwards this cross is called *Coonan Kurusu*, meaning the leaning cross. From the historical records it is seen that for a long time before the advent of the Portuguese, this cross was under the care of the Nestorians. The earlier cross had been made of granite stone. This cross was destroyed during the invasion of Mohammedans, but later it was remade into its original size and shape in wood. This is the cross which stands there today.

It was on the 3rd of January 1653 that the famous *Coonan Kurusu Satyam* (Oath of the leaning cross) took place, in the name of this cross. It was a proclamation made by the Marthoma Christians against the Portuguese missionaries. Consequent on this, 116 parishes throughout Kerala severed their connections from the Portuguese Bishop. Some of them at a later period became Jacobites. After sometime a Jacobite church was built on the western wing of this leaning cross. On the entrance of this church could be seen inscribed 'ancient Syrian church'.

This cross now stands in a small chapel attracting many, including people from overseas and showering always its blessings on the numerous devotees flocking to its side. It is doubtful whether a historical monument such as this Coonan Cross which stands encircled by burning candles and neverfading lights in a narrow by-lane in a comparably less busy area of the Mattancherry town, could be seen anywhere else, not only in Kerala but even in the whole of the country.

It is seen that the Christians who adopted the Latin rite and remained under the Portuguese Bishop and those Jacobites who were reunited by the Carmelite missionaries had jointly founded a church about 300 years ago at the site of the cemetery according to the plans furnished by the Portuguese. Though this church came under the Archdiocese of Verapoly in the year 1709, most of the Christians, however, decided to remain under the Cochin diocese. Thereupon, the rift between them increased; a suit was filed in the High Court of Madras and finally, in the year 1829 A. D. got a decree from the court in favour of the Cochin diocese. When the church became too unaccommodated for the increasing number of people, the present church was constructed in the vicinity of the old church, on its southern side and was named as Our Lady of Health.

It could be seen that not only the Mattancherry church but a good number of promi-

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

nent clergy as well as eminent persons of this parish also had adorned high positions in the Church of Kerala. When Dr. Alexis Menezis, the Portuguese Bishop of Goa, came to Cochin on 1st of February 1599 to convene the Synod of Diamper, the Marthoma Christians of the Mattancherry parish gave him a rousing reception. The parish chiefs and the prominent clergy as well as the choir of this church also attended the Synod of Diamper by special invitation. Not only this, when Dr. Menezis returned to Goa on the conclusion of the Synod of Diamper, the parishioners gave him a touching farewell and sent two local sailors to keep escort to him up to Goa.

The first Keralite to become a Bishop in the 17th century, Palliveetil Chandy Methran, known in history as Dr. Alexander de Campo, was ordained by Joseph Sebastiani, the famous Carmelite Missionary, at the Kaduthuruthy church on the 1st of February 1663 A. D. It is to be specially mentioned that the priests who acted as assistants in this investiture ceremony were all drawn from Cochin and the choir from the Mattancherry church. Thus, looking back to the annals of this church, one could see that

the sons of this ancient parish had contributed, in no small measure, to the uplift and advancement of the church and the community at large. Evidently, these historical facts would suffice to kindle inspiration and impulse among the present generation of the community.

The important offerings made to the Coonan Cross are *Chuttuvilakku* and *Poomala*. Six oil lamps will be lighted around this cross and a wreath will be placed on the top of it by the devotees. This is the offering. On the 8th of December every year, the feast of Holy Mother is celebrated in the Roman Catholic church attended by about 3,000 people. At the Coonan Cross shrine, there will be celebrations on the first Fridays every month in which about 1,000 people usually take part. During the *Kurusu Thirunal* about 2,000 persons will congregate to make the celebration a success. Since the Roman Catholic Church and the Coonan Cross are situated in the centre of the Mattancherry town, no fair worth mention is held in connection with the festival. Usually, candles, oil and religious articles like crosses are the important things sold in the fair that is held on a very small scale.

Based mainly on an article by Fr. Thomas Puthenveetil in the *Kraisthava Kahalam*, February-March 1962 (except the last paragraph)

FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, PALLURUTHI

(FR. J. COCHERIL)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Cochin
Town	Mattancherry

The St. Sebastian's church and its patrons' feast preserve a valuable historical heritage of great importance. The present church is only about 92 years old, having been constructed in 1870. After separation from the old parish of "Saude", the people were gathering together for religious

functions in a chapel at Karuvelipadi, about 3 furlongs north of the present church. The old chapel of Karuvelipadi though it does not now exist, except for a wooden cross, has its own history. The importance of that chapel centred round a small ivory statue of St. Sebastian of about 15 inches

FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, PALLURUTHI

in height. There is a strong tradition behind it. Canai Thommen (Thomas of Cana) of antiquity brought 400 families to Kerala from Syria in the 4th century. Thommen lived here for some years and then went to visit Rome. After his visit to Rome, he came back to Kerala with a small ivory statue of St. Sebastian who had been recently martyred in Rome. He enshrined the statue in Mattancherry, which was then a Christian centre. The statue remained in Mattancherry for a few centuries as an object of great devotion and many miracles were attributed to it. It was during the time of the Portuguese and some time before the famous event of *Coonan Kurusu Satyam* (oath of the leaning cross), that the peace loving people, who did not want to be molested by any kind of controversies and desired to keep their faith undisturbed, advanced to the south to a quiet place with the ivory statue of St. Sebastian. They made a small chapel in Karuvelipadi, near the site of the present chapel of Karuvelipadi, and were conducting their religious services. In course of time the chapel became famous due to the miracles attributed to the statue of St. Sebastian and many people began to settle down on the vicinity. At this time, the Christians living in Karuvelipadi, Thoppumpadi and at the surrounding places who were within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the parish of "Saude", picked up quarrels on account of communal differences and eventually separated themselves from the parish of "Saude" altogether, and began to consider the Karuvelipadi chapel as their parish church.

The Karuvelipadi chapel was too small for the growing congregation. Hence they built a bigger church in Thoppumpadi dedicated in honour of St. Sebastian, and they placed the small ivory statue of St. Sebastian, which they considered as their precious possession, on the main altar of the church. We can still see this small ivory statue of 15 inches on the top of the

high altar of the church. The statue was popularly known as *Cochupunniavan*, meaning a small saint on account of the small size of the statue. From that name the church itself began to be called as *Kochupalli* i.e. small church. Even now as of old, the *Kochupunniavan* is the centre of attraction and devotion. The people attribute all their blessings and favours to the *Kochupunniavan* and take pride to belong to the *Kochupunniavan*'s parish.

It is with great solemnity the parishioners celebrate the feast of the saint. The feast of St. Sebastian is celebrated on the Sunday immediately following the 20th January every year. Special devotions such as High Masses, rosary, litany of Blessed Virgin Mary and sermons dealing with the predominant virtues of the saint are held on the seven preceding days of the feast. On the feast day itself a huge procession is taken out to Karuvelipadi chapel. The entire route of the procession is tastefully decorated by the parishioners. It is a traditional thing of the parish. The procession is generally taken out at about 11 a. m., when the sun is at its hottest. Still it is noticed that nobody suffers or is overtired on account of the scorching heat of the day.

The feast of St. Sebastian imparts not only the spiritual consolation to the devoted Christians but it gives also an occasion for family reunion in the parish. The daughters married in distant places come for the feast with their children to their parental homes. This gathering of the people, chiefly of the women folk from distant villages, attracts hawkers with their various merchandize of domestic use. Predominant among the goods are earthenware pots and *chatties* which have a brisk sale.

Since St. Sebastian is considered to be a protector against epidemics, his feast has become a day of devotion even for non-Christians of the place. They vie with their Christian brethren in bringing their offerings to the church in cash and kind.

FEAST IN THE ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH, NEDUNGAD

(SHRI JOSEPH KAVALIPADAM)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Cochin
Village	Nayarambalam

The village Nedungad belongs to the former Cochin State. This tiny island in Vypeenkara is situated about two miles north-east of Njarakkal. Until the year 1880 the Catholics of the village had to go to St. Mary's church, Njarakkal for religious services. Because of the distance and inconveniences, the people of the place put their heads together to find a way out. They determined to establish a church in their own village. And in the year 1880 A. D. they succeeded in erecting a new church in Nedungad. St. Augustine was chosen as the heavenly patron of the new church. The feast of St. Augustine is on 1st Sunday in January. In every Catholic church the feast of the patron saint is conducted with unusual solemnity. According to the Catholic calendar, the feast of St. Augustine falls on 28th of August. But in August, as is known to all, it is difficult to conduct a feast with external solemnity and pomp, because of heavy rains. Therefore January 6th was chosen to be the feast day. And

until recently it was conducted on that date. A few years back, because of a new decree, January 6th ceased to be a day of obligation. Therefore the celebration of the feast was transferred to the 1st Sunday in January.

The celebrations begin on Thursday previous to the 1st Sunday in January. Though the festive celebrations last for four days, only on the last day there will be great gathering. The crowd may vary from 4,000 to 5,000. The people from neighbouring villages too take part in the celebrations.

The importance of the feast lies in the fact that all the villagers, no matter to what caste or creed they belong, take part in it. They all think it to be their own. The common folk call the saint their *Muthappan*.

The fair in connection with the feast attracts many, especially the low-class. Earthen vessels and furniture are the important commodities brought and sold. It is a solitary chance for the villagers of this coastal area to buy such things at their door and at their choice. Hence the importance.

FEAST OF THE HOLY CROSS IN THE CRUZMILAGRES CHURCH, OCHENTHURUTH

(FR. JOSEPH PAYAPPILLY)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Cochin
Village	Elangunnappuzha

The Cruzmilagres church, Ochenthuruth, was founded in the year 1754. 'Cruzmilagres' is a Portuguese word meaning 'miraculous Cross'. The historical back-

ground for this name is derived from the fact that the big wooden cross in the centre of the main altar of this church was obtained very miraculously. While an Ezhava woman

FEAST IN THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF HEALTH, "SAUDE"

was washing something in the river near her house, she saw a piece of wood floating in the water and a strong glow emanating from the wood. She tried in vain to capture that piece of wood. Therefore her husband was called for. He caught it and took it ashore. Finding that it was something sacred he showed it to the Catholics living nearby. They told him that it was a cross and highly venerated by them. Hearing this he kept it piously in a special place in his own compound. Catholics as well as a good number of Hindus began to show their veneration to this cross by lighting oil lamps around it. After some years, one Portuguese named Captain John who heard about this cross visited the place and on hearing the wonderful way through which it was obtained, called it 'Cruzmilagres' i.e. miraculous cross. From that day onwards, this cross is known as 'Cruzmilagres'. This Captain John then purchased the compound and the cross. At that time, as the old church which was nearly three miles west of the present site near the sea shore

was washed away by the sea, the Catholics were beginning to build a new small church in the present church compound. Captain John presented this cross to this new church and it was installed in the centre of the main altar. Thus the name 'Cruzmilagres' church or *Kurusumkal palli* came into existence. When this new beautiful edifice was completed in 1929, this big wooden miraculous cross was installed in the centre of the main altar.

The feast of the Holy Cross is celebrated for five days in the month of May in commemoration of the invention of the True Cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified. This memorable event took place on third May. The feast begins on Wednesday and ends on Sunday if the Sunday is 3rd May. Otherwise the feast ends on the first Sunday after 3rd May. More than five thousand people partake in this feast. On the last two days of the feast, there will be a fair on a small scale in which earthen pots, crockeries and fancy goods are mainly dealt with.

FEAST IN THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF HEALTH, "SAUDE"

(FR. CASIMIR CONCEICAO)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Cochin
Village	Palluruthy

Saude church is one of the oldest coastal churches built by the Portuguese missionaries, at least four centuries ago. The word Saude itself is Portuguese, meaning 'Health', which is derived from the name of the parish church, which is dedicated in honour of Our Lady of Saude, i.e. 'health'. Since the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Mother of Christ is the dispenser of all graces from her Divine son, the Catholics invoke her as 'Our Lady of Hope',

'Our Lady of Divine Grace', 'Our Lady of Perpetual Help', 'Our Lady of Mercy', 'Our Lady of Health' etc.

The present church is not the one which the Portuguese first constructed. The one which was constructed by the Portuguese was at least three furlongs away west of the present site of the church. As years passed by, as it is now, the turbulent sea has swallowed the whole edifice together with acres of land and there are no records as to

the date of the construction of that church or of the destruction of the edifice. But we have sufficient proof that the old church was existing long before the year 1599.

The present church, was constructed in 1804. At that time the parish of Saude was very extensive. The present neighbouring parishes of St. Louis, Mundamveli, St. Sebastian's, Palluruthy, the Nazareth church, Moolamkuzhi and the St. Michael's Manacherry belonged to the ancient parish of Saude.

As the parish is still unwieldy, it is expedient that it should be split up again into smaller parishes.

Three major feasts are celebrated in the church of Our Lady of Health, since the time of the first church of the name, which was washed away by high seas. The important feasts are:-

The feast of St. Peter's Chair (Cathedral

Sancti Petri Ap.) is celebrated on the 23rd of January, with seven days' special devotion preceding the feast. The feast of Our Lady of Health is celebrated on the 11th of September every year, having 9 days' special devotion preceding the feast, and the feast of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception is invariably celebrated on the 15th December every year preceded by Novena and Holy Sacrifices of Mass in the morning and with special devotions such as rosary, sermons and the singing of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Since the great majority of the parishioners of Saude are very poor, they are content with the solemn religious services held in the church. Unlike the feasts conducted in the neighbouring parishes, the feasts held in Saude are not very colourful. Hence there are no fairs which attract the concourse of people from distant parishes.

FESTIVALS IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, PAZHANGAD

(SHRI K. V. JOSEPH)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Cochin
Village	Kumbalanghy

The St. George's church, Pazhangad is in the Kumbalanghy village, about 2 miles and 6 furlongs from its northern end. From Mattancherry Halt railway station one can reach the church travelling about 6 miles by road.

The church is more than a century old. The foundation stone was laid on the 18th of Chingom 1012 M. E. (1836 A. D.). The construction took about 12 years and the church was blessed on 6th January 1848. The facade of the church is almost similar in design to that of other Christian churches of the period. But the church building is in the fashion of a cross, the head portion and arms ending in semicircular formation.

A rare skill is exhibited in the construction of the roof, in that the roofs of the three smaller ends of the cross-like structures are semi-conical tapering towards the middle and giving the impression of three half-cones put together with one apex, the like of which is not seen in any other church. The main altar at the head end of the church is a marvellous piece of wood carving. The statues of St. Mary, St. George, St. Rocky, St. Sebastian, St. Joseph and the Little Flower are carved in wood and display great skill in wood carving. The statue of St. George which is placed in the central niche of the altar requires special mention. In this statue, the horse is presented in the

FESTIVALS IN ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, PAZHANGAD

galloping posture, its hind legs alone touching the ground, with the result that the weight of the horse and St. George is balanced on the two hind legs.

At the time of construction the church was affiliated to the parish of Edacochin and had no separate status as a parish. It was declared a separate parish independent of its mother church at Edacochin about 90 years ago. It has now under its jurisdiction three chapels, namely, St. Antony's chapel in Kumbalanghy itself, Immaculate Conception chapel at Ezhupunna and St. Mary's chapel at Neendakara, the first one being the oldest. A congregation in the name of St. George, the patron of the church, was established even before the church acquired independent status as a parish. Subsequently, not long after it became an independent parish, a confraternity in the name of St. Mary of Dolours was also established. The feasts conducted in the church under the auspices of the congregation as well as the confraternity are the more important of all the feasts celebrated annually in the church.

(1) The feast of St. George

St. George, a martyr of the 3rd century A. D. is the patron of the parish. The name George as well as Geevarghese, its equivalent in Syriac, is derived from the Greek word Georgeos, meaning agriculturist. According to the ecclesiastical calendar, the feast of St. George falls on 23rd April but the feast is celebrated in this parish on 17th of January. As pointed out above, the church was blessed on 6th January and the feast of the Patron Saint under the auspices of the congregation was started the same day and celebrated for 11 days, ending on 17th January. In course of time the number of days was reduced from 11 to 9 and from 9 to 7. The reduction in the number of days of celebration affected the day of commencement and not the final day. Thus, now the celebrations in connection with the feast start on 10th January. The feast is celebrated for 7 days, commencing on the 10th of January and ending on 17th January. The festivities commence with the flag hoisting

ceremony taking place in the evening of 10th January. The parish priest accompanied by the president and office-bearers elected for the conduct of the festival and a group of parishioners proceeds to the flagstaff, blesses the flag and hoists it. This inauguration is proclaimed by the loud pealing of the church bell, the report of petards and crackers and the melodious tune of instruments like drums, Nagaswaram, band etc. The day's function closes with solemn Litany of St. Mary. From the second day onwards there will be solemn High Mass every morning. On the second day evening before the solemn Litany the statues of St. George and St. Sebastian which are taken out during the processions connected with the festival will be placed in the decorated niches specially got ready for the purpose. The third day is called *Nalamperunnal*. How that day came to be called by that name is not known. On this day solemn High Mass is followed by a sermon and a procession almost resembling that of the final day. The procession closes with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. On that day evening, the electors who are in turn to elect the president and the office bearers for the conduct of the next year's feast are appointed from among the members of the congregation. The next day these electors attend a special Mass recited for them, after which they assemble for the purpose of selecting the office-bearers for the conduct of the next year's feast viz, a president, a secretary, a treasurer, a procurator and a few committee members. It may happen that some of the parishioners or even persons from the neighbouring parishes would have applied to the electoral college for being elected as one or another of the office-bearers. The election is done by secret ballot. The votes are counted in the presence of the parish priest who is the chaplain of the congregation. The results of the election are proclaimed by about noon with the pealing of the bells, firing of crackers and the instrumental orchestra. The electors are

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

treated to a feast by the president of that year's festival. Sometimes the president gives a banquet in his house on the same day to invited guests. The official reporter of the congregation goes to the houses of the elected persons and informs them about the results of the election severally. The next evening there is a colourful function in which the president-elect and his colleagues are formally invested with the authority for conducting the festival next year and they are taken in a procession in front of the church amidst enthusiastic jublations. The next day is the eve of the feast. By the afternoon of that day the front yard of the church would have been occupied by several hawkers bringing various commodities for the conduct of the fair which extends from that evening to the next evening. The evening function commences with the procession which returns to the church by about dusk. The procession is followed by Vespers and the Litany of St. Mary and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The festival day morning there will be a large gathering of people in the church. The function in the church includes a solemn High Mass, a Sermon, a procession and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The fair in this festival consists of earthen wares,

edible articles, religious pictures, frames and other articles and agricultural implements. The earthenwares are mostly brought from the place called Moolampilly which is famous for earthenwares and utensils. As ploughing commences immediately after the festival, the agricultural implements have got great demand during this festival. The attendance will be well over 5,000.

(2) Feast of St. Mary of Dolours

The feast of St. Mary of Dolours falls on 15th of September. In the St. George's church this feast is celebrated under the auspices of the confraternity of St. Mary of Dolours for 7 days ending on the Sunday after 15th September. As usual the flag is hoisted on the previous Monday afternoon. There is no *Nalamperumal* like the feast of St. George. All the other functions are as in the previous festival. The important items of the fair during this festival are big screwpine mats and sickles. The harvest in Kumbalanghy takes place within a fortnight of this feast and paddy is dried by spreading it on screwpine mats. Therefore there will be a great demand for sickles which are used for reaping the corn and for screwpine mats to dry threshed paddy. Attendance during this festival also will be about 5,000.

THE FESTIVALS AT THE ST. PETER'S CHURCH, KUMBALANGHY

(DR. JOHN BERCHMAN MANALY, KUMBALANGHY)

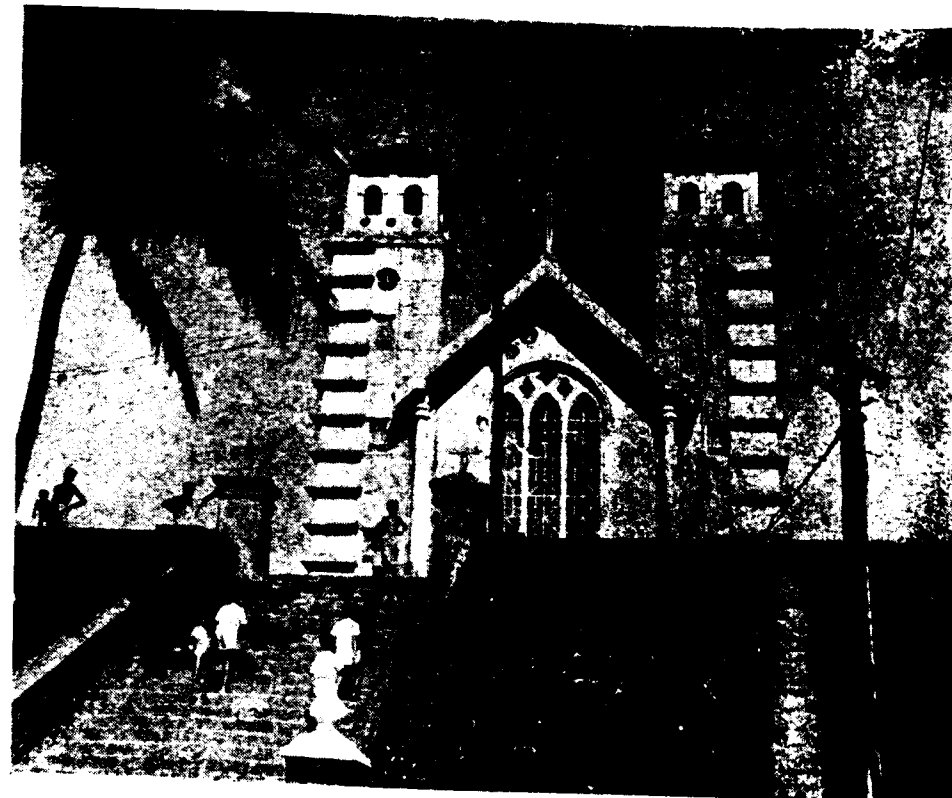
District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Cochin
Village	Kumbalanghy

The middle one of the three churches in Kumbalanghy which is popularly known as the St. Peter's church is dedicated to the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. As the two other churches, the St. Peter's Church also is under the Cochin Diocese, the parishioners being Latin Catholics.

Formerly, this church was filial to the St. Lawrence's Church, Edacochin, established in the early 16th century, at the onset of the Portuguese era on the Malabar coast. In their attempt to defend Cochin against Zamorin's attack the Portuguese, allies of the Cochin Maharaja in those days, built a



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Pl. 75

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KOTHAMANGALAM

fort and a church at Edacochin which acted as the nucleus of the defence force and establishments organised by them with the active participation of the original Catholics of those regions. Some of the Catholics in the regions were honoured by titles and rewarded tax-free lands referred as "*Manya-vakasa*", in return for their meritorious services. Let us listen for a while to these two authors—"A Fort was also made at Edacochin on the bank of the backwaters in those days. This fort was established to block the entry of Zamorin's forces. In those days it was possible to enter into Kumbalam through Thevara by a bund". (*Lendas da India* by Gaspar Correa I-460). "The backwater stream between Kumbalam and Edacochin in those days was not so broad as is today. Similarly it was easy to get into Aroor from Panangad via Valangar and to enter into places like Edacochin and Kumbalanghy from Aroor. It was to block this passage that a fort was established there at Edacochin and that Christian soldiers were settled at Edacochin and Kumbalanghy etc. This fort was made in the name of astronomical scholars. A church was also built close to it" (*The Latin Christians of Malabar* by Br. Leopold ch. IV—p. 48). From this Edacochin church, certain churches have departed later, one among them being the St. Peter's church, Kumbalanghy. St. Peter's Church as it is today was established in 1875 A. D. (*The Catholic Directory of Malabar* by Philip Palmer, 1938. P. 342). A quarter of a century later the parish had grown so desirably that in 1900 A. D., the St. Peter's Church under the Vicarship of Fr. Paul Alvares Alumkal, had a Catholic population of 2400 having four vernacular schools with 196 boys and 102 girls studying in them (*The Travancore Almanac* 1901 A. D. P. 130). The Catholic population of the Edacochin, Aroor and Perumpadappu churches combined together was 4,900 at that time.

The church, now at the end of 1963, under the vicarship of Fr. George Palakkal

has a Catholic population of 8,500. Three chapels namely the St. Joseph's chapel at the southern limit of the parish, St. Joseph's at Ettungal in the north and St. Mary's, Azhikkakam on the western side have come up. A fourth chapel in the name of St. Martin D. Porus is under construction at Kallenchery, a small offshore strip on the western coast of Kumbalanghy where once existed the erstwhile St. Andrew's Church referred by the author of Cochin history, in connection with the 2nd Dutch invasion of Cochin in 17th century. (*History of Kerala* by K. P. Padmanabha Menon II-3-52). There are also two shrines namely St. Antony's and St. Jacob's. The presbytery existing near the church today was built in 1907.

The St. Peter's High school under the church management, established 40 years ago and our Lady of Fatima's convent situated at the southern limit of the parish near the St. Joseph's chapel are two noteworthy institutions in the parish. Most of the Governmental institutions situated in Kumbalanghy including the Primary Health Centre are situated in and around the church premises. The main and oldest market place in Kumbalanghy, 'Kamseyee Market' is owned by the church.

The parishioners of the St. Peter's Church are mainly engaged in agriculture and trading, coconut and paddy cultivation topping the list. A considerable section is engaged in coir industry. A good many are working as teachers, *Jawans*, lawyers, priests, doctors, government officials and politicians in the village, as well as abroad. Games played by them are mainly football, volleyball and badminton and *Bola-Kaly* (a form of game using wooden cylinders about 5" long and weighing about 2 pounds). *Parisamuttukali* and *Chavittunatakam* are two items of art which were once very popular among them but are fading out nowadays. The Kumbalanghy Boat Race conducted in the backwaters on the eastern coast of Kumbalanghy on the feast of St. John in the month of June is famous from a long past.

Festivals

The main festival connected with the church is during the feast of the patron saints St. Peter and St. Paul. The festival is conducted each year in January from the 17th to 25th. The church and premises will be colourfully decorated with artificial flowers, lamps and beautiful paintings of saintly scenes. Graceful figures of angels made of straw and paper are a conspicuous item of the decoration. Since a decade, illumination with multicoloured electric bulbs also is a good show.

The festival starts on 17th January with the hoisting of the church flag—a red flag on which are depicted the Tiara, (Triple crown) and keys of St. Peter—by the parish priest in the presence of a large crowd of parishioners and officials of the festival (described below). Simultaneously with the flag hoisting, the church bells will be tolling loudly proclaiming the commencement of the festival and there will be a fine fire-works. Litany and Benediction are done in the church. On the succeeding days the programmes inside the church are Solemn High Mass in the morning and Litany and Benediction in the evening. There assembles a good crowd for the ceremonies and especially for the evening items.

The coronation of the new officials being conducted on the night of 23rd January is an item of the festival with all pomp and show. The coronation is done inside the church by the parish priest, a huge crowd witnessing the solemn scene. The parish priest dressed in holy costumes and escorted by members of the 'Comprarya', reads out the names of the new officials and proclaims them as the responsible men elected for conducting the festival for the next year, by placing a floral wreath on the head of each of them. Officials of the current year as well as the newly elected will be clad in their peculiar dress of the 'Comprarya'. Soon after these ceremonies, there will be a coronation procession which is one of the spectacular components of the festival. The

officials and parish priest are taken out in procession, the officials bearing lighted candles in their hands. Fine fireworks lasting for an hour will follow.

The final day of the festival dawns with the sight of a large energetic and enthusiastic crowd in and about the church. The church premises will be echoing with *Nagaswaram* and drum beats. A row of flags attached to long flag sticks, intended for the procession will be seen ready in front of the church. Pedlars and merchants swarmed by people is a scene everywhere.

Within the church, the ceremonies are solemn High Mass and Sermon. At about noon the procession starts with all colour and show with the participation of the parish priest holding a small statue of crucifixion in his hand and escorted by the officials, new and old, and by the parishioners. Statues of the patron saints, St. Jacob, Our Lady of Dolours and St. Sebastian are taken out in procession. The ceremonies in the church end with Benediction.

A crowd estimated to be not less than 6,000 attend the festivities. On the final day of festival a good amount of business and sales are done by the attending crowds. The main items of business are in the form of agricultural implements like sickles, spades and mats and cooking vessels made of clay, crockery and other household goods. Spiritual books, rosaries, portraits of saints, metal badges or *Kasuroopams* etc. go to form another considerable section of the sales. Confectionaries and sweets prepared and brought by Tamilians is another important item of business. Amusements like display of figures through magic lantern and *Thottichattam* etc. also catch attention of the on-lookers.

The officials for conducting the festival and meeting the expenses connected with it will be selected each year by a system of private balloting. The voters who are mainly the officials of the previous years assemble in a closed conclave, clad in their official costumes. They spend the day in prayers

FEAST IN THE PIRAVOM OLD CHURCH

and elect the four officials, namely, the President, the Treasurer, the Procurator and the Secretary, by separate private balloting. The election after getting the ratification of the parish priest and consent of the elected men, will be notified immediately with the tolling of the church bells and fireworks. The elected members after their coronation become the officials of next year. Other festivals of lesser importance, connected with the church are during the feasts of Our Lady of Dolours and the feasts of St. Jacob each having 5 days' duration. Regular Novenas conducted to St. Jude on all Wednesday afternoons since 1962 are being attended by a very big crowd. Corpus Christi is a very conspicuous festival in the parish in May-June. On that day there will be an exposed Mass in the church followed by procession. The church premises through which the procession passes will be decorated

with ripe plantain bunches brought by the parishioners. Each family brings one ripe plantain bunch and displays it in the assigned place in the procession route and carries them home when the ceremonies are over. A temporary chapel will be made ready in the St. Peter's High school grounds and Benediction is conducted as the procession reaches there. After the return of the procession into the church the parish priest will inspect the decorations. The plantain bunches brought by families of one chapel area (*muri*) will be decorating a particular portion of the procession path. After inspection the parish priest will judge and declare on the spot the name of the particular chapel area whose exhibition was the best. When these events are over the parishioners carry home their plantain bunches and have a feast at their home.

FEAST IN THE PIRAVOM OLD CHURCH

(REV. DECON JOSEPH KARIPPAYIL)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Muvattupuzha
Piravom

The Jacobite Syrian church, Piravom, known as the Piravom Old church, is dedicated to St. Mary. There is no definite record, worth mention about its antiquity. According to traditional belief, the church is about 1500 years old. It has to be said that the church was established in the 4th century A. D.

In this church which is dedicated to St. Mary, the feast of the Magi known as *Koosa Rajakkal* is observed. Having known about the birth of Christ according to astrology, the two kings started to visit Christ. There is a legend that they left the country, after their journey, without meeting king Herod as directed by him and reached Piravom.

This story seems to be improbable from the historical point of view.

The word 'Koosa' is mentioned in many places in the Bible. This word denotes a place in Eastern Arabia called Koose. Koose has different meanings. Some people say 'Goosa' for 'Koosa' which is a synonym for Shree Kali, meaning 'Virgin'.

Misraim consisting of Egypt and the surrounding places was also named Koose. Occasionally this word is seen used as names of individuals. (Eg. the son of Haam-Genesis 10:6. Koose alias Benjamin—7th Psalms; Koose—Luke—8:3). It has other forms also like 'Magi' in English, 'Magos' in Latin and Greek, 'Magas' in Persian and

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'Magoosai' in Syriac, all meaning learned men. The word 'Koosa' is a derivation from Syriac.

Though the legend mentioned above is not relevant, it is a speciality in Piravom church to observe the feast in memory of the Magi. There is no proof of their having embraced Christianity by baptism. But it is a fact that great celebrations are held in the name of these non-Christians.

Adjacent to the church on the southern side, there is a Bhagavathy temple called Pisharee Kovil. The church and the temple are separated only by a wall. The temple is older than the church. There had been serious feuds and differences of opinion on the question of establishing a church adjacent to the temple on the northern side, about which many stories are current among the people. It is said that some years ago there was a quarrel about laying a road to the church.

In olden days, temples and churches were built adjacent to each other. However it can be surmised that the feuds in Piravom have all ended once for all.

This imposing edifice standing proudly on a spacious hill top on the banks of the Muvattupuzha river, about 11 miles west of Koothattukulam on the Koothattukulam-Piravom road and about 12 miles south-west of Muvattupuzha on the Muvattupuzha-Piravom Road, is really in the heart of the beautiful village called Piravom. The Muvattupuzha river flows embracing it on the north-western side. The bridge on the Muvattupuzha river, now under way, is very close to this place.

This place is about 6 miles from Mulanthuruthi railway station and about 7 miles from Piravom Road railway station. One can easily reach Piravom from Ernakulam and Mulanthuruthi by the Ernakulam-Chottanikkara-Piravom bus.

Though many festivals are observed here, Easter festival is the most important. 'Three-day-fast' and Christmas are also celebrated here.

Easter is one of the most important feasts among Christians. Easter is observed on the 50th day—Sunday—after 50 days of Lent. The date of Easter Sunday changes every year according to the differences in the calendars of every year. But usually Easter falls in the month of April. To the Christians this is an international festival.

Thousands of people of all religions and communities flow to Piravom on Easter day. They come to Piravom with a view, among others, to expressing their respect and devotion to the Magi. On that day Piravom would have a new colourful life. The atmosphere would resound with jubilations. The flow of people would commence by Saturday evening, the eve of Easter, with their bundles of offerings.

At midnight on Saturday, services commence in the church and conclude at about 6 a. m. on Easter Sunday. The report of the petards and the sound of crackers and of various musical instruments lend a festive air to the occasion.

On Sunday, the sun dawns with the Easter message. How many animals are slaughtered from the eve of Easter onwards!

The unprecedented congregation has a peculiar function on that day in Piravom. People come from miles away to partake in that function. From time immemorial, this function is observed unimpeded to this day, having come down from the forefathers. It is called the offering of the twelve children. It is a banquet in commemoration of the last supper Christ had with his twelve Apostles on Maundy Thursday, the eve of Good Friday, the day of His crucifixion.

The offering of the twelve children, which is reminiscent of the last supper, is conducted with 12 children in the place of the Apostles and the priest in the place of Christ. It is conducted in other forms also like "the offering of Twelve Priests" and the 'offering of twelve elders'.

This commences on Easter day in the morning after Mass. The children will be anxious to partake in several offerings one

UTSAVAM IN THE SIVA TEMPLE, THRIKARIYOOR

after another. The important items on the menu are bread and chicken. One cock is essential for each offering. Every person making the offering will bring one cock. There will be five to six thousand offerings on that day. Sometimes the number rises to seven thousand. All these fowls are

killed in the church compound itself and cooked for the banquet. All people partake in the offerings irrespective of social, communal or religious differences, considering it as a privilege. The functions connected with the offerings and the enthusiasm evinced by the congregation are worth seeing.

UTSAVAM IN THE SIVA TEMPLE, THRIKARIYOOR

(SHRI M. P. VISWANATHA KURUP)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Muvattupuzha
Eramalloor

Historically, it is believed, that Thrikariyoor was for some time the capital of the Perumals who reigned in the ancient days in Kerala. The present Thrikariyoor temple had been well maintained by them than at present. In the 'Kerala Charithram' there is a reference about the Thrikariyoor village and this temple. In Kerala, it is only here and in the Thiruvanchikulam temple that the idols of *Sapthamathrakkal* (seven goddesses), *Veerabadran* and *Ganapathy* have been installed so close to the altar. The ceremony known as *Nalupadam* is an important performance conducted at this temple. It is said that this ritual is a crude form of *Yathrakali*. Legend has it that the idol of Siva installed in this temple was the last that had been consecrated by Parasurama in Kerala and that it was from here that he

vanished from the earth. Since the consecration of the deity of this temple was performed by Parasurama and Agni together, only double musical plays can be displayed in this temple. Even today this is scrupulously maintained here. As an evil consequence of the curse spelled by Parasurama, it is believed, that the local inhabitants would not agree on any matter.

Chathusatham, cakes, *dhara*, *kalabhom* and lighting of the lamps are the main offerings made to this temple. The annual festival attended by about 5,000 people, is celebrated in this temple for ten days from 1st to 10th of *Meenam* (March-April). Bell-metal vessels, stonewares etc., are the important commodities usually marketed in the fair attached to this *Utsavam*.

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KOTHAMANGALAM

(REV. FR. P. M. KURIAKOSE)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Muvattupuzha
Kothamangalam

The Martha Mariam Valia Palli, Kothamangalam, with its two steeples grazing the

clouds, is situated on a beautiful hill on the northern side of the Alwaye-Munnar road in

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

Kothamangalam Bazaar in Kothamangalam village, Muvattupuzha taluk, Ernakulam district. Alwaye, the nearest railway station, is only 22 miles away from here.

Local tradition has it that this church is 1,400 years old. Based on a manuscript record in the possession of Shri Pothanikatt Kuruvilla Varkey, Shri T. K. Joseph has mentioned in Kerala Society Papers that the church was established in 513 M. E. It is probable that in the old cadjan records 'M.E.' was written by mistake for A.D. The model of the church, the method of construction, the mural paintings etc. are all of the Persian pattern, lending weight to the surmise that the church was established in the 6th century A. D. The walls of the church, except the front, though were repaired several times and the windows replaced by bigger ones, are maintained in the same condition in which they were built in olden times. The front was reconstructed recently in modern fashion with two steeples as the original one was damaged. This church is the mother church of many churches in the neighbourhood and deserves the attention of researchers in history.

There are about 500 families and over 2,500 people belonging to this parish church. It is under the administration of the Metro-

politan of Ankamaly under the Patriarch of Antioch. The following are the important feasts of this church.

Suneye Feast of St. Mary on August 15th

As the church was established on 15th in the name of St. Mary, the feast of Assumption is celebrated here with great devotion from olden times. About 2,000 people take part in the feast. The feast commences on 14th August and concludes on 15th August.

Feast on February 10th

This feast is celebrated in memory of St. Mary and of the late Ignatius Aghathalla Bava, Patriarch of Antioch, who gave up his life for the cause of the Malankara Church in 1653 A. D. The feast lasts for three days and concludes on 10th February. On the afternoons of 9th and 10th, processions are taken out. Over 5,000 people take part in the feast. Various articles are exposed for sale in the vicinity of the church during these days. Of all the feasts of the church, this feast is most solemnly celebrated.

Feast of St. George, Martyr on April 24th

St. George was martyred in the 3rd century A. D. for the sake of the Christian faith. The feast of St. George is celebrated on the 23rd and 24th of April. About 1,500 persons take part in this feast.

UTSAVAM IN THE DURGA TEMPLE, THIRUMARADY

(SHRI ADITYA NARAYANAN NAMBOOTHIRI)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Muvattupuzha
Village	Thirumarady

The Durga temple, Thirumarady, lies at a distance of ten miles from the Piravom Road railway station. In olden days, the area around this temple was a thick forest. Once a Pulaya woman went to this forest to collect wild roots. She happened to sharpen her sickle on a rock when suddenly came out blood from that rock. Greatly afraid

at this strange occurrence, she fled away immediately from the place, but soon succumbed when she was hardly a furlong away from the scene in the centre of a paddy field. Until ten years ago, there was a small islet-like piece of land in that paddy field covered with wild shrubs and thick undergrowths reminding one of this strange incident.

UTSAVAM IN THE ONAKKOOR BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

Some of the local inhabitants who might have seen the incident inspected the site, consulted an astrologer and came to know that there was an idol of Bhagavathy in that place. They cleared the forest and constructed a temple there. Even now there is a crack on the idol of the temple. This is said to have been the wound inflicted by the *Pulayee*. Close by this idol, there are five self-sprung idols of Durga Devi. Two years back when this writer had the ground near the temple dug for growing plantains, he had discovered some remnants of certain huge idols, supposed to be as tall as a man and fully adorned with ornaments. Details of these idols are, however, not available. Anyway it is clear that there is an extraordinary power reigning over this place. About ten years ago when a Christian boy was cutting green leaves and twigs from a tree in the temple premises, he became suddenly restless and fell ill with fever the moment he got down from the tree. Within ten or twelve days of this strange happening,

all the members of his family except one female lunatic passed away. A similar incident had also occurred two years ago in this place. When another Christian boy was collecting green leaves from a tree, quite unexpectedly he felt some fear in his mind and no sooner had he descended from the tree than he became mad and had to be kept in chains on the same day itself. He was cured of this ailment only after numerous offerings were made to Devi. This boy is still happily getting on in this place. Some of the residents in the neighbourhood of this temple have told this writer that on certain Fridays during the dead of night they used to see large number of ladies collecting themselves inside the temple and standing there silently holding the light and *Thalam* (plate) in their hands.

The *Karthika Thalappoli* is the annual festival of this temple. It is celebrated on *Karthika* day in *Vrischigom* (November-December). About 500 people participate in this festival.

UTSAVAM IN THE ONAKKOOR BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI K. NARAYANAN NAMBOOTHIRIPAD)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Muvattupuzha
Village	Onakkoor

The Onakkoor Bhagavathy temple is located about 8 miles away from the Piravom Road railway station. This is one of the three temples where *Arat* is performed twice a day during the *Utsavam* days. It is from here that Shri Kakkasseri Bhattathiri who defeated the wise Uddhannan in philosophical arguments, had taught philosophy and other subjects to his disciples. Kizhppurath Bhattathiri and others. When Kizhppurath Bhattathiri went to set right the delicate problem arisen by the violation of the vedic rites by the Kakkasseri Bhattathiri in the Chottanikkara temple, he had offered an ornament to this temple before proceeding

to that place. It is still preserved here. The famous 'Apadikinkaraneeeyam' are the questions and answers in this controversy.

The important offering of this temple are *Malarpara* (a full *para* measure of roasted grain), *Nelpara* (a full *para* measure of paddy), lighting the huge temple lamp with two *edangalis* of oil and *Chathussatham* (porridge prepared with 101 cocoanuts, 101 *Nazhis* (a measure) of rice, 101 *palams* (a weight) of molasses and 101 *kadali* plantains.

The annual festival of this temple is conducted from *Uthram* day in *Kumbham* (February-March) for eight days. Approximately ten thousand people participate in this festival.

FEASTS IN THE ST. JOHN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, VADAKARA

(FR. THOMAS PLACKATT)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Muvattupuzha
Village	Koothattukulam

The ancestors of the present parishioners of the St. John's Roman Catholic church, Vadakara were, at one time, members of the new St. John Baptist's Jacobite Syrian church, Vadakara which then was a Roman Catholic church. About the middle of the 17th century (1660-'65) in consequence of the unjust and imprudent interventions of the Portuguese, there arose in the Malabar Syrian Church, the Jacobite schism. And the majority of the then parishioners embraced the schism while the minority remained loyal to the Holy Roman See. Nevertheless the same old church was peacefully used by both the parties—the Catholics and the Jacobites—for well over a century. As a result, however, of the ever increasing population etc., many difficulties and inconveniences arose and hence the Catholic minority had to erect a separate place of worship for themselves. After a just and amicable partition, a small church was temporarily built on the adjacent hillock on the site of the present Catholic cemetery which served its purpose for about half a century. Towards the beginning of the 19th century, the

present and more spacious church was erected for the Catholics of the Vadakara parish. This church, like its preceding ones, is dedicated to St. John the Baptist.

The miraculous and benevolent protection, help and favours obtained and experienced by hundreds and thousands of clients through the efficacious intercession of the celestial patron of the parish, St. John the Baptist, especially in the case of domestic animals of all grades and kinds, are really noteworthy. Offerings in money and in kind, provisions for sumptuous poorfeeding etc., flowing in abundance by way of petitions and thanksgivings for favours, constitute a very considerable part of the church's annual income.

The feasts of the St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist are the important annual celebrations of this church. These feasts are celebrated for three days each, the former from 22nd to 24th of June and the latter from 25th to 27th of December. Solemn High Mass, Benediction, procession etc. are the highlights of these feasts. The assemblage attending these feasts will roughly come to two to three thousand.

THRIKARTHIKA UTSAVAM IN THE PERUMANKAVU BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI E. K. VASUDEVAN NAMBOOTHIRI)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Muvattupuzha
Village	Arakkuzha

The Perumankavu *Devaswom*, located about 28 miles away from the Alway railway station, in ancient days, had been in the possession of the Vadakkumkoor royal family. At a later period they handed over

this temple to the Namboothiris of Iraliyoor *Illom*. By an agreement entered upon in the year 1114 M. E. Sree Kesavan Namboothiri of the above *Illom* obtained the ownership of this temple.

FEAST IN THE ST. RITA'S CHURCH, KALIYAR

In the early years, there had not been any landed properties to this *Devaswom* to meet the expenses for conducting *pooja* and other religious services in the temple. The site of this temple, extending to half of an acre, was obtained in 1116 M. E. The temple is situated closeby a deep nullah called *Perumamkayam*. Once, when one of the trustees was drawing water from this nullah, his waterpot accidentally slipped into the water. He jumped into the water in a great rage to catch the pot, went direct to the under world and brought a jack fruit from there. Subsequently a jack tree grew from the seeds of this fruit. This tree is said to have been in existence in this locality

until 150 years ago. It is on this spot where the jack tree was standing in the past that the present Perumamkavu temple is located.

The annual festival of this temple is the Thrikarthika *Utsavam*, celebrated in the month of *Kumbhom* (February-March). More than 500 people take part in this *Utsavam*, the main attractions of which are *Thalapoli*, *Kumbhakudam*, *Kavidiyaghosham*, *Parayeduppu*, *Kalamezhuthu*, *Garudanparava*, *Kathakali*, *Ottamthullal*, *Kathaprasangom*, *Ezhummellippu* on elephant's back and religious seminar. This *Utsavam* is conducted every year by a council of members constituted for the purpose.

FEAST IN THE ST. RITA'S CHURCH, KALIYAR

(FR. SEBASTIAN PULLOPPILLY)

District	Ernakulam
Taluk	Thodupuzha
Village	Kodikulam

The present parish church of Kaliar is situated on the northern bank of the Kaliyar river. Kaliyar as it is known abroad, is a naturally gifted place where many useful crops grow in abundance. The majority of the inhabitants of the place are Catholics and they were very particular of building a church to adore God and schools to educate their children.

The church was founded by Very Rev. Mgr. Francis Thekkekara by the order of the late Archbishop of Ernakulam, Mar Augustine Kandathil. Though the work commenced on 19th May 1941 the church was completed in 1943. The present parish priest of the church is Rev. Fr. Sebastian

Pullopilly, this writer. This parish is in the patronage of St. Rita, the famous patroness of the impossibles (1386-1456)

Now, every year, the most important feast, the feast of St. Rita, falls on the 22nd of May. It is one of the very important and splendid feasts in the neighbourhood and festive fairs of the locality.

Facilities for the festive fairs will be given by the church authorities by giving place with right of merchandise at reduced rates on the floor. A good number of people assemble here in church on four days of the feast Novena before the feast will be conducted in preparation for the same. About 1,200 persons will be attending this feast.

UTSAVAM IN THE SARANKUTHI KAVU, KUDAYATHUR

(SHRI M. K. PRABHAKARAN PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Thodupuzha
Kudayathur

A Potti who lived at a place four miles away from Kudayathur at the slopes of the western ghats was once the priest of the famous Sastha temple at Sabarimala. Daily he used to go from Arakulam to Sabarimala through an underground passage, passing between the mountain ridges to perform the religious duties in that temple. When he became too old to go over to Sabarimala and conduct *pooja* there, he felt disappointed and became heart-broken and was always meditating as to what he should do to solve the problem. One day while he was asleep Lord Sastha appeared to him in a dream and told him that since he had become physically weak to walk a long way, he need not go to Sabarimala from next day onwards and that it would be enough if he would consecrate him (Sastha) in the eastern side of his *Nalukett* and worship him there. The old man did not take notice of the dream he had the previous night so seriously that he again went to Sabarimala as usual on the next day with much difficulty and performed *pooja* there. Again on that day Lord Sastha appeared in a dream in his sleep and asked him whether he would not trust his words. Notwithstanding this reprimanding of the Lord, the old man again started next morning to Sabarimala. But when he approached the entrance to the underground passage he was greatly shocked to see that the passage had been mysteriously covered up. So he had to return disappointed. When he reached his house, he saw an arrow was firmly secured on the ground on the eastern side of his house and vibrating itself voluntarily in that place. That was a clear manifestation of the commands of the Lord. When a temple was constructed at Arakulam

and dedicated to Sastha, the inhabitants of Kudayathur brought the above arrow of the Lord and installed it on the southern bank of the Thodupuzha river. Ever since then, this place was known as *Saramkuthikavu*. This event is believed to have occurred some six or seven centuries ago. This temple is located 42 miles away from the Ettumanur railway station.

The annual festival in the Arakulam temple is celebrated from 11th to 17th *Makaram* (January-February). On the morning of 17th *Makaram*, the deity is taken in procession from Arakulam to the *Saramkuthikavu*, and throughout the day time the local inhabitants perform various *Vazhipadu* and by evening the deity is taken back in procession to Arakulam temple. This procession will reach there at about 10 o'clock in the night. Until about 40 years back, the successors of the above-mentioned Potti were living at Arakulam. Now, it is known, they are living at Thodupuzha.

By the concerted efforts of the Hindus of Kudayathur, the Travancore *Devaswom* board gave permission to construct a temple at the place called *Saramkuthi*. Subsequently it was revealed astrologically that the chosen place was sanctified by the presence of Devi as well. Accordingly both Lord Sastha and Devi have been installed there. Ever since the establishment of this temple, *pooja* is regularly conducted on all days there. To commemorate the consecration of this temple, every year, the *Utsavam* is conducted here for three days from the *Makayiram* asterism in *Kumbhom*. The assemblage attending this *Utsavam* will come to 5,000.

UTSAVAM IN THE VAYANAKAVU, KUDAYATHUR

(SHRI M. K. PRABHAKARAN PILLAI)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Thodupuzha
Kudayathur

About 38 miles from the Ettumanur railway station, on the northern bank of the Thodupuzha river, half a mile north of the *Saramkuthikavu* in the Kudayathur village, Thodupuzha taluk and to the eastern bank of the *Vadakanar*, is situated the *Vayanakavu*. Although historical evidence is available to prove that this temple was once a prosperous one, today there is only a granite *sanc-tum sanctorum* in the place. There are many legends about this temple. The devotees conduct worship here with deep devotion and great belief. There are some indications seen over this place which testify that the area around this temple was once a civilized and densely populated region. Perhaps due to some natural calamities, this place would have become desolate and

turned into a thick forest. But in recent times, people have cleared up the forests, converted the place into cultivable lands and made permanent settlements there. Now it is a developing area and it could very well be expected that the *Vayanakavu* temple would prosper in the coming days. The remnants of the bathing ghat used in olden days by the then baron of this locality could be seen still in this place.

At present only *Sankranthi pooja* is performed in this temple every month. An *Utsavam* is also celebrated here once a year by the local people according to their means. This *Utsavam* takes place for two days on *Pooram* and *Uthram* asterisms in *Kumbhom* (February-March) in which nearly thousand people usually take part.

UTSAVAM IN THE ARAKULAM SASTHA TEMPLE

(SHRI K. P. PRABHAKARAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Ernakulam
Thodupuzha
Arakulam

The Arakulam Sastha temple is situated at a distance of 40 miles away from the Piravom Road railway station. Long ago, this Arakulam *Devaswom* was a *Mana* (mansion of Namboothiris) known as *Karott Mana*. The elder people even now call it as *Mana*. In the olden days, according to the local people, the *Sankranthi pooja* in the temple was performed by the Namboothiris and there was an underground way from Arakulam to reach Sabarimala. In course of time, the above *Mana* became extinct and

only one elder Namboothiri was left alone in that *Mana*. He became too old and incapacitated to go to Sabarimala and perform the *Sankrama pooja* there. When the time for the *Sankramam* ceremony approached next time, he was greatly worried over his inability to attend the function. On the eve of the *Sankramam*, he had a dream in which the Lord informed him thus:— 'Sleep well; next morning before you go to take your bath, clean well the courtyard of your house; when you return I shall be

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

present there ; you may then perform *pooja* to me'. Next day he did everything as directed by the Lord in the dream. When he came back after his morning bath much to his surprise, he saw an arrow, secured firmly on the ground in upright position and the same dancing with a tremulous motion. Immediately he conducted *pooja* on the spot. This is the legend among the local people about the origin of the Arakulam temple.

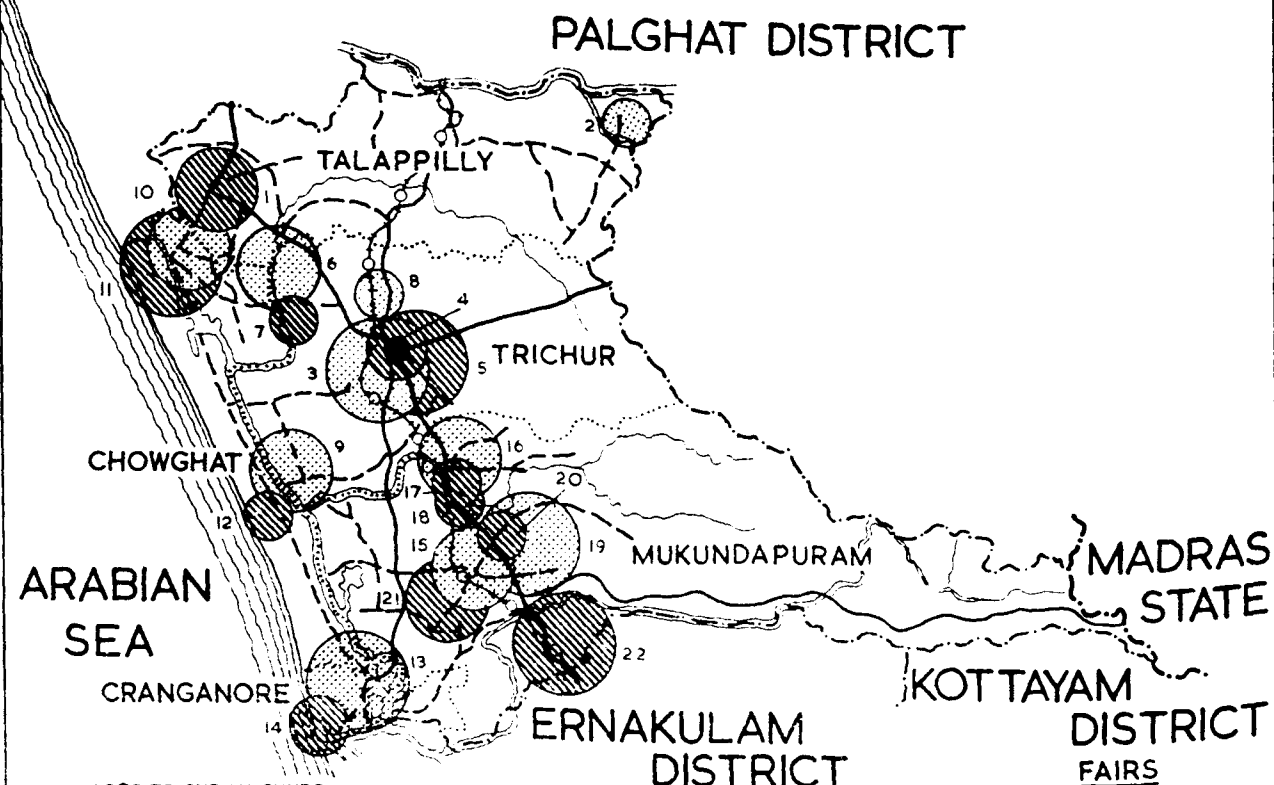
The annual festival of this temple takes place for seven days from 11th to 17th of

Makaram (January-February). About 5,000 people join in this festival. Textile goods, dates etc, are the important commodities of trade in the fair held in the festive days here. The usual attractions of this *Utsavam* are *Ezhunnellippu* on elephant's back, illuminations and the beating of drums (*Chendamelom*), *Kadumpayasam*, *Koottupayasam*, *Palpayasam*, *Ganapathy homam*, *Pushpanjali*, *Pizhinjupayasam*, and *Vella Nivedyam* are the special offerings made to the deity of this temple.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

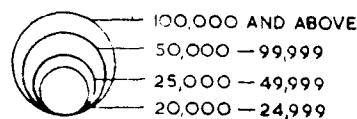
TRICHUR DISTRICT

PLACES OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS WITH
CONGREGATION OF 20,000 AND OVER

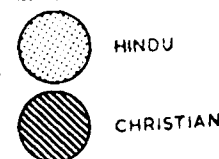


- 1 JACOBITE SYRIAN CHURCH, CHIRALAYAM, KUNNAMKULAM
- 2 SREE RAMASWAMY TEMPLE, THIRUVILWAMALA
- 3 WADAKKUMNATHAN TEMPLE, TRICHUR
- 4 CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF DOLOURS, TRICHUR
- 5 LOURDES CHURCH, TRICHUR
- 6 KAVIL TEMPLE, EDAKOLATHUR
- 7 PARAPUR CHURCH, CHALAKKAL
- 8 CHIRAKUZHY SUBRAMANIA TEMPLE, PUZHAKKAL
- 9 PERINGOTTUKARA SOMASEKHARA TEMPLE, THANNIYAM
- 10 GURUVAYOOR TEMPLE, CHOWGHAT
- 11 ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, PAVARATTY
- 12 ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, VALAPAD, CHA-PALLIPROM
- 13 BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, KODUNGALLOOR, LOKAMALESWARAM
- 14 KODUNGALLOOR CHURCH, AZHICODE
- 15 SREE VISWANATHAPURAM EZHUVA TEMPLE, IRINJALAKUDA
- 16 VARAKARAKAVU BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, AMBALLUR
- 17 ST. ANTONY'S CHURCH, PUDUKAD, THORAVU
- 18 ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, PARAPPUKKARA
- 19 POOVILARKAVIL TEMPLE, KODAKARA
- 20 R.C. CHURCH, PERAMBRA, KODAKARA
- 21 ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, THAZHAKKAD
- 22 KORATTY ST. MARY'S CHURCH, MURINGUR THEKKUMMURI

SCALE FOR SIZE
OF CONGREGATION



FAIRS
AND FESTIVALS



LEGEND

- STATE BOUNDARY
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- TALUK BOUNDARY
- NATIONAL HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAY
- DISTRICT ROAD
- RAILWAY
- RIVER
- CANAL
- DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS

FEAST IN THE KUNNAMKULAM SIMHASANA CHURCH

(REV. M. C. JACOB RAMBAN)

District
Taluk
Town

Trichur
Talappilly
Kunnamkulam

This church is situated at Kunnamkulam, a Municipal town in Talappilly taluk, Trichur district in Kerala. The late Mar Austhatheous Sreeba Metropolitan lived and was buried here. His Grace was one of the delegates of the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East and was the predecessor of His Grace Mar Julius Elias Metropolitan, the present Delegate of the Holy Sea of Antioch, in India.

His Grace Mar Austhatheous Metropolitan was a Sanyasi practising the severe and pious discipline of monastic life. It is known that even during his lifetime, through

his intercessory prayers many sick people were healed and many miracles were wrought.

The present church was founded by His Grace. After his demise a beautiful tomb and a stately church were built on the site. It is one of the biggest churches in Kerala.

The festival is celebrated every year on the Sunday nearest to March 19, the date of his passing away. A large number of Christian and non-Christian devotees congregate on that day to take part in the divine worship to receive blessings from the church and the holy tomb.

POORAM IN THE VADAKKUMNATHAN TEMPLE, TRICHUR

(SHRI PUTHEZHATHU RAMAN MENON)

District
Taluk
Town

Trichur
Trichur
Trichur

The well known *Pooram* of Trichur which is a confused and at the same time orderly celebration in which gods and goddesses from various temples are brought in all pomp and pageantry with the play of drums and musical instruments and pyrotechnics to the Thekkinkad *maidan*—recently called 'the round'—the courtyard and premises of the Siva Temple—the Vadakkumnathan Temple—to which Trichur owes its name. Vadakkumnathan is but a mere spectator in this celebration granting the premises and convenience for the festival. No offering is received, no expenditure is incurred and no special *pooja* is offered in this temple in

connection with this festival. Lord Vadakkumnathan never comes out of his abode. For him, there is no *Utsavam* or other celebrations. Even during the *Sivarathri* celebrations which is the most important ceremony of this temple, he is not taken out in procession. The *Pooram* festival is celebrated annually in *Medom* (April-May).

All the *Poorams* taking part in this grand festival of Trichur had been formerly associated with the Arattupuzha *Pooram* festival in which fifty-six gods and goddesses were represented by taking their images to Arattupuzha. Ten of these gods and goddesses, are now associated with the Trichur *Pooram*

festival. Usually, the residents of Arattupuzha, gathering themselves in the local temple, in the presence of Lord Sastha—he is one among the aforesaid fifty-six gods and goddesses used to celebrate the festival associating themselves with the deity. But, Lord Vadakkumnathan to whose presence people flock to celebrate the festival, has no connection whatsoever with those who celebrate the *Pooram* festival.

It was by a historical accident that the *Pooram* festival of Trichur originated. Once, as usual, the above mentioned ten *Poorakkar* set out to Arattupuzha to celebrate *Pooram* there. Due to heavy downpours they were stranded midway and could not proceed further and were forced to while away the whole night in a wayside shed. Disappointed they returned the next day to Trichur. The residents of Arattupuzha blamed them for their absence from the festival. Disgusted with this, they decided to dissociate themselves with the Arattupuzha *Pooram* in future. It was in those days that Sakthan Thampuran, the ruler of Cochin was building the Trichur town. He called the above ten *Poorakkar* who were the patrons of the temples in and around Trichur and enquired of them as to why they used to go to Arattupuzha surmounting great hardships and whether they could not celebrate the festival at the *Thekkinkadu Parambu* in the presence of Lord Vadakkumnathan. Since the *Pooram* that was to be celebrated in *Meenam* was intercepted unexpectedly, they decided to celebrate the *Pooram* in the month of *Medom*. This was the origin of the celebration of *Pooram* festival at Trichur as an outcome of the torrential rains during a certain year, the insult offered by the Arattupuzha people and above all, the advice offered by Sakthan Thampuran. The Arattupuzha *Pooram* was therefore divided into two *Poorams*, forty-six *devas* associating themselves with the Arattupuzha *Pooram* and ten of them participating in the *Pooram* at Trichur. It is because of this reason that Lord Vadakkumnathan is

dissociating himself with the Trichur *pooram*.

Of those ten groups separated from Arattupuzha, the *Pooram* of the Panakkampilly temple is not now represented in the Trichur *Pooram*. All the nine *Poorams* of the temples at Kanimangalam, Karamukku, Chembookavu, Laloer, Choorakkattukara, Nethrulkavu, Ayyanthole, Paramekkavu, and Thiruvambadi are represented in this *Pooram* festival. Of these there is only one god and that is of Kanimangalam. All the rest are goddesses. All these temples with the only exceptions of Chembookavu, Paramekkavu and Thiruvambadi which stand in the centre of the town, are situated within a radius of three miles of the Vadakkumnathan temple.

The story as to how the deity of the Panakkampilly temple ceased to be represented in this *Pooram* festival is quite interesting. The Panakkampilly temple is located in the Kizhakkumpattukara ward of Trichur. It belongs to the *Thekke Madom* Brahmaswom. In olden days the route through which the deity of this temple was carried in procession to the Vadakkumnathan temple during the *Pooram* days was uninhabited and the deity could have been carried to the temple unpolluted on the way. But in later days the region on either side of this route became densely populated and non-Hindus refused to keep away from the route when the procession carrying the deity was on the move. It was therefore difficult to carry the deity unpolluted on the way. Accordingly the ceremonial procession of carrying the deity of Panakkampilly temple during *Pooram* days was stopped. Thus the ten *Pooram* participants got reduced to nine.

These nine participants are now associated with the *Pooram* festival of Trichur. Among them, as the Kanimangalam Ayyappan cannot be exposed to sun and dew the *Pooram* in honour of that deity will be conducted at day-break and before dusk. Hence this ceremony is not held on a grand scale.

Like the temple at Paramekkavu, the



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TRICHUR POORAM

Thiruvambadi temple too was a Devi temple in early days. It is in honour of Devi that *Pooram* is celebrated there. The consecration of Sree Krishna in that temple is of later origin. In course of time greater importance was shown to Sree Krishna than Devi. There are many such instances in Kerala. The Thiruvambadi *Pooram* is conducted not in honour of Sree Krishna; the *Thitambu* carried in procession is of Bhagavathy. Also, the temple flag is hoisted in honour of Bhagavathy. But the *Kolam* (figure) held on elephant's back is of Sree Krishna. This is one of the strange contradictions found in the Trichur *Pooram* festival.

Of the *Poorams* mentioned above, those of Chembookavu and Paramekkavu are only led inside the temple through its eastern entrance. The day-*Pooram* of Paramekkavu is conducted at the courtyard of the temple; this is famous as *Elenjitharakkale Melom* the grand celebration at Elanjithara. Even though Chembookavu Bhagavathy enters through the eastern gate she gets out through the western gate and turns to west at the Sreemoolasthanam when alone *Chendamelom* will be played. While the *Chendamelom* of nine *Poorams* is *Pandy* that of Chembukavu alone is *Panjari*.

The rituals observed for all the *Poorams* celebrated during the day will be followed in the night also. But in the night-procession the Paramekkavu deity comes to the Sreemoolasthanam taking a round without entering the temple. For all the *Poorams* special timings have been prescribed by Government long ago. This was done when group rivalries of the participants grew intense. Similarly there are other injunctions limiting the number of elephants in the procession to fifteen and the number of pop-guns fired at a time to 100 and prohibiting *Kolvanam* (a kind of rockets) altogether during the *Pooram* festival. There is a custom that whenever a *Pooram* is over, the elephant employed for carrying the deity in procession, will be led to the temple through the western entrance and made to circum-

ambulate the shrine of Lord Vadakkumnathan. Of the rival groups participating in this *Pooram*, the most important are Paramekkavu and Thiruvambadi. At the close of the day-*Pooram* both these groups, enter the temple through the western gate and coming out through the southern gate array themselves, face to face one from the round and the other from the Municipal Office Road. This, which is usually called the march to the south, is highly enchanting. Although this grand festival is known as Trichur *Pooram*, in fact, it is the concluding celebration of the *Utsavams* of eight days of the nine temples. In all these temples, the temple flags will be hoisted timing the *Arat* to take place on the *Uthram* day in *Medom* i. e., the eighth day of the *Utsavam*. All ceremonies like *Utsavaveli*, *Boothabali*, *Nythyaseeveli*, *Ahassu* and *Kodikalpara* will be performed in these temples since the hoisting of the temple flags. On the seventh day, carrying the deity in procession, a *Valiya Vilakku*, a grand festival is conducted. To participate in this grand festival, all throng to the shrine of Vadakkumnathan. This is what is known as the Trichur *Pooram*. On the following day the flagstaff is removed and the *Arat* performed in all these temples.

The processional journey of the Thiruvambadi *Pooram* to the *Madom* and back are not only important, but also quite enlivening. The marvellous magical effect of the *Panchavadyam* could be felt and enjoyed in this. About the taking of this procession to the *Madom* and back, there is an amusing story behind it. When the *Pooram* festival was introduced there was no such practice of taking the deity ceremoniously to this *Madom*. During the heyday of the Naduvile *Madom* family, the head of that family became persona grata of the Thiruvambadi temple. He had in his family a complete set of gold caparisons etc. for five elephants. One day the trustees of the Thiruvambadi temple approached him and requested him to spare these ornamental materials in connection with their temple festival, to which he

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

replied, 'let the Thiruvambadi Krishnan come over here to see the Krishnan of my Madom so that I can see them together. They can be carried together in procession from here. Then I will offer all ornamental outfits for five elephants.' Greatly pleased at this offer, the Thiruvambadi people cere-

moniously led the Sree Krishna deity to Naduvile Madom early in the morning, offered *pooja*, *payasanivedyam* etc. to the deities and took them back only in the afternoon. Even to this day this custom is followed without break.

True translation of an article by Shri Puthiezath Raman Menon in the Express, Trichur dated 26th April 1961

UTSAVAM IN THE OLARIKKARA TEMPLE

(SHRI K. W. CHAKRAPANI MARAR)

District	Trichur
Taluk	Trichur
Town	Trichur

The Olarikkara Bhagavathy temple is in the Ayyanthole village, hardly two miles to the west of the Trichur railway station, on the main bus route to Kanjani. Various anecdotes are told about the origin of this temple. But the following is supposed to be the accepted one.

During the days when Nairs were wielding power in the State, it was obligatory for the local Nair Chiefs to entertain people from outside who might visit their villages. Once a pious *Yogi* came to Olarikkara. It was to the local Nangeeli house, the site where the temple stands now, that he went first. He had with him a sword and foot-trinkets. The same he kept on the courtyard of the house with instructions to the inmates of the house not to pollute them in any manner. It was his habit to take with him the sword and the foot-trinkets whenever he went out from the house. One day, when he went out as usual, he left behind him the sword and the foot-trinkets at the Nangeeli house. When the inmates of the house wanted to remove the sword for safe custody, they found them firmly secured to the ground. Struck with wonder at this strange occurrence the occupants of the house

consulted an astrologer. He predicted that Durga Devi had settled down herself there as the local patron. In course of time, a temple was constructed there, the consecration of which was performed by an eminent *Thanthri* (priest). Thus Devi became the tutelary deity of the people and her temple, their worshipping centre. Knowing that Devi had made her abode there, the Nangeeli family shifted their residence from the place. But their serpent-grove where special *poojas* are offered by devotees, is still located in the temple campus.

The residents of Olarikkara, Pullazhi, Puthoorkara and Ayyanthole are the *Uralars* of this temple. The instructions of *Komaran* (oracle) who is supposed to be the representative of Devi, are taken for granted by the people as the words of Devi. Whatever be the truth of the traditions about the origin of this temple, it is certain that there are some inalienable connections between the Nangeeli house and the temple. Even now the sword is preserved at the Nangeeli house. The deity of the temple is *Vanadurga*. This is evident from the fact that the idol is kept exposed to sun and rain. The popular belief is that all *Vanadurga* deities



VADAKKUMATHAN TEMPLE, TRICHUR



POOKRAM AT ARATTUPUZZHA



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KODUNGALLOOR BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

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Pl. 80

CHERAMAN JUMA MASJID

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UTSAVAM IN THE CHOORAKKOT TEMPLE

in the Kerala temples are either installed under the foot of trees or are being kept exposed to continuous downpours. Some people also call the deity as *Nanadurga*.

Even though no historical records are available at present to determine the antiquity of this temple, basing on traditions, it can be assumed that this temple would have been in existence for the past 500 years or so.

It is said that during the time of Saktan Thampuran of Cochin, there was a Namboothiri house called Olamana in this place and that Olarikkara is a corrupt form of '*ola irikkum kara*' which means the place where Olamana is located. These Namboothiris adored Devi as their tutelary deity. While these Namboothiris were happily

getting on in friendly terms with the Zamorin of Calicut, they chanced to incur the displeasure of Saktan Thampuran. As a result, the latter confiscated all their lands. Perhaps, valid information in support of this conjecture, would be available in the manuscripts preserved in the Vadakkumnathan temple at Trichur and the palaces at Paliyam and Thrippunithura.

The annual festival of this temple is *Mandala thalapoli* celebrated on the 10th day of the Malayalam month *Dhanu* (December-January). The crowd attending this festival will come to about 6,000 in number. Ceremonious procession headed by five or seven elephants and splendid *Panchavadyam* performance are the highlights of this festival.

UTSAVAM IN THE CHOORAKKOT TEMPLE

(SHRI K. G. MENON)

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Trichur
Padiyam

No other temples than the Choorakkot Devaswom are existent in Kerala where the deities of Badrakali and Durga Devi have been consecrated side by side in one *Sreekovil*. The Choorakkot temple is located in the Padiyam village of the Trichur taluk, eight miles away from the Trichur railway station. The following is the legend, current among the elders of the locality, regarding the origin of this temple.

Years back, the area around the temple was a forest thickly covered with rattan palms. One day when a Harijan lady was collecting cane sticks from this forest, she happened to sharpen her knife on a nearby rock. While she was doing so, blood gushed out of the rock. Greatly afraid of this strange occurrence, she immediately rushed to the local chief of the Kolayamparambath

house and conveyed to him the news. Accompanied by his followers, the local chief visited the spot, cleared the forest and commenced offering *pooja* at the spot. In the year 1106 M. E., the old temple was modified with new additions such as *Gopuram*, *Uttupura*, *Sreekovil*, *Chuttambalam*, *Mandapam* and bathing house.

Of all the festivals celebrated in this temple, the most important is the *Bharany Utsavam* in *Makaram* (January—February) lasting from *Bharany* to *Karthika* asterisms. In the afternoon on the *Bharany* day, the Nairs will begin their *Vela*. This will be continued till day-break on *Karthika* day. Then the *Pooram* of the Vettuvans will commence. This will be followed by *Kalakali* and like other performances. Besides these, *Panchavadyam*, *Pandimelam*, *Pancharimelam*

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

and *Thayambaka* would also help increase the tempo of this *Utsavam*. On an average, not less than 1,500 people usually take part in this *Utsavam*.

FEASTS AND FAIRS OF PALAYUR CHURCH

(REV. FR. JACOB ELAMKUNNAPUZHA)

District	Trichur
Taluk	Chowghat
Village	Guruvayur

Palayur which is known as Palur in the ancient European records, is now a village situated in the south Chowghat of the Chowghat Taluk in the present Trichur district at a distance of a mile and a half from the Arabian Sea. Palayur was in the beginning of the 1st century A. D. a famous Brahman station inhabited by Nambuthiri Brahmans with a famous Siva temple.

The Catholic Syrian Church of Palayur which is the most ancient in this part of Malabar is one of the seven churches founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle in the middle of the 1st century i. e. 52-54 A. D. Cranganore was a great sea-port at that time, being the chief centre of pepper and other trades for which ships were frequently coming via Persian Gulf from several Asiatic ports of the West, and it was the chief capital of the Chera Kings. There was also at Cranganore a Jewish settlement which had connection and communication with another Israelite settlement that existed at Palayur. It was in this city of Cranganore that the great Apostle of Indies is said to have first arrived by sea voyage. Then St. Thomas turned his attention to Palayur near which there was a port at Chetwayi. It might be probably the existence of an Israelite settlement at Palayur, the ruins of which are noticeable even this day, that so soon attracted the Apostle's attention to this place of Brahmans.

He visited on one *Karkitaka Samkramam* day, the great tank of the temple where the Brahmans were having their morning baths

and performing the "Snanam" ceremonies by taking a handful of water from the tank and throwing it up to the air muttering some prayers of "mantrams". Seeing this, the Holy Disciple of Christ asked what it meant. Their answer did not satisfy him. The Namboothiris had a hot discussion with the Apostle about the new religion he preached in the course of which they one and all finally agreed to embrace the religion of the saint if he could perform a miracle in water and took solemn oath to that effect. St. Thomas consented to it and stepping into the tank and praying to his divine Master looking upwards, he drew some water from the tank with two hands joined and threw it up in the air. The Namboothiris could not believe their eyes. They saw a depression on the surface of the tank wherefrom the water was drawn and the water thrown above was floating in the air and falling down as flowers in different colours. The Namboothiris were thunderstruck by the plain miracle. The majority of them received the saint's words according to their oaths then and there, and were instantly baptized by the hands of the Apostle with the water of the same tank. But a small minority of them who refused to be baptized on the shameful pretence that they were duped by some magic art of the saint quitted the place at once saying "*Iniyathe kuli Vemmanat*" meaning the next bath is at Vemmanat which is near Pavaratty 3 miles away from Palayur. They presumed that the temple and the tanks at Palayur were polluted on account of

FEASTS AND FAIRS OF PALAYUR CHURCH

the conversion of their brethren in that place. They also cursed the locality and the converted community. The village itself was henceforth called and styled by them as "Sapa-Kadu" and latterly "Chapakadu" signifying 'cursed forest'. The nick-name of the place was subsequently called and confirmed by the other Brahmans also. Hence the whole village of Palayur and its surroundings are even this day called Chavakad, which is also spelt by Europeans as Chowghat. Even this day, not a single Nambuthiri Brahman will drink cold water or even that of a tender cocoanut within the boundary of Palayur which is regarded as cursed.

The light of the Gospel was not only preached by the Apostle to the Brahmans of the place, but also to the Israelite Jews who had already a settlement and a synagogue just outside the ancient Brahman quarters at Palayur. A number of Jews have also embraced the Christian religion and were baptized by the hands of their countryman St. Thomas. The site of the ancient synagogue is even now called and recorded in the Government registers as "Judankunnu" meaning Jews Hill. The owner of the site had very recently dug the foundation of the ruins of the synagogue and taken a number of old granite stones found to have been buried deep under the ground.

The compound in which the present church is located and the sites around it will impress a stranger of the antiquity of the place. Numerous pieces of broken idols and other remnants of temples are even this day seen in the vicinity of the church. Many old modelled stone-built wells have been found buried deep under the ground in all parts of the village which are rarely found in the sandy soil in other parts. Besides these, there exist four big tanks at the four sides of the church compound. The tank at the east known as "Thaliyakulam" is believed as the one in which St. Thomas wrought the miracle. The present position and the surroundings of these tanks will

convince an observer how extensive and important they were at the time of their fame. The principal and remarkable families of "Adhia Brahmanas" (priestly class) converted by the Apostle in Malabar are said generally to be four in number i. e. "Kalli", "Kalam Kav", "Sankarapuri" and "Palamattom". There are sufficient grounds to believe that at least three of these families were in Palayur as the three sites still bear the names "Kallingal" (Palayur Desom settlement Register Survey No. 56/2), "Palamattom" (Survey No. 64/7) and "Kalam Veedu" (Survey No. 50/20) which are believed to be the *Illom* names of such ancient families of "Kalli" "Palamattom" and "Kalam Kav" respectively.

The edifice of the sacred and principal temple of Palayur which was converted into the first Christian Church of the place by St. Thomas and which existed on the present site was believed to be one built with stone foundation and wooden walls and roofs of sandal and teak. It continued to exist for many centuries with timely repairs. In the 16th century when an Italian Jesuit missionary named Fr. Fenichio tried to build a new fashioned church on the site, the people rejected to dismantle the old wooden building and the missionary was thereby compelled to give up the idea of dismantling it and he built a big church enclosing the old and impaired wooden building within the walls of the new one. (Vide page 30 in "St. Thomas and India" by Dr. Medlycott). But gradually the inner church is said to have been demolished or dismantled in course of time.

In a Syriac report which is written by Nestorian Bishops in A. D. 1504 to their Patriarch which is even now preserved in the famous Vatican library, Palayur is spoken of as one of the famous cities in Malabar. They say in the report, "Out of 20 cities of Malabar, 3 notable and firm cities are Cranganore, Palayur and Quilon. (Vide page 11 in Christianity in Travancore by Mackenzie). As a Christian station too, it was once the

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

seat of a Bishop as seen from the Bull of the Holy Father, Pope Gregory XIII dated 15th March 1580 (vide "Orthodoxy of St. Thomas Christians page 31 and 32). It was also one of the principal churches in the list of the Synod of Diamper or Udayamperur in the year 1599.

This state of prosperity and importance began to decline due to the invasions of Hyder Ali and his son Tippu Sultan in the year 1780-92 when the church and the Christian station were partially devastated. Some of the copper plate deeds first lost in the panic and turmoil of Tippu's invasion but discovered after some years and now retained in the church repository show that the church possessed many extensive lands, the ownership of which the church has now lost

by lapse of time. The present church and the other buildings attached to it were built one after another by the parishioners when the British rule began in 1792-93. The huge tower was built in 1912.

As a token of memory of the mother church, the Catholics of distant parts as well as the separated brethren, the Jacobites, Marthomites, Nestorians etc. visit Palayur and pay their offerings at least once a year on the 15th July (a date coinciding with *Karkitaka Samkramam*) which has been the principal feast of the church from time immemorial. Many pilgrims from different parts of India, even those who come to Guruvayur temple (about a mile away from Palayur) visit Palayur because of its historical importance and antiquity.

UTSAVAM IN THE GURUVAYUR TEMPLE

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Chowghat
Guruvayur

One of the famous pilgrim centres in India, the Guruvayur temple, is situated in an out-of-the-way village in the Chowghat taluk, drawing a vast concourse of pilgrims from throughout the length and breadth of the country. Devotees are thronging to this temple not to see and appreciate the variety of its structural patterns or to revel in the festivals celebrated there—in fact there are no prodigious structures for this temple—but only to feel the air of benediction that pervades this famous shrine of Guruvayoorappan and to invoke his blessings, for they believe that there is nothing which cannot be fulfilled by offering worship at his shrine. All through the year the devotees pour in here either to celebrate marriages and other ceremonies or to fulfil their vows and offer prayers to Guruvayoorappan. Though the structure of this temple is comparatively

small, its fame is fabulously widespread. Entering the portals of the temple, one is overwhelmed by the pervading atmosphere of piety and devotion; he would feel as if he was in Vaikuntam, the abode of Lord Vishnu. A journey by bus or motor car for a short distance of 20 miles from Trichur, the nearest railway station to Guruvayur, leads one to the vicinity of this great temple.

More than one factor have contributed to the fame and glory of this temple. Years back, Guruvayur had been the centre of many activities; it was from here that the great devotional poetic cult which flourished in Kerala with phenomenal popularity during the seventh century of the Malayalam era originated. The great devotional poets, Poonthanam, Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri, Vilwamangalam Swamy, Manavedan, Kurooramma had all drunk deep in the fountain of devotion to Guruvayoorappan.

UTSAVAM IN THE GURUVAYUR TEMPLE

Not only this, Guruvayur has also made rich and significant contribution to several branches of art in Kerala. At a time when the great renaissance was taking place in Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries of the Christian era, diffusing its radiance and fragrance all round, simultaneously there had been a new resurgence and awakening in Kerala too. The influence of Sanskrit literature over Malayalam increased considerably and as a result, the latter grew richer and richer in scope and extent. Under the patronage of the Zamorin of Calicut, a revitalisation was manifest in every branch of knowledge. The centre of all these far-reaching developments was the temple at Guruvayur. Poets like Poonthanam and Melpathur Bhattathiri were the exponents of the aforesaid devotional poetic cult. They adored and worshipped the Guruvayoorappan and immortalised him with their poetical compositions. Poonthanam by his *Jnanappana* and *Sreekrishna Karnamrutham* and Melpathur Bhattathiri by his *Narayaneeyam*. Likewise, many other art forms like *Krishnanattom*, *Kooihu* and a variety of poetical compositions extolling the divinity of Sree Krishna, were also originated from Guruvayur.

As in the case of many other temples, mystery surrounds the origin of this temple too. Its early history is made of nothing but legends and folklores. No reference to this temple occurs in any of the ancient Tamil or Malayalam books. Neither there is any old manuscript record or carving in this temple which would help determine the period of its construction. The period of its construction could, however, be determined only based on legends and anecdotes. The popular belief is that the temple was built by a Pandya king and that its fame and glory began to radiate to all parts of the country only when the importance of the temple at Thirunavaya, the venue of the famous Mamamka festival ancient Kerala waned. It was, however, from the days of

the great luminaries like Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri who compiled his famous *Narayaneeyam* in 763 M. E. at the altar of this temple that it has achieved added importance and fame as a great centre of pilgrimage.

The name 'Guruvayur' is said to have been derived from 'Kuruveeyoor.' In the Devaswom records dating back to 1638 A.D. reference is seen made to this place as 'Kuruveeyoor.' When the influence of Sanskrit grew in Kerala the name 'Kuruveeyoor' also got changed. Thus 'Kuruveeyoor' became 'Guruvayur.' The legend goes that "Udhawa at the behest of Lord Krishna handed over the idol of Vishnu that was being worshipped by Vasudeva, to Brihaspathi. At the time of the deluge when Dwaraka was destroyed Brihaspathi with the help of Vayu managed to reach a place where nature appeared in all its resplendent glory. They had no hesitation to choose that place for installing and consecrating the idol. Because Guru (Brihaspathi) and Vayu installed the idol the place came to be known as Guruvayupuram and later Guruvayur. According to another version it was Lord Siva himself who directed Guru and Vayu to this particular place. Siva after blessing their efforts is believed to have taken His abode at Mammiyur near Guruvayur.

Still, another legend says that King Janamejaya who had incurred the wrath of serpents and become a leper, was advised to worship the idol of Lord Krishna which was submerged in the deluge. Janamejaya recovered the idol with the help of Guru and Vayu and installed it at Guruvayur.¹ A special *Balikallu* is still set apart in this temple for Guru and Vayu.

The main idol of this temple is of Lord Vishnu. The idol, made of a rare stone called 'Patala Anjanam' which is supposed to have great healing qualities, especially for rheumatism, with a *chank* (conch), *chakra* (wheel), *gada* (mace), *pankajam* (lotus) in

1. Article by Shri Gopal in the Indian Express dated 27-9-1964.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

its four arms and a radiant smile on its lips, looks bewitchingly beautiful. It is believed by some that this idol represents the vision of Lord Vishnu when he gave *darshan* to Devaki and Vasudeva at the time of Sree Krishna's birth while others think that it is of Parthasarathy since *Geetadinam* is celebrated as *Ekadasi* day in the temple on a grand scale in memory of Sree Krishna's *Geethopadesom* to Arjuna.

During Tipu Sultan's invasion of Kerala fearing the desecration of this temple, the authorities took the idol to Ambalapuzha where it was installed for worship for two years at the Sreekrishnaswamy temple. It was only after the retreat of Tipu from Kerala that this idol was taken back from Ambalapuzha and re-consecrated at Guruvayur. The sub-temple in the Sreekrishnaswamy temple at Ambalapuzha where this idol was enshrined for worship for two years is still known as Guruvayurambalam. Despite all the atrocities committed by Tipu during his invasion of Kerala, he neither attacked this temple nor spoiled it in any manner. Instead, he instituted a big fund for offering *nivedya* to the Lord every-day and appointed one of his representatives by name Hydross Kutty Mooppan to be in charge of the maintenance of the temple. The English people when they came to power, cut this fund at the first instant and in 1842 ultimately stopped its payment once for all. Instead they waived a portion of the tax levied on the Devaswom lands.

The administration of this temple was originally vested with 72 Namboothiri families. In course of time, all except Mallisery *Illom* became extinct and they continued to administer the affairs of the temple. The overall supervision and control of the temple was however still maintained by the Zamorin of Calicut. The cordial relationship between the Zamorin and Mallisery Namboothiri did not however, continue for long. Disputes arose between them over the affairs of the temple which led to a long-drawn-out legal wrangle. Now the Zamorin is the

managing trustee of the temple and Mallisery Namboothiri, the co-trustee. The day-to-day administration of the temple is now carried on by the Devaswom Manager acting on their behalf.

Just behind the entrance to the temple is the *Anakkottil* and behind it, the golden flag-staff. Adjacent to this is the *Koothambalam*. Taking a round of the temple proper, one reaches the front of the *Krishnanattasala*, a small structure wide open on all sides. It was here where *Krishnanattom* used to be staged before. This building was once located in front of the main temple. It is said that when *Krishnanattom* was palyed here, it was Sree Krishna's wont to come down from the *Sreekovil* and take part in the play by himself playing the role of Sree Krishna. The *Krishnanattasala* was therefore shifted from its original side to another side of the temple. Behind this building there is another hall where men of wisdom and learning used in olden days to hold discourses in Puranas. Beyond this is the famous temple tank where Melpathur Bhattathiri bathed and got cured of his chronic rheumatism. The *Mandapam* just in front of the *Sreekovil* is resplendant with beautiful carvings. The paintings around the *Sreekovil* depicting stories of the childish pranks of Sree Krishna (Sree Krishna leela), stand out as works of everlasting beauty of the ancient art. The devotees, for a moment, will feel that they are caught themselves in Ambadi, the boyhood rambling place of Sree Krishna.

The important religious festivals celebrated in this temple are (1) *Ashtami Rohini* in *Chingom* (August-September), (2) *Sukla Paksha Ekadasi* in *Vrischigom* (November-December), (3) Kuchela day in *Dhanu* (December-January), the day on which Kuchela visited Sree Krishna with beaten rice, (4) *Dwaja Prathishta* day (erection of flagstaff in the temple) on *Makayiram* asterism in *Makaram* (January-February), (5) *Vishukani* in *Medom* (April-May), and (6) the 10 days *utsavam* commencing from *Pooyam* asterism in *Kumbhom* (February-March). Of these

FEAST IN THE ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, KAVID

Ekadasi draws the largest crowd. *Ekadasi* is held as an important day, for according to the Hindu mythology it was on this day that Sree Krishna made *Geethopadesa* to Arjuna. It was again on this day that Lord asked Sree Sankara to formulate a system of rituals and ceremonies in the temple. Also, Melpathur Bhattathiri had obtained the vision

of the Lord on this day. Even before the Temple Entry Proclamation, the doors of this temple were open to the low caste Hindus on *Ekadasi* day. One thing which merits particular mention in this context is that on all days, at noon, a number of hungry stomachs are fed with free meals at this temple.

Based mainly on an article by Shri K. Narayana Pillai in the Malayala Manorama Weekly dated 9th February 1957.

FEAST IN THE ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, KAVID

(FR. RAPHAEL, M)

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Chowghat
Perakam

The St. Joseph's R. C. Church, Kavid is situated in the Perakam village, Chowghat Taluk, about 20 miles away from the Trichur railway station. The main feast of this church, the St. Joseph's feast, is celebrated for two days on 2nd Sunday after Easter and the preceding Saturday, attended by about 1,000 people.

Just a week before the festival a flag will be hoisted high in front of the church in a ceremonial way by the priest to indicate the advent of the festival. That week is the time of preparation for the festival, both spiritual and temporal. The church and its premises will be gaily decorated. In the

evening of the day preceding the festival, Vespers will be conducted in a solemn way.

On the day of the festival a solemn High Mass will be said and there will be a sermon on St. Joseph as model for all classes of people. A procession carrying the statue of St. Joseph amidst prayers, songs and music is one worth mentioning. In the evening there are processions in honour of St. Joseph from different parts of the parish. When they meet in the church compound pyrotechnics are displayed which attract thousands of people from all around. Many people come and give offerings to St. Joseph.

FEAST IN THE ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH, PAVARATTY

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Chowghat
Pavaratty

Perhaps there may not be many Catholic churches which have attained fame and importance within so short a period as the

church at Pavaratty. The feast of this church which stands in the name of St. Joseph, is celebrated on a grand scale on

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

the 4th and 5th of May every year. The origin of this church which draws devotees to its side from all parts of Kerala had been in a very humble manner.

In olden days it was in the church at Chittattukara that the Christians of Pavaratty and the neighbourhood offered worship. The parishioners who were undergoing great hardships by treading three or four miles to reach the above church, on a particular Sunday set up a small chapel at Pavaratty, thatched only with cadjan leaves and enclosed on all sides by bamboo mats. The beginning of this church, the foundation of which was laid in 1877, was accomplished in this manner. The parishioners of this church take pride in the phenomenal progress achieved hitherto by this church which stands now in the forefront of all the great churches of South India. It is to be remembered that the construction of the above-mentioned chapel and the conduct of prayers therein had made possible with the earnest efforts of Fr. Francis of Vadakkoot and the Vicar of Edakkulathur church. About this ninety years old church, many legends are current among the local inhabitants.

The present site of the church was obtained by outright purchase from the Padayath family. Once a set of devout Christians who were on a business tour, happened to take rest at a wayside choultry. These traders

had a dream while they were asleep to the effect that there was a statue lying hidden underground about that choultry and that they had to take it along with them. Accordingly, as revealed through the dream, they made a search about the choultry and recovered the image. This image, they took to Pavaratty and installed in their church. Even now the elders of the locality attach much importance to this story.

The splendid church that now stands there is the outcome of the liberal contributions made by a good number of large-hearted devotees. While the late Alookaran Ouseph Malpan was alive, there had been considerable progress in the construction of this church. It is to be remembered that one or two other non-Christians had also made valuable contributions towards the building of this church. The flagstaff erected in front of the church is one of such contributions made by these people.

In 1937 when Rev. Fr. George Choondal was the Vicar of this church, the celebration of a feast known as *Budanazcha Thirunal*, was commenced in this church.

In connection with the above celebrations, a public feasting is provided in this church in which a number of devotees will take part. It is worth mentioning here that from this year (1963), onwards meat has been abjured as an item of the victuals served for this feast.

Based mainly on an article by Shri N. A. Ibrahim Kutty in the Malayala Manorama daily dated 5-5-1963.

FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, VALAPAD

(REV. FR. IGNATIUS CHITILAPPILLY)

District	Trichur
Taluk	Chowghat
Village	Cha-Palliprom

The St. Sebastian's Roman Catholic Church, Valapad is in the Trichur Diocese. About six generations ago the faithful in

this area, though the population was smaller, had to go to the nearest church, Pazhuvil, for their religious needs. In those days that

THOTTOTSAVAM IN THE KOVILAKATH DHARMA SABHA TEMPLE

was a tough job due to the absence of proper and safe means of transport. The distance to Pazhuvil is only about three miles from here. But even this distance was a great handicap to the aged, the children and especially the womenfolk. It was with much exertion, expense and sacrifice on the part of many that the present church took shape. Additions and improvements to the original building were made as time passed on and as necessity arose.

The church can claim the introduction of education in this area. The present Government Secondary School, Valapad, was started by the church and subsequently handed over to the Malabar District Board, due to financial drawbacks, and the school was later taken over by the Kerala Government. The church now runs only two Lower Primary Schools.

The church is dedicated to Saint Sebastian, and this patron Saint is most reverentially

considered by the people as their chief protector. This can be easily studied from the number of devotees gathering for the festival in the last two days of January each year. Special prayers and processions are held during periods of epidemic. Hindus also take advantage in offering prayers and dedicating something in respect of their faith.

Though the festival begins five days ahead of the last day of January, the peak celebrations are by the evening of the 30th and the full day of 31st. The arrow is the symbol of relic, in memory of the arrow-shots received by the Saint, which caused his death; and arrows, generally made of gold, are taken in procession in and around the church, besides those taken by individual houses. The whole feast is embellished by the usual attraction of music, fireworks etc. The crowd attending the festival will come to about 20,000 in number.

THOTTOTSAVAM IN THE KOVILAKATH DHARMA SABHA TEMPLE

(SHRI K. R. PRABHAKARAN)

District	Trichur
Taluk	Cranganore
Village	Edavilanga

Thottotsavam is celebrated in the Kovilakath Dharma Sabha Bhagavathy temple, situated 12 miles away from the Irinjalakuda railway station, in the Edavilanga village, Cranganore taluk, for seven days from 5th to 11th in *Makaram* (January-February) every year. About 3,000 people participate in this *utsavam*.

The ancestors of the patrons of this temple, once upon a time, came from the north to Ayiroor and asked the local chief to provide them with a house for their dwelling. There

was no suitable building, worth their status, to be placed at the disposal of the petitioners. Hence the local chief released to them a newly constructed *Kovilagam* (mansion) occupied by none so far, for their use. Thenceforth the local chief and his men called them as *Kovilakathe Chowwanmar*. Gradually this term was corrupted as *Kolath Chon*. It is to perpetuate the divinity of their tutelary deity that this temple is named Dharma Sabha.

BHARANY UTSAVAM IN THE KODUNGALLOOR BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Cranganore
Lokamaleswaram

Cranganore, the ancient capital of Kerala, lying about 20 miles from Ernakulam, has a hoary past. From the days of recorded history, Cranganore had been the widely known maritime port of India in the world. Even in those distant days she had extensive trade relations with many countries in the West as well as in the Middle East and had earned the reputation of being the 'first trade emporium of India'. Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all thronged to Cranganore one after another for trade in the native products and to reap rich harvest from the land. Pliny, Periplus and other early world-trotters were full of praise for Cranganore for what it was. Apart from being the premier trading centre of the country, Cranganore was a cradle of great religions as well, of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. At the wake of the colonisation of Kerala, it is pointed out that Cranganore had already been developed into a great spiritual centre of Hinduism. The most renowned Bhagavathy temple of Kerala, the Kodungalloor Bhagavathy temple, is believed to have been consecrated there in the immemorial past by that mythical creator of Kerala namely Parasurama. Not only Hinduism but also Christianity and Islam flourished in the fostering atmosphere of Cranganore under royal patronage. It was here that the first missionaries of Christianity and Islam set foot in India and commenced the propagation of their religious mission. But as fate would have it, Cranganore was not destined to enjoy this propriety and splendour for long. The feuds and vendetta of the numerous petty principalities that sprung up at the wake of the decline of the Perumal dynasty in Kerala and the exploitations of the Portuguese and the Dutch at a later period, spoiled much of

the glory of this ancient town. Even though the Britishers restored peace and unity in the land when they came to power, they could not, however, regain the lost glory of Cranganore.

But all the vicissitudes in the annals of this famous town in no way affected the grandeur and glory of the ancient Kodungalloor Bhagavathy temple. Various traditions are centred around this temple. Some of these stories have been mentioned in the monograph on Lokamaleswaram in the Census of India 1961 Kerala, Part VI B.

Situated in the centre of an extensive *maidan*, overspread with bright snowy sands, the temple presents a splendid sight. The *Sreekovil* has been finished quite artistically. The idol of Devi in the temple is in the guise she had assumed when she fought Darika. Hundreds and thousands of her devotees, queueing up in respectful submission in the sublime presence of Devi, cry in unison, 'oh! Mother, Save us' and prostrate before her. It is believed that those who place faith in *Kodungalloor Amma* will never fail to enjoy her eternal protection. Those who pine for life with small pox and such other dreadful diseases, come to this temple and offer worship to Devi. They offer pepper, turmeric, silk, gold, etc. to invoke her blessings.

The Kodungalloor Bhagavathy temple is one of the wealthiest temples in Kerala. It has extensive landed properties, coconut groves as well as paddy fields. In addition to these lands, huge offerings received here constitute a major source of income to the temple. Till recently, the administration of the temple was in the hands of the Cranganore royal family. But now it is under the Cochin Devaswom Board.

BHARANY UTSAVAM IN THE KODUNGALLOOR BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

Badrakali who was born from the third eye of Samhararudra assassinated the demon Darika. It is to commemorate this event that the famous *Bharany utsavam* is conducted in the Kodungalloor Bhagavathy temple in *Meenam* (March-April) every year. There are many anecdotes related to the rituals and ceremonies connected with the conduct of this *utsavam*. One such story is related to Parasurama who, according to Puranas, redeemed Kerala by throwing his axe to the ocean. In order to wreak vengeance upon the Kshatriyas for the murder of his parents, Parasurama, once undertook an expedition throughout the length and breadth of Bharatha to kill them all. At least, to make amends for this sin, he gave away the conquered land to the Brahmans as free gift. And, thereafter, for the use of his own residence, he threw his axe into the sea and lifted up the earth lying from Cape Comorin to Gokarnam with the help of Varuna, the King of Seas. To populate this newly created land, he brought Brahmans from the North and settled them in sixty villages. He was so greatly interested in their welfare that he dug out tanks and constructed temples and choultries for their use. In the meantime, the dreadful epidemic of small-pox spread over the place and many a Brahman succumbed to that terrible disease. To save them from their misery, Parasurama started penance before Paramasiva. The latter appeared to him and advised him, in turn, to pray before goddess Badrakali. Accordingly, Parasurama started penance before Badrakali. Greatly pleased with his penance Devi appeared to him in the form she had assumed when he killed the demon Darika. And *Devi* uttered, 'If you instal me here and make offerings of toddy, flesh and blood to me, small-pox and other contagious diseases will disappear from this place.' When he expressed his doubt as to how *pooja* could be offered to her with meat since the same was taboo for Brahmans, *Devi* informed him that liquor and meat were permissible for seven days preceding

Bharani asterism in *Meenam* and that if *pooja* was performed with these offerings during these days, the same would fetch as much benefit as would accrue from 'eternal worship' to her; and so saying disappeared from the place. Thus, the popular belief of the devotees is that it was Parasurama who, as per the direction of Badrakali, had introduced the conduct of *Bharani utsavam* in this temple.

The *Bharani utsavam* commences with the hoisting of the temple flag on *Bharani* day in *Kumbhom*, the day on which Bhadrakali is supposed to have challenged Darika for a combat. Ten days prior to *Bharani* asterism, devotees would begin to throng to the temple. The belief is that these devotees are the militia of Devi, fighting on her side against Darika. Prior to ten days of *Bharani*, sacrifice of fowls would begin. This is now forbidden in the temple. In the early days, goats were also sacrificed at the altar of Devi. This is said to have been offered in order to arouse militancy among the demons through liquor and meat. On the very same day when the fowl-sacrifice begins, the temple flag also will be hoisted on the southern entrance of the temple, signifying the commencement of actual fight between Bhadrakali and Darika. Soon after the last *pooja* on *Aswathi* day, all the ornaments of the deity, will be removed and by dusk, the senior priests of the temple who are called *Adikals* will smear sandal mixture on the idol of Devi. This is done only to enhance the glory of Devi. Darshan of Devi at the time when the temple doors are opened at the end of the *pooja* is supposed to be more sacred. As soon as the function of smearing sandal mixture on the idol is over, the Senior Raja of the Cranganore royal household, along with the oracle, would come to the *Balikalpura* and present arms of the length of a person and his arm to 24 select dignitaries. These chosen people are supposed to be acting as the commanders of Devi in her fight against Darika. When this ceremony is over, the Raja climbing up

the *Althara* (platform around the banyan tree) spreads out his silken umbrella. This marks the beginning of the *Kavutheendal* ceremony. It is supposed Devi would have slain Darika by that time. When the time for holding the *Kavutheendal* ceremony arrives, Palakkal Velan would have already reached the northern entrance of the temple in procession. No sooner the silken umbrella is unfurled by the Senior Raja than the Palakkal Velan and his party begin to circumambulate the temple thereby polluting it. Thrice they perform the circumambulation, running as fast as they could around the temple. Since it is believed that even the demoniac spirits would participate along with human beings in this successive circumambulations according to old convention, those who circumambulate had to equip themselves with arms. Now, instead of deadly weapons, only sticks are held.

Early morning on *Bharani* day, a special

nivedya prepared with a fine variety of rice, known as *Variyarippayasa nivedyam* will be offered to Devi. This ceremony too is performed by the *Adikals*. Even before the day dawns, the deity would be ceremoniously taken out of the *Sreekovil* and placed on a raised pedestal for public worship. Simultaneously, the temple flag will be hoisted at the eastern side of the lamp post about the northern entrance to the temple. It signifies the victory of Devi over Darika. Following the *Bharani* day, the temple doors will remain closed for six days. On these days, *poorja* will be offered in the temple only once a day. On the seventh day when the doors of the temple are opened, countless number of devotees will obtain *darshan* of Devi, for they believe it is most pious to get the vision of Devi on that day. On the same day, all the flags hoisted earlier, will also be lowered down, marking the end of the *utsavam*.

Based mainly on the articles by Sarvaswari V. Gopalakrishna Menon and T. K. Raghavan in the *Malayala Manorama* Sunday supplement dated 17-3-1963.

FEAST IN THE MAR THOMA PONTIFICAL SHRINE, CRANGANORE

(SHRI P. B. VENUS)

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Cranganore
Eriyad

Nineteen hundred years ago, the first missionary of Indian Christians, St. Thomas, the Apostle set foot in India at Cranganore. Situated in that sacred soil is that living monument to that saint, namely the Mar Thoma Pontifical Shrine, a historic pilgrim centre of the Indian Christians.

In the year 52 A. D. St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, landed at a spot called Malankara (Maliyankara) in Cranganore, the then prime port of India and the capital of Kerala. The reigning Perumal welcomed him most hospitably and allowed him to preach the gospel in the

land. Thus, it is believed that for the first time in India the Christian religion spread in the country and their first church was set up in the land. Subsequently St. Thomas visited different parts of Kerala and converted a good number of local inhabitants to Christianity. After erecting churches at Kottakavu, Palayoor, Kokkamangalam, Niranam, Nilakkal, Quilon, Thiruvamcode and such other places, he visited other parts of India also. Eventually he met with martyrdom at Mylapore at the hands of an assassin. Though he was buried at Mylapore itself, his mortal remains were

FEASTS IN THE MAR THOMA PONTIFICAL SHRINE CRANGANORE

unearthed from that place at a later stage and caused to be buried at various centres in Europe. Finally they were interned in the church at Orthana in Italy.

The earliest church built by St. Thomas might have been destroyed either perhaps as a result of the wars between the rival rulers of Kerala waged at this place or due to some other natural calamities. With the destruction of this church many of the Christians left Cranganore. Still, the importance of Cranganore did not wane for long and Christians from different parts of the land used to go over there on pilgrimage. Presumably it would have been due to the wars in subsequent period pilgrimage to Cranganore completely stopped.

Nevertheless, the happy memory of Cranganore still lingered in the minds of Christians in Kerala. Accordingly they considered their bounden duty to erect an enduring monument to St. Thomas, the Apostle. The present Mar Thoma Nagar on the bank of the Periyar river and the magnificent church towering in its centre, are the outcome of their decision.

On an auspicious morning in the month of August 1953, a few Christian missionaries of the Carmelite Monastery at Trichur arrived at Cranganore in search of a suitable site for building a church in the name of St. Thomas in order to perpetuate his memory. They found the land belonging to Palliyil Veedu, an ancient Christian family of Azhicode, where the old church founded by St. Thomas was believed to have been in existence, quite suitable for constructing the proposed church. Probably it may be owing to the existence of the old church that the above family is known as *Palliyil*. Anyway that picturesque cocoanut grove situated on the banks of Periyar was found suitable for building a magnificent church.

Accordingly, in September 1953, the missionaries purchased that plot of land from the heirs of the late Palliyil Bavu Pappu. On 13th September 1953 Rev. Dr.

George Alapat, Bishop of Trichur, laid the foundation stone of this church and named the place Mar Thoma Nagar. The splendid church that we see today was completed in so short a period of only 83 days.

Since St. Thomas was the Apostle sent to India and the father of the Indian Christians, the Christian Community in Kerala felt that his mortal remains should be got buried at Cranganore, the place where he set foot in India for the first time. They informed the Pope of this desire and also of the building of the church at Cranganore. Pleased with this request of the Kerala Christians, Pope Pius XII sent his legate Cardinal Tissarant to Kerala to inaugurate this place of worship, coinciding it with the happy occasion of the celebration of the nineteenth centenary of St. Thomas and to bury that arm of the saint which had obtained the divine privilege of feeling the wound of Jesus, an arm that had given enlightenment to the Indian Christians at Cranganore.

On that memorable day, 6th of December 1953, His Eminence Cardinal Tissarant, in the presence of about half a lakh of pilgrims drawn from various parts of India, performed the consecration of this church built more or less on the pattern of St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome and interned the holy relics of St. Thomas, the apostle brought from Orthana in Italy in a special urn in the special safe kept in the church and announced the glad tidings that the Holy See had been pleased to recognise the church as a papal pilgrim centre. Thus the spirit of St. Thomas had again come back to Cranganore after a long period of nineteen hundred years and Cranganore became a pilgrim centre for the Christians.

The main feast of the church is celebrated on the 21st of November every year, on the day on which St. Thomas is supposed to have landed at Cranganore. Although the importance of Cranganore as a historic port and the ancient capital of Kerala is lost in antiquity, Cranganore is still a sacred place to Christians, Hindus and Muslims alike.

FESTIVAL IN THE CHERAMAN JUMA MASJID, CRANGANORE

(PRESIDENT, CHERAMAN JUMA MASJID COMMITTEE, METHALA, CRANGANORE)

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Cranganore
Methala

Cheraman Perumal went on a pilgrimage to Arabia accompanied by a group of Arab traders who were on their return journey to Arabia after a visit to Adam Mountains in Ceylon. He met Prophet Mohammed at Jeddah and embraced Islam and the Prophet re-named him as Thajuddin. Thajuddin became a close friend of Malik-Ibn-Dinar, the king of that place and the latter in turn gave his sister Rajiya Beebi in marriage to the former. They settled down at a place called Mukhalla. Perumal fell ill there. From his death-bed he wrote many letters addressed to various rulers of Kerala and entrusted Malik-Ibn-Dinar to hand over the letters to their addressees and to propagate the tenets of Islam in the soil of Kerala.

After the death of Thajuddin (Cheraman) Perumal, Malik-Ibn-Dinar set out for Kerala with an entourage consisting of the members of his family and some friends. He handed over the introductory letters written by Cheraman to the addressees. The first among the rulers he met was the Raja of Cranganore. Because of the high esteem and admiration he had towards Cheraman, the Raja promised every help and extended all facilities to the royal guests. The Arathali temple situated east of Arakulam was left at the disposal of the guests for their residence and for conducting prayers. They started conducting prayers and sermons to propagate the new faith. The response of the people was heartening. The need for a Juma Masjid became evident. Certain modifications were embodied in the old Arathali temple to suit the needs of a Juma Masjid and Juma prayers were started for the first time in India. Thus originated the first Juma Masjid in India. It was only

after the completion of building this mosque, the famous mosques at Quilon, Mangalore and Chaliyam were built. It is situated in the Methala village of Cranganore taluk, hardly 14 miles away from the Irinjalakuda railway station.

There is clear evidence to show that this mosque was designed and constructed by Hindus based on Hindu art and architecture. The distinct native features of the mosque are (1) the shape and design of the front view and portico of the mosque, (2) the resemblance of the roof with that of the Hindu temples and (3) the name *Palli* meaning temple.

The graves of the three great disciples (Sahabis) of prophet Mohamed (Rajiya-Beebi, her brother Malik-Ibn-Dinar and Habib-Ibn-Malik) are situated adjacent to this mosque. They are situated in about 7 feet area about 8 feet eastwards from the south-west corner of the mosque. They are lying hidden under the southern part of the mosque; some portion of the basement wall has been left unplastered to indicate the exact location of the graves.

This Cheraman Juma-Masjid constructed in A. D. 629 is famous as the first mosque erected in India, and also the first mosque in India and the second in the world where the Juma prayers were started. It is a daily occurrence that people from all walks of life and faiths and creeds not only from India but also from abroad, including religious leaders, tourists, historians, political leaders and government officials visit this holy place and pay homage to the above mentioned great disciples of the prophet.

The administration of the affairs of this mosque is carried on by a committee elected

POORAM IN THE BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, VARAKKARA

by the people of the Mohalla (the area under the jurisdiction of the mosque). The president of this committee has extensive executive authority subject to the approval of the committee. The administration of a few acres of *wakaf* land donated by some philanthropic people is also vested in the committee. The income from these dry lands is very meagre. The only source of income to meet the expenses towards the

salary of the officials like the Khateeb (priest) etc. is the donations given by the philanthropic and generous individuals belonging to different communities.

No other celebrations than the Idul-Fitr (Ramzan) and Idul-Azha (Bakrid) are conducted in this mosque. All the Muslims of the locality congregate in the mosque for these two celebrations.

POORAM IN THE BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, VARAKKARA (SHRI P. C. CHATHUNNI)

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Mukundapuram
Amballur

One of the ancient Bhagavathy temples in Kerala is the Varakkara Kavu is situated on the borders of Amballur and Varandarpally villages in the Mukundapuram taluk. Puthukad, the nearest railway station is only five miles away from this place. The legend regarding the origin of this temple as told by the local people, is narrated below.

Once there was an Ezhava family by name Aviyan residing in the premises of the present temple buildings. Drawing toddy was the main occupation of the head of that household. One day while he was drawing toddy from the cocoanut palm, Bhadrakali happened to pass that way accompanied by her retinue after slaying Darika. When she neared the cocoanut palm, a small flower bunch of the cocoanut tree chanced to drop on the umbrella of Devi. Looking upwards, she saw the Aviyan perched on the top of the cocoanut palm. In turn, Aviyan also saw Devi standing below him. Devi reminded him that nobody, not even her parents, had seen her real form and that it was he who had seen it the first time. Aviyan was greatly alarmed at this comment of Devi

that he began to tremble with fear. Devi told him not to be scared of her and asked him to bring a tender cocoanut without touching it on the ground. Accordingly he brought one and Devi quenched her thirst. This Aviyan had only one son. Devi wanted him to bring that child to her presence. Soon the child was brought to her presence. No sooner did the child make his appearance there than Devi slew him with her sword and gave the beheaded body to her retinue to assuage their thirst for blood. Then she asked Aviyan whether he had any grievance to represent to her. But Aviyan simply kept mum. Thereupon Devi, chanting the names of Rama, Krishna, and Govinda, struck thrice on her palm when suddenly appeared two babies, more charming than Aviyan's beheaded child. Devi entrusted these babies to Aviyan and then fixing her umbrellas on that spot, informed him that he would not have to go to Cranganore in future to see her and that whenever he or his family members wanted to invoke her blessings, she would be present in their place itself. And so informing the Aviyan, she presented her sword to him.

Ever since this strange incident took place, the Aviyam was called Aviyam Muthappan. He constructed a temple at the spot where Devi implanted her umbrella and began to offer *pooja* there. This temple was then known as Aviyankavu. Later the local Ezhuvas took up its management. The spiritual duties of this temple, from the very inception of it till date, are being ministered by the members of the Aviyam family. On the demise of the Aviyam Muthappan, his spirit was consecrated in this temple by installing his image therein. It was only after the temple was taken over by the Devaswom Board that it was renamed as Varakkara Bhagavathy temple. The elder people even now call it Aviyankavu. The Aviyam who obtained *darshan* of Devi is called *Kolamkanda* Aviyam (he who saw the vision of Devi). To commemorate this event, an *Utsavam* is held in the temple on 30th of *Dhanu* (December-January) every year. There will be a procession in connection with this *Utsavam* led by eleven caparisoned elephants. Besides, there will be

a number of other items of rituals and ceremonies also. There is a particular reason for conducting the *Utsavam* on the last day of *Dhanu*. On the day following the conclusion of the *Utsavam* here the *Thalapoli Utsavam* of the Kodungalloor temple begins. Devi is supposed to go over to Kodungalloor on that day. On the first of *Makaram*, the temple doors will be closed. It is only on the eighth day that these doors will be reopened.

The highlights of the *Utsavam* of this temple in which about 30,000 people take part are *Kathakali*, *Kathaprasangom*, *Ottamthullal*, *Kalakettu*, *Kuthirakettu* and ceremonious procession led by richly ornamented elephants. The offerings made in the temple consist mainly of turmeric powder, *Nivedyam*, *Vilakku*, *Rakthapushpanjali*, gold ornaments as well as domestic animals. Earthenwares, bell-metals and aluminium vessels, toys etc. are the important commodities that are usually put on sale in the fair held during the *Utsavam* days.

FEAST IN THE ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, PARAPPUKARA

(FR. A. F. WELLANIKARAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Mukundapuram
Parappukara

Parappukara is a typically agricultural village with all the features and beautiful scenery natural to a rural area in Kerala. It lies in the Mukundapuram Taluk of the Trichur district, and approximately midway on the five mile road running as a connecting link between the Ernakulam line at Nandikara on the East, and Irinjalakuda line at Mapranam on the west. And she has got Irinjalakuda at four miles distance on the right and Pudukad at three miles distance on the left, and these two nearby

towns on the south and north of Parappukara, are the two main centres of business and marketing for the villagers. This trio has a common tie of inter-relation in their everyday walk of life, which, of course, is an encouraging environment for Parappukara in her march towards better conditions.

Parappukara is a Mother village, so to say, with a number of filial suburbs and villages all around it like Anandhapuram Thottipal, Rapal, Nedumpal, Muthrathikara etc., with almost the same characteristics

FEAST IN THE ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, PARAPPUKARA

and features. All these suffragan places look upon Parappukara as their time-honoured and venerable mistress. They are all inter-dependent and form a sort of interwoven social structure, enjoying the same way of life and facing the same problems and difficulties.

One of the serious and depressing handicaps for the place was the utter lack of roads and means of communication. Until some two or three generations back, Parappukara was a totally isolated and incommunicable piece of land; she had no proper tracks, and no vehicle of any sort could enter the interior of the land from any side. Besides this helpless and miserable situation, there was another trouble with her. Every year during the rainy season, a blockade of flooding waters forced the villagers to stick up to their homes as if on a temporary island. Under these enormous difficulties and inconveniences, she was pushed back into a helpless plight of inertia. She, therefore, happened to lag far behind her more fortunate neighbouring sister villages in her industrial, economic and social developments. Anyhow, in course of time many of these handicaps have been removed and improvements have been effected.

There stands an outstanding fact that an ancient and traditional Christian community has been existing here, down the centuries up to now, long before the present flourishing Christian communities of neighbouring towns came into existence. Several of the parishes and churches in the neighbourhood of Parappukara are the offsprings of the original Parappukara, though, ironically some of them, like Pudukad are now much more prominent and progressive.

This mother church is a great source of inspiration and refuge of the people; everyone feels proud of it; it is this church that has kept up the name and life of the place; you remove the church and Parappukara would seem desolate and drowsy.

It is customary that every Catholic church is dedicated to the heavenly patronage of a

saint. Parappukara church also has her patron saint, Saint John Napumzianus, a martyr of the 14th century who laid his life for the cause of keeping the confessional secrecy. The statue of the saint is venerably enthroned on the high altar of the church. And from there he has been laying upon his devoted clients abundant graces and favours all through these long centuries.

There is a traditional story afloat in the folklore about the saint's present statue. Centuries back, at the request of the faithful at Parappukara, a pious missionary priest from Verapoly sent to them a beautiful statue of St. John Napumzianus, but the statue found its way, misled by name, to Parappur instead of to Parappukara. (Parappur is a different and distant parish from Parappukara). When the original petitioners knew about the mishap they again approached their former benefactor and this time they brought direct home their long expected patron saint. The second sacred statue, though, small in stature, is rich in wonder-working. His fame has spread far and wide and legion are his devotees and clients. They never fail to receive at his hand the graces and favours they ask of him and he is known as the people's saint.

The feast of St. John Napumzianus brings about a special atmosphere of jubilation and enthusiasm for the whole people of the locality, regardless of caste and creed. The feast celebration will last formally for a week with great pomp and show. Pilgrims and devotees from the different parts of the country would begin to flow in as the feast days advance. On the final day, that is, the 16th May, of the celebrations they would throng together inside the church and on the precincts to pay their homage to their beloved patron and to take part in the holy services conducted in his honour.

Processions are the traditional way of honouring saints in public, and they (processions) are generally part and parcel of the main celebrations of a festival

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

in Kerala. The reasons for its popular acceptance is that it has got all the religious, psychological and social elements that satisfy the natural likings and tendencies of human mind. Parappukara festival too has this item of procession in honour of the saint. By the close of the procession on the

last day of the feast the celebrations formally come to an end.

As regards the fair in connection with the festival, it can hardly be said that a regular form of fair is carried on. However, some agricultural commodities are marketed on a small scale during this season.

UTSAVAM IN THE KOODALMANICKOM TEMPLE, IRINJALAKUDA

District
Taluk
Town

Trichur
Mukundapuram
Irinjalakuda

The Koodalmanickom temple is ancient and historic. It is situated in the Manavalassery village, about six miles away from the Irinjalakuda railway station. The deity of the temple is Sree Bharatha who is generally not found consecrated in the Kerala temples. About the idol of the temple legend has it that it was installed there by a sage. Once four idols, of Sree Rama, Laxmana, Shathrugna and Bharatha were drifting through a river. A sage spotted them out and installed them in the temples at Thripriyay, Moozhikulam, Padiyur, and Koodalmanickom respectively. It is believed that it was at the site of the present temple tank that the sage observed penance.

The temple is finished in the true architectural pattern of the Kerala temples. In the front is the entrance succeeded by the front-yard. On the left of it is the huge *Koothambalam* and on the right, the temple tank. The flagstaff and the ornamental top of the temple proclaim in no small measure the glory and grandeur of this temple. The idol of the temple used to radiate divine light as if from a ruby.

According to tradition, a precious ruby obtained from the Maharaja of Travancore was placed on the idol by the Brahmans of the locality to test its radiance in comparison with that of the idol. The moment this was done strangely enough the ruby merged

itself with the idol. Ever since then the idol was known as Koodalmanickom which means 'the idol of a ruby alloy'.

One of the wealthiest in Kerala, this temple has extensive landed properties in various parts of the State. The temporal as well as spiritual administration of the temple is vested with the Thachudaya Kaimal, a person nominated by the sovereigns of the erstwhile Travancore State. The position of Thachudaya Kaimal offers him unlimited powers over the affairs of the temple. His words are final. His decisions are unquestionable. He is the sovereign authority of the temple.

Although the temple is situated in the former Cochin State, the right of nominating Thachudaya Kaimal was vested with the Maharaja of Travancore. According to tradition when the ruby obtained from the Maharaja of Travancore could not be given back to him as it was dissolved in the idol, the Brahmans of Irinjalakuda, in turn, offered to the sovereigns of Travancore the right of choice of Thachudaya Kaimal.

Whenever the position of Thachudaya Kaimal falls vacant, the Brahmans of Irinjalakuda, offering special worship for 40 days, meet together and inform the Maharaja of Cochin about the vacancy. He would, in turn, send word to the Maharaja of Travancore, who, on hearing the

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KALPARAMBA

news, nominates a person from an approved Nair family at Chirayinkil and sends the horoscope of the nominated person for scrutiny. On a propitious day, the Brahmans, gathering together at the Koodalmanickom temple, would conduct a ceremony called *Jathakavarodham* under the guidance of the Azhuvanchery Thambakkal. Following this, they would all go to Travancore to welcome the Thachudaya Kaimal—designate to Koodalmanickom. As soon as the nominee reached the temple, he would assume the office of the Thachudaya Kaimal and subsequently become an ascetic. With the assumption of this high office, he would become entitled for vast powers and privileges. The extent of power and authority that he was wielding could very well be imagined from the fact that during the circumambulation of Thachudaya Kaimal a special ceremony would be held when the Maharaja of Cochin would grace the occasion by his presence and touch the palanquin with his hands. By a proclamation of the Maharaja of Cochin dated 30th

November 1917, the powers and privileges of the Kaimal have been defined clearly. According to that Proclamation, the Kaimal can draw an annual allowance amounting to Rs. 3,800/-and 2,024 *paras* of paddy from the temple.

About the question relating to the nomination of the Kaimal, there had been protracted disputes between the sovereigns of Cochin and Travancore. The right of Travancore was, however, finally upheld. Quite recently the Maharaja of Travancore renounced his right over this temple.

The festival in this temple is held annually for 11 days in *Medom* (April-May) from *Uthram* to *Thiruvonam* asterisms, the flag-hoisting being conducted on the *Uthram* day. A mammoth crowd estimated to be ranging from five to seven thousands ordinarily participate in this festival. *Kathakali*, *Ottamthullal*, *Panchavadyam* and processions led by caparisoned elephants are the special features of the festival. *Neyyuvilakku*, *Palpayasam* and *Neyyappam* are the main offerings to this temple.

Based mainly on an article by Shri K. Narayana Pillai in the Malayala Manorama weekly dated 25th May 1957.

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KALPARAMBA

(REV. FR. A. F. WELLANIKARAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Mukundapuram
Poomangalam

Kalparamba is a developing village, situated some three miles south-west of Irinjalakuda populated by hundreds of families, mainly of an agricultural occupation.

There are some villages and rural parts which have been once well accredited and held in fame and prestige, but in the long run have lost their former position and name. Kalparamba can be listed under

this category. While the neighbouring places, like Irinjalakuda, now a well-known Municipal town, had no churches and parishes in an organised form, Kalparamba had the rare and unique good fortune and honour to have a church established in her centre in as far back as 1733 A. D. which thrived all through these long years. The Velayanad church enjoys the honour

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

and motherly pride to give birth to the church at Kalparamba, perhaps the eldest daughter.

The church planted in the midst, Kalparamba, moved to found a well established Christian Community which gave the place a culture and status.

Many existing documents written in palm-leaves bring into light the influence of the parish people and also the hearty co-operation between the Sirkar rulers and the parish.

The plot of land required for the construction of the church had been voluntarily granted free of all revenue and taxes; the church was also accorded the rare privilege of putting up of a majestic and elephant-size wall all around the church compound by the then Government. The wall even now stands intact as a bulwark of protection and also as a symbol of honour for the imposing church under its coverage. Each side of the outer wall measures 225 ft; and a huge archgate graciously welcomes all people into, on the eastern side. On the western side, in front of the church, rises up a tall granite cross on a granite pedestal ornated with beautiful engravings, proclaiming the voices of love and brotherhood from Christ.

In former days the administration of the church came from the ecclesiastical authorities at Angamaly and Cranganore. There is evidence to show that the Kalparamba church also had been represented among the 84 churches from Malankara at a convention in Angamaly in connection with the episcopal consecration of Rev. Fr. Thoma Fariemkal in 1787. Two years later a brief has been sent to this church from the Governador (the ecclesiastical administrator) in Angamaly to the effect of conferring a faculty of indulgence (a spiritual favour) for the spiritual good of the faithful.

Another item of historical interest is that Kalparamba had the honour to have a seminary conducted in the premises of the church; it lasted for a period of more than

half a century i.e. from 1807 to 1865. The names of 29 clerics have been noted on record. The Seminary started at Pukkot (Aripalam) only a mile west of Kalparamba in an earlier time i. e. in 1752 was demolished and destroyed during the devastating military expedition of Tippu Sultan from Mysore. It might be the consequence of this devastation that the Seminary at Kalparamba happened to be got up.

Such were the happy flow of events in the slow but steady course of the history of the church; but there were also episodes of a rivalling nature which had created chaos in the peaceful march of parish life. In the year 1874, there appeared at Trichur a Schismatic Bishop known as Meluse under the false claim that he had been sent as the Bishop of Malankara by the Pope. Thus he could dupe several parishes and they took side with him on his claim. The native Christians always had cherished an inborn desire to have a Bishop of their own clime and rite and they found outwardly such a one in Meluse though he was not really in union with Rome. So the common people easily followed his call of welcome for his lead; but the thoughtful strongly resisted the impostor's action as a Bishop.

The people of Kalparamba also had to confront with this faction in accepting the authority of Meluse. A good majority turned to the side of Meluse and claimed the church for them, but others though not many, steadfastly opposed the rivalling party and forced a decision that the main altar and the portion along with that should be set apart for the old set and the side altars for the innovators. This division was, of course, a black spot in the history of Kalparamba; but fortunately this state of affairs did not last long. Meluse was called back to Babylon and the chaos came to a close with a happy reunion of both parties in Kalparamba and elsewhere except in Trichur.

These facts and events certainly enshroud the village of Kalparamba and its time

FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, THAZHAKKAD

honoured church with a thin but bright robe of historicity and she deserves the claim to feel proud of it. But there is the other side of the picture. Despite all these historical background, Kalparamba did not seem to have coped with the timely current of progress that appeared all around.

The parish of Kalparamba has spread over a radius of two miles; Aripalam, Vellangalore, Vallivattam, etc., are within this parish. There is a church in Latin rite for the Anglo-Indians at Aripalam. Vellangalore too is an important centre of the parish with a welcoming chapel on the face of the Kalparamba road towards the west.

There are altogether five hundred Christian families under the patronage of the church and many others also of other castes and creeds and traditionally all of them harmoniously move about in a society of a homely atmosphere. Any problems confronted, all communities join hands together to make a united front to tide over the situation. So

Kalparamba is always at an arm's distance from any communal strife.

The church celebrates, besides other small feasts, the annual festival of St. Sebastian both at Kalparamba and Aripalam on two different dates, but all participate in both. In connection with this festival a procession is conducted with all pomp and splendour all along the streets, well decorated. At the close of it, there may be fire-works which help the people to go back home with high spirits. Marketing and other bargains are very seldom seen except of the fancy stuff for the fancies of the women and children in connection with festival.

Anyhow Kalparamba has risen to that point of standard in its social and cultural life from which it can easily take its step to a higher plane of progress. The church at the back of the life in Kalparamba is ever the inspiring and formalising factor to stir up the spirit of the people that live under her shade.

FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, THAZHAKKAD (FR. JOSEPH MANGOLY)

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Mukundapuram
Thazhakkad

St. Sebastian's church Thazhakkad belongs to Thazhakkad village, Mukundapuram Taluk, Kerala. The following is the brief history of this ancient church.

In ancient times there was a big family here by name "Thazhekkadan" and there were priests in this family. By their influence the then Kerala Rajasimha Perumal gave permission to build a "Prayer House" adjacent to their house. Thus mass was conducted in the above prayer house in A. D. 800.

The priests of the influential Thazhekkadan family were in close contact with Rome in

those days and according to the local traditions here, they brought the present wonderful statue of St. Sebastian together with a part of Holy Cross from Rome and they installed them in the above prayer house. Afterwards they began to call the saint as *Kurissumuthappan*.

In those days Cheraman Perumal brought two Christian merchant families of Manigrammom to this place. Their names were Chathenpadukan and Eravikothan with high powers of ruling this place. As testimonial of their high powers there is a granite slab with ancient inscription here. It is kept in

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

the portico of this church even now.

Gradually the former Thazhekkadan family was extinct by the conquest of Tippu Sultan and according to tradition they fled away from this place abandoning their properties and church. Tippu burnt and demolished the church and the famous statue of St. Sebastian was thrown away.

Afterwards by the untiring efforts of the local Catholics the church was rebuilt. The statue of St. Sebastian was also found out from the neighbouring jungle Incha-vallam and again the statue of St. Sebastian

was installed in the new church. From that day onwards the festival of the church began to be celebrated on 3rd May every year because the Holy Cross was found out on that day by St. Helena.

The wonder-work of the saint began here from that day onwards and pilgrims from different places used to come to this church with their offering to this saint. Nearly 5,000 people assemble for the festival every year. Merchants from various places use to come here to dispose their articles.

FEAST IN THE ST. MARY'S CHURCH, KORATTY

(SHRI V. O. PAUL)

District
Taluk
Village

Trichur
Mukundapuram
Muringur Thekkummuri

In the centre of Kerala, about four miles to the south of Chalakudy there is an ancient and beautiful village called Koratty. There is an old catholic church there, built in honour of St. Mary. It is locally known as "Koratty Muthy's" church. Around the church there are five bazaars, and many families of Syrian Catholics live there. Several stories are prevalent in the locality about the origin of the ancient church. The most reliable of these is given below.

About six centuries ago, parts of Kerala were governed by several petty local chiefs. Two such neighbouring chiefs were the Kodassery Kartha and the Koratty Kaimal. Hundreds of able-bodied catholic young men served under those chiefs as trained soldiers with swords, spears and arrows. In a fight between those two chiefs several people were killed on both sides and there were also Catholics among the killed and wounded. Koratty Kaimal had a contingent of Catholics under the leadership of one Kavalakatt Ouseph. He was killed in the fight. The nearest Catholic church then,

was at Ambazhakatt near Mala and that was within the territorial boundary of another chieftain. Koratty Kaimal wanted to conduct the burial of captain Ka valakatt Ouseph with all religious honours and so he sent the dead body to Ambazhakatt under a good escort. But due to the machinations of Kodassery Kartha, the authorities of Ambazhakatt church refused to conduct the burial there and so the dead body was carried back to Koratty. It was kept at the site of the present Koratty church and the facts were reported to Koratty Kaimal. He ordered the dead body to be buried there and made immediate arrangements to put up a church at Koratty. By 1381 the church was completed and it was called St. Mary's church, Koratty and the Kaimal placed at the disposal of the church authorities sufficient landed properties for its annual upkeep and maintenance. Till recent times the *Karanavan* of the Koratty Kaimal family was reported to be exercising a kind of nominal right over the church.

The most important festival at Koratty

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Pl. 81 PRIESTS IN LITURGICAL VESTMENTS—GOING IN THE REAR OF THE PROCESSION P. 338



Pl. 82 INSTRUMENTAL ORCHESTRA AT THE HEAD OF THE PROCESSION. NOTE THE SILVER CROSSES AND STATUES CARRIED ON DECORATED Dais WHICH ARE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROCESSIONS IN CATHOLIC CHURCHES. NOTE ALSO THE ORNAMENTED UMBRELLAS P. 338



A VIEW OF THE GATHERING

P. 338

FEAST IN THE LITTLE FLOWER CHURCH, THIRUMUDIKUNNU

church is the “ Koratty Muthy's ” festival celebrated during the second week of October every year. It is celebrated on the Sunday after the 10th of October and people from far and near flock to the place to give their offerings to their Beloved Mother. It is believed that very serious diseases are cured through the intercession of ‘ Koratty Muthy ’ and childless parents are blessed with children. Pains, sprains, wounds and severe sores are miraculously cured. People make their annual offerings of thanksgiving at the time of the festival. We can see parents with their children on their shoulders going round the church on their knees in thanksgiving for their being blessed with children. Newly married couples make it a point to make their offerings to the church soon after their marriage. Hundreds of non-Catholic pilgrims also assemble in the church to make their offerings.

This festival has importance as a great annual fair of the locality. Being a predominantly agricultural locality every year farmers make their annual purchase of agricultural implements like the plough, *kaicotta*, waterlift etc. Copper and bronze vessels are available in large numbers. Boxes for the newly married girls have very large sales and items of furniture of all

varieties and types are available in large numbers. Being the season for plantains and bananas, huge quantities of the same are sold at the time of the festival. Formerly due to the absence of facilities of travel people used to make their purchases for the whole year round but now that buses are plying into the nooks and corners of villages, the sales at the annual festival are considerably diminished.

Apart from gold and silver articles, the offerings at the church in money amount to between 15 and 20 thousand rupees. The common offerings at the festival is a special kind of plantain bunch available here in large quantities. In spite of the tendencies of modern times there is an ever-increasing concourse of pious pilgrims flocking to the annual festival in October every year and they vie with one another to make bigger offerings to their Beloved Benefactor.

Koratty, after the opening of the J. and P. Coats Thread Mills, is fast becoming a little industrial town with its population steadily increasing. About 100 acres of land are set apart for the opening of a Forms Press by the Central Government and the building of a Junior Technical school is half completed. Slowly the face of Koratty is undergoing a change for the better.

FEAST IN THE LITTLE FLOWER CHURCH, THIRUMUDIKUNNU

(FR. GEORGE KOLANCHERRY)

District	Trichur
Taluk	Mukundapuram
Village	Murigoor Thekkummuri

Thirumudikunnu Church (which may be translated Holy Mount Church) was founded in the year 1939 A. D. Located on Pachampilly hills, three miles due east of Koratty railway station with hills and alleys sprawling at its feet, this small church is dedicated to the Little Flower (St. Therese of Child Jesus). Nedumkotta or

Tippu's fort is afar, and Padamulkandan for his bugle parade is close by. A flourishing Hindu community was ravaged by the invasion of Tippu Sultan. Their spacious baths now called Erattachera and the scattered temple ruins bear testimony to this rampage.

The succeeding years saw the trail of

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF TRICHUR DISTRICT

social rehabilitation throughout North Kerala. The forsaken Thirumudikunnu again throbbed with a new life of Christian migration and their return to land. Forests were cleared, lands reclaimed and houses put up. Their parish church of Koratty being four miles away, the Archbishop of Ernakulam His Grace Mar Augustine Kandathil of revered memory opened this church with a resident priest in order to meet the spiritual needs of this far-flung flock. The festivals are celebrated in this church in September and February.

The Koratty Leprosy Hospital established in 1930 is situated on the southern side of the church. It was managed by the Salvation Army but now it is handed over to the government. It gives accommodation for 800 patients. They get all facilities for

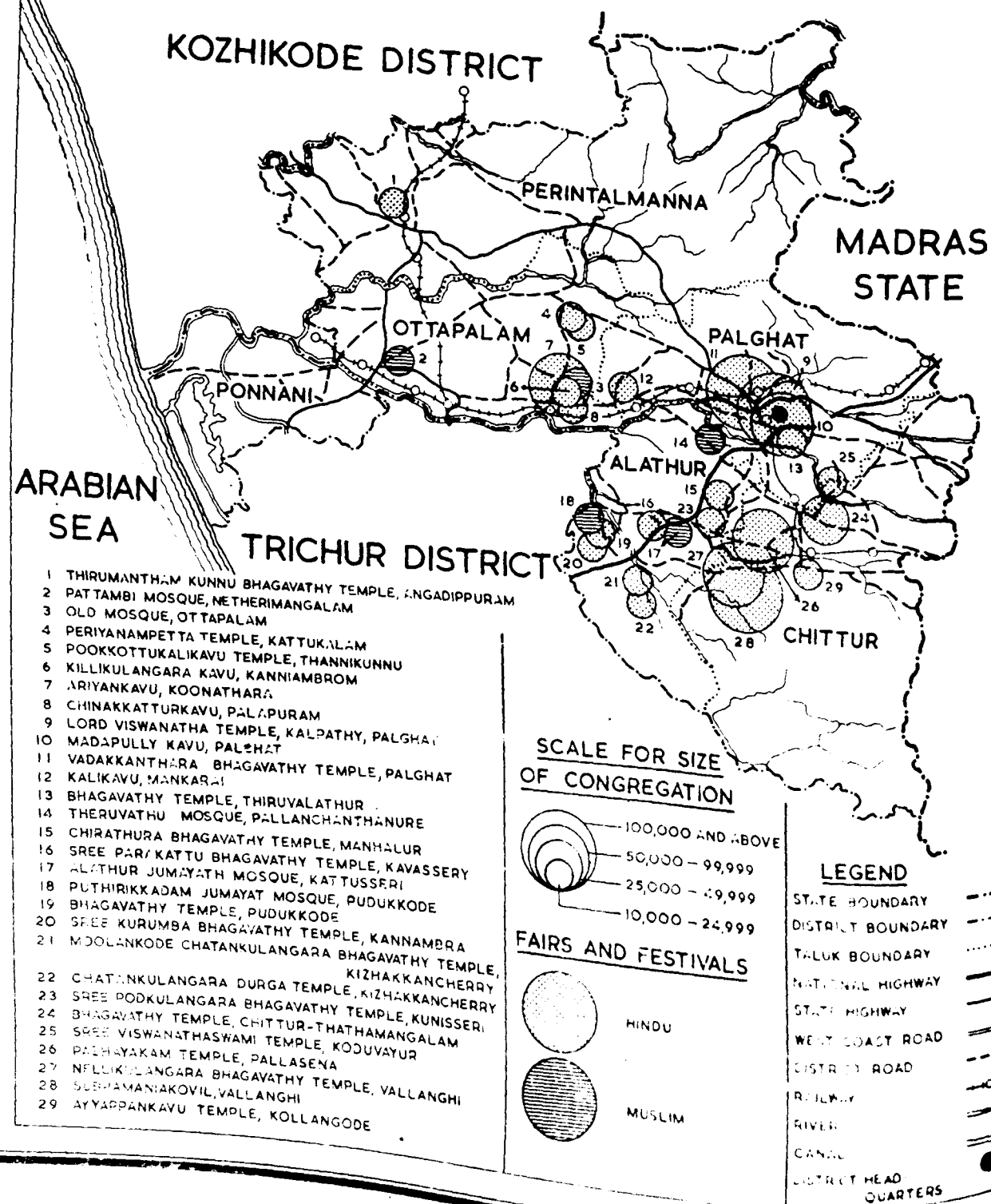
attending religious service. There is a big chapel erected by His Grace Mar Joseph Parekkattil, the Archbishop of Ernakulam for conducting Catholic service.

Educational facilities and standards in this parish are on the rise. Even though graduates are very few, there is a good number of school final hands in the parish and there are about twenty parishioners employed as teachers here and outside. There are two lower primary schools fully developed and an upper primary school, all managed by the church. There are two branch post offices in the parish. The irrigation canal staff and supervisors are doing a wonderful job for this place. So also the Gramasevak is doing a nice job for the villagers.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF PALGHAT DISTRICT

PALGHAT DISTRICT

PLACES OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS WITH
CONGREGATION OF 10,000 AND OVER



JARAM NERCHA FESTIVAL AT VELIANCODE

(PRESIDENT DELEGATE, VELIANCODE PANCHAYAT)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Ponnani
Village	Veliancode

In this village of Veliancode, there is a Thangal family (claimed to be the descendants of prophet Muhammad). The great grandfather of that family, it is reported had come from Surat before a hundred years or more. Before that there was no Thangal family in this place. He settled down permanently here. He was reported to be a great pious man, bestowed with exceptionally divine qualities. It is also reported that he could make gold out of certain metals through some process of his own. The level of his wisdom was so admirably high that people, irrespective of caste and religion had held him in great honour and respect.

The 'nercha festival' was commenced after the death of that Thangal which is subsequently conducted in every year, in memory of his death. The main functions

of the anniversary are conducting recital of the holy Quran by the side of Jaram (Tomb) where the body of that Thangal lay buried, and also conducting a feast to the poor, free. The festival is conducted in the premises of the Jaram and not in the Veliancode Juma mosque. The Juma mosque has no connection with the Nercha festival. Formerly, the festival was conducted without pomp and pageantry.

Large number of people assemble in this place for participation in the festival. They pay their homage, and also give offerings at the tomb, for it is their belief that the grace of the tomb can avert their worries and difficulties. The expenditure towards the anniversary is met by way of voluntary contribution of funds by the rich class among the public, in token of their respect towards the tomb.

UTSAVAM IN THE MAHADEVAMANGALAM TEMPLE, MUNDAMUKA

(SHRI V. K. KRISHNAN)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Ottapalam
Village	Mundamuka

At a distance of two miles from the Shoranur railway junction, on the banks of the Bharathapuzha, is situated the Mahadevamangalam Siva temple in the Mundamuka village of the Ottapalam taluk. As to the origin of this temple, no information is available save the following legend.

One of the patrons of this temple, a Namboothiri of the Kozhisseri Illom, was in the habit of offering worship at the

Vadakkumnatha temple, Trichur once every month. On one occasion, due to some unforeseen reasons, he could not go to Trichur and offer prayers to Lord Vadakkumnatha. He was greatly worried over this lapse. During that night Lord Vadakkumnatha appeared to him in a dream and informed him that at a particular spot (where the temple stands now) there was a Sivalinga and that it was enough if he

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF PALGHAT DISTRICT

offered prayers to it. Accordingly on the next day, the Namboothiri discovered the *Sivalinga* at that particular spot and performed *pooja* to it. In due course he constructed a temple there and also donated landed properties for its maintenance.

Sivarathri is the important annual festival of the temple. The average number of people attending this festival would come to 500. The special offerings (*Vazhipadu*) of the temple consist of *Sahasrakalasam*, *Dhara* and *Thulabharam*.

UTSAVAM IN THE CHATHAN KANDAR KAVU, OTTAPALAM

(SHRI K. P. GANGADHARA MENON)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Ottapalam
Village	Ottapalam

About the origin of the Chathan Kandar Kavu, there is a legend current among the local people. The Varode desom of the Ottapalam village, mostly lying at the foot of the Anangan hills, was a thick forest in olden days. One day a Harijan labourer by name Chathan went to this forest to gather fodder grass. When he sharpened his knife on a granite, surprisingly enough, he found the granite bleeding. He thought his hands were wounded but it was not so. Unmindful, he again sharpened his knife on that stone, and again the stone was found bleeding. The awe-stricken Harijan fled away from the place and narrated the whole incident to the landlord of the local Kanjoor Nambuthiri family. In course of time people began to go over to this spot and pray for favours. Their prayers began to fructify. The *Thampuran* of the Kanjoor *Illom* built a small temple on the spot. Since Chathan had spotted that sacred place, people called that temple 'Chathan Kandar Kavu' (the temple seen by Chathan). The deity of this temple is Durga of whose miraculous powers, mention has been made in the book 'Delhi to Chunking' by Shri K. P. S. Menon, formerly Indian Ambassador to Russia.

Thalapoli is the annual festival of this temple which is celebrated on *Avittam* day in *Meenam* (March-April). This festival

will be inaugurated 14 days prior to the actual *Vela* (festival) in the august presence of the trustee of the temple and other prominent personages of the locality. Following the inauguration of the festival, *Koothu* will be conducted every night, the theme being Kamba Ramayana. Large number of people will attend this *Koothu*. On the fourteenth day, the *Thalapoli Utsavam* will be celebrated and *Koothu* will be wound up with the story of the coronation of Sree Rama. The local people take keen interest in the celebration of the festival. They contribute so munificently and render necessary assistance to the *Utsavam* committee, that the authorities are able to hold a grand display of pyrotechnics in connection with the festival. Also, there will be folk dances by the people assuming themselves the guise of *Poothan*, *Thera*, *Nayadi*, *Thekkan* and *Thek-kathi*, *Cappila Poothan*, *Kalan* etc., prior to five days of *Thalapoli*. On the whole, it is a festive occasion for the local people.

Various things are brought here for sale during the festive days. Edible things such as dates, halva, banana chips, grapes, roasted bengal grams, lozenges, tea, coffee as well as toys and fancy articles will be available in abundance in the fair at cheaper rates.

At about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, under the scorching sun, the two groups of people of Chunangad and Varode desoms,

NERCHA FESTIVAL IN THE MOSQUE, OTTAPALAM

commence *Pana* in their respective places. They would reach in procession to the temple at about 5 o'clock in the evening. Sooner did they reach the precincts of the temple than the two parties would make it to occupy the temple courtyard before the other party did so. Sometimes much heat and excitement is produced at this time resulting in clashes between the contending parties. But the clash will not last long as the same will be settled amicably by the elders on the spot itself. Following the circumambulation and other rites in the temple take place the grand playing of *Kombu* (a drum), *Kuzhalu* pipe) and *Maddalom* (a

long finger-drum). Then the oracle of the temple makes his divinations and with it, the evening ceremonies come to a close. At dusk, *Seva* will be performed. This is followed, at about 11 o'clock, by a grand *Thayan-baka* performance by renowned artistes. Thereafter, lighting of the *Thalams* by the ladies and *Panchavadyam* take place at about 8 a. m. on the termination of which will begin the pyrotechnic display. The closing ceremony is performed, again with the playing of *Kombu*, *Kuzhalu* and *Maddalam*. Five to six thousand people usually attend this festival.

NERCHA FESTIVAL IN THE MOSQUE, OTTAPALAM

(SHRI K. P. GANGADHARA MENON)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Ottapalam
Village	Ottapalam

There is only one mosque in the Pancha- area of Ottapalam where Juma prayers are held on Fridays. It is located on the Ottapalam-Palghat bus route, hardly few miles to the east from the Ottapalam town. Long ago a saintly person by name Auliya had lived and died at this place. To commemorate his death anniversary, an annual festival is held at this mosque in the month of *Makaram* (January-February) in which about 20,000 people will actively take part. The special feature of the festival is the grand processions bringing moniously various articles such as rice, mutton, cocoanuts etc. to the mosque. In the local terminology is called *Varavu*. Such processions will be

drawn from the neighbouring places like Palapuram, Varode, Murukkumpatta, Ambalapara, Lakkidi etc. For each *petty* a donation of one rupee is given to the mosque. There will be about 30 such processions participating in the festival. To arrange for the taking of these processions to the mosque, the local Muslims would constitute festival committees at their respective places and collect money from the public in that behalf. The pomp and splendour of these processions will be greater according to the financial soundness of the parties. On the next day following the festival, a feast is held when the various articles received at the mosque will be cooked and distributed to the poor and hungry.

UTSAVAM IN THE KILLIKULANGARA BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, KANNIAMBROM

(SHRI K. P. GANGADHARA MENON)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Ottapalam
Village	Kanniambrom

The Killikulangara Bhagavathy temple is located in the Kanniambrom village of the Ottapalam taluk. The deity of this temple is called *Killi Moorthi* who is supposed to be a powerful goddess. The temple roof has been covered with copper plates. Similarly the flag staff in front of the temple is also fully covered with thin sheets of copper. These have been done out of contributions from devotees. *Pooram* which is the important festival of this temple is celebrated

on the 12th of *Medom* (April-May) every year on a grand scale with various musical performances, caparisoned elephants leading the procession and a grand display of pyrotechnics. For the conduct of the festival, special committees will be formed locally. With the inauguration of the festival, *Koothu* will commence in the temple. The assemblage attending this festival will roughly come to ten to twelve thousand.

UTSAVAM IN THE CHINAKKATHUR BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, PALAPURAM

(SHRI K. P. GANGADHARA MENON)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Ottapalam
Village	Palapuram

The Chinakkathur Bhagavathy temple is situated in the Palapuram village of the Ottapalam taluk. The trustee of this temple is the Namboothiri of the Erannur *Illom*. All the expenses incurred for the conduct of religious services in the temple are met out of the funds received here as offerings. Whatever is wanting is, however, met by the Namboothiri himself.

Pooram is the important festival of this temple, which is celebrated on the *Makam* asterism in *Kumbhom* (February-March) attended by about 15,000 people. There is a strange observance in connection with this festival which is not found in any other temple in Kerala. On the days following the inauguration of the festival, the local people gather together into small batches, and wail as '*Ayyayyo! Thachu Kollunne, Oti vare, Vellom dahikkunne, Moothram*

Muthi Kutichole' meaning 'Alas! We are being beaten to death, please rush up for our rescue, we are feeling thirsty, we may piss and drink the urine'. During this period, even if a person is actually beaten to death, no one will turn up for his rescue! There is a legend behind this strange observance.

Once Sree Rama of Thiruvilwamala wanted his dependants Shri Ayyappa and Chinakkathur Bhagavathy to go and ascertain some information regarding certain matters. Instead of gathering the required details, both of them spent their time gossiping, hiding themselves in the interior parts of the dense forest. As they were not to be seen for a long time Sree Rama himself set out in search of them and found them whiling away their time in the forest. He got wild at this and kicked down Sree

UTSAVAM IN THE BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, AKALUR

Ayyappa from the place who as a result fell rolling down the earth. Hence Ayyappa of that place is called 'Kundil Ayyappan'. Then Sree Rama turned against Chinakkathur Bhagavathy who, fearing the wrath of the former, fled from the place crying aloud 'alas! I am being beaten to death', crossed the river Bharathapuzha and took refuge at Palapuram. It is thus to commemorate the flight of Bhagavathy that the local people wail as described above. Even now this observance is in vogue.

Another feature of the festival of this temple has also to be mentioned here. Soon after the inauguration of the festival,

for five days consecutively, throughout day and night, the oracle of the temple, accompanied by an elephant and the drummers, would go about the place, including the neighbouring villages and collect offerings from the devotees. Besides money offerings, rice, paddy and various kinds of cakes will also be collected by him as offerings in that trip which will roughly come to 1,200 *paras* of paddy, 300 *paras* of rice and a sum of Rs. 1,000/-. Of these, the entire lot of paddy is the due right of the trustee of the temple, and the rice and money to the oracle.

UTSAVAM IN THE BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, AKALUR

(SHRI M. KANNANUNNI NAIR)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Ottapalam
Village	Perur

The ancient Bhagavathy temple of Akalur is situated in the Perur village, Ottapalam taluk. The antiquity of this ancient temple is enshrouded in mystery as no information throwing light into its past is available. This temple is the common worshipping centre of all the Hindus of the locality. The local Mulanjur and Elayanad Nair families are the patrons of this temple, but the managing trustee is the Zamorin of Calicut.

Annually two festivals are conducted in this temple. Of these, the *Mandala vilakku* is conducted for 41 days, commencing from the first of *Vrischigom*, (November-December) and concluding with the celebration of *Mandala Thalapoli*. The other festival takes place in the month of *Meenam* (March-

April). On 17th *Meenam*, the festival would commence in the temple. From that day onwards, *Koothu* will be held here which usually lasts till the 10th of *Medom* (April-May). In certain years, there will be variations in the dates of holding this *Koothu*. The festival on the concluding day, which is known as *Koothu Thalapoli*, is held on the tenth of *Medom*. Since this festival is of great importance, all the local Hindus take part in it. Procession led by the elephants, *Panchavadyam* and pyrotechnics are some of the attractions of this festival which is usually held with the voluntary contributions raised from the locality. In 1960 a flag staff of copper has been erected on public contribution.

THE JAIN TEMPLE, PALGHAT

District
Taluk
Town

Palghat
Palghat
Palghat

There is an ancient Jain Temple at Jainamedu in the Vadakkanthara village of Palghat town, adjacent to the Kalpathi river bridge. According to a legend, one Inchanna Sutar, head of the Jains, built this temple 500 years ago for the Jain sage Chandranathaswamy. Of the descendants of Inchanna Sutar, one family now survives here. It is Jainachandra Das, the head of this family, who is performing the *poojas* and other ceremonies of the temple. He is a school teacher.

The temple

The temple, 32 ft. long and 20 ft. broad, is built of granite stone. Its granite superstructure rests on 8 granite pillars. Both the pillars and walls are devoid of all inscriptions or ornamentation.

At the entrance to the temple are seen the ruins of a dilapidated *gopuram*.

There are four cells within the temple. A marble statue of Chandranathaswamy is in the first cell. This is surrounded by granite walls leaving barely space for just one person to circumambulate the statue. In the second cell are the statues of Vijayakshan and Jwalapathi Devi who are the *Yaksha* and *Yakshy* respectively of Chandranathaswamy, with the statue of Rishabha-theerthankaran, founder of Jainism, in the

middle. And around them are the statues of Parswanathan, etc.

In the third cell are the statues of Dharmendran, Padmavathy and Brahmayakshan. There are no statues in the fourth cell, but a big gong is hung there for the devotees to ring.

There were two Jain settlements here called Manikkapattanam and Muthupattanam with temples in both. One of these temples was destroyed during the invasion of Tippu Sultan, the ruins of which are seen even today. It was during that invasion that the Jains left the place.

Tradition says that the Jains came to Palghat from a place called Kallampallu in Mysore under the leadership of Inchanna Sutar. It is said that the persecution launched against the Jains by the then Rajah of Mysore was responsible for their emigration to Palghat. They settled down on the banks of the Kalpathi river on parcels of lands obtained from the Rajah of Palghat and had been conducting business. They fled from the place during the invasion of Tippu. When peace was restored some of them returned here. Of them, only one family remains now. They speak Kannada among themselves.

Mainly based on an article by Shri T. B. Menon in the Mathrubhoomi weekly dated 29-4-1962.



JAIN TEMPLE, PALGHAT

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INSIDE THE JAIN TEMPLE

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BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, CHITTUR

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MARIYAMMAN PONGAL IN THE MARIYAMMAN TEMPLE, ANJUMOORTHY

(SHRI R. VELLA MUTHALI)

District
Taluk
Village

Palghat
Alathur
Mangalam

The Mariamman temple of Anjumoorthy is in the Mangalam village of the Chittur taluk. It is situated 21 miles away from the Palghat railway station. The main deity of the temple is Mariyamma. The minor deities consecrated here are Ganapathy, Karappu Swamy, Uchumma Kaliyamma, Sankili Karappan and Muthukumara Nainar. The important festival of the temple is the Mariyamman Pongal which is celebrated for two days on the *Makam* asterism in *Kumbhom* (February-

March) to propitiate the deity of Muthukumara Nainar. He was a man who had put an end to his life by peeling off the flesh from his body. To commemorate this event, devotees perform on the festive day some acrobatic feats with knives and chains and mangling their bodies. This is the main attraction of this festival.

Lighting of the lamp, *Nivedyam* with rice flour and *Panchamruthabhishekam* are the special offerings made to this temple.

PAVAKOOTHU IN THE CHUNANGHI BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI P. S. VAIDYANATHAN)

District
Taluk
Village

Palghat
Chittur
Nallepilly

Pavakoothu is an important annual festival celebrated in the Chunanghi Bhagavathy temple situated in the Nallepilly village of the Chittur taluk at a distance of eight miles from the Pudunagaram railway station. This festival which lasts for 14 days, begins from the second Friday following *Sivarathri* and ends on the fourteenth day with a grand celebration. The assemblage attending this festival daily during the first 13 days will roughly come to 500. On the final day, the attendance will be 5,000.

With the commencement of this festival, *Pavakoothu*, with the theme of Kamba Ramayana is conducted daily at night, from 11'o clock to 6'o clock in the morning next day, in a specially put up shed near the temple called *Koothumatom*. During the

night on all the 13 days, from 8 p. m. to 10 p. m., there will be grand performance of *Thayambaka*, *Maddalom*, *Kombu*, and *Kuzhal* preceding the *Koothu*. At 10 p. m. the people start to the *Koothumatom* along with the oracle of the temple in a procession headed by the elephant and with drum-beatings. As soon as this procession reaches the *Koothumatom* at about 11 p. m., *Koothu* begins. Preceding the commencement of the *Koothu*, certain ceremonies such as *Koottathenga* and *Kummatti* will be held in the temple for two days. On the fourteenth day, the final day of the festival, is the *Koothu Utsavam*. From 6 a. m. to 11 a. m. on that day, special *pooja* will be offered at the temple with accompaniments of *Thayambaka*, *Nagaswaram* and

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF PALGHAT DISTRICT

Panchavadyam. In the evening a grand procession with caparisoned elephants and all other paraphernalia, starting from the Vettakkorumakan kavu located at a distance of two furlongs to the east of the Chunanghi temple, reaches the temple. This is followed

by the performance of *Nagaswaram* which lasts till 8'o clock. Afterwards, *Koothu* begins as usual and ends with the story of the coronation of Sree Rama. With a grand display of pyrotechnics at dawn, the festival comes to a close.

KONGAPPADA

District	Palghat
Taluk	Chittur
Village	Chittur

Kongappada is a grand festival celebrated in the Bhagavathy temple at Chittur. It is a unique festival held every year on the first Monday after the dark lunar night in *Kumbhom* (February-March) to commemorate the victory of Nairs of Chittur over the militia of Kongunadu (Coimbatore).

The Chola King Rajadhi Raja was anxious to conquer the fertile and prosperous Kerala. He had been waiting for a chance to attack Kerala. Before long, he got some reasons too. A set of merchants from Kongunadu had come to Chittur for trade in their local products of chilly, onion, coriander etc. From very early days these merchants used to come to Chittur and do business with the local people. While, on their return to Kongunadu, they were crossing the river Sokanasini to go to Pattancherry from Chittur, quite unexpectedly a torrent of water swept down the river and washed away their bullocks and merchandise. Many lost their lives also. They had to return empty-handed to their native place. They also had no answer to the owners who had sent the commodities with them for trade. They were sure that capital punishment was the only reward that they would receive at the hands of their King. Therefore, they cleverly found out a device to save themselves from the wrath of the King. On reaching their lands, they represented to Rajadhi Raja that the Nairs

of Chittur had robbed them of their goods and driven them from their lands.

The Chola king who was waiting impatiently for some flimsy reasons to attack Kerala now got a reason. Without troubling himself to find out the truth of the merchants' version of the incident, he decided to make use of the opportunity. He attacked Chittur by entering through the 'Palghat Pass'. It became impossible for the unarmed and unprepared people of Chittur to resist the fierce attack of the Chola army, consisting of elephants, cavalry and plenty of ammunitions. Therefore they prayed to their deity Bhagavathy to save them from their pathetic plight. Bhagavathy gave lead to the people and slew almost all the soldiers of the 'Kongappada'. Then Bhagavathy met Rajadhi Raja. He was a man who had been blessed with a boon that he could not be killed by anybody so long as his feet touched the earth. To decide their might both Rajadhi Raja and Bhagavathy volunteered to jump over a huge banyan tree. Bhagavathy first jumped over the tree but had her left foot bruised. Rajadhi Raja followed her forgetting for a moment that he would lose the benefit of his boon while jumping. While he was leaping over the tree, Bhagavathy sent her sword across him and he fell cut into two pieces.

The Kongappada festival is celebrated

KONGAPPADA



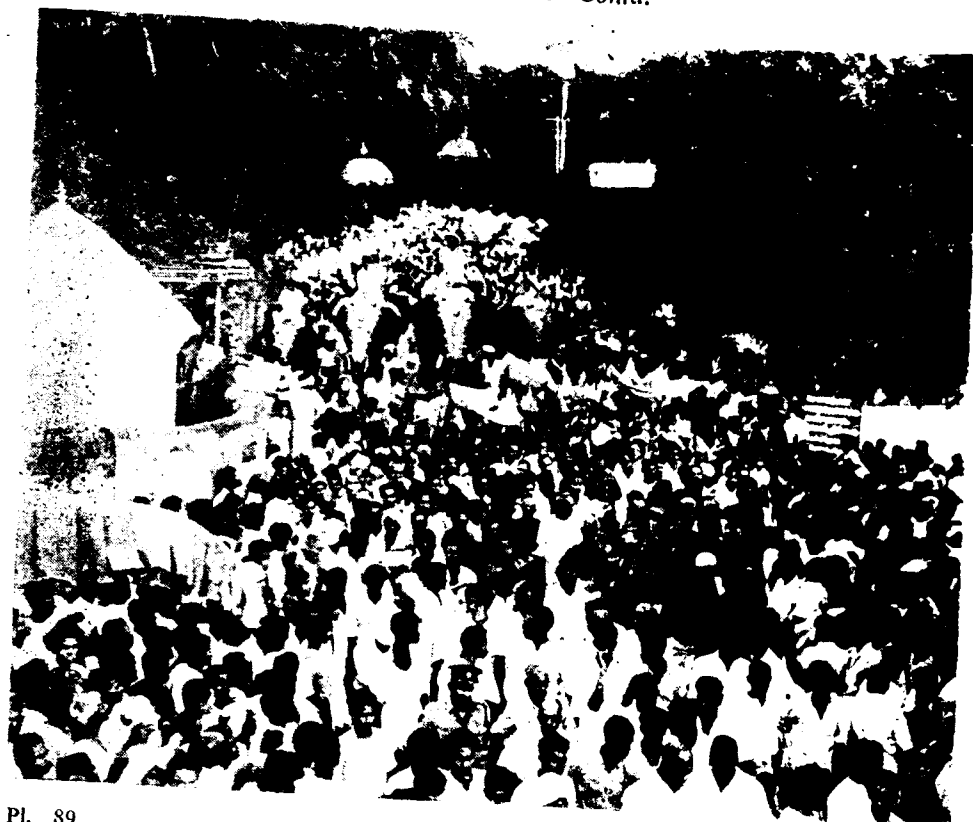
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DECLARATION OF WAR



Pl. 88

'ARIPPAITHATU' — SETTING OUT FOR WAR



Pl. 89

KONGAPPADA PROCESSION

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Pl. 90

 'POTHADIPARA'
 ROCK WITH FOOT-MARK OF KONGAN'S BUFFALO

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KONGAPPADA

every year to dramatise these incidents which took place more than a thousand years ago. The festival starts with 'Chilambu' on the night of the Sivarathri day in Kumbhom which reminds Kongan's declaration of war and the frightened people worshipping Bhagavathy and beseeching her help. On the second day, a flag is hoisted to indicate their preparedness for war. On the evening on the day, they set out for war with all preparations. This is called *Arippathattu*. All the people assemble at the temple. After three pop-gun shots, the procession starts. Clad in silk, wearing gold ornaments and trinkets and with a shining sword in hand the *Velichapadu* (oracle) goes in front while the people full of exultation follow him with torches held aloft. The procession stops at Poovathum Kavau where it is supposed that the Chola army met and fought against the local inhabitants. At midnight the procession will return to the temple with elephants and chariots. Next day is the day of Kongappada. On this day, even the penniless pauper will hold a grand feast. Sometimes there will be poor-feeding also. On the morning of the Kongappada day pop-guns will be fired 101 times. In addition to expressing respect and homage to goddess Bhagavathy this is intended to inform the people in and around Chittur about the holding of the festival. This day is celebrated with great festivity during day and night alike. Of the festivities taking place during the day time, *Kolam* procession is very important. Little boys of three or four years are dressed like girls, adorned with gold ornaments and vermilion speck on their forehead and with a *Valkannadi*, the symbol of Bhagavathy in their hands, each boy is taken on the shoulders of a man with a silk cloth being held above them to ward off the sun, and paraded in a procession with the *Velichapadu* in front. This ceremony is called *Kolam*. Children are sent for assuming *Kolam* in response to

certain vows made by their parents to Bhagavathy. This *Kolam nercha* is supposed to be a favourite offering to Bhagavathy. Barren women offer *Kolam nercha* for getting children. Little boys and girls suffering from dangerous diseases and are on the verge of imminent death are miraculously saved when they are promised for this *Kolam nercha*.

The procession starts from Vettakkorumakan Kavau. The quadrangle of this Kavau will be gorgeously decorated on the occasion. Ladies dressed beautifully befitting their position and status will occupy their seats on the floor or balconies. The sight of the children, bubbling with joy and ecstasy and running hither and thither is quite charming. Both earth and heaven alike reverberate with the giggling of the ladies and the din and bustle of the crowd. Everyone beams with joy. In the meantime various entertainment programmes like *Ezhovela*, *Thattinmel Koothu*, *Sinki natakam* etc. are staged on one side of the temple.

For *Thattinmel Koothu* the actors don the dress as in *Kathakali* and dance on the *thattu* (a kind of platform arranged over four bamboo sticks). *Sinki natakam* has many features of a drama. The *Kolam* procession will reach the temple by dusk. This is followed by the holding of a function called *Olavayana* when the messenger of Kongan will read the declaration of war. About 10 o' clock Kongan makes his appearance. From the temple, the people also start with torches in their hands making much din and bustle as in a war. At Poovathum kavau a mock fight will be held by driving the horses hither and thither as if in a battle. This is followed by *Pothottom* in which some people rush forward with the head of a buffalo reminding one of the head of the dead buffalo of the Chola king. Then follow various ritualistic performances such as *Thozhi*, *Ravela*, *Sekharivela*, etc. The festival ends with a function called *Pallu*.

A short version mainly based on the book Kongappada by Shri P. R. Menon

UTSAVAM IN THE SIVA TEMPLE, KAKKAYUR

(THE PRESIDENT, KAKKAYUR PANCHAYAT)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Chittur
Village	Kakkayur

In the centre of the Kakkayur village, Chittur taluk, there is a Siva temple and at the rear of it, a big tank extending to an area of over two acres. *Vishu* in *Medom* (April-May) and *Navarathri* in *Kanni* (September-October) are celebrated annually in this temple. Formerly, an eight day festival commencing on *Aswathi* in *Makaram* (January-February) used to be celebrated here in addition to the former ones. On the last day of this festival i. e. on *Pooyam* day, there used to be held *Rathotsavam* and *Kavadi Abhishekam* on a grand scale.

For some years now, this *Rathotsavam* is not conducted here, probably as a result of the disputes between the Kuthiravattathu Nair and the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department.

Of late, *Sivarathri* used to be celebrated here on a grand scale in *Kumbhom* (February-March). In former days the Brahmans were provided daily with free meals and once in a month with a *Thiruvathira Oottu*, a grand feast, from this temple. It is a long time since these had been discontinued here.

ATHAPATAHARAM IN THE KOTTAMALA TEMPLE

(THE PRESIDENT, KAKKAYUR PANCHAYAT)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Chittur
Village	Kakkayur

There is a place called Kakkayur near Koduvayur in Chittur taluk, Palghat district. Lying as it does in picturesque surroundings of hillocks and vast expanse of green fields, the village is delightfully beautiful. Here in this village is located, at an elevation of 500 feet above sea level, the hillock called Kottamala. A flight of steps cut out of stone takes one to the top of this hill where remnants of two temples are still extant. Ruins of villages, said to have existed once in that locality, could also be seen there. It is said that these temples were dedicated to Siva and Sastha and that grand festivals were used to be held in those temples.

At the foot of the hill there is an old tank, the spoiled steps of which testify that it was once a well maintained tank. There are indications about the place to show that there had been a subterranean passage from the top of the hill leading to the tank. There are even now two small tanks on the top of the hill, almost filled up with earth.

It is believed that once upon a time, on the *Atham* day of a certain month of *Kumbhom*, some of the local chieftains killed one Kurur Nambidi, the trustee of the temple and confiscated all his properties. The place names like Thachankod (place where one was hit), Fetayi (place of deathly convulsions), Konnarkilumbu (place where

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KOTTAMALA PROCESSION

murder was committed) and Rudhirathulli (scene of blood shed) of the neighbouring areas probably support this legend. It is even said that the local inhabitants were accomplices in this crime. As an act of expiation of the sin of the murder of the trustee of the temple, a function known as

Athapataharam used to be held on *Atham* day in *Kumbhom* when the villagers would be treated with a grand feast and the Nambuthiris specially treated and offered presents. But today, the treat and presents are provided to Brahmans only.

VELA IN THE NELLIKULANGARA BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE

(SHRI K. BHASKARAN)

District	Palghat
Taluk	Chittur
Village	Vallanghi

In the Vallanghi village of the Chittur taluk, there is a beautiful temple dedicated to goddess Bhagavathy. The deity of this temple is called Nellikulangara Bhagavathy. In front of this temple, there is a small tank well-protected by walls on all sides. To the south-west of the temple is located a huge *Uttupura* (dining hall). By the side of the temple is running the public road to Nelliampathy hills.

To invoke the blessings of goddess Bhagavathy, the local people of Vallanghi and Nemmara conduct a festival on 20th *Meenam* (March-April) every year. This is the famous Vallanghi *Vela*. One of the attractions of this festival is the grand procession of carrying the image of Bhagavathy on the back of a richly decked elephant escorted by a few elephants, the oracle of the temple and the local inhabitants, with accompaniments of *Panchavadyam* and similar other entertainments. During the night there will be a grand display of pyrotechnics. The *Vela* is conducted by the villagers in a spirit of healthy competition. Divided themselves into two groups, the residents of Vallanghi and Nemmara, celebrate the *Vela* with great enthusiasm, each party trying to excel the other in the performance of their *Vela*.

Because of this spirit of competition among the villagers, the pomp and pageantry of the *Vela* outgrow year by year so much so the assemblage crowding here to attend the festivities also increase in number every year. The splendour and magnificence of this *Vela*, has acquired such fame and greatness during the past ten years that it can comparably be considered as magnificent as the grand *Pooram* festival of Trichur. Unlike in other temples the Nellikulangara *Vela* is conducted not based on a particular constellation (*Naal*) or a *Sankramam* (movement of sun from one sign to another). The *Vela* is held on the twentieth day of *Meenam*. The procession of the Vallanghi people starts from the Vallanghi Siva temple while the Nemmara people take their procession from Nemmara *Mannam*. It is the Vallanghi people who are the first to enter and to leave the temple. The following legends relate to this temple and its deity Nellikulangara Bhagavathy.

The elder people of the locality hold that there is some undeniable connection between the places Cherunelly and Nellikulam in the Nelliampathy hills lying to the south-east of this temple and the Nellikulangara Bhagavathy. The ancient Kodakaranad consisted of five desoms, namely, Ayilur,

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF PALGHAT DISTRICT

Thiruvazhiyad, Nemmara, Vallanghi and Vithanasseri. Once a local chief of Kodakaranad went to the Nelliampathy hills and performed penance there. Goddess Bhagavathy, the tutelary deity of Nelliampathy, appeared to him and gave him her blessings. When he prayed that he wanted to have *darshan* of Devi always, she threw a gooseberry she had in her hand. Accordingly she was consecrated at the spot where the gooseberry flung by her fell down on the ground. This is supposed to be the present Nellikulangara temple. Some people do not believe this story. According to them the above mentioned chief of Kodakaranad after having been blessed by Devi, returned to his native place. One day he stepped into a tank leaving his palmyra-leaf umbrella on the bank and had his bath there. When he came out after taking bath, it was found, to his utter disillusionment, that the umbrella had been stuck fast to the ground and that it could not be lifted from the spot as goddess Bhagavathy had been sitting on the umbrella. Accordingly Bhagavathy was consecrated there. Thus came into existence the present Nellikulangara temple. Quite a few others believe that the Nellikulangara Bhagavathy is the incarnation of Karnaki.

The flag hoisting ceremony in connection with the *Vela* is held jointly by the residents of Vallanghi and Nemmara on the 9th *Meenam*. On all days following the flag

hoisting till the eve of the *Vela Kumatti*, *Karivela*, *Andi vela* and similar other rituals will be performed in the temple. From 9th to 17th *Meenam*, *Kummatti* is performed in the temple while *Karivela* and *Andivela* are conducted on the 18th and 19th *Meenam* respectively. These three ceremonies are together known by the name *Kanyar*. There are people who believe that this *Kanyar* is held to perpetuate the memory of Karnaki who, by the power of her chastity, had frightened the Pandya king and burnt to ashes his kingdom, Madura and finally gave up her life by throwing herself into the flames.

Anyway there is no denying of the fact that the Vallanghi Nemmara *Vela* had shot into fame only within a short span of time. Judging from the pomp and splendour of this festival, one is apt to think that the Vallanghi *Vela* is second to none in Kerala after the *Pooram* festival of Trichur. Some people think that in respect of pyrotechnic display, the Vallanghi *Vela* excels even the *Pooram* festival of Trichur. Annually, about lakhs of people participate in this festival. Since there are extensive grounds around the temple, the people could conveniently gather themselves in the place and attend the celebrations. Hence no accidents also usually occur in connection with the celebration of this festival.

UTSAVAM IN THE SREE CHERAPURAM SIVA TEMPLE

(SHRI A. V. RAGHAVA WARRIER)

District
Taluk
Village

Palghat
Chittur
Elavancherry

Adding to the grandeur of the picturesque sylvan settings of the Western ghats by its presence the Sree Cherapuram Siva temple stands four miles south-west of Kollengode,

in the Elavancherry Panchayat, Chittur taluk. This temple which draws devotees from various parts of the State belongs to the royal family of Kollengode. The temple

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AN ACTOR FOR THEATINMEL KOOTHI

is situated in the centre of a large estate surrounded by a vast expanse of green fields. The ornamental domes of the temple could be visible even from a long distance. The place which lies in a peninsular form flanked by the Malampuzha river, is rendered all the more attractive by the background of the western ghats. The sight of devotees flocking to the temple at dawn after a dip in the nearby river and invoking the names of gods all through their way fills the minds of the visitors with divine serenity. Sometime back a North Indian Swamiji who had visited almost all the pilgrim centres of India, observed that nowhere in India had he seen such a temple and calm surroundings. There is no doubt that anyone with the good fortune of visiting this temple of immense natural beauty will, not only agree with the observations of the Swamiji, but also always cherish the vivid memories of this temple.

The self-born god Siva is the main deity of this temple. Besides, Mahavishnu, Ganapathy, Subramonia and Saṁtha have also been consecrated here in separate sanctuaries. The spacious *Chittambalam* (temple-court building), the huge gate-towers, long and spacious entrance halls and the exquisitely finished adytum are the distinctive marks of this temple.

Various legends are told about the origin of this temple. One legend goes as follows. Years ago, this place lying at the foot of the western ghats, was a dense forest infested with wild animals. One day a Pulaya woman went to this forest to gather firewoods. While collecting the twigs and branches of the trees, she chanced to sharpen her knife on a nearby granite stone when, quite amazingly, blood began to flow out of that granite. The woman also fainted and fell down on the ground. The then Raja of Kollengode, Sri Vasudeva Raja, on receipt of the news of this strange incident, visited the spot and made enquiries with the astrologers as to the cause of that wonderful happening. It was

revealed through astrological predictions that the bleeding granite was a *Sivalinga* and that icons of Sree Ayyappa and Kshetrapala (both self-sprung ones) could also be found in that locality. Accordingly these images were also redeemed, and the Raja constructed a temple in that place.

Another legend has it that the Kollengode Raja's Chief executive Sri Mootha Chetty had once a severe stomach ache. In spite of all medical treatments provided to him the condition of the patient remained unchanged. At last a famous astrologer was consulted who pointed out the existence of an unknown *Sivalinga* at a particular spot. The moment Mootha Chetty volunteered himself to build a temple over that spot where the *Sivalinga* lay unnoticed, his stomach pain miraculously subsided. Thus the Sree Cherapuram Siva temple came into existence.

According to local belief, the name 'Cherapuram' of this temple and premises evolved from the word 'Cherapuram', the name by which the place was known previously based on the legend already given above.

Whatever the legends may be, the fact remains that devotees visiting this place find peace and consolation in the sublime atmosphere of this temple. The temple is also famous for cures. Persons possessed of evil spirits are relieved of their sufferings here. The devotees firmly believe that relief from all troubles caused by the evil spirits is assured by tying a talisman obtained from this temple. The *Panchagavyam* (the five gifts of cow such as milk, curd, butter, urine and dung used for various purposes in the temple) of this temple is said to be an effective recipe even for chronic diseases. Various stories telling the personal experiences of the devotees are current in the place which go to prove this belief. The following incident is of a recent occurrence. An Ezhava devotee who was a leper and had sores all over his body, swallowed the *Panchagavyam* for some days and was

miraculously cured of his disease.

According to tradition, it was immediately following the *Dakshayagam* that Parama Siva made his appearance at this place and the idol is, therefore, of an angry posture. It is held that the *Sivalinga* installed here is growing in size.

Here there is an image of Lord Siva's conveyance Rishabha (bull) which is an outstanding piece of art. Such life-like images are undoubtedly rare, not only in Kerala but even throughout India. Similarly the image of Mooshika (mouse), Vinayaka's conveyance, is also immensely beautiful. Annually a huge amount is received at this temple by way of offerings.

The temple is managed by Shri Padma^{na}bha Ravi Varma Raja, B. A., B. L. of Kollengode. The management is ideal. Although

Sivarathri is the grandest festival of this temple, various other minor festivals like *Nira*, *Puthari*, *Onam*, *Vishu*, *Thiruvathira*, *Ashtami Rohini* and *Vinayaka Chathurthi* are also held quite befittingly. *Niramala*, *Nagaswaram* and pyrotechnics are some of the highlights of the *Sivarathri* celebrations of this temple. Multitudes of people, throng to the temple on the day to participate in these celebrations. Since there is no other Siva temple in the vicinity of Cherapuram, devotees from the neighbouring places would come and attend the *Sivarathri* celebrations here. At night on *Sivarathri* day, special *pooja* will be offered in the temple. Usually the Raja of Kollengode and other members of the royal family associate themselves with the *Sivarathri* celebrations of this temple.

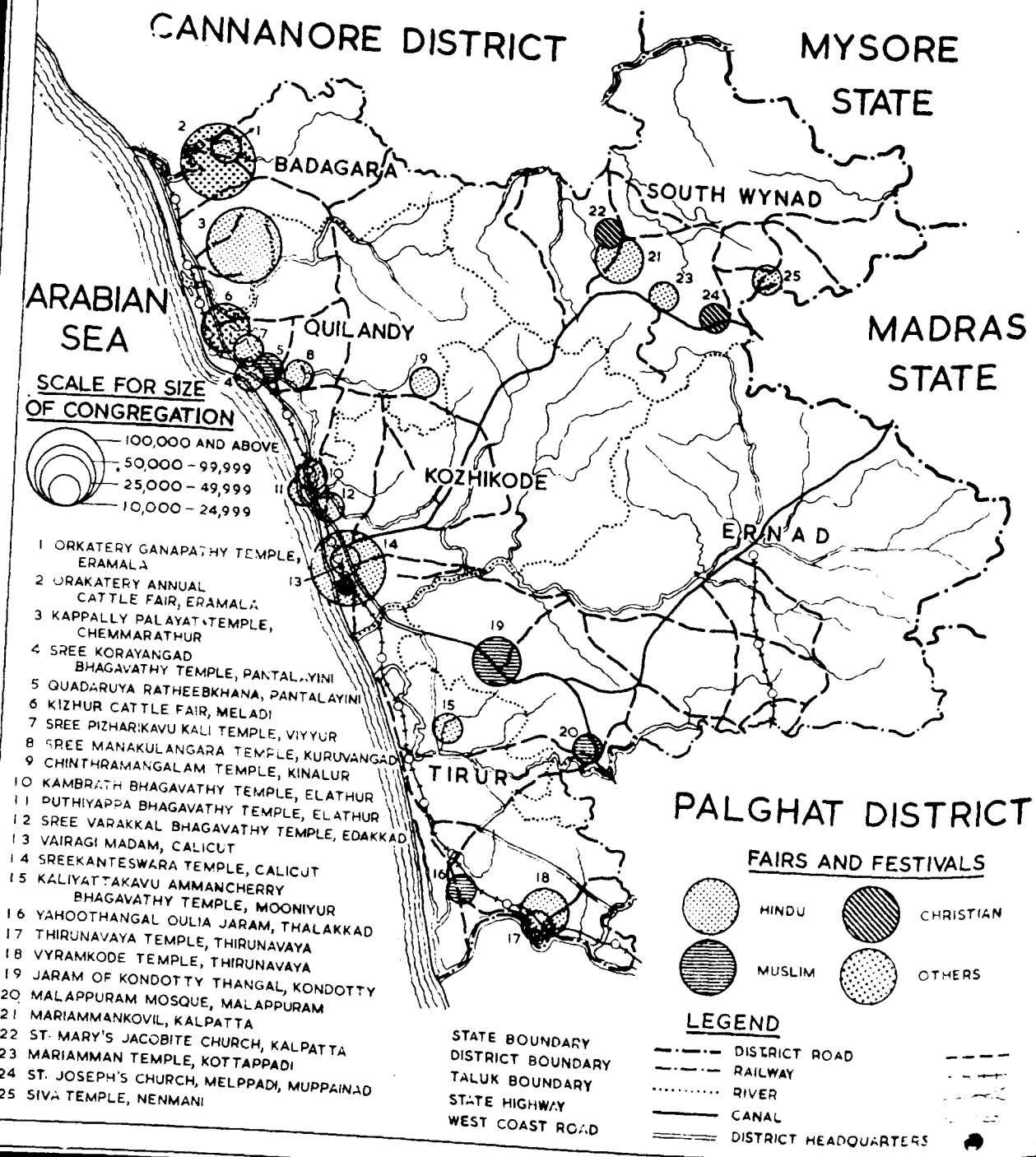
KONGAPPADA—Concl'd.



**FAIRS AND FESTIVALS
OF
KOZHIKODE DISTRICT**

KOZHIKODE DISTRICT

PLACES OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS WITH
CONGREGATION OF 10,000 AND OVER



UTSAVAM IN THE ARAKKAL TEMPLE

(SHRI M. RAMOTTI)

District	Kozhikode
Taluk	Badagara
Village	Uralangal

The most important festive occasion in Badagara taluk is the *Pooram* celebrations of the Arakkal Temple at Madappalli. It is a long course extending between the *Mrigashirsha* and *Pooram* in the waxing period in the month of *Meenam* every year, and the days on *Ashlesha* and *Makha* are considered the most auspicious days in it from the religious point of view.

This temple that stands on the sea coast of Madappalli has been dedicated to 'Kadapurath Bhagavathy' (The goddess of the Coasts), conceived as another incarnation of goddess Durga. Nine more deities such as Vishnumoorthy, Gulika, Parameswari etc. are also worshipped here. Five of these deities have priests who enjoy the ecstasy of divine dance. This dance ceremony is performed by the men from Malaya and Munnoottan communities. The prominent deities are not propitiated with offerings of meat, intoxicants etc. During the *Pooram* festival thousands of devotees throng to witness the procession of these goddesses in profuse ornamentation. This festival stands unparalleled for its majesty and splendour in the taluk of Badagara and the nearby places. The only possible parallel is found in the festivals of Kolathirinad as a whole, and of the territories of the Allada Swaroopam (Hosdrug taluk) in particular. Nevertheless there is no temple even in the Allada Swaroopam where the *Pooram* festival is celebrated with as much splendour as it is here.

It is believed that the goddess first appeared in Mookambi in South Kanara. Later she moved to the sea coast of Nileshtar, a territory in Allada Swaroopam. The legend goes that when she asked the Lord

of Nileshtar Tali for some place to settle in, she was given a deep marshy area surrounded by bushes and that in a moment she transformed that place into a beautiful abode and settled there. The goddess has even now an abode in Padinjattum Kozhuvai in Nileshtar, and has a few claims on Nairs of that place, especially on Nair women. The priest of Madappalli temple at times go there and perform the festivals of the goddess.

In the course of time the sea began to erode the land where the temple stood and the goddess had to move away. She with her retinue went by the sea to the southern lands and reached Karukachal on the western side of the present temple at Madappalli. There she rested for a while on the banks of a pond of lotus. When the people of the locality became aware of her presence they offered her milk and took her in procession to the place where the temple now stands and began to worship her. The lotus-pond which is but a hundred feet away from the salt water of the sea is still considered sacred so far as the festivals of the temple are concerned.

This temple has no considerable property. The high priests of this temple are Mukayans, the inland fishermen who have started sea fishing only lately. Even today the Mukayans are inland fishermen in all the places they live, except in Madappalli and the nearby coast.

The Arakkal *Pooram* is the most renowned of its kind in North Malabar for its fire-works. This attracts thousands of people and usually there is a big crowd during the festival.

UTSAVAM IN THE SIVA AND AYYAPPAN TEMPLES, CHENNAMANGALAM

(SHRI K. K. RAMA VARMA RAJA)

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
Badagara
Chorode

As in the case of many other temples in Kerala, for want of authentic records, no precise information is available about the origin of the Siva and Ayyappa temples, situated at Chennamangalam in the Chorode village, Badagara taluk. However it is believed by the elderly Hindus of the locality that it was the Ayyappan temple which was set up first in the locality. Regarding the origin of this temple, legend has it that when a woman was collecting arrowroots with the aid of a hoe, accidentally the implement struck a stone that lay nearby the place. The moment it struck the stone, blood began to ooze out of it. The Senior Raja and the local Hindu residents, hearing this strange happening, thought that it was a self-born image of Lord Ayyappa. Accordingly they built a small temple on the spot and began to offer worship to Him. The Siva temple was constructed only at a later period. Both these temples were subsequently covered with copper sheets. A miracle is said to have occurred about 80 years ago when it was arranged to cover the temple with copper plates. At the first instance the authorities had proposed to thatch the Siva temple only with copper plates. Accordingly when the required quantity of copper was purchased, a good number of carts than was expected

had to be engaged to carry the material to the work spot. Again, when the actual roofing of the temple started, surprisingly it was found that the copper plates were much in excess of what was actually required and obtained for roofing the Siva temple and quite sufficient to cover the Ayyappa temple also. People believe that it was the might of Lord Ayyappa that brought sufficient copper plates to cover his temple also.

The annual festival in this temple takes place on *Uthram* day in *Meenam*. The *Abhishekom* with ghee is performed on the next day attended by a large number of people. The number of devotees coming to the temple with ghee pots every year had always been not less than 1,000. But with the change of times, the number diminished and twenty years ago, this celebration had to be given up for want of sufficient number of volunteers to carry the ghee-pots. However the annual festival is even now celebrated here without break, but only with small attendance. Recently an *Ashtabhandakalasam* was conducted in this temple with the willing co-operation of the residents and devotees from other places. It is hoped that the temple will regain the glory of the past.

UTSAVAM IN THE LOKANARKAVU BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE

(SHRI KAVIL P. RAMA PANICKER)

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
Badagara
Memunda

'Lokamalayarkavu' or 'Lokanarkavu Bhagavathi temple' as is familiarly known, is situated at Memunda, three miles east of Badagara in North Kerala. Although the ownership of the temple and its properties now is vested in the hands of the Raja of Kadathanad, as the trustee under the Religious Endowment Board, the real owners of the temple are a clan of Nairs of the area known as *Ravarimar*. It is said that the Raja of Kadathanad who was a trustee of the temple gradually became its owner. Even now the religious rites connected with the temple are to be performed by the above Nairs who are residing in the temple premises. The legend is that this Nair clan has its origin at Quilon. They were a merchant class who came from Quilon to the north about nine centuries ago and ultimately settled at the temple site. They also brought with them their family deity 'Lokamaleswarathamma'. It is this goddess that is now familiarly known as Lokamalayarkavil Bhagavathi. In Kerala from times immemorial there existed three equally famous 'Bhagavathis', namely, Sree Mookambika, Lokambika and Hemambika (Kodungallur Bhagavathi). A lot of powered glory are ascribed to Lokambika, who is now familiarly known as Sree Lokanarkavil Bhagavathi. Thacholli Othenan, the hero of North Malabar, was an ardent worshipper of Lokanarkavil Bhagavathi. He never did anything important before offering prayers to this goddess. During the early days, Lokanarkavu *Devaswom* had its own lands. But, those lands are now left uncared for.

Festivals

Two festivals are celebrated here annually

in the months of *Vrischikam* (November-December) and *Meenam* (March-April). The festival in *Vrischikam* is known as *Mandalavilakku*. This is the most important festival of the temple.

Mandalavilakku

Mandalavilakku is so called because this festival is celebrated during *Mandala* season i. e. from 1st of *Vrischikam* to 10th of *Dhanu*. During these forty days, this festival is celebrated in almost all Bhagavathi temples of Kerala, but at Lokanarkavu it is celebrated only for 30 days. During the remaining ten days, the festival will be held in honour of Kongannur Bhagavathi. In that temple the festival is celebrated from 1st to 10th of *Dhanu* (December-January).

The reason attributed for such a division of this festival between Lokanarkavu and Kongannur as told in the legends is as follows. Kongannur Bhagavathi temple is situated in the Chingapuram desom of the Vanmukha amsom eight miles south of the Lokanarkavu. It is said that a devotee of Devi from Chingapuram once used to go to Lokanarkavu daily and offer worship to Bhagavathi. When he came old, he built a temple for this goddess at his native place with the blessings of the Devi and consecrated her therein. This is the Kongannur Bhagavathi. As Kongannur Bhagavathi is a part of the deity of Lokambika, she is called the younger sister of Lokambika; and it is because of this that *Mandalavilakku* is celebrated for 10 days at the Kongannur Bhagavathi temple.

There is yet another instance corroborating the relationship of these two goddesses. It is that annual function known as *Uchat*

Ezhunallathu, held on the *Uchal* day, (*Sankrama* day). Every year on that day a procession from Lokanarkavu is taken to Kongannur. This procession starts in the evening. Though there is no specification of the numerical strength of this procession generally it will never be less than 14. One of the members of this procession is Theyyanbadi Kurup, holding a sword in his hands, at the pointed edge of which, it is told would sit Lokambika; other members are supposed to be escorting Bhagavathi with swords, shields, *Kombu* (musical instrument), *Kuzhal*, *Kuthuvilakku*, etc. and with great jubilation. *Kanakkapillai* (accountant) should be present in the procession wearing the prescribed uniform. Usually *Kanakkapillai* is chosen from Warriar caste. He becomes *Kanakkapillai* only after certain rites such as *Ariyitt Vazhcha* are performed. He has an important role in all matters connected with the temple. *Pattola* is an important document detailing the old history of the temple. Wrapped in silk it is preserved in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. This record will be taken out only on important occasions. When the above procession is on its way to the temple, devotees throng on both sides of the road to witness the procession. They also decorate and illuminate their homes as a mark of respect to the goddess.

By night the procession reaches Kongannur. The two sisters are then supposed to enjoy their meeting and the younger sister falls sound asleep on the lap of the elder. This state of affairs will continue till midnight. While she sleeps, Lokambika goes out of the temple silently and without the knowledge of her sister, and visits Keezhur temple. Early next morning Lokambika returns to Lokanarkavu with all her retinue. This, in short, is how the *Uchal Ezhunallathu* is performed and the legends behind it. This function was held every year without break till the proclamation of the temple-entry was made.

Mandalavilakku is really a grand festival worth seeing. People flock to the area from different places so as to witness this pleasing festival. All the lamps on the walls of the temple will be lit on that occasion. The *Kakkavilakku* lamps (*Kakkavilakku* is made of iron in round shape which will take in $\frac{1}{8}$ of a *nazhi* of Coconut oil. A wicker made of cloth is laid in each of them. There are nearly three thousand such lamps) are fixed on seven tiers on the wooden railings of the wall of the temple. On the first day, only one row of lights will be lit, on the second two, on the third three, and so on. From the seventh day onwards all the seven rows of lamps will be lit. The temple offers a special attraction when all the lights are on. These lights not only offer a delightful spectacle but also help to intensify the devotions and faith in the omnipotence of Bhagavathy. The expenditure for burning the lights is met either singly or collectively. The Munsiff, the Tahsildar of Badagara and their subordinates will also contribute towards the expenses for lighting these lamps. On the sixteenth day the festival is conducted solely by the *Vyapari Nairs*. There will be some special items of attraction on this day. In the evening at about 4 p. m. on that day pop guns will be fired. During the night, when the deity is led in procession the above Nairs clasping each other's palm form a circle and march around the temple crying *Nada, Nada, Nadeyo, Naduppe*. The last day of the festival is usually celebrated at the expense of Kadathanad Raja. The celebrations of that day will be on a grand scale. People all around the area throng to witness the display or pyrotechnics on all days of the festival.

Meenam Festival

It is celebrated for eight days in *Meenam* (March-April) the most important occasion being *Kodiyettam* (flag hoisting) on the *Rohini* day and *Arat* on the *Pooram* day. All the usual festival rites of important temples are followed here also. The special attraction on the fifth and sixth days is



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LOKANARKAVU BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE



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THE PLACE WHERE THACHOLI OTHENAN LIVED

(The association of Thacholi Othenan, the famous hero of North Malabar, with the Lokanarkavu Bhagavathi temple is well-known. The small shrine in the centre is dedicated to Othenan. In the thatched shed some of his descendants are living).

KADAPPALLY KUMBHOM THIRA FESTIVAL

the traditional dance performance of They-yambadi Kurup. On the seventh day there will be *Nadu Valam Vekkal* and *Pallivetta* and on the *Pooram* day there will be *Poorapattu* and *Poorakkali*. *Poorakkali* is conducted during night which is also performed by certain sections of *Vyapari* Nairs just as any other festival rites. It is only 125 years now since the celebration of the *Meenam* festival was commenced. Before that, there was only a minor festival held here, namely *Kavootu* and *Pattu*. *Kavootu* is only a grand feast held in order to please the people residing in the temple premises. It is believed that Bhagavathi will be much pleased with such a feast. The expenditure on this account is usually met from the collections received from the local people. If any amount more is needed the same is met from the *Devaswom* fund.

Poorapattu has as its theme the life history of Bhagavathi. It is sung by They-

yambadi Kurup in the *Pattupura*, a small shed located just in front of the temple. Since it is to be sung before Bhagavathi, the idol of Bhagavathi will be kept in that shed. A good number of Devi devotees will attend this *Pattu*. Like *Kavootu*, *Pattu* is also quite pleasing to Bhagavathi. *Poorapattu* is sung only during the four days from *Pooyam* to *Pooram*. On *Pooram* day the idol of Bhagavathi is taken for *Arat*. It is called *Poorakuli*.

This, in short, is the festival of *Meenam*, celebrated with much pomp and pageantry. This festival is only a modified form of the old *Kavootu* and *Pattu* and is conducted by giving it the colour of a festival. This modification was made by the able Kadathanad Raja who passed away in 1056 M. E. However, it has to be admitted that the ancient glory of the festival has now almost waned.

KADAPPALLY KUMBHOM THIRA FESTIVAL

(SHRI A. RAMA KURUP)

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
Badagara
Chemmarathur

About 700 years ago, a batch of Nairs from Quilon arrived at Puthuppanam, near Badagara, accompanied by their families and with a number of jars filled with gold dust. Part of the present Badagara taluk including Puthuppanam was then known as Kadathanad and was divided into several *tharas*, each *thara* being governed by a local chief. Matters that affected the *thara* in general were discussed and settled by these chiefs who met occasionally in council for the purpose.

At a distance of a furlong and a half from the present Memunda High School there stands a mound surrounded by

green fields. This place, then known as Olampalam was the rendezvous of the chiefs of the Kadathanad *tharas*. The new immigrant Nairs began to arrive one after the other in the Council Chamber when the assembled gathering saw a lady in their midst coming to attend the assembly. No sooner had all the Nairs entered the Council hall than the lady mysteriously disappeared from the scene. Some of the assembled enquired about that lady but the Nairs had no information that such a lady had even accompanied them. One of the Nairs soon appeared to emerge as if possessed. He ran westward to a spot, four furlongs away

from the place where they had met in Council. The astonished assembly rose and proceeded in that direction. They saw the man in the centre of a thicket holding the stump of an unknown tree and demanding that he wanted to be settled down there. Soon he became his own self. It became clear that the man had been possessed by the powerful goddess of the Nairs who settled themselves at Puthuppanam. Accordingly the Nairs purchased that land, founded a temple around the unknown stump and installed in all solemnity their tutelary deity there. These Nairs who were carrying a flourishing trade in gold were known as *Vyaparimar* meaning merchant Nairs which appellation, in course of time, became changed as Ravari Nairs.

Some years later the Raja of Kadathanad got the proprietary right over the temple. This is the famous temple Lokamalayarkavu. The local belief has it that Thunchath Ezhuthachan, that venerable poet of Kerala, had once visited this temple and given instructions to the priest as to how *pooja* and other religious services had to be carried in the temple and that it is strictly in accordance with those instructions that even to this day *pooja* is performed in the temple.

One of the Nair families which had settled in the vicinity of the temple consisting of one Koran and his aged mother, at a later time moved to Kappally Palayat in Chemmarathur village lying two miles east from Lokamalayarkavu. They constructed a big house and settled down there. Koran's mother had made it her routine that she would take her breakfast only after worshipping their family goddess at Lokamalayarkavu which was situated at a distance of two miles from their place. Koran at a later time consecrated their goddess on a pillar of deodar wood in a room in their house.

In those days the heads of almost all *tharas* of Kadathanad were Kurups. But so far as Chemmarathur was concerned, no

one held sway in this *thara* until Kappally Palayat family settled down there. Kora Kurup, as he was popularly known, was a man of spotless character and was noted for his truthfulness, piety, wealth and skill at arms. He was easily acknowledged as the leader of Chemmarathur.

Today, Kappally Palayat house is no more a residential house. It is a temple where people offer worship to the goddess of Lokamalayarkavu and also to her first devotee Kora Kurup whose spirit has been consecrated on a dais made of an alloy of five precious metals and kept behind the idol of Bhagavathi Palat Koman, the contemporary of the redoubtable warrior Thacholy Othenan, whose spirit is supposed to have been consecrated in an inner room of the Kappally Palayat house, is at present worshipped in a small temple, about 30 yards west of the old house that is now extinct.

There is a temple about three furlongs to the east of the Kappally Palayat temple. This is the Kappally temple where the *thira* festival is conducted annually in the month of February. About 50 yards to the south-west of the temple a visitor would come across a number of caves and to the north-west of the temple extensive paddy fields. There is reason to believe that the Nairs who came to Chemmarathur from Lokamalayarkavu had first settled at this place and later shifted to Palayat and that therefore the place was called Kappally Palayat. Until recent times there were no dwellings at Kappally Palayat, but there are indications to show that about 300 years ago, it was a well-populated area. Even now when the land is reclaimed, the local people often come across pieces of old earthen and metalwares. Besides there is a ruined tank at the place which also speaks of a hoary past. Time was when the Parayas and Pulayas were segregated from the society and not permitted to tread along the public paths of this place. If a Pulaya cast a ripe areca-nut at a high-caste female,

she stood a sure chance of excommunication from the society and being given in marriage to that Pulaya if he so wished. One night when all the male members were away from the Kappally house, one Pulayan secretly crept into their compound and hid himself at the back of the house waiting to cast an areca-nut on the lady of the house when she came out of the house. While he was thus waiting secretly behind the walls, the lady was preparing her supper in the kitchen, quite unawares of his presence in the immediate neighbourhood. The pungent odours of the bitter-gourds dish she was preparing then from the kitchen spread all around that the Pulayan could not but relish the same. But he felt sorry that in case he snatched away the lady, he had no bitter-gourds in his garden to provide her. His thoughts escaped him unawares through a small ditty which caught the ears of the lady inside the kitchen who sensing the presence of the Pulaya outside killed him by a clever stratagem. It is evident from this story that the members of the Kappally house were blue-blooded Kiriya Nairs and that the present Kappally Kurups are their descendants. Today this family boasts of nearly 2,000 members. During the British regime in Malabar when members of leading families were appointed as Village Officers (*Adhikaries of amsoms*) it was the members of this ancient family who were appointed as village headman of Memunda, Chemmarathur and Thiruvalloor villages. Even to this day they hold this position. One of the ladies of the Kappally family had been married to a person at Pandikot in Wynad. For long she stayed with her lord at Pandikot; but had no issues at all. Very near her husband's house there was a Siva temple. The story goes that Lord Siva, disguised himself as a wild hunter, had an encounter with the epic archer Arjuna in which the Lord's forehead was broken by the latter and that a bit of the flesh flung from the wound and dropped down a little away from the scene of the encounter. It is

supposed that this particle of Siva's body is the Thalachil Siva. The above mentioned lady of the Kappally house was an ardent devotee of Siva. She never failed to offer worship to him in that temple. On the demise of her husband, according to the local custom, she had to leave that place. In those days a Nair lady had no right over her husband's earnings. Not only this, she was also required to leave his house even before his body was taken for cremation. Although the news of the demise of her husband was conveyed to her home which was situated 30 miles away from the place, she had to leave Wynad even before an escort arrived from her house. Alone, she set out to her home taking along with her some of her belongings in a bundle. After a long trek she reached one of her family houses known as Chakyeri which was the first house on the eastern border of Chemmarathur. The widow sat down for her meals. But she could scarcely swallow one morsel because it seemed to her that an invisible hand struck her hand away without allowing her to take the morsel to her mouth. This tantalisation occurred every time when she tried to swallow her food. Therefore an astrologer was called in who revealed that her tutelary deity Thalachil Siva whom she had venerated all along during her stay at Pandikot had come with her for her protection and that she should abjure food till that deity was consecrated in a temple. The widow looked about for a suitable site for building the temple. Meanwhile one male member of the household became possessed and he flung away an arrow which fell down on the ground at Kappally located two furlongs south-west of Chakyeri. The Kappally temple built by the pious widow stands to this day at the site where the arrow dropped to the ground. The members of the Kappally household began to venerate that merciful Lord who escorted His devotee from Pandikot to distant Kappally as their family deity. On every Saturday *pooja* is offered in this temple. Eighteen

communities who are proficient in different trades are associated with the conduct of the festival in this temple. As early as 400 years ago, Palat Koma Kurup had distributed landed properties to these communities. Not many other families in Kadathanad had offered such gifts of lands.

About three centuries back, another Kurup of the family who was a devotee of their tutelary deity, met with his end in a fight at Nadapuram and he had to be installed by the side of the temple. About three quarters of a century back when this temple was renovated separate sanctuaries were raised and the tutelary deity and the spirit of the warrior-devotee who met with his end at Nadapuram were consecrated therein separately.

The *Thira* festival of this temple is celebrated from third to 13th of *Kumbhom* (February-March) every year. The most important day of the festival is the 12th of *Kumbhom*. The ceremonies during the first 8 days are known as *Vellattom*. This includes a festive dance when the devotees, assuming the guise of the deity, participate in it. Among the various rituals, one denotes an attempt on the part of the man who is acting on behalf of the deity to flee to Pandikot. The assembled Thiyyas prevent her flight, a Kappally Kurup conducts her to the presence of the *Karanavar* of the family and entrusts her to his care. This *Vellattom* ceremony starts at 4 p. m. and goes upto 9 p. m. every day. On the day of the *Thira* festival, the Kurups of the Kappally family to whom belong this temple, proceed from Chakyeri with the temple treasures in a gorgeous procession to the temple. This is followed by another procession in which the sword and shield will be carried to the temple. This procession starts from the house of an ancient family of blacksmiths residing near the Chakyeri house. Caparisoned elephants, pipes and drums and tradesmen in their traditional costumes lead the procession. In the rear are blacksmiths, cobblers etc. This is

reminiscent of the first visit of the tutelary deity to the place and of offering the sword and shield to her. Since the installation of the family hero in the temple, the chief of the local Thiyyas who is known by the title *Thandan* used to attend the procession with a goblet full of liquor, escorted by a number of Thiyyas. Though they will not employ any musical instruments in their procession, the cry of triumph of the processionists is highly exhilarating.

At 5 o'clock in the evening starts the *Thira* festival. The man who assumes the guise of the tutelary deity is led to the temple yard by the Kurups, the patrons of the temple by clasping his hands. The actor wields a lance. Placed above the compound walls of the temple will be placed a tall lamp and a special altar (*Peedham*). The *Thandan* with his liquor goblet and followed at his heels by the actor with the lance run around the lamp and the altar. This is known as *Meeth*. The actor who plays the role of the tutelary deity, finally snatches the goblet from the *Thandan* and pretends to drink the liquor to the tune of the various musical instruments and cry of victory from the crowd. Since the use of liquor was prohibited by Government, the juice of tender coconuts is poured in the goblet instead of liquor. On that day, representing the Lokamalayarkavu Bhagavathy, the oracle of the temple comes to Kappally flaunting his traditional silken robes and sword. He is received in the Kappally temple by the oracle with due honour and respect symbolising a grand welcome to Bhagavathy. Various rites of the *Thira* will be performed during the whole night and late into the next day. Devotional songs extolling the martial prowess of the above-mentioned goddesses will be recited by the devotees. In addition to the immense congregation, all the members of the Kappally family wherever they may be stationed, participate in the festival, offer worship to their goddess and submit their offerings to her. People obsessed with evil influence of Saturn used to

offer worship to this deity for their redemption.

Another festival of the temple is *Vellattom*. It is held in memory of Devi's trip to the fencing school for trial exercises. She is supposed to go over to the fencing school on the 1st of *Karkatakam*, returns to the temple on the 14th day, again goes on the same day to the fencing school and returns to the temple finally after undergoing the fencing exercises on the 30th of *Karkatakam*.

About two furlongs to the south-east of the Kappally temple there is a spot where it is believed that Palat Koman and his ancestors had practised martial exercises. This place which is still known as Ankachal, until ten years back, remained, in the same condition. Though that ground has now been converted into a coconut grove, the place does not fail to disclose to the inquisitive eye the lay out of a battle ground which once witnessed feats of arms and physique. To the south of the temple there is a small hill known as Mayankalam, now a cashew plantation, where the members of the Kappally Palayat family had training in fencing exercises in olden days. Even today the above mentioned two places are not visited alone at night even by the bravest.

It was the practice in olden days to install a goddess in a fencing school and offer worship to her. Lying between the Kappally Palayat house and the Kappally temple, there is a small temple dedicated to Devi. In the vicinity of the Kappally temple, there is another Vishnu temple which had been inherited by the Kappally family through one of the members from his father Kundi Suppuarath Namboothiri. It is said that when one of the descendants of the Namboothiri put forward his claim over the temple, a Kurup of Kappally family killed him. This Brahman is seen installed in the precincts of the temple.

The Chakyeri house referred to earlier was in olden days tenanted by a race of Kurups known as Peruvaniyan Kurups. A member of this house usually frequented

the Kappally Palayat house for a game at chess. Many a time he invited the Kappally Kurup to his house, but the latter who was the overlord of the place always declined the former's invitation. When the importunate entreaties of the Chakyeri Kurup finally prevailed upon the Kappally Kurup, the latter reminded his host that he would be accompanied by a large retinue and that it would be quite troublesome to him. But Chakyeri rejoined that he would be only glad to receive Kappally Kurup and his followers whatever be their number. At last Kappally Kurup fixed a date for his visit.

On the appointed day Chakyeri Kurup arranged for a grand feast to entertain his guests. The two houses of Chakyeri and Kappally Palayat were situated barely a few furlongs apart from one another. The roads to the Chakyeri house cut through a vast field. Chakyeri Kurup was eagerly scanning on the day the distance when he noticed to his utter bewilderment a large number of people issuing out of Palayat and filing past the fields. Chakyeri's pride failed him when he thought of his inability to entertain the large retinue of the Kappally Kurup. He fled with his family. Palayat Kurup entered a deserted house. There was none to receive him there. The Chakyeri Kurup never came back to the place since then, and therefore the Chakyeri house and their properties including the Mekkothu temple, their worshipping centre, fell in the hands of Kappally Kurup. The *Thira* festival of Mekkothu temple and that of Kappally fall one after the other. The deity installed in Mekkothu temple is Vettakkoru nakan who is supposed to have been born of Lord Siva and his consort Parvathi during their mirthful sojourn in the mountainous regions disguised as a hunter and his spouse.

The spirits of the long line of illustrious heads of the family who once ruled the principality, had been consecrated in the inner partments of the Kappally house. In course of time due to the various reasons,

the Kappally Kurups set up independent residences in other places and ruled over such places. One such Kurup removed one of the idols from Kappally Palayat and installed it in a separate temple half a mile south-west to Palayat. This temple stands at a place called Ramath. According to the convention *pooja* will be offered in this temple only after the same is offered at Palayat. Another Kurup also removed an idol and installed it in a separate temple built by him. This is that beautiful temple standing at Memunda.

The story goes that in the 18th century, after the demise of Koma Kurup, a lady of the Kappally house shifted her residence to the distant south and that it is the successors of this lady that constitute the Kappally

Pulapra family at Ramanattukara, near Feroke.

During the period 1952-53 the Kappally Palayat temple was renovated with the donations received from the members of the Kappally family, among whom Sarvashree K. P. Gopala Menon and K. P. Krishna Menon and Smt. K. P. Janaki Amma are worthy of mention for their magnificent contributions. Besides, one Shri K. P. Narayana Menon, a worthy scion of the family and an ardent devotee of Devi, visited the temple at the time of its renovation and gifted his portion of the family properties to the temple. The proceeds from these properties are now utilised for the upkeep and maintenance of this temple.

UTSAVAM IN THE SHRI PISHARI KAVU BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, VIYYUR

(SHRI ELAYADATH SANKARAN NAIR)

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
Quilandy
Viyyur

This is an important Bhagavathy temple. Affiliated to this is the Vishnu temple Palur near Thikkody railway station about 5 miles away from here. This temple belongs to eight families by heredity. After the administration was taken over by the H. R. & C. E. Board, two non-hereditary trustees have been appointed. The management of day-to-day affairs of the temple is done by an executive officer. There is also a managing trustee. Daily 5 *poojas* are held in the temple. Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays are important days.

The most important festival of this temple is called *Kaliyatta Mahotsavam*. In the first week of *Kumbhom*, Pottamel Nambissan, a notable astrologer makes astrological calculations in front of the temple and fixes the date for *Kaliyatta Mahotsavam* in the

middle of *Meenam*. On the penultimate day there will be *Valiavilakku* and on the last day the *Kaliattam*. During these days processions of large numbers of people holding flags and tender cocoanuts come from many parts of Quilandy taluk. With the prohibition of animal sacrifices in temples sacrifices of fowls and goats in this temple have been stopped. On the *Valiavilakku* day, a grand procession accompanied by many caparisoned elephants commences at about 11 p. m. and ends with the prophecies of the oracle, Theyyampadi Kurup at about day-break. The next day also in the afternoon the procession starts from the temple, goes round the village and returns at the appointed hour. The festival ends with the prophecies of the oracle, Kurup. But there are certain other functions in the

temple after midnight. These functions are usually performed in the grove at the northern side of the temple by the functionaries of the temple who will be observing fast on most of the days. This continues for 9 days in a very secret manner not known even to the trustees of the temple. Public traffic along the northern side of the temple is prohibited during these days.

According to astrological surmise, the image of Bhagavathy in this temple is very ancient. It is said that the image was being worshipped by Sage Sukra. The story goes that the forefathers of the temple trustees lived in Quilon of the former Travancore State, that they owing to a clash with the Maharaja Marthandavarma, fled from that State with the idol, built a temple here and consecrated Devi in it. Anyway it is to be particularly mentioned here that devotees from Trivandrum side come and offer worship at this temple even now.

It is said that during the invasion of Kerala by Tippu when he tried to destroy this temple, goddess Bhagavathy appeared to him and dissuaded him from his attempt. Greatly overjoyed with the *darshan* of Devi,

Tippu instead of attacking the temple, donated extensive properties free of tax to it for its maintenance. The Britishers also allowed the *Devaswom* to enjoy those concessions.

Various offerings are made to this temple. The most important among them is the *Valia Vattalam Guruthy*. To offer this *Vazhipadu*, the expenditure will roughly come to Rs. 140/.

In addition to *Chakyar Koothu*, *Patakam*, *Ottam thullal*, *Harikatha*, *Thazhambakom*, *Pandimelom* and *Panchavadyam*, there will also be religious discourses by eminent personalities. An expenditure of about six thousand rupees will be incurred for the conduct of the *Kaliyotta Utsavam* in the temple.

Another important festival celebrated here is *Navarathri*. Large number of devotees take part in these celebrations for which about three thousand rupees will be spent from the *Devaswom* funds.

There is a tank 13 acres in extent attached to this temple which has fallen to ruins since the days of Tippu Sultan. It is still in use though it badly requires renovation.

VETTAKKORUMAKAN PATTU IN THE BALUSSERY FORT

(SHRI M. P. VISWANATHA IYER)

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
Quilandy
Panangad

The Balussery Fort is situated 16 miles away from the Calicut railway station in the Panangad village of the Quilandy taluk. This fort is not actually a temple in the strict sense of the term, though the deity of Kirathamoorthy (Vettakkorumakan) is consecrated and venerated there. It was once the fort of the Rajas of Kurumbranad. About 2000 years ago, the then Raja of Kurumbranad, an ardent devotee of Kirathamoorthy, invoked the blessings of that

deity and made entreaties for the protection of his subjects. He had also gifted 18 *kathams* of land towards meeting the expenditure for offering *pooja* and other religious services to that deity. One day, the Raja had a dream, a dream in which Kirathamoorthy informed him that he would be visiting his kingdom very soon. Accordingly Kirathamoorthy went to the Balussery fort one day incognito, in the guise of a beggar; but he had to leave the palace

disappointed and enraged, for he did not receive any alms. It was past midday when he reached the fort. It was the practice in the palace that after midday no alms would be distributed from there. On his way back from the palace, Vettakkorumakan visited, among other places, the Vandeeyam Velli *Illom* also. From that day onwards, the Bhattathiripad of that *Illom* became His *Thanthri*. At last, after traversing through many places, Vettakkorumakan reached a place called Menapuram where he chose to remain under a banyan tree in meditation.

The Raja was greatly worried that Vettakkorumakan did not turn up as promised to him in the dream. The next day the Raja had another dream in which Vettakkorumakan informed him that he did not like to go over to a place where no alms were distributed to the poor and needy, that the Raja need not worship him thereafter and that he preferred to remain at Menapuram where he was staying for the moment. Next day the Raja wanted his court priest; a Brahman by caste, to fetch Vettakkorumakan to his fort. The Brahman who set out to Menapuram as ordered by his master, on reaching the place prostrated before Vettakkorumakan and informed him of his master's wish. Repeated requests of Vettakkorumakan asking the Brahman to rise up from the ground where he was still lying in prostration at the former's feet were of no avail. He won't rise up from the place unless he got an assurance from Vettakkorumakan that he would go along with him to Balussery fort. At long last, the latter agreed to do so. Accompanied by the Brahman he set out to the Balussery fort. During their journey when they lost their way, Vettakkorumakan enquired Karora Nair of the route which would lead them to Kurumbranad. The moment he enquired, the Nair turned himself possessed and showed them their way. From that day onwards the oracle for Vettakkorumakan became Karora Nair. Thus, Vettakkorumakan reached the

palace of the Raja of Kurumbranad and vanished in the walls of the palace. That is why there is no consecration of the image in this fort. Also there are on flagstaff and altar here. Distribution of meals to those who come from other places is the important *Vazhipadu* in this temple.

Usually the midday *pooja* is held important in this temple. *Seva* and *Pattu* are the two important annual celebrations. Of these, *Seva* is usually conducted by prominent persons like the Zamorin of Kozhikode, Raja of Kadathunad, Valia Raja of Ramamangalathu Kovilagam and Meppally Nambuthiripad while *Vettakkaran Pattu* is celebrated by various persons. On the first day, it is celebrated by Balussery Kottachala *Devaswom*, on the second day jointly by the Raja of Ramamangalathu Kovilagam and the *Ooralers* of the temple and on the third by the royal family of Kizhakkedathu Kovilagam. About thirty years ago, a *Kalam Pattu* used to be conducted here as an offering by the Maharaja of Travancore. Even now, as a *Vazhipadu* of the Maharaja of Travancore, *Palpayasam* is distributed in this fort. On the festive day, the Daivampadi Kurups begin the *Vettakkaran Pattu* early in the morning. Following this, midday *pooja* is performed to the tuning of instrumental music. Afterwards a *Kanji Sadya* (distribution of rice gruel) is given for those who took part in the *Pattu* earlier in the morning. In the evening there will be a grand feasting for the musicians, Brahmans and others which is followed by grand *Thazhambaka*, *Ottam thullal*, *Panar Kali*, *Asari Kali* and similar other items of cultural entertainments. At 8 o'clock in the evening, a grand procession will be taken out to the nearby fort of the Banyan tree headed by caparisoned elephants and accompanied by the playing of *Kombu*, *Kuzhal* and various other musical instruments, *torches*, *Kopparavilakku*, *Kaivilakku* and the like which would add colour and vigour to the procession. After a while, this procession starts from the foot of the banyan tree

UTSAVAM IN THE SREEKANTESWARAM TEMPLE, KOZHIKODE

towards the fort. On reaching there, it takes a round of the fort. On this occasion, the *Parichamuttukalikka* will be playing their best. After making the circumambulation of the fort thrice, the oracle representing

Vettakkorumakan goes to the *Vettakkaran Kalam* and the oracle representing goddess Bhagavathy to the *Kalam* prepared for him.

UTSAVAM IN THE SREEKANTESWARAM TEMPLE, KOZHIKODE

(MAJOR DR. O. K. SANKARAN)

District	Kozhikode
Taluk	Kozhikode
Town	Calicut

The Sreekanteswaram temple at Kozhikode is situated in the heart of the town, about four furlongs to the north-east of the Calicut railway station. It is not an old temple. It was only in the year 1906 that a proposal for the construction of a temple for the Thiyya community residing at Kozhikode was first made at a meeting of prominent members of the community held in the esteemed presence of Brahmasree Chaithanya Swamy at the Ittiriparambath Bhajan Kovil. Subsequently another conference of eminent Thiyyas of Kozhikode taluk was convened at the Ganapath High School, Calicut under the chairmanship of their revered leader late Shri Kallingal Madathil Rarichan Moopan to go into the details pertaining to the building of the temple, and it was unanimously decided to build a temple at Calicut for the Thiyya population of that town. Accordingly for this purpose a special executive committee was constituted headed by Shri Rarichan Moopan.

The site of the temple and the area lying around it were once paddy fields known as Nalleswara Matom field. In those days, an unknown *Sanyasi* was residing in that field. People held him in great respect and venerated him with devotion. They also held that place which was sanctified by his presence, as sacred. Because of these reasons and other facilities obtaining in the locality the temple

construction committee selected that spot for building the temple. The great religious reformer Sree Narayana Guru had also found the site quite suitable for the proposed temple. Apart from this, there is some historical importance too for this place. On the site of the present temple there was once a temple known as Nalleeswaram temple. When the ground was dug for laying the foundation for the new temple, ruins of the old temple had been discovered from the place. One of the notable findings obtained from the place was a *Sivalinga* which is now preserved in the *Arat* tank of the temple.

For the construction of this temple, the land was given free by Shri Rarichan Moopan and the money was raised by voluntary contributions from the Thiyya population of Kozhikode. It may be mentioned that very few non-Thiyya Hindus had also contributed their mite towards the construction of this temple. On 12th *Dhanu* 1083 M. E. the foundation-stone was laid for this temple. On 29th *Medom* 1085 M. E. Sree Narayana Guru performed the consecration of the deities of Siva, Subramonia, Ganapathy and Sastha in the temple. It was only at a later time that the deity of Vishnu was installed here, the consecration of which was performed by Sree Govindananda Swamy, the trusted disciple of Sree Narayana Guru. The present prosperous circumstance

attending the temple was largely due to the earnest efforts put in by the Thiyya populace of Kozhikode. Now a special committee is working hard in order to construct a *Chuttambalam*, *Deepastambam*, *Gajendra Mandapam*, *Agrasala* and quarters for the *poojaris*.

Close by the temple, there is a huge hall, costing two lakhs of rupees, called Sree Narayana Centenary Memorial Hall. It was under the auspices of a committee of 25 members with the late Shri W. K. Sankunni as chairman, Shri K. I. Achuthan as secretary and K. Imbichi as treasurer that the hall was constructed. This is let out by the authorities for holding marriages and feasts collecting a nominal rent. At times religious discourses are also held in this hall. The temple tank has been fortified all around with stone walls and barbed wire fencing. The cost of the fortification being met by M.s. P. Kuttan Brothers of Kozhikode. Unlike other temple tanks, the water in this tank is always fresh and pure, because none is allowed to use oil and soap while taking bath in the tank. A watchman is specially posted here to see whether anybody acts otherwise. In the centre of the tank, there is a *Chithra mandapam*. On *Sivarathri* day, it is at this tank, that *Theppotsavam* is celebrated.

The festivals celebrated in this temple are:—

(1) *Viayakachathurthy* on *Chathayam* day in *Chingom* (August-September). Since the deity of Ganapathy has been consecrated here, this day is held sacred and celebrated befittingly.

(2) Sree Krishna Jayanthi on *Ashtami Rohini* day in *Chingom* (August-September).

(3) Sree Narayana Jayanthi on *Chathayam* day in *Chingom* (August-September). This is held in commemoration of the birthday of Sree Narayana Guru.

(4) Sree Narayana Samadhi day on 5th *Kanni* (September-October). The occasion is the death anniversary of Sree Narayana Guru.

(5) *Navarathri* celebrations in *Kanni* (September-October).

(6) *Guruvayoorekadashi* on *Ekadasi* day in *Vrischigom* (November-December). This is celebrated here mainly for those who are not in a position to go to Guruvayoor to participate in the *Ekadasi* celebrations there.

(7) *Thaippooyam Utsavam* on *Pooyam* asterism in *Makaram* (January-February). It is because Subramonia is installed here that this *Utsavam* is conducted here.

(8) *Makara Vilakku* on 1st of *Makaram* (January-February).

(9) *Sivarathri* in *Kumbhom* (February-March).

Of all these festivals, *Sivarathri* is the grandest celebration because the presiding deity of the temple is Lord Siva. Several lakhs of people participate in these celebrations. All the above mentioned festivals except *Navarathri* and *Sivarathri* which last for three and seven days respectively, are conducted for one day each. The main attractions of these festivals are the colourful procession led by caparisoned elephants and followed by *Nagaswaram*, *Chendamelom* and other musical instruments. The other highlights of the festivals are *Thayambaka*, *Kathaprasangam*, *Ottam thullal*, *Dance*, *Theppotsavam* held in the *Chitra Mandapam* in the temple tank, *Palli Vetta*, *Arat* and grand display of pyrotechnics. Along with these cultural entertainments, there will be religious discourses by learned theologians also. The fair held in connection with these festivals will deal in all kinds of daily necessities.

The important offerings made to the temple are *Thulabharam* and *Kavadi Abhishekam* performed during *Thaippooyam Utsavam* days. The income derived out of the votive offerings received here alone is insufficient for the actual requirement for the day-to-day maintenance of the temple. The balance will be raised through voluntary contributions from the Thiyya community of Kozhikode.

UTSAVAM IN THE SREE KURUMBA TEMPLE, PARAPPANANGADI

(SHRI A. V. NARAYANAN VAIDYAR)

District	Kozhikode
Taluk	Tirur
Village	Parappanangadi

The Sree Kurumba Kali temple is situated in the Parappanangadi village, Tirur taluk, at a distance of hardly one furlong to the west from the Parappanangadi railway station. Following is the legend regarding the origin of this temple.

Once, an unknown Brahman came to the Parappanat palace. The members of the royal family did not treat him with due honour. Greatly disappointed, the Brahman returned from the palace and sat brooding over his fate, at a spot called *Konna-mangalam*, the place where the temple is located, which was then a dense forest roamed about only by wild animals. No sooner did the Brahman leave the palace precincts than the members of the royal household fell a prey to the dangerous epidemic of small-pox. On enquiry, it was understood that the reason for the sudden attack was the ill-treatment meted out to the Brahman by the royal personages. Thereupon they searched for the Brahman and begged him to forgive the wrong done to him. Forgiving their wrong, the Brahman informed them that goddess Bhadrakali had also come along with him, and that therefore they should give away those forest lands where he had been resting for some time for the goddess and construct a temple

for her. Accordingly the Parappanat Raja donated the entire forest area extending to nearly 50 acres to that Brahman for goddess Bhadrakali, constructed a temple there and dedicated it to the goddess. All the documents pertaining to that plot of land are even now in the name of Sree Kurumba Kali. The above mentioned Brahman, afterwards, married a woman from the Ezhava community. Even at present it is their progenies who are the *Ooralers* of the temple. When the Brahman later met with his *Samadhi* near this temple, another temple has been erected there, probably by his heirs. Safron cloths, fowls, goats, a good variety plantain called *Poovan*, are the special offerings made at this temple.

The annual festival of this temple takes place on any two convenient days during the month of *Makaram* (January-February) or *Kumbhom* (February-March). The assemblage attending the festival will roughly come to 1,000. *Chenda vadyam*, *Pancha-vadyam*, caparisoned elephants, *Kuthira-kettu*, *Thalapoli* etc. are some of the highlights of the festival. Sweetmeats, fruits and stationery goods are the important commodities marketed in the fair held in connection with this festival.

**NALANKARI UTSAVAM IN THE SHOBHAPARAMBU BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE,
RAYIRIMANGALAM**

(VALIAPURAKKAL VELAYUDHAN AVEN)

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
Tirur
Rayirimangalam

This temple belongs to Thiyyas by title. It is believed that the deity of this temple, Sree Kurumba Bhagavathy, was brought here long ago by a woman by worshipping Sree Bhagavathy of Cranganore. The religious services are conducted by a member of the Thiyya community known by his titular name Aven. This right is hereditary to the family of Aven.

The important festival of this temple is known as *Kalankari* to which no religious occasion is attributed. The festival is celebrated on the last day of *Mandalavriatham* (41 days' fast) commencing on 1st *Vrischigom*. But as the celebrations ought to be only on Tuesday or Friday, it will be extended at times by two or three days.

The celebrations are financed by raising contribution from the five *desoms* affiliated

to the temple. The temple has no funds of its own.

The function called *Kalankari* and the *Thalapoli* procession are held by Thiyya women. On the festival day, Harijans disguise themselves as *Kattalan*, *Bhutam*, *Kala* etc. At night Thiyya women conduct the function called *Kalankari* in the house of the Aven. At about 4 o'clock in the morning, the Aven proceeds from his house to the temple escorted by the *Thalapoli* procession, circumambulates the temple thrice, ascends the pedestal and conducts the dance and other acts. With this the festival concludes. There will be a fairly good display of pyrotechnics also.

The important offerings in this temple are flags, tender cocoanuts, fowls etc.

UTSAVAM IN THE SIVA TEMPLE, TRIKKANDIYUR

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
Tirur
Trikkandiyur

This temple is dedicated to Lord Siva. The idol, a monolithic lingam-shaped piece about three feet in height, is supposed to be installed by Parasurama of old. Parasurama being an enemy of royalty i.e., Kshatriyas, old symbols of royalty such as elephant, fireworks, *Rathams* etc. are taboo. The deity is taken in procession, only borne by men who are specially attached to the temple for the purpose. *Vavutsavam* (New Moon Festival) the chief

and important festival of the temple, comes off in the Malayalam month of *Thulam*; it lasts for seven days, and on the eighth day the deity is taken out in a procession to a nearby Bhagavathy Kavu with all pomp and show, the presiding deity of which is supposed to be his consort. It is also believed that at Ambalakulangara another Bhagavathy Kavu on the way to the consort is Lord Siva's daughter so much so that all the pomp and show of the marital pro-

UTSAVAM IN THE KALIKAVU, PARAPPANANGADI

cession are shed when it reaches this spot so as to give the daughter the slip and the procession continues in a humbler style.

This temple belonged to Vettathnad Raja whose family became extinct and the property escheated to Government and the then ruling Britishers entrusted this temple along with some others to the Zamorin of Calicut

as a trustee to manage the institution. There are other subdeities in the temple, such as Ganesan, Vishnu, Parasuraman and Mahakalan. Daily there are three *poojas* and one *Deeparchana*. This is considered to be one of the few most important and holiest of Siva temples in Kerala.

UTSAVAM IN THE KALIKAVU, PARAPPANANGADI

(SHRI K. P. RAVUNNI)

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
Tirur
Neduva

The Kalikavu *Devaswom* which is dedicated to goddess Bhagavathy is situated in the Neduva village of the Tirur taluk, hardly half a mile from the Parappanangadi railway station. It was founded about 150 years ago by the great grandfather of this author Shri Chathu. He was a devotee of Bhagavathy. One day Devi appeared to him and gave him her blessings. Greatly delighted over his *darshan* of Devi, he constructed a temple and installed the goddess in it. The consecration ceremony was performed by a Namboothiri of the Chiramangalath *Illom*. On the festival day, it is from this *Illom* that *Kulasam* is brought to the temple.

The most important festival of this temple is the *Thalapoli* in *Makaram* (January-February) which is celebrated for two days on second Tuesday and Wednesday of the month. The occasion of this festival is the foundation day of the temple. About 1,000 people use to participate in this festival. The other less important festivals of the temple are *Ayyappan Vilakku* and *Vavu Utsavam*. Of these, the *Ayyappan Vilakku* is conducted in the month of *Idavam* (May-June) and *Vavu Utsavam* is held in *Thulam* (October-November). Since these festivals are not celebrated on a grand scale usually the attendance for the same is very thin.

MALAPPURAM NERCHA

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
Ernad
Malappuram

Years ago, one of the female dependants of Para Nambissan, a petty chieftain of Malappuram, was taken away by the local

Muslims as a slave. Para Nambissan who could not bear this ignominy done to him wanted to wreak vengeance upon the

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOZHIKODE DISTRICT

culprits. He therefore sent for Marakkar, the leader of the local Muslims, only to be questioned and killed. Marakkar at first refused to meet Para Nambissan but later went to him, escorted by his aids, fully prepared for a fight. At the time when they reached the residence of Para Nambissan he was taking rest on the upstairs of his mansion reclining on a cot. Marakkar jumped up and dashed his sword against Para Nambissan, but the latter miraculously escaped from the cut, his cot only being smashed to pieces. Soon after, he came downstairs mustering up courage

and his men to meet his enemy Marakkar. In the fierce fight that ensued, many lost their lives on both sides. In memory of the devoted Muslim leaders who gave up their lives during this fight, a *Nercha* is conducted every year, either in February or in March, near the Mosque at Malappuram.

Processions coming from the neighbouring villages bringing with them *Nercha* boxes to the tuning of instrumental music and other entertaining items, are the highlights of this *Nercha*. The participants usually come to about 1 lakh in number.

Based on the information furnished by the Commissioner, H. R. & C. E. (Admn.) Department, Kerala, Trivandrum.

FEAST IN THE ST. JOSEPH'S SHRINE, MEPPADI

(FR. G. SEQUEIRA)

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
S. Wynad
Muppainad

The annual feast of the shrine of St. Joseph at Meppadi is celebrated with befitting solemnity on the last Sunday of January every year. On this occasion a big fair takes place near the Shrine. Temporary tea-shops and hotels are erected and eatables, fancy dresses, religious articles etc. are sold.

The shrine was built in 1936 by the late Rev. Father Antony A. Machado of happy memory on a hill at the 49th mile on the Calicut-Ootty road. Father Machado had made a vow to St. Joseph, that if he was cured of the malignant malaria of which he was suffering, he would dedicate the remaining of his life in propagating his devotion. The saint heard his prayer and the father was completely cured. Therefore he bought some jungle land, which was widely inhabited by elephants, cleared it and built the shrine of St. Joseph in a modest way.

From 1936 onwards the feast has been celebrated every year on the hill with great solemnity. On the eve of the feast the statue of St. Joseph is carried in procession from the parochial church to the shrine. On the feast day thousands of pilgrims visit the shrine bringing their votive offerings. After the Solemn Mass, meals are served to the pilgrims and to the poor. In the afternoon there is usually a variety entertainment attended by many people of all castes and creeds. After the entertainment the petitions and intentions placed at the shrine are burnt and then there is a grand procession with lights from the hill to the parish church passing through the main street of Meppadi, headed by the band. Usually an elephant tops the procession carrying the banner of St. Joseph. At least ten thousand people take part in this procession which is followed by fireworks.

UTSAVAM IN THE POKILI SREE RAMA TEMPLE

(SHRI P. KANARI)

District
Taluk
Village

Kozhikode
South Wynad
Noolpuzha

The Ponkili temple dedicated to Sree Rama is situated in the Noolpuzha village of the South Wynad taluk. The important festival of the temple is *Ponkili Utsavam* celebrated for two days on 23rd and 24th of *Kumbhom* (February-March) in memory of the *Seetha Parithyagom* (desertion of Seetha by Sree Rama). More than 1,500 people participate in this festival.

On his victorious return after the execution of Ravana, Sree Rama, fearing public slander, was forced to abandon his spouse Seetha Devi. For this purpose he employed his brother Laxmana who took Seetha Devi to the hermitage of Valmiki and abandoned her there. It is said that it was at this place that Seetha Devi sat down and lamented over her plight after Laxmana left her alone there.

The temple is built in granite stones including its roofing. At the four corners above the roof a tiger each is sculptured in granite. In the inner square of this at each corner the image of a female devotee is also seen. These are also in granite. Close by the temple, there is a huge banyan tree. On one side of the temple is running the rivulet Noolpuzha and on the other side the Kozhikode-Mysore highway. About 20 yards from the foot of the banyan tree is situated the holy spot where it is supposed that Seetha had sat and wailed. As though to substantiate this fact, there is still to be seen the ruins of an ancient temple in the midst of a thicket lying about one furlong from the temple site. It is also believed that the hermit Valmiki had been dwelling in this place.

The sage Valmiki who chanced to see Seetha in a miserable condition consoled

her and took her to his hermitage. It is said to be at this place that Lava and Kusha were born to Seetha. These young boys were trained as great archers under the tutelage of Valmiki. When the *Yagaswan* (the sacrificial horse) of Sree Rama came that way Lava caught hold of the animal and tied it on a near-by tree. This place where Lava is believed to have seized the horse is known by the name Alinkazhakom which lies at the 69.2 milestone on the Kozhikode-Mysore road. Of the two days celebration in the temple the last day's festival i.e., on the 24th *Kumbhom*, is held at this place. Sree Rama who came to know of the seizure of his horse sent his army to regain it, but in the fierce battle that ensued Lava took Hanuman, the famous monkey-king of Ramayana, as a prisoner. Seetha who came to know of the arrest of Hanuman arrived at the scene and released him from captivity. Ere long, Sree Rama also rushed to the scene where he chanced to meet his consort Seetha and to know her story from the sage Valmiki. Sree Rama tried in vain to reunite with Seetha, for she instantaneously vanished from the world and joined with the mother earth. Thereupon the sage Valmiki consecrated Sree Rama at Ponkili and Seetha at the place where she had sat and mourned.

On the festival day, a procession starts from the place called Kalloor which will be received at the premises of the Vellattom temple. On that occasion the villagers will dance with great rejoicings. At dawn, a *Kettiyattam* (dance in the dress of Gods) will be performed in honour of Sree Rama representing him as Athiralan Swamy. At this time, special *poojas* will be offered both

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF KOZHIKODE DISTRICT

in the Ponkili temple and at the small temple where Seetha has been consecrated and venerated. Besides, a *Kettiyattam* called *Thampuratti* representing Seetha and other *Vettiyattam* like Kalimala Thampuran, Manmathan, Kaudampuli, Arivilli and Pottan Daivan also are held. These are performed in the temple at Alinkazhakam also. On the eve of the celebrations at Alinkazhakam, there will be a

large hunting expedition. On the night of the festival day a grand feast is also held. This ancient practice is still continued. During certain years this hunting expedition is not held due to the imposition of restrictions by the Forest department.

The important votive offerings made by the villagers at this temple for obtaining various favours are *Payasanivedyam*, *Pushpanjali*, *Midiyedulal* etc.

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF CANNANORE DISTRICT

CANNANORE DISTRICT

PLACES OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS WITH
CONGREGATION OF 12,000 AND OVER

UTSAVAM IN THE GUTHIAMMA BHAGAVATHY TEMPLE, MANJESHWAR

District
Taluk
Village

Cannanore
Kasaragod
Bangramanjeshwar

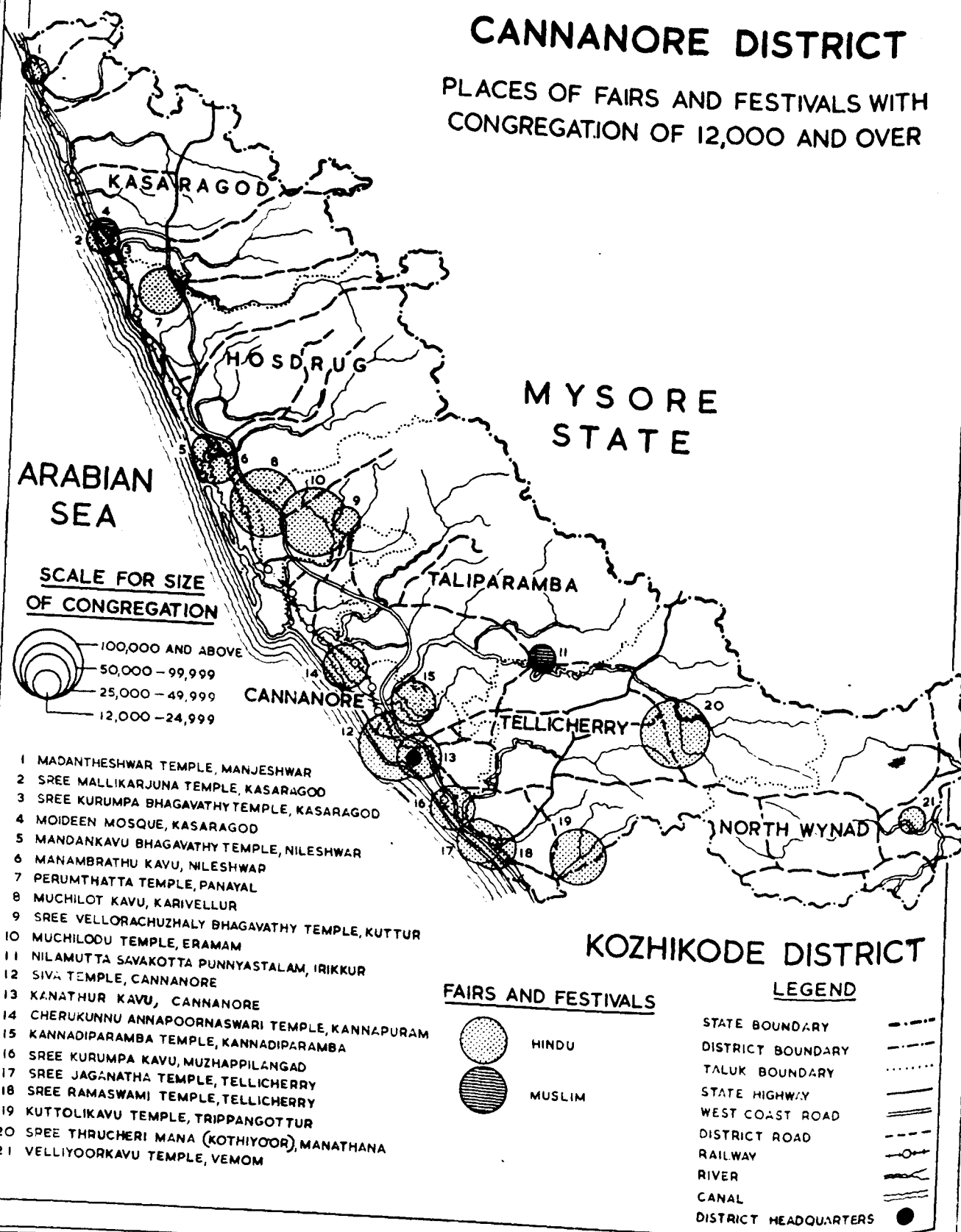
The Guthiamma Bhagavathy temple is situated in the Bangramanjeshwar village of the Kasaragod taluk. Although no authentic records are available to prove its antiquity, according to popular belief, it is said to have been in existence even before 500 years now. Every year two festivals are held in this temple. The one, the Nadavally *Utsavam* is celebrated for one day, while the other, the Bharany *Utsavam* which is the important festival of this temple, is conducted for seven days. On a scrutiny of the records, it is seen that the Bharany *Utsavam* was celebrated in the olden days only for five days and that the seven days' celebration was instituted only since 100 years ago. Presumably this change in the conduct of the *Utsavam* would have been effected in order to suit the changing conditions. This *Utsavam* is held in the temple according to the following programme.

7th day Lowering the flag and the return of *Pandaram*

When the Devas and Rishis were no more able to suffer the harassment of the demon Darika, they related their tales of woe to Lord Siva and begged him to redress their grievances. Lord Siva opened his sacred third eye when goddess Bhagavathy appeared before him. She killed the demon and brought relief and happiness to the Devas and Rishis. It is to commemorate this event that the *Bharany* festival is celebrated in this temple.

Legend has it that goddess Bhagavathy once came to the Bangalachithra Bavanna hill accompanied by her retinue and settled on the hill. It was during the days of the Bangadi Rajas or immediately before their time that the present site was chosen for the temple. Once a deep ravine, this place was levelled up with earth and made suitable for building the temple. Blessed by the goddess and assisted by the Bangadi Rajas, the eight *Illoms* of Thiyyas (eight sub-castes of Thiyyas) of the locality adopted Bhagavathy as their fostering deity. The local people believe that it is by the blessings of goddess Bhagavathy that they are saved from epidemics like small-pox. They also believe that those who take refuge at the Kannila hills and pay homage to the goddess will never fail to receive her blessings.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1st day | <i>Pandura Varavu</i> and hoisting the flag |
| 2nd day | <i>Bootha bali</i> and <i>Pookalam</i> |
| 3rd day | <i>Amrithakalasam</i> and <i>Ayiramthiri</i> |
| 4th day | <i>Talapoli</i> and <i>Chathurakalam</i> |
| 5th day | <i>Betty</i> of the <i>Batajamalinge-swaran</i> and <i>Deeparadhana</i> |
| 6th day | <i>Amrithakalasam</i> , <i>Sarpakalam</i> and <i>Ayiramthiri</i> |



UTSAVAM IN THE KANATHUR MAHALINGESWARA TEMPLE

(SHRI P. KELU NAIR)

District
Taluk
Village

Cannanore
Kasaragod
Muliyar

The Kanathur Mahalingeswara temple is situated in the Muliyar village of the Kasaragod taluk within a distance of 13 miles from the Kasaragod railway station. According to tradition the place had originally the name Kanakathur because it was there that Kanaka Maharshi performed *tapas* (penance) in ancient days. In course of time Kanakathur became Kanathur.

The temple which is dedicated to Mahalingeswara stands on an elevated spot. The reason for the temple being located so is attributed to the wrath of Ganapathy against Kanaka Maharshi for consecrating Mahalingeswara first overlooking his prime importance. As a result, the nearby lands eroded and became low.

Long ago a monarch of the Chirakkal Kulam had reigned over this place. He had a minister from Kadathanad. When the Mysore ruler conquered his territory, he fled from the palace bequeathing his palace and kingdom to his minister. The temple now

belongs to the progenies of the above mentioned minister.

One of the territorial limits of Kanathur is *Chandran para*. Mythologically it is believed that even before the deity of Mahalingeswara was installed in the temple, Mahalingeswara had come to stay on the *Chandran para*. It is also believed that he was so powerful that he had made a tree to spring up from a burning hearth.

The usual offerings made to this temple are rice, *Payasam*, tender cocoanuts, fowls and *Marthanaiom*.

The annual festival of the temple is *Kaliyattom*, celebrated for two days in *Vrischigom* attended by about two thousand people. It is held in commemoration of the consecration of Mahalingeswara. The main attraction of the festival is *Theyyam thullal* done by the Malayar and Kovalar people. There will be a grand pyrotechnic display also in connection with the festival.

PATTU UTSAVAM IN THE PODAVADUKKAM TEMPLE

(SHRI VENGAYIL KANNAN NAIR)

District
Taluk
Village

Cannanore
Hosdrug
Belur

The Podavadukkam Sastha temple is situated in the Belur village of the Hosdrug taluk. It is a private temple belonging to the local Vengayil family. Years ago, one of the heads of this family used to go to Keezhoor daily and offer worship to Sastha

in the temple there. He had to overcome many hardships for offering worship to Sastha at Keezhoor, for he had to trek for about 15 miles to reach there. Even then, he kept going on there daily.

As years went by, he became old and

FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, PAYYAVOOR

weak. It was very difficult for him to undertake a long journey every day to Keezhoor to worship his fostering deity. For several days he remained at Keezhoor in meditation and prayers. But he felt sorry that he was not in a position to remain there for long and therefore he prayed to the Lord that he should be given facilities to offer worship to him from his native place itself. For a number of days he prayed with intense feelings, sometimes even foregoing drinks and food. One night while he was lying asleep at the temple premises, the Lord appeared to him and told him, 'you need not take so much trouble hereafter to offer worship to me. You may now return to your native place. There you will see a green arrow fixed on the ground. You may consecrate me there'. Saying this the Lord disappeared from the scene. Accordingly the old man returned to his

native place, happy and gay, and reached his native place Podavadukkam early morning the next day. At the place where he spotted the arrow, he installed the idol of Lord Sastha.

It was on the first Saturday of a certain month of *Vrischigom* that the old man saw the green arrow. The first Saturday in *Vrischigom* is, therefore, held an auspicious day in this temple. On that day, a good number of devotees will bring their votive offerings to this temple.

Lord Sastha was consecrated in this temple during the first, second and third days of *Dhanu*. To commemorate this event, annually a *Pattu Utsavam* is held here on these days. A crowd of 5,000 usually take part in this *Utsavam*. A fair is also held during these festival days in which the important commodities brought for sale are cane, earthenwares etc.

FEAST IN THE ST. SEBASTIAN'S CHURCH, PAYYAVOOR

(FR. CYRIAC KOOPLICAT)

District
Taluk
Village

Cannanore
Taliparamba
Eruvassi

The St. Sebastian's Church of Payyavoor is situated in the Eruvassi village of the Taliparamba taluk at a distance of 32 miles from the Cannanore railway station. Annually two feasts are celebrated in this church, namely the Feast of Mary Immaculate and the Feast of St. Sebastian.

Feast of Mary Immaculate

This feast is celebrated here under the auspices of the pious association called *Darsana Samuham*. The feast is celebrated for four consecutive days and is arranged in such a way as to end on the Sunday following 8th December. All the members of the *Darsana Samuham* attend High Mass and other religious functions donning a special kind of dress called *Oppa* and *Moris*.

On the previous (i.e. Saturday) evening there will be Vespers sung by three priests. The members of the association and other parishioners make their confessions and receive Communion on these days.

Feast of St. Sebastian

This feast is celebrated in the church on the last Sunday of January. It starts on Thursday. On Saturday there is procession from the grotto of Our Lady at Kandakacherry. A solemn *Rasa* is sung on the feast day. There will be many communicants on these days.

Many domestic articles such as pots and plates are sold in the fair held in connection with the above feasts.

UTSAVAM IN THE SREEKRISHNASWAMY TEMPLE, TRICHAMBARAM

(MANAGER, TRICHAMBARAM DEVASWOM)

District	Cannanore
Taluk	Taliparamba
Village	Taliparamba

The Trichambaram temple, dedicated to Sree Krishna, is located in the Taliparamba village of the Taliparamba taluk, about 8 miles away from the Pappinisseri railway station. The story goes that long ago a Brahman who was an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna lived in Pookoth Illom near Pookoth Nada. He used to go to the Trichambaram temple daily to offer prayers to the deity. When he became old, he found it extremely tiresome to walk the distance all the way from his home to the temple, and offer worship there. Therefore he prayed to the deity to help him to see the Lord every day till his demise. Lord Krishna who is well known for his benevolence took pity on his devotee and decided to visit him at his residence. It was the time of the annual festival of the temple. Priests who were carrying the idol that day, by some inspiration, ran to Pookoth Nada with the idol and started dancing in front of the Brahman devotee's house. In commemoration of this event a festival is held in this temple every year extending over 14 days from 22nd *Kumbhom* to 6th *Meenam*.

At Mazhoor (Dharmakulangara), a place lying near Trichambaram, there is a temple dedicated to Sree Balarama. At night on the 22nd of *Kumbhom*, the deity of Balarama will be taken out in procession from there and brought to the Trichambaram temple. As soon as it is brought there the festival begins in that temple. All other rituals are performed in the temple on equal footing to Lords Krishna and Balarama who are brothers. The relationship between these two brother Lords is so close that they are not likely to be separated. On the 6th of *Meenam*, the last day of the festival, the idols of Sree Krishna and Balarama will be taken ceremoniously, the *Santhees* performing dance with the idols on their heads. When Lord Krishna notices the milk bowl carried ceremoniously in the evening he retreats to his abode (Trichambaram Temple) while his brother Balarama returns to his resort, Dharmakulangara temple, marking the end of the festival.

A peculiar feature of this festival is that no elephant is engaged for the procession. About 8,000 people participate in the festival.

UTSAVAM IN THE ARANGAN MAHADEVA TEMPLE

(SHRI V. NARAYANAN)

District	Cannanore
Taluk	Taliparamba
Village	Thadikkadavu

The Arangan Mahadeva temple is situated 32 miles away from the Baliapatom railway station, in the Thadikkadavu

village of the Taliparamba taluk. Tradition has it that in olden days this temple and its surroundings were in the possession of the

OOTTU IN THE SIVA TEMPLE, PAYYAVOOR

Paithracommans, an ancient Kshatriya family of the village. Later, the temple came to the possession of their descendants, the Eettisseri Kaimals. During Tipu's invasion of Kerala, the temple fell under ruins. It was recently that Poonjar Koi-kkal Shri P. R. Rama Varma Raja took up the management of the temple, renovated it and revived religious services therein.

Ruins of a good number of caves, wells and tanks have been found out in the vicinity of this temple. From these have been obtained a large number of vessels made of brass and bell-metal and also tools

and implements of various types which are believed to be as old as 800 years. Therefore it is more likely that the locale of the temple would have been a thickly populated region and the inhabitants a highly civilized people too.

The annual *Utsavam* of the temple is celebrated in *Makarom* for eight days, the *Arat* falling on the *Thiruvathira* asterism. The main attraction of this *Utsavam* are *Kathakali*, *Thullal*, procession with caparisoned elephant, musical orchestra etc. The congregation attending the *Utsavam* will come to about 10,000 persons.

OOTTU IN THE SIVA TEMPLE, PAYYAVOOR

(SUB-INSPECTOR SREEKANTAPURAM)

District	Cannanore
Taluk	Taliparamba
Village	Eruvassi

There is a famous temple at Payyavoor in Eruvassi village, Taliparamba taluk, dedicated to Lord Siva. The mythological version about this temple goes as follows. Arjuna, the epic hero of the Mahabharatha, was deeply immersed in *Tapas* (penance) when Siva's consort Sree Parvathi approached him and wanted him to break his penance. But the former who could not appreciate such a request drove Parvathy away from the place. Parama Siva who came to know this disgrace done to his

consort became so furious that he appeared before Arjuna and kicked him off from the heavens. As a result, Arjuna fell to the earth, presumably at the site of the present Payyavoor temple.

Every year, in commemoration of the above event, an *Utsavam* is celebrated here in *Kumbhom* (February-March) attended by about 1,000 persons. This is known as Payyavoor *Oottu*. During this *Utsavam*, the local Nairs bring ghee to the temple and offer special worship to Lord Siva.

UTSAVAM IN THE VADAKKEKAVU, PATTUVAM

(SHRI T. V. ACHUTHAN NAIR)

District
Taluk
Village

Cannanore
Taliparamba
Pattuvam

The Vadakkekavu, Pattuvam, situated three and half miles away from the Pazhayangadi railway station, is a centuries-old temple. The main deity of the temple is Varahi. Besides, Chamundi and Narasimhamoorthy have also been consecrated in the temple. In the year 1961, the old dilapidated *Sreekovil* was renovated by the members of the local Thazhathu veedu family to whom belongs the temple.

The following is the legend relating to the origin of this temple. Years back, a warrior-chieftain of Kolathunad by name Ponnarathachan had gone to the north, to the Thulu Nadu, to get himself trained in the art of fencing. He was such an ardent devotee of goddess Bhagavathy that he wanted to consecrate her in his fencing school as his fostering deity. On his way back to his native place, he happened to spend one night at the residence of Thazhathu veedu family who were the most distinguished persons of the locality. Next morning when he set out to continue his journey, it was found that his umbrella and walking stick could not be lifted from the

ground. It was revealed through astrological predictions that goddess Bhagavathy had willed to be consecrated at that place where the temple stands today. Accordingly the Thazhathu veedu family people constructed the temple. The Bhagavathy is known as Panchali.

Pooja is not performed daily at this temple. Every month, on the last Friday, at midnight, a ritualistic ceremony known as *Mudi*, is performed here. A sum of Rs. 45/- or so will be incurred for the conduct of this ceremony which is usually held by the *Ooralers* of the temple. Occasionally devotees perform the *Mudi pooja* as their votive offerings to the deity.

The annual *Utsavam* of the temple which falls in the month of Kumbhom (February-March) is held for six days from 12th to 17th of the month. More than 10,000 people participate in this *Utsavam*. Usually the commodities that are sold in the fair attached to the *Utsavam* are earthen wares, screwpine mats, iron materials, textile goods, bangles etc.

UTSAVAM IN THE SREE SUNDARESWARA TEMPLE, CANNANORE

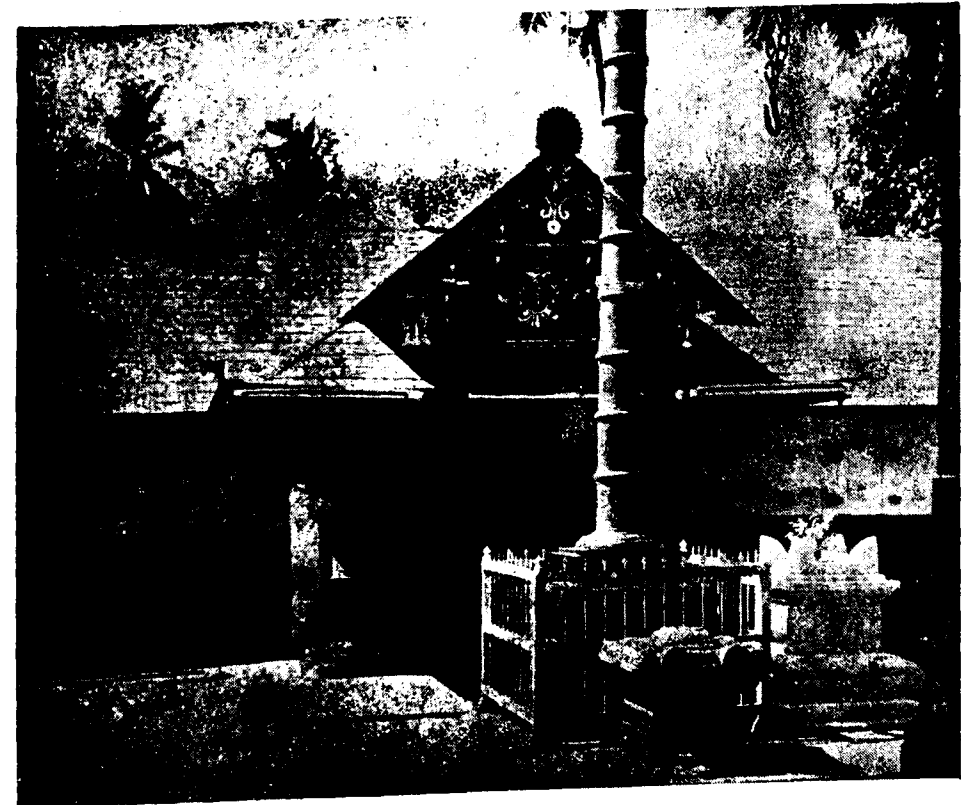
(SHRI V. GOVINDAN)

District
Taluk
Town

Cannanore
Cannanore
Cannanore

Sree Sundareswara temple was founded on 16th April 1916 by the late His Holiness Sree Narayana Guru of Sivagiri Mutt. Siva is the deity worshipped and *Sivalinga*

is the idol to which daily *pooja* is performed. The temple is open to all without any difference of caste or creed. According to the express wish of the Guru, the premises



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SREE SUNDARESWARA TEMPLE, CANNANORE



Pl. 97 KANATHUR KAVU — CHAMUNDI THEYYATTAM P. 382



Pl. 98

KANATHUR KAVU — BHAGAVATHI THEYYATTAM



Pl. 99

KANATHUR KAVU THEYYATTAM — 'THOTTAM CHOLLAL'

UTSAVAM IN THE KANATHUR KAVU, CANNANORE

of the temple are kept scrupulously clean. Situated as it is by the side of a long stretch of fields, it is breezy and an ideal place for quiet and peaceful retreat.

Every year in the month of *Meenam* (March-April) the annual festival of the temple is conducted for eight days. Thousands of people assemble every day for the festival and spend the evenings and major portions of the nights witnessing the daily

processions of the deity on caparisoned elephants, listening to the music of the pipe by some illustrious artiste, enjoying the fun and fair held in the adjacent field and also attending the public speeches or musical and other art performances arranged in connection with the festival. This festival has become one of the annual attractions of Cannanore and its suburbs.

UTSAVAM IN THE KANATHUR KAVU, CANNANORE

(SHRI V. GOVINDAN)

District
Taluk
Town

Cannanore
Cannanore
Cannanore

Kanathur *Kavu* (temple) is an ancient Hindu religious institution in the heart of Cannanore. The annual festival is held for three days towards the end of February.

Originally the *Kavu* was started as a temple of Mahadevi, the goddess, worshipped under different names all over Malabar. Later Devathar representing Sree Rama of Ramayana has also been installed. The popular belief is that the temple is more than 1,200 years old. Till recently worship of the goddess included animal sacrifice of fowls and goats.

There is a legend explaining how the goddess came to the temple. After putting an end to all *Rakshasas*, Mahadevi went on a pilgrimage visiting several holy places of importance in expiation of her cruel deeds. She visited the Katalayi temple of Cannanore and from there came to the present site of the Kanathur *Kavu*. She was tired of walking and sat down under a cocoanut palm, on the top of which a man of the Thiyya community was tapping for toddy. Particles of toddy fell upon the Devi's

umbrella and she became very angry. The man was terrified and hid himself among the leaves of the tree. Devi made the tree bend down and thus brought the offender before her. He fell at her feet and requested for pardon and the Devi was pleased. She asked him for two tender cocoanuts to quench her thirst. The compound belonged to Kanakathur Kaikollar, a *Savarna* chief and if the man plucked tender cocoanuts without permission, he would be hanged. But the Devi made a loop out of thorny bushes and asked the man to climb up and pluck two tender cocoanuts. The man obeyed and being satisfied the Devi blessed him and went away.

The Kanakathur Kaikollar charged the man with theft, had him dragged through thorny bushes and finally hanged. The dead body was eaten away by birds and animals. The parents, wife and children of the man wept aloud. From Brahmans who talked about this disaster, Mahadevi came to know about it. She at once reached Kanakathur,

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF CANNANORE DISTRICT

assembled parts of the dead body scattered by birds and animals, meditated upon Siva, her father, got *Amritha Kumbham* from him and sprinkled it over the remnants of the dead body and the man came back to life. He was given the name of Konkannan Ayathan (squint eyed priest of Devi).

Mahadevi left the place, but her curse lay upon the family of Kanakathur Kaikollar. Several of the members died of small-pox. The Kaikollar consulted an astrologer who told him of Devi's anger and advised him to seek the help of Konkannan Ayathan. On condition that he would be given a grand welcome with gold and silver, the Ayathan agreed to help. He entered

the house of the Kaikollar where there were fourteen dead bodies. All the bodies were buried in the central room of the house and that place became the abode of the Devi. That is the present temple (*Kavu*) of the Mahadevi.

During the annual festival in April thousands of people gather to see the *Theyyattam*, dance recital of Mahadevi and Devathar and other gods.

Of course, we are unable to take the story given above as true. It is a mere legend popularly believed by the ignorant and the superstitious. But the fact remains that Kanathur *Kavu* is popular and there are several devotees who worship there.

UTSAVAM IN THE SUBRAMONIA TEMPLE, PERALASSERI

(MANAGER, PERALASSERI TEMPLE)

District
Taluk
Village

Cannanore
Cannanore
Makreri

The Subramonia temple, Peralasseri, generally known as Sree Peralasseri temple, is situated in Makreri village in Cannanore taluk. Though the temple is dedicated to Sree Subramonia, other deities viz., Sree Ganapathy and Sree Ayyappan are also worshipped here.

The legendary belief is that this is one of the most important temples established by Sree Rama. The remnants of art found here signify the antiquity and importance of the temple. The paintings and carvings in the *Sreekovil* (Sanctuary) deserve special mention, a large portion of which has been lost due to ravages of time and renovations.

A legend says that Sree Hanuman who went to fetch the idol for enthronement was late and therefore Sree Rama took a bangle from his arm and enthroned it at the fixed time. The bangle was a twisted one (*Piriyavalala*). The temple, was, therefore, called

Peruvalasseri temple, which name, in course of time, changed to the present name Peralasseri.

The festival celebrated in this temple is Skanda *Shashthi*. As the temple was established by Sree Rama in *Threthayuga*, the day is not known correctly. The celebration is on full moon *Shashthi* day in *Vrischigom* (November-December).

The most important offering in this temple is Subramonia *pooja*. Another important offering is *Sarpabali pooja* which is a prayer of the devotees to appease the *nagas* (snakes.) This is also done by offering flowers. The importance of snakes in this temple is based on the mythological belief that Sree Subramonia went about disguised as a snake. There are also other kinds of *Vazhipadus* and prayers offered in the temple. About 15,000 people attend the festival.

UTSAVAM IN THE JAGANNATH TEMPLE, TELlicherry

District
Taluk
Town

Cannanore
Tellicherry
Tellicherry

One of the early British settlements in Malabar, Tellicherry is famous as a place of historical importance. It was from here that Duke of Willingdon directed his military operations against that great patriot Pazhassi Raja. About three miles south of Tellicherry lies the Jagannath Temple Gate railway station. Situated closeby this railway station is the famous Jagannath temple dedicated to Lord Siva. Simple in structure, the temple is located on a raised ground in the centre of paddy fields. In addition to Lord Siva, Subramonia and Ganesha have also been consecrated in the temple. The consecration was performed about 58 years ago by the great religious reformer Sree Narayana Guru. A bronze

image of Sree Narayana Guru which had been cast by an Italian sculptor by name Thavarelli is installed on the northern side of the temple on a pedestal rising above the temple tank. This statue was unveiled as early as in 1927.

Pooja is performed in the temple strictly in accordance with Hindu observances. It is not performed by Brahmans. The temple is administered by Sri Gnanodaya Yogam, a registered society of Thiyyas of North Malabar. The temple is open to all castes.

The annual festival in this temple takes place in *Kumbhom* (February-March) for eight days. Thousands of devotees from all over the south would gather here during the festive days and participate in the festival.

Based mainly on an article by Shri Murkoth Srinivasan in the Sunday Standard dated 21-2-1965.

THIRAYATTOM IN THE KOYITHATTA TEMPLE

(SHRI N. KOYITHATTA)

District
Taluk
Village

Cannanore
Tellicherry
Vadakumbad

The Koyithatta temple dedicated to Sree Porkali is situated in the Vadakkumbad village of the Tellicherry taluk. This is an ancient temple, believed to have been in existence for more than 500 years. About 200 years ago, this old temple was renovated to its present form. This is a private temple belonging to an influential family of the

village. It is said that there was once a lady in this family who was very proficient in architecture. When the idol that was to be installed in Thrikkaikunnu temple attached to the Kottayam Kovilagam was being taken to that temple for consecration, this lady was able to spot out even from a long distance some defects in the make-up of

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS OF CANNANORE DISTRICT

that idol which rendered it unfit for consecration in the temple. The Raja of Kottayam who came to know of this, called her and wanted to know the reasons for her observation. Immediately she stripped off a part of the idol and showed him a frog inside it. The Raja thus became very much

pleased with her and gave her presents and titles and privileges which are even now enjoyed by her descendants.
The annual festival celebrated here is *Thirayattam* falling on the 19th of *Kumbhom* (February-March). About 500 persons take part in this festival.

GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

<i>Aar</i>	River	<i>Agathimandiram</i>	Orphanage
<i>Abisheka</i>	Ablution; Consecration by sprinkling water; bathing of the divinity	<i>Agni</i>	God of fire
<i>Adhia Brahmanas</i>	A class of aristocratic Namboodiris	<i>Alavattam</i>	A fan made of peacock feathers
<i>Adima</i>	Slave; Also the name given to the custom of offering oneself as ward under the protection of a saint	<i>Allahu Akbar</i>	A form of salutation of Mohammedans meaning God is great
<i>Aditi</i>	The mother of the gods. Aditi is the mother of Daksha according to Rig-veda, the wife of Vishnu according to Yajurveda, the mother of Vishnu according to Mahabharatha and the wife of Kasyapan and the daughter of Daksha according to Vishnupuranam. In the incarnation of Vamana, Aditi was the mother of Vishnu and Indra. Aditi is the protector of the sky and the ruler of the earth. Devaki, the mother of Sree Krishna is the incarnation of Aditi	<i>Altara</i>	Altar
		<i>Althara</i>	A platform-like construction around the foot of a banyan tree
		<i>Alu</i>	Peepal tree
		<i>Ambalavasi</i>	A group of castes whose occupation is temple service and who hold a position in the social scale between the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas on the one hand and Sudras on the other
		<i>Ammachiplavu</i>	Mother jack tree at Neyyattinkara — Maharaja Marthanda Varma of Travancore hid himself in the hole of this jack tree and thus saved his life from his enemies.
		<i>Amman</i>	A form of Goddess Kali worshipped as a village goddess
<i>Advaita</i>	The doctrine of non-duality in Hindu Philosophy according to which the individual human soul and the soul of the Universe are not different but one and the same	<i>Ammankoda</i>	A Hindu festival celebrated in Bhadrakali temples
		<i>Ammankoil</i>	Temple dedicated to the goddess Kali
		<i>Ammankuda</i>	Offering to Amman, A festival in Amman temples

GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

<i>Amrit</i>	Amrosia; that which confers immortality		deity during festivals in Hindu temples
<i>Ana Ezhunnellippu</i>	Procession connected with festivals in Hindu temples in which the deity is taken on the back of elephants	<i>Annamkettu</i>	<i>Annam</i> taken in procession
<i>Anakkottil</i>	Elephant's house, erected in front of temples where elephants remain at the time of procession	<i>Anna nada</i>	Gait of a Swan; A kind of folk dance
<i>Anandavatham</i>	A festival in honour of Anantha Padmanabhaswamy held in some Hindu temples	<i>Apath</i>	Mishap, danger
<i>Ananthasayana</i>	'Lying or reposing on Anantha'; the idol of Padmanabha in the SreePadmanabhaswamy temple, as reposing on the serpent Anantha	<i>Appam (Appom)</i>	Fried cake, bread; A preparation of rice flour, molasses and cocoanut mixed in a certain proportion and fried in cocoanut oil or ghee. This is a favourite dish in Kerala and is largely offered as <i>nivedyam</i> in temples
<i>Anantha Vahanam</i>	A pedestal designed in the form of Anantha the serpent, on which the idol is carried in procession	<i>Apsara</i>	A class of female divinities or nymphs; wives of Gandharvas and very fond of the water
<i>Anchekalum Koppum</i>	Customary present given in money and kind	<i>Aranazhipayasam</i>	A kind of <i>payasam</i> (pudding) offered to the deity in a Hindu temple
<i>Angam</i>	Duel	<i>Arat</i>	Ceremonial bathing in a river; An important festival held on the last day of the <i>utsavam</i> in Hindu temples. The ceremony consists in taking the idol in procession to the nearest tank or river or sea with the accompaniment of instrumental music and washing the image and making oblations to the god in the presence of a large concourse of people. The <i>Arat</i> procession
<i>Anizham</i>	The 17th constellation, Lupus and scorpion's head		
<i>Anjanakal</i>	Antimony sulphate		
<i>Annam</i>	Swan; a huge image of the celestial swan or Brahma's vehicle built of timber and bamboos covered with cloth and tapestry and fitted with wheels to be drawn. Such images are taken in procession to be presented to		

GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

	of the Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple is attended by the Maharaja of Travancore himself.		by pouring rice on the head (corresponding to coronation)
<i>Arattukalasam</i>	Conclusion of <i>Arat</i>	<i>Asari Kali</i>	A cultural entertainment, generally held in connection with festivals in Hindu temples
<i>Aravana</i>	A preparation of rice boiled with ghee and molasses to which plantain fruit and honey are added. It is a favourite offering to Lord Vishnu	<i>Ashindi</i>	A sacrificial lamp
<i>Archana</i>	Worship	<i>Ashtabandha</i>	A particular kind of paste composed of eight ingredients prepared for fixing idols in temples at the time of installation
<i>Archana vigraham</i>	The smaller idol of a deity for temporary worship placed side by side with the main idol	<i>Ashtabanda Kalasam</i>	A <i>Kalasa</i> ceremony in connection with the installation of an idol in a temple, using <i>Ashtabandha</i>
<i>Ardha Kumbamela</i>	A festival celebrated at Thriveni, the confluence of the holy rivers Ganga, Jamuna, and the invisible river Saraswathy	<i>Ashtabhisheka</i>	<i>Abhisheka</i> , by using eight sacred objects of worship, viz., water, milk, curd, honey, ghee, juice of sugarcane, water of tender cocoanut and sandal paste
<i>Ardhanareeswara</i>	God whose half is woman; Lord Mahadeva symbolical of the duality and unity of the generative act and production of the universe from the union of the two eternal elements Prakrithi and Purusha	<i>Ashtadikpalakas</i>	Guardian deities of the eight points according to Hindu mythology, viz., (1) Indra (east), (2) Agni (south-east), (3) Pithrupathi (south), (4) Nirurthi (south-west), (5) Varuna (west), (6) Maruth (north-west), (7) Kubera (north) and (8) Esa (north-east)
<i>Ardra</i>	Same as <i>Thiruvathira</i>	<i>Ashtami</i>	8th lunar day; The eight day of the dark fortnight in the month of <i>Vrischigam</i>
<i>Ardra darshan</i>	A Hindu festival. The day is observed with fasting and prayer to god Siva. It falls in the month of December-January on the day of the <i>Thiruvathira</i> Asterism		
<i>Ardratha</i>	Compassion		
<i>Ariyittuvazhcha</i>	Installation of a Raja		

GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

	is held to be highly sacred to Lord Siva and is celebrated as a festival in the Mahadeva temple, Vaikom on a grand scale	<i>Athachamayam</i>	Adorning oneself for the <i>Atham</i> day. A ceremony observed by the Rajahs of Cochin and the Zamorin of Kozhikode on the <i>Atham</i> day preceding <i>Onam</i> in the month of <i>Chingom</i>
<i>Ashtami Rohini</i>	Also known as Krishna Jayanthi or Jenmashtami. It is celebrated as the birthday of Lord Krishna on the 4th lunar asterism <i>rohini</i> falling on the 8th quarter of the moon, <i>ashtami</i> in the month of <i>Chingom</i>	<i>Atham</i>	The 13th constellation, Coma Berenices
		<i>Atharva Veda</i>	The 4th Veda. This contains prayers and hymns of sorcery or enchantment
<i>Ashtanga Hridaya</i>	A famous work on medicine by Vag Bhatacharya	<i>Athemar</i>	Nambudiri female
		<i>Athira</i>	Same as <i>Thiruvathira</i>
<i>Ashtapadi</i>	The recitation of <i>Ashtapadi</i> songs of Jayadeva's Geethagovinda, a cultural performance in some Hindu temples	<i>Attakalam</i>	A boyish pastime played especially during <i>Onam</i> festival
		<i>Attar</i>	A perfume—Essence of roses
<i>Ashtavaidyas</i>	Eight famous families of physicians in ancient Kerala	<i>Attavishesham</i>	Annual festival
		<i>Avabhrutha Srana</i>	Bath after sacrifice
<i>Ashura</i>	The tenth day; pertaining to the number ten	<i>Avittam</i>	The 23rd asterism, Delphinus
<i>Asrama</i>	Hermitage	<i>Ayiramthiri Pooja</i>	<i>Pooja</i> or worship with a thousand lighted wicks
<i>Asthana mandapa</i>	The pavilion in front of the <i>Sreekovil</i>	<i>Ayudha Pooja</i>	Worship of weapons or tools. The 9th day of <i>Navarathri</i> is observed as a feast in honour of the tools which procure one's livelihood, and on that day tools are worshipped. Hence <i>Navarathri</i> is also called <i>Ayudha Pooja</i>
<i>Asthana mandapa darsanam</i>	Worshipping the deity from the <i>Asthana mandapa</i>		
<i>Asuras</i>	Demons; Enemies of devas		
<i>Aswati</i>	The 1st constellation head of Aries		
<i>Aswina</i>	Seventh month of the lunar year corresponding to September-October	<i>Ayurveda</i>	The <i>Veda</i> of life; One of the four subsidiary <i>vedas</i> of the Hindus forming the medical

GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

	science on which all their treatises on medicine are based	<i>Bharani</i>	The second constellation, Musca Borealis Also a Hindu religious festival
<i>Ayyappan</i>	Lord Sastha	<i>Bhasmabhisheka</i>	Abhisheka of idol with ashes
<i>Ayyappan Vilakku</i>	Festival of lights in an Ayyappa temple	<i>Bhootha bali</i>	Sacrifice to demons
<i>Bali</i>	Offering	<i>Bilwa tree</i>	<i>Crataeva religiosa</i>
<i>Bathees</i>	A long splinter coated with sandalwood paste which gives scented fumes when burnt	<i>Bola-kaly</i>	A form of native game using wooden cylinders about 5" long and weighing about a kilogram
<i>Bhadradeepam</i>	"Auspicious lights." A half yearly religious ceremony conducted in the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Trivandrum in January and July every year	<i>Brahmachari</i>	A Brahman student (Bachelor) undergoing religious instruction under the preceptor
		<i>Brahmahathyapapa</i>	The sin of slaying a Brahman
<i>Bhadrakali Pattu</i>	A religious function conducted usually in Hindu temples or Brahman houses when hymns in praise of Bhadrakali are sung	<i>Brahmani</i>	Brahman woman
		<i>Budhanazhcha Thirunal</i>	Literally means the festival on Wednesday—A feast instituted in the St. Joseph's Church, Pavaratty since 1937
<i>Bhadrpadam</i>	A month (Kanni)		
<i>Bhagavad Darshan</i>	Literally seeing the God—a form of worship in temples	<i>Chadurdesi Pooja</i>	<i>Pooja</i> held on the 14th lunar day as a part of <i>Sivarathri</i> ceremonies
<i>Bhagavan</i>	The adorable	<i>Chakiar</i>	A man of the <i>Ambalavasi</i> caste whose traditional profession is to recite stories from the Puranas to large gatherings especially during temple festivals in Kerala
<i>Bhagavathi kavu</i>	Bhagavathi temple		
<i>Bhagavathi Seva Vazhipad</i>	An offering in the form of <i>Bhagavathi seva</i>		
<i>Bhagavathi Seva</i>	Devotional worship of Bhagavathi	<i>Chakiar Koothu</i>	Recitation of Puranic stories by <i>Chakiar</i> during temple festivals
<i>Bhajan</i>	A form of worship by chanting songs in praise of God	<i>Chakra</i>	Wheel—fiery discus, one of Mahavishnu's weapons
<i>Bhajanamadam</i>	A prayer hall. Also a place within the premises of Hindu temples for the stay of devotees		

GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

<i>Chal</i>	A furrow or channel—Also an observance marking the auspicious commencement of agricultural operations on <i>Vishu</i> day	<i>Chendamelam</i>	An instrumental concert using drums
<i>Chama</i>	<i>Panicum miliaceum</i> , a cereal	<i>Chenda Vadyam</i>	Instrumental orchestra using drums
<i>Champal</i>	Ash	<i>Cheriakuruthi</i>	<i>Kuruthi</i> conducted on a small scale
<i>Chandabhishekam</i>	<i>Abhisheka</i> of idol with <i>chandu</i>	<i>Cherupushpam</i>	Literally little flower. St. Teresa of Lissieux is generally known as the Little flower
<i>Chandala</i>	Low caste	<i>Chettivadyam</i>	A kind of instrumental orchestra
<i>Chandali</i>	Low caste female	<i>Chilambu</i>	Literally foot-trinket filled with pebbles for tinkling worn by dancers—also the ceremony connected with the <i>Kongappada</i> festival
<i>Chandam Charthal</i>	The royal shave preceding a function in which the king has to be present	<i>Chingom</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in August-September
<i>Chandanakudam</i>	A pot smeared with sandalwood paste presented as offering in some mosques	<i>Chirutha vili</i>	Calling the lady in waiting after the royal lunch—a mark of royalty in olden days
<i>Chandattam</i>	Same as <i>Chandabhishekam</i>	<i>Chithira</i>	Also <i>Chitra</i> —The 14th lunar asterism, <i>Spica Virginis</i>
<i>Chandu</i>	Compound ointment of sandal, camphor, musk and saffron	<i>Chokkittamandapam</i>	A hall for playing <i>Chokkitta</i> , a kind of dice
<i>Chathayam</i>	The 24th lunar asterism, three stars in Pegasus	<i>Chorounu</i>	The initial rice giving to a child celebrated by Hindus
<i>Chatti</i>	Earthen pan	<i>Chothi</i>	The 15th lunar asterism, <i>Arcturus</i>
<i>Chattu</i>	A wheeled dais used for <i>thookkam</i>	<i>Chundan Vallam</i>	A kind of locally made race-boat
<i>Chavittunatakam</i>	A form of martial dance-drama depicting stories from the Bible or Church history, enacted by means of rhythmic movements of the limbs especially legs to the tune of the songs, drums and cymbals	<i>Chuttuvilakku</i>	An offering at the Koonan Cross Mattancherry, by lighting the six oil lamps round the Cross
<i>Chedanacharam</i>	Circumcision	<i>Cochu Punniavan</i>	Literally little saint. The name of the small

GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

	Ivory statue of St. Sebastian in the St. Sebastian's Church, Palluruthy	<i>Dekshina</i>	The customary present to Brahmans and teachers (on completion of study)
<i>Comprarya</i>	A pious confraternity established in Catholic parish churches	<i>Desam Ariyikkal</i>	Publication of the news of the conduct of 'Athachamayam'
<i>Coonan Kurusu</i>	Bent cross	<i>Desami</i>	The tenth lunar day
<i>Coonankurusu sathiam</i>	The oath taken at the <i>Coonan kurusu</i> at Mattancherry	<i>Devadasi</i>	Temple-dancer
<i>C. S. I.</i>	Church of South India, A Christian Denomination	<i>Dhanu</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in December-January
		<i>Dhanwanthari</i>	The physician of the gods. One of the incarnations of Vishnu
<i>Daitya</i>	Asura	<i>Dhanwanthari Jayanthi</i>	Hindu festival in honour of Dhanwanthari
<i>Dakshayaga</i>	Sacrificial offering made by the sage 'Daksha' according to Hindu mythology	<i>Dhara</i>	A medicinal treatment by having water, oil etc., continually poured on the body; Also a form of worship by pouring some liquid over the idol in Hindu temples
<i>Dakshinayana</i>	The sun's course towards South, the half year from June to December	<i>Dharamuttukali</i>	A kind of recreative game played by a few Muslim men together by singing and beating small, flat-bottomed basin-like drums and followed with rhythmic movement of their bodies
<i>Darbha</i>	<i>Poa cynosuroides</i> . A kind of long grass used in Hindu religious rites		
<i>Darshan</i>	Worship in temple		
<i>Dashana samooham</i>	A pious confraternity established in Catholic parish churches	<i>Durgashami</i>	A Hindu festival in honour of goddess Durga. The eighth day of the <i>Navarathri</i> festival
<i>Dasiyattam</i>	Dance performance by <i>Devadasis</i>	<i>Dwajaprathishta</i>	Erecting the flagstaff
<i>Dayara</i>	Monastery	<i>Edavam</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in May-June
<i>Deepakazhcha</i>	Illumination		
<i>Deepam</i>	Lamp		
<i>Deepanam</i>	Digestion		
<i>Deeparadhana</i>	A form of worship by waving lamps to an idol in Hindu temples		
<i>Deeparchana</i>	See <i>Deeparadhana</i>		

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<i>Eduppukuthira</i>	Effigy of a horse for carrying on shoulders during temple festivals	<i>Gandharvas</i>	Heavenly musicians, husbands of the <i>apsaras</i>
<i>Elenjitharkkale Melom</i>	An important item of the Trichur Pooram celebration	<i>Garuda</i>	Eagle; Vishnu's bird
<i>Enna vilakku</i>	Oil lamp (an offering in Hindu temples)	<i>Garudan parappu</i>	A man dressed as <i>Garuda</i> making performances as an offering in Hindu temples
<i>Esan</i>	God. Also the guardian of the North-east point according to Hindu mythology. See also <i>Ashtadikpalakas</i>	<i>Garudan parava</i>	See <i>Garudan parappu</i>
<i>Ettam perunnal</i>	Eighth day festival. In some Christian churches the octave of the festival is also celebrated though not with as much grandeur as the main feast	<i>Garudan Thookam utsavam</i>	An offering in Bhagavathy temples whereby a person dressed as <i>Garuda</i> allows himself to be lifted on a lever by a hook attached to a waistband tied over a padding of pillows on his chest and back
<i>Ettangadi Nivedyam</i>	Eight kinds of tubers cooked by direct exposure to fire as an offering to Siva and Parvathi	<i>Garuda vahanam</i>	A pedestal designed in the form of <i>Garuda</i> for carrying the idol
<i>Ettukandam urulicha</i>	Rolling oneself over the ground around the temple as offering	<i>Geeta</i>	Also Bhagavat Geetha, the famous book of verses containing Sree Krishna's advice to Arjuna on the eve of the Mahabharatha war in Hindu Mythology
<i>Ettu nompu</i>	Eight-day abstinence; A Jacobite Christian feast	<i>Geeta Dinam</i>	A festival conducted in the Guruvayur temple in memory of Sree Krishna's <i>Geetopadesam</i> to Arjuna
<i>Ettu nompu perunnal</i>	See <i>Ettu Nompu</i>	<i>Geetopadesam</i>	See <i>Geetha</i>
<i>Ezhunnallathu</i>	Procession (Royal or religious)	<i>Ghridha dhara</i>	A form of worship by pouring ghee over the idol in Hindu temples
<i>Ezhunnellippu</i>	Carrying in procession	<i>Gohatya papa</i>	Sin of killing a cow
<i>Ezhuthinu Iruthu</i>	Initiation of children in education by making them write a few alphabets on rice or sand	<i>Gopika nritham</i>	Dance performed by <i>Gopikas</i> (cowherd girls) with Lord Krishna according to Hindu mythology
<i>Ganapathy homam</i>	Oblation to god Ganapathy	<i>Gopuram</i>	A pyramidal tower over the gateway of a temple
<i>Ganas</i>	Siva's hosts of deities, attending him on under the rule of his son		

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<i>Grandha</i>	Book	<i>Iratta kuthiyottam</i>	The offering of <i>Kuthiyottam</i> by boys in pairs. See also <i>Kuthiyottam</i>
<i>Guru dekshina</i>	Customary present to teacher; See also <i>Dekshina</i>	<i>Ivar</i>	Five persons; Also <i>Pandavas</i> of the Hindu mythology
<i>Guru pooja</i>	Offering to Sree Narayana Guru	<i>Jaladhara</i>	A form of worship by pouring water over the idol in Hindu temples
<i>Guruthi</i>	See Kurusi	<i>Jalotsavam</i>	Regatta or water carnival
<i>Guruvayurappan</i>	The deity of Guruvayur temple (Sree Krishna) is popularly known by this name	<i>Jangada</i>	A float to ferry across water
<i>Halva</i>	A kind of sweet	<i>Jaram</i>	Tomb
<i>Hannukka</i>	A festival of the Jews	<i>Jawan</i>	Soldier
<i>Hanuman Jayanthi</i>	A Hindu festival in honour of Hanuman, the monkey-god	<i>Jeevathma</i>	The individual soul according to Hindu belief
<i>Harikatha</i>	An entertainment with recitation of stories from Purana in songs and prose	<i>Kachil</i>	<i>Dioscorea alata</i>
<i>Harikatha-kalakshepam</i>	See <i>Harikatha</i>	<i>Kadunpayasam</i>	A kind of <i>payasam</i> (pudding) given as offering in Hindu temples
<i>Harikatha prasangam</i>	See <i>Harikatha</i>	<i>Kaicotta</i>	Hoe
<i>Homakundum</i>	A fire hole for giving oblation to the god of fire	<i>Kaikottikali</i>	A folk dance of Kerala in which women move in a circle singing and clapping their hands; See also <i>Thiruvathirakali</i>
<i>Inayadi</i>	A precious medicinal herb	<i>Kaikkottuchal</i>	A ceremony in certain parts of Kerala to mark the auspicious commencement of the agricultural operations in the New Year (<i>Vishu</i>) in which a small garden-bed is prepared in the field
<i>Indari</i>	A special kind of cake made of flour of rice or of blackgram prepared in Christian homes on Maundy Thursday in some parts of Kerala and on the 25th day of the lent in the other parts	<i>Kaineettam</i>	Handsel, present on <i>Onam</i> or <i>Vishu</i> ; first gift or sale of a day
<i>Indravahanam</i>	A kind of pedestal designed in the form of a <i>Mandapam</i> for carrying idol in procession	<i>Kaivilakku</i>	A type of bell-metal lamp with handle

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<i>Kakka vilakku</i>	Small pan-like iron lamp fixed in rows on the outer walls of temples	<i>Kalumkeezhu</i>	A stage in a local game called <i>Thalama</i> (fifth service)
<i>Kalabhom</i>	Mixture of perfumes like sandal, musk etc., made into an ointment	<i>Kamala vahanam</i>	A pedestal designed just like <i>Indravahana</i> with a lotus in the middle to carry the idol during processions
<i>Kalam</i>	Painting a human figure in five colours using rice flour (white), turmeric powder (saffron), mixture of turmeric and lime (red), charcoal (black) and powdered leaf of <i>Acacia odora</i> (green)	<i>Kanam</i>	Possession; Also a type of land tenure
<i>Kalamezhuthu</i>	An offering in some Bhagavathi temples	<i>Kani</i>	A peculiar observance in Kerala held on <i>Vishu</i> day; Auspicious sight; First sight of the day
<i>Kalamezhuthu pattu</i>	A singing in chorus in praise of goddess Bhagavathi around a <i>kalam</i>	<i>Kanikkiduka</i>	Putting gifts in the temple coffer
<i>Kalampattu</i>	<i>Kalamezhuthu pattu</i>	<i>Kaniyan</i>	Member of a caste of traditional astrologers
<i>Kalari</i>	Fencing-school	<i>Karji</i>	Rice gruel
<i>Kalari Asan</i>	Fencing master	<i>Kanjisadya</i>	A feast in which rice gruel is served
<i>Kalaripayattu</i>	Fencing exercise	<i>Kanni</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in September-October
<i>Kalasam</i>	A purificatory ceremony performed in Hindu temples; water pot in temples	<i>Kara</i>	A thorny prickly shrub
<i>Kalasamithi</i>	Arts Club	<i>Karadikali</i>	A crude form of dancing in which a person wearing mask of a bear moves from house to house to receive presents
<i>Kalasabhishekom</i>	A form of worship by pouring water over the idol with <i>Kalasam</i>	<i>Karakali</i>	A native hockey game played with branches of <i>Kara</i> plants as sticks
<i>Kaliyoottu</i>	A festival in some Bhagavathi temples to commemorate the fight between demon Darika and Bhadrakali according to Hindu mythology	<i>Karakam</i>	A goblet, generally of bell-metal, with a spout
<i>Kaliyuga</i>	Iron-age or the present (fourth) age of the world, of universal degeneracy, according to Hindu mythology	<i>Kurakam ezhunnellippu</i>	Carrying a decorated <i>Karakam</i> full of water in procession as an item of festival in some Hindu temples
		<i>Karanavan</i>	Head of family

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<i>Kari Nercha</i>	An edible offering in the St. Mary's Church, Kudamaloor. Also an offering of cocoanut shell charcoal in Christian churches		feathers for carrying on the shoulders of pilgrims as an offering to god Subramonia
<i>Karkadakam</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in July-August	<i>Kavootu</i>	Feast given to the people residing in the temple premises as a ritual in some Bhagavathi temples. Also worshipping the deities in a <i>Kavu</i>
<i>Karkadaka Sankramam</i>	Passage of the sun from one sign to another occurring on the first day of <i>Karkadakam</i>	<i>Kavu</i>	Grove meant for the abode of serpents where serpent worship is carried on by Hindus; Also small Hindu temple.
<i>Karthika</i>	The third constellation, Pleiades; Third day of the lunar month; Also a Hindu religious festival	<i>Kavutheendal</i>	A part of the Bharani festival in the Cranganur Bhagavathi temple when the low castes are given entry to the temple for worship thereby causing pollution
<i>Karthika thalapoli</i>	A festival in some Hindu temples celebrated on the <i>Karthika</i> day in <i>Vrischikam</i>	<i>Kayyankali</i>	A kind of native boxing played during <i>Onam</i> festival
<i>Karyasthan</i>	Manager or a paid employee looking after the properties and affairs of big families	<i>Kayyankali chadangu</i>	A manuscript containing the secrets of the game <i>Kayyankali</i>
<i>Kasuroopam</i>	Medalet	<i>Kazhunnurcha</i>	An offering to St. Sebastian in Catholic churches in which an arrow from the Saint's statue taken by the vower on payment of a fixed fee to the church is returned in solemn procession
<i>Katha kalakshepam</i>	An entertainment with recitation of stories in songs and prose	<i>Ketta</i>	The 18th lunar asterism in Scorpio
<i>Kathakali</i>	A story-play or a dance-drama in which stories (mostly from Hindu mythology) are enacted by means of gestures, facial expressions and dance movements of the actors interpreted by signs and attended by the rhythm of the drums, cymbals and gongs	<i>Kettiyattam</i>	A dance in the dress of gods in Hindu temples.
<i>Kattalan</i>	Forester		
<i>Kavadi</i>	A bow-shaped wooden structure decorated with tapestry and peacock		

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<i>Kettukazhcha</i>	Exhibition of effigies, a festival in certain Hindu temples	<i>Koothu</i>	A dance performed in Hindu temples—See also <i>Chakiar Koothu</i>
<i>Kochazhi</i>	The Cochin bar	<i>Koothu matom</i>	Playhouse; A specially put up shed in the premises of certain Hindu temples for the conduct of <i>Pavakoothu</i>
<i>Kodiyet</i>	Flag hoisting		
<i>Koduveli</i>	<i>Plumbago ceylanica</i> , a herb		
<i>Kolam</i>	Effigy	<i>Kooti pooja</i>	A ritual of the <i>Ashtami</i> festival in the Mahadevar temple, Vaikom
<i>Kolamkettu</i>	Making of effigies in connection with certain Hindu festivals	<i>Kozhukkatta</i>	A special cookie made of balls of rice dough filled in with a mixture of cocoanut shavings and molasses, cooked over steam. This is a special preparation made in Christian homes on the eve of Palm Sunday
<i>Kolam nercha</i>	An offering in the Chittur Bhagavathi temple, in which little boys dressed like girls are each carried on the shoulders of a man and paraded in procession with the oracle in front in satisfaction of vows made by parents	<i>Kozhivettu</i>	Poultry sacrifice as an offering in some Hindu temples
<i>Kolam thullal</i>	A kind of frantic dance carrying the <i>kolam</i> in connection with certain Hindu festivals	<i>Krishna chathurdesi</i>	14th lunar day in the dark fortnight
<i>Kolati</i>	A fencing with sticks as an item of cultural programme	<i>Krishnasila</i>	A superior variety of stone used for making idols
<i>Koluvaipu</i>	An exhibition of images of gods, animals toys etc., in certain Hindu homes as part of <i>Navarathri</i> festival	<i>Kulkuls</i>	A cookie made of flower, cocoanut juice, egg and ghee prepared in Anglo-Indian homes during Christmas
<i>Kolvanam</i>	A kind of rocket as an item of pyrotechnics	<i>Kumbhakudam</i>	A religious ceremony in Hindu temples in which a person places on his head a <i>Kumbham</i> filled with milk or turmeric solution and decorated with flowers and is led in a procession
<i>Kolvilakku</i>	A bell-metal lamp with long handle		
<i>Kombu</i>	Musical horn		
<i>Konna</i>	<i>Cassia fistula</i> , a flowering tree	<i>Kumbham</i>	Jar, pitcher; Also a month of the Malayalam almanac falling in February-March
<i>Koosa Rajakkal</i>	The Magi		

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<i>Kumbha revathy</i>	A religious festival in Hindu temples on the <i>Revathy</i> day in <i>Kumbham</i>	<i>Magha</i>	A month of the <i>Saka</i> era falling in January-February
<i>Kummatti</i>	<i>Cucumis colocyathus</i> (a melon); Also a religious ceremony in certain Hindu temples	<i>Mahabali</i>	See <i>Maveli</i>
<i>Kurava</i>	A chorus of shout by women announcing auspicious events	<i>Mahabali Pooja</i>	Worship of <i>Mahabali</i>
<i>Kurusi</i>	Mixture of red turmeric and <i>chunam</i> representing blood in demon worship; Also a form of religious worship	<i>Mahalaya paksha</i>	Dark lunar fortnight in the month of <i>Bhadrapadam</i>
<i>Kurusumala kayattom</i>	A festival in St. Thomas' Church, Arnottimangalam in Kottayam district	<i>Mahanavami</i>	The ninth day of the <i>Navarathri</i> festival; See also <i>Navarathri</i>
<i>Kuruthi</i>	See <i>Kurusi</i>	<i>Mahasivarathri</i>	The fourteenth lunar day of the dark fortnight in the month of <i>Magham</i> ; A Hindu religious festival
<i>Kuthiyottam</i>	A sacrificial offering in Bhagavathy temples	<i>Mahotsavam</i>	Grand festival
<i>Kuthu vilakku</i>	A bell-metal lamp with long handle	<i>Makam</i>	The 10th constellation, <i>Regulus</i>
<i>Kuzhalu</i>	A musical pipe	<i>Makaram</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in January-February
<i>Lakshadeepa</i>	A religious illumination.	<i>Makara Sankrama</i>	Passage of the sun from one sign to another occurring on the first day of <i>Makaram</i>
<i>Lethormarudae virunnu</i>	A treat given on the occasion of confraternity feasts in some Catholic churches by the outgoing President to the electors of the office-bearers for the conduct of the feast for the succeeding year	<i>Makara vilakku</i>	A grand festival conducted in the Sabarimala temple; The holy lamps lit on the first of <i>Makaram</i> at Sabarimala
<i>Linga</i>	Sivalingam, the phallus	<i>Makayiram</i>	The fifth constellation; Head of Orion
<i>Madan</i>	A demon god	<i>Makkathayam</i>	A system of inheritance whereby the children of the deceased inherit the property
<i>Madappothu</i>	Male buffalo		
<i>Maddalom</i>	A long finger-drum, tambourin	<i>Makroni</i>	A synthetic rice
		<i>Malar</i>	Roasted paddy

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<i>Malar para</i>	A full <i>para</i> measure of <i>malar</i> as an offering in Hindu temples		brated as a festival in some Hindu temples
<i>Mamamkam</i>	A jubilee festival conducted on the sands of Thirunavaya river in Kerala in ancient times	<i>Meenam</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in March-April
<i>Mandalam</i>	Period of 41 days	<i>Melsanthi</i>	Chief priest of a temple
<i>Mandala pooja</i>	A <i>pooja</i> especially in Sabarimala temple by devotees after observing 41 days abstinence from the 1st day of <i>Vrischigom</i>	<i>Mithunam</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in June-July
<i>Mandala vratam</i>	Abstinence for 41 days as a Hindu religious observance	<i>Moolam</i>	The 19th constellation; Extremity of Scorpion's head
<i>Mandapam</i>	An open shed erected for marriages and other feasts adorned with flowers; An open temple	<i>Moonnimmel Kurbana</i>	Holy mass offered by three priests simultaneously on three altars in Orthodox Syrian churches on festive occasions
<i>Mannanmar</i>	Washermen		
<i>Mantram</i>	A hymn or prayer to God generally in Sanskrit	<i>Moonnu noymbu</i>	Three day abstinence; A Christian religious festival
<i>Markazhi</i>	The moth of <i>Dhanu</i>	<i>Mooshika</i>	Mouse; God Ganapathy's conveyance according to Hindu mythology
<i>Marumakkathayam</i>	Matrilineal system of inheritance	<i>Mridangam</i>	A tabor
<i>Masavishesham</i>	Monthly festival	<i>Mudi</i>	Hair; Also a kind of tiara of the idol, representing the deity
<i>Maveli</i>	Mahabali, a legendary ruler of ancient Kerala	<i>Mudiyettu</i>	A Hindu religious festival in honour of goddess Bhadrakali; See also Mudi
<i>Maya</i>	Illusion		
<i>Mayiloosi</i>	A precious herb	<i>Mula prakrithi</i>	Primal energy or the functional aspect of the supreme power according to Hindu philosophy
<i>Meda vishu</i>	Vernal equinox occurring in <i>Medam</i> celebrated as a Hindu religious festival		
<i>Medom</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in April-May	<i>Mumbilthali</i>	Sprinkling the pathway with water by a person walking in front of the king in a royal procession as a mark of royalty in olden days
<i>Meena Bharany</i>	<i>Bharany</i> day in the month of <i>Meenam</i> cele-		

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<i>Munnoottan</i>	A caste, Velan or Panan	<i>Nalampalam</i>	Part of the temple surrounding the <i>Sreekovil</i>
<i>Murajapam</i>	A ceremony conducted every 6th year in the Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple, Trivandrum for the propitiation of the gods and the prosperity of the country. It consists of chanting vedic hymns and other <i>manthrams</i> for 56 days the chief reciters being Nambudiris	<i>Namakaranam</i>	Naming ceremony of a new born child
		<i>Nanam-munam</i>	The old Malayalam script so called in olden days
		<i>Navami</i>	The ninth lunar day
		<i>Navarathri</i>	A feast of nine days as observed by <i>Sakti</i> worshippers in the month of <i>Kanni</i> (September-October)
		<i>Nazhi</i>	A small measure 20 cubic inches in capacity with local variations
<i>Muram</i>	A fan or winnow to sift grain	<i>Nazhiyum Pidiyum</i>	A <i>nazhi</i> measure and a handful of some grain as a religious offering
<i>Muthappan</i>	Grandfather. In Christian churches the patron saint is affectionately addressed by this name; A Hindu God	<i>Neenthu nercha</i>	Moving on hands and knees by the vower as a religious offering in certain Christian churches
<i>Muthukuda</i>	An ornamental silk umbrella used in royal or religious processions	<i>Neerum palum</i>	A form of serpent worship using milk, tender cocoanut, turmeric powder etc.
<i>Muthu</i>	Pearl	<i>Nelpara</i>	A full <i>para</i> measure of paddy as an offering in Hindu temples
<i>Muzhukkappu</i>	Coating the idol with sandal paste as an offering in Hindu temples	<i>Nercha</i>	Offering; Vow
		<i>Nercha kalas</i>	Bulls received in temples as offering
<i>Nada</i>	Temple entrance; Door of the Sreekovil; Also a minor temple	<i>Nercha Kanji</i>	Poor-feeding with rice gruel as an offering
<i>Nadu valam vekkai</i>	Taking the idol around the locality of the temple in procession	<i>Nerchapetti</i>	A chest or box with a slit kept in places of public worship for receiving offerings in cash
<i>Nagaswara cutcherry</i>	A music concert played with <i>Naagswaram</i> and other accompaniments	<i>Neyyappam</i>	A kind of sweetened rice cake cooked in ghee or cocoanut oil
<i>Nagaswaram</i>	A snake-pipe with twelve holes	<i>Neyyuvilakku</i>	A bell-metal lamp lighted with ghee; Also
<i>Nagayakshi</i>	Serpant goddess		
<i>Nakshathram</i>	Star; A lunar asterism		

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	an offering of ghee given in temples for burning the lamp	<i>Otra</i>	Odd number; Also a stage in a local game called <i>Thalapanthu</i> See <i>Thullal</i> See <i>Thookam</i>
<i>Nirapara</i>	A <i>para</i> filled above the brim with paddy. It is an auspicious object for Hindus	<i>Ottamthullal</i> <i>Ottathookam</i> <i>Orappam</i>	
<i>Niruthi</i>	The guardian of the south-west point according to Hindu mythology. See also <i>Ashtadikpalakas</i>		A single large bread baked with flour, sugar, currants and cocoanut juice prepared in Christian homes in south Kerala on Maundy Thursday
<i>Nilavilakku</i>	A stand-lamp generally made of bell-metal	<i>Palazhi</i>	Ocean of milk (Mythological)
<i>Nivedya</i>	Edible offering to gods	<i>Palli</i>	Church or mosque
<i>Nompu</i>	Abstinence	<i>Falli vetta</i>	Royal chase; Also a mock hunt being a part of festivals in temples
<i>Noorum palum</i>	See <i>Neerum palum</i>	<i>Panchavadyam</i>	Music produced by five kinds of instruments
<i>Nythya seeveli</i>	Daily offering to <i>Bhoothas</i> ; See also <i>Bhoothabali</i>	<i>Pandal</i> <i>Panthukali</i>	Tent; Temporary shed Any ball game; Also a local game played with a ball made of rope, or leaves, especially during <i>Onam</i> festival
<i>Onam</i>	The popular festival of Kerala celebrated in the month of <i>Chingom</i> , the season for the chief harvest commemorating the golden age of Mahabali, a legendary ruler of Kerala who is supposed to revisit Kerala on that day	<i>Pappadam</i>	A kind of crisp thin cake made of flour of blackgram
<i>Onathallu</i>	See <i>Kayyankali</i>	<i>Para</i>	A large bushel generally 13.1 litres in capacity—also a <i>para</i> -full of paddy given as offering in Hindu temples
<i>Oonjal</i>	Swing	<i>Parishad</i>	Assembly
<i>Oonjal attom</i>	Swinging; An essential item of merriment especially for women and children during important festivals like <i>Thiruvathira</i> and <i>Onam</i>	<i>Patakam</i>	A mono-drama resembling <i>Chakiar koothu</i>
<i>Oorazhmakar</i>	Landlords or <i>Jenmis</i> who are in sole management of temples; Temple trustees	<i>Patala</i> <i>Pathirappoo choodal</i>	Hades Wearing of consecrated flowers by women at midnight as a part of the <i>Thiruvathira</i> festival

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<i>Pattu</i>	Singing hymns in praise of Bhagavathi at Bhagavathi temples during <i>Mandalam</i> in <i>Vrischigom-Dhanu</i>	<i>Prathamam</i> <i>Puja Eduppu</i>	A kind of <i>Payasam</i> Concluding ceremony of the <i>Navarathri</i> festival by taking back books, tools etc., arranged for worship on <i>Vijayadesami</i> day
<i>Payasam</i>	A kind of pudding prepared with rice, or other grains, milk and sugar or molasses	<i>Puja vaipu</i>	The opening ceremony of the <i>Navarathri</i> festival by arranging books, tools etc., together in a particular spot for worship on <i>Durga-shtami</i> day
<i>Polivachanam</i> <i>Pongu tree</i> <i>Ponkala</i>	A lie <i>Pongamia glabra</i> Cooking of rice or pudding in the open air by women devotees as an offering in some Bhagavathi temples	<i>Punartham</i>	The 7th <i>Nakshatra</i> , Gemini and Sirius
<i>Pooja</i>	A worship in the prescribed form	<i>Purim</i>	A Jewish festival
<i>Poojari</i> <i>Pooram</i>	Hindu priest The eleventh asterism, rump of Leo; Also a Hindu religious festival	<i>Purusha</i>	One of the duality in the generative act. One of the two eternal elements that have produced the Universe by their union according to Hindu philosophy, the other being <i>Prakrithi</i>
<i>Pooratam</i> <i>Pooruruttathi</i> <i>Poothiruvathira</i>	The 20th asterism, bow of Sagittarius The 25th asterism The first <i>Thiruvathira</i> in the month of <i>Dhanu</i> occurring after the marriage of a girl	<i>Pushpanjali</i>	Offering a nosegay of flowers in both hands joined; An oblation of flowers made to a god
<i>Pooyam</i>	The 8th lunar asterism, Cancer and the head of Hydra	<i>Puthen thiruvathira</i> <i>Puttan pana</i>	See <i>poo'hiruva'hira</i> A poetical work in Malayalam by the German Jesuit, Father, Ernest Haxeldon containing accounts of the passion of Christ and of the sorrows of St. Mary
<i>Pournami</i> <i>Prakriti</i>	Full moon <i>Maya</i> , the great negative energy with which the union of <i>Purusha</i> has brought about the universe according to Hindu philosophy	<i>Puzhukku</i>	Fruits or vegetables boiled, a dish of curry
<i>Prasadam</i>	Leavings of offerings (sandal paste etc.), obtained from temples as marks of God's favour	<i>Quorbam</i>	Sacrifice; Mass

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<i>Rakkuli Thirunal</i>	Local name for the feast of Epiphany in the St. Thomas' Cathedral, Palai		very popular among Nambudiri Brahmans. It is noted for its humour
<i>Raktha Pushpanjali</i>	<i>Pushpanjali</i> with red flowers	<i>Sankramam</i>	Passage of the sun from one sign to another
<i>Rasam</i>	Vegetable soup	<i>Sankrama pooja</i>	Religious ceremony on the <i>Sankramam</i> day
<i>Rathotsavam</i>	A festival in which the temple chariot is taken in procession	<i>Sanyasi</i>	A devotee; Ascetic
<i>Reti</i>	Wife of God Kama (Cupid)	<i>Saptha mathrukkal</i>	Seven goddesses. (i) Brahmi (ii) Maheswari (iii) Koumari (iv) Vaishnavi (v) Varahi (vi) Indrani and (vii) Chamunda
<i>Revathi</i>	The 27th <i>Nakshatra</i> in Pisces		
<i>Rigveda</i>	First of the four <i>vedas</i>	<i>Saraswathi pooja</i>	See <i>Ayudha pooja</i>
<i>Rigvedin</i>	Follower of <i>Rigveda</i>	<i>Sarat</i>	A season of two months (Autumn)
<i>Rishabha</i>	Bull, god Shiva's conveyance (mythological)	<i>Sarkara payasam</i>	A kind of <i>payasam</i> with molasses
<i>Rishi</i>	Sage	<i>Sarpa bali</i>	A form of serpent worship
<i>Rithu</i>	Season especially of two months	<i>Sarpa pattu</i>	A crude form of musical performance held in serpent groves to propitiate serpent gods
<i>Rohini</i>	The fourth <i>Nakshatra</i> , with Aldebaram		
<i>Sahasrakalasam</i>	Literally thousand <i>kalasams</i> ; A form of worship in Hindu temples by pouring water over the idol with <i>kalasams</i>	<i>Sarvani puthen</i>	The custom of presenting a <i>puthen</i> , a coin, to one and all gathered in the royal palace on the occasion of <i>Athachamayam</i> and other royal feasts
<i>Sakshykonu</i>	Dining with the king		
<i>Samadhi</i>	Deep meditation; Abstract contemplation; Grave	<i>Sarvani sadya</i>	Public feast held on the occasion of <i>Athachamayam</i> and other royal functions
<i>Samaveda</i>	Third of the four <i>vedas</i>	<i>Sastha</i>	A Hindu god
<i>Samudayam</i>	Society; A community in general	<i>Satha kalasam</i>	Literally hundred <i>kalasams</i> . See <i>Sahasra-kalasam</i>
<i>Sanjya velakal</i>	A religious ceremony in temples in the evening		
<i>Sanghakali</i>	A form of dramatic entertainment once	<i>Satrom</i>	Inn, rest house
		<i>Savakotta</i>	Burial ground

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<i>Seethankanthullal</i>	See <i>Thullal</i>	<i>Tapasu</i>	Penance; Self-mortification
<i>Seetha parithyagom</i>	Desertion of Seetha by her husband Sree Rama (mythological)	<i>Tarpana</i>	Libation to gratify the manes of ancestors
<i>Seva</i>	Worship; A religious pageant in temples	<i>Thai pooyam</i>	A temple festival held on the <i>Pooyam</i> asterism in the month of <i>Makaram</i> (January-February)
<i>Sidha</i>	Accomplished, perfected; Also a deified person	<i>Thalam</i>	Round metal salver
<i>Simhasana Vaahanam</i>	A pedestal designed in the form of a throne for carrying the idol in temple procession	<i>Thalama</i>	A local game played with a ball made of rope or leaves, especially during <i>Onam</i> festival
<i>Siva linga</i>	The phallus		See <i>Thalama</i>
<i>Siva Loka</i>	Lord Siva's residence in the Himalayas (mythological)	<i>Thalapanthu</i>	An offering made to goddess Bhagavathi—
<i>Sivarathri</i>	A night assigned for the worship of Lord Siva in the month of <i>Kumbhom</i> (February-March) observed as an important Hindu religious festival	<i>Thalappoli</i>	A ceremony in which girls circumambulate the temple carrying in their palms <i>Thalams</i> containing lighted lamps, rice, flowers etc. Also a ceremonious welcome peculiar to Kerala
<i>Snanam</i>	Bath; Ablution		
<i>Straddha</i>	An oblation to the manes of the deceased ancestors	<i>Thalipeelikali</i>	A game for girls in North Kerala played especially during the <i>Onam</i> festival
<i>Sravana</i>	The month <i>Chingom</i> (August-September)		
<i>Sribhoothabali</i>	See <i>Bhoothabali</i>	<i>Thamuk</i>	A preparation of rice-flour, molasses and plantains given as offering in churches
<i>Srikovil</i>	The sanctuary of a temple		
<i>Sihothra</i>	Hymn, praise	<i>Thanthri</i>	Temple priest
<i>Sudarsana</i>	The fiery discus of Lord Vishnu	<i>Thattinmel Koothu</i>	A kind of entertainment held in connection with the Kongapada festival in the Bhagavathi temple, Chittoor, in which the actors dressed like <i>Kathakali</i> characters dance on the thattu (a
<i>Sudarsana chakram</i>	See <i>Sudarsana</i>		
<i>Swarnadwajam</i>	Golden flagstaff		
<i>Swayumbhu</i>	Self-born		
<i>Swayamvara</i>	The marriage in which the girl selects her bridegroom		

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<i>Thayampaka</i>	kind of platform arranged over four bamboo sticks)	
<i>Thayir katayal</i>	A concert of instrumental music	<i>Thiruvathirakali</i>
<i>Thazhambakam</i>	Churning the curd	
<i>Theevetti</i>	See <i>Thayampaka</i>	
<i>Thejas</i>	A typical long-handled torch with several wicks arranged in a vertical circle, used in temple processions	
<i>Thendu</i>	Power; Glory	
<i>Theppotsavam</i>	A sweetened rice cake given as an offering in certain temples	<i>Thiruvathira oottu</i>
	An item of the Sree-kandeswaram temple festival in Kozhikode wherein the idol is taken in a float and towed round the tank thrice with the accompaniment of <i>Nagawsaram</i>	<i>Thiruvonachilavu</i>
<i>Theyyam Thullal</i>	A kind of devil dance in certain temples	<i>Thiruvonam</i>
<i>Thina</i>	<i>Panicum Italicum</i> , a cereal	<i>Thitamibu</i>
<i>Thira</i>	An offering; An inferior feast in which Malayar, Vannan, etc. dressed like gods and demons yarticipate	<i>Thiyattu</i>
<i>Thirali</i>	A kind of cake made of rice-flour and molasses given as an offering to the deity	
<i>Thirunal</i>	A feast; Birthday of a king	<i>Thodama</i>
<i>Thiruppoopu</i>	Holy menses of goddess Parvathy	<i>Thodum Pidutham</i>
<i>Thiruvathira</i>	The sixth asterism including Botelgeuze;	<i>Thoni</i>
		A Hindu religious festival in <i>Dhamu</i> (December-January) for women
		A kind of folk dance in which a group of women stand in a circle around a lighted brass lamp, singing and dancing to the tune of clapping hands. It derives its name as it is very common during <i>Thiruvathira</i> . Also known as <i>Kaikottikali</i>
		A monthly feast given to Brahmans in certain temples
		Materials brought for conducting the <i>pooja</i> and feast in the Aranmula Parthasarathy temple marking the beginning of the famous Aranmula <i>Vallamkali</i> (water carnival)
		The twenty-second asterism including Aquila; See also <i>Onam</i>
		Idol used for procession
		A dance in the guise of god. Ayyappan <i>Thiyattu</i> and Bhagavathi <i>Thiyattu</i> are its subdivisions. Bhagavathi <i>Thiyattu</i> is the more important and is performed as a ritual for the worship of Bhagavathi.
		A stage in a local game called <i>Thalama</i> (fourth service)
		A boyish pastime played especially during <i>Onam</i> festival
		Native boat

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<i>Thookkam</i>	A ceremony in Bhagavathi temples whereby a person allows himself to be lifted on a lever by a hook attached to a waistband tied over a padding of pillows on his chest and back. He carries a sword and shield which are brandished while swinging	<i>Thullal</i>	An action-song peculiar to Kerala first invented by Kunjan Nambiar, a poet of great genius. There are three types viz., 1. <i>Ottan</i> 2. <i>Seethankan</i> and 3. <i>Parayan</i>
<i>Thookkakaran</i>	One who performs <i>Thookkam</i>	<i>Thumbi thullal</i>	A kind of entertainment among girls often played especially during <i>Onam</i> festival
<i>Thottam pattu</i>	A hymn in honour of Bhagavathi	<i>Thurai</i>	Minor port
<i>Thottichattam</i>	A kind of merry-go-round with cradles going up and down	<i>Thuruthu</i>	Islet
<i>Threthayuga</i>	The second of the four ages of the world	<i>Tiruvathira</i>	<i>Thiruvathira</i>
<i>Thrikala pooja</i>	A special form of religious worship performed at morning, noon and evening	<i>Thiruvonam</i>	See <i>Onam</i>
<i>Thrikkakara Appan</i>	A conical figure made of sticky clay symbolic of the deity of Thrikkakara put up in every Hindu home during <i>Onam</i> festival	<i>Trikkarthika</i>	A Hindu festival held on the <i>Kartika</i> day in <i>Vrischikam</i> (November-December)
<i>Thripputharat</i>	A festival in the Mahadevar temple, Chengannur to celebrate the appearance of <i>Thirup-poopu</i> on the idol of goddess Parvathy	<i>Trimurthis</i>	The Hindu Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva
<i>Thulabharam</i>	One's weight in gold, fruits, cereals or other things given as offering in Hindu temples	<i>Uchal</i>	Festival in honour of Bhudevi's (goddess earth) menstruation on <i>Makara Sankramam</i> day
<i>Thulam</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in October-November; A weight; A weighing machine	<i>Uluva</i>	Fenugreek
		<i>Upanishad</i>	Esoterical doctrine: explanation of <i>vedas</i>
		<i>Urakkamozhichil</i>	A kind of devotion in which the devotees keep vigil and chant hymns foregoing sleep
		<i>Uraler</i>	See <i>Oorazhmakar</i>
		<i>Uri</i>	Network for suspending pots
		<i>Uruli</i>	A large shallow bell-metal vessel
		<i>Urulicha</i>	See <i>Urul nercha</i>
		<i>Urul nercha</i>	Rolling oneself in the premises of a temple or

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	church in satisfaction of vow		boat races in the back-waters
<i>Usha pooja</i>	Morning worship in temples	<i>Vandikuthira</i>	Effigy of a horse on four wheels for processions in temple festivals
<i>Uthram</i>	Twelfth asterism, tail of Leo		
<i>Uthra seeveli</i>	A form of religious worship in some temples on the <i>Uthram</i> day	<i>Varunan</i>	God of water and rain; Guardian deity of the west point. See also <i>Ashtadikpalakas</i>
<i>Uthratam</i>	Twenty-first asterism, shoulder of Sagittarius	<i>Vasantam</i>	Spring, March-May (two months)
<i>Uthrattathi</i>	Twenty-sixth asterism, head of Andromeda	<i>Vavu</i>	Change of the moon; new moon or full moon
<i>Utsavam</i>	Festivals, especially of temples	<i>Vayu</i>	Maruthi, the god of wind; Guardian deity of the north-west point. See also <i>Ashtadikpalakas</i>
<i>Uttarayana</i>	The sun's course towards north, the half year from December to June	<i>Veda</i>	Any one of the four ancient scriptures of the Hindus (<i>Rig</i> , <i>Yajus</i> , <i>Sama</i> and <i>Atharva</i>)
<i>Uttupura</i>	Dining hall attached to temples where free meals are given to Brahmans	<i>Vedaparayanam</i>	Reading the scriptures
<i>Upadevathakal</i>	Sub-deities	<i>Veena</i>	Indian lute
<i>Upperi</i>	Fried vegetable chips	<i>Velakali</i>	An ancient martial folk dance
<i>Uzhinjal</i>	See <i>oonjal</i>	<i>Velichappadu</i>	Oracle
<i>Vaahanam</i>	Conveyance; Also a pedestal for carrying idols in temple procession	<i>Venchamaram</i>	Whisk of yak-tail
		<i>Veta</i>	Forester
<i>Vadithallu</i>	A feat with sticks played by two or more people	<i>Vettukali</i>	A kind of ball-game played with hands especially during <i>Onam</i> festival
<i>Vaikuntam</i>	Vishnu's Paradise	<i>Vidvat parishad</i>	Assembly of learned men
<i>Valiakuruthy</i>	<i>Kurusi</i> performed in the night on a grander scale	<i>Vidyarambha</i>	Formal Commencement (or renovation) of learning as a religious observance on the <i>Vijayadesami</i> day
<i>Valkalam</i>	Garment made of bark		
<i>Vallam</i>	A country boat	<i>Vigraham</i>	Idol
<i>Vanchippattu</i>	A kind of Malayalam songs specially composed to be sung during	<i>Vijaya Desami</i>	The tenth day of the <i>Navarathri</i> festival—See also <i>Navarathri</i>

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<i>Vilakku</i>	Holy services in the temple. Illumination—lighting of lamps. It is also used to denote processions of the image in the night during <i>Utsavam</i>	<i>Vrischigam</i>	A month of the Malayalam almanac falling in November-December
		<i>Vritham</i>	Voluntary act of penance or continance; Also vow
		<i>Yaga</i>	A sacrifice
<i>Villadichanpattu</i>	A musical entertainment more or less like <i>Harikatha</i> to the accompaniment of rhythmic sound produced on a string of a large bow. The players wear special costumes especially the headgear	<i>Yagasala</i>	A place of sacrifice
		<i>Yagaswam</i>	Sacrificial horse
		<i>Yajurveda</i>	Second of the four holy <i>vedas</i>
		<i>Yajurvedin</i>	Follower of <i>Yajurveda</i>
		<i>Yajys</i>	Same as <i>Yajurveda</i>
		<i>Yaksha</i>	A demi-god
<i>Vilpattu</i>	See <i>Villadichanpattu</i>	<i>Yaksha Ratri</i>	The night of the <i>Yakshas</i>
<i>Vina</i>	See <i>Veena</i>		
<i>Visakha</i>	The 16th lunar asterism, right leg of Bootes	<i>Yakshi</i>	An inferior divinity worshipped by people of the lower order
<i>Vishahari</i>	An ayurvedic physician specialised in the treatment of poison	<i>Yama</i>	The god of death and Hades
<i>Vishu</i>	The Hindu festival held on the first day of <i>Medom</i> which is the astronomical new-year's day	<i>Yathrakali</i>	An entertainment more or less like <i>Sanghakali</i>
		<i>Yogakkar</i>	Members of an assembly
<i>Vishukani</i>	<i>Kani</i> on <i>Vishu</i> day	<i>Yoga nidra</i>	Absorption in meditation; Sleep as of gods
<i>Vrishabha</i>	Same as <i>Rishabha</i>		

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