Chapter IV

The Teyyam is a popular ritual dance of North Kerala, particularly now found in the traditional Kolattunādu, of the present Cannanūre and Kāsargod districts. As a living cult with centuries old traditions, ritual and custom, it embraces almost all casts and classes of Hindu religion in this region. The term Teyyam is a corrupt form of deivam or God. It is a rare combination of dance and music and reflects important features of a tribal culture.

The indigenous Teyyam cult under the influence of the 'great' classical Indian tradition incorporated new ideals and legends. However its form and content did not change very much. The earliest Brahmanical settlements like Payyannūr and Perimchellur (Taliparamba) in Kolattunādu where the
Brahmanical religion was propagated through the institutions of temples, largely influenced the popular folk religion based on Teyyam and other tribal cults. According to the legendary Keralotpatti, Parashurama sanctioned the festivals like Kaliyattam, Puravela and Deivattam or Teeyattam to the people of Kerala. He assigned the responsibility of Teyyam dance to the indigenous communities like Panan, Velan and Vanan. These traditions explain how the indigenous cults like Teyyam were incorporated and metamorphosed under the religious supremacy of the Brahmanism. In the long historical process a social system evolved in Kerala in which the 'little' culture like Teyyam belonged to the depressed castes and classes whereas the temple oriented culture belonged to the dominant castes and classes. There were no violent confrontations between these two cultures as there was no total destruction of the indigenous culture. "There can be no


1. doubt', say Bridget and Raymond Alchin, 'that a very large part of this modern folk religion is extremely ancient and contains traits which originated during the earliest periods of Neolithic, Heliolithic settlement and expression.
Patronage by Brahmins

When the cult of Teyyam borrowed liberally from Brahmāṇism or it was superimposed by the Brāhmaṇical legends and myths, the Brāhmīns with their social and caste Superiority, also Patronised the Teyyam Gods and Goddesses. They even established their own shrines and Kāvus (groves) for Teyyam deities where Non-Brahmanical rituals and customs were observed. The goddesses like Rakeshwary, Cāmuṇḍi, Someswari, Kuratti and the gods like Viṣṇumūrti are propitiated in these household shrines. There the scheduled caste Teyyam dancers appear during the annual festivals of gods and goddesses. The rituals of such shrines are different from those of the Brahmanical temples. Such a cultural fusion or inter-action between the ‘little’ and ‘great’ cultures makes Teyyam an interesting field of research for social scientists.
The impact of this cultural fusion could be traced on social organization based on caste system and in the agrarian relations. Once the cult is patronized by the Brahmins, the highest authority of Hindu religion, the intermediary and lower castes also took it as a major religious practice. In fact the cult has become the religion of the masses. Even the followers of Islam are associated with the cult in its functional aspect. Even some of the Mappila characters like Alicamundi have found a place in the cult.

**Caste and Agrarian Relations**

The cult of T. eyyam and the allied arts of Kerala had been contributed by an agrarian society. This society had been organized in a caste hierarchical system. The caste mainly determined the position of the individual. Those who controlled the land, the significant means of production and
political authority, claimed superior caste status. Those who cultivated the soil as labourers belonged to the inferior caste. The menial servants also belonged to the same category of caste. Such inferior caste members had patronized their own Teyyam deities. The main deity of the mammals is Bali. Tiyyas exclusively propitiated the deities like Pūmala, Vayanāṭṭu Kulavan, Pūmarutan, Kativaṇṇūrveeran and Muttappan. The Vaṇiyas, a caste of oil-mongers, worshipped exclusively the Muccilot Bhagavati, a goddess identified as Kaṇṇaki of Cilappatikāram. The Maniyanis, a Nayar sub-caste, patronized the goddess of Kaṇṇaṅgat (Bhagavati). Many other Teyyam deities were propitiated in common by all castes.
Classification of Sub Cults

Under the impact of Āryan religions, the cult of Teyyam had changed substantially incorporating new trends and sub cults along with its tribal character.

In a different way, it can be stated that all prominent characteristic of a primitive tribal religious worship had widened the stream of Teyyam cult and made it a deep-rooted folk religion of the millions. For instance, the cult of mother goddesses had an important place in Teyyam. Besides this, the practice like spirit-worship, hero-worship, tree worship, ancestor worship, animal worship, serpent-worship, worship of the goddesses of disease and grāmadevata worship are included in the main stream of Teyyam cult. Under the influence of Āryan myths and legends, a large number of Brahmānic gods and goddesses had infiltrated as separate
culds into Theyyam. Along with these gods and goddesses there exist innumerable folk gods and goddesses. Most of these goddesses are known as Bhagavatis as a matter of sanskritisation.

Different branches of Brahmanical religion such as Saktism, Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism now dominate the cult of Theyyam. However the forms of propitiation and other rituals are continuation of a historical past. In several cult-centers, blood offering was forbidden under the influence of Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism. In such centers separate places outside the under wall of the shrine are selected for blood offering and preparation of the traditional kalam known as vatakkanvatil. The Theyyam deities propitiated through cock-sacrifice will not enter inside such shrines walls. This is a good example of a long-standing cultural synthesis of 'little' and 'great' cultures.
On account of the later origin of Vaiṣṇavism in Kerala, it has no wide-spread influence on Theyyam cult. Only a few deities are available under this category. This may probably be due to the lesser influence of Viṣṇu on the village folk who had an uninterrupted tradition of the worship of Mother goddess for fertility and the god Śiva and his son Murukan for protection and security even during the Saṅgam age. The major Teyyam deities of Vaiṣṇavism are Viṣṇumūrtti and Daivaṅgā. Vaiṣṇavism was very popular in Tuluva country during the 13th century under Viṣṇuvarādhana of Hoysalas. He was a great champion of Vaiṣṇavism. Most probably he was deified as viṣṇumūrtti and propitiated in the Bhūta cult of Tuluva and then propitiated as a prominent folk deity in the Teyyam also. The legend of Viṣṇumūrtti is identified the God's migration from Māṅgalore to Kolattunadu.
All other categories of Teyyam deities can be incorporated in Śaivism and Śaktism. Even ancestors, heroes, animals, etc. are deified and included in those categories. In brief Teyyam provides a good example for the religious evolution and its different stages in Hinduism.

**Tottampāṭṭukal**

The ritualistic songs appropriate for Teyyam is known as ‘Tottam pāṭṭukal’. They describe the origin of the deities, their beauty and grandeur, their journey, power and boldness.

Tottam pāṭṭu or Vāyttāru are performed for each Teyyam. Tottam pāṭṭu is nothing but explaining the story in the form of a song which includes the origin, reason of originating, duties to be performed, ways it went through and at last the farewell. Tottam pāṭṭu will always be performed before the Teyyam.
A distinguishing component of Teyyam performance is that of Tottam. These are songs through which the deities are invoked. With few exceptions, Tottam invokes goddesses Kāli and Pārvati and the sons of Lord Śiva. A Tottain eulogizes the deity and narrate legends for about five hours at a stretch. Towards the end the deity is believed to have entered the body of the Tottam singer. Two men encircle him with their hands interlocked with each other so as to guard the spirit, which has just gained entry.

Tottain pāṭṭukal are mainly to praise the deities and contain myth or legend of deities. They describe the origin of the deities their beauty and grandeur, their journey, power and bravado. Tottain songs help us to understand a lot about the social, cultural and linguistic characters of North Kerala. They expose the cruel and bestial treatment of the old rulers in Malabar. Some describes the dictatorship and evils of misrule.
Some questions the futility of perverted casteism and untouchability. “Pottan Teeyam” is a good example. The dialogue between Sri Śaṅkara and Śiva, disguised as Candāla (Pottan), is famous and noteworthy.

Tottam songs generate pretty belief and divine knowledge among the common folk. In some songs the philosophy is that the god is the power found in all the phenomena of the world. The self-dedication of the ardent devotee can be found in some songs. Some songs have much touching effect. Some give elaborate description of the delightful sight of the Teeyam. Some Tottam songs give picturesque description of war and hunting. Many are heroic worship. Another feature is the representation of the myth with a spiritual tint.

Tamil writings and Saṅgam (B.C.500 – A.D. 500) epoch and historical evidences indicate that a form like today’s
Teyyam emerged about 1500 years ago, and passed through several stages of evolution. A key landmark in this process was the emergence of Malayalam as a literary language. Tottam songs, lauding the divinities relevant to Teyyam came to be composed only after Malayalam became a mature form of literary expression. These songs were transmitted orally from generation to generation, though their authorship remain unknown.
Pūrāṇa Based Teyyas

Bhagavati Teyyas
Daughters of Lord Śiva

1. Kaṅkara Bhagavati
   1. Kuliyana Bhagavati (Concept of Kakkara Bhagavati)
   2. Koyikulaṇṇara Bhagavati
   3. Cekychery Bhagavati
   4. Mainballi Bhagavati

2. Kaṇañātu Bhagavati

3. Kālakeśi Bhagavati (Wife of Dharika)

4. Kālarātri
5. Putiya Bhagavati
6. Dhūma Bhagavati
7. Paṅkuruliyarṇa Bhagavati
8. Aṅkakulaṇṇara Bhagavati
9. Naraṅbil Bhagavati
10. Onukura Bhagavati
11. Korakoṭṭa Bhagavati
GRÄMADEVATAS

1. Karkadoti Bhagavati  (Concept of Pārvati)
2. Karatu Bhagavati
3. Kelam Kulaṅgara Bhagavati
4. Ciralatu Bhagavati
5. Tayippara Bhagavati

Concept of Tayippara Bhagavati Teyyas.

1. Keṭṭilatu Bhagavati
2. Frinikal Bhagavati
3. Kañamañalatu Bhagavati
4. Kāmādatu Bhagavati
5. Kariyāppil Bhagavati
6. Kaleriyaiṇa Bhagavati
7. Kaviṇiśari Bhagavati
8. Kātiyoṭu Bhagavati
9. Kāpāṭu Bhagavati
10. Kārakīl Bhagavati
11. Kāṭuvakulaṇaṇa Bhagavati
12. Kuṭṭikara Bhagavati
13. Kurukalāl Bhagavati
14. Kurunta Kalamāra Bhagavati
15. Kūlūl Bhagavati
16. Cāmakal Bhagavati
17. Comilotu Bhagavati
18. Deviyāl Bhagavati
19. Nāgacheri Bhagavati
20. Nilamañalatu Bhagavati
21. Nālankai Bhagavati
22. Madatil Bhagavati
23. Rākṣasamāla Bhagavati
24. Vayalicceri Bhagavati
25. Virajirakāvil Bhagavati

6. Nāga Bhagavati
7. Pānaccira Bhagavati
8. Perakulaāara Bhagavati
9. Maraṅatalaria Bhagavati
10. Āāyirānteñil Bhagavati
11. Poyyakāl Bhagavati
12. Pramācceri Bhagavatī
13. Mūte datu Bhagavatī
14. Kaṁiyāna Bhagavatī
15. Paroliyama Bhagavatī
16. Rudhiranaṇi Bhagavatī
17. Mucciloṭṭu Bhagavatī
18. Kelankulanāra Bhagavatī
19. Malakāri Bhagavatī
20. Malankuratti Bhagavatī
21. Pullikuratti Bhagavatī
22. Kūnū Kuratti Bhagavatī
23. Uciṭṭa Bhagavatī
24. Pulamāṇḍi Bhagavatī
25. Keliyātu Bhagavatī
KĀLI TEYYAS

1. Kāli
2. Bhadrakāli
3. Vīrarkāli
4. Kodurākāli
5. Parakāli
6. Pulli kāli
7. Malaya Kariṅkāli
8. Veṭṭakāli
9. Cūṭṭakāli
10. Cūṭṭahāda Kāli
11. Puliyurkāli
12. Pullikariṅkāli
13. Nāga Kāli
CAMUNDI TEYYAS

1. Kāla Cāmunḍī
2. Kundora Cāmunḍī
3. Padiṅāre Cāmunḍī
4. Madayil Cāmunḍī
5. Rakta Cāmunḍī

Concept of Rakta Cāmunḍī
1. Kūṭi kara Cāmunḍī
2. Nilaṁ Kai Cāmunḍī
3. Plādaka Cāmunḍī
4. Bālicceri Cāmunḍī
5. Vīra Cāmunḍī
6. Mutiyāra Cāmunḍī
7. Kīzhke Cāmunḍī
8. Nilaṁ Cāmunḍī
9. Kūṭikara Cāmunḍī
10. Periyāṭu Cāmunḍī
11. Edapara Cāmunḍī
12. Cālayil Cāmunḍī
13. Aāyiraṁ teñil Cāmunḍī
14. Karel Cāmunḍī
6. Pannātu Čāmuṇḍi
7. Āarya Čāmuṇḍi
8. Ardha Čāmuṇḍi
9. Edalā Puratu Čāmuṇḍi
10. Panuikulatu Čāmuṇḍi
11. Kuṇḍūr Čāmuṇḍi
12. Kariṁ Čāmuṇḍi
13. Pulli Čāmuṇḍi

GRAMA ČĀMUŃDI TEYYAŚ

1. Mūvalain Čāmuṇḍi
2. Memacuṛ Čāmuṇḍi
3. Kariyātu Čāmuṇḍi
4. Maṇalatu Čāmuṇḍi
5. Aalakuni Čāmuṇḍi (Concept of Viśnumūrti)
6. Utira Čāmuṇḍi
7. Keliyatū Čāmuṇḍi
8. Tī Čāmuṇḍi
9. Pālotu Čāmuṇḍi
CONCEPT OF LORD ŚIVA

1. Ghantā Karna
2. Kṣetra Pālan
3. vaira Jātan
4. Bhairavan
5. Aādivedan
6. Oṇa Potan
7. Kārimkutī Cātan
8. Pulamāruturan (Concept of Nandikeśwara)

GRĀMADEVATAS

1. Pālotu Candran
2. Pulikanḍan
3. Veṭṭakkorumakan
4. Vayanadu Kulavan
5. Kuṭṭiccāttan
6. Pūlon Daivam
7. Pūṭā di Daivam
8. Karuvom Daivam
9. Karumāla Daivam
10. Meletalaccil
11. Pūtatār
12. Maṇikanthan
13. Danda Devan
14. Kālicān
15. Pāliyāṭṭīswaran
16. Pulapottan

CONCEPT OF ŚIVABHÜTAS

1. Bhūtattān
2. Velutta Bhūtam
3. Bhūtaṁtulal
4. Kariyātan
5. Karumakan
6. Cukana Bhūtam
7. Parava Maṅkal
8. Karin Bhūtam
9. Karivūr tottam (Concept of Gaṇapati)
CONCEPT OF VIŚṆUMŪRTI TEṆ YAS

1. Viśṇumūrti
2. Kayaran Daivam
3. Urppazhacci
4. Pākkān Daivam
5. Kāran Daivam
6. Pālotu Daivam
7. Ottakolam

1. Mañabali       Vāmana Purāṇa
2. Oñatar         Bhāgavata Purāṇa
3. Bhāli          Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa
4. Raktabijān     Vāmana Purāṇa
                        Devi Bhāgavata Purāṇa
5. Rakṣas         Agni Purāṇa
Stories Stated in Purāṇas: about the Teyya Characters

KĀLI
Parvati wife of Śiva

Parvati is known under different names and worshipped in different forms. Amarakośa (Sanskrit Lexicon) gives the following synonyms for parvati: Uma, Katyāyani, Gauri, Kāli, Haimavati, Isvari, Śiva, Bhavani, Rudrani, Sarvani, Sarvaṁaṅgala, Aparna, durga, Mrdani, Candika, Aṁbika, Arya, Dākṣayaṇi, Girija, Menakatmaja, Cāmunda, Karṇamoti, Carccika, Bhairavi. Some of these names refer to the various dispositions of Parvati, while a few are the names in the incarnations of Parvati. Himavaṇ and Mena had three daughters and a son. The Devas were watching who among
the three-Rāgini, Kutila and Kāli would become the consort of Śiva. All the three were interested in penance. The Devas took Ragini to Brahmaloka and showed her to Brahma and the latter declared that she is incapable of being a mate of Śiva. Rāgini got angry and Brahma cursed her and made her into Sandhyārāga and she took her place in the sky. Then the Devas took Kutila to Brahma and the latter said that she was also incapable of being a mate of Śiva. Kutila also got angry and Brahma made her into a river and kept her in Brahmaloka. Mena was greatly distressed at the loses of her two daughters and so she advised Kāli, her third daughter to go home discontinuing the penance. She at first said Uma (ma – do not) and so she got the name of Uma. She was the daughter of a Parvata (Himavān is a Parvata (mountain)) and so she got the name Parvati (mountain girl) also. Kāli later went home. But after sometime the natural inclination in her led her to start a
severe penance again. Then Śiva appeared before her in his real form and married Pārvati (Kāli alias Uma) in the presence of Devas and Mahārṣis.

Mahiṣāsura once went to the Vindhyas after conquering all the three worlds. He was accompanied by his ministers: Raktabija, Caṇḍa, Muṇḍa, Ciksura and Naraka. They met there the goddess Kātyayani. Mahiṣāsura fell in love with the beautiful and well figured Kātyayani and he sent Dundubhi as messenger to the goddess to make her know his desire. Dundubhi approached Kātyayani and told her to become the wife of Mahiṣa, the emperor of all the three worlds. Devi replied that she would accept as her husband one who will defeat her in the battle and that was the custom also in her caste. Mahiṣāsura with a huge army and heavy equipments went to war with her. But Kātyayani entered the field alone mounted on her lion and the devas watching her enter the
battlefield without wearing even an Armour were shocked. Devi went forward reciting the mantra of Viṣṇupancakṣara given to her by Śiva and lakhs and lakhs of demons were killed by the adroit sword swinging and also by the dinning roar of Kātyāyani. Mahiṣa and his ministers surrounded her and Devi stepping down from the lion started to dance wielding her sword. Swinging her sword to the rhythm of her dance-steps Devi picked up the leading demons one by one and killed them. Seeing that, Mahiṣāsura approached her, burning with rage like the pralayagni. All the attendants of Devi fled. Those who remained were trampled to death by Mahiṣāsura. Devi at first killed the ministers and then, faced Mahiṣāsura. Mahiṣa became an elephant and Devi cut off its trunk. The elephant became a buffalo then. Devi sent a spike and it was broken. Even Devi’s discus, granted to her by Viṣṇu was blunted when it hit the rock-like body of Mahiṣāsura.
Varuṇapāsa, yamadaṇḍa and indra-vajra were all alike fruitless against the mighty Mahiṣāsura. Angered Devi jumped on the buffalo form of the demon and drove it to exhaustion and when at last its power of resistance had failed, Devi plunged her spear into the ears of the buffalo and the demon fell dead.

Many years went by when Kāśyapa beget of his wife Danu three great sons named Śūṁbha, Niśūṁbha and Namuci. All were fierce demons. Namuci attacked Indra but they soon came to a compromise. But Indra hid in the foam of the ocean which entered the ears, nose and mouth and Namuci while he was playing in the ocean. Indra used his Vajrayuddha from inside and killed him.

Śūṁbha and Niśūṁbha were angry and they entered svarga and defeating everyone there, carried all the riches from there to the earth. They met rakta-bīja and he said “Oh Lords, I am Raktabīja, minister of Mahiṣāsura. Katyāyani Devi killed
virtuous Mahiṣāsura. His two ministers Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa are hiding inside the ocean afraid of Kātyāyani Devi”. While he was speaking thus Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa also came there. When they all exchanged ideas Śūmbha called one of his men and said “Bhoḥ Sugrīvasura, go and tell Kātyāyani to be my wife.” Sugrīva went to Kātyāyani and returned disappointed and said “Lords Śūmbha and Niśūmbha, I told Devi your message and she only laughed. She said that Śūmbha and Niśūmbha might be mighty lords but only those who defeated her could marry her.”

Enraged at this arrogance of Kātyāyani, Śūmbha sent Dhūmrākṣa to drag Kātyāyani down to him. Dhūmraka with six Aksauhiniṣ of soldiers went to the seat of Kātyayani and challenged her to a light. Devi stepped down from her seat and stood before Dhūmrākṣa and the latter leaped forward to catch hold of her. But Dhūmrākṣa was burnt to death by the
humkāra fire of the goddess. Not only that, the humkāra sound reached the ears of Śūṁbha. Śūṁbha felt small by this prowess of the Devi but his rage increased. Śūṁbha then sent Canda, Munḍa and the great demon Ruru also with an army of a hundred crores of demons to face Devi Kauśikī. When the enemies reached Vindhya the Bhūtās of Devi made loud and shrill noises. The lion of Kātyāyani roared and she leaped into the midst of the army with sword in hand. Lakhs and lakhs of asuras fell dead by the sword of the goddess. Devi once opened her mouth and lakhs of asurās entered it and then she shut her mouth keeping the asuras in her stomach till they all died. Devi beat the demon Ruru to death and she plucked her matted hair and struck it on the ground and from there arose the fierce form of Cāmuṇḍi. Canda and Munḍa fled but Cāmuṇḍi followed them to Patāla and catching hold of them chopped off their heads and presented them to Kātyāyani.
Then Devi, Cāmuṇḍi and the bhutas together tore to pieces all the remaining asuras and stored them all in their stomachs.

Hearing this Śurēbha’s rage knew no bounds and he started with an army of thirty crores of men. The army swept on like an ocean and finding it, moving forward Cāmuṇḍi roared, Kātyāyani made a sound like a lion’s roar and Brahmani holding high the dagger jumped down to fight. Maheswari with snakes and the spike, with the three eyes open got down in fits of anger. Kaumāri with the Javelin hanging round her waist and bright eyes entered the field. Vaiṣṇavi swinging her sword and whirling the mace with many weapons rushed to the field. Varāhi breaking open the earth with its tusk and bearing a large wooden pestle came to fight. Indrani with diamond on her sides came to fight. Narasimhi brushing the manes on her breast, shaking the stars and whirling the planets and making a fierce appearance came to the field. (Cāmuṇḍi, Brahmani,
Maheśwary, Kaumāri, Vaishnavi, Varāhi and Narasiṁhi are the
different forms of Kātyāyani. They are called Saptamatrs
(seven mothers). These Saptamatrs were born when
Kātyayani in her wrath beat the earth with her matted hair).
Cāmuṇḍi roared. The world became dark. Hearing the roar
Śiva descended to the field. The asurās surrounded the Devi
again. But they all fell dead with blood flowing in a stream.
The dead bodies of the asurās became heaped up and in
despair Śurīmbha and Niśurīmbha wept. Seeing that, Raktabīja
got angry and rushed at Devi. The Saptamatrs shouted and
Cāmuṇḍi opened her mouth. The lower jaw of Cāmuṇḍi
touched Paṭāla when she opened her mouth from the sky.
Raktabīja wounded and bleeding by a dagger stroke of
Cāmuṇḍi, fell into the mouth of Cāmuṇḍi and disappeared.
Then Niśurīmbha interfered and the fight became one between
Niśurīmbha and Devi. The fat and sturdy hands of Niśurīmbha
and the mace he was carrying fell by an arrow sent by Devi. Then Devi struck him with her spike and Nisumbha was killed. Both Sumbha and Nisumbha who came to wreak vengeance on her were thus killed. This story is stated in Skantapuran, Agnipuran and Bhagavatapuran.

**GHANTAKARNA**

General: Ghanta and Karna were two Raksasa brothers who attained salvation by worshipping Visnu. But the elder brother, Ghanta alone is sometimes called by the name Ghanta Karna in the Puranas.

Brith.

There is a reference in Darukavdha (killing of Darukasura) about the birth of Ghanta Karna. Daruka, after having secured a boon from Brahma, used to harass the world too much and when his depredation became unbearable Siva created Bhadrakali from his third eye and she killed the asura.
Maṇḍodāri, the wife of Dāruka and daughter of Maya, was sunk in grief on the death of her husband. She began to do tapas. Śiva appeared and gave her a few drops of sweat from his body, saying that the person on whom she sprinkled the sweat drops would suffer from smallpox, and that such patients would worship her (Maṇḍodāri) and supply her necessary food. From that day onwards Maṇḍodāri became the presiding deity over smallpox. On her way back to the earth with the sweat drops, Maṇḍodāri met Bhadrakāli at whom she threw the sweat drops to take revenge of her husband's death. Immediately Bhadrakāli fell down with an attack of smallpox. Hearing about the mishap Śiva created a terrible Rākṣasa called Ghaṇṭākarna. According to Śiva's directions Ghaṇṭākarna licked off smallpox from Bhadrakāli's body. But, when he tried to lick it off from her face, she prevented him saying that she and Ghaṇṭākarna were sister and brother and that it was
improper for a brother to lick the face of a sister. And, even to this day the small pox on Bhadrakāli’s face remains as an ornament to her. This story can be seen in Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The name Ghantākarna

This Rākṣasa, at first, was an enemy of Viṣṇu, and did not tolerate even the mention of Viṣṇu’s name. Therefore, he went about always wearing a bell so that the tinkling of it warned. He wore a Ghanta (bell) in his Kanḍas (ears) and so he came to be known as Ghantākarna.

Ghantākarna pratistha

(Installation of his idol in temples). Though Ghantākarna was a Rākṣasa, as he attained Vaikuṇṭha due to the blessings of God Almighty his idol is still installed in temples and worshipped. The installation ceremony described in chapter 59 of the Agnipurāṇa thus: The idol of Ghantākarna should
have 18 hands. He holds in his right hand vajra, sword, cakra, arrow, etc. and in his left hand broom, sword, cord bell, pickaxe, etc. He also holds the trisula (trident). Ghaṅtākarna who turned out to be a Deva is believed to cure small pox. He cures diseases born as a result of sins.

**KĀLA (YAMA) (THE GOD OF DEATH)**

When the life span of each living being allotted by Brahma is at an end, Yama sends his agents and takes the soul to Yamapuri (the city of Yama). From there, the holy souls are sent to Vaikuṇṭha (heaven, the abode of Viṣṇu) and the sinful souls to Hell.

**Genealogy and birth of Yama**

Yama was originated from Sūrya, who took his origin from Kāśyapa. Kāśyapa was from Marīci and Marīci was from Brahma, who originated from Viṣṇu. Sūrya married
Samjna, daughter of Viśvakarma. They had three children, Manu, Yama and Yami. Of them, Yama has the task of taking away the soul of those whose life-span is at an end. Once Samjna who was unable to bear the dazzling brilliance of Sūrya, ordered her maid Chaya to attend on him and went to the forest for performing penance. Mistaking her for his wife Samjna, Sūrya begot of her three sons namely, Sanaiscara, Manu and Tapatī. Once Chaya cursed Yama for disobedience. Then Sūrya and Yama understood that she was not Samjna. After that the Aśvinikumārās, Revanta and Bhaya were born to Sūrya and Samjna. Thus viṣṇupurāṇa, part III, chapter 2 says that Yama was the brother of Manu, Yami, the Aśvinikumārās, Tapatī, Sanaiscara and Bhaya. Yama's sister Bhaya was married by the Asura, Heti. Sunita was the eldest daughter of Yama. Aṅga married her. The famous king Vena was her son. (Viṣṇu Purāṇa Part I Chapter 13).
GULIKA

He was a hunter who was given mokṣa by the sage Uttāṅga. This hunter once made an attempt to steal the gold plates on the roof of the Viṣṇu temple at the palace of Sauvira-Uttāṅga was present at the temple then and, Gulīka tried to kill the sage. The sage cursed him and killed him. Taking pity on him later Uttāṅga sprinkled some water from the river Huṅga on him and hunter attained Vaikuntha. (Nāradīya Purāṇa).

YAKṢA

There are chiefly three classes of inhabitants in Heaven:-devas, Gandharvas and Upadevas. Gaṇadevas consist of the 12 Ādityas, 10 Visvadevas, 8 Vasus, 36 Tūṣitās, 64 Ābhāsvaras, 49 Animals, 220 Mahārājikas, 12 Sādhyas and 11 Rudras.
Among the Upadevas there are 10 subdivisions. They are Vidyādharas, Apsaras, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Piṣācās, Guhyakas, Siddhas and Bhūtas.

**ORIGIN**: There are different views relating to the origin of the Yakṣas. In Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva Chapter 1 we find that the Yakṣas took birth after Brahma's birth from "virat puruṣa's anda. According to a statement in Agni Purāṇa Chapter 19, Yakṣas and Rākṣasas were born from Muni, the grand daughter Kāsyapa Prajāpati. Thus Yakṣas and Rākṣasas are related as brothers. In Mahābhārata, Ādi Parva Chapter 66, verse 7, there is another passage, which says that yāskās are the progeny of the Sage Pulastya.
YAKŞI (YAKŞINI)

Women folk of Yakṣas. Agni Purāṇa chapter 50 mentions that the images of Yakṣi to be installed in temples should have fixed and long eyes. Mahābhārata, Vana Parva Chapter 54, verse 105, states that Yakṣini is a Devi and by eating the Prasada (naivedya) of the Devi one would be absolved of the sin of Brahmatya (killing of Brahmana).

KṢETRAPĀLA

Kṣetrapāla is consecrated on the South East corner of the temple, for protecting the villages and cities. This is a large image with three eyes. There are figures which are Sattvika, Rajasa and tamasa (having the attributes goodness, ostentatiousness and sloth). In some places figures having two or four or eight hands are seen. It is presumed that this deity is a portion of Śiva. It is stated in Agni Purāṇa, Chapter
51. that Kṣetrapālas should be figures having trident in the hand.

**BHAIRAVA (A Parsada of Śiva)**

**General:** Immediately after his birth, this terrible monster subdued all the Devas without getting the permission of Śiva. Enraged at it, Śiva turned him into a tree by a curse. But Śiva was soon pacified and lifted the curse by declaring that those who offered puja to the gods would get the full reward for their worship only if they offered puja to Bhairava also. Bhairava became a tree as soon as he was cursed. He became a tree because he subdued the gods. Therefore that tree came to be called “Damanaka” tree (Damana = subdue). It has another name “Tātiri” tree. Even now, pious people offer puja to this tree. (Agni purāṇa Chapter 52-80)
Birth: Once Brahma and Visnu became swollen with pride. In his haughty way, Brahma insulted Siva. Under the insult, Siva was infuriated and out of the fire of his fury was born Bhairava with his black form. (Līnga Purana 1-90)

Brahmahatya: As soon as he was born, Bhairava rushed towards Brahma and pinched off his fifth head which had insulted Siva. By this, he incurred the sin of Brahmahatya. For the expiation of this sin, as ordered by Siva, Bhairava started on a journey begging, with Brahma’s severed head in his hand. Siva then created a woman named “Brahmahatya” and asked her to follow Bhairava.

Although Bhairava visited many holy places, he was not able to liberate himself from the sin of Brahmahatya. At last, on the suggestion of Siva, he went to Varanasi and washed off his sin. Brahma’s head, which he carried, was also deposited
there, and the place became famous under the name of "kapalamocanatirtha". (Śiva Purāṇa, Satarudra Samhita)

SHAPE: Bhairava has a terrible shape. He wears the crescent moon and plaited hair on his head. His weapons are, sword, arrow, dagger, bow, trident, rope, etc. At times he is dressed in elephant skin. He has five faces. Serpents are his ornaments.

BHŪTĀS (A set of beings created by Rudra)

General: A manava class or sect in ancient India. In the Purāṇas, this manava sect is classified into four subdivisions. (1) Dharmapraja, (2) Isvarapraja, (3) Kāśyapiyapraja, and (4) Pulahapraja.

Birth: In the Brahmānda Purāṇa there is the following story about the birth and shape of Bhūtās:- Bhūtās are one of the subdivisions of Pulaha’s creations. Long ago, Brahma asked Rudra, Nilalohita, to perform the function of creation.
Accordingly he begot thousands of Bhūtās in the womb of his wife Sati. All the issues were the exact replica of his own figure. Lean limbs, long ears, thick hanging lips, red eyes, bushy eyebrows, long, pointed and protruding teeth, long nails, matted dirty hairs, etc. were the grotesque features of these Bhūtās. These music haters used serpents as their yajnopavitas (sacred threads). These spirits who loitered in Śiva’s assembly were, as a rule, naked and carried skills on their heads. But at times they were fantastic dress with elephant skin. Their chief weapons were, trident, bow, sword, etc.

BHŪTA CHIEF

In the Purāṇas, Rudra is acknowledged as the Bhūta chief. That is why Rudra is known by such names as “Bhūtanāyaka”, “Gaṇanāyaka” etc. But since the common name Rudra is used for the ruler (king) of all the Bhūtās. Vāmana Purāṇa declares that Rudra is not an individual. Both
Vāmana Purāṇa and Matsya Purāṇa represent Viśrabhadra and Nandikeśwara as two Rudras who are the masters of Bhūtās. In Vāmana Purāṇa, the number of Bhūtās, is given as 11 crores. Skanda, Sakha, Bhairava are the chief among them. Under them are innumerable Bhūtās. Ashes and Khatvanga etc. are their weapons. The emblem on the banner is a cow or a bird. That is how the Gaṇanayakās have got the titles like- “Mayūradhvaja”, “Mayūravāhana” (Vāmanapurāṇa 67, 1-23)

BHADRRAKĀLI - Another form of Pārvati.

Lord Śiva on hearing about the self immolation in fire of his wife, Sati at the famous yajna conducted by Dakṣa rushed in all anger to the spot, and beat the earth with his matted hair, and there ensued two forces called Viśrabhadra and Bhadrakāli. This Bhadrakāli was really Sati or Pārvati in another form. This is stated in Bhāgavata Purāṇa.
DIFFERENT TYPES OF TEYYA CHARACTERS

VIŚṆUMŪRTI

A popular folk god of Malabar and South. The particular incarnation of Viśṇu in the form of Narasimha or Man-lion who had killed Hiranyakaśipu the demon king. The original place of worship in Kolattunādu, is Koṭṭappuram in Nileswar.

The dancer performs all three-component parts of the dance Nāṭya, Nṛtta and Nṛtya. The deity is believed to be the saviour of the depressed and down trodden people. Fire walking is also observed by the dancer as a ritual.

KUṆḌŪR CĀMUṆḌI

There are several deities known after Cāmuṇḍes. Hindu mythological treatise Devi Bhāgavatra describes Kāli, Kālarātri, Cāndi, Cāmuṇḍa and Kālika as different forms of seven mothers. The war like character of Cāndi is described in Mārkandeyā Purāṇa. The goddess Cāmuṇḍi was born from the
third eye of Śiva with an avowed purpose of destroying demons. This item is always performed outside the shrine walls by Velan. The story deals with the destruction of Daruka. The dancer covers his face by mask in a particular moment. Mahāyāna Buddhism described a mother goddess wearing leaves as dress, she was known as Parnaśabari in Hīmyāna or Aparana. The costume of Cāmuṇḍi deity is made out the tender leaves of coconut tree.

**NARAMBIL BHAGAVATI**

Narambil Bhagavati is a village goddess named after particular place in Talipparamba Taluk and a family deity of adiyodis, a landed class, in that locality. According to tradition a Bhagavati of a locality is known after that place. All such local goddesses are divine mother goddess or Kāli. They are also worshipped as virgins. It is stated that there is hardly a Hindu community or a village in Malabār that does
not worship Kāli in one form or another or own a shrine dedicated to the mother goddess.

**PULURKĀLI OR PULIYORKĀLI**

Among the primitive folks the worship of animals like tigers (Zoolatry) had been prevalent. The forest tribes like Kisans and Santhals worship the tigers and leopards. The cult is predominant in Teyyāṭṭam. The popular deities under this category are Puliṅkṛāṁkāli, Pulimāruthan, Marppuliyan, Kāṅḍoppuli, Puliyoru Kāli and Kāḷappuliyan. Puliyorkāli is supposed to be the daughter of Pulikṛāṁ Kāli. The incorporation of the cult of tiger and its identification with the goddess Kāli or god Śiva reveal the cultural evolution and a new synthesis under the influence of Āryanisation.
POTTAN TEYYAM

This folk deity is identified with god Śiva. The story relates to the tradition that the great Indian philosopher Śankara was questioned by a pulaya for observing social formalities of caste system. The Tottam song ridicules the caste system, untouchability, etc. The song is highly philosophical and instructive of Vedanta. It advocates social equality and criticize class differentiation.

GRĀMADEVATA

India is predominantly a rural country with a number of villages, and the rural folk depend mainly upon agriculture for living. Agricultural land, rain and epidemics which affect them as well as their cattle are the main concern of the villages. Indians, from very ancient days, used to believe that each of the above has its own presiding devatas. Such devatas
are the grāmadevatas. Devi is the chief grāmadevata of south India. Devi is called Durga and Kāli also. But, Devi is worshipped in sixty four different forms or aspects. The gentle Devi, viz. in her gentle aspect or attitude has three forms, Kanya, Kāmākṣi, and Mukāmābika. In Kerala, Devi is called Bhagavati also. Valiangadi Bhagavati of Calicut is Lākṣmi Devi. Kāli temples in Karnataka are called “Koṭṭapuram Lākṣmi Kṣetras”. There are such temples in Andhra also. Most of them are Jokulambika temples. In Tamilnādu there are grāmadevatas called Māriyamma, Kāliyamma and Draupadiyamma. Not the Draupadi mentioned in the Mahābhārata: but the Kaṇṇaki of Cilappatikāra is the Devi worshipped in Tamilnādu.

There are two kinds of Devi called Saptamatrs and Saptakanyas. Saptamatrs have puruṣas (husbands) Saptakanyas have seven brothers for help and support. Devi
pūja is very much prevalent in South India. The custom is supposed to be as old as 5000 B.C. Idols of Devi have been unearthed from Mohanjo-daro and Harappa. Even the Buddhists worship the Devis called Yakṣi and Hariti. When Hinduism was revitalized these grāmadevatās got promoted as the great Devatas of the epics and the Purāṇas. The Rāmāyaṇa mentions the incident of the Devi called Lāṅkālakṣmī driving away Hanumāṇ. There are famous Kāli temples in Ujjayini and Calcutta. It is believed that in the temple at Cidambaram also Kāli occupied a prominent place. But, according to legends, Śiva defeated Kāli in a dance competition and ousted her to her present temple at the outskirts of the city. Cāmuṇḍi is worshipped as the ancestral guardian deity in Mysore. The Kāmākṣi temple of Kānci, Minākṣi temple of Madura and Mukānbika temple of North Karnātaka may be cited as examples for the worship of the
gentle form of Devi. Alarmed Mankattayar temple at Tiruccamur is a very important Devi temple. The ‘Aditi’ in the Vedas and Kottravai of Tamil Saṅgha texts point to the very long past of the Devi in India. Kālidasa and Kalamegha (a Tamil poet of the fifteenth century) have worshipped Kāli. Sri Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsa and the great modern Tamil poet Bharati were devotees of Kāli.

In most of the grāmādeva temples idols of the Devas are not found. A pūṭa (stool like seat) is supposed as the seat of the Deva and it represents the Deva also. But in some temple weapons like the sword, the club, etc. are found. Offerings to the deity in grāmakṣetras and annual festivals are common in such temples.
CHAPTER IV

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