

PERSPECTIVES ON KERALA HISTORY

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CHAPTER _ VII I

Cultural Traditions in Medieval Kerala-

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The Impact of the Sanskritic Great Tradition / Confluence of the Great and Little Traditions / Growth of a Malayalam Tradition / Knowledge and Culture
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FORMATION OF THE MEDIEVAL CULTURE

Information about the Samutiris, the chiefs of Kozhikode are available from the middle of the 14th century, a long time after the decline of the Ceras who ruled from Mahodayapuram. Evidence of a stable, well-established government is visible at Kozhikode from the beginning of the 15th century. Kozhikode was a major port of trade, a city planned to favour commerce, a capital based on classical Indian tradition of town planning and the seat of a well ordered administrative network. The structural and functional aspects of this centre of a medieval chief is revealed by a detailed study of the port of trade, the organisation of settlements of urban, semi-urban or rural import, the structure of exchange centres and the nature of merchant guilds that were interlinked, existing within the structure that extends unto internal regions. They indicate that the pressure of population has been mounting in all regions from village settlements to ports of trade. The organisation of administrative units like Kalari and Kalam and the consolidation of different occupational groups in the semi-urban and urban specialised centres point to the differentiated forms of evolution in different geographical regions and social groups as a result of the fragmentation and lack of centralised authority. The centripetal and centrifugal forces that were active on the process of change from the previous period was integrally related to the upward and downward patterns of social mobility and demographic features that were developing in the new conditions. The growth of social mobility, the growth of population, changes in the internal and external structure of settlements, functions of settlements and inter and intrarelations resulted in the pressure of settlements and demographic patterns which in turn was the cause of the change in social rhythm. The Naduvali chief that grew in strength with Kozhikode as headquarters established hegemony over the entire Malabar region. Evolutionary patterns similar to the changes at Kozhikode was also visible in the remaining parts of Kerala. It is not easy to arrive at an estimate of the increase in settlements that was generally taking place in Kerala, nor to analyse the variations in demographic patterns and settlements due to pre-modern marriage systems, frequent warfare, foreign contacts and changes in educational system. However, it is possible to arrive at an approximation on the changes in the character of settlements from the period before the 15th century to the period after the 15th century in the light of literary and non-literary evidence available with regard to the background forces of the new trends developing in the field of society and culture. The knowledge that is obtained through combining the information on the growth of capitals of chiefs, exchange centres, commercial centres, the expansion and contraction that are manifested by the records relating to administration, religion, and ritual associated with the capital cities, are extremely useful in this respect. The growth of Taravads and the special features in the lineage systems that were emerging as a result could be referred to in this context.

The illumination of aesthetic consciousness of any society is possible only on the basis of certain artistic streams standardised by traditions. All societies, whether literate or illiterate, would try to express their technical virtuosity in terms of normal, routine living conditions, irrespective of the character and mode of expression of artistic activity. This cannot be haphazard or chaotic. "It is the expression of the desire for beauty that finds fulfilment in the application of technical skill through established forms of the patterned perceptions and imaginative resources of the artistically endowed members of every society. The artist who uses words on his medium no less than the artist who works with

the painting brush, wood or stone acts as a creation of his culture, his responses are always relative to its formal patterns and his values reflect its underlying values." This social science perspective is relevant in the study of Medieval Kerala Culture. We have to examine the situation in Kerala in the 15th century in the background of the cultural streams and their fluctuations in an earlier era.

A Bhakti Movement similar to the one that originated in Cola and Pandya territories did not develop in Kerala during the times of Ceras of Mahodayapuram. There is not much evidence in the form of literary works or other sources for a Bhakti stream. The literary works are confined to the Great Tradition of Ramayana and Mahabharata. The other stream is that of royal eulogy. The stream of ritualistic sacrificial (yajna) culture of Prabhakara and Agnihotri was also powerful. Later evidences substantiate the beliefs regarding these persons. Brahmana Gramas were divided according to the

sacrificial culture. The observance of Pattathanam had developed on the basis of this culture by the 15th century. Temples that were the subject of Vaishnavite songs were relatively few. The existing temples were distributed from Tirunavaya to Venmani along with Brahmana Gramas. Temple complexes of the Cola style were not developed in Kerala. Instead, temples which were built as stipulated in the Tantrasamuccayam were developing. Such temples spread in the region to the South of Tirunavaya, but not in the north. The scope for the temple-centred Bhakti movement in Kerala was extremely small.

It seems that the Brahmana Gramas helped the spread of a puranic culture by means of their village temple ethos. Saivite and Vaishnavite religions were not visible in toto. However Brahmana villages got polarised along these lines throughout the State. Siva and Vishnu became idols worshipped in temples. Since the brahmana grama used this technique of assimilation, the growth of popular Saivite and Vaishnavite religions was very weak in Kerala. The Jaina tradition of tantric culture was absorbed into the temple sanketas and their ritual order. Isanagurudevapaddhati, a mammoth work of more than 18,000 slokas show the entry and influence of the Tantric culture in temples. Thus the most interesting cultural stream visible after the age of the Ceras of Mahodayapuram was the ordered development of the temple-centred puranic tantric culture. This might indicate the tendency of assimilation among the brahmanas. The Nambutiri brahmanas of Kerala did not retain the models of classical Saivism and Vaishnavism. This difference exists in their rituals like the name giving ceremony (Peruvili). The integration of elements of Jainism into the temple culture during this period also should be noted. It is highly possible that the growth of typical Kerala rituals was the result of this effort at integration. Major rituals like installing of idols in a temple and festivals in Kerala are not based on the prescriptions in other parts of India. The opinion of various scholars that Kerala followed the Vedic-tantric ritual order of Southern Recension indicates this integration. This structural variation also helps to remove the obstacles created by the Sruta body or rituals. The rituals related to temple festivals that are being conducted in association with various occupational groups bear testimony to this. This is shown by the association of washermen with Mattu, the potter with Mulappalika and Mankalanganal, the carpenter with Marika and Sruvam and the coppersmith with Varneetha varkal. While integrating all these rituals and organising the worship of the idols of Siva and Vishnu in

the temple Srikovil, the Kerala Brahmanas have preserved the forms of offering based on the Vedic-sacrificial (Yajna) culture. Sixteen

formal pujas, including their histrionic element, should be studied from this point of view. It can be generally stated that there emerged the Tantric culture that combined the elements of Yajna culture, Puranic culture, various components that helped to attract and ensure the subordination of the regional society, and parts of the culture of the Jainas and other sets of people.

Tevaram that was supposed to have been conducted by Ravana and others according to poetical works is not merely the worship of God. It is a version of the Tevaram conducted in the houses of Kerala Nambutiris. In this the relation between Manipravalam poetical works and Jaina religion can be deduced. The temples, Naduvalis and the elite families came into being and grew in power in a social order dictated by royal, astrological, and Tantric forms of justice. This accumulation of political and ritual powers appear to be taking place after the age of the Ceras of Mahodayapuram .

Ceras of Mahodayapuram maintained a court that had scholars who could contribute to the formation of a model culture. Being a relatively centralised power, Ceras were able to spread a courtly form of conduct. A reference society that is loyal to the central power was being formed in this way. This reference society spread the impression that they had an enlightened and culturally superior style of functioning. Because of this reason, the literary and scientific achievements of the Cera rule belonged entirely to the Great Tradition. However, feudal centres are also centres of historiography, and the Cera inscriptions could also be viewed from that point of view. These inscriptions were normally written in the local language. While the reference society to the Great Tradition and the royal centre of that Tradition continued to exist, Malayalam language was being used in the inscriptions, due to the pressure of circumstances. The characteristics of the upper class cultural stream filtered down to the lower layers of society. At the same time, a situation was created where the upper layer, including the reference society separated itself from the lower layers. This was the initial phase when the reference society to the feudal central power gave birth to the courtly aristocratic structures in the Kerala society.

The Nadus of the Muvendar (Cera, Cola and Pandya chiefs) became separate entities with the centralisation of power by the Ceras. The pre-eminence and spread of Sanskrit language was the result of the uniformity that developed, as the brahmana gramas, petty chieftains and lords under the influence of the central power accepted the model of the reference society of

the central power. Although forms like the Kuttu, which tried to stage plays by Bhasa, attempted to incorporate local elements of contemporary relevance, this uniformity became a hindrance to the rise of Malayalam language and indigenous factors. Dependence on the centripetal force was the major factor. Ceras, who were the feudal central power, entered into conflict with the Colas in order to ensure the dependent relations with the lords and this eventually led to the fall of the Ceras.

With the decline of the centripetal forces, the dependent local chiefs separated themselves. The evidence for the working of the centrifugal forces and the resurgence of local factors could be found in Ramacaritam, Bhasha Kautaliyam, Attaprakaram, Kramadipika and Vaishikatantram all belonging to the 12th century. Each of these works reveal the plane of reciprocity taking place between the Great Tradition and the little traditions. Ramacaritam exemplified this conflict, both in language and in usage. The expanded Yuddhakanda in Ramacaritam is indigenous application of the heroic trend that developed as a result of the expansions of various parts of Ramayana as in Sitaharanam, Vichchinnabhishekam, Ascharyachudamani and Amoghara-ghavam. The political philosophy of the same trend was revealed in Bhashakautaliyam, stage craft in Attaprakaram and Kramadipika and the outlook on women in Vaisikatantram. The relation of Manipravalam with the Jainas and that of Pattu with Tamil lyrical poetry could also be noted. Vaisikatantram followed the tradition of Kuttinimatham which came into Kerala from Karnataka. The three centuries after the Cera decline, was an interregnum which saw the strengthening of localisation and weakening of the power of the Great Tradition in Kerala cultural sphere. The course of history during the interregnum clearly showed that the strengthening of the localised little traditions was taking place in the absence of a reference society. This situation continued until the emergence of another centralised power.

The Sanskrit works that were written as a parallel tradition to the works like Ramacaritam showed the emergence of the centres of the local chiefs like Kollam, Odanad, Perumpatappu, Vadakkumkur, Tekkumkur, etc, as the nuclear areas of the Great Tradition. Court Hagiography of the heroic mould became the major trend. The Manipravalam form of poetry also belonged to this stream. The preference for romantic taste in the Manipravalam poetry and the heroic trend in the hagiographic works were the characteristics of feudalism as well as the streams of Great Tradition. Eulogy of masculine virtues was

complemented by the dehumanisation of women in the form of eulogising the functions of the prostitute. Femininity in such works appeared as a utilitarian concept.

Information on Matrilineal system, Sambandham relations, and the tradition of the Kalaris help to understand the interregnum more deeply. The Kalari system indicated the spread of the martial class. Change in the condition of women would have to be viewed along with the Kalari system. Centralised sustenance of property appeared to be the aim in Sambandham relationship and the matrilineal system. These factors demonstrated the masculine perspective also. The spread of brahmana gramas through family migrations, the rise of exchange centres in relatively interior regions and the rise of single landlord families also should be seen as the trends during this epoch. During this interregnum there was a reordering of the small chiefs who accepted the model reference society under the Ceras and the upper class social factors that were assimilated by them. The ripples caused by the increase in the number of chiefdoms and temple centres are reflected in the literary works during this period. The exchange centres that spread into rural areas and the fragments of political authority had intensified this ripple into a wave. The political centres of smaller chiefs, exchange centres, the location of brahmana lords

and temples acted as the rural centripetal force. The formation of a stratified society downward from the small chiefs was thus made possible. Singular social factors formed into collectives and moved towards temple centres or political centres.

The reciprocal relation of the Great and Little traditions had also to take place side by side. The transition of heroic poetry into hagiography and romantic literature into eulogy of the prostitute also showed the direction of the dynamic forces during this period. The tussle between the Great Tradition of Sanskrit and the Malayalam language also should be seen in this background. The heroic and ornate poetry of the Great Tradition echoed this conflict. This conception grew in the form of the comparison of local chiefs with puranic heroes, and often, both were rendered indistinguishable.

Variations in the architectural elements in temple construction was being formulated on the basis of the works of the Great tradition like Samarankana Sutradharam and keeping the brahmanic rituals in view. These changes also penetrated into the temple murals, musical instruments and musical traditions. Episodes from puranic legends, their main characters, and colour variations

representing the austere, sanguine and dark features appeared in temple walls. They acquired importance even in carvings in wood and stone. Single puranic characters began to be represented by using border lines to demonstrate their importance. Puranic divine characters appeared with their superhuman aura. Elaboration, an element that appeared earlier in Kuttu and Kutiyattam spread in all art forms. In Music, South Indian and Keralite Raga forms and indigenous musical instruments held their own to some extent.

The general effort was not to obliterate the down-trodden communities and their cultural features, but to integrate them. This was shown to have been manifested in temple festivals. This period, when displacement of centripetal force took place, could be considered to provide opportunity for different dynamic forces to act on their own. The civilising of behaviour that appeared in the next stage emerged from the three or four major feudal centres that gained strength during this interregnum. The basic changes that came into being in the monetary flow and processes of exchange helped the formation of the new "civilising" process.

The dynamics of these internal forces have to be noted. This could be interpreted as social feudalisation. Centrifugal force could be evaluated by basing on the ways of gathering strength, the atmosphere in which this took place and the objective material factors. Social factor was the existence of more than fourteen small Naduvali chiefs with their limited territory, the political and administrative centres dispersed within it, and the dependants attached to them. The activities of this factor, either as a single or as a collective entity in the villages resulted in remarkable changes. The existence of Kalam and Kalari signified the units of the administrative system and the militia of small chiefs. Another factor was the temple-centred groups and their communities. Third factor was that of exchange, trade and commerce. There was also the factor of the downtrodden people at the bottom. These factors in general present a centripetal force. The relevance of the double argument that the land in Kerala was granted to the brahmanas by

Parasurama, and the same land was granted by Cheraman Perumal to the Naduvali chiefs, mentioned in the Brahmandapuram prose and the Keralolpatti could be noted here. The dichotomy of ideas and interests that existed between the priestly and ruling components of the upper class, ie, between the brahmanas and Naduvalis on the question of landed property rights could be seen here.

This internal conflict increased in strength during later centuries. The money flowing into the temple through various means was being distributed among the various strata within the temple. In this context conflict among the rising landlords, Taravads and the smaller feudal centres continued. Smaller feudal centres were more powerful economically and militarily, due to the presence of exchange centres and militia attached to the centre. Cash economy spread in such areas having port facilities and possibilities for trade relations. This facility would be utilised by the Naduvali chiefs also. There were inbuilt limitations for the landlord - Taravad axis who were dependent on the regular annual income. One section among them were dependent on the Naduvali power, and the heroic among them became members of the warrior class attached to the local chief. Thus the power of the local chief grew and the weaker chiefs became dependent on the stronger chiefs. The unstable equilibrium that developed in this background was sustained by the bigger chiefs.

The changes in the village components after the decline of the Cera power led to various migrations and expansion of population and the spread of monetary system. Muslims, Jews, Christians and Jains were spreading in the Naduvali centres and coastal trading centres. Limitations in living space within the settlements and pressures that it created in the control of various amenities available in the settlement became important. This resulted in the migration to trade centres and the port and Naduvali centres. 15th century Kerala saw the growth of three or four major Naduvalis and their dependents based on these conflicts and various dynamic forces. The growth of Taravad joint families that had the stability and ritual power which would ensure the accumulation of land and other form of wealth and the sustenance of vested interests in them could also be seen in this century. The age of the major chiefs was the age when the works by the Kannassans, Lilatilakam and Chandrotsavam were composed. Venad, Kochi, Kozhikode and Kolathunad were the major Naduvali centres.

The Impact of the Sanskritic Great Tradition

Lilatilakam attended to the formation and improvement of Kerala language. There was a clear distinction between the scholarly language and the people's language and the ongoing tussle between the two is noticeable, they denoted respectively the reference society and the lower class society. Although Sanskrit as the language of the courtly society and the streams of

Great Tradition provided the components of this 14th century work, explicit argument for a Kerala language should be noted. The argument was to accept the Kerala language. The Kannassan poets who wrote in Malayalam, were

non-brahmanas. The transliteration of large Sanskrit works was the trend there. Gita, Bhagavata and Ramayana represented the heroic trend. Hence the non-brahmanas were at the helm of the efforts of localisation and the propagation of the Great Tradition and the excessive influence of the Great Tradition in fact distorted the Pattu form of literature. The coming of Bhagavata with its denial of greed (Artha) and lust (Kama) was important here. The philosophy of denial was expanded by Punthanattu Nambutiri and Thunchath Ezhuthassan.

Chandrotsavam another work of this period extolled the observances of the prostitute. The essence of this work consisted of the renewed consciousness regarding the basis of the status and honour given to women in society and institutionalisation of prostitution. Eulogising the single Devadasi families, and their functioning within the collective of dependents and the financial centre could also be seen in Chandrotsavam. These works that became popular in the 15th century, were not only the representatives of earlier traditions, but also reflected the conflict between the Great Tradition and Little Tradition. The appearance of a strong little tradition in Kolathunad and a strong Great Tradition in Kozhikode followed this new trend.

During the 15th century, royal courts of Kolathunad and Samutiri appeared. The scholarly world and their dependents were attracted to the courtly society. The Great Tradition itself was growing based on these centres. About 150 Sanskrit books were composed in connection with these centres. Most of the writers lived towards the north of Tirunavaya. A puranic cultural tradition developed in Kolathunad, through Krishna legends, as in the case of the tenth Skandha of Bhagavata and Sreekrishna Vijayam. Hamsasandesa, a poem describing the heroine from Kancheepuram, going to Vrindavana in search of Lord Krishna, has also been recovered from this area. Kolathunadu is particularly notable in the production of original literature. The famous literary exponents like Purnasaraswati also belonged to Kolathunad. The atmosphere of a eulogic-heroic-puranic culture developed in Kolathunad, as evidenced by work like Udayavarma Caritam. Krishnagatha a Malayalam poem tried to develop a model conception of the presentation of devotion and heroism.

The royal court of the Samutiris of Kozhikode had two major components, the eighteen and a half (Patinettara) poets and the court of Pattathanam. They were also inter-related. Both emphasised the scholarly levels of the Great Tradition. The eighteen poets were proficient in the Vedic-Tantric tradition including Mimamsa, Tantra Vyakarana and Vedanta. Among them two brahmana Taravads were important. Payyur Patteris (Bhattathiris) who contributed nine poets and Tiruvegappura Nambutiris who contributed five poets. Payyur Patteris were the heads of Pattathana Yogam, which had even the power to decide upon the observances like the Ostracism (Bhrashtu). They were also called Mimamsa Cakravartis and were proficient in Purvamimamsa. This was a clear continuation of the Yajna culture prevalent in the earlier period.

With the growth of the power of the major Naduvalis, scholarship became the preserve of certain Taravads, who had entered into a dependent relation with the Naduvalis. If we take into account the Taravads that were attending the Pattathana Yogam a picture of the

fragmentation of brahmana gramas, the rise of single brahmana households and their unnatural spread, and the rise of the upagramas could be obtained. The Vedic tradition of such Taravads is also clear. Brahmana Yogams that conducted specialised study of language, Vyakarana, Vedanta, Prabhakara (Mimamsa) also developed. Institutionalised activities like Pattathanam and Mamankam demonstrated the relative strength and spread of the inter-mediary groups like the lords, heads of Taravads, military captains and soldiers. The Samutiri rule also tried to relate the temple centred communities to the reference society at the royal residence (Kovilakam) and its rituals and observances. The cultural formation at the top level was that of the Mimamsaic tradition and Tantric culture of the Great Tradition. The influence gained by works like Tantrasamuccayam and, Kaumarilayuktikam demonstrate this process. The objectives of this cultural formation was classified through the appearance of works like Natankusam which characterised the indigenous component in Kuttu as `Bhramsa'. The appearance and growth of reference societies could be discovered in Naduvali centres like Venad, Chempakassery, Kochi and Vettam. These together formed a conservative cultural formation at the upper level. Heroic poetry in the form of royal eulogies not only emanated from these centres, but also from weaker chiefs like Vatakkumkur, Tekkumkur and Odanad. There also the presence of a reference society was manifested.

Tantrasamuccayam is important in the laws concerned with temple construction and temple ritual. Tantrasamuccayam aimed at the creation of a nucleus at the temple centres that underwent evolution of form through the integration of indigenous elements, by providing the basis and vested character of the Great Tradition. The brahmanical components in temples including the Mukhamandapa became more expensive, ritual oriented and ornate. A similar aim was noticeable in the order of Pujas and offerings also. Festivals as the components of popular appeal also came to be conducted regularly. The rituals and offerings became temple activities based on the Yajna cultural tradition and festivals came to be distinguished as functions of popular appeal. Kuttambalam and Namaskara Mandapam have to be studied carefully. This process was already visible in the village level activities by brahmanas, lords, and smaller chieftains. The model reference societies in the chief political centres spread to the centres of smaller chieftains and a unity at the level of reference societies developed. The Taravads and the Sthanams of lords developed as the intermediary level under the reference society.

Just as Tantrasamuccayam formed the basis for temple sanketams, Manushyalayachandrika and several works of rituals and observances played an important role in the construction and growth of Taravads. The power and extent of the joint family system and Sambandham sexual alliances also were visible in the architectural forms. Eulogies of the royal, temple, brahmana and trading factors became a regular theme in the Sandesa Kavyas and Campus. Special interest shown in the acceptance of such themes and the emphasis on them in these works, composed in both Sanskrit and Malayalam, displayed the features of the existing cultural tradition. Because of this, while the Sandesa Kavyas and Campus were based on the models in the Great Tradition, they laid emphasis on the indigenous factors in the formation of feudalism. Eulogies of families of kings, lords and brahmanas appearing in the Sandesa Kavyas, larger poems and Campus cannot be ignored. Unlike the earlier period, with the growth

of the major Naduvalis, the intermediary groups that were expanding played a crucial role behind this eulogisation. Work on metre and Alankara Sastra which introduced the poetics of the Great Tradition also began to appear. Works like Natankusam tried to correct the localisation that was developing in the visual and poetic arts. The appearance of Sankara Smriti which consolidated the growth of Taravads as a ritual based entity was not surprising. During one or one and a half centuries after the 15th century, numerous works which had the manifest characteristics of Great Tradition were composed in Kerala.

The subsequent centuries saw the growth of a large number of regulations and rituals based on the Great Tradition. These Sanskrit works did not originate in political centres alone. They originated also from the growing lords of various Taravads. A strong reference society originated in Vettathunad. The large number of Mimamsaic ritualistic works like Manameyodayam, Smartha prayascitta vimarsini, Asauchadipika, Grihya prayogadarpanam, and Kriyatrayam, and a number of astrological works showed that the models of reference society previously mentioned had penetrated into the joint families, Taravads, and centres of lords. Numerous works on architecture, Manushyalayachandrika by Neelakanta, Viswakarmeeyam, and Shilparatnam by anonymous authors were written in this period. Shilparatnam which directed the painting in Kerala into the framework of Great Tradition is an important work in many ways. The observances within the Taravad were given in Vyavaharamala which codified the laws given by various smriti writers from Manu onwards, like Aswalayana Kriyakrama, Kriyalesasmriti, etc. Among the political works, the annotation of Kiratarjunyam called Trisargi was specifically meant to be taught in Taravads and houses of lords. It was composed by a brahmana from Chovvaram Gramam. This study scheme was a part of an axis among the lords, Taravads and Naduvalis. With the addition of Vyavaharamala, which had 1234 slokas in 19 Prakaranas, royal politics consolidated into the code of observances for the intermediary groups also. The number of commentaries that appeared on these works should also be noted.

As the rituals became consolidated and concentrated, intensive efforts were made to convert the Taravads and centres of lords into the nodal points of ritual cultural formation. For this, a series of writings appeared, like Smarthaprayaschittam and Asauchadipika of Malamangalattu Nambutiri, Jaiminiyagrihyamantravritti by an anonymous writer, Bodhayana dasapurnamasanusthanam, Aswalayana grihyaprayoga Vritti by Damodara, Grihyaprayogadarpanam, etc. The beginnings of a ritual tradition which observed even the full moon and new moon days could be seen here. Thus, the special feature of the new period was the codification of ritual traditions and observances for Lords and Taravads. It was the same age which saw the composition of Patapattu, which continued the heroic tradition in Malayalam.

The eulogies of Kings continued to be composed. A series of eulogies on towns also began to appear. The work describing the port of Kolathunad, and Ananthapuravarnanam were composed in an earlier age. The three Nagarastutis in the name of Melpattur Narayana Bhattathiri have a distinct individuality. Works like Kusabhyudayam, and Kamasandesam also belonged to the eulogy-heroic tradition. The urban centres of Kochi

and Kozhikode and their rulers were being eulogised in these poems. These stutis described the increasing trading centres, and their characteristic components. These features which were only briefly visible in the earlier works following the Great Tradition, became an important line of thinking in works like and Kamasandesam, Bhringasandesam, Gosree Nagara Varnanam. The author of Kamasandesam even compared the tolls in the ferries of Kaveri river with the tolls at Kochi and pointed out the causative factors of the growth of trade. Melpattur Narayana Bhattathiri even discussed the presence of foreigners, growth of trade and the positive and negative sides in the growth of urban centres. These works demonstrated the existence of a social segment that analysed the conditions of urbanisation, trade and monetisation, and the growth of Naduvali centres during the 16th and 17th centuries, and gave thought to the impact of these developments.

Temples and idolatry became widespread. This was demonstrated by Kerala Mahatmyam. The spread of festivals as its accompaniment was shown in the Ashtamicampu by Melpattur. Even the works written from the point of view of reference society throw light into dynamics of the development of families of lords, growth of temples, growth of trading centres, conditions in Naduvali centres and other features of the social history of the 16th-17th centuries. Customs and rituals that consolidated, and the emergence of intermediary households that held a dependent relation with the rulers could be discovered in these works. Extolling heroic and masculine virtues became stronger and widespread during this period. The disappearance of romantic perspective from Sanskrit works and the growth of masculine heroic descriptions should be considered. In a society that was becoming increasingly militarised, opportunities arose for the display of masculine strength and accumulation of wealth and fame, which led them to disregard the earlier tendency to dehumanise femininity. The growth of the voice of Bhakti which laid emphasis on the ties of dependence also was manifested in this period.

The Bhakti of Melpattur Bhattathiri that commenced from Guruvayupuresasthavam culminated in the self sacrificing Narayaneeyam. This was also a strong tendency reflecting the puranic cultural tradition which was linked to the culture of temple panegyric. Another special feature of Malayalam poetry that developed during this period also should be remembered. Ramayanam which was the major work of Thunchath Ezhuttassan, saw Rama as an incarnation. Unlike Melpattur who tried to assimilate puranic cultural tradition into the temple culture, Ezhuttassan separated them. The outlook of Melpattur Bhattathiri did not run parallel to that of Ezhuttassan. After Ezhuttassan, the temple assumed a different role in Malayalam poetry.

The Sanskrit works of this period revealed the dominant cultural component created by the Great Tradition which spread to political centres of big and small chiefs, noble households and temple centres. This influenced the entire world of art including painting and sculpture. The political order of the Samutiris, along with the social factor which held the cultural leadership, and pattathanam, eighteen and a half poets, Mamankam, temple festivals and the rituals and observances resulted in the formation of the dominant cultural sphere. They were the carriers of the culture of the reference society.

While placing Ezhuttassan as a determinant nodal point in the emerging cultural order, the Sanskrit Great Tradition will have to be examined. The nature of Bhakti of Melpattur is being discussed from that point of view. The Great Tradition continued to persist even after Ezhuttassan. Several Sanskrit works were composed in relation with the Naduvali centres of Kozhikode, Northern Kottayam, Vadakkumkur, Kochi, Desinganad, Tiruvitamkur and Chempakasseri. The Kozhikode centre had writers like Manaveda, Narayana Pandita, Desamangalath Varier, and Divakara. The Vadakkumkur centre had Iswarasharma and Sitaramakavi. The author of Uttaracampu was related to Chempakasseri, Godavarma Raja with Desinganad, and Ravivarma with Trippappur. Unlike the situation before the 15th century, the members of the royal household themselves increased within the reference society. While the system of court poets continued, members of the royal household themselves came forward as proponents of the Great Tradition. The same tendency developed in the case of Malayalam poetry also. After Manameyodayam by Manaveda, Manaveda Campu and Krishnageethi were composed. Ramayana Sangraha by Ravivarma and the play Janhavi Santhanavam by Godavarma are interesting in this way. The trend of maintaining poets coming from other

parts, like Divakara and Sitarama also became strong. More than thirty campus were composed based on puranic themes which were expanded in order to lay emphasis on the heroic deeds of the characters. Instead, Attakkatha literature spread in Malayalam. Some themes even underwent significant changes, as in the case of Hanumadapadanam, Kurmavataram, Lakshana Swayamvaram, etc. An effort to glorify smaller chiefs and their political centres was also visible. Prasasti of Nataraja in Sringerasundaram Bhanam, Prasasti of Matilakam in Thiruvananthapuram in Padmanabhastuti, Prasasti of the royal residence of Vadakkumkur (Ettumanur) in Balaramavijayam, and Prasasti of Kumaranellur temple in Uttara campu are examples. Another work was Godavarma Yasobhusanam. The appearance of Viduropadesa, Asaucha Chinta and Sadacharavrtti were also significant. The numerous shades that appeared in the Sanskrit works after Ezhuttassan also signified the degeneration of the major rulers. As it was a period where the Dharma code of conduct needed to be stressed, a work called Keraladesadharmam was also composed.

It was indicated that Narayaneeyam of Melpattur diverted the cultural trends of the period to a position of temple - centred Bhakti. Instead of temple Stutis, several Kshetra Mahatmyas were written during the period. Numerous plays were being written for visual performances during this period. The composition of Krishnageethi which bound the visual art to temple centres and royal residence was composed in the middle of the 17th century. This was composed by a major Kerala ruler. A little later Ramayanam Kuttu which adapted the original Kuttu to incorporate the political order of the Naduvalis was staged in Vairanallur temple. The change of face in the Sanskrit tradition itself after Ezhuttassan was the result of the decline of power of the political centres of the Naduvalis, the ensuing fragmentation of the reference society, and the efforts by the political centres to increase their strength through new sectors of activity. The increase of fame and relevance of Guruvayur temple by means of the activities of the Samutiri, the association of Krishnanattam with the temple, opportunities given to non-brahmana

artists in these visual presentations and the enactment of this form in all noble houses should be noted. The evolution of Krishnageethi in the form of Attakkathas as a powerful heroic aristocratic art form also took place very swiftly, after this period. Plays continued to be written, but they were of the heroic mould, like Yaduvira Vijayam. With the consolidation of the relationship between Krishnageethi and Attakkatha, these theatrical forms became relatively irrelevant. A situation developed when temple hymns became temple glorifications, observances

became rituals, royal eulogies became a combination of prasastis of the King and the urban centre and royal law became the laws of the nobles and Taravad. Bhakti became temple centred, self-dedication and heroic glorification increased and it became the major component of the feudal art forms. A decrease in the romantic works in Sanskrit language was also noticeable. Astrology related to observances and rituals attained extraordinary power. There was also a shift from Ramayana to Mahabharata in adopting puranic themes.

The above features appeared in an organised form and not as single entities. They were complementary and based on the desire to increase power. While discussing Malayalam poetry, the relation between the elements of Krishnageethi, Narayaneeyam, Guruvayur, Ramayanam Kuttu, and heroic poetry, and the reference society of feudal royalty and nobility was clearly visible. Change of attitude could be attained through practice, rather than sermonising. These organised forms also demonstrated the coming of the minute element of persuasion that changed the course of the subconscious streams as well.

During the 18th century this superstructural cultural formation started crumbling. This tradition began to concentrate in Tiruvitamkur and Chempakasseri. Sanskrit works of the Great Tradition decreased in number. The number of books in disciplines like astrology also began to decrease. Royal eulogies got reduced to extolling the power of Tiruvitamkur and Chempakasseri, as in Balamarthanda Vijayam, Sreepadmanabhacaritam, Lakshmidewa-narayaniam, etc. The cultural centres at Kozhikode and Kolathunad clearly began to decline. The shift in the character of migrations by scholars and poets also signified this condition. Melpattur Bhattathiri and Sreekumara, the author of Silparatnam, were the best examples. Such migrations were possible with changes in the conditions of power centres. Vettam, Kochi, Chempakasseri and Tiruvitamkur, rather than Kozhikode came forward to give protection to the poets. Works like Balaramabharatham and Bharathamkatha written under the instructions of Devanarayana of Chempakasseri were examples. We have already seen the major representative role played by members of royal families in the structure of reference society. Campus and temple glorifications that concentrated upon a single temple centre or single urban centre, expanded the main factors of the earlier Sandesakavyas. Balamartanda Vijayam, which presented forcefully the problem of the foreign merchants, was written in the beginning of the 18th century. The major trends in the works by Ramapanivada

also should be noted. They provide a deviant form of a declining, fragmented Great Tradition of a previous era, like Kuntalarajakatha, Madanaketu Caritam, works in Prakrit

language, Citarama Nritya Prabandham, etc. Stories that were alien to the puranic works and that contained wit and satire became common and represented a trend which, although belonging to the super-structural cultural formation tended to ridicule it. The indigenous little tradition broke up the Great Tradition with great force. The position of Streechatus by Chelparambu Namputiri is relevant here. The humour and ridicule that appeared in Krishnagatha and Campus were temporary and incidental. They were basically intended for mass appeal. However, the humour developed in a specific cultural condition.

A reference society continued to hold its own in Kochi. No such society existed in Kozhikode or Kolathunad. Punnasserri Nambi, Desamangalathu Varier and Manorama Thampuratti were isolated voices. As a parallel to Pattunni Caritam which described the coming of the Nabhas and the period of travail due to their coming, a Nambutiri poet from Tirumandhamkunnu wrote a Sanskrit poem called Catakasandesam. Catakasandesam described a mission to Thiruvananthapuram. A man who lost everything and without refuge anywhere else, appealed to the ruler of Tiruvitamkur to provide for his livelihood. Like the degeneration of poetic forms and thematic process in other works, the crumbling of the form of Sandesakavyas is clearly seen here. It is during this period that literature in Kerala turned to Kucelavrittam of Ramapurattu Varier and several works describing the story of Kucela.

Confluence of the Great and Little Traditions

More than two hundred literary works in Malayalam language appeared during the 15th-16th centuries. Grammar, Astrology and Mimamsaic works were not seen in this flow of Malayalam literature. They were mostly attached to the literary tradition of the original works from Kolathunadu.

Kolathunad also maintained a reference society. But this group was not related to scholarly literature. This area was deficient in the power dynamics of temple centres. The influence of brahmana gramas and temples continued in the southern parts of Kerala. Scholarly literature of the Great Tradition developed in Kozhikode under the Samutiri rule. It appears that the little tradition had the opportunity to climb upward in the Kolathunad lying northward, and this was the major reason for the emergence of Kolathunad

Malayalam tradition. The ancient Dravidian art forms of Teyyam and Tira also developed in this region. This situation was also due to the weakness of the central power, although an ancient and strong brahmana grama (Cellur-Taliparamba) existed in this region. The constant family squabbles for political power that existed in the Naduvali centre of Kolathunad, disturbed the sustenance of the central power. The special situation of the fragmentation of political power and the growth of mutual competition among them arose here. The central power, although fragmented, encouraged the growth of a puranic poetic culture, and not a Tantric or ritualistic tradition. The outlook of Keralolpatti itself was that the obligation to maintain Teyyattam and Kaliyattam lay with Kolathunad. These forms of art were related to the rural occupational groups like panan, velan, and vannan.

These occupational groups underwent transformation in other parts of Kerala, as they were related to temple rituals and festivals on the basis of Great Tradition, but such possibilities were very limited in the region of Kolathunad.

This is not to say that the influence of the Great Tradition was not found in the regional art forms. Krishnagatha is not only the symbol of puranic culture, but also of the development of Malayalam language. It should be mentioned that Krishnagatha did not have the formal structure of the Mahakavyas of the Great Tradition. It adopts an independent path in its poetic structure also. However, the content of the story and the articulation of the hero represents the heroic narrative. It should not be forgotten that the heroic element was very strong in the regional art forms. Vaishnava, Saiva and Sakteya traditions appear in these art forms. The interest of the brahmanas in the performance of Teyyam is shown by the changes brought about in the concept of local shrines (Kavu). This cultural fusion took place in Kolathunadu, where Krishnagatha appeared earlier as a model. Chenda, tudi and kuzhal are the musical instruments in Teyyattam. The influence of the Great Tradition is very feeble either in the mode of dancing or in the musical forms. The Great Tradition exerts influence as the ritual factor, concept of a deity and the explanation of the objectives of the performance. This dialectical situation was the means to keep the lower classes as dependent communities. Apart from Krishnagatha, Bharathagatha and Dasama stotram, Payyannur prose and Tali prose was born in this region. Payyannur Pattu, which followed the metrical form of the Northern Ballads was an older poem. The story of Krishna, which came as a component of Bhagavata and thus belonged to the Sanskrit tradition, took an effective form in the Gatha, where it assumed the garb of Bhakti and

heroic poetry. Kolathunad thus had an original cultural tradition including indigenous art forms.

An examination of the Sandesa Kavyas and Kshetrastutis would reveal that those pertaining to Kolathunad were very few. There were atleast fifty Kshetra Stutis produced during this period. Among them, only four or five belonged to this region. Most of the remaining works belonged to the land of the Samutiri. This region was not at all mentioned in the Sandesa Kavyas. Eulogies and heroic poems related to kings were also very few in Kolathunad. Only one or two sanskrit works of this genre were composed.

To the south of Kolathunad, a powerful Naduvali centre maintained a reference society in the sector of knowledge and politics. With the rise of the Samutiris, Kolathunad began to decline. This situation was the result of the economic decline of Kolathunad, decline of the port town and fierce conflict within the Naduvali family, which did not create a centralised and powerful political power, and a reference society that favoured the sustenance of such a power also did not arise. It can be surmised that this situation paved the way for the original Malayalam literature and art forms that increased their influence by drawing energy from the regional factors. The same situation was evident in Kolathunad and Kurumbranad, which also did not maintain a model reference society. In this area, heroic poetry based on the numerous Taravads like Tacholi and Puthuram were composed. In the absence of brahmana settlements and Naduvali centres, an economy

centred on Taravads and major Kuttams (assemblies) developed here. The heroic songs narrating blood feuds in the Vatakkann Pattukal were increasing on the basis of regional conditions. However, the trend of ascribing greatness displayed the characteristic of a reference society. In the absence of a reference society, the power blocs came to be centred on the Taravads. The transformation of Pantalayini and Nadagara into subsidiary ports when Kozhikode became the major port of the region, should also be noted.

Samutiri, was a medieval Naduvali who was astute enough to maintain the people in a state of dependence, through continuous warfare, ritual forms and other Naduvali strategies. This central power displayed the trend of eliminating Malayalam language and art - the entire component of regional culture to the maximum extent. This domination was maintained until the middle of the 18th century. The urban planning based on Indian architectural science was implemented by them. They also planned the ports, trade and commerce

according to the prevalent laws. They also created the organisational structure that would attract scholars, lords who maintained their own militia, and those who belonged to the Vedic tradition into their political centre. They had also the financial basis for sustaining this ritual-dependent Great Tradition. They gained strength through minting coins, accumulating foreign exchange, establishing relations with overseas powers and even transforming trade into a ritual observance. The Big Bazaar of Kozhikode opened out prospects for all village sanketams which had a closed economic structure. The special factor of monetary exchange resulted in conflicts with noble families with a permanent income, and small chiefs, and gradually in the expansion of central power. The cultural plane that was developed by the reference society of this form of central power, was visible in the Sanskrit works.

However, a large sector of Malayalam literature appeared during this period. Bhakti poems, romantic works, temple stutis and royal panegyrics appeared as a part of this tradition. These literary works could be divided into Sanskrit works, literature of Malayalam Great Tradition and literature of Malayalam little tradition.

Lilatilakam, Kannassan's works and Chandrotsavam were mentioned earlier. The argument has been advanced that the criteria used in Lilatilakam for Malayalam language and for distinguishing the Malayalam words should be discussed from the background of the existing culture and principles of literature. The argument (called "Kunthal" argument) advances the principle that the meaning of each word incorporates an element of the regional culture. The main issue is not that one word appears in several languages, but that in each language the work will have a connotation related to the indigenous culture of that area speaking that language. Such words in the Malayalam language are important in Manipravalam. Lilatilakam also gives importance to emotions. The best works in Manipravalam were not descriptive works of knowledge, but were literary works rich in emotive content. With this stress on language and emotive content, the works of the reference society, like works of knowledge, were rendered unimportant. Lilatilakam which evaluated the path that literature had taken, was composed when the new Naduvali centres arose. Lilatilakam which rendered the rigid laws of Malayalam

songs unimportant, also showed that the disposition for linguistic fusion was not manifest in the Malayalam songs. When the vernacular form of Sanskrit was widespread both in the upper class and lower class languages of common discourse, it was clear

that the rigidity of songs was irrelevant. Lilatilakam also held that it was not the negation of the Great Tradition, but the incorporation of poetic elements from the Tradition, which was desirable.

The changes brought about in the works by Kannassans (poets of the Kannassan family) as a result of these ideas are to be noted. Lilatilakam repeated the statement by Bharata, referring to Mahendra, that the most important rasa was the heroic. The Romantic rasa was also important. With reference to Kannassan's works, it could be seen that after Ramacaritam the heroic element based on the puranic tradition was being expressed by the non-brahmanic social component. Chandrotsavam throws light into the romantic Malayalam poetry that followed it. Poems of the romantic tradition during the later period were not like Achicaritams (Devadasi poems) and eulogy of an Achi (Devadasi) that appeared in the Sandesa Kavyas. Chandrotsavam brought out clearly how a society which cast and formed the womanhood in a specific mould, also made women the central attraction of social factors in their own independent field of activity. The increase of Devadasi centres, the condition of brahmana villages, the importance and migration of Chattira Sanghams and similar changes in social conditions that emerged as a result of the activities of the power blocs like Naduvalis numbering more than thirty five, Taravads numbering more than one hundred, foreigners, intermediaries and militia_were manifest in Chandrotsavam.

After Chandrotsavam, more than seventy poems of the romantic mould that described the upper strata who went to Devadasi residences in search of finances for literary works, and devadasi households that grew up separately, were composed. Devadasi households that spread from Kozhikode to Odanad were referred to in Chandrotsavam and in later poems. The Eighteen Chattira Sanghams mentioned in Chandrotsavam continued to exist even later. Eighteen Sabha mathas also existed. Sanghakali, which emerged earlier, attained special significance during this period. Between Nalupadam and Kali, Nalupadam is important for Sanghakali. Sanghakali was observed as a ritual for obtaining progeny. This art form had integral connection with the rituals of the reference society like feeding (Chorunu), Upanayana, Samavartana and birthdays of rulers. Outside the temples, this art form was prevalent in the Taravads. Chattira Nambutiris were not entitled to the study of Vedas. However, Sanghakali could be completed only by the addition of Nambutiris entitled to the Vedas. In this art form, control of political power, military power and financial power

represented by Vakyavrtti, Parisha and Kizhippuram was vested with the Vedic Nambutiris. Sastha or Bhagavati was the deity of this form. This art form also incorporated local components like Malamashasram Parachil, Kurattiyattam, coming of Kandappan and the debate between Kandappan and Otikkon. Evidence for this outlook is obtained in the presentation of Ramachekkan, Sitappennu, and Ravanachan.

Contemporaneity is a powerful force in this art form. These Sanghams were the cultural link between the reference society and noble families.

The fragmentation of brahmana Gramas, practices that deviated from the observances of the reference societies, and the spread of noble houses were reflected in Chandrotsavam and in the Mukataka poems. They, along with the Chattirasanghams also pointed to the growth of noble families under the Naduvali central power that sustained the reference society. An important element of these new social forces was the warrior class which had come into existence earlier. The intermediary class including patanayars, panikkars and nambis, that grew up in conjunction with the Naduvali centres had the character of the warrior class. They had also the tendency and interest in heroism and dehumanisation of women. Changes in romantic poetry also showed this characteristic. The special relevance that this heroism came to acquire in Kolathunad, Kadathanad and Kurumbranad, and the importance of Kalari system also should be noted. The Naduvali strategy of fusing the physical training in the Kalaris with the heroic art of Kathakali was evident in the later period. Because of its special features as the training centre of warriors, centre of godly rituals and the centre of protection of landed property and social position, Kalari was the product of the existing social and economic relations. The arrangement of the unit called Kalam and Kalari pointed to these relations. In the political centre of the Samutiri the warrior captain named Dharmoth Panikkar was the Gurukkal (teacher) in a Kalari. The major Naduvalis made use of this institution to acquire central political power. This institution was connected with the Naduvalis and ritual observances by introducing a ritual plane like Utavalanakkal. Thus it could be seen that nobles had extensive sway as the warrior class. It should be noted that regional deities like Kali, Ayyappan, Ganapati and the Nagas appeared as the object of Bhakti poems.

A large variety of literary works including Stotras, Dandakas, Kilipattus, Kirtanas, Panas, and poems based on puranic themes appeared in the northern region, particularly in the land of the Samutiri. This sector was highly developed

in Vettathunad, Kolathunad and Valluvanad. This does not mean that there were no poems of the Great Tradition. There are problems in determining their authorship. Works in Vyakarana, Vedanta and Jyotisa were relatively few. There were more than one hundred and sixty smaller poems composed during this period. They were not poems composed in relation to a Naduvali centre, or according to the orders of a Naduvali. The divergent path taken by the vernacular poetry and regional culture began from this period. Centres of major Naduvalis including the Samutiri were the sources of Sanskrit works of the Great Tradition. Because of this heroic poems were comparatively fewer. When Sanskrit poems remained attached to the Naduvali centre, vernacular literature moved away from that path. There was only one Campu Kotiyaviraham, which was a royal panegyric. Romantic tradition also had its influence on this Campu. Romantic interludes in the Campus and single Muktakas took the cover of puranic themes. This form of elimination of romanticism could be found in Krishnageethi itself. Karnadahanam Campu was also composed in this period. Components of idealism, deism, and realism, components of verse and prose, humour and ridicule, and Sanskrit-Malayalam linguistic mix in the model of milk and water were the characteristic features of the Campu. In one

of the Campus (Kotiyaviraham), the heroine was portrayed as attempting to commit suicide by tying a garland around her neck. This could be seen as a shift from the earlier position that a heterosexual relationship had to be ridiculed. Several temple festivals like Puram, Katyayani Kshetrarangam, Ashtami and Sivaratri became subject matters of the Campus. Such festivals were the centres of commerce also. Erecting idols in temples were on the increase, as shown by Campus like Tenkailanathodayam. The number of Kshetra stutis also increased, as a parallel phenomenon. Nilakanta, in Tenkailanathodayam Campu presents the concept of Keralaraja. The role of Naduvalis in the erection of idols and temple festivals had not decreased. The attention paid to the festivals as spectacles meant that the regional elements paid less attention to the ritualistic component of the festival. This demonstrated the means to attract the people to temple centres and the increasing need to provide facilities for commerce. The standpoint that royal eulogies and temple panegyrics were not the favourite themes of Malayalam poetry indicated the divergence of the Malayalam from the influential field of Sanskrit.

Some more features will have to be brought out on the basis of Campu literature. Ramayanam Campu described Kosala as the region of Kerala. Such a presentation was visible in the later Campus also. Campus were the first to

turn their attention to trade and commerce, after Sandesakavyas. Campus which followed the confines of a permanent space and time, had the opportunity to respond to the changes taking place in this respect. In the Ashtami Campu and other eulogies to the ruler and the town by Melpattur Bhattathiri, trade factor appears in great detail. "Towns burdened by their heavy population" comes as a refrain in the Campus and other similar works.

They described also the increasing population density in villages, pressures of population increase, domination of foreigners, organisation of production and distribution of commercial goods and the centripetal forces directed towards society that used to come to festivals. The fragmented upper class including Nambutiri, younger Nambutiris, lovers, gluttons, quacks, brahmanas greedy for alms, delinquent youngsters, apart from rituals and observances were described. Another group includes Vaniyar, weavers and christian priests. Their detailed and accurate description was not given from a literary perspective, but was meant to depict an existing actuality. While the reference society continued in an ordered way, the power dynamics created by the mobility of lower structures resulted in these features. They could be signified as ruptures in the orderlines of the upper strata. One Campu even dealt with the ritual of Somavaravratam.

The appearance of a composition called Kuttappathakam during this period deserves attention. This was reputed to have been written by a man who was fed up by the maladministration of managers (Karyastans) and the frequent Sambandhams by the Nambutiris. This was performed in noble houses during auspicious occasions. Naykkaraphan, Elayath the Manager, Pisharoty the Guru, Ittipennu to whom one of the Nambutiris had Sambandham, a male servant called Parangodan and female servant named Mappa were the characters in this work. The writer says that the activities of this

group resulted in the destruction of the Illam. The representative nature of the characters has to be noted.

The Campus contain a comprehensive presentation of the divergent power dynamics of the society during this period. Descriptions mainly focus upon the major social forces. Royal eulogies, temple culture, rituals, trade and commerce, deficiencies in the upper class structure, ruptures in the power centres, and a condition of anarchy were represented in the Campus which brought out the degeneration of the upper class. This degeneration indicated the growth of centrifugal forces. Under the damaging impact of an uneven

economic order, Naduvali, the temple, royal residence, trade centres, brahmana mathams and yogams and Sanghams, became the source of centrifugal forces. These works reflected the increase of Naduvalis, foreigners, noble houses and Taravads, population density and mobility, the resulting power conflicts in the upper strata and the centrifugal forces that developed as a result. The struggle for a share of power based on previous right by temple centred yogams and Naduvalis, changes taking place in the dynamics of the yogams and the numerous treaties with the foreigners were the realities of the time. Continuous warfare that came as a result of the effort to retain centralised power with the help of Patamuttus and keep the intermediary groups in a state of dependence could be seen from the beginning of the 16th century. The fragmentation of central power that was sustained through a strong reference society, in the case of Samutiri Raja, brought the Great Tradition and Little Tradition into open conflict and the Samutiri nad and central Kerala became important as the ground of this conflict. An extensive intermediary strata of nobles and Taravads were created as the end result of the administration of this major Naduvali. Malayalam literature and Little Tradition primarily had their influence on this plane. The Samutiri had the support of the commercial port and the foreign factor in this effort to centralise property relations. Kozhikode could be seen as a break of bulk port that is, it did not give opportunities for the concentration of wealth. Due to warfare and ritual, this major Naduvali also suffered depletion of wealth. These were the major factors that resulted in the weakness of the major Naduvali centre. It was this weakness that made intermediaries and reference society to act as centripetal forces and paved the way for the growth of intermediary nobility.

Kuttappathakam which was a satirical work and Brahmanipattukal, which had a ritualistic content were composed during the 16th century. Theeyattu, a ritual conducted for the sake of progeny became widespread during this period. Some relationship could be found between Sanghakkali and Theeyattu also. Kalampattu also became popular. Kalampattu ended by singing Santhanagopalam. The mixing of diverse elements like the local deities including Kali, Sastha, Yaksi, Yaksa, Gandharva, and Rakeswari, Nambutiris who were entitled to Vedas and who were not, Teeyati Nambiar, Teeyattunni, Kaniyar, local shrines (Kavu), Brahmana houses and noble families in this ritualistic art form was for the sake of progeny and other auspicious benefits. It appears that they belonged to the sphere of brahmanical activity rather than Naduvali activity. This revealed the growth of intermediaries based on rituals

and observances, that grew up related to the noble houses and Taravads. Sanghakkali already contained satirical remarks on the strata of Kiriyam. Satire became more manifest in Kuttappathakam. In Ezhamathukali, names of characters like Morpala Kesavan, Ozhukkathu Valatti, Ayakkotil Kakka could be found. Another feature of Ezhamathukali was that a person who did not know the names of temple tanks had to take the roles of Kakkala or a drunkard. This was meant to glorify a temple and make it popular. This art form was popular in Tiruvitamkur. Satire, temple rituals and observances and declaration of the objective of the art form made it appear that the brahmanas who were a component of the reference society, approached the intermediary noble houses with a specific aim. Even if these forms came into existence before the 15th century, their significance increased during the 15th, 16th centuries. Special features of certain other songs would have to be studied with this aspect being taken into account.

One set of such songs consists of Kanippattu connected with Attingal royal family, Pulayarpattu, Vattippattu, Edanadanattu popular in Edappalli and Kuttanadu. Another set consists of Pulayipattu, Pullavanattu, Panarpattu, Kuravanattu, Velarpattu and Mannarpattu. The heroic episodes of Veerappan, a pulaya called Atiyarupilla, Akutodayan provided the stream of ideas that related the different songs of the first set. These songs took the form of avenging feudalism. Pulayipattu described the invitation by the Lord, destruction of the ara (godown) of the Lord and the gathering of seed, the issue of wages called Anjali and Changanaluri. These songs contain extremely sharp responses to the nobility. The need for heroism was justified by the objective of avenging the ruler. Pullavappattu sung by the group of midwives and magicians in Taravads which declared that chentengu (tender coconut tree) was planted and watered by the ruler of Eelam, and the songs by panar which started that they were not kings of elephants, nor ministers of horses, they did not want Angam and chungam (taxes and tolls), they only wanted permission to arouse the people in the morning, (Tuyilunartu) feed themselves and lie down, could be studied only from the standpoint of the conflict that developed in the social relations between the intermediaries and Naduvalis. Satire, in the form of prayer, could be seen in the Great Tradition. This was also visible in these songs. The major problem of these works was the increase of intermediaries and the penetration of heroic narrative. It is difficult to say, from the point of view of social and cultural evolution, how diversified and widespread were these cultural forms, before the 15th century. The relevance of other regional songs that displayed

the power of heroic narrative can also be seen here. Records show that the characters of the Northern Ballads related to Kalari and Angam (a mode of warfare) were the leaders of the Taravads of Kadathanadu who lived in the 16th and 17th centuries. The rise of Lokanarkavu also took place alongside. The strategy of eulogising the influence of such a heroic group, based on the tenets of the Great Tradition, developed in Kadathanad. The growth of Teyyam and Tira and related literature, and Kotamuripattu focus upon masculinity and heroism. Many of the southern ballads (Tekkanpattukal) were composed in the 16th and 17th centuries and some in the 18th century. It is clear that the heroic trend became extremely powerful after the 15th century.

Patappattu naturally became a part of this trend. These diverse local songs were formed in the background of the conflicts and quarrels among the regional forces, families and Naduvali centres. Patappattu had another feature also. A foreign power also made its appearance in these songs. Patappattus were written in the middle of the 16th century after the coming of the Portuguese. Later patappattus, composed in Arabi Malayalam, were the histories of battles fought during the time of prophet Mohammed. However, the oldest were on the Portuguese. The Arabs and local Muslims at Kozhikode opposed the Portuguese from the beginning. The Mappila Patappattu arose against the background of this conflict. The growth of songs in Malayalam written in Arabic script was related to this tradition of war songs. Some of these songs like Kunjali Marakkar Patappattu were composed during the 16th or 17th centuries. The Arabic poem written in 1579 by Zainuddin Mukhroom I who belonged to Ponnani named Tahril Ahlil Iman Alaji Hadi Abdathi Sulman (poem that encourages the believers to conduct warfare against the believers of the cross) became popular in Kerala. Patappattus composed on the relationship between the Dutch and Kochi, Mamankam, stories of Caver also appeared in the subsequent period. Here, a tradition of struggle and enthusiasm for heroic narratives were blended with the literary and cultural structures of the Muslims. Thus it was a merging of similar streams. A similar foreign element in the tradition of language and culture could not be found in relation to Christians. Thus the urge for heroic and masculine narrative increased in the structure of reference society, intermediaries, lower classes, specific regional groups and the regional forms of foreign elements. In this atmosphere the four divisions among the folk, viz, hero worship, science, occupation of the group, and morals were being blended into a joint stream. Among the divisions suggested by Ulloor S. Parameswara Aiyar, only those related to

worship of deities and those related to entertainment were remaining. Ulloor also mentions the tendency to drive those meant for entertainment into the groove of Puranas and stotras.

Other groups of literary works composed during this period were temple hymns, pana, twenty-four metres (Irupattinalu Vrittam) and more than thirty hymns addressed to various deities, abridged forms of puranas, in the local rhythm and in alphabetical order suited for remembrance were composed in this period. A number of works by non-brahman poets also appeared. The element of Bhakti from the Great Tradition appeared from the intermediary classes, arranged in the local rhythm, and for constant reading, assimilation and remembrance of the story narrated. Prayer songs became integrated with the rituals of the Taravad. Ekadasi mahatmyam, Brahmani songs, prayer songs written in the form of Kilipattu were spreading. These compositions were meant for the isolated ritual of the Taravads, in the background of the increase in the number of Taravads. They were spreading in the region to the north of Tirunavaya. These works which were not dependent on a Naduvali did not also show a marked preference for any deity. Both God and king were gradually rendered unimportant.

By the end of the 16th century both temple rituals and the factors related to the ruler of the land became unimportant. The centripetal force of the model reference society with its temple, brahmana and Naduvali factors declined. This force shifted to the Taravads.

Taravads, as isolated economic and political islands, increased. Deities and administrators of Taravads were on the increase.

The trends related to the objectives of the reference society were mostly restricted to Sanskrit works. The only works that represented them in Malayalam were the Campus, and that to a certain extent only. The Campus, on the whole had different faces. Cultural trends belonging to the poems of the Little Tradition increased and a regional culture on the basis of the Great Tradition was rejected even by Punthanam Nambutiri and Ezhuthassan. The statement by Punthanam regarding those who "burn and eat their Janmams" should also be noted. The growth of astrology and other forms of knowledge in relation with the Taravads, and the houses of Vedic tradition like Cherumukku, Thaikkad and Panthal who enforced the brahmanical customs in such Taravads should also be noted. Gradually, we have also to note the depth and breadth of the descriptions in Keralolpattis.

The story of Parasurama in Brahmanda Puranam prose in Sanskrit was already composed in Kerala before the 15th century. Keralamahatmyam consisting of 2217 slokas, was a 16th century Sanskrit work. Temple glorifications, and panegyrics of kings and towns were also composed in Sanskrit. A Malayalam work named Keralanatakam was also composed. Each Naduvali centre had composed a Keralolpatti during the 16th or 17th centuries. These works developed a holistic perspective of the social factors including landlords, chieftains, different occupational groups and castes, and made them hierarchical, customary, ritualistic and based on temples and deities. The crumbling of centripetal forces was attempted to be compensated with the spread of a new cultural pattern. The consolidation of hierarchical pattern was to make the brahmanical centripetal force more rigid. The objective was to develop property rights. This was also legitimised by traditional history. The story of Keralolpatti consolidated the various social and economic factors like king, Tara, Sanketam, Melekkunnu, Kilekkunnu, Kanam, Janmam, Illams constructed in an Ur(village) and Sthanams of nobles into predetermined nodal points in the social system.

Growth of a Malayalam Tradition

When the course of cultural streams are discussed, it should be remembered that we may have to rely upon the oscillating movements from time to time. If we consider Ezhuthassan as a nodal point, the course has to be delineated by proceeding beyond the times of Ezhuthassan. However, a holistic perspective will have to be developed on the post-Ezhuthassan period.

More than one hundred Malayalam works were composed from the end of the 16th century to the beginning of the 18th century. About one third were prose. Royal eulogies and romantic poetry almost disappeared during this time. Bhakti tradition was also declining. Earlier the literary works had the depth, and spread and were more in number so, that they could be included in the Bhakti, royal eulogy or romantic tradition. These features were being lost. Even for the shorter poems of the Little Tradition, subjects dealing with temples, Naduvali centres and the sthanams of Devadasis were becoming

unacceptable, or unattractive. The Bhakti tradition could be thought of only by taking into account the epic themes and the Attakkatha literature. Literature of the Kilipattu, Pattu and Pana variety like Putrakameshtipattu, Patalaramayanam, Nalacaritam pana, Lakshmiswayamvaram, etc began to appear. Twelve Pathaka prose were also composed.

Song forms like Pana, Kilipattu, and Hamsapattu also increased. The need for increased progeny and chastity appeared as the subject of several works. There were several customs and rituals that had this perspective of the Taravad was adopted by portraying Dasaratha as drinking watered rice (Kanji) and ghee. Tiravonapattukal were another variety. The importance of fighting was continued in the increased significance of Onatallu (Onam fighting) and similar entertainments. Onappada, Makappada and Pakkilppada became popular in Vadakkumkur, Tekkumkur and Thiruvananthapuram. Ochirakali also developed. An Onapattu named Haryakshamasotsavam was composed at Kandiur Mattam. Some of the patappattu were also composed at this time. Poithu, Ankam, Patamuttu and Ranotsavam indicated the spread and depth of the warrior masculine factor. The social divisions that participated in them and exerted influence were the Taravads, i.e., the intermediaries. Banayudham and Balivadham were being written as Kilipattu stories of warfare featured in most of the Pathaka prose also. From the point of war and heroism all these works expressed a continuity with a specific age. The element of consciousness invoking slaying the wicked and protecting the virtuous appeared gradually in the Malayalam shorter poems also.

Literature related to customs began to increase in the Malayalam language. Kriyadipika, Shodasakriya, Asaucakeli, Asaucashtakam and similar works, numbering more than fifteen, were composed in the Little Tradition. A number of works praising the brahmana houses also appeared. Sometimes, glorification of a village was also attempted. The main objective of the Asauca literature was to consolidate the caste identity. Works related to custom, pollution, prayaschittam and caste structure began to appear in Malayalam instead of Sanskrit. There was also an effort to pacify those social elements that were breaking away. This was in different layers of the hierarchy. Most of these works were by Vedic brahmanas. The rigidification of caste became a matter of prime importance. The reverse of this process was demonstrated by Punthanam. Strong protest against the institutionalisation of caste and rituals could be seen in the works of Kerala Varma. Punthanam talked about the oneness of all Indians, Kerala Varma talked about one caste, and Unnayi Variar, the author of Nalacharitam said, "Don't raise the question of caste". The customs of Mannappedi and pulappedi was banned by Kerala Varma and as a result, he became a victim of the wrath of Pandarathu Kuruppus (royal servants). Kerala Varma also said that both Pulaya and Brahmana could be injured by the sword in the same way, everyone had the same physical

constitution and everyone was the same when they were dead. Punthanam satirised the curious customs prevalent in the noble and brahmana families. As a next step, Kerala Varma criticised these customs using the most powerful language.

Poems were written by Kerala Varma in the form of advice like Vairagya Candrodayam and Bhismopadesam. Here, the path to Moksa, life according to the principles of Dharma,

and the dictates of chaturvarnya were being explained by a bird. The perpetuity of the possessions of a ruler was also demonstrated in these works. He also explained the principles of Vedanta in the Malayalam metres Keka and Kakali. He also said that birds were being used to sing on these subjects in order to make even idiots understand them . The work named Karmavipakam alias Bhismpadesam followed a similar vein. The ideas of virtue (Punya) and sin (Papa) and the removal of Papa were the subject of this work. He also stressed mankind as a single caste. The responses of Kerala Varma, although hazy at certain points, were notable. He also composed the early form of Valmiki Ramayana in Malayalam.

These changes in the thought process, and the growth of philosophical doubt arose after Ezhuthassan. Even the Kaniyar who wrote on astrology, Paksi sastra, and fixing auspicious moments (Muhurta Darsana) had appeared by this time. Hence, in the shorter poems of the Little Tradition, the form and content of the Great Tradition was rejected to a certain extent, and thought processes that questioned the dominant tendencies of the time developed. The process of history showed that the weakening of the centripetal force and reference societies in the major forces among Naduvalis was the reason for this change. Melpattur related Bhakti as a form of self-sacrifice with the temple sanketa of Guruvayur. Punthanam also turned his Bhakti to the deity at Guruvayur on the basis of his personal life and experience. Punthanam, however, forcefully presented the deviations in the course of society, based on this personal element. Punthanam transformed the tone of Gita, which had the structure of heroic poetry in the Great Tradition into a philosophical narration of personal sorrow. Punthanam rejected the framework of the upper class, which was repeated to a certain extent by Kerala Varma and the author of Nalacaritam.

Here, the tone of the Attakkathas also would have to be studied. A poem of the Great Tradition in Sanskrit, based on Bhakti and the element of performance, called Krishnanattam was composed. This could be thought of as a Krishnageethi composed during the middle of the 17th century and gave

a clear operative area for the reference society. The observances of Krishnanattam were followed without deviating even a trifle from the prescriptions of Kilmariyadai. Eight stories were performed at night after eight Nalikas (time-scale) were gone. The duration of each performance was eight Nalikas. At first the story of Krishna from his birth to death was performed and then the birth of Krishna was repeated as Kutiyattam. The performance continued for nine days in the Samutiri Kovilakam and Guruvayur temple. Four months from the month of Makaram (January/February) was the time for performing Krishnanattam. The initial performance took place in all Cerikkals. Members of Krishnanattam Yogam would continuously move from place to place. The performance took place in all Cerikkals, Brahmaswams, Devaswams, Kalams and in the major Taravads. This was performed all over Valluvanad. About one hundred and thirty performances of Krishnanattam would take place during this period. The income and expenditure for the performances were recorded in the accounts for Guruvayur temple, Kovilakam and performers. When property was transferred money for Krishnanattam was specifically fixed and collected. This method was followed by a few other rituals

also. The mode of collecting an amount permanently, for the conduct of performance regularly, and the practice of saying the performance as an obligation and custom, made Krishnanattam a part of the administrative strategy of Naduvalis. Whether Manavedan intended it or not, this feature pointed to the aims and objectives of each move by the reference society. The ritual status of Krishnanattam, the legal obligation on everyone including the tenant cultivators for its performance, and its validity as an administrative fixture and an expression of Bhakti made this art form a strategic weapon in the hands of Naduvalis. The non-brahmans were accepted as performers in Krishnanattam. In Krishnanattam, dancing and not acting was the important feature. Its relation with the regional art forms that involved ritual form of dancing was evident. Even Kaikottikkali was integrated with this form. Since Krishnanattam was composed in hard Sanskrit, songs were kept in the background. This art form was not even meant for those who were an audience for Kutiyattam. It is clear that an even more powerful and expressive reference society-central power axis acted in the background of this art form.

In the performance of Krishnanattam, the incarnation of Krishna and the slaying of serpent Kaliya comprised the section called Balalila consisting of 28 scenes. The slaying of Kamsa and Vivida and the battle with Bana consisted of 43 scenes. Rasakrida and Swayamvaram consisted of 22 scenes.

That is, in the 108 episodes in Krishnanattam, about half were battle scenes. The difference between the structure of Krishnagatha and that of Krishnageethi consisted precisely in this. Krishnagatha took the form of the narrative of worldly life of its hero, Krishna. In Krishnageethi the situation of the Naduvali central power is as manifest in the urge to present the heroic element. Gatha did not lay stress on the battle scenes. The change from this form of treatment in the later Krishnageethi was related to the changes as the central power of major Naduvali. It should be stressed that this trend became more powerful in the Attakkatha literature. Attakkatha was not interested in Bhakti but in the narration of heroic stories. Ramayanam Kuttu, performed in the Vairanallur temple during the beginning of the 18th century showed that the course that Naduvali power had taken reached its highest point. When the story of Ramayana was being performed in the course of one hundred and twenty five days, the Samutiri was seated in the dais throughout. In the last scene of coronation (Pattabhiseka) the ruler accompanied Sreerama. Afterwards he received the arrow of Rama and visited several temples. This method of carefully transforming Kuttu and Kutiyattam was the declaration of the aims and objectives of the ruler, and it was a part of his effort to survive as a major power.

The story of Ramayana was presented in one hundred and sixty scenes in Ramanattam. About ninety scenes were set apart for war. Kharavadham, Balivadham and Toranayuddham, comprised sixty scenes and Ramaravana-yuddham consisted of forty scenes. Attakkathas of Kottayattu Tampuran and later Attakkathas dealt with wars and killings. Most of them were composed by members of Naduvali Kovilakams. Nalacaritham the most interesting Attakkatha was written by a member of the Varier caste. It concentrates its attention on the tragedy of Nala. While Naishadham Campu made Nala into a hero, the author of Attakkatha gave a different interpretation of his being possessed by Kali. The argument that works by Ezhuthassan showed the way for

the sweeping changes in Bhakti, heroism and romantic works after his age, cannot be fully accepted. During a period when the central power of the Naduvalis and its centrifugal-centripetal forces were undergoing transformation owing to their special forms of inherent movements, literary works also displayed corresponding changes.

However, the motive force for meditating upon the meaning of life must have emanated from Ezhuthassan. This might have resulted in changing the

philosophical outlook of the authors of Narayaneeyam and Nalacaritam, Punthanam and Keralavarma. The working of this trend also resulted in the composition of heroic, masculine-feudal narratives from the Naduvali centres themselves. Their basic characteristics were not the Bhakti and hero based narration of Ezhuthassan. If chronologies could be depended on, Ezhuthassan may have had this impact in directing their course. Ezhuthassan's voice had its echo in transforming Rama into an Avatar, enthusiasm for description of war scenes, and also in questioning Vedic rituals, interest in forming a world outlook based on Dharma and Moksa. But his voice was that of heroism and not temple centred Bhakti. Ezhuthassan moved towards simple Bhakti based on chanting the word Rama.

The fusion of heroic narrative and simple Bhakti began and ended with Ezhuthassan. For this he was helped by the culture of the Great Tradition, heroic culture of the warriors, respect for brahmanas, and an extraordinary insight into the rhythmic component of the Little Tradition. The formal components of Bhakti were God, who could be served, Bhakta who was the servant and the act of service. Bhakta should not bring his mind to anything else. Bhakti thus had extraordinary self-control. Karma that is performed through the three karanas were to be always laid before the Almighty. The works of Ezhuthassan followed this path. If the literature and other art forms of Kerala were examined, only Ezhuthassan tried to merge a masculine conception of form into an Avatar. Rama was a part of God. The lack of ritual obligation in the conception that even chanting the word leads to deliverance should be noted. If one examined rationally, Ezhuthassan could also be seen developing an independent conception of war, illumined by his own imagination. It is also possible that Uttararamayana was not composed by Ezhuthassan. Ezhuthassan in fact drew himself away from the temple centred Bhakti and showed the influence of a form of hero worship. The later form, which developed along with the growth of Nayar warriors, also demonstrated in the presentation of Bhakti another form of dependence. Rama was also God and the dependence was on God.

It has been pointed out that an intermediary Taravad culture was spreading during this time. Ezhuthassan and, to some extent, Punthanam were the products of this culture. For this culture, they were also a necessity. The extraordinary sincerity and perspective of Punthanam was also the result of his personal experiences. The works of Ezhuthassan which integrated simple worship of God with Puranic culture had widespread influence among the

intermediary sections. Poets were not simply becoming dependents nor sycophants of rulers. Although Krishnagatha through its language and style had this character, the style

of Ezhuthassan's works was the direct opposite of Krishnagatha. In Krishnagatha, the Avatar was portrayed just as a cowherd. Ezhuthassan portrayed the human Rama as God.

The age of Ezhuthassan was the period when temple Yogams like Trikkandiyur Yogam which wanted to assume political power were growing. Noble families, warrior captains (Patanayar) and ruling families (sorupis) were building their own islands of power. The identity of the Naduvali chief with a puranic character was performed and popularised, as in the case of Ramayanam Kuttu performed at Vairanallur temple (near Tirunavaya). Similarly the Yogam of Trikkandiyur were presenting themselves and the God at Trikkandiyur as a single entity. In this atmosphere, Ezhuthassan departed from the temple of the Yogakkar and heroism of the Naduvali and became the spokesman of a new cultural consciousness. The Samutiri integrated Krishnanattam with the economic structure through an administrative order. Krishnanattam performers went to all Cerikkal and the actor who played the role of Krishna wore the peacock feather, supposed to have been received by the Samutiri from Lord Krishna himself. Here there is an effort at the fusion, of the deity with the ruler. Similarly in Ramayanam Kuttu, the Naduvali became Rama, by receiving the arrow used by Rama. This form of purposeful activity took place even after Ezhuthassan. Trikkandiyur Yogam tried to become a political centre by giving considerable importance to the deity at Trikkandiyur. When Yogams, Samudayam, nobles, sorupis, warriors, Karyastas and Koyma tried to get their share of political power, the central Naduvali power became weakened. In these turbulent conditions it is not surprising that Ezhuthassan sought the legitimation of God, puranas and the Karma of human beings.

During the end of the 18th century, most of the Naduvali powers declined. Tiruvitamkur was striving to become a major central power, and the artists and writers began to flock towards the newly growing power. The explanation of Kuchelavrittam Vanchipattu could be that the author of Kuchelavrittam also declared this allegiance to Martanda Varma. The upper class had created sophisticated forms of art that required specialised training and cerebral effort. During the 18th century, when the central power started declining, this became the expression for the strengthening of a new power structure. This form of art becomes noticeable through its conspicuousness.

Extravagance is its soul. This art form presented the story of certain ideal lives which were construed by society as the reality.

This tendency was demolished by Kunchan Nambiar. He depuranified his art form by overthrowing all the traditional conceptions regarding audio-visual form, poetics and mode of presentation. Nambiar demonstrated his strong protest against feudal power and intermediary culture. This provided the arena for the renewal of aesthetic sense. Although Nambiar did have allegiance to a central power, he never allowed it to influence his outlook, which was the cultural dimension of his satire.

The cultural formation which was characterised by conspicuous artificiality until the 14th century, was later transformed in form as well as content through the penetration of regional Little Tradition. Earlier, several features could be seen in the Campus which

revealed this character. From the 15th century, some trends disappeared, others revealed themselves, still others were subject to transformation. The stages of mixing of the Great and the Little Tradition and the conflict for supremacy between them were also visible. Even in the Vatakkal Pattukal there are couplets which revealed elements of conflict with the ruler of Kolathunad.

The same consciousness could be seen in Ezhuthassan and others also. However, a real war front opened up with the coming of Kunchan Nambiar. The works of Nambiar showed changes in language, form, character of elaboration, and the mode of associating contemporary society with puranic themes. Framing of models in the use of Malayalam language and the regional cultural components became widespread. Nambiar was able to pay attention in its detailed and expanded form, to the degeneration of the intermediary culture that was growing during the time of Ezhuthassan. Nambiar indicated that the cultural atmosphere had completely changed. This was a meaningful formulation in the light of the position of the Naduvali forces. The Naduvali power lost its relevance except the formation of a central power in Tiruvitamkur and the centralising tendencies elsewhere. All centripetal forces were fragmented. This spread unevenly among the intermediaries also. The regional Little Tradition became powerful. The dominant aesthetic tastes existing in society, the central powers in the upper strata that determined these tastes, and their aristocratic court models declined. This prepared the conditions for the rise of the aesthetic taste based on specific customs and beliefs at the local level, sponsored by the intermediaries. Cultural formations took this route to the next stage.

However, the new cultural trend including that of Kunchan Nambiar has been criticised for the scarcity of dignity and seriousness. This was because the earlier cultural traditions had not been completely vanquished. When Nambiar, to a certain extent opposed the social system, Ramapurattu Varier showed complete subservience, precisely due to this reason.

Knowledge and Culture

Eighteen Yogams, three Mathas and Vedic studies conducted on the eve of Pattathanam associated with the brahmanas, prepared the ground for the spread of upper class knowledge and pedagogy. At the same time, village occupational groups including carpenters, blacksmiths, etc gained vocational experience on a hereditary basis inside their Taravads. They were connected with temples, upper class Taravads and Naduvali centres through rituals and privileges. In Mamamkam, several groups and individuals like the Tunnaran Chakravarti (tailor) Aloor Kanigal (Astrologer) Marayanceri Asari (Architect of the Kovilakam) Kalaripanikkar (Teacher of martial arts) Chaliyan (Weaver) and Virarayirathattan (Goldsmith) were associated with the Naduvali centre. They were connected with the inheritance of the Taravad through a hierarchical structure. Acquiring vocational knowledge, and knowledge in science and literature persisted, centred on the Taravads. However, the relation that upper class reference society had with the elements like science and literature which had the strength of the Great Tradition enabled them to create a strong unified plane by giving importance to these disciplines. Knowledge of the occupational groups did not have a unified form. Their relevance was with respect to

their association with the Taravads and temples and their project was to gain knowledge on the basis of their family heredity. They were hierarchical but acted as single units. The temples, noble houses and royal courts spread the knowledge of Sanskrit by laying emphasis on religious education and the study of Kavyas and Sastras. The reference society which included such education centres were the creators of Sanskrit poems, and to some extent Malayalam works. Most of them were members of caste groups like Varier, Nambidi, Chakyar and Pisharody. However, those engaged in writing documents and orders for the ruler like Pattolachans of Kozhikode Kovilakam learned their alphabet from the teachers (Nattezhuthassan) in their respective villages. This meant that the knowledge imparted by Nattezhuthassans was adequate for preparing documents. This was not elitist education. It was a form of Gurukula education. This was, at the time, different from the family-based Gurukulas of

specialist occupational groups, conducted by experienced family members. The latter involved gaining vocational experience given by the elder family member.

Thus there were three separate streams, vocational education, education imparted by Nattezhuthassan, and the pedagogical scheme developed by the upper strata related to temples, religion, and administration. The carpenter and weaver knew only his job. A member of the intermediary class learning from Nattezhuthassan, knew reading and writing to the extent of its usefulness for administrative and religious purposes. The upper strata created a sphere for spreading knowledge that determined the form and quantity of the other forms.

The process of accumulation of knowledge reached a form of rigidity that prevented inter-relationship among these three streams. This sphere of activity was enmeshed in custom and ritual. The process of learning was based on religion and it was standardised. When a specialist occupational group became extinct, that occupational knowledge itself disappeared. As other pieces of knowledge were not combined, and the process of combination itself was based on ritual, the sphere of knowledge was going through a phase of immobile rigidity. Even songs and proverbs on agriculture collected together for one or two centuries, demonstrated the extent of control of that custom and ritual and sastras like astrology had over the process of acquiring knowledge. Agriculture itself was considered a ritual suggested by Parasurama. A number of writings on occupations, that were composed from a ritual angle in their respective areas are available, although they have not been studied properly. Manuscript libraries could throw light into this area.

Education got completely frozen into the structures of religion and administration. An upper strata and another social hierarchy of specialist occupational groups existed. Although hierarchical structures were evident in both the groups, the units in the second group were more in number. Nambidi, Varier, Pisharody were groups whose positions in the upper hierarchy were only slightly different, and could intermingle easily. The character of the lower groups was different. The common factors related to the technical expert and the village artisan existed far apart from each other, in a rigid and uncommunicative form. There was no basic plane which could be unified through the quality of knowledge. Their spread was indicated by a few writings composed during the

middle of the 19th century. The number of publications in pure sciences numbered 251, Mathematics 112, Astrology 51, architecture 38, Medicine 308, Ayurveda 369, Agriculture 82 and Life science 29. Many

of these were old branches of knowledge. It is not clear who wrote them. They were the collection of knowledge that provided the basis for family traditions.

Knowledge was vested with those who held 'power'. Visual Arts, Kuttu, Kutiyattam, Sanghakkali, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture_all had the same structure. There were clear distinctions among the performers, like Chakiyar and Nangyar for Kuttu, Vedic and non-vedic Nambutiri for Sanghakkali and those connected with Kalameluttu for painting. It is important that Nayars became actors in Krishnanattam. In this mode of education Attapparakaram, Kramadipika and Natankusam were important. In this sphere, Kavya and Sastra works and Lilatilakam also cannot be ignored. As in the structure of government, a trend for conservation appeared in the case of acquisition of knowledge also. The relevance of the supposed dialogues between Melpattur and Ezhuthassan appear at this point. Beginning of the revolt against conservation and inertia in the acquisition of knowledge was expressed in the memories regarding this knowledge. It could be seen that the pedagogical activities of christians particularly in the field of Sastra, grammar and poetics also signified revolt as they negated the preordained ways regarding these disciplines.

Growth of Malayalam Prose

The effort to protect and conserve the formal structures that brought everything to a state of immobility, which manifested, in the Government, performance of art, spread of knowledge and social stratification, was less rigorous in the case of Malayalam prose. This was because the development of Malayalam prose was related to the historiographical trends associated with a Naduvali power. The inscriptions of the Ceramans displayed the element of Malayalam prose. Models of Malayalam prose were mostly available in the inscriptions and Granthavaris. Traditional pedagogy and Government helped the development of Malayalam prose. Granthavaris showed that the influence of Sanskrit in the language learned from Nattezhuthassans was feeble. The functional efficiency of the pattolachans, Ezhuthassans, Karyastas and Menons who learned from the Nattezhuthassans is shown by the documents of the Samutiris, which rigorously followed Kilmariyadi. These documents which were periodically being written, copied and preserved referred to and described all aspects of life. Many of the events could not be foreseen, and concern for the presentation of form was irrelevant while documenting them. This practice led to the development of prose.

Prose included the cultural spheres of the lower, middle and upper classes. This was also the reason for prose to develop as a major Malayalam trend, although it proceeded very slowly. The relevance of the mention in Lilatilakam on the vulgar language and spoken language where the influence of Sanskrit was minimal also could be seen here. These forms influenced the growth of prose. Krishnagatha did not ignore these elements.

Ezhuthassan showed a great deal of discretion in choosing or rejecting these linguistic forms. Nambiar assimilated the image structure of Kerala culture in his language.

This loosening of prose language came naturally. The various Cerikkal accounts, descriptions of rituals, Government documents, and royal orders collected in Lokanarkavu Granthavari and Samutiri Kovilakam Granthavari showed the medieval practice of chronicling a variety of events. An examination of the use of words in such documents would help in penetrating the interior regions of Kerala culture. They were documents on the wealth and activities of each Kanakkaran written on the spot by the writer who was trained by Nattezhuthassans and sent to the centre of power. The royal letters for establishing communications were also important. In this, the letters in prose to establish relations with foreigners are to be specifically noted. These prose documents which were different from the literary and scientific work in Sanskrit and Malayalam throw light on the practices and cultural traditions of the lower strata rather than the ruling groups. The collective strength of these trends pushed the Malayalam prose forward. Narration of personal experience made its appearance during the beginning of the 18th century itself. The Keralolpattis also had an element of historical documentation. The reasons for their differentiation from ritual prose are obvious. It is also clear that prose had become refined by the second half of the 18th century.

The cultural tradition was able to assimilate several elements of Jaina, Saiva and Vaishnava religions in the formation of Manipravala and Tantric culture. The association of Islamic culture with poetic traditions such as Patappattu could also be noted. The Kerala Muslims imbibed numerous local models which could be seen in their literary traditions, and other cultural planes like Sarkeettu Pattu and Nerchas. The growth of Malayalam prose and visual art forms were related to Christianity also. The Christian writings came as a mode of presentation of their distinct thought processes, rather than as good Malayalam prose. This was the reason why such forms, including printing, had the characteristic of a revolt. This was able to change the thought processes of

the ruling families, intermediaries and lower classes. The most widespread was the tradition of religious orations (Mataprasangam) and texts. This gave rise to a power source which was able to break the traditional framework.

Culture of the Dominant Classes

There were about fourteen Naduvali powers during the 14th century, after the decline of the Ceramans. The concept of Tamilakam had already been destroyed with the coming of Cera, Cola and Pandya rulers. However, the problem during the end of the 14th century was to determine the major powers among the fourteen rulers. By the end of the 15th century about thirty-five Naduvalis had emerged. Among them, three or four could be classified as central powers. Smaller Naduvalis owed allegiance to the bigger ones. This shows that division on the one hand and unification on the other, i.e. centrifugal and centripetal forces present themselves interchangeably. This situation continued in later centuries also.

The arrangement of territories among the thirty-five Naduvali centres is interesting. Desinganad and Trippappur became separate. Elayedattu swarupam came into being. One fragment remained in Kollam, and the other in Thiruvananthapuram. Elayedattu Swarupam controlled the interior region from Kilimanoor. They were divided into Kottarakkara and Nedumangad. Ports in the Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram coastal regions were controlled by the traditional chiefs and Elayedattu Swarupam controlled the mountain passes towards the East. The Swarupams that were formed all over Kerala either controlled the ports or the mountain routes to the East. This pattern could be seen clearly upto Tirunavaya in central Kerala.

It is clear that division of the ruling families was based on the possibilities of economic advance. In each branch of the ruling family, there were open conflicts among the junior members (Ilamura). In some parts like Cherthala (Karappuram) more than 72 Madampis were involved in a similar conflict. There were about forty nobles in Kochi contributing to the squabbles there. In the south, the activities of these forces resulted in the East-West and North-South conflicts among the smaller chiefs. From the South upto Tirunavaya, these political centres had evenly and vertically divided the territories. All these rulers were also striving to establish contact with the European powers.

In the North, the central power of the Samutiri controlled large territories and entered into conflict with the ruler of Valluvanad on the question of Bharatapuzha and the ports. The form of dissociation between the 'coastal' and 'mountain' ruler continued upto Kolathunad. This dissociation gave rise to mutual competition, which was possible due to geographic features, character of resource mobilisation, and possibilities of trade and commerce. It is possible to delineate the nature of these conflicts from local sources, only to a certain extent. Foreign notices help us to fill the gaps in a certain way.

The location of Naduvali centres were motivated by trade and economic advance. The more important reason was possibly trade. The Nagaram and harbour created by the Samutiri based on established norms at Kozhikode during the 15th century, testified to this basic motive. The importance of trade could be seen in the privileges of Kozhikode, as announced in Keralolpatti. These privileges were further affirmed in the dynastic history composed by the Samutiri in 1810. The ritual of "shipping to Mecca" practiced at Kozhikode centre should also be noted. This foreign element was carefully consolidated by the Samutiris. Changes took place in the organisation and social evolution in the surrounding regions also. The specialised production centres spreading all over Kerala could be seen in the references to more than hundred such centres, like the grass mat of Kavalappara, pots of Peruvamboozhi and washing towel of Attingal. Such production and training centres were not a myth.

Documentary evidence for Malabar region is available mainly from the 16th century. It cannot be said that such documents did not have roots in an earlier period. Lokanarkavu documents of 1550 and Granthavari of Tali temple of 1561 showed that administrative units including Desams and Cerikkals had spread during the early half of the 16th century. Hundreds of Taravads can be identified from these documents, and some of them exist even now. The territory of the Samutiri consisted of 32 units including 32

Cerikkals, 28 Devaswams and 4 Brahmaswams. It was spread from Paravur in the South to Pantalayini in the North, the central Naduvali had several types of rights and powers. Documents about three centuries showed that the structure of Government, including Cerikkals and different administrative positions evolved under the Samutiri by the end of 15th century, was allowed to persist under the Kilmayadai. Some of the major aspects of this administrative structure have been described by the Samutiri to William Logan in 1881 when he described the methods of "ruling over the earth".

The Samutiri had six Karyastas, viz Mangat Unnikumaran, Dhamme Panikkar, Cherakattu Thachu, Kayitta Raman, Tenkurussi Govindan, and Ozhukil Ittunni Raman. The first two were also named Karyastas, which meant that they were not ministers. There were other Karyastas in charge of temples and tanks. These main Karyastas visited Kalams and Cerikkals and managed their affairs. The first three lived within the Kovilakam itself. All of them continued in their respective post (Sthanam) on a hereditary basis.

Kalam and Cerikkal had definite boundaries. Pattam and Michavaram would be handed over to the respective Karyastas by the Kudiyan, living within those boundaries. The right of polichezhuttu could not be entrusted with the Karyastas without the permission of the Naduvali. Karyastas collected the amount and gave receipts (Kaicheettu). Karyastas, who had Malayalam education ruled over the cerikkals, consulting the documents at all levels. They also prepared the various deeds (Adharam) and gave receipts. Some of the Karyastas had their own fields and received a monthly salary. Karyastas received a share of the amount paid by the Kudiyan for Polichezhuttu. Pattam was decided by the sowing capacity, yield, fertility as well as local practice.

2/10 of the Pattam after deducting the interest on the Kanam and the tax was the Michavaram for the Janmi. Kudiyan could hand over any information to the Naduvali after submitting an honorary present (Tirumulkalzhcha). Kudiyan allotted their land as Pattam to their Kilkudiyan. Naduvali did not interfere in this as it was left to the discretion of the Kudiyan. Agricultural labourers were allotted a plot for their settlement and house construction in the cultivated land. The right to possess this land lay with the Kudiyan of the ruling chief. Roads were constructed only with the concurrence of the Janmi. Canals, ponds and tanks were constructed for agricultural purposes. If the Kudiyan constructed them, the ruler compensated them adequately. Rights of Kuzhikkurachamayangal were given to the Kudiyan. If the Kudiyan were evicted they were given a price (Vilai) according to local custom. Kudiyan celebrated royal observances like Tirumasam.

This brief description reveals certain important features. Affairs were conducted based on customs, traditions, and local practice at the lower levels. The Hierarchy consisted of Karyastas, Karyastas of Cerikkals, Kudiyan, Kilkudiyan (subtenants) and Velakkar (labourers). Kudiyan were Kanam holders. They were at times designated as Janmis. The ruler of the Nadu was the Janmi of all. However, Kanakkudiyan were also, in a sense, Janmis.

Nothing much is known about the lower strata. Among those who have established a hierarchical relationship with the ruler, the intermediary strata from Karyastas to Kanakkudiyans were the groups that evolved into nobles and Taravads. The same form of hierarchical relations, also entered the Devaswams forming an intermediary strata. Kilkudiyans and labourers called Athaloor Kudigal and Kakacheri Kudigal appeared in the documents of 1666 A.D. and 1776 A.D. This intermediary strata could gain economically under the Naduvali rule. The extent of settlements (Kudiyiruppu) could be seen in the Lokanarkavu documents from 1550 A.D. The extent of habitation could also be seen from this. The intermediary strata including sections of temple collectives, and warriors, could read and write or were eligible to do so. They also functioned by allegiance to the Naduvali central power.

It has been pointed out that the number of small Naduvalis increased during the 15-16th centuries. Taravads of Madampis and ministers in Cherthala and Kochi have also been indicated. There were also families like Anchekaimals and members of the ruling families. The section called Kandukariyam in the Kozhikode Granthavari mentions the existence of more than one hundred and fifty noble families, who could be classified as small Naduvalis.

These documents discussed the mode of address to be used by the Samutiri to the small Naduvali. Small chiefs included Naduvalis from all parts of Kerala. Nobles who were present during the Ariyittuvalcha of 1650 A.D. numbered more than three hundred. They were nobles who received Uzhappanam and Arichilpanam from Kozhikode central power. These nobles lived to the north of Trisoor. The Samutiri had more than twentyfive Kovilakams in this area, and some of them were meant for junior princes. There were Cerikkals which were directly administered by the junior princes. By taking the sum total of all these, an estimate of the extent of nobles could be arrived at. Documents from 1599 A.D. to 1740 A.D. gives details about visits to temples by the Samutiri, objectives of such visits and information regarding the nobles related to the temples. Some nobles were also uralas of the temples. A parallel system of temple centred ownership was visible here. The arrangement of temples, palaces and noble houses were seen related to the arrangement of Kalam, Kalari and forts, and also markets, harbours, ferries and warehouses. These nobles represented the extent of influence wielded by the reference society related to the Naduvali central power. Intermediary strata appeared in relation to them and mixed with them in the social hierarchy.

Cultural Components of Political Power

The modes of allegiance that these sections had with the central power should be discussed. The Karyastan received the right to collect Pattam and other controlling rights through a function called Valum Pudavayam (sword and dress) which was carried out with temple related customs and rituals. The descriptions of this function on 1693 A.D. and 1720 A.D. throw light into several important features of the Government. There was apparently no significant change in these rituals even a century earlier. The nobles related to the specified regions (from where Pattam was to be collected) also attended the function. The various components of these rights are to be noted. When Valum

Padavayam was given to Tarakkal Iraman, he was given the responsibility for Kaladi Edavaga, Cerikkal, Pattam from Madattumklnad, tolls from Kaladi bazar, Channatamakhamnokku and Vazhipizha Ezhunna Mutal. The amount from these should be brought to the Kovilakam sources after deducting the expenses for Trikkandiyur vaveli, Tirunavaya feeding, padagaram at Trikkannapuram, and his own monthly salary (1676 A.D.). There should be an excess of 524 panam from Aliparamb Cerikkal and 2060 panam from Chunangat Cerikkal. 225 persons came and received their privileges during this function. Many people like Kutiravattathunayar, Tarakkal Menon, Chembil Patanayar, Karamvelli Kurup, Mulanjoor Patanayar, Kannanur Patanayar, Eranholi Achan, Vettathu Eradi, and Kangacheri Nayar received valum pudavayam and acquired the titles of Talachennor and Patanayar. As a result a complicated network was created in each Cerikkal. The temple centre and Kovilakam were the first layers of this hierarchy. In order to integrate different sections into various layers of the hierarchy and ensure their allegiance, several functions like Peruvili, Thalaikettu, Kuthuvilakku, etc. were conducted. Another stipulated function was to provide chela and churika to patanayars. If they wore the chela and returned to the function, items like Vella (cloth) dagger and sheath, and sword called Ariyanval were presented. A large network of warriors, patanayars and companions (Akampadi Janam) was also created.

In 1600 A.D. Kuthiravattathu Nayar was given chela and churika before he was given valum pudavayam. That is, the title called Kuthiravattathu Nayar integrated the functions of Talachennor, Karyastan and Patanayar. He was ordered to conduct the landed possessions (Yavanagal) and shrines (mukkalvattam) enjoyed by his Karanavar (Predecessor). Purushantaram for preserving the family inheritance was received from him. During 1601 A.D., when Chembil Muttapanikkar was given chela and churika, there was special

provision to collect Kaval Channatam from them. Thus the rights over Cerikkals became a family inheritance for the Taravads. If the Taravads became extinct adoptions were made to them. In 1600 A.D. Chalappurathu Nayar, when he was adopted was given the position of Nalamkurudaiya Nayar (fourth rank in the family hierarchy). This Chalappurathu Nayar was adopted from Lakkattuveedu. Adoption was also a method to enter into the central power hierarchy by eliminating regular inheritors. Just as the tenants were replaced by the Kanakkar through Polichezhuthu, the nobles including Karyastas were replaced by the central power through adoption (Dethu).

Another provision is that of Udavalanakkal. Dharmoth Panicker, who was the head of the Kalari, conducted Udavalanakkal for the Samutiri. After receiving the Udaival (royal sword), Samutiri conducted several functions like Thalekkettu, Peruvili, Kuthuvilakku, Virachangala, etc. gave away gifts, instituted titles (like Pattathanam, Nanthavanathil Nampi, Mangattachen, Shahbandar Koya, Kunjali Marakkar etc.) to maintain a large noble warrior servant hierarchy under the central power. Central power would make whatever changes necessary in their functions. After every coronation (Ariyittuvalcha) these functionaries (Pozhuthikkar) would be appointed anew. Everything started afresh, on the basis of allegiance to the Samutiri. Even adoptions and Kurvalcha were subject to changes in this system. They were all strongly linked to the priesthood, temple centres

and rituals. A person who was appointed as Talachennor by a royal order, became a Talachennor and Patanayar in actuality only by going through various stages of custom and ritual in the temple sanketarn, in front of the nobility of his cerikkal including the Kanakkar and Swarupis. This meant that Bhakti was being used as a mode of Government. The high upper class including temple centres and brahmanas became the controllers of this process.

Numerous observances like temple feeding, gifts, Vettakaran song, Athachamayam, Tiruvonam, Kannokku in Kovilakam, Tirumulkazhcha, Poli, Niramala, Onappudava, etc represented different functions of the central Government and were directed towards the survival of the central power. It could be assumed that a relatively uniform administrative structure prevailed all over Kerala during the middle ages, i.e. during 15th-17th centuries. Small chiefs would imitate the central power. This style of functioning would definitely create upper class reference society, warriors and nobility. They could be divided into upper class reference society, intermediaries, and lower classes.

It is not necessary to go into details in this context. It is only intended to give a general account of the diversity of centrifugal - centripetal forces and their basic features by economic and social status. The role of these forces and social dynamics in the cultural formation of Kerala is broadly sketched here.

Gradually, changes in the action and reaction processes in these forces became noticeable. They made their appearance and gathered strength during the 16th and 17th centuries. They also created fissures in the central power structure. The practice of repeatedly copying certain rituals, specifically mentioning their rigid continuity and repeating the same functions as Kilmariyadai, appearing in the documents from the 16th century onwards showed that these structures had been interpreted to be continuing for centuries. During the later period cracks in this structure became noticeable. In a political structure directed to ensure subservience, the nature of Bhakti itself underwent transformation, as royal worship (Rajabhakti), temple worship (Kshetrabhakti), worship of the brahmanas (Brahmanabhakti) worship of the puranas (Puranabhakti) and worship of the nobles (Prabhuhakti). Bhakti of Ezhuthassan became different due to this reason. Similarly, Bhakti of Melpattur was transformed owing to the same feature. The modes of administration, titles and functions became standardised, in which tradition, family inheritance and customary obligations played an important role. Although they were standardised and had a rigid structure, the inherent centrifugal forces that emanated appeared as fissures. It is also possible to find further reasons for these changes such as the activity of the foreigners, trade and monetisation.

An overview of the extent and functional areas of the reference society and intermediary groups should be mentioned here. It could be seen that they were the basic drives and forces behind the changes in the essence of literature, art, and scholastic writings. Historical reference to them belonged to later half of the 17th century, they were actually older. This showed that the central power at Kozhikode had to undergo functional changes after one and a half centuries by the end of the 17th century. This perspective has been developed on the basis that the emergence of the central power was during the

beginning of the 15th century. The central power gathered strength during the 15th and 16th centuries and with the growth of centrifugal forces by the end of the 16th century, the decline of central power began. This process of decline gradually increased and the central power became extremely weak by the beginning of the 18th century.

Some aspects of the temple based functions should be noted here. By the middle of the 17th century, the functional and formal elements inside the temple had become separated, and the temple Yogams were engaged in the tussle for power. The differences between the Pooram festival at Varakkal temple in 1562 and the Pooram Tiravulsavam held in Trikkavu temple in 1672 has to be noted here. The interest shown by the Government in conducting Ramayanam Kuttu at Vairanallur temple during 1729 and 1730 A.D. and in presenting Krishnageethi also should be noted. Pooram festival became widespread. Taipooyam was conducted in Tirunavaya every year. Niramala and Vettakkaran Pattu in temples increased. Bharanivilakku, Kartika Vilakku, Tullal and Teeyattu spread in various places. Temple came to acquire an element of popular entertainment and exchange of goods, quite different from its actual functions. During the end of the 16th century, festivals were conducted in Lokanarkavu also. Many temple art forms were in the nature of offerings. Also, the Kudiyaans were required to pay the amount stipulated in the title deeds for several offerings like Niramala.

The relation between the Varakkal temple at Kozhikode and the nearby Puthiyangadi is shown by some documents of 1555 A.D. The formal structure and details of the trading centre called Putiyangadi showed that this was already developed as a port. The Padu collected from the bazaar was set apart for expenses in the temple. The Pattam, tools and Melazhi from the bazaar was utilised for several festivals and offerings like Mahanavami in the month of Kanni, Onam offering, Kalasam, full moon/ new moon days in Tulam, Namaskaram ceremony in Vrischika Sankranthi in Magham, Trikkarthika, Pooram in the month of Minam, Puja in Makam, Vishu offering, Nira in the month of Karkatakam and Triputhari. 1063 panam and 150 Idangali of rice were required by the temple, including the expenses of pooram. The officers in charge of these were Varakkal Janam, Koyima, Pattamali and Menokki. In 1675, Pooram was celebrated in a grand manner including a procession of elephants. The increase in the number of temples, increase of festivals in these areas, and the participation of the upper class in the rituals and ceremonies could be seen as attempts at consolidation of power.

This effort became manifest in the Ramayanam Kuttu mentioned before. The ruler and temple deity became unified and the various components of the reference society all over the royal territory also became integrated. According to Kilmariyadi, beaten rice (avil) and plantains were to be brought by Olliyur Samudayam, Talakulattur Samudayam and Kilodumpurai Samudayam, Major

Karyastas like Tuvvakada Kaimal and Tinayanceri Elayathu, Talachennor, Nampis, Moosad and Nampidis and such bodies like Trikkalayur Kuttam, Tacholi Kuttam and Tacholi Nayanmar. There were more than 250 groups involved in it. Panchavadyam was brought from the saliya streets at Kozhikode. There were twenty Panchavadyam bands including Arangath Rama Marar Kuttam and Elanir Kunnath Chathunayar Kuttam.

Naduvali managed to hold all sections of the people together by allotting to them various rights and established himself as Rama by receiving 'Rama's bow' in their presence.

The increase in the number of temples could be seen by comparison with earlier estimates. In 1601, the offerings for the rulers, Tirumasam was conducted in more than 50 temples including Tacharakkavu Ayyappan, Mulamkunnathkavu Ayyappan. The number of festivals in such temples also gradually increased. These references indicated the interest shown by the central power in such matters.

Information on the components of temple administration like Yogam, Samudayam, and Janam deserve special consideration. They were widespread in the kingdom of Samutiri. These Yogams consciously intervened in the scuffle for political power, which was shown by the changes in the style of functioning of the Trikkandiyur Yogam. This element also demonstrated the accumulation of power by brahmana families. While ceremonies like Uttu, Pooram, Puyam, etc were conducted in temples, they became family observances in several brahmana and noble houses. During 1646 and 1656 A.D. Atham, and in 1647 A.D. Attathirunal were celebrated with great pomp in the royal palace. The Patinara Makam after Onam was celebrated in 1654 and 1675 A.D. and Tirunal in 1654 A.D. In the Sanghakkali, conducted during the Tirumasam of 1675, 23 Chattira Sanghas participated. There were more than 80 people each in six sanghas, 14 to 32 among the rest. Altogether there were more than 600 chattirar. This Sanghakkali was held in 1869 also, when the number was reduced to less than 200. Brahmani Pattu was held in 1675 A.D., and Teeyattu and Tullal in 1605 A.D. These were being held more or less in brahmana Illams and intermediary noble houses. In this background, the relevance of writings on ritual, astrology and architecture are obvious.

Foreigner's accounts on the spread of trading centres are available. Some documents also portrayed the changes taking place in Malabar. The Samutiri had assigned the supervision of the port of Kozhikode with Kozhikode (Shahbandar) Koya. There are clear references to the appointment of Karyastas

for collecting the tolls from trade in Cerikkal lands. More than all these, the 16th century documents presented a clear picture of the state of Putiyangadi. There were separate dues to Ara (the shop) pura (house) pandiyala (warehouse) and sea-faring. There were 132 shops in Putiyangadi. There were also five Vazhipokku (travellers resting place) for Kalavaniyan (vessel merchant) and Pudavavaniyan (cloth merchant). At the end of the 17th century, 140 panam was collected from Parappurangadi for channatamukhamnokku, 82 panam from the Mutta Chettiyar of Pallikkal Randuteruvu, 90 panam from Muttachettiyar of Idamuzhikkal Teruvu, and 46 panam from the fishermen of Kadalundi. Money was collected in 6 or 4 panam from Ramanattukarai, Kadalundi, Cheruvannur, Kovoov, Munnur, Velimukku, Ariyallur, Chelembra and Pazhancha Aru. In some places, shops were built for selling silk. 2 panam was collected from oil press (Chakku) in six Desams including Velimukku Chettis. Muslims and Chaliyas participated in this trade. This was a clear reference to the spread of trading centres to interior regions. Raksabhogam, Desabhogam and Channatham were collected from this region. The collection was made by the Manushyam and Samudayam of each Desam. They were

based on the Kilmariyadai in the documents of 1632. The money income of the central power and regular income of the intermediary nobles were also demonstrated by this situation.

Estimates of the warriors and companions, details of the patanayar, and information on Kulichevugam, and Channatamukhamnokku make it possible to calculate the number of warriors under the Samutiri. The estimates given in Keralolpatti also cannot be dismissed as an exaggeration. Small chiefs, and those who held positions inside the royal palace also held power and privileges.

The above account demonstrated a situation where the centrifugal forces increased when the central power attempted to consolidate and centralise their power through various means. Trade also played a role in this. Just as the axis of Sanketam, Janam, Yogam, and Samudayam in the case of a temple, trading elements also tried to consolidate their position by Tirumulkazhchas (royal presents) to the central power. Trading elements were always interested in the concentration of wealth. This is very clear from the Tirumulkazhchas received by the Samutiri in 1679. Among them, presents were made by Chaliath Marakkayar, Karannur Kuttiyathan of Putiyangadi, Kozhikode Koya, Kunjuma Achiyaru (Haji), Putiyaveetil Marakkar, Kurikkala Mappila of Tirunavaya, the English, Kumudavar, Izhavan Raran of Vellarakattucheri, Chettis of

Panditteruvu, etc, numbering about thirty. A document from Vanneri of 1635 show that Marakkar (Sea traders) had become powerful enough to keep the ruler and the temple Yogam in check.

Judicial Forms

The administrative, religious and ritualistic framework formulated by the central power of the major Naduvalis became the basic characteristic of Kerala houses also. Apart from the ruler and the Brahmanas, several groups in the upper strata like Nayar, Nampi, Nambidi, Moosad, Kurup and Panikkar had their own rights, customs and rituals. Several of these groups had Dwisalas, Chatussalas, Nalukettu, Ettakettu, Pathinarukettu, Padi, Padippura, Pathayappura, Kulichevugam and patanayar of their own. They were the islands of wealth and centralisation of power. This structure created fissures in the central power of the major Naduvali. Representatives of more than 500 or 600 Taravads attended the functions of Tirumasam and Pazhayaricharttu in Kovilakam. The junior members of these Taravads also came as representatives, including those who held the sixth or seventh rank. The structure of family hierarchy also was visible here. The loose structure and shifting characteristics of this period were manifested in Campus. The ruling powers declined, Gramas and Mathas of brahmanas became fragmented and weak. The local powers created their own customary, ritualistic framework, and this led to conflicts with the upper strata. Competition among the small Naduvalis and major Naduvalis, and fights between them and foreigners can be inferred from the sources. Conflicts among sections of the upper strata, those among the intermediaries and those between the upper and lower classes can also be deduced from certain documents.

The Samutiri fought several times with the ruler of Vettathunad. In 1678, a prince was adopted from Vettam to Kochi as Perumpatappu Mutta Koil. Two members of the Ayirur branch of Perumpatappu came with their militia (Purusharam) and created disturbances in Vettam, with the result that even the Mamamkam for the year could not be conducted. This resulted in war with the help of foreigners (Patamuttu). It was after this that the Kovilakam at Trisoor was burnt and the Samutiri captured the territories upto Kunnath Pallinadu. In 1667, a patamuttu took place between the Samutiri and the Dutch at Kodungallur. Kodungallur temple was destroyed by the Dutch. During this time Vettathunad princes collected their militia and fought with the Samutiri. The

Vettathunad bazaar was destroyed in the process. When Vettam fought with the Samutiri in 1602, the Samutiri made the ruler of Vettathunad conduct three Pariharams (retributions). The Vettathunad family gave several houses and parambus to the deity at Trikkandiyur as compensation. During the same year, the Samutiri caused Arangottu Swarupam (Valluvanad) to pay compensation to Trikkandiyur temple. This meant that the practice of providing compensation to temples prevailing in earlier years gave way to settling issues through patamuttu. This was a major change in the conflict between major and small Naduvalis. It could be seen that Vettathunad and a branch (Tayvali) of Kochi came into conflict once.

Even if the members of the temple yogam who were brahmanas erred, they had to pay compensation. In 1635 A.D. the Janam of Trikkandiyur Yogam, named Mangalacheri, paid compensation to the deity at Trikkandiyur. This Mangalacheri was later degraded as Moothath and Elayath. This meant removal from upper strata, i.e., from the major functionaries of the temple. Conflict developed between Trikkandiyur Yogam and the ruler of Vettathunad from 1603 A.D. When Kanniyankattu Kumarappan walked through the main road within the sanketam, the Karyakkar and Nayars captured him and brought him before the junior prince of Vettathunad. However the prince let him go. Trikkandiyur Yogam protested against this decision and asked for compensation. This was the beginning of the competition that the Nambutiri Yogams had with the Naduvali for political power. The power of the Trikkandiyur Yogam at this time could also be assessed. Apart from forcing the offenders to give money, land and other possessions as compensation, conduct prayaschittam and publicly admit his guilt (Utharam Chollikkuka), the practice of downgrading the social status of the offenders from Nambutiri to Muthath, and later into Elayath could be seen in 1603. Caste rigidity had already taken its roots. In 1760 A.D. all the brahmanas in Panniyur Grama were downgraded into Musad, and later were reinstated as Nambutiris. For this change 32000 panam had to be paid as compensation to the Kovilakam. During the 18th and 19th centuries, issues like walking through forbidden roads, polluting tanks by touching them, and entering into temple sanketas became more visible. The stipulation of committing the offence to the deity of Trikkandiyur and paying compensation also to the deity should be noted. In 1631 A.D. certain decisions were taken by the Vanneri house without the consent of the God at Trikkandiyur, i.e. without the permission of Trikkandiyur Sanketam and Yogam. This indivisibility is similar to the indivisibility of Rama and the ruler in Ramayanam Kuttu. It is in this

background, when different power centres tried to merge themselves with God to increase their power, that the Bhakti of Ezhuthassan became relevant. Ezhuthassan lived near Trikkandiyur.

The practice of continuous intervention in all activities by Trikkandiyur Yogam as a parallel centre of power was not an isolated event. When a temple centre grew in economic scale with their ritual offerings, festivals and retribution for offerings, there was a tendency to make determined moves to share political power.

When the expansion of these parallel forces took place at one level, there was continuous conflict between people who belonged to these groups. The major Naduvali centre tried to control, replace and destroy those who were not in their good books. Historical documents give a stream of evidence for these two tendencies. In 1639 a house in Alathoor Desam was destroyed and a part of rajabhogam was carried away. The Kulichevugam, Nayars of Elamparakottathu Swarupam set out against this. Elamparakottathu Swarupam is a family called Madathil Paniker. The forces of the Swarupam encountered the miscreants, stabbed them and forcibly took away their weapons. Kodappurattu Muthathu, and other manushyam, came upto Kannampuzha, in order to take revenge. By then Eramangalattu Nambutiri and other Nambutiris took the side of Elamparakottam. The issue was finally resolved when as per the Samudaya Mariyadai of Kilur Thottiyum Valarum was placed before Annamanada temple and properties were given as compensation. Very important social institutions were indicated when mention was made of the transformation of small lords into Swarupams, intervention of the Namputiris in such matters, division of rajabhogam, importance of Kulichevugam, the relevance of Samudayamaryndai and the payment of landed property as compensation. A number of new Swarupams gathered in strength like Karingampalli Swarupam, Elamparakattu Swarupam, Patiniarrukuttil Swarupam, Velutha Tayvali and Karutha Tayvali. A group of arbitrators called Enangar appeared during this period. Two Kalagappuras of the Matha where Mangat Achen was staying, were destroyed by Nadaviledattu Nambutiri, who paid compensation in 1702 A.D. For the destruction of Kalagappura Erattiyur Mangalappalli Namputiri and Erattiyur Unni paid compensation of 52 achchu and other properties. During the same period, compensation was paid for destroying Pallath House, Karippicheri house, Parambath Kuzhikkat House and House of Kizhakke

Madath Potuval. Houses and Kalagappuras had become the centres of administration and ownership. During 1565 A.D. Mangalappalli Namputiri and Kilumana Namputiri quarrelled over the question of properties of Mecheri Taravad. They sent manushyam, and destroyed each other's houses and exchanged blows. The issues were resolved by dividing equally the Taravad properties and the Mukkalvattam. Kilumana Nambutiri received Taravad property, Mukalavattam that the Taravad controlled in other areas, Samantha Urayma in Vellapanad and Kayyenur Settlement (Kudiyirippu). This indicated a new situation when constructing a house meant consolidating the Janmam and the rise of a number of houses of this kind. The quarrels have always been about houses, garden lands, paddy fields and other rights. In 1665 A.D., Ittikattu Namputiri placed an Ola before Mangat Achen to undergo the ordeal of Viralmukku at Adoor Vatilmadam. A

prayaschitta took place at Adoor in 1663 for committing an offence against brahmanas. The Viralmukku (dipping a finger in boiling oil) ordeal took place at Valayanad and Varakkal in Kozhikode also.

Lokanarkavu temple, where Raja of Kadattanadu was the Uralar, conducted Aratt festival in 1600 A.D., apart from normal temple rituals. Several rituals and ceremonies like Panchagavyam, Nalamvilakku offering of raw meat, Akathuttu Kalasam, Triputhari, Illam Nira and feeding as well as lighting a lamp in the month of Karkatakam were being conducted regularly before 1600 A.D. For this, numerous Taravads including Ravari Nayars, granted house sites and parambas to the temple. Palat Koman and Tacholi Devan Chandu appear among them. More than forty acts of compensation (Pizhai Dandam) took place between 1595 and 1700. The compensation paid to the temple included house sites, Parambus, fields, and cash either as Janmam or otherwise. Here, there is no evidence for Samudayam or Yogam. However, the accumulation of wealth in the temple, and the participation of more than thousand Taravads in this process could be seen. Orkatteri Nambiar, and Manikoth house paid compensation several times. Kaipalli Kannappan, Tacholi Nampi Kurup, and Kunki Amma also paid fines. There is no mention of the Uralar of Kadattanad. However, the quarrels between these Taravads for fields and garden lands and the resulting Kudippaka (blood feuds) could be gathered from the Northern Ballads. These events took place centred around the temple, the stipulations and decisions followed the general trend.

Documents mentioning adoption into the families of Tarakkal Talachennor, Chalappurath Nayar and Mangalasserri Elayath, indicated the

quarrels that certain Taravad centres had with the central power. The major feature of such adoptions was the exercise of authority by the central power. Undesirable elements were removed and power rights were vested with those who were subservient. In the stipulations regarding transfer of property, the practice of Polichezhuttu every twelve years gave the Talachennor and Karyastas such a loophole. They were all purposeful displacement of power. When an adoption took place, a certain share of the control over large tracts of lands came to the Naduvali. This procedure could easily result in conflict.

In 1676 A.D. Tarakkal Unnikitta Menon was appointed as the inheritor of Ittunni Rama Menon on the demise of the latter. Tarakkal house received further rights and authority, and the ruler had financial benefits. First the royal order read, "as enjoyed by Ittunni Rama Menon", later it was changed to "as enjoyed by the predecessors." This change was explained away as due to the observance of Pula (ritual untouchability) on the demise of the junior Tampuran and hence the Karyakkar could not be consulted while giving the order. It is clear, however, that the presence of Karyastas had become essential in issuing such an order and the rights "as enjoyed by the predecessors" was confirmed. Major acts of the ruler were thus being clearly dominated by the Karyakkar. In 1605 A.D. Unnichunda Nambiar, who held the title Peruvenda Mukkil Kizhakke Nambidi was adopted into the family of Venganad Nambidis (Raja of Kollangode) and anointed as the ruler, after removing Cheruvalli Asharimar who had held this position so far. Here

through adoption, one family was removed from power, and another family was given the right.

Mangat Achen sold an elephant in Kozhikode to Suri Chetti without the knowledge of the Samutiri and without paying the necessary amount to the Kovilakam. This was in 1583 A.D. The Naduvali ordered digging up Melapattu Veedu, held by Mangat Achen. In 1762 A.D. the instructions given by the Samutiri to Tarakkal House to resist the outrages committed by Kavalappara Nayar was rejected by the Taravad and the head of the Taravad shot at the forehead of the Samutiri. The Tarakkal house was destroyed and dug up, Talachennor of Tarakkal was called up and hacked to death. The members of the house raised a banner of revolt against the Samutiri. In 1709 A.D. the ruler committed atrocities against the household of apathateeri of Panniyur Gramam. Payment of varam to the temple was being disrupted by the intervention of the ruler. By 1781, the power of the Samutiri had become extremely weak. The major feature of that time was the efforts to gather strength by the ruler of Tiruvitamkur.

Revolt of the lower classes gathered strength during this period. In 1709 A.D. an adiyar woman called Ceethamma destroyed and burnt the houses of Chathukurup, Koru Panikkar, Itti Raman and haystacks belonging to Tozhavanur Elayedathu Nambutiri, who was her Janmi. Ceethamma was caught and handed over to the royal servants (pandaram). Namputiris and children of Appathillam were forcibly captured by the Naduvali. Unlike the previous cases various punishments and forms of excommunication like smartha vicaram, sending out of the caste, Uruvilakku, ban on assemblies, etc. became widespread at this time.

Conflicts began to develop among various groups like men having a fixed income, merchant groups, warriors, Yogams, Samudayams, Manushyam, Swarupam, junior princes, small Naduvalis, Kulichevugam and nobles, and between them and the Naduvali power by the 16th century. The strength of these groups gradually increased, conflicts became intensified, and protests from below began to develop by the 18th century. These forces were at the bottom of the formation and changes taking place in Kerala culture during this period.

Patterns of Everyday Life

In the previous sections, an effort was made to weave together the main strands of Kerala culture in the background of original literary works, scholarly works and certain social factors, and to give a general view of the political, social and economic relations that gave rise to these cultural forms. There were several cultural units that existed in association with these major cultural streams. Some more of these units could be discussed in order to make the analysis more comprehensive. The symbols of nobility and feudal power that appeared in these forms could be seen as instruments of sanctification and legitimisation of power.

The formation of family hierarchy in matrilineal joint families could be seen in the attribution of hegemony to the Karanavar, with the nephew (Anantharavan) in a

dependent role. In the Talikettu (nuptial) ceremony, both the Naduvali and brahmana was essential for sitting on a grassmat, participation of elephants in processions, beating of the drum, bursting crackers in temples, etc. Men and women of the castes from Nayars downwards, were not allowed to cover their chest, wear shirts or put on a head-dress. This process had not only the element of alienating women but also the alienation of intermediaries as the lower class. It has been observed that in the case of dress, the manners

followed by certain tribal groups provided the model. The sanctification and controlled performance of Kalamezhuthu and songs, Vavubali among ancestral rites might be an instance of integrating the tribal elements into the mainstream. The story that Parasurama brought Deva, Gandharva and Rakshasa women as consorts to brahmana boys and that Nayars were their progeny also did the sanctifying trick. The same implication could be seen in the story that Nayars were Sudras who accompanied the brahmanas brought by Parasurama. This group got the right to mingle with the upper class reference society. Mention in the 18th century work, Krishipattu that Parasurama instructed the brahmanas on the principles of agriculture was obviously a method to consolidate the hold of brahmanas on agriculture in a period of crisis. Integral connection established between agriculture and astrology were also models of a similar process. Similarly Kalam, Kalari, and ankam were sanctified, legitimised and brought in consonance with feudal power. Profession of a warrior, martial skills, and competitions became a controlled affair. A female deity (Bhagavati) and associated rituals existed even for Kalam. This was a method of regulating the granaries. Several forms like Velakali, Patayani, Valeru (throwing swords), Kunthameru (spear-throwing) and Jnaninmelkali (tight-rope walking) were integrated to the temple Sanketas. The presence of Nattukizhi in ankams (duels) ensured the sanction of royal power. The role of Naduvali in adoptions was clear from Dettukazhcha. The process of reduction of powers, brahmanisation, sanctification, and legitimisation, characteristic of upper class reference society could be seen in the customs and observances considered typical of Kerala.

The presence of these factors are evident in the audiovisual arts also. Among the popular musical instruments in India, Chengila and Elathalam entered into the Sopana music in Kerala temples and Kathakali. Other instruments like Chenda and Thayambaka also became important. Panchavadyam included in the Panchamahasabdhas prescribed by the Natya Sastra of Bharata, although appeared in various parts of India, acquired its purity and ritualistic form in Kerala. Edakka, and Timila acquired this status separately. Some of the indigenous ragas of Kerala entered not only Kuttu and Kutiyattam but with some changes in their rendering entered Kathakali also. Ashtapadi and Sopana music have to be noted in this respect. The transition from the forms of dancing outside the temple premises, mentioned in medieval Manipravala works, to Mohiniyattam also should be noted. Temple architecture was considered sacred in all respects. Tantrasamuccayam and shilparatnam revealed this relationship perfectly well. Mural paintings also showed this

tendency. In all these cases the tendency to assimilate the art forms in local and neighbouring regions into the Kerala cultural atmosphere could be seen. In these respects Kerala functioned as a centripetal force.

The medieval period saw the Jaina and Buddhist religions being rendered irrelevant. The Saivite and Vaishnava religions had been integrated to the village and temple centres of Kerala somewhat earlier. The same transition took place in the case of Jaina and Buddhist religions also. The Brahmanic culture of Kerala was prepared to assimilate various elements of these religions, including the nature of Puja, nature of offerings, festivals and methods of temple construction. The Manipravala forms introduced by the Jainas were accepted in all South Indian Languages and gave a new methodological awareness to the Kerala poets. The Kerala language and culture was entrapped in its sphere of influence.

In the case of scholastic disciplines, Kerala became a centre of attraction in Astronomy, Ayurveda, and Mathematics. The importance that Ayurveda gained through the eight families of physicians (Ashtavaidyas) had not taken place anywhere else. A special programme of adapting medicine to the resources of Kerala and preparing drugs developed. These families belonged to the groups of Mooss and Nampi. Vaidya Matham who was the physician for the Yajnas was a Nambutiri. Vayaskara Mooss was the court physician of the Raja of Tekkunkur, Chirattaman Mooss of Tiruvitamkur, Pulamanthole Mooss of the Samutiri and the ruler of Valluvanad, Pazhanellipurattu Mooss of the Samutiri and Kuttancheri Mooss of Kochi. They were all connected with the temples dedicated to Dhanvanthari. New innovations in Ayurveda also developed in the Kerala atmosphere. Astronomy developed in relation with Haridatta and Mamankam festival at Tirunavaya. The growth of Mathematics was in relation to astrology which gained purity and sanctity and received the protection of the rulers. Hastalaksana deepika was written taking into account the dance notations of Kerala style although it also incorporated elements of the Great Tradition like Attaprakaram and Kramadipika. Its relation with Kathakali should also be noted. Another important work of this genre, Balaramabharatam was composed in the 18th century. It should be mentioned that in the case of physical culture, the major originating point was the non-brahmana group. The new areas developing in physical sciences are amazing. The non-brahmana tradition provided the vital thrust for the little tradition to branch off from the Great tradition. The non-brahmana intermediaries also could

develop a secular tradition in physical sciences. Kerala culture had extra ordinary achievements in this field.

A centripetal force that attracted the Pan-Indian Great Tradition, cultural traditions of nearby areas, and local factors was already strengthened in Kerala. Although Christianity, Islam and Judaism developed during the medieval period, very few among their traditions were accepted into this structure. Christians spread in the Tiruvitamkur area, Jews in Kochi and Muslims in Malabar. During the medieval period, they tended to concentrate in the coastal region connected with the coastal ports of trade. They only gradually entered the interior regions. Among them, the Jews in fact declined. Others sought the protection of the Samutiri and the ruler of Tiruvitamkur. Although these sections were related to the expansion of trade and monetisation which had wide ranging impact on the Kerala culture as a whole, they were assimilated only in a limited manner. The canon of the Synod of Udayamperur prohibited christians from accepting local customs and ideas.

On this basis, they began to indulge in proselytisation and the composition of grammar and language works that would aid this process. Chavittunatakam itself was composed by the priests and was the visual presentation of stories from the Bible and other Christian lore. The atmosphere prevailing in the cultural formation, which prevented a give and take process with such trends also excluded such major innovations like Hortus Malabaricus, Varthamanapusthakam, and the introduction of printing. Conflict prevailing among Christian groups also should be mentioned. The feudal power also did not attempt to give them a major place in the execution of administration. The loss in credibility incurred by the activities of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French may have been a reason for this. The major reason was the lack of interest shown by the Naduvalis and religious leaders. In this respect, Islam enjoyed better privileges. The special attention given by the Samutiri to the Muslims of Kozhikode and their cordial relations in the spheres of administration, commerce and ritual should be noted here. Like the common interest of driving out the Portuguese, a common interest developed in trade and commerce also. Kozhikkottu Koya enjoyed privilege and position in Mamankam and Pattathanam. The Naduvali also made him the Shah Bandar of Kozhikode who was the absolute controller of the trade being conducted there. The call to fight for the victory of the Samutiri appeared in the earliest Muslim Patappattu. Kozhikkottu Koya was honoured by making him one of the major companions (Akampadi) when Samutiri entered the city of Kozhikode. These provisions began to be abandoned only by the end of the 18th century.

Although the Kerala culture was assimilated by Mappila culture and literature, the reverse process, that of the assimilation of Muslim culture among the other sections did not take place. Evidence of assimilation in literature is seen in Sarkeetu Pattu, Kalapoottupattu, Patappattukal, Pakshipattu, Ashtangahridaya Pattu, Vasoorimala Kirtanam, Nerchapattu and Angadippuram Pattu. Mappilas also could assimilate several customs and rituals. It is, however, well known that, even the pan-Indian Great Tradition was reluctant to assimilate foreign cultural elements. It was stagnant and degenerate to that extent. This element also prevailed in the cultural atmosphere of Kerala. It was only after 18th century, when the Naduvali rule and the dominance of noble Taravads declined that the foreign cultural elements ceased to be anathema to the Kerala culture. The vocabulary of Kerala language and forms of prose showed relationship with foreign elements even earlier.

Summing up

In the above discussion, the course that Kerala culture took during the medieval period was being traced with reference to the extent and modes in which they were reflected in the literary tradition. In order to examine the forces that gave shape to these changes, general knowledge regarding the development of Kerala history and special knowledge on Malabar was made use of. Hence the perspective that has been developed is liable to be partial. If one studies the general principles of feudalism and the concentration and arrangement of the originating points of Kerala literature and art, these partial remarks could be seen as providing a general framework for the cultural formation. Malabar region seems to be the originating point of many of these traditions. Samutiri was the

major Naduvali in Kerala from the 15th to about three centuries. The impact of this central power was visible in the region from Kochi to Kolattunad. Hence, the effort to minutely analyse the local trends in this region does not distort the general picture of the cultural trends throughout Kerala.

There is continuous conflict among the royal power, priesthood, and nobility. The struggle to gain a share of power and produce of the land is a general character of these social forces. Trade was the fourth component that appeared among them. Although there were variations in the form and content of these components, the objectives and the end results were the same. Power was acquired by the Naduvali, junior members of the royal family and their representatives. The central political power and the nobles, priests, and warriors who were dependent on them formed a hierarchical reference society, and a courtly conservative section who had absolute power, emerged in this process. This model began to spread and in course of time, a relatively widespread reference society developed. This reference society which spoke the same language, had the same life style and the same tastes led the region into a definite cultural plane. The gradual weakening of this reference society resulted in ruptures in this cultural formation and gave rise to the ascendance of the intermediaries and lower classes. The three centuries from the 15th century saw considerable activity from these factors, as far as Kerala was concerned. There may have been changes in details or in the philosophical aspects, but the process of cultural formation was guided by the interplay of these factors.

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