CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF KËßI IN BELIEFS RITUALS AND CUSTOMS

*Ki½i* is believed as the mother in every sense. So people give their whole consideration to her. The worship of mother goddess in India as deity of prosperity had been started in remote past. It is seen in the stone plates excavated in Harappa engraved the mother goddess on one side and human sacrifice on the other. The agrarian society believed *Ki½i* as the goddess of plants and the folk who depend on cattle accepted *Ki½i* as the goddess who protect cattle. Later these goddesses on the different phases merged together and became the omnipotent 'Ki½i'. *Ki½i* is also considered as *i·ipa¾i šak¶i* and also one among *Èa¾amahiviÈyas*. Among them *Ki½i* is worshipped in different parts of India, Especially Kerala and West Bengal. In Kerala she is benevelant as well as Malavelent. Rarely it is seen in Kozhikode district, *Ki½i* is functioning as a *Ma°Éram£rÉÉi*. 
This version of .isNull known as °·akkii is propitiated by Malaya Community. It is believed that °·akkii is used for o·is®va. If a person use o·is®va to put the enemy in trouble the only way to save himself form ill happenings by pleasing the °·akkii.

Each and every community in Kerala worship .isNull with awe and respect. It is believed that she protect people from natural calamities as well as uncurbale diseases. So she is popular among people who live in all geographical areas. In hilly area, worshipped as p°rrkalı B°ragavaÉi; in coastal areas as Sr¢kurumba; in middle areas as isNull (iÉi BiÉa vinišini Nama:).

Tuesdays, Sundays and Fridays are special days .isNull. Among these Tuesdays and Fridays are called as Ko·iyi«cca. The first Ko·iyi«cca in every Malayalam month is special to isNull and on these days the devotees offer redsilk to isNull to protect them from all harms. This offering is known as C°ppoppikkal.
The worship system related to ÉanÉra is divided into two. Samayamírga and Ka£½amírga. Samaya worship follows the traditional text that explains the procedure when, where and why it should be done. But for ka£½amírga texts are several according to the place. Different kulas and villages are following different versions of worshipping system and accordingly. Manifestations of Ki½i are in varied forms.

In Kerala Ki½i is worshipped according to Ka£½aÈarm. According to this tradition the existence of the whole universe is on the basis of śiva and śakÉi and all males are believed as śiva and female as śakÉi. Paµca’ma’ kíra pÉja is the peculiarity of Ka£½aÈarma. It gives importance to female and worship them as a part of śakÉi. The Brahmins are against the ka£½aÈiram because it is not accepting the Var¸a system and Caste system that boosts the social status of Brahmins (Acharyathraipuram: 2004: 21).
śikē®ya tradition is also part of ka£½aÈarma which is being done for the benevolence of the family as well as individual. GuµuÉi and Bali are unavoidable part of śikē®yam. Musath, Pitaraka, Yogigurukkal, Nayar, Ezhava, Parava, Kaniyan, Viswakarma etc. are the caste groups believe in ka£½aÈarma and follow the practices of its ritual. Many śik¶®yak¡vukal are there in Kerala. Some among them are popular. Ki½iyimba½²ikivu, Mi·iyikkavu, MaººamburaÉÉukivu, PiÀirikkivu, MiminaÉÉukivu, Ùi¤uvanj®rikkivu, Ka½amivi¶ukkal are few among them. The mythological connections and ritual bonds between these kivus with Kodungalloor temple reveals the fact that Kodungalloor temple is the centre of this worshipping system.

It is believed that at its origin the Goddess in Kodungalloor temple was šrckurumba and later it became as Kodungallooramma. Now the concept of È®vi at Kodungalloor temple is a fusion if Ki½i, Srckurumba and Ka·aki and devotees are free to identify the Goddess according to their will. For example to Mukkuva
community *Kodungallooramma* is *Srkuumb* and they do worship *Srkuumb* in *Crmakkivus*.

The myth behind the worship of *Ki½i* in Kodungalloor is the post episode of *Ki½i-Èiuka* fight. The ritual on the eve of *bhaia* festival is believed as the enactment of the acts of *Ki½i* on the way back from the battle field. The whole situation is reminiscence the acts of *Ki½i* when she was on the way back from battle field. The *polja* at the end of the festival is meant for the purification of *Ki½i* who was polluted by killing *Èiuka*. *Kaaki* myth also is one of the attributes to *Kodungallooramma* who is the heroin in *Kaaki Kovilan KaÉai*. There is a secret Chamber in Kodungalloor temple which was not opened ever and it is believed that after the salvation of *Kaaki* her body was cremated and later bones were collected and brought to Kodungalloor which was the capital of *Chh*a Kingdom. The collected bones were kept in this chamber.

The myth of *Kaaki* is as follows:
Kašaki and Kovilan lived in Pukar. Both of them were members of wealthy family. Kašaki’s father Peşumku-i Vaišyan Mišikan was an eminent sailor. Kašaki and Kovilan married at the age of twelve and sixteen respectively. Midhavi, the dancer in Pukar dynasty, is a charming lady attracts men by her beauty and dance. Kovilan also was attracted and longed to enjoy her beauty and spent some hours with her when he saw her dance from the Palace Cö½a King. Kovilan tried to fulfill his wishes and failed many times. One day he met Midhavi’s servant on the way to market to sell the green stoned necklace, gifted by the king. The servant informed him that those who buy the necklace by paying 1008 Ka½aµju gold could marry Midhavi. On hearing this, Kovilan bought the necklace without thinking twice and followed the serve to marry Mi·havi. Eventhough Kašaki and Mi·havi are same in age and beauty, Kovilan was attracted more by Mi·havi than Kašaki. He completely forgot Kašaki.
Without knowing these incidents, Kaₐₐₐki lived awaiting Kᵥilan, avoiding her luxurious life. She lived in a temple premises praying and with her MangalysÉéra and patiently waited for the arrival of Kᵥilan.

Years passed and Mi·havi gave birth to a beautiful child Maₐₐₐimₐₐₐimₐₐₐghala. Years after Kᵥilan began to suspect the chastity of Mi·havi and slowly he lost passion towards her. Their life became miserable because of this and Kᵥilan went away from her. Midhavi could not tolerate this. She wished to bring back him and send her servant VasanÉamilika as a messenger to give him a letter. He was reluctant to accept the letter and sent back the servant. He became poor. During this time Kaₐₐₐki was living in a CiÉÉan temple with VraÉa and PÉja. Kᵥilan approached Kaₐₐₐki with regret and told her that he lost everything because of the verst life with dirty prostitute Mi·havi. Kaₐₐₐki believed that Kᵥilan approached her with the aim to earn money for Midhavi and still she gave him two anklets that she kept with her, with a smile inside. Kᵥilan said to her that he would go to Madurai to
sell out the anklets and he would re-start the trade to regain the lost wealth. He requested to Kaş,aki to follow him. Kaş,aki followed the words of K°vilan like a child and K°vilan felt happy. They travelled to Ma-urai by dreaming a new life. On the way they took rest in the išram of KavuöÉi A·ikal. From there KavuöÉi A·ikal also followed them to Madurai. On the way a forest goddess appeared before K°vilan in the form of VasaöÉamilika, when they stopped near a stream to drink water. When she tried to attract him K°vilan chanted ÈurgamaöÉra as a self protection.

In Madurai, whenever he wanted to go outside Kaş,aki was under the protection of KavuöÉi A·ikal. One day the Brahmin, Kaušikan approach K°vilan and gave Midhavi’s letter to him. The content of this letter was about the pitty condition of his parents. K°vilan felt very sorry. He thought that he himself was the cause for all misseries, not Midhavi. He gave a reply letter to his parents. The hours long talk on this issue with KavuöÉi A·ikal was a solace to him. With the help of KavuöÉi
A·ikal K°vilan found out sheppered, MiÉiri and resided with her in her house. The experience in that house with Ka¸¸aki opened the eyes of K°vilan and he confessed his own ill deeds in their wealthy life in the past.

One day K°vilan went to the street to sell one of the anklets of Ka¸¸aki, unfortunately he approached the gold merchant who had been the gold smith of the palace. On seeing the anklets Goldsmith planned to a treachery that accuse K°vilan for theft of anklet of the Queen. He informed the queen about K°vilan who was under his custody with the anklet. For some reason king wanted to please queen and therefore he ordered to produce K°vilan with anklet before him. He was sentenced to death by the King and hanged. On hearing the news from Ayya, daughter of miÉiri. Ka¸¸aki fell down unconsciously. She wept a lot and then became furious. Holding anklet in her hand she ran to the palace to see the king, who sentenced K°vilan to death. The gate keepers stopped her way. Hearing the roaring noice at the gate king asked the gate keepers to let her to get in.
She wanted to know the truth, why her husband was hanged to death. King's argument could not convinced her. She was ready to prove that the anklet was her own because she was sure that inside her anklet there are small thin diamonds. King told that queen's anklet consists of small pearls. Then the king ordered to bring the anklet. While bringing it she snatched the anklet and threw it on the floor. Thin diamonds spread all over the floor. Seeing this and realizing his mistake king fell down and died. Realizing the facts queen also died after it. Then Kaşaki move towards street and plucked her left breast in fury and threw it away. Fire emitted from it swallowed entire Madurai except Brahmins, cattle, old people and children. Then she moved towards for west of Madurai and reached in Chera Kingdom and took shelter under a tree. Kövilan came down from heaven and took her also to heaven. After the cremation of the body the bones were taken to Kodungalloor, the capital of Chera Kingdom. Later, she became deity of Kodungalloor temple.
Kodungalloor is known as the pivotal place of 64 major $B^h\text{\textit{a}ÈraKi}^\frac{1}{2}i$ temples in Kerala. Besides these there are around hundreds of temples related to Kodungalloor (Appendix I: p.216).

Thousands of devotees belong to all castes except Brahmin participate in the annual festival of Kodungalloor temple, known as 'B$^h\text{\textit{a}xa}_{i}$ UÉsavam that starts on the day of 'Kumb$^h$a b$^h\text{\textit{a}xa}_{i}$ and ends on m$\text{\textit{a}na}$ B$^h\text{\textit{a}xa}_{i}$.

In the early morning of the B$^h\text{\textit{a}xa}_{i}$ in the month of Kumb$^h$am a representative of Éa¶¶in who has the right to do ritual in temple visit the temple and cireambulate it 3 times by ringing the bell of brones. At the end of 3$^{rd}$ round he adorn Ê®vi with a golden Éili. This is the beginning of B$^h\text{\textit{a}xa}_{i}$ festival. After it edamukku m$\text{\textit{e}ppan}$ hangs ritualistic flags in different colours on the near by palm trees.

$K^\circ\text{\textit{ive}³³u}$ is one of the important rituals of Kodungallor temple. Thousands of coacks are sacrificed before $K^\circ\text{\textit{ikkallu}}$, near the temple. Kodungalloor
bʰagavaÉi Vḍdu one of the famous Nair Éaravidu has the right to cut the first coack in K°‹iveu and Éacc°½i Éaravidu of Kadathanad has the right to bring the first coack. As per animal and birds sacrifice Prohibition Act of 1953 Coack sacrifice was banned by the Government. Therefore as symbol of sacrifice, now coacks are brought and flees them before the K°‹ikkallu. After K°‹ikkallumÉ·al obscene songs are sung from the northern side of the temple by devotees. KivuÉċ₂·al is a ritual having active participation of devotees. It was on the day of aśwaÉi. Immediately after the visit of the Kodungalloor King secret pooja will be performed in the temple on the same day. They wounds their own head with sword in a trance and sprinkle blood. It is believed that this perform once is reminiscence of the battle with Ki½i and Èiçuka. The Palakkal v®la community have the right to take the first round of KivuÉċ₂·al. In this after noon performance of šikÉ®yapÉja takes place very secretly. The performers of this pooja are three members of 3 Éaravidrs who have this right traditionally.
No one knows the details of this, because the secret will be disclosed to a $4^{th}$ person only if one of the member passes away. KunnaÉÉ Ma·am, N¢laÉÉ Ma·am, °a¸a·aÉÉil Ma·am are the three families having the above given right. These $p£jiries$ are known as $a·igal$. They will clean the $Sr¢k°vil$ before the pooja, prepare a mixture of turmeric and water of tender coconut. The utensils used are exclusively for this pooja. Tender coconut by removing its top part are offered in the pooja. ÉrimaÈu¤am also offers along with this. It is believed that during the occasion of pooja $Ki½i$ is taking rest to cure her injuries that she got during the war. The king of Kodungallur who sits in the $Balikkalpura$, leaves the temple only after hand over the customary stick to one of the $a·ikal$ who comes out of the temple after completing the pooja. The king moves towards 'Nilapi·uÉara' which is in the eastern side of the temple. When he is seated his servant raises a redsilk umbrella as a sign to start $KivuÉt¸·il$. Making sound by blessing on a metal one of the member of $Palakkal v®la$
community takes the first round of $Kivu{\mathfrak{C}}{\cdot}al$. Then it is free to do $Kivu{\mathfrak{C}}{\cdot}al$ by all devotees assembled $\mathfrak{C}{\cdot}al$. They are all possessed. the $sr\mathfrak{C}kovil$ is closed after $a\mathfrak{w}a\mathfrak{E}i p\mathfrak{j}a$. On that day only one pooja is performed and $va\mathfrak{y}i\mathfrak{y}i piyasam$ is offered to $\mathfrak{O}vi$. The $Na\cdot a$ is closed for six days after $B\mathfrak{a}\mathfrak{a}\cdot i$. On those days $A\cdot igal$ does pooja for $\mathfrak{E}\mathfrak{V}i$ once in a day by entering into the temple through backside.

$\mathfrak{E}ilappoli$ will perform after $m\mathfrak{C}nab\mathfrak{h}a\mathfrak{a}\cdot i$. Now a days $\mathfrak{E}ilappoli$ is performed only one day. In olden days $\mathfrak{E}ilappoli$ is for 7 days and $\mathfrak{E}ilappoli$ of each day is the right of different communities. The details are given below:

1\textsuperscript{st} day - $O^\mathfrak{O}\mathfrak{u}k\mathfrak{a}a i\mathfrak{i}\mathfrak{y}am Y^\mathfrak{o}gam$

2\textsuperscript{nd} day - $Ayir\mathfrak{E}r A\mathfrak{y}ayiram Nayar y^\mathfrak{o}gam$

3\textsuperscript{rd} day - King of Cochin

4\textsuperscript{th} day - Kodungallor $\mathfrak{E}ambu\mathfrak{s}in$

5\textsuperscript{th} day - King of Travancore

6\textsuperscript{th} day - $A\mathfrak{p}aya$ community
7th day - Kaⱽakka community

On the first day the ladies form the family of Onnukaⱽa iyⱽam yᵜgam have the right to take the Éilam for the eᵜuᵜa½ᵜ₂aÉÉ. The Kudumbi community, now known as mⱽppan, have the right to explore 1008 kaÉïna which is the signal to begin Éilappoli. On the first day of Makaⱽam Kudumbi community perform əa·aÉa½½al. Goats are decorated with garlands and brought in a procession, carrying banana bunch with the accompaniment of 'Éappu'. In the morning of the same day ladies of Kudumbi community perform a ritual called 'Suvisini'. This is a group prayer for getting suit grooms for girls and to get a long married life.

On other days, Éilappoli is officiated by the Cochin È®veswam board. On all days Éilappoli starts from the nearest Kurumba temple, except the 3rd day which starts from PaÉïne¶¶arayïlal k°vilakam.

GuⱽuÉi and Bali are two important rituals in šikÉ®ya PÉja. Auspicious days for šikÉ®ya PÉja are
Monday, Tuesday and Sunday. the blood of offered animal or birds is used for GuµuÉi. Brahmin priests also use to do guµuÉi ritual. But instead of blood they use the mixture of turmeric and lime water. Now the same is used by all because of the prohibition of animal/bird sacrifice. There is a raised platform in the northern side of the sikÉ®ya kivus, which is known Va¶akk®nviÉil, the place for sacrifice. If there is no permanent altars temporary altars made of skin part of plantain leaf are used for the purpose.

If a person is diseased by vas£¤i (small pox), people believe that the dead body have been taken as the food of Ki½i, failing which Ki½i becomes furious and spreads vas£¤i to everybody in the village.

Éilappoli is one of the main ritual for the appeasement of Ki½i. This is the enactment of the events that happened after the slaughtering of Èiruka. Nobody could controls the fury of Ki½i and thus to cool down she was received by vergins who carried 'Éilam' in
both hands in which broken half of coconut is placed filled with oil and litted wicks in it. Usually the Ėilappoli starts from a particular ĖaΞavi-, which has traditional rights in the specific temple of Ki½i. Ėilappoli move towards the temple in a procession with the accompaniment of musical instruments.

ĖaΞ, τΣamruÉu is another ritual in which special poojas are performed and uΞ iyappan is offered to Ki½i.

V®la is performed almost all Kivus in Kerala. Among these B¹aΞa, iv®la and p£Ξav®la are important. Obscene songs, pa·aya, i and Ėilappoli are also performed along with v®la. The P£Ξav®la in B¹agavaÉi Kivus of North Kerala is entirely different from that of South Kerala. In North Kerala, p£Ξam is performed for nine days from the day of KirÉika and ends with p£Ξamku½i. B¹aΞa, i V®la is considered as an important v®la related to Ki½i as B¹aΞa, i is the birth star of Ki½i. Kodungalloor B¹aΞa, i is important among these. Besides this c¢rmba Kivus in Kerala are famous for B¹aΞa, i v®la.
Pongila is another ritual as part of Bhājāvatī. Attukal pongila is very famous. Ladies, as a vow visit the temple in the early morning carrying rice and others accessories to prepare rice and Ėi.ana·a and it is prepared in the temporary owen made in front of the temple. The number of participators in pongila is very high especially in temples such as Attukal and therefore temporary owens are made both sides of all roads, even ten to fifteen kilometers away from the temple. Once rice is cooked sacred water from the temple is sprinkled over that. Kalam Kāzikal ritual is similar to pongila. For this also ladies take vaÉa. They arrange a new clay pot filled with rice powder and fix an aracanut, betel leaf, coconut and mollasses on it and move to the temple in a procession. From the temple they prepare Ėi.·a.a·a (A·a), a kind of sweet prepared out of rice, coconut and mollasses.

Ladies offer cuttuvi½akku for Évi, all over Kerala. For this devotees fill the lamps fixed around the temple with oils and lit wicks in it.
Kalašam is another offering to Ki½i especially in Ki½ckivu. Kalašam, Kaṣīnkalašam, PuĒÉaṣikkalašam, Po·ikkalašam, Ėikkukalašam, MuĒakkalašam are different types of Kalašam.

Bhrahmins also worship Ki½i as their goddess in their own way. To them Ki½i is one among the SapÉaÈ®vaÉa. According to Kuzhikkattu Pacca Ki½i is the seventh È®vaÉa, an addition in the Ka£la context (kuzhikkattu Maheswaran Bhattathirippad; 1974. Introduction p:7). Rarely they also perform śikÉ®ya p£ja. But they avoid liquor and flesh. Instead of that 'a¤aÉÉam' a mixture of lime and turmeric and add Éecci flower and malar in it is prepared. For śikeÉ®ya p£ja they make symbolic altar with the skin part of plantain leaf and fix K°ÉÉksi on it and decorate it with kuṣuÉÉ°la.

The secret worships for Ki½i is mainly done by a caste group who are entirely different from Namboodiries who are known as Pi¶iraka, M£saÉu etc. Offerings for Ki½i are Paµcamakīnas'. Like Namboodiries their
residence are also known as *illam*. A·i is another group who practice the pooja for *Kî½i*, especially in Kodungalloor temple. Their living places are known as *ma·am – 'Y°giguəukkal* also entitled to do pooja for *Kî½i*. *Kî½i* worship in Nair Éaravíd is done by Nairs. The reference in *BⁿaÈπakî½i* worship in Éacch°li OÉ®nan's Éaravíd is an evidence for that. *Bⁿadrakî½i* is *Ka½aΞim£rÊEy*. Those who are oracles in some of the *Kî½i* temples, belong to theyyampadi Kuruppu and their group is considered as a fraction of Nair community. Likewise, *raΞappiÂiśa, P®Ξi·ippa,ikkar* and a·i who are related *Kî½i* worship are part of Nair community.

In *P£vanka,·i BⁿagavaÉi* temple, in Kozhikode district, Kallikkodan *kivu* in Kannur, *Kaπi,ki½i* temple in *Ciladu, Nellikk°·u Kivu* in Ramnattukara, *P£jaries* belong to thiyya community. *Cu·alabⁿaÈπakî½i* have an important role in the death rituals of thiyyas of Malabar. *GuµuÉi* for *Cu·alabⁿaÈπakî½i* along with death rituals of thiyya community is evident that thiyya community has special affinity towards *Cu·alabⁿaÈraki½i*. Ezhava
community is having right in Kodungalloor as $\text{M£ppan}$. They are also called as $\text{Éa}_\text{·}an$.

Pulaya community have their own $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$ temples in different parts of Kerala. They worship $\text{smašinaki}\frac{1}{2}i$, $cimu_\text{·}i$, etc. Vela community also worship $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$ and perform $Ka\frac{1}{2}ame\text{«uÉÉumpi¶¶u}$ in Kodungalloor. The relationship of Vannan community with $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$ is very deep that goes down to its origin. The origin myth of Vannan community is as follows:

Because of the Duel with $\text{È¡¤uka}$, $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$'s body injured seriously. On seeing $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$'s sufferings Lord Vishnu created Vannan from his right hand to cure the injury. Vannan could give relief to $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$'s body except her genital area. So $viÅ,u$ created vannatti from his left hand and send them to earth and blessed them with traditional medicinal practices, $Pa\frac{1}{2}i_\text{·}ivi\frac{1}{2}$, Redsilk, Cila´ka, $RuÈx$ ikÀa and $V¢na$. All these are used by Vannan's while gave offerings to $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$. Parava_ Kuruppu and Viswakarma community also worship $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$. 

163
The Araya/Mukkuva community who lives in the coast of Kerala are also worshippers of $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$ and pooja for $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$ is being done by themselves. In hill tribes such as Kurichyar, Kurumar, Adiyar also worship $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$. Kurichiyar worship $sr\mathit{cpp}^\mathord{\circ}rkkali$ the deity of Pazhassiraja as their deity. Adiyar worship $Ka\mathit{si}^{\prime}ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$ and $cu\mathit{alab}^h\mathit{a}\mathit{E}^{\mathit{a}}\mathit{ak}i^{\frac{1}{2}}$. They worship $Cu\mathit{alab}^h\mathit{a}\mathit{E}^{\mathit{a}}\mathit{ak}i^{\frac{1}{2}}$ along with spirits. $Cu\mathit{alab}^h\mathit{a}\mathit{E}^{\mathit{a}}\mathit{ak}i^{\frac{1}{2}}$ is entitled to protect the spirits till the end of death rituals and on the day of pula (A\mathit{iyan}\mathit{E}^{\mathit{a}}\mathit{am}) take back the spirit from $Cu\mathit{alab}^h\mathit{a}\mathit{E}^{\mathit{a}}\mathit{ak}i^{\frac{1}{2}}$. Kurichiyar and Adiya follow the same ritual proceedings in the case of $Cu\mathit{alab}^h\mathit{a}\mathit{E}^{\mathit{r}a}ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$. On the day of a\mathit{iyan}\mathit{E}^{\mathit{a}}\mathit{am} they perform – $b^h\mathit{agava}^\mathit{E}^{\mathit{i}y}i^{\mathit{a}}$am too. Besides $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$ $Ka\mathit{si}^{\prime}ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$ is also worshipped by Kurichyar along with malakki\mathit{a}i teyyam. They also perform $Kumb^h\mathit{appi}^{\mathit{a}}$ and toddy as offerings.

$s\mathit{iva}$, $Vi\mathit{A},u$, $Ga$, $apa\mathit{E}^{i}$, $Subrahma,ya$, $\mathit{E}^{\mathit{a}}\mathit{ga}$ are Pan Indian God/Goddesses which are popular in Kerala. In Kuzhikkattupacca the details of installation and description of $p\mathit{E}^{\mathit{a}}j\mathit{avi}\mathit{E}^{i}$ of $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$, as a seventh God also
included. In the preface of the book the author himself stated that $K^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ is an addition in the Kerala context, which is popular in Kerala. Wherever it may be, in all settlements the presence of $K^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ as Goddess as a protector and at the same time destructor will be there. $K^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ is accepted as a village goddess all over Kerala and accordingly its different manifestations that suits to its own contexts. One who is in search of the identity of the Kerala folk may realise that the first and foremost special feature is the belief in $K^{\frac{1}{2}}i$. $K^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ is the only God/Goddess having acceptability by all caste in Kerala and popular in all places of Kerala from south to north and performance and rituals are so many to propitate $K^{\frac{1}{2}}i$. Customary practices in relation to the beliefs of $K^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ are also popular all over Kerala.

In Kerala $K^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ is accepted as the goddess of both protection and destruction. In certain cases she is worshiped as protector of life and wealth and at the same time she used to punish by giving contagious diseases such as small pox. The whole belief system related to


$Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$ is in support of the above given fact; not only belief system but, rituals also. The myth and its special versions is evident that people from Kerala from south to north believe in the destruction and constructive power of $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$: For fertility, both in the case of the earth and women she have been propitiated since remote pasts. The belief system behind $padaya_{i}$, $K^{o}lam$ $\acute{E}u^{\frac{1}{2}}^{\frac{1}{2}}$al, $mu_{i}iyettu$, $K^{\frac{1}{2}}iy\acute{E}\\mu$ and so on emphasises the same fact that each folk wanted to propitated $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$ to achieve prosperity and to escape from the wrath of $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$. It is believed that whether, it is $padaya_{i}$, $mu_{i}iy\acute{E}ttu$, or $\acute{E}lappoli$ all festival are to cool down the wrath of $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$.

$Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$ is the most furious Goddess among other Goddesses of Kerala. The myth behind any of the ritual/performance of the Goddess exemplify that all ritual/performance are aimed at cool down the Goddess whose anger was at its peak to kill $\acute{E}i\nu$ka. This is the case with the concept of $C\acute{e}rmba$ and $Ka_{a}$, $aki$. In the mind of people there is no difference between $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}$ who got birth from $\acute{S}iva$, $C\acute{e}rmba$ who originated from the third
eye of śiva and Ka,s aki who destroyed the whole city of Madurai out of her anger.

The Gods/Goddess of Hindu Pantheon and Kerala village Gods/Goddesses are basically different to each other not only because of the concepts, but by practice of rituals also. In this regard Ki½i belongs to the Kerala Gods/Goddesses who will be appeared by receiving offerings such as blood, flesh, liquor and more over animal sacrifice. But animal sacrifice in the case of Ki½i is not an offering for it. But to appease the bhEaga,is with Ki½i who were created by śiva to help Ki½i in the battle field. As part of hinduisation, almost all gods/goddess of Kerala were approved by Ea, Erasamuccaya and accordingly installation were made and daily/annual rituals were prescribed. In these such cases native Gods/Goddesses are considered as partial incarnation of any of these Hindu gods and installation is made in the name of particular God/Goddesses. But, Ki½i, the native Goddess having different manifestations all over Kerala was accepted by Hindu tantric system as
one among the È®vaÉa and separate ‘Éa®ÉraviÈi’ was prescribed for it. Each of the six Hindu god/goddess have its own ‘Éa®ÉraviÈi’ and accepted rituals where as in the case of Ki½i even though installation rituals are prescribed by Kuzhikkattupacca, the festivals and other series of rituals that take place in household in different from place to place. The myth of Ki½i is every where the same. But, for the above given facts Ki½i worship in Kerala can be considered as unique and it is one of the expression of its identity.

The È°ttam songs, ‘Kivile pi¶¶u’ and origin myths of various main Ki½i temples such as midayikivu, at Pazhayangadi, L°kanirkivu at Vatakara, PiÀïnikivu at Koyilandi, Va½ayanidukivu at Kozhikode, Ka½iya¶¶akkivu at Malappuram and B°agavaÉikivu at South Kollam elucidate that the origin of Ki½i worship or the centre place Ki½i worship is Kodungalloor temple. According to the myth M¢na B°a¶a,i in the ‘birth star’ if Ki½i and therefore the annual festival (uÉsavam) falls on the same day in all most all Ki½i temple all over Kerala.
or special rituals are performed on the day in all $Kì$ temples. In the grand festival and series of ritual that take place in Kodungallur denotes from all over Kerala participate and give offerings to $Kì$ in the form of rituals and cash or kinds. Apart from this devotees of $Kì$ have certain customary practices in their own houses. Another special belief worth to mention in that the devotees one who dies in received by $Kì$ and he becomes the part of $Kì$ and special rituals are performed to them on all annual days. The ritual practices and propitiating system in different from one place to another. It is because of people in different parts of Kerala conceived $Kì$ in different way and manifested through rituals and festivals accordingly. For e.g., $Padaya$ represents post-war episode where as $mudiy.tt$ enacts the story of $Kì-Èiuk$ story. In the same way several other episode is being enacted through different rituals that exists in different parts of Kerala.

$Pongila$ in south Kerala, especially in Attukal temple, $Kalamkarikkal$ in other parts of Kerala and $tilappoli$ in so
many $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$ shrines all over Kerala are special features of $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$ worship that exist at present also. Among these ‘Attukal Pongila’ is the ritual observance in which the number of women participate is more than one lakh. All these ritual performances are observed only by women also emphasises the uniqueness of the $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$ worship in Kerala.

Kodungalloor temple is the main centre of $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$ worship where the obscene songs are sung by devotees is a special ritual performances one who killed Ėiṣuṣuka is $B^\prime_\text{adraki}\frac{1}{2}i$, who was created by śiva. Cṛmba is the Goddess came out of the 3rd eye of śiva. And Kaṣ, aki is the heroin who destroyed completely Madurai city and became Goddess. The whole ritual performances in $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$ temples are generally to propitiate $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$ who killed Ėiṣuṣuka; Padaya, Ki$\frac{1}{2}iy$£¶¶u and Ṁi, abali are some of the examples. Éilappoli also is to cool down the wrath of $Ki\frac{1}{2}i$. The main rituals in cṛmbakivu of Mokaya community and thiyya and few other communities of Malabar are to propitiate Cḍṃba who is known as the
È®vaÉa of ‘vas£¤i’. It is believed that the obscene songs that performed in Kodungalloor temple on the occasion of M¢na Bha¤a, festival is part of ‘paµcamakira p£ja’ for Ka¸¸aki who lived her whole life without any pleasant experience with her husband (It is also believed that obscene songs are to cool down K¡½i who was on way back from the battle field, immediately after killing Èiµuka).

The belief, ritual and customs related to K¡½i worship in Kodungalloor point out that the above said three È®vaÉa concepts are merged together and became one. In the same way in C¶rmba Kivu all over Kerala the myths, ritual and customs are the expression of the strong faith of these three Goddesses. The song sung during the annual festival of C¶rmba shrine known as ‘Kivile Pi¶¶u’, for 3 nights or 7 nights continuously narrated the story of these 3 È®vaÉis. In C¶rmba Kivu of north Kerala the main È®vata is C¶rmba. But, the Ka½am drawn, before which sacrifice and ritualistic dances are taking place of K¡½i. The merging of the
above said 3 deities makes the $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ concept unique when it is compared with any other deities in Kerala.

$Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ is common to all caste groups in Kerala, Paraya to Brahmins. Brahmin incorporated $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ as the seventh ‘$È®vaÉa$’. The ‘Pooja’ in the main temples of $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ in Kerala follows the ‘$Ka£½aÈarma$’ which has no written text and as a result different texts are available in different temples. Some of the cases it is known as ‘$šikÉ®yapÉja$’.

According to caste $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ is conceived differently and therefore ritual practices and even names are also different in different caste. $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ $B^{h}adraki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$, $Cudalab^{u}aÈ³raki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$, $šmašinaki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$, $akki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$, $Ka₁₉aki$, $C$ $crmba$ are few of the names popular among different castes. This difference is not limited to names. But, in ritual practices also. This is the reason, in Kerala, geographically and socially $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}i$ concept get hundreds of manifestations. As an expression $Ki^{\frac{1}{2}}ike¶¶u$ in north
Malabar has no comparison either with the ritual practices in Kodungalloor or with Padaya,ši.

Eventhough the right for installation of Ki½ši belongs to ÉaºÉri who is a brahmin the right over to perform daily P£ja is of the PiÉara, mussaÉ, adigal or yogi gurukkal, who are not brahmins. As mentioned elsewhere each caste has its own shrine of Ki½ši and the priest and oracle are from the same caste. In certain cases, such as ni, abali the Malaya caste members perform Ki½ši rituals in house hold of other castes. Here also the priest or ‘ritual man will be from the officiating caste.

The analysis of believe for, rituals and customs brings to an notice that the concept of Ki½ši in Kerala is unique by its mythology, which is almost same in communities and all over Kerala by its varied ritual performances that exists in different temples and shrines of different castes and by its customary practices available in all most all communities of Kerala. There is no other Goddess that having such a deep root in the
mind of the people who belongs to different caste groups and accordingly that having varied manifestations in different parts of Kerala.