A COMPARISON OF ARCHETYPAL RELIGIOUS SYMBOL - SYSTEMS OF HP AND CP

7.1. Introduction

In the introductory chapter we stated that our attempt is to analyse the symbol system of pulayas, i.e. their rituals, myths and symbols. Having analysed rituals and myths and their relation to behaviour patterns of pulayas, in this chapter we begin the symbolic analysis of pulaya symbol system.

What we do in this chapter is to take some of the religious archetypes and see how they are interpreted by the HP and CP pulayas and compare them. Our assumption is that the cultural interpretation of the religious archetypes through ritual celebration defines the world view and behaviour pattern of a culture.

By religious archetypes we mean the primordial, universal symbols which are venerated as sacred and are participant representations of Cosmic power and which shape the behaviour patterns of the people by determining the world-view.

We understand the archetype in the Jungian sense. He says just as the human body represents a
whole variety of organs, each with a long evolutionary history behind it, so we should expect to find that mind is organized in a similar way. Mind cannot be without a history, history in the sense of gradual unconscious evolution of animal psyche into a human psyche of the archaic man. This immensely old psyche forms the basis of our body, just as much as the structure of our body on the general anatomical patterns of the mammal. The product of this primitive mind is stored in the unconscious as "collective images" (Jung 1964: 67).

Freud called the archetype "archaic remnants"—mental forms whose presence cannot be explained by anything in the individual's own life and which seem to be aboriginal, innate, and inherited shapes of the human mind.

The archetype has a basic pattern but their symbolic expressions are varying. There are, for example, many representations of the motif of the hostile brethren, but the motif itself remains the same.

Archetypes and instincts are not the same. Instincts are physiological urges, and are perceived by the senses. But at the same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. "These
manifestations are what I call the archetypes. They are without known origin and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world — even where transmission by direct descent or "cross fertilization" through migration must be ruled out."

(Jung, 1964 : 69)

We have taken the religious archetypes from the History of Religion Approach, mainly from Mircea Eliade (1983). Synonymous to "religious archetypes" he used words such as "elementary modalities", "primal hierophanies" etc. We understand that there are some basic universal symbols (primodial symbols) which exist in all religions whether they are primitive or modern. We take some of these primodial religious symbols and treat them as religious archetypes for our comparison of religions of HP and CP.

We could see basic difference in the interpretation of religious archetypes in both HP and CP religions, in other words hindu and christian religious traditions.

The method we have adopted in this chapter is, first to identify and state the religious archetyp e secondly to establish them as religious archetypes quoting from different authors; thirdly to describe the interpretation of the religious archetype by HP ;
fourthly the interpretation of it by CP; and finally compare and contrast them to establish the difference in world view and the consequent effect on the behaviour patterns of HP & CP.

The religious archetypal symbols or symbols of "primal hierophanies" we take for comparison are: (1) the religious symbol of Enemy (2) Symbol of Sacred Place (3) symbol of "Centre" (4) symbolism of Tree (5) symbolism of Mother - Earth (6) symbolism of Sky-Father (7) symbol of Animal (Totem) (8) the symbol of Serpent (9) symbolism of Water (10) symbolism of Hero (11) symbol of Stones (12) symbolism of Fire. There are many more archetypal religious symbolisms such as Sun, Moon, Mountain, Sky etc.

7.2. Comparison of Archetypal Symbols

7.2.1. The symbolic paradigm of 'Enemy'

It seems that the idea of an "enemy" or lingering fear of an opposing force is almost inherent in the human psyche. In the primitive society the known and the familiar surrounding world was conceived as a microcosm. At the limits of this microcosm begins the domain of the unknown, the dangerous. The known domain is ordered and organized, and the unknown is a dangerous chaotic region of the dead demons and the ghosts. Speaking
from the point of view of anthropology this is not too difficult to explain. Primitive man lived in fear of the surrounding that were unknown to his 'little world'. In the hunter-gathering stage he had umpteen number of enemies to fight. This image of the inhabited microcosm, surrounded by desert regions regarded as chaos and a kingdom of the dead has survived even in highly evolved civilizations such as those of China, Mesopotamia and Egypt and in the modern religions.

_Theyyam_ of the ghost is one of the five main types of _theyyam_. It is also implicitly understood that the untouchables (_neeja — jati_) propitiated only demons (_bhutas/asuras_) and their _theyyams_ are also considered to be demon _theyyams_. In the state of Karnataka the religious performance similar to _theyyam_ is known as _bhutattas_ (dance of devil).

In the _theyyam_ myths, the evil spirits are only the dark side of life, the shadow of light. If not capable of doing good, at least can be neutral, and by propitiating they can be appeased against probable harming. Evil spirits of the _pulayas_ are credited with goodness, they can be beneficial to men, if properly appeased.

On a closer examination, the evil spirits in the _theyyam_ is an idea corresponding to the _yin-yang_
pair of opposites or the Chinese or the Sakti-Purusha of the Indian understanding of reality. Yin or sakti, the dark, negative, and feminine aspect of life is the complementary opposition of the Yang, the purusha, the light positive and masculine, the two interlocked to form the entire reality of the phenomenal world.

The personification of demons and devils is very much a reality in the life of CP too. Starting with the myth of the fall of angels it runs all through the mystic tradition of Christianity. The day to day life of the consciousness of the christian is quite troubled and preoccupied with the machination of the devil and his alluring tricks to get the human beings to sin. The christian saints are said to be acutely aware of the devil, and that they can any time be deprived of their holiness by the devil's superior intelligence. Even Jesus is reported to have been tempted by the devil. "Obviously, then, the Devil is credited with an almost infinite intelligence for subtle falsification, whereas in truth, this is not subtle at all, but merely the endless maze of confusion, resulting from unpercieved mistakes (Alan Watts:1968:74)

In christian tradition, the evil spirit is autonomus and has an existence of its own. The investigator is told that it is an embodiment of
"deliberate malice" and has equal power as the good spirits. In practical life, the devil is credited with superior craftiness and its very essence and existence is evil and thus the perpetual enemy of all that is good.

In Christian tradition, the complementary opposites of the phenomenal world and the underlying unity of the ultimate experience is not recognised. In the practice of Christianity the ideal of Christian good life, the goal is to achieve total joy and happiness eliminating completely pain and suffering, though the life and teaching of Jesus is an assertion quite in line with the yin-yang experience: death and resurrection, suffering and joy are the two dimensions of same reality the investigator is told by a priest.

7.2.2. The Primodial symbol of "Sacred Place"

The idea of a sacred place is a universal symbol both in the simple as well as the complex cultures. All manifestations of spirits whether, evil or holy, transform the place where it occurs, hitherto profane, it is henceforth considered to be a sacred area. "touched by divine or demonic manifestation the place emerges from it, as an awe-inspiring spot of myth and mystery. In the words of Levy-Bruhl (1938:183)
To these natives, a sacred spot never presents itself to the mind in isolation. It is always part of a complexus of things which includes the plant or animal species which flourish there at various seasons, as well as the mythical heroes who lived, roamed or created something there and who are often embodied in the very soil, the ceremonies which take place there from time to time and as the emotions aroused by the whole.

In actual fact, the sacred place is "chosen" by man, it is merely discovered. The dwelling places of hermits or saints and in general human habitation and specifically holy places such as sanctuaries are considered sacred places (Vander Leeuw, 1983:393ff).

We are not sure of the origin of the kottams, the sacred place, of the pulayas. Given their socio-economic status in the society, pulayas might not have got an opportunity to choose their own sacred place, it must have been already discovered before they were domesticated by the high caste immigrants. We have seen in earlier chapters that kottams are central to the pulaya life. Their clans are organized around the kottam and their social structure is determined by the sacred place the kottams.

The informants said that sacred places (kottams) of the pulayas are permanent. In the post-independence times, owing to the break-up of the social system the sacred places remained neglected for decades, but still the place continued to be considered as sacred and holy by the people.
In the theyyam celebration the sacred place (stanam) is given more importance than the officiating priest (tandri) and the theyyyam, informants said. Around the kottam an area is always marked off. No one is expected to enter this area unless barefooted. This restriction is meticulously observed in the apparently free for all situation of the theyyam celebration. Unaccustomed of the practices, the investigator happened to enter the kottam with chappals, and was immediately reminded of it.

Being a non-hindu the investigator was not given entry in the stanam for the first two years, only on verifying the genuineness of the purpose he was allowed to go near the kottam. In sharp contrast to the HP kottams, the churches of CP are not discovered plots. They are just built with a view to the convenience of the people to attend the services. This is the reason why almost all the churches are on the highways, ensuring easy access to the people. The place of worship (stanam) is not given importance in christianity. The God in christianity is person oriented.

The faithful attend the Eucharistic service in a variety of footwear. In fact, not long ago, shoes were compulsory for the officiating priest while he performed the ceremony.
The sacred place of CP is ephemeral in nature, in contrast to the HP. The change of place of worship is fairly easy in christianity. Once shifted the place holds no sacredness.

7.2.3. The primordial Symbol of the "Centre"

Every microcosm, every inhabited region, has what may be called a "centre"; that is sacred above all. It is there, in that centre, the sacred manifests itself, in its totality. According to the Eastern understanding there are unlimited number of such "centres". These centres are considered to be the centre of the world (Eliade, 1983:39).

It is in such centres one comes in direct contact with the sacred, through symbolic objects such as trees and stones. It is where the hierophanies and theophanies and kathophanies occur, that the divine breaks into the human realm.

The importance of centre is celebrated in the construction of mandala, as practised in Tantric schools and Buddhism. The perfect mandala itself is a series of circles which may be or may not be concentric, inscribed in a square. The corrupt form of mandala includes any circular patterns with an implicit centre.
Among the primitives as well as in oriental religions which have a conception of three cosmic regions - those of heaven, earth and hell - the "centre" constitutes the point of intersection of those regions. In them we meet with an archetypal image of an axis in the "centre" connecting three cosmic regions: heaven, earth and hell. This axis is symbolically represented by a mountain, a tree, or a column (pillar/ladder) (Eliade, 1961:41).

The pulaya's "centre" of life, is their stanam (the place). The kottam the uniting centre of life is situated at the centre stanam. We have seen in chapter II how important the kottams are for the pulayas. Their social structure is organized around the centre kottam. There are several such stanams for the pulayas and each one is the centre of the universe of their conception. Each stanam is associated with a 'clan' (illam) within the pulaya tribe. This idea of having several centres for the cosmos may have been borrowed by the high traditions of the orient for, we see this tendency of positing multi-centre for the universe in the oriental tradition.

Reaching the "centre", ritually speaking, is a very difficult task according to the pulaya ritual beliefs and rites. As we have seen before, the only
rule that is strictly enforced is the respect for the *stanam*. Only special people appointed for the purpose and approved by the community can enter “centre” of “centres” (holy of holies).

The centre (*kottam*) of *pulaya* is treated with a certain amount of awe and wonder, fear and respect. Even a casual passing-by *pulaya* never fails to show signs of respect to the centre of revelation (*kottam*).

The *theyyam* dance, its decorative patterns and rituals particularly of the life-cycle suggests their belief in the *axis mundi*, the connecting axis of all the three cosmic regions. In the decorative patterns of the head dress of *thekken gulikan* (fig. 3.4.3) is patterned like a ladder. The long *mudi* of the Ariyakkara *Bhagavati* is designed like a mountain. In the life-cycle ceremony most of it is conducted in the courtyard under a pole of a branch of a tree representing the axis at the centre. Thus the *pulaya* life in general is controlled and defined by the primordial symbol of the “centre”.

Contrary to the experience of the HP, for the CP the “centre” of life is a person of Jesus, a historical figure. At the beginning of Christianity, says Thomas Fawcett (1973:172), Jerusalem was considered as the ‘centre’ of the world. “The idea
that Jerusalem was located at the centre of the earth is only explicitly asserted in the post-exilic literature. By the time of Jesus, it had probably became a common-place." Jesus, too, seemed to have shared the idea that Jerusalem was the Centre of the world in his time.

Gradually the "centre" is shifted from Jerusalem to the person of Jesus. Jesus became the centre which all men seek and in which lies their salvation. This meant that all other centres were negated, and in particular that the role of Jerusalem as the bond of earth had ultimately to be rejected.

From Jesus the 'centre' is passed down to Peter the head of the first disciples to the succeeding Pope who takes the place of Peter. For the CP, in sharp contrast to HP, there is, therefore, only one 'centre' and that centre is not a place but a person.

Christianity, as it is lived by the CP, the persons, the bishop and priests who share the "centrality" of pope are the centres of their religion. The place of worship, the sanam, is given comparatively less degree of importance.

7.2.4. Tree Symbolism

The primordial tree symbolism is a universal phenomenon. We come across sacred trees and
vegetation rites and symbols in the history of every religion, from primal to the modern; and in their metaphysics and mysticism, in iconography and popular art.

What is the special characteristic of trees, that compelled the primitives to produce so vast and varying a symbolism of them? Anthropologically speaking, it must be the life-sustaining power of the trees and vegetation. In fact, it is for this reason, that the primitives have a general attitude of worship towards the tree, regardless of its kind.

To this general belief, a religious objection can be put: why are not all trees worshiped? "No tree was ever adored for itself only, but always for what was revealed through it, for what it implied and signified...To the primitive mind, nature and symbol were inseparable" (Eliade, 1983: 265). For the primitives, trees represented a power, a power of expressing something beyond itself, that the tree becomes a religious object. The trees expressed fully the cosmos. It is vertical, it grows, it loses its leaves and regains them and is thus regenerated (it enacts the death and resurrection) time without number, it gives out later, fruits, leaves, firewood, shade and protection. The trees enact what is the primitive understanding of the whole cosmos.
"The tree can, of course, become a symbol of the universe, and in that form we find it in more developed civilizations: but to a primitive religious mind, the tree is the universe, and it is so because it reproduces, and as it were, sums it up as well as 'symbolizing' it (Eliade, 1983: 269).

The theyyam of the pulayas is conducted at the kottam which is situated at the sacred grove (kavu). The groves consist of certain special trees important among them are: pipal tree, neem tree, kadamba tree, bilva tree, kuvalam (Aegle marmelos), chembakam, kanjhiram (Nux Vomica). The pipal tree is associated with fairies, chempakam is linked with gulikan and nimb tree, to kali. Informants told the investigator that the kottam of the pulayas were the original groves. Later on the immigrant higher caste made additions to the grove according to their imported faith and rituals. The present temples were original groves (kavu), and later on these groves got converted into places of worship for the dominant caste. This is the reason, why all the temples we see are groves in its original form, or the sacred trees attached to temples.

In the theyyam of all castes the tree symbolism plays an important role. For the theyyam make copious use of leaves, flowers and fruits. Pulayas theyyam such as potten and gulikan are decorated
fully with tender coconut leaves, as we have seen early. Many of the facial decorations are either in the form of a leaf, flower, or fruit of the venerated trees. Eg. prakezhethu is in the form of elngi flower. The decorations on the head gear are mostly patterned either in the shape of a fruit or leaf. The heart-shape of the pipal tree leaf is a common pattern used for decorations. the theyyam colours are made of leaves, fruits and stems of certain trees. Only special types of vegetations are used for ritual offering.

The theyyam dance begins by paying respect to the tree which represents the respective deity. The deity gulikan is venerated under the tree symbol of chempakan. The glowing charcoal heap for the potten theyyam to jump in as a ritual is made out of the wood of particular trees such as tamerind tree or chempakan.

The tree kanjiram symbolizes folk-god-kalicean who resides in the tree. Informants told the investigator that the pulappan theyyam of pulayas is performed to propitiate the god for helping to trace missing cattle. Kanjiram is a prominent tree in most of the pulaya kottams. Thus the HP were one with thier surroundings in their life and worship.
The Christians were not an exception to the universal phenomenon of using tree symbolisms. Although prophetic Judaism resisted much of the symbolism embodied in the tree, it continued to play a vital part in Hebraic thinking even into Christian times.

In the Bible, particularly in the N.T., very little use is made of the tree symbolism. When it occurs, the symbolism usually appears in the form it had taken in prophetic literature. From the second century onwards, the tree became an important element in Christian hagiography; this is very clearly seen in the connection made between the tree of life and the cross of Jesus. Celsus declared that Christians everywhere, "speak in their writings of the tree of life and of resurrection of the flesh by the tree— I imagine because their matter was nailed to a cross and was a carpenter by trade" (Origin) quoted in Fawcett 1973:272). The life-giving act of Jesus on the cross was more and more frequently contrasted with the death-resulting act of Adam, and the cross itself compared with the tree of life.

In conclusion, we may note again that the symbolism finds little place in the gospels and that when it does, its mythological content is restricted to that which was acceptable to the cautious
spirituality of Judaism. In real life of the christians, the opposition between the tree symbolism and christian faith was created, as the fig-tree failed to provide Jesus with fruit when he was hungry (MK 11, 12-14)

Among the CP of Chirakkal region the tree symbolism is very minimum, except the annual celebration of the christmas tree, there is no significant tree symbolism celebrated. Attached to some churches there is what is called, 'grotto' surrounded by trees, a special place of devotion to the Lady, in remembrance of her apparition at Lourdes in the bushes to a group of children.

7.2.5. The Archetypal Symbol of Mother Earth

The earth was adored because all things came from it and all things returned to it. The earth, to primitive religion is consciousness, and is something immediately experienced and accepted /its size, its solidity, its variety of landscape and of vegetation, formed a live active cosmic unity. The primary intuition of the earth as a religious "form" might be formularized thus: "The cosmos - repository of a wealth of sacred forces ". (Eliade, 1983:242).

One of the first theophanies of the earth as such, and particularly of the earth as soil, was its
"motherhood", its inexhaustible power of fruitfulness. Before becoming a mother goddess, or divinity of fertility, the earth presented itself to men as a mother. The later growth of agricultural cults, forming a gradually clearer and clearer notion of a Great Goddess of vegetation and harvesting, finally destroyed all trace of the Earth-Mother. According to John Marshall (1973) the cult of mother Goddess, a prototype of the Nature of Prakriti developed into that of Sakti and gradually village-deities (Gramadevatas) originated from this popular cult.

The cult of village deities or Bhagavati (Goddess) is very popular in Malabar. There is hardly a village in Malabar that does not have some form of Mother Goddess worship. For several ruling families in Kerala, the different forms of Bhagavati had been the family deity (kuladevata). The Bhagavati of Madai is the chief deity of the Kolathiries of Chirakkal (1973:19).

The theyyams of all castes in general and that of the pulayas in particular, are dedicated to Bhagavati. Out of four hundred theyyams, the majority are manifestations of Mother Goddess in her different forms and moods. The Bhagavati theyyams are known after the name of the sacred grove of the village: Thottumkara Bhagavati, Aryiakkara Bhagavati.
and Madai Bhagavati are some examples. The evolution of the Mother Goddess can be traced from theyyam. The close link of the theyyam with the vegetation and its personification represent the first stage of "Earth-Mother" veneration. It is followed by the worship of Kali and Sakti-cult.

The Sakti-cult seems to be the last stage of evolution of the feminine worship. Most of the theyyam of higher caste, reflect the influence of sakti cult of trantric sadhana. The myths behind the theyyam of Muchilot bhagavati, Makkapothi, Puthiya Bhagavati etc. are illustrative of the sakti-cult.

The pulaya theyyam of Bhagavati too integrated the sakti-cult in their myth. The kurathi (parvati), the consort of potten (Siva) of the pulaya theyyam shows the influence of sakti cult. In their make-up and costume, and in rituals the Bhagavati of pulaya worship retain their original appearance of kali cult. Ritual offering of animals is an important ritual in theyyam particularly in some of the Bhagavati theyyams which is the manifestation of the terrible aspect of goddess, kali.

It is said that the priesthood was invested with feminine qualities. The dress of the Velichappad corroborates this idea. His dress is mostly that of a woman (Raghavan Payyanad, 1977: 56). The dress of
the Velichapad consists of a piece of cloth which reaches his ankle and over this white piece of cloth, a red piece is wrapped around the waist. While the chest is left uncovered the head is covered with red linen. Ear-rings anklets (chilenka), the ornaments of the velichapd are all reminiscent of the appearance of women of old. (fi. 4.1.7)

Ritually there is a close relation with Bhagavati and velichapad. Thus velichapad becomes the representation of modern earth-mother goddess of the primitive people. It is not surprising that for the primitive agricultural people like pulayas almost all their theyyams are representation of Bhagavati. The women venerated as Bhagavati in the theyyam, mostly are virgins. What is known as the virgin cult, has influenced the myth as well as the expression of it in the form of theyyam.

The idea of mother is very prominent in CP religious symbols. Many of the churches are dedicated to Mother Mary. Special devotions of Mary are observed during the month of May, which is dedicated to her. Saturdays are specially dedicated to Mother Mary. The Rosary is a special devotion, and the evening prayer in most christian families are limited to the recitation of Rosary, the informants said.
But the fact remains, that Mary is Mother only in so far as she is the mother of Jesus. Mary has only a second place in the church; she is fully human, a created person. Christian theology strives to make Mary something special, establishing that she was born sinless and remained sinless, by living a virgin even at the birth of Jesus.

Virginity and motherhood, two irreconcilable opposites are rolled into one—emphasising always virginity. This has great consequence on the behaviour patterns of the Christian women. In the pre-adolescent stage, almost all Christian girls want to be virgin after the model of the virginity of Mary. Her choice of marriage is made, as a necessary evil, with unconscious guilt. Many Christian mothers, it seems unconsciously would like one of their children to be a virgin to compensate for what she could not achieve. Mother-worship in Christianity is not an independent reality as the Bhagavati cult in Hinduism.

7.2.6. The Archetypal Religious Symbol of Sky – Father

To grasp the religious significance of sky we need not look elsewhere, the sky itself directly reveals a transcendence, a power and a holiness. Mere
contemplation of the vault of heaven must have produced in the primitives a religious experience. The sky shows itself as it really is: infinite, transcendent. The symbolism of its transcendence derives from the simple realization of its infinite height. "Most High" becomes quite naturally an attribute of the divinity for the tiny man, when he looks at the sky. The region above man's reach naturally becomes the habitance of the divine majesty of the transcendent, of absolute reality, of ever-lastingness. Such high-places are the dwelling place of gods, where man can not reach except through ceremonial ritual ascents. When he reaches there he ceases to be a human being, the souls of the privileged dead leave their human state behind when they rise into heaven.

Among the primitives the understanding of a primordial pair: sky (male) and Earth (female), is fairly common (Eliade, 1983: 51). Different divine forms substituted the notion of the sky-god. The first signs of this sky-god being understood as personified divinity, "sky Father" in the Mesopotamian primitive religions (Eliade, 1983:65). The evolution became complete in the hands of the Jewish nomadic tribes: Sky-God as the loving Father, the creator of the universe: all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-present like the sky. In the
primitive religions the supreme beings of the sky do not play a leading role (Eliade, 1983:50).

This is true in the case of HP of North Malabar. The sky deities are not propitiated in the theyyam celebrations. The designs of ladder and the shape of mountain in the theyyam costumes suggest the skyward movement, still the indications are rare to substantiate any belief in the sky gods. The deities of the pulayas are earth bound as the earth, the mother, the vegetation, the animals and the serpent.

In the CP tradition the idea of God the Father dominates the religious scene. The basic understanding of God is a loving father who created the universe. The disobedience to the father created the sinful tendencies in man, to go away from his loving embrace. God the father sent his own son to become one among them to save the people who have wandered away from him. When the son came to the world, his mission was to fulfill the will of the father. The only prayer he taught was addressed to the "Father in heaven". When dead he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the father to come again to judge the living and the dead. The Holy spirit also in the symbol of the dove hovers around the heavens. Thus the CP religious symbolism is full of "Father-Sky", male dominated symbols where as the HP , as we have seen , dominated by the
"Mother Earth" dominated female symbols.

7.2.7. The Archetypal Religious Symbol of Animals

From the studies on totems we know the close relation existed between the primitive people and animals. Totemism is rooted in the primitives sense of deep kinship with animals and other objects other than human. A tribe may feel particularly allied to an animal like bear, wolf, snake, cock or Tiger (Smart, 1976:35).

The paleolithic cave paintings consist almost entirely of figures of animals whose movements and postures have been observed in nature and rendered with great artistic skill. There are exaggerations of details that show that the figures were intended more than naturalistic reproductions. Accompanied by these, there are semihuman beings in animal disguise (Jung, 1974:235).

A primitive chief is not only disguised as the animal when he appears at initiation rites in full disguise, he is the animal. Still more, he is the animal spirit, a terrifying demon who performs circumcision. At such moments he incorporates or represents the ancestors of the tribe and the clan, and therefore the primal god himself. He represents, and is, the "totem" animal.
In the course of time, the complete animal disguise was superseded in many places by animal and demon masks. Primitive men lavished all their artistic skill on these masks, and many of them are still unsurpassed in the power and intensity of their expression. They are often the objects of the same veneration as the god or demon himself.

Dancing, which was originally nothing more than a completion of the animal disguise by appropriate movements and gestures, was probably supplementary to the initiation or other rites. It was, so to speak, performed by demons in honour of the demon (Jung 1974:236)

In the theyyam dance of HP, gods are propitiated under the symbol of animals. Tiger theyyams (puli-theyyams) are the most popular. Pullikarimkali and ayvarmakkal (Mother - tiger and five children) are also important theyyams in the HP community.

The symbol and myth of animal theyyam is incorporated in the Saiva Hindu tradition. I was informed by Othena Peruvannan that God Siva had a weakness, and whenever he saw animals mating he wanted to experiment it in the form of the respective animals. Siva and Parvati, thus, assume the animal form and mate. The divine seed being eternal it cannot go waste and the child will be an animal God.
This is according to the informant, the origin of animal *theyyam*.

The *theyyam*, *pulymaryjna – thondchan* (The hero who became a tiger), is a *pulaya theyyam* and it is an important *theyyam* of the *pulaya* community, of course only next to the *potten theyyam*. Even in the *potten theyyam* one of the mask is of a buffalo.

In the make up of *theyyam* animal shapes and features are frequently used. The patterns and designs of facial decorations (*mukathezhuthu* are named after the different organs of the animals. *Mankannu* (eye of a deer) *Sangum valum* (shell and tail); *Anakkalam Kattaravum* (elephant leg) and *Prachurulu* (dove-fold etc. are some of the popular ones. The body-decoraion too, designed according to the animal shape (fig. 8.1). Another costume which shows clear influence of animal patterns is the head-dress (*mudi*). In the *Muttappan theyyam* the *mudi* of the *vellattam* is patterned after the horn of a buffalo. Dog is a constant companion of *Muttappan*.

*Goat and cock are offered in the theyyam rituals. Thus animal-world play: an integral role in the theyyam performance of HP.*

Animal symbolism plays surprisingly great role in early Christianity too. Three of the evangelists have animal emblems *St. Luke has the Ox. St.Mark the
In the mystic tradition, St. Francis Assisi is said to have been a friend of animals and birds. He is believed to have conversed with them and, even the most ferocious ones, were friendly with him.

In the Christian pulaya community the use of animal symbols are rare. Some of the window paintings and the railings carry the image of fish and lamb. On Christmas day animal figurines are used to commemorate the birth of Jesus among the animals. Occasionally a cock or a goat is brought to the church as an offering and it is auctioned and the money is credited to the church account. Apart from these few instances Christianity generally keeps away from the animal-world. For the Christians the animals are to be subjugated and it is the Lord's command to use them all for man's needs.

7.2.8. The Archetypal Religious symbol of Serpent

Among those figures which seems to appear in every culture, which despite certain differences of
interpretation, retains certain common perennial meaning, we find the figure of the serpent (Jyothi Sahi 1980: 161). The serpent symbol demonstrates the truth of the unconscious; the unconscious itself is symbolized by the serpent. The serpent is the foundation of the universe. Coiled around the navel of the cosmos, it appears to be the dynamic centre of time and space. An important aspect of serpent symbolism is movement. According to kundalini yoga, the serpent power at the base of the spinal column is the vital energy in man. The process of man’s growth is a process of spiral movement of this energy up form the base of the column to higher nodes of consciousness.

The serpent is said to be the symbol of wholeness and youthfulness. It is a symbol of healing and is constantly required for sacrifice. They are held as a symbol of fertility. The fertilizing power of snake is a belief among many primitive cultures. Fertility, regeneration and change seem to be the attributes of serpent symbolism (Jyothi sahi, 1980: 167-68).

In the theyyam celebration the serpent worship is well represented. Nagakanni, Nagappothi, Nagarajan, are some of the serpent - god theyyams. The mudi of these theyyams are yellow in colour and in the shape of serpent hood. Symbols of the serpent
are generously employed in the theyyam makeup especially on the hand and mudi. It is also seen that the serpent is painted on mudi which are made of tender coconut leaves. One kind of facial decoration is known Nagamthathezhuthyu, after the name of serpent. Some of the theyyam myths are linked with serpent. For example, the myth of kandanar kelan, is a legend of a hero who died of snake bite., (fig.9.1.2) The body decoration of the theyyam represents the myth: two winding serpents.

In almost all the groves we have another small grove dedicated to the serpents. The serpent-grove (serpa kavu) will be especially marked and separated by some kind of fencing. In certain groves, the serpent is fed with milk and egg. Where there is no serpent grove, the serpent is symbolically venerated in the form of a stone on which the figure of the serpent is engraved. This stone is known as chitrakoodan. The stone chitrakoodam is often found under a tree. It can be assumed, therefore, that there is an intimate relation between serpent and worship.

In the pulaya theyyams, the masks of both potten and gulikan carry the symbol of serpent.

In the CP tradition the serpent has become a tempter and a deceiver after the loss of paradise.
The serpent tricked Eve to take the forbidden fruit, and thus the eternal joy of paradise was robbed by Satan in the form of a serpent. The serpent thus became an eternal enemy of man. Later on in the tradition the myth of St. George killing the dragon and saving the virgin corroborated the belief that the serpent is the enemy of man. Many of the churches in the Malabar area are dedicated to ST. George, the protector from serpent-bite. However, in the middle ages there was positive approach to serpent symbols. Christ is represented as a serpent on the cross (Jung, 1964:239; Cambell, 1974:296).

Among the pulaya christians St. George is not very popular. The harmonious relation that existed between the beasts and men as in the case of HP is lost to pulayas when they became CP. Many of the CP informants cautioned me about the serpent grove that any time the serpent can come out and bite, and they made fun of the serpent worship.

7.2.9. The Archetypal Symbol of Water

Water symbolizes the whole of potentiality, the source of all possible existence. Water is formless and potential, the basis of every cosmic manifestation, container of all seeds, it is the primal substance from which all forms come and to
which they will return either by their own regression or in a cataclysm. Water existed at the beginning and returns at the end of every cosmic or historic cycle; it will always exist, though never alone, for it is always germinative, containing the potentiality of all forms in their unbroken unity (Eliade, 1983:188)

Every contact with water implies regeneration: first, because dissolution is succeeded by a "new birth" and then because immersion fertilizes, and increases the potential of life and of relation. In initiation rituals, water confers a "new birth" in magic rituals it heals, and in funeral rites it assures rebirth after death because it incorporates in itself all potentiality. Water becomes a symbol of life, "living water" Rich in seeds, it fertilizes earth animals and women. it contains the development of all things, and is therefore either compared or even directly associated with the moon. Its rhythms are fitted to the same pattern as the moon's; they govern the periodic appearance and disappearance of all forms, they give a cyclic form to the development of things everywhere (1983:189).

The Hindu religious tradition in practice hinges on purity and pollution. Water is an essential ingredient for regeneration from the "death" of pollution through purification. The
polluted higher caste purify themselves by a ritual dipping in water. Even drinking water is denied to polluting caste for fear of ritual pollution, and it remains a sensitive issue in caste ridden Indian villages even to this day. Bathing in Ganges is an easy way of attaining moksa. The ultimate wish of every believing hindu is to get dissolved in the Ganges. Attached to every significant centre of worship there is a pond or a pool, if not lake or a river. The worshipper as well as the worshiping place is purified several times a day. Among the items of offering water is an essential element.

In the theyyam too, water is an integral item. Every grove is supposed to have a well at the right side of the kottam. Some of the theyyam legends take place in the site of the pool or have integral relation with water or well. Makkapodi and Vishnumurthi, among several other legends take place in the context of pool. The theyyam of Muchilot Bhagavati, acts out giving a bath to the child.

Purification by water is an important item in pulaya theyyams. Before the theyyam festival begins the kottam is purified with water, and all the officiating people purify themselves by a ritual bath known as kulichukayalar. Before the potten theyyam begins his make up, there is a ceremonial bath
accompanied by all those who take the subordinate kolams. In the rite of all the pulaya theyyams water is an integral part of every ritual. The potten theyyam ends with pulachamndi, doing household work including washing the cloth and bathing the children.

CP beliefs are rich in water symbolism. Christ came to bring the life-giving waters promised by the prophets. He is the temple from which springs up the river that will irrigate and vivify the new Jerusalem. Holy spirit is water, the life giving power of God the Creator. In water symbolizes the life-giving teaching brought by christ-wisdom.

The symbolism of water finds its complete meaning in christian baptism because of its cleansing value and also of its principle of new life. Immersion in the water and emerging from it, is the climax of the ritual of baptism, symbolized the burial with christ and spiritual resurrection with christ, the central mystery of the christian faith (Leon Dufour, 1967: 565-67).

In CP religious rituals, water plays an important role. Every one wishing to become a christian and every new-born child of christian parents, should undergo the ritual of baptism. In commemoration of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples, during the easter season the washing of feet is enacted in
rituals. The new water is blessed at the Easter night ceremony and this water is used for the rest of the year for baptism and for other purificatory rites. In the main entrance of every church holy water is kept for the people to purify symbolically as they enter the church; in important occasions there is sprinkling of holy water over the congregation to purify them.

In the celebration of holy eucharist, water is a prominent symbol. Wine mixed with water is offered during mass, and the priest washes his hands, symbolizing the washing away of sins. Thus water symbolism is very much used in the CP religious symbol system.

7.2.10. The Archetypal Symbol of Hero Worship

Hero worship is an archetype of human response to people. Ancient and modern people remember and honour outstanding persons who have made lasting contributions for the betterment, as well as good name of their caste and community. From the very dawn of human history, heroes were considered to be models and were honoured, and particularly after their death their memories were perpetuated by deifying and worshipping them. Epics and Puranas speak of such remembered heroes. Some of the existing gods might have emerged from the cult of
heroes (Kurup, 1977:37). Hero worship is an important element in the folk culture. Vallikoothu, Bhootas and theyyam are folk religious forms where the simple people remember their heroes. There are mainly three types of heroes in the theyyam myth and dance. The heroes who defended the ruler and thus the people, through a display of great courage and valour. Kudiveean, Paruthi veeran, Muttappan etc. (fig. 3.4.5) belong to this type. The second category of heroes is those people of extraordinary skills in mantras and learning. They are considered to be an unending source of inspiration for those living especially for the succeeding generations, the theyyam of gurukkals fall in this type. The third category is that of people who stood for certain values and had to suffer due to it even to the extent of courting death. The virgins who sacrificed their life in defense of their virginity come under this category. Makkapothi, puthiya Bhagavathi, (Fig.3.4.4) Valiathamapuratti etc. are some of them.

The veneration of weapon (Ayutham) seems to derive piety from the hero worship. Most of the Kottam and kavu, the deity is installed under the symbolic form of instruments such as trident (stula), spear, etc. Almost all the theyyams have some kind of weapon, even Seeta in the theyyam has a weapon.
The pulaya theyyam that belong to the first category are: Vattiyan polla, kalichekon, kudiveeran, thevaru vellen etc. Those coming under the second category are Ambalery Gurukkal, panayan Gurukkal, Chittoth Gurukkal etc. Ariakra Bhagavathi, Kaavumpai Bhagavathi, Chittothu Bhagavathi etc. are some of the theyyams that belong to the third category. Potten theyyam is the most popular hero-theyyam of the pulayas.

CP also have a strong tradition of hero worship. The men and women who showed great courage and endurance in physical suffering and stood by Christian faith and died are known as martyrs. St. Stephen, St. Sebastian, St. John Britto are some of the martyrs. Other holy men and women are in general known as saints. The saints are remembered on their feast days every year. Moreover, there are churches and institutions dedicated to their name, thereby implicitly promoting their virtues and values.

CP remember their heroes, naming their vehicles and shops after the saints. They develop a special devotion to the particular saint who appeals to them most.

7.2.11. The Archetypal Symbol of Stones.

The hardness, ruggedness, and permanence of
matter was in itself a manifestation of sacredness in the religious consciousness of people. The rock conveyed directly a feeling of autonomy, of completeness in its strength, an awe-inspiring majestic appearance. "Above all stone is. It always remains itself, and exists itself, and more important still, it strikes. Before he even takes it up to strike, man finds in it an obstacle – if not to his body, at least to his gaze – and ascertains its hardness, its roughness, its power" (Eliade, 1958: 216). The rock shows him something that transcends the precariousness, the fragility of humanity: an absolute mode of existence. Its strength, its motionlessness, its size strange outlines are none of them human; they indicate the presence of something that fascinates, terrifies, attracts and threatens, all at once. In its grandeur, its hardness, its shape and its colour, man is faced with a reality and force that belong to some world other than the profane world of which he himself is a part (Eliade, 1983).

Stone is the implement of destruction (Paul- Radin, 1957), stone weapon of combat, emblem of dignity, symbol of power, ritual object (Schmidt, 1928). Stone gained importance in relation to burial rituals (Kopper 1942), sacred stones are attributed with fertilizing capacity (Sybilot, 1887).
In India the stones and rocks caught the religious imagination of the people early in history. In the groves and kottams which are the prototype of present temples the deities are represented in rough single stones or a heap of stones. The holy of holies of almost all the temples, the deity is installed in a single untouched stone. Those temples where the sculpture of the deity is worshiped, must be a later innovation. As we have seen the devotion of heroes and nagas are perpetuated in the form of stones called veerakkal and Nagakkal respectively. The sculptures of deities done on stones and rocks and rock-paintings in the caves are almost unparalleled in the history of sculpturing and painting. Thus in the Hindu way of worship we can see the employment of stone ranging from ordinary stones to highly intricate art work is done to make the stone to speak to the devotees.

The Hindu temples and holy places have a natural tendency to be built either on top of a rocky hill or in the shades of it. The serenity and the barren loneliness of the rock mountains seem to have fascinated the Hindu mind. Almost all the famous Hindu temples are built either on the rocky mountain or in relation to stone and rock-hills.
In North Malabar too, the deities in the grove are installed in the stones. Often enough the sacred stone is kept on a platform, in some cases it will be a simple stone in the forest under a high tree.

In the traditional kottam of the pulaya the theyyam deity is installed in the image of a stone, (fig. 4.2.1.) often in a platform. In the modern ones the theyyams are installed either in the symbol of a weapon or trident.

In the Christian tradition of CP, stones were an important symbol to represent the transcendent God. Jacob at Bethal raised up sacred pillars and thus stones were set up in the figure of twelve tribes, sanctified by the nearness of the pillar. The altars were built from untrimmed stones. Later, Christ came to be identified with the altars; till recently the eucharist was celebrated on a stone placed on the altar. The so called memorial stones used in the Christian teaching was to perpetuate the memory of the covenant between God and Man.

Christ has been compared to the rock from which Moses miraculously drew water, he is the "corner stone rejected by the builders"; and also as Rock of destruction, the stumbling stone. The transformation that will come after Christ is symbolized as "precious stone and the new Jerusalem (Leon Dufour, 1967:510)
Fire is like water, a symbol of transformation and regeneration. For most primitives fire was a demiurge emanating from the sun, whose earthly representative it was; hence it is related on the one hand with the ray of light and the lightening and, on the other, with gold. Fire is also at the same time a purifying agent as well as force of destruction. Marius Schneider, however, distinguish between two kinds of fire, depending upon their direction or function: fire as in the axis of earth, representing eroticism, solar heat and physical energy, and fire of the axis fire, air, linked with mysticism, purification or sublimation, and spiritual energy. According to the alchemist's concepts, fire is an element which operates in the centre of all things, as a unifying and stabilizing factor. Fire is ultra-life. It embraces both good and bad heat. In it lies the desire to annihilate time and to bring all things to their end. Fire is the archetypal image of phenomena in themselves (Cirlot, 1962: 101).

Fire is a very important thought in the Indian tradition and it contains in itself many opposites. Fire is thought to be both creative and destructive. Every elemental understanding of the process of nature has indentified the presence of heat, both in
the emergence of life (as in the incubation of the egg, or the germination of the seed), and also in decomposition, where rotting organic matter is found to emit heat while destroying its own cellular structure. Fire is also connected both with the seed of Purusa, the archetypal male, and the womb of prakarti, nature. The feminine principle itself is thought as the fusion of all fires primal energies. Women herself is spoken of as fire. Gestation in the womb is said to be kind of 'cooking'. All fire in Indian thought is related to the feminine. Agni is called vanaspati too, the Lord of vegetation. In this sense, the cosmology of Heraclitus which saw the universe as essential fire, is very close to the Hindu concept of the cosmos as arising out of the incubation of a cosmic fire-egg called hiranya garbha, or the golden womb (Jyoti Sahi, 1980: 59).

In the theyyam celebrations in general, fire is an important symbolism. The fire is mainly used in two ways in the theyyam: one, fire in the theyyam decorations and two, fire in measuring the asceticism of the performers through testing their endurance. In the theyyam make-up, around the circular mudi of the theyyam there is fire in the form of a fire wick (pandam) arranged artistically. (fig. 3.4.4. & 3.4.6.). Some theyyams have big fire-wicks, usually four, tied to their waist in four directions. (fig.
3.4.4.) Thottumkara Bhagavati and puthiya Bhagavati have in their make-up, fire wicks tied to their waist as well fire on their mudi. The mudi of Pputhiya Bhagavati is circular in form and that of the Thottumara Bhagavati conical in shape. Namgalath Bhagavati's make-up has fire only on the circular mudi.

The power of endurance of both priest (tantri) and the theyyam performer are tested by their ability to play with fire. Walking through the fire is a common ritual in theyyam (fig. 4.1.5. & 4.1.7.). The theyyam kandanar kelan walks through the fire (fig. 4.1.5.). According to the myth, kandanar kelan dies in the wild fire. There is ritual of fire-walk in some groves, especially of Tiyyams: the fire walk reminds us of the initiation ceremony.

Integrated into the theyyam ritual in certain theyyam there is the rite of jumping in the fire. The theyyam, Kala gulikan of Iranavu kanu jumps in the fire several times (fig. 4.1.6.). The honourable title, panickar is awarded to the malayan on the basis of his ability to jump in the fire. A malayan becomes a panickar when he jumps a hundred times at a stretch in the heap of fire.

Another test of endurance is called "karaval", where the priest (tantri) picks up rice preparations
called *kara* from the boiled coconut oil (fig. 4.1.8.). Taking rice from the boiling water also part of this feat (fig. 4.1.9.).

In the *pulaya theyyams*, as we have seen, fire plays an important role. The *potten theyyam* of the *pulayas* jumps into the fire several times to show the enduring power of the *theyyam* as well as its ascetical power. It is understood that the *potten theyyam* continue to jump in the fire till the audience is satisfied and the elders prevent the *theyyam* from further jumping.

In the CP rituals fire as such is not very important. The light and fire is used as symbol for the eucharist, candles are lit and it is considered to be an integral element. A lamp will be burning twenty-four hours near the blessed sacrament to mark the presence of divinity in the church. Light is a symbol of Christ.

In the easter service at night, along with the new water, new fire also is blessed and the main candle is lit from the new fire symbolizing the resurrection of Christ and hence the renewal of whole creation.

From our analysis of archetypal symbols it has become evident, that the HP are by and large closer to nature, and their symbols show more eco-sense in
comparison to CP. The sky symbolism is almost absent in HP symbols, whereas it abounds in CP symbols. The HP symbols are more earth-bound and feminine, whereas the CP are more masculine and upward moving. HP emphasis stands, CP are more person oriented.

In the next chapter VIII we take one of the archetypal symbols Mandala and analyse the theyyam symbols on the basis of mandala patterns.